What would be the future of Caledonia if the independence movement refused France's peace agreement proposal?

The future of New Caledonia if the separatists reject a proposed peace agreement from France would depend on several factors, including the reactions of the population, French authorities, and local political actors. Here are some possible scenarios:

1. **Maintaining the current status with increased tensions** : If the separatists reject a peace agreement proposed by France, this could lead to a continuation of the status quo, i.e., the retention of New Caledonia as a special collectivity of the French Republic, but with internal political tensions. This refusal could fuel a climate of discontent and polarization, making management of the situation more complex and potentially risky in the long term. It could also reinforce the division between supporters of independence and those who support remaining within France.
2. **Renewal of the dialogue process** : A refusal to agree would not necessarily eliminate dialogue. It could lead to a new phase of negotiations, perhaps with a different approach to try to reconcile the aspirations of pro-independence and non-pro-independence supporters. France could be led to seek alternative solutions, such as adjustments to the sharing of powers or economic and social measures strengthening New Caledonia's autonomy while remaining within the French fold.
3. **Impact on social and political stability** : A rejection of the agreement could also lead to an intensification of social and political tensions, with demonstrations, strikes, and even acts of violence. Uncertainty over New Caledonia's future status could affect the local economy, particularly if instability leads to business disinvestment and a slowdown in tourism or industrial development.
4. **Possibility of a subsequent referendum** : If the peace agreement fails, it is possible that France could hold another referendum to try to definitively resolve the issue. However, this would risk rekindling deep divisions and could exacerbate tensions unless a compromise is reached.
5. **Consequences for relations with the UN and the international community** : If independence is not achieved in the short term but the separatists reject the agreement, the issue of decolonization of New Caledonia could be brought back before the United Nations. This could redefine the diplomatic and international framework, with implications for France in terms of its decolonization policy and relations with the Pacific countries.

In short, the future of New Caledonia, should the separatists reject the peace agreement, would be marked by uncertainty and could lead to continued internal tensions and complex negotiations. The balance between autonomy and belonging to France would be at the heart of the debate.

How to break the deadlock in New Caledonia if the State sticks to its guns causing any peace agreement to fail?

Breaking the current impasse in New Caledonia requires overcoming institutional blockages and rigid positions, including those of the state. If the state digs in its heels, this risks fueling mistrust and radicalization, as we are seeing today.

Here are some concrete ways to get out of the crisis:

---

1. Temporary suspension of the contested reforms

Withdrawing or suspending the proposed thawing of the electoral roll could ease tensions. This gesture would show that the state is listening to Kanak concerns and open the door to a resumption of sincere dialogue.

---

2. Return to a sincere tripartite dialogue

A discussion process involving **the state, the separatists, and the loyalists** —possibly with a **neutral mediator (UN or other international body)** —could recreate a space for negotiation. The model of the Committee of Signatories could be renovated.

---

3. Reaffirm the principles of the Noumea Accord

It would be useful to recall the spirit of the Noumea Accord: **recognition of colonization, rebalancing, and a path toward self-determination** . Without this respect for the historical framework, no lasting agreement is possible.

---

4. Involve civil society more

Citizen or customary initiatives (chiefdoms, churches, associations) can play a mediating role. If politics is blocked, **the grassroots can exert pressure to reopen dialogue** .

---

5. Thinking about a common future, beyond independence or the status quo

Instead of a binary opposition of "France or independence," exploring **innovative forms of shared sovereignty or expanded autonomy** could create consensus, provided they are co-constructed and not imposed.

What is the way out of the impasse in the Caledonian conflict?

The option of extended autonomy , often mentioned as a middle way between full independence and remaining in the French Republic. This could constitute a way out of the impasse, if it is co-constructed and accepted by all parties .

What is extended autonomy?

Extended autonomy would allow New Caledonia to have **almost complete powers over its territory** , while remaining linked to France for certain sovereign areas (defense, currency, diplomacy, etc.). This model is **more advanced than that of the Noumea Accord** , but **does not go as far as total independence** .

Examples of similar models around the world:

- **Greenland** (attached to Denmark): large autonomy, but diplomatic and military ties with Denmark.
- **Faroe Islands** : strong legislative and fiscal autonomy.
- **New Zealand and the Cook Islands/Niue** : Free association with independence on paper, but close cooperation.
- **Puerto Rico** vis-à-vis the United States (although with limits on democratic representation).

Possible characteristics of a specific Caledonian model

Domain	Local management (New Caledonia)	Shared or delegated management (French State)
Education, health, civil justice	Yes	No
Police and security	Yes, with cooperation	In part (National Gendarmerie)
Defense, diplomacy, currency	No	Yes
Strengthened local citizenship	Yes (e.g. reserved rights, local elections)	No

We could also imagine:

- **An autonomous Caledonian Parliament** , with expanded legislative power.
- **Full Caledonian citizenship** , constitutionally recognized.
- **A partnership agreement with France** , based on equality and not on guardianship.

Conditions for success

1. **Co-writing** : The model must not **be imposed by Paris** , but written **by three voices** (State, independentists, loyalists).
2. **Strong symbolic recognition of the Kanak people** , including through a new preamble or constitutional reform.
3. **Membership referendum** : Once the model is established, it would be validated by **all the populations concerned** , including young Kanaks and non-Kanaks.

What scenario is envisaged for 2025-2026?

Here is a concrete political scenario for 2025-2026 , based on a model of negotiated expanded autonomy , aimed at breaking the current impasse in New Caledonia:

Political scenario 2025–2026: Towards negotiated autonomy

SUMMER 2025 – Suspension of the electoral thaw

Faced with rising tensions, the State has agreed to **suspend the proposed constitutional reform** on the thawing of the electoral body. This suspension is accompanied by a **call for formal dialogue** , relayed by the President of the Republic.

> **Key message** : “No future will be built without the Kanak people, nor without the other communities in the country.”

SEPTEMBER 2025 – Opening of a “Caledonian Forum” under neutral mediation

Creation of a **Caledonian Forum for the future** , including:

- The three components: State, FLNKS (and other independentists), Loyalists.
- A third-party mediator: either **New Zealand** or **a UN representative** accepted by all.
- Representatives of civil society, chiefdoms, youth and women.

The discussions aim to **rethink a shared institutional model** , while calming post-referendum memories.

DECEMBER 2025 – Agreement in principle on increased autonomy

The parties agree to a **transitional political agreement** , based on:

- **Constitutional recognition of the Kanak people as the first people** .
- Establishment of **quasi-sovereign local institutions** (Caledonian parliament, enlarged government).
- Maintaining a link with France in sovereign areas.
- **Right to deferred self-determination** : possibility of a referendum on full independence **in 2040** , guaranteed by a clause in the agreement.

MARCH 2026 – Referendum on accession to the new status

A referendum is being held, not on independence, but on **the adoption of the new autonomy agreement** . Two questions could be asked:

1. Do you approve of this new status of shared autonomy?
2. Do you wish to maintain a link with the French Republic in this context?

This format allows everyone to **project themselves without denying their convictions** .

MI-2026 – New Caledonian Constitution

Based on the referendum, a **local constitution** is drafted, specifying:

- The place of the Kanak people.
- The organization of powers.
- The terms of partnership with France.

It is then **validated locally and ratified by the French Parliament** .

Benefits of such a scenario

- **Exit from the institutional deadlock** without winner or loser.
- Reconciliation through recognition and power sharing.
- Preparing a future generation to decide on its future in full maturity.

fictional version of the political agreement between the French state, pro-independence and loyalist representatives, based on the scenario of negotiated expanded autonomy :

Peace and Shared Autonomy Agreement for New Caledonia

Signed in Noumea, December 15, 2025

Preamble

Considering the unique history of New Caledonia, marked by colonization, dispossession and the struggles for recognition of the Kanak people,
Recognizing the deep aspirations of the different components of Caledonian society for a common future,
Noting the institutional, political and social blockages that prevent lasting peace and the construction of a shared future,
Affirming the desire to establish a peaceful, plural society that respects identities,
The signatory parties agree as follows:

Article 1 – Recognition of the Kanak people

The French Republic recognizes **the Kanak people as the first people of New Caledonia** , bearers of a specific identity, culture and history.
This recognition will be included **in the French Constitution** , through a revised preamble.

Article 2 – Extended Autonomy Status

New Caledonia has gained a **status of extended autonomy** within the framework of the French Republic.
Within this framework, it exercises **full legislative, regulatory and judicial jurisdiction** over:

- Education, health, culture, environment, civil and administrative justice, taxation, economy, employment, land law, and internal security.

The following sovereign powers remain the responsibility of the State:

- Defense, diplomacy, currency, criminal justice, nationality.

Article 3 – Citizenship and local institutions

A **constitutionally recognized New Caledonian citizenship** is established, the basis for a permanent electorate for local elections.

A **New Caledonian Parliament** is created, with legislative power over local jurisdictions.
A **New Caledonian Government** appointed by this Parliament is responsible for implementing public policies.
A **Council of Indigenous Peoples** is established as a consultative body.

Article 4 – Partnership agreement with the Republic

A **partnership agreement, renewable every 10 years,** defines the ties between New Caledonia and the Republic: financial cooperation, joint defense, and joint international representation.
France is committed to ensuring financial stability and structural investments for 20 years.

Article 5 – Right to deferred self-determination

By 2040, New Caledonia will be able to organize, if it wishes, a **referendum on independence** , according to procedures defined in advance and validated by local institutions.

Article 6 – Popular membership referendum

The adoption of this agreement will be subject to a **popular referendum** in March 2026. If validated by a majority of voters, it will enter into force within the following six months.

Signatories

- Representative of the French State
- Representatives of the FLNKS and independence movements
- Representatives of non-independence parties
- Customary and civil society representatives
- International Mediator (observer)

Here is a fictitious article, written as if it had just appeared in a major media outlet on December 15, 2025 , the day the agreement was signed:

Noumea signs peace: a historic agreement on expanded autonomy in New Caledonia

By Élodie Massot | Le Monde | Nouméa, December 15, 2025

In a sober but solemn room at the Noumea High Commission, tears sometimes replaced words. This December 15, 2025, will go down in history as the day New Caledonia returned to dialogue, after months of tension, blockages, and violence. The French government, the FLNKS separatists, loyalist representatives, and traditional authorities signed this morning a **"Shared Peace and Autonomy Agreement** ," the result of negotiations conducted since September under international mediation.

> **A "moment of truth and dignity," hailed the outgoing president of the Caledonian government.**

Breaking the impasse, with no winner or loser

The agreement, unprecedented in its structure and scope, marks a break with the binary logic of the three referendums of 2018, 2020 and 2021. It proposes a **new status of extended autonomy** , strengthening local powers while maintaining a voluntary link with France.

Above all, it recognizes for the first time in a text with constitutional value **the Kanak people as the first people** , with all the symbolic and institutional implications that this implies.

"This is not a renunciation of independence, but a step towards a sovereignty that is constructed differently, more progressive, more shared," declared Victor Wamytan, one of the independence architects of the compromise.

A membership referendum in March 2026

The agreement provides for **a referendum on popular accession** to be held in March 2026, with a two-pronged question: accepting the new autonomous status and confirming the continued connection with the Republic. This is a way to overcome historical divisions, while leaving open a clause for revision by 2040.

> "For the first time, Caledonians will vote not against something, but *for* something," summed up one Oceanian observer.

Paris gives ground without losing face

The President of the Republic, present by videoconference from the Élysée Palace, welcomed " **an act of responsibility and democratic reinvention** ." He pledged to **have the agreement**

enshrined in the Constitution and to ensure its long-term compliance.

The Parisian right is already denouncing a "masked dismemberment of the Republic," while the left sees it as "a laboratory of modern autonomy." In the archipelago, the mood is one of relief.

And now ?

The institutional challenge is immense: drafting a local constitution, establishing the Caledonian Parliament, defining a new tax system and international representation. But for once, the country is no longer moving backward.

Tonight, in the neighborhoods of Noumea and among the tribes of the east coast, **bonfires replace roadblocks** . The tired faces of recent months give way to cautious hope.

> "This is not the end of the story, but perhaps the beginning of something we will write together."