

BORIS JOHNSON'S FULL STATEMENT

In the last few days I have been overwhelmed by the number of people who suggested that I should once again contest the Conservative Party leadership, both among the public and among friends and colleagues in Parliament.

I have been attracted because I led our party into a massive election victory less than three years ago - and I believe I am therefore uniquely placed to avert a general election now.

A general election would be a further disastrous distraction just when the Government must focus on the economic pressures faced by families across the country.

I believe I am well placed to deliver a Conservative victory in 2024 - and tonight I can confirm that I have cleared the very high hurdle of 102 nominations, including a proposer and a seconder, and I could put my nomination in tomorrow.

There is a very good chance that I would be successful in the election with Conservative Party members - and that I could indeed be back in Downing Street on Friday.

But in the course of the last days I have sadly come to the conclusion that this would simply not be the right thing to do. You can't govern effectively unless you have a united party in parliament.

And though I have reached out to both Rishi (Sunak) and Penny (Mordaunt) - because I hoped that we could come together in the national interest - we have sadly not been able to work out a way of doing this.

Therefore I am afraid the best thing is that I do not allow my nomination to go forward and commit my support to whoever succeeds.

I believe I have much to offer but I am afraid that this is simply not the right time.