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Ongoing Social Unrest in France

F-2023-06-30a

Classification: TLP:CLEAR

Criticality: High

Intelligence Requirements: Social Unrest, Protest

June 30, 2023

Scope Note

ZeroFox Intelligence is derived from a variety of sources, including—but not limited to—curated open-source accesses, vetted social media, proprietary data sources, and direct access to threat actors and groups through covert communication channels. Information relied upon to complete any report cannot always be independently verified. As such, ZeroFox applies rigorous analytic standards and tradecraft in accordance with best practices and includes caveat language and source citations to clearly identify the veracity of our Intelligence reporting and substantiate our assessments and recommendations. All sources used in this particular Intelligence product were **identified prior to 1:00 PM (EDT) on June 30, 2023**; per cyber hygiene best practices, caution is advised when clicking on any third-party links.

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> Key Findings

- Widespread social unrest continues throughout France, including protests and riots.
- The activity is anticipated to continue through the next several days, including on July 1, when a funeral for a teen shot by police is slated to occur.
- Several countries have released travel warnings about the disruptions and violence for the next several days.
- Protest activity has begun to spread to other countries as well, starting in Belgium.

| Analyst Commentary

As of June 30, 2023, France continues to experience widespread unrest in the wake of a shooting death of a teen by a police officer in the Paris suburb of Nanterre, allegedly during a traffic stop. ZeroFox's Geopolitical Working Group has been closely tracking the protests and riots that have occurred nationwide for three consecutive nights, with widespread destruction of property, including vehicles and businesses. Over 875 people have so far been arrested in connection with the violence.¹² In a statement regarding the

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¹ [hXXps://www.lemonde\[.\]fr/en/france/article/2023/06/30/french-pm-says-all-options-being-considered-to-restore-order_6040117_7.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/en/france/article/2023/06/30/french-pm-says-all-options-being-considered-to-restore-order_6040117_7.html)

² [hXXps://www.wsj\[.\]com/articles/french-riots-escalate-as-macron-struggles-to-respond-2ebbd315](https://www.wsj.com/articles/french-riots-escalate-as-macron-struggles-to-respond-2ebbd315)

events, President Emmanuel Macron said that about a third of those arrested for rioting were “very young” individuals and urged parents to keep any children “at home” if they intend to protest outside. President Macron also urged social media companies such as TikTok and Snapchat to take down “sensitive content” that had been shared online and provide authorities with the names of people who use social media to organize violent events.³

Overnight, multiple reports on social media showed riots and looting across France. In the Chatelet Les Halles shopping mall in central Paris, retail stores were allegedly broken into, and several people were arrested. Footage from Nanterre, where the mayor confirmed the funeral of the shooting victim, Nahel M., on July 1, showed torched cars and barricades. In Lyon, a tram was reportedly set on fire, and a dozen buses were destroyed in a depot in Aubervilliers in northern Paris. The facade of the adjacent Aubervilliers aquatic center, where training will take place for the 2024 Olympics, was reportedly slightly damaged in the fire. Overall, the Interior Ministry reported a total of 6,000 fires throughout France on the night of June 29, with an estimated 500 buildings damaged.⁴

In response to the recent riots, President Macron reportedly announced new measures, including the cancellation of some festivities in the most sensitive areas, more resources for the interior ministry to investigate rioters, and a call to regulate social media activity calling for looting.⁵ On June 30, local reports indicated that French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin requested that all bus and tram services across the country cease at 9:00 PM.⁶ Darmanin also reportedly requested that businesses stop selling gasoline and other flammable materials currently.⁷ In response to widespread unrest, the French Directorate General of Civil Aviation announced that from June 28–June 30, Beauvais Airport, located

³ [hXXps://www.bbc\[.\]com/news/world-europe-66069080](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-66069080)

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[hXXps://www.lemonde\[.\]fr/societe/live/2023/06/30/emeutes-apres-la-mort-de-nahel-m-en-direct-eric-dupond-moretti-appelle-a-une-reponse-judiciaire-ferme-y-compris-pour-les-parents_6179556_3224.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/live/2023/06/30/emeutes-apres-la-mort-de-nahel-m-en-direct-eric-dupond-moretti-appelle-a-une-reponse-judiciaire-ferme-y-compris-pour-les-parents_6179556_3224.html)

⁵ [hXXps://twitter\[.\]com/France24_en/status/1674757684493467648](https://twitter.com/France24_en/status/1674757684493467648)

⁶ [hXXps://www.bbc\[.\]com/news/live/world-europe-66049895](https://www.bbc.com/news/live/world-europe-66049895)

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[hXXps://apnews\[.\]com/article/france-police-shooting-nanterre-nahel-9ec58a1219c943b9dd09c41db405c41b](https://apnews.com/article/france-police-shooting-nanterre-nahel-9ec58a1219c943b9dd09c41db405c41b)

approximately 75 kilometers (45 miles) north of central Paris, will experience disruptions.⁸ In addition, major events like concerts have been canceled across France, while organizers of the Tour de France said they would adapt their logistics if needed. Paris metro, which usually runs an hour later over the weekend, will stop services according to the workday schedule.⁹

On June 30, simultaneous 8:00 PM protests will reportedly occur in most major urban areas across France.¹⁰ Additional demonstrations during the weekend of June 30–July 2 are all but certain. Demonstrations may start peacefully but could become violent with little notice, and clashes with police at some or all of these events are possible.

In addition, Brussels, Belgium, witnessed spillover protests on the night of June 29 sparked by the ongoing unrest in France. A total of 64 people were arrested following riots in the Anneessens neighborhood of the capital.¹¹ Further demonstrations are expected on the evening of June 30, and the Brussels police chief has instituted the “highest level of ground response” to prevent further violence and property damage.¹²

Several countries, including Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States, have warned their respective citizens of the potential for widespread violence and significant travel disruptions in the coming days. Italian and British authorities advised of the possibility of curfews and spontaneous demonstrations throughout France. Due to the unpredictability of disruptive events, the advisories urged travelers to follow the media, avoid areas where riots are taking place, and follow the authorities' recommendations.¹³¹⁴¹⁵

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[hXXps://wfin\[.\]com/fox-world-news/france-riots-what-vacationers-need-to-know-as-violent-protests-continue/](https://wfin.com/fox-world-news/france-riots-what-vacationers-need-to-know-as-violent-protests-continue/)

⁹ [hXXps://www.bbc\[.\]com/news/live/world-europe-66049895](https://www.bbc.com/news/live/world-europe-66049895)

¹⁰ [hXXps://twitter\[.\]com/bobxiing/status/1674718316018176000](https://twitter.com/bobxiing/status/1674718316018176000)

¹¹

[hXXps://www.brusselstimes\[.\]com/brussels-2/580149/death-of-nahel-64-arrested-in-brussels-as-mass-riots-spread-over-france](https://www.brusselstimes.com/brussels-2/580149/death-of-nahel-64-arrested-in-brussels-as-mass-riots-spread-over-france)

¹²

[hXXps://www.brusselstimes\[.\]com/581042/death-of-nahel-belgian-pm-breaks-his-silence-on-brussels-protests](https://www.brusselstimes.com/581042/death-of-nahel-belgian-pm-breaks-his-silence-on-brussels-protests)

¹³ [hXXps://fr.usembassy\[.\]gov/security-alert-u-s-embassy-paris-france-june-29-2023/](https://fr.usembassy.gov/security-alert-u-s-embassy-paris-france-june-29-2023/)

¹⁴ [hXXps://www.gov\[.\]uk/foreign-travel-advice/france](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/france)

¹⁵ [hXXps://www.viaggiaresicuri\[.\]it/find-country/country/FRA](https://www.viaggiaresicuri.it/find-country/country/FRA)

| Appendix: Traffic Light Protocol for Information Dissemination

	Red	Amber
WHEN SHOULD IT BE USED?	Sources may use TLP:RED when information cannot be effectively acted upon by additional parties and could lead to impacts on a party's privacy, reputation, or operations if misused.	Sources may use TLP:AMBER when information requires support to be effectively acted upon but carries risks to privacy, reputation, or operations if shared outside of the organizations involved.
HOW MAY IT BE SHARED?	Recipients may NOT share TLP:RED with any parties outside of the specific exchange, meeting, or conversation in which it is originally disclosed.	Recipients may ONLY share TLP:AMBER information with members of their own organization and its clients, but only on a need-to-know basis to protect their organization and its clients and prevent further harm. Note that TLP:AMBER+STRICT restricts sharing to the organization only.
	Green	Clear
WHEN SHOULD IT BE USED?	Sources may use TLP:GREEN when information is useful for the awareness of all participating organizations, as well as with peers within the broader community or sector.	Sources may use TLP:CLEAR when information carries minimal or no risk of misuse in accordance with applicable rules and procedures for public release.
HOW MAY IT BE SHARED?	Recipients may share TLP:GREEN information with peers and partner organizations within their sector or community but not via publicly accessible channels.	Recipients may share TLP:CLEAR information without restriction, subject to copyright controls.