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France

# Our country is in mourning and angry

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**The shooting of Nahel by a police officer at point-blank range in Nanterre has laid bare the effects of decades of discriminatory and security-based public policies targeting working-class neighbourhoods and the young people who grow up there, particularly those who are racialized and living in precarious circumstances. The escalation of violence is a dead end and must stop. The essentially repressive approach of the police, and the legislative changes introduced in 2017 on the use of service weapons, are exacerbating what the population is experiencing and suffering from in terms of discrimination and racist practices.**

The tensions between the public and the police have a long history, marked by injustice, prejudice, violence, discrimination, sexism and a systemic racism that permeates the whole of society and has still not been eradicated.

The residents of the neighbourhoods concerned, and women in particular, often have to make up the shortfall in public services on their own. It is the decline in these services - schools, social and cultural facilities, sports facilities, the post office, administrative services, etc. - and the reduction in state support for voluntary organizations, which have largely contributed to the marginalization of these neighbourhoods and of entire regions far beyond, particularly in the French overseas territories.

The abandonment of these neighbourhoods is exacerbated by the economic context of impoverishment, inflation, rising rents and energy prices, and the reform of unemployment insurance. Social inequalities particularly affect children and single mothers. This is borne out by the uprisings that have shaken working-class neighbourhoods in recent days in reaction to the tragedy in Nanterre.

In addition to decades of excesses in policing policies, security laws (the Global Security Act, the Separatism Act, etc.) and emergency measures, in recent days we have witnessed pressure from the government to introduce expeditious justice. Systematic preventive detention with increasingly harsh sentences is unacceptable!

The urgent need is not for repression, which will only strengthen the extreme right and set back rights and freedoms once again.

Lasting peace is only possible if the government takes the necessary measures to respond to the urgency of the situation and the demands of the people concerned.

The UN has repeatedly criticized security policies and the institutional problems of racism in France, particularly in the police force.

Discrimination is a toxic poison that undermines the very idea of equality and sows despair.

The far right uses it to divide society even further. We condemn the call for civil war against working-class neighbourhoods and the description of people from these neighbourhoods as "harmful" by police unions.

We condemn the setting up of a fund in support of the policeman who killed Nahel on the initiative of a member of the far right and the lack of any action by the government, thus adding fuel to the fire.

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Everything needs to be rethought and built upon. We need to start from new foundations, create broad forums for discussion and learn from the mistakes of decades of public policy, while respecting the histories, backgrounds, cultures and singularities that fuel our collective aspiration for equality. It is high time we listened to and took into account the demands of the people living in working-class neighbourhoods, especially young people!

The situation requires the government to shoulder its responsibilities and come up with immediate solutions to end the confrontation:

- repeal of the 2017 law relaxing the rules on the use of firearms by law enforcement officers;
- an in-depth reform of the police, their intervention techniques and their weapons;
- replacing the IGPN (Inspection générale de la Police nationale) with a body that is independent of the police hierarchy and the government;
- the creation of a department dedicated to discrimination against young people within the administrative authority chaired by the Human Rights Defender, and the strengthening of resources to combat racism, including within the police force.

However, nothing can be done without a different distribution of wealth, without combating social inequalities. Nothing can be done without the fight against poverty and insecurity, exacerbated by climate change and rising rents and charges, and without strengthening public services and popular education. These are the issues that the government should be tackling, instead of pursuing regressive public policies that provide fertile ground for the far right.

Our trade unions, associations, collectives, committees and political parties are mobilizing to safeguard public and individual freedoms.

For the time being, we are calling for people to join all the rallies and marches organized around these demands, throughout the country from Wednesday 5 July, following the example of the march organized by the Comité Vérité et Justice pour Adama on 8 July, in Beaumont-sur-Oise, and the march organized by the Coordination Nationale contre les violences policières on 15 July.

We are calling for citizens' marches on Saturday 8 July throughout France and the overseas territories.

We will be working together on the follow-up to these marches.

*5 July 2023*

### **Signatories**

#### **Trade unions:**

CGT,  
CNT-Solidarité Ouvrière,  
Fédération Syndicale Étudiante (FSE),

FSU,  
Solidaires Étudiant-e-s,  
Syndicat des Avocats de France,  
UNEF le syndicat étudiant  
Union Syndicale Solidaires,  
Union Étudiante,

### **Associations:**

350.org,  
Adelphi'Cit ,  
Amnesty International France,  
Alternatiba,  
Alternatiba Paris,  
Les Amis de la Terre France,  
ANV-COP21,  
ATTAC France,  
Bagag rue,  
Conscience,  
Coudes   Coudes,  
DAL Droit au Logement,  
La Fabrique D coloniale,  
FASTI (F d ration des Associations de Solidarit  avec Tou-te-s les Immigr s-e-s),  
F d ration Nationale de la Libre Pens e,  
F d ration nationale des maisons des potes,  
Femmes  galit ,  
Fondation Copernic,  
Gisti (Groupe d'information et de soutien des immigr s-es),  
Greenpeace France,  
Jeune Garde Antifasciste,  
LDH (Ligue des droits de l'Homme),  
Memorial 98,  
Observatoire nationale de l'extr me-droite,  
Organisation de Solidarit  Trans (OST),  
Planning familial,  
R seau d'Actions contre l'Antis mitisme et tous les racismes-RAAR,  
REVES Jeunes,  
SOS Racisme,

### **Collectives:**

Alliances et Convergences,  
Assemblée des Gilets Jaunes de Lyon & Environs,  
Col re L gitime,  
Collectif civgTENON,  
Collectif des  coles de Marseille (le CeM),  
Collectif national pour les Droits des Femmes,  
Collectif Nouvelle Vague,  
Collectif V rit  et Justice pour Safyatou, Salif et Ilan,  
Collective des m res isol es,

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Comité des Soulèvements de la Terre Sud-Essonne,  
Comité Local de Soutien aux Soulèvements de la Terre Aude,  
Comité Soulèvement Bas-Vivarais,  
Comité les Soulèvements de la Terre Lyon et environs,  
Comité local de soutien aux Soulèvements de la Terre Villefranche,  
Comité local de soutien aux Soulèvements de la Terre Romans-sur-Isère,  
Comité nîmois de soutien aux Soulèvements de la Terre,  
Comité de soutien à Moussé Blé,  
Comité justice et vérité pour Mahamadou,  
Comité Les Lichens Ardéchois,  
Comité Vérité et Justice pour Adama,  
Coordination des comités pour la défense des quartiers populaires,  
Démocra'psy,  
Dernière Rénovation,  
En Gare,  
Justice pour Othmane,  
La Révolution est en marche,  
Lla Terre se soulève en Corrèze,  
Le Peuple Uni,  
Les Soulèvements de la Terre - comité Île-de-France,  
Les Soulèvements de l'Entre2Mers (33),  
Lyon en lutte,  
Lyon Insurrection,  
Nîmes Révoltée,  
Réseau GBM,  
Rejoignons-nous,  
Collectif du 5 novembre - Noailles en colère (Marseille),  
Syndicat des quartiers populaires de Marseille,  
Collectif Justice pour Claude Jean-Pierre,  
Youth for Climate IDF,

### **Political organizations:**

ENSEMBLE! – Mouvement pour une Alternative de Gauche, Écologiste et Solidaire,  
Europe Ecologie Les Verts (EELV)  
La France insoumise (LFI),  
Front Uni des Immigrations et des quartiers populaires (FUIQP),  
Gauche Ecosocialiste (GES),  
Génération.s (G.s),  
Nouveau parti anticapitaliste (NPA),  
Parti Communiste des Ouvriers de France (PCOF),  
Parti de Gauche (PG),  
Pour une Écologie Populaire et Sociale (PEPS),  
Parti Ouvrier Indépendant (POI)  
Réseau Bastille,  
Révolution Écologique pour le Vivant (REV),  
Union communiste libertaire (UCL),

*The appeal can be consulted for example on the website of [Solidaires](#).*

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