

Prime Minister Boris Johnson's statement in Downing Street: 7 July 2022

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Good afternoon everybody,

It is now clearly the will of the parliamentary conservative party that there should be a new leader of that party

and therefore a new Prime Minister

and I have agreed with Sir Graham Brady

the chairman of our backbench MPs

that the process of choosing that new leader should begin now

and the timetable will be announced next week

and I have today appointed a cabinet to serve – as I will – until a new leader is in place

so I want to say to the millions of people who voted for us in 2019 – many of them voting Conservative for the first time

thank you for that incredible mandate

the biggest Conservative majority since 1987

the biggest share of the vote since 1979

and the reason I have fought so hard for the last few days to continue to deliver that mandate in person

was not just because I wanted to do so

but because I felt it was my job, my duty, my obligation to you to continue to do what we promised in 2019

and of course I am immensely proud of the achievements of this government

from getting Brexit done and settling our relations with the continent after half a century

reclaiming the power for this country to make its own laws in parliament

getting us all through the pandemic

delivering the fastest vaccine rollout in Europe

the fastest exit from lockdown

and in the last few months leading the west in standing up to Putin's aggression in Ukraine

and let me say now to the people of Ukraine that I know that we in the UK will continue to back your fight for freedom for as long as it takes

and at the same time in this country we have at the same time been pushing forward a vast programme of investment in infrastructure, skills and technology

the biggest for a century

because if I have one insight into human beings

it is that genius and talent and enthusiasm and imagination are evenly distributed throughout the population

but opportunity is not

and that is why we need to keep levelling up

keep unleashing the potential of every part of the United Kingdom

and if we can do that in this country, we will be the most prosperous in Europe

and in the last few days I have tried to persuade my colleagues that it would be eccentric to change governments

when we are delivering so much

and when we have such a vast mandate and when we are actually only a handful of points behind in the polls

even in mid term after quite a few months of pretty unrelenting sledging

and when the economic scene is so difficult domestically and internationally

and I regret not to have been successful in those arguments

and of course it is painful not to be able to see through so many ideas and projects myself

but as we've seen at Westminster, the herd is powerful and when the herd moves, it moves and

and my friends in politics no one is remotely indispensable

And our brilliant and Darwinian system will produce another leader equally committed to taking this country forward through tough times

not just helping families to get through it but changing and improving our systems, cutting burdens on businesses and families

and – yes – cutting taxes

because that is the way to generate the growth and the income we need to pay for great public services

and to that new leader I say, whoever he or she may be, I will give you as much support as I can

and to you the British people I know that there will be many who are relieved but perhaps quite a few who will be disappointed

and I want you to know how sad I am to give up the best job in the world

but them's the breaks

I want to thank Carrie and our children, to all the members of my family who have had to put up with so much for so long

I want to thank the peerless British civil service for all the help and support that you have given

our police, our emergency services and of course our NHS who at a critical moment helped to extend my own period in office

as well as our armed services and our agencies that are so admired around the world and

[Political content omitted]

I want to thank the wonderful staff here at Number Ten and of course at chequers and our fantastic protforce detectives – the one group, by the way, who never leak

and above all I want to thank you the British public for the immense privilege you have given me

and I want you to know that from now until the new Prime Minister is in place, your interests will be served and the government of the country will be carried on

Being Prime Minister is an education in itself

I have travelled to every part of the United Kingdom and in addition to the beauty of our natural world

I have found so many people possessed of such boundless British originality and so willing to tackle old problems in new ways that I know that even if things can sometimes seem dark now, our future together is golden.

Thank you all very much.