



The News

January 3rd, 2pm ©

by Emma Phillips

A hostage situation is unfolding at the prison in Arles in the Bouches-du-Rhône. Five people, prison nurses and a guard, have been held hostage by an inmate since late this morning. The inmate in question is armed with a knife and is serving a sentence for rape at gunpoint. The 37-year-old suffers from psychiatric problems and is said to be protesting the refusal to transfer him to another detention centre. France's elite tactical unit, the Raid, and local security teams have been deployed to the prison, while the minister for justice, Gérald Darmanin says that he is monitoring the situation.

Zizou Youcef was arrested this morning in Brest. The Algerian influencer, real name Youcef Aziria, has over 400,000 followers on TikTok. A report was made against him on December 31st after the influencer encouraged his followers to use gunfire during the New Year celebrations. Earlier, the minister of the interior Bruno Retailleau announced the arrest on X, with a post that thanked law enforcement and magistrates for making it possible and calling on "not tolerating anything".

The very first conseil des ministres of the government under François Bayrou met this morning. The prime minister is said to have assured his team that a way out existed to the current political instability. New government spokesperson Sophie Primas has urged elected officials that they should go beyond, instead of causing obstruction.

Jean-Noël Barrot has said he has hopes for a "sovereign, stable and peaceful Syria", as the French minister for foreign affairs and his German counterpart are due to meet Ahmad al-Chareh in Damascus. Syria's new leader is the head of the coalition that ousted former president Bashar al-Assad. France will be hosting an international meeting on Syria later this month.

And finally, to the world's largest cross-country rally and the Prologue to the Dakar Rally saw French driver Sébastien Loeb finish sixth this morning in Saudi Arabia. The Prologue determines the starting orders for stage 1 of the 47th edition of the Dakar Rally that gets underway tomorrow and will go on until January 17th.