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France

Leucate: NPA activists protest against the burkini bans

- News from around the world -

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Between 100 and 350 militants of the New Anti-Capitalist Party (NPA) demonstrated Thursday in the streets of Leucate station (Aude) during the summer school of their party, to denounce municipal decrees prohibiting the burkini, reports an AFP photographer.

The party has been holding its annual gathering since Tuesday in this seaside resort on the Mediterranean, where the mayor on August 17 made issued a decree banning on its beaches this outfit covering the body and head worn by some Muslims.

100 (according to police) and 350 militants and sympathizers of the NPA (according to the organizers) marched through the streets, some carrying signs "No to Islamophobia" and "No to the burkini ban" and others NPA flags.

The march then moved to the beach where some of the protesters bathed fully dressed, then left to rally outside the local town hall of Port-Leucate.

"Our summer university is held in a city where the mayor has seen fit to issue an order prohibiting the burkini on the beach. We could not remain passive," NPA spokesperson Christine Poupin told Agence France Presse

"This does not correspond to a situation, it is not to address a problem but to create a problem, create an artificial debate whose goal is always the same, stigmatize Muslims," she continued, citing "an act of pure racism." "We wanted to say that in any case it is for women to decide" she concluded, calling for a "very broad mobilization" against these bans.

The highest French administrative court decided on Thursday that it would issue a ruling on the ban on the burkini on several beaches, which is controversial in France and abroad, and reveals differences within the executive and of the left in government. [1]

Thirty towns, mainly in the Alpes-Maritimes and the Var, have issued an order of this type up to 24 August.

Leucate (France), August 25, 2016

Agence France-Presse

[1] Two women ministers, Marisol Touraine, Minister of Health and, Najat Vallaud-Belkacem, Minister of Education, spoke out against the ban. Manuel Valls the Prime Minister immediately responded to Vallaud-Belkacem criticising her statement.