

French Forces Launch Major Crackdown in New Caledonia's Restive Capital



People wait in line to buy provisions from a supermarket as charred items previously set on fire are seen following overnight unrest in the Magenta district of Noumea, France's Pacific territory of New Caledonia, on May 18, 2024.

PARIS (Dispatches) – French forces launched a major crackdown on Sunday to regain control of a road linking New Caledonia's capital Noumea to the main international airport, after a sixth night of violent unrest.

Officials said more than 600 heavily armed gendarmes were dispatched to secure Route Territoriale 1, the main artery connecting the restive capital with air links to the outside world.

Furthermore, plans for the Olympic torch relay to pass through the French territory were cancelled.

The flame had been scheduled to arrive on June 11 but French Sports Minister Amélie Oueda-Castera

said that "priority must be given to a return to calm" in the territory.

"I think that everyone understands, given the context, that the priority really is to consolidate the return to public order, and then to appeasement.

Six people have been killed and hundreds injured since rioting began on Monday, according to local authorities.

The violence has been fuelled by economic malaise, ethnic tensions and long-standing opposition to French rule on the Pacific archipelago.

A nighttime curfew, state of emergency, ban on TikTok and arrival of hundreds of troops from

mainland France failed to prevent more unrest overnight Saturday to Sunday.

Unidentified groups set two fires and raided a petrol station, according to the office of New Caledonia's high commissioner.

But authorities insisted the situation is improving.

"The night has been calmer," the commissioner's office said.

Local media reported a public library was among the buildings burned.

The mayor's office told AFP there was "no way of confirming for the moment" as the "neighborhood remains inaccessible".

For almost a week, protesters have set vehicles, shops, industrial sites and public buildings alight, while pro-independence forces have blocked access to Tontouta International Airport.

A local business group estimated the damage, concentrated around Noumea, at more than 200 million euros (\$200 million).

AFP reporters attempted to reach the airport on Sunday but were stopped by groups blocking access at several locations.

Flights to and from New Caledonia's main island have been cancelled since the unrest began, stranding an estimated 3,200 travellers and cutting off the trade route.

Four Killed, Three Injured in U.S. Mass Shootings

COLUMBUS, Ohio (Dispatches) – Two overnight shootings in Columbus resulted in four people killed, including three in a mass shooting on the north side.

Columbus police said they received reports of a shooting at 2:35 am at the intersection of East 5th Avenue and Summit Street, which is located between Weinland Park and Italian Village north of Downtown Columbus.

Police said six people were shot with three pronounced dead, one in critical condition, and two in stable condition. The three people who died were identified as Malachi Pee, 27, Da'ondre Bullock, 18, and Garcia Dixon Jr., 26. Two of the men were pronounced dead at the scene, while the third died at the hospital. The three other victims are expected to survive their injuries, police said.

East 5th Avenue from North High Street to North 4th Street was closed for most of Saturday along with Summit Street from East 7th Avenue to 3rd Avenue.

Police are continuing to investigate the shooting and the circumstances surrounding it.

"It was something like a scene from the movie as you would never want to see happen in real life, honestly," Daquian Williams, a resident who saw the shooting, said.

Williams lives next door to where the shooting happened, saying he has



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felt sadness and pain in the air since then.

"(I) honestly think this is a cry for help," he said. "It's a cry that we need to come together. We need to learn mentally. This is my daughter. This is what we got to do for. We have kids that live in all of these neighborhoods, no matter where we're at in this city. And that's our future."

Roughly two hours prior, an unrelated shooting occurred in east Columbus. Police received a report of the shooting at 12:35 a.m. at the 4100 block of Vineshire Drive. In a Saturday morning update, Columbus police said that two men were celebrating the birthday of 34-year-old Tyler Goins

when an argument began.

During the argument, one of the men, 30-year-old Alsaiah Griffin, pulled out a gun and fatally shot Goins, who was pronounced dead by medics at 12:46 a.m., according to police. Griffin surrendered to police and was charged with murder. Police said Griffin initially fled the scene but returned to surrender to police.

According to data compiled by Gun Violence Archive (GVA), the United States averages two mass shootings a day.

GVA data shows that more than 42,000 people in the United States died as a result of gun violence in 2023.

Russia Strikes Ukraine's Kharkiv, Zelensky Demands More Supplies

KHARKIV (Reuters/TASS) – Russia struck a busy lakeside resort on the edge of Ukraine's second largest city on Sunday and also attacked villages in the surrounding region, killing at least 11 people and wounding scores.

The missile strikes were the latest in what have been recent Russian attacks in recent weeks on the Kharkiv region of northeastern Ukraine, where Russian troops have launched an offensive.

Prosecutors said six people were killed there, one was still missing and 27 wounded. Rescuers said the initial strike was followed by a second strike around 20 minutes later, targeting emergency crews at the scene in a

so-called "double tap".

Another five people were killed and 9 injured later in the day in two villages in Kupiansk district. Local governor Oleh Syniehubov said Russian forces shelled two villages of the district with a self-propelled multiple rocket launcher.

President Volodymyr Zelensky again called on Western allies to supply Kyiv with additional air systems to protect Kharkiv and other cities.

"The world can stop Russian terror - and to do so, the lack of political will among leaders must be overcome," Zelensky said on Telegram.

"Two Patriots for Kharkiv will make a fundamental difference," he said, referring to Patriot missile de-

fense systems. Air defense systems for other cities and sufficient support for soldiers on the front line would ensure Russia's defeat, the president added.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said it is time for Ukraine to recognize the realities on the ground and for the West to stop sacrificing Ukraine for its futile goals.

"It is time for Kiev ... to recognize the realities on the ground. I hope that this message, which has been repeated many times, will be understood, and the West will realize that it is time to stop sacrificing Ukraine for its absolutely futile goals," he said in an interview with the program "Moscow.

Japan's Hiroshima, Nagasaki Lodge Protest on U.S. Nuclear Test



A-bomb survivors, peace organization members and others protest the United States' subcritical nuclear tests before the cenotaph for A-bomb victims at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park in the city's Naka Ward on April 13, 2022.

TOKYO (Dispatches) – The administrations of Japan's Hiroshima and Nagasaki prefectures have lodged a protest to Washington over the latter's recent subcritical nuclear experiment at the Nevada National Security Site.

Earlier this week, the United States successfully executed another subcritical experiment to allegedly provide essential data on the behavior of materials used in nuclear warheads, the U.S. Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration said. The authority said that the experiment was consistent with the U.S.'s self-imposed moratorium on nuclear explosive testing and did not create a self-sustaining, supercritical. "Such a conduct is totally unacceptable as it betrays the wishes of the hibakusha [victims of the U.S. atomic bombings in Japan] who have been appealing that 'no one else should suffer as we have,' and

millions of others who seek the abolition of nuclear weapons. On behalf of the atomic-bombed city of Hiroshima, I vehemently protest and demand that all future nuclear tests be cancelled," Hiroshima City Mayor Matsui Kazumi said in his letter to U.S. President Joe Biden and U.S. Ambassador to Japan Rahm Emanuel on Saturday.

Nagasaki Governor Kengo Oishi and Nagasaki City Mayor Shiro Suzuki have also sent similar letters to the White House and the U.S. ambassador, Japanese media reported.

On August 6 and 9, 1945, the U.S. dropped two atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Around 220,000 people – mostly civilians – were killed in the attacks and 200,000 more died from deadly radiation exposure. The two cities' residential structures were mostly burned and destroyed in the detonations.

100,000 Affected by Climate Protest That Shut Munich Airport

MUNICH (DPA) – Members of the German climate activist group Last Generation breached Munich Airport's tarmac and glued themselves to a taxiway, disrupting travel for more than 100,000 passengers by forcing the airport to temporarily close on a busy holiday weekend.

The airport in southern Germany, the nation's second largest, shut down completely at 5:19 am (0319 GMT) on Saturday and remained so for nearly two hours, Bavaria's Interior Minister Joachim Herrmann said (CSU).

The airport association said more than 100,000 passengers were affected. Several aircraft had to be diverted to other airports. An aircraft with an emergency patient on board was only able to land 20 minutes late as a result, authorities said.

Officials said that 60 flights at the airport were cancelled on Saturday following the protest action that shut down the airport for nearly two hours.

The terminals in Munich had been very full, as it was a holiday weekend, airport spokesman Robert Wilhelm told dpa.

The new protest action triggered a wave of criticism from politicians.

"This was yet another absolutely brainless action by climate chaotic people. Interfering with air traffic with such blockades - and at the start of the travelling season - is not only reckless, but also potentially endangers the lives of many people," said Herrmann, from the conservative Bavarian CSU party.

Interior Minister Nancy Faeser, writing on X, said, "Such criminal actions jeopardize air traffic and harm climate protection because they only provoke incomprehension and anger." She called for the perpetrators to be "prosecuted and the protective measures at the airport must be reviewed."

Transport Minister Volker Wissing said: "This is not a legitimate protest, but a targeted intervention in air traffic." He said people are at risk if air

traffic isn't safe and it also risks economic damage. He called for the Aviation Security Act "to be tightened."

Airport Association (ADV) Managing Director Ralph Beisel called for tougher criminal penalties.

The airport was initially closed for security reasons, airport officials and the federal police said.

After about two hours, one of the two runways was reopened, followed by the second runway around an hour later.

Around 1,000 take-offs and landings were planned in Munich on Saturday, an airport spokesman said. Due to the tight timing of flights, delays continue even when runways are reopened. Passengers flying out of the airport on Saturday should check with their airline he recommended.

The Last Generation reported on X that six people sat down in groups of two at different locations at the Munich Airport.

Numerous police officers and firefighters were on site to remove the activists. According to Herrmann, the six activists, as well as two others who had not made it onto the tarmac, were detained. They are being investigated and could face prison sentences.

The climate activists cut the security fence in four places at the same time and eight tried to enter the site simultaneously from the four different points, a spokesman for the federal police said.

Munich Airport had expected a large number of holidaymakers, with a total of around 350,000 passengers expected from Friday to Sunday. The airport were to handle 2,860 flights during this period.

Overall, 7% more flights were registered during the Whitsun holidays, the second major travel wave of the year after Easter, than in the previous year, the airport reported before the start of the holiday.

Many countries, including Germany, have a holiday on the day after Pentecost Sunday, or Whitsun, which marks 50 days after Easter.

News in Brief

KINSHASA (AFP) – The DR Congo military on Sunday thwarted an attempted coup near the offices of President Felix Tshisekedi in Kinshasa involving "foreigners and Congolese," the army spokesperson said. The coup bid took place in the early hours outside the residence of economy minister Vital Kamerhe, in the Gombe area in the north of the capital, near president's offices at the Palais de la Nation. "An attempted coup d'etat has been stopped by the defence and security forces," said General Sylvain Ekenge in a message broadcast on national television. He added that the "foreigners and Congolese ... including their leader" would "all no longer cause any harm". Shots were also heard near the Palais de la Nation at the time of the coup attempt, according to a number of sources. Ekenge did not give any more details on the coup attempt. AFP also contacted official sources but has so far received no reply. The situation was calm in the city later in the morning, AFP journalists reported.

LONDON (Reuters) – A British court could give a final decision on Monday on whether WikiLeaks' founder Julian Assange should be extradited to the United States over the mass leak of secret U.S. documents, the culmination of 13 years of legal battles and detentions. Two judges at the High Court in London are set to rule on whether the court is satisfied by U.S. assurances that Assange, 52, would not face the death penalty and could rely on the First Amendment right to free speech if he faced a U.S. trial for spying. Assange's legal team say he could be on a plane across the Atlantic within 24 hours of the decision, could be released from jail, or his case could yet again be bogged down in months of legal battles. "I have the sense that anything could happen at this stage," his wife Stella said last week. "Julian could be extradited, or he could be freed." She said her husband hoped to be in court for the crucial hearing.

LONDON (The Daily Mail) – Pharmacists are warning of shortages of crucial whooping cough antibiotics amid the biggest outbreak in more than a decade. Five babies have died of the highly contagious disease, with confirmed cases this year more than three times the total for the whole of 2023. But Dr Leyla Hannbeck, chief executive of the Association of Independent Multiple Pharmacies, said chemists were having to turn parents away because a surge in demand for antibiotics had caused pharmacies to run out of stock. Pharmacists report struggling to get hold of the liquid form of clarithromycin, one of the main drugs recommended for children, and say supplies had been low for months. Dr Hannbeck told The Mail on Sunday, "We have had an ongoing problem with the supply of common antibiotics for two years now and this current epidemic of whooping cough is putting an additional strain on supplies."

MOSCOW (TASS) – Preparations for Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to Pyongyang are ongoing, Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov told TASS on Sunday. "Preparations for the visit are proceeding at their own pace," he said. Peskov added Putin's meeting earlier on Saturday with Natural Resources and Environment Minister Alexander Kozlov, who heads the intergovernmental commission on cooperation with the North Korea, was unrelated to the preparations for the visit. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un invited Putin to visit his country when he traveled to Russia in September. It was reported earlier that the countries would work to set a time for Putin's trip. Kim visited Russia amid heightened tensions on the Korean Peninsula, which had seen recurring missile launches by Pyongyang as well as military drills involving South Korean and U.S. troops.

JAKARTA (Reuters) – A volcano on the remote Indonesian island of Halmahera has spectacularly erupted, spewing a grey ash cloud into the sky, and people from seven nearby villages have been evacuated, authorities said on Sunday. Mt. Ibu erupted on Saturday evening, sending ash 4 km (2.5 miles) high, as streaks of purple lightning flashed around its crater, according to information and images shared by Indonesia's volcanology agency. A joint team comprised of police, military and search and rescue officials was dispatched to the area to evacuate residents from surrounding villages, Abdul Muhari, from the disaster mitigation agency, said in a statement. Photos shared by the disaster agency showed authorities assisting the elderly, while other residents were moved in pick-up trucks and accommodated in emergency tents for the night. The agency did not provide any information about how many people had been moved, but authorities have recommended that a seven-km (4.35-mile) radius be cleared.

BUDAPEST (Xinhua) – Two people were killed and five others went missing after two boats collided on a river near the Hungarian capital Budapest, local police said Sunday. A hotel ship collided with a small boat on the Danube River near the village of Veroco, 55 km north of Budapest, causing the fatalities, the police said. The incident came to light Saturday night when a man with a head injury was found near Veroco. Police then initiated a search operation using drones and found a man's body on the shore south of Veroco, said Soma Csecsi, spokesperson for the Budapest Police Headquarters. A woman's body was found later in the Danube River near the Megyeri Bridge. Among the eight adults on the small craft, five went missing, Csecsi added. An investigation into the accident remains ongoing.