

## Le Pen's Presidential hopes revived as appeal could overturn ban in 2026



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PARIS – French far-right leader Marine Le Pen has been given a chance to remain in the 2027 presidential race after a court of appeal announced it would rule on her case by mid-2026. The decision offers a political lifeline after a recent conviction threatened to derail her bid to succeed Emmanuel Macron.

Le Pen, the National Rally leader and a key contender for the presidency, was found guilty alongside 23 others of embezzling European Parliament funds. The court imposed fines, suspended prison sentences, and a five-year ban from public office. The ruling was seen as a major setback, with Le Pen acknowledging the challenge but vowing to fight on.

The appeal process now opens the possibility of overturning her ban before the next election. Two other co-defendants have also appealed.

Monday's verdict has intensified political tensions in France, with Le Pen's allies condemning it as politically motivated. International figures, including U.S. President Donald Trump and billionaire Elon Musk, have voiced support for her, calling the ruling undemocratic.

With Macron ineligible for a third term, Le Pen was the front-runner for the presidency. Having failed in three previous attempts, her fate now hinges on the appeal court's ruling, which could determine whether she remains in the race.