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France

Statement by Philippe Poutou on the Champs Elysées shooting

- News from around the world -

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The shooting last night where a man attacked a police car killing an officer, while wounding another and a tourist, before being shot dead, took place right at the end of the Presidential campaign. It is a human drama which today plunges families into mourning. But most of the candidates have used this to raise all kinds of fears by characterizing this as an act of war, of Islamist barbarism.

Whatever the precise motives of the assailant, this deed cannot be isolated from its political context. On the one hand the French state makes itself the champion of military interventions in Africa and the Middle East, the champion also of arms sales to dictatorships. On the other, in France, a whole section of the population and of young people in the popular neighbourhoods suffers poverty and discrimination because of skin colour or origin.

All this context leaves room, very limited but real, for acts like that of yesterday, where individuals seek a suicidal and criminal revenge against a society which excludes them. All the more so since, on the social networks, the reactionary and deadly propaganda of Islamic State seeks to convince and rally supporters.

The roots of such acts are neither in the mosques nor in the migrant camps. They are in the situation of external and internal war maintained by the state and in the injustices and discrimination maintained in the neighbourhoods, in the rise of racism and of state Islamophobia. These are the roots which should be attacked.

Neither the state of emergency nor the arming or increase in size of the police force will help this. The police officer who was killed was armed. The arming of the police only reinforces the climate of violence and leads to death. The closure of borders, the rejection of migrants and the strengthening of military interventions are still less likely to bring a solution.

Montreuil, 21 April 2017