

Protests in France rage on over teenager's killing by police



Paris, June 29 (RHC)-- French President Emmanuel Macron has held a crisis meeting with some of his ministers, as security forces have arrested 150 people in a second night of violence after the killing of a teenager by police.

In a sign of the seriousness of the situation, Macron held an early morning crisis meeting of his ministers on Thursday, the Elysee announced, after a second night of rioting in which cars and buildings were set alight in towns and suburbs across France.

"The last few hours have been marked by scenes of violence against police stations but also schools and town halls, and thus institutions of the Republic and these scenes are wholly unjustifiable," Macron said as he opened the emergency meeting.

Police arrested 150 people across France on Wednesday night, Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said, describing the unrest as "intolerable," and added that several public buildings were "burned or attacked."

The police killing of Nahel, a 17-year-old boy of North African descent, has intensified concerns about police brutality and racial discrimination within the French law enforcement. A growing number of police-involved incidents has sparked widespread condemnation from human rights organizations and various nations worldwide.

"A night of intolerable violence against symbols of the republic, with town halls, schools and police stations set on fire or attacked," Darmanin wrote on Twitter as he announced the arrests figure, expressing support for police, adding, however, "Shame on those who did not call for calm."

Around 2,000 riot police were called up in suburbs around Paris on Wednesday night to quell the raging protests over the killing of Nahel, who was shot point-blank during a traffic search Tuesday morning.

Protesters set fire to trash bins and fireworks in Nanterre on Wednesday night, as well as in other communes of the Hauts-de-Seine region, where the shooting took place. Clashes spread from neighborhoods around the capital to other French cities, including Toulouse, Dijon and Lyon.

"We are sick of being treated like this. This is for Nahel, we are Nahel," said two young men calling themselves "Avengers" as they wheeled rubbish bins from a nearby estate to add to a burning barricade. One said his family had lived in France for three generations but lamented: "They are never going to accept us," as the teenager who died was of North African origin.

In the southern city of Toulouse, several cars were torched and responding police and firefighters were pelted with projectiles as thick black smoke billowed high into the sky, a police source said.

Earlier on Wednesday, Macron appealed for calm to allow investigators time to find out what happened and said the deadly police shooting was "unexplainable and inexcusable" and that "nothing justifies the death of a young man."

"A teenager was killed. That is inexplicable and unforgivable," he said during a visit to the Mediterranean city Marseille, adding that the case had "moved the entire nation." He also expressed "respect and affection" for the family of the victim.

In addition, lawmakers held a minute's silence in the National Assembly, where Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne said the shooting "seems clearly not to comply with the rules."

Moreover, celebrities known for their social activism have expressed support for the 17-year-old and his family.

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