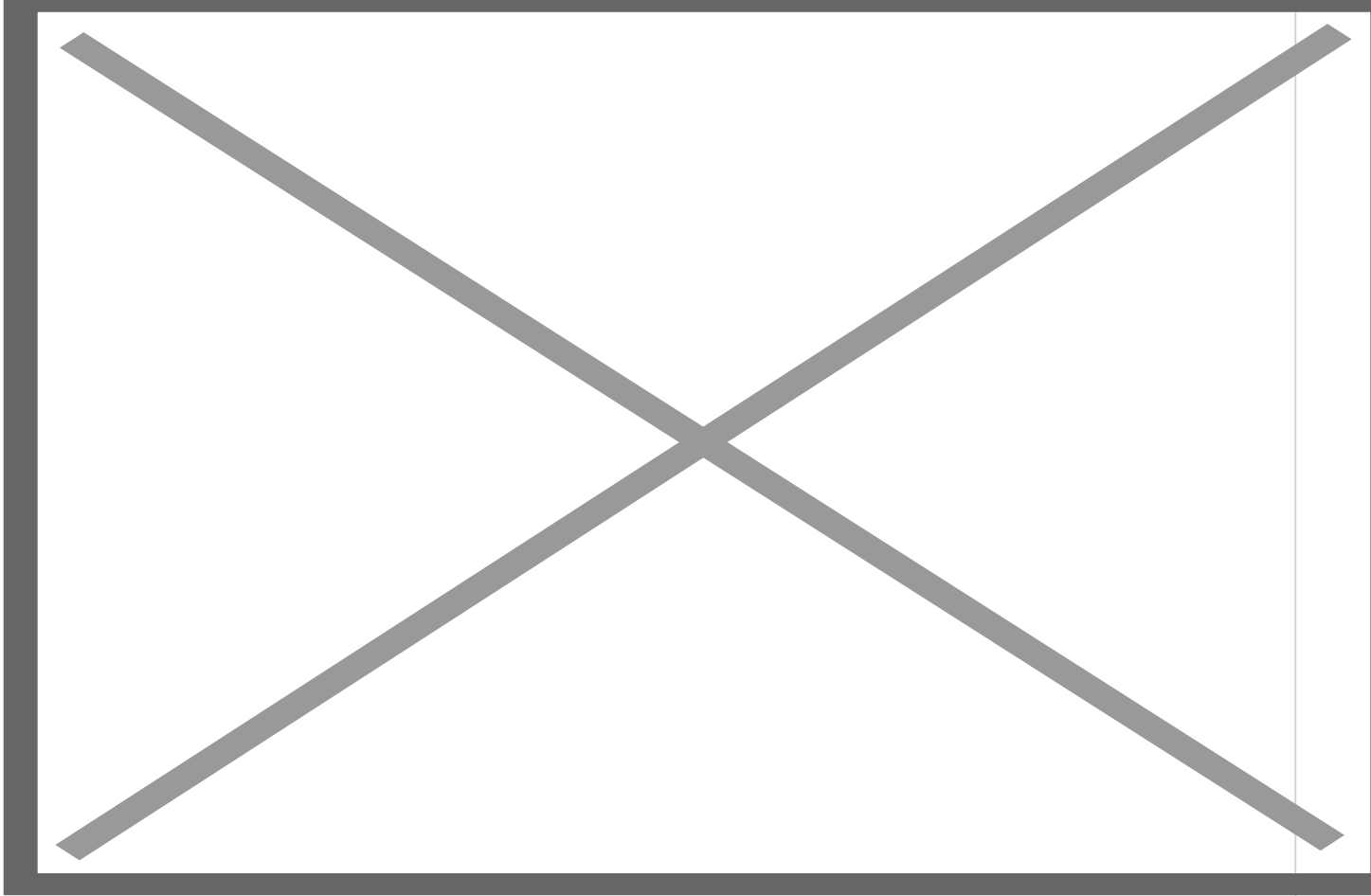


France bans Bastille Day fireworks sale after anti-government protests

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French riot police stand guard during clashes in Lyon in southeastern France [File: Jeff Pachoud/AFP]??

Paris, July 9 (RHC)-- France has banned the sale, possession and transport of fireworks during the July 14 national holiday weekend, following protests sparked by the killing of a teenager by the police.

Fireworks were used in some protests that erupted in France after a police officer shot dead 17-year-old Nahel M during a traffic stop on June 27 near Paris.

The shooting of Nahel, who is of Algerian and Moroccan origin, rekindled long pent-up frustrations and accusations of systemic racism among France's security forces and sparked the severest unrest since 2005.

More than 3,700 people were taken into police custody in connection with the protests, including at least 1,160 minors, according to official figures.

"In order to prevent the risk of serious disturbances to public order during the July 14 festivities, the sale, possession, transport and use of pyrotechnical articles and fireworks is banned until July 15 inclusively," said a government decree published in the Official Journal on Sunday.

The ban does not extend to professionals or municipalities that are organising traditional fireworks for the Bastille Day celebrations, it added.

Worried about a possible resurgence of violent clashes between protesters and police, Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne told Le Parisien newspaper on Saturday that the government would deploy "massive means to protect the French" during the national holiday.

Fireworks displays are an annual feature of Bastille Day celebrations. They are also often used during protests in the country.

On Saturday, thousands of French protesters defied a ban to march in central Paris against police violence. Nearly 30 demonstrations against police violence took place across France, including in the southern port city of Marseille and Strasbourg in the east.

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