

## **Protests in Paris Universities Amid European Elections and Middle East Peace Efforts**

At Sorbonne University in Paris on 29 April 2024, pro-Palestinian students protested, echoing similar events at U.S. universities. Demonstrators gathered outside waving a Palestinian flag and briefly occupied university facilities while some students set up tents in the courtyard, demanding an immediate halt to Israeli military actions in Gaza, which is in its seventh month.

Protestors criticized French President Emmanuel Macron for his perceived inaction and indifference. Similar pro-Palestinian demonstrations were held at Sciences Po on Friday 26 April 2024, where students blocked access to a campus building using makeshift barricades, including garbage cans, a bicycle, and wooden platforms. President Emmanuel Macron chose this place to deliver a speech on his vision for Europe, ahead of the European Union Elections.

According to a participant, the police action during the protest was labeled as harsh due to some protesters being forcefully brought to the ground. However, there were no reported arrests. The demonstrators showed support for similar protests taking place in universities worldwide, including those in the United States and other countries.

According to reports, French politicians from the La France Insoumise (LFI) party supported the protests. Valérie Pécresse, the head of the Paris region and a member of the right-wing Les Républicains, criticized the protests, attributing them to a radical minority and accusing LFI of inciting anti-Semitic hatred.

Given the upcoming European Parliament elections scheduled to take place from Thu, 6 June–Sun, 9 June 2024, it is important to note that demonstrations during this time could pose considerable risks and law and order problems. In addition, such events have the potential to disrupt local businesses and cause disturbances in nearby areas, leading to impeded supply chains, travel disruptions, and disturbances in residential areas. It is crucial to take necessary precautions to mitigate these risks and ensure the safety of all parties involved.

Moreover, these protests have the potential to sway public opinion and impact election results, which could have destabilizing effects on the political landscape in France. The likelihood of such protests gaining momentum among universities is high, similar to the situation in the United States.