# Stranded Tourists Await Evacuation Amid Deadly Riots in New Caledonia



**Stranded Tourists Amid Deadly Riots in New Caledonia**

French President Emmanuel Macron visited New Caledonia following deadly riots triggered by electoral changes. The unrest, which resulted in the deaths of six people, including two police officers, broke out across the French territory, leaving road barricades and looted stores.

An Australian couple, Maxwell Winchester and his wife, who were on vacation, found themselves trapped on the island. Their hotel is experiencing severe shortages of food and medicine. With the main international airport closed and commercial flights canceled, evacuations were halted on the day of Macron’s arrival.

In response to the riots, Australia and New Zealand started sending planes to evacuate their nationals, successfully transporting 108 tourists to Brisbane on Tuesday. However, many remain stranded, anxiously awaiting their turn. Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade stated they are communicating directly with Australians in New Caledonia regarding departure options.

The riots erupted due to a constitutional amendment approved in France, proposing to change voting rights, which local leaders fear will dilute the indigenous Kanak vote. Macron has deployed 3,000 French security forces to restore order. He emphasized that the forces will remain as long as necessary and hinted at the possibility of lifting the state of emergency if political leaders call for the removal of roadblocks.

The French territory, located 930 miles northeast of Brisbane, has a long history of tensions stemming from its colonial past. The indigenous Kanaks, making up about 40% of the population, have long struggled under French rule. Macron’s visit aims to facilitate discussions with local leaders and restore peace, amidst ongoing security challenges.

In the meantime, stranded tourists like Winchester and his wife are exploring alternative evacuation options while coping with limited resources and growing safety concerns.