French government bans so-called Freedom Convoys in Paris

(FILE PHOTO) © Photo by Nicolas Economou/NurPhoto via Getty Images

Paris, February 11 (RHC)-- Paris authorities have issued an order prohibiting Canada-style 'Freedom Convoy' demonstrations over the weekend. The ban will run from February 11th to the 14th. The edict came as thousands of motorists took to the road on Wednesday and headed in the direction of Paris to demonstrate against government's COVID policies -- in particular the vaccination pass.

"The stated objective of these demonstrators is to 'block the Capital' – by obstructing road traffic in the streets of Paris to promote their demands, before continuing their journey towards Brussels on Monday February 14th," a press release from the police headquarters read.

The police cite an increased "risk of public order disturbances that this gathering could cause" as their reason for banning any Canada-style protests. The authorities will impose heavy penalties for those who

are "obstructing or hindering a road open to public traffic." The misdemeanor carries a penalty of two years' imprisonment and a fine of ?4,500 ($5,150).

Organizing such a demonstration is punishable by six months' imprisonment and a fine of ?7,500. The police also announced that a "specific device" will be used by the authorities to prevent the convoy from entering the city.

French protesters have seemingly been inspired but the Canadian truckers' protest. The Canadian Freedom Convoy has brought parts of Ottawa and other strategic parts of Canada to a standstill. It started as a demonstration against vaccine mandates for cross-border truck drivers, but has grown into a broader protest against restrictions.

In related news, Brussels Mayor Philippe Close announced on Thursday that a protest convoy of truckers will be barred from entering the city. "We have taken the decision to ban the 'Freedom Convoy' which has not been authorized to demonstrate because no request has been sent," Close wrote on Twitter, noting that he made the decision along with Interior Minister Annelies Verlinden and Brussels region Minister President Rudi Vervoort.

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