

Climate protesters block UK's busiest motorway for second day

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A 'Just Stop Oil' protester blocks a road leading into Westminster, in London [Photo: Maja Smiejkowska/Reuters]

London, November 8 (RHC)-- Just Stop Oil protesters have blocked parts of the United Kingdom's busiest motorway for a second successive day, bringing rush-hour traffic to a standstill as they call for more government action to tackle climate change.

The campaign group said on Tuesday morning that 15 activists had climbed onto overhead gantries along multiple parts of the M25, a main orbital road that encircles London. Essex Police said officers were on

the northbound carriageway of the M25 near the Dartford Crossing, where a Just Stop Oil demonstrator had climbed a gantry, forcing the closure of the Dartford Tunnel.

Meanwhile, Hertfordshire Police said they were responding to a protest at junction 20 of the M25 near Kings Langley and urged motorists to seek alternative routes. Surrey Police said two protesters had also climbed motorway gantries between junctions 8 and 9 and junctions 12 and 13, stopping traffic in both directions on that part of the motorway.

Activists taking part in Tuesday's protests, which came as world leaders were taking part in the COP27 climate conference in Egypt, said they were determined to force the UK government to adopt more drastic measures in response to the climate crisis.

"In order to survive, we need to take action to stop new oil and gas," Charlotte Kirin, a 53-year-old social worker, said. "For as long as the Government pretend this isn't the priority, I will do what I can to demand a response," Kirin said.

The protests came after police arrested dozens of Just Stop Oil activists on Monday for staging similar demonstrations along the M25. Officers accused the group of "criminality", saying they had intended to cause "massive disruption" and pledged to bring those involved to justice as quickly as possible.

Critics of the tactics adopted by Just Stop Oil have said they undermine the climate movement's credibility and alienate potential supporters of their cause. Since the end of September, the group has staged more than 30 days of protests, which London's Metropolitan Police service said resulted in 677 arrests, leading to 111 people being charged.

According to the group, since its campaign began on April 1, Just Stop Oil supporters have been arrested nearly 2,000 times, and five are currently in prison. Last month, two of the movement's activists threw tomato soup over artist Vincent van Gogh's famous painting Sunflowers at London's National Gallery, causing minor damage to the frame.

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