

Late-night French cabinet meet calls state of emergency

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France declared a state of emergency in the wake of the terrorist attacks Friday that left at least 120 people dead.

The protocol invoked by a late-night cabinet meeting allows authorities to close any public space or highway, hold people at home, and control published media.

The state of emergency empowers security forces to "prohibit passage of vehicles or people," to set up "protection or security zones, where people's presence is regulated," and to exclude from a given area "any person seeking to obstruct, in any way, the actions of the public authorities."

It also gives the interior minister the power to hold in their homes anyone "whose activity appears dangerous for public security and order."

The state of emergency law was drawn up in 1955 and applied several times during the Algerian war of independence of 1954-62. It has been implemented only twice since then, in 1985 during unrest in the French territory of New Caledonia, and in 2005 during riots in the Paris suburbs.

President Francois Hollande also indicated the borders would be tightened "so that no one can get out, escape," the report said. "We know who they are," he said of the perpetrators.

The Foreign Ministry clarified that "airports continue to work," and "air and rail connections remain in place," but that "controls are to be carried out at road, rail, maritime and air connections."

France started border checks on Friday ahead of the climate conference in Paris next month.

France lifted land border controls with its neighbours in 1995 as member of the Schengen zone.

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