

France in Turmoil

A prayer guide for a nation in unrest · 20 October 2026

THE SITUATION

France is reeling from its worst unrest in years. What began in late September as lycée protests over teacher shortages, crowded classes and crumbling school buildings has grown into a nationwide movement against the cost of living, joined by university students, trade unions and former 'yellow vests'. On Saturday 17 October around 550,000 people marched, largely peacefully, but as night fell masked groups looted shops, set cars alight and attacked public buildings. Limoges' 143-year-old town hall was gutted by fire, Lyon's tourist office was torched, and in Marseille rioters invaded the town hall, ransacked a police station and broke into churches. Nearly 2,400 people were arrested and about 1,000 police and gendarmes injured; a protester died from a cardiac arrest in Paris, and teenagers have been seriously hurt by police munitions. Curfews now cover parts of Paris. Behind the anger lie political paralysis, a minority government seeking €54 billion of savings in a contested budget, and a presidential election six months away. Further protests are called for 24 October and strikes for 5 November.

PRAYER POINTS

Pray for... Leaders

Pray for President Macron, Prime Minister Lecornu and members of the National Assembly in a divided National Assembly. Ask God to give them wisdom, humility to listen to legitimate grievances, and courage to seek a just budget and lasting reconciliation as cross-party talks begin this week. 1 Timothy 2:1–2

Pray for... Protection

Pray for police, gendarmes and firefighters facing violence during the unrest, and for restraint and integrity in their use of force. Pray for healing for the injured on every side, including the teenagers who have suffered life-changing wounds, and comfort for grieving families. Psalm 121:7–8

Pray for... Young people

Pray for secondary-school and university students anxious about their schools and their future. May their concerns be heard, may they turn away from those who would exploit their anger, and may they discover a hope that does not disappoint, found in Jesus. Jeremiah 29:11

Pray for... Restoration

Pray for shopkeepers, families and towns counting the cost in Limoges, Lyon, Marseille, Bordeaux and Paris. Ask for comfort, practical help, and neighbours coming together to clean up and rebuild, so that streets marked by fear become places of welcome again. Isaiah 61:4

Pray for... Peacemakers

Pray for churches across France, including those broken into, to be peacemakers in their streets: serving neighbours, building bridges between divided communities and pointing people to the Prince of Peace during this time of uncertainty. Matthew 5:9

More information

- [Why have France's school protests become a wider political crisis? \(Al Jazeera\)](#)
- [France hit by worst unrest in years \(CNBC\)](#)
- [French Church leaders urge peace among protests \(Aleteia\)](#)