



France: “Humiliating Defeat” for Macron’s Proposed Migration/Refugee Bill

French President Emmanuel Macron suffered a decisive parliamentary thrashing to his flagship immigration bill on December 11. France 24 TV called it a “humiliating defeat” and a “stunning setback.” *The Times* (U.K.) similarly called it a “humiliating blow,” while Bloomberg called it a “major blow.” A BBC headline proclaimed, “Emmanuel Macron’s government in crisis after migration bill defeat.”

Despite Macron’s pleas and his claims that the bill would address needed reforms to France’s migration/refugee crisis, the lower house of parliament, the National Assembly, rejected the bill by 270 votes to 265. The vote came as the result of parties on both the left and right uniting — for opposite reasons — to deliver a multi-party defeat to the Macron government.

Macron tried to sell the bill’s provisions that would make it easier for authorities to deport migrants with prison sentences of five years or longer and make it more difficult for migrants to bring family members into France. However, the Left charged that the legislative proposal was too harsh, placing undue restrictions on refugee/asylum entrance. Reflecting this sentiment, Arthur Delaporte, an MP for the Socialist Party, called the bill an “unjust, scandalous and a threat to freedom.”

On the other hand, the Right rejected the bill as too “pro-immigration,” citing provisions that would make it easier for migrants to get work permits and residency, which are supported by major businesses that claim there is a labor shortage. Marine LePen, leader of the conservative National Rally party and a leading contender to Macron, said she was “delighted” with the result of the vote, saying it had “protected the French from a migratory tidal wave.”

The vote, no doubt, reflects the growing fear and anger throughout France engendered by the continuing string of deadly terrorist attacks by jihadist migrants over the past decade. The vote came only a week after the [shocking knife attack](#) on December 3 by a French-Iranian man reportedly yelling “Allahu Akbar” as he stabbed to death a Filipino tourist and gravely wounded a British tourist and a French national near the Eiffel Tower in Paris. The vote also came only three days following the highly publicized trial of six teenagers convicted of conspiracy in the murder of Samuel Paty, [a teacher who was beheaded](#) outside his school in Paris by a Muslim Chechen refugee in 2020.

Following a crisis meeting with Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne and key ministers on December 12, Macron remained defiant, vowing to pass a compromise version of the bill. It is being submitted to a bipartisan mixed commission of members from the National Assembly and the Senate for revision and is



AP Images
Emmanuel Macron



Written by [William F. Jasper](#) on December 12, 2023

unlikely to be returned without serious changes. For one thing, an earlier, more conservative, bill offered by the Senate would have greatly restricted healthcare and other government benefits to migrants, which proponents of the bill said provide a magnet for continued migration.



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