



By: Tomorrow's Affairs Staff

French far right in a labyrinth as they await a decision on the political future of Marine Le Pen



Marine Le Pen – President, Jordan Bardella – Prime Minister. A **scenario** which the leader of the French far right presented two years ago as a "ticket" for gaining power in 2027, now appears rather uncertain.

This week, appeals court extended the agonising wait for the leader of the National Rally (Rassemblement National) until 7 July. On that date, it will announce whether it upholds her appeal or confirms the lower court's March 2025 verdict, which bans Le Pen from political activity for five years.

The nightmare for the leader of France's most popular party continues, so the answer to whether she will be able to run for president must wait until the summer.

Although routine in judicial proceedings, this timing has direct and significant political consequences—first for Marine Le Pen, then for her party, the entire French political scene, and, by extension, Europe.

"Here we are on the eve of an election that is of the utmost importance for the country. But this presidential election makes the judgment that you will have to hand down dizzying," **Rodolphe Bosselut**, Le Pen's lawyer, said before the court.

Election strategies pending

Therefore, the National Rally will not know before 7 July who will stand as its candidate in the presidential race in April of the following year.

This means that all plans and **strategies** for the campaign must wait for the verdict of the French appeals court, which will determine whether Marine Le Pen or her protégé, the young president of the party, Bardella, will be on the poster.

However, it is not only the design and costs of printing posters and producing videos that are at stake. Much more is on the line.

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The previous presidential campaign for the 2022 elections, Marine Le Pen and the National Rally started almost a year in advance. Even that lengthy period was not enough to defeat Emmanuel Macron, though other factors were involved.

If the court's decision in July is favourable to Marine Le Pen, and if the National Rally manages to launch her campaign immediately, she will have less than eight months to promote her candidacy.

The burden on Marine Le Pen

An even greater problem for that campaign will be its content. Marine Le Pen would enter it carrying the burden of a recently concluded court case, in which she was initially sentenced to a prison term and a five-year ban from politics.

For the National Rally's strategists, this would pose the challenge of how to remove this stain in the short term, at least for those voters who still have more faith in the objectivity of the courts than in the words of their political leaders.

Their only option is to follow the model used by Trump during his 2024 campaign, in which he also faced serious criminal charges in court.

The National Rally has also adopted Trump's approach, accusing the courts and the political establishment of attempting to destroy his candidacy.

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Even if she receives a favourable court decision in July, Marine Le Pen will enter the campaign in poor shape.

Faced with the difficult decision of how to mitigate the negative impact of last year's verdict while maintaining her voters' political energy, Marine Le Pen has, by necessity, focused on her defence, while Jordan Bardella has taken on the role of National Rally policy promoter.

Is Bardella taking the lead?

Perhaps the biggest problem for the French far right lies in this division of work. The rivalry between the young president of the National Rally and his political mentor inevitably exists.

When he was convincingly elected **president of the National Rally** in November 2022, Bardella was considered an unquestionable loyalist to both the party's direction and Marine Le Pen, who, after her defeat in the presidential election earlier that year, remained the party's true leader.



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However, new circumstances can change these relationships. Jordan Bardella is now tasked with carefully building his image as a young, determined right-winger from a Parisian suburb.

At the same time, the troubles surrounding Marine Le Pen make far-right supporters increasingly recognise him as the true leader and even their favourite for the upcoming presidential elections.

As many as 69% of National Rally voters believe that Jordan Bardella would be a stronger candidate in the presidential elections than Marine Le Pen. More convincingly, Bardella has a better chance of attracting moderate right-wing votes than Marine Le Pen.

It is precisely this quality that makes him a more desirable National Rally candidate, given the long-standing problem of the far right being unable to attract voters from other parties in the second presidential round.

Bardella's **election prospects** are also good; his first-round rating of about 35% would guarantee him a leading position in the second round.

The National Rally therefore faces a risky period ahead, in which it may even experience strong internal turbulence in the event of a confrontation over the selection of a presidential candidate.

While they await the decision of the Paris court in July, the French far right will have to carefully evaluate all possible options if they want to approach the 2027 presidential elections united.