

Convoys against mandates in other Canadian cities support of Ottawa truck protest (Trucker-Protest-Support)

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EDMONTON — Like many of those gathered near the Alberta legislature to support a convoy of trucks that inched their way through Edmonton's downtown streets for several hours on Saturday, Kyla Keulers has been to protests against COVID-19 health restrictions before.

But there were so many more people at Saturday's event, and so many truck horns honking, that she felt optimistic things are about to change — that their protests will finally make a difference.

“I think people are really waking up and we're all uniting,” said Keulers, standing beside a stroller with her three-month-old son inside.

“I want to be able to choose and I want my child to be able to choose, and it's just ridiculous what the government thinks it can get away with.”

The event, which a provincial spokesman said attracted several thousand people, was one of numerous convoys that were held in conjunction with a national convoy against vaccine mandates for cross-border truckers that rolled across Canada this past week and arrived in Ottawa on Saturday.

“I think there's a lot of people who've been silenced because we've been bullied into silence,” said Megan Crowther, who attended the Edmonton protest with her four children, her parents and friends.

“We can't get onto a train, a plane, a bus. We've lost our right to have a job. People are losing their homes,” she said.

Other protesters openly espoused debunked conspiracy theories about the virus and the vaccines used to combat it.

Further south at the U.S. border in Coutts, Alta., RCMP said several hundred, possibly up to 1,000 vehicles, took part in another protest, eventually blocking Highway 4 to the U.S. border crossing in both directions.

Cpl. Curtis Peters, an RCMP spokesman, said there was no access to the border on the Canadian side and that U.S. officials were turning traffic around on the other side.

He said no arrests had been made by late Saturday afternoon, but that Coutts itself was blocked off in case emergency vehicles needed to get in.

“We're engaging in dialogue with them and encouraging them to rethink that,” Peters said from Coutts late Saturday afternoon.

Police in Vancouver posted on Twitter shortly after 1 p.m. saying heavy traffic throughout the city due to the “planned trucker convoy protest” may lead to disruptions.

Victoria police also tweeted that a large protest was disrupting traffic around the provincial legislature, while videos posted to social media showed a group of trucks and other vehicles in Prince George honking in support of those rallying in Ottawa

Nova Scotia issued a directive aimed at prohibiting those protesting against COVID-19 measures from blocking the Trans-Canada Highway near the New Brunswick boundary.

The province said the directive also applied to people who stopped or gathered alongside the highway in support of the 2022 Freedom Convoy, the Atlantic Hold the Line event, or others who organize to interfere with traffic.

In the end, though, a storm forced the highway between the provinces to shut, and traffic was diverted away from the boundary at Amherst, N.S.

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— With files from Brenna Owen in Vancouver and Brett Bundale in Halifax.