4.1.1. PTI and MQM-L members and supporters

COMMON ANALYSIS
Last update: October 2026

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: Country Focus 2026, 2.1.1., 6.1.7.; Country Focus 2024, 2.1., 6.1.7., 6.4.1.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Pakistan's political landscape is characterised by numerous parties, often with regionally or ethnically concentrated support, but effective power remains strongly influenced by the military, which shapes political outcomes and governance. Since 2024, the federal government has been led by a coalition dominated by the PML-N and the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), alongside smaller allies.

The opposition remains largely marginalised. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) of former Prime Minister Imran Khan was prevented from directly taking part in general elections.

The Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) has historically been a party representing the interests of the Muhajirs, and its support is concentrated primarily in the city of Karachi and other cities in the province of Sindh. In 2016, the MQM split into the MQM-L, whose leadership is based in London, and the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P), which aims to mainstream the party and gain a share of political power. The situation of MQM-P is not addressed under this profile since this party is supportive of the current government in Pakistan.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Acts to which members or supporters of the PTI and the MQM-L could be subjected are of such a severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, PTI members have reportedly been subjected to custodial torture, preventive detention and arrests by state actors. Some party members were accused of rebellion and terrorism, as well as of inciting violence against the state. PTI supporters have also been arrested in the context of protests (see Protesters). Military courts were reportedly used in some cases for trials related to PTI. Allowing military courts to adjudicate cases of civilians is contrary to the principles of fair trial.

Limited reports describe MQM-L party members having been imprisoned for sedition and anti-terrorism charges. Others have been arrested at party gatherings, some of them having been subsequently charged, and later acquitted.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for **PTI members and supporters** to face persecution should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances**, such as:

- **Visibility and nature of activities:** visibility to the authorities is a critical factor impacting the risk of persecution. Due to their activities, some individuals such as leaders either at the national or provincial level are more visible than others and, as such, face a high risk. Family members of such leaders may also face a high risk. Conversely, ordinary rank and file party members or supporters who do not have other risk-enhancing circumstances will generally not face a risk of persecution.

- **Being known to the authorities**: individuals who have been identified by state authorities as active participants in protests, or against whom state authorities have initiated legal proceedings for their participation in the protests, face a high risk. See also Protesters.

Given that acts of persecution against **MQM-L members or supporters** seldom occur, **well-founded fear of persecution would only be substantiated in exceptional cases**. Therefore, each case must be assessed individually taking into consideration the most recent information available and risk-impacting circumstances such as the applicant's level of visibility, their role within the party, participation in party gatherings, or otherwise being known to the authorities.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile this is highly likely to be for reasons of **political opinion**, as the persecution is directly connected to the expression of political views that are perceived by state authorities as challenging their control over power.

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