



Observation of General Election 2013:

Key Findings and Recommendations

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Free and Fair Election Network
www.fafen.org

Executive Summary

Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) issued three short statements on Election Day, May 11, 2013, and a preliminary statement and report the day after the elections. The following report includes additional analysis of summary data received from more than 40,000 observers across the country.

The ten themes in this report include voter turnout, barriers to women's voting, irregularities in polling stations during voting and counting procedures, and weak election results management. The report also includes sections on last-minute changes in polling schemes; pre-election violence, government interference and Code of Conduct violations; and constituency delimitations.

The following analysis is still preliminary and does not represent FAFEN's final analysis, which will be based on aggregation of comprehensive checklists filled by hand on Election Day in a statistically-valid random sample of 9,160 polling stations by more than 25,000 static observers and about 15,000 additional mobile observers each visiting 2-4 polling stations.

FAFEN's final analysis also will depend on the extent to which the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) transparently releases official forms from all 69,801 polling stations and all 272 National Assembly (NA) constituencies around the country, as urged by both FAFEN and the European Union Election Observation Mission (EUEOM) in public statements.

Key Findings

1. Voter Turnout

General Election 2013 witnessed voter turnout that was considerably higher than elections held previously in the country since 1985. Analysis of unofficial results of 263 out of 272 NA constituencies suggests that 53.4% of registered voters nationally turned out to vote for candidates contesting NA seats. However, accurate voter turnout can only be analyzed when ECP releases Form XIV (Statement of the Count), Form XV (Ballot Paper Account), Form VI (Consolidation Statement of the Results of the Count) and Form XVII (Result of the Count) for full public scrutiny.

For the first time in Pakistan, ECP introduced specific amendments to the Statement of the Count to measure the sex-disaggregated voter turnout for General Election 2013. However, according to FAFEN assessment of 264 Statements of the Count from 26 constituencies, the Presiding Officers at as many as two-thirds of polling stations did not fill out the specific sections of the form correctly, raising concern that ECP may not be able to provide accurate sex-disaggregated turnout.

2. Barriers to Women's Voting

FAFEN observers reported a total of 15 incidents in which women were barred from voting by under implicit understanding among candidates and community leaders. Most of these cases were reported in Punjab, where 10 incidents of expressed intention of men to bar women from voting were recorded in Khanewal (4), Faisalabad (3), Sahiwal (2), and Kasur (1). In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, barring women from voting was observed in four districts, namely Peshawar, Buner, Kohat and Lower Dir. In FATA, one such case was reported from North Waziristan Agency. No cases of women being barred from voting were reported from Balochistan or Sindh.

3. Weak Polling Station Management

Based on FAFEN's data analysis so far, no significant improvement was witnessed in polling station management comparing General Elections in 2008 and 2013. Predictable irregularities

continued, including interference in voting by polling officials and unauthorized people in polling booths and stations.

FAFEN has analyzed summary data sent on May 11 and 12, 2013, by observers deployed at 6,314 polling stations. A total of 1,492 irregularities were reported from 1,181 of the reporting polling stations. Some of these irregularities are relatively minor, but some have the potential of creating conducive environment for Election Day fraud.

These irregularities were reported from all provinces. At least 291 of these irregularities, most of which were recorded in Punjab, were related to changes in polling schemes. A high number of violent incidents (288) were also reported from across the country; however, most of these were also seen in Punjab.

FAFEN observers were restricted from carrying out their duties in 226 polling stations, while at least 106 incidences of interference by security/other officials and 123 incidents of illegal or fraudulent voting were observed.

Most importantly, the procedures for counting ballots and votes in polling stations remain chaotic and non-transparent. In particular, FAFEN is beginning to scrutinize polling station Statements of the Count (Form XIV) gathered by observers, which have errors and irregularities. These irregularities could be indications or electoral fraud.

In a review of the 264 Statements of the Count shared with FAFEN observers by presiding officers for 26 NA constituencies, on 86 Statements, the presiding officer did not fill properly the number of registered voters assigned to that polling station. As many as 41 Statements of the Count have an incorrect total of valid votes for each candidate with minor differences. In 114 Statements of the Count the percentage of invalid ballots was more than 3%. In 12 cases, the invalid ballots amounted to more than 10% of polled votes. In one case, invalid ballots amounted to one fourth of the total polled votes.

4. Weak Management of Election Results

All forms from all polling stations in the constituency must be carefully reviewed and, if necessary, investigated by Returning Officers openly in the presence of candidates (or their representatives) and accredited observers on election night. Data from each polling station should be added on a flipchart or board within view of these stakeholders. Both polling station forms and consolidation of election result forms must be transmitted promptly to ECP. None of these steps are currently followed consistently or well, according to FAFEN observations.

According to FAFEN Parallel Vote Tabulations (PVTs), which are now complete in 92 (out of 272) constituencies, 89 reconcile with ECP results with the same winner and same runner up. However, the PVT results do not reconcile with the winner on three constituencies. Very narrow margins of victory in these three constituencies (NA-28, NA-171 and NA-208) make it very difficult to verify the ECP results.

The most important single step that ECP can make to ensure transparency and legitimacy of the elections is that before certifying any election results, ECP must post official documents from all polling stations and all constituencies on its website, including Form XIV (Statement of the Count), Form XV (Ballot Paper Account), Form VI (Consolidation Statement of the Results of the Count) and Form XVII (Result of the Count). These forms are the most important evidence of the quality of election administration and the validity of results in each constituency.

5. Changes in Polling Schemes

The polling schemes in three provinces – Punjab, Sindh and KP – were finalized and posted on the ECP website during the week immediately preceding elections. The scheme for Balochistan

has not been posted to date. The late finalization and failure to notify the voting public and election stakeholders in Balochistan are counter to Representation of the Peoples Act (ROPA) Article 8(2).

In addition, ECP officials and/or constituency ROs apparently changed the numbers, locations and configuration of polling stations after public notification of the final polling schemes. FAFEN observers reported changes in the addresses or numbers of 255 polling stations across Pakistan, with 127 reports coming from Punjab followed by 105 from Sindh, 17 from KP and three each from FATA and KP. These last-minute changes raise doubts about the motives and accountability of these officials.

Summary Recommendations

1. Release of ECP Forms and Data

To ensure transparency and legitimacy of the elections, FAFEN's most urgent recommendation is that before certifying any election results, ECP must release the actual polling scheme on Election Day as well as documents from all 69,801 polling stations and all 272 constituencies. The required documents include Form XIV (Statement of the Count), Form XV (Ballot Paper Account), Form VI (Consolidation Statement of the Results of the Count) and Form XVII (Result of the Count).

2. Resolving Election Result Disputes

FAFEN urges ECP to clarify and publicize immediately the procedures to address both Election Day complaints and post-election results petitions in order to ensure that election dispute resolution is timely, systematic and transparent.

ECP should design standardized forms and simple case tracking systems for election complaints and results petitions. Case tracking should be shared openly with the public, and updated at least weekly on the ECP website. For full transparency, media and observers must be permitted to witness adjudication processes, including all Election Tribunal proceedings.

ECP should impose a deadline of one week for its simple internal administrative processing of each case before forwarding it to a Tribunal. In addition, lawyers' adjournments must be strictly limited, and other procedural adjustments can be introduced to expedite election-related cases. Election Tribunals must be empowered to enter summary judgments against litigants who violate the expedited procedures.

3. Management of Election Results

FAFEN also recommends significant changes and consistent enforcement of law and procedures related to ballot and vote counting, as well as consolidation and finalization of election results. These procedures have received too little public scrutiny during past elections, but are critical to the legitimacy of the election process, and require major reforms to meet minimum standards of transparency and effectiveness.

FAFEN's recommendations relate to manuals and training for election officials, processing of Statements of the Count (Form XIV) and Ballot Account Forms (Form XV), consolidation of election results by Returning Officers, and certification of final election results by ECP.

Introduction

Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) issued three short statements on Election Day, May 11, 2013, and a preliminary statement and report the day after the elections. The following report includes additional analysis of summary data received from observers across the country. The ten themes in this report include voter turnout, barriers to women's voting, irregularities in polling stations during voting and counting procedures, and weak election results management. The report also includes sections on changes in polling schemes; pre-election violence, government interference and Code of Conduct violations; and constituency delimitations.

The following analysis is still preliminary and does not represent FAFEN's final analysis, which will be based on aggregation of comprehensive checklists filled by hand on Election Day in a statistically-valid random sample of 9,160 polling stations by more than 25,000 static observers and about 15,000 additional mobile observers each visiting 2-4 polling stations. FAFEN's final analysis also will depend on the extent to which the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) transparently releases official forms from all 69,801 polling stations and all 272 National Assembly (NA) constituencies around the country.

FAFEN trained and deployed more than 40,000 non-partisan citizens to monitor polling stations across the country on Election Day. See Table 1 for region-wise breakdown of the number and types of citizens mobilized as Long-Term Observers (LTOs) and Short-Term Observers (STOs). More detail about FAFEN's observation methodologies is included at the end of this report.

Table 1: Numbers and Types of FAFEN Election Observers

Province/Region	EOMs	District LTOs	Constituency LTOs	Assistant CLTOs	STOs	Total Observers
KP	8	27	10	2	5,375	5,422
FATA	0	7	11	-	1,040	1,058
FRs	0	1	5	-	214	220
ICT	0	1	1	-	313	315
Punjab	10	36	144	8	23,028	23,226
Sindh	6	28	66	5	8,902	9,007
Balochistan	6	30	12	-	1,711	1,759
Totals	30	130	249	15	40,583	41,007

FAFEN's sample for Election Day observation included a total of 9,160 polling stations located in 272 constituencies across the country. About two-thirds of the 40,583 STOs served as static observers, reporting from one polling booth of the 9,160 sampled polling stations, while the remaining observers visited 2-4 polling stations twice to record their observations.

Table 2: FAFEN Sampled Polling Stations

Province/Region	Male PS	Female PS	Combined PS	Total
Balochistan	128	96	316	540
KP	292	254	584	1,130
FATA	74	48	219	341
FR	-	1	41	42
ICT	29	30	12	71
Sindh	363	366	1,390	2,119
Punjab	1,258	1,114	2,545	4,917
Total	2,144	1,909	5,107	9,160

STOs stationed at the sampled polling stations were tasked with separately counting the number of ballots from female and male polling booths, observing the vote count and closing of the polling stations. They collected or manually copied the official Statement of the Count (Form XIV) from the randomly selected set of polling stations. A Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT) is currently being conducted on the data collected from the sampled polling stations. FAFEN LTOs observed the consolidation of NA election results in each constituency by the ROs. See Table 2 for a breakdown of sampled polling stations distributed by region and type of polling station.

Major Findings

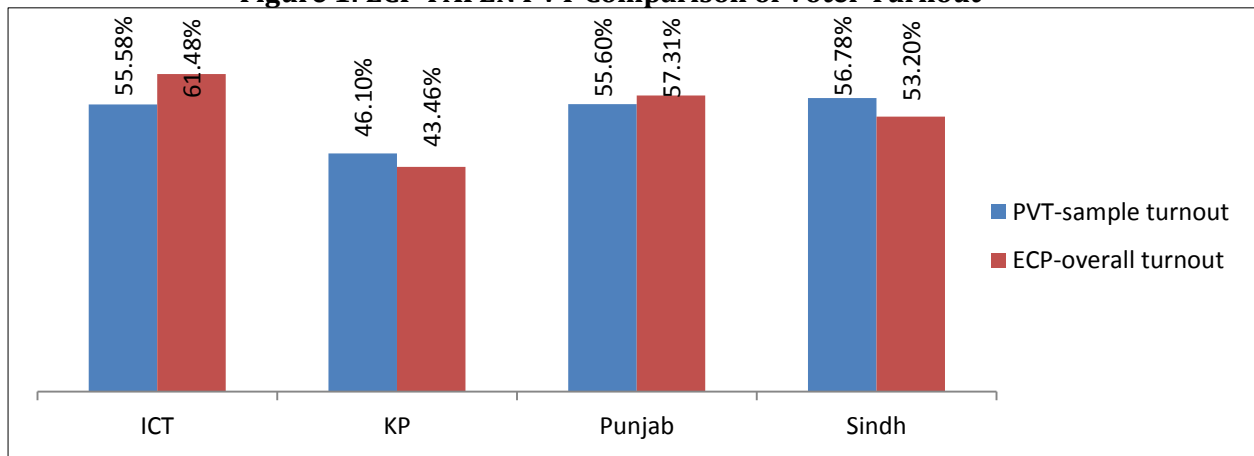
1 Voter Turnout

General Election 2013 witnessed voter turnout that was considerably higher than elections held previously in the country since 1985. The election campaign period apparently attracted traditional as well as non-traditional voters, including in the urban middle class, reflected in cities such as Islamabad, which recorded the highest voter turnouts. Analysis of unofficial results of 263 out of 272 NA constituencies suggests that 53.4% of registered voters nationally turned out to vote for candidates contesting NA seats.

FAFEN has so far received Statements of the Count from 3,070 of sampled polling stations in 92 constituencies. According to FAFEN data, the cumulative turnout in these constituencies is 0.93% lower than the turnout calculation by ECP, with a margin of error ranging from 0.6% to 0.8%. The province-wise voter turnout comparison is given in Figure 1.

However, accurate voter turnout can only be analyzed when ECP releases Form XIV (Statement of the Count), Form XV (Ballot Paper Account), Form VI (Consolidation Statement of the Results of the Count) and Form XVII (Result of the Count) for full public scrutiny. Public release of these forms from every polling station and constituency is a prerequisite for electoral transparency, a recommendation also echoed by the European Union Election Observation Mission (EUEOM) on May 21, 2013.

Figure 1: ECP-FAFEN PVT Comparison of Voter Turnout



1.1. Sex Disaggregated Voter Turnout

For the first time in Pakistan, ECP introduced specific amendments to Form XIV-Statement of the Count to measure the sex-disaggregated voter turnout for General Election 2013. However, according to FAFEN assessment of 264 Statements of the Count from 26 constituencies, the Presiding Officers at as many as two-third of polling stations did not fill out the specific sections of the form correctly, raising concern that ECP may not be able to provide accurate sex-disaggregated turnout.

While ECP may attempt to release sex-disaggregated voter turnout data eventually, FAFEN's preliminary analysis of data from 3,070 polling stations in 92 NA constituencies suggests that 56.03% males turned out to vote at male polling stations as compared to 48.79% of females coming to female only polling stations. The number of females turning out to vote in 2013 appears to be almost twice the percentage as in 2008, which was around 29% at female polling stations, according to FAFEN analysis.

At combined polling stations, according to FAFEN sampled data, the turnout in 2013 was 55.75%. In the absence of sex-disaggregated data for 2008 General Election, a comparison cannot be made for female turnout at combined polling stations. However, FAFEN's analysis suggests that female turnout is consistently better at combined polling stations compared to female polling stations.

1.2. NA and PA Voter Turnout

Voter turnout for NA and PA seats should be identical or nearly so. FAFEN preliminary analysis indicates that voter turnout was similar for PA seats, with only five distinct districts having a variation from 2.9% to 4.5%. The variation might be because of the number of invalid NA and PA ballots. However, the number of invalid ballots is not part of provisional results posted on the ECP website. Therefore, the difference of the two voter turnout figures can only be analyzed with the release by ECP of all polling station and constituency forms.

2 Barriers to Women's Voting

FAFEN observers reported a total of 15 incidents in which women were barred from voting by under implicit understanding among political parties, religious leaders, influential persons, other community leaders and/or militants. Most of these cases were reported in Punjab where 10 incidents of expressed intention of men to bar women from voting were recorded in Khanewal (4), Faisalabad (3), Sahiwal (2), and Kasur (1). In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, barring women from voting was observed in four districts, namely Peshawar, Buner, Kohat and Lower Dir. In FATA, only one such case was reported from North Waziristan Agency. No cases of women being barred from voting were reported from Balochistan or Sindh.

Though the caretaker governments in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab and ECP took measures to discourage such social agreements barring women's voting, nevertheless reports of political parties' and candidates' consensus against female voting were reported. Out of 264 Statements of Count reviewed by FAFEN, no women turned out to vote at 13 combined polling stations, including 12 in KP and one in Punjab. NA-28 and NA-33 in KP reported the most cases of zero percent women turnout.

3 Weak Polling Station Management

Based on FAFEN's data analysis so far, no significant improvement was witnessed in polling station management comparing General Elections in 2008 and 2013. Predictable irregularities continued, including interference in voting by polling officials and unauthorized people in polling booths and stations. Most importantly, the procedures for counting ballots and votes in polling stations remain chaotic and non-transparent. In particular, FAFEN is beginning to scrutinize polling station Statements of the Count (Form XIV) gathered by observers, which have errors and irregularities. These irregularities could be indications or electoral fraud, but more importantly they could help identify specific recommendations for reforms in electoral procedure and training for polling officials to improve future bi-elections and general elections.

3.1. Irregularities during the Voting Process

FAFEN has analyzed summary data sent on May 11 and 12, 2013, by observers deployed at 6,314 polling stations. About 1,492 irregularities were reported from 1,181 of the reporting

polling stations. Some of these irregularities are relatively minor, but some have the potential of creating conducive environment for Election Day fraud. Table 3 shows a province-wise breakdown of irregularities reported from these polling stations.

Table 3: Voting Process Irregularities by Province/Region

Province/Region	Number of Polling Stations Reporting	Number of Polling Stations Reporting Irregularities	Percentage of Polling Stations Reporting Irregularities
Balochistan	171	19	11%
FATA	98	25	26%
KP	463	137	30%
Punjab	3,920	635	16%
Sindh	1,662	365	22%
Total	6,314	1,181	19%

FAFEN classified irregularities into eight categories, including:

- 1) Illegal/fraudulent voting: Instances in which FAFEN observers witnessed unauthorized persons stamping or marking ballot papers.
- 2) Interference by security and other election or public officials: Instances in which FAFEN observers witnessed security personnel such as police, paramilitary or army officials and public officials such as federal, provincial and local government or election officials attempting to influence the voting process.
- 3) Partisan election or security officials: Instances in which FAFEN observers witnessed any of these officials encouraging voters to favor a certain party or a candidate.
- 4) Polling station capture: Instances in which FAFEN observers witnessed the control of a polling station or booth by unauthorized persons, rendering the polling staff ineffective for the duration of the capture.
- 5) Restrictions to observation: Instances in which FAFEN observers were barred from carrying out their duties by election, public or security officials, party workers or candidates.
- 6) Violence: Instances in which FAFEN observers witnessed brawls, quarrels, attacks or any other kinds of verbal or physical violence between political workers, voters, election officials, security personnel or other officials.
- 7) Violence against observers: Instances in which FAFEN observers were not only barred from observation but also physically abused, detained and kidnapped by voters, political party workers, party supporters, security personnel or election officials.
- 8) Any other: Instances in which FAFEN observers reported breaks in voting for any reason other than violence (such as food, tea or prayer breaks), unsealed ballot boxes, minimal security deployment outside polling stations, extension in polling hours, etc.

These irregularities were not limited in geographical scope and were reported from all provinces. As shown in Table 4, at least 291 of these irregularities, most of which were recorded in Punjab, were related to changes in polling schemes. A high number of violent incidents (288) were also reported from across the country; however, most of these were also seen in Punjab.

FAFEN observers were restricted from carrying out their duties in 226 polling stations, while at least 106 incidences of interference by security/other officials and 123 incidents of illegal or fraudulent voting were observed.

Table 4: Summary Data of Voting Process and Other Irregularities

Category	Balochistan	FATA	KP	Punjab	Sindh	Total
Changes in Polling Scheme	4	5	23	156	103	291
Illegal/Fraudulent Voting	1	1	14	63	44	123
Interference by Security/Other Officials	3	4	20	35	44	106
Partisan Election/Security Officials	1	-	5	11	8	25
Polling Station Capture	-	1	2	3	29	35
Restrictions to Observation	-	16	45	94	71	226
Violence	8	5	23	173	79	288
Violence against Observers	-	-	2	8	11	21
Any Other	7	1	43	238	88	377
Total	24	33	177	781	477	1,492

3.2 Ballot and Vote Counting Procedures

The presiding officers did not consistently fill correctly the Statements of the Count (Form XIV), which is the most important single document in electoral process. The Statements of the Count filled by many Presiding Officers were misleading and reflective of the lack of basic training on how to complete this crucial document. In a review of the 264 Statements of the Count shared with FAFEN observers by presiding officers for 26 NA constituencies, 75 Statements were found either to be filled incorrectly or have serious data discrepancies. Irregularities in the Statements of the Count included:

3.2.1 Incorrect entry of registered voters and changed polling station number

The number of the polling station was changed on four Statements of the Count. This may be a result of last minute change in polling scheme not notified to the public. On 86 Statements the presiding officer did not fill properly the number of registered voters assigned to that polling station. In the majority of the cases, the number of polled votes was written in the space where the number of registered voters should be, which creates confusion about voter turnout, including identifying cases of impossible or improbable turnout.

3.2.2 Incorrect total of vote count

As many as 41 Statements of the Count have an incorrect total of valid votes for each candidate with minor differences. In other words, the numbers of votes for each candidate do not add up to the total number of votes cast in the polling station.

3.2.3 Excessive invalid ballots

The percentage of invalid ballots in a typical polling station normally ranges between 2-3%. However, in 114 Statements of the Count the percentage of invalid ballots was more than 3%. In 12 cases, the invalid ballots amounted to more than 10% of polled votes. In one case, invalid ballots amounted to one fourth of the total polled votes, indicating serious problems at the polling station, potentially based on political motives or inept administration.

4 Weak Management of Election Results

The management of election results by ECP is one of its most important tasks, but has been shown to be extremely weak. It is very hard to understand why this aspect of Pakistan's election administration remains so under-developed and poorly-managed. Instead of waiting for political will and legislative change, ECP must use its rule-making powers to implement significant procedural amendments that can be pilot-tested immediately in 2013 during consequent by-elections.

ECP has never collected sex-disaggregated voting data and has never released timely polling station vote counts and other data for public scrutiny. General Election 2008 was the first election in which ECP published polling station vote counts, six months or more after the elections, following persistent FAFEN advocacy. General Election 2013 is the first in which ECP has attempted to collect sex-disaggregated data, but preliminary FAFEN observations indicate that Presiding Officers may have followed the required procedure in a minority of polling stations.

4.1 Ballot and Vote Counting Procedures

As noted above, FAFEN's preliminary analysis of polling station Statements of the Count suggests that Presiding Officers do not correctly tally the number of votes cast for each candidate in a consistent and reliable manner. FAFEN is gathering examples of Statements of the Count in which the total number of votes reported on the form differs significantly from an accurate addition of the number of votes cast for each candidate. Other forms have many hand-written corrections and changes with no initials or other authorizations.

FAFEN notes that the training manual for Presiding Officers includes only a few non-specific pages on ballot and vote counting processes. These pages and the training on these themes cannot possibly be adequate for such essential tasks. A transparent election results process requires detailed, written explanations and training for polling officials on careful, controlled, step-by-step ballot and vote counting procedures.

Election officials must empty ballot boxes from women's polling booths, account for all ballots, record the number of ballots, and then follow the same procedure for ballot boxes from men's polling booths. Then all ballots in the polling station must be mixed together for vote counting. Election officials must establish a clear and separate pile for each candidate and call out and show each marked ballot to polling agents and observers. Challenges from polling agents about any ballots must be addressed consistently and transparently. No person should touch any ballots other than election administration personnel.

Presiding Officers must then produce a clear and accurate accounting of all ballots and all votes on the appropriate forms, checking their arithmetic carefully and initialing any corrections. Copies of these forms must be presented to all polling agents and should also be made available to accredited observers. The law requires that the same forms must be openly posted at the polling station for all citizens to view.

4.2 Returning Officer Consolidation of Election Results

All of these forms from all polling stations in the constituency must be carefully reviewed and, if necessary, investigated by Returning Officers openly in the presence of candidates (or their representatives) and accredited observers on election night. Data from each polling station should be added on a flipchart or board within view of these stakeholders. Both polling station forms and consolidation of election result forms must be transmitted promptly to ECP.

The most important single change that ECP can make is to ensure publication of polling station forms before the finalization of election results. Data from each polling station must include the number of registered male and female voters, the number of ballots distributed to each polling station, the number cast in female and male polling booths, an accurate listing of the number of votes cast for each candidate and the number of invalid and challenged ballots, in addition to an accurate tally of the total number of votes cast.

To ensure transparency and legitimacy of the elections, before certifying any election results, ECP must post official documents from all polling stations and all constituencies on its website, including Form XIV (Statement of the Count), Form XV (Ballot Paper Account), Form VI (Consolidation Statement of the Results of the Count) and Form XVII (Result of the Count).

These forms are the most important evidence of the quality of election administration and the validity of results in each constituency.

4.3 Parallel Vote Tabulations (PVTs)

Parallel Vote Tabulation is a standard technique for election observation to detect discrepancies in the consolidation of election results. PVT is a statistical tool to assess the official results based on a “parallel” aggregation of polling station vote counts gathered by observers.

FAFEN has undertaken the world’s largest PVT during the 2013 elections, conducting the exercise in 261 constituencies. Between 30 and 45 polling stations were selected in each constituency, keeping in view the total number of registered voters, ethnic and political composition of voters, and their homogeneity or heterogeneity in voting behavior.

According to FAFEN PVTs, which are now complete in 92 (out of 272) constituencies, 89 reconcile with ECP results with the same winner and same runner up. However, the PVT results do not reconcile with the winner on three constituencies. Very narrow margins of victory in these three constituencies (NA-28, NA-171 and NA-208) make it very difficult to verify the ECP results. These preliminary problematic findings indicate the importance of ECP releasing all polling station forms before certification of any election results.

5 Late Finalization and Changing Polling Schemes

Transparency of election administration requires timely publication of the final polling scheme in all constituencies for the benefit of candidates, voters and all other election stakeholders. Representation of the Peoples Act (ROPA, 1976) Article 8(2) specifically requires that polling schemes must be finalized and publicly notified 15 days before Election Day, with no further changes permitted.

The detailed polling scheme is the foundation for transparent, effective and accurate election administration and election results management. Election officials must know where they are assigned and voters must know exactly where they are supposed to cast their ballots. Returning Officers must be able to account for the exact number of ballots and votes counted at each polling station, based on the number of voters who are registered and vote at each station. In addition, candidates and political parties must know where and how to organize their polling agents and other resources on polling day.

A persistent problem with elections in Pakistan is that polling schemes are finalized very late, usually fewer than 15 days before elections, and even then continue to change till Election Day. Political parties, candidates and citizens have bitterly complained about this problem before and after every election, but they present anecdotal evidence of changes in polling stations and booths instead of systematic analysis.

For General Election 2013, ECP deserves praise for introducing an SMS service to enable voters to identify their polling stations in advance by using their Computerized National Identification Numbers (CNICs). However, if polling stations change at the last minute, the value of the SMS service is undermined.

FAFEN notes that the polling schemes in three provinces – Punjab, Sindh and KP – were finalized and posted on the ECP website during the week immediately preceding elections. The scheme for Balochistan has not been posted to date. The late finalization and failure to notify the voting public and election stakeholders in Balochistan run counter to the law and are inexcusable.

Making matters worse, ECP officials and/or constituency ROs apparently changed the numbers, locations and configuration of polling stations after public notification of the final polling

schemes. These last-minute changes raise doubts about the motives and accountability of these officials.

FAFEN observers reported changes in the addresses or numbers of 255 polling stations across Pakistan, with 127 reports coming from Punjab followed by 105 from Sindh, 17 from KP and three each from FATA and KP.

The changes also significantly damage the integrity of the ECP's management of election results, especially since the election administration ostensibly does not yet possess full knowledge of the final polling scheme implemented on Election Day. If ECP does not know how many voters were registered and voted at each polling station, it has practically no way of verifying vote counts and consolidating election results. The EU's Election Observation Mission has also stressed the immediate need for publicly of the actual polling schemes implemented on Election Day.

FAFEN continues to compile data in order to present a systematic analysis of this matter. Full information may never be available, since many last-minute changes may not have been notified to ECP. So far, FAFEN has identified at least 255 un-notified changes (127 in Punjab, 105 in Sindh, 17 in KP and three each in FATA and KP) in the polling scheme from among 5,260 polling stations for which data is available, including in Lahore and Rahimyar Khan. This incomplete data suggests that a significant 4.2% of the polling scheme might have been altered immediately prior to Election Day.

6 Terrorism and Militancy during Pre-Election Campaigning

The expanding and increasingly deadly wave of terrorism targeting some political parties and their supporters compromised the fairness of the election process during the election campaign. Despite clear directives and desires of the ECP to the caretaker government, there was no letup in the acts of terrorism against certain parties, government and election functionaries and security forces.

The 2013 General Election campaign season in Pakistan was the most competitive and violent in the country's history. FAFEN recorded 149 incidents of election-related violence during the campaign period between March 17 and May 9, in which approximately 189 people were killed and 667 were injured.

The hardest hit province was Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, followed by Sindh and Balochistan. FATA saw relatively fewer incidents of election-related violence but the severe militant insurgency in the region continued unabated throughout the campaign period. Punjab experienced the least election violence during this time; however, during the last week of the campaign period, a string of incidents took place in the province, thus, bringing up the tally.

Table 5: Number of Incidents of Electoral Violence, by Province

Province /Region	Number of Incidents
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	52
Sindh	43
Balochistan	37
FATA	10
Punjab	7
Total	149

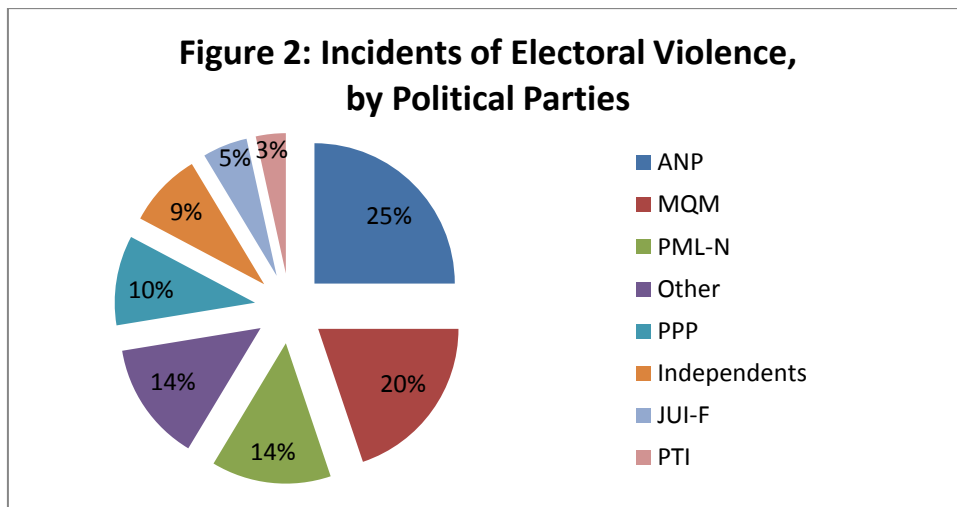
The predominant targets of violence were political parties and electoral candidates. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh saw the highest number of attacks on political parties, with Balochistan not far behind. Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were the provinces where candidates, in

particular, were targeted most. Polling stations (or educational institutions designated as polling stations) were targeted almost exclusively in Balochistan, as were election officials, in keeping with the general trend in the province of anti-state/infrastructure violence.

Table 6: Categories of Electoral Violence and Their Frequency, by Province

Category of Electoral Violence	Balochistan	FATA	KP	Punjab	Sindh	Totals
Attacks on Party Workers/Supporters	7	2	20	3	25	57
Attacks on Candidates	16	4	15	2	5	42
Attacks on Party Offices /Property	5	2	9	1	10	27
Clashes Between Political Parties	1	-	4	1	2	8
Attacks on Polling Stations	6	-	-	-	1	7
Intimidation of Voters	-	2	3	-	-	5
Attacks on Election Officials	2	-	-	-	-	2
Attacks on Community Members	-	-	1	-	-	1
Totals	37	10	52	7	43	149

The Awami National Party (ANP) was the most frequently targeted party during the campaign period, having been targeted in a total of 29 incidents. The Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) was targeted in 23 incidents, the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) in 16 incidents and the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in 12 incidents. The Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) and Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaaf (PTI) were targeted in six and four incidents, respectively. Ten incidents involved independent candidates and/or their workers and supporters being targeted.



Of the incidents in which political parties were targeted, 42 were attacks on candidates. Candidates of the ANP were targeted most frequently, including six times in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and one each in FATA and Sindh. Candidates of the JUI-F were targeted most in Balochistan (four incidents), and were also targeted in FATA and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (one incident each). Candidates of the PML-N were also mostly targeted in Balochistan (four incidents), and in one incident in FATA. Candidates of the PPP were targeted in two incidents in Sindh, and in one incident each in Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab. Candidates of the PTI were attacked in two incidents in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, while JI candidates were attacked in one incident each in Balochistan and FATA.

Candidates were killed in three incidents. These included a candidate of the ANP, a candidate of the MQM and an independent candidate.

Table 7: Political Affiliations and Frequency of Candidates Targeted in Electoral Violence

Political Affiliation of Targeted Candidate	No. of Incidents
ANP	8
JUI-F	6
Independent	5
PML-N	5
PPP	5
JI	2
PPP-S	2
PTI	2
MQM	1
Awami Jamhoori Ittehad Pakistan (AJIP)	1
Balochistan Muttahida Mahaaz (BMM)	1
Jamote Qaumi Movement (JQM)	1
National Party (NP)	1
National People's Party (NPP)	1
Qaumi Watan Party (QWP)	1

Bombing was a predominant tactic of election-related violence, closely followed by gunfire. The high number of bombings in election violence is consistent with the implication that most of the violence was perpetrated by militants/insurgents. A few incidents also involved missiles – these incidents were all in Balochistan and were perpetrated by unknown actors. Clashes between political parties mostly involved exchanges of gunfire. In two incidents – one in FATA and the other in Punjab, candidates were kidnapped by unidentified perpetrators.

Table 8: Tactics of Electoral Violence and Their Frequency

Method/Tactic of Violence	Number of Incidents (April 25 and May 7)
Bombing	65
Gunfire	60
Missile/Mortar	4
Threats/Intimidation	4
Arson	4
Attempted/Thwarted Bombing	3
Kidnapping/Abduction	2
Physical Assault resulting in Serious Injury	2

Voters braved the threats of terrorists on Election Day and came out to vote in significant numbers. Although their confidence was boosted by effective security measures resulting in very few incidents of organized violence on polling stations, preliminary analysis indicates that there seems to be a correlation between the voter turnout and number of violent incidents during the election campaign. The following table reflects this relationship.

Table 9: Relationship between Violence and Turnout

Province /Region	No. of Violence Incidents during Campaign Period	Voter Turnout
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	52	43.4%
Sindh	43	53.2%
Balochistan	37	38.8%
FATA	10	34.9%
Punjab	7	57.3%

7 Caretaker Government and Other State Authorities

During the pre-election process, FAFEN did not receive many reports of the involvement of the caretaker government in partisan activities. However, there were reports that state resources were used by certain parties in parts of the country, which were pointed out by FAFEN during the campaign period.

The caretakers remained neutral for the most part and did not apparently support any political party or their candidate. They were seen to mostly follow the instructions of ECP and the various Codes of Conduct that were notified by the election administration for political parties, security officials, observers and the media. However, there are some reports of their involvement in the provinces of Sindh and Punjab that are being probed.

7.1 ROs inconsistent, not under ECP control

FAFEN wrote letters to election officials at all levels to take corrective measures on violations of the Code of the Conduct being committed by the political parties or their candidates and supporters. FAFEN was directed by the ECP Secretariat to directly contact the concerned election officials at the district level instead of seeking remedial measures from its central Secretariat in case of violation reports. However, FAFEN did not receive many responses from Returning Officers or District Returning Officers, despite the fact that they were working under the administrative structure of the ECP and should be responsive to citizen requests for information and action.

7.2 Local government and ECP officials more responsive than DROs/ROs

FAFEN wrote 4,164 letters to different election stakeholders including DEC, RECs, AECs, DPOs, DCOs, DCs, Commissioners, DROs and ROs in 137 districts of all 272 National Assembly constituencies. Out of these, FAFEN received 16 letters from DEC, AECs, and Election Officials, 13 letters from DPOs and DCOs and only six letters from political parties. FAFEN received 74 responses from political parties on the phone, 89 from DEC, AECs, EOs and RECs, and 28 from DPOs/DCOs.

FAFEN released 42 updates on the basis of reporting from its 400 Long-Term Observers who were deployed across the country since February 2013.

FAFEN sought corrective measures on the reports of violations of election laws, rules and Code of Conduct for political parties and contesting candidates. These violations included oversized campaign materials, wall chalking, use of government buildings for campaigning, partisan government officials, display of weapons, fireworks, aerial firing, use of loud speakers, unauthorized rallies, inducement to voters, intimidation of voters, promises of development schemes, inappropriate speeches and comments, restrictions on women voting and use of worship places for campaigning.

8 Pre-Election Violations of ECP Code of Conduct

FAFEN observers reported 3,213 violations of the Code of Conduct for political parties and contesting candidates set by the ECP during the pre-election period. The highest number of incidents (2,036) was reported from Punjab, followed by Sindh 623, Balochistan 298, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 178, Federally Administered Tribal Areas 77 and one incident from Islamabad.

As many as 104 incidents of aerial firing by party workers were reported from Pakistan. The highest number of aerial firing incidents was recorded in Punjab 57, followed by Sindh 32, Balochistan four, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa four and FATA three.

According to the code, the ECP bars contesting candidates and their workers from displaying weapons. FAFEN observed 461 incidents – Punjab 268, Sindh 115, KP 49 and Balochistan 29.

The contesting candidates were observed delivering undemocratic speeches (personal attacks on their opponents) on 139 times instances. FAFEN observers also recorded 37 contesting candidates/parties offering bribes to their opponent candidates to withdraw from elections.

At 14 instances political workers/supporters of various parties were observed harassing and intimidating women contesting candidates. Similarly, FAFEN observers reported 15 incidents where women voters were being harassed.

Political parties/candidates were observed displaying fireworks at 66 political rallies. Sixty-two such incidents were reported from Punjab. Similarly, candidates and their workers/supporters were seen setting off fireworks other than rallies i.e. party offices, candidates' resident etc.

A total of 460 unauthorized political rallies were reported during the pre-election time period. As many as 1,330 violations of illegal use of loudspeaker during the campaign period were reported from Pakistan. The highest number 827 were reported from Punjab, followed by Sindh 232, KP 193, FATA 43 and Balochistan 35.

A total of 364 incidents of voter inducements were reported from Punjab, followed by Sindh 103, Balochistan 34, KP 32 and FATA 26.

Table 10: Pre-Election Violations of Code of Conduct

Province/Region	Aerial firing	Display of weapons	Speech Violations	Bribing Candidates	Intimidation of Women Candidates	Intimidation of Women Voters	Fireworks in Rallies	Fireworks other than Rallies	Rally causing Public Inconvenience	Use of Loudspeaker	Voter Inducements	Total
Punjab	57	268	94	15	11	10	62	19	309	827	364	2,036
Sindh	32	115	11	11	3		4	1	111	232	103	623
Balochistan	8	29	2	6				6	20	193	34	298
KP	4	49	32	3		4		1	10	43	32	178
FATA	3			2		1		1	9	35	26	77
ICT									1			1
Total	104	461	139	37	14	15	66	28	460	1,330	559	3,213

9 Campaign Methods and Materials - More Enforcement Needed

Contrary to election campaigns witnessed in 2008 and 2002, the 2013 election campaign was more regulated in terms of election administration's enforcement of code of conduct and election laws and rules. Election administration showed its seriousness in controlling the oversized visibility material but still thousands of reports of oversized material were received from across the country. Some reports of efforts by election administration to assert its writ on publicity material, however, were something unique to Pakistani election environment.

FAFEN observers reported a total of 15,576 violations of specified sizes of visibility material by the political parties across the country. These violations included banners/panaflex, hoardings, leaflets/handbills, posters exceeding size prescribed size limits and violation of a blanket ban on wall chalking. Punjab reported 13,634 violations (87.5% of the total) by the political parties, followed by Sindh 953 (6.1%), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 791, Balochistan 107, FATA 86 and ICT 5.

Of the total, 2,593 violations of wall chalking ban were observed. Punjab's major share in violations is reflective of more electioneering activity in the province as compared to other regions.

Table 11: Oversized Visibility Material Violations

Province/ Region	Banners/ Panaflex more than 3X9 feet	Hoardings/ Billboards more than 3X5 feet	Leaflets/ Handbills more than 9X6 inches	Posters more than 2X3 feet	Wall Chalking	Total
Punjab	5,127	2,232	223	4110	1,942	13,634
Sindh	244	48	76	269	316	953
KP	280	81	3	136	291	791
Balochistan	24	21	5	29	28	107
FATA	27	1	10	32	16	86
ICT	2	2		1		5
Total	5,704	2,385	317	4,577	2,593	15,576

10 Voting Population and Constituency Delimitation

The 2013 General Elections were the first elections in Pakistan to be held since the country accepted new legal obligations under the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in 2010. Along with the universal suffrage, among the fundamental obligations of the ICCPR and universally accepted democratic norm is the principle of equal suffrage – which ensures equal weightage to each vote.

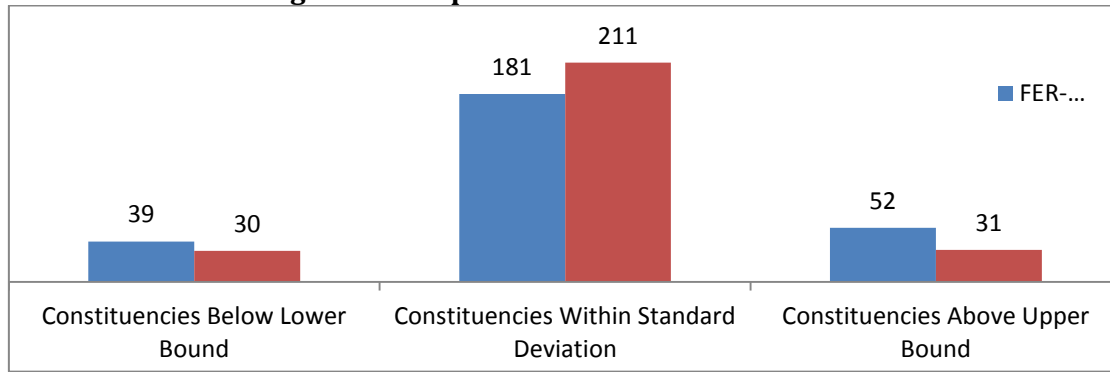
According to the principle of equal suffrage, the delineation of electoral boundaries should be based on a justifiable and established criteria and reflect the size of the population of each district so that elected officials represent approximately the same number of electors¹.

According to the Final Electoral Rolls (FERs) released by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), a total of 86,284,017 voters were registered in 272 constituencies; an average of 317,221 voters in each constituency. When compared to the FERs for the 2008 General Elections, the data shows a notable improvement in distribution of voters, indicating that the recent elections were more consistent with the principle of equal suffrage. However, Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) believes that the delineation of electoral boundaries still needs to be carried out to ensure each vote has the same weightage across the country.

The ECP's data shows 211 constituencies having registered voters within the standard deviation of the average voter per constituency², as compared to 181 during the 2008 General Elections. While this improvement is commendable, it shows that the remaining 61 constituencies did not come close to the national average of voters per constituency. Similarly, the number of constituencies below the lower bound decreased from 39 to 30, while the number of constituencies above the upper bound fell from 52 to 31. Refer to Figure 3 for a comparison of FERs 2007 and 2012.

¹ Handbook for European Union Election Observation, Second Edition, Page 33.

² One standard deviation is equal to 70,000 registered voters.

Figure 3: Comparison of FERs 2007 and 2012

According to the ECP's data, 161 constituencies had between 250,000 to 349,999 registered voters, as compared to 149 during the 2008 General Elections. The number of constituencies having between 150,000 and 249,999 voters decreased from 47 to 25, while constituencies with less than 149,999 voters also decreased from 13 to seven. Moreover, the recent elections had no constituency with over 550,000 voters as compared to one in the previous elections. However, the number of constituencies having 350,000 to 449,999 voters rose from 60 to 70, while the number of constituencies having 450,000 to 549,999 voters also increased from two to nine.

The data further shows South Waziristan Agency (NA-41) had the least number of voters (91,192), more than three times less than the national average. On the other hand, Haripur (NA-19) had the highest number of registered voters (531,865), nearly 68% more than the average voter in each constituency.

Not surprisingly, five out of seven constituencies with less than 149,999 voters were located in tribal areas, with the exception of Kohistan (NA-23) which saw a 60% decrease in voters and Bolan-cum-Jhal Magsi (NA-267) where the number of voters decreased by 40%.

On the other hand, constituencies having more than 450,000 voters showed a different trend, with eight out of nine constituencies witnessing sharp increase in registered voters. The substantial increase in voters in these eight constituencies further suggests the need to delineate the electoral boundaries.

Moreover, ECP's data also shows inconsistent patterns in the change in registered voters, which highlight the need to carry out delimitation of constituencies. For instance, the number of voters in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) saw a sharp increase in number of registered voters (nearly 30%) when compared to the 2008 General Elections, yet there was no change in the number of National Assembly seats reserved for both regions. Similarly, Balochistan saw a decrease of 23.5% in registered voters, with no change in electoral boundaries.

The most extreme case was that of Khyber Agency, which saw an increase of over 70% in registered voters. Moreover, seven other constituencies witnessed an increase of more than 40% in voters compared to the previous electoral rolls.

On the other hand, Kohistan (NA-23) witnessed a decrease of 60%, in voters compared to the previous elections, while Killa Abdullah (NA-262) and Tharparkar-II (NA-230) saw a decrease of 53% and 44% respectively.

Moreover, district-wise analysis of ECP's data further shows discrepancies, with stark differences registered voters in areas within close proximities which lead to uneven distribution of political power.

For instances, Swat District, with a total of 981,820 voters, had only two seats in the National Assembly (490,910 voters per constituency), while Shangla, located right next to the district, has one seat with 296,723 registered voters. Similarly, Haripur, with a total of 531,865 voters, represents a distinct constituency, while Abbottabad, with 675,189 voters, has been divided into two constituencies (337,595 voters per constituency).

Lower Dir and Upper Dir presented a similar pattern, with the former having 504,091 registered voters and the latter only 368,035.

Likewise, North Waziristan Agency, having 160,666 voters, has been allocated one seat, while South Waziristan Agency having two seats for 231,813 voters (115,907 per constituency).

Gujrat, where the number voter exceeds 1.5 million, has been given four seats in the National Assembly (395,350 voters per constituency), while Hafizabad, located nearby, has only two seats with half a million voters (271,837 voters per constituency).

Narowal and Sialkot present yet another interesting example, with the former having three seats for nearly 792,379 voters (264,126 voters per constituency) and the latter having five seats for more than 1.8 million voters (368,270 voters per constituency). Moreover, Khanewal and Sahiwal, despite having a difference of one million voters, have been allocated four seats each, while Pakpattan, located in the same region, has been divided into three constituencies despite having substantially less number of registered voters. Table 1 summarizes some of FAFEN's findings:

Table 12: District-wise Analysis of Uneven Distribution of NA Seats

Province/ Region	District	Number of Constituencies	Constituency Name	Number of Registered Voters	Registered Voters per Constituencies
KP	Swat	2	Swat-I	521,072	490,910
			Swat-II	460,748	
	Shangla	1	Shangla	296,723	296,723
	Abbottabad	2	Abbottabad-I	338,265	337,595
			Abbottabad-II	336,924	
Haripur	1	Haripur	531,685	531,685	
FATA	North Waziristan Agency	1	North Waziristan Agency	160,666	160,666
	South Waziristan Agency	2	South Waziristan Agency-I	91,192	115,907
			South Waziristan Agency-II	140,621	
Punjab	Narowal	3	Narowal-I	247,582	264,126
			Narowal-II	271,905	
			Narowal-III	272,892	
	Sialkot	5	Sialkot-I	342,125	368,270
			Sialkot-II	399,981	
			Sialkot-III	363,004	
			Sialkot-IV	354,741	
Sialkot-V	381,496				

FAFEN Election Observation Methodology

FAFEN's election observation activities are based on the Constitution and laws of Pakistan and global best practice standards for election monitoring. Also relevant are Pakistan's international legal obligations, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), ratified by Pakistan in 2010, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), to which Pakistan acceded in 1996.

All FAFEN observers adhere to the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) Code of Conduct for National Observers as well as the Global Principles for Non-Partisan Election Observation and Monitoring by Citizen Organizations (April 2012). Moreover, FAFEN also has its own Code of Conduct that observers are required to adhere to.

FAFEN observers use standardized checklists to report to the FAFEN Election Observation Secretariat in Islamabad through the FAFEN Online Program Tracker (FOPT) and with hardcopy checklists (for Election Day observers). FAFEN gathers data and information from around the country to share with ECP for corrective action, and to issue both quick impact messages (via an election web portal, email listserves, and Twitter) as well as aggregated and thematic reports for the consideration of citizens and other election stakeholders.

All updates and reports are available online and have received extensive national and international media coverage. FAFEN's dedicated election web portal also includes election-related alerts from Long Term Observers (LTOs), mapping of campaign violations and other observations, district voter registration data, election resources, legislator scorecards (based on five years of direct observation of the National Assembly), and a portal for citizen complaints.

The purposes of FAFEN's election observation activities include:

1. To empower non-partisan citizen monitors of state authorities and other stakeholders
2. To deter political and electoral illegality, irregularities and fraud
3. To detect and report political and electoral illegality, irregularities and fraud
4. To suggest immediate corrective action by relevant authorities and stakeholders
5. To share impartial data about election processes with the public and stakeholders
6. To enhance public confidence in the election process, if appropriate
7. To advocate for long-term electoral reforms based on statistical data
8. To improve the transparency and administrative integrity of election systems
9. To promote and protect the political and electoral rights of all stakeholders
10. To increase the likelihood that election results represent the will of the people.

FAFEN conducted Pakistan's only statistical assessment of the 2012 Electoral Roll and observed the March 2013 public display of the voters' lists. In addition, FAFEN deployed almost 400 LTOs in each district and National Assembly (NA) constituency.

LTOs used detailed, standardized checklists and interview protocols to monitor and report on the activities of District Election Commissioners (DECs), District Returning Officers (DROs), constituency Returning Officers (ROs) and other officials associated with preparations for elections. Examples include appointment and training of all levels of election officials, candidate nominations and verifications and the establishment of polling schemes.

LTOs also observed compliance of political parties and candidates with the ECP Code of Conduct, and compliance of civil servants and other officials with legal responsibilities and ECP regulations. Examples include restrictions on participation in campaigning, last-minute transfers

of civil service personnel, and initiation of new development schemes to influence voters. In addition, LTOs monitor political and electoral intimidation and violence, the actions of the police and other security forces, and the general pre-election political environment.

FAFEN published 42 Pre-Election Updates, or approximately three updates per week since February 1, 2013 till Election Day, based on data gathered by LTOs across the country. Themes include election administration transparency, postings and transfers, election-related complaints, and Code of Conduct violations. Separately, FAFEN tracks news reports of electoral and political violence and publishes weekly Violence Monitors as well as other periodic thematic analysis.

LTO observation data was shared with relevant ECP officials in order to encourage timely corrective action to address critical problems. The data and analysis also will contribute to FAFEN's long-term advocacy for continuing electoral reform.

FAFEN's long-term observation of the 2013 General Elections process continues through the announcement of election results, responses of election contestants and the public and formation of the new government. A smaller team of LTOs with legal training will monitor and report on the full process of adjudication of election result disputes by ECP and election tribunals. FAFEN will continue to publish periodic Post-Election Updates during this period.

Key Recommendations

1. Release of ECP Forms and Data

FAFEN has shown ECP and media several examples of polling station Statements of the Count that indicate last-minutes changes in polling schemes, contrary to the law, or have improbable voter turnout, calculation errors, or other problems. FAFEN is still analysing data from thousands more polling stations around the country.

To ensure transparency and legitimacy of the elections, FAFEN's most urgent recommendation is that before certifying any election results, ECP must release the actual polling scheme on Election Day as well as documents from all 69,801 polling stations and all 272 constituencies. The required documents include Form XIV (Statement of the Count), Form XV (Ballot Paper Account), Form VI (Consolidation Statement of the Results of the Count) and Form XVII (Result of the Count).

These ECP forms, which are public documents, are the most important evidence of the quality of election administration and the validity of results in each constituency. Withholding such crucial information causes unnecessary speculations.

2. Resolving Election Result Disputes

Another set of time-sensitive recommendations relates to ECP's management of election dispute resolution mechanisms, which must be made much more transparent and efficient. Prompt response to complaints enhances people's trust in electoral processes.

ECP reportedly is appointing retired judges for Election Tribunals for the first time in Pakistan electoral history. Retired judges will be able to concentrate exclusively on time-sensitive election results petitions so that they can potentially be concluded within 120 days, as required by law.

FAFEN urges ECP to clarify and publicize immediately the procedures to address both Election Day complaints and post-election results petitions in order to ensure that election dispute resolution is timely, systematic and transparent.

ECP should design standardized forms and simple case tracking systems for election complaints and results petitions. Case tracking should be shared openly with the public, and updated at least weekly on the ECP website. For full transparency, media and observers must be permitted to witness adjudication processes, including all Election Tribunal proceedings.

ECP should impose a deadline of one week for its simple internal administrative processing of each case before forwarding it to a Tribunal. In addition, lawyers' adjournments must be strictly limited, and other procedural adjustments can be introduced to expedite election-related cases. Election Tribunals must be empowered to enter summary judgments against litigants who violate the expedited procedures.

Results petitions from previous elections have languished for years or never been resolved. This persistent failure undermines the credibility of Pakistan's elections, compromises the integrity of the elected Assemblies, and may contribute to political tension and violence.

Immediate reform measures would add credibility to Pakistan's electoral process and could help mitigate post-election political tension and violence, according to FAFEN.

3. Management of Election Results

FAFEN also recommends significant changes and consistent enforcement of law and procedures related to ballot and vote counting, as well as consolidation and finalization of election results. These procedures have received too little public scrutiny during past elections, but are critical to the legitimacy of the election process, and require major reforms to meet minimum standards of transparency and effectiveness.

FAFEN's recommendations relate to manuals and training for election officials, processing of Statements of the Count (Form XIV) and Ballot Account Forms (Form XV), consolidation of election results by Returning Officers, and certification of final election results by ECP.

- **Manuals and Training**
 - Training materials and sessions related to ballot counting, vote counting, and result consolidation should be significantly revised and expanded to include detailed, step-by-step instructions
 - Presiding Officers and Returning Officers should be held accountable for any deviations from procedures related to these important themes
- **Statement of the Count (Form XIV) & Ballot Account Form (Form XV)**
 - Presiding Officers must be held accountable for counting male and female ballots separately and recording these counts accurately
 - Presiding Officers must be held accountable for correctly filling each part of Statement of Count and Ballot Account Form
 - Presiding Officers must be held responsible for investigating and reporting impossible (>100%) and improbable (>80%) voter turnout
 - Official copies of Statement of Count and Ballot Account Form should be given to observers in addition to polling agents
 - Official copy of Statement of Count must be posted at the polling station
- **Consolidation of Election Result**
 - Returning Officer scrutiny and consolidation of Statements of the Count and Ballot Account Forms must be witnessed by candidates (or their agents) and observers
 - Returning Officers must be held accountable for putting aside vote counts from any polling station with impossible vote count and investigating improbable vote counts
 - Returning Officers must be held accountable for investigating or putting aside vote counts from polling stations where Statement of the Count or Ballot Account Form does not add up properly or is not filled correctly
 - Returning Officers must be held accountable for putting aside vote counts from any combined polling station where the number of ballots from any female booth is zero
- **Certification of Election Results**
 - ECP must not certify any constituency election results before publishing / posting all Statements of the Count, Ballot Account Forms, and RO result consolidation forms
 - ECP must ensure that all points above have been double-checked before certifying any results, and must not certify any election result until all anomalies are investigated and resolved, with public disclosure of process and conclusions

- ECP must not certify an election result from any constituency where women were prevented from voting in any polling station (where the number of ballots from any female polling station or polling booth is zero)

4. Additional General Recommendations

- The current state of fragmented election laws results in disparate implementation of election law and procedure. All election laws need to be reformed and unified for uniform implementation.
- Judiciary should, once again, separate itself from election administration. ECP should be structurally empowered to manage the election administration through greater control over seconded staff. This step would strengthen the enforcement capacity of the ECP and the Executive over all aspects of election administration.
- A special Parliamentary Committee on Elections should be formed for working on electoral reforms.
- Delimitation of Karachi constituencies without a census has established a precedent that should be followed to delimit all constituencies afresh on the basis of voting population data, even if a census is not conducted.
- Parliament should expeditiously take up the issue of women's participation in political and electoral processes, specifically aiming at mitigating bars on women's voting. The easiest way to guarantee women's right to vote is to deny constituencies a certified election result if women have been barred from any polling station.
- ECP must establish a permanent polling scheme before the next General Elections. Small adjustments to the polling scheme based on local conditions at the time of elections must be finalized and notified to the public at least 15 days prior to elections. Election laws and regulations must be amended to ensure that election officials, including ROs, face serious consequences for any last-minute changes in the polling schemes. FAFEN also recommends that all polling stations should be combined, with a specified number of separate booths for men and women.
- Local government elections should be held forthwith in all provinces, complying with the true constitutional spirit of devolution of power.
- Election observation should be covered under law and a timely and transparent accreditation process should be defined by ECP rules and regulations.
- The voter registration process should be streamlined so that eligible voters can easily register at any time of any year.