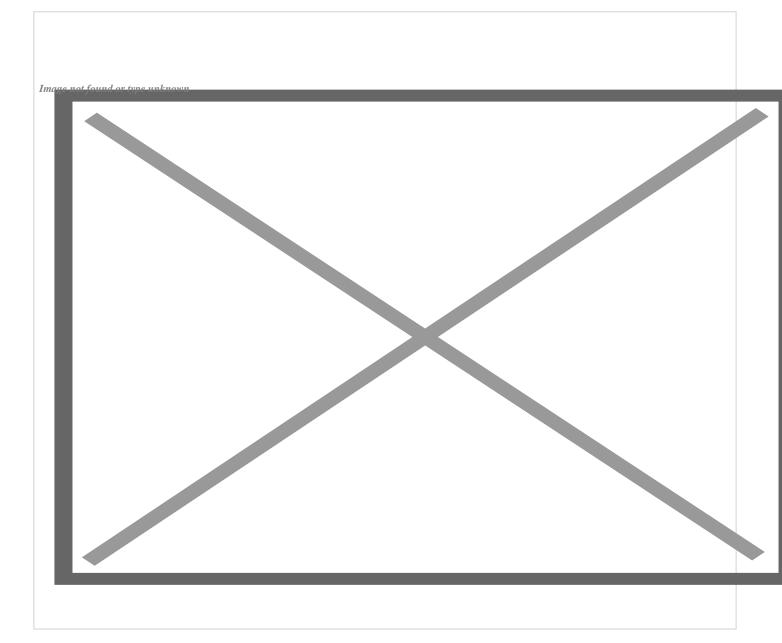# *Thousands protest against sexual violence in France*

Paris, November 24 (RHC)-- Thousands of people have taken to the streets across France to protest against sexual violence. The protests on Saturday come two days before the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

In the capital, Paris, large crowds of women and men marched waving purple placards that denounced gender-based violence and defended women's reproductive rights.

Demonstrators voiced concerns about a possible rollback on women's rights in the United States when President-elect Donald Trump returns to the White House in January. Vice President-elect JD Vance said he would like a national abortion ban in a podcast interview in 2022, but has since emphasised that individual states should determine their policies.

The French newspaper Le Monde reported that roughly 80,000 protesters took to the streets in Paris, with 400 different organisations taking part in demonstrations. It said thousands of people also took to the streets in smaller cities across the nation, including 1,500 in Renne outside Lyon in the southeastern part of France.

France enshrined abortion rights in the constitution in March — a move largely seen as a response to the US move to roll back key reproductive rights protections in 2022 when the Supreme Court overturned decades-old laws protecting abortion rights nationally. While abortion has been legal since 1975 in France, the constitutional change explicitly guaranteed abortion access. France was the first country in the world to do so.

Protesters also voiced solidarity with Gisele Pelicot, whose ex-husband Dominique Pelicot and 50 other co-defendants are on trial over allegations that the men drugged and raped her while she was unconscious over a decade. In September, Dominique accepted the charges.

"Unfortunately, anybody can be a perpetrator of violence. It can be our brothers. It can be our fathers. It can be our colleagues. It can be our bosses. I think that's the big shock for people," said Maelle Noir, representing the feminist collective Nous Toutes, which translates as All of Us, told The Associated Press news agency at the Paris protest.

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