Beat: News

The Right To Protest

Freedom Demonstrators Speak Out

Halifax, Nova Scotia , 14.02.2022, 20:38 Time

USPA NEWS - For the second weekend in a row, demonstrators have staged events in Halifax to protest against pandemic restrictions and various government imposed mandates that have been in place to help stop the spread of COVID-19 and relieve some of the strain on our health care system.

The Halifax Regional Police released the following statement related to Saturday's truck convoy protests: "Members of the public and media have a number of questions about the expected weekend truck convoy protest and the effect it can have on our city, residences and businesses. While we cannot speak to the specifics of our operational deployments, we can confirm that multiple groups have noted that they will be headed to Halifax for a protest from different parts of Nova Scotia. We can't speak to the specific or exact timing of these activities, but we can confirm that we expect these events to have an impact throughout the day. We acknowledge that these events will cause inconvenience to businesses and residences – we are asking everyone who plans to attend to show consideration during an already challenging time. We will have police presence as required throughout the city and our officers will do their very best to keep the traffic and streets flowing. We will be communicating through our social media channels as updates take place. Once again, we strongly advise everyone planning to participate in these events, to follow the rules, and take responsibility for your actions."

The original mandate of the Freedom Convoy movement (aka Freedom Truckers), was to have truckers from all over Canada to converge on Ottawa to protest the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and demanding that they be eliminated. While the original Freedom Convoy protest was started in Ottawa, various protests now span the country including cities such as Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Montreal, Quebec City, Toronto, Fredericton and now Halifax. There are also several international border crossings being blocked to traffic which is now starting to cause crucial supply chain disruptions and also affecting the livelihood of a growing number of Canadians and also reaching to citizens on the American side of the border. Ottawa is thought to be the location of the largest protest which is causing major traffic delays, excessive noise complaints and basically shutting down retail and other businesses in parts of the city. Many other of the Canadian cities have set up blockades and check points to prevent trucks from causing gridlock such as seen in our nation's capital.

As of late Sunday, February 13th, 2022, Windsor Ontario Police cleared and arrested many protesters who were involved in the 7 day shutdown of the Windsor/Detroit Ambassador Bridge. This is the busiest international border crossing in the country and is a vital link for trade between Canada and the United States.

BREAKING NEWS/
On February 14th, 2022, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced that the Federal Government is enacting the Emergencies Act in order to end the Freedom Trucker protests and blockades.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said, "With each illegal blockade, local law enforcement agencies have been acting to keep the peace within their jurisdiction. Despite their best efforts, it is now clear that there are serious challenges to law enforcement's ability to effectively enforce the law. I want to be very clear, the scope of these measures will be time-limited, geographically-targeted, as well as reasonable and proportionate to the threats they are meant to address. The Emergencies Act will be used to strengthen and support law enforcement agencies at all levels across the country."

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms clearly states the "fundamental freedoms" as follows: "freedom of conscience, freedom of religion, freedom of thought, freedom of belief, freedom of expression, freedom of the press and of other media communication, freedom of peaceful assembly, and freedom of association. In case law, this clause is cited as the reason for the religious neutrality of the state." SS. 2(b) and 2(c) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees freedom of expression and freedom of peaceful assembly.

Prime Minister Trudeau said in closing, "We are not preventing people from exercising their right to protest legally. We are reinforcing the principles, values and institutions that keep all Canadians free."

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