



## SOUTH KOREA CRISIS: INTERNATIONAL ISSUE

**NEWS:** The political crisis in South Korea

### WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

**Political Crisis in South Korea:** South Korea is currently facing a political crisis involving President Yoon Suk Yeol, who was impeached by the National Assembly on December 14, 2024. This came after growing public discontent with his leadership, accusations of authoritarian practices, and allegations of misuse of power. Yoon's popularity significantly declined due to his controversial actions, including the declaration of martial law.

### Background of the Crisis:

- Yoon Suk Yeol, elected in 2022, initially had close ties with the Democratic Party of Korea, but he strongly opposed the appointment of Justice Minister Cho Guk in 2019. This opposition led to a public fallout and a shift in his political alliances.
- After the fallout, Yoon shifted from being a liberal figure to a conservative ally, eventually joining the conservative People Power Party (PPP), where he became their presidential candidate in 2022.

### Martial Law and Impeachment:

- On December 3, 2024, Yoon declared martial law, an unprecedented move in South Korea's democratic history, arresting opposition leaders and suppressing protests. This sparked outrage and was swiftly repealed by the National Assembly within hours.
- The National Assembly then impeached Yoon on December 14, 2024, with 204 votes in favor, sending the matter to the Constitutional Court for further scrutiny. The crisis has placed a significant strain on South Korea's political system.

### Political System of South Korea:

- South Korea operates as a **presidential republic** with a **unitary system**, where the President is both the head of state and head of government.
- The **executive branch** is led by the President, who appoints the Prime Minister and Cabinet members. The **legislative branch** consists of the **National Assembly**, a unicameral body with 300 members elected for a four-year term.
- The **judicial branch** is independent, with the **Supreme Court** and **Constitutional Court** serving as key institutions to ensure legal integrity.
- South Korea's **multi-party system** primarily features the **Democratic Party of Korea** (liberal) and the **People Power Party** (conservative), though smaller parties also have a role in the legislature.



## Electoral System and Governance:

- The President serves a **single five-year term** without re-election. National Assembly members serve a **four-year term**.
- The political crisis and impeachment are a reflection of South Korea's broader political challenges, such as increasing polarization between the liberal and conservative factions. These tensions have led to public dissatisfaction and raised concerns about the stability of the nation's democratic institutions.

## Democratic Institutions and Polarization:

- The political crisis in South Korea underscores deep **political polarization** within the country, with the public increasingly divided between the conservative and liberal factions. The impeachment and authoritarian actions taken by Yoon have further weakened trust in South Korea's political institutions.
- The crisis has highlighted the **fragility of democratic systems** in South Korea, as growing public dissatisfaction and political instability raise concerns about the future of governance and democratic values in the country.



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