

Protest of Truckers in Canada against Vaccine Mandates!

From January 22 thousands of Canadians truckers and their supporters have paralysed Canadian capital Ottawa and blockading three major sites including two on the US-Canada border in protest against vaccine mandates and Covid related restrictions.

The rule that Canadian truckers entering US needed to be vaccinated and those not vaccinated have to show a Covid-negative test taken within 72 hours and go into quarantine for 14 days, triggered the protests. Until January 15 truckers were considered as essential workers and could freely cross the border with goods even as non-essential travel banned. Apart from the vaccine mandates themselves other factors like deep-rooted loathing of intrusive government surveillance in the name of public health has fuelled the resentment of protesters.

With the demands of “terminate the vaccine passports and all other obligatory vaccine contact tracing programmes, or inter Canada passport systems” and “terminate Covid vaccine mandates and respect the rights of those who wish to remain unvaccinated” the protesters conducted their three-week long protests.

Calling itself as “Freedom Convoy-2022” 500 truckers with their heavy duty trucks, from different parts of Canada, they have protested at the country’s capital Ottawa.

The protesters also have called traffic disruptions on the Ambassador bridge on US-Canada border, which connects Windsor, Ontario, with Detroit, Michigan. 30% of the annual trade business between US and Canada is conducted on this route which was halted due to protests. Another blockade was in Coutts, Alberta, at Canada’s border with US State of Montana. The protest disrupted supply chains and production chains in USA or Canada. The protesters enjoy the sympathy of a broad cross section of Canadians. The organisers of the protest raised more than \$10 million through crowd funding platforms. They used the money to pay for the trucker’s fuel and boarding costs. The protester have received backing from out-side Canada, especially from US also.

During these protests several provinces including Alberta, Saskat-chewan, Quebec and New Brunswick have announced an easing of restrictions.

This protest of “Freedom Convoy” has inspired copy cat protests in different parts of the world including Europe, New Zealand and Australia.

On January 12 more than 10 thousands of protesters marched through Australia’s capital to parliament building waving the red Australian ensign flag associated with

“sovereign citizens”. Protesters, many with children rallied brandishing banners proclaiming “Fight for your freedom and rights”, “Free Aus Freedom Now”. “No Forced drugs” written above a symbol of a syringe.

Canadian Prime Minister, invoked emergency to quell the protests as hundreds of big-rigs clogged the streets of capital Ottawa. In Canadian history this only the second time to invoke emergency in peace time. The funding to the protesters is banned.

Large police forces are deployed to clear the blockaded sites on the Canada-US border. Police arrested some protesters allegedly with a “cache of fire arms” blocking a border crossing with the United States.

The truck drivers protest at the border is ended on Jan 17, after the invocation of emergency and police deployment. The police are seriously attempting to disperse protesters agitating at Ottawa.