

# Letter to our sisters in the World March of Women and all over the world

WE, KANAK, INDIGENOUS & ALLIED WOMEN OF KANAKY, APPEAL TO YOUR INTERNATIONAL FEMINIST SOLIDARITY IN RESPONSE TO THE VIOLENT SITUATION WE ARE CURRENTLY EXPERIENCING ON OUR LANDS.

THIS SITUATION IS THE RESULT OF COLONISATION, STARTING FROM FRANCE'S TAKING POSSESSION OF THE LAND IN 1853, FOLLOWED BY SUCCESSIVE 'CIVILISING' INTERVENTIONS BY THE ARMY TO 'PACIFY' THE Kanak (THEN CONSIDERED TO BE SAVAGES), AND OF AN ACCELERATED RECOLONISATION VIA SETTLER COLONIALISM ORCHESTRATED BY THE FRENCH STATE. THIS SITUATION HAS BEEN RESHAPED ALONG NEOLIBERAL LINES SINCE 2020 WITH THE APPOINTMENT OF SÉBASTIEN LECORNU UNDER EMMANUEL MACRON. **SINCE 13 MAY 2024 WE HAVE BEEN SUBJECTED TO AN EXTENSIVE OPERATION OF COLONIAL REPRESSION INCLUDING THE MASSIVE DEPLOYMENT OF FRENCH ARMED FORCES TO A COUNTRY ALREADY UNDERGOING A PROCESS OF MILITARISATION.**

IN PARTICULAR, WE ARE SOUNDING THE ALARM OVER:

- THE RISK OF GENOCIDE IDENTIFIED THROUGH VARIOUS MARKERS
- THE NEED TO REOPEN NOUMÉA'S AIRPORTS AND COMMERCIAL FLIGHTS FOR THE WELL-BEING OF ALL.

IN THIS DOCUMENT, WE LAY OUT OUR MAJOR CONCERNS, OUR DEMANDS, AND OUR REQUESTS FOR COORDINATED, JOINT AND SIMULTANEOUS ACTION FROM EACH NATIONAL COORDINATION OF THE WORLD MARCH OF WOMEN, TO PUT AN END TO THIS SITUATION.

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## SOME BACKGROUND INFORMATIONS

### About us:

In the original (French-language) document and in our discussions in the French language, we use the word “autochtone” rather than “Indigène” for two reasons:<sup>1</sup>

- “Autochtone” is a word meaning “Indigenous, under occupation of an administrating power”, which is currently the case of Kanaky.
- To situate ourselves in relation to international and French law (France ratified the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples on 13 September 2007).

This being said, it is important to mention that in our daily lives, we do not define ourselves according to either of these terms, but simply as Kanak. (Kanak without S.)

### About Kanaky:

New Caledonia is the name of the colony; we use the Indigenous name, Kanaky. Kanaky has been on the list of non-autonomous territories to be decolonised since 1986.

When we say “Kanak”, we align ourselves with the thoughts of Pierre Declercq, the first white martyr murdered by the French Colonial State, which he shared on 22 June 1979 in *Les Nouvelles Calédoniennes*: “The term Kanak designates neither an ethnicity nor a race. The purpose of a Kanak society is the construction of a multiracial and fraternal people existing in solidarity. This does not mean that the future society will be entirely Melanesian. The right to difference will be respected, but we will ensure that this does not lead to the domination of any one ethnicity over another.”

### On the results of the independence referendums:

You may have heard that three referendums were held to vote on the question of independence, with the conclusion: “each time, the Caledonian people voted no.” We add some context to counter this disinformation.

1. The Caledonian people does not exist. In the Nouméa Accords,<sup>2</sup> the only people that is recognised and mentioned is the Kanak people. We take care to never use the term “Caledonian people” because this is in fact an erasure of the Kanak people. Consequently, we consider that the Kanak people and French people exist in this country, and we use the term “Caledonian citizenship”.

2. The results of the referendums which were laid out in the Nouméa Accords, initially every two years:

- First referendum, 4<sup>th</sup> November 2018: 43.3% in favour of independence
- Second referendum, 4<sup>th</sup> October 2020: 46.7% in favour of independence

The third referendum was supposed to take place in 2022 but the date was brought forward by the French Colonial State, despite the promises of then-Prime Minister Edouard Philippe<sup>3</sup> and the request of the pro-Independence movement to delay the referendum following the national

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<sup>1</sup> Translator's note: both these terms are translated as “Indigenous” in English.

<sup>2</sup> Translator's note: in the Nouméa Accords, finalised in 1998, the French government agreed to grant increased political power to Kanaky over a twenty-year transition period. The three referendums at the end of the transition period were intended to determine whether the country would remain a French territory or become independent.

<sup>3</sup> “The Nouméa Accords stipulate that, in the case of a no vote in the second referendum, a third referendum can be held in the two years following the second. We preclude the possibility that this third consultation can be held between mid-September 2021 and the end of August 2022. It has become evident to us all that it was preferable to make a clear distinction between the national electoral deadlines and those relating to the future of New Caledonia. The choice of dates after the second vote will thus constitute a major issue. In this regard, the Government and the political forces of New Caledonia have discussed the necessity of continue this discussion throughout the process.” Declaration of 10 October 2019 following the 19<sup>th</sup> committee of signatories to the Nouméa Accord.

declaration of Kanak mourning following the more than 280 deaths linked to COVID-19 among the Kanak people (particularly those who were most precarious and most exposed).

Facing off against the legendary stubbornness of the French Colonial State, the pro-Independence movement called for a massive boycott of the third referendum. The abstention rate for this third referendum was 56.1%, and 3.5% of the final vote was in favour of independence. We know, thanks to the data and the differences in demographic categories between different regions, that more than 90% of Kanak joined the boycott. Consequently, we reject the legitimacy of this third referendum in which those most directly affected, the Indigenous people, did not participate.

The advice of the International Court of Justice has been sought, but has not yet returned an answer.

## OUR MAJORS CONCERNS

### Sounding the alarm: risk of genocide

This section is based on **article 211-1** of the French Criminal Code,<sup>4</sup> as of 22 May 2024:

Genocide is the act, by executing a **concerted plan aimed at the total or partial destruction of a national, ethnic, racial or religious group** or of a group determined by any other arbitrary criterion, of committing or causing to be committed against members of that group, any of the following acts: wilful attack on human life, serious bodily or mental harm, inflicting of conditions of life likely to bring about the total or partial destruction of the group, measures intended to prevent births, forced transfer of children.

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*NB: We have chosen to refer to these criteria for the sake of clarity. However, we make connections between these criteria in the text below because many of the markers overlap in practice.*

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<sup>4</sup> Legislative part (Art. 111-1 to 727-3) - Book II: Crimes and offences against persons (Art. 211-1 to 228-1) - Title I: Crimes against humanity and the human species (Art. 211-1 to 215-3) - Sub-title I: Crimes against humanity (Art. 211-1 to 213-4-1) - Chapter I: Genocide (Art. 211-2 to 211-2) - Amended by Law n°2004-800 of 6/8/2004 - art. 28 - JORF 7/8/2004/

## General context

### A. WHY THE CONCEPT OF « RISK OF GENOCIDE » ?

We emphasise the **idea of risk of genocide** for several reasons:

- We refuse to ignore the fact that the genocide is beginning to accelerate;
- We refuse to wait for markers beyond those presented in this document to emerge;
- We refuse to fall into the colonial rationality of ranking by number of people who are victims or threatened by a genocide: there are **110 856 Kanak in this country; a genocide would happen much too quickly.**<sup>5</sup>

In honour of our martyrs who have been murdered since 24 September 1853, and in honour of the Kanak depopulation as a part of Oceanian depopulation<sup>6</sup> more broadly, but also in honour of our martyrs who have fallen since 13 May 2024, we will not wait for even one more murder.

**We demand a complete halt to the genocidal process as soon as possible through massive international pressure.**

Our civilisation is in danger. This is a distress signal that we are sending out to you. We are strong, yes, as our history shows, but we are also in mourning, stunned, overwhelmed, and we need all the international feminist pressure we can muster.

### B. KANAKY AT THE CENTRE OF (NEGATIVE) ATTENTION

Some major aspects of this issue, whether historical or contemporary, are related to geopolitical issues or neoliberal domestic politics based on the extraction of natural resources. These elements make it even clearer that taking our claims seriously is not in the interests of the French Colonial State; on the contrary, every claim for self-determination will slow down the achievement of their goals.

- **Neoliberal extraction of natural resources:** our land is rich in natural resources such as nickel, which is the main source of the extensive mining operations in the country, the consequences of which are discussed below. The discovery of gas and petrol has led to the suggestion of further exploration to obtain data, with ambitions for future extraction (note: Uvea ma Futuna<sup>7</sup> is on the list of territories with natural resources for future exploitation).
- **Geopolitics:** to confront China and Russia, the French Colonial State has promoted our land to the rank of advanced military base in the Pacific in service of the Indo-Pacific axis, bringing along with it plans for massive local militarisation (an accelerated process which we discuss further below).

It is clear that it is in the interests of the French Colonial State to shut down any possibility of uprising as quickly as possible, today or in the future.

### C. WARNING SIGNS FROM OUTSIDE OF KANAKY

In addition to the markers specific to Kanaky or to the Kanak people described in the rest of the document, here are some other strong indicators :

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<sup>5</sup> Demographics: the Kanak population was estimated to have been between approximately 300 000 to 500 000. The population declined from the moment of European arrival, dropping to 27,000 in 1900. In 1973, the population reached 50,000.

<sup>6</sup> A concept developed by the archaeologist Christophe Sand in his book *Oceanian Massacre*: "there are some things that remain constant within questions of depopulation: the problem is not limited to illness. Illnesses transform societies, they create crises which lead to wars... also because of social, political and symbolic destructuring linked to demographic collapse. Depopulation is also linked to infertility. European sailors introduced syphilis, gonorrhoea, tuberculosis. Source: [Interview with Christophe Sand](#)

<sup>7</sup> Translator's note: Uvea ma Futuna is the Indigenous name for the country named "Wallis and Futuna" by the colonisers. It is another present-day French colony located in the Pacific.

France is an accomplice of the State of Israel in the genocide of the Palestinian people, as demonstrated by:

- Unconditional political support for Israel expressed from the start and renewed on several occasions since;
- Visits to the Israeli army by members of the French government and the President of the National Assembly;
- No vote in favour of ceasefire ;
- No sanctions against French nationals who have joined the Israeli army or obstructed humanitarian convoys ;
- Severe repression of any kind of mobilisation in support of the Palestinian people;
- Delivery of weapons (100,000 rounds of ammunition for machine guns likely to be used against civilians in Gaza) at the end of October 2023 under the aegis of Sébastien Lecornu:<sup>8</sup> "While the Ministry of the Army has constantly asserted, before Parliament and in the media, that France was only sending defensive components to Israel, on Tuesday March 26 Sébastien Lecornu was forced to admit that ammunition belts for machine guns made in France were indeed sent to the Hebrew State at the end of October 2023."<sup>9</sup>

Through its racist and colonial politics, **the French Colonial State has actively participated in globalised anti-black racism**: for example, Louis XIV's *Code Noir*, the Rwandan Genocide, the history of slavery on the African continent and in the Antilles. Locally, the French Colonial State applied the *Code de l'indigénat*,<sup>10</sup> in use in Algeria at the time, to Kanaky, and used blackbirding<sup>11</sup> to supply its mines and farms in Tahiti and Kanaky with labour. **This participation in globalised anti-black racism continues today**: a current example is in the city of Nantes, which was the main French slave port from the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>12</sup> The current local government, led by Johanna Rolland, is currently reshaping its participation in racist and colonial politics through the construction of an Administrative Detention Centre, which is nothing more than a prison for foreigners, despite the ongoing fight against its construction by the Insomnia Pure Collective.

Two additional factors:

- France, historically a colonial empire, has not completed a single peaceful decolonial process. Today, faced with the rapidity and intensity of colonial repression, we now see that **the entire process, including the Nouméa Accords, was a fundamentally hypocritical colonial manoeuvre aiming to extinguish Kanak revolt**. It was a process of pacification aiming to serve their interests and further the process of settler colonialism. Macron's latest visit has confirmed the maintaining of his political strategy of recolonisation through settler colonialism, through his announcement that "appeasement cannot mean going backwards".
- **In its own territory in Europe, France today is a fascist state**: we have no illusions that things would be any different here.

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<sup>8</sup> This is the same minister who forced the third referendum on Kanak independence to go ahead in 2021, ignoring the Kanak mourning period following to the deaths of more than 270 Kanak from COVID; and then-Prime Minister Edouard Philippe's promise that the referendum would not be held before the end of the French electoral period (i.e. not before August 2022). To this day, we reject the legitimacy of this referendum due to the 56% abstention rate, mostly of the indigenous people.

<sup>9</sup> Sources: [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)

<sup>10</sup> A legal code which prohibited freedom of movements to Kanak, and which was governed by rules allowing colonial administrators to apply various penalties (e.g. prison, fines) without trial.

<sup>11</sup> Blackbirding was a 19<sup>th</sup> century practice in which sailors and ship captains travelled around the Pacific Ocean to kidnap and imprison Indigenous people (in this case Kanak) to be used in forced labour, mostly in the sugar cane plantations in Queensland, Australia.

<sup>12</sup> 1,714 slave expeditions have been recorded with more than 550,000 black prisoners transported to the colonies.

## Five markers of the risk of genocide

### A. WILFUL ATTACK ON HUMAN LIFE

Since 13 May 2024 and up to the present day, 28 May 2024, we mourn and lament seven official deaths. We have not been able to confirm :

- Ten unannounced deaths
- Twelve as yet unrecognised deaths
- Six corpses that are unidentifiable due to mutilation.

Among these 35 people are two Wallisians, one Futunian and 32 Kanak (two girls and 30 boys and men).

On social media, the figure of 43 deaths is also circulating. We have not been able to confirm this figure, but causes our anxiety to increase as well as the anxiety of our friends and loved ones. A request for an inquiry into these murders and the French state's responsibility is currently being written for submission to the UN, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

We have no data on the actual number of people injured per day, but a surgeon from the local public hospital testified: "Hundreds injured. (...) We don't do medicine or surgery by halves. We're still treating patients in the best possible way. But it's still ballistic trauma, gunshot wounds. So, yes, it's like war surgery," said the surgeon, who confirmed that he had treated patients with bullet wounds to the head. He also confirmed that essential surgeries have been delayed. "We have such a high volume of patients that we can't cope with all the operations on the same day. So we go as fast as we can. Right now, we're on a downward curve, I have the impression, I hope anyway, of the influx of injured people," he said.<sup>13</sup>

- **The presence of heavily armed colonial militias:** defined as paramilitary organisations consisting of any group of people carrying or having access to weapons and likely to disrupt public order. Historically present in Kanaky since colonisation, they have been remobilised very quickly on several occasions over the course of history to hunt down Kanak people.

These militias have been highly active since 13 May 2024, armed with heavy weaponry and supported by the forces of law and order, by the representative of the French colonial state, by the French armed forces and by "citizens' collectives" or so-called "vigilant neighbours". These latter groups egg on the militias in private message groups, while others call overtly for the hunting down of the "Kanak rebels".

All of this is in response to an alleged lack of security. These claims take the form of a moral panic, which is typical of right-wing movements adopting a narrative of invasion and who claim the necessity of defending "their territory" at all costs. "Their territory", naturally, is defined solely by their arbitrary criteria to allow them to hunt wherever they like.

The colonial militias hunt us down and enter all of our neighbourhoods at any time of day or night, with total impunity to kill any Kanak that they see. While the state of emergency was in effect, the pro-Independence movement advised everyone to go home as soon as the curfew began, and to avoid going out onto rooftops or balconies or being visible through windows.

These militias were not subject to the restrictions of the State of Emergency declared on 14 May 2024 via a press release from the High Commission, which stipulated: "Measures taken with immediate effect: a curfew for the greater Nouméa area from 6pm on Tuesday 14 May until Wednesday 15 May at 6am; this curfew may be extended as necessary. All gatherings in the greater Nouméa area are prohibited, as is the transport or carrying of weapons anywhere in New Caledonia.

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<sup>13</sup> Source: « Ca s'apparente à la chirurgie de guerre », témoigne un médecin de Nouméa. Article sur RTL

The sale of alcohol is prohibited throughout New Caledonia". The State of Emergency was lifted on 28/05/2024.

We have recovered photos of some of the militias' equipment found at the home of a murderer from the militia in Noumea and during a vehicle search. This is just a glimpse, as there are currently around 120,000 weapons in Kanaky.



- **The massive deployment of military personnel** as part of a remilitarisation process, underway since 2022 (military vessels: tugboats, patrol boats, support and assistance vessels, a standard amphibious landing craft, patrol aircraft), with plans for new military vessels, increasing in number from 2,100 to 2,500 by 2030.

To date the French Colonial State has deployed 2,700 military personnel to the country, where in 2019 the population was 271,407 people in total (including 110,856 Kanak).<sup>14</sup> The following quote demonstrates this process of militarisation: "With respect to the situation in New Caledonia, the government's position is not changing. 'Our objective is clear: to re-establish order'. The Prime Minister announced several decisions: 'We are going to reinforce the air bridge for the restoration of order to deploy an additional thousand internal security personnel on top of the 1,700 already on site. In concrete terms, GIGN<sup>15</sup> forces arrived last night from Polynesia. A plane has just landed in New Caledonia with an additional 132 personnel. A plane left mainland France last night with a mobile gendarmerie squadron and 40 GIGN personnel, making a total of 116 additional personnel', he added. 'This afternoon, a plane will leave mainland France with two mobile gendarmerie squadrons and two CRS<sup>16</sup> companies, i.e. 250 additional personnel'... Six additional mobile gendarmerie squadrons will also be deployed in the next few hours, via the military and civil aviation authorities... to organise this air bridge. 'This is an unprecedented level of mobilisation, which illustrates the government's determination', [Prime Minister] Gabriel Attal insisted. (Source: [Article](#))

On 27 May 2024, following Emmanuel Macron's visit, we learned that 480 additional gendarmes are going to be sent to Kanaky, as well as a team called CRS8, a team from the National Police specialising in "urban guerrilla warfare".

<sup>14</sup> 271,407 Inhabitants (135,794 male and 135,613 female) including 111,856 Kanak (55,646 male and 56,210 female), 65,488 European (33,599 male and 31,888 female), 30,731 mixed race (15,028 male and 15,703 female), 22,521 Uvea ma Futuna (11,133 male and 11,387 female), 5,366 Tahitian (2,584 male and 2,782 female), 3,786 Indonesian (1,806 male and 1,980 female), 2,313 niVanuatu (1,203 male and 1,110 female), 2,230 Vietnamese (1,013 male and 1,217 female), 1,181 other Asians (456 male and 725 female), 20,298 undeclared (10,401 male and 9,898 female), and 5,610 other (2,925 male and 2,685 female).

<sup>15</sup> Translator's note: elite police force specialising in counter-terrorism and similar.

<sup>16</sup> Translator's note: police unit specialising in security, public order and riot control.



Tanks, armoured vehicles, helicopters and surveillance drones are being used, as well as drones that have dropped red gas ostensibly to stun and attack activists. The real impact that this gas will have on us and on our environment is unknown.

**- Attacks on our access to food and ability to survive:**

Food supplies have been rendered unfit for consumption by the forces of order: we have received testimony from an association that assists disadvantaged families (mainly Kanak and some other Oceanians). Testimony transcribed verbatim: "The security forces took advantage [of the state of emergency] to carry out a search. There were three children aged between 4 and 11 on the premises. All the phones were seized. They knocked the pots onto the fire, burnt down the generator, spilled toilet fluid in the freezer on the association's foodstuffs, and threw tear gas into the bedrooms (fortunately, the children had been moved). The containers were opened and the food disappeared... The association's premises have been destroyed."

We have also received a testimony from the Bangou tribe in Païta, where the police broke in to spill food and burn down various kitchen areas, forcing the Kanak to take refuge higher up than usual. We know that we only have very limited access to these testimonies depending on who is able to share them.

Shooting at people queuing for food to survive.

Burning of our local food shops by the militia (with suspicion of participation by the forces of order as well).

Requisitioning of service stations for the forces of order and French Armed Forces, preventing people from moving around and from stocking up on food and other needs, as well as rationing of petrol.

Food rationing for adults and children and babies in particular in working class neighbourhoods (The southern parts of Noumea which make up the white, bourgeois heartland are not suffering from shortages or rationing; however, we have received testimony that some are concerned about when their hairdresser will be able to reopen, when they will be able to eat at the outdoor area of a café, or have brunch again): we note in contrast that we are tired and weakened.

**B. SERIOUS BODILY OR MENTAL HARM**

Since 1853, the colonisation of the Kanak people has been carried out through multiple massacres; but it has also had strong psychological and religious aspects. This constitutes *cultural genocide* due to:

- The crushing of our culture through religious colonisation and diverse phases of settler colonisation of our land: disconnection from ourselves, loss of reference points, of our creation myths, our languages, the loss of our clan organisation through forced population displacement and large-scale cantonment (in the so-called "Indigenous reserves"), division among our people through mental alienation, and alcoholism as a colonial weapon of mass destruction;

- Multiple transgenerational traumas that hamper our knowledge of our history, our identity, our fundamental myths and sacred links with our terrestrial and marine environment, as well as the transmission of all this to our people and to other communities with the sense of welcome, sharing and a multiculturalism that is specific to the Oceanian peoples.

The existence of lasting trauma was recognised in the Nouméa Accords<sup>17</sup> but to date it has not been clearly defined, including all its various bio-psycho-social, environmental and cultural manifestations. Nor has it ever been addressed in a way that would help Kanaky begin along a path of profound collective healing while also confronting the decisions and wishes of the French Colonial State (for example: we have repeatedly refused to allow our seabed to be exploited or even explored).

Multiple letters requesting the restructuring of the chiefdoms have sent by the Customary Senate and by *Inaat Ne Kanaky*, the National Council of Chiefs of Kanaky: they have been ignored.

- Poisoned gifts such as:

- Specific places that confine Kanak identity to "cultural reserves" such as the Tjibaou Cultural Centre and the Customary Senate;
- The option to learn some of our languages at school.

We do not consider these to be genuine steps forward, but rather measures designed to suffocate our demands.

On the contrary, we consider that our Kanak identity is only considered as an exotic interlude or a perfunctory consultation, rather than as the very foundation of the Kanak society that we seek through the IKS (Indépendance Kanak Socialiste – Kanak Socialist Independence).

This cultural genocide is a major issue for us because, beyond our death in this world, we fear for the death of our civilisation, which is taking place via two processes:

- Recolonisation through settler colonialism: gradual destruction;
- The genocidal risk discussed in this document: brutal destruction.

We also cannot ignore the destruction of our environment through the systematic exploitation of our natural resources in our mountains, and on our land.

Mining for capitalist extraction has led and still leads to:

- Clan wars including ongoing turf wars that can lead to murders;
- Pollution of our land, air and water;
- Population displacement;
- A reformulation of the *Code de l'Indigénat* (which we endured for seventy years) through the activation of the State of Emergency: a manoeuvre aiming to confine the Kanak in their homes and to prohibit them access even to their own balconies and rooftops through intimidation (firing tear gas towards them, which lands in their house, for example), violent intrusions into their private spaces and homes. These acts have been documented even after the official end of the State of Emergency.

It should be noted that the end of the State of Emergency was inevitable because otherwise the State would have had to propose a new law. However, president Macron's political management of

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<sup>17</sup> Paragraph 3 of the Nouméa Accord: "The shock of colonisation constituted a lasting trauma for the original population. Clans were deprived of their names at the same time as their land. Extensive colonisation of land led to significant population displacements, in which Kanak clans saw their means of subsistence reduced and their places of memory lost. This dispossession has led to a loss of identity. Even though the principles of Kanak social organisation have been recognised, its society was turned upside down. Population movements led to the breakdown of its structure, and ignorance of its power structures all too often led to the denial of legitimate authorities and the establishment of authorities lacking in cultural legitimacy, which has accentuated trauma arising from the loss of identity.

At the same time, Kanak artistic heritage was denied or plundered.

On top of this denial of the fundamental elements of Kanak identity were added restrictions on public freedoms and an absence of political rights, even though the Kanak people paid a heavy price in the defence of France, particularly during the First World War.

The Kanak people were pushed to the geographical, economic and political margins of their own country, something that, when imposed on a proud people not yet deprived of their warrior traditions, was bound to provoke rebellion. This led in turn to violent repression, aggravating resentment and misunderstanding.

Colonisation undermined the dignity of the Kanak people, depriving them of their identity. In this encounter, men and women lost their lives or their reasons for living. The result was great suffering. We must remember these difficult times, to recognise mistakes made, to return to the Kanak people their confiscated identity. For them, this is tantamount to recognising their sovereignty, which is a prerequisite for the foundation of a new sovereignty, shared in a common destiny."

Kanaky has been widely condemned within the French National Assembly, by all of the left but also by the extreme right, which unfortunately is using this issue as a way to un-demonise itself to the electorate: as decolonial feminists we strongly critique this process. This means that Macron's party would not have been able to achieve a majority vote to continue the State of Emergency..

Nonetheless, the official lifting of the State of Emergency does not imply the end to colonial manoeuvring.

### **C. INFLICTING OF CONDITIONS OF LIFE LIKELY TO BRING ABOUT THE TOTAL OR PARTIAL DESTRUCTION OF THE GROUP**

As a continuation of the repeated forced displacements of the Kanak people (via force and through intimidation) and the establishment of "indigenous reserves" to enact a process of ethnic cleansing<sup>18</sup> in the sense of "*policy deliberately devised by an ethnic or religious group with the aim of eliminating, through the use of violence and terror, civilian populations belonging to a distinct ethnic or religious community within particular geographical areas*", **the French Colonial State is pursuing the degradation of the living conditions of the Kanak people** through local policies applied via colonial right-wing politicians. The Kanak people is discriminated against in every way (no gendered data is available). This can be seen from the data.

#### **Demographic composition:**

- The Kanak minority: the Kanak people represent 40% of the population (111,000 Kanak and 135,000 non-Kanak).

#### **Socio-economic data:**

- Incarceration: 90% of the prison population are Kanak
- Poverty: 71% are Kanak
- Employment in management roles: over the past 40 years, only 11% have been Kanak
- Unemployment: 7 out of 10 Kanak are considered to be unemployable by employers due to racist beliefs
- Young people without jobs or training: 69% are Kanak
- Non-precarious employment:<sup>19</sup> Kanak: 48%; non-Kanak born in New Caledonia: 64%; Residents not born in New Caledonia: 75%.
- While men may have permanent contracts, the majority of Kanak women are insecurely employed, which is linked to the sexist and racist discrimination suffered by Kanak women.

We also note the difficulty of accessing decent housing:

- Squats: in 2018, there were 4,000 squatters; in 2024, there are an estimated 8,000 squatters (Nouméa only)
- Social housing: Every year, 8,000 requests for social housing go unanswered.
- Kanak women have no access to land and end up living in squats.

#### **Some health data:**

- 43% of people are obese in the Northern Province (mostly Kanak)
- 46% of people are obese in the Islands Province (mostly Kanak).<sup>20</sup> This leads to major chronic illness (diabetes, high blood pressure, kidney failure, cholesterol)
- Breast cancer screening: 32% in the Northern Province, 44% in the Islands Province

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<sup>18</sup> Source: [United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention](#)

<sup>19</sup> Translator's Note: this category of employment ("emploi local") consists only of permanent contracts and is restricted to residents who have lived in the country for more than ten years.

<sup>20</sup> Translator's Note: Kanaky is divided into three provinces: the North and South Provinces located on the main island, and the Islands Province. Nouméa is located in the South Province, which is the most populous and wealthy and the only province in which Europeans make up the majority of the population.

- Of the 847 doctors practising in the country across all specialisations, 88% work in the Southern Province<sup>21</sup>
- Over the last ten years, the number of people receiving care for a chronic illness has increased by 54.2%, representing an increase of 16,697 patients.<sup>22</sup>

#### Some data on femicide:

The government department in charge of women's affairs still does not break down femicides by ethnicity, even though:

- From 2021-2024, there were 14 femicides
- Of the 14 women killed, ten were Kanak, three were Oceanian and one was French.
- The average age range was 16 to 30 years

Kanak women make up the links in our clan organisation.  
This is difficult to do when we are a colonised people.

Our material realities and the explosive violence accompanied by a neglect of public policy are colonial manoeuvres designed to let us destroy ourselves from within.

#### D. MEASURES TO PREVENT BIRTHS

To date, road blockades have caused many obstructions to access to healthcare, including for childbirth (in addition to healthcare for injuries caused by the forces of order and the militias, and ordinary health needs). These obstructions are not caused by the pro-independence road blockades, which are allowing people to pass in order to access health facilities, but Kanak people have told us that they were later obstructed by the forces of order. We have no data on who is really obstructed or how many are obstructed.

Beyond that, although to date we do not have any specific data on forced sterilisation in Kanaky, we do not rule out the possibility that this change will take place in the near future because, as mentioned in the section entitled "Attacks on psychological and physical integrity", the colonisation of Kanak women was, and still is, enacted on a psychological level before the physical level. Colonisation has confined Indigenous women to invisibility (ignored as interlocutors or actors), to servitude (domestic work) and to submission to coloniser sexual violence. This situation has endured for many years. Today, even though Kanak women are beginning to emerge into the world of work, the effects of the period of the *Code de l'Indigénat* continue to weigh heavily on their private and public lives. It is important to note that the customary status created by the political system remains discriminatory for Kanak women.

We are aware that our resistance will cause the French Colonial State to take even more coercive measures.

Through the local colonial right-wing (and extreme right) politicians, the French State applies a paternalistic and colonialist approach to control of childbirth in various ways:

- Psychological: guilt-tripping of Kanak mothers on the basis that "Kanak are delinquents" (without consideration of the legal system's racist criminalisation of Kanak people) entrenches a sense of guilt in Kanak women who do not feel capable of or legitimate to become mothers: this is a powerful internalised mechanism to reduce the possibility of having children,

<sup>21</sup> Source: [NC 1<sup>ère</sup> / données du Syndicat des Médecins Libéraux NC](#)

<sup>22</sup> Source: [Made in NC / données du Syndicat des Médecins Libéraux NC](#)

- Economic: poor families (mostly Kanak) are implicitly or explicitly and repeatedly told not to have children until they are 'stable' according to colonial criteria,
- Structural by social housing policies that do not correspond to our model of the Kanak family, or the Oceanian family more broadly: the social housing designed in 2019 by the SIC<sup>23</sup> are designed for two-person couples.

Couples who already have difficulty accessing social housing (as mentioned in the previous section) and unable to access another home due to their precarious employment situation will be inclined not to start a household with children, or will rethink or put off their plans;

- Cultural through the colonial school system, which is killing our minds but also the environment as a whole; the "nuclear couple with a maximum of 2 children" model is implanted in our minds, thereby playing a part in hindering our maternity.

#### **E. FORCED TRANSFER OF CHILDREN**

At present, we have received reports of:

- unsolved disappearances
- forced transfers by plane of our young people who have been apprehended by police, of a similar type to organised deportations, another crime against humanity.

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<sup>23</sup> The Société Immobilière de Nouvelle-Calédonie, which focuses on the construction of social housing for rental

## Genocidal intent

Since the French Colonial Empire took possession of Kanaky on 24 September 1853, the country has been conceived as a colonial settlement of two types:

- Colonisation known as penal defined in the Law of 1854, with a penal colony opened in 1863;
- Colonisation known as free colonisation from 1869 and once again in 1890 in the context of challenges to penal colonisation.

**1972:** The Messmer letter sent to the Secretary for Overseas Territories: "The French presence in Caledonia can only be threatened, barring a world war, by a nationalist claim from the indigenous populations supported by a few possible allies in other ethnic communities from the Pacific. In the short and medium term, mass immigration of French citizens from mainland France or from the overseas departments (Reunion) should make it possible to avoid this danger by maintaining and improving the numerical ratio of the communities."

All non-Kanak communities are instrumentalised to reduce the Kanak people to a minority group. This is visible at the following levels:

- **societal:** metissage (mixed-race individuals) is regularly and repeatedly glorified by the colonial right-wing, thereby erasing the use of metissage in colonial history. Kanak women were raped during colonisation, during the military presence linked to the Second World War, and with 2700 soldiers currently in the country, Kanak and non-white women are not safe.
- **Institutional:** We have been undergoing a supposedly peaceful decolonisation process since the Matignon-Oudinot Agreements in 1988 and then the Nouméa Agreements in 1998. As previously mentioned, we are certain today that this was in fact a colonial manoeuvre accompanied by the illusion of social harmony. Above all, it brought about peace for the colonial, bourgeois and white supremacist order, because it did not concern the Kanak people in view of the state-sponsored violence that we experience on a daily basis.

The Nouméa Accords were supposed to end with a new "Global Accord" after three referendums. We do not recognise the legitimacy of the third referendum because there was a 56% abstention rate, mostly of the Indigenous people, in response to a call from the pro-independence movement.

In spite of this, the French Colonial State, through the local colonial right-wing, has claimed the final result of the referendum as a refusal of independence, without taking the abstention into account. It has therefore unilaterally decided, under the guise of "democracy", to unfreeze the provincial electoral lists (concerning public policy in the territory) and register 25,900 people in two categories:

- 12,400 so-called "natives"<sup>24</sup> (including around 5,500 Kanak + 2,200 children of non-natives): over the course of negotiations, an agreement was reached between the pro-independence movement and the French government to allow the members of this group to be registered.

- Non-natives who have lived in the country for at least 10 years: 13,500 people.

"This corresponds to an increase of 14.46% in the special electorate, calculated pro-independence senator Robert Xowie. If we apply this to the French electorate, it is analogous to registering just over 7 million voters in one go."

By accelerating the minoritisation of the Kanak people in their own land, we are witnessing a reshaping of the settler-colonial process and the slow and gradual death of the Kanak people.

**This constitutes genocidal intent without being named as such**, and we wish to draw particular attention to it: **the French Colonial State**, through its government representatives, **has learned to avoid Netanyahu and his government's error of using dehumanising words such as "eradicate the cockroaches"**; but that does not prevent their intentions being revealed through their acts.

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<sup>24</sup> Translator's note: in this context, "native" refers to people born in Kanaky regardless of ethnicity.

## Relief for people stranded in the country for the well-being of all

We demand the **reopening of airports and commercial flights from Nouméa** to:

- Allow **those needing medical evacuation to access medical treatment** within the required timeframe,
- **Enable French nationals to leave the country using their own financial resources,**
- Allow **repatriation** for residents of other countries who wish to leave, as Aotearoa<sup>25</sup> has done.

As part of our decolonial feminist political practice, **we are conscious of the well-being of every person on our land.** We are also attentive to the vital need for safety and serenity, the reduction of harmful impacts on this safety and serenity, and the earliest possible reparation of any injuries.

However, we have received a number of reports from panic-stricken people and their families and friends who are **experiencing the anxious and alienating feeling of being imprisoned and hunted down.** They do not necessarily have access to other topics of discussion than those currently prevalent in the anxiety-provoking environments in Noumea. The state of emergency, the difficulties accessing healthcare and food supplies and the interruption of economic life are all factors that lead to an increase in anxiety.

We are **deeply concerned about the trauma these people are going through** when they could regain peace and begin to recover by leaving our country, with the possibility of returning later if they so wish.

We maintain that **concentrating a group of panic-stricken people behind closed doors close to people with weapons is a risk to everyone's safety,** due to a self-reinforcing anxiety spiral that prevents calming down and rationality. As with a cult, the only solution is to remove the person from this toxic environment and support them to get back in touch with reality. The reality for these people is that they do not have ties in Kanaky other than in Nouméa, and they want to leave because their relationships and resources are outside of the country. This is in some ways similar to the measures taken by the Northern and Island Provinces who have organised the return of their children to their clans.

**The growing anxiety of people trapped in Kanaky in turn encourages anxiety spirals in their families and friends living elsewhere, particularly in France.** This atmosphere encourages haste and the acceptance of any measure taken by the French Colonial State to ensure the safety of 'their' loved ones, while abandoning any critical interrogation of the methods used due to ignorance and lack of familiarity with the violence of colonial repression.

We also believe that this could contribute to a **general reduction in pressure in Kanaky,** including for people caught up in a spiral of violence that it is too late for them to stop alone. In addition, we call for the reopening of airports and commercial flights departing from Nouméa, with **commercial flights operated by the cheapest airlines available, or even accompanied by partial or total financial assistance for all people and families in need.**

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<sup>25</sup> Translator's note: Aotearoa is the Maori (Indigenous) name for the land that colonisers have named New Zealand.

## OUR DEMANDS & REQUESTS FOR SUPPORT

Any support actions must be driven by a single objective: to **apply pressure to the French Colonial State to accede to our demands.**

- Accession to full sovereignty for Kanaky without restrictions
- Demilitarisation and disarmament of the entire civilian population
- Opening of airports and commercial flights + financial aid / France to help people needing support to leave.

We also demand that two independent and impartial inquiries be undertaken: one into the murders of Kanak children, and another into the concerning disappearances of Kanak children (our letters on this topic will come later).

**We have a few ideas** about actions you might like to undertake in your various contexts, but we leave you as much latitude as possible because you know your local circumstances much better than we do:

- Demonstrations, awareness-raising campaigns...
- Rallies and demonstrations in front of French embassies

Further, we launch an appeal without equivocation for the boycott of France at diplomatic, cultural and economic levels to increase pressure on the French government to firmly and definitively withdraw all armed forces and for the accession to our full sovereignty: we need support to build a campaign according to the BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) model launched by 170 Palestinian organisations against the State of Israel. This model was itself created by activists against apartheid South Africa, and succeeded in this campaign.

**On an international level,** we ask:

- that you **alert the public to the risk of genocide** through your organisations and/or collectives directly to Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch: <https://www.hrw.org/contact-us> , the UN Human Rights Council: <https://spsubmission.ohchr.org/en>. The idea is that the more requests come from different organisations and groups (local and international), the stronger the message it will send to these NGOs.

WE REMAIN OPEN TO YOUR PROPOSALS, SUGGESTIONS AND SUPPORT.

*IN THE INTERESTS OF RELEVANCE AND TO SAVE TIME, WE PROPOSE TO SEND YOU DOCUMENTATION ON THE HISTORY OF KANAKY ONLY ON REQUEST BY EMAIL.*

THANK YOU SO MUCH,  
IN SOLIDARITY ALWAYS,

**WORLD MARCH OF WOMEN - KANAKY**