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Trudeau plans to invoke Emergencies Act in response to protests: sources

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has told his caucus he will invoke the never-before-used Emergencies Act to give the federal government extra powers to handle anti-vaccine mandate protests across the country, sources say.

Those sources, who were not authorized to speak publicly, said the prime minister informed the premiers of his decision this morning.

The Emergencies Act, which replaced the War Measures Act in the 1980s, defines national emergency as a temporary "urgent and critical situation" that "seriously endangers the lives, health or safety of Canadians and is of such proportion or nature as to exceed the capacity or authority of a province to deal with it."

It gives special powers to the prime minister to respond to emergency scenarios affecting public welfare (natural disasters, disease outbreaks), public order (civil unrest), international emergencies or war emergencies.

The act grants cabinet the ability to "take special temporary measures that may not be appropriate in normal times" to cope with an "urgent and critical situation" and the resulting fallout. It is still subject to the protections of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Once cabinet declares an emergency, it takes effect right away - but the government still needs to go to Parliament within seven days to get approval. If either the Commons or the Senate votes against the

Canada protests: After police cleared bridge, is this the end?

This was the moment the protesters had dreaded.

"I was hoping it wasn't going to end like this, I was hoping the police would allow us to continue to peacefully protest," Tyler Kok told the BBC as he left the site.

The officers arrived by the bus load on Sunday morning - in balalaivas and carrying long guns, ready to out the last few protesters blocking the roads leading to the Ambassador Bridge.

A week long stalemate was about to come to an end.

About 100 vehicles had been parked along a 2km (1.25 miles) stretch of the road for days on end.

There were pickups, SUVs and even a dog-grooming van, festooned with Canadian flags, anti-vaccination slogans and anti-Trudeau epithets, as well as some heavy commercial trucks.

The people were a mix of evangelical Christians, anti-mask mums, vaccine sceptics and local residents who are tired of lockdowns and vaccine passports.

The Freedom Convoy, as it's been called, began as a protest against a mandate requiring truckers who cross the US-Canada border to be vaccinated against Covid.

Police detain a protester as they clear the bridge.

But the group is not united by any one occupation - rather, they share a distrust of vaccines, a concern for government overreach and a general dislike of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

Similar blockades have also popped up at other border crossings across the country - four people were arrested at one in British Columbia on Sunday.

But the biggest one in Windsor is no more. The police began stage one of their clearance operation on Saturday and only a few dozen remained by Sunday morning after a bitterly cold night.

Canada protests: After police cleared bridge, is this the end?

That meant police could make their final and decisive move. Dozens of officers descended on the two remaining encampments located about a kilometre apart on the single road leading to the bridge.

They erected cement barricades and flanked them on all sides.

But while in France officers had fired tear gas to keep similar protests at bay, Windsor Police said they prioritised safety over speed.

A court-ordered injunction had been in place since Friday, but police waited over 36 hours, mindful that there were many children among the demonstrators.

"I think that's something that speaks to our Canadian society," Sergeant Steve Betheridge told the BBC.

Police made about 12 arrests but the majority of protesters voluntarily left the area and drove their vehicles home. Clearly outnumbered, they honked their horns - a swan song to the blockade that had gone on far longer than anyone had anticipated.

Canada has a 99% vaccination rate, far higher than the US, and in many parts of the country you need to show proof of vaccination to access bars, gyms and restaurants.

Media caption, "Truckers don't have the right to hold us hostage"

About 150km (466 miles) east of the Ambassador Bridge, the protest group that has taken over the nation's capital was showing no signs of slowing down on Sunday.

But then came news of a breakthrough - an apparent deal struck by the city of Ottawa that would mean the convoy of trucks relocating



away from residential areas. However protest leaders later said no deal had been agreed.

Unlike the Windsor crowd, which was limited to one major road, the Ottawa protest has essentially taken over the centre of a major city, with thousands of people flooding the streets with Canadian flags.

Barbecues are set up on the street with food being handed out to hungry demonstrators, while people play street hockey to the sounds of dance music, honking horns and chants of "Freedom".

"This is not an anti-vax movement; this is a freedom movement. It's for choice," said Justin Smith, who was enjoying BeaverTails - a Canadian pastry - with his wife Brandy Lawrence on the sidelines of the protests on Saturday evening.

"This nation is through and through my heart, I love Canada like you wouldn't believe," said Mr Smith.

They say they hate what mandates have done to their family, including their five children aged six to 16.

"I want my kids to go into a store and see a smile on someone's face. That's the saddest thing," said Ms Lawrence.

This wasn't the convoy's first time in the Ottawa "red zone" - they came to support the convoy in its first weekend, and drove the five hours from their home in southern Ontario to be there a second time.

"I will do anything and everything I can do to support these people," says Mr Smith.

A demonstrator in Ottawa cooks breakfast.

There is a police presence - but mostly on the margins.

A court order silenced loud honking from the trucks earlier this week, granting respite to downtown residents aggravated by the noise.

But some residents fed up with the noise and the disruption have accused police of idling by and allowing an occupation. Some businesses - including a major shopping centre - have closed their doors or have seen a drop in traffic.

While many of the demonstrators have been peaceful, residents have

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TD Bank freezes two personal accounts that received over \$1M for trucker convoy

Toronto-Dominion Bank has frozen two personal bank accounts into which \$1.4 million (US\$1.1 million) had been deposited to support protesters fighting the Canadian government's pandemic measures, a bank spokesperson said on Saturday.

The demonstrations, dubbed the "Freedom Convoy" by Canadian truckers opposing a vaccination mandate for cross-border drivers as well as other pandemic restrictions, are now in their third week. They have gridlocked the capital Ottawa and blocked U.S.-Canada border crossings, damaging trade between the two countries.

Early on Saturday, Canadian police began clearing protesters blocking a key bridge linking Canada and the United States.

TD applied to the Ontario Superior Court of Justice on Friday to take the funds, which were sent through



GoFundMe and bank transfers, so they can either be sent to intended recipients or returned to the donors "who have requested refunds but whose entitlement to a refund cannot be determined by TD," the bank said in a statement.

TD has been put "on notice that their actions are improper and disappointing," Keith Wilson, a lawyer for the convoy, said in an email on Saturday, adding the convoy

will seek a court order next week to release the donations to a new not-for-profit corporation that has been set up to manage and distribute them.

GoFundMe for violating terms of service - Feb 5, 2022

One of the bank accounts received a lump sum of \$1 million through GoFundMe, while the rest was sent to the second account through multiple bank e-transfers, the TD

per group.

In Atlantic Canada, Nova Scotia is easing some restrictions as of Monday, part of a three-phase process to lift public health measures.

A statement from the province last week said that the first phase will allow for events, with gathering limits increased.

The province also said "all border restrictions for domestic travellers will be lifted."

Health officials across the North and in British Columbia are expected to provide updated COVID-19 information later Monday.

What's happening across Canada

Alberta Premier Jason Kenney announced the decision about masks last week as part of a phased plan to eliminate all COVID-19 restrictions.

The provincial government has told school boards they don't have the power to override the directive.

Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe announced last week his province's proof-of-vaccination mandate would come to an end Feb. 14, while indoor masking and self-isolation rules would stay in place until the end of the month.

Moe has said the proof-of-vaccination policy helped increase vaccination rates in the province, but suggests its costs now outweigh its benefits.

Indoor sports and recreation activities can also resume today, including at colleges and universities, with a maximum of 25 participants

per group.

In the Asia-Pacific region, South Korea will begin administering a fourth COVID-19 vaccine dose by the end of February and will supply millions of additional home test kits to ease shortages amid a surge in Omicron infections, authorities confirmed.

Singapore's Health Sciences Authority said it has granted an interim authorization for Novavax's COVID-19 vaccine.

3 weekends, 1 hot tub: Ottawa residents reach protest boiling point



Three weekends and a hot tub - apparently, that's Ottawa's breaking point.

Eighteen days into a truck protest that's taken over public infrastructure, polluted downtown air and created an atmosphere of fear for some downtown residents, it appears the citizens of the nation's capital have had enough.

This weekend, people took to the streets in what were characterized as counter-protests.

On Saturday, about 500 people - including labour unions and those supporting front-line workers - marched from Lansdowne Park through the Glebe, but didn't wade into Centretown for fear of escalating existing tensions.

But the quickly organized protest that sprang up on Sunday at the intersection of Bank Street and Riverside Drive made its anti-convoy point rather more directly.

A neighbourhood Facebook shoutout from the previous night called for the community to block vehicles from a so-called "blue collar convoy" heading downtown.

Initially attracted about 25 people to the intersection. But by late afternoon, the grassroots group had grown to 1,000 - and tensions often ran high.

The counter-protests stopped trucks, sometimes removing the Canadian flags flapping from the open beds of pickups in exchange for letting drivers go back home.

At one point, a truck heading north on Bank Street, presumably toward

the protest, was quickly swarmed by a group of protesters who flung themselves in front of the moving vehicle.

Clearly concerned for hours that someone would get injured, police quickly separated protesters and the truck, allowing it to head back to wherever it came from.

But the crowd's pent-up frustration wasn't directed exclusively at the protesters who've been clogging downtown streets, those whose behaviour has led many businesses to close and locals to move out.

It was also aimed at the authorities, who many believe have been letting it all happen.

Barbecues, bouncy castles

Police have allowed bouncy castles, barbecues, street hockey games and dance parties on Wellington Street.

They appear not to be halting efforts to refuel the trucks parked in the downtown, despite earlier promises that these doing so would be banned.

Not one, but two videos of Ontario Provincial Police officers being friendly with protesters have gone viral on social media.

The first of one allowing protesters to have photos of themselves taken in the back seat of his car, the second of an officer telling a couple he pulled over that he "100 per cent supports" the protesters and has heard nothing but great things about what they're doing in Ottawa.

The latter has led to an internal investigation.

A Macdonald Parkway. "The truckers here in Ottawa have always been about peaceful protest. Many of the citizens and businesses in Ottawa have been cheering us on but we are also disturbing others," Lich wrote in a letter to Watson. "That was never our intent."

Then, hours later, Lich tweeted that "the media lies" and that there is "no deal." Hours after that, she replied to a CTV reporter to say she was talking about a federal deal and the local deal is on.

Could become a federal problem

If by some chance Watson's brokered deal somehow comes through, many more vehicles could be crammed at the foot of Parliament Hill, making it a more direct problem for the federal government.

Should the blockade impede parliamentarians from the Hill or other nearby government buildings, the Parliamentary Protective Service

folks, overseen by the RCMP, will have to move directly involved.

Is trying to shove the trucks up onto Wellington more buck-passing, this time by the mayor? Earlier in the day, it was Emergency Preparedness Minister Bill Blair doing the jurisdiction dodge, when he said on CBC's Rosemary Barton Live it was "inapplicable" that local police were not enforcing the law.

But whether the convoy moves closer to the seat of federal government, or stays where it is, the federal government will likely have to take more direct action. Blair also said for the first time on Sunday that there are discussions about whether to invoke the Emergencies Act for the first time since it was passed in 1985.

The armed forces could also be requested by the province's attorney general under Part VI of the National Defence Act.

Entitled "Aid of the Civil Power," this part of the act allows for the military to be called upon to help "in any case in which a riot or disturbance of the peace, beyond the powers of the civil authorities to suppress, prevent or deal with ... occurs or is, in the opinion of an attorney general, considered as likely to occur."

Maybe the back will eventually stop with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his cabinet. They got together Sunday evening, with members of the prime minister and premiers and of the national Liberal caucus scheduled for Monday.

Coronavirus: What's happening in Canada and around the world on Monday

Ontario lifting more COVID-19 restrictions

Ontario's premier says the province is ending its vaccine certificate system on March 1, when capacity limits will lift as well. Doug Ford's announcement came as several other provinces - including Alberta and Saskatchewan - on Monday moved ahead with previously announced lifting of public health measures.

The province will also remove its 50 per cent capacity limit on restaurants on Thursday, four days earlier than planned. Ford gave no timetable for dropping the requirement that people wear masks in public places.

"Let me be very clear: We are moving in this direction because it is safe to do so. Today's announcement is not because of what's happening in Ottawa or Windsor - but despite it," Ford said.

A vaccine mandate for staff in long-term care homes will remain, the

premier said.

Meanwhile, Alberta's mandatory mask requirement for children under 12 in all settings and for all students in schools ended Monday, while Saskatchewan's use of a vaccine passport program is also ending.

Alberta Premier Jason Kenney announced the decision about masks last week as part of a phased plan to eliminate all COVID-19 restrictions.

The provincial government has told school boards they don't have the power to override the directive.

Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe announced last week his province's proof-of-vaccination mandate would come to an end Feb. 14, while indoor masking and self-isolation rules would stay in place until the end of the month.

Moe has said the proof-of-vaccination policy helped increase vaccination rates in the province, but suggests its costs now outweigh its benefits.

Meanwhile Manitoba's staged lifting of restrictions will see the current 50 per cent capacity limits in places like restaurants and hockey arenas end Tuesday. Caps on gatherings in people's homes will also end.

What's happening across Canada

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Here's what's reopening and when in Ontario as province speeds up reopening

On Monday, the Ontario government announced it will be moving to the next step of its COVID-19 reopening plan Thursday, four days ahead of schedule.

The province also said it will lift proof of vaccination requirements beginning March 1.

Ontario moving to next phase of reopening plan on Feb. 17, to lift vaccine passport in March.

Speaking at a news conference Monday morning, Premier Doug Ford said the decisions were made based on recommendations from the province's chief medical officer of health.

"This is great news and a sign of just how far we've come together in our fight against the virus. While we aren't out of the woods just yet we are moving in the right direction," the premier said in a statement issued Monday.

Here's a full list of what's reopening



and when in Ontario:

February 17

- Increasing social gathering limits to 50 people indoors and 100 people outdoors
- Increasing organized public event limits to 50 people indoors, with no limit outdoors
- Removing capacity limits in the following indoor public settings

where proof of vaccination is required, including but not limited to:

- Restaurants, bars and other food or drink establishments without dance facilities, non-spectator areas of sports and recreational fitness facilities, including gyms, cinemas, meeting and event spaces, including conference centres or convention centres, casinos, bingo halls and other gaming

Ontario allowing non-urgent, non-emergent surgeries to gradually resume

Hospitals in Ontario are now allowed to gradually resume non-urgent and non-emergent surgeries and procedures.

Dr. Kieran Moore, the province's chief medical officer of health, announced Thursday he was lifting Directive 2 as the province continues to see a steady decline in COVID-19 hospitalizations and ICU admissions.

The directive was issued last month, ordering hospitals dealing with rising virus cases due to the Omicron variant to pause non-urgent and non-emergent surgeries and procedures.

"With encouraging trends and community transmission and our hospitalization and ICU admission trending downwards, we can now see that Omicron peak is behind us," Moore said.

"It's now time that we start focusing on resuming certain procedures in our health system, as well as the other aspects of our society that improve our social and well-being."



The province said it will be taking a planned phased approach in the resumption of surgeries and procedures in public hospitals and will be in alignment with the guidance by Ontario Health.

The approach, Moore said, entails hospitals initially increasing surgical capacity to 70 per cent before slowly moving up to 90 per cent. And he hopes that surgeries will return to normal volumes in late March and April when Moore said he anticipates the province will be in a recovery phase.

Moore explained that the gradual approach ensures that hospitals will not be overwhelmed.

"We don't want to suddenly open up all the doors and have our hospitals

establishments and indoor areas of settings that choose to opt-in to proof of vaccination requirements.

- Allowing 50 per cent of the usual seating capacity at sports arenas
- Allowing 50 percent of the usual seating capacity for concert venues and theatres
- Increasing indoor capacity limits to 25 per cent in the remaining higher-risk settings where proof of vaccination is required, including nightclubs, restaurants where there is dancing, as well as bathhouses and sex clubs
- Increasing capacity limits for indoor weddings, funerals or religious services, rites, or ceremonies to a number of people who can maintain two metres physical distance. Capacity limits are removed if the location opts-in to use proof of vaccination or if the service, rite, or ceremony is occurring outdoors.

March 1

- Lifting capacity limits in all remaining indoor public settings
- Lifting proof of vaccination requirements for all settings at this time. Businesses and other settings may choose to continue to require proof of vaccination.
- Making requirements will remain in place at this time, with a specific timeline to lift this measure to be communicated at a later date.

We really need to understand some hospitals are still quite busy with COVID activity and there are regional variations in the level of COVID across Ontario," he said.

"We need to work as a system supporting each other - all hospitals, our long term care and public health - trying to ensure that patients can be provided the right care at the right time and in the right place."

While Directive 2 has been lifted, Moore said Directive 2.1, which supports patient transfers, will remain in effect. He noted that some hospitals in other regions are still limited.

"As these services resume, it will be critical that our health system partners proceed cautiously and continue to demonstrate the tremendous partnership and collaboration they have shown to date so that all regions have the capacity to resume services slowly," Moore said.

Earlier this month, several medical and clinical activities were already allowed to resume, including diagnostic imaging, cancer screening, and non-urgent and emergent surgeries and procedures in pediatric specialty hospitals.

On Thursday, the number of people in hospital with COVID-19 dropped below 100 for the first time in more than a month.

Government considering emergency powers with 'appropriate caution,' federal minister says

The federal government has discussed invoking special emergency powers to deal with ongoing protests in Ottawa, Emergency Preparedness Minister Bill Blair says, calling a lack of enforcement in the nation's capital "inexplicable."

The government's Incident Response Group and cabinet have had "daily" discussions about potential use of the Emergencies Act, Blair said in an interview on Sunday on Rosemary Barton Live.

A cabinet meeting was added to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's itinerary late Sunday, and CBC News has learned that a meeting with the prime minister and premiers has been called for Monday morning.

Blair described the attitude around use of the law, which has never been implemented before, as "appropriate caution" rather than "reticence."

The law empowers Ottawa to do just about anything it thinks is necessary to cope with a crisis. The legislation, which replaced the War Measures Act, defines a national emergency as a temporary "urgent and critical situation" that "seriously endangers the lives, health or safety of Canadians and is of such proportions or nature as to exceed the capacity or authority of a province to deal with it."

While Blair emphasized it was important to make sure that "the appropriate authorities that are with the provinces are fully utilized," he said the federal government was "prepared to do everything necessary."

He also did not rule out deployment of the military in some way to help end the occupation.

"That's a shift in tone from the position taken by Trudeau on Friday, when he said a military deployment is "something to avoid having to do at all costs" while also noting that "all options remain on the table" when discussing blocked border crossings.

While much of the responsibility for law enforcement lies with the



provinces, Blair told CBC chief political correspondent Rosemary Barton, the federal government has made it clear that "in any situation where the circumstances exceed the ability or authority of the provinces, we are prepared to step in and do whatever is necessary."

"Enough is enough, this has to come to an end," he said, noting the role the Canadian Armed Forces have played in assisting during other crises.

"The activities that are targeting right now critical infrastructure, our borders in the country, are intended clearly to harm Canada and Canadians."

"We just need the police to do their jobs"

The protests in Ottawa against COVID-19 public health measures, including vaccine mandates, have dragged on for more than two weeks with protesters occupying several blocks in the downtown core around Parliament Hill. Local residents, who have faced blaring horns, diesel fumes and harassment, have become increasingly furious with the police response.

Ottawa police have said they have a plan to end the protests but require additional resources from outside the city. Recently, an integrated command centre was set up in the city, bringing together local police with the Ontario Provincial Police

signing orders giving police new leeway and increasing penalties against protesters.

"Police now have new authorities and I think very effective tools," Blair said on Sunday. "We just need the police to do their jobs and enforce and uphold the law, and to restore public safety in Ottawa."

Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson called the minister's statement "unfair."

"Given the sheer numbers of people who are out, many of them don't have anything to do with the trucking industry they're just showing up to be agitators, we don't have the resources to go in," he said.

"Many of [them] are very angry and very frustrated and are taking it out on our city."

His comments came the same day the city brokered a deal with one of the protest organizers to move trucks out of residential areas in the next 24 hours.

Counter-protests gain steam

Counter-protests are picking up steam in Ottawa, with hundreds marching this weekend. On Sunday, a group of people blocked a major intersection to prevent a number of vehicles from joining the main protest downtown.

Kempe said while he understands the desire to push back, he's worried about the risk of confrontation between the two groups.

"That would be a very dangerous and volatile situation," he said.

"This underlines why the state must get control of the streets of Ottawa. Citizens are in effect, giving up and the state must demonstrate that the institutions of democracy are able to control the situation."

Politicians at all levels of government have condemned the occupation in Ottawa, calling for protesters to leave. Ford has called the situation a "siege."

Interim Conservative leader Candice Bergen, who in past weeks voiced support for the protest's aims, said on Thursday that "the time has come for you to take down the barricades, stop the disruptive action and come together."

The Conservatives have also tabled a motion calling on Trudeau and his cabinet to drop all federal pandemic restrictions and "transition to a post-COVID society as quickly as possible." The House will vote on the non-binding motion on Monday.

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