

Stade de France, Paris

Oct 20, 2022 15:03 BST

## Report finds football fans suffered 'extreme violence' at Champions League final

An independent panel report that tells how fans experienced extreme violence before, during, and after the European Champions League Final in Paris earlier this year has been released.

The report is based on the written testimonies of 485 women, men, and children, and from eyewitness accounts by international journalists who attended the game in May 2022.

Compiled by five leading authorities in their respective fields, including Dr Patricia Canning, Assistant Professor in the Department of Humanities at Northumbria University, the report, ['Treated with Contempt': An Independent Panel Report into Fans' Experiences Before, During and After the 2022 Champions League Final in Paris'](#), details fans' written evidence submitted in the days after the event.

"Collectively and consistently, fans' testimonies demonstrate the shocking treatment they suffered before and after the match, particularly at the hands of those who should have ensured their safety," said Dr Canning.

Dr Patricia Canning is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Humanities at Northumbria University. She is an applied linguist specialising in forensic texts and contexts. Her work includes the investigation and analysis of police reporting, particularly the attribution and deflection of blame through individual and institutional language choices. She has published research on analyses of the witness statements following the Hillsborough Disaster; a

fatal human crush during a football match at Hillsborough Stadium in Sheffield, on 15 April 1989.

News articles following the European Champions League Final in Paris showed that fans were held for several hours in a bottleneck close to the ground, then again in static queues at malfunctioning turnstiles. This latest report outlines statements from fans in which they tell how they were subjected to unprovoked teargassing by paramilitary police and on leaving the stadium were attacked at knifepoint by gangs who stole their possessions.

Without protection, many who had paid significant amounts of money for match tickets, travel and accommodation did not enter the stadium. Mercifully, there were no fatalities, but thousands, including children, have been left traumatised, according to authors of the report.

“Already evident is the longer-term impact on their physical health and psychological well-being,” said Dr Canning. “The consequences of events on and after 28th May 2022 will have personal and professional ramifications for a long time to come.”

Alongside Dr Canning, authors of the report include Professor Phil Scraton from Queen’s University Belfast, Dr Deena Haydon, an independent researcher and writer, Dr Lucy Easthope, Professor in Practice of Risk and Hazard at Durham University, and journalist and broadcaster Peter Marshall.

Some of the report’s key findings include inadequate pre-match preparation by UEFA and the Paris agencies; aggressive policing before, during and after the match; inadequate provision for crowd safety and event management; fans left traumatised by unprovoked assaults by the police and local gangs; abject failure by UEFA in meeting its responsibilities.

Professor Phil Scraton featured on BBC Panorama’s *‘The Champions League Final: What went Wrong?’* which aired on the 17<sup>th</sup> of October 2022 and [can be viewed here via BBC iPlayer](#).

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