



Liberation, Not Repression: Macron Must Start Listening to the indigenous people of Kanaky-New Caledonia

MEDIA STATEMENT

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The people of Kanaky-New Caledonia have spoken, saying yet again, any and all attempts to determine the future relationship between France and the territory, by force, and without its people, will never be accepted.

The Pacific groups, and solidarity partners therefore strongly support the affirmation of the FLNKS and other pro-independence groups that responding to the current crisis in a political and non-repressive, non-violent manner is the only pathway towards a viable solution. Macron must heed the call for an Eminent Persons Group (EPG) to ensure the current crisis is resolved peacefully and impartiality is restored to the decolonisation process for the occupied territory.

A week after violence broke out in Kanaky-New Caledonia in mid-May, President Emmanuel Macron flew 10,000 miles to defuse tensions with pro-independence groups and to restore calm. Following his departure, FLNKS representatives and other pro-independence voices are neither convinced of the effectiveness of his visit nor of the genuineness of his intentions.

While we commend efforts on all sides to restore calm as well as assurances by the French

President to withdraw the controversial electoral bill that prompted the violent turn of events in the territory, we deplore:

- the ongoing deployment of additional police and armed forces into the territory bringing the total number of troops to more than 3000 in just 2 weeks, and with more to come; and
- increasing brutal treatment and repressive force by French Police and other armed units against Kanaky youth.

On good authority, we understand that there is consideration by the Macron Government to put the question of whether or not to unfreeze local electorate rolls, which will dilute the indigenous and pro-independence vote, to a referendum in France.

We are also reliably informed that the July 2024 deadlines, earlier prescribed by Macron for local parties to agree on a political formula to move the territory forward beyond the Noumea Accords timeframes, remains unchanged.

These measures can only perpetuate the cycle of repression that continues to impede the territory's decolonisation process and are to be condemned in the strongest terms!

The pace and pathway for an amicable resolution of Kanaky-New Caledonia's decolonisation challenges cannot, and must not continue to be dictated in Paris.

During the events of May 1988, this same behaviour by the French authorities – the stubborn refusal to listen to the indigenous people, the imposition of colonial will, and the use of armed force – resulted in the Ouvea Massacre, bloodshed that could and should have been avoided.

We recall these painful memories with hope that the loss of life, some 36 years ago, will not be in vain.

Moreover, the recent loss of life and livelihoods, and ultimately, continuing to withhold full sovereignty from the people of Kanaky-New Caledonia, and indeed other French 'dependencies' in the region, cannot now, or ever, be the price to pay for all unfulfilled political, geopolitical and strategic aspirations Macron still holds in our Blue Pacific region.

The Alliance, along with partners and solidarity movements, commends Pacific Governments, political institutions, church, elders and community leaders who have spoken up in support of peaceful resolution to the crisis and ultimately for the liberation of Kanaky-New Caledonia from colonial rule.

In view of the upcoming United Nations Special Committee on Decolonisation (C24) substantive session in New York from the 10th - 21st June, we implore our Pacific governments, especially our permanent Missions to the United Nations and the Fiji and Papua New Guinea representatives on the C24, to ensure Kanaky-New Caledonia is not prematurely removed from the UN list of Territories to be decolonised but that the process of decolonisation be appropriately concluded.

In solidarity with the FLNKS and other pro-independence voices in Kanaky-New Caledonia, the Pacific groups and solidarity partners call:

1. For the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the draft constitutional law seeking to unfreeze the local electorate roll;
2. On the French Government to reconsider, as an essential step to de-escalating tensions in the territory, any further deployment of armed forces to Kanaky-New Caledonia;
3. On the French Presidency to cease any further attempts to enforce externally designed and controlled pathways to determine the political future of Kanaky-New Caledonia, including a possible referendum in France on the option of unfreezing the territory's electorate roll;
4. On other parties to the Noumea Accord to heed the repeated and non-violent requests of the FLNKS and other pro-independence voices, over the last 2-3 years, to allow more conducive conditions for dialogue and negotiation for a better political agreement, and to give the process all the time necessary to do so; and
5. For the urgent establishment, in collaboration with the Pacific Islands Forum and the UN, of an Eminent Persons Group comprising French, Pacific Islands and international personalities to mediate between the parties and ensure the best conditions to enable a just and peaceful dialogue process for the territory's political future.

Endorsed By

- **Pacific Elders' Voice**
- **Alliance for Future Generations**
- **PYC- Pacific Youth Council**
- **Citizens' Constitutional Forum**
- **Peace Movement Aotearoa**
- **Pacific Women Mediators Network**
- **PARC- Pacific Asia Resource Center**
- **TNYC- Tuvalu National Youth Council**
- **SEEP- Social Empowerment and Education Program**
- **Kia Mau**
- **Kanaky Aotearoa Solidarity**
- **Vanuatu National Youth Council**
- **Aid/Watch**
- **YWCA- Fiji Young Women's Christian Association**
- **FemLINKpacific**
- **350 Aotearoa**
- **Te Kuaka**
- **AAPS- Australian Association for Pacific Studies**
- **CSFT- Civil Society Forum of Tonga**
- **MILDA - Melanesian Indigenous Land Defense Alliance**
- **FWCC- Fiji Women's Crisis Centre**

- **DIVA- Diverse Voices and Action for Equality**
- **FWRM- Fiji Women's Rights Movement**
- **Elsham Papua**
- **Kewita Learning Initiatives**
- **PAHAM Papua legal Aid**
- **FCOSS - Fiji Council of Social Services**
- **LLCTC-Lauru Land Conference of Tribunal Communities**
- **PCC - Pacific Conference of Churches**
- **Youngsolwara Pacific**
- **PANG - Pacific Network on Globalisation**
- **PIANGO- Pacific Islands Association of Non-governmental Organizations**