

Protesters paralyze roads in U.S. cities over Israeli plans to continue attacks against Iran

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Heavy traffic at O'Hare International Airport in Chicago on Monday [Nam Y Huh/AP]

Chicago, April 16 (RHC)-- Protesters have blocked major roads in the states of Illinois, California, New York and the Pacific Northwest, temporarily preventing travel into some of the United States's most

heavily used airports, onto the Golden Gate and Brooklyn bridges and along a busy West Coast highway.

In Chicago, protesters linked arms and blocked lanes of Interstate 190 leading into O'Hare International Airport at about 7 a.m. (12:00 GMT) on Monday in a demonstration they said was part of a global "economic blockade to free Palestine," according to Rifqa Falaneh, one of the organizers.

Protesters say they chose O'Hare in part because it is one of the largest airports in the US. Dozens were arrested, according to Falaneh. Chicago police said that "multiple people" were taken into custody after a protest where people obstructed traffic but did not provide a detailed count.

In California, demonstrators blocked lanes on the northbound I-880 in Oakland by chaining themselves to barrels, while a separate group of protesters with banners disrupted traffic on the southbound lanes. On the Golden Gate Bridge, protesters impeded traffic in both directions, displaying a banner that read, "Stop the world for Gaza."

In Eugene, Oregon, protesters blocked Interstate 5, shutting down traffic on the major highway for about 45 minutes.

Meanwhile, on the East Coast, protesters marching into Brooklyn blocked Manhattan-bound traffic on the Brooklyn Bridge.

Antiwar protesters have held demonstrations in Chicago nearly every day since Hamas's October 7 attack on southern Israel, which killed about 1,200 people, triggered an Israeli assault on Gaza that has killed more than 33,700 Palestinians, according to the Gaza Ministry of Health.

O'Hare warned travellers on social platform X to find alternative ways to get to the airport, with car travel "substantially delayed this morning due to protest activity."

Some travellers stuck in standstill traffic left their cars and walked the final leg to the airport along the freeway, trailing their luggage behind them. "This was an inconvenience," Madeline Hannan from suburban Chicago said in a telephone interview as she was heading to Florida. "But in the grand scheme of things going on overseas, it's a minor inconvenience."

Near Seattle, the Washington State Department of Transportation said a demonstration closed the main road to Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. Social media posts showed people holding a banner and waving Palestinian flags while standing on the highway, which reopened about three hours later.

About 20 protesters were arrested at the Golden Gate Bridge demonstration and traffic resumed shortly after noon, according to the California Highway Patrol. The agency said officers were making arrests at two points on the highway, including one spot where roughly 300 protesters refused orders to disperse.

"Attempting to block or shut down a freeway or state highway to protest is unlawful, dangerous, and prevents motorists from safely reaching their destinations," the agency said in a statement.

Oregon State Police said 52 protesters were arrested for disorderly conduct following the Interstate 5 protest in Eugene, Oregon, about 177km (110 miles) south of Portland. Six vehicles were towed from the scene.

New York Police made numerous arrests, saying 150 protesters were initially involved in the march at about 3:15 pm (19:15 GMT) but that the crowd grew quickly.

In San Antonio, protesters holding Palestinian flags obstructed both sides of the Valero Energy Company headquarters, causing traffic congestion on the city's northwest side.

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