

France Elections

Why In News

- A loose alliance of leftist parties has won the most seats in French legislative elections after a second round of voting. While the coalition has managed to keep France's far-right away from power in the elections, , no single political party or alliance of parties has won a clear majority.



Did Left Win The French Election

- To win an **outright majority**, a party or coalition needs to secure at least 289 of the **National Assembly's 577 seats**.
- Three alliances emerged on top after the vote count, but all of them fell short of a majority.
- **New Popular Front (NFP)**, a broad alliance of leftist and environmental parties, won the largest number of seats – 188.
- **Ensemble, the centrist coalition** led by French President Emmanuel Macron, came second with 161 seats.
- **National Rally (RN) and its allies**, led by far-right leader Marine Le Pen, won 142 seats.

Final result of the second round of the French parliamentary election:

Le Pen - 37.05% (143 seats)

Mélenchon - 25.95% (182 seats)

Macron - 24.54% (168 seats)



What Happened

- **Supporters of the left and centrist parties** thronged the streets of Paris on Sunday night chanting **“No pasarán! (They shall not pass)”**, the anti-fascist slogan during the Spanish Civil War, to convey their determination to keep the far right out of power.
- **Thousands gathered at Paris's Place de la Republique** to cheer the news, highlighting widespread support for the coalition over Prime Minister Emmanuel Macron's centrist bloc, which secured second place.



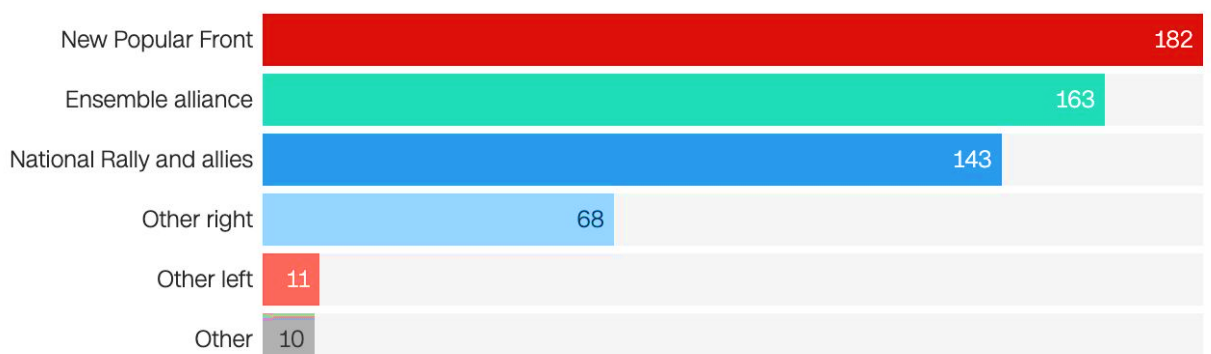
- **Conservatives were left reeling by the upset**, having anticipated Marine Le Pen's National Rally to seize power, as reported by Fox News.
- Social media footage captured fiery scenes **in Parisian streets, with authorities** in riot gear managing crowds as tear gas was deployed amid clashes. Protesters reportedly threw Molotov cocktails and set off smoke bombs.
- **The victorious left-wing coalition**, known as the Popular Front, comprises France's Socialist Party, the French Communist Party, the Ecologists, and France Unbowed.



How Will France Form A Government

- **Since none of the three blocs** has won an outright majority, France now has a hung parliament, and a coalition government will need to be formed between alliances or political parties.

Number of seats won in the 2024 parliamentary elections



- Experts predicted that **Macron's Ensemble alliance** of centrist parties will try to form a coalition with the Socialists and the Greens, the more moderate parties within the **left-wing alliance, New Popular Front (NFP)**, rather than attempt any tie-up with Jean-Luc Melenchon's far-left France Unbowed party.
- The **president has said he will not join forces with France Unbowed**, which at times during the election campaign he portrayed as being as dangerous as the far right.
- The primary bone of contention between the left bloc and Macron is his pensions reform. **In 2023, Macron raised the state pension age from 62 to 64.** "The left vehemently opposed it.
- They might make this a **condition to join the coalition**, which Macron will refuse," said Rainbow Murray, a politics professor at Queen Mary University of London and a specialist in French politics.

Will Macron Remain In Office

- **Macron's presidential term ends in 2027**, and he does not intend to step down before that.
- The constitution grants **Macron power over foreign policy** and the armed forces. The success of the leftist alliance in this election potentially means the weakening of Macron.



- **Some experts are now speculating that Macron** could take Sunday's election results as a vote of no confidence, could then resign and trigger a snap presidential election.

Where Does France Go From Here

- **Macron's first decision** is to appoint a new prime minister. He has already delayed this process by **declining Gabriel Attal's resignation**, asking him to stay in office for now.
- Typically, the **French president appoints a prime minister** from the largest bloc in parliament. But it is unclear from which party within the NFP this will be. Mélenchon's party won the most seats within the NFP, but Macron's allies have repeatedly refused to work with France Unbowed, saying it is just as extreme – and therefore as unfit to govern – as the RN.



- **In order to reach the majority needed to pass laws**, the NFP will likely have to enter into alliances with Ensemble – as two coalitions enter an even larger coalition, straddling vast ideological ground. Finding common ground will be a fraught task, meaning gridlock is likely.
- Without a **clear majority, a minority government** faces the risk of no-confidence votes as soon as this month, which could lead to several governments replacing each other.



- **One way out could be a “technocratic” government**, which would involve Macron appointing ministers with no party affiliation to manage day-to-day matters. But these can come to seem undemocratic and can further fan the flames of populism. Just look at Italy: after the premiership of Mario Draghi, the technocrat par excellence, the country elected its most far-right government since Benito Mussolini. While France avoided a far-right government for now, the RN threat is likely to remain strong