

French police fire tear gas at protesters in Paris, arrest over 100



Paris, December 1 (RHC)-- French police fired tear gas to disperse anti-government protesters marching down the streets of Paris, the capital. The so-called yellow vest protesters opposing diesel tax hikes and the high cost of living gathered at the top of the grandest avenue in Paris on Saturday morning.

Police blocked access to streets riot police used tear gas and water cannons against protesters as they were trying to break the blockade and force their way through. At least 107 people have been arrested during the Saturday clashes so far, according to police sources. Speaking at the Paris police's command center, a spokesman said 36,000 people were protesting across France, including at least 6,000 in the capital. Meanwhile, French police said 65 people, including 11 officers, were injured in the protests.

The protests initially began last month after President Emmanuel Macron announced controversial hikes in diesel prices to encourage a transition towards greener energy. Previous protests have ended with violence, with two people killed and over 600 injured.

Over the past year, the cost of diesel, the most commonly used fuel in cars in France, has risen by 23 percent. Many people, however, are now say that they are protesting against President Macron, whom

they consider as part of an elitist coterie that neither understands, nor cares how they live.

Macron took office last year with a pledge to revitalize the economy; but many voters ranging from conservative pensioners to low-income workers complain that his pro-business policies have mostly benefit companies and the rich.

Protests have also spread to the Belgian capital, where police fired tear gas and used water cannon against some 300 demonstrators. Police said at least 60 people were arrested in possession of box-cutters, smoke bombs or tear gas canisters. It also said that protesters torched two police vans and disrupted traffic in Brussels.

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