



2. Background and political developments

2.1. Recent political developments

Throughout the referencing period, the federal government continued to be led by the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) (PML-N) in coalition with the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and smaller allies,[94](#) with the by-elections in November 2025 strengthening the position of the PML-N.[95](#) Although public disagreements between the PML-N and the PPP were reported in 2025, sparked by a dispute concerning assistance frameworks for victims of flooding, the two parties maintained their cooperation within their coalition.[96](#) At the same time, the opposition remained largely marginalised,[97](#) as the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) continued to be affected by arrests,[98](#) convictions,[99](#) disqualifications,[100](#) and legal proceedings.[101](#) In response, PTI lawmakers boycotted parliamentary sessions[102](#) and organised public protests.[103](#)

In November 2024, thousands of supporters of former Prime Minister Imran Khan and the PTI marched into Islamabad,[104](#) with Amnesty International reporting the use of force by security forces, casualties, temporary restrictions on mobile internet services and mass arrests of 4 000 people.[105](#) Further protests by opposition supporters took place in major cities on 8 February 2026, marking the second anniversary of the 2024 general election.[106](#) In May 2025, the Supreme Court of Pakistan validated the conduct of military trials for civilians accused of involvement in the May 2023 unrest,[107](#) reversing earlier restrictions, a decision criticised as undermining fair trial guarantees.[108](#) Following judicial review in mid-2025 concerning the allocation of reserved seats to the PTI, these seats were reassigned in a manner that substantially increased the governing coalition's parliamentary majority, enabling it to reach a two-thirds majority.[109](#) In October 2025, large-scale protests led by Islamist party Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) erupted in Punjab in response to a US-brokered ceasefire between Hamas and Israel and escalated into violent clashes with police.[110](#) The federal government subsequently banned the TLP under anti-terrorism legislation, sealed its offices and froze its assets.[111](#)

On 12 November 2025, parliament adopted a constitutional amendment that expanded the formal authority of the army chief, including the establishment of a Chief of Defence Forces role,[112](#) and restructuring constitutional adjudication by transferring key powers from the Supreme Court to a newly established Federal Constitutional Court.[113](#) Opposition lawmakers boycotted the vote.[114](#) The amendment was interpreted as reinforcing the institutional role of the Pakistan Army in political affairs and limiting civilian judicial oversight.[115](#)

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