



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.^{[116](#)} In practice, however, political competition remained dominated by a limited number of major actors,^{[117](#)} notably the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) (PML-N), the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), and the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).^{[118](#)} 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.^{[119](#)}

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

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.^{[125](#)} During the reporting period, Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) was banned under anti-terrorism legislation following violent protests in October 2025.^{[126](#)} 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.^{[127](#)}

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