

Press Release

A wave of repression in France against the environmental movement - Attempts to dissolve Les Soulèvements de la Terre

Friday 23 June 2023, by [Les Soulèvements de la Terre](#) (Date first published: 21 June 2023).

In France, over the past two weeks, more than thirty arrests have been made in environmentalist circles, and attempts have been made to dissolve Les Soulèvements de la Terre, despite the fact that more than 100,000 people have publicly claimed to belong to the movement, and despite the support of dozens of trade unions, farmers' organisations, associations, parties, MPs, senators and intellectuals.

A wave of repression is currently sweeping across France against the environmental movement, following, in particular, a campaign against cement manufacturer Lafarge and the dissolution of Soulèvements de la Terre.

Lafarge is one of the country's largest companies, and one of the biggest emitters of CO₂. It makes a decisive contribution to the massive process of extractivism and land artificialisation, which profoundly affects water tables and destroys hedged farmland, wetlands, and forests at a time of global warming. But Lafarge is not just an ecocidal company. It has also been accused of financing various terrorist organisations, including the Islamic State.

On Tuesday 18 October, the Lafarge group, which is now controlled by the Swiss firm Holcim, pleaded guilty to financing the Islamic State (ISIS) and agreed to pay \$778 million (€790 million) to the US Department of Justice in exchange for a stay of proceedings in the United States. In France, the company has been indicted as a legal entity, along with eight of its senior executives, for "financing a terrorist undertaking", "complicity in crimes against humanity" and "endangering the lives of others". They are suspected of having financed several terrorist organisations, including the Islamic State, between 2011 and 2015 to ensure the continuity of their operation in Syria.

A major campaign led by environmental activists in France and Switzerland has been underway in France since 2020. Last December, 200 activists invaded and defaced an empty Lafarge plant in Marseille.

Over the past two weeks, more than thirty arrests have been made in environmentalist circles, led by the Anti-Terrorist Sub-Directorate, which had not reserved such a fate for Lafarge executives. These arrests took place against a broader backdrop of very strong mobilisation in France, particularly around the issue of water grabbing and mega-reservoir projects. This led Gérald Darmanin, the Minister of the Interior and kingpin of the French government's authoritarian turn, to dissolve Les Soulèvements de la Terre, one of the largest of these movements, despite the fact that more than 100,000 people have publicly claimed to belong to the movement, and despite the support of dozens

of trade unions, farmers' organisations, associations, parties, MPs, senators and intellectuals.

A press conference organised by Soulèvements de la Terre and its supporters will be held today, Wednesday 21 June at 5pm in front of the Conseil d'État, 1 place du Palais royal.

Press Release from Soulèvements de la Terre

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P.S.

• Blog post. Verso Books, 21 June 2023:

<https://www.versobooks.com/en-gb/blogs/news/press-release-from-soulevements-de-la-terre>