
LE PEN CAMPAIGN HQ IN PARIS TARGETED BY ARSON ATTACK

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The Paris headquarters of far-right presidential candidate Marine Le Pen was the target of a suspected arson attack early Thursday morning, with the leader of the National Front (FN) party suggesting that left-wing extremists were to blame.

Firefighters rushed to the campaign's offices on the capital's prestigious rue du Faubourg St. Honoré, near the l'Arc de Triomphe, around 2:30 am and quickly brought [the fire] under control. A door and a doormat on the ground floor were nevertheless damaged, police and fire sources said.

A window was also shattered and the graffiti tag FN vs KLX was found outside the building, which houses Le Pen's campaign headquarters, but also an insurance office.

Police said the small blaze was not accidental, and likely a criminal act. A group calling itself *Kombatte La Xénophobie*, or Fight Xenophobia, later claimed responsibility for the attack in a telephone call to the AFP news agency.

The person who phoned in said the group had used Molotov cocktails against the National Front's Paris offices and pledged to carry out similar attacks every day up until the elections.

French voters will pick the countrys new president in a two-round election on April 23 and May 7. Le Pen is on pace to win the most votes in the first round of the election, according to opinion polls, but is expected to lose the run-off.

Speaking on French television on Thursday morning, the FN candidate said she knew nothing of the incident, since state authorities failed to contact us to tell us what happened.

I imagine this probably comes from a small leftist group. These extremists have felt like they can do whatever they want for several months now, she said.

Reacting to the incident on French radio, French Interior Minister Matthias Fekl condemned unacceptable acts.

**Photo: France 24*