

Environmental protesters tunnel under London to resist eviction



HS2 Rebellion protesters in a tree, part of an encampment in Euston Square Gardens in central London. (Photo via The Daily Mail)

London, January 27 (RHC)-- Environmental activists have secretly dug what they described as “a network of tunnels” under a small public garden in front of a London train station as part of their action against the HS2 high-speed rail project.

The HS2 Rebellion group have been camping in front of Euston Station for several months in an effort to prevent the HS2 company from taking over the garden as part of the development of the planned high-speed link from London to Birmingham.

The group said the 100-foot (30-metre) tunnel network, codenamed “Calvin”, had been dug in secret over a period of months by activists who worked concealed behind a “fortified stronghold” made out of pallets, nicknamed “Buckingham Pallets.” “Tunnelers have worked around the clock, using pickaxes, shovels, buckets and shifts of 2-12 people at a time,” the group said in a statement.

They made their efforts public in the early hours of Wednesday because they were facing imminent eviction by bailiffs acting on behalf of the HS2 Ltd company. When the bailiffs arrived during the night, some of the protesters took refuge in the tunnels. They issued videos of themselves in what looked like makeshift underground structures supported by wooden slats.

A Reuters photographer on Wednesday saw some protesters in trees refusing to come down. The garden had been cordoned off and reporters were not being allowed inside to see the entrance to the tunnel.

HS2 Ltd said the eviction was necessary because the protesters were trespassing on its land and certain works needed to take place on time. “HS2 has taken legal temporary possession of Euston Square Gardens East in order to progress with works necessary for the construction of the new Euston Station,” it said.

The Reuters photographer saw personnel from the National Eviction Team, a private contractor that specialises in evicting protesters, squatters and travellers, according to its website. Police officers were also present. A Metropolitan Police spokesman said officers were there to prevent any breach of the peace.

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