# Extinction Rebellion escalates protests at Shell AGM with vandalism and mass disruption



In a striking demonstration of environmental activism, members of Extinction Rebellion gathered outside the headquarters of Shell in London, where the oil giant was holding its annual general meeting. Protesters aimed to spotlight the urgent need for action against climate change, donning an oil-like substance on their faces—a symbolic representation of the pollution they attribute to the fossil fuel industry. The demonstration coincided with a week of international protests demanding governmental declarations of a climate emergency.

Echoing a broader movement, the protesters, numbering in the thousands, disrupted key locations across central London, including Parliament Square and Oxford Circus. Many activists resorted to non-violent civil disobedience, a hallmark of Extinction Rebellion's strategy. Organisers intended to maintain their presence for days, reflecting a commitment to sustaining pressure on both corporate and governmental entities. At Marble Arch, one of the city's busiest intersections, banners and flags unfurled as speakers rallied the crowd.

In a bold act of defiance, some activists vandalised Shell's headquarters, daubing the slogan "Shell kills" on its walls, while others glued themselves to windows and shattered glass in the building’s revolving doors. The group's tactic of drawing attention to what they term “ecocide” stems from their belief that major fossil fuel companies like Shell are not only contributing to environmental degradation but are actively obstructing necessary climate action. In a statement, they claimed that their actions aimed to provoke legal scrutiny and galvanise public debate on the issue.

The police responded to the escalating protests with a significant presence, resulting in a handful of arrests. While initially apprehensive, the authorities did not escalate their involvement to a level seen during past protests, such as those in November, where extensive occupations of central London bridges led to numerous detentions. This more restrained approach appears to reflect an evolving dynamic between law enforcement and climate activism.

Activists have underscored the urgency of their cause, with one protester articulating, “If we don’t do anything to change this, our children will die.” This sentiment encapsulates the desperation felt by many concerned citizens, particularly in light of recent scientific reports that signal worsening climate scenarios. The protests serve not only as a call to action but also as a reminder of the growing discontent among youths regarding inaction on climate policies.

Moreover, the backdrop of such protests is an evolving political landscape in the UK, where climate policy has increasingly entered public discourse. The government's response to these demonstrations carries significant weight, as activists consistently demand a transformative shift in policies that prioritise environmental sustainability over fossil fuel dependency.

As the week of protests unfolds, the attention of both the public and the media is firmly on the activists' demands for accountability and sustainable change. Their resolute stand, amidst significant societal division on the issue of climate change, underscores the urgency of the activists' message and the broader implications for governance and industry in the climate crisis.

The protesters' determination to disrupt the status quo reflects a growing global movement, as cities around the world grapple with the consequences of climate inaction. As Extinction Rebellion continues its campaign, it remains to be seen how effective their methods will be in influencing policy and public opinion in the long term.

### Reference Map

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Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/news/gallery/2025/may/20/oil-soaked-protesters-and-dolly-parton-photos-of-the-day-tuesday> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/news/gallery/2025/may/20/oil-soaked-protesters-and-dolly-parton-photos-of-the-day-tuesday> - An activist sits with an oil-like substance on her face outside the offices of the Shell energy company. Photograph: Leon Neal/Getty Images
3. <https://www.the-independent.com/news/uk/home-news/extinction-rebellion-protest-london-oxford-circus-waterloo-climate-change-a8870691.html> - Thousands of environmental activists have shut down some of central London’s busiest roads in an attempt to force the government to address escalating climate change. Members of Extinction Rebellion (XR) took over roads around Parliament Square, Oxford Circus, Marble Arch, Waterloo Bridge and Piccadilly Circus late on Monday morning, in what they hope will be the UK element of an international week of protest. Organisers said they planned to occupy the streets around the clock for days, with many taking part willing to be arrested. The protests, which XR describes as non-violent civil disobedience, follows similar action last November when thousands of people occupied five central London bridges. Police detained 85 people that day. At fossil fuel company Shell’s London headquarters, activists daubed “Shell kills” on its walls, glued themselves to its windows and shattered glass in the front entrance’s revolving doors. “We non-violently cracked some windows at Shell’s HQ in London earlier because their operations are killing all life on Earth,” XR said, adding the corporation was contributing to “ecocide”. The group said nine activists caused more than £6,000 in damage in a bid to get the case referred to the Crown Court, where they would be given the opportunity to make their case to a jury. Amid a sizeable police presence, hundreds of protesters at Marble Arch, one of the busiest intersections in the country, unfurled banners and flags. A handful of activists chained themselves to the underside of a lorry – which was doubling as a stage – to ensure police could not remove it. At Oxford Circus, protesters sat in the middle of the road beneath a pink model boat emblazoned with the message, “Tell the truth”, while Waterloo Bridge was turned into an impromptu garden bridge and temporary skate park. In Parliament Square, hundreds of people unfurled banners, held up placards and waved flags as speakers took to a stage. In a sign they were in for the long haul, a number of protesters were seen carrying tents, while eco-friendly portable toilets were set up in the streets. As of Monday afternoon, police said they had made three arrests, all on suspicion of causing criminal damage to the Shell HQ on Belvedere Road.
4. <https://apnews.com/general-news-ce66b513c411499d9cb2bfeed8fe1716> - Environmental protesters blocked access to several major London landmarks and vandalized oil company Shell’s headquarters Monday as they tried to bring the city to a standstill. The group Extinction Rebellion was seeking to paralyze parts of central London to highlight demands for the British government to declare a climate emergency. Thousands of protesters converged on Marble Arch, Oxford Circus, Waterloo Bridge, Piccadilly Circus and Parliament Square. Some activists glued themselves to windows at Shell headquarters near Waterloo, and others smashed glass revolving doors and sprayed the building with graffiti. Many carried signs pleading with the government to make fighting climate change a top priority. Police said three men were arrested in the ongoing protests. They have not been identified or charged. Extinction Rebellion drew attention to its cause two weeks ago when members stripped to their underwear in the public gallery in Parliament during a Brexit debate. Protester Olivia Evershed, 23, said climate policies must be altered quickly to prevent catastrophic changes. “If we don’t do anything to change this, our children will die,” she said. Police advised Londoners to leave extra time for their journeys because of possible delays caused by the protest. Protesters aim to keep the demonstrations going for two weeks.
5. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/04/15/extinction-rebellion-activists-threaten-bring-london-standstill/> - More than 50 people were arrested as climate protesters staged Extinction Rebellion (XR) demonstrations across the capital on Monday. Police were called to the Shell Centre, the London headquarters of the major oil firm near Waterloo station, to reports of a disturbance after the building's revolving doors were shattered and graffiti was daubed on to the building. Messages such as "Shell kills" were sprayed on to the property, while a female climate change activist glued herself to the door of the building. A Shell spokeswoman said: "We respect the right of everyone to express their point of view, we only ask that they do so with their safety and the safety of others in mind." The building was one of five locations targeted by protesters across the capital. Radical environmental protesters blocked major London roads in an attempt to bring the capital to a standstill. Glass has been shattered at Shell's headquarters near Waterloo station Jonathan Brady/PA By midnight, there had been a total of 52 arrests, the majority for public order offences and obstruction of the highway, Scotland Yard said.
6. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-04-13/extinction-rebellion-activists-occupy-shell-s-london-office> - Climate activists from Extinction Rebellion occupy Shell Plc’s office in London and ask for a meeting with CEO Ben van Beurden. Climate protests have taken place at fuel terminals in the U.K. this month.
7. <https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2020/1/16/scotland-climate-activists-blockade-shell-headquarters> - XR Scotland's boat is named after an activist killed during protests in Sudan [Twitter/@ScotlandXR] Climate change activists have blocked the entrance to the Scottish headquarters of oil giant Shell. Extinction Rebellion (XR) Scotland members began their protest at the premises on Altens Farm Road at 6:30am on Thursday and said they plan to stay there all day. The group say they have secured the entrances with lock-on equipment and the main entrance with XR Scotland’s big purple boat, named Amal Gous after an activist killed in protests in Sudan. XR said they plan to shut the building down to disrupt business and hold Shell to account for its role in the climate crisis. Police said they were called to the scene at approximately 6:45am on Thursday. “If the whole world reaches zero carbon emissions by 2030, we only have a 75 percent chance of staying below [an increase of] 2C,” said one of the protesters, who gave his name as Paul, 43, from Aberdeenshire. “These are terrible odds; and by committing to continued production decades into the future, Shell is literally destroying our future.