

# Boris Johnson elected British prime minister, Tory Party leader



British Prime Minister-elect Boris Johnson speaks to supporters in London Tuesday after he was announced as the winner to take over for Theresa May. Photo by Neil Hall/EPA-EFE

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July 23 (UPI) — Tens of thousands of Conservative Party members voted Tuesday to select Boris Johnson as their leader and Britain's new prime minister — defeating Jeremy Hunt in his bid to succeed Theresa May in the post.

More than 150,000 party voters cast ballots to choose the new leader in London. Nearly 60 percent — more than 92,000 votes — favored Johnson. Hunt won about 46,000 votes. Johnson will officially take office Wednesday.

“We are going to unite this amazing country,” Johnson said after he was formally declared the winner. “I will work flat-out from now on, with my team that I hope to build over the next few days, to repay your confidence. In the meantime, the

campaign is over and the work begins.”

“It is now paramount that we come together,” Conservative Party Chairman Brandon Lewis said, “to get behind our new leader and out next prime minister.”

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As the new prime minister, Johnson will lead a country divided by its planned departure from the European Union this fall and growing threats from the Middle East. Johnson has made no secret his intention to leave the EU on the Oct. 31 deadline, with or without an agreement.

Johnson said Tuesday he knows he won't have universal support.

“No one person, no one party has a monopoly on wisdom,” he said. “It is we Conservatives who have had the best insights into human nature.”

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Johnson said the EU plan has divided Britain into “two noble sets of instincts” — one with free trade, friendship and mutual support of the European Union, and one with Democratic self-government.

“Deliver Brexit, unite the country and defeat Jeremy Corbyn and that's what we're going to do,” Johnson pledged, promising better infrastructure, more police officers and faster broadband Internet in more houses.

“We are going to energize the country.”

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In the end, Hunt simply didn't have sufficient support to win the leadership post after nearly two months of campaigning — and he could also be out as foreign secretary by the end of next week, depending on who Johnson appoints to Cabinet posts. Hunt replaced Johnson as Britain's chief diplomat a year ago.

Tuesday's election finishes at least part of the political turmoil that's divided Britain for months and follows pledges by May to give up her position after she failed three times to sell her negotiated exit agreement to lawmakers. Like May, Johnson will have a narrow two-seat majority in British Parliament.

Several lawmakers in recent weeks have already quit or announced they will resign amid the uncertainty over the EU exit — including Chancellor Philip

Hammond.

Lawmaker Anne Milton, Britain's former education minister, resigned even before Johnson declared victory, saying she has "grave concerns" about leaving the EU without an agreement.

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