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## **Fifth night of riots in Paris suburb**

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**2 November, 2005**

## **THE ARTICLE**

### **Fifth night of riots in Paris suburb**

The troubled Paris suburb of Clichy-sous-Bois has suffered its fifth consecutive night of rioting as angry mobs engaged with police in pitched street battles. Gangs of youths hurled Molotov cocktails, chunks of paving stones and debris left over from the previous night's unrest. The police responded with tear gas and baton charges to try and quell the violence and disperse the angry crowds. Eleven cars were set ablaze and twelve people were arrested. The level of violence had decreased somewhat from the intensity and rage of the first four nights. However, a worrying development was news of the rioting spreading to neighboring suburbs. Gangs of youths in nearby Montfermeil torched a police garage, destroying two patrol cars.

The violence is in response to the deaths of two youths, aged 15 and 17, who were electrocuted when they scrambled over a fence into an electrical relay station and touched the high voltage transformers. Furious residents maintain the boys were being chased by the police, but authorities strongly deny this. Clichy-sous-Bois has a sizeable and largely deprived immigrant community. Local residents complain of persistent police harassment. Tensions have been running high since the accidental electrocutions and escalated after a police tear gas canister hit the local mosque. France's interior minister, Nicolas Sarkozy, has promised a firm crackdown on any further unrest. He also said he would launch an inquiry into the deaths of the two teenagers.

## **WARM-UPS**

**1. COMPLAINTS:** In pairs / groups, talk about the things in life you are unhappy with, that perhaps make you angry. These could be about your partner, family, friends or job. Talk also about what people in your town and country are angry about. What do you do about your anger?

**2. SOCIAL UNREST:** Look at the following possible causes of social unrest. Talk about them with your partner(s). Have you experienced or witnessed any of these things? Talk about these things in relation to your hometown or where you live now.

- Poverty
- Slum housing
- Police harassment
- Drugs and prostitution
- Dissatisfaction with government
- Racial tensions
- Religious tensions
- Unemployment
- Environmental degradation
- Other

**3. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

*Troubles / Paris / suburbia / riots / street battles / Molotov cocktails / tear gas / rage / immigrant communities / police harassment / mosques / unrest / crackdowns*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

**4. PARIS:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with Paris. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

**5. IMMIGRANTS:** You are now a poor immigrant in a strange land. Talk with the other “immigrants” in your class about your life, your worries and fears, and about how the local people in your community treat you. What do you do every day? What can you do to improve your life?

**6. STREET PROTEST:** Would you ever take part in a riot? Which of these things would make you take to the streets? How serious are they? Do they happen in your country?

- a. Human rights violations
- b. Your president / prime minister having extra-marital sexual relations
- c. Going to war against a country that is not your enemy
- d. Your country’s immigration policy
- e. Abortion rights
- f. Excessive police harassment and brutality
- g. The doubling of income tax
- h. A law that prohibits the public wearing of religious symbols
- i. The introduction (or removal) of the death penalty

Change partners and compare what you talked about.

## **BEFORE READING / LISTENING**

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. Parisians rioted in the heart of their city for the fifth night in a row. T / F
- b. Gangs of youths drank Molotov cocktails and hurled rocks at police. T / F
- c. The level of violence was most intense on this latest night of rioting. T / F
- d. Gangs of youths torched a police station and destroyed patrol cars. T / F
- e. The violence is in response to the recent apartment fires in Paris. T / F
- f. Two boys were electrocuted after touching high voltage transformers. T / F
- g. A police tear gas canister hit a mosque and escalated tensions. T / F
- h. France's interior minister promised an inquiry into the boys' deaths. T / F

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |                |              |
|----------------|--------------|
| a. consecutive | on fire      |
| b. hurled      | heightened   |
| c. debris      | climbed      |
| d. ablaze      | impoverished |
| e. torched     | lobbed       |
| f. scrambled   | burned       |
| g. deprived    | persecution  |
| h. harassment  | successive   |
| i. escalated   | suppression  |
| j. crackdown   | rubble       |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- |                                    |                              |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| a. suffered its fifth              | immigrant community          |
| b. engaged with police in pitched  | destroying two patrol cars   |
| c. The police responded with       | street battles               |
| d. quell the violence and disperse | deny this                    |
| e. torched a police garage,        | high there                   |
| f. ...electrocuted when they       | the angry crowds             |
| g. authorities strongly            | scrambled over a fence       |
| h. a sizeable and largely deprived | consecutive night of rioting |
| i. Tensions have been running      | on any further unrest        |
| j. a firm crackdown                | tear gas and baton charges   |

## **WHILE READING / LISTENING**

**WORD ORDER:** Put the underlined words back into the correct order.

### **Fifth night of riots in Paris suburb**

The troubled Paris suburb of Clichy-sous-Bois has fifth its suffered consecutive night of rioting as angry mobs engaged with police in pitched street battles. Gangs of youths hurled Molotov cocktails, chunks of paving stones and left previous debris from over the night's unrest. The police responded with tear gas and baton charges to try and violence quell the disperse and the angry crowds. Eleven cars were set ablaze and twelve people were arrested. The level of violence had decreased somewhat and rage intensity of from the the first four nights. However, a worrying development was spreading rioting of the news to neighboring suburbs. Gangs of youths in nearby Montfermeil torched a police garage, destroying two patrol cars.

The violence is in the deaths to response of two youths, aged 15 and 17, who were electrocuted when fence they over scrambled a into an electrical relay station and touched the high voltage transformers. Furious residents maintain the boys were being chased by the police, but authorities strongly deny this. Clichy-sous-Bois has a deprived immigrant and largely sizeable community. Local residents complain of persistent police harassment. Tensions have been running high there since the accidental electrocutions tear after and escalated a gas police canister hit the local mosque. France's interior minister, Nicolas Sarkozy, has promised a firm crackdown on any further unrest. He also said he would inquiry into the launch an deaths of the two teenagers.

## **LISTENING**

Listen and fill in the spaces.

### **Fifth night of riots in Paris suburb**

The \_\_\_\_\_ Paris suburb of Clichy-sous-Bois has suffered its fifth consecutive night of rioting as angry mobs engaged with police in \_\_\_\_\_ street battles. Gangs of youths hurled \_\_\_\_\_ cocktails, chunks of paving stones and \_\_\_\_\_ left over from the previous night's unrest. The police responded with tear gas and baton charges to try and \_\_\_\_\_ the violence and disperse the angry crowds. Eleven cars were set \_\_\_\_\_ and twelve people were arrested. The level of violence had decreased somewhat from the \_\_\_\_\_ and rage of the first four nights. However, a \_\_\_\_\_ development was news of the rioting spreading to neighboring suburbs. Gangs of youths in nearby Montfermeil \_\_\_\_\_ a police garage, destroying two patrol cars.

The violence is \_\_\_\_\_ the deaths of two youths, aged 15 and 17, who were electrocuted when they scrambled over a fence into an electrical relay station and touched the \_\_\_\_\_ transformers. Furious residents maintain the boys were being chased by the police, but authorities strongly \_\_\_\_\_ this. Clichy-sous-Bois has a sizeable and largely \_\_\_\_\_ immigrant community. Local residents complain of persistent police \_\_\_\_\_. Tensions have been running high there since the accidental electrocutions and \_\_\_\_\_ after a police tear gas canister hit the local mosque. France's interior minister, Nicolas Sarkozy, has promised a firm crackdown on any further unrest. He also said he would \_\_\_\_\_ an inquiry into the deaths of the two teenagers.

## **AFTER READING / LISTENING**

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words **'launch'** and **'inquiry'**.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. WORD ORDER:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers.

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. STUDENT "SOCIAL UNREST" SURVEY:** In pairs / groups, write down questions about social unrest in cities.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

**6. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- |            |             |
|------------|-------------|
| • suffered | • response  |
| • Molotov  | • voltage   |
| • baton    | • deny      |
| • ablaze   | • sizeable  |
| • worrying | • escalated |
| • torched  | • launch    |

## **DISCUSSION**

### STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. Do you have the impression of Paris being a tolerant and cosmopolitan city?
- c. What goes through your mind when you see people rioting in the streets of cities like Paris?
- d. What goes through your mind when you see people rioting in the streets of places like Baghdad or Karachi?
- e. Has there ever been rioting in your town / country?
- f. What would you do if you saw rioters torch your car?
- g. What can the Paris police do to ease tensions in the suburbs?
- h. Do you think Nicolas Sarkozy's inquiry will help appease the local community?
- i. Should such unrest be dealt with by crackdowns or dialogue?
- j. Are the immigrant communities in your country happy?

### STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. Shouldn't the local community accept that the boys were electrocuted in a tragic accident?
- d. Do you think you could ever take to the streets?
- e. What kinds of punishments should rioters get?
- f. How should local authorities police social unrest and rioting?
- g. What are the main causes of rioting?
- h. How do you think police officers feel when trying to control a riot?
- i. Is it OK for police to use tear gas, water cannon and rubber bullets?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

**AFTER DISCUSSION:** Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?



## **SPEAKING**

**SOCIAL UNREST:** You are a government minister. The people in your country are close to boiling point over the issues below. The whole country could explode into an uncontrollable state of anarchy and rioting by the end of this class. You must find solutions to these problems. These solutions must keep the people happy and stop them from destroying the country and each other. You must do what's best for your country.

PROBLEMS	SOLUTIONS TO STOP ANARCHY BREAKING OUT
Terror suspects are being detained in prison without charge.	
Your country's leader is suspected of wide scale corruption.	
Your leader has announced he/she will declare war on a distant land accused of having nuclear designs.	
This month has seen 17 unexplained deaths of immigrants in the country's prisons.	
The government has announced plans it must double income tax for the country to survive.	
The government has announced all religions are banned and places of worship to be destroyed to reduce religious extremism.	
Your education minister has announced all English teachers must leave the country by Friday lunchtime.	

- Change partners and show each other your suggestions.
- Give each other feedback on whether these suggestions will work and offer advice on how to improve them.
- Role play the government minister giving the suggestions to the near-boiling-point citizens.
- Discuss which of the above problems are most serious.

## **HOMEWORK**

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find more information on the riots in Clichy-sous-Bois. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

**3. SOCIAL UNREST:** Write an essay on an area of your town, city or country in which tensions are always high. Describe the area and the conditions in which people live. Has there been any social unrest? Show what you wrote to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

**4. EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT:** You are a local resident of the Paris suburb Clichy-sous-Bois. Write down your eyewitness account of the violence. You saw everything from your bedroom window. Show what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

## ANSWERS

### TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F      b. F      c. F      d. T      e. F      f. T      g. T      h. T

### SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                |              |
|----------------|--------------|
| a. consecutive | successive   |
| b. hurled      | lobbed       |
| c. debris      | rubble       |
| d. ablaze      | on fire      |
| e. torched     | burned       |
| f. scrambled   | climbed      |
| g. deprived    | impoverished |
| h. harassment  | persecution  |
| i. escalated   | heightened   |
| j. crackdown   | suppression  |

### PHRASE MATCH:

- |                                    |                              |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| a. suffered its fifth              | consecutive night of rioting |
| b. engaged with police in pitched  | street battles               |
| c. The police responded with       | tear gas and baton charges   |
| d. quell the violence and disperse | the angry crowds             |
| e. torched a police garage,        | destroying two patrol cars   |
| f. ...electrocuted when they       | scrambled over a fence       |
| g. authorities strongly            | deny this                    |
| h. a sizeable and largely deprived | immigrant community          |
| i. Tensions have been running      | high there                   |
| j. a firm crackdown                | on any further unrest        |

### WORD ORDER:

#### **Fifth night of riots in Paris suburb**

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