

New Popular Front carries French snap elections as hung parliament emerges

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Jean-Luc Mélenchon's New Popular Front (NFP) emerged as the winner of the second round of the French snap elections last night. The NFP carried 182 seats in the 577-seat National Assembly, against 168 for President Emmanuel Macron's Ensemble coalition and 143 for the far-right National Rally (RN). Final turnout was 67 percent, the highest in the second round of legislative elections since 1997 and over 20 percent higher than the 2022 legislative elections.

The result, bucking media expectations of an RN victory, testifies to the left-wing sentiment and the rejection of neo-fascism among broad layers of workers and youth in France.

It is a debacle for Macron, who throughout his presidency has claimed to be leading a fight against the far right. In reality, he has ruled systematically against the will of the people. His party has been relegated to a rump in the National Assembly as 70 percent or more of the population opposes his illegitimate pension cuts, which he rammed through without a vote last year, and his call to send French troops to Ukraine to fight Russia.

Minutes after the results were announced at 8 p.m. yesterday, Mélenchon spoke on national television, appealing to Macron to call upon the NFP to form a government. "The president has the duty to call the New Popular Front to govern," Mélenchon said, hailing voters for having "won a result that was said to be impossible."

"The majority has made another choice for the country," Mélenchon added, arguing that "the will of the people must be confirmed. ... The president must give in."

Mélenchon claimed the NFP would apply "its program, only its program, but all of its program." Measures like repealing Macron's reform raising the

retirement age to 64, stopping price increases by fixing prices for key goods, and raising the minimum wage "can be taken by decree, without a vote," he said.

Before the result was announced, Macron held a meeting at the Élysée presidential palace with Prime Minister Gabriel Attal and leaders of his Ensemble coalition. Earlier, it had been reported that either Macron or Attal would speak after the election results were announced. Afterwards, however, the Élysée palace reported that Macron would not be speaking Sunday evening and was "taking note of the results of these legislative elections as they come in, constituency by constituency."

Macron will wait for the "structuring" of the new Assembly before "taking the necessary decisions," the Élysée announced, including deciding who to name as a new prime minister to try to assemble a parliamentary majority. Attal later issued a statement to the press declaring that he is willing to stay in power "as long as duty will require it."

The Élysée also reported that Macron will delay by one day, but not cancel his trip to Washington to attend a NATO war summit starting tomorrow. At the NATO summit, imperialist warmongers like Macron will discuss how to escalate the war against Russia while intensifying the attacks against the working class to finance the war economy. Macron, despite his election debacle, clearly intends to continue ruling against the people.

Today, Macron asked Attal to "remain as prime minister for the moment," supposedly to "ensure the stability of the country." Thus Macron will fly to Washington to continue NATO war plotting as a representative of a government that is rejected by the French people.

Last night, RN leader Marine Le Pen spoke on TF1

television to state that her party had suffered only a temporary setback and pledged that neo-fascism would one day rule France. She said, “The tide is rising. It did not rise high enough this time, but it is continuing to rise and, consequently, our victory is only delayed. I have too much experience to be disappointed by a result which allows us to double the number of seats we have,” citing a result that made the RN “the first party” in terms of the number of seats.

Frustration exploded at RN election headquarters, however, as RN officials issued foul-mouthed threats and denunciations of the French people for not electing them. “The French people are assholes, it’s a people of idiots!” one told the media, while RN legislator Julien Odoul said: “They will pay the price of this act of submission. They will pay the price of this non-choice.”

But the electorate has spoken against fascistic-authoritarian rule and the hated policies of Macron. The will of the overwhelming majority of the people that works for a living—repeatedly trampled underfoot by Macron and his right-wing allies—must be done. The war escalation against Russia and the genocide in Gaza must be stopped, Macron’s pension cuts and other austerity measures must be repealed, and the police-state dictatorship of the banks that he has imposed must be dismantled.

The independent mobilization of the working class in struggle is decisive to the fight to impose such demands. Workers cannot leave them to France’s political establishment, which is dominated by supporters of militarism and austerity.

While the election marks a setback for the RN—that, like previous setbacks, will likely lead to criticisms in the RN of Marine Le Pen’s refusal to openly promote the heritage of French fascism and to advocate street violence—the RN has established itself as a significant force.

According to official French Interior Ministry figures, the RN led in absolute numbers of votes with 8.7 million, followed by 7 million for the NFP, and 6.3 million for Ensemble. There were 1.6 million blank or spoiled ballots, and 1.5 million votes for the right-wing The Republicans (LR) party. The NFP vote fell and Ensemble rose because the NFP largely favored Ensemble in tactical voting deals to block RN candidates: the NFP withdrew its candidates to back

Ensemble candidates in 125 constituencies, while Ensemble supported NFP candidates in only 80.

Within the NFP, moreover, Mélenchon’s electoral negotiations gave away substantial positions to longstanding parties of capitalist government that support war with Russia and denounce opposition to the Gaza genocide as “anti-Semitism.” While Mélenchon’s own France Unbowed (LFI) party carried 72 seats, the big-business Socialist Party (PS) 65, the Greens 34, and the French Communist Party (PCF) 9 seats. The Pabloite New Anti-capitalist Party (NPA) did not win any seats.

Within the NFP, forces around the PS are calling for the NFP to make far-reaching concessions to Macron, because they in fact support his reactionary policies. Raphaël Glucksmann, who denied that a genocide is underway in Gaza while he led the PS campaign in the European elections this spring, told the media: “We are in a hung parliament and therefore we will have to act like adults, that is, we will have to talk, to discuss, to engage in dialogue, to get beyond ourselves.”

Workers and youth must reject calls for compromise with Macron, despised figures like PS former president François Hollande, or their allies among the Greens and the Stalinist PCF bureaucracy. The decisive task now is to turn Macron’s election debacle and the RN setback into a broader offensive of the working class against war, genocide and capitalism.



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