

PAKISTAN

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Country Analysis Report

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Accountability Lab Pakistan is examining Pakistan's social, political, and economic development indicators to analyze the impact of policy actions and highlight challenges concerning each sector. Amid current political uncertainty and a financial crisis, the Country Report gives an overview of developments in different sectors like security, governance, and the rule of law.

The report also focuses on human rights progress, including the rights of minorities, women, and children. It examines the progress across various developmental indicators to promote citizen awareness of a socially connected, economically stable, and politically accountable Pakistan.

Political Situation



In the latest piece for [Foreign Policy Magazine](#), Michael Kugleman, Director Asia Program at the Wilson Center, argues that despite the devastating floods haunting the country's [33 million people](#), Pakistani politics are running as usual.

He was referring to the ongoing political tug of war between the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) led coalition government and Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI).

In the latest incident, some PTI supporters [heckled](#) the ruling party's minister Mariam Aurangzeb on the streets of London. The incident was condemned in many quarters of the country while the victim has called it the ["toxic impact of Imran Khan's politics"](#).

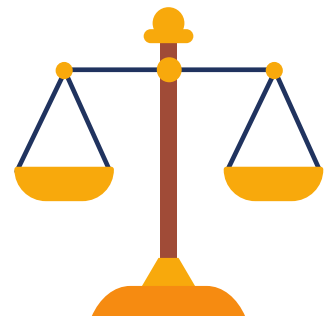
Addressing a gathering at the Government College University (GCU) Lahore, Imran Khan has called for the [resignation](#) of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) after the leaks featuring conversations among the significant figures in the coalition government. Khan's GCU address itself became a political issue which was [criticized](#) by Maryam Nawaz, PML-N President, and has [demanded action against the GCU Vice Chancellor](#) for hosting a political event and spreading political hatred at the university campus.

On September 7, the PTI Chairman Imran Khan has [accused](#) the characters he refers to as Mr. X and Mr. Y- to topple the coalition government in Punjab by bribing the lawmakers. This was in line with PTI's claim for involvement of power holders in regime change conspiracy against Khan.

The PTI leadership is gearing up for the long-awaited ["Haqiqi Azadi" march](#) towards the capital. A similar long-march was led by Khan in May with an intention to hold a sit-in at D-Chowk until dates for fresh general elections were announced; yet, the march was called off for another date. This time, although Khan believes that his 'Haqeeqi Azadi' has [entered final phase](#) and will begin from September 24, [u](#)

On the other hand, the government is doing its [preparation](#) to manage the expected inflow of thousands of protesters. The capital police has procured [40,000 shells worth Rs 75 million](#) to deal with the situation. The severity of situation can be realized as the Islamabad Police, in a this month, indicated using shell-bombing drones to deal with the protesters.

In an exclusive [interview on television](#) on September 11, Imran Khan in his controversial statement questioned the election of army chief by the incumbent coalition government and suggested that present Army Chief Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa [should be given extension](#) until the next government is elected. After being pressed by media on his contradictory position, Khan [backtracked from his statement](#) and argued that he never asked for extension of army chief but for its deferment ["until the next government is elected."](#)



Following the return of PML-N leader Ishaq Dar, a [petitioner has withdrawn a disqualification plea](#) from the ECP and says the case will be taken to a [higher forum for further pursuance](#). Ishaq Dar has been in self-exile since 2018 after being found guilty in an asset-beyond-mean case by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB).

Ishaq Dar has sworn as senator while the opposition has strongly protested his return. Dr Shehzad, the Opposition leader, stated that the tradition of the house has never been that a [“man absconds and come back.”](#)

In a serious security breach, [audio leaks of PM Shehbaz Sharif](#) have been surfaced by the unknown hackers which has caused political uproar in the country.

The audio leak features a conversation [between PM Sharif and official of the Prime Minister house](#) where they discussed plans to illegally [import machinery from India for the son-in-law of Maryam Nawaz](#). While the PTI leaders have questioned the [security of the Prime Minister Office \(PMO\)](#), the government has maintained that there is [“nothing illegal”](#) in the audio leaks. Despite this, however, the Prime Minister has termed the leak as a [“very serious lapse”](#) and announced that a [high level committee](#) will be formed to investigate the leak.



Economic Updates and Developments

The ongoing floods have increased Pakistan's economic woes. The country was already struggling under an acute economic crisis, the devastations caused by floods had rather compounded the disaster.

Among the directly hit is the Agricultural sector that has cost Pakistan a huge chunk of its economy. Agriculture makes around [fourth of the Pakistani Gross Domestic Product \(GDP\)](#) and 40 percent of people are reliant on the sector for employment.

With a [global output of 5 percent](#), Pakistan is the [fifth largest producer](#) of cotton whose [40 percent](#) crops are destroyed. The [UN Food and Agricultural Organization](#) estimates that 80 percent of the crops in Sindh which nearly constitutes [30 percent of Pakistan's total cotton crops](#) have been lost to the floods.



Similarly, Pakistan is the world's fourth largest rice exporter and [15 percent of its rice crops](#) have been lost in the floods. With agriculture making a quarter of Pakistan's economy, it is estimated that floods have [cost an overall \\$40 billion](#) to the country's battered economy. An estimated [800,000 cattle](#), a major source of income for rural families, have been killed by the floods.

Because of the floods, inflation of common ingredients in Pakistani meals like [Onions and vegetables](#) has risen manifold. Major parts of the country's breadbasket are cut from the rest of the country as bridges and roads have been destroyed. Combined with the devastation caused by floods, the inflation is expected to increase to a [record 30 percent](#) by the end of the current fiscal year. [Khaqan Majeed](#), former advisor to the Finance Ministry, has stated that crops like cotton, rice, and tomatoes have been seriously hit by the flood.

He estimated that the devastation to agriculture can cause Pakistan's trade deficit to widen from [2.4 percent to 3.5 percent](#) as the country will have to import most of the food products. This is a critical situation because Pakistan's [foreign exchange reserves stands at \\$8.6 billion](#), enough only for about a month of imports.

Despite a successful deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for the release of a \$1.2 [billion loan](#) last month, the Pakistani rupee continues a fee fall. On September 27, the U.S. dollar was traded against [233.5 Pakistani rupees](#). The dollar is expected to rise given the rising imports of food and other products amidst the devastating floods.

In a major development on September 25, Pakistan's finance minister Miftah Ismael [announced his resignation](#) amidst the ongoing economic uncertainty exacerbated by floods. Following Miftah's announcement, the former finance minister [Ishaq Dar has returned to Pakistan](#) from London on a special flight with PM Shehbaz Sharif on September 26.

Ishaq Dar has taken charge as finance minister with a commitment to take the country out of the economic crisis. While talking to the media after his return, [Dar announced](#) that "Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has asked me to accept the responsibilities of finance minister. By the grace of God, I will try my best to get Pakistan out of this economic rut."



On 29th September, Maryam Nawaz Sharif and her husband Captain (Retd) Safdar were [acquitted in the Avenfield case](#). Previously in 2018, Maryam was sentenced to seven years in prison and was fined two billion pounds.

While the new foreign minister has boasted about stabilizing the Pakistani economy, challenges are abounding especially amidst the ongoing floods and resulting food shortages and socioeconomic insecurity.

Security and Rule of Law Situation

The banned militant organization [Tehreek-i-Taliban \(TTP\)](#) has ended the ['indefinite ceasefire'](#) with the government of Pakistan. The announcement by TTP spokesperson Mohammad Khorasani who [accused](#) the government for not making the necessary efforts for the success of negotiations. Khorasani also accused the government for [breaching terms](#) of the ceasefire by re-arresting the TTP militants.



Following the nullification of the ceasefire, TTP has reemerged in the Swat Valley. The group has carried out a number of [attacks](#) on members of the Aman Lashkars (Peace groups). On September 14, [five people were killed](#) in a bomb attack that targeted the peace leader Idrees Khan and his two bodyguards. The local leader had previously fought against the TTP. Just a few days before the blast, the banned outfit also [kidnapped](#) a man and demanded a ransom amounting 20 million.

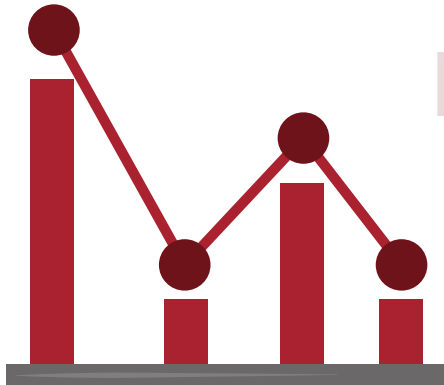
The TTP [attacked the police post](#) situated in Matta Tehsil of the district. There was no causality as a result. Moreover, fearing the return of the TTP and rise in violence, the locals belonging to Malakand division are considering to migrate. In light of the recent worsening situation of rule of law in the valley, locals have protested against the resurgence of TTP through a [peaceful demonstration](#). Placards carrying peace messages denouncing terrorism were carried by the locals.



In the month of September, the Pak-Afghan border remained a hotspot for exchange of fire. Three Pakistani soldiers have been killed after a [recent exchange of fire](#) with the terrorists across the border with Afghanistan. This will pose a serious threat to the relations between Kabul and Islamabad, since the Taliban government had assured Islamabad about not allowing Afghan soil to be used for terrorism. PM Shehbaz Sharif [highlighted the issue and expressed his concern](#) on terrorism emanating from Afghanistan. However, his statement was met with harsh [criticism](#) from Kabul and they [denied the accusations](#) saying that no armed forces operate on Afghan soil.

In another incident, Pakistan's military helicopter crashed in Baluchistan and killed all 6 soldiers onboard. The Baluchistan Liberation Army (BLA), a designated terrorist organization has taken [responsibility](#) for the attack. The group [claims](#) that it has shot down the helicopter near Khost, Harnai when the chopper arrived to rescue the kidnapped army officials from the BLA.

At the UN General Assembly, Pakistani Diplomat, Saima Saleem has [rejected](#) India's accusations of Pakistan's involvement in terrorist activities. She responded to the accusations with bold concerns about [India's grave human rights violations](#) in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. She has also termed New Delhi as the "principal perpetrator, sponsor, financier and abettor" of terrorism in South Asia.



Social Sector indicators and developments

In the year 2022, Pakistan has experienced some of the [hottest months in the last six decades](#). Despite contributing only 0.8 percent of Carbon emissions, the country is among the 'hotspots'

for climate change where people are fifteen times more vulnerable to the effects of climate change. The recent floods have caught the Pakistan government off guard with its mal-governance and lack of proper planning to deal with the disaster relief and operations.

According to the National [Disaster Management Authority \(NDMA\)](#), the death toll has exceeded 1500 while 1.8 million houses have been damaged or completely destroyed. Overall, more than [33 million people](#) have been affected by the floods in 81 districts of the country. Agriculture remains at the forefront of this devastation. The floods have destroyed [15 percent](#) of the rice crop and [40 percent](#) of Pakistan's cotton crops. In its [September Situation Report](#), the World Food Program (WFP) has estimated that 1.9 million people across the flood-affected areas are currently facing food insecurity. The food security agencies have also indicated that at least [70 percent of Pakistan's food basket](#) has been damaged by the ongoing floods.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has raised concerns over a '[second disaster](#)' that could bring a number of water vector borne diseases. The spread of dengue has already shown an ascent which could further exacerbate the existing crises.

Given the [conducive environment](#) for dengue mosquitos, the dengue affected cases are on the rise throughout the country. Only in Sindh province, more than 4000 dengue cases have been [reported](#), while more than ten children have already lost their lives to Diphtheria.

[Irshad Memon](#), Project Director of Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI), has stated that the disease has long been eradicated from the world. However, in this part of the world the [disease still exists](#).



Schools across the country have been destroyed by the recent floods, incurring greater losses for children. In a seminar conducted by the STEAM [Policy Unit of Ministry of Federal Education](#) and Professional Training titled, "Defending Education Against Climate Change", educationists and experts have [addressed the adverse effects](#) of climate change on education and the need to rehabilitate and rebuild schools.

China and Pakistan have launched a series of activities of vocational education under the [Technical and Vocational Education and Training \(TVET\)](#) Cooperation and Development Program. According to the Chinese Embassy in Islamabad, the seminar and series of activities aim to improve the standard of vocational skills, socio-industrial ethics and e-commerce capability of Pakistani youth, which constitutes about [70% of Pakistan's total population](#). This will also improve Pakistan's export capacity by producing young talent for the Special Economic Zones and make Pakistan a regional center of excellence.

In a similar endeavor for educational improvement, the U.S. Pakistan Women's Council (USPWC) in partnership with the U.S. Embassy has launched [Pakistan Future of Women and Work Initiative \(PFWWI\)](#). The program aims at working on developing 'sustainable prosperity' for women's economic advancement in Pakistani society. A [special course](#) will be rolled out in Islamabad on Animal Welfare. The course aims at inculcating a humane approach towards animals by children and to promote civic sense. This will be the first course of its kind rolled out in the country.



Human Rights

The segregated factions of the society are further marginalized when structural reforms are exclusionary by nature and based on social discrimination. The transgender community has long been at the forefront of social discrimination in almost every aspect of human life. [The historic Transgender Persons \(Rights Protection\) Bill](#) was passed by Pakistan's Parliament in 2018.

The bill aims at [prohibiting all forms of social discrimination](#) against the transgender community at education, workplaces, public modes of transit, and healthcare. However, most of the religious elite have condemned and opposed the recent bill that will guarantee the fundamental human rights to the suffering community.

The current controversy over the Bill has emerged after Senator Mushtaq Ahmad of Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) has [submitted amendments](#) to the law and even challenged it in the Federal Shariat Court (FSC). JI has [opposed the bill](#) citing its 'anti-Islamic' nature and that it can cause complications to the Islamic heredity rules. The bill has been [referred](#) to the relevant standing committee for debate in order to reach a harmonious decision.

The transgender community has condemned the opposition to the bill especially when [transgender community is under attack](#) in provinces like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) where a number of [transgender have been murdered](#) this year.



According to a report by the Sustainable Social Development Organization (SSDO) and Centre of Research Development and Communication (CRDC), in the month of August, the [highest number of cases](#) pertaining to sexual abuse, physical assault and gender based violence were reported in the mainstream media. The report states that 136 women were kidnapped, 87 physically assaulted, 71 women were raped and 114 children were sexually assaulted. In another unfortunate event, a Chinese national in Pakistan was [arrested](#) for sexually assaulting a minor girl for months repeatedly.

A young flood-stricken girl was [allegedly raped and tortured](#) by two men in the Shahdadour district of Sindh. Although the Sindh Minister for Women Development, Shehla Raza has taken notice of the incident, this tragedy reveals the vulnerability of women amidst the ongoing floods.

A Canadian citizen, Sarah Inam was brutally tortured and killed by her husband in Islamabad only after three months of their marriage. The [main suspect](#) of the murder were the husband Shahnawaz Amir and his father Ayaz Amir, a well-known journalist, who was also taken into custody by the Islamabad police. The court ordered [physical remand](#) of the accused Shahnawaz and his father. In a [recent development](#), Ayaz Amir has been discharged from the case by an Islamabad district and session court.



In Sialkot, 30 people were [booked for attacking](#) the Chehlum procession in the city. The police have registered a first information report (FIR). The FIR had been registered under sections of the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA).

According to a recent research titled, "[Sahil's Six Months Cruel Numbers Report](#)", a total of 2,211 cases of child abuse has been reported in Pakistan in the first six months of 2022. The report was issued by an NGO Sahil which also revealed that [12 children were sexually abused](#) around the same period.

Overall, the ongoing floods have made the underrepresented groups including transgender and women more vulnerable to crimes and human rights abuses.



Foreign Relations



The [US Global Trends Report](#) released by the U.S. intelligence has raised alarms over the possibilities of miscalculations in the South Asian region. The report states that India and Pakistan may "stumble into a large-scale war [that] neither side wants". The nuclear equipped countries can escalate the risk which would result in a scenario of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD). [Sharat Sabarwal](#), Former Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan, has said that Pakistan is not on top of India's foreign policy agenda. However, he argued that economic interdependence through trade can grow.

In his [first statement](#) on the devastating floods in Pakistan, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has expressed hopes for the "early restoration of normalcy". In fact, there are [reports](#) that discussions were held on the possibility of extension of humanitarian aid to the flood affected people in Pakistan. The gesture is unique given the tensions between the two countries since August, 2019.

In the month of September, discussions on cooperation between China and Pakistan centered mostly on conventional and non-conventional security. Pakistan has [received](#) the second batch of J-10C fighter jets, also known as "Dragon from the East", from China.

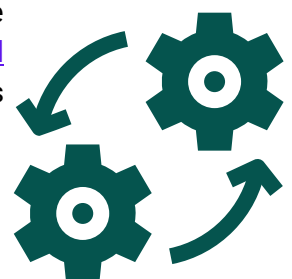
According to the Inter Services Public Relation (ISPR), China has expressed gratitude to the [Pakistan Army](#) for providing "a safe and secure environment" to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). On September 16, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chinese President Xi Jinping held their [bilateral meeting](#) on the sidelines of the 22nd Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) held at Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

In the meeting, President Xi has urged the Premier to provide "[solid protection](#)" to the Chinese citizens working on different projects in the country. In the non-traditional aspect of security, both countries [have shared perspectives](#) on the climate change agenda and aspire to cooperate closely at both bilateral and multilateral levels to advance their shared objectives.

PM Shahbaz Sharif, while addressing the SCO heads of state, [stated](#) that "it will be a big mistake to ignore Afghanistan this time around." In his meeting with the US Special Representative for Afghanistan Thomas West, the foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has also reiterated that a "[peaceful, stable and prosperous](#)"

Afghanistan is the topmost regional security priority for Islamabad. In the meanwhile, the Afghan Defense Minister, Muhammad Yaqoob Mujahid has [accused](#) Pakistan for providing airspace to the US drones to enter Afghanistan that has recently killed the Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri in July this year.

Pakistan's Foreign Office has termed the accusations "[highly regrettable](#)" and reiterated its resolve to respect "[sovereignty and territorial integrity](#)" of all countries and rejected terrorism in "all its forms and manifestations."



On the sidelines of the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, PM Shehbaz Sharif and Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi held a meeting and [restated](#) their desire to strengthen bilateral trade and connectivity.

The Iranian government has urged Pakistan to complete [Iran-Pakistan \(IP\) gas pipeline](#), and also hinted towards extending between the two countries in other fields. Additionally, officials from the two countries expects that ['Pishin border market'](#) will be opened in the month of October

This is aimed at increasing free trade between Pakistan and Iran. Pakistan has also [opposed a non-binding statement](#) by the UN Nuclear Watchdog that expressed 'profound concern' over Iran's unexplained nuclear sites in an attempt to pressurize Tehran.

After the torrential rains and resulting floods in the country, the international community has extended overwhelming support to Pakistan. In addition to the [\\$60 million pledge](#) last month, the U.S. secretary of State Anthony Blinken in his meeting with FM Bilawal Bhutto pledged another [\\$10 million](#) in flood aid to Pakistan.



The US Agency for International Development (USAID) has positioned a [Disaster Assistance Response Team](#) to help in the rescue and relief operation in the flood affected parts of the country. Similarly, different friendly countries including Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and UAE have dispatched flights carrying aid packages for the flood affected people in Pakistan.

In defense cooperation, the U.S. Congress has been notified by the Biden Administration to extend a [\\$459 million of package](#) for the maintenance of Pakistan Air Force F-16 fleets. However, the proposal does not include any new capabilities, weapons and munitions.

Presented by

