

UN committee urges France to fully probe police killing of teenager



United Nations, July 9 (RHC)-- A United Nations committee has called on France to ensure the investigation into the killing of Nahel, the teenager shot dead by police near Paris, is "thorough and impartial," and called for racial profiling to be banned.

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), made up of 18 independent experts, flagged concerns on racial profiling and the excessive use of force by law enforcement." The experts also condemned "looting and destruction of private and public property as well as reports of mass arrests and detention of protesters."

The UN committee said it welcomed the opening of an inquiry into the circumstances that led to the killing of Nahel, whose death sparked an eruption of violence in France.

"France [should] promptly ensure that the investigation into the circumstances that led to the death of Nahel M. is thorough and impartial...prosecute the alleged perpetrators and, if convicted, to sanction them" accordingly, it said.

It also called for France to "adopt legislation that defines and prohibits racial profiling" -- also reiterating its recommendation that the authorities address as a priority "structural and systemic causes of racial discrimination, including in law enforcement."

Its intervention came as a French administrative court ruled against organizers of a march in memory of Nahel organized by the Adama Traore foundation, who had sought to challenge a ban on their rally planned for Saturday.

Traore, who was black, died in police custody in 2016 sparking several nights of rioting. "The judges found that, although the violence has decreased in recent days, its extremely recent nature does not allow us to presume that any risk of disturbing public order has disappeared," the court said in a statement.

The UN committee -- which monitors the application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination -- flagged concerns around the Nahel case under its early warning and urgent action procedure.

It said it was deeply concerned by "the continuing practice of racial profiling combined with the excessive use of force by law enforcement officials, in particular the police, against members of minority groups, particularly people of African and Arab descent."

"[The situation] frequently results in disproportionately recurrent killings with near impunity."

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