

GENERAL ELECTION 2018

Update-V

June 1 - June 30, 2018



1 INTRODUCTION

Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) has been conducting periodic assessments of the political environment and the implementation of election related laws, rules and regulations since January 2018, as part of its multi-phase observation of General Elections (GE) 2018. The purpose of the observation is to contribute to the evolution of an election process that is free, fair, transparent and accountable, in accordance with the requirements laid out in the Elections Act, 2017. FAFEN produces regular updates, information briefs and reports to provide objective, impartial and evidence-

based information regarding the quality of electoral and political processes to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), political parties, the media, civil society organizations and citizens. The General Elections 2018 Update-V is based on data gathered through field observation and monitoring of 25 newspapers during June 1 to June 30, 2018. Update-V documents the recent progress on electoral administration, district-level political alignments and realignments prior to GE 2018, incidents of political violence, and development schemes.

2 INCIDENCE OF POLITICAL AND ELECTORAL VIOLENCE

FAFEN's violence monitor found 13 incidents of political and electoral violence reported in the media and by our observers during June. Previously, FAFEN General Election Updates had chronicled 46 incidents of election-related violence in the country – 35 in May and 11 in April.

Of the incidents reported during June 2018, five occurred in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) including FATA, four in Punjab, two in Balochistan and one each in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) and Sindh. A total of ten persons were killed and more than nine were injured in these incidents.

Perpetrators of Violence

As many as six incidents of violence involved political workers as perpetrators of violence. PTI supporters and workers resorted to violent tactics at five places in Punjab, KP and ICT while a clash among JI workers was also reported. In two incidents, militants associated with banned organizations attacked political workers and government officials in tribal areas while perpetrators remained unknown in five incidents.

Tactics of Violence

These perpetrators used blunt objects such as stones and sticks, explosive materials and firing as tactics of violence. As many as eight out of thirteen were incidents of firing and one of bomb blast. The remaining four incidents were scuffles among political workers who were either unarmed or used stones /sticks.

Victims of Violence

Two government officials became victims of the violent acts in as many incidents while the remaining 11 incidents targeted political leaders or workers. In Miramshah area of North Waziristan Agency, a Political Moharar was killed while some Levies Personnel on his guard were injured. In Karachi, a woman political leader of PTI was reported to have maltreated staff at District Election Commissioner's office. A passer-by was killed by a stray bullet fired by PTI supporters in an armed attack on an ANP worker. In Punjgur and Turbat areas, unknown assailants attacked Balochistan National Party Awami's (BNP-A) leaders, killing a leader and his son. Similarly, unknown attackers killed a PTI councillor, injured a PML-N leader, and injured a personal staff member of a former PML-N minister in three separate incidents in Peshawar, Rawalpindi and Bahawalpur, respectively.

A clash among Jamat-e-Islami workers during a rally in Mohmand Agency also claimed a life and injured three workers. In Toba Tek Singh and Islamabad, PTI supporters clashed with each other ransacking private properties and injuring their colleagues. Meanwhile, PTI supporters killed a PML-N worker in an armed attack in Sheikhpura.

3 POLITICAL REALIGNMENTS

With the nomination process entering its final phase, political parties are finalizing their candidates for the national and provincial assemblies' constituencies. In these last hours of candidate selection, cross-party movement of political figures has subsided relative to the preceding months. FAFEN observed a total of 18 political figures switching parties, formation of two political alliances and two instances of politically influential factions announcing their support for a specific party ahead of GE 2018. As many as ten political leaders changed political affiliations in Punjab, five in Sindh and three in KP.

Since January, FAFEN has observed around 60 former elected representatives announcing changes in their party affiliations¹.

In Punjab, six PML-N leaders from Lahore, Rahim Yar Khan, Chakwal, Kasur, Dera Ghazi Khan, and Mandi Bahaudin joined PTI in June. The defecting leaders included former provincial governor, minister, lawmakers and local government representatives. Conversely, two PTI leaders from Hafizabad and Sheikhpura joined PML-N while a PTI leader announced support for PPP in Mandi Bahaudin. Moreover, a former PPP lawmaker joined PML-N in Lahore.

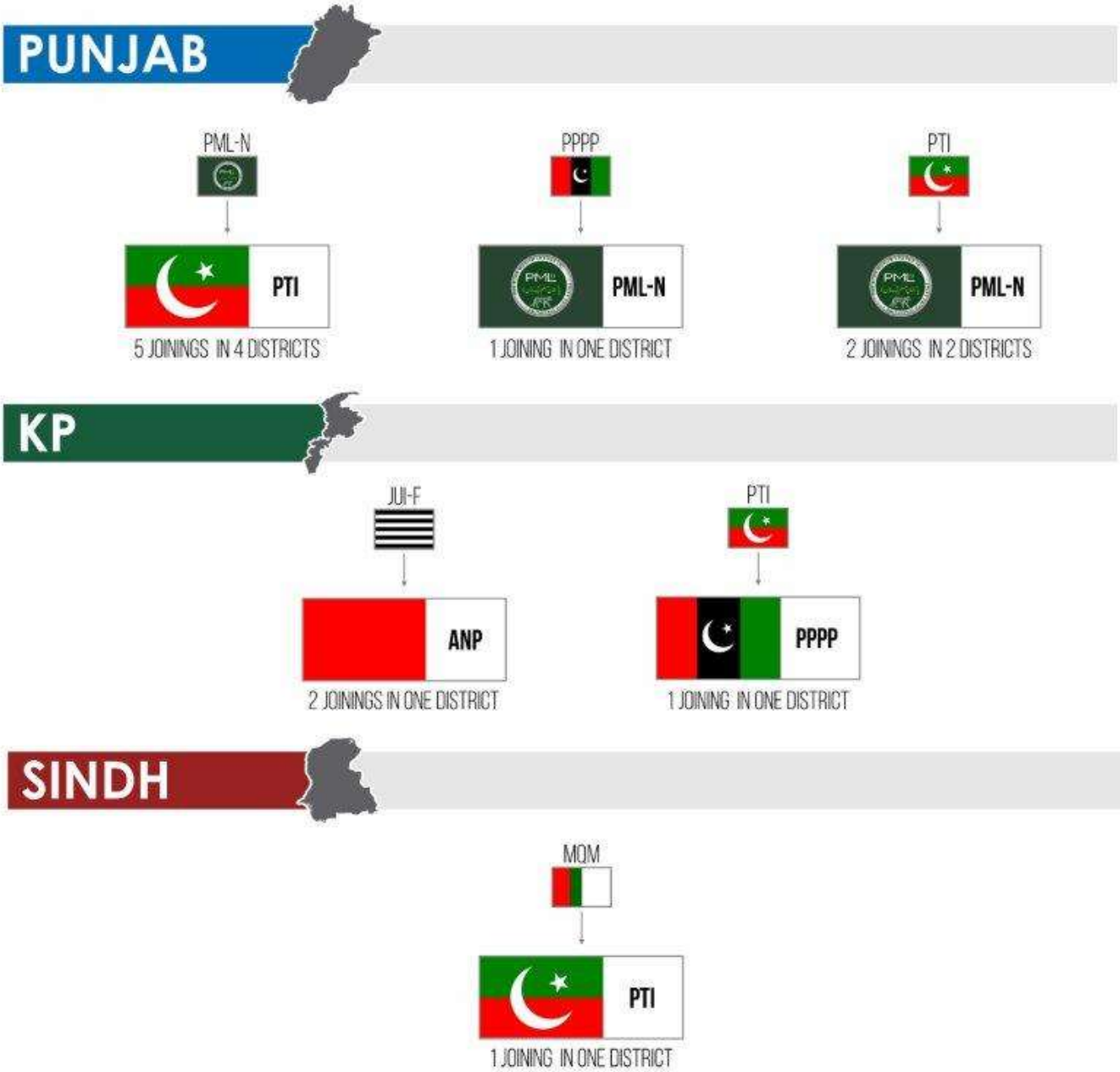
In Sindh, five political leaders – 2 each from MQM and PPP, and one from PML-N – belonging to Karachi, Sanghar, Kashmore and Sukkur announced joining PTI. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, PPP and JUI-F leaders belonging to Bannu joined ANP while a former PTI lawmaker joined PPP.

¹ The numbers reported by FAFEN may not be exhaustive as there may be more incidents of party-switching than reported by FAFEN observers.

Pakistan Justice Party (PJP) announced its merger with PML-N ahead of the election month. PJP is registered with the ECP and has its head office in Lahore. Moreover, Balochistan National Party (BNP) and JUI-F announced an electoral alliance in Balochistan.

An entire village in Okara district announced its support for Pakistan Mazdoor Kissan Party (PMKP) while a group of locals in Jacobabad announced support for PTI. Similarly, a group of PPPP workers in Larkana announced joining PTI.

The figure below depicts the provincial distribution of observed incidences of party-switching.



4 SCRUTINY OF NOMINATED CANDIDATES AND FINALIZATION OF ELECTORAL ROLLS

Returning Officers completed the scrutiny of nomination papers of aspiring contestants for GE 2018 during June, whereas the time for deciding appeals on the acceptance or rejection of nomination papers expired on June 26. In a bid to encourage transparency, the ECP released publicly available information about candidates received from various sources, including the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). Moreover, the ECP also publicly displayed the records of assets and liabilities and affidavits submitted by the nominated candidates on its website.

According to the FBR, nearly 30% or 1,714 of 5,806² National Assembly candidates are not registered as taxpayers with the board. An FIA report reveals that 88 candidates are dual nationals. As many as 209 nominated candidates are defaulters of total PKR 3.901 billion to Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL). Similarly, 1,195 candidates are defaulters of total PKR 12.384 million to Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL). Moreover, 115 candidates – 105 for general seats, eight for women-reserved seats and one for minority-reserved seat – had acquired bank loans which are either overdue or have been written off.

NAB reported corruption cases against ten candidates. As many as five of them have been convicted in the past, one entered into a plea bargain with the bureau while two are currently under trial in accountability courts. In addition, NAB's appeals against dismissal of cases involving two candidates by the Lahore High Court are currently pending in the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

4.1 Numbers of Nominated Candidates and Registered Voters for GE 2018: Comparisons with GE 2013

The total number of candidates nominated for election to national and provincial assemblies stands at 21,482, registering an overall decline in comparison to the preceding general elections of 2013. However, the overall decrease in nominated candidates has been accompanied by notable increases in the numbers of nomination papers filed for women and minority candidates - for election to provincial assemblies in the latter case. The significant increase in nominated minority candidates is entirely due to an almost four-fold increase in non-Muslim nominations for election to the Punjab Assembly. Similarly, Punjab's share in the total increase of nominated women candidates also considerably exceeds the shares of other provinces. Table 1 shows the numbers of candidates nominated in GE 2013 and GE 2018, disaggregated by general, women and non-Muslim seats and province/region.

TABLE 1 Number of Nominated Candidates for GE-2013 and GE-2018

Sr. No.	Province	General				Women				Non-Muslim			
		NA-2018	NA-2013	PA-2018	PA-2013	NA-2018	NA-2013	PA-2018	PA-2013	NA-2018	NA-2013	PA-2018	PA-2013
1	Balochistan	435	439	1,400	1,648	36	50	116	114	154		56	61

² The total number of National Assembly Candidates i.e. 5,806 mentioned in FBR report does not match with the total number of nominated candidates released by ECP i.e. 5,473 which is given in Table 1 and was accessed from: <https://www.ecp.gov.pk/PrintDocument.aspx?PressId=55295&type=Image>

2	KP, including FATA	992	1,390	1,920	2,572	88	78	262	229		73	70
3	Punjab, Including Islamabad	2,700	4,160	6,747	9,392	236	123	664	231		232	56
4	Sindh	1,346	2,007	3,626	5,213	76	99	213	247		110	123
	Total	5,473	7,996	13,693	18,825	436	350	1,255	821	154	471	310
	Total	Nomination Papers for General Elections 2018				21,482						
	Total	Nomination Papers for General Elections 2013				28,302						

Of the candidates in the run for general seats in the National Assembly, nearly five percent or 260 are women. These women filed their nomination papers for contesting election on 157 (58%) out of 272 general NA seats. On the remaining 115 seats, only men are in the run.

The ECP also issued fresh district electoral rolls for four provinces and Islamabad Capital Territory. According to the fresh data, there are 105,955,409 registered voters in the country including 46,731,146 (44%) women and 59,224,263 (56%) men. The electoral rolls have registered almost 19% growth since GE-2013 during which a total of 86,189,802 voters were registered. Table 2 shows the regional distribution of men and women registered as voters for GE-2018.

TABLE 2 Number of Registered Voters for GE-2018

Region	Men		Women		Total Voters	
	2013	2018	2013	2018	2013	2018
Punjab	27,697,701	33,679,993	21,561,633	26,992,877	49,259,334	60,672,870
Sindh	10,490,631	12,436,844	8,472,744	9,954,400	18,963,375	22,391,244
KP	7,086,960	8,705,831	5,300,909	6,610,468	12,387,869	15,316,299
Balochistan	1,915,388	2,486,230	1,421,271	1,813,264	3,336,659	4,299,494
FATA	1,063,807	1,507,902	552,794	1,002,252	1,616,601	2,510,154
ICT	337,900	407,463	288,064	357,885	625,964	765,348
Total	48,592,387	59,224,263	37,597,415	46,731,146	86,189,802	105,955,409

Section 234 of the Elections Act 2017 mandates the ECP to monitor the election campaign through monitoring teams in order to enforce the provisions of the election law, rules and code of conduct. Complying with its mandate, the ECP constituted the monitoring teams and officers for the purpose of deciding complaints regarding any violations committed by a candidate or a political party.

5 CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ELECTION CAMPAIGNING

Following the notification of monitoring teams, the ECP also issued the Code of Conduct for Political Parties, Contesting Candidates and Election Agents for GE-2018 and subsequent by-elections. The code, comprising 62 sections and finalized in consultation with parliamentary parties, provides guidelines for the general conduct of political parties, contesting candidates and their election agents, election campaign, political meetings and processions, polling day and other issues concerning elections.

While most of the code's provisions originate from the Elections Act 2017, there is at least one provision regarding the prohibition of canvassing around polling stations which contrasts with the law. The Elections Act, 2017 prohibits canvassing within a radius of 400 meters of a polling station without making any distinction between urban or rural areas. Section 56 of the code, however, reduces the radius of prohibited limits to 100 meters in urban areas.

Similarly, a few of the code's provisions are ambiguous while others may be considered redundant. For instance, section 26 bans the use of "panaflexes of any size" ignoring the fact that panaflex is a material that can be used for printing banners and portraits of permissible sizes. Moreover, the code allows the use of posters in campaign activities, however, section 25 prohibits affixing them on "walls or any building" thus making the permission to using them as campaign materials redundant. The code also bans the distribution of vote *perchee* containing information about a voter and his/her electoral area on polling day; however, such *perchee* can be distributed during the campaign period.

The code does not clarify the means and ways to enforce the ban on participation of care-taker government officials in election campaign activities. Also, there is no word on this subject in the law and rules. Moreover, section 3 of the code asks parties and candidates to refrain from "maligning ECP" which may be treated as contempt of court. Since most of the ECP's work is administrative, it should remain subject to reasonable criticism. The code also stresses the legal provision of 5% candidates' quota for women; however, it does not provide for any implication in case a party fails to fulfil the condition.

6 FINALIZATION OF POLLING STATIONS

Under Section 59 (6) of the Elections Act, 2017, the Commission is responsible to publish the Final List of Polling Stations in the official gazette as well as on its website at least thirty days before the day of the polling. Despite less than thirty days left in the forthcoming GE-2018, ECP is yet to publicly release the Final Lists of Polling Stations to be set up in each constituency.

Legally speaking, the Returning Officers issue the Preliminary Lists of Polling Stations after physical verification of the polling stations proposed by the ECP. The District Returning Officers (DRO) issue the Final Lists of Polling Stations after hearing and deciding voters' objections on the polling stations included in the preliminary lists. So far, the District Returning Officers have completed hearings on the voters' objections on the Preliminary Lists of Polling Stations and the ECP is in the process of uploading the Final Lists of Polling Stations on its website. The uploading started on June 28, 2018, three days later than due date. The ECP is yet to release the final lists of polling stations of the constituencies falling in at least two Punjab districts i.e. Rahim Yar Khan and Muzaffargarh.

FAFEN observed the hearings of the voters' objections on polling stations in 42 districts and interviewed 160 objectors regarding their objections and DRO's decisions on those objections. These

objectors had filed 177 objections on the polling stations assigned to them in the preliminary lists. As per the objectors' claims, the concerned DROs did not hear as many as 23 objections in eight districts – five in KP, and one each in Balochistan, Punjab and Sindh.

Of 154 objections, a majority 135 were heard by DROs themselves while 17 were dealt with by Returning Officers and two by other election staff. The objectors expressed satisfaction with the DRO's decision in 100 objections while they were dissatisfied with the decision on remaining 54 objections.

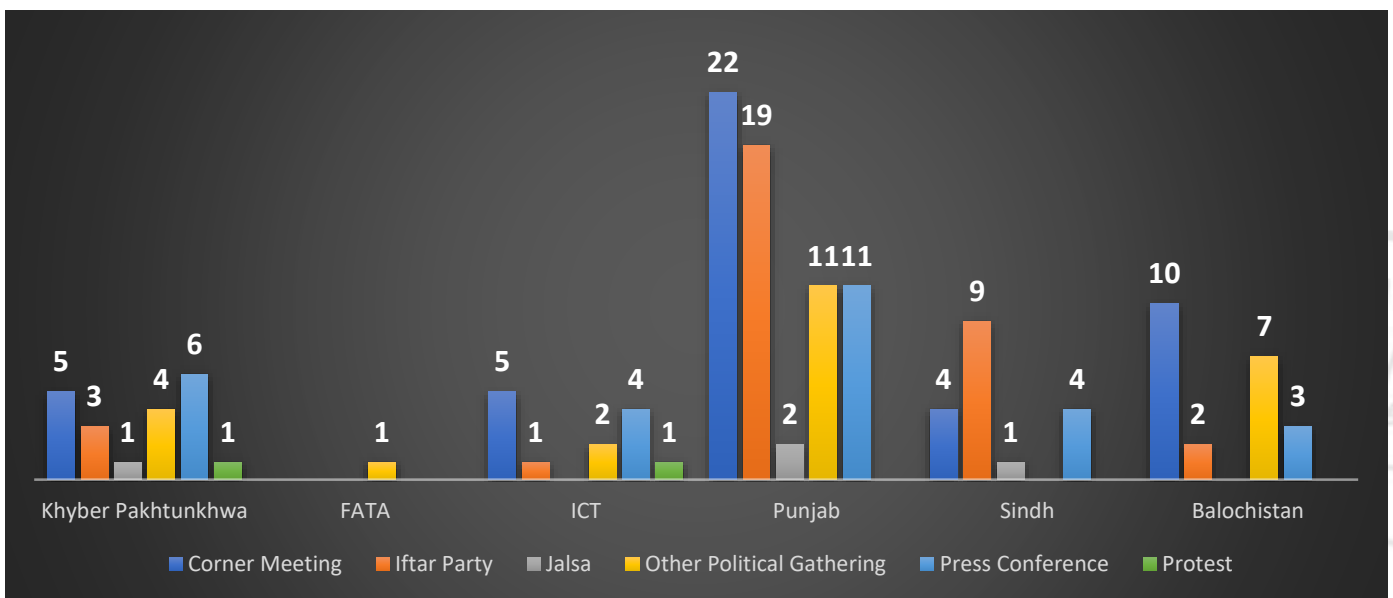
7 COMPETITIVE ELECTION CAMPAIGN

During June, FAFEN observed a total of 139 public gatherings of 20 political parties, independent political leaders and political groups that are not registered with the ECP. Almost half of the observed gatherings were held in Punjab (65), followed by Balochistan (22), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (20), Sindh (18), Islamabad Capital Territory (13) and FATA (one). Major political parties, including PML-N, PPP and PTI held the majority of these public gatherings.

7.1 Types of Political Gatherings

During the reporting period, political parties organized various types of political gatherings, largely for the purpose of campaigning, ranging from small-scale corner meetings (46) to large-scale *jalsas* (four) in various cities across the country. Corner meetings figured most prominently in Punjab (22) and Balochistan (10) while two *jalsas* were organized in Punjab and one each in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh.

As the observation period coincided with the month of Ramadan, political gatherings (34) also took the form of *Iftar* parties. Moreover, parties arranged press conferences (28), other minor political gatherings (25) to convey political messages and two protests – one each in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and ICT. The following graph illustrates the regional distribution of different types of political gatherings observed by FAFEN during the reporting period:



7.2 Objective/s of Political Gatherings

The majority of observed political gatherings (136 or 98%) were political events intended to mobilize voters ahead of GE 2018.

Jl organized a protest at the Islamabad Mayor's office on the issue of water shortage in the federal capital. Pashtoonkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) held a protest in Swat demanding the implementation of National Action Plan (NAP). PTI leadership in Quetta held a press conference against unjust award of tickets by the party leadership.

TABLE 3 Region-wise Objectives of Political Gatherings

Purpose of Political Gathering	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	FATA	ICT	Punjab	Sindh	Balochistan	Overall
Protest Against Government Institutions	1		1				2
Protest against Political Parties' Leadership						1	1
Workers or Voter Mobilization/Worker Meeting/Social Media Convention	19	1	12	65	18	21	136
Overall	20	1	13	65	18	22	139

8 INAUGURATION OF DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES

FAFEN's monitoring revealed six development initiatives reported in the press during the reporting period. Former Federal Minister for Interior inaugurated a Citizen's Facilitation Center in the federal capital on the last day of his job while laptops were distributed among students across the country during the third phase of the Prime Minister's National Laptop Scheme announced by former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif. The Ministry of Planning, Development and Reforms released PKR 3.79 billion for various ongoing road infrastructure projects in the country. The provincial government of Punjab released funds for Union Councils and launched a Crop Insurance Scheme to protect farmers in four districts.

FAFEN observers also reported the announcement, inauguration and completion of four development projects. A PTI lawmaker from Swat inaugurated a water supply scheme in the area Nawa Kalay. Meanwhile, according to the local press, distribution of Sui Gas connections in Swat increased in June. In Mianwali, a PML-N MNA announced the construction of six interchanges in the district as part of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Moreover, the district administration completed a highway project in Kohat.