

Dutch police use water cannons and detain 2,400 climate activists

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Amsterdam, September 10 (RHC)-- Police deployed water cannon to disperse thousands of climate activists protesting on a highway in the Netherlands to demand an end to government subsidies for the fossil fuel industry.

More than 10,000 people marched along the A12 highway into The Hague on Saturday, ignoring warnings from authorities not to block the major traffic artery into the Dutch seat of government.

Extinction Rebellion, which organised the event, has said it will continue to hold protests until the government of the Netherlands stops using public funds to subsidise the oil and gas industry. "The seas

are rising and so are we,” chanted the crowd, which included children and the elderly.

A report last week detailed 37.5 billion euros (\$40.5bn) in subsidies in the Netherlands, notably related to the shipping industry, prompting calls for a quick halt to the practice.

The protesters — from Extinction Rebellion, Greenpeace and other organisations — broke through a police barrier and sat on a main road. They threatened to stay until the subsidies were lifted and to come back every day if police removed them. “This is much larger than any one of us. This concerns the whole world,” activist Yolanda de Jager said.

The activists brandished signs with sayings such as “Fossil Fuel Subsidies are Not Cool”, and warned extreme temperatures around the world this summer are a sign of the future if fossil fuels are not abandoned.

After several hours, police moved in and fired volleys from water cannon at the crowd. They picked up or dragged some protesters, wheeling them away in special orange wagons.

Protesters on the front line held up their fists in resistance or put their heads down to protect themselves from the jets of water. Those farther back danced and jumped up and down under the spray, appearing to enjoy the shower on an unusually hot September day for the Netherlands. The roadblock is part of a series of protests led by Extinction Rebellion targeting the Dutch parliament.

The Netherlands is often seen as a leader in renewable energy and progressive climate policies. Minister for Climate and Energy Rob Jetten acknowledged the country has to end the subsidies but has offered no timeline. A new protest is planned for Sunday.

At the G20 summit in India on Saturday, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva told world leaders the planet is facing an “unprecedented climate emergency.”

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