



Written by [James Murphy](#) on May 10, 2021

SNP Wins Emphatic Election Victory in Scotland, Promises New Referendum on Independence

The Scottish National Party (SNP) won a decisive victory in the country's latest general election on May 6. The SNP won 64 of the 129 parliamentary seats — not quite a majority but almost assuredly close enough to call, with legislative allies, for another referendum on independence from the United Kingdom.

Finishing a distant second was the Conservative Party with 31 seats. The Labour Party garnered 22 seats, while the Scottish Green Party took eight seats and the Liberal Democrats 4 seats.



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The Scottish Greens have also campaigned for independence from the U.K., possibly giving the SNP the needed allies to request another referendum on independence. Pro independence parties will hold a 72 – 57 majority in Scottish Parliament.

But the people would have to decide upon independence in a referendum. And last time, they voted “no.”

A referendum on Scottish independence was held in 2014, asking the simple question: “Should Scotland be an independent country?” That referendum failed by 55 percent to 45 percent.

While not quite gaining a majority, the SNP Party leader and current First Minister [Nicola Sturgeon](#) was very pleased with the result.

“I’ve said all along that a majority was a long shot. We have a PR system in Holyrood (where Scottish Parliament is located) that’s not meant to deliver majorities, but I’m thrilled with our results,” said Sturgeon.

“We won more votes and a higher share of the votes than any party in the history of devolution,” Sturgeon said.

Devolution began in the U.K. in the late nineties when the U.K. ceded some powers to elected parliaments in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

“By any standards, this is a historic achievement, a quite extraordinary achievement for the SNP. Our vote share is up, the vote share of the other main parties is down. So, the SNP has won this election emphatically, the message that we took to the people of Scotland has been endorsed,” Sturgeon said.

First things first, however. Scotland, like nearly every other nation in the world, is still dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting government restrictions. “Getting through the COVID crisis has to come first and that is what I would deliver,” Sturgeon stressed.

But she also feels that the government should be able to walk and chew gum at the same time. Asked by a reporter if there would be a new referendum on independence from the U.K. in the first half of the



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new parliament, the First Minister sounded a hopeful note.

“It looks as if it is beyond any doubt that there will be a pro-independence majority in that Scottish Parliament. And by any normal standard of democracy that majority should have the commitments that it made to the people of Scotland honored,” Sturgeon stressed.

U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson has called talk of “ripping our country apart,” at this time, “reckless and irresponsible.”

U.K. Cabinet Minister Michael Gove questioned Sturgeon’s claim of a mandate for another referendum, at least at this time. “What we cannot afford is anyone taking their eye off the ball when it comes to recovery, when it comes to investment in the N.H.S.(the UK’s National Health Service) by having a ... protracted conversation about the constitution,” Gove said. “The second point to bear in mind is that a majority of the people who voted in the constituencies voted for parties that were opposed to an election referendum.”

But Sturgeon had strong words for politicians in Westminster such as Johnson and Gove who might be thinking of attempting to block a new referendum on Scottish independence.

“For any Westminster politician who tries to stand in the way of [a new referendum on independence], I would say two things. Firstly, you’re not picking a fight with the SNP, you’re picking a fight with the democratic wishes of the Scottish people. And, secondly, you will not succeed,” Sturgeon said.

“The only people who can decide the future of Scotland are the Scottish people and no Westminster politician can or should stand in the way of that.”

The “partnership” between Great Britain and Scotland goes back more than three hundred years to 1707 when the two nations aligned together under Queen Anne in 1707 to form Great Britain. Were Scotland to vote to leave the U.K., it might also signal to Northern Ireland and even Wales that the United Kingdom has outlived its usefulness.

It is perhaps the irony of ironies that five years after the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union, it now faces the possibility of a messy divorce from Scotland.



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