



Pakistanis Say Musharraf Resignation Would Improve Stability

A majority of Pakistanis (64 per cent) say that stability and security in Pakistan would get better “if President Musharraf were to resign now,” according to a new poll conducted by GlobeScan for BBC Urdu. One in four (25 per cent) respondents believes that security would get “worse” if he were to resign.

Nearly a third (29 per cent) of respondents regard Pervez Musharraf’s election as President last November as “valid”; while around half (49 per cent) say it is “invalid” (22 per cent did not provide an answer).

Almost two out of three Pakistanis (63 per cent) agree that the “National Assembly should seek to reinstate Iftikhar Chaudhry as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court” following the general election. While 19 per cent of respondents say the Assembly should not seek Chaudhry’s reinstatement.

The poll of a nationally representative sample of 1,476 Pakistanis aged above 18 was conducted by Gallup Pakistan using in-home interviews from 27 to 28 January 2008. Detailed results of the poll are available on the special Election 2008 microsite on the BBC Urdu website, bbcUrdu.com

Asked about the assassination of Benazir Bhutto, 16 per cent - believe the Pakistani government’s contention that the Pakistani Taliban leader Baitullah Mehsud and his al-Qaeda linked network are responsible. The largest number - 39 per cent - believes that “the Pakistani security agencies or people linked to them” are responsible. Twenty-four per cent say that some other party is responsible. While 21 per cent percent say they do not know. (*The poll was taken before the release of the Scotland Yard report largely affirming the Pakistan government’s account of how Bhutto died.*)

Looking ahead, Pakistanis are divided about whether the general elections scheduled for 18 February will be “free and fair.” Forty-four per cent say they are “very” (11 per cent) or “somewhat” (33 per cent) confident that they will be free and fair. Forty-six per cent say they are “not very confident” (27 per cent) or “not at all confident” (19 per cent).

Around half of Pakistanis polled show a level of optimism that the situation in Pakistan will improve over the next six months. Fifty-one per cent say they are “very optimistic” (16%) or “somewhat optimistic” (35%) that conditions will improve. In contrast, 39 per cent say they are pessimistic; 19 per cent saying they are “very pessimistic” and 20 per cent agreeing they are “somewhat pessimistic”.

GlobeScan President Doug Miller, who worked with the Program on International Policy Attitudes at the University of Maryland to develop and analyze the poll, says, “While many Western governments have supported President Musharraf in the belief that he offers the only hope of a stable Pakistan, average citizens in the country disagree with this assessment in large numbers.”

Regional Variations

There were a number of variations among provinces. The belief that Musharraf’s resignation would help to stabilize the country was held by majorities in all provinces, though in Sindh, the majority was not as strong (56 per cent believe the country would stabilize).

The belief that Pakistani security agencies or those close to them are responsible for Benazir Bhutto’s death was strongest in the Northwest Frontier Province (48 per cent) and in Sindh (46 per cent), and weakest in Baluchistan (30 per cent).

Sindh was the least optimistic (38 per cent) that conditions in the country would improve in the next six months and Baluchistan was the most optimistic (76 per cent). Punjab and NWFP (53 per cent each optimistic) were similar to the country overall.

Gallup Pakistan conducted 1,476 face-to-face, in-home interviews on January 27 and 28, 2008 across four provinces, including urban and rural locations in each province (details given below). The sample was weighted based on geography, the urban/rural ratio, and key demographics to reflect the distribution of the national population.

Provincial Breakdown:

Punjab	n=808	(55%)
Sindh	n=365	(25%)
NWFP	n=201	(14%)
Baluchistan	n=102	(7%)

Location Breakdown:

Cities (<i>Population 500,000 plus</i>)	n=818	(55%)
Towns (<i>Population 5,000 plus</i>)	n=418	(28%)
Villages	n=240	(16%)

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The Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) is a joint program of the Center on Policy Attitudes and the Center for International and Security Studies at the University of Maryland. PIPA undertakes research on attitudes in publics around the world on a variety of international issues and publishes the website/webzine WorldPublicOpinion.org.

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Questionnaire

Political Situation

Q1: Would you say you are optimistic or pessimistic that the situation in Pakistan will improve over the next six months? Would you say you are very or somewhat _____?

- a) Very optimistic
 - b) Somewhat optimistic
 - c) Somewhat pessimistic
 - d) Very pessimistic
- VOLUNTEERED
? Don't know / No answer

Musharraf

Q2: Do you regard last November's election of Pervez Musharraf as President as valid or invalid?

- a) Valid
- b) Invalid

VOLUNTEERED
? Don't know / No answer

Q3: If President Musharraf resigned now, do you think that stability and security in Pakistan would get better or worse? Would you say a lot _____ or somewhat _____?

- a) A lot better
- b) Somewhat better
- c) Somewhat worse
- d) A lot worse

VOLUNTEERED

? Don't know / No answer

Election

Q4t: Assuming that there are general elections as scheduled, how confident are you that they will be free and fair?

- a) Very confident
- b) Somewhat confident
- c) Not very confident
- d) Not at all confident

VOLUNTEERED

? Don't know / No answer