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SECURITY

Intelligence in the capital: **An Extinction Rebellion Case Study**



Summary:

In October 2019, the climate change activist group Extinction Rebellion planned a mass-mobilisation on an unprecedented scale. It was a well-resourced, highly-coordinated community that planned to descend upon London with the objective to “shut down Westminster”.

Mitie's Global Security Operations Centre (GSOC) made this a top priority, providing intelligence to help customers plan their security and ensure they had deployed sufficient resource to minimise the impact to their businesses.

The GSOC delivered relevant, timely and actionable intelligence taken from open sources of information, for customers, enabling them to continue business as usual. This was done through a variety of means, including pre-Rebellion reporting, a webinar giving details of the known plans and a WhatsApp group with regular updates, enabling customers to plan and prioritise their security accordingly.

Over the two-week period the GSOC delivered over 300 intelligence reports and covered over 100 planned Extinction Rebellion protests and events. This level of intelligence was truly industry-leading, affirming Mitie's position as the leader in intelligence-led security services.





What is Extinction Rebellion?

Extinction Rebellion are a global, decentralised activist organisation committed to non-violent, direct action protests to raise awareness of the threat of climate change. Historically they have been known for intentionally causing widespread disruption by committing acts of criminal damage and aggravated trespass to further their aims and objectives and to bring attention to their cause.

Common tactics used by the group often involved supergluing activists to transport infrastructure and access routes, blocking roads to cause severe travel disruption and occupying private premises to disrupt business operations.

The October protests in London were a two-week mass mobilisation of activists on an unprecedented scale. The group were well-resourced and highly-coordinated, making the chance of success in their aims extremely likely.

The initial plan was to occupy 12 sites across London, with mass participation directed against government buildings with the main objective to “shut down Westminster”. As well as this, there were decentralised actions focused on key transport nodes and iconic buildings targeted as protest sites.

The key 12 sites that were planned to be occupied included sites such as Trafalgar Square and Westminster Bridge, causing as much disruption in these areas as possible.

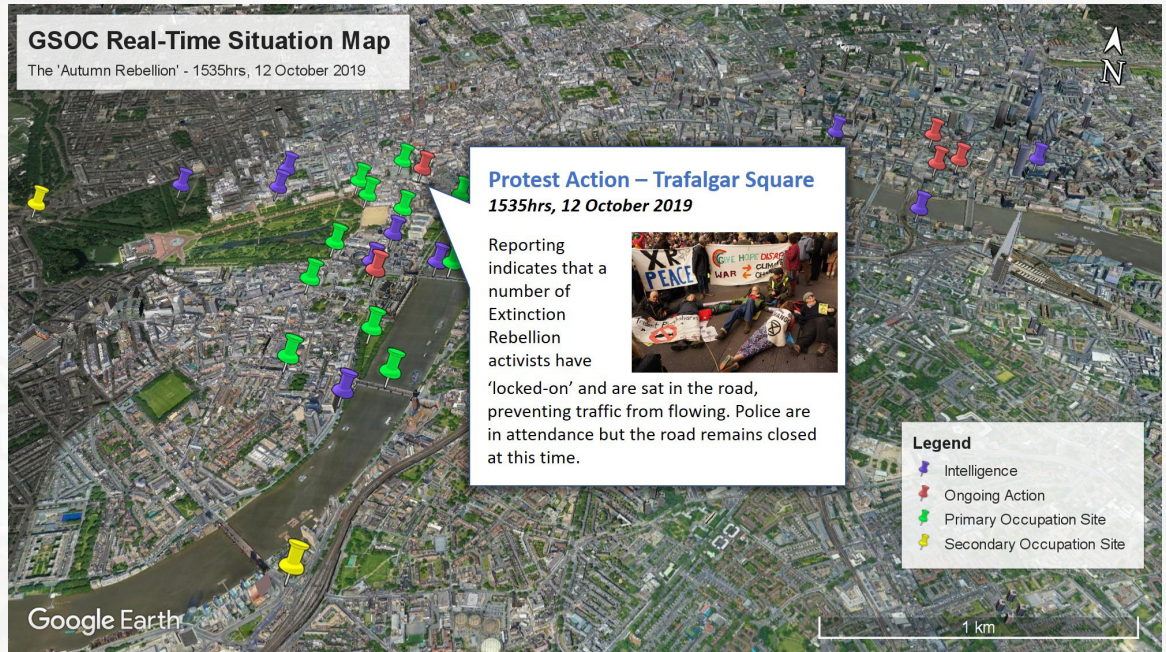
How did Extinction Rebellion impact Mitie and its customers?

Despite the protests taking place in London, the Extinction Rebellion groups' activities affected customers all across the UK, many had sites in London, or staff requiring travel to the capital. The group were targeting buildings in and around numerous customer sites, with protest routes also passing commonly used customers' areas, so understanding the threat was paramount to keeping their people, assets and environments secure.

Mitie Security's GSOC provided up to date intelligence through a variety of channels to enable customers to make better informed security decisions, based on the targets and routes planned by Extinction Rebellion.



What did the GSOC do to reduce the impact of the Extinction Rebellion protests?



Ahead of the planned protests, the GSOC provided intelligence reports to customers, informing them of known sites and planned activities.

The reports detailed provided maps of locations and protest routes and notes alongside each entry detailing known planned activity at the site and common tactics the factions of the group use, so that security teams could be prepared to deal with them. For example, some groups used 'lock-on' techniques, whereas others had a propensity to undertake arrestable actions.

The details included in the notes for each site proved invaluable to security planning and deployment of resources by customers.

In addition to the detailed reports prior to the activity, the GSOC also hosted an invite only webinar aimed at providing a much more detailed look into the known plans and activity, in order to minimise the disruption to customer sites as much as possible.

Finally, the GSOC set up a WhatsApp group providing regular updates with new intelligence to those that joined. Through this channel, over 300 security professionals received information that supported their organisations and informed their security decision making process.

This group provided access to participants to an interactive map of known sites, movements and activities, with updates when new intelligence was available, enabling customers to get a snapshot of the locations and plan their security accordingly.

What was the outcome?

Over the two-week period of activity by Extinction Rebellion, the GSOC provided over 300 intelligence reports and coverage of over 100 planned protests and events. The interactive map created by the GSOC gained over 2,000 visits during the period, and the webinar was viewed by 150 individuals from 13 separate sectors, highlighting the breadth of impact the events had, and the importance of up to date intelligence.

On average, Mitie provides 191,000 hours of guarding in the capital per week. During the Extinction Rebellion movement guarding hours increased by 20,000, based on pre-agreed customer protocols, the latest intelligence and the overall risk-based approach Mitie take. There were also additional security measures around the barriers to critical national infrastructure locations to ensure safe and secure environments for our customers' assets. In addition, the GSOC team provided real-time reporting to clients within close proximity to the disruption to ensure the best possible action could be taken, working with Mitie's wider risk consultancy team to advise clients on operational response and risk mitigation, enabling them to adjust security measures as the situation evolved.

The level of intelligence provided enabled numerous customers to improve their security planning and minimise the disruption to their business.

Financial client:

"The reporting from the Mitie GSOC over the two week period helped us get support from the police, that we wouldn't normally receive in the absence of this type of reporting. It aided us in putting the correct security mitigation measures in place and in our view prevented us from becoming a target"

Property Management client:

"The GSOC intelligence changed our decision making in the lead up and during the Autumn Rebellion. We based our actions on it and it helped us to deconflict other sources of inaccurate information. The GSOC is pivotal to the way we make our decisions."

**IN 2
WEEKS**

100
PROTESTS AND EVENTS
COVERED

300
INTELLIGENCE
REPORTS

210,000
GUARDING HOURS

What is the GSOC?

The GSOC is Mitie's Global Security Operations Centre providing actionable intelligence to customers. The open-source intelligence provided by the GSOC enables customers to improve planning and resource deployment to ensure that their people, assets and environments are protected.

The GSOC provide a range of proactive intelligence services, including:





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