

Press Statement: Upcoming General Elections 2018

General elections are scheduled for July 25, 2018. It is very welcoming that Pakistan is moving towards its democratic transition. The Elections are a central feature of democracy. For elections to express the will of the electorate, it must be 'free and fair'. In other words, all those entitled to vote have the right to be registered and to vote. The elections in Pakistan cannot be 'free and fair' if any community is excluded from the electoral process. Religious disagreements cannot justify denying people their right to vote.

The National Commission for Justice and Peace appreciates and congratulates that the current government has completed its time period and now another democratic government is going to take over after general elections. In a joint statement His Excellency Archbishop Dr. Joseph Arshad, Chairperson NCJP, Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Yousaf (Mani), National Director and Mr. Cecil Shane Chaudhry, Executive Director NCJP demand that elections should be transparent and each step of the election process should be easily understood and open to scrutiny by all stakeholders (voters, political parties, outside observers). All results should be independently verifiable.

Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Yousaf (Mani) stated that the Church is in support of democracy and we are aware and respect all democratic values. We hope that during the general election all the observers, civil society, activist and volunteers will play their role impartially. He further stated that all communities must cast their vote no matter which political party they are supporting.

His Excellency Archbishop Dr. Joseph Arshad, Archbishop of Islamabad/Rawalpindi, President, Pakistan Catholic Bishops' Conference and Chairperson, National Commission for Justice and Peace stated that Democracy flourishes when it is rooted in a shared social ethic. Democracy is fundamentally about people working and walking together to foster the common good. Democracy is damaged by indifference and by a splintering of society or a fixation on individual interests. We share the anxiety of many citizens in Pakistan at the fact that there is an uncertain social climate in the country regarding vital sectors of people's lives, especially regarding health, homes, education, security, the fostering of a solid human values, and international responsibility. We urge all to carefully examine the persons they want to see in government and vote for only those who would enhance the development process. He further urged Pakistani authorities to ensure peace and security situation during general elections to protect democracy and free and fair elections. He also prayed for peace during the time of elections so that the people would feel secure to cast their vote without fear or threat of any oppression.

NCJP Media Cell