

French pensioners rally as Macron adds more austerity to long-running inflation

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Paris, March 31 (RHC)-- Pensioners rallied in hundreds of towns and cities in France against President Emmanuel Macron's determination for even more austerity cuts amid the inflation crisis. When campaigning in 2017 -- seven years ago -- Macron promised he wouldn't cut pensions and that their purchasing power relative to inflation would be preserved.

Seven years later, inflation has progressed by 17 percent while pensions have increased by just 8 percent. The widely protested pension rollback and retirement age hike by decree in 2023 and the widening gap between inflation increases and pension increases may explain why no sector of society has turned against Macron more than retirees.

The French Parliament has refused to even allow a vote on the age hike, ensuring that President Emmanuel Macron's executive decree would receive no checks, balances, or even oversight, by the legislative branch.

Police have clashed with protesters angry at President Macron and his controversial pension reforms. Paris has warned there will soon be a second round of austerity cuts to the already austerity-driven 2024 budget.

One protester on Saturday in Paris told reporters: "There are so many retirees who live on less than \$900 per month and everyone should be able to comprehend how difficult that is. Many of us have also diseases like cancer and diabetes, and I can promise you that none of us asked for them. We deserve dignity and not to be treated like we are some sort of lower class citizen just because we have finished our working career."

An alternative to public service cuts would be increased taxes on the rich or corporate shareholders. But the Macron administration said it doesn't want to go digging into the pockets of the French.

While the average household is still reeling from COVID-19 and the disastrous backfiring of European sanctions on Russia, an Oxfam report revealed that the billionaire families of France have gained \$230 billion since 2020. That would be sufficient to give \$3,400 to every single French person.

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