



Pakistan - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Tuesday 26 & Wednesday 27 June 2012

Information on the Pakistan Peoples Party including activities, objectives, policies, leadership, membership, history and current situation, treatment of members and perceived members and supporters. Information on whether there is free movement within the country for supporters and if they would experience any legal or practical problems moving.

Commenting on events of 2011, the *United States Department of State* in a report issued in May 2012 notes:

“With the election of current president and head of state, Asif Ali Zardari, democratic rule was restored in 2008 after years of military government. Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani of the Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) served as prime minister and head of government. The PPP and its federal coalition partners controlled the executive and legislative branches of the national government and three of the four provincial assemblies” (United States Department of State (24 May 2012) *Pakistan, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2011*, Introduction)

A report released in March 2012 by *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* notes:

“Pakistan's ruling party has strengthened its position in senate elections, preliminary results show, in a boost for President Asif Ali Zardari's crisis-hit civilian government” (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (3 March 2012) *Zardari Gets Boost In Pakistani Senate Elections*).

In June 2012 *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* states:

“Pakistan's president has summoned the country's parliament to meet on June 22 to elect a new premier, in the wake of the Supreme Court's disqualification of incumbent Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani. The announcement was made on June 20 after negotiations involving the ruling Pakistan People's Party, whose coalition holds a parliament majority. There was no immediate clear indication who will be nominated to head the government. Gilani was dismissed on June 20 after being convicted in April on a contempt of court charge for refusing to ask Swiss authorities to reopen corruption cases against President Asif Ali Zardari, who heads the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), which Gilani is also a member of. The disqualification of Gilani was the culmination of a showdown between Pakistan's judiciary and Zardari's government” (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (20 June 2012) *Crisis talks on new Pakistani prime minister enter second day*).

A report released in June 2012 by *BBC News* points out that:

“Pakistan's ruling party candidate has been elected prime minister, three days after the Supreme Court forced former PM Yousuf Raza Gilani from office.

Raja Pervez Ashraf, who won 211 votes in the 342-seat house, was a last-minute choice after a judge ordered the arrest of the preferred candidate” (BBC News (22 June 2012) *Pakistan crisis: Raja Ashraf voted in as prime minister*).

In June 2012 the *Economist Intelligence Unit* notes:

“The long-running battle between the ruling Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and the Supreme Court culminated in late June with the disqualification from office of the prime minister, Yusuf Raza Gilani, following his conviction for contempt of court earlier this year. The major centres of political power in Pakistan have been locked in a contest to redefine the limits of their authority since the end of military rule in 2008” (Economist Intelligence Unit (26 June 2012) *A political shake-up and its aftermath*).

This document also states:

“Even with Mr Gilani's ouster, the PPP retains its plurality in parliament” (ibid).

Citing an external source, a report published in June 2012 by the *United Kingdom Border Agency* notes:

“—The Pakistan People's Party (PPP), which heads the governing coalition, won 19 of the 45 Senate seats being contested in the March [2012] elections, increasing its majority to 41 members. The PPP along with its allies – the Awami National Party (with 12 seats), the Pakistan Muslim League (Quaid-iAzam), which holds five seats, and the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (six seats) – now hold a comfortable majority in the Senate. The ruling coalition also controls 216 seats in the 335-member National Assembly” (United Kingdom Border Agency (7 June 2012) *Pakistan, Country of Origin Information (COI) Report*, P.19).

Using further external sources, this report includes a profile of the party stating:

“A mainstream party advocating Islamic socialism and democracy...Co-chaired by Pakistan Head of State, President Asif Ali Zardari (widower of Benazir Bhutto), and their son, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. PPP member Yusuf Raza Gilani was nominated as Prime Minister following the 2008 elections. The only party to have candidates in the National Assembly and in all four Provincial Assemblies; has formed governments at the centre and in Sindh and Balochistan provinces” (ibid, p.272).

In February 1993 a publication issued by the *Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada* points out:

“At the time of its founding in 1967, the PPP sought to distance itself from the Pakistani political scene, characterized by the ‘essentially “clientele-oriented” makeup of parties, in which personal allegiances dominate political life to the detriment of political programs and ideological affiliations’...The PPP defined itself then as an ‘Islamic socialist’ party, whose objective was to serve the needs of simple workers and peasants...The party's founder, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, upon his election in 1970 tried to introduce a series of social and economic reforms, but he quickly abandoned the party's socialist program to

serve the interests of large landowners..." (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (1 February 1993) *The Pakistan People's Party*).

A *Library of Congress* report published in April 1994 states:

"The PPP adopted the slogan 'Islam our Faith, Democracy our Polity, Socialism our Economy.' The party, like its founder, was enigmatic and full of contradictions. A left-leaning populist movement, the PPP attempted to blend Islam with socialism. The PPP espoused such policies as land reform to help the peasants; nationalization of industries to weaken the industrialists; and administrative reforms to reduce the power of the bureaucrats. The party, however, was built on the foundations of the wealthy, landed elite, Pakistan's traditional ruling class" (Library of Congress (April 1994) *Pakistan, Pakistan People's Party*).

A profile of the party is included in a report issued in December 2011 by the *International Crisis Group* which states:

"The Pakistan Peoples Party, founded by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1967 with a socialist, egalitarian agenda. Since Benazir Bhutto's assassination in December 2007, the party is headed by her widower, President Asif Ali Zardari, and son, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, and currently leads the coalition government in the centre" (International Crisis Group (12 December 2011) *Islamic Parties in Pakistan*, p.37).

This document describes the PPP as being

"...moderate on religious issues..."(Ibid, p.1).

This report also states that:

"...the PPP's concessions to Islamist forces have resulted in inconsistent messaging that damages the party's standing and restricts its policy choices" (ibid, p.25).

A report issued in March 2012 by the *Human Rights Commission of Pakistan* reviewing events of 2011 notes:

"Political leaders and activists were also targeted in terrorist attacks in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA. These included...the...killing of a Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader in Mardan district" (Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (20 March 2012) *State of Human Rights in 2011*, p.151).

In April 2012 *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* notes:

"At least five people were killed in Pakistan's southern port city of Karachi on April 2 as a result of violence. The killings raise to at least 24 the number of people killed by violence during the past week. The killings began with the killing of Hasan Soomro, a local leader of the ruling Pakistan People's Party (PPP)" (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (2 April 2012) *Dozens Killed In Week of Karachi Violence*).

The *Daily Times* in June 2012 states:

“...three Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) activists were injured in an armed ambush near Chota Maidan within the limits of Nazimabad police station” (Daily Times (27 June 2012) *KESC deputy GM among four shot dead in Karachi wave of violence*).

Further information on the PPP party is available on their website at <http://www.ppp.org.pk>

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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Human Rights Watch

Human Security Gateway

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

International Crisis Group

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