

Political System and State Structure of Pakistan

POST-INDEPENDENCE AND CONSTITUTION

Within the first few years of its' birth, post-independence Pakistan faced a number of challenges. The first of two significant deaths, first in 1948 of its first head of state, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, and then the assassination in 1951 of its first Prime Minister, Liaqat Ali Khan, destabilized the new country, and may have been the cause of the emergence of conflicting visions of the ideological direction the country ought to pursue. It took almost eight years (till 1956) to agree to a final constitution, establishing Pakistan as a republic within the Commonwealth. Within two years, the new parliamentary system was facing challenges, and in 1958, General Ayub Khan launched Pakistan's first military coup, declaring martial law. In 1960 Khan became President, and by 1962, Pakistan saw its' second constitution, with politics placed in the firm grip of the military. At this point, the turmoil caused by the failure to win a second war with India in 1965, mounting corruption and increasingly taxing relations with East Pakistan gradually undermined Khan's authority, finally forcing his resignation in 1969. The first election on a nationally democratic basis was conducted in 1970. The elections saw the primarily East-Pakistan based Awami League, lead by Shaikh Mujibur Rahman, gaining an overall majority. However, the results were not well-received in West Pakistan, and power was not transferred to elected leaders. This set the stage for a new constitutional crisis where, in the period following, relations between East and West Pakistan further polarised. In March 1971 Mujibur Rahman declared an independent People's Republic of Bangladesh, setting the stage for a nine month long civil war. In December 1971, India interceded in support of East Pakistan, and the ensuing Indo-Pak war resulted in a humiliating surrender by Pakistani forces. The surrender also marked the emergence of the former East Pakistan as an independent country, Bangladesh.

General Yahya Khan resigned the presidency in the aftermath of the war, and handed over leadership to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Ayub Khan's former Foreign Minister, and the founder and leader of the Pakistan People's Party, which had won the majority of seats from West Pakistan in the elections of 1970. Bhutto became President and also the first civilian Chief Martial Law Administrator. The National Assembly approved the 1973 Constitution on April 10, 1973, and it came into effect on August 14. Bhutto took over as the Prime Minister of Pakistan from this date and Fazallahi Chaudhry was appointed as the President of Pakistan.

The 1973 Constitution declared Pakistan as a Federal Republic to be known as the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, recognizing Islam as the religion of the state. Pakistan was to be a Federation of four federating Units, Punjab, Sindh, the NWFP and Balochistan. The Constitution was parliamentary in nature, with a bicameral legislature at the Center consisting of two Houses, the National Assembly and the Senate. Although the 1973 Constitution has been held in abeyance during military rule in the late 1970s/early 1980s, and has to date, been amended 19 times, it is currently the constitution governing the state. The 18th Amendment to the Constitution, which was passed in April 2010, removed most of the constitutional changes introduced during military regimes, as well as formally changing the name of the North West Frontier Province to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and has granted provinces greater autonomy.

Executive

The 1973 Constitution lay down that the President was to be the Head of the State. The President was to act on the advice of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, and could be removed on the grounds of physical or mental incapacity or impeached on charges of violating the Constitution or gross misconduct by a two-thirds vote of the members of the parliament.

The President

The President of Pakistan is chosen by a secret ballot through an Electoral College comprising the Members of the Senate, National Assembly and the Provincial Assemblies. A person who is a Muslim and not less than 45 years of age and is qualified to be elected as a Member of the National Assembly can contest the Presidential election. The President is elected for a term of 5 years and is authorized to appoint the Attorney General, Judges of Supreme Court and High Courts, and the Chief Election Commissioners. In the Provincial Government, each province was to have a Governor appointed by the President. He could be re-elected but could not hold office for more than two terms.

The Prime Minister

The Prime Minister is appointed by the President from among the members of the National Assembly, and has to demonstrate majority support in the House. The Prime Minister is assisted by the Federal Cabinet, a council of ministers whose members are appointed by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister. The Federal Cabinet comprises the ministers, ministers of state, and advisers



1947-1948 Mohammad Ali Jinnah*	1948-1951 Khawaja Nazimuddin*	1951-1955 Malik Ghulam Muhammad*	1956-1958 Iskaner Mirza**	1958-1969 Ayub Khan	1969-1971 Yahya Khan	1971-1973 Zulfikar Ali Bhutto
MUSLIM LEAGUE	MUSLIM LEAGUE		REPUBLICAN PARTY	MILITARY	MILITARY	PAKISTAN PEOPLES PARTY

* From 1947 to 1956, there was no office of the President. The head of state was the Governor General.

**In 1956, Iskander Mirza, who was then the Governor General, automatically assumed office as the President, since the post of Governor General was abolished.

TABLE 1. ALLOCATION OF SEATS IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

	Punjab	Sindh	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa*	Balochistan	FATA	Federal Capital	TOTAL
General	148	61	35	14	12	2	272
Women	35	13	8	4	0	0	60
Non-Muslims	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
TOTAL	183	74	43	18	12	2	342

* Former NWFP.
Source: National Assembly Secretariat

Legislature

The bicameral federal legislature is the Majlis-i-Shoora (Council of Advisers), consisting of the Senate (upper house) and National Assembly (lower house).

The National Assembly

Members of the National Assembly are elected by universal adult suffrage (over eighteen years of age in Pakistan). The National Assembly has 342 seats, 272 of which are elected on a first-past-the-post basis.¹ The candidate who gains the major number of votes in a single constituency is nominated elected member of the National or Provincial Assembly. Of the 70 remainder seats, 60 are reserved for women and ten for non-Muslim minorities; they are allocated, on the basis of proportional representation, to parties that win more than 5% of the directly elected seats. Seats are allocated to each of the four provinces, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, and Islamabad Capital Territory on the basis of population. National Assembly members serve for the parliamentary term, which is five years, unless they die or resign sooner, or unless the National Assembly is dissolved. Graph 1 shows the current distribution of seats in the National Assembly.

The Senate

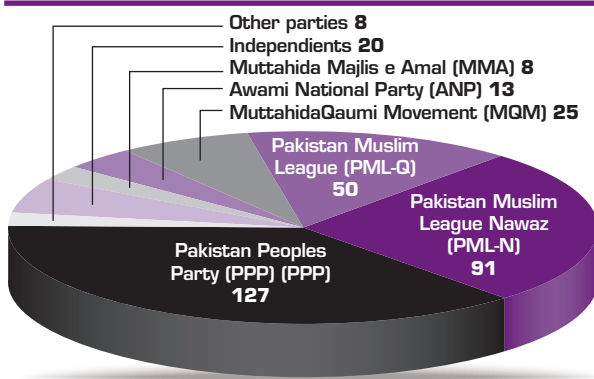
The Senate is a permanent legislative body with equal representation from each of the four provinces, elected by the members of their respective provincial assemblies. The chairman of the Senate, under the constitution, is next in line to act as President should the office become vacant and until such time as a new President can be formally elected. The Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Islamabad Capital Territory also have representatives presenting the Senate,² which has a total of 100 members, of whom 14 members are elected by each Provincial Assembly, 8 members are elected from Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATAs) by the Members of National Assembly from these areas, 2 members, 1 woman and 1 Technocrat is elected from the Federal Capital by the Members of National Assembly, 4 women and 4 Technocrats are elected by the members of each Provincial Assembly. The term of the members of the Senate is 6 years. However, the term of the first group of the Senators, who shall retire after completion of first 3 years of the Senate, is determined by drawing of lots by the Chief Election Commissioner.

Both the Senate and the National Assembly can initiate and pass legislation except for money bills, where the National Assembly has an edge over the Senate, legislating exclusively on money matters. Only the National Assembly can approve the federal budget and all money bills. With exception to money matters, however, both the Houses work together to legislate. The Bills relating to the Federal Legislative List can originate in either House. If one House passes the Bill through majority vote, it is transmitted to the other House. If the other House passes it without amendment, it is presented to the President for assent. If the Bill, transmitted to the other House, is not passed within ninety days or is rejected, it is considered in a joint sitting of parliament, to be summoned by the President on the request of the House in which the Bill originated. If the Bill is passed in the joint sitting, with or without amendments, by the votes of majority of the members of the two Houses, it is presented to the President for assent. The President is required to assent to bills passed by both houses within ten days. However, in all bills except the Finance Bill, the President may return the Bill to the parliament with a message requesting that the Bill be reconsidered and that an amendment specified in the message be considered. The parliament is supposed to reconsider the Bill in a joint sitting. If the Bill is passed again, with or without amendment, by vote of the majority of the members present and voting, it is presented to the President and the President is required to give his assent within ten days; failing which such assent is deemed to have been given.

PRESIDENTS OF PAKISTAN (1947-2011)

1973-1978 Fazal Ilahi Chaudhry	1978-1988 Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq	1988-1993 Ghulam Ishaq Khan	1993-1997 Fraoq Leghari	1997-1998 Wasim Sajjad	1998-2001 Muhammad Rafiq Tarar	2001-2008 Pervez Musharraf	Desde 2008 Asif Ali Zardari
PAKISTAN PEOPLES PARTY	MILITARY	INDEPENDENT	PAKISTAN PEOPLES PARTY	PAKISTAN MUSLIM LEAGUE (N)	PAKISTAN MUSLIM LEAGUE (N)	MILITARY/ INDEPENDENT	PAKISTAN PEOPLES PARTY

GRAPH I. SEATS IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY



Source: Election Commission of Pakistan

TABLE II. ALLOCATION OF SEATS IN THE SENATE

Administrative Unit	General Seats	Seats reserved for		Total
		Women	Technocrats and Ulema	
Federal Capital	2	1	1	4
Balochistan	14	4	4	22
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	14	4	4	22
Punjab	14	4	4	22
Sindh	14	4	4	22
FATA	8	-	-	8
TOTAL	66	17	17	100

Source: Senate

Under the Constitution, the Parliament may also legislate for two or more provinces by consent if a request is made by those provinces. If the Federal Government proclaims a State of Emergency in any province, the power to legislate for that province is vested in the Parliament. But the bills passed by the Parliament during the State of Emergency, cease to be in force after the expiration of six months from the date the emergency is lifted. Nevertheless, the steps already taken under these Acts remain valid.

In exercises of its constitutional role, the Parliament also has other important duties to perform. The President, who is the Head of State, is elected by members of both Houses of the Parliament and by the Provincial Assemblies. The Prime Minister, who heads the Cabinet and is meant to aid and advise the President in his functions, belongs to the National Assembly. He enjoys the confidence of the majority of the members of the National Assembly.

There is a democratic procedure to remove the Prime Minister from his office if he loses the confidence of the majority of the members of the National Assembly. In such a situation, a resolution for a vote of no-confidence is moved by not less than 20% of the total membership of the National Assembly. If the resolution is passed by the majority of the total membership of the National Assembly, the Prime Minister immediately relinquishes powers.

Similarly, for the removal or impeachment of the President, not less than one-half of the total membership of either House may

give in writing its intention to do so, to the Speaker of the National Assembly, or, as the case may be, to the Chairman Senate, for moving a resolution for the purpose. If, in a joint sitting of the two Houses, convened for the purpose, the resolution is passed by the votes of not less than two thirds of the total membership of the Parliament, the President ceases to hold office immediately.

In case an emergency is proclaimed, the Parliament holds the authority to extend the term of the National Assembly. Under the Constitution, the Parliament may also, on the request of the Federal Government, confer functions upon officers or authorities subordinate to the Federal Government.

Judiciary

The 1973 Constitution provided for a free and independent Judiciary. The Constitution guarantees a right to the citizens to be protected by law, and imposed two duties on them, loyalty to the Republic and obedience to the law. Any person who was found to abrogate or attempt or conspire to abrogate or subvert the Constitution was to be treated guilty of high treason. The Constitution conferred several kinds of fundamental rights to the people such as the right to life, liberty, equality and freedom of speech, trade and association. The Constitution also declared any laws inconsistent with or derogatory to fundamental rights as null and void.

The judiciary includes the Supreme Court, provincial high courts, and other lesser courts exercising civil and criminal



jurisdiction. The Supreme Court is the apex court in Pakistan's judicial hierarchy, the final arbiter of legal and constitutional disputes. The Supreme Court of Pakistan consists of a Chief Justice and not more than 16 other Judges appointed by the President. A person with 5 years experience as a Judge of a High Court or 15 years experience as an advocate of a High Court is eligible to be appointed as a Judge of the Supreme Court. The chief justice of the Supreme Court is appointed by the President; the other Supreme Court judges are appointed by the President after consultation with the chief justice. The chief justice and judges of the Supreme Court may remain in office until age sixty-five. The Supreme Court has original, appellate, and advisory jurisdiction. Judges of the provincial high courts are appointed by the President after consultation with the chief justice of the Supreme Court, as well as the governor of the province and the chief justice of the high court to which the appointment is being made. High courts have original and appellate jurisdiction.

In 2007, for the first time in Pakistan's history, the sitting Chief Justice was suspended by the government on charges of abuse of power. The Chief Justice was given the option to resign, but upon his refusal to comply with this "order," he was removed under a series of charges, including violating the norms of judicial propriety, corruption, seeking favours and misbehaving with senior lawyers. In response, the Chief Justice, Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, decided to challenge his suspension in the Supreme Court of Pakistan. The Chief Justice's suspension was followed by widespread protests on the part of the legal community, civil society, and almost all political parties in the country. The protests centered around not only on the lack of validity of the allegations against the Chief Justice, but also on the question of whether the President had the power to suspend the Chief Justice under any circumstances. On 20 July 2007, Justice Chaudhry was reinstated to his position as Chief Justice in a ruling by the thirteen-member bench of the Supreme Court headed by Justice Khalilur Rehman Ramday. All thirteen of the sitting justices agreed that General Musharraf's action had been illegal, and ten of the thirteen ordered the reinstatement and ruled that he "shall be deemed to be holding the said office and shall always be deemed to have been so holding the same." After having been elected as President for second term by the Parliament, General Musharraf, in November 2007 pre-empted an impending court decision against his re-election, suspended the constitution, and declared a state of emergency. Justice Chaudhry convened a seven-member bench which issued an interim order against this action. He and other judges were again removed from their offices and put under house arrest along with his family members. Justice Chaudhry was reinstated only in 16 March 2009, seven months after the resignation of General Musharraf as President, and only after another protracted protest on the part of a number of groups. While the first phase of protests had focused on the unconstitutional action of General Musharraf, the post August 2008 protests were focused on the apparent reluctance of the then newly elected government to reinstate the Chief Justice.

The Federal Shariat Court constitutes another key pillar of the judiciary and consists of eight Muslim judges, including a chief justice appointed by the President. Three of the judges are *ulema*, that is, Islamic Scholars, and are supposed to be well versed in Islamic law. The Federal Shariat Court has original and appellate jurisdiction. This court decides whether any law is repugnant to the injunctions of Islam. When a law is deemed repugnant to Islam, the President, in the case of a federal law, or the governor, in the case of a provincial law, is charged with taking steps to bring the law into conformity with the injunctions of Islam. The court also hears appeals from decisions of criminal courts under laws relating to the enforcement of *hudoob* laws that is, laws pertaining to such offenses as intoxication, theft, and sexual intercourse outside marriage.

In addition, there are special courts and tribunals to deal with specific kinds of cases, such as drug courts, commercial courts, labour courts, traffic courts, an insurance appellate tribunal, an income tax appellate tribunal, and special courts for bank offenses. There are also special courts to try terrorists. Appeals from special courts go to high courts, with the exception of labour and traffic courts, which have their own forums for appeal. Appeals from the tribunals go to the Supreme Court.

Within the constitution, the office of *Wafaqi Mohtasib* Ombudsman is provided for, as established in many early Muslim states, to ensure that citizens had a forum on which to register complaints against public officials. Appointed by the President, the Mohtasib holds office for four years. The term cannot be extended or renewed. The Mohtasib's purpose is to institutionalize a system for enforcing administrative accountability, through investigating and rectifying any injustice done to a person through maladministration by a federal agency or a federal government official. The Mohtasib is empowered to award compensation to those who have suffered loss or damage as a result of maladministration. Excluded from jurisdiction, however, are personal grievances or service matters of a public servant as well as matters relating to foreign affairs, national defence, and the armed services. This institution is designed to bridge the gap between administrator and citizen, to improve administrative processes and procedures, and to help curb misuse of discretionary powers.

Military

The military in Pakistan has played an influential role in mainstream politics, having taken over from civilian governments on four occasions. Military governments were led by (in the 1960s) General Ayub Khan and General Yahya Khan, (in the late 1970s and 1980s) General Zia-ul-Haq, and (from 1999 to 2008), General Pervez Musharraf. In total, military or military backed civilian regimes have been in power for half of the years of the country's existence.

The influence of the military extends far beyond its constitutional role even in times of civilian rule. The military high command has on occasion acted as a mediator between the government and other state actors, and between political leaders. In addition it has exerted strong behind the



scenes influence on foreign policy, particularly with regard to relations with India and Afghanistan. The military also has economic interests in Pakistan which it seeks to protect. According to one analyst, the growth of the military's business interests encourages the top echelons of the armed forces to support "policy making environments" that will "multiply their economic opportunities" and such actions are "both the cause and effect of a feudal, authoritarian, non-democratic political system" (Siddiq, 2007).

Elections

Pakistan's electoral history is characterised by the eternal tussle between the civilian and military regimes, with almost half of its existence being characterized by outright military, or military sponsored rule. Nevertheless, an analysis of election trends since 1970 showing that there are four clusters of voters in Pakistan, namely the PPP cluster, the Muslim League(s) cluster (i.e. the various factions of the party), the Religious Parties Cluster and the Regional Parties cluster (PILDAT 2008). It is estimated that roughly 60% to 75% of the votes are claimed by the first two clusters (PPP and MLs) while the remaining gets distributed among the other clusters as well as independents and miscellaneous. Frequently, no single party holds a majority, and therefore parties must form alliances during or after elections.

In terms of political stability, the past decade has been a tumultuous one for the country. The 1990s were characterised by coalition politics dominated by the Pakistan Peoples Party and Muslim League. India's nuclear test Pokhran-II triggered Pakistan to conduct two nuclear tests in Balochistan in May of 1998. The following year, the Kargil conflict was followed by a coup d'état by General Pervez Musharraf, ousting Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. In 2001, Musharraf became the President and after the 2002 parliamentary elections, Musharraf transferred executive powers to the newly elected Prime Minister Jamali, who was succeeded in the 2004 prime-ministerial election by Shaukat Aziz.

On 15 November 2007, the National Assembly, for the first time in Pakistan's history, completed its tenure and new elections were called. The exiled political leaders Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif were permitted to return to Pakistan. However, the 2008 Pakistani election was dealt a great shock on 27 December 2007 when Benazir Bhutto was assassinated while leaving a rally in Rawalpindi, leading to nationwide riots. The Pakistani Election Commission announced after a meeting in Islamabad that the election would take place on 18 February, after a five week delay. The PPP then decided to name Bhutto's son, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, the new party leader with his father Asif Ali Zardari as co-chairman.

With 44% turnout, the 2008 election led to strong showings for the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) (PML-N). Both parties initially formed a coalition to lead the government, and signed an accord, known as the Bhurban Accord, to lay out a course of action. Yousaf Raza Gillani was appointed as Prime Minister. On 18 August 2008, Pervez Musharraf resigned from the presidency when threatened with impeachment, and was replaced by Asif Ali Zardari in early September.

Local government

Prior to 2001, the sub-provincial tier of government was composed of 26 divisions, with two further tiers (districts and tehsils) administered directly from the provincial level. Under the 2001 Local Government Ordinance (LGO), the divisions were abolished and a new three-tiered system of local government came into effect, comprising districts, tehsils and union councils, with an elected body at each tier.

At present, Pakistan is still a two-tiered federal state, not incorporating the local governments as a constitutionally recognised third level of government. The 17th Constitutional Amendment offered the local government system six years of protection (roughly from 2002 to 2009), during which the changes to the local government legislation could not be made by the provinces without the approval of the President (ADB et. al, 2004). The LGO, however, lapsed in the end of 2009, existing local governments ceased to hold office, and each provincial government is now supposed to finalize its own local government plan, and get appropriate legislation approved by its provincial assembly. This process is at various stages across the four provinces.

There are currently 113 districts in Pakistan-proper, each with several tehsils and union councils. The tribal areas comprise seven tribal agencies and six small frontier regions <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pakistan> - cite_note-94 detached from neighbouring districts while Azad Kashmir comprises of ten and Gilgit-Baltistan seven <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pakistan> - cite_note-96 districts respectively.

Regions

Pakistan is divided into 4 provinces, Sindh, Balochistan, Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (formerly known as the North West Frontier Province). Additionally, Pakistan also has 3 territories, the Federal Capital (known as the Islamabad Capital Territory), the Federally Administrated Tribal Areas (FATA) and the region of Gilgit-Baltistan.³ The disputed territory of Azad Jammu and Kashmir legally has its own government and constitution, although it is sometimes referred to in international bodies as Pakistan Administered Kashmir.

At the time of independence, the population count was 32.5 million (Pakistan Economic Survey, 2010-2011). The last official population census took place in 1998, although the 2011 census is in process. In 1998, the population was estimated at 132.35 million (Population Census Organisation, 1998).

In the inter-census period, the population for each year is estimated on the basis of demographic and fertility studies. According to this estimate, Pakistan's population in mid-2011 is estimated at 177.1 million, growing at an annual rate of 2.07% (Pakistan Economic Survey, 2010-2011). However, many estimate the population to be as much as 10 million more than the suggested figure. According to the United Nations Population Council, Pakistan will be one of the 9 countries in the world accounting for over half of the global population by 2050 (UN Press release, 2009), with an estimated population of 318 million, thereby ranking third after India and China.

Provincial Governments

Each province has a governor, a Council of Ministers headed by a chief minister appointed by the governor, and a provincial assembly. Members of the provincial assemblies are elected by universal adult suffrage. Provincial assemblies also have reserved seats for minorities. After the passage of the 18th Amendment to the Constitution, there is now a well-defined division of responsibilities between federal and provincial governments. Most of the services in areas such as health, education, agriculture, and roads, for example, are provided by the provincial governments.

Political parties

Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP)

The Pakistan Peoples Party is a center-left political party, which originally campaigned on a socialist platform, but is now considered more centrist. The party was founded in 1967, by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. The party gained much popularity and support prior to Pakistan's split with Bangladesh, winning the bulk of seats in West Pakistan in the elections of 1971 with its pledge of providing "Roti, Kapra aur Makaan" (food, clothing and shelter) to the people. The Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) is a party formed in 2002 by the PPP for the purpose of complying with electoral rules governing Pakistani parties, which did not allow the original PPP to contest elections. The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPPP) is a mainstream political party in Pakistan, which was led by Bhutto's daughter Benazir until 2007 when she was assassinated. The Bhutto dynasty continues with Benazir's son Bilawal 'inheriting' Chairmanship of the party, with his father Asif Ali Zardari as co-chairman and current President. The PPP has held government four times since its formation, and is the largest political party of Pakistan. Although its heart land is in rural Sindh, it also has considerable support in southern Punjab in parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and to a lesser extent, in Balochistan. It has consistently laid claim to being the only party which has support in all provinces and territories of Pakistan – a claim that has been borne out in most elections.

Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N)

The Pakistan Muslim League is a center-right party which has also held power on two occasions. The party was founded in 1962 as a successor to the previously disbanded Muslim League,⁴ and gained the (Nawaz) or (N) label in 1993 for its leader, Nawaz Sharif. PML-N is the second biggest party in Parliament. Mian Nawaz Sharif the leader of the party, has been elected Prime Minister on two occasions, but on neither instance was the party able to complete its term. Although the bulk of its support has traditionally been in North and Central Punjab, it also retains support in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and in parts of Sindh.

Pakistan Muslim League (PML-Q)

PML-Q is another centrist political party, and was formed in 2001, when the Pakistan Muslim League split into several factions on the removal of the Nawaz Sharif government by General Musharraf. The party supported former President Pervez Musharraf and was in power, as the lead member of a coalition, from 2002 to 2007. It is the 3rd biggest party in parliament after the PPPP and PML(N).

TABLE III. DIVISIONS AND DISTRICTS IN PAKISTAN

Provinces/Territories	Divisions	Districts
Balochistan	6	30
Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa	7	24
Punjab	9	36
Sindh	5	23
Azad Kashmir	3	10
GilgitBaltistan	1	7
FATA	1	7
Islamabad	1	1

Source: Population Census Organisation

TABLE IV. POPULATION OF PAKISTAN

Administrative Unit	Area Km ²	Population (millions)	%	Provincial Capital
Balochistan	347,190	6.5	4.9	Quetta
Khyber Pakhtun-khwa	74,521	17.7	13.4	Peshawar
Punjab	205,345	73.6	55.6	Lahore
Sindh	140,914	30.4	23	Karachi
Territories (Federal Capital, FATA, Gilgit-Baltistan)	28,126	4.15	3.1	N/A
PAKISTAN TOTAL	796,096	132.35	100	Islamabad

Source: Pakistan Census Organisation (1998)

MuttahidaQaumi Movement (MQM)

The MQM began life as a party formed for the Urdu speaking Mohajir community based in Karachi and Hyderabad. It was founded and is currently led by Altaf Hussain, who has lived in self-imposed exile in London since 1992. The party originated as an ethnic student organization in 1978 from the University of Karachi. The organization maintains liberal, progressive and secular stances on many political and social issues. In 1997, the MQM officially removed the term Mohajir (or refugee, which denotes the party's roots of Urdu-speaking Muslims) from its name, and replaced it with Muttahida (meaning "United"), in an attempt to widen its appeal outside urban Sindh. MQM currently holds the fourth highest number of seats in the National Assembly. It is currently a member of the ruling coalition in the federal government as well as in the Sindh government.

Awami National Party (ANP)

The Awami National Party (ANP) is a leftist, secular political party, with a long history in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa under different names. The current leadership are descendants of Pakhtun leaders who were affiliated with the Congress Party in pre-partition India. The party has had a checkered history, marked by conflict

with the federal government, but is currently part of the ruling coalition in the center as well as in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)

In 1997, former cricketer Imran Khan started a socio-political movement in Pakistan known as Movement for Justice (Urdu: Tehreek-e-Insaaf). As the fastest growing political party in Pakistan, PTI is establishing itself as one of the country's mainstream national parties, and is said to have made tremendous strides in gaining support in the last two to three years.

Other than the parties listed above, the religious parties, mainly the Jamaat-i-Islami and the Jamiat Ulema e Islam (Fazlur Rehman group) have been represented in parliament, although they have rarely garnered more than 5% of the vote. In the elections of 2002, however, an alliance of religious political parties, the Muttahida Majlis e Amal or MMA, came to power in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and also had a respectable showing in the National Assembly.

Notes

1. This refers to a system where the winner has the highest number of votes, not the majority.
2. The administration of the territories of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Balistan were entrusted to Pakistan under UN Security Council resolutions. They have since been treated as administrative units of Pakistan and are subject to most of liabilities of a Province under the Pakistan constitution. They do not have any of the constitutional rights and powers enjoyed by the provinces. One of the many consequences of this situation is that Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Balistan do not have any seats in the Pakistan Parliament or institutions established by the Constitution (PILDAT, 2011).
3. In August 2009, the government of Pakistan had approved a Self-Governance Reforms Package for the Northern Areas, aimed at giving it full internal autonomy, but without the status of a province, and changed its name to Gilgit-Baltistan.
4. General Ayub Khan banned all political parties during his regime (1958-1969).

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MQM: <http://www.mqm.org>

National Assembly: <http://www.na.gov.pk>

National Reconstruction Bureau: <http://www.nrb.gov.pk>

Pakistan Army: www.pakistanarmy.gov.pk

Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz: <http://www.pmln.org>

Pakistan Peoples Party: <http://www.ppp.org.pk/>

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf: <http://www.insaf.pk/>

Population Census Organisation: <http://www.census.gov.pk/>

Punjab Provincial Assembly: <http://www.pap.gov.pk>

Sindh Provincial Assembly: <http://www.pas.gov.pk>

Supreme Court: <http://www.supremecourt.gov.pk>

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