

French government faces collapse after PM circumvents parliament over budget bill

French Prime Minister Michel Barnier used the controversial Article 49.3 of the French Constitution to force the adoption of next year's social security budget plan. In retaliation, opposition parties from the left and far right are threatening his government with a no-confidence vote.

French Prime Minister Michel Barnier's government is hanging on by a thread.

On Monday, Barnier, who lacks a majority in the National Assembly — the lower house of the French parliament — activated the controversial Article 49.3 of the French Constitution to pass his social security plan for next year without a vote.

This, in turn, allows opposition parties to launch a no-confidence vote. Both the left-wing coalition NFP and far-right National Rally (RN) have announced they will file separate censure motions. The confidence vote could come as early as Wednesday.

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