

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	711
Land:	Pakistan
Kilde:	Documentation Centre (Ireland), Legal Aid Board (RDC)
Titel:	COI Query Response – Pakistan – Information on state corruption
Udgivet:	19. marts 2024
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	21. oktober 2024

RESEARCHED AND COMPILED BY THE REFUGEE DOCUMENTATION CENTRE OF IRELAND ON THE 19 MARCH 2024

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COI QUERY RESPONSE - PAKISTAN - INFORMATION ON STATE CORRUPTION

The *UK Parliament House of Commons Library* in February 2024 notes that: “Former three-time Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of the PML-N party, brother of Shehbaz Sharif, returned to Pakistan after four years in London. Nawaz Sharif was convicted and imprisoned on two charges of corruption in 2018 but was given leave to travel to the UK for medical treatment.” [...] ¹

The same document also states that: “In October 2022 the Electoral Commission of Pakistan (ECP), disqualified Imran Khan from standing for election for five years because they said he had broken the law by selling gifts that he had received while prime minister.” ²

“Imran Khan has challenged the corruption charges that resulted in his disqualification as a member of the National Assembly. However, an appeal to the Islamabad High Court in February 2023 failed. Also, in February the same court allowed a legal case to proceed, in which it was claimed he had failed to mention Tyrian Jade White in his nomination papers, an individual who the petitioners claim is Mr Khan's daughter.” ³

“On 9 May Imran Khan was successfully arrested while in a court hearing relating to the ECP corruption charges, on the grounds of not cooperating with another corruption investigation, under which he is accused of having “received land as a bribe in exchange for political favours” while Prime Minister.” ⁴

“The Economist magazine, in an article examining the conviction of Mr Khan in August, mentions his belief that the charges are politically motivated, and responds “Whether or not Mr Khan is guilty, he probably has a point”. The Economist explains that corruption is both deeply embedded in Pakistani politics, but also used by political rivals as a reason to jail their opponents:

¹ UK Parliament House of Commons Library (13 February 2024) Politics in Pakistan 2022-24 and upcoming elections, p.5, p.18

² ibid

³ ibid

⁴ ibid

Corruption penetrates all levels of business and government in Pakistan, which ranks 140th out of 180 countries in a corruption-perceptions index compiled by Transparency International, an antigraft watchdog. Yet it is rarely prosecuted with any seriousness unless the accused has fallen foul of Pakistan's government or the powerful army, whose heavy involvement in politics and business is one of the main sources of corruption. Rather than being a way to keep all politicians and businesspeople honest, corruption investigations are a means to keep pesky opponents of those in power away from politics.”⁵

The Conversation in February 2024 mentioned that: “Pakistan's former prime minister, Imran Khan, has been sentenced to seven years in prison after a Pakistani court ruled his marriage un-Islamic and illegal. Khan had already been sentenced to 14 years in jail for corruption and barred from holding public office for ten years a week earlier and, a day before that, ten years in prison for leaking official state secrets.”⁶

This document also states that: “In 2017, Sharif, who was then prime minister, fell out of favour with the military following disagreements about normalising relations with India. Sharif was arrested on charges of corruption and sentenced to ten years in jail less than two weeks before the 2018 general election.”⁷

In January 2024 *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* reported that: “Former Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan and his wife, Bushra Khan, were both sentenced to 14 years in prison on January 31 in a corruption case, a day after he was convicted to 10 years for leaking state secrets in a separate trial, his Pakistan Tehrik-e Insaf (PTI) party said.”⁸

Voice of America News in January 2024 mentioned that: “A special court in Pakistan sentenced former Prime Minister Imran Khan to 10 years in prison Tuesday on charges that while in office, he made public state secrets involving the United States.”⁹

The document further points out that: “Khan has been in jail since August after being convicted on controversial corruption charges and sentenced to three years behind bars. He was subsequently disqualified from contesting an election for five years in line with laws that bar convicts from running in elections.”¹⁰

The *Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime* in September 2023 notes that: “...corruption in local government persists, which has enabled the trade of gems and other precious stones to thrive.”¹¹

The report also states that: “State corruption related to criminal markets is a considerable problem in the country: political parties and politicians reportedly form relationships with gangs to influence political process, mostly at the provincial level. Accusations of embezzlement, levelled at politicians

⁵ *ibid*

⁶ *The Conversation* (5 February 2024) Pakistan election: the military has long meddled in the country's politics – this year will be no different

⁷ *ibid*

⁸ *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* (31 January 2024) Pakistani Ex-PM Khan, Wife Sentenced To 14 Years In Prison For Corruption

⁹ *Voice of America News* (30 January 2024) Pakistan's Ex-PM Khan Sentenced To 10 Years Over US-Related State Secrets

¹⁰ *ibid*

¹¹ *Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime* (26 September 2023) 2023 Global Organized Crime Index – Pakistan

and military leaders, are commonplace. There are also allegations of military officials being complicit in certain criminal markets, including drug trafficking.”¹²

“The police force is widely regarded as the most corrupt institution in Pakistan.”¹³

The *US Department of Labor* in September 2023 reported that: “...police corruption, particularly the taking of bribes from suspected perpetrators to ignore child labor crimes and a lack of willingness to conduct criminal investigations, hindered Pakistan's ability to address child labor throughout the country.”¹⁴

The *UK Home Office* in May 2023 mentioned that: “Police are susceptible to corruption and petty bribery and, according to surveys by Transparency International, are perceived to be the most corrupt public service at the national level.”¹⁵

A report issued by *Freedom House* in March 2023 states that: “Despite numerous formal safeguards, official corruption is endemic in practice.”¹⁶

The *US Department of State* Country Report on Human Rights Practices in March 2023 notes that: “The law provides criminal penalties for official corruption, but the government generally did not implement the law effectively, and officials frequently engaged in corrupt practices at all levels. Corruption was pervasive in politics and government, and various politicians and public office holders faced allegations of corruption, including bribery, extortion, cronyism, nepotism, patronage, graft, and embezzlement.”¹⁷

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¹² *ibid*

¹³ *ibid*

¹⁴ US Department of Labor (26 September 2023) 2022 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor: Pakistan

¹⁵ UK Home Office (24 May 2023) Country Policy and Information Note - Pakistan: Actors of protection (May 2023), p.5

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