

CSIS is here to protect Canadians? Two “Persons of Interest” under their Microscope.

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*“Canada is literally arming Nazis in Ukraine who are bombing civilians in Donbass, and I have been there under the bombs. Canada is not there to protect me.” – **Eva Bartlett***

The following interview took place on October 16. Two Canadian individuals on separate occasions in Canada were stopped after returning to Canada after spending time in Russia, and subjected to intense scrutiny by members of the Canada Security Intelligence Service. It is from the transcript to the recent [Global Research News Hour broadcast](#).

Eva Bartlett is a Canadian independent journalist and activist. She has spent years on the ground covering conflict zones in the Middle East, especially in Syria and occupied Palestine, where she lived for nearly four years. She is a recipient of the 2017 International Journalism Award for International Reporting, granted by the Mexican Journalists’ Press Club (founded in 1951), was the first recipient of the [Serena Shim Award for Uncompromised Integrity in Journalism](#), and was short-listed in 2017 for the Martha Gellhorn Prize for Journalism.

Tamara Lorincz is a long-time member of the Canadian Voice of Women for Peace. Tamara is also a member of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom-Canada. As well, she is on the advisory committee of the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space, World Beyond War and the No to War, No to NATO Network. Tamara was awarded the Rotary International World Peace Fellowship in 2013. In addition to her activism, Tamara is currently a PhD candidate at the Balsillie School of International Affairs at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario.

Global Research: Thank you both for appearing on the Global Research news hour this week.

Eva, your encounter was in February of this year, correct?

Eva Bartlett: Yes.

GR: Do you want to briefly explain what happened to you then?

EB: Sure! I have not been back to Canada for four years, mainly because of the COVID policies for the first two years since 2020, when I left Canada. And then because, well, since 2019 I’ve been on the Ukrainian kill list, Myrotvorets, and in 2022 CBC did a smear on my journalism, which throughout 2022 was from the Donbass, under Ukrainian fire, with most of

the time Western weapons. And for my crime of doing journalism from the Donbass and how Ukraine's bombings have brutalized civilians there, the CBC decided to smear me.

But the interesting thing is they drew from the kill list, Myrotvorets' entry on me. So CBC was very aware of the fact that a Canadian journalist is on the Ukrainian kill list, but they did not address it. They used that information to smear me.

And so then I became concerned if I were to come back to Canada after that, they have just alerted Ukrainian nationalists in Canada of my existence, and then it could be very dangerous for me. However, that said, by February this year, I decided I would risk it because I had not seen my elderly mother for quite a while, four years. And so I went back to Canada and I was met at Toronto's Pearson Airport.

I went to the passport control. It seemed like they were going to stamp me out, but then I was told to go step aside and I was taken. Had my suitcase, my purse, everything that I was carrying with me, searched item by item. The man doing it was nice enough.

He wasn't hostile. He asked me a lot of questions, trying to garner as much information from me about who I am, what I do, where I've been. And after, I don't remember, 20, 30 minutes search, then he said, CSIS would like to talk to you.

It's voluntary, but will you talk to them? And I'm aware of CSIS visiting people's homes, like that of Ken Stone, and I did not want my brothers exposed to that. So I said, yes, I will talk to him for a short period. We ended up speaking for about 20 minutes, during which time, I don't remember verbatim his questions, but he started by trying to make himself likeable to me by saying that he had also lived in Gaza.

As it turned out, he lived there when the illegal Jewish colonists were there. So he was part of the occupation in whatever he was doing there. But then he went on to ask me the nature of my journalism, who I knew in Russia.

He named a specific person who I did know and was trying to find out information when I'd last seen him and where, and I told him I'm not going to tell you that information. And then he went on to basically say, this is not verbatim, basically asked me if I'm taking directives from the Kremlin in my journalism. And I replied to him, my journalism is based on what I see and hear on the ground, under Ukrainian shelling.

And then I write about it, nobody tells me what to write. I didn't get Tamara's as hostile treatment. He did tell me that CSIS is there to protect me, which I bit my tongue, because quite honestly, I wanted to see my mother.

He came back to me when I was exiting Canada roughly two weeks later, when I was just ready to board my flight. And he repeated that CSIS was there to protect me, to which I replied, Canada is literally arming Nazis in Ukraine who are bombing civilians in Donbass, and I have been there under the bombs. Canada is not there to protect me.

GR: The article that had been written about you, that smeared you, but one of the, I mean, it said that you'd been writing for RT, and I mean, that is correct.

EB: Well, I have written for RT since 2013, when I still lived in Gaza. It was one of the only, it was the only major outlet that would allow me to write on what I was seeing under Israeli bombs and other torture policies against Palestinians.

And RT was the only platform, the big platform that would allow me to write without any sort of censorship, what I was seeing, what Palestinians were enduring. And so over the years since then, I've contributed op-eds pretty randomly, sometimes a couple of times a year or more, I don't remember. And then more frequently in recent years, because again, it's grown to be a massive platform.

And the way it works is I pitch, they say yes or no, whether it's newsworthy or not, and nobody tells me what to write. So the implication that just because it's published on a Russian media platform, therefore its propaganda is just, it's a ludicrous accusation that the West is using, along with these intimidation tactics of arresting and intimidating journalists, they're using that to try to silence unpopular narratives. In other words, narratives that are contrary to their lies, frankly, and narratives that are about actually ending wars and bringing peace.

GR: Tamara, you got the same kind of treatment earlier this month. Do you want to elaborate?

Tamara Lorincz: Yes. So I would like to begin by saying that I went to Russia from September 16th to October 2nd.

I was invited to attend the Eurasian Women's Forum. This was a big gathering of women, almost 2,000 from 126 countries in St. Petersburg. I also attended the BRICS Women's Meeting, again, with thousands of women.

And I also attended a peace conference in St. Petersburg on peace, nature, and cooperation in the Arctic and Baltic regions. So I was going to Russia on a peace mission. And I was also going in the spirit of people-to-people diplomacy.

I wanted to learn more about the country. I was in St. Petersburg for a week, and then I was in Moscow for a week. And I scheduled meetings because I'm an academic.

I also scheduled meetings with professors at other universities and had a number of really good exchanges with students and with professors. So that's why I went to Russia. And on my way back, when I arrived at the Toronto International Airport, I went quickly through passport control.

I didn't have anything to declare. I got my passport approved and going through passport control. And I was walking out of that area, and there was another security guard.

Usually, the security guards just quickly have a look at your declaration form. But this one took me aside, and he asked me more questions about my travel itinerary. And then he said, well, where are you coming from? I said, from Turkey.

And he goes, where else have you been travelling from today? And I said, Russia. And then he started asking me the question, why was I in Russia? He goes, well, that's very interesting, started to ask me more questions. And then he wrote on my declaration, BIO, I think, border inspection.

And when I picked up my luggage and wanting to leave the airport to get back home because I hadn't been home in two and a half weeks, this Canadian Border Services agent was there at the exit. And as I was trying to go through, he said, no, you need to come with

me. And so I went to another area of the airport that was a large securitized room.

I was the only one in that area required to go through this secondary examination. So I was on a plane with about 300 people coming from all over the region, all over the Middle East, Eastern Europe. And I'm the only one in this area being questioned by this border agent.

And that's because I was in Russia. And so he asked me a lot of questions. I was there trying to answer questions, giving as minimum information as I could.

But he also went through all of my belongings, just like he did with Eva, inspecting every single article and all of my bags. The thing that he was interested in was my no to NATO literature. And I had a couple of banners with me and he wanted to have me unfurl them and was looking at that.

And then when he had gone through all of his questioning, examining all of my bags, he asked if he could have copies of my no to NATO literature. And then as I was leaving that area, there was a CSIS agent waiting for me. And I don't recall them saying, you don't need to answer the questions.

I decided I would have an interview with CSIS. And one of the reasons why is because I follow CSIS actually on social media. And I know CSIS is lying about Canadian foreign policy, particularly this war in Ukraine.

So I decided to try to harness the interview as best as I could to say that I really objected to CSIS lying to Canadians about Russia and about the war in Ukraine, and that the CSIS is really a threat to Canadian security. By not being honest and by not helping to end this war in Ukraine, that's a nuclear risk for all of us. He also was interested in why I was going to Russia, what my intentions were, who I was talking to, my opposition to NATO.

He kept saying that Canada needs to maintain a friendly relationship with the United States because our economy depends on it, and things like this. The most troubling thing was that he did say to me that CSIS had been following me, surveilling me for a long time, and that I was well known by CSIS, and that there are agents that are covering all regions of Canada. And he's the agent that is overseeing southwestern Ontario, and he's been following my activities.

So it's very troubling. Why is CSIS wasting time on peace activists instead of spending time and helping to end wars and build peace with all countries?

GR: I'm wondering about the larger context, because I don't think CSIS is acting alone. They're coordinating with other groups, warning us of disinformation from Putin propagandists.

Could you inform us more of what you know of these groups and individuals who warn us of Kremlin trolls like yourself?

TL: This is one of the things that I raised with the CSIS agent. I said that Canadian intelligence services are not operating alone. Canada operates as part of the Five Eyes Alliance, dominated by the United States intelligence services, the UK, Australia, and New Zealand.

And what CSIS is sharing on social media are the same things that the CIA in the United

States is sharing on social media too. So they are trying to control the narrative about this war in Ukraine, but they're lying to the Canadian public about what is going on. For instance, I brought copies of access to information documents that I have to Russia to show, for instance, in a meeting that I had with the Canadian embassy in Moscow, that definitively the Canadian military has been training and arming neo-Nazi militias in Ukraine, and they've known it for years.

So I have these records from inside the Department of National Defence that shows that our military knew that these groups that they were training under Operation UNIFIER had Nazi ideology, but we continue to support them and train them for years. These are the groups that were shooting and shelling into the Donbass with our weapons. And so I have these documents, I'm showing the diplomats in Moscow, and then this is what I showed the CSIS agents.

So I put the question to them directly, why is Canada arming and training neo-Nazis in Ukraine? And then why are you lying about it on social media saying that we're not doing it? It's CSIS that is deceiving the Canadian public, and this is what is so troubling. Canadians should be outraged, and there should be a national inquiry into this.

GR: Eva, would you like to comment on this as well? And also, you could bring in the fact that you yourself are in the sights of Ukrainian kill list, and how is that you all coordinate to CSIS web of influence, if you will?

EB: This Myrotvorets is not unique to Ukraine, and it is posted on various servers, including Western servers.

The fact that CBC was made aware, I refer to CBC because CSIS would have known that CBC did this smear. Because like Tamara said, if they are following her, and they stopped me, then I can assume they're also following me and my activities. And I've been very outspoken about the CBC smear, not because my feelings were hurt, but because it was so disingenuous and dishonest.

They took away from the importance of what I and colleagues are doing on the ground in Donbass reporting on Ukraine's crimes against civilians. And instead, they tried to depict me as a crazy person, Russian disinformation agent type of thing. And that's what this, as I might have said earlier, this policy of harassment against journalists and activists, and also this Myrotvorets kill list.

But by the way, the irony is Myrotvorets means peacemaker in Ukrainian. But that's what this list is about. It's about silencing dissent, but it is a real kill list.

As much as people try to debate otherwise, when people are killed or die of suspicious means, they are marked as liquidated on this list. So CBC was made aware of this. They did nothing to expose it.

And CSIS would have to be aware of it, and also they did nothing. In fact, when presumably the same man that questioned Tamara was speaking with me and kept saying, we're here to protect you, and asking about my activities, I said to him, are you aware of the CBC entry on me? I'm of the opinion you're not here to protect me. And he feigned innocence and ignorance about the list and the threat it poses to journalists and activists and civilians around the world.

And doing nothing, as Tamara pointed out, instead for years, covertly or overtly even arming neo-Nazis in Ukraine and whitewashing their crimes. So it does come back to, as we keep saying, to silencing any sort of dissenting voices, because they need to control the narrative. And frankly, they're failing at it.

I mean, even prior to 2022, certain Canadian media were reporting on the presence of these neo-Nazi elements within the Ukrainian armed forces. After 2022, they ceased reporting on it, and they're trying to basically say, anybody who points this out are crazy, and this is a figment of your imagination. So they're trying to basically erase history, because then justify arming Ukraine, and then they can vilify Russia as if nothing happened prior to 2022, and as if Azov and IDAR don't exist.

Yeah, you only got a couple of minutes left. I was wondering if I could get each of you to comment on how we can extract ourselves, because it seems like things are getting worse. What can we do to protect ourselves, to protect yourselves? Because I mean, it's not just going to be you.

I mean, eventually, they'll climb the ladder and even go after people like me.

EB: I would say the first step is being aware of your rights and what they are or are not entitled to do. So as I read, CSIS is not entitled to go into your phone.

They can ask you questions. I don't believe you're obligated to answer them. But again, the reason I went ahead and answered them is that I didn't want them to pay my family a visit.

And I also would stress that, again, these are intimidation tactics. So inform yourself of your rights. Get in touch with legal advice if you do think you're going to be in a position where you will be interrogated and attempted to be intimidated.

And be prepared to have legal advice back you if you actually need it. But absolutely don't back down, because this is what they want us to do, is to stop reporting and stop speaking out. Again, I stress, and I know Tamara probably will say something, that this is not about ourselves as individuals.

This is about reporting on the truth and stopping the bloodshed that is solely, in my opinion, it's solely the responsibility of the West because they fomented this war. Me, for example, reporting on the effects of Ukraine's bombing of Donbass with Western weapons usually could contribute to other people, of course, obviously reporting on it, not just myself. The awareness that this is happening, awareness amongst Western public could contribute to actually stopping the war.

But when they silence voices like ours, then there's maybe not an impetus from the Western audience to put any sort of pressure on their governments to stop funding Ukraine and bring about a peace talk with Russia so that peace can reign again.

TL: Yes. So CSIS is trying to use intimidation tactics, you know, in order to silence and suppress peace voices and peace activists.

So the, you know, the antidote to this is raising our voices even louder, is speaking up, is calling for peace and diplomacy. You know, this is why I went to Russia to engage in people diplomacy and why I'm urging, you know, all Canadians to go to Russia to educate themselves, to find ways to build peace, and not just Russia, our other so-called enemies. If

you look at CSIS's latest national report, it identifies, you know, China, Iran, North Korea as adversaries and threats to Canada.

So, you know, these are other countries that we need to find ways to build peace with. And, you know, I just want to urge people to find creative ways to engage in peacemaking because we need to prevent a broader war with Russia, a broader war in the Middle East, and, you know, peace is just so essential.

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