



Macron introduces newbies into French Politics

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NIGERIA: -

Incoming French president Emmanuel Macron's centrist party on Thursday unveiled 428 candidates for June's general election, half whom are new to politics in line with Macron's promise to rejuvenate parliament.

The secretary general of Macron's La Republique en Marche (Republic on the Move), Richard Ferrand, said that 52 percent of the candidates chosen from more than 19,000 applicants had "never held elected office" and that 214 were women.

"We aim to build a majority for change," Ferrand said.

A total of 577 seats are up for grabs in the June 11-18 elections to the National Assembly.

Macron, himself a relative newcomer to politics who had never held office before being elected president, has until the end of next week to complete his list.

His former boss Manuel Valls did not make the cut, Ferrand said, ending days of speculation about whether the former Socialist prime minister — an unpopular figure in his own party — would run on Macron's ticket.

Valls had sought Macron's backing for a run in his Essonne constituency south of Paris but was left twisting in the wind without an answer for two days.

"We will not select him but we will not run a candidate against him", Ferrand said, adding: "We should not slam the door on a former prime minister".

The pro-EU Macron, 39, who defeated far-right leader Marine Le Pen, has been trying to lure people away from Socialists and right-wing Republicans while also giving space to new faces.

The nomination process is a delicate balancing act for France's youngest ever president, who will take over from Socialist Francois Hollande on Sunday.

Ferrand said five criteria were used to fill the party's general election slate: political renewal, gender parity, ethics, pluralism and support for Macron's programme.

Of the candidates unveiled Thursday, 2 percent were jobseekers, he said.