

# With Canada Arresting Journalists, Freedom of the Press Is More Vital Than Ever

It was once unthinkable for nations like Canada to arrest journalists for asking questions. Not anymore.

That's precisely what happened last week when David Menzies of conservative news outlet *Rebel News* was accosted and handcuffed by members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) for approaching Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland with a microphone in a public street.

"How come the IRGC [Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps] is not a terrorist group?" Menzies asked Freeland as she was leaving a vigil in Richmond Hill, Ontario, honoring 55 Canadians killed by the group. "Why is your government supporting Islamic nationalism?"

The veteran journalist's lanyard and microphone flag were clear indications he was a member of the press.

Footage of the encounter shows Menzies making no physical contact with the nation's deputy leader.

Nevertheless, as seen in the video, a member of Freeland's RCMP security detail stood in Menzies' way in an effort to protect the progressive figurehead from questioning.

"You're under arrest for assault," the officer said, as he accosted Menzies by the lapel and pinned him against a sidewalk partition.

"I didn't touch a single person," Menzies replied.

Incredulous, Menzies offered his press credentials, but the

officer doubled down, claiming, “You’re under arrest for pushing her.”

When the *Rebel News* reporter asked what crime he had committed, the officer changed his story, stating the arrest was for “assaulting a police officer.”

When Menzies warned the police that cameras had been rolling the entire time and the footage would vindicate him of any assault charges, a supporting officer became defensive, claiming, “There were a lot of shuffling feet.”

Menzies was then pinned against a wall and handcuffed. Before being marched away, he turned to his cameraman to comment on the stunning scenario:

*This is what they do to journalists. ... This is now a trumped-up charge of assault, folks. I didn't come here to cause any trouble, I came here to do my job, and now I'm handcuffed. This is your Canada now, folks.*

Menzies’ treatment by police stands in stark contrast to how Canadian officers greeted pro-Palestine protestors blocking a bridge only a few days prior to Menzies’ arrest. [Video footage](#) shared on social media shows police delivering the protestors hot coffee.

Freedom of the press is explicitly protected in Section 2(b) of the [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#), which states, “Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms: ... freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication.”

Even so, under Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, press freedoms have been significantly curtailed, thanks to [generous financial bailouts for establishment media corporations](#), [speech-limiting “disinformation” legislation](#), and the PM’s own [chilling verbal attacks](#) on news outlets that seek to hold him

accountable.

As [tweeted](#) by Opposition Leader Pierre Poilievre in response to Menzies' arrest, "Trudeau has divided media into two groups: those he's bought off with bailouts and those he censors and has arrested."

*The Washington Stand* has [reported](#) that members of Poilievre's Conservative Party plan to launch a parliamentary investigation into the arrest of David Menzies.

Menzies' charges were ultimately dropped, with an RCMP spokesperson stating, "It was determined that no credible security threat existed and the subject was released unconditionally shortly thereafter," [according to the CBC](#).

Freedom of the press is one of the fundamental freedoms that sets free nations apart from oppressive regimes. UNESCO has [estimated](#) that between 2006 and 2020 some 1,200 media professionals were killed and 90 percent of their murders went unpunished.

Still today, hundreds of millions of people around the world live in nations that firewall their internet, maintain strict control over news outlets, ban independent media organizations, and take punitive measures against citizen journalists.

The United States' founders deemed a free and independent media so essential that, in the First Amendment of the Constitution, they forbade Congress from making any law "abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press."

According to Article 19 of the United Nations' [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)," Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."

Now more than ever, as woke Western governments chase the bogeyman of “misinformation,” independent media and citizen journalists are vital.

A free press is a crucial indicator of the strength of a nation. It ensures that members of the public can access the untarnished facts about matters that affect them and that any corruption by governments and other powerful organizations can be exposed without fear of reprisal.

To that end, your support of *Intellectual Takeout* is of utmost value, so thank you!

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Image credit: [Unsplash](#)

Correction: A previous version of this article misspelled Chrystia Freeland’s name.