

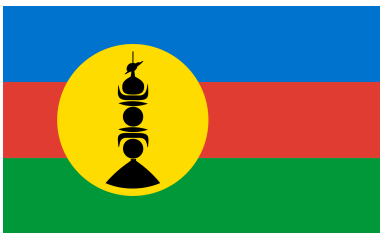
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Kanaky

# Kanaky: the era of colonies must end

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**The Senate vote on the constitutional bill concerning New Caledonia marks a new stage in the erosion of the Kanak people's right to self-determination. Behind an institutional veneer, the government is pursuing a strategy of strong-arming, which must be stopped by mobilization.**

On February 24, 215 senators gathered in Paris and voted in favour of "the constitutional bill relating to New Caledonia," with 41 votes against and 89 abstentions. The right wing supported the text, the socialist group abstained—except for one senator from Guadeloupe—while the Communist and Green senators, including FLNKS senator Robert Wienie Xowie, voted against it—as did the three RN senators, but on the grounds that it "opens, without saying so, the door to independence," a claim that is, to say the least, exaggerated.

## Another attempt to force the issue...

This is becoming the hallmark of the Macron governments on this issue. Darmanin and Lecornu are showing zeal to put an end to the Matignon-Oudinot (1988) and Nouméa (1998) agreements, which recognized the right to self-determination of the Kanak people and opened a path towards independence.

In 2018, the first referendum was held, despite the absence of 22,000 Kanaks from the electoral roll. The second referendum in 2020 showed a significant increase in the pro-independence vote. The third, in 2021, was held against the wishes of the independence movement, which had requested a postponement due to the post-Covid mourning period, leading to Kanaks refusing to participate. Yet it was this referendum that served as the basis for the plan to unfreeze the electoral roll, intended to make Kanaks →a minority in their own territory.

In May 2024, the presentation of the bill to the National Assembly triggered a Kanak youth uprising, which was repressed using the worst colonial methods: 13 Kanaks killed, hundreds injured, 2,235 arrested and imprisoned, including seven pro-independence leaders deported to France. In a community of just over 110,000 people, the scale of the repression was considerable, hitting those most affected by precarious living conditions, difficulties accessing employment and housing, and, since the uprising, difficulties accessing education, healthcare, transportation, and work.

## ... to be prevented by mobilization

The bill passed by the Senate relied on the exhaustion of the population in Kanaky and indifference in mainland France to ratify the end of the right to independence. The creation of a "state" of New Caledonia, maintained within France and whose powers could not contradict French interests, is nothing like true independence. The gradual unfreezing of the electoral roll again means marginalizing the Kanak people and the "victims of history." Strengthening the provinces would exacerbate the concentration of wealth in the Southern Province, where the Kanaks are already a minority, fostering a logic of apartheid—all under the threat of economic strangulation of heavily indebted communities.

The vast majority of the independence movement rejects the bill. The only Kanak organization to have accepted it is disavowed by many of its activists, notably by Paul Néaoutyine, president of the Northern Province and the last living

signatory of the Nouméa Accord.

In Kanaky, the time for mobilization has arrived. Pro-independence groups held their congress with strong participation. Thousands of activists are engaged in the municipal elections, focusing on local issues and the future of the country, and the fight on the nickel front is underway against a project of plunder for the benefit of multinationals and Europe.

On March 21st, the various Kanak and Caledonian collectives in France, along with the Kanaky Solidarity Collective, are calling for a demonstration to express their rejection of the government's colonial policies and their solidarity with the struggle of the people of Kanaky - New Caledonia, urging members of parliament to reject the proposed legislation at the end of March. The aim is to force the reopening of discussions within the framework of the Nouméa Accord to guarantee the inalienable right of the Kanak people to decide their own future.

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