

Thailand's recent elections have delivered a surprising outcome, with the opposition party, Move Forward, receiving a majority of votes. The party's platform, which calls for substantial reform of the country's institutions, resonated with voters who were eager for change. This report discusses the election results, their significance, and the reactions of political analysts and supporters of Move Forward.

Election Results

Early results from the election indicate that Move Forward has won 151 out of 500 seats in the lower house, surpassing expectations. This result puts the party ten seats ahead of the previous frontrunner, Pheu Thai, led by the daughter of former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra. The governing coalition, which is aligned with the military and led by Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, won only 15% of the seats.

Significance of the Results

Political analysts are describing this election as a "political earthquake" that represents a significant shift in public opinion. The results are a clear repudiation of the current government and its two military-aligned parties. The vote is a reflection of the desire for change and a rejection of the "Prayuth regime." According to Prajak Kongkirati, a political scientist from Thammasat University, "The majority of votes reflect the need to escape from the 'Prayuth regime,' and the yearning for change... It shows that people believe in the Move Forward demand for change - many more people than predicted."

The party's bold vision and clear stance on avoiding any coalition with parties associated with the 2014 military coup helped it to stand out from its rivals. Move Forward's candidates had fewer resources than their competitors and relied on social media, and sometimes old technology like bicycles, to get their message across. Despite the party's success, the Senate's 250 appointed senators could still block a Move Forward-Pheu Thai coalition, even though the two parties have nearly 60% of the seats in the lower house.

There is also a risk that the losing conservative bloc may resort to extra-parliamentary manoeuvres to prevent the reformists from taking power. Although a military coup is unlikely, another court ruling to disqualify Move Forward on a technicality, as happened to its predecessor Future Forward in 2020, is possible. The other question is how well Move Forward and Pheu Thai, whose relations in the last parliament were sometimes fractious, can work together.

Move Forward’s 42-year-old leader, Pita Limjaroenrat, a Harvard University graduate, tweeted that he was “ready” to become the country’s 30th prime minister.

พรรคการเมืองไทยที่นำโดย นายพิธา ลิ้มเจริญรัตน์ หัวหน้าพรรคก้าวไกล ได้ประกาศชัยชนะในการเลือกตั้งทั่วไปเมื่อวันที่ 14 พฤษภาคม 2566 โดยได้รับเสียงสนับสนุนจากประชาชนชาวไทยกว่า 30 เปอร์เซ็นต์

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— Pita Limjaroenrat (@Pita_MFP) [May 14, 2023](#)

The election results in Thailand represent a significant shift in public opinion and a rejection of the current government. Move Forward’s victory indicates a strong desire for change and reform of the country’s institutions. The reactions of political analysts and supporters of Move Forward suggest that this election may have marked a turning point in Thai politics and that the country may be heading towards a new era of political change and reform.

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