



EDITION:
U.S.

News
& Markets

Sectors
& Industries

Analysis
& Opinion

[Login](#) | [Register](#)

Search

SEARCH

FaithWorld

Religion, faith and ethics

» See all analysis and opinion

"No to Islamism" campaign boosts France's National Front in poll

MAR 15, 2010 14:17 EDT

ELECTION | FAR-RIGHT | FRANCE | IMMIGRATION | ISLAM | ISLAMISM | LE PEN | MUSLIM



Jean-Marie Le Pen at a rally in Marseille on March 7, 2010. The placard reads "No to Islamism. You with Le Pen" and shows a map of France covered by an Algerian flag and minarets/Jean-Paul Peliss

Far-right leader Jean-Marie Le Pen, playing on fears over the spread of Islam, has regained the political initiative in France with a strong result in regional elections that poses a problem for President Nicolas Sarkozy.

Bouncing back from a string of recent reversals, Le Pen's National Front won a surprise 11.74 percent of the national vote in Sunday's first round ballot and will dilute support for Sarkozy's conservative block in crucial run-offs on March 21. Aged 81, Le Pen himself enjoyed a remarkable personal triumph, winning 20.29 percent backing in the southern French Provence-Cote d'Azur region, which has absorbed hundreds of thousands of mainly North African immigrants in recent decades.

A government move in 2009 to organise a broad debate on national identity rekindled interest in the far right by reviving controversies over how to deal with immigrants and Islam in a country that has Europe's largest Muslim population.

Le Pen, who has said the regional vote will be his last election campaign, proved astute at leveraging concerns over radical Islam, plastering billboards with a poster showing France covered by an Algerian flag, a veiled woman and minarets. "No to Islamism," read the slogan.

[Read the whole analysis here.](#)



Search

SEARCH

Sprint

Get unlimited text and picture messaging, Web, GPS and calling to any mobile in America.

All for just \$69.99/month.

Learn more →

Replay

Author Profile

Crispian Balmer

Crispian Balmer is Reuters' Chief Correspondent in Paris. He joined Reuters in London in 1991 and was then posted to Spain and Italy before moving to France in 2007. He has reported from more than 20 countries during his journalistic career, covering everything from Hurricane Katrina to the Tsunami and the Balkans conflict.

» [View Profile](#)

Follow FaithWorld

[Subscribe to all posts via RSS](#) (What is RSS?)

Tag Cloud

abortion afghanistan anglican Barack Obama bible

bishop britain buddhist **catholic** catholic

church **christian** common word election evangelical france germany God hindu holocaust india interfaith

islam islamist israel italy jewish jews koran law

media mosque **muslim** pakistan **pope**

benedict protestant religion religious freedom

saudi arabia sexual abuse sharia SSPX turkey **united states vatican** women

Archives

Select Month

