# **Just Stop Oil Protests**

Protests, strikes, marches, and go-slows have become the day's norm in addressing issues affecting people in societies globally. In the United Kingdom, it is no different, and Just Stop Oil, an advocacy and direct action group, continuously fight for their environmental rights through protests. Just Stop Oil is a group focused on protecting the environment against the exploration, growth, and creation of fossils to be used by the people of the United Kingdom (BBC, 2022). The group claims that there are more gases and oil (fossil fuels) that supersede people's ability to burn them. Conversely, Just Stop Oil demands that the government adopt renewable energy sources and stop giving licenses to oil and gas companies. This group has no structured leadership but operates within autonomous blocs, with their primary funding source being donations from well-wishers and the US-based Climate Emergency Fund. Just Stop Oil holds its protest in various regions on the M25, such as J8-9 (Reigate), J2 (Darenth), J27 (M11), J6-7 (Godstone), and J13-14 (Staines). Just Stop Oil makes a worthy cause by calling for the end of the use of oil products and replacing them with environmentally-friendly ones through protests against oil companies and distributors and by seeking public attention through disruption of public events such as sports, film awards, and blocking roads.

## **Protest Against Oil Companies and Petrol Stations**

Active protest against oil companies started April 1 this year when activists targeted ten vital oil facilities across England to cut petrol supply to South East England. The main objective of this disruption was to ensure that there was no supply of petrol, and on April 14, protestors surrounded a tanker oil on the M4 motorway creating massive congestion on this road. Additionally, they staged a protest on April 15 where supporters targeted various soil terminals, including Grays, Navigator, and Kingsbury. Activists surrounded tanks, climbing on them and blockading roads. Companies like Valero, ExxonMobil, and Navigator Thames were attacked even though they had injunctions to stop any protest within their terminals (Hennessey, 2022).

The protests came to a halt for a week, from April 19, as the protestors expected that the government would take charge and stop the distribution of petrol across England; however, this was not the case. Instead, the oil supply intensified within this one week, forcing the environmental activists from Just Stop Oil to organize vandalism. On the other hand, petrol stations and oil companies constantly seek court injunctions to stop these protests.

On April 28, a week after the group's last protest, activists organized petrol pump sabotages at Clacket Lane and Cobham services in Kent and Surrey, respectively. Also, on August 26 this year, activists from the group blocked several petrol stations from operation within Central London and successfully vandalized petrol pumps. Consequently, following the vandalism, forty-three people were arrested.

## **Disruptions of Sports and Social Well-Being**

One of the powerful protest methods of Just Stop Oil is to cause public disruption. These events include blocking roads and disrupting social events like sports. For example, on March 13, activists caused a disturbance at the 75th British Academy Film Awards. Also, these activities have disrupted various football matches, including at Emirates Stadium, Molineux Stadium, Goodison Park, and Tottenham Hotspurs Stadium (Gayle, 2022). Some supporters tie themselves to goalposts or run across the pitch with placards bearing "Just Stop Oil."

Additionally, protests have been all over London and blocking bridges and roads, including Westminster, Islington, Thames, and Kingsway/High Holborn. During their protests, activists carry placards, posters, hang on bridges, and block motor vehicle passage on these major roads. Blocking of these roads and bridges results in traffic snarl-ups.

Elsewhere, supporters believe that the British Grand Prix Competition burns many fossil fuels, affecting the environment. Besides, supporters of Just Stop Oil disrupt peace by throwing tomato soups, spray-painting, and damaging buildings they believe support oil production and distribution. One instance is when activists from the group attacked News Corp, MI5, Bank of England, and Home Office by spray-painting these buildings with orange paints demanding that they not give new licenses to gas and oil companies. Also, several group members disrupted the July 2022 British Grand Prix when they walked to the track, sat down, and defied any order for them to leave. With these protests, arrests are synonymous with several being charged with criminal damage and causing a public disturbance. Additionally, the group has been critically criticized regarding their approach and methods of presenting their grievances.

## **Conclusion**

Just Stop Oil is gaining popularity in the United Kingdom and globally. Their campaign against the usage of fossil fuels is viable, and the government has been addressing the same. Civil resistance and non-violent direct action have been protesting methods with an approach targeting social disruption. These protests are not welcomed, especially by their critics and the government, which ensures that activists get arrested and charged with various offenses. Generally, Just Stop Oil will not just stop their protests until they are heard. With people's support and donations funding, their activities will continue to rise worldwide.

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