# Penny Mordaunt Under Fire for Missing Cabinet Meeting as Sunak Calls Early Election



**Penny Mordaunt's Absence Notable in Cabinet Meeting as Sunak Announces Early Election**

Commons Leader Penny Mordaunt has been accused of avoiding a pivotal Cabinet meeting in which Prime Minister Rishi Sunak authorized a surprise general election. The meeting took place on a Wednesday, with notable attendance including David Cameron, who flew back from Albania to participate. Mordaunt, meanwhile, was chairing a Privy Council meeting at Buckingham Palace, a mile away.

Mordaunt, considered a potential future Tory leader by her supporters, was described as having a ‘notable’ absence. A Cabinet minister emphasized the expectation for all members to attend unless they had a significant reason, pointing out that both the Foreign Secretary and Defence Secretary had returned for the session.

The decision for an early election, to be held in June or July, had been under discussion for a month. It was reportedly finalized during a secret dinner at Downing Street, attended by Sunak’s close advisers. Despite No10’s denial, some sources indicate that political strategist Isaac Levido had reservations about the timing. Others, including Sunak’s longtime friend James Forsyth and Chief of Staff Liam Booth-Smith, argued for the early poll due to various strategic reasons, including ongoing issues with migrant flights to Rwanda and prison overcrowding.

At the Cabinet meeting, Welsh Secretary David TC Davies expressed support for Sunak’s decision, emphasizing the necessity of proactive campaigning. Meanwhile, some Tory grassroots members voiced discontent on social media, criticizing Sunak’s handling of several issues, including the Rwanda plan.

Adding to the political turmoil, senior Conservatives Michael Gove and Dame Andrea Leadsom announced they would be stepping down, joining 15 other Tories resigning their seats. This brings the total number of Conservative MPs standing down to 78, higher than in 1997, signaling a lack of confidence within the party.

Sunak began his election campaign with visits, including a stop at a Belfast dockyard, as speculation about the timing and strategy of the snap poll continued to stir debate within the Conservative Party.