



Protesters call Macron a tyrant following brutal new COVID-19 mandates

Description

FRANCE: France's parliament on Monday approved a law mandating vaccination for all healthcare workers and special virus passes for all restaurants and domestic travels, prompting protests and political tensions in the country. *CBS News* reported that the law requires all workers in the health care sector to [get vaccinated by September 15](#) or risk suspension. It also required a "health pass" to enter restaurants, public transportation, or other public venues. The measures, which were met with protests and political tensions initially applied only to adults but will apply to those 12 years old and older beginning September 30.

President Emmanuel Macron and the French government said that these measures are necessary to protect vulnerable populations and hospitals to avoid more lockdowns.

To get the pass, individuals must have proof of full vaccination, recently tested negative or recently recovered from the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Paper or digital documents will be accepted, and a decree will follow, outlining how to handle documents from other countries.

Unveiled only six days before its approval, lawmakers worked to reach a compromise, which was approved by the Senate on Sunday night, and by the National Assembly after midnight. Depending on the pandemic situation, the rules will initially be applied for two months, through November 15.

Law met with protests, pushback

Macron appealed for mass vaccination to fight virus resurgence. However, the decision was met with protests from those with anti-vaccination sentiments of about 160,000 people protesting around France.

Macron, however, urged for national unity. He asked, "What is your freedom worth if you say to me 'I don't want to be vaccinated,' but tomorrow you infect your father, your mother or myself?"

He said that while protesters are free to express themselves in a calm and respectful manner, he did criticize those "who are in the business of irrational, sometimes cynical, manipulative mobilization" against vaccination. Among those organizing the protests are far-right politicians and extremists who are tapping into their anger at Macron's government. (Related: [French police use tear gas to disperse protesters opposing new COVID-19 mandates](#))

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Demonstrators carried placards denouncing Macron as a tyrant, with demonstrators chanting “freedom, freedom,” “Big Pharma shackles freedom,” or “No to the pass of shame.”

After the protests, *Politico* reported that the [government made concessions](#), to the law, including lowering fines for noncompliance, postponing deadlines and changing some rules for shopping malls.

A separate report from *Al Jazeera* also said that a similar scheme in Italy, called “[green pass](#)” also sparked angry demonstrators from Rome, Naples, and Turin. The green pass will be needed in Italy early next month for individuals to eat in restaurants and visit cinemas without wearing masks, however, the turnout was lower than expected.

Thousands of protesters also described a similar law as an “erosion of civil liberties,” saying that the UK government’s track and trace app is limiting their movements as over 600,000 individuals were told to self-isolate in one week this month.

French government tackles rising cases

This move, according to *Al Jazeera*, came as a move to [tackle rising cases](#) of infections, fueled by the spread of the delta variant, which was first detected in India.

Separately, Macron also announced on Monday that the number of vaccinated individuals who received at least one dose of vaccine has already crossed the 40-million mark. This means that some 60 percent of the population are now partly or fully vaccinated.

Authorities also cautioned that the increase in cases in France meant that the country officially entered its fourth wave of infections, with the death toll standing at more than 111,000 people. However, intensive care cases have dropped dramatically since their peak in April, with the government accrediting the improvement due to the vaccine rollout.

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