

# France votes in first election since Paris attacks

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Media caption Voting is taking place under a state of emergency declared after the Paris attacks

**French people are voting in regional elections, the first electoral test since last month's Paris attacks, in which 130 people were killed.**

Opinion polls suggest there will be a strong showing for the far-right National Front (FN).

The centre-right led by former President Nicolas Sarkozy is expected to win in most regions at the expense of the governing Socialist Party.

Sunday's first round will be followed by a run-off on 13 December.

French regions have wide powers over local transport, education and economic development.

## Has France's National Front changed?

### The far-right's charm offensive

The election is also being closely watched after opinion polls suggested the popularity of the anti-immigration, anti-EU National Front had increased since the attacks on 13 November.

FN leader Marine Le Pen is likely to win in the northern region of Nord-Pas-De-Calais-Picardie, while her niece Marion Marechal-Le Pen is a leading contender in Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur in the south.

Image copyright  Image caption Marion Marechal-Le Pen was elected the youngest ever French MP in 2012

It would be the first time the National Front has captured any of France's regions. The party is hoping a strong performance will boost Ms Marine Le Pen's chances for the 2017 presidential election.

Both Mr Sarkozy's Les Republicains party and the FN appear to be heading for about 30% of votes, according to opinion polls, but President Francois Hollande's Socialist Party is trailing on about 22%.

Prime Minister Manuel Valls made an "appeal to patriotism" on Thursday in an effort to rally the Socialist vote.

The election is being held under a state of emergency which was declared after the Paris attacks.

On Friday, the Belgian prosecutor's office said police were seeking two new suspects accused of aiding the fugitive suspect from the Paris attacks Salah Abdeslam, who lived in Belgium.

The pair are "armed and dangerous" and are thought to have helped Abdeslam travel to Hungary in September.

### Who were Paris attackers?

### How the Paris attacks unfolded

Investigators say Abdeslam may have driven the suicide bombers at the Stade de France to their target on the night of the Paris attacks.

But Abdeslam's precise role in the attacks remains unclear. There are suggestions he was meant to carry out a suicide attack on the night but decided against it.

Image copyright **Belgian police** Image caption Belgian police also released stills of the two new wanted men

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## Paris attacks