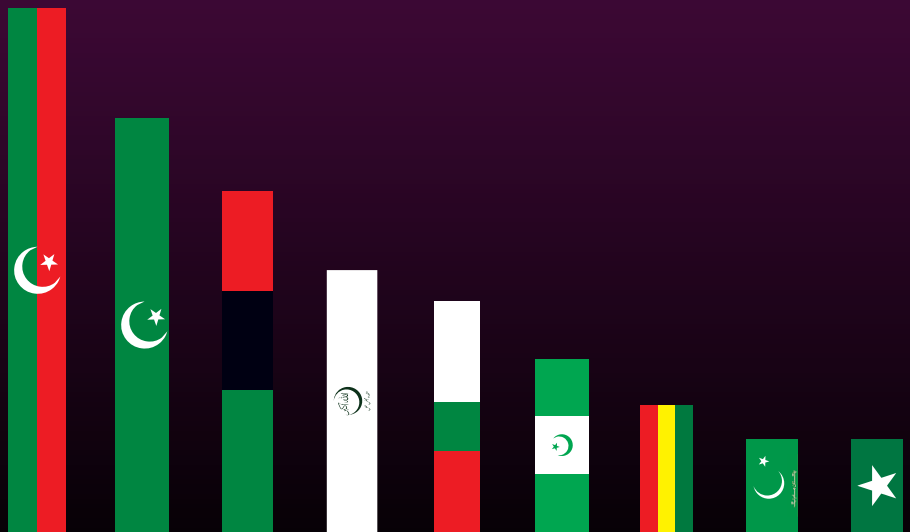
PILDAT
Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development And Transparency

ELECTION 2018

Assessment of the Quality of General Election 2018



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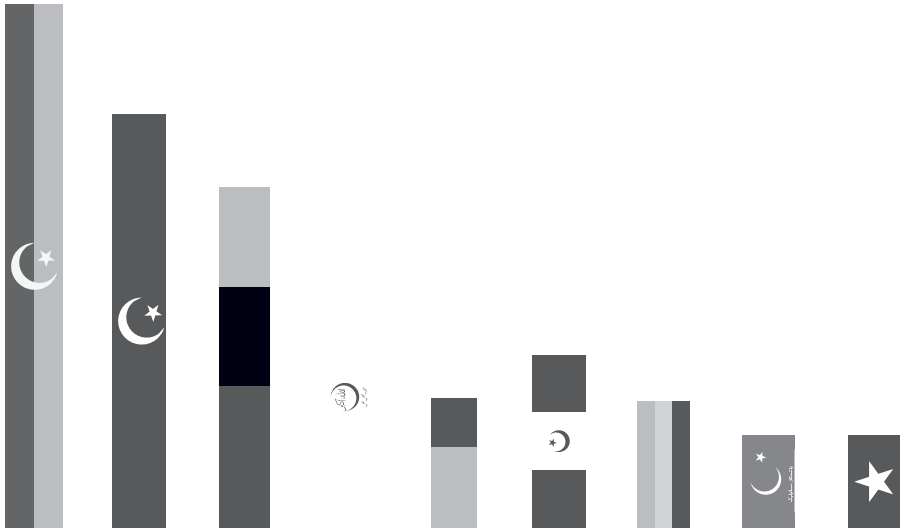

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PILDAT
Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development And Transparency

Islamabad Office: P. O. Box 278, F-8, Postal Code: 44220, Islamabad, Pakistan
Lahore Office: P. O. Box 11098, L.C.C.H.S, Postal Code: 54792, Lahore, Pakistan
E-mail: info@pildat.org | Website: www.pildat.org

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Preface

It is unfortunate that while Pakistan was better prepared than at any other time in its history to hold a free, fair and professionally managed 11th General Election, many political parties and individuals have questioned the fairness and management of General Election 2018 that was held on July 25, 2018.

The hope and expectation of a free, fair and professionally conducted General Election was not just due to the excellent administrative preparation by the Election Commission of Pakistan but also due to the major constitutional and legal reforms that been instituted in Pakistan since after the 2008 and 2013 General Elections.

As an independent, non-partisan political think tank, PILDAT has continued to systematically analyse the electoral process leading up to General Elections in 2002, 2008, 2013 and 2018. In addition, for each one of these General Elections, PILDAT has also carried out independent, scientific and dispassionate assessments of the quality of these General Elections post their conduct.

The **Assessment of the Quality of General Election 2018** carries the results of the post-election assessment carried out by PILDAT and eminent citizens who are members of PILDAT Dialogue Groups. The assessment scores on quality of General Election 2018 are also compared with earlier assessment scores given to the conduct and quality of previous General Elections of 2013, 2008 and 2002.

This assessment is published as part of PILDAT series of analyses and commentaries on fairness and quality of General Elections in Pakistan.

Disclaimer

Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy of the contents of this assessment. Any error or omission, therefore, is not deliberate.

Islamabad
August 2018

Executive Summary

In the PILDAT assessment on Quality of General Election 2018, a marked improvement is noted in the ***Polling-day Operations*** compared to GE 2013 in terms of training and impartiality of polling staff and overall management of the polling arrangements for voters as the process received an overall score of **64%** - highest scoring aspect of the quality of GE 2018 - compared to the score of 44% assigned to the same aspect in 2013.

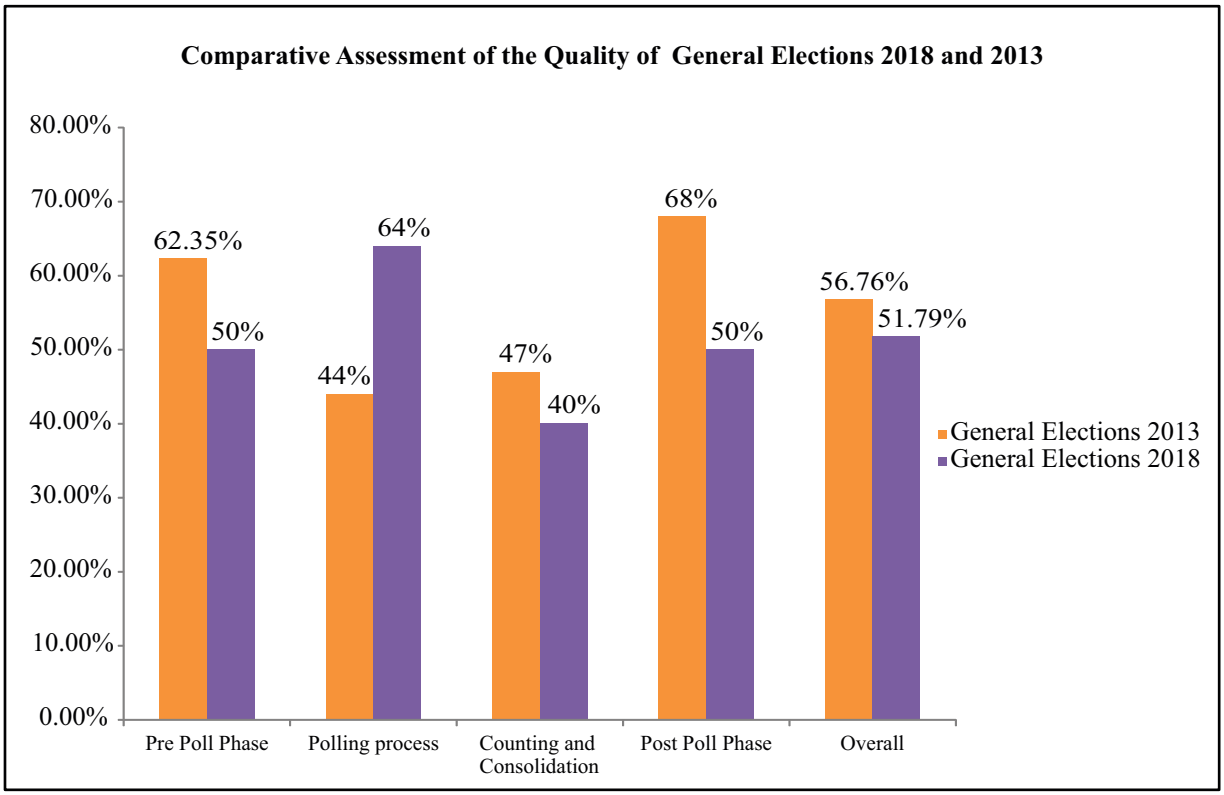
It must be noted that in terms of polling day management, a steady improvement is recorded since 2002 and 2008 when the process received a score of 40% respectively, improving to 44% in 2013 and now to 64% in 2018. This is the aspect of election which requires long preparation on the part of the ECP which, along with the polling staff and security forces, need to be commended for the marked improvement on this aspect of the polling day operations.

Counting of Votes, Compilation & Transmission of Results have, however, received the lowest score of **40%** thus depicting the counting, compilation and transmission of results as the weakest link in the management and quality of General Election 2018.

The overall score of quality of General Election 2018 stands at **51.79%** which has dropped nearly 5 percentage points from the quality of General Election 2013 assessed to be at **56.76%.** PILDAT has proposed investigation into those aspects of the election about which a number of questions have been raised by various political parties and candidates. The next government and the opposition should agree on the mode and forum for such investigation which may be through an independent commission of enquiry whose terms of reference and composition should also be agreed.

The PILDAT Score Card on Quality of General Election 2018 has also assessed ***Pre-Poll Phase*** which has received an overall score of **50%**, ***Polling Day Operations*** and arrangements for voting which have received the highest score of **64%** and the ***Post-Poll phase*** which has received the score of **50%**.

Graph 1: Comparative Assessment of Quality of General Elections 2018 and 2013

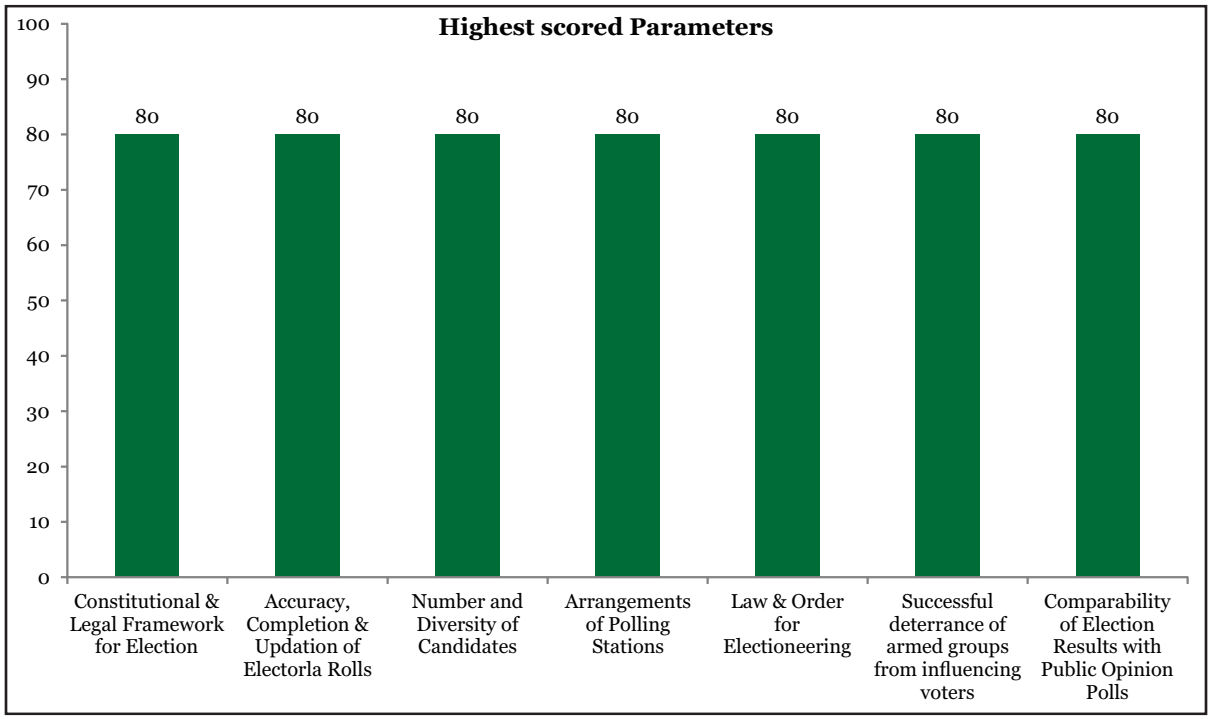


The quality of General Election 2018 has been assessed on 39 parameters under 4 broad categories of 1) *Pre-Poll*; 2) *Polling*; 3) *Counting of votes, Compilation & Transmission of Results* and 4) *Post-Poll phase*. Each parameter has been assigned equal weightage and graded on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 indicating the poorest quality and 5 indicating the best quality.

The PILDAT Assessment of Quality of General Election 2018 is a continuation of earlier similar assessments that have been carried out by the think tank after General Elections of 2002, 2008 and 2013. Similar assessments in the past assigned the overall score of **37.30%** to the quality of General Election 2002 and **40%** to the quality of GE 2008. The scores improved for quality of General Election 2013 at **56.76%** but have dropped again to **51.79%** for the quality of General Election 2018. This drop in quality is mainly due to poor quality of Pre-poll phase which is largely attributable to the factors lying outside the direct remit of the ECP. Another factor adversely affecting the overall score of GE2018 is the issues reported in Counting of Votes, Compilation of Result both at the Polling Station and Returning Officer's office and Transmission of Results from Polling Station and from Returning Officer's Offices resulting in considerable delay in announcing provisional results and questions about the credibility of counting and compilation of results.

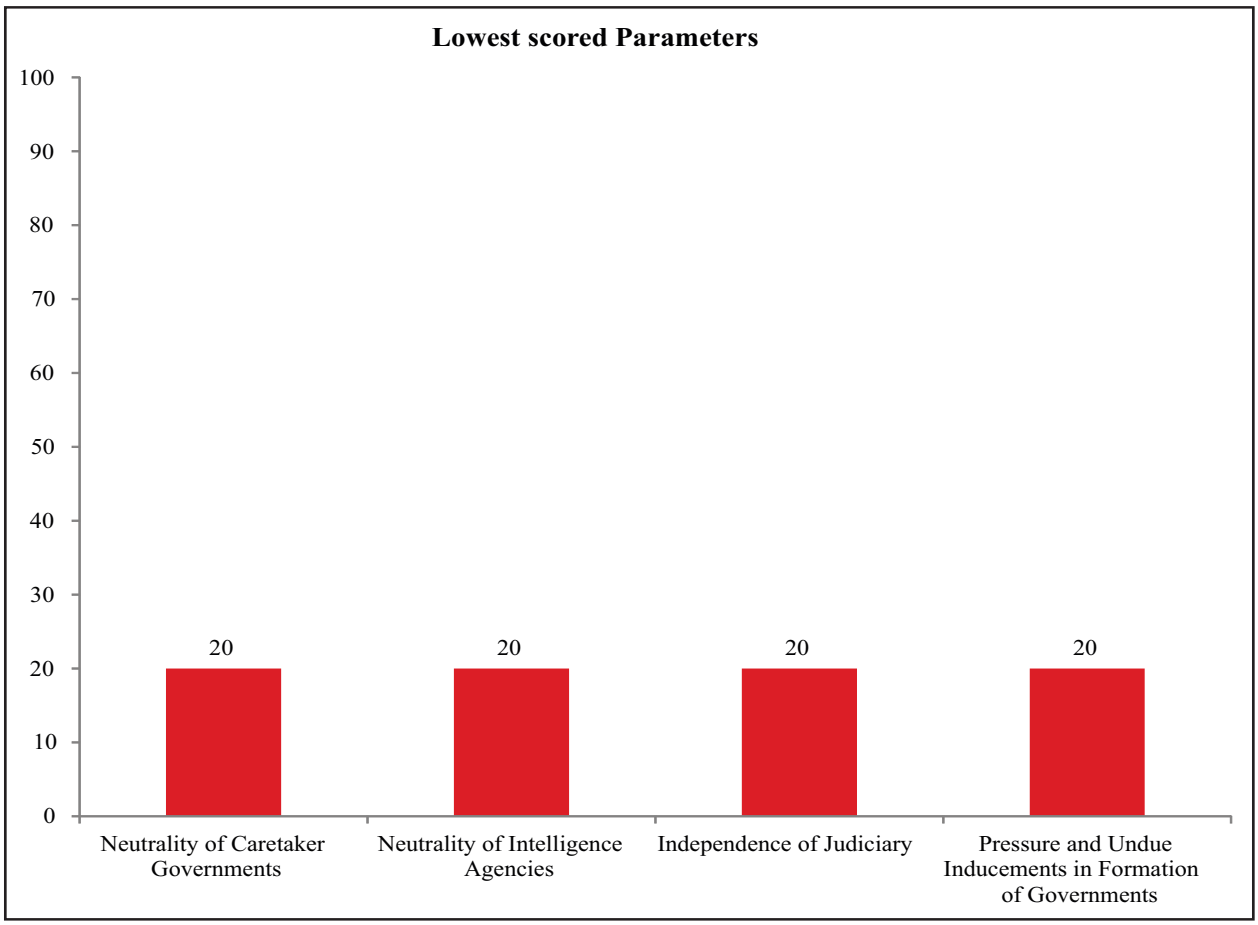
While the quality of ***Pre-Poll Phase*** has received an overall score of **50%**, it has declined nearly 12 percentage points in comparison to the quality of pre-poll phase of GE 2013 which had received a score of 62.35%. While PILDAT had already carried out analysis of perception of pre-poll fairness in May 2018 terming it ***unfair***, the score assigned in this assessment has been based on the period between April to July 2018 and in particular is low on the parameters of neutrality of the Federal and Provincial Caretaker Governments, impartiality of the intelligence agencies and independence of the Judiciary.

Graph 2: Highest Scored Parameters General Election 2018



The PILDAT assessment shows improved ***Polling-day Operations*** in GE 2018 compared to GE 2013 in terms of training and impartiality of polling staff and overall management of the polling arrangements for citizens as the process received an overall score of **64%** - highest scoring aspect of the quality of GE 2018.

Graph 3: Lowest Scored Parameters General Election 2018



The quality of management of polling day operations, satisfactory arrangements and environment of voting, however, seems to have taken a nosedive in the process of ***Counting, Result Compilation & Transmission of Results*** which have received the lowest score of **40%** in the assessment. It must be noted that this is not just the lowest score for any single aspect of the quality of General Election 2018 but it is also the lowest score in comparison to the processes adopted in 2002, 2008 and 2013 when the similar process received scores of 43% respectively in 2002 and 2008 and improving to 47% in 2013 General Election which has, in 2018 General Election, plummeted to 40%. Each parameter under the *Counting, Result Compilation & Transmission of Results* including strict legal requirements of transparency of compilation of statement of vote count, availability of results to polling agents and display at polling stations, efficiency and accuracy of the transmission of election results from polling stations to returning officers, transparency of consolidation of results at RO level and efficiency and accuracy of transmission of results from ROs to the ECP has been called into question.

PILDAT, therefore, proposes that that an urgent, thorough and impartial investigation may be undertaken, a need which even the ECP has at least partially recognised by asking the Cabinet Division of the Government of Pakistan to arrange an investigation into the malfunction of the Result Transmission System (RTS). While the leader of the victorious majority party PTI, Mr. Imran Khan showed magnanimity by offering to investigate rigging complaints of the opposition in any constituency, which is the legal responsibility of the ECP, he and his party can translate that promise by facilitating the setting up of an independent commission of enquiry whose terms of reference and composition should be agreed between the next government and the opposition. The proposed commission should investigate the issue and assign responsibility.

The ***Post-Poll Phase*** has also seen declining score of **50%** compared to the score assigned to the similar process after the GE 2013 which stood at 68%. Again, the assessment of the quality of this process shows that while the lowest score assigned to this process was 40% after General Election of 2002, which saw the worst-of-its-kind post-poll rigging in recent history, the score improved after GE 2008 to 56%, recorded significant further improvements with the score of 68% after General Election 2013 and has now recorded a decline even lower than GE 2008. This decline in the quality of Post-election score compared to GE 2013 may partly be attributed to the fact that PMLN had gained clear majority in the National Assembly and the Provincial Assembly of the Punjab in GE 2013 and it did need to make intense efforts to win the support or joining of independent legislators to form the government.

In GE 2018, since no party has a clear majority in the National Assembly and the Provincial Assembly of the Punjab, PTI and, to a lesser degree, PMLN are making intensive efforts to win support of independent legislators and forming alliances with other parties. Normally these efforts are considered legitimate part of the democratic process and promote inclusivity in formation of government but reported pressures and inducements offered to independent members by one party or the other may have contributed to the drop in the score for the quality of the post-election phase. The post-election activities are, of course, not directly within the scope of the ECP and therefore should not be reflection on the performance of ECP.

The PILDAT Score Card on Assessment of Quality of General Election 2018 is based on combined analysis and scoring of eminent persons who are members of PILDAT Dialogue Groups on Electoral Processes, Quality of Democracy and Civil-Military Relations. These include (*in alphabetical order by last name*) **Maj. Gen. (Retd) Athar Abbas**, Former DG, ISPR and Former Ambassador, **Air Vice Marshal (Retd.) Shahzad Chaudhry**, Political and Security Analyst & Former Ambassador, **Dr. Ijaz Shafi Gilani,** Chairman, Gallup Pakistan; **Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Moinuddin Haider**, Former Governor Sindh; Former Federal Minister for Interior, **Mr. Shahid Hamid,** Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of Pakistan; Former Governor Punjab & Federal Minister for Defence, **Dr. Parvez Hassan,** Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of Pakistan, **Mr. Javed Jabbar**, Former Senator; Former Federal Minister for Information & Media Development, **Mr. Wazir Jogezai**, Former Deputy Speaker, National Assembly of Pakistan, **Mr. Rustam Shah Mohmand,** Former Chief Secretary, KP, **Mr. Arif Nizami**, Editor, Pakistan Today, **Mr. Tasneem Noorani**, Former Federal Secretary, **Mr. Ghazi Salahuddin,** Columnist; Former Editor The News, **Mr. Mujib-ur-Rehman Shami**, Editor-in-Chief, Daily Pakistan alongside PILDAT President and Joint Director, **Mr. Ahmed Bilal Mehboob** and **Ms. Aasiya Riaz** respectively.

Background

Apart from the winning PTI and the parties with whom PTI had entered into seat-adjustment ahead of General Election 2018, 7 major political parties rejected the results of General Elections 2018. These include PML-N, PPP, MMA, ANP, QWP, NP, and PKMAP.

While the PML-N and the PPP have said they reject the results but would still return to Assemblies. MMA Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman announced his party would boycott the Parliament but later chose to reconsider his decision.

Pakistan People's Party with the third largest number of seats in the General Election also rejected the results however, decided to sit on opposition benches in the National Assembly and form Provincial Government in Sindh.[1]

In KP, ANP president Asfandyar Wali Khan, and QWP president Aftab Sherpao rejected election results over alleged manipulation. The ANP accused the trio of Election Commission of Pakistan, Pakistan Army and Caretaker government for the manipulation and called for a peaceful protest on July 30, 2018 across the province.[2]

However, PPP and PML-N, two major political forces after the PTI, have decided to join the Parliament and form a joint opposition to give a tough time to the incoming PTI government, and take the rigging complaints through parliamentary channels.[3]

In terms of public acceptance of results, apart from a few incidents mentioned below and allegations of rigging, no major public protest or public agitation has been witnessed on the election results unlike 1977 election though opposition parties have continued to join hands, hold APCs and allege rigging and manipulation of pre-poll, vote count and transmission and post-poll processes of the General Election 2018.

There were two key International Observation Missions in the country to observe the General Elections 2018: European Union Election Observation Mission and Commonwealth Observation Mission. The Commonwealth Observation mission, a relatively smaller and shorter mission which arrived on July 18, 2018 and returned on July 30, 2018, issued its preliminary statement on July 27, 2018. The EU observation mission comprising 100 long term observers, arrived in Pakistan on July 17, 2018 and issued a preliminary statement on July 27 and will publish a detailed report at a later stage.

The EU Observation mission did not consider the pre-poll environment as free and fair. They observed restrictions on freedom of press which forced the media to resort to self-censorship. The mission also questioned the timing of the verdict against the former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and termed the process of counting as problematic. The EU termed election day to have been conducted in a transparent and orderly fashion except some reservations over the presence and participation of armed forces in the process of counting and transmission of results in some areas.[4]

In a statement, the U.S Department of State lauded women participation in voting but expressed its concerns on what it termed as flaws in the pre-voting electoral process as mentioned by the Human rights Commission of Pakistan. It also expressed grave reservations over the participation of terrorist-affiliated individuals in the elections, but commended Pakistani voters for fully rejecting these candidates at the ballot box.[5]

The Commonwealth Mission noted a clear improvement in election laws since the previous elections. However, it noted need for further improvements in counting methods, results transmission system, and inconsistency in applying electoral procedures.[6]

Administrative Preparedness by the ECP

The Election Commission of Pakistan was considered

1. Dawn, 'PPP rejects election results but will form opposition in National Assembly: Bilawal' July 27, 2018, https://www.dawn.com/news/1423250 (as accessed on July 30, 2018)
2. Dawn, 'ANP to protest election 'rigging' across KP on Monday', July 28, 2018 https://www.dawn.com/news/1423332 (as accessed on July 30, 2018)
3. Dawn, 'PPP, PML-N join hands to give Imran tough time', July 30, 2018, https://www.dawn.com/news/1423776 (as accessed on July 30, 2018
4. European Union Election Observation Mission, July 25, 2018, https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eu_eom_pakistan_2018_-_preliminary_statement_on_25_july_elections.pdf (as accessed on July 30, 2018)
5. Press Release, Election Pakistan US Department of States, July 27, 2018, https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2018/07/284668.htm (as accessed on July 30, 2018)
6. Premium Times, 'Abdulsalami Abubakar's Commonwealth Group says Pakistan's election 'credible', July 28, 2018, https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/more-news/278105-abdulsalami-abubakars-commonwealth-group-says-pakistans-election-credible.html (as accessed on July 30, 2018)

to be more prepared than ever in holding the 11th General Election. From training 0.9 million polling staff to depicting better management of the polling day, the ECP remained poised to undertake a professional conduct of General Election 2018. The ECP continued using the earlier 8300 SMS based system to make available the location of respective polling stations to voters. There are reports of polling stations being at a distance of miles from the villages in Tribal areas. There were no major complaints of polling station locations in densely populated urban areas.

It was, however, the vote count and result compilation process that showed the ECP's inability and weakness in not pre-testing the system and in managing the process in the event pf failure of the Results Transmission System (RTS). Polling staff was not in possession of adequate number of Form 45 and as ECP claimed, with the failure of technology, the ECP was not equipped to undertake vote count process manually in a swift manner.

Election observers and others reported that overall the polling staff adhered to the legal and procedural requirements with some minor digressions. However, the key issue encountered was during vote count as parties complained their polling agents weren't allowed to be part of counting and the failure of the Results Transmission System (RTS) showed that polling staff was not equipped on how to deal with the situation.

Failure of the Results Transmission System (RTS)

The ECP introduced a Result Transmission System (RTS) during General Election 2018. The system, not formerly tested on a large scale, failed which resulted in inordinate delays in compiling results. The ECP released the complete preliminary results after more than 56 hours after the conclusion of voting process on July 28, 2018.[7] The ECP Secretary conceded the failure of the system.[8]

PILDAT had showed public concern and shared public warning ahead of General Election 2018 that during the 2017 Presidential election in Kenya, a similar RTS system was employed which miserably failed, chaos ensued and 28 people died during the protests. The Supreme Court of Kenya termed the election null and void after the controversy.[9] The Election Commission of Pakistan ought to have been more careful with testing the system since we had a recent example of its failure.

It is inexplicable, however, that the mere malfunction of the RTS should stop polling staff to effectively carry out its legal responsibilities of vote count, compilation and dissemination. According to Election Act 2017, Section 90 (14), "The Presiding Officer shall publish the Result of the Count and Ballot Paper Account, signed by him and others, by affixing copies at a conspicuous place at the polling station for public inspection".

The RTS was the key component to ensure that result transmitted to RO is not tempered on the way. Due to breakdown of RTS, the POs used the same old method of carrying Form 45 physically to RO office. Some POs reportedly reached RO offices after inexplicably long delay. Non-availability of Form 45 to some polling agents across the country and providing the results on a white paper seriously undermined the arrangement to ensure that State of Vote count are not changed after they are prepared.

Section 13 of the Elections Act 2017, states that:

(4) The Returning Officer shall electronically send to the Commission—
Scanned copy of the provisional results compiled under sub-section (3);
Scanned copies of the Consolidated Statement of the Results of the Count, Final Consolidated Result together with Results of the Count and the Ballot Paper Accounts, as received by him from the Presiding Officers under sub-section (18) of section 90.

(5) The Returning Officer shall also send to the Commission original copies of documents mentioned in sub-sections (3) and (4) through special messenger or any other swift means of communication including urgent mail service or courier service, as may be directed by the Commission.

(6) The Commission shall publish the documents received under subsection (3) along with gender disaggregated data of turnout on its website.

7. Dawn, 'PTI largest party with 115 NA seats as ECP releases final tally two days after polls', July 28, 2018, https://www.dawn.com/news/1423442 (as accessed on July 31, 2018)
8. Dawn, 'Under fire ECP puts blame on results transmission system', July 27, 2018, https://www.dawn.com/news/1423180 (as accessed on July 30, 2018)
9. Ahmed Bilal Mehboob, A test for election observers, Dawn, July 23, 2018, https://www.dawn.com/news/1421903/a-test-for-election-observers, (accessed July 31, 2018)

Despite legal requirements, it appears that the polling staff was not prepared to put in place a plan B in the case of a technological glitch. Across the country, candidates and political parties complained of forcible exclusion of their polling agents from the vote count process and delay in receiving complete results on a legally prescribed format. The delay evidenced as a result can be gauged from the fact that the ECP was only able to manage releasing preliminary results after more than 56 hours of the conclusion of voting which signifies a significant lapse in following the ECP rules.

The Elections Act 2017, Section 95 states that *Immediately after announcement of provisional results, the Returning Officer shall give the contesting candidates and their election agents a notice in writing of the day, time and place fixed for the consolidation of the results, and, in the presence of such of the contesting candidates and election agents as may be present, consolidate in the prescribed manner the Results of the Count furnished by the Presiding Officers, including therein the postal ballots received by him before the time fixed for the consolidation of results.*

(2) Before consolidating the Results of the Count, the Returning Officer shall examine the ballot papers excluded from the count by the Presiding Officer and, if he finds that any such ballot paper should not have been so excluded, count it as a ballot paper cast in favour of the contesting candidate for whom the vote has been cast.

(3) The Returning Officer shall also count the ballot papers received by him by post in such manner as may be prescribed and include the votes cast in favour of each contesting candidate in the Consolidated Statement except those which he may reject on any of the grounds mentioned in section 90.

(4) The ballot papers rejected by the Returning Officer under subsection (3) shall be mentioned separately in the consolidated statement.

(5) Before commencement of the consolidation proceedings, the Returning Officer shall recount the ballot papers of one or more polling stations if a request or challenge in writing is made by a contesting candidate or his election agent and the margin of victory is less than five percent of the total votes polled in the constituency or ten thousand votes, whichever is less, or the Returning Officer considers such request as not unreasonable:

Provided that the recount shall be made by the Returning Officer only once.

(6) The Commission may, before conclusion of the consolidation proceedings, for reasons to be recorded, direct the Returning Officer to recount the ballot papers of one or more polling stations.

(7) If there is a difference between the Results of the Count received from the Presiding Officers and the results of the recount, the Returning Officer shall record the difference and details thereof:

According to Elections Act 2017, the returning officer shall recount the ballot papers of one or more polling stations if a request or challenge in writing is made by a contesting candidate or his/her election agent and the margin of victory is less than five per cent of the total votes polled in the constituency or 10,000 votes, whichever is less. The recount can be made only once.

Deployment of Troops in General Election 2018

The ECP had deployed about 371,000 troops both *inside* and *outside* the polling stations on polling day across the country. This has been the largest deployment during any Pakistani election till date. In comparison, the number of troops deployed during 2008 and 2013 election stood at 39,000 and 75,000 respectively.

The Code of Conduct issued by the ECP for General Election 2018 authorised the Army troops deployed inside the polling stations to have a coordinating role in result transmission. The Code stated that: "*While performing duties inside the polling stations [the security personnel shall] coordinate in a manner that snapshot of Form 45 (Result of the Count) and tabulated result has been taken and sent through Result Transmission System (RTS) to (the) Election Commission and returning officer by respective presiding officers*." The ECP also gave designated Army personnel magisterial powers, which when used cannot be questioned under Article 245 of the Constitution.[10]

Speaking on the matter in the Senate, Senator Raza Rabbani questioned this provision of powers to the army and their presence inside the polling stations. He asked if there would be military courts since the army officers have been given magisterial powers. "*Whether*

10. The News, 'ECP gives extended powers to army', July 11, 2018. https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/340253-ecp-gives-extended-powers-to-army (as accessed on August 2, 2018)

it will be the presiding officer or army officer whose orders or view will be accepted," Senator Rabbani said.[11] Later PPP leader Farhatullah Babar put forward his reservations on the provision of magisterial powers to army officers terming it controversial and the equivalent of rigging.[12]

The transportation of polling staff with polling material happened under security from the Army. Polling staff were to be provided with transport to the polling station however, there were complaints of mismanaging both during the distribution and transportation of polling material. Polling staff were provided buses for pick and drop to the polling stations. Polling staff spent hours in long queues in order to get the polling material. Male polling staff was supposed to spend the night at polling stations while women staff was exempted.[13]

Opinion Polls and Election Results

PILDAT Assessment shows that results of GE 2018 results are somewhat in line with the professional public opinion polls conducted shortly before GE 2018.

General Election 2018 results have shown the PTI winning 115 of the 272 National Assembly seats, PML-N with 63 seats, the PPP with 43 seats, MMA with 12 seats, MQM-P with 6 and PML, BNP and BAP with 4, 2, 4 seats respectively.[14] According to ECP, the voter turnout in the National Assembly elections remained 51.85%.

The Poll of Polls report compiled by Gallup Pakistan on July 24, 2018 predicted that PTI and PML (N) were running neck and neck with PTI ahead in the national vote bank and PML-N ahead in Punjab. The results show that PML-N has a lead with 129 seats in the Punjab Assembly while the PTI managed to secure 123 seats.

The national average of expected votes computed by Gallup Pakistan ranged between 30 to 32% for PTI; 27% to 30% for PML-N; 17% to 20% for PPP and 15 to 21% for all other parties.[15] The polls had indicated PTI to carry KP, PPP to carry Sindh and mixed results in Balochistan. Table 1 shows a comparison of public opinion poll predictions with the General Election 2018 results:

The opinion polls had predicted the rise in vote bank of PTI by winning over voters of PML-N as well as other parties. PTI's voting share stood at 17% in the 2013 General Election which has now come to be at 42.9%. The PML-N vote share has dropped from being at 33% in 2013 to 23.7% in 2018 General Election.

The national average of expected votes in the opinion polls ranged between 30 to 32% for PTI; 27% to 30% for PML-N; 17% to 20% for PPP and 15 to 21% for all other parties. The percentage of votes computed after the Election Day is 43.0% for PTI; 23.16% for PML-N; 15.8% for PPP and 17% for all other parties.

The voter turnout for PTI was 12% more than the expected votes. For PML-N it was 5.34% less than the expected result. For PPP it was 2.7% less than the expected result and 1% less for all other parties.

This shows that other than PTI which has improved its performance compared to opinion polls predictions, the other two major parties, PML-N and PPP have underperformed than expected. PPP, however, has improved number of representation from 2013.

In terms of actual vote banks of parties in the 2018 General Election, PTI has received 16860675 votes nationwide followed by PML-N with 12907190 votes and PPP at number 3 received 6899830 votes.

International Perspectives on General Election 2018

The General Election 2018 have raised questions internationally over its conduct. The international media has cried foul over the alleged interference to subvert the mandate of the people.

Some analysts are of the opinion that *"The military persuaded politicians from other parties to defect to [the] PTI along with their voters… The army bullied*

11. The News, 'Senators raise serious questions over polls' transparency', July 22, 2018, https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/344864-senators-raise-serious-questions-over-polls-transparency (as accessed on August 7, 2018)
12. Daily Times, 'Magisterial powers to army can be equated with rigging', July 25, 2018, https://dailytimes.com.pk/272911/magistrate-rights-to-army-officials-can-be-equated-with-rigging-farhatullah-babar/ (as accessed on August 9, 2018)
13. Express Tribune, 'Mismanagement, chaos mar distribution' July 26, 2018, https://tribune.com.pk/story/1765920/1-mismanagement-chaos-mar-distribution/ (as accessed on July 30, 2018)
14. Election Commission of Pakistan https://www.ecp.gov.pk/ResultDetails.aspx?EleId=10070&Election=General%20Election%2025%20Jul%202018 (as accessed on July 30, 2018)
15. Computed by Gallup Pakistan, July 24, 2018 https://mail.google.com/mail/#inbox/164e9aac21e4a360?projector=1&messagePartId=0.1 (as accessed on July 30, 2018)

Table 1: Comparison between Public Opinion Polls and Results of GE2018

	Poll of Polls Predictions: July 2018	General Election 2018 Results
Federal Government	PTI to be largest party closely followed by PML-N in terms of votes	PTI secured 116 seats in the National Assembly followed by PML-N with 64 seats.
Punjab	PML-N would lead in terms of votes but with single digit margin with PTI	PML-N secured 61 out of 141 National Assembly seats followed by PTI with 60 seats. PML-N secured 129 in Punjab Assembly while PTI secured 122 seats.
Central and Western Punjab	PML-N to lead in terms of votes	PML-N secured 37 seats in the National Assembly followed by PTI with 25 seats.
South Punjab	Anti-PML-N vote would be in majority with probable PTI in the lead	PTI secured 25 National Assembly seats followed by PML-N with 15 seats.
North Punjab	PTI and PML-N would have tough competition with PTI being ahead in votes	PTI secured 10 National Assembly Seats followed by PML-N with 6 seats.
Sindh	PPP would continue to dominate	PPP secured 36 out of 61 National Assembly seats and 76 seats out of 130 Provincial Assembly seats.
KP	PTI would continue to lead	PTI secured 30 out of 36 National Assembly seats and 66 out of 96 Provincial Assembly Seats.
Balochistan	A coalition of parties would be able to form government	MMA secured 5 National Assembly seats followed by BAP with 4 National Assembly Seats. BAP has secured 15 Provincial Assembly seats with MMA in the second place securing 9 seats.

the press into providing [the] PTI with positive coverage while attacking the PML-N. The security apparatus rounded up, detained, and otherwise harassed [the] PML-N party workers, and the army worked behind the scenes to disqualify [the] PML-N candidates from running."[16] The international media believes, "they appear determined to keep former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif out of politics"[17] using the judiciary, *"In this election, the court was instrumental to the army's scheme to elect Khan."*[18]

Some in the international media believe that, "*this view of Pakistan — and the military's role in it — leaves the country in a permanent cycle of political tumult and economic stagnation."*[19]

In its editorial after the elections, The Guardian noted that, *"Mr. Khan has also benefited from voters' frustration with years of corruption and dynastic politics dominated by the PML-N and the Pakistan Peoples Party… Mr. Khan promises a new Pakistan, and has certainly reinvented himself.* However, also maintained that, *"He [Imran Khan] claimed the country's "umpires" would step back if he were elected. But Mr. Khan's promised "New Pakistan" seems likely to look rather like the old variety."*[20]

16. Cristine Fair, Foreign Affiars, 'Pakistan's Sham Election', July 27, 2018, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/pakistan/2018-07-27/pakistans-sham-election (as accessed on August 10, 2018)
17. LA Times, 'As Pakistan prepares for Elections, its powerful military appears to be meddling' July 20, 2018, http://www.latimes.com/world/asia/la-fg-pakistan-elections-20180720-story.html# (as accessed on August 9, 2018)
18. ibid
19. Ishaan Tharoor, the Washington Post, 'Pakistan's military has its fingerprints all over the elections', July 25, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2018/07/25/pakistans-military-has-its-fingerprints-all-over-the-elections/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.b607e1524144 (as accessed on August 9, 2018)
20. The Guardian, 'The Guardian view on Pakistan's elections: Imran Khan's real test is coming', July 26, 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/jul/26/the-guardian-view-on-pakistans-elections-imran-khans-real-test-is-coming (as accessed on August 9, 2018)

Assessment of the Quality of General Election 2018

Assessment of the quality of General Election 2018 has been carried out by PILDAT on a score card which has 39 parameters under following 4 broad categories:

1. Pre-Poll
2. Polling
3. Counting of votes, Compilation & Transmission of Results and
4. Post-Poll

Each parameter has been assigned equal weightage and graded on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 indicating the poorest quality and 5 indicating the best quality.

The PILDAT Assessment of Quality of General Election 2018 is a continuation of earlier similar assessments that have been carried out by the think tank after General Elections of 2002, 2008 and 2013. PILDAT had designed a score card which has been used to assess quality of each General Election since 2002.

Similar assessments in the past assigned the overall score of **37.30%** to the quality of General Election 2002 and **40%** to the quality of GE 2008. The scores improved for quality of General Election 2013 at **56.76%** but have dropped again to **51.79%** for the quality of General Election 2018. Complete Score Card on Assessments of Quality of General Elections 2018, 2013, 2008 and 2002 is available at *Appendix A*.

The PILDAT Score Card on Assessment of Quality of General Election 2018 is based on combined analysis and scoring of eminent persons who are members of PILDAT Dialogue Groups on Electoral Processes, Quality of Democracy and Civil-Military Relations. Members undertook a comprehensive assessment of events and development under each parameter before assigning scores.

The overall score of quality of General Election 2018 has received the score of **51.79%**. **Polling-day Operations** has received an overall score of **64%** - highest scoring aspect of the quality of GE 2018. **Counting of Votes, Compilation & Transmission of Results** have received the lowest score of **40%** thus depicting the counting, compilation and transmission of results as the weakest link in the management and quality of General Election 2018. Both **Pre-Poll Phase** and the **Post-Poll phase** have recorded issues and weaknesses and have, thus, received the score of **50%** each.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Despite all the hard work of the Election Commission, a dark cloud of suspicion did hang over polling day on July 25, 2018.

There seems to be near-consensus among a number of political parties, civil society organisations, local and international media commentators that the pre-election environment in Pakistan was not fair. PILDAT had already carried out analysis of perception of pre-poll fairness in May 2018 terming it Unfair with an overall low score of 51.5% while the same has been assessed to be at 50% in this assessment based on the period between April to July 2018 and in particular is low on the parameters of neutrality of the Federal and Provincial Caretaker Governments, impartiality of the Armed Forces and their intelligence affiliates and independence of the Judiciary. The EU Election Observation Mission also acknowledged complaints regarding the pre-election phase in its preliminary statement issued after the election.

Despite the importance of the pre- and post-election phases in Pakistan, polling day, too, is critical in many ways. One can divide the day into five distinct stages. The first stage is the casting of votes which continues uninterrupted for nine hours. This time the duration was increased to 10 hours. Despite negative perceptions about the pre-election phase, the process of polling went exceptionally smooth on July 25, with very few major violations of the law or rules reported. The movement of voters and the conduct of polling staff and polling agents was quite disciplined and orderly, and at least partly the credit can go to the presence of armed forces personnel both inside and outside the polling stations. Polling staff and security personnel — both police and military — were generally polite and helpful to the elderly and handicapped persons. Many polling stations witnessed long queues even before polling time which indicated the public's zest to exercise their right to vote. Despite the presence of military personnel inside and outside the polling stations, the occasional visit of their officers to polling stations and filming and photographing by the ISPR crew, apparently, there was no incident where military personnel gave any unlawful instruction to the polling staff.

Counting of the votes is the second, critical stage of polling day activities and the law requires that it should be carried out in the presence of candidates or their agents. At the end of counting, the presiding officer completes Form 45-Result of the Count and Form 46-Ballot Paper Account, affixes his and a senior assistant presiding officer's signatures and thumb impressions and asks candidates present or their agents to sign the forms. A copy of the completed, signed and stamped Forms 45 and 46 is required to be given to each candidate or his agent and another copy is to be affixed at a prominent place in the polling station for public knowledge. Many political parties and their candidates have complained that their polling agents were turned out at the time of counting and that they were not given a copy of Forms 45 and 46. The ECP has contradicted these allegations and has asked political parties and candidates to provide it with evidence so that appropriate action may be taken. Since almost all political parties have voiced these complaints, these need to be seriously investigated.

The next stage is the transmission of election results from each polling station to the respective returning officers. It is here that all hell seems to have broken loose. Some problems have even been acknowledged by the ECP. The smartphone-based new Result Transmission System, reportedly prepared by NADRA for ECP, apparently collapsed soon after it was put to use. It seems that the system had not been adequately tested. The problem was not just limited to the breakdown of the RTS; reportedly, many presiding officers inexplicably turned up very late at the ROs' offices to submit the original Forms 45 and 46 leading to suspicion that they were being pressured to change the result count. Only a thorough investigation and forensic audit of Forms 45 can determine the exact issues.

The fourth stage relates to the consolidation of results of each constituency by the respective ROs on the basis of the Forms 45 received from the POs. Each RO was provided a laptop, two IT personnel and a computer-based application for processing the results through a Result Management System (which was developed in-house by the ECP). Reportedly, the RMS worked fine but since Form 45 came in late, the consolidation of results through RMS was slow. The RMS was supposed to generate Form 47-Provisional Consolidated Statement of Results of the Count and Form 48-Consolidated Statement of the Results of the Count furnished by the POs.

The last stage of the polling day was the transmission of results from the ROs to the ECP. Since ECP has taken almost 48 hours to declaring about 99 per cent of the results, it is not clear exactly which stage of the election day proceedings suffered from problems.

PILDAT recommends that only a thorough investigation can identify the actual problem, fix

responsibility and, above all, allay the suspicions of political parties, candidates and the public in general. The need for an urgent, thorough and impartial investigation which even the ECP has at least partially recognised by asking the Cabinet Division of the Government of Pakistan to arrange an investigation into the malfunction of the Result Transmission System (RTS), is the demand by major political parties also. While the leader of the victorious majority party PTI, Mr. Imran Khan showed magnanimity by offering to investigate rigging complaints of the opposition in any constituency, which is the legal responsibility of the ECP, he and his party can translate that promise by facilitating the setting up of an independent commission of enquiry whose terms of reference and composition should be agreed between the next government and the opposition. The proposed commission should investigate the issue and assign responsibility.

Table 2: Score Card on Comparative Assessment of Quality of General Elections 2018 and 2013

Scores are assigned on the scale of 1-5 with 1 representing the lowest and 5 representing the highest scores. Scores on GE2013 were assigned after GE2013.

No	Parameter	Score on a Scale of 1 to 5		Trend in Scores
		General Election 2018	General Election 2013	
	Pre-Poll Phase			
1	How comprehensive and fair was the Constitutional and Legal Framework for Election?	4	4	↔
2	How accurate, complete and upto date were the electoral rolls?	4	4	↔
3	How Neutral were the Federal and Provincial Caretaker Governments?	1	3	↓
4	How impartial were the Security Forces and the Intelligence Agencies?	1	3	↓
5	How effective were the Caretaker Governments in supporting ECP?	2	3	↓
6	How independent was the ECP?	3	4	↓
7	What was the level of Integrity and competence of the ECP as a whole?	3	4	↓
8	How effective and fair was the scrutiny of Candidates' nomination papers as per the constitutional provisions?	3	2	↑
9	How effective was the ECP monitoring and check on overspending by candidates?	2	2	↔
10	How effective was the Framework to monitor and check spending by Political Parties on political advertisement in the media?	2	1	↑
11	How far were the Caretaker Governments able to ensure law, order and peace during electioneering?	2	1	↑
12	How far was the Judiciary independent during the electioneering phase?	1	4	↓
13	How far was the media Independent of government influence during electioneering?	2	5	↓

No	Parameter	Score on a Scale of 1 to 5		Trend in Scores
		General Election 2018	General Election 2013	
	Pre-Poll Phase			
14	How far during electioneering was the media independent of other influences and undeclared vested interests	2	2	↔
15	How competitive was the election as manifested in the number and diversity of contestants (both candidates and political parties)?	4	3	↓
16	How competitive was the election as manifested in the number and diversity of contestants (both candidates and political parties)?	4	4	↔
17	How satisfactory were the arrangements for voters to know the location of their polling stations?	4	4	↔
18	How fair was the delimitation process across Pakistan?	3		
		45	53	↓
	Per Cent Score	**50.00%**	**62.35%**	↓
	Polling-day Operations			
	A. Polling			
19	How satisfactory was the training of the Polling Staff and Returning Officers as evidenced in their performance on the polling day?	3	2	↑
20	How impartial were the Polling Staff?	3	3	↔
21	How good was the Management capacity of the ECP?	3	2	↑
22	How far was it safe and secure for the Polling Staff to do justice to their duty especially in sensitive areas, for instance, certain areas of Balochistan?	3	2	↑
23	How satisfactory were the arrangements made by the ECP for safe transportation of Polling Staff with Polling Material?	3	1	↑
24	How suitable were the Polling Stations premises and their location?	3	3	↔

No	Parameter	Score on a Scale of 1 to 5		Trend in Scores
		General Election 2018	General Election 2013	
	Polling-day Operations			
25	How satisfactory was the law and Order conditions to facilitate participation of Voters?	4	2	↑
26	How far the law enforcement agencies were successful in deterring armed groups from influencing the polling choices of voters?	4	2	↑
27	How accessible and transparent were the Polling operations to neutral election observers?	3	3	↔
	Sub-total	29	20	↑
	Per Cent Score	**64%**	**44%**	
	B. Counting and Result Compilation & Transmission			
28	How efficient and accurate was the transmission of election results from polling stations to the returning officers?	2	2	↔
29	How efficient and accurate was the transmission of election results from the Returning Officers to the ECP?	2	2	↔
30	How satisfactory was the arrangement to ensure availability of Polling Results to the Polling Agents and display at Polling Stations	2	3	↓
31	How transparent was the compilation of statement of Vote Count at Polling Station and its distribution among candidates or their agents and public display at polling stations?	2	3	↓
32	How transparent was the consolidation of Polling results at RO level?	2	2	↔
33	How satisfactory was the arrangement to ensure that statements of vote count are not changed after these are prepared at the polling stations?	2	3	↓
	Sub-total	12	15	↓
	Per Cent Score	**40%**	**47%**	

No	Parameter	Score on a Scale of 1 to 5		Trend in Scores
		General Election 2018	General Election 2013	
	Post-Poll Phase			
34	How acceptable were the election result by the political parties?	2	3	↓
35	How acceptable were the election result by the defeated candidates?	2	3	↓
36	How acceptable were the election result by the electorate in general?	3	3	↔
37	How far did the neutral election observers (both foreign and domestic) declare the election free and fair?	3	4	↓
38	How far are the election results in line with the professional public opinion polls conducted shortly before the election?	4	4	↔
39	Was there any undue pressure or inducement in the formation of governments?	1		
	Sub-total	15	17	↓
	Per Cent Score	**50.00%**	**68.00%**	
	Total Score	101	105	↓
	Total Per Cent Score	**51.79%**	**56.76%**	

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Assessment of the Quality of General Election 2013 and its comparison with 2002 and 2008 Elections

No.	Parameter	Score on a Scale of 1 to 5			
		General Election 2018	General Election 2013	General Election 2008	General Election 2002
	Pre-Poll Phase				
1	How comprehensive and fair was the Constitutional and Legal Framework for Election?	4	4	2	1
2	How accurate, complete and uptodate were the electoral rolls?	4	4	1	1
3	How Neutral were the Federal and Provincial Caretaker Governments?	1	3	1	1
4	How impartial were the Armed Forces and the Intelligence Agencies under their influence?	1	3	1	1
5	How effective were the Caretaker Governments in supporting ECP?	2	3	2	2
6	How independent was the ECP?	3	4	2	2
7	What was the level of Integrity and competence of the ECP as a whole?	3	4	2	1
8	How effective and fair was the scrutiny of Candidates' nomination papers as per the constitutional provisions?	3	2	1	1
9	How effective was the ECP monitoring and check on overspending by candidates?	2	2	1	1
10	How effective was the Framework to monitor and check spending by Political Parties on political advertisement in the media?	2	1	1	1
11	How far were the Caretaker Governments able to ensure law, order and peace during electioneering?	2	1	1	1
12	How far was the judiciary independent during the electioneering phase?	1	4	2	2
13	How far was the media Independent of government influence during electioneering?	2	5	2	2
14	How far during electioneering was the media independent of other influences and undeclared vested interests	2	2	2	2
15	How far was the Law and Order conducive for electioneering for all contestants?	2	3	3	4
16	How competitive was the election as manifested in the number and diversity of contestants (both candidates and political parties)?	4	4	2	1
17	How satisfactory were the arrangements for voters to know the location of their polling stations?	4	4	2	1
18	How fair was the delimitation process across Pakistan?	3			
	Sub-total				
	Percent Score	**50.00%**	**62.35%**	**32.94%**	**30.59%**

No.	Parameter	Score on a Scale of 1 to 5			
		General Election 2018	General Election 2013	General Election 2008	General Election 2002
	Polling-day Operations				
	A. Polling				
19	How satisfactory was the training of the Polling Staff and Returning Officers as evidenced in their performance on the polling day?	3	2	2	2
20	How impartial were the Polling Staff?	3	3	2	2
21	How good was the Management capacity of the ECP?	3	2	2	2
22	How far was it safe and secure for the Polling Staff to do justice to their duty especially in sensitive areas, for instance, certain areas of Balochistan?	3	2	2	2
23	How satisfactory were the arrangements made by the ECP for safe transportation of Polling Staff with Polling Material?	3	1	1	1
24	How suitable were the Polling Stations premises and their location?	3	3	2	3
25	How satisfactory was the law and Order conditions to facilitate participation of Voters?	4	2	2	3
26	How far the law enforcement agencies were successful in deterring armed groups from influencing the polling choices of voters?	4	2	2	2
27	How accessible and transparent were the Polling operations to neutral election observers?	3	3	3	3
	Sub-total	29	20	18	19
	Percent Score	**64%**	**44%**	**40%**	**40%**

No.	Parameter	Score on a Scale of 1 to 5			
		General Election 2018	General Election 2013	General Election 2008	General Election 2002
	B. Counting and Result Compilation & Transmission				
28	How efficient and accurate was the transmission of election results from polling stations to the returning officers?	2	2	2	2
29	How efficient and accurate was the transmission of election results from the Returning Officers to the ECP?	2	2	2	2
30	How staisfactory was the arrangement to ensure availibility of Polling Results to the Polling Agents and display at Polling Stations	2	3	3	3
31	How transparent was the compilation of statement of Vote Count at Polling Station and its distribution among candidates or their agents and public display at polling stations?	2	3	3	3
32	How transparent was the consolidation of Polling results at RO level?	2	2	2	2
33	How satisfactory was the arrangement to ensure that statements of vote count are not changed after these are prepared at the polling stations?	2	3	2	2
	Sub-total	12	15	14	14
	Percent Score	**40%**	**47%**	**43%**	**43%**

No.	Parameter	Score on a Scale of 1 to 5			
		General Election 2018	General Election 2013	General Election 2008	General Election 2002
	Post-Poll Phase				
34	How acceptable were the election result by the political parties?	2	3	3	2
35	How acceptable were the election result by the defeated candidates?	2	3	3	2
36	How acceptable were the election result by the electorate in general?	3	3	3	2
37	How far did the neutral election observers (both foreign and domestic) declare the election free and fair?	3	4	3	2
38	How far are the election results in line with the professional public opinion polls conducted shortly before the election?	4	4	2	2
39	Was there any undue pressure or inducement in the formation of governments?	1			
	Sub-total	15	17	14	10
	Percent Score	**50%**	**68%**	**56%**	**40%**
	Total	101	105	74	69
	Percent Score	**51.79%**	**56.76%**	**40.00%**	**37.30%**

PILDAT
Pakistan Institute of Legislative
Development And Transparency

Islamabad Office: P. O. Box 278, F-8, Postal Code: 44220, Islamabad, Pakistan
Lahore Office: P. O. Box 11098, L.C.C.H.S, Postal Code: 54792, Lahore, Pakistan
E-mail: info@pildat.org | Website: www.pildat.org