



PAKISTAN

Current Human Rights & Political Persecution Overview
and Evidences

Danny Coulson | Former Deputy Assistant Director of the FBI | January 2024



BACKGROUND

My name is Danny O. Coulson, I am a citizen of the United States of America and reside in the state of Texas. By way of background I served in the Federal Bureau of Investigation for over thirty years. The Director of the FBI, William Webster appointed me as the Agent In Charge of the Iran Contra Investigation where he was later detailed to the Office of the Independent Counsel. I was responsible for all aspects of that investigation. During my services I attained the position of Deputy Assistant Director where I was responsible for all terrorism, and violent crime investigations for the FBI. A copy of my resume is attached.

I have conducted a review of the current situation in Pakistan as it pertains to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (“PTI”) party and former Prime Minister Imran Khan at the request of members of the Pakistani American Diaspora group who are US citizens.

This report is based on video, news, and the private testimony of 25 victims and their families. For those testifying, their names and testimony must remain protected for both their privacy and physical safety.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In my country it is ingrained in our culture that the military is absolutely prohibited from engaging in civilian law enforcement activities. We see the involvement of the military in civilian affairs as a threat to both democracy and personal liberty. We are seeing that concern playing out in Pakistan where the military is actively participating in civil affairs including the legislature (parliament), criminal justice system, civil demonstrations, civil incarcerations, and business affairs. The Pakistan National Assembly passed a Constitution in 1973 and it has been amended periodically, the last being 2012. It provides for limitations upon the government and protections for its citizens. In fact, the military has used its power to circumvent those protections.

Attached to this document is an appendix with exhibits that details how the military has circumvented civil law and has oppressed the people of Pakistan. This review is only a very small part of the story. The attached exhibits are products of the individuals who lived through this situation. They are powerful and frightening.

It is noted that the military decision to prosecute civilian protestors under military law is proof that the military is usurping civilian law and due process.

Pakistan’s police have fired on and used excessive force against protestors following the arrest of Imran Khan. According to Human Rights Watch, *“The government’s cutting of mobile internet services, and restrictions on access to Twitter, Facebook, and other social media platforms, is overbroad and indiscriminate in violation of basic rights”*.¹

This action has adversely impacted the ability of journalists to upload photos and videos that document government overreach. International human rights law prohibits broad and indiscriminate restrictions on fundamental rights.

¹ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/05/11/pakistan-excessive-force-against-violent-khan-protests>

Thousands of Khan's political party, PTI, have been arrested and forced to give statements against Imran Khan. Those that did so were not only released but were pushed to join the newly formed political parties by the Military. Those that refused were kept in custody.

It is clear that the military has no respect for civil authority. This is demonstrated by the arrest of Khan at the offices of the Islamabad High Court on May 9th by Army Rangers. What justification is there for military intervention in the operations of the Court System? It is noted that Khan had presented himself for bail to the Court. Khan and his supporters believe that this operation was in fact a "False Flag" operation designed to cast dispersion on the PTI party. Was this a deliberate attempt to incite protest of this unprecedented event to cast dispersion on PTI? The violent nature of his arrest was sure to incite demonstrations. It should be noted that the law provides that it is unlawful to arrest anybody from the court when an individual has surrendered to the court of law. The law in Pakistan does not contain much weight when it is in conflict with the views of the military.

TIMELINE

April 2022 - Vote of No-Confidence

Former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan, was removed from office in April 2022, following a vote of no-confidence led by the opposition parties Pakistan Democratic Movement ("PDM"), Pakistan Peoples Party ("PPP"), and the Pakistani military.

This vote of no-confidence followed PM Khan's announcement that he had a copy of a diplomatic cable (dubbed the "Cypher") dated March 7th, 2022, which according to a transcript obtained by The Intercept, outlines a luncheon meeting between US Assistant Secretary of State Donald Lu and Pakistan's then-Ambassador Asad Majeed Khan. This Cypher outlines the concerns that the State Department had with PM Khan's "*aggressively neutral position*" on Ukraine and that "*...if the no-confidence vote against the Prime Minister succeeds, all will be forgiven in Washington...*"²

These statements by the State Department to Ambassador Asad Majeed Khan created the pretext for the unilateral dismissal of the initial motion of no-confidence on April 7th, 2022 by Deputy Speaker Qasim Khan Suri, citing "foreign interference." This dismissal was overturned by the Supreme Court, with political coverage from the Pakistani military, on April 10, 2022, just three days after the dismissal.

November 2022 - Assassination Attempt

On November 3rd, 2022, thousands of individuals from various parts of Pakistan converged in Wazirabad heading towards Islamabad to express their support for Imran Khan. They were demanding early elections and exercising their right to peaceful protest, prompted by what they perceived as a coup against their democratically elected Prime Minister. During this demonstration, Imran Khan was shot in an assassination attempt where several other PTI leaders were also injured. This incident served as a catalyst for the subsequent protests in Lahore cantonment area .

During the November 3 protests, the Pakistani military blocked several entry points using military personnel, vehicles, and armored tanks. This "blockade" prohibited the protestors from entering the military cantonment area.

² <https://theintercept.com/2023/08/09/imran-khan-pakistan-cypher-ukraine-russia/>

May 9th - Political Persecution

On May 9, 2023, Imran Khan was arrested at the direction of retired army Lieutenant General Nazir Ahmad Butt who appears to have been appointed to the National Accountability Bureau (“NAB”) to pursue PM Khan. The arrest was executed by the Director General of Rangers who holds an active position in the Pakistani military hierarchy, further underscoring the military’s involvement in the perceived coup. Furthermore, following the arrest, PM Khan’s legal and security teams were left unconscious as a result of the military’s aggressive arrest.

Following his arrest, thousands of PTI supporters gathered around the country in protest of the arrest. The Pakistani government designated these protests as “riots” which allowed the military to aggressively pursue members of the PTI party, regardless of their involvement in any protests.

Similarly to the November 3, 2022 protests, the military and government were aware of the protests, the main protest was held in the same location, and the PTI supporters and members had the objective of peacefully protesting.

The main difference between the November 3, 2022, and May 9, 2023 protests, was the lack of official military participation and/or intervention in these protests. There is evidence of military troops in “plain clothes” blending into the protests to incite violence, the deliberate removal of security layers allowing the protestors to enter the cantonment area, and the withholding of CCTV footage from critical areas.

Following these May 9th, 2023 protests, thousands of PTI leaders, workers, and supporters were arrested and multiple human rights groups have raised concerns regarding unjust arrests, custodial torture, forced disappearances, and harrasment by military and intelligence forces.³

ANALYSIS

Careful analysis reveals that within Pakistan, the manner of removal of PM Imran Khan, subsequent repeated crackdowns against public protests by paramilitaries, murder and torture of journalists, assassination attempt against Imran Khan, and the unprecedented persecution against May 9 protests after the violent arrest of Imran Khan were all connected to the March 7, 2022 Cypher that outlined the meeting between the US Assistant Secretary of State, Donald Lu and Pakistan’s then Ambassador Asad Majeed Khan and can be summarised in the following excerpt from Cypher:

“...if the no-confidence vote against the Prime Minister succeeds, all will be forgiven in Washington...”

Thorough examination of the evidence, and sequence of events, since Imran Khan’s removal from office suggest that the violence on May 9th, 2023, constituted a coordinated effort between the Pakistani military, its controlled civilian bureaucracy and the then PDM government that was put in place by the military in April 2022, amidst the ongoing Cypher controversy. The abysmal failure of the US State Department to appropriately condemn these sequence of events and gross human right violations have unfortunately strengthened the belief within Pakistan that regime change and the persecution that followed was done with the approval and blessings of the United States. Feelings that are developing are akin to what prevailed before the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran.

³ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2423227/102-people-in-army-custody-over-may-9-mayhem-agp>



This coordinated effort gave political coverage to the political opponents of PTI and emboldened the direct threats against PM Khan as seen from comments made by Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah on March 27, 2023 where he said⁴:

“there will be ‘no normalcy or political stability’ in the country so long as the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party chief ‘exists’.”

The evidences of coordinated military and political interventions against PM Imran Khan are seen in thousands of repeated arrests, abductions, abuse of families and children, use of torture, against political workers, journalists and media executives over the course of past 23 months. Pakistan’s court system is now totally dysfunctional, civil liberties are curbed and internet access is repeatedly shut down to block access to X(Twitter) Facebook, YouTube & other global networks. We are clearly seeing an undeclared martial law that is set to rule Pakistan, in a military dictatorship, through planted governments as show pieces.

In order to re-establish a free and fair democracy in Pakistan, it is my recommendation that an independent inquiry by an international organization must be conducted. This is the only way to ensure that these human rights violations cease and a rule of law is re-established in the country.

Danny Coulson

⁴<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/3/27/either-imran-khan-exists-or-we-do-says-pakistan-home-minister>

APPENDIX

#	NAME	INTERVIEW/ PRESS CONFERENCE DATE	DEPARTURE	EVIDENCE
1	Mehmood Moulvi	17 th May 2023	Joined IPP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - https://dawn.com/news/1753789 - https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2023/06/23/pti-deserter-mahmood-molvi-made-ipp-sindh-president/
2	Aamer Kiani	17 th May 2023	Joined IPP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - https://www.app.com.pk/national/amir-kiani-quits-pti-politics-as-well/ - https://www.brecorder.com/news/40242646
3	Malik Amin Aslam	18 th May 2023	Quit PTI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - https://tribune.com.pk/story/2417409/malik-amin-aslam-another-pti-leader-jump-ship - https://www.brecorder.com/news/40242857

4	Dr Mohammad Amjad	18 th May 2023	Quit PTI	- https://www.dawn.com/news/1754304
5	Sanjay Gagwani	18 th May 2023	Quit PTI	- https://thefrontierpost.com/pti-mpa-sanjay-gangwani-also-announces-to-quit-his-party/
6	Dr. Imran Ali Shah	18 th May 2023	Quit PTI	- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iPrI0mk8vp8
7	Jai Prakash	19 th May 2023	Quit PTI	- https://www.nation.com.pk/19-May-2023/former-mna-jai-prakash-becomes-seventh-pti-leader-to-part-ways-with-party
8	Dr Hisham Malik	19 th May 2023	Quit PTI	- https://www.geo.tv/latest/489164-here-is-a-list-of-pti-leaders-who-quit-party-up-till-now
9	Iqbal Wazir	19 th May 2023	Quit PTI	- https://www.dawn.com/news/1754363
10	Mubeen Khilji	19 th May 2023	Quit PTI	- https://dunyanews.tv/en/Pakistan/725052-Mubeen-Khilji-becomes-latest-to-leave-PTI-following-May-9-riots--QUETTA-

11	Usman Tarakai	20 th May 2023	Quit PTI	- https://www.brecorder.com/news/40243422
12	Ajmal Wazir	20 th May 2023	Quit PTI	- https://www.nation.com.pk/21-May-2023/ajmal-wazir-quits-pti
13	Aftab Siddiqui	21 st May 2023	Quit PTI	- https://tribune.com.pk/story/2417968/pti-karachi-head-mna-aftab-siddiqui-quits
14	Faizullah Kamoka	22 nd May 2023	Quit PTI	- https://www.nation.com.pk/22-May-2023/faizullah-kamoka-parts-ways-with-pti
15	Chaudhry Wajahat Hussain	22 nd May 2023	Quit Politics	- https://dunyanews.tv/en/Pakistan/725768-Ch-Wajahat-Hussain-announces-departure-from-PTI
16	Shireen Mazari	23 rd May 2023	Quit PTI	- https://www.dawn.com/news/1755265
17	Fayyaz-ul-hassan Chohan	23 rd May 2023	Quit PTI	- https://tribune.com.pk/story/2418221/fayyaz-chohan-quits-pti-over-partys-policy-of-violence

18	Jaleel Sharaquri	23 rd May 2023	Quit PTI	- https://dunyanews.tv/en/Pakistan/726010-PTI%E2%80%99s-Jalil-Sharaquri-announces-to-jump-ship
19	Abdul Razaq Niazi	23 rd May 2023	Quit PTI	- https://www.dawn.com/news/1755246
20	Bilal Ghaffar	23 rd May 2023	Quit PTI	- https://www.brecorder.com/news/40243733
21	Omar Omari	23 rd May 2023	Quit PTI	- https://thefrontierpost.com/baryar-bilal-omari-sharaquri-also-quit-pti/
22	Fawad Chaudhry	24 th May 2023	Quit Politics but attended IPP launch	- https://www.24newshd.tv/22-Oct-2023/fawad-ch-rejoins-ipp-after-meeting-with-jahagir-tareen
23	Senator Abdul Qadir	25 th May 2023	Quit PTI	- https://twitter.com/MurtazaViews/status/1661792221220286464

24	Maleeka Bokhari	25 th May 2023	Quit PTI	- https://dunyanews.tv/en/Pakistan/726583-PTI%E2%80%99s-Maleeka-Bokhari-quits-PTI-as-he-gets-out-of-jail-
25	Makhdoom Iftikharulhasan Gillani	25 th May 2023	Quit PTI	- https://www.brecorder.com/news/40272020
26	Khawaja Qutab Koreja	25 th May 2023	Quit PTI	- https://thefridaytimes.com/23-May-2023/ex-mna-khawaja-ghulam-rasool-koreja-quits-pti-joins-ppp
27	Jamshed Cheema	25 th May 2023	Quit PTI	- https://www.brecorder.com/news/40244236/jamshed-cheema-his-wife-musarrat-quit-pti
28	Musarrat Cheema	25 th May 2023	Quit PTI	- https://www.brecorder.com/news/40244236/jamshed-cheema-his-wife-musarrat-quit-pti
29	Senator Saifullah Khan	26 th May 2023	Quit PTI	- https://www.dawn.com/news/1755982/senator-saifullah-nyazee-parts-ways-with-pti











30	Abrar ul Haq	26 th May 2023	Quit PTI	- https://www.dawn.com/news/1755985
31	Murad Ras	26 th May 2023	Quit PTI	- https://www.samaa.tv/208734960-dozens-from-pti-to-join-ipp-t-his-week-murad-raas
32	Khurram Shehzad	26 th May 2023	Quit PTI	- https://dunyanews.tv/en/Pakistan/726841-PTI%E2%80%99s-Khurram-Shahzad-calls-it-quit-
33	Ali Haider Zaidi	27 th May 2023	Quit PTI	- https://www.dawn.com/news/1756178
34	Imran Ismail	27 th May 2023	Joined IPP	- https://thefrontierpost.com/imran-ismail-declares-mqm-to-be-key-contender-of-ipp-in-karachi/
35	Khusro Bakhtiar	27 th May 2023	Quit PTI	- https://tribune.com.pk/story/2418815/ali-zaidi-khushro-bakhtiar-also-part-ways-with-pti
36	Hashim Dogar	27 th May 2023	Quit PTI	- https://www.nation.com.pk/16-Aug-2023/col-hashim-dogar-joins-ipp

37	Raja Khurram Nawaz	27 th May 2023	Quit PTI	- https://www.dawn.com/news/1756197/ex-mna-raj-khurr-nawaz-others-quit-pti
38	Malik Jawad Hussain	2 nd June 2023	Joined IPP	- https://www.dawn.com/news/1754429
39	Ghulam Sarwar Khan	22 nd June 2023	Quit PTI	- https://www.dawn.com/news/1761140
40	Usman Dar	4 th October 2023	Quit Politics	- https://www.dawn.com/news/1779400
41	Sadaqat Ali Abbasi	9 th October 2023	Quit politics	- https://www.nation.com.pk/10-Oct-2023/pti-leader-sadaqat-abbasi-leaves-party-blames-imran-for-may-9-events
42	Farrukh Habib	16 th October 2023	Joined IPP	- https://tribune.com.pk/story/2441388/farrukh-habib-resurfaces-quits-pti

43	Andleeb Abbas	24 th October 2023	Joined IPP	- https://www.samaa.tv/208733197-andleeb-abbas-among-three-ex-pti-mpas-join-ipp
44	Asad Umer	11 th November 2023	Quit Politics	- https://tribune.com.pk/story/2445888/asad-umar-resigns-from-pti-completely-quits-politics
45	Zulfiqar Ali Khan Dullah	14 th November 2023	Quit PTI	- https://www.dawn.com/news/1789428
46	Ali Nawaz Awan	19 th November 2023	Joined IPP	- https://www.dawn.com/news/1790806
47	Sardar Asif Nakai	19 th November 2023	Joined IPP	- https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1130744-ali-nawaz-asif-nakai-quit-pti-join-tareen-s-ipp
48	Arbab Ghulam Rahim	30 th November 2023	Joined GDA	- https://24newshd.tv/27-May-2023/arbab-ghulam-rahim-is-likely-to-quit-pti
49	Liaqat Ali Jatoi	6 th December 2023	Joined GDA	- https://www.dawn.com/news/1796018

50	Wasiq Qayyum Abbasi	7 th December 2023	Quit politics	- https://www.samaa.tv/208735849-pti-s-ex-deputy-speaker-wasiq-qayyum-quits-party
51	Shauqat Tareen	8 th December 2023	Quit Politics	- https://www.nation.com.pk/09-Dec-2023/shaukat-tareen-quits-pti-senate-seat
52	Humayun Akhtar Khan	22nd June 2023	Joined IPP	- https://tribune.com.pk/story/2423057/humayun-akhtar-parts-ways-with-pti
53	Syed Faizul Hassan Shah	19 th December 2023	Quit PTI	- https://www.dawn.com/news/1799327/two-ex-mpas-reappear-quit-pti
54	Chaudhry Muhammad Arshad	19 th December 2023	Quit politics	- https://www.dawn.com/news/1799327/two-ex-mpas-reappear-quit-pti
55	Zulfiqar Ali Shah	20 th May 2023	Quit PTI	- https://www.radio.gov.pk/20-05-2023/syed-zulfiqar-ali-shah-quits-pti

56	Saeed ul hasan shah	22 nd May 2023	Joined IPP	- https://arynews.tv/ptis-former-mpa-from-punjab-quits-party/amp/
57	Usman Buzdar	2 nd of June 2023	Quit PTI	- https://www.deccanherald.com/world/ex-pak-punjab-cm-usman-buzdar-latest-pti-leader-to-quit-politics-1224280.html
58	Col (R) Anwar	29 th Nov 2023	Joined IPP	- https://dunyanews.tv/amp/english/774037.php
59	Ch Azeem	26 th Oct 2023	Quit politics	- https://pothwar.com/news/2023/10/25/gujar-khan-chaudhry-mohammad-azeem-announces-to-part-with-pti-because-of-imran-khans-anti-establishment-views/
60	Ch Sajid Mehmood	30 th Oct 2023	Quit politics	- https://dunyanews.tv/en/Pakistan/766502-PTI%E2%80%99s-Sajid-Mehmood-announces-to-leave-party