

What Canada's election results mean for Canadians, Trump and U.S. tariffs

Mark Carney's Liberal Party is projected to win a federal election that played out against a backdrop of Trump's trade war and annexation threats.

**By Rachel Pannett, Frances Vinall, Amanda Coletta and Victoria Bisset
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Canada's Liberal Party, led by Mark Carney, is projected to win a federal election that played out against a tumultuous backdrop of President Donald Trump's trade war and annexation threats.

It was not immediately clear whether the Liberals would lead a minority or majority government as votes continued to be counted early Tuesday. Either way, Carney will now have to figure out how to deal with Trump's 25 percent tariffs on many Canadian goods — and his persistent talk of turning the country into a “51st state.”

Here are the key takeaways from Canada's election results.

Voters elected Carney amid Trump's threats

The election became in large part a referendum on who Canadians felt would do a better job of protecting their country from Trump's economic and geopolitical salvos.

Trump has announced tariffs on some of Canada's largest exports to the United States, including auto parts, prompting retaliatory levies from Canada and a “Buy Canadian” movement encouraging consumers to boycott American brands.

Trump's repeated threats of annexation also rankled Canadians. Former prime minister Justin Trudeau told business leaders in February that he believed Trump's talk was serious and that the president coveted Canada's critical minerals. Carney — who took over the Liberal Party leadership from Trudeau in March — also tapped into voter concerns over Trump, saying

during a victory event early Tuesday: “America wants our land, our resources, our water, our country. These are not idle threats. President Trump is trying to break us so America can own us.”

Meanwhile, Pierre Poilievre — a career politician and right-wing populist who once declared war on “wokeism” — found his Trump-like qualities now counted against him. He faced a sudden reversal in polls that had favored his Conservative Party to win only a few months ago; on Tuesday morning, he was projected to lose his own seat, according to the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. The party was polling with a more than 20-point lead over the Liberals in January.

Carney pledges discussions with the U.S. — but says Canada has ‘other options’

Carney, a 60-year-old former central banker in Canada and Britain, pitched himself as a crisis manager who could navigate Trump’s economic chaos. Carney said during the campaign that Canada’s “old relationship with the United States, based on deepening integration of our economies and tight security and military cooperation, is over.”

Carney has said there are sectors of the economy that will remain deeply integrated with the U.S. and that he will seek to negotiate a new security and trade relationship with Trump. But he has also talked up the prospects of broadening ties with other “like-minded” partners globally.

In his victory speech, he said he would sit down with the U.S. president to discuss “the future economic and security relationship between two sovereign nations.” He added that the discussion would be undertaken with the “full knowledge that we have many, many other options than the United States,” promising to strengthen relations with “reliable partners” in Europe, Asia and elsewhere.

Canadian Foreign Minister Mélanie Joly has said that Canada wants to deepen ties with Europe. She told a gathering of Group of Seven foreign ministers in March: “If the U.S. can do this to us, their closest friend, then nobody is safe.” Her warning came ahead of Trump’s far-reaching tariff announcement in April and prompted pledges of solidarity from European Union officials.

World reactions focused on closer ties with Canada

As world leaders sent Carney their congratulations Tuesday, many focused on the importance of a strong relationship with Canada during challenging times.

European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen wrote on X that the “bond between Europe and Canada is strong — and growing stronger. ... We’ll defend our shared democratic values, promote multilateralism, and champion free and fair trade.”

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun said Beijing is “willing to develop Chinese-Canadian relations on the basis of mutual respect, equality and benefit,” according to state-controlled media. Relations between the two countries were strained in recent years by Canada’s detention of a top Chinese tech executive and China’s jailing of two Canadians, which Western officials said was an example of “hostage diplomacy.” Canada’s security services also accused China of interfering in the country’s federal elections in 2019 and 2021.

Smaller parties suffered as support for the Liberals grew

A large part of the swell of support for the Liberals on Monday was subtracted from minority parties. The Conservatives’ overall vote share and number of elected lawmakers was projected to increase compared with the last election, in 2021, but that wasn’t enough to get them over the line as voters turned the contest into a two-horse race, which is unusual for Canada.

Jagmeet Singh, leader of the New Democratic Party, further to the left than Carney’s centrist Liberals, announced overnight that he would resign after a poor showing for NDP candidates, from 25 elected in 2021 to a projected seven. Singh was among those to lose his seat. Bloc Québécois, a pro-Quebec independence party that often leans left on other issues, also dropped seats, from 32 to a projected 23. The collapse in minor-party votes could make it more complicated to form a minority government if Carney doesn’t secure a majority outright.

Canada is often ruled by minority governments — including those in Trudeau’s last two terms — which typically negotiate with smaller parties bill by bill to execute their agendas. There was a significant chance that Carney, too, would govern in the minority as the vote count continued. But voters turning toward the two major parties was a clear trend this election.

The results could signal a change in fortune for populist politicians globally

The Canadian election could signal a shift against Trump-aligned politicians around the world. Voters in elections globally last year often opted against incumbents, and support for populist right-wing parties surged in countries such as Austria and France. Canada was on track to continue the trend until the tumult of the first quarter of the year.

Another election to watch will be the federal vote this weekend in Australia, in which conservative leader and prime ministerial hopeful Peter Dutton had proposed Trump-like policies such as firing government “cultural diversity and inclusion” officials.

But analysts now predict that similarities to Trump could hamper Dutton’s efforts to wrest the top office from his opponent, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese. In Australia, too, polls have reversed recently to favor the center-left, Albanese’s Labor Party in this case.