

Theresa May 'clings on' amid election fallout

As the prime minister scrambles to make a deal with Northern Ireland's DUP to keep her party in power, the "vultures are circling" in search of a new Conservative leader. How long can May last?



Ides of May: Ruth Davidson (left) and Boris Johnson (right) are two favourites to replace May.

"Theresa May is a dead woman walking," the former chancellor George Osborne told the BBC yesterday morning. The only question is "how long she's going to remain on death row."

Four days after Britain voted for a hung parliament, it is still unclear exactly what form its new government will take. As the largest party, the Conservatives have permission from the Queen to form a minority government which relies on support from the **Democratic Unionist Party** (DUP) based in Northern Ireland.

This means that the DUP would vote in favour of Conservative policies in the House of Commons, without being their formal partners in government. But an official deal has not been finalised — despite a statement claiming that it had, which was made "in error" by Downing Street on Saturday — and there are no **details** about what the Conservatives will offer the DUP in return.

The deal — ironically branded a "**coalition of chaos**" by the Labour Party — is already facing scepticism.

Yesterday, Enda Kenny, Ireland's prime minister, warned that it could put Ireland's **peace process** at risk. Many Conservative MPs have expressed concern over the DUP's anti-abortion, anti-LGBT policies. And even if it does go ahead, it would only take three rebel MPs to prevent a vote from being passed.

Meanwhile, rumours circulated all weekend about Theresa May's future as prime minister. She was forced to fire her two top aides, and appoint a first secretary of state to act as deputy prime minister.

There were claims that Boris Johnson was preparing a leadership bid, although he dismissed these as "tripe".

Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn told the *Sunday Mirror* that "I can **still be prime minister**. This is still on."

And a new poll by **Survation** found that 49% of voters believe Theresa May should resign. Are they right?

Mayday, Mayday!

lightly reshuffled her cabinet, another sign that she is thinking about the future. She will meet with the head of the DUP, Arlene Foster, tomorrow.

Q: What do we not know?

A: What exactly May and Foster will agree to in their meeting tomorrow; the DUP are sure to

Yes — June will be the end of May, say the prime minister's most confident opponents. She cannot go on like this. As *The Observer* put it in yesterday's editorial: "May has lost credibility and leverage in her party, her country and across Europe... It is impossible to see her having the influence, authority or credibility to serve her country." It is an extremely difficult time in the UK's history; she must resign so that a fresh face can move the country forward.

Not likely, say others. Resigning now would only create more instability while the Tories search for a replacement. Such a move would be akin to handing Number 10 straight to Jeremy Corbyn, something they want to avoid at all costs. And anyway, this election was always about her — she wanted a personal mandate to carry out her vision for Brexit and beyond. She has not got one. That is now her mess to clean up.

want some things in return for their support. We also do not know how long Theresa May will remain prime minister once this initial crisis is over. Even in her own party, some think she should step down fairly quickly; others say in six months when Brexit negotiations are underway; others say in two years when they are scheduled to be completed.



Q: What do we know?

A: For now, it seems like Theresa May intends to remain as prime minister. Instead of resigning, she fired her top two aides, who have been called "toxic". Yesterday she also

YOU DECIDE

1. Should Theresa May resign?
2. If she did resign, who should replace her as prime minister?

ACTIVITIES

1. Write a 100-word job advertisement for prime minister of the UK. What does it involve, and what personal qualities does it require?
2. Imagine that, as with the DUP, Theresa May needs to win your party's support in Parliament. Write a list of policies which you would ask for from the government in return.

SOME PEOPLE SAY...

"The supreme quality for leadership is unquestionably integrity. Without it, no real success is possible."
Dwight D. Eisenhower

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

WORD WATCH

Democratic Unionist Party – The DUP has 10 MPs in Westminster, and was the largest party in the Northern Ireland assembly until this was suspended in January. The party is in favour of a soft Brexit, opposes a unified Ireland, and holds conservative views on many social issues.

Details – It is likely that this will involve more

money for Northern Ireland, and a "soft" Brexit deal – particularly when it comes to the border with the Republic of Ireland. Abortion and LGBT rights will not be included.

Coalition of chaos – This is the name that the Tories gave to a potential coalition between left-leaning parties like Labour, the SNP, Liberal Democrats and Greens.

Peace process – The Good Friday Agreement states that Westminster must show "rigorous

impartiality" in Northern Irish politics. There is concern that a deal with the Tories will make this impossible.

Still be prime minister – Corbyn aims to lead a vote against the Queen's speech in Parliament later in June, which could scupper May's plans to form a government.

Survation – The same poll put Labour five points ahead of the Conservatives.

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