

COUNTRY ANALYSIS REPORT 2022

9th Edition



PREAMBLE

In the year 2022, Pakistan faced significant challenges, including political instability, economic recession, and increase in social and human rights issues. In addition, the country has complex and sometimes strained relationships with its neighbors and other international actors. This report aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the political, security, economic, social, human rights, and foreign relations situation in Pakistan for the year 2022. It examines the major developments and challenges faced by the country in 2022, as well as the opportunities and threats that lie ahead. Through this analysis, the report hopes to shed light on the state of Pakistan for the year 2022 and its prospects for the future.

Political Situation

Imran Khan Ousted as the Prime Minister of Pakistan

In 2022, it was the first time in the history of Pakistan that a Prime Minister was ousted from the parliament through a [no-confidence motion](#). The motion was tabled by the united opposition including major political parties of Pakistan, Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PMLN), Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam F (JUIF), and others to ousted Imran Khan, Chairman Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf. The former PM called out the Biden administration for the "regime change conspiracy" and for backing the no-confidence motion. The Biden administration denied any role in



the process. After examining the contents of the cypher, proof of the alleged conspiracy, the National Security Committee (NSC) reaffirmed the decision of the last NSC meeting that they have completed the investigation and found no evidence of any conspiracy.

First time in the history of Pakistan, a Prime Minister was ousted from the parliament through a no-confidence motion.

Political Parties Mired in the Power Struggle

In July, the province of Punjab was mired in the power struggle between the two biggest parties and their coalition partners. The by-elections were held in the heartland of Pakistan; Punjab, after [court orders](#) to replace the dissident lawmakers, who previously defected from Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI) by [electing Hamza Shehbaz](#), son of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, as Punjab's Chief Minister in April. In the much-anticipated by-elections on July 17th, the PTI surprised its opponents with a decisive victory, winning [15 provincial seats](#). Meanwhile, the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N), for whom Punjab is their "[political citadel](#)," stood second in this race and bagged only [four seats](#).

Following by-elections, in line with the Lahore High Court (LHC) orders of June 30th, elections for Chief Minister Punjab were held on July 17th. With 15 more seats, PTI and its allied party Pakistan Muslim League (Q) (PML-Q), gained a majority in the provincial assembly with 186 seats against 179 of PML-N and its coalition partners. However, despite a clear majority of votes by PTI's candidate, the deputy speaker [controversially declared](#) the candidate of PML-N and its allies as the province's Chief Minister. [PTI and PML-Q challenged](#) the Deputy Speaker's ruling in the supreme court. Eventually, the supreme court [rejected the deputy speaker's illegal ruling and](#)



[declared Elahi](#) the Chief Minister of Punjab. The PTI's win in Punjab is crucial as Punjab is the country's political center of gravity besides being the most populated and largest province. The month of August marked the diamond jubilee of the creation of Pakistan – the 75th Independence Day - but the political and economic troubles are far from over. In August, the chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insa (PTI), Imran Khan, took the precedent in Pakistan's electoral history to contest from nine constituencies of the National Assembly in the upcoming by-elections. However, the political party found itself in a predicament over an eight-year-old foreign funding investigation. The Election Commission Pakistan (ECP) unanimously ruled that the PTI has received unlawful money. The opposition leader, Imran Khan, was charged under section 7 of the Anti-terrorism Act after his address to thousands of supporters in Islamabad. The First Information Report(FIR) states that Khan had terrorized and threatened top police officials and a respected female session judge.

Amid the flood crisis, the government and the opposition found themselves in a power struggle. Analysts believe that the major parties engaged themselves in their power struggle and disregarded the catastrophe that has befallen the people of Pakistan.

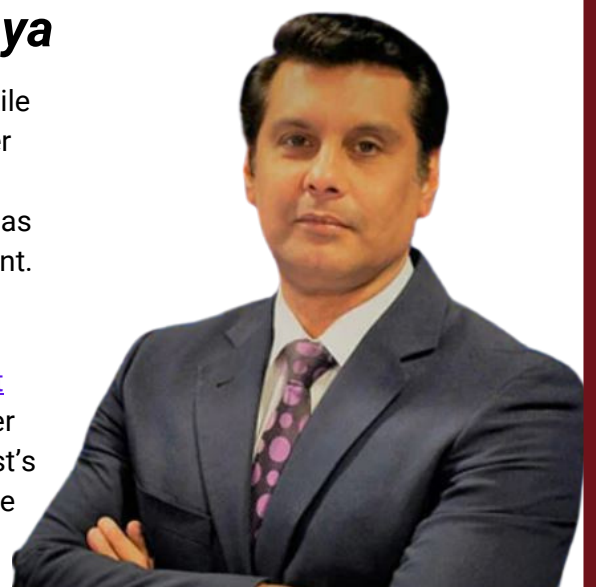
Imran Khan's Disqualification

In a major political development, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) [disqualified](#) Imran Khan under [article 63\(1\)\(p\)](#) for “false statements and incorrect declarations” and for “committing corrupt practices” in Toshakhana reference. Allegedly, Khan had unlawfully sold state gifts and concealed assets. This was a huge blow to PTI as the disqualification barred Imran Khan from holding public office. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) immediately rejected ECP's ruling, declaring it biased. Khan challenged the ruling with a petition in the Islamabad High Court, the very next day. In the Toshakhana reference case, an alleged buyer Umer Farooq Zahoor surfaced. Umer claimed that the watch was sold to him for \$2 million by Farah Shahzadi, a family friend of ex-premier Imran Khan. The actual worth of the watch was approximately Rs 280 million at the time of the alleged sale in 2019. The [National Accountability Bureau \(NAB\)](#) said that it will ask the buyer to come and testify about the case.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) disqualified Imran Khan under article 63(1)(p) for “false statements and incorrect declarations” and for “committing corrupt practices” in Toshakhana reference.

Killing of Pakistani journalist in Kenya

Senior Pakistani journalist, Arshad Shareef who lived in self-exile was [shot dead](#), allegedly by police in Nairobi, Kenya on October 23rd. Kenyan police termed it as a case of [“mistaken identity”](#). Sharif's tragic death raised many questions as the journalist was critical of the incumbent government and military establishment. The Interior Minister [formed the team](#) and has representatives from the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and Intelligence Bureau (IB). The opposition leader, Imran Khan called it [“target killing”](#) and said the slain journalist is a “martyr”. Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif [said](#) that Imran Khan is using the late journalist's death for his [“petty politics”](#) and “is casting aspersions on state institutions”.



Unprecedented Press Conference

On 27th October, 2022, in an [unprecedented press conference](#), the Director General of Pakistan's powerful Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Lt. Gen Nadeem Anjum made his [first public appearance](#) with DG ISPR. The DGs indicated that the narrative built around cypher by former Premier Imran Khan is [far from reality](#) and the journalist Sharif was fed the same "propaganda" by Imran Khan. They also said that the slain journalist, Arshad Shareef, was [neither facing any threat](#) in the country and nor was he forced to leave the country. It was also revealed by the DGs that Chief of Army Staff (COAS) was given a "[lucrative offer](#)" of extension by the former Prime Minister Imran Khan in March, 2022, to save his government, which he denied.

According to the presser, the narrative built around cypher by the former Premier is far from reality, and Imran Khan fed the journalist Sharif the same "propaganda".

Appointment of Chief of Army Staff

In November 2022, Pakistan witnessed political polarization over the appointment of Chief of the Army Staff (COAS). All the major political parties of the country had built their narrative around the appointment of the COAS. The former COAS General Qamar Javed Bajwa [retired](#) on 29th November, after having headed the institution for the last six years. President Arif Alvi had [signed the summary](#) on the appointment of General Bajwa's successor, Lt. General Asim Munir along with Lt. General Shamshad Mirza as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC). On the



same date, the [baton of command](#) was handed over to General Asim Munir by the outgoing general. General Munir is serving as country's 17th COAS. One of the generals among the six named as the potential successor of General Bajwa, Lt. General Faiz Hameed took [early retirement](#) ahead of General Munir taking charge of the Pakistan Army.

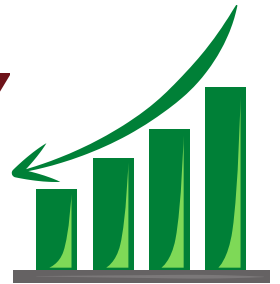
Assassination attempt on Imran Khan

On 3rd November, former Premier Imran Khan survived [an assassination attempt](#), while he was leading the Haqeeqi Azadi March in the city of Wazirabad. 14 PTI leaders and political workers were injured including Imran Khan who [sustained multiple bullet injuries](#). The suspected assailant was caught on the spot and claimed the responsibility for the attack in a video released by the Punjab Police. Although the assailant claimed his personal motivations behind the attack, Imran Khan said he knew about the attack prior and [held](#) three senior officials from the government and military including Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif responsible for the attack and demanded their removal. The attack on Khan resulted in [mass protests](#) across the country, condemning the attack on one of the most popular leaders in the country. As the ousted PM made his first appearance in the resumed Haqeeqi Azadi March on 26th November,

Imran Khan held three senior officials from the government and military, including prime minister Shehbaz Sharif responsible for the attack and demanded their removal.

he [announced](#) that the March will not proceed to Islamabad, and instead, the PTI was quitting the provincial assemblies in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab. Amidst rumors that Punjab Chief Minister, Chauhdry Pervaiz Elahi will not dissolve the assembly, Elahi has announced that he ['won't hesitate for a minute'](#) if Imran Khan asked for dissolving the assemblies.

Economic Development and Indicator



Overview

In 2022, the country faced challenges including high inflation, a fiscal deficit, and a current account deficit. The government implemented a number of structural reforms to address these issues, however, the situation has been dismal.

2022-23 Pakistan Federal Budget

On June 10th, Finance minister Miftah Ismail unveiled the budget of [Rs 9.5 trillion](#) (\$47 billion) for the fiscal year 2022-23 setting a [target of 5 percent](#) of economic growth, lower than the [5.97 per cent](#) of the foregoing year. With this, the government had removed subsidies on fuel and energy products to settle the [condition of the International Monetary Fund \(IMF\)](#) and receive a bailout package of \$6 billion, a 39-month program which has stalled for months over the lender's concerns, especially about fiscal [consolidation](#). In the Budget for 2022-2023, around 40 per cent of the funds were reserved for debt servicing which was expected to climb to [\\$23 billion](#) in the 2022 fiscal year. The government had also scaled back [on the health budget](#) and allocated only Rs 24 billion for health and Rs 64 billion for the higher education programs. Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif had also announced a new ['super tax'](#) on large-scale manufacturers including oil, fertilizers, steel, sugar, automobile, and textile. Which further caused inflation and reduce people's purchasing power for these commodities.

Glimpse of Country's Nominal GDP Growth

On the eve of Pakistan's Independence Day, the Ministry of Finance released its [update and outlook](#) report for August, which warned that the country's economic outlook is facing global and domestic uncertainties. The report also gave a glimpse of the country's 75-year economic journey highlighting the nominal GDP growth to [\\$383 billion from only \\$3 billion](#) in 1950 - marking Pakistan as the [24th largest economy](#) in the world. While these facts are undisputed, it is also true that Pakistan's economy continued to face a range of challenges, such as skyrocketing inflation which directly affects the socio-economic needs of its citizens.

The U.S.-based [Financial Post](#) had also reported that foreign investors were losing confidence in Pakistan amidst the dire economic conditions, including soaring commodity prices and tighter credit conditions, coupled with the impending political uncertainty.

Impact of Floods on Economy: The Case of Pakistan

The floods increased Pakistan's economic woes. The country was already struggling under an acute economic crisis, and the devastation caused by floods compounded the disaster. The agricultural sector is among the directly hit and has cost Pakistan a considerable chunk of its economy. Agriculture contributes around a fourth of the Pakistani gross domestic product (GDP), and 40 percent of people rely on the

sector for employment. With agriculture making a quarter of Pakistan's economy, it was estimated that floods had cost the country around \$40 billion of the economy. Similarly, Pakistan is the world's fourth largest rice exporter, and 15% of its rice crops had been lost in the floods. Because of the floods, the price of vegetables had risen sharply. Major parts of the country's breadbasket were cut off from the rest of the country as bridges and roads had been destroyed.

According to the estimates, the floods had cost the country around \$40 billion of the economy.

Pakistan Appointed New Finance Minister Amid Economic Crisis

In a major development on September 25, Pakistan's Finance Minister, Miftah Ismael, [announced his resignation](#) amidst the ongoing economic uncertainty exacerbated by the floods. Following Miftah's announcement, the former finance minister [Ishaq Dar returned to Pakistan](#) from London on a special flight with PM Shehbaz Sharif on September 26. Ishaq Dar took charge as finance minister, committed to bringing the country out of the economic crisis. While talking to the media after his return, [Dar announced](#) that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had asked him to accept the responsibilities as the finance minister.

Pakistan Removed from FATF Grey List

In a landmark relief development in October 2021, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) [removed](#) Pakistan's name from the '[Grey List](#)' – list of countries under increased monitoring for money laundering and terror financing - after four years. The development came at a time when Pakistan's position in the global market had declined given the [precarious economic conditions](#).



SBP Raised Interest Rate for the year 2023

In November, in an unexpected move, the State Bank of Pakistan [raised the interest rate](#) benchmark and set a target rate to 16% for the year 2023. The move was part of SBP's efforts to control the stronger-than-anticipated inflation in the country. A [report](#) by POREG, a policy research group, stated that Pakistan's economy is in '[free fall](#)' and that the government has failed in saving its falling GDP. Neither the creditors nor the market is impressed and that the country's [economic indicators](#) are showing a dangerous trend.

Foreign Reserves Fallen to Eight year low in the last week of December

In the last week of December, The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) foreign exchange reserves had fallen to eight year low by [\\$294 million to \\$5.8 billion](#). This posed an alarming situation especially when Islamabad had to pay nearly [\\$33 billion](#) to foreign lenders in the 2023 financial year.

The ongoing political uncertainty is among the major impediments to Pakistan's economic slowdown. According to the [EFG Hermes](#), an Egyptian financial services company, Pakistan's GDP growth rate is projected at a significant [low of 2.1%](#). The report stated that "The growth outlook beyond the current fiscal year is primarily hinged on future political developments, which will dictate the macro path." This shows that Pakistan's macroeconomic outlook remains hostage to the political uncertainty in Islamabad.

Security and Rule of Law Situation



Overview

In the year 2022, the western frontier, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), and Baluchistan have been severely hit by the recent wave of terrorism. The outlawed group gained momentum after the regime change in Afghanistan. Assuredly, the recent rise in terrorism lies in the Afghan Taliban's global patronage of terrorist groups. According to a report by the Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies (PIPS), an [increase of 51%](#) was seen in terrorist activities in Pakistan since the Taliban takeover.

This year the country witnessed intensified terrorism, militant activities, and border clashes through different groups, including; Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Baluch Liberation Army (BLA), and Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP).

The Resurgence of Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan: Challenges and Implications



In May 2022, the Pakistani government was [engaged](#) in peace talks with the proscribed Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), with the mediation of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. According to [NACTA's briefing](#) to the senate standing committee on interior, the Taliban have been emboldened by the peace talks. They have been gaining considerable ground in Pakistan for the past few months. While the talks were already showing little signs of success in the face of the Taliban's rigid position on [demands](#) including the imposition of Shariah law and repealing of the merger of the erstwhile tribal districts in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, the TTP has ended its '[indefinite ceasefire](#)' with the Pakistani government in November. Although the insurgent group blamed the Pakistani military for 'sabotaging' the peace process by carrying out attacks against the group members, the TTP carried out some of the deadliest attacks on security forces in different parts of the country and emerged as a significant challenge for the coalition government in Islamabad.

118 personnel of KP police had been martyred and 117 had been injured in the line of duty during 2022

According to the annual report of the KP police, 118 personnel of KP police had been martyred and 117 had been injured in the line of duty during 2022. The month of December had been the deadliest month of 2022. In December, through a suicide attack in Islamabad, TTP made its presence recognized in the capital of the country. This attack was the first-ever recorded attack in the capital after an eight-year-long hiatus. A Counterterrorism police center in Bannu was sieged by 33 detained militants from Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan after one militant snatched a guard's gun. The Special Service Group (SSG) unit of the army carried out the operation after 40 hours of negotiations. On December 18th and 19th, TTP also raided police stations in Lakki Marwat and South Waziristan, and took away all the weapons with sheer warnings for the police officials.

Terror Triad: TTP, BLA and ISKP

The [nexus of alliance](#) between the Tehreek-i-Taliban groups and Baluch insurgent groups that joined the TTP umbrella is another large-scale threat to the state. The alliance has the potential to turn KP and especially Baluchistan into a war zone, and all past gains of the government to pacify the insurgent group would completely conclude. Since July 2022, a total of 22 groups have joined the banned outfit under the umbrella.

BLA

Baluch Liberation Army (BLA), a Baluch ethnonationalism militant [group, carried out sporadic](#) attacks across the country. The designated group considers the flagship China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which connects Baluchistan and Xinjiang province to Gwadar Port, as an "imperialist" project. In the month of April, the group [carried out an attack](#) on a van carrying Chinese academics near the Confucius Institute at Karachi University. The group claimed responsibility for this attack and was also involved in the attack on a check post in Kech, Baluchistan that killed ten soldiers. The group has gained momentum and the nexus can result in greater unrest in the country that is already compounded by political and economic crises.



Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP)

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 sustained minor injuries but remained safe. However, his security guard was critically injured. The responsibility for the attack on Pakistan's embassy was claimed by the Islamic State-Khorasan Province (ISKP).

In total 376 attacks during 2022, 282 security personnel and 973 civilians lost their lives.

In a [report published by](#) the Centre for Research and Security Studies (CRSC), Pakistan will most probably witness more violence in the year 2023. As per the report, 282 security personnel lost their lives in 2022. There were total 376 attacks in 2022, for which ISKP, TTP and BLA claimed responsibility for 57 of these attacks. The total civilian fatalities add up to 973.

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

Social Sector Indicators and Development



Overview

In 2022, Pakistan 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 floods had caught the Pakistani government off guard with its mal-governance and lack of proper planning to deal with disaster relief and operations.

Floods in Pakistan

According to the [National Disaster Management Authority \(NDMA\)](#), the death toll had exceeded 1700, while 2.2 million houses had been [damaged or destroyed](#). Overall, more than [33 million people](#) had been affected by these floods in 81 districts of the country.

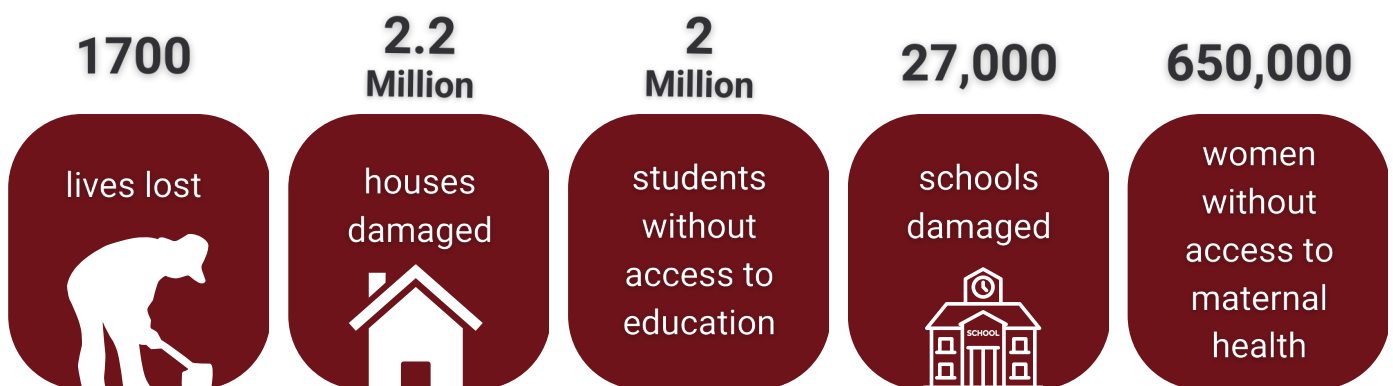
According to the Planning Commission and National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA),



almost [3 million children](#) will miss on atleast one term because of the damage caused to schools due to flood. The planning minister, Ahsan Iqbal has told journalists that due to the extensive destruction caused by floods, the rehabilitation and relief work will at least [continue](#) for two years. According to the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF), after the severe flooding in the country, for more than [2 million students education was inaccessible](#) and the flooding has destroyed around 27,000 schools in the country.

The flood crisis is even tougher on women. According to the latest UN estimates, [650,000](#) women in flood-stricken areas are in need of access to [maternal health services](#). The aftermath of floods has witnessed an alarming rate of [severe acute malnutrition cases](#) in children. More than [1 in 9](#) children in Sindh and Baluchistan have been found suffering from severe malnutrition.

IMPACT OF FLOODS

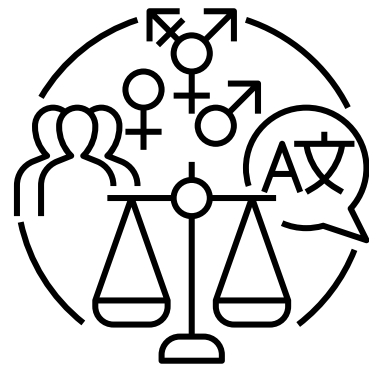


Pakistan sought climate justice after the torrential floods devastated the country’s agriculture and socioeconomic sector. In 2022, the COP27 was [co-chaired](#) by the Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. PM Shehbaz had also effectively highlighted the recent floods as a consequence of climate change at the [Shanghai Cooperation Organization \(SCO\)](#) summit and [77th session of UN General Assembly](#) in 2022. Pakistan chaired the group of 77 and China, had also successfully [gained support](#) for the establishment of the Fund in Conference of Parties (COP27) in PSharm el Sheikh, Egypt.



Pakistan’s proposal was set on the agenda of the conference, and was pressed successfully for consensus. The fund will [address the loss and damages](#) that have been caused by the climate induced disasters. Pakistan was also chosen among the [seven “path finder”](#) countries that are eligible to receive Global Shield against Climate Risks funding. The fund is [aimed](#) at providing pre-arranged and ready to deploy emergency relief to the effected.

Human Rights



Overview

In 2022, Pakistan displayed a mixed reflection on the human rights front. The country has a constitutional commitment to protect fundamental rights, but these rights are often not upheld in practice. In the year 2022, there have been instances of discrimination against women, religious minorities, and people belonging to lower socioeconomic class and the government has been criticized for not doing enough to address these issues.

Minorities Rights

In a bid to safeguard minority rights, Premier Shahbaz Sharif ordered the formation of the [task force](#) on minority rights in the month of June. The Prime Minister [said](#) that “our non-Muslim citizens are part & parcel of our national fabric”. The body will oversee the measures taken regarding the rights of minorities and will present quarterly reports to him. The development came in context of the growing violence against minorities, especially the [killing of Sikhs](#) in May in Peshawar and cases of forced [religious conversions](#) in Sindh province.

Transgender Inclusion

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. [Pakistan's Parliament passed the historic Transgender Persons \(Rights Protection\) Amendment Bill](#) in 2022 by revising the existing 2018 bill. The bill was aimed at [prohibiting all forms of social discrimination](#) against the transgender



The historic Transgender Persons (Rights Protection) Amendment Bill was passed in 2022 to prohibit all forms of social discrimination against the transgender community.

community in education, workplaces, public modes of transit, and healthcare. However, most of the religious elite condemned and opposed the bill that guaranteed fundamental human rights to the affected community. Controversy over the Bill emerged after Senator Mushtaq Ahmad of Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) [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 argued that it can cause complications to the Islamic heredity rules.

Violence Against Women

As per the latest estimates of National Police Bureau, more than [63,000 cases](#) of violence against women have been registered in the past three years including a shocking number of [11,000 rape cases](#). A survey conducted by the [Samaa TV's investigation Unit \(SIU\)](#), displays abysmal [statistics](#) of crimes perpetrated against women and their conviction rate. The survey which is based on data collected from the Punjab's home ministry and ministry of human rights suggests that in Pakistan, a woman is raped in every two hours with a conviction rate of only 0.2%. The surveyors [believe](#) that these numbers of cases could only be [tip of the iceberg](#) since most of the cases are not even reported because of the societal stigma and fear of retribution. In a shocking incident on July 17th, an American Vlogger visiting Pakistan was "gang-raped" by the travel guide in a hotel in Dera Ghazi Khan. While the police have arrested the perpetrators, the incident has affected Pakistan's image as a safe country for foreign nationals, particularly women.

In August 2022, in a shocking incident, a final-year medical student [in Faisalabad was kidnapped](#), sexually harassed, and filmed for refusing a marriage proposal. While the culprits are arrested, and the [national assembly panel has taken notice](#) of this brutal incident, the [victim is still waiting for justice](#). A Canadian citizen, Sarah Inam, was brutally tortured and killed by her husband in Islamabad only three months after they were married. The main suspects 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. In a recent development, the main suspect and his mother have been indicted.



Freedom of Expression and the Press

Article 19 of the Constitution of Pakistan enshrines citizens' right to express themselves. However, the state of affairs regarding human rights in Pakistan is in dismal condition. The government took extreme measures to curb free speech and shrink civic space for dissenting voices in the country. On August 9th, Pakistan's biggest news broadcaster ARY News was taken off air for being critical of the government and airing seditious content. After the government banned live telecasts of former PM Imran Khan's speeches, the government also banned YouTube temporarily when Khan used the platform to broadcast his speech. In an arbitrary display of power, the government had taken into custody several dissenting journalists and tortured them.

Legislation regarding Human Rights

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Assembly passed a [landmark bill](#) that enshrines severe punishment for child sexual abuse and child pornography. This will deter the perpetrators of this heinous crime and should be replicated in other provinces, specifically Punjab which has seen mass cases in the [Kasur district](#) over the last few years. On October 21st, Pakistani senate passed a landmark bill, [The Torture and Custodial Death \(Prevention and Punishment\) Bill, 2022](#), that for the first time in the country's history criminalized custodial torture. The Bill was passed at a time when leaders of Pakistan Tehrik e Insaf (PTI) were protesting against the detainment and [torture of a PTI leader Azam Swati](#). The Bill is an unprecedented move towards protection of human rights as it [protects the accused from extra-judicial custodial torture](#) which has been in practice in Pakistan's law enforcement agencies.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Assembly passed a landmark bill that enshrines severe punishment for child sexual abuse and child pornography.

Death-row Inmate Acquitted/ Legal Wrangling

On October 18, Supreme Court of Pakistan [acquitted](#) Shah Rukh Jatoi and other accomplices in a case of cold-blooded murder of a 20-year old Shahzaib Khan in December 2012. Previously, an [Anti-Terrorism Court \(ATC\)](#) found Jatoi and his accomplice Siraj Talpur guilty and granted them [death penalty](#) in 2013. After ten years of legal wrangling the acquittal, in a cold-blooded murder case, has raised serious questions over the judicial system of the country. It has generated a [nationwide uproar](#) over whether the country's elite could be held accountable for crimes they committed. Law experts believe that it is an "[overindulgence](#)" of the legal system to put their life imprisonment aside since they were sentenced on terrorism charges.

Foreign Relations

Overview

Pakistan's foreign policy is shaped by a variety of factors, including regional politics, economic interests, and security concerns. The Shahbaz Sharif government inherited a

challenging international environment, especially impeding relations with the United States. In 2022, Pakistan has sought to improve relations with other countries in the region, including Afghanistan and India. Overall, Pakistan's foreign policy aims to promote the country's national interests and protect its sovereignty while also seeking to build positive relationships with other nations.

Indo-Pak

Pakistan and India have a complex and volatile relationship. The two countries have a long history of conflict, including three wars and numerous border skirmishes. The main source of tension between the two countries has been the disputed region of Kashmir, which has been the subject of a territorial dispute since the two countries gained independence in 1947. In addition to the Kashmir issue, there have been other sources of tension, including water disputes and the issue of terrorism.

In June, Pakistan denounced [India's plan](#) to host the next G-20 Summit in the Indian Occupied Kashmir (IoK), and had reached out to its friends in the group to stop this provocative Indian endeavor. In 2022, according to the [news reports](#), the Indo-Pak trade had almost doubled despite the trade ban between the two countries. In August, Pakistan and India celebrated their diamond jubilee with zeal and enthusiasm. Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz expressed his desire to seek [permanent peace](#) with India, noting that war is not an option. In September, Sharat Sabarwal, the Former Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan, had said Pakistan is not on top of India's foreign policy agenda. However, he argued that economic interdependence through trade could grow. Moreover, in his first statement on the devastating floods in Pakistan, Indian Prime Minister



Shehbaz expressed his desire to seek permanent peace with India, noting that war is not an option.

In September, [Sharat Sabarwal](#), the Former Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan, had said Pakistan is not on top of India's foreign policy agenda. However, he argued that economic interdependence through trade could grow. Moreover, in his [first statement](#) on the devastating floods in Pakistan, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed hope for the "early restoration of normalcy." There are [reports](#) that discussions were held on the possibility of extending humanitarian aid to the flood-affected people in Pakistan.

Cricket diplomacy has been an important component of engagement between Pakistan and India since the late 1980s. Undoubtedly, the two countries share the most intense sports rivalry in the world. However, in October 2022, cricket diplomacy was damaged by a recent statement from the secretary of Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) Jay Shah in which he announced that India will not be visiting Pakistan for the Asia Cup 2023. The President of BCCI said that the decision to visit Pakistan is the prerogative of the Indian government.



In the gamut of traditional security, Prime Minister Modi has initiated the [work on airbase](#) near Pakistan border [saying](#) it would "emerge as an effective center for country's security". With Deesa airbase expected to be operational in the next two years in 2024, defense experts in Pakistan urged Pakistan air force to ramp up its air assets in the sector.

Before the Financial Action Task Force plenary session, in which Pakistan was successfully removed from the FATF Grey list, Pakistan Foreign Office categorically rejected the ["malevolent campaign"](#) by the Indian media against Pakistan.

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.

Sino-Pak

China and Pakistan held their [11th Joint Coordination Committee \(JCC\)](#) meeting on CPEC. Power projects of 3144 MW, participation of third parties and the [extension](#) of CPEC to Afghanistan were among the main [themes](#) of the meeting.

In July, China-Pakistan security cooperation continued as the two countries concluded their joint naval exercises "[Sea Guardians-2](#)" off the Shanghai coast. Chinese Defense Ministry spokesperson [Wu Qian](#) shared that the joint exercise had consolidated the traditional friendship between the two countries and the two militaries, enhancing the two navies' ability to deal with maritime security threats jointly."

Amidst the tensions in Taiwan Strait, after U.S House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan, Islamabad reaffirmed its strong support for the [One-China Principle](#) by backing Beijing's stance on Pelosi's visit. In a statement, Pakistan's Premier, Shahbaz Sharif, indicated Islamabad's desire to play a positive role in bridging gaps in the cold war between China and the U.S. PM Shehbaz Sharif announced abolishing [the infamous CPEC Authority](#) to speed up the implementation of CPEC projects in Pakistan. The decision was [linked](#) to China's approval which has [tacitly approved](#) scrapping the controversial CPECA. In September, discussions on cooperation between China and Pakistan centered mostly on conventional and non-conventional security. Pakistan [received](#) the second batch of J-10C fighter jets, also known as "Dragon from the East," from China. According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), China has expressed gratitude to the [Pakistan Army](#) for providing "a safe and secure environment" to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

CPEC aims to improve bilateral investment and cooperation in various sectors, including health, agriculture, and science and technology.

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) at Samarkand, Uzbekistan. In the meeting, President Xi 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. They aspire to cooperate closely at both bilateral and multilateral levels to advance their shared



objectives Premier Shahbaz Sharif visited China at the Chinese Premier invitation on 1st November. Under China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Pakistan and China decided to launch three new projects to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). This multi-billion project is aimed at improving bilateral investment and cooperation in various sectors including health, agriculture, and science and technology. In the third meeting of the Joint Working Group on October 24th, the two countries have also decided to kick start the second phase of CPEC.

China has [pledged](#) to extend its support to Pakistan amidst the ongoing geopolitical and economic challenges. In a meeting, attended by the Foreign Ministers of the two states, Chinese FM had assured his Pakistani counterpart that China supports Pakistan in its ["legitimate aspirations, rights and interests"](#). In the gamut of economic diplomacy, Pakistan and China will push to accelerate the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The two sides have expressed the intent to extend CPEC to Afghanistan as a pioneering effort towards regional connectivity. According to a Chinese official, the CPEC has [created 190,000 jobs](#) over the past 9 years.

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 categorized Pakistan as China's only ["all-weather strategic partner"](#).

Afghanistan -Pak

A delegation of prominent religious clergy from Pakistan [visited](#) Kabul to discuss a range of issues with Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) upon the Afghan Taliban's invitation. However, no positive development occurred due to Islamabad's [refusal](#) of TTP demands.

While addressing the SCO heads of state, PM Shahbaz Sharif stated, "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 also reiterated that a "peaceful, stable and prosperous" Afghanistan is the topmost regional security priority for Islamabad. Meanwhile, the Afghan Defense Minister, Muhammad Yaqoob Mujahid, accused Pakistan of providing airspace to the US drones that entered Afghanistan and killed the Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri in July, 2022. Pakistan's Foreign Office called the accusations "highly regrettable" and reiterated its resolve to respect the "sovereignty and territorial integrity" of all countries and rejected terrorism in "all its forms and manifestations."

The delegation being headed by a woman is significant given Pakistan's concerns over women's rights under Taliban rule.



Since 2021, not a single country recognized the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan' yet, countries maintained bilateral relations through diplomatic talks and humanitarian assistance. On 29th November, after TTP called off the ceasefire, Minister of State, Hina Rabbani Khar, [visited Kabul](#) on a one day visit to hold public dialogue with the interim Afghan government. This is the first time a senior Pakistani official has visited Kabul after the installation of a new government in April. The delegation being [headed by a woman](#) is also significant given Pakistan's concerns over women rights under Taliban rule.

On November 13, some unidentified men came from across the Afghan border at the Chaman crossing and [killed](#) a soldier of the Frontier Corps (FC) while two soldiers were injured in the armed attack. Following the attack, all trade activities had been halted at the Friendship Gate. However, the gate was later [reopened](#) by the Pakistani officials on a conditional basis.

U.S-Pak

Imran Khan's conspiracy claims were termed [very disturbing](#) by an official of the U.S. State Department. However, the official looks forward to rebuilding a strong relationship with Pakistan that he called a meaningful partnership. Pakistan's Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal, stated that it's time to [reset](#) U.S-Pak relations in economic and development spheres.


In a break with the traditional American approach, the U.S ambassador to Pakistan not only [visited](#) the Pakistani-controlled Kashmir but also termed the region as ["AJK"](#), inviting a strong backlash from India. However, the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad clarified in its [official readout](#) that the aim of his visit was to strengthen U.S-Pakistan trade and public diplomacy. While describing relations with India and Pakistan, U.S. department's Principal Deputy Vedant Patel acknowledged that Pakistan remains a key regional ally. He added that the domestic politics in Pakistan does not affect the bilateral relations, and it "remains unchanged."





While addressing a Democratic congressional campaign committee, President Joe Biden made [unwarranted remarks](#) about Pakistan's nuclear weapons. Biden called Pakistan ["one of the most dangerous nations in the world"](#) and said that its nuclear weapons program is ["without cohesion"](#). Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif and former PM Imran Khan rejected the statement as "factually incorrect" and "unwarranted", respectively. After a strong reaction from Pakistan, the Foreign Ministry summoned the U.S ambassador Donald Blome and issued an official demarche seeking an explanation about Biden's 'irresponsible' remarks. Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto stated that such statements resulted from the lack of engagement and misunderstandings between Pakistan and the U.S. Following an immediate and strong reaction from Pakistan, the U.S. State Department walked back on Biden's remarks and stated that Washington has "confidence" in Pakistan's ability to secure its nuclear arsenal.



 www.integrityicon.pk

 www.accountabilitylab.org

 [/integrityiconpk/](https://www.facebook.com/integrityiconpk/)

 [/accountabilitylabpk/](https://www.facebook.com/accountabilitylabpk/)