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Mounted Police Knock Protesters Down, as Over 100 Are Arrested in Ottawa

Limin Zhou

9-11 minutes

OTTAWA, Canada—Police put the number of arrests at over 100, and the number of vehicles towed at 21 on Feb. 18 as law enforcement escalated its confrontation with protesters in [Ottawa](#).

Mounted police and officers on foot advanced on crowds to push them away from the designated secured area, in some instances knocking down protesters.





A mounted police unit lines up behind public order units on foot to clear protesters in Ottawa on Feb. 18, 2022. (The Canadian Press/Adrian Wyld)



Police confront protesters in Ottawa on Feb. 18, 2022.
(Jonathan Ren/The Epoch Times)

The police slowly pushed back the crowd for most of the day, but in the afternoon increased pressure by deploying pepper spray and using police on horseback to gain more ground while advancing against the protesters.

Some police officers carried assault rifles and what appeared to be rubber bullet launchers.

Earlier in the day, protest organizer Benjamin Dichter took to [Twitter](#) to urge protesters to leave and pleaded with the OPS to let the truckers “leave in peace.”

“One of Freedom Convoy Canada drivers had his truck windows smashed by Ottawa Police, guns drawn & dragged out of his vehicle by force. It’s time to leave. Ottawa Police please allow the remaining trucks to leave in peace.”

Dichter confirmed to The Epoch Times that the decision to leave was made by convoy leadership.

“We had a meeting with all the road captains and they came to the conclusion that it is the safest option,” he said.

Meanwhile, protesters could be seen making snow barricades on Wellington and Metcalfe streets to slow the police advance toward the core of the protest in front of Parliament Hill.



Canadian military veterans protesting against COVID-19 mandates are removed by police from the protest site in Ottawa on Feb. 18, 2022. (Limin Zhou/The Epoch Times)



Police arrest a demonstrator protesting against COVID-19 mandates in Ottawa on Feb. 18, 2022. (Andrej Ivanov/AFP via Getty Images)

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA) [called out](#) the OPS for telling media earlier in the day to stay away and warning that “anyone found within areas undergoing enforcement may be subject to arrest.”

“Warning journalists about safety risks in the protest zone is reasonable. Threatening them with arrest for doing their jobs is not,” wrote the CCLA on Twitter.

Organizers Arrested

Two Freedom Convoy organizers, Chris Barber and Tamara Lich, were arrested on Feb. 17. Former RCMP officer Daniel Bulford, who coordinated security at the protest, was also

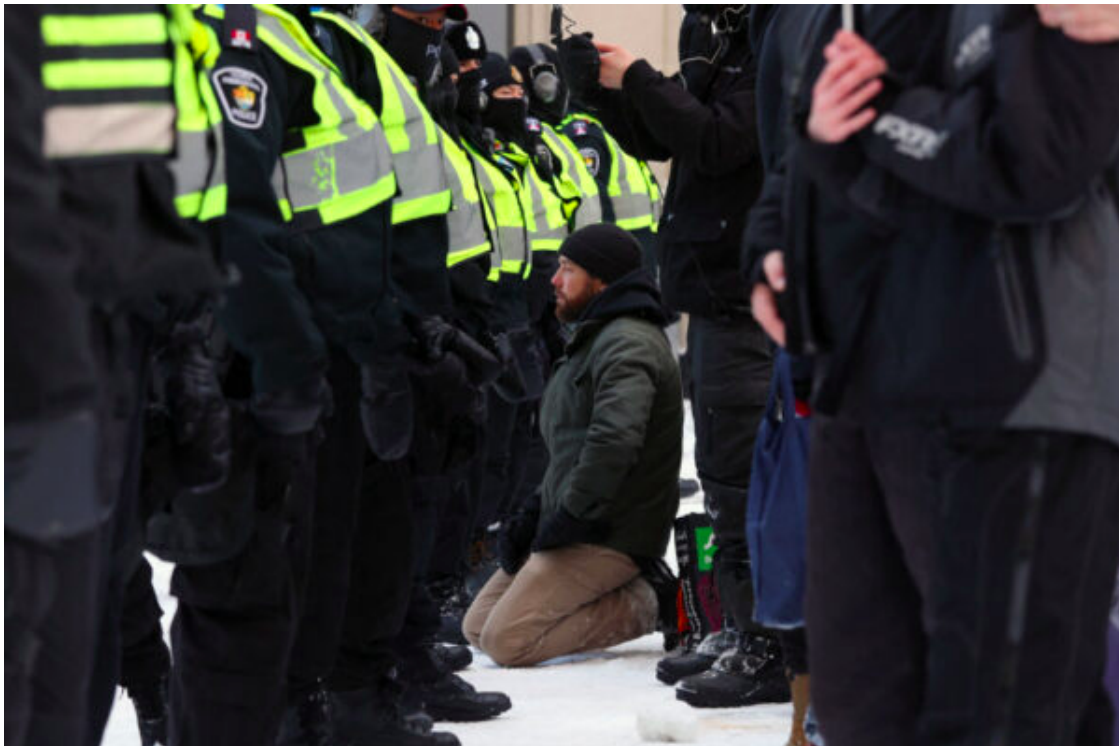
[arrested](#) on Feb. 18.

Barber is charged with “counselling to commit the offence of mischief,” “counselling to commit the offence of disobey court order (s. 127,” and “counselling to commit the offence of obstruct police.” Lich is charged with “counselling to commit the offence of mischief.”

Both were scheduled to appear in court on Feb. 18.

Dichter said on [Twitter](#) on the afternoon of Feb. 18 that in the case of Barber, the presiding judge ruled that he can be released on condition he goes home.

“This is why de-escalation is important & to communicate it to law enforcement. I do not want my friends stuck in jail or other drivers to get injured,” Dichter said. “To everyone who has shared #love & support for #CanadasTruckers, thank you, we love you all. I & many others have left Ottawa.”



A demonstrator against COVID-19 mandates kneels in front of police in Ottawa on Feb. 18, 2022. (Dave Chan/AFP via Getty Images)



Police confront protesters in Ottawa on Feb. 18, 2022. (Jonathan Ren/The Epoch Times)



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The House of Commons sitting on Feb. 18 was cancelled due

to the expanded police operations, the Speaker of the House said.

“Given these exceptional circumstances, and following discussion with all recognized party leadership, the sitting today is cancelled,” said a [post](#) on the official Twitter account of Anthony Rota.

On Feb. 14, the federal government invoked the Emergencies Act to confront the ongoing protests. The House of Commons is currently debating the measures under the Act. While the Tories are opposed to the move, so far NDP have spoken in support of the use of the Act, giving Liberals enough support for its passage once it goes to vote.

“To deal with the current threats, our government is invoking the Emergencies Act. The scope of the Act is time-limited and targeted, reasonable, and proportionate—and it gives law enforcement agencies more tools to restore public order and protect people,” Trudeau [said](#) on Twitter about his government’s decision to invoke the act.

Ottawa police have set up fences and barriers in downtown Ottawa to establish a secured area, banning travel and assembly of people within the zone. The secured area is from Bronson Avenue to the Canal, and the Queensway to Parliament Hill.





Police confront protesters in Ottawa on Feb. 18, 2022.
(Jonathan Ren/The Epoch Times)



A demonstrator is arrested by police in Ottawa on Feb. 18, 2022. (Andrej Ivanov/AFP via Getty Images)

Only local residents or people who work in the area will be allowed to go into the secured area.

“We want you to be aware that entering the Secured Area for the purpose of contravening the Emergencies Act, may result

in you being arrested and/or charged,” Ottawa police said in a [statement](#).

Interim Ottawa police chief Steve Bell said on Feb. 17 that the secured area includes close to 100 checkpoints, to ensure those who want to enter the area for an “unlawful reason, such as joining a protest, cannot enter the downtown core.”

The Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms (JCCF), which has provided legal representation to Freedom Convoy organizers, said in a statement that it has issued a “cease and desist demand letter” to Bell.

“The Charter ensures that Canadians are free to peacefully assemble, to express their ideas, to gather to discuss them and communicate them widely to other people, including vigorous political dissent. These activities are basic forms of individual liberty. They are essential to the basic functioning of a democratic society like Canada. In Canada, people are free to discuss matters of public policy, to protest and to criticize governments,” JCCF said in a statement.

“The Interim Police Chief’s improper attempts to scare Canadians from exercising their Charter rights is disturbing,” added Keith Wilson, JCCF lawyer and external lead counsel for the Freedom Convoy 2022.





Armed police officer deploy to remove demonstrators against COVID-19 mandates in Ottawa on Feb. 18, 2022. (Dave Chan/AFP via Getty Images)

Civil liberties and constitutional rights groups have launched legal challenges against the government's use of the Emergencies Act in the face of the protests.

"The government's emergency declaration is unprecedented and seriously infringes the charter rights of Canadians," Canadian Civil Liberties Association executive director Noa Mendelsohn Aviv said at a press conference on Feb. 17, after announcing that her organization is intending to take the government to court over its use of the act.

The Canadian Constitution Foundation (CCF) also said it's taking legal action against the government over its use of the act on Feb. 17.

"Prime Minister Trudeau has set a dangerous precedent by invoking the never before used federal Emergencies Act to address the current situation. The high threshold for declaring a public order emergency in the Emergencies Act has not been met," said CCF litigation director Christine Van Geyn in a

statement on Feb. 17.



Police confront protesters in Ottawa on Feb. 18, 2022.

(Jonathan Ren/The Epoch Times)

With the new powers granted under the Emergencies Act, Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland [said](#) on Feb. 17 that information is now being shared by law enforcement with Canada's financial institutions to cut off funding for the ongoing protests.

"The names of both individuals and entities, as well as crypto-wallets have been shared by the RCMP with financial institutions, and accounts have been frozen, and more accounts will be frozen. Crowdfunding platforms and payment service providers have started the registration process with FINTRAC," Freeland said at a press conference.

The ongoing protests against COVID-19 mandates and restrictions were inspired by a movement initiated by truck

drivers opposed to the federal government's requirement that truck drivers crossing the U.S.-Canada border need to have COVID-19 vaccination. As large convoys of trucks and other vehicles drove to Ottawa to protest the vaccination mandate, more people joined the movement, opposing various COVID-19 mandates and restrictions.

Many protesters have said they intend to stay in Ottawa until the mandates are lifted.

"We will remain peaceful, but planted on Parliament Hill until the mandates are decisively ended," protest organizer Tamara Lich [said](#) at a press conference on Feb. 14.

Isaac Teo and Andrew Chen contributed to this report.





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Limin Zhou is a reporter based in Ottawa.



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Noé Chartier is an Epoch Times reporter based in Montreal.