

RIOTS IN PARIS BEFORE PENSION REFORM RULING

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all their last hopes in this institution.

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Friday, April 14th, was long awaited by the opponents of the pension reform because on this date, the Constitutional Council must issue its opinion on the much-decried reform. Several spontaneous demonstrations have been recorded throughout the country. In Paris, rioters besieged the headquarters of the luxury brand Louis Vuitton on the evening of April 13th. On the morning of April 14th, the Constitutional Council building was placed under police surveillance pending the verdict.

The opinion of the Constitutional Council—one of the highest authorities of the Fifth Republic, which rules on the conformity of laws with the French constitution—is eagerly awaited by opponents of the reform, who have placed their last hopes in this institution. A negative opinion from the Council is their last chance in the institutional process to have all or part of the law retested.

In addition to its possible criticism of the law, the Constitutional Council must also rule on the possibility of organising a popular initiative referendum on the adopted law. During Emmanuel Macron's two terms in office, the Constitutional Council has generally shown itself to be perfectly [aligned with the government](#), especially during COVID, with only partial censures of voted texts, to the point that the president's political opponents, like Marine Le Pen, have criticised the institution's [lack of independence](#).

From the morning of Friday, April 14th, the Constitutional Council building in the heart of Paris, just a stone's throw from the Louvre, was surrounded by police with [an impressive security detail](#), including riot barriers. The police prefecture has banned all demonstrations around the building but spontaneous gatherings have already been reported.

Demonstrators, including French General Confederation of Labour (CGT) trade unionists, gather in front of the Louis Vuitton store and headquarters after they occupied the fashion store on the Montaigne avenue in Paris on April 13, 2023, during a demonstration on the 12th day of action after the government pushed a pensions reform through parliament without a vote, using the article 49.3 of the constitution. - France faced nationwide protests and strikes on April 13, 2023, to denounce the French government's pension reform on the eve of a ruling from France's Constitutional Council on the reform. (Photo by Thomas SAMSON / AFP)

President Emmanuel Macron was due to visit the construction site of the Notre-Dame de Paris cathedral in the late morning of April 14th. This site has also been evacuated and surrounded by police. Elsewhere in France, [roadblocks](#) were reported in several regions.

The previous evening, on April 13th, striking railway workers improvised a surprise demonstration by marching from the Gare de Lyon in the eastern part of the capital to the prestigious Avenue Montaigne, home to some of the most luxurious shops in Paris—two blocks from the Champs-Élysées. They invaded the headquarters of LVMH (Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy), France's leading luxury brand and the property of billionaire Bernard Arnault, who was honoured a few days ago with the title of [the world's richest man](#). The rioters threw smoke bombs into the building, but no serious damage was done. They chanted anti-capitalist slogans such as “there is money in the pockets of the bosses” and “we will go until the law is withdrawn” before leaving the building.