

[Home](#) | [Israel-Gaza war](#) | [Cost of Living](#) | [War in Ukraine](#) | [Climate](#) | [UK](#) | [World](#) |[More](#)[Business](#) | [Politics](#) | [Culture](#)[Asia](#) | [China](#) | [India](#)

# Taiwan elects William Lai president in historic election

⌚ 58 minutes ago



GETTY IMAGES

| Mr Lai won 40% of the vote, beating his two opponents comfortably

**Let us know  
you agree to  
cookies**

We use [cookies](#) to give you the best online experience.  
Please let us know if you agree to all of these cookies.

**Yes, I agree**

**No, take me to  
settings**

## Taiwanese voters have chosen William Lai as their president in a historic election, cementing a path that is increasingly divergent from China.

The move has angered Beijing, which issued a statement shortly after the results insisting that "Taiwan is part of China".

While Beijing has called for "peaceful reunification", it has also not ruled out the use of force.

It had cast the Taiwan election as a choice between "war and peace".

China has ramped up its military presence around the island in recent months, heightening fears of a possible conflict.

- **Taiwan just chose a president China loathes. What now?**

Beijing's communist government reviles Mr Lai's pro-sovereignty Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) which has governed Taiwan for eight years.

By winning an unprecedented third consecutive presidential term for his party, Mr Lai has broken new ground. In his first remarks after his opponents conceded, he signalled that this was an irreversible trajectory.

"The country will continue to walk on the right path forward. We will not turn around or look backwards," he told the world's media in a press conference.

- **It's not war Taiwan's young voters worry about - it's jobs**

- **The Taiwan that China wants is vanishing**

Later, while addressing tens of thousands of ecstatic supporters on the streets of Taipei, Mr Lai characterised his win as a triumph of democracy.

"We've done it. We didn't let external forces influence our election. That's because we decided that only we can choose our president," he said. In the lead-up to the polls, Taiwan had accused China of attempting to interfere with the process.

But Mr Lai also had a message for China.

He told reporters he favoured more exchanges and dialogue over obstructionism and conflict, and called for peace and stability with Beijing.

At the same time, he added, he would "maintain the cross-strait status quo" - neither seeking independence nor unification with China - and pledged to "safeguard Taiwan from threats from China".

**Let us know  
you agree to  
cookies**

We use cookies to give you the best online experience.  
Please let us know if you agree to all of these cookies.

**No, take me to  
settings**

On Saturday, a statement from the Taiwan Affairs Office of China's State Council insisted that Taiwan's elections "cannot stop the unstoppable trend of the eventual reunification of the motherland" and the DPP "cannot represent the mainstream public opinion" in Taiwan.

The US, Taiwan's biggest ally, was swift to congratulate Mr Lai on his win. Secretary of State Antony Blinken also praised the island's "robust democratic system and electoral process".

In a statement, he said Washington is "committed to maintaining cross-strait peace and stability". Earlier President Joe Biden told reporters the US "does not support independence" for Taiwan.



| Watch: The BBC's Shaimaa Khalil joined DPP supporters at a rally celebrating their win

Outside the DPP's headquarters in Taipei on Saturday, supporters celebrated the result.

"I'm so happy now. Most Taiwanese people want to protect our democratic lifestyle," said Cheng Yu-tsai.

"I don't care [how China reacts]. We have to hold up our values and insist on what we think is right and move on," said Wei Yi-tsai.

Mr Lai's 40% of the vote put him comfortably ahead of Hou Yu-ih from the main opposition Kuomintang (KMT) party. Since 2000, Taiwan has alternated

**Let us know  
you agree to  
cookies**

We use cookies to give you the best online experience.  
Please let us know if you agree to all of these cookies.

**No, take me to  
settings**

Voters on Saturday also chose their legislature. The DPP has lost its majority with the opposition gaining ground, though no one party has enough seats to control parliament, according to Taiwanese media reports.

Observers say that an opposition-dominated legislature with a DPP president could mean the process of governing Taiwan would become more fraught.

---

## Read more about the Taiwan election:

- [\*\*Love and longing across the Taiwan Strait: The view from China\*\*](#)
  - [\*\*The dark rumours trying to destroy Taiwan's trust in US\*\*](#)
  - [\*\*China is ramping up the pressure for Taiwan's election\*\*](#)
  - [\*\*The three men vying to be Taiwan's next president\*\*](#)
- 

## Related Topics

Taiwan

## More on this story



**China warns Taiwan voters and condemns 'brazen' US**

2 days ago



**Why the Taiwan election matters to the world**

10 hours ago



**Chinese satellite triggers missile alert in Taiwan**

4 days ago

**Let us know you agree to cookies**

We use [cookies](#) to give you the best online experience. Please let us know if you agree to all of these cookies.

**No, take me to settings**

## The Taiwan party asking voters to choose war or peace

4 days ago

## What's behind China-Taiwan tensions?

5 days ago

## What is the 'One China' policy?

6 October 2021

## Top Stories

 **LIVE** US launches new missile strike on Houthi target in Yemen

Taiwan elects William Lai president in historic vote

58 minutes ago

**The thorny politics of Houthi strikes for Sunak and Starmer**

1 hour ago

## Features



**Yemen strikes show war in Gaza has already spread**



**Why the Taiwan election matters to the world**



**The new-style nightclub that's only open in the day**

**Let us know you agree to cookies**

We use [cookies](#) to give you the best online experience.  
Please let us know if you agree to all of these cookies.

**No, take me to settings**



**Will Macron's whizz-kid help fend off the far right?**



**Why the world is watching US election so closely**



**The ex-miners who are the Last Men Standing**



**South Korea's complicated relationship with dog meat**

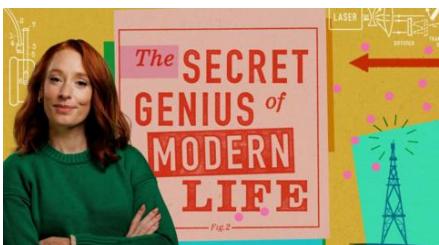


**AI pillows and toothbrushes: Is it all getting a bit silly?**



**I noticed a bulging lump sensation in my vagina**

## Elsewhere on the BBC



**Inside the secret world of passport security**

The secret tech making the British passport one of the most secure documents on the planet

iPlayer



**British television's greatest double act**

Eric and Ernie share their remarkable journey through TV appearances, rare radio material and BBC archives

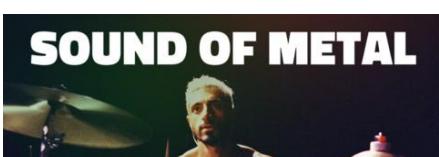
iPlayer



**'It was a Beatles sandwich, isn't that a nice thought?'**

Sir Paul McCartney opens up in a candid chat with Sir Michael Parkinson, first broadcast in 1999

iPlayer



**Let us know you agree to cookies**

We use cookies to give you the best online experience.  
Please let us know if you agree to all of these cookies.

**No, take me to settings**

There's something for everyone on BBC iPlayer

 iPlayer

## Most Read

- |          |   |           |   |
|----------|---|-----------|---|
| <b>1</b> | Airbnb host stunned after puppy seller trashes home | <b>2</b>  | Cockpit window crack forces ANA Boeing to turn back         |
| <b>3</b> | Jacinda Ardern marries partner in private ceremony  | <b>4</b>  | The thorny politics of Houthi strikes for Sunak and Starmer |
| <b>5</b> | Cold blast and more snow in store for UK next week  | <b>6</b>  | Taiwan elects William Lai president in historic vote        |
| <b>7</b> | Thousands attend pro-Palestinian march in London    | <b>8</b>  | Queen died peacefully and without pain, book says           |
| <b>9</b> | Days of Our Lives star Bill Hayes dies              | <b>10</b> | Hundreds attend funeral for boy killed in crash             |

## BBC News Services

 On your mobile

 On smart speakers

 Get news alerts

 Contact BBC News

## Best of the BBC

**Let us know you agree to cookies**

We use [cookies](#) to give you the best online experience. Please let us know if you agree to all of these cookies.

**No, take me to settings**



**Investigating women's historical crimes**

BBC Sounds



**The Jurassic discovery of a lifetime**

BBC iPlayer



**How can Vitamin D help your health?**

BBC Sounds

**The deeper you go, the darker it gets...**

BBC iPlayer

Home

Weather

CBBC

Bitesize

Local

News

iPlayer

CBeebies

Arts

Three

Sport

Sounds

Food

Taster

[Terms of Use](#)

[About the BBC](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Cookies](#)

[Accessibility Help](#)

[Parental Guidance](#)

[Contact the BBC](#)

[Make an editorial complaint](#)

[Get Personalised Newsletters](#)

[Why you can trust the BBC](#)

© 2024 BBC. The BBC is not responsible for the content of external sites. [Read about our approach to external linking.](#)

**Let us know  
you agree to  
cookies**

We use [cookies](#) to give you the best online experience.  
Please let us know if you agree to all of these cookies.

**No, take me to settings**