

French police clash with anti-COVID pass protesters in Paris



Protesters hold up signs that read 'no to the vaccine passport' during a demonstration in Paris [Michel Euler/AP]

Paris, August 1 (RHC)-- Thousands of people have protested in Paris and other French cities against a mandatory coronavirus health pass for entry to a wide array of public venues, introduced by the government as it battles the fourth wave of infections.

Some 3,000 security forces deployed around the French capital on Saturday for a third weekend of protests against the pass that will be needed to enter restaurants and other places. Police took up posts along Paris's Champs-Elysees to guard against an invasion of the famed avenue by violent demonstrators. Most demonstrations were peaceful but some in Paris clashed with riot police, who fired tear gas.

"We're creating a segregated society and I think it is unbelievable to be doing this in the country of human rights," Anne, a teacher who was demonstrating in Paris, told Reuters news agency. She declined to give her last name. "So I took to the streets; I have never protested before in my life. I think our freedom is in danger."

With virus infections spiking and hospitalisations rising, French legislators have passed a bill requiring the pass in most places as of August 9th. Polls show a majority of French support the pass, but some French are adamantly opposed.

The pass requires vaccinations or a quick negative test or proof of a recent recovery from COVID-19 and mandates vaccinations for all healthcare workers by mid-September.

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