



## 2.1.1. Landscape of political parties in Pakistan

The Election Commission of Pakistan listed on its website 171 registered political parties and one alliance of five parties.<sup>116</sup> In practice, however, political competition remained dominated by a limited number of major actors,<sup>117</sup> notably the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) (PML-N), the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), and the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).<sup>118</sup> Smaller parties, including the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P), Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam (Pakistan) (JUI-P) and Pakistan Muslim League (PML) continued to hold limited representation at national level.<sup>119</sup>

Ethnic identity continued to play a significant role in Pakistan's political landscape<sup>120</sup> with several parties drawing support from particular ethnic or regional constituencies, resulting in geographically concentrated patterns of political support.<sup>121</sup> The PML-N remained strongest in Punjab,<sup>122</sup> while the PPP maintained its dominant position in Sindh,<sup>123</sup> particularly in rural areas of the province.<sup>124</sup>

The legal framework governing political parties is primarily set out in the Elections Act 2017, which regulates, *inter alia*, registration with the Election Commission, financial reporting requirements, and the conduct of intra-party elections.<sup>125</sup> During the reporting period, Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) was banned under anti-terrorism legislation following violent protests in October 2025.<sup>126</sup> In December 2025, the Punjab Assembly passed a resolution to ban PTI and its founder, former prime minister Imran Khan, without explicitly mentioning either by name.<sup>127</sup>

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