

Crowd in Ontario cheers on anti-vaccine mandate truck convoy

January 28 2022



Protesters and supporters against a COVID-19 vaccine mandate for cross-border truckers cheer as a parade of trucks and vehicles pass through Kakabeka Falls outside of Thunder Bay, Ontario, on Wednesday, Jan. 26, 2022. Credit: David Jackson/The Canadian Press via AP

Crowds cheered, waved flags and hoisted signs in Ontario on Thursday

as parts of a convoy of truckers headed for Ottawa to protest the Canadian government's COVID-19 vaccine mandate for cross-border drivers.

Several thousand people are expected in Ottawa as early as Friday as part of group demanding an end to vaccine mandates and COVID-19 restrictions. Some of the group's leaders are calling for a peaceful event, but statements from some associated with the group have included threats of violence.

The road in front of Parliament Hill is to be closed to general traffic. Buildings in the Parliamentary district are being closed and locked except for essential staff as of Friday and workers warned of threats of physical damage.

In a packed mall parking lot north of Toronto, supporters threw cash and food up to truckers in their vehicles on Thursday, while others held up signs protesting the government as transport trucks gradually rolled out. Some people harassed journalists covering the rally. Others cheered trucks on from overpasses.

The convoy of truckers set to descend on Canada's capital has prompted police to prepare for the possibility of violence and politicians to warn against escalating rhetoric linked to the demonstration. A top Parliament official warned lawmakers to avoid the protest and to lock their doors amid reports their private homes may be targeted.



Protesters and supporters against a COVID-19 vaccine mandate for cross-border truckers cheer as a parade of trucks and vehicles pass through Kakabeka Falls outside of Thunder Bay, Ontario, on Wednesday, Jan. 26, 2022. Credit: David Jackson/The Canadian Press via AP

The truckers are, in part, protesting a new rule that took effect Jan. 15 requiring truckers entering Canada be fully immunized against the coronavirus. The United States has imposed the same requirement on truckers entering that country Jan. 22.

"Canadian truckers rule," Tesla CEO Elon Musk tweeted in support of the convoy.

Some with extreme, far-right views have latched onto the protest against

the mandate. One online video includes a man expressing hope the rally will turn into the Canadian equivalent of the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the U.S. Capitol by supporters of former President Donald Trump.

Canadian Public Safety Minister Marco Mendicino said nobody should "trivialize the organizers' distorted claims that this is a protest about freedom."

"It's about a fringe group, many of whom are not truckers, who are spreading lies, about vaccines, about health workers, and frankly, about the media," Mendicino said. "And the vast majority of Canadians reject those extremist views. And they understand that if we really want to safeguard our freedoms and vaccines and vaccine mandates are the best way to get ourselves out of the pandemic."



Protesters and supporters against a COVID-19 vaccine mandate for cross-border truckers cheer as a parade of trucks and vehicles pass through Kakabeka Falls outside of Thunder Bay, Ontario, on Wednesday, Jan. 26, 2022. Credit: David Jackson/The Canadian Press via AP



Protesters and supporters against a COVID-19 vaccine mandate for cross-border truckers cheer as a parade of trucks and vehicles pass through Kakabeka Falls outside of Thunder Bay, Ontario, on Wednesday, Jan. 26, 2022. Credit: David Jackson/The Canadian Press via AP



Protesters and supporters against a COVID-19 vaccine mandate for cross-border truckers cheer as a parade of trucks and vehicles pass through Kakabeka Falls outside of Thunder Bay, Ontario, on Wednesday, Jan. 26, 2022. Credit: David Jackson/The Canadian Press via AP



Protesters and supporters against a COVID-19 vaccine mandate for cross-border truckers cheer as a parade of trucks and vehicles pass through Kakabeka Falls outside of Thunder Bay, Ontario, on Wednesday, Jan. 26, 2022. Credit: David Jackson/The Canadian Press via AP

Opposition Conservative leader Erin O'Toole said he will meet with truckers but not the organizers of the convoy.

The Canadian Trucking Alliance has estimated that about 15% of truckers in Canada—as many as 16,000—are not fully vaccinated

Mike Fabinski, a truck driver from Barrie, Ontario, said the mandate means he won't be able to work cross-border routes any more.

"You want to be vaccinated, go ahead, your choice. I don't want to be vaccinated, that's my choice," he said.

Fabinski said he has been driving trucks for 20 years but has not been able to travel to the U.S. since the mandate became effective Jan 15.

"I was going non-stop until they started last Saturday," he said. "Now I cannot go. I cannot work no more."

The federal government ended truckers' exemption to the vaccine mandate two weeks ago, meaning Canadian truck drivers need to be fully vaccinated if they want to avoid a two-week quarantine when they cross into Canada from the U.S.

© 2022 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed without permission.

Citation: Crowd in Ontario cheers on anti-vaccine mandate truck convoy (2022, January 28)
retrieved 6 May 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-01-crowd-ontario-anti-vaccine-mandate-truck.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--