

Tens of Thousands Rally in France Against Security Law as Police and Protesters Clash Again

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French protesters clashed with police in Paris and other cities including Marseille, Lyon, Rennes and Nantes yesterday as tens of thousands took to the streets in further mass demonstrations against an authoritarian new security law.

The weekly rallies each Saturday are developing into the third huge wave of street unrest against **President Emmanuel Macron** since he took office, following the Yellow Vests movement of 2018-19 and the giant trade union demos against railway privatisation in 2019. Many at the demos wore yellow high-vis jackets to indicate their continuity with the Yellow Vests.

Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin praised police for tackling “very violent individuals” who pillaged a bank, set fire to cars and threw projectiles — including a Molotov cocktail in Nantes — at officers.

But the mass rallies denounced police violence, with the demos calling for the government to drop its Global Security Law imposing prison sentences of up to a year and fines of up to €45,000 (£40,000) on individuals who publish photographs showing police officers’ faces with “harmful intent.”

Demonstrators carried banners saying “Police mutilate, police kill” and chanted: “Everyone hates the police.”

The French Communist Party called its supporters out on demonstrations against police violence and poverty.

Leader **Fabien Roussel** joined marchers in both Lille and Valenciennes against “both poverty and for the revocation of the Global Security Law. France, the country of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, must not become a country of poverty and authoritarianism,” he tweeted.

France Unbowed leader **Jean-Luc Melenchon** also linked the issues, saying the government should recognise “there is hunger in France” and tying Mr Macron’s increasing authoritarianism to the need to quash social unrest.

“This is not just about Article 24,” he said, referring to the police photography clause of the Global Security Law. “It’s the whole ‘liberty-cide’ project that must be binned!”

The French government offered to rewrite Article 24 of the law last week because of the scale of opposition, which ranges from the political left to the editors of Establishment

newspapers such as Le Monde, who say it will have a chilling impact on freedom of the press.

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