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'We didn't listen to people': French PM admits mistakes in dealing with Yellow Vest rallies

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French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe has acknowledged that the government made mistakes while handling the massive Yellow Vest protests that have gripped the country for the past five weeks.

*"We made mistakes. We did not listen enough to the French people. I remain convinced that they want this country to be transformed,"* he [told](#) Les Echos newspaper on Sunday.

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Violence at the demonstrations has been hitting record levels with hundreds of protesters injured since November 17. At least seven people died during the protests. Police officers have also suffered injuries.

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French cities descended into chaos, with protesters smashing store windows, looting, overturning cars, and burning barricades. City centers were shrouded in

fog from tear gas, smoke grenades and firecrackers. Earlier in December, Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire admitted that the protests were a “*catastrophe*” for the country's economy and businesses.

[READ MORE: Protests turn violent as Yellow Vests clash with police \(PHOTOS, VIDEO\)](#)

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There was massive security at the rallies, with tens of thousands of police officers deployed. Heavy armored vehicles belonging to French Gendarmerie – military police – rolled in the streets of the capital and several other cities. The number of those detained throughout the protests has surpassed 4,500.

People initially protested against fuel-price hikes due to come into force this January. The government has since abandoned those plans, but demonstrators continued to demand more concessions, including lower taxes and even the resignation of Emmanuel Macron.

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