

Climate activists block traffic in U.S. capital



Washington, September 24 (RHC)-- Activists seeking to pressure U.S. politicians to fight climate change blocked major traffic hubs in the U.S. capital on Monday, drawing attention to a UN Climate Summit that is being attended by leaders from about 60 countries.

Those attending the New York summit include the leaders of small island states most at risk from rising sea levels and companies expected to make fresh pledges to cut emissions of greenhouse gases.

Activists targeted four locations, including Farragut Square in downtown Washington, Columbus Circle, near the Union Station train terminal, and Folger Park on Capitol Hill. Just north of the White House, at 16th Street and K Street, activists pushed a small sailboat in the middle of the intersection and protesters clung to it. About 200 protesters staged a dance party in the street while police weaved through the crowd.

"I'm fighting for our future because if things continue as they are with fossil fuel extractive industries... increasing greenhouse gases there's not going to be a good future for anyone," said 23-year-old Arielle Welch, a volunteer for the Sunrise Movement, a nonprofit group.

The protest, called Shut Down DC, was backed by about two dozen groups including the Metro DC chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America, Extinction Rebellion DC and Black Lives Matter DC.

Extinction Rebellion, which says it is backed by hundreds of scientists, promotes non-violent civil disobedience to press governments to cut carbon emissions and avert a climate crisis it fears will bring starvation and social collapse. Over 11 days in April, the group disrupted parts of London, stopping trains and defacing the building of energy giant Shell.

Protesters aim to pressure U.S. government workers who are helping to make Washington an obstacle in international climate negotiations, said Kaela Bamberger, a spokeswoman for Extinction Rebellion, DC.

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