



Written by [James Murphy](#) on July 7, 2022

“When the Herd Moves, It Moves”: Boris Johnson Announces Resignation as U.K. Prime Minister

A year full of scandals and the deterioration of trust within his own party have finally prompted the United Kingdom’s prime minister to announce his resignation. Boris Johnson made the announcement on Thursday in the wake of dozens of resignations from his government in the last few days.

Johnson will remain in a “caretaker” role until a new prime minister is named. The Conservative Party is scheduled to meet in its annual conference in October, but there are numerous calls to remove Johnson before that meeting occurs.



British Prime Minister Boris Johnson (AP Images)

“It is clearly now the will of the parliamentary Conservative Party that there should be a new leader ... and therefore a new prime minister,” [Johnson said](#).

Johnson seemed determined to remain in his post despite numerous scandals over the past six months, most notably the [“Partygate”](#) affair in which Johnson, his wife, and several cabinet members were alleged to have taken part in alcohol-fueled parties during the Covid-19 pandemic, when U.K. citizens were forbidden from holding even family holiday gatherings.

Johnson first ascended to the office of prime minister in 2019 after his predecessor, Theresa May, resigned amid her failure to deliver Brexit. Johnson famously delivered Brexit in 2020, although the nation still retains certain ties to the European Union.

The most recent [scandal](#) — the one that was, apparently, too much to overlook for members of his own party — was the Chris Pincher scandal, in which Pincher, the government deputy chief whip, was alleged to have committed multiple incidents of inappropriate homosexual advances against two male guests at a Conservative Party gathering on June 29.

Pincher reportedly engaged in the same type of behavior in 2017, prompting many to ask why Johnson allowed him to stay on in his government post.

Johnson said that Tories should get busy in replacing him: “The process of that should begin now. The timetable should be announced next week,” he said.

Johnson clearly wanted to hang on to power, believing that it was imprudent to “change governments when we are delivering so much and when we have such a vast mandate and when we are actually only a handful of points behind in the polls.”

“I regret not to have been successful in those arguments and of course, it is painful not to be able to see through so many ideas and projects myself,” he said.

In the end, it was Johnson’s own party that, ultimately, pushed for his resignation.



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“As we have seen at Westminster, the herd instinct is powerful and when the herd moves, it moves,” Johnson said. “And my friends in politics, no one is remotely indispensable and our brilliant Darwinian system will produce another leader, equally committed to taking this country forward through tough times.”

Johnson promised the next prime minister — whoever that may be — “I will give you as much support as I can.”

Johnson thanked the people of the United Kingdom for their support during his time as prime minister: “And to you, the British public, I know that there will be many people who are relieved and perhaps quite a few who will also be disappointed, and I want you to know how sad I am to be giving up the best job in the world. But that’s the breaks,” he said.

“Above all, I want to thank you, the British public, for the immense privilege you have given me. And from now on until the new prime minister is in place, your interest will be served, and the government of the country will be carried on.”

Labour Party leader Keir Starmer [balked](#) at the idea that Johnson may hold on for months, and lamented that Tories would still be in control of the government in any case. Starmer seemed to be suggesting new elections.

“The Conservatives have overseen 12 years of economic stagnation, declining public services and empty promises,” Starmer said. “We don’t need to change the Tory at the top — we need a proper change of government. We need a fresh start for Britain.”

Unless a new election is called for, the next U.K. general election is not scheduled until January of 2025.

Despite Starmer’s protestations, there are, reportedly, several Tories in the running to replace Johnson as prime minister. Among those are Defense Secretary Ben Wallace, Trade Minister Penny Mordaunt, Attorney General Suella Braverman, and former Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt.

Also said to be considered front-runners to replace Johnson are former Treasury Secretary Rishi Sunak and former Health Secretary Sajid Javid, who began the wave of resignations from Johnson’s government on Tuesday.



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