

London Olympic torch relay disrupted

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More than 35 protesters were arrested during the London Olympic torch relay in a series of clashes with the police, who had to reroute part of the procession. Despite nearly a year of planning and the deployment of 2,000 officers, the Metropolitan Police were unable to stop protesters breaking through the security cordon at vulnerable points. One demonstrator attempted to seize the torch, two others tried to douse the flame with a fire extinguisher near Ladbroke Grove. A campaigner, Peter Tatchell, jumped in front of a relay bus in Oxford Street. Tumultuous scenes occurred in front of Downing Street, the official seat of the British Prime Minister. The torch was diverted from foot to a bus at St Paul's to avoid increasingly chaotic scenes. The Olympic torch's progress was halted in several places where police scuffled with protesters. Fu Ying, the Chinese Ambassador to the UK, was forced to run her stretch of the route through Chinatown after ditching plans to run through Bloomsbury, where hundreds of pro-Tibet protesters were waiting. Police pushed the protesters behind barriers 20 yards from the route to separate them from pro-Chinese groups waving red Chinese flags on the pavement.

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