



Constitutional Structure and Political Landscape

Constitutional and legal structure

Pakistan's constitutional and legal system is rooted in the Constitution of 1973, which establishes the country as an Islamic Republic with a federal parliamentary structure. The Constitution outlines the separation of powers between the executive, legislature, and judiciary, and guarantees fundamental rights to its citizens.

Pakistan's legal system is based on English common law, but with significant influences from Islamic law (Sharia), particularly in personal and family matters. The Supreme Court is the highest judicial authority, while the Federal Shariat Court ensures that laws conform to Islamic injunctions. Provinces have their own legislative assemblies and jurisdiction over certain subjects, while the federal government oversees matters of national importance.

Political Landscape

The political landscape of Pakistan comprises of multiple political parties, with the three largest parties being Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf (PTI), Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PLMN) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP).

PTI was founded in 1996 by former cricketer Imran Khan, who served as the party's chairman until his imprisonment in 2023. PTI gained prominence in 2013 by securing 7.5 million votes and ranking second in terms of votes and is currently led by Barrister Gohar Khan. Throughout his political career, Khan has faced various controversies, including confessions from his former wife, corruption charges, and allegations from the former spouse of his current wife.

PML-N, established in 1992 by Nawaz Sharif, has had Sharif serve as Prime Minister of Pakistan three times, though he has not completed a full five-year term. Nawaz Sharif has been entangled in several controversies, notably being implicated in the Panama Papers scandal, which led to his disqualification as Prime Minister in 2018. The party's leadership features prominent figures including Nawaz Sharif, his brother Shehbaz Sharif, and his daughter Maryam Nawaz, underscoring the significant family involvement in the party's affairs. Currently, PML-N holds power through a coalition with the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP).

PPP was founded in 1967 by the prominent Pakistani politician Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and is currently led by his grandson, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. PPP, like any other party has also faced allegations pertaining to corruptions. The Bhutto family's involvement in politics is notable, with Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's daughter, Benazir Bhutto, having served as Prime Minister before her assassination in 2008. Benazir was married to Asif Ali Zardari, who is currently serving his second term as President of Pakistan. Their children, Bilawal and Aseefa Bhutto Zardari, continue the family's political legacy, with Aseefa also serving as a member of the National Assembly.



Imran Khan won the general elections in 2018 but was unable to complete his term due to a vote of no-confidence motion led by the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) in 2022, a year before the scheduled general elections. PDM, an opposition coalition formed in 2020, included PPP, PML-N, and Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F), along with dissident members from Khan's own party.

After Imran Khan was ousted as Prime Minister in 2022, Shehbaz Sharif of PML-N (Nawaz Sharif's brother) was elected as the new Prime Minister. During Sharif's tenure, Khan faced multiple charges, was booked in several cases, and was ultimately arrested on May 9, 2023, outside the High Court, where he remains in custody.

The general elections, originally scheduled for 2023, were significantly delayed by over five months and were eventually held in February 2024. These elections sparked significant controversy, with widespread allegations of rigging. This follows PTI's loss of their well-known "bat" symbol, Imran Khan's imprisonment, and delays in reporting results from numerous polling stations along with discrepancies in vote counts and unexpected changes in results.

Despite PTI-backed independent candidates securing a majority, PML-N and PPP formed a coalition to take control of the national assembly. As a result, Shehbaz Sharif was appointed as the new Prime Minister of Pakistan, and Asif Ali Zardari was named President of Pakistan.