# French Public Figures Call for Law Against Sexism and Sexual Violence Amid Cannes Film Festival



More than 140 French public figures from literature, film, journalism, and politics have signed a petition calling for a comprehensive law to combat sexism and sexual violence in France. Among the signatories are notable personalities such as writers Camille Kouchner, Leïla Slimani, Vanessa Springora, and actors Juliette Binoche, Isabelle Adjani, Emmanuelle Béart, and Judith Godrèche. The petition was published in *Le Monde* on May 14, 2024, highlighting that 94% of complaints involving sexual violence were dismissed in 2022.

The petition demands various legal reforms, including clearer definitions of "rape" and "consent," introduction of the term "incest," stricter measures against serial rapists, and improved victim support services. This move coincides with the start of the Cannes Film Festival and follows extensive discourse about sexual violence in the French film industry. Specifically, Godrèche will premiere a short film titled *Moi Aussi* (Me Too) at the festival, focusing on survivors of sexual violence.

In a concurrent event, filmmaker Roman Polanski was acquitted by a French court of defaming British actor Charlotte Lewis, who accused him of sexual assault. Lewis’s allegations date back to an incident in Paris in 1983. The court's decision addressed only the defamation claim, not the truth of the assault accusations. Polanski's lawyer described the court ruling as a “victory for the rights of the defense.” The verdict was delivered on the opening day of this year's Cannes Film Festival.

These events reflect ongoing and intensifying discussions surrounding sexual violence and legal accountability within multiple facets of French society.