

British politics in turmoil with sudden exit of Boris Johnson



Johnson waving at a camera as he walks past a car in an open suit jacket and white shirt. Johnson denounced the privileges committee as a 'kangaroo court' [File: Henry Nicholls/Reuters]

London, June 10 (RHC)-- Former British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's departure from parliament over COVID lockdown-breaking parties has sparked fevered speculation about his and the current government's future. Johnson announced that he was quitting as a member of parliament on Friday,

claiming he had been forced out in a stitch-up by his political opponents.

The 58-year-old populist politician has been under investigation by a cross-party committee about whether he deliberately lied to parliament over parties when he was in office. In evidence earlier this year, he insisted he had not.

But as the committee prepares to make public its findings, he said they had contacted him “making it clear ... they are determined to use the proceedings against me to drive me out of parliament.” The privileges committee, which has a majority of MPs from his own Conservative Party, has powers to impose sanctions for misleading parliament, including suspension.

Ordinarily, suspension of more than 10 working days leads to a by-election in the politician’s constituency. By quitting, Johnson avoids the consequences of a humiliating fight to remain an MP in his Uxbridge and South Ruislip seat in northwest London where he holds a slim majority of just over 7,000.

He denounced the committee, chaired by veteran opposition Labour MP Harriet Harman, as a “kangaroo court.” “It is very sad to be leaving parliament – at least for now – but above all I am bewildered and appalled that I can be forced out, anti-democratically ... with such egregious bias,” he said.

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