

'We Are the Ones Making a Difference': Greta Thunberg Addresses Extinction Rebellion in London



"We are now facing an existential crisis, the climate crisis and ecological crisis which have never been treated as crises before, they have been ignored for decades," activist Greta Thunberg told protesters in London on Sunday. (Photo: @cahulaan/Twitter)

By Julia Conley | [Common Dreams](#)

A day before countries around the world celebrate Earth Day, activist and leader of the School Strike for Climate Greta Thunberg addressed protesters in London who have been occupying a number of major landmarks for almost a week, rallying the demonstrators to continue their fight against the "existential crisis" brought about by climate change.

“Humanity is now standing at a crossroads,” Thunberg told the protesters gathered at the Marble Arch. “We must now decide which path we want to take. How do we want the future living conditions for all species to be? We have gathered here today and in many other places around London and across the world too, because we have chosen which path we want to take and now we are waiting for the others to follow our example.”

[@GretaThunberg](#) speaking at [#ExtinctionRebellion](#) at Marble Arch in London [@inheritEU](#) pic.twitter.com/uzL8hmN5TV

– Dr. Bettina Friedrich (@betty_friedrich) [April 21, 2019](#)

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The demonstrators had joined Extinction Rebellion’s public action, in which members of the movement have also occupied Oxford Circus and Parliament Square and superglued themselves to train cars to disrupt daily life and call attention to the climate crisis.

Police have made at least 963 arrests, [according to the Guardian](#), while London mayor Sadiq Khan has called for the demonstrators to disperse. But leaders of the movement say their message is getting out to the public and that disruption is necessary to convey the dire situation in which world governments have placed communities by ignoring the climate crisis for decades.

“People are willing to be arrested,” spokesperson Ronan McNern [said](#) in a statement. “What this disruption is doing, we are the news now. It is making people talk in pubs and buses about Extinction Rebellion. It makes them think about their existence which is under threat.”

“We—people in Extinction Rebellion and the children in the School Strike for Climate—we are the ones making a

difference,” said Thunberg, who is 16 and started a global movement last fall when she [staged a one-person protest](#) outside Swedish Parliament, refusing to attend school unless lawmakers took action to stop the burning of fossil fuels.

“It shouldn’t be like that but since no one else is doing anything we will have to do so,” she continued. “And we will never stop fighting, we will never stop fighting for this planet and for the futures of our children and grandchildren.”

Extinction Rebellion plans to continue its occupation of some London landmarks, with some leaders calling for a new phase of the protests, in which they will vacate some areas in exchange for the government beginning to carry out [their demands](#).

The movement wants lawmakers to declare a climate and ecological emergency; act now to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2025; and create a Citizens’ Assembly to lead decision-making regarding ecological and climate justice.

“Today marks a transition from week one, which focused on actions that were vision-holding but also caused mass ‘disruption’ across many dimensions (economic, cultural, emotional, social),” [wrote](#) environmental lawyer Farhana Yamin. “Week two marks a new phase of rebellion focused on ‘negotiations’ where the focus will shift to our actual political demands. We want to show that XR [Extinction Rebellion] is a cohesive long-term, global force, not some flash in the pan.”

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