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## TOPIC

# POLTICS IN PAKISTAN

The **politics of Pakistan** takes place within the framework established by the [constitution](#). The country is a [federal parliamentary republic](#) in which [provincial governments](#) enjoy a high degree of autonomy and residuary powers. Executive power is vested with the [national cabinet](#) which is headed by [the prime minister](#), who works coherently along with the bicameral [parliament](#) and the [judicature](#).<sup>[1]</sup> Stipulations set by the constitution provide a delicate [check and balance](#) of [sharing](#)

powers between executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the government.<sup>[2]</sup>

The head of state is the president who is elected by the electoral college for a five-year term. The president was a significant authority until the 18th amendment, passed in 2010, stripped the presidency of its major powers. Since then, Pakistan has been shifted from a Semi-presidential system to a purely parliamentary government.<sup>[3]</sup>

The Government consists of three branches: executive, legislative and judicial. The Executive branch consists of the Cabinet and is led by the Prime Minister. It is totally independent of the legislative branch that consists of a bicameral parliament. The Upper House is the Senate whilst the National Assembly is the lower house.<sup>[4]</sup> The Judicial branch forms with the composition of the Supreme Court as an apex court, alongside the high courts and other inferior courts.<sup>[5][6]</sup> The judiciary's function is to interpret the Constitution and federal laws and regulations.<sup>[7][8]</sup>

Pakistan is a multiparty democracy where several political parties compete for seats in the National and Provincial assemblies. However, as an aftermath of the Fall of Dhaka in 1971, a two-party system was inculcated between the Peoples Party and Muslim League. There has also been a sharp rise in the popularity of centrist parties such that PML-Q and PTI.<sup>[9][10]</sup> The Military establishment has played an influential role in the country's politics. From 1950s to 2000s, several coups were

staged that overthrew democratic regimes. However, after the resignation of [President Pervez Musharraf](#) in 2008, a sharp line has been drawn between the [Military](#) and **politics** and Pakistan is moving closer to becoming a [liberal democracy](#).

Executive branch

The president of Pakistan, in keeping with the constitutional provision that the state religion is Islam, must be a Muslim. Elected for a five-year term by an [Electoral College](#) consisting of members of the Senate and National Assembly and members of the provincial assemblies, the president is eligible for re-election. But no individual may hold the office for more than two consecutive terms. The president may resign or be impeached and may be removed from office due to incapacity or gross misconduct by a two-thirds vote of the members of the parliament. The president generally acts on the advice of the prime minister but has important [residual powers](#).

One of the most important of these powers—a legacy of General [Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq](#)—is the president's power to dissolve the National Assembly "in his discretion where, in his opinion, it has arisen in which the Government of the Federation cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and an appeal to the electorate is necessary." This power has twice been granted —by the [Eighth Amendment](#) in 1985 and by the [Seventeenth Amendment](#) in 2003—and has twice been revoked—by the [Thirteenth Amendment](#) in 1997 and by the

[Eighteenth Amendment](#) in 2010. Despite this most recent power-stripping, the President remains the *ex officio* chair of the [National Security Council](#), as per the National Security Act 2004.

The prime minister is appointed by the members of the National Assembly through a vote. 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. As of early 1994, there were thirty-three ministerial portfolios: commerce; communications; culture; defence; defence production; education; environment; finance and economic affairs; food and agriculture; foreign affairs; health; housing; information and broadcasting; interior; Kashmiri affairs and Northern Areas; law and justice; local government; minority affairs; narcotics control; parliamentary affairs; petroleum and natural resources production; planning and development; railways; religious affairs; science and technology; social welfare; special education; sports; state and frontier regions; tourism; water and power; women's development; and youth affairs.

Legislative branch

The bicameral federal legislature consists of the Senate (upper house) and National Assembly (lower house). According to Article 50 of the Constitution, the National Assembly, the

Senate and the President together make up a body known as the [Majlis-e-Shoora](#) (Council of Advisers).

Pakistan's democracy has no [recall](#) method. However, past governments have been dismissed for corruption by the President's invocation of Article 58 of the Constitution. The President's power to dismiss the Prime Minister and dissolve the National Assembly was removed by the [Thirteenth Amendment](#) and partially restored by the [Seventeenth Amendment](#).

Provincial Governments [\[edit\]](#)



The subdivisions of Pakistan

Pakistan is subdivided into 4 provinces, 1 territory, and 1 capital territory. Each province has a Provincial Assembly, a directly elected legislature. Members are elected for five-year terms. Each Assembly elects a Chief Minister, who then selects the ministers of his or her cabinet.

- [Balochistan](#)
- [Islamabad Capital Territory](#)\*\*
- [Khyber Pakhtunkhwa](#)

- [Punjab](#)
- [Sindh](#)
- [Gilgit–Baltistan](#)
- Note: the federally administered portion also includes the disputed/held [Kashmir](#) region includes [Azad Kashmir](#).

*See also: [Government of Pakistan](#)*