

## Politics

**22**

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**UK Alert: Kier Starmer resigns as PM, Labour leader on June 22; unlikely to trigger snap elections, new Labour leader, PM likely by September**

## Current Situation

- On June 22, UK Prime Minister and Labour Party (Labour) leader Keir Starmer announced his resignation from both positions.
- He requested that Labour's governing body establish a timetable for the leadership contest, with nominations scheduled to open on July 9 and close before the summer recess on July 16. Starmer stated that he will remain prime minister until a successor is elected.
- Meanwhile, Nigel Farage, the leader of the right-wing populist Reform UK (Reform), called for a general election following this announcement.

Source: [BBC](#)

## Assessments & Forecast

1. Starmer's resignation reiterates the heightened risk of political instability in the UK, which has seen six prime ministers in the last decade following a succession of leadership changes driven by electoral setbacks, intra-party disputes, and governance challenges. The trend is evidenced by the quick turnover of prime ministers since 2016, including the resignation of Conservative PM David

Cameron in July 2016 following the Brexit referendum; Conservative PM Theresa May in July 2019 amid parliamentary deadlock over Brexit; Conservative PM Boris Johnson in September 2022 following a series of political scandals; Conservative PM Liz Truss in October 2022 after market turmoil triggered by her government's fiscal policies; Conservative PM Rishi Sunak in July 2024 following Labour's general election victory; and Labour PM Keir Starmer in June 2026.

2. Notably, several of these leaders resigned despite securing strong electoral mandates or commanding comfortable parliamentary majorities, including Cameron following the Conservatives' 2015 majority victory, Johnson despite leading the Conservatives to an 80-seat majority in 2019, and [Starmer despite securing a sizable Labour majority at the July 2024 general election](#). As such, the latest resignation points to increasingly volatile political leadership cycles in the UK, highlighting the growing influence of intra-party pressures and leadership challenges on political stability despite the country's traditionally stable political institutions.
3. **FORECAST:** Nevertheless, despite the wider political instability and calls by Farage for a fresh election, likely driven by the increased popularity of Reform, which currently leads opinion polls at 25 percent, compared to 18 percent each for Labor and Conservatives, an early general election remains unlikely. Labour retains a sizeable parliamentary majority secured at the July 2024 general election, enabling the party to appoint a new leader and prime minister without seeking a renewed electoral mandate. Moreover, Labour MPs are unlikely to support an early election given the risk of losing seats amid declining public support and rising backing for Reform. Additionally, under established UK constitutional convention, a PM who resigns mid-term is typically replaced by a new leader of the governing party without a general election being held, provided the successor can command the confidence of the House of Commons. This was recently seen during the transitions from Boris Johnson to Liz Truss in September 2022 and from Liz Truss to Rishi Sunak in October 2022, neither of which resulted in a general election.
4. **FORECAST:** Labour's leadership contest is expected to proceed smoothly in the coming weeks. Following the nomination phase, candidates are likely to campaign among Labour MPs, party members, and affiliated trade unions before a new leader is selected, most likely by early September. Given Labour's parliamentary majority, the successful candidate is expected to immediately assume the premiership upon election as party leader.
5. **FORECAST:** Andy Burnham is likely to emerge as the leading contender to succeed Starmer and enter the leadership contest as the frontrunner. His position is supported by strong support among Labour members, favourable approval ratings, and his high-profile role as Mayor of Greater Manchester. Recent polling suggests Burnham performs better than other potential candidates on issues including economic management, the cost of living, and public trust. He is also viewed as better placed than many rivals to win back working-class and northern voters, groups increasingly targeted by Reform. Other potential contenders, including Wes Streeting, Angela Rayner, David Lammy, and Ed Miliband, remain credible candidates but currently appear to enjoy less support among Labour members and the wider public.
6. **FORECAST:** Given that leadership contests and changes of prime minister are established features of the UK's political system, the potential for large-scale protests and civil unrest remains limited in the immediate term. Recent leadership transitions, including those from Boris Johnson to Liz Truss and from Liz Truss to Rishi Sunak, did not generate notable protest activity or widespread unrest. That said, the leadership contest is likely to become a focal point for political mobilization, with supporters of Reform, Labour factions, and other activist groups potentially organizing rallies, campaign events, and demonstrations to influence the outcome of the contest or advance broader political causes. In particular, groups focused on issues such as immigration, the cost of living, and the Israel-Hamas conflict are likely to seek to leverage the heightened political attention surrounding the contest to amplify their messaging.

## Recommendations

1. Those operating or residing in the UK are advised to remain cognizant of the ongoing political developments in the coming months.
2. Travel to the UK may continue while maintaining standard safety protocols.

3. Monitor statements from senior Labour figures and prospective candidates for indications of emerging frontrunners, policy priorities, and potential shifts in government direction.
4. For more information on the political and security situation, as well as planning for upcoming political developments, please contact [intel@max-security.com](mailto:intel@max-security.com)