

# Leftwing group claim responsibility for Tesla factory arson attack in Berlin

Publication Date: 2024-03-05

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Section: Technology

Tags: Tesla, Germany, Europe, Electric, hybrid and low-emission cars, Ethical and green living, news

Article URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2024/mar/05/leftwing-vulkan-group-claim-responsibility-tesla-factory-pylon-arson-attack-berlin>



Leftwing extremists have claimed responsibility for a dawn arson attack on an electricity pylon at the Tesla car factory in Berlin, which bosses said would halt production until the end of the week. In a 2,500-word letter released on Tuesday, the Vulkan (volcano) activist group claimed responsibility for the attack, saying the factory, which produces about 500,000 electric cars a year, consumed both natural resources and labour and was neither ecological or sustainable. Electric cars have come under increasing attack by environmental activists, in particular over concerns that their production leads to higher emissions than the manufacture of internal combustion engine cars and that the production and recharging of electric car batteries constitute environmental burden. In targeted attacks around Europe, including in Germany, electric cars have had their tyres slashed or deflated. Locally there has been much debate about the high usage of groundwater by the company in a region that has been suffering from drought for several years as well as dismay over the amount of forest that has been felled to make way for the factory premises. A protest camp of environmentalists campaigning against proposals to fell further trees for expansion plans, set up around a week ago, building tree houses in the forest. However, they distanced themselves from the arson attack. In a press conference on Tuesday, Tesla bosses said the damages ran into hundreds of millions of euros and would cause production to halt until the end of the week. The electricity outage affected the factory as well as surrounding communities in the state of Brandenburg. The factory had to be evacuated in the early hours of Tuesday morning. Tesla boss, Elon Musk, wrote on X: "These are either the dumbest eco-terrorists on Earth or they're puppets of those who don't have good environmental goals." He added: "Stopping production of electric vehicles, rather than fossil fuel vehicles, ist extrem dumm," he said, switching to the German phrase meaning "extremely dumb". Brandenburg's interior minister, Michael Stübgen, said that the judicial authorities would "severely punish" those found to have been behind the sabotage. "If the initial findings are confirmed, this is a perfidious attack on our electricity infrastructure," he said, which had caused tens of thousands of people to be "cut off from basic services and put in danger". Tesla recently announced plans to expand the works, so far the only ones in Europe, which opened two years ago and employs about 12,500 workers, including thousands of Poles and Ukrainian refugees. A local referendum last month rejected the plan – which includes building a kindergarten for workers' children, improving roads to the plant, and the construction of a freight depot. The vote result is not legally binding but Tesla bosses and mediators said they would try to work with the community to find a solution. Tesla's shares, which are listed on the Frankfurt stock exchange, fell by 2.8% following news of the fire and its likely effect on production. The incident is just the latest in a series of challenges for Tesla, which has faced a backlash from trade unions seeking

collective bargaining agreements for workers in the Nordic countries as well as supply chain issues, due to Houthi rebel attacks on shipping in the Red Sea which earlier this year forced it to halt production for a fortnight. Police said they had launched a criminal investigation into the fire and were checking the authenticity of the letter, which had been signed Água De Pau, the name of a volcanic mountain in the Azores. In 2021, the Vulkan group claimed responsibility for an arson attack on a transmitter tower at the then building site of the Tesla factory, accusing the company of being "neither ecological nor socially just".