

**Refugee Review Tribunal
AUSTRALIA**

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

Research Response Number: PAK33971
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Questions

1. **Please provide information on the candidates for Township Ward or Ward NA-127 / PP-154 for the 2008 election.**
2. **Deleted.**
3. **Please provide any information on the killing of a PML-N candidate named Asif Ashraf.**
4. **Are there any reports indicating that this event led to the arrest of PML-Q members?**
5. **Please provide any information on the election of Shahbaz Sharif.**
6. **What is the present situation for PML-Q members, particularly in Lahore?**
7. **Have there been any reports of the targeting of PML-Q members by the PML-N?**

RESPONSE

1. **Please provide information on the candidates for Township Ward or Ward NA-127 / PP-154 for the 2008 election.**

The sources consulted provide the following information regarding National Assembly candidates for Ward NA-127 and Provincial Assembly candidates for PP-154 in the 2008 election.

i. National Assembly: Candidates for Ward NA-127 (Lahore X)

| Contesting Candidates | Party Affiliation | Votes Polled |
|-----------------------------|---|--------------|
| Chaudhry Nasir Ahmed Bhutta | Pakistan Muslim League (N) | 53602 |
| Dr.Ch.Zahid Akram Nutt | Independent | 1 |
| Dr. Abdul Rehman Shakir | Mutthida Majlis-e-Amal Pakistan (MMA) | 235 |
| Dr. Muhammad Riaz | Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians | 21698 |

| Contesting Candidates | Party Affiliation | Votes Polled |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| Rana Intizar Hussain Advocate | Independent | 126 |
| Zahir Ahmed | Independent | 225 |
| Abdul Aleem Khan | Pakistan Muslim League | 13707 |
| Aneeqa Meerai Akhtar | Independent | 1053 |
| Farooq Amjad Meer | Independent | 2277 |
| Malik Ehsan Gungial | Independent | 112 |
| Major (R) Rana Abdul Ghafar Khan | Independent | 16 |

Source: Election Commission of Pakistan 2008, ‘Search – NA-127 (Lahore-X)’, Election Commission of Pakistan website <http://www2.ecp.gov.pk/vsite/ElectionResult/Search.aspx> – Accessed 3 November 2008 – Attachment 1).

Background information regarding candidates who have previously held National Assembly seats in various wards is provided by *Daily Times* (Jabbar, Q. 2008, ‘Pakistan Decides’, *Daily Times*, 17 December

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2007%5C12%5C17%5Cstory_17-12-2007_pg7_20 – Accessed 5 November 2008 – Attachment 2) and *Dawn* (‘District Profile: Northern Punjab- Lahore’ 2008, *Dawn – Herald Election 2008*

<http://www.dawn.com/weekly/herald/herald47.htm> – Accessed 5 November 2008 – Attachment 3).

ii. Punjab Assembly: Candidates for PP-154 (Lahore XVIII)

| Contesting Candidates | Party Affiliation | Votes Polled |
|----------------------------------|---|--------------|
| Anjum Shahzad | Independent | 0 |
| Ch.Asif Ashraf | Pakistan Muslim League (N) | 0 |
| Ch.Muhammad Ramzan Ali | Independent | 0 |
| Ch. Muhammad Fiaz Bhatti | Pakistan Muslim League | 0 |
| Hafiz Qari Hafeez ur Rehman Amir | Mutthida Majlis-e-Amal Pakistan (MMA) | 0 |
| Rai Shahbaz Saddiqe | Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan | 0 |
| Sajid Sardar Joia | Independent | 0 |
| Syed Muhammad Masoom Hussain | Jamiat Ulama-e-Pakistan (Niazi) | 0 |
| Syed Mahzar Rasool Bukhari | Independent | 0 |
| Muhammad Aslam Pervaz Garra | Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians | 0 |
| Mirza Fakhar Hussain | Independent | 0 |
| Mian Nasir Ahmad | Independent | 0 |
| Maj(R) Rana Abdul Ghafar Khan | Independent | 0 |

Source: Election Commission of Pakistan 2008, ‘Search – PP-154 Lahore-XVIII’ <http://www2.ecp.gov.pk/vsite/ElectionResult/Search.aspx> – Accessed 3 November 2008 – Attachment 4).

Election proceedings were terminated following the death of PML-N candidate of PP-154 (Lahore-XVIII), Asif Ashraf, on 17 February 2008 (Election Commission of Pakistan 2008,

‘Election Proceedings Terminated Due To Death of Mr. Asif Ashraf, Contesting Candidate of PP-154 Lahore-XVIII’, Election Commission of Pakistan website, 19 February <http://www.ecp.gov.pk/content/press/feb08/19.htm> – Accessed 5 November 2008 – Attachment 5).

By-elections were held for five National Assembly constituencies and 25 constituencies of the four provincial assemblies, including PP-154 Lahore XVIII, on 26 June 2008. The seat of PP-154 Lahore XVIII was won by Syed Zaeem Hussain Qadri of PML-N.

Punjab Assembly

| | Result Status | Returned Candidate | Party Affiliation | Votes Polled |
|---------------|------------------|---|---|--------------|
| PP-10 | Announced | Mian Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif (Un-Contested) | Pakistan Muslim League (N) | 0 |
| PP-48 | Announced | Mian Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif (Un-Contested) | Pakistan Muslim League (N) | 0 |
| PP-59 | Announced | Qasim Zia | Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians | 32915 |
| PP-70 | Announced | Rana Sanaullah Khan | Pakistan Muslim League (N) | 23070 |
| PP-99 | Announced | Qaiser Iqbal Sandhu | Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians | 33943 |
| PP-118 | Announced | Major (R) Zulfiqar Ali Gondal | Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians | 20859 |
| PP-124 | Announced | Rana Shamim Ahmed Khan | Pakistan Muslim League (N) | 24994 |
| PP-141 | Announced | Mujtaba Shuja-ur-Rehman (Un-Contested) | Pakistan Muslim League (N) | 0 |
| PP-154 | Announced | Syed Zaeem Hussain Qadri | Pakistan Muslim League (N) | 8211 |
| PP-171 | Announced | Rana Muhammad Arshad | Pakistan Muslim League (N) | 22715 |
| PP-219 | Announced | Karam Dad Wahla | Independent | 38098 |
| PP-229 | Announced | Sardar Wajid Ali | Pakistan Muslim League (N) | 24989 |
| PP-243 | Announced | Sardar Zulfiqar Ali Khan Khosa | Pakistan Muslim League (N) | 27829 |
| PP-258 | Announced | Mukhdoom Zada Syed Haroon Ahmed Sultan Bukhari. | Independent | 23829 |
| PP-277 | Announced | Mian Fida Hussain | Pakistan Muslim League (N) | 32706 |
| PP-295 | Announced | Syed Abdul Qadir Gillani (Un-Contested) | Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians | 0 |

Source: Election Commission of Pakistan 2008, ‘Bye-Elections [sic] Result – Punjab Assembly’, Election Commission of Pakistan website, 26 June <http://www2.ecp.gov.pk/vsite/bye/AllResults.aspx?assemblyid=PP> – Accessed 3 November 2008 - Attachment 6).

2. Deleted.

3. Please provide any information on the killing of a PML-N candidate named Asif Ashraf.

Asif Ashraf was the Pakistan Muslim League – Nawaz candidate for PP-154 Lahore XVIII in the February 2008 elections. He was shot on 17 February 2008, a day before the elections were held. His secretary Kashif Shehzad and driver also died in the attack.

Asif Ashraf's murder is described in a report released by *The News International* on 18 February 2008, which states:

LAHORE: PML-N candidate from PP-154 Chaudhry Asif Ashraf, his secretary Kashif Shehzad and driver, who were shot by unknown assailants in Township, died in the Jinnah Hospital late Sunday night while three others were critical.

The PML-N candidate from NA-127 has confirmed the death of the three persons and stated others were in a critical condition in Jinnah and General Hospitals. Asif Ashraf was travelling with his uncle and a few bodyguards in the constituency on Sunday night, when near their election office situated at Pindi Stop, Township, some unknown assailants opened fire on them.

As a result, Ashraf, his driver, his uncle and three bodyguards sustained serious bullet wounds. The injured were taken to Jinnah Hospital where Asif, his secretary and driver died late night. PML-N candidate from the NA seat, Naseer Ahmed Bhutta, told *The News International* it was a targeted firing and the assailants escaped after committing the crime. The PP-154 is a provincial constituency which falls under NA-127, the area where PML's Abdul Aleem Khan is contesting against PML-N's Naseer Ahmed Bhutta.

A firing incident on PML-N candidate was also reported some two weeks ago in which he had a narrow escape. The SHO of Township police station said some unknown suspects had opened fires at PML-N candidate and it would be too early to ascertain about the shooters. He also expressed ignorance about death of the candidate and his driver when contacted ('PML-N candidate shot dead in Lahore' 2008, *The News International*, 18 February http://www.thenews.com.pk/top_story_detail.asp?Id=13026 – Accessed 3 November 2008 – Attachment 7).

On 21 February 2008, *Dawn* also reported Asif Ashraf's death stating:

Asif and his three partymen were gunned down in an ambush by five assailants in front of his election office on Green Town Main Road on Feb 17, a day before the general election.

The Model Town investigation police on Wednesday officially launched the investigation into the incident after freeing from the election duties on Feb 18 and 19.

DIG (Investigation) Chaudhry Tassaduq Husain, who is heading the investigation team, visited the crime scene along with other members, reviewed the scene and issued necessary directions.

Sources privy to the investigation told Dawn that though the family had not nominated any person, the police investigation included the aspects of election-related violence and Asif's possible opponents.

"Asif and his father-in-law Hakim Ali have been involved in litigation over property issues with some people, including a candidate of provincial constituency, and some cases have been traced in different police stations," sources said.

He had survived an attempt on his life on Jan 14 when some unidentified people sprayed his vehicle with bullets near Ghausia Chowk, College Road, as he was on way to UC-132 for

election campaign.

“It was a life attempt on me, but I luckily survived,” Asif Ashraf had told Dawn by phone on Jan 14 but he did not disclose the elements who wanted to kill him. It is worth mentioning that neither Asif nor his family had nominated the people in the first information reports got registered separately in police stations of Sattukatla and Township against incidents of life attempt and murder.

The DIG told Dawn that the police could not start investigation into the case due to election duties on Feb 18 and 19. “Though the assassination of Mr Asif and his colleagues is still a mystery, the police investigators have started recording statements of the witnesses and the family,” he said (‘Three injured in post-poll violence’ 2008, *Dawn*, 21 February <http://www.dawn.com/2008/02/21/nat41.htm> – Accessed 3 November 2008 – Attachment 8).

4. Are there any reports indicating that this event led to the arrest of PML-Q members?

The sources consulted provide no information regarding whether this event led to the arrest of PML-Q members or any other persons.

5. Please provide any information on the election of Shahbaz Sharif.

Background:

A biography of Shahbaz Sharif located on his official website states that Sharif was born in 1950. During his political career he has served as:

- Member of the Punjab Assembly 1988-90
- Member of the Pakistan National Assembly 1990-93
- Member of the Punjab Assembly and Opposition Leader 1993-96
- Member of the Punjab Assembly in 1997
- Chief Minister of Punjab 1997-1999

The biography further notes:

He is the younger brother of ex-prime minister of Pakistan Mian Mohammed Nawaz Sharif. As a keen businessman he played a vital role in the success of Ittefaq Group of Companies, which was founded by his father and uncles. He came into politics to follow the footsteps of his brother and “Quaid” of Pakistan Muslim League.

...He was elected as the president of Pakistan Muslim League on 3rd August 2002 while he was on exile in Saudi Arabia. In the meeting of central executive committee he was elected unopposed. The move to pass on the party leadership to Shahbaz Sharif suggests that the PML (N) still believes it is the charisma of the Sharif name which may win them votes in the elections.

He was forced to leave the country along with his family by the Military Government. He spent two years in Saudi Arabia and 6 years in London. He returned to Pakistan but was not allowed to come out of the airport and deported to Saudi Arabia. He traveled to London again and lived there until his return to Pakistan.

Mian Shahbaz Sharif was re-elected President of PML(N) for the second term on 2nd August 2006.

After winning the majority in Punjab province in 2008 elections, he is elected as the leader of the house. He is expected to take part in the by election and take the position of the Chief Minister of Punjab ('Biography' (undated), Shahbaz Sharif's Official Website <http://www.shahbazsharif.net/aboutme.htm> – Accessed 3 November 2008 – Attachment 9).

The election of Shahbaz Sharif

Provided below are a selection of reports, drawn from various sources, which offer insights into events relating to the election of Shahbaz Sharif on 26 June 2008 as well as controversial aspects surrounding this. These are noted in chronological order.

- **4 December 2007** *The Guardian* reported that Shahbaz Sharif and his brother ex-Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had been barred from contesting the February 2008 election. The report asserted that this ban was due to the Sharif brothers facing “criminal charges going back to the 1999 coup which brought Musharraf to power” (Walsh, D. 2007, ‘Opposition leader Sharif barred from fighting Pakistan election’, *The Guardian*, 4 December <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/dec/04/pakistan.declanwalsh> – Accessed 6 November 2008 – Attachment 10).
- **13 January 2008** *Dawn* reported that Shahbaz Sharif attended a meeting in Islamabad with retired brigadier Niaz Ahmad, an aide of President Pervez Musharraf, in which he was asked to take part in a national government that would govern the country until the general elections were held on 18 February. According to *Dawn*, sources in the PML-N said that Musharraf had suggested Shahbaz Sharif become “a part of the proposed government and had also proposed a ‘future role’ for Shahbaz Sharif after the elections”. Sharif is reported to have said that he would not make any decision until he spoke with his brother (Wasim, A. 2008, ‘Shahbaz “asked to join national government”’, *Dawn*, 13 January <http://www.dawn.com/2008/01/13/top1.htm> – Accessed 5 November 2008 – Attachment 11).
- **1 March 2008** a report by *Hindustan Times* stated that Shahbaz Sharif had been acquitted of his alleged involvement in the killing of five terrorism suspects during his 1997-99 tenure as the Chief Minister of Punjab. It suggested that this was the main reason for Shahbaz’s disqualification from the February 18 elections although Shahbaz denied the allegations over the years, saying these were politically motivated (‘Pakistani court acquits Nawaz Sharif’s brother’ 2008, *Hindustan Times*, 1 March <http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/StoryPage.aspx?sectionName=&id=d3be43ec-23d7-4c13-b752-ee0d7b9cbf11&&Headline=Pak+court+acquits+Sharif’s+brother> – Accessed 3 November 2008 – Attachment 12). A similar report was released by *India Express* (‘Pakistani court acquits Nawaz Sharif’s brother’ 2008, *India Express*, 1 March <http://www.expressindia.com/latest-news/Pakistani-court-acquits-Nawaz-Sharifs-brother/279016/> – Accessed 3 November 2008 – Attachment 13).
- **5 May 2008** *Thaindian News* reported that Shahbaz Sharif had filed nomination papers to contest the June by-elections from two constituencies in Lahore (‘Shahbaz

Sharif files nomination papers for by-elections' 2008, *Thaindian News*, source: Xinhua, 5 May http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/politics/shahbaz-sharif-files-nomination-papers-for-by-elections_10045320.html – Accessed 3 November 2008 – Attachment 14).

- **1 June 2008** *Agence France-Presse* (AFP) reported that Pakistan's election commission had "cleared the way for former prime minister Nawaz Sharif and his younger brother, a former chief minister, to contest June 26 by-elections.... 'All objections raised against the nomination papers of Nawaz Sharif and Shahbaz Sharif have been rejected and now they can contest by-elections,' a spokesman for the commission told AFP" ('Sharif cleared to contest Pakistan by-election: official' 2008, *Agence France-Presse*, 1 June http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5g2pN16_9QHpr8IZ3vWmZsPy1Jb9g – Accessed 3 November 2008 – Attachment 15).
- **8 June 2008** *Pakistan Times* noted that Shahbaz Sharif had taken an oath as a Member of the Punjab Assembly (Saleem, R. 2008, 'Shahbaz taken oath as MPA', *Pakistan Times*, 6 June <http://www.pak-times.com/2008/06/06/shahbaz-taken-oath-as-mpa/> – Accessed 3 November 2008 – Attachment 16).
- **12 June 2008** *Business Recorder* reported that a petition had been filed by Syed Khurram Shah, in an effort to restrain Shahbaz Sharif from taking oath as member of the Provincial Punjab assembly or participating in the assembly proceedings. The petitioner's counsel Ahmad Raza Qusari argued that "Shahbaz Sharif was alleged for having illegal assets of Rs 6,146 million and was disqualified from the general elections 2002" and that a similar matter of illegal assets was pending in the Lahore High Court (LHC). He contended that "these charges still persist as Shahbaz Sharif has not made any clarification to the RO." He further argued that "the Election Tribunal had either surpassed its limits or had not utilised its powers while declaring Shahbaz Sharif eligible to contest the elections" and therefore an interim relief should be given to the petitioner. The Supreme Court bench Thursday dismissed the petition declaring it non-maintainable (Zaman, Q. U. 2008, 'Supreme Court dismisses petition against Shahbaz', *Business Recorder*, 12 June http://www.brecorder.com/latestindex.php?latest_id=8377&cindex=21¤t_page=2 – Accessed 3 November 2008 – Attachment 17).
- **24 June 2008** *Dawn* reported that the Lahore High Court (LHC) disqualified Nawaz Sharif from contesting the by-election whilst provisionally allowing Shahbaz Sharif to continue working as the Punjab Chief Minister. "On May 5 an election tribunal comprising two LHC judges had handed down a split verdict on the objections raised against [the Sharif brothers]. Following the tribunal's decision, the Election Commission had allowed them to remain in the run" (Shakeel, S. F. 2008, 'Nawaz barred from by-poll: LHC allows Shahbaz to remain in office', *Dawn*, 24 June <http://www.dawn.com/2008/06/24/top1.htm> – Accessed 3 November 2008 – Attachment 18). Another report stated that judges turned down the request of Syed Khurram Shah to bar Shahbaz Sharif from holding his office but referred the petition to the Election Commission of Pakistan to constitute an election tribunal to decide Sharif's eligibility. ('PML-N Chief Nawaz Sharif barred from by-election' 2008, Pakistan Elections website, 24 June

<http://www.elections.com.pk/newsdetails.php?id=634> – Accessed 5 November 2008 – Attachment 19).

- **26 June 2008** Geo TV announced the results of the by-election held that day, which showed Shahbaz Sharif to have been elected unopposed to the seats of PP-10 (Rawalpindi X) and PP-48 (Bhakkar II) ('Polling for NA, PA by-polls ends, vote count begins' 2008, Geo TV website <http://www.geo.tv/By-election2008/news.html> – Accessed 3 November 2008 – Attachment 20).
- **14 October 2008** The ARY OneWorld website reported that the Supreme Court of Pakistan had re-issued notices to Nawaz Sharif and Shahbaz Sharif over the eligibility case and a hearing was scheduled for 12 November. The report noted Justice Moosa K. Leghari's remark that the Bench was also evaluating the question of "the maintainability" of the earlier made petition (see report dated 12 June 2008) ('SC re-issues notices to Sharif brothers' 2008, ARY OneWorld website, 14 October <http://www.thearynews.com/english/newsdetail.asp?nid=13799> – Accessed 3 November 2008 – Attachment 21).

6. What is the present situation for PML-Q members, particularly in Lahore?

A recent research response, dated 17 September 2008, refers to the following documents which provide information on the current situation facing PML-Q members following the 18 February 2008 election:

A 7 September 2008 article states that the "Pakistan Muslim League (Quaid-e-Azam), a party "arranged" by former Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf, is slowly vanishing from the scene, much like the dictator himself who took time to bow out" ('PML-Q begins to fade after exit of Pervez' 2008, Howrah News Service, source: *Asian Age*, 7 September <http://howrah.org/World/28457.html> – Accessed 11 September 2008 – Attachment 22).

A 14 August 2008 article states that the "PML-Q is facing an uncertain fate and there is a risk that it may evaporate right after the exit of Pervez Musharraf from the presidency, most of its leaders and MPs candidly admit" (Butt, T. 2008, 'PML-Q discusses life after Musharraf', *The News International*, 14 August http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=129907 – Accessed 11 September 2008 – Attachment 23) (RRT Research & Information 2008, *Research Response PAK33756*, 17 September- Attachment 24).

Another research response, dated 22 October 2008, draws on two recent articles in *Dawn* which provide further information on the situation:

- A September 2008 article states that "political experts believe that in the near future more PML-Q members... will either join the PPP or the PML-N" and that the PML(Q) "is facing extinction within a month of the ouster of Gen (ret'd) Musharraf". This follows the PML(Q)'s presidential candidate receiving only 44 of 126 projected votes in the September presidential election, which the article attributes to the fact that "most of the PML-Q members... have changed their loyalties in less than one month of his resignation and are now trying to prove their allegiance to their new-found friends and arch rivals of the past – Pakistan People's Party and the PML-N":

Saturday's presidential election proved to be a Waterloo for the Pakistan Muslim League-Q (PML-Q), whose numerical strength in the parliament as well as

provincial assemblies was reduced to almost one-thirds, posing a serious challenge to it in terms of maintaining its existence.

According to the unofficial results of the elections, PML-Q's candidate Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed got only 44 electoral votes even though, keeping in view the party's strength in all the assemblies and parliament, he was projected to secure 126 votes.

The result clearly shows that most of the PML-Q members, who were earlier staunch supporters of former president Gen (ret'd) Pervez Musharraf, have changed their loyalties in less than one month of his resignation and are now trying to prove their allegiance to their new-found friends and arch rivals of the past – Pakistan People's Party and the PML-N.

...The PML-Q had suffered a major blow when a strong group of about 30 parliamentarians attended the dinner hosted by Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani at the PM House on Friday evening which had been arranged to show their strength ahead of the presidential elections.

Soon after the announcement of the unofficial results, a dejected Senator Mushahid Hussain – who was the only candidate who ran an extensive campaign – alleged some foul-play in the polling held for the presidential election. On the other hand, another PML-Q MNA Sheikh Waqas Akram declared that those who had not voted for the party's candidate were "turncoats". Talking to the media, he termed the presidential election a good omen for the party, saying that now the real PML-Q would play the role of a true opposition in the parliament.

However, political experts believe that in the near future more PML-Q members will ditch the Chaudhrys of Gujrat and will either join the PPP or the PML-N, thus proving that the PML-Q was really a "King's Party" which is facing extinction within a month of the ouster of Gen (ret'd) Musharraf (Wasim, A. 2008, 'Presidential poll PML-Q's Waterloo', *Dawn*, 7 September <http://www.dawn.com/2008/09/07/nat5.htm> – Accessed 17 October 2008 – Attachment 25).

- An October 2008 report states that the PML(Q) is considering entering into a coalition with the PPP at the federal level, and could "seek the chief ministership of Punjab in return for cooperation with the PPP in the country's biggest province, where the PPP and the PML-N are together in government but remain strange bedfellows":

The PML-Q is 'inclined' to become coalition partner with the PPP at the federal level, putting aside some positive gestures lately sent by the PML-N.

Party sources told Dawn on Tuesday that the situation had reached a stage that only some major development could change the mindset of the party leadership.

Top PML-Q and the PPP leaders were in contact with each other and their outcome would be made public in near future.

...President Asif Ali Zardari phoned Shujaat and asked him that his party – the PML-Q – should join the federal government without delay.

...Although the opinion was divided at the outset, more people were supportive of cooperation with the PPP by the time the meeting came to an end.

“The mood and the body language of Shujaat showed that he won’t have any problem working with the PPP, burying the bitterness of the past”, sources said.

Some of the participants said that the PML-Q should seek the chief ministership of Punjab in return for cooperation with the PPP in the country’s biggest province, where the PPP and the PML-N are together in government but remain strange bedfellows. However, more internal party discussions on the subjects will be held later (Mumtaz, A. 2008, ‘PML-Q ‘inclined’ to join hands with PPP: PML-N monitoring situation’, *Dawn*, 1 October <http://www.dawn.com/2008/10/01/nat19.htm> – Accessed 17 October 2008 – Attachment 26) (RRT Research & Information 2008, *Research Response PAK33864*, 22 October – Attachment 27).

The sources consulted also revealed the following report released by *The News International* on 1 October 2008, in which the Punjab Governor stated that the government should establish a working relationship with PML-Q:

LAHORE: Punjab Governor Salman Taseer said on Wednesday that government should establish working relationship with Muslim League-Q and added that Q-league should be treated on equal grounds over all issues including development funds.

...The governor said he was neither satisfied nor happy over performance of Punjab government and added differences on issues were part of politics. He hoped that all issues would be resolved amicably (‘Punjab Governor for equal treatment with PML-Q’ 2008, *The News International*, 1 October <http://www.thenews.com.pk/updates.asp?id=56747> – Accessed 5 November 2008 – Attachment 28).

The sources consulted did not provide any additional information relating specifically to the situation facing PML-Q members in Lahore.

7. Have there been any reports of the targeting of PML-Q members by the PML-N?

Information regarding the targeting of PML-Q members by the PML-N is provided in the above-mentioned research response dated 22 October 2008, which states the following:

Recent press reports from Pakistan provide information indicating that, with the shift in political power and control after the 2008 elections, the PML(Q) is now experiencing a crackdown on its members and officials under the PPP-PML(N) coalition government.

A September 2008 report in *The Nation* states that the Punjab government, a coalition between the PML(N) and PPP, is cracking down on “the leaders and workers of the PML-Q” and “expediting efforts on the pending cases against some top PML-Q leaders”. The report states that the government is arresting “activists of the Wahajat Force”, the private PML(Q) militia:

Punjab government has launched a crackdown against the leaders and workers of the PML-Q, the former ruling party, which is considered as the main remnant of General Musharraf.

Sources said that apart from expediting efforts on the pending cases against some top PML-Q leaders, the Punjab government had also launched a crackdown against what is being officially described as ‘Wajahat Force’ in Gujrat district, which the PML-Q said was part of political victimisation.

The Punjab government has taken up with NWFP and AJK governments to track down the activists of the Wajahat Force who were allegedly hiding to escape their arrests in Mirpur, Muzaffarabad, Peshawar, Swat, Haripur, Abbottabad, Mansehra and Battagram districts (Malik, M. 2008, 'Parties agree to facilitate two-party system', *The Nation*, 24 September <http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Politics/25-Sep-2008/Parties-agree-to-facilitate-twoparty-system> – Accessed 20 October 2008 – Attachment 29).

Another article from September 2008, taken from the *Dawn* newspaper, provides further information about the arrests of “activists of Wajahat force” in Gujrat, Punjab, approximately 120km north of Lahore. The report claims that a PML(Q) council nazim and a district president were among those arrested “in some already registered robbery and theft cases in various areas of the district”. According to this article, a “PML-N district president...and secretary-general...denied PML N role in the police crackdown on the force”:

A search operation to arrest the activists of Wajahat force is still under way in Gujrat as a PML-Q spokesman has claimed more arrests during the last 24 hours.

Reports said Gujrat Saddar SI Amjad Husain got three-day remand from a special anti-terrorism court for the 20 activists who were arrested on Thursday during a major crackdown. Since then a number of workers had gone underground to prevent their arrests.

PML-Q spokesman and private secretary to MNA Wajahat Husain, Hameedullah Bhatti, told Dawn that former Barilla Sharif union council nazim Chaudhry Asghar, Ghewranwali UC ex-nazim Chaudhry Zulfiqar and MSF district president Zahid Bhatti were arrested on Saturday in some already registered robbery and theft cases in various areas of the district.

Police is still unable to arrest main office-bearers of the force, including its district president Shehzad Gull, a UC nazim, and tehsil president Adeel Arshad who is wanted in many other cases of heinous crimes.

Sources said Adeel Arshad had fled to Europe to avoid his arrest and many others were still at large.

They said raiding teams from Mandi Bahauddin and Gujranwala had been called as it was feared that local police had leaked information to influential activists. Sources said former Punjab chief minister Pervaiz Elahi and Wajahat Husain talked to the detained activists on cell phones of the visitors. Wajahat Husain has also constituted a free legal aid committee for the arrested workers.

Meanwhile, PML-N district president Malik Hanif Awan and secretary-general MPA Haji Nasir Mehmood in a joint statement appreciated the police operation against the Wajahat force and denied that the action was political victimisation.

They also denied PML N role in the police crackdown on the force ('Action against Wajahat force continues' 2008, *Dawn*, 21 September <http://www.dawn.com/2008/09/21/nat14.htm> – Accessed 20 October 2008 – Attachment 30).

A July 2008 report sourced from the *Newstrack India* website quotes a PML(Q) leader claiming that party leaders are “being victimised”:

Mushahid Hussain said that PML leaders and workers were being subjected to inhuman atrocities and cited the example of Altaf Unnar and his son. He also alleged that the Shirazis of Thatta and PML-Q leaders in other districts were also being victimised ('Gilani's a 'government in exile' run by Zardari, alleges PML-Q' 2008, *Newstrack India* (source: *ANI*), 23 July <http://www.newstrackindia.com/newsdetails/7959> – Accessed 17 October 2008 – Attachment 31).

A May 2008 report in *Dawn* provides detail on allegations of threats against an independent candidate in the coming by-elections, who was accompanied at a press conference by senior PML(Q) figures, and also states that the candidate "had not approached police to seek protection". Also quoted are allegations from a PML(Q) source that "PML-Q's candidates for various seats in Bhakkar, Rawalpindi and Lahore were being harassed and forced to withdraw their nominations":

A day after the PML-N released an alleged phone tape implicating PML-Q leaders in a plot against the Sharif brothers' candidature in the coming by-elections, the former ruling party has made public the recording of a couple of threatening phone calls allegedly made to a candidate contesting against former chief minister Shahbaz Sharif.

Naeem Shahzad, an independent candidate for a provincial assembly seat in Lahore, said at a press conference that he had recorded the calls made to his cellphone on Monday, but he had been harassed for several days. He was accompanied by Punjab PML-Q secretary-general Chaudhry Zaheer and former law minister Basharat Raja.

A recording of the calls was also played on the occasion.

Sources said Mr Shahzad had not approached police to seek protection or taken legal action on the matter, but had sought the help of some rivals of the Sharif brothers.

...He alleged that PML-Q's candidates for various seats in Bhakkar, Rawalpindi and Lahore were being harassed and forced to withdraw their nominations.

...He alleged that PML-Q candidate Ikhtlaq Ahmed Guddoo had withdrawn from the contest against the PML-N chief under pressure (Mahmood, A. 2008, 'PML-Q's tit for tat: Phone bugging', *Dawn*, 28 May <http://www.dawn.com/2008/05/28/top6.htm> – Accessed 17 October 2008 – Attachment 32).

A May 2008 report from the *GEO.tv* news website (which claims that Altaf Unnar is a member of the PML-N, while all other reports located name Unnar as a PML-Q leader) states that a leading PML(Q) figure had his nomination papers for the by-election rejected because he failed to appear before a returning officer because he was being held in detention:

Pakistan Muslim League-N leader Altaf Unnar has filed appeal in Sindh High Court against rejection of his nomination papers for contesting by-polls from NA-207.

The appeal challenges the decision of the concerned returning officer who rejected the nomination papers for Altaf Hussain Unnar's not appearing before him.

Under the rules it is mandatory for a candidate to appear before concerned returning officer while it is also a right of every citizen to participate in the elections.

But, Altaf Unnar failed to appear before the returning officer because of his detention due under various cases ('Unnar files appeal against rejection of papers' 2008,

GEO.tv website, 16 May <http://www.geo.tv/5-16-2008/18194.htm> – Accessed 20 October 2008 – Attachment 33).

An April 2008 report from The Pakistani Spectator blog website identifies Unnar as “a prominent leader of PML-Q in Sindh”, and quotes a PML(Q) spokesperson who claims that “this is one of the many steps taken by PPP government in Sindh to victimise the PML-Q workers and leaders”. The author of the blog entry concludes that “given the political vendetta history of Pakistan, this seems yet another round of political victimisation”:

Former provincial minister for power and relief, a prominent leader of PML-Q in Sindh and an old adversary of Zardari family has been arrested and put on body remand of 5 days.

According to the media reports, He was arrested in a case lodged with the Budhapur police on the complaint of MNA of Pakistan People’s Party, Dr. Azra Pechuho, the sister of PPP co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari. Earlier police had refused to lodge the case for which an order was passed by concerned additional district and sessions judge on application filed under sections 22-A Cr.PC by Dr. Azra. The application was filed after the MNA allegedly came under firing on February 10, 2007 in a clash outside a polling station in Budhapur during by-elections of PS-71.

According to the PML-Q spokesperson this is one of the many steps taken by PPP government in Sindh to victimise the PML-Q workers and leaders and they have produced a list of 2000 cases registered against their workers throughout Sindh.

This is pretty much alarming. If anybody has committed any sin, then he or she should be punished but given the political vendetta history of Pakistan, this seems yet another round of political victimisation (Khan, A. 2008, ‘Altaf Unnar of PML-Q Under Arrest’, The Pakistani Spectator blog website, 18 April <http://www.pakspectator.com/altaf-unnar-of-pml-q-under-arrest/> – Accessed 20 October 2008 – Attachment 34) (RRT Research & Information 2008, *Research Response PAK33864*, 22 October – Attachment 27).

An earlier research response, dated 17 September 2008, also provides information on claims of victimisation voiced by PML-Q members following the 2008 elections:

A 15 September 2008 article in *The Nation* reports on claims by “PML-Q President Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain” who states that ““PML-Q legislators, workers and office-bearers are being targeted in Sindh and Punjab provinces” (‘Pervaiz Elahi resigns as Opposition Leader’ 2008, *The Nation*, 15 September <http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Politics/15-Sep-2008/Pervaiz-Elahi-resigns-as-Opposition-Leader> – Accessed 15 September 2008 – Attachment 35).

A 13 September 2008 article states that PML-Q supporters submitted to the Sindh High Court that “since the change of provincial government, they are being harassed and implicated in false cases by the police to change their loyalties”. In response to the petition, “Sindh Additional Advocate General Abdul Fatah Malik told the...bench that police officials will not harass PML-Q supporters in Thatta and act strictly in accordance with the law to dispose of pending criminal cases” (‘Electricity for the burnt Tahir Plaza’ 2008, *Daily Times*, 13 September http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C09%5C13%5Cstory_13-9-2008_pg12_8 – Accessed 15 September 2008 – Attachment 36).

A PML-Q leader appears to have been targeted in Kabal in the Swat Valley (North West Frontier Province (NWFP)). On 1 September 2008 *The Daily Mail* reported that in Kabal

“Four houses of PML-Q leader Haroon Rashid family” were blown up by militants. On 28 August 2008, the South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP) reported that “one Sikandar Khan, grandson of PML-Q leader, Haroon Rasheed, sustained bullet injuries while his servant Muhammad Qayyum died instantly when unidentified gunmen opened fire on his car in the Koza Bandai area of Kabal sub-division. Further, a passer-by, Ali Rehman, was killed while another was wounded after being caught in the crossfire when the relatives of the PML-Q leader retaliated” (‘Militants blow up houses of PML-Q leader’ 2008, *Daily News*, 1 September <http://dailymailnews.com/200809/01/news/dmheadlinepage01.html> – Accessed 11 September 2008 – Attachment 37; ‘Detail of Terrorism Update: Thursday, August 28, 2008’ 2008, South Asia Terrorism Portal website, 28 August http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/detailed_news3.asp?date3=2008%2F08%2F28#5 – Accessed 11 September 2008 – Attachment 38).

A 22 July 2008 article found on the PML(Q) website states: “Chaudhry Shujaat [party president]...alleged that the PPP had unleashed a reign of terror against PML-Q leaders and workers”, that they were being “victimized” and “subjected to inhuman atrocities”. This appears to be referring to PML-Q leaders and workers in Sindh (Malik, A. 2008, ‘PML-Q leaders call it a “government in exile”’, Pakistan Muslim League (Q) website, source: *Daily Dawn*, 22 July <http://www.pml.org.pk/Details.aspx?id=b48a87bd-619a-4c68-a0ab-75b3dd9bf086&cha=1&cat=1&subcat=1> – Accessed 11 September 2008 – Attachment 39).

A *Washington Times* article reports that former PML-Q minister for parliamentary affairs, Afgan Niazi, was assaulted by lawyers in April 2008. On the following day protests over the treatment of Niazi escalated into violent clashes in Karachi between government supporters and opponents, leaving seven people dead (Khan, A. 2008, ‘7 Dead After Pro-Musharraf Lawyers Clash With Opponents in Pakistan’, *Washington Post*, 10 April <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/04/09/AR2008040900902.html> – Accessed 11 September 2008 – Attachment 40) (RRT Research & Information 2008, *Research Response PAK33756*, 17 September – Attachment 24).

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