

NEW ZEALAND | Politics

Police 'monitoring' Brian Tamaki-led Freedom and Rights Coalition upcoming Parliament protest, Wellington street march

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July 23, 2022 | A protest organised by Brian Tamaki and the Freedom & Rights Coalition caused chaos. Video / Supplied / Michael Craig

NZ Herald



Police will be monitoring a protest led by Destiny Church's Brian Tamaki that intends marching through central Wellington before staging a mock trial at Parliament.

New details have emerged of the rally set to take place on August 23 that will see protesters from across New Zealand assemble at Civic Square before marching to Parliament where they will hold a self-styled "people's court".

Police today said they were aware of the protest activity planned for Wellington later this month but would not say if they were in talks with Tamaki about the day.

"We recognise the lawful right to protest," said a spokesperson.

"Police will be monitoring the event and will be working to ensure there is limited disruption to the wider public."



Police and firefighters clear protesters as tents burned on Parliament's lawns. Photo / Mike Scott

The Freedom and Rights Coalition, a vocal opponent of the Government's pandemic vaccination mandates and laws, has posted a timetable of the day's protest action, summoning people to leave work and attend the trial.

It says the defendants are the New Zealand Government and that they are facing "crimes against humanity".

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The mock hearing is set to have a verdict delivered by the people at 1.30pm, on a day when the House is sitting.

The day is regarded as a means to get New Zealand back again with a declared aim of removing the Labour Government from office.

"You have been served," reads the post.

"The New Zealand public are (sic) issued with a notice of jury service.

"Kiwis are urged to seek leave from work for jury service on this history-making day!" reads a Facebook post.

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Wellington Mayor Andy Foster and Parliamentary Services have been approached for comment alongside The Freedom and Rights Coalition.

The capital protest is regarded as the culmination of earlier disruptive protests held in recent weeks that during a rally in July saw the busiest section of Auckland's motorway network grind to a halt without warning.

Police are yet to lay charges against anyone who walked on Auckland's Southern Motorway stopping traffic for around an hour on a busy Saturday morning.



Protesters from Brian Tamaki's Freedom and Rights Coalition bring Auckland's motorway to a halt last month. Photo / Michael Craig

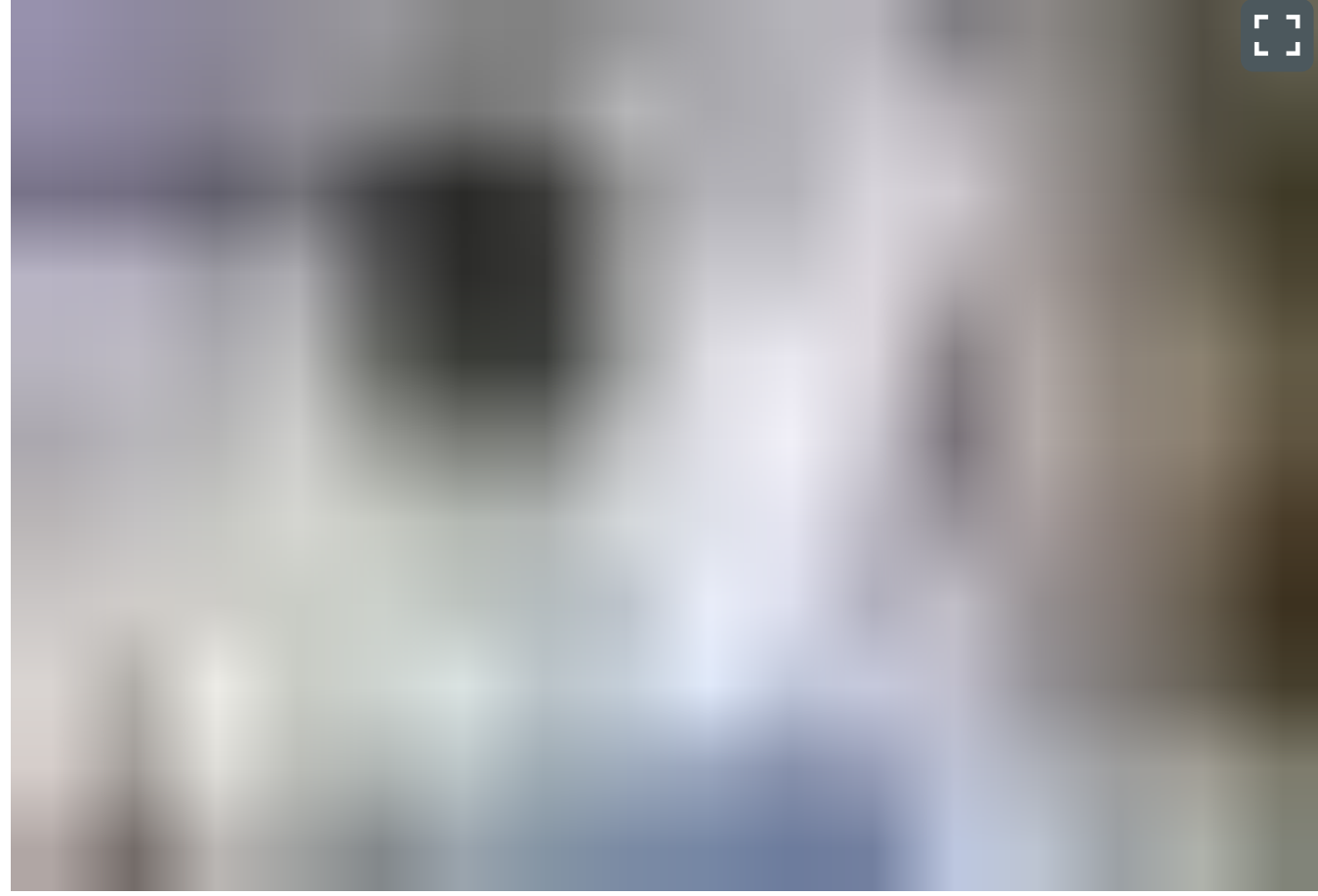
A police spokesperson said inquiries were still ongoing in regards to the July 23 protest.

More demonstrations are planned across the country this weekend before people are urged to drive from either end of the country in a protest convoy on Monday August 22.

Organisers say there will be pitstops at iconic towns and landmarks in a bid to rally public support for a vote of no confidence petition.

Vehicles in the protest motorcade would be decked out with key messaging to raise awareness about the desire to get back the country "we know and love".

On the day of the capital protest the "people's court" hearing and petition is hoped to force a snap election.



Riot police move on protesters in the day-long operation to clear Parliament grounds. Photo / Mike Scott

It's been six months since Wellington experienced a tumultuous end to a 23-day occupation of parliament grounds.

Hundreds of anti-mandate protesters who had set up a shantytown clashed with police in a fiery and violent day on which cobblestones were ripped from footpaths and hurled towards officers and tents were set alight.

Eighty-seven people were arrested for a range of offences, including wilful trespass, possession of restricted weapons, obstruction, wilful damage, assaulting police, and refusing to provide identifying details. Seven officers were injured as police attempted to shut down the protest that day.

Police are still seeking certain wanted for their role in the violence, releasing pictures from the riots.

Police say the investigation into the occupation's final day has led to 16 prosecutions to date and one referral to Youth Services, in addition to other prosecutions made during the event.

In the meantime Tamaki, who pleaded guilty to a charge of careless driving relating to a crash in May when he hit a car with an elderly couple inside, is still facing charges from breaching Covid public health orders last year.

The self-styled apostle faces four charges of intentionally failing to comply with Covid-19 orders. Police alleged he organised a protest at Auckland Domain on October 2, last year, attended the protest, attended a second Auckland Domain protest on October 16, and attended a third Auckland Domain protest on November 20.

Large outdoor gatherings were prohibited by Covid-19 orders at the time.

Along with his wife Hannah, Tamaki and two others, Jennifer Louise Marshall and Kaleb Cave, have been remanded until September 1 for a case review hearing relating to those charges.

All four were charged with intentionally failing to comply with the Covid-19 Public Health Response Act, which could carry a penalty of up to six months' imprisonment and a \$4000 fine.

Tamaki has pleaded not guilty to all charges.

Earlier this year the controversial church leader was remanded in custody for 10 days at the Mt Eden Corrections Facility for breaching his bail conditions after he addressed a January anti-vaccine rally in Christchurch attended by more than 100 people - more than allowed under the Covid-19 traffic light system.



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