

# [***Pakistan election candidate shot dead as violence escalates ahead of nationwide vote***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B7F-7T31-DY7V-G00F-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Byline:** By Sophia Saifi, Azaz Syed, Asim Khan and Alex Stambaugh, CNN

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**Body**

Islamabad, Pakistan (CNN) &#8212; A Pakistan election candidate was shot dead while campaigning on Wednesday, as violence escalates a week before polls open.

Rehan Zeb Khan, an independent candidate affiliated with former Prime Minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, was shot in a "targeted killing" when gunmen opened fire on his car in a market in Bajaur, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, according to district police. Three other people were injured.

The Islamic State Khorasan, or ISIS-K, later claimed responsibility for the attack.

It's the second killing of a candidate in recent weeks after Malik Kaleem Ullah, an independent candidate for the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Assembly, was shot dead on January 10 while going door to door, according to Reuters.

Wednesday's shooting is the latest in a string of attacks across the South Asian nation targeted at political candidates and parties ahead of the general election on February 8.

Also on Wednesday, the residences and offices of several candidates from Pakistan's People's Party and the election office of the Pakistan Muslim League were attacked in Balochistan province, injuring at least 15 people, according to caretaker Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs Balochistan Zubair Jamali.

At least one of the attacks was claimed by the Baloch Liberation Army, a militant separatist group.

Just a day earlier, four people were killed and five injured in a blast during PTI campaign rally in the city of Sibi in Balochistan, according to the PTI. No group has yet claimed responsibility for the attack.

In response to the violence, Pakistan's Election Commission (ECP) summoned an emergency meeting of security officials on Thursday to discuss the "deteriorating" law and order situation in the two provinces, according to a statement from the commission.

On Wednesday, Pakistan's military also met for an annual conference where they discussed the possible deployment of the country's army to assist the election commission during the general election next week, according to a government statement.

"No one would be allowed to indulge in violence in the name of political activity and sabotage the quintessential democratic exercise of conduct of free and fair elections," the statement said.

The election commission has declared February 8, the day of the election, a public holiday for the country's 240 million people.

Thursday's killing follows a turbulent week in Pakistani ***politics*** in which former Prime Minister Khan was sentenced to 14 years in prison for corruption, his second conviction in as many days.

Khan and members of the PTI party have been subjected to a widespread crackdown following his ouster from office in a no-confidence vote in April 2022, with some saying they were intimidated into silence, and others arrested on various charges or banned from leaving the country.

By Sophia Saifi, Azaz Syed, Asim Khan and Alex Stambaugh, CNN

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