

'Civil war is brewing' warn serving soldiers in open letter to Macron

From [*Guardian*](#)

Serving members of the French military have fired a second salvo at Emmanuel Macron's government in an open letter accusing it of "cowardice, deceit, perversion", just weeks after a first letter said the country was heading for "civil war". The armed forces are taking disciplinary action against 20 serving personnel who signed the first letter.

The second letter, published late on Sunday evening, batted off threats of punishment and launched an all-out attack on the government, accusing it of "trampling" on veterans' honour and "sully" their reputation "when their only fault is to love their country and mourn its visible decline". The signatories, who were not named this time, said they were young servicemen who had seen active duty in France's operations in Africa and Afghanistan and had taken part in Operation Sentinel, the anti-terrorist patrols in French streets.

"Some of us lost their comrades. They gave their lives to destroy the Islamism to which you make concessions on our soil," they wrote.

"We have seen with our eyes the abandoned *banlieues* [suburbs], the arrangements with criminals. We see the violence in our towns and villages . . . We see hatred of France and its history becoming the norm . . . You are abandoning without reacting whole neighbourhoods in our country to the law of the most powerful."

"Yes, if civil war breaks out, the army will keep order on its

own soil because it will be asked to do so . . . No one wants such a terrible situation, our elders no more than us, but yes, once again, civil war is brewing in France and you know it perfectly," they wrote. "The survival of our country is at stake."

"To quibble about the form of our elders' tribune instead of recognising the evidence of their findings, you have to be cowardly. To invoke a misinterpreted duty of reserve in order to silence French citizens, one must be very deceitful. To encourage the army's senior officers to take a stand and expose themselves, before angrily sanctioning them as soon as they write anything other than battle reports, one must be quite perverse.

"Cowardice, deceit, perversion: this is not our vision of the hierarchy. On the contrary, the army is, par excellence, the place where we speak the truth because we commit our lives."

It concluded: "Once again, civil war is brewing in France and you know it perfectly well." By 10am Monday morning, l'Espresso (a weekly magazine which published the letter) claimed 76,461 people had signed the petition.

The government was taken aback by polls showing strong public support for the views voiced by the retired soldiers. Fifty-eight per cent said they supported the former soldiers' action and 73 per cent agreed with their view that "France is disintegrating".