

**HUMAN  
RIGHTS  
WATCH**

Mr. Emmanuel Macron  
President of the French Republic  
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**HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH**

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Re: A Human Rights Agenda

Dear Mr. President,

We write to you on behalf of Human Rights Watch as your presidency begins, to encourage you to make human rights a priority of your domestic and foreign policy, throughout your term in office.

You have repeatedly, during your campaign and since your election, referred to values of liberty, democracy and equality and stated your desire to place them at the forefront of your action. During your inauguration speech at the Elysée, you proclaimed that "France will always seek to be on the side of liberty [and] human rights."

You also answered the questionnaire sent to all presidential candidates by Human Rights Watch and expressed your attachment to human rights values and your intention to make them a focus of your foreign and domestic policy.

At a time when universal human rights and the principles of the rule of law are under attack in Europe and around the world by nationalist populists and autocrats, it is crucial that France not only strongly reaffirm these principles, but also put them into practice in its policies. To this end, we are sending you a "Human Rights Agenda" with recommendations on eleven key issues, in the hope that it will help guide your action and that of your government.

At the domestic level, ensuring respect for human rights in the fight against terrorism is a crucial issue. Human Rights Watch, along with many other civil society organizations, have repeatedly emphasized the threat to the rule of law and to fundamental rights of an endless extension of the state of emergency, without strengthening the protection of the country. We call on your government to lift the state of emergency and not renew it beyond July 15, when the latest extension voted by the Parliament is due to expire.

The persistence of abusive and discriminatory practices of ethnic profiling by police forces should be adequately addressed by the new government. The reinforcement of France's asylum policy for those fleeing war and persecution should also be a priority.

At the European level, in the context of Brexit and the rise of radical right populism, France should, as you have acknowledged, play a leading role in ensuring that the European Union's founding values of "respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law" are a priority of EU policy, in particular in its response to the crisis around welcoming refugees. EU member states that flout these values should be held to account.

At the international level, the protection of civilians, targeted by deliberate and mass attacks in the context of the armed conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and South Sudan, should be at the top of your diplomatic agenda and of the efforts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As a permanent member of the Security Council and at a time when it is blocked by Russia and, to a lesser degree, China, France's role is essential to reaffirm the importance of multilateralism and UN institutions in international diplomacy and peace efforts.

Faced with the proliferation of human rights crises, France has a compelling duty to support efforts for international justice, especially as it is the subject of hostility on the part of certain countries. France's commitment to international justice, through unambiguous political and financial support for the International Criminal Court (ICC), will be crucial in advancing the fight against impunity.

We also urge you to make the respect for human rights a priority of France's bilateral relations, in particular those with countries who are openly hostile to them, including China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Turkey. Respect for human rights and the rule of law should go hand in hand with efforts to advance economic, political and security interests.

Finally, as Commander-in-Chief, you should ensure that France's military operations abroad, in particular in the context of counterterrorism operations in the Sahel and in the Middle East, do not lead to abuse, either by forces allied to France or by French forces themselves.

In the hope that this letter will be given your full attention, we would like to meet with you to discuss these issues with you further.

Please accept, Mr. President, the assurance of our highest consideration.

Bénédicte Jeannerod  
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