

FEATURE

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Taiwan voters reject attempt to recall opposition lawmakers

Vote deals a blow to President Lai Ching-te's party and its hopes for taking control of parliament.

I-Hwa Cheng, AFP

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Supporters of Taiwan's main opposition KMT party rally against the recall election in front of the Presidential Office in Taipei, July 25, 2025

Taiwanese voters have rejected an attempt to remove 24 opposition lawmakers, according to an official tally, dealing a blow to President Lai Ching-te's party and its hopes for taking control of the parliament.

All [recall votes](#) against 24 lawmakers from the largest opposition party, the Kuomintang (KMT), were rejected, according to live vote counts by Taiwanese media hours after the vote ended at 08:00 GMT on Saturday.

Civic groups backed by Lai's Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) had sought to unseat the KMT lawmakers, accusing them of being in cahoots with China.

The KMT, which advocates closer ties with Beijing, controls parliament with the help of the Taiwan People's Party (TPP) and has slammed the unprecedented recall effort as a DPP power grab.

"Let this political farce end here," KMT chairman Eric Chu told reporters.

"No one can lose an election and then engage in a vicious recall," he said, calling on Lai to "sincerely apologise" and "stop thinking about political infighting".

parties", Lin said the DPP would "reflect more prudently on the society's response".

The DPP needed to unseat a minimum of 12 KMT lawmakers to gain temporary control of parliament, with risk analysis firm Eurasia Group giving that outcome "a 60 percent probability".

Lai's party would then have needed to flip six seats in by-elections – that will follow the recall vote – later this year to cement its dominance in Taiwan's 113-seat parliament.

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A recall election for an additional seven KMT lawmakers will be held on August 23.



People against the recall movement gather in Taoyuan, Taiwan, July 20, 2025 [Ann Wang/Reuters]

DPP Secretary-General Lin Yu-chang said the party "humbly" accepts the results.

Insisting the election could not be "reduced to victory or defeat between political

The DPP and KMT held rain-soaked rallies in the days leading up to the critical vote, which has dominated Taiwanese politics, newspaper headlines and social media feeds for months.

While Lai won last year's presidential election, the DPP lost its legislative majority. That has allowed the opposition to flex its legislative muscles since then to pass laws the government has opposed and impose government budget cuts, complicating efforts to boost defence spending, in particular.

Taiwan has been trying to increase its military budget amid threats from China, which considers the island [part of its territory](#).

The domestic political drama came as China ramps up a military and diplomatic pressure campaign against Taiwan to assert its territorial claims over the island, which Lai and his government reject.

Lai has offered talks with China many times but has been rebuffed by Beijing, which has called him a "separatist".

The heated recall election was closely watched by China, whose Taiwan Affairs Office and Chinese state media have repeatedly commented on and even used the KMT's talking points to lambaste Lai.

Taipei said this week that Beijing was "clearly" trying to [interfere in the vote](#), and it was up to the Taiwanese people to decide who should be removed or stay in office.

Those supporting the recall vote had accused the KMT of selling out Taiwan by sending lawmakers to China, not supporting defence spending and bringing chaos to parliament.

The KMT rejected the accusations and denounced Lai's "dictatorship" and "green terror" – referring to the DPP's party colour.

Source: Al Jazeera and news agencies