

How Facebook twisted Canada's trucker convoy into an international movement | The Verge

By Ryan Broderick

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After more than two weeks of chaotic protest, this week, the Canadian government pushed back. On Tuesday, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau invoked the country's Emergencies Act, enabling new financial restrictions on the protests and signaling harsh new penalties against anyone involved.

For many Canadians, it's an overdue end to a chaotic protest that has stifled trade and brought alarming weaponry into otherwise quiet communities. But right-wing supporters have a wildly different view of events: figures like Tucker Carlson have portrayed the convoy as a working-class rebellion, and Trudeau's response has been treated as enacting martial law, leading Elon Musk to tweet (and then delete) a meme comparing Trudeau to Adolf Hitler.

It's a shocking split, arguably the single most important factor in the protests, and much of it originates in the fractured way information travels online. Convoy supporters are getting their news from a tangle of Facebook groups, Telegram channels, and random influencers, which is all then amplified and expanded by right-wing broadcasters like Carlson, *The Daily Caller*, or Canadian right-wing media network Rebel News. These channels promote a sanitized version of movements like the Freedom Convoy, amplifying its hashtags and turning its obscure extremist leaders into celebrities.

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