

COUNTRY ANALYSIS

REPORT PAKISTAN

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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 highlights challenges concerning each sector. Amid current political uncertainty and a financial crisis, the Country Report gives an overview of developments in different sectors such as security, governance, and the rule of law. The report also focuses on human rights progress, including the rights of minorities, women, and children and examines the progress across various developmental indicators to promote citizen awareness of a socially connected, economically stable, and politically accountable Pakistan.

Political Situation

Local government election in Azad Kashmir

Pakistan- a country of 230 million people- is under a continuous political upheaval for the last few months. Besides economic ramifications, political tensions have transformed into a dangerous trend of polarization. Amidst these trends, all the three phases of [local government elections](#) were concluded in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) [took the lead](#) in the final phase of local government elections.

Dissolution of KP and Punjab government

After Imran Khan announced an end to his 'Haqeeqi Azadi March' Pakistan, Tehreek-i-Insaf [decided to dissolve both](#) provincial assemblies for Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), insisting for early elections as a solution to the economic crisis.

CM Punjab reaffirms support to PTI

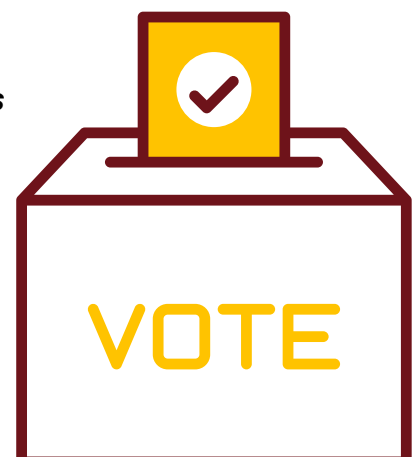
Although PTI has promised to [dissolve provincial assemblies](#), the political debate has centered on whether or not PTI will be able to convince PML-Q and dissolve the assemblies? Political commentators speculated the Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhary Pervez Elahi as a major challenge; however, Elahi has brushed aside all the speculations and [announced](#) that he will dissolve the Punjab Assembly after receiving orders from PTI Chairman Imran Khan. The Chief Minister Punjab and PML-Q leader Chaudhary Pervez Elahi has said that its [ties with the PTI](#) are stronger than ever amidst the rumors of rift between the two. In response to this, Pakistan Muslim League- Nawaz (PML-N) is [gearing up to mobilize](#) its workers in Punjab and KP in case of dissolution of assemblies for early elections in the provinces.

ECP motion to remove Khan as PTI Chairman

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has [set a motion](#) to remove Imran Khan as the Chairman of PTI in the Toshakhana case reference. Upon failing to appear to the court, the [ECP has summoned](#) Imran Khan along with the other PTI leaders including Asad Umar and Fawad Chaudhry for the hearing of contempt case on January the 3rd. Previously, [Supreme Court](#) has also asked high courts to quickly decide PTI pleas in the ECP contempt case.

Ultimatum to the government to dissolve the provincial assemblies

Amidst the continuous political deadlock, Imran Khan has given an [ultimatum](#) to the Shehbaz Sharif government to announce elections plan by December 20 otherwise the PTI will [dissolve two provincial assemblies](#). So far the government has [rejected](#) calls for early elections; yet, the future of any such development depends on whether or not the government and the PTI settle for a dialogue.



Economic Update & Development



Pakistan projected to be the sixth largest economy by 2075?

In a research titled, "[The Path to 2075](#)" published by the Goldman Sachs has projected Pakistan to be the [sixth largest economy](#) in the world if appropriate 'policies and institutions' are in place. However, the current economic situation in the country presents a dismal picture. The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) foreign exchange reserves have fallen to [four-year low](#) of \$6.7 billion. To abate the crisis, Pakistan is seeking foreign aid to reduce its current account deficit. Since last month, the foreign exchange reserves have declined by [\\$784 million](#) with SBP holding only \$5.8 billion. This is an alarming situation especially when Islamabad has to pay nearly \$33 billion to foreign lenders in the next financial year. The SBP Governor Jameel Ahmad has attributed the current economic crisis to the catastrophic floods, Russia-Ukraine crisis, and the rise in food prices.

Energy shortages and deteriorating economic conditions

Given the energy shortages and deteriorating economic conditions, [major companies](#) are struggling to keep their operations open. More recently, Frontier Ceramics Limited (FCL) announced shutting down its floor tile production plant for an '[uncertain period](#)'. However, despite the continuing downward spiral, the Finance Minister Ishaq Dar claims that Pakistan's economy is heading in '[right direction](#)' and that it will not default.

Pakistan seeks emergency bailout packages

Pakistan is seeking an [emergency bailout package](#) of \$3 billion from Saudi Arabia and the new Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Gen Asim Munir will likely take up the matter during his visit to the Kingdom. The government has recently received a [\\$500 million](#) tranche from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) at 4.9% interest rate. These loans were taken to maintain the foreign exchange reserves; the country is seeking more funds from the Chinese commercial banks for the same reasons. Experts hope that Pakistan will get [\\$32 billion](#) in loans for the current financial year.

Request to IMF, dollar shortage and increase in gold prices

Pakistan has also requested the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to [waive off or drop](#) its surcharges on some of its loans. Amidst a delay in the IMF loan program, Pakistan is facing [dollar shortage](#) which has increased demand for Gold. By the first week of December, the gold price climbed to a record high of \$733 per Tola or 12 grams. According to the World Gold Council report, between July and September, the Gold price has [jumped by 34%](#) in Pakistan.

While the incumbent government rejects speculations of a default, the current fiscal trends do not give a good sight into the country's economic situation in the coming weeks.

Security and Rule of Law Situation



US withdrawal from Afghanistan: An inimical factor in expediting TTP activities in Pakistan

In its briefing to the senate committee in Islamabad, the [National Counter Terrorism Authority](#) has stated that the US withdrawal from Afghanistan has been an inimical factor and has [expedited](#) the Tehreek-i-Taliban (TTP) activities in Pakistan.

It was further informed that the peace talk process has helped TTP gain [substantial ground](#) with an increase in terror activities. Resistance from Swat valley's resident is seen as a positive sign and is paramount to stand in the face terrorism.

'Unprovoked' attack from Afghan forces at Chaman bord

The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) has reported an ['unprovoked'](#) firing incident from Afghan forces at the Chaman border which resulted in the killing of six civilians and seventeen injured.

The Pakistani authorities have urged the Taliban regime to take strict action and ensure that such incidents are not repeated in future. In retaliation, Pakistani forces attacked the check post on the Afghan side.

After the attack, the border crossing on the Baluchistan side had been closed but reopened after the Taliban government [apologized](#) for the incident.

Attack on Pakistan's Chargé d' Affaires to Kabul

On December 2, Pakistan's Chargé d' Affaires to Kabul Ubaidur Rehman Nizamani survived an [assassination attempt](#) in Kabul city. According to Pakistan's Foreign Office, the diplomat has sustained minor injuries but [remained safe](#). However, his security guard was critically injured. The attack was condemned by the Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the Taliban government to investigate the matter and ensure the safety of Pakistani diplomats.

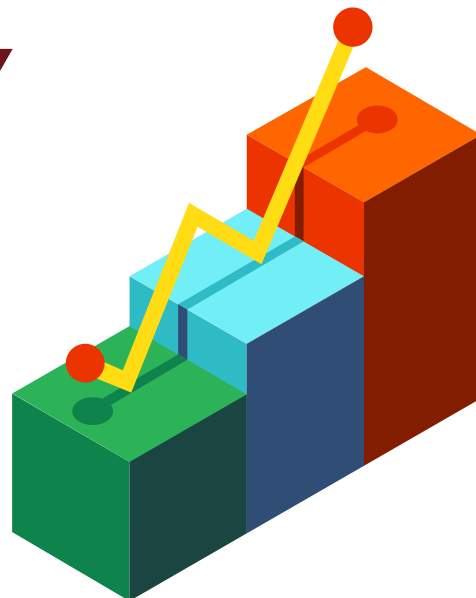
The Afghan Foreign Ministry has assured the Pakistani authorities of a proper [investigation](#) and punishment of the perpetrators. The responsibility for the attack on Pakistan's embassy was [claimed](#) by the Islamic State-Khorasan Province (ISKP).

The slipping grip of the Taliban government over security, deteriorating law and order situation in Kabul, and their failure in stopping the cross-border terrorism from its soil casts doubt on its capacity and raises alarms within the Pakistani government over the looming security threats emanating from Afghanistan.

Social Sector Indicators & Development

Pakistan launches polio campaign

Pakistan is one among the only two polio-endemic countries in the world. While the country has failed to achieve a zero-polio target, the Pakistani government is launching new campaigns to get rid of this virus. The [Third Sub-National Immunization Days \(SNIDs\)](#) campaign for the year 2022 has been [launched](#) that aims at immunizing 13.5 million children under the age of five years in 36 districts of the country. According to G. Adjei, the United Nations International Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) Regional South Asia Director, polio will be [eradicated](#) from Pakistan by the end of the year 2023.



Pakistan ranks as the top second country in children out of school

According to the National Commission on the Rights of Child (NCRC), Pakistan ranks as the top second country with an estimated [23 million out of the school children](#) between the age of 5 and 16 years. The data reveals that [44%](#) of the Pakistani children are either out of school involved in begging or child labor. The UNICEF report finds that the recent floods have further exacerbated the existing educational crisis with significant damage to around [27,000 schools](#) in the country. The estimated funds required to meet these losses has been [quantified](#) to be around \$198 million. Ongoing economic crisis remains a serious challenge for the incumbent coalition government.

Malala Yousafzai visits Pakistan to promote girls education

The U.S. has launched a \$4 million project under the theme of [“Improving Girls’ Education Activity”](#) in the remote areas of the KP province to promote and give access to quality education to girls. Nobel laureate, [Malala Yousafzai](#) has also arrived in Pakistan to promote Science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM) education for girls. In this regard, a delegation from Oxford Pakistan Programme (OPP) and Malala fund will hold [talks](#) to the key stakeholders including Pakistan’s Ministry of Federal Education. The ambitious program is intended to reform around 13000 schools throughout the country.

Punjab’s first transgender public school

To empower the Trans-community, the Government of Punjab has opened its [first transgender public school](#). The school will give education from primary to higher secondary levels. The province of Punjab has around [65% of trans population](#) in the country which is expected to be the primary beneficiary of such initiatives.



Human Rights



Pakistan reiterates its commitment to human rights

On this Human Rights Day on December 10, Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif has [reiterated government's commitment](#) towards devising a human centric-strategy to curb human rights violations. Pakistan is a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) which outlines a [systematic approach](#) to address civil, economic, cultural and social well-being. However, the deteriorating human rights situation in the country signifies the neglect in implementing the declaration.

Surge in child abuse cases in Punjab

In a research conducted by the Sustainable Social Development Organization (SSDO), Lahore has observed the highest number of [child abuse cases](#) in the first ten months of the year 2022 with 27% share compared to the other cities. The [report](#) also established that child abuse cases had been most prevalent in Sheikhpura, Kasur, Gujranwala and Rawalpindi. Lahore and Faisalabad have also [reported](#) the highest number of rape cases in the Punjab in 2022.

100 Christian girls faced religious conversion

In another [report released](#) by the Voice for Justice and Jubilee Campaign titled, "Conversion without Consent" revealed that around 100 Christians have faced religious persecution in the form of conversions and child marriages since January 2019 to October 2022. 61% of these girls were targeted before they had reached 18 years of their age. The report has [recommended](#) that taking strict actions against the perpetrators is inevitable for the protection of minorities in compliance with the existing laws and introducing reforms to accommodate the needs and issues of minorities.



Foreign Relations

Indo-Pak

The newly appointed COAS, General Asim Munir made his first visit on the Line of Control (LoC) at the Pakistani side. On his visit, COAS [made clear](#) that Pakistan armed forces will defend the country and will fight back in case war is imposed by [the neighboring India](#). The two South Asian countries have fought two of total three wars over the disputed Kashmir region. While addressing a joint press conference with his German counterpart, S Jaishankar, India's external affairs minister said that Delhi cannot have talks with Pakistan until the issue of cross border terrorism is not resolved. Diplomatic and trade engagements between the two countries since August 2018 when India unilaterally revoked the special status of Kashmir as a disputed territory.

Sino-Pak

Pakistan and China have setup a [Science and Technology \(S&T\) center](#) to boost bilateral cooperation in science and technology. The center was initiated after Premier Shahbaz Sharif's visit to China where the two countries identified science and technology as an important sector for collaboration.

Amidst the growing rivalry between China and U.S., a report titled, "[The China Military Power 2022](#)" was released by the Pentagon. The report states that [China depends on Pakistan](#) for the projection of its military might, as Pakistan remains China's key ally. The report also [categorizes](#) Pakistan as China's only "[all-weather strategic partner](#)". The fallout of bilateral relations of two great powers has the potential to push Pakistan towards a precarious situation in the already fraught South Asian security dynamics.

U.S-Pak

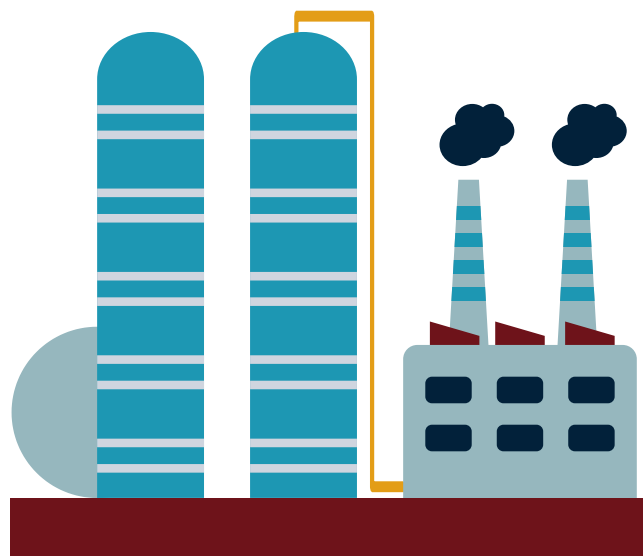
The United States has included Pakistan along with China, Russia and Iran in the list of countries [under the Religious Freedom Act](#) over severe religious violations. According to Antony Blinken, the U.S. Secretary of State, these states have been found engaged in and have tolerated severe religious freedom abuses. Surprisingly, India with a record of human rights abuses is left out for strategic reasons as New Delhi is America's emerging strategic partner in countering China. For the past three years, the [US Commission of International Religious Freedom \(USCIRF\)](#) has urged that India should be put on violator's list due to the growing marginalization of religious minorities in different parts of the country.

The Biden administration has blacklisted and placed some [Pakistan companies](#) on export control list due to security concerns. The Pakistani firms have allegedly supported Russia's defense base and promoted nuclear activities. On December 19, Pakistan and the United States are scheduled to [hold talks](#) in Washington to discuss trade and cooperation between the two countries. The Pakistani delegation will be led by Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto where apart from trade, cooperation over regional security and terrorism will also be on the agenda.

Russo-Pak

The Russian-Ukraine war has inevitable implications for the global oil market and therefore, a direct impact on emerging economies like Pakistan which imports almost 50% of its energy needs. Islamabad is struggling to meet gas supply as the demand increases while bulking under massive debts.

Musadik Maik, State Minister for Petroleum, has [announced](#) that Pakistan will be buying crude oil, diesel and petrol from Russia at discounted prices. A Russian delegation will arrive on 20th January to strike the much-awaited deal.



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