

Occupy will be out of park 'very soon': Ford

By Don Peat ,City Hall Bureau Chief  
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TORONTO - Occupy Toronto will be asked to leave St. James Park soon, Mayor Rob Ford warned Monday.

"We're going to be asking them to leave the park and we'll take it from there," Ford told reporters at City Hall. "It's going to happen soon."

Ford said he won't take Occupy protesters up on an invitation to visit the downtown park.

"I do my job here, if anybody wants to come here I don't mind meeting anyone but I can't go down to the park," he said. "It is illegal what they are doing right so I can't condone illegal behaviour."

The mayor refused to say when precisely the notices would be handed out but was optimistic the protesters would leave.

"We're just going to hand out the notices and ask these people to leave, it has been a peaceful protest and I'm sure they will leave peacefully," Ford said.

City officials wouldn't specify what type of notices would be handed out to Occupy Toronto or when that would occur.

A group claiming to be Anonymous posted a video on YouTube Saturday, stating it would "remove" Ford and the city from the Internet if the city moved to evict the 500-or-so Occupy Toronto demonstrators who have camped out in the park for the last month.

Councillor Paul Ainslie says he doesn't "negotiate with cyber-terrorists."

While city officials say they are "taking all threats seriously," Ainslie — the chairman of the city's government management committee — said Monday he's not worried by threats from the hacking activists.

"I won't dare them," he said. "But I certainly feel safe and secure that they are not going to be able to hack into the City of Toronto's system."

Councillor Gord Perks, who visited the park over the weekend, said Occupy protesters should be allowed to stay as long as fire and other life safety requirements are being met and there is no violent activity in the park.

"We're at a critical time in our economic history where the right to protest is very important and I think that the freedom of assembly and the freedom of speech decisions of the supreme court definitely trump bylaw notices for being in a park overnight," he said.