FROM THE RIGHT TO VOTE TO THE RIGHT TO RESIST: THE LEGITIMACY OF REVOLT IN THE FACE OF THE DENIAL OF SUFFRAGE

EDITO

"Universal suffrage is peaceful revolution. The ballot is the substitute for the rifle."

In a speech to the National Assembly in 1848, Victor Hugo expressed the idea that universal suffrage should replace insurrection as a means of political transformation.

This clearly expresses the idea that the right to vote renders the use of violence unnecessary, even illegitimate: *"the right to vote replaces the right to revolt."*

The fairly obvious corollary of this is that, in a conditional logic, we can deduce that the right to revolt regains its legitimacy if the right to vote is removed or rendered meaningless.

From an ethical, philosophical, and even legal point of view, the denial of the right to vote can thus rehabilitate the right to insurrection.

This is an old idea, theorized in particular by John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Hannah Arendt. In his Treatise of Civil Government (1689), John Locke reminds us that *"when a government removes the legal means of changing the things, citizens regain the right to use force"*: this is one of the foundations of the right to resist tyranny.

Without the right to vote, all that remains is the right to resist.

Article 2 of the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Human and of the Citizen later reaffirmed that *"the natural and imprescriptible rights of Human include resistance to oppression."*

In short, when legal and electoral channels are blocked or distorted and peaceful protest is suppressed, resistance, including by non-institutional means, regains moral, political, and legal legitimacy.

