

NBC's *Today*

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SHEINELLE JONES: Also this morning, we are following breaking news from overseas, including the curfews now being imposed in parts of Paris and other French cities following violent protests. Officials there attempting to rein in the country's worst unrest in years. We have two reports for you, starting with NBC's chief foreign correspondent, Richard Engel. He's in Paris for us. Good morning to you, Richard.

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Violent Protests Spark Curfews Across France]

RICHARD ENGEL: Good morning from Paris. Here, you can see the aftermath from this latest round of unrest — these latest clashes that we've been seeing here. I am now in République Square and the main statue here is covered in graffiti. And, if we spin around, you can see one of the many cars that was completely burned and destroyed. And on the hood are all of these pieces. These are fragments of tear gas canisters, just some of the many tear gas canisters that riot police fired at demonstrators. But now, because of the partial curfews, France's prime minister says the situation across the country has somewhat calmed down. France is trying to restore calm this morning. In the République Square, teams were out early, clearing away the aftermath of protests that, at times, turned into riots. Overnight, police were on patrol, enforcing extraordinary curfews in several French cities, after days of clashes that left hundreds of shops looted, buildings damaged, and cars burned. Iconic landmarks were attacked. In Paris, students pushed through police barricades to blockade the Louvre Museum.

FEMALE FRENCH RIOTER: We are here in support of those who cannot be heard, as well as us.

ENGEL: Many protesters, including students who started this movement, were unhappy with the violence, blaming instigators. "Personally, I do not agree with the vandals, because they are smashing up shops, and frankly, it discredits us. It really doesn't show what we want," said a demonstrators. Overnight at his rally in Kansas, President Trump weighed in, pointing the finger at mass immigration for the unrest.

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP: Just look at what's happening in France. A once great nation that is being conquered, looted, and burned to the ground by migrants, jihadists, and communists.

ENGEL: Although French authorities and police have not linked immigrants to the rioting, it's the same argument France's far-right parties are using, hope to capitalize on the chaos to win key elections in the spring. Much of the anger is directed at President Emmanuel Macron and France's struggling economy, and Macron is being criticized here for being out of touch, after attending a Celine Dion concert last week, and he's now out of the country, on a tour of the Middle East. Calm for now, but this is not over. More demonstrations have been called for Thursday and Saturday, Sheinelle.

JONES: Alright, Richard Engel in Paris. Thank you.