
France braces for fifth straight weekend of 'yellow vest' rallies

14/12/2018



Security services intend to deploy the same numbers and strength as last weekend, with about 8,000 officers in Paris.

Anticipating a fifth straight weekend of violent [protests](#), Paris' police chief has said that armoured vehicles and thousands of officers will be deployed again in the French capital.

Michel Delpuech told RTL radio that security services intend to deploy the same numbers and strength as last weekend, with about 8,000 officers and 14 armoured vehicles in Paris on Saturday and Sunday.

Delpuech said the biggest difference will be the deployment of more groups of patrol officers to catch vandals, who last weekend roamed streets around the Champs Elysees, causing damage and looting.

Police arrested more than 1,000 people in Paris last weekend and 135 people were injured, including 17 police officers.

A sixth "[yellow vest](#)" protester was killed this week, hit by a truck at a protest roadblock.

Despite calls from authorities urging protesters - who wear the fluorescent safety vests that [France](#) requires drivers to keep in their cars - to stop the protests, the movement rocking the country has shown no signs of abating.

"Last week, we pretty much handled the yellow vests but we also witnessed scenes of breakage and looting by criminals," Delpuech said.

"Our goal will be to better control this aspect."

Further climb-downs?

Elected in May 2017 on a promise to revitalise the sluggish French economy, President [Emmanuel Macron](#) had previously vowed not to be swayed by mass protests like his predecessors.

But he announced a [climb-down](#) on the hated fuel tax rise last week and further concessions appear to be on the cards.

However, the president refused to back down on another policy that is deeply unpopular among the "yellow vests": his decision to scrap a tax on assets for France's richest.

Many protesters have expressed disappointment at the measures and some trade unions are now calling for rolling strikes across the country.

"The best action is to go on strike," said Philippe Martinez, the head of leftist trade union CGT.

"There are inequalities in this country and we need to make big company bosses pay."

The protesters overwhelmingly hail from rural and small-town France but have a range of different goals - from lower taxes to Macron's resignation - making his attempted negotiations with them all the more difficult.