

**Government Response to
the Petition of Tree of Humanity for All
on
Justice for Imran Khan**

**Presented to the House of Representatives
In accordance with Standing Order 380**

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Introduction

- 1 The government has carefully considered the Petition Committee's referral of the petition entitled "*Petition of Tree of Humanity for All: Justice for Imran Khan*". The petition requests that the House of Representatives urge the New Zealand Government to call for the Pakistan Government to release Imran Khan from detention, ensure fair trial standards and allow international observers, and call for an investigation into allegations of excessive force used during November 2024 protests.
- 2 The government welcomes the Committee's referral of this petition and thanks the petitioner for bringing this matter to the government's attention.
- 3 The government responds to the report in accordance with Standing Order 380.
- 4 The government has considered the petition as it pertains to New Zealand's existing foreign policy settings. The government is unable to respond positively to the four recommendations.

Recommendations and government response

- 5 Petition Recommendations: The petition urges the New Zealand Parliament to:

Condemn the Inhumane Treatment of Imran Khan: Publicly denounce the violations of his basic human rights and call for his immediate release.

Advocate for International Oversight: Encourage international bodies, such as the United Nations and the Commonwealth, to monitor the situation and ensure accountability for human rights abuses.

Support Democratic Processes in Pakistan: Advocate for free and fair elections in Pakistan, ensuring that all political parties, including PTI, can participate without intimidation or legal hindrances.

Provide Humanitarian Assistance: Extend support to organizations working to alleviate the suffering of individuals affected by political persecution in Pakistan.

- 6 Response: We respond below to each of the four specific recommendations made by the petition.

Condemn the Inhumane Treatment of Imran Khan: Publicly denounce the violations of his basic human rights and call for his immediate release.

- 7 The government is aware that concerns have been raised over Imran Khan's detention. New Zealand expects Pakistan to abide by its international obligations, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Advocate for International Oversight: Encourage international bodies, such as the United Nations and the Commonwealth, to monitor the situation and ensure accountability for human rights abuses.

- 8 Various international governmental and non-governmental bodies have been monitoring the human rights situation in Pakistan in recent years. In July 2023, the Human Rights Council released its final report for Pakistan's 4th Universal Periodic Review; in February 2024, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights urged Pakistani authorities to ensure elections were free and fair; and in June 2024, the UN Human Rights Council's Working Group on Arbitrary Detention examined the detention of Imran Khan.
- 9 New Zealand supports the work of these bodies and expects all UN member states, including Pakistan, to cooperate with monitoring efforts conducted by UN bodies.

Support Democratic Processes in Pakistan: Advocate for free and fair elections in Pakistan, ensuring that all political parties, including PTI, can participate without intimidation or legal hindrances.

- 10 New Zealand supports the conduct of free, fair and inclusive elections.
- 11 New Zealand acknowledges that international observers have raised concerns about the conduct of Pakistan's 2024 elections. The Commonwealth Observer Group concluded that some developments may have undermined credibility and inclusiveness, although it also recognised the potential of Pakistan's democracy, particularly in light of the engagement of women and youth.

Provide Humanitarian Assistance: Extend support to organizations working to alleviate the suffering of individuals affected by political persecution in Pakistan.

- 12 Guided by New Zealand's Humanitarian Action Policy, New Zealand responds to the world's major humanitarian crises through advocacy and humanitarian diplomacy, and by contributing funding towards the coordinated efforts of the international humanitarian community. When allocating humanitarian funding to emergencies outside the Pacific and Southeast Asia regions, New Zealand considers the scale and severity of humanitarian needs and protection threats, prioritising large-scale events (in terms of numbers of people and proportion of the population impacted or at risk) and where it is beyond national and immediate regional capacity to meet needs. For example, New Zealand provided a total of NZ\$3.5 million in support of the responses of international humanitarian agencies following severe flooding in Pakistan in 2022 and 2023.

Conclusion

- 13 The New Zealand Government has been monitoring the political situation in Pakistan. We expect Pakistan to abide by its international obligations, and we support the role of UN bodies in monitoring human rights in member states, including Pakistan.