PREDICTING THE CHAOS

France's autumn of protest through the lens of Online Video



ACTS I–IV · 17 OCTOBER – 7 NOVEMBER 2026

Emerging indicators suggest that the protest movement that began in France on 17 October is more coordinated, more geographically spread and more prone to violence than conventional reporting reflected. This report traces how calls to violence circulating on online video in the days before 31 October translated into attacks on law enforcement at Porte de Charenton, and how the same platforms openly carried the calendar of the next phase.

It also examines the spread of the movement into schools and commercial targets, the rise of an organised far-right counter-mobilisation, and the growing volume of unverified or staged footage that complicates the operational picture. This report covers Acts I to III and the preparation of Act IV, based on online video detected between 20 October and 2 November 2026.

KEY PLATFORM METRICS

32,000+ videos
related to the French protest movement identified across TikTok, Instagram and Facebook using the Senai OVINT platform.

86 users
assessed at critical risk level by the platform.

250M+ views
accumulated by the videos monitored over the sequence.

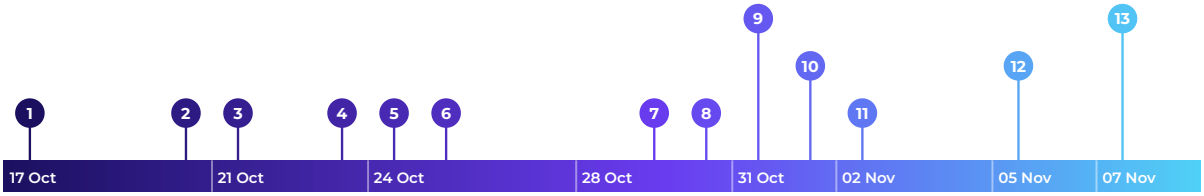
63% of red flags
in the analysed corpus (42 of 67) were posted before Act III, ahead of the violence on 31 October, demonstrating strong early-warning capability.

983 publications
flagged red for explicit incitement, glorification of attacks or other high-risk content.

8 communities
166 connected accounts grouped into eight communities, from legal support to a pro-violence anti-immigration cluster.

Source: Senai OVINT platform, Sentinel 759. Detailed analysis of 4,450 exported publications, of which 996 relevant (888 TikTok, 88 Instagram, 20 Facebook; 50.7M views). Participation and arrest figures from press reporting.

THE MOBILISATION: Numbered event timeline

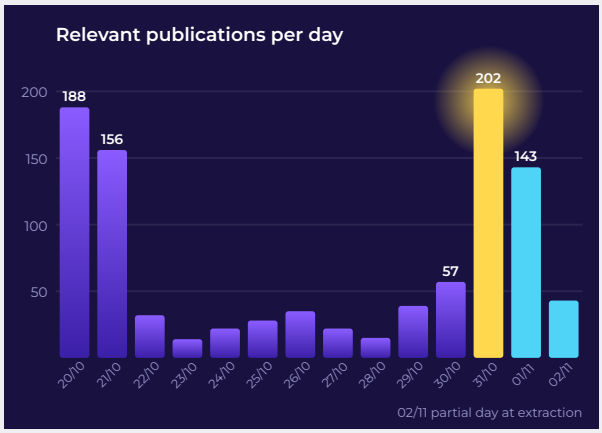


Timeline Key

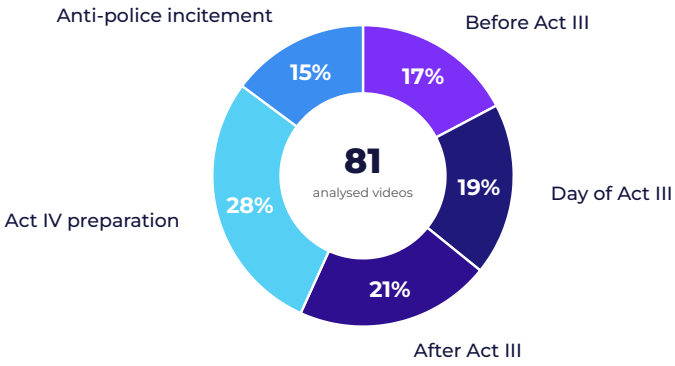
1. Act I, first national day
2. Protective gear advice circulates
3. "Everyone dressed as CRS" idea
4. Police van attack glorified
5. Act II
6. Call to wear CRS uniforms
7. Far-right Telegram alert
8. "Kill cops" call, police warning
9. Act III, Porte de Charenton
10. Molotov reel, weekly calendar
11. Lycée blockades resume
12. General strike begins
13. Act IV in Paris and regions



Online video signals mentioning French cities, 20/10/2026 – 02/11/2026. Dark markers: cities named in the corpus without a significant count.



Daily volume of relevant publications, 20/10/2026 – 02/11/2026. Act III on 31 October is the peak of the sequence.



Analysed video evidence by phase (81 videos reviewed in detail)

KEY INSIGHTS

• Calls to violence detected online before 31 October materialised on the ground: fireworks mortars and incendiary devices were fired at law enforcement at Porte de Charenton at the end of the Paris march.

• Online video provided a clear early-warning window, with explicit calls to "kill cops" and to disguise as riot police circulating days before Act III.

• The movement is no longer confined to the street: within 48 hours, mortars, fires and alleged Molotov cocktails were reported outside lycées, and luxury-store looting was promoted as a model to copy.

• An organised far-right counter-mobilisation, including militia recruitment and Telegram coordination across 16 cities, raises the risk of clashes between opposing camps.

• Unverified and staged footage circulates alongside authentic evidence, reinforcing the need for rigorous geolocation and verification before acting on viral claims.

• The next phase was published openly: lycée blockades on 2–3 November, a general strike on 5–6 November and Act IV on Saturday 7 November.

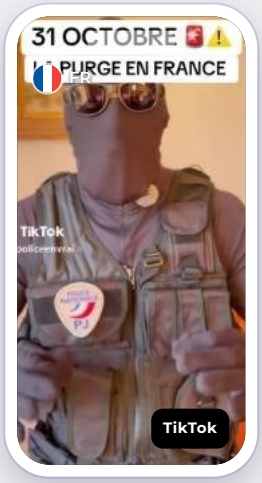
FROM CALLS TO ACTION: THE ROAD TO 31 OCTOBER

Since the first national day on 17 October, **Senai has identified** a steadily rising volume of incitement across online video platforms. Between 20 and 30 October, 608 relevant publications accumulating 38.2 million views were detected, 42 of them flagged red. Three signals dominated: explicit calls to attack the police, the viral idea of disguising as riot police or firefighters, and alerts announcing a far-right mobilisation for the same day.

The most widely viewed incitement was far from marginal. A TikTok video promoting 24 October as "Doomsday" and declaring that "the CRS are dead" reached 87,000 views; another, glorifying an attack on a police van and the seizure of police batons, passed 120,000. On 30 October, a video calling for "killing cops" during the Halloween march gathered 83,000 views within a day.

Among the most explicit signals were posts framing 31 October as a night of "Purge", relaying calls to "sow chaos" and loot shops, alongside dated and located meeting points in regional cities. The idea of blending into police lines, first floated on 21 October (77,000 views), was relayed on 25 October with a call to dress as CRS officers or firefighters "so they can't hit us" (62,000 views).

Posts announcing 31 October as a "Purge" night and a 14:30 meeting point in Nîmes, published 28–30/10/2026



30/10 · 5.5K views



28/10 · 2.2K views

The State's response was visible on the same platforms. The Police nationale's official warning against calls to violence, vandalism and looting on 31 October reached 472,000 views, the most watched single piece of content of the preparation phase, but with no visible effect on the incitement circulating alongside it.

PORTE DE CHARENTON: WHAT VIDEO SHOWED FIRST

On 31 October, according to press figures, 320,000 people demonstrated across France, including 70,000 in Paris according to the Interior Ministry, and 565 arrests had been recorded by 21:00. **Senai detected** 202 relevant publications that day, the highest daily volume of the whole sequence, totalling 6.7 million views.

The decisive footage came from online video. Short Instagram posts filmed at the end of the Paris march, at Porte de Charenton in the 12th arrondissement, documented masked individuals firing fireworks mortars and throwing projectiles and incendiary devices at law enforcement, with two gendarmes reported in flames. These posts were among the first accounts of the evening and shaped the narrative of the days that followed.

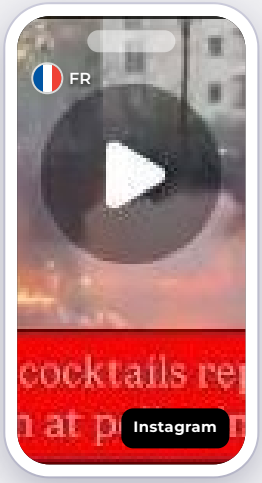
At 20:01, **Senai identified** one of the first posts of the evening: a march "degenerating" at Porte de Charenton, incendiary devices launched at law enforcement and a police officer catching fire. A second post at 20:33 relayed reports of Molotov cocktails thrown at police, with an explicit caveat that they were unconfirmed.

The footage also captures the end-of-march pattern that would be reused afterwards: dispersal, masked groups, mortars fired directly at police lines, then smoke and fire.

First Instagram posts documenting the attacks at Porte de Charenton, evening of 31/10/2026



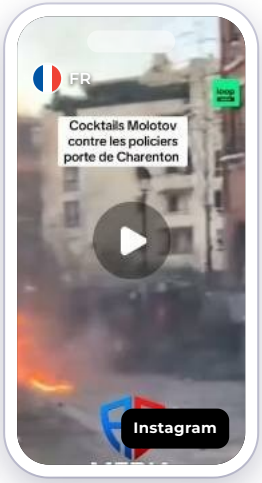
31/10 · 20:01



31/10 · 20:33



31/10 · 15.7K views



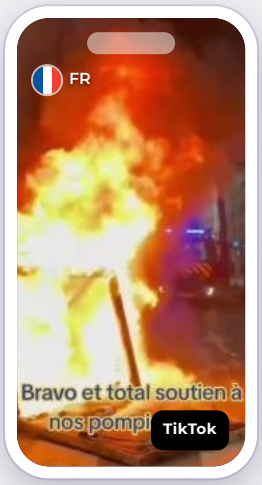
01/11 · 03:35

At 03:35, a reel showing a Molotov cocktail exploding on a CRS officer became the defining image of the night, framed as "attempted murder" and as evidence of State laxity. The Interior Minister himself spoke of attempted murder.

This framing drove a second wave of circulation: 186 relevant publications between 1 and 2 November, totalling 5.8 million views. Reconstructions, songs and humorous clips reused the same images, giving the Charenton modus operandi a strong **imitation value** for the acts to come.

BEYOND PARIS

Footage from 31 October shows the same end-of-march pattern repeated in other cities. In Lyon, the second hotspot of the day, firefighters were filmed extinguishing a fire attributed to protesters, after a TikTok post addressed to the city's protesters had announced the intention to come only to "break everything". In Marseille, night-time footage shows street fires and a helicopter or drone searchlight sweeping the crowd. In Paris, tear gas reached a crowded Line 6 metro carriage around 19:00, with families on board.



Lyon · 31/10 · 16K views



Marseille · 31/10

Online mentions confirm the national footprint of the sequence. Paris dominates with 344 relevant publications, ahead of Marseille (71) and Lyon (48). Within Paris, four sites structure the movement: Bastille (58), Porte de Bagnolet (33), Porte de Charenton (33) and République (31).

Smaller signals extend the map to Toulouse, Limoges, Nantes, Nîmes, Perpignan, Bordeaux, Metz and Strasbourg, with protesters in Metz filmed surrounding police officers to free other demonstrators.

VERIFYING WHAT CIRCULATES

Not every viral claim holds up. Alongside authentic footage, **Senai detected** a significant volume of content whose attribution could not be confirmed. The highest-scoring video of the entire corpus (risk score 0.86) was filmed outside a lycée in Nantes on 2 November, its author asserting that Molotov cocktails were being thrown and that there was fire inside the school. The visible frames show no device or fire, and no other source in the corpus corroborates the claim.

A second example circulated on 1 November: a dramatic sequence of a Paris square engulfed in smoke, with voices chanting that they will "shoot at them". The caption describes it as an "RP riot", meaning role-play, which suggests staged or game-generated footage. Reports of a tram station set on fire in Bordeaux and of a town hall "entirely burned" in Limoges were likewise carried by single accounts.

Route information was also distorted: maps presented as the "official route the police did not want to show" (17,000 views) and contradictory accounts of a court-validated Bastille–Nation route ("D-Day", 36,000 views) blurred the picture for participants.



Nantes · 02/11 · unverified



01/11 · "RP" footage

Corroborated by press reports, institutional accounts and numerous videos, the attacks at Porte de Charenton are assessed by **Senai** with high confidence. The Nantes, Bordeaux and Limoges claims remain unverified, a reminder of how quickly unconfirmed footage can distort situational awareness without deeper verification.

FROM THE STREET TO SCHOOLS AND STOREFRONTS

Within 48 hours of Act III, the violence spread to two new arenas. The return to school on 2 November was marked by blockades in many cities: a TikTok video ranking the seven most affected departments reached 279,000 views and mentioned mortars exploding inside a lycée. Students filmed black smoke, mortar fire and a large blaze in front of school gates, and a blockade at a lycée in Épinay was followed by a call to "keep going all the way".



02/11 · 279K views



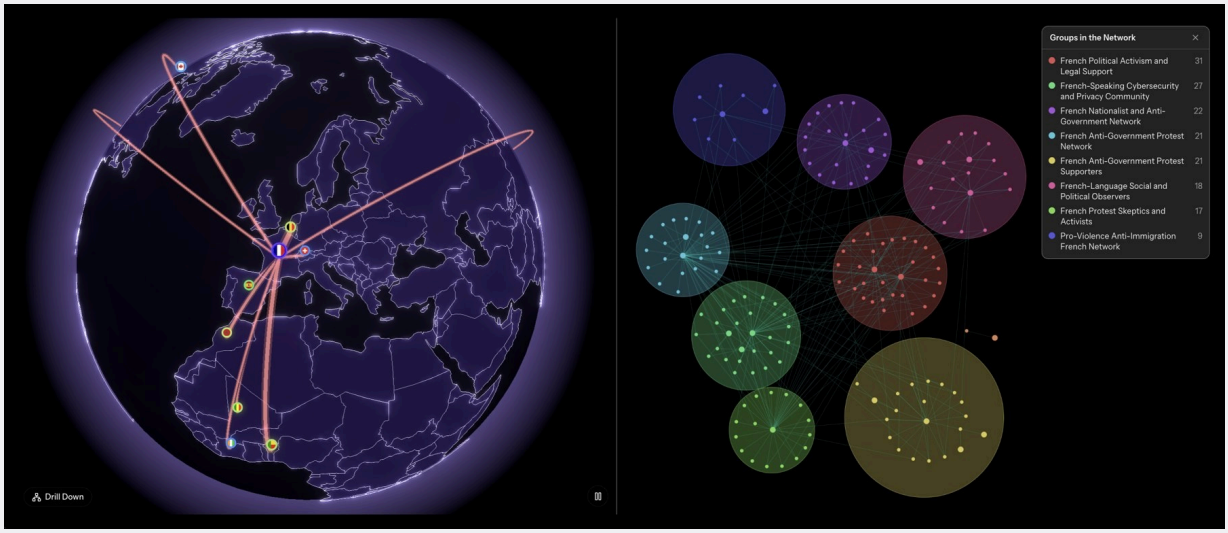
Marseille · 49K views

At the same time, looting was promoted as replicable. A video describing an attempted crowbar break-in at a Paris luxury watch store reached 174,000 views, while footage presented as the looting of Rolex, Hermès and Louis Vuitton boutiques in Marseille reached 49,000.

A chant of "Shoot the police!" filmed during the Paris march passed 109,000 views, showing how music and humour normalise anti-police violence among a young audience.

THE COUNTER-MOBILISATION

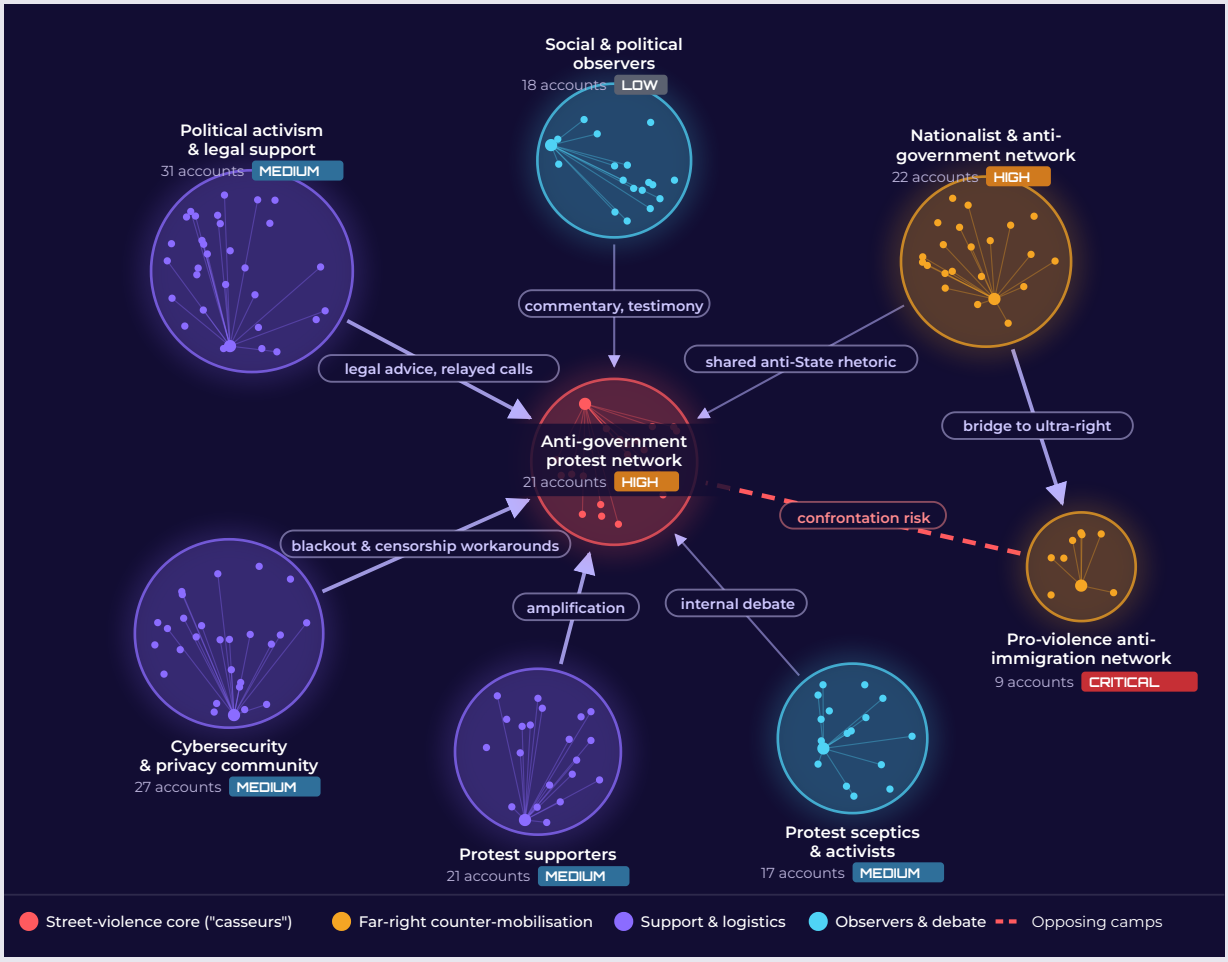
Senai identified a parallel far-right mobilisation building over the same period. On 28 October, a video describing an ultra-right militia invited viewers to "join our ranks" (90,000 views). The next day, another warned that far-right groups were coordinating on Telegram across 16 cities to take to the streets on 31 October and target people "not ethnically French" (68,000 views). On 31 October, a protester said she was struck after asking a far-right group to leave the march. Accounts presenting themselves as patriots called for protecting shops, for publishing the faces of suspected rioters (#balancetoncasseur, 31,000 views) and for giving the army, RAID and GIGN "carte blanche".



Senai connection graph of the monitored accounts. Outbound links to Canada, Belgium, Switzerland, Spain, Morocco and West and Central Africa point to francophone audiences abroad rather than demonstrated foreign coordination.

INSIDE THE NETWORK

Network analysis groups 166 connected accounts into eight communities. Read by behaviour rather than by declared affiliation, they form four families: a **street-violence core** that carries calls to vandalism, blockades and anti-police content; a **support and logistics** layer that supplies legal advice, workarounds and amplification; **observers** who comment on and debate the movement; and a **far-right counter-mobilisation** positioned against it.



Schematic view of the eight communities detected by Senai. Bubble size reflects the number of accounts; lines show the relationships identified in the analysis, not measured link volumes. Risk levels are analyst assessments.

The street-violence core (21 accounts) is small but central: every other community connects to it. The two largest communities, political activism and legal support (31) and a francophone cybersecurity and privacy community (27), do not call for violence themselves but form the movement's logistical backbone, circulating legal instructions and ways around blackouts and censorship.

The far-right side combines a nationalist, anti-government community (22) that acts as a bridge to the ultra-right and a nine-account pro-violence, anti-immigration cluster combining militia rhetoric and Telegram coordination. Small but rated **critical**, it is the main driver of the risk of clashes between camps.

No community in the data is defined by far-left affiliation: radical-left media and slogans appear among the relays of the protest core rather than as a separate cluster. "Casseurs" designates the behaviour observed in the content (calls to vandalism and attacks), not an organised group.

ACT IV: THE NEXT DATE IS ALREADY SET

Unlike Act III, Act IV was announced in advance and in detail. Between 29 October and 2 November, 143 publications totalling 6.8 million views referenced 7 November, the 5 November strike or the school blockades. They converge on a single calendar: lycée blockades on 2 and 3 November, an unlimited interprofessional general strike on 5 and 6 November, then Act IV on Saturday 7 November.

The calendar was carried by high-reach accounts. A video summarising the week's programme reached 1.06 million views; another, coordinating school and university blockades with the strike, reached 508,000. In Rennes, a call to build student and interprofessional assemblies to "bring down Macron" reached 165,000.

Dated meeting points were published for Toulouse (Jean-Jaurès, 14:00), and a video from Reims announced a "wildcat protest" for Saturday 7 November, the only explicit call in the corpus to an undeclared demonstration that day.



29/10 · 9.5K views



Reims · 02/11

Act IV programme poster and Reims call for a "wildcat protest", published 29/10 – 02/11/2026

SENAI ASSESSMENT

Senai assesses the overall sequence at a **CRITICAL** threat level. For 7 November taken in isolation, the risk is assessed as **HIGH**, with a possible shift to critical at the end of the Paris march. The corpus contains no dated plan for violence on 7 November apart from the Reims call, but the Charenton modus operandi, an audience mobilised by several million views and an active counter-mobilisation make a repeat plausible.

Confidence: high on observed facts, moderate on the 7 November forecast.

INDICATORS TO WATCH

- Publication of a Paris meeting point for 7 November, in particular a call to an undeclared demonstration.
- Return of "Purge" or "Doomsday" slogans, or of police disguises, associated with Act IV.
- Renewed far-right calls to "go down" into cities, and antifascist counter-calls.
- Images of mortars, fires or incendiary devices outside lycées during the week of 2 to 6 November.
- Announcements of targeted luxury-store looting or of attacks on journalists.

Method: monitoring of Senai Sentinel 759 (32,000+ videos). Publications from 20 October to 2 November 2026 were filtered on mobilisation keywords, red flags and risk scores, classified by phase (Paris time) and reviewed by an analyst. Severity levels are analyst assessments. Reach is measured in cumulative views. 2 November was a partial day at extraction. Participation and arrest figures come from press reporting and may evolve.