

# National Front stages violent provocation in Paris

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Supporters of the extreme-right National Front (FN) last week attacked political opponents and passers-by in a heavily populated working class area in the northeast of Paris, sending several people to hospital.

At 11:30am on June 2, one week before the first round of the legislative elections, two FN candidates, accompanied by 30 or 40 burly supporters, put in an appearance at the weekly outdoor market in the 20th district. *Le Monde* reported that three of them approached the stand of Catherine Gégoud, a candidate of the French Communist Party (PCF), sniggering and threatening. "They tore down our posters, cut them into pieces and attacked the stand," Gégoud said.

They also turned on members and supporters of the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR), the anti-fascist group Ras l'front and Alternative Libertaire. The same source quoted a supporter of the LCR, who said: "They grabbed my newspaper. I protested and they punched me in the face. Then their whole gang descended on us." They also set upon a woman who had refused to take an FN leaflet.

"It was very fast and very brutal," a member of Ras l'front told the press. "They had big tear gas bombs. They sprayed us right away point blank."

Not even children were spared. One woman, with her two young children and five-month-old baby, was doing her shopping. "Someone shouted out: 'Watch out, there are children here!'" It made no difference. "The baby was sprayed with orange gas. I ran away. Some people followed me so the baby could be taken to hospital," she said.

Onlookers were deeply affected by the incident. A 38-year-old teacher, who was walking with his wife and young daughter, said: "We are still very shocked. The guys from the FN were all over the place. Their aggressive air was palpable. When they got out their

gas bombs, I shouted out. Immediately, two of them ran at me."

The web site of Ras l'front reported that police allowed one of the attackers to peacefully depart although he had been identified by several witnesses and that they took so long to register complaints against the FN that several of the victims, including some who had been injured, left without doing so. But "they recorded the wild and lying complaints of the Front members."

The same night, the FN published a communiqué alleging that they had been violently attacked while leaving the market. One FN member said that the anti-fascist campaigners had tear-gassed each other.



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