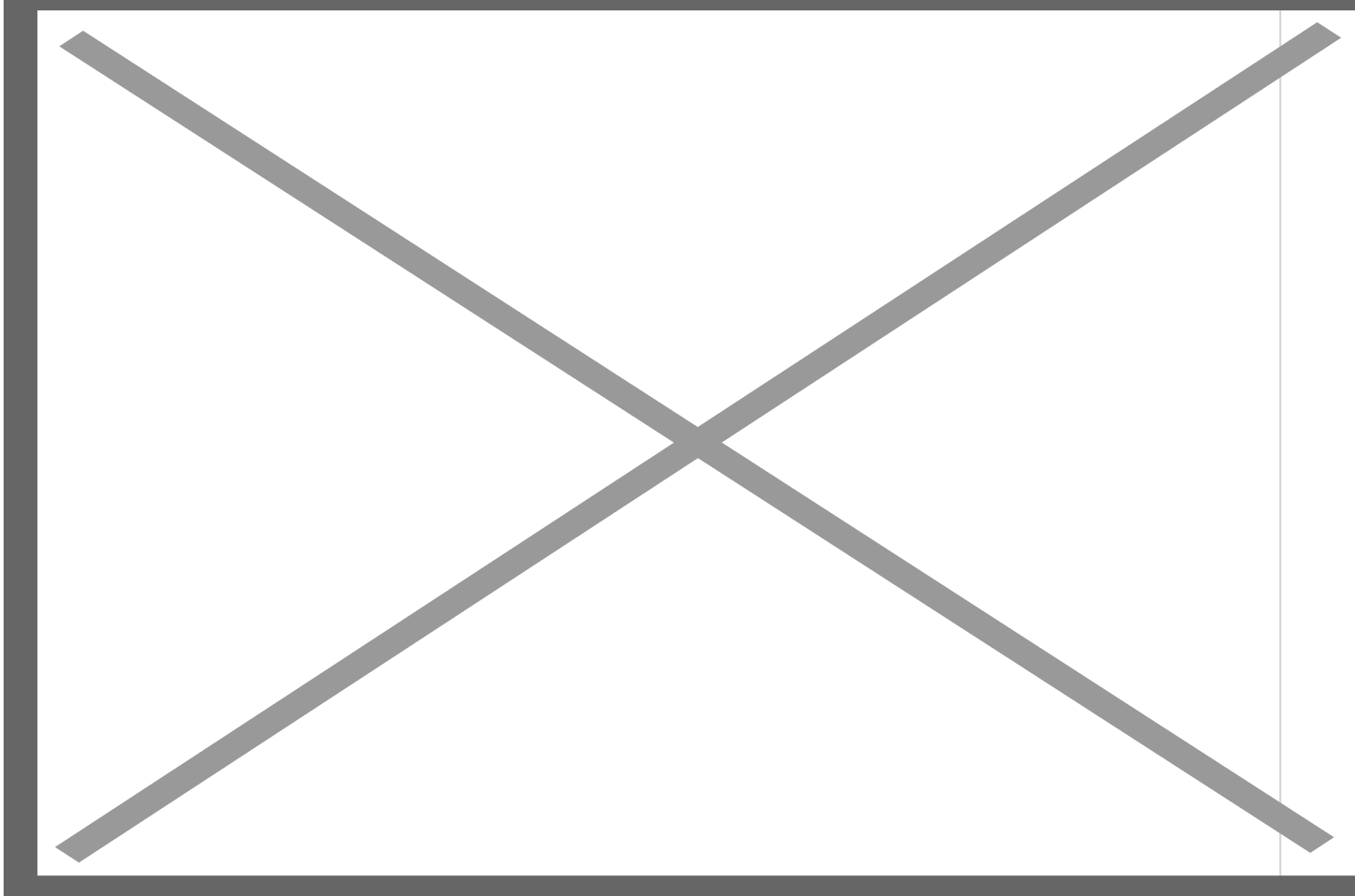


France bans pro-Palestine rallies and cracks down on protesters, while allowing demonstrations in favor of Israel

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French police apprehend a protester during a banned demonstration in support of Palestinians

Paris, October 13 (RHC)-- French police have used tear gas and water cannon to disperse protesters who took to the streets in support of the Palestinians, shortly after the government moved to ban all such rallies.

Police broke up a rally in capital Paris on Thursday, following orders from Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin to ban all pro-Palestine demonstrations in the name of "public order". Critics called the order an attack on civil liberties.

"We live in a country of civil law, a country where we have the right to take a stand and to demonstrate. [It is unfair] to forbid for one side and to authorise for the other and that does not reflect the reality of Palestine," 29-year-old Charlotte Vautier told the Reuters news agency.

The ban came as Israel continues to bomb the Gaza Strip for a sixth day, killing more than 1,400 people, wounding thousands and wiping out neighbourhoods in the already-besieged territory now under a total siege.

The bombings began on Saturday after the Palestinian armed group Hamas launched an unprecedented incursion inside the Israeli territory. More than 1,300 people have been killed in Israel and at least 100 taken captive by Hamas.

French minister Darmanin also said at least 24 people have been arrested across France for "anti-Semitic acts" since Saturday, adding that he believes any foreigner who commits such acts should be expelled from France "without delay".

France is home to Europe's largest Muslim and Jewish communities, and events overseas can sometimes increase tensions domestically.

No restrictions have been announced for events in support of Israel.

"Let's not add, through illusions or calculations, domestic divides to international divides," French President Emmanuel Macron said on Thursday. "The shield of unity will protect us from hatred and excesses."

Macron said 13 French citizens were killed in the Hamas attack, while 17 others, including children, are missing. Some could be among the dozens of people, including Israelis and foreigners, held captive by Hamas in Gaza.

"France is doing everything alongside Israeli authorities and our partners to bring them home safely because France never abandons its children," Macron said, adding that Israel has the right to destroy Hamas but must do so while "preserving civilian populations."



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