

# [***Labour's Sadiq Khan reelected as London mayor as UK's ruling Conservatives face more electoral pain***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BY8-G1N1-JC5B-G21V-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

LONDON — [*Sadiq Khan*](https://apnews.com/article/london-mayor-sadiq-khan-election-labour-party-74daae2291815622514630a3ee1ca7ab), the Labour Party's mayor of London, romped to victory Saturday, securing a record third straight term at City Hall, on another hugely disappointing day for the U.K.'s governing Conservatives ahead of a looming general election.

Khan won a little over a million votes, or nearly 44% of the vote, more than 11 percentage points ahead of his main challenger, the Conservative Party's Susan Hall. His is the biggest individual mandate of any politician in the U.K.

There had been frenzied speculation on Friday that the result would be closer than previously thought, but Khan's victory showed a swing from Conservative to Labour when compared with the previous mayoral election in 2021, even though that was conducted under a different electoral system.

Khan, who replaced Boris Johnson as London mayor in 2016 and who has widespread policing and budget powers, has been an increasingly divisive figure in the past few years regardless of the facts for or against, particularly in the suburbs, where he fared worse than in the inner city.

His supporters say he has multiple achievements to his name, such as expanding housebuilding, free school meals for young children, keeping transport costs in check and generally backing London’s minority groups. His critics say he has overseen a crime surge, been [*anti-car*](https://apnews.com/article/uk-climate-change-net-zero-targets-26e3f4e563e96260380904172621efe6) and has unnecessarily allowed [*pro-Palestinian marches*](https://apnews.com/article/uk-london-police-apology-openly-jewish-protest-8c2c574150e56888bbc7e91c39e1d333) to become a regular feature at weekends.

“We faced a campaign of non-stop negativity, but I couldn’t be more proud that we answered the fearmongering with facts, hate with hope, and attempts to divide with efforts to unite,” Khan said at the declaration of the final result. Among the candidates standing behind him was Count Binface, his head covered by a garbage can, a regular colorful presence in British elections.

“We ran a campaign that was in keeping with the spirit and values of this great city, a city that regards our diversity not as a weakness, but as an almighty strength, and one that rejects right hard-wing populism and looks forward, not back," Khan added.

The incumbent Labour mayors in Liverpool, Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire were also re-elected Saturday. For Labour, arguably the best result was in the West Midlands, widely regarded as the key bellwether region of the U.K. where the Conservative incumbent lost.

The latest successes for Labour came after it seized control of councils across England that it hasn’t held for decades. The party was also successful in a special election for a seat in Parliament, that if translated to a general election would lead to one of the Conservatives' biggest-ever defeats.

Though the Conservatives suffered a [*drubbing in the local elections,*](https://apnews.com/article/uk-election-conservatives-labour-sunak-starmer-71b0348dc6057513bb73f32385039df4) it looks as though [*Prime Minister Rishi Sunak*](https://apnews.com/hub/rishi-sunak) will not face a further rebellion among his ranks.

Sunak was able to breathe a sigh of relief when the Conservative mayor of Tees Valley in the northeast of England was reelected, albeit with a depressed share of the vote. Sunak had hoped that Andy Street would hold on in the West Midlands but he lost to Labour's Richard Parker, who claimed a majority of under 2,000 votes.

One negative for Labour was that its vote in strongly Muslim areas in England was depressed by opposition to the party leadership’s [*strongly pro-Israel stance*](https://apnews.com/article/uk-parliament-gaza-cease-fire-vote-c394d17657c32ab861b3a121d0954f18) over the war in Gaza.

Starmer conceded that the party has had issues with Muslim voters, but the results in general were positive for the man who is favorite to become prime minister at the next general election.

Sunak has the power to decide on the date of the next election, and has indicated that it will be in the second half of 2024. Starmer urged him not to wait.

“We're fed up with your division, with your chaos, with your failure,” he said Saturday. “If you leave your country in a worse state than when you found it, 14 years later, you do not deserve to be in government a moment longer.”

[*Thursday’s elections*](https://apnews.com/article/uk-local-elections-mayor-london-sunak-starmer-6c08c449c84199520338fd104de6e837) in large parts of England were important in themselves, with voters deciding on who runs many aspects of their daily lives, such as garbage collection, road maintenance and local crime prevention. But with a national election looming, they are being viewed through a national prism.

John Curtice, professor of ***politics*** at the University of Strathclyde, said the results show that Sunak has not helped the Conservative brand following the damage accrued by the actions of his predecessors, [*Boris Johnson*](https://apnews.com/article/uk-election-boris-johnson-photo-id-038bf7bf72c7490137ec921a5242a2ef) and then [*Liz Truss*](https://apnews.com/article/liz-truss-europe-economy-business-e18e6e6007c28f6e11cc1a201c545b71).

“That in a sense is the big takeaway," he told BBC radio.

Sunak became prime minister in October 2022, after [*Truss's short-lived tenure*](https://apnews.com/article/liz-truss-resignation-politics-c3482c96df805080fcb54fb8520c3e23). She left office after 49 days following a budget of unfunded tax cuts that roiled financial markets and sent borrowing costs for homeowners surging.

Her chaotic — and traumatic — leadership compounded the Conservatives’ difficulties following the circus surrounding her predecessor Johnson, who was forced to quit after being adjudged to have lied to Parliament over coronavirus lockdown breaches at his offices in Downing Street.

By late afternoon Saturday, with most of the 2,661 seats up for grabs in the local elections counted, the Conservatives had lost around a half of the 1,000 seats they were defending, while Labour had picked up about 200 despite some seemingly Gaza-related losses.

Other parties, such as the centrist Liberal Democrats and the Greens, also made gains. Reform U.K., which is trying to usurp the Conservatives from the right, also had some successes, notably in the special parliamentary election in Blackpool South, where it was less than 200 votes from grabbing second place.

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