

# The Rassemblement National leads in the first round of legislative elections in France

The Rassemblement National (RN), a radical right-wing party chaired by Jordan Bardella, came out on ahead in the 1st round of the snap legislative elections held in France on 30 June, a first in the history of the Fifth Republic. With its allies who decided to follow Eric Ciotti and join the RN, it won 33.34% of the vote and 39 seats in the National Assembly, the lower house of the French parliament, in the 1st round. The RN has become the main opposition party to the President of the Republic Emmanuel Macron (Renaissance, RE). It came out first in half of the 577 constituencies.

It overtook the Nouveau Front populaire (NFP), a left-wing coalition comprising La France insoumise (LFI), the Parti socialiste (PS), the Parti communiste (PCF), the Écologistes, the Nouveau Parti anticapitaliste (NPa), Place publique (PP) and the Parti ouvrier indépendant (POI), which won 27.99% of the vote and 32 MPs in the 1st round.

Ensemble!, a coalition of Emmanuel Macron's presidential majority led by Prime Minister Gabriel Attal (Renaissance (RE), Horizons, led by former Prime Minister (2017-2020) Edouard Philippe and François Bayrou's Mouvement démocrate (MoDem)),

came 3rd with 20.04% of the vote and 2 seats in the 1st round.

The latter's result was higher than expected, but the defeat is undeniable. The centre bloc has shrunk considerably compared with the previous poll on 12 and 19 June 2022, and the right/left divide (led by extreme forces on both sides) was sharply revived in this 1st round.

The Republicans (LR), who did not follow their president Eric Ciotti, obtained 6.57% of the vote and 1 elected candidate in the 1st round.

France is truly fractured between cities and rural areas. In Paris, for example, the NFP came out on top in 13 of the 18 constituencies. 9 candidates were elected there in the 1st round. In many rural communes, however, the RN attracted more than half the voters.

Turnout was high, the highest for a legislative election since 1997: 64.99%, 17.49 points higher than the 1st round of the previous legislative elections on 12 and 19 June 2022. The 2nd round of voting will take place on 7 July.

**General elections in France**

30th June &amp; 7th July 2024

02

**Results of the 1st round of legislative elections on 30 June 2024 in France**

Turnout: 64.99%

Political parties	Number of votes won	% of votes cast	N° of seats
<b>Rassemblement National (RN) and Allies (UXD)</b>	10 688 057	33.34	39
<b>Nouveau Front populaire (NFP)</b>	8 974 554	27.99	32
<b>Ensemble !</b>	6 425 357	20.04	2
<b>Les Républicains (LR)</b>	2 104 916	6.57	1
<b>Various Right</b>	1 172 539	3.66	2
<b>Others</b>	2 694 832	8.42	0

Source : [https://www.resultats-elections.interieur.gouv.fr/legislatives2024/ensemble\\_geographique/index.html](https://www.resultats-elections.interieur.gouv.fr/legislatives2024/ensemble_geographique/index.html)

The President's gamble of calling early general elections and dissolving the National Assembly (and winning that election) failed. The French people, who turned out in large numbers to vote, expressed a clear demand for change, and the President's majority was defeated. The way the electorate voted is not very different from the way they did on 9 June for the European elections. The lightning campaign could hardly have given the French the opportunity to change their choices.

On the evening of 9 June, Emmanuel Macron had sought to catch his opponents off guard. He had hoped that 3 weeks would not be long enough for the radical political forces, on both the left and the right, to get their act together, overcome their differences and be able to unite and agree on a programme. Once again, Emmanuel Macron had positioned his Renaissance party as a counterweight to the RN and tried to make it the only possible barrage against the radical right. The attempt failed, as the RN won a third of the electorate and, for the first time in its history, elected MPs in the 1st round. Moreover, the RN has become the main representative of the right in several regions.

*"Through this unambiguous vote, the French people have demonstrated their desire to turn the page after 7 years of contemptuous and corrosive government,"* said Marine Le Pen (RN), the party's unsuccessful presidential candidate against Emmanuel Macron in 2017 and 2022. *"The choice is clear and there are two avenues open to France. On the one hand, the alliance of the worst, that of the New Popular Front*

*united behind Jean-Luc Mélenchon, which would lead the country to disorder, insurrection and the ruin of our economy. On the other, national unity, which I have the honour of leading alongside Marine Le Pen, Eric Ciotti and our allies,"* said the President of the RN, who is running for the post of Prime Minister if he wins on 7 July and only if the RN obtains an absolute majority in the National Assembly, i.e. 289 seats. *"We are the only republican and patriotic bulwark against a dangerous extreme left that proposes to disarm the police, open the floodgates to immigration, abolish the law against squats and the law against Islamic separatism,"* added Jordan Bardella.

It remains difficult to say whether the RN will be able to obtain an absolute majority in the 2nd round. The high turnout means that there will be a large number of triangular contests, *a priori* 304, as well as 5 quadrangular contests, before any withdrawals. Only 192 constituencies will be contested by 2 candidates. Candidates qualified have until 6 p.m. on 2 July to register their candidacy for the 2nd round on 7 July. As all the political analysts say, this week between the two rounds is that of a new electoral battle, and there will be a great deal of political wheeling and dealing within and between the parties.

Calls for a republican front (i.e. for everyone to unite against the radical right) are growing louder in the face of fears that the RN could come to power.

The President of the Republic has called for "a large, clearly democratic, Republican assembly for the second round." "Our aim is clear: to prevent the *Rassemblement National* from having an absolute majority in the 2nd round, and from dominating the National Assembly and therefore from governing the country with the disastrous project it has in mind," declared Prime Minister Gabriel Attal (RE). The head of government asked any candidate from the presidential majority who came 3rd against the RN to withdraw. However, there is still a lack of clarity in the presidential majority regarding the attitude to adopt towards certain candidates from Jean-Luc Mélenchon's La France insoumise (LFI). Gabriel Attal spoke of withdrawing in favour of candidates defending "the values of the Republic", but the presidential camp denounced the anti-republican stance of certain members of the radical left-wing party on several occasions during the campaign.

"In 129 triangular elections in which a left-wing candidate came 3rd and a *Rassemblement National* candidate came 1st, we will withdraw our candidacy, wherever that may be, under all circumstances", said the LFI leader. "Not one more vote, not one more seat for the *Rassemblement National*", he added. "In this country there are no more loopholes. It's them or us, there's nothing in between", stressed Jean-

Luc Mélenchon. However, the New Popular Front will not be able to obtain an absolute majority on 7 July, prevented by the radical right and also by a coalition of the presidential majority, which is holding up better than it had estimated.

Finally, Les Républicains (LR) are refusing to give any voting instructions for the 2nd round. "Where we are not present in the 2nd round, considering that voters are free to make their own choices, we are not giving any national instructions and we are leaving the French to express their conscience".

Eric Ciotti called on the Republicans to follow his example and form an alliance with the RN: "The unprecedented and historic union that we have built with Jordan Bardella has put an end to too many years of immobility that relegated the right to the role of impotent spectator", said the man who is still officially the president of the party.

French President Emmanuel Macron has always said that his first objective was to halt the advance of the radical right in the country. Today, he is forced to acknowledge his failure to do so. As Alexis Brézet wrote in the daily *Le Figaro*, "France finds itself faced with the dual prospect of political adventure or institutional deadlock: the two facets of a regime crisis."

You can read all of our publications on our site :

[www.robert-schuman.eu](http://www.robert-schuman.eu)

Publishing Director : Pascale JOANNIN

The opinions expressed in this text are the sole responsibility of the author.

© All rights reserved, Fondation Robert Schuman, 2024

---

THE FONDATION ROBERT SCHUMAN, created in 1991 and acknowledged by State decree in 1992, is the main French research centre on Europe. It develops research on the European Union and its policies and promotes the content of these in France, Europe and abroad. It encourages, enriches and stimulates European debate thanks to its research, publications and the organisation of conferences. The Foundation is presided over by Mr. Jean-Dominique Giuliani