

Chapter 1

Introduction

The Commonwealth Observer Mission for the 2013 elections in Pakistan was led by the Hon Sir Douglas Kidd, former Speaker of the House of Representatives of New Zealand, and comprised eight eminent persons in total. The Observer Mission was supported by a five-person team from the Commonwealth Secretariat. A full list of members is at Annex 1.

Terms of reference

'The Mission is established by the Commonwealth Secretary-General. It is to observe relevant aspects of the organisation and conduct of the General Elections which are scheduled to take place on 11 May 2013, in accordance with the laws of Pakistan.

The Mission is to consider the various factors impinging on the credibility of the electoral process as a whole. It will determine in its own judgement whether the elections have been conducted according to the standards for democratic elections to which Pakistan has committed itself, with reference to national election-related legislation and relevant regional, Commonwealth and other international commitments.

The Mission is to act impartially and independently and shall conduct itself according to the standards expressed in the International Declaration of Principles to which the Commonwealth is a signatory. It has no executive role; its function is not to supervise but to observe the process as a whole and to form a judgment accordingly. In its Final Report, the Mission is also free to propose to the authorities concerned recommendations for change on institutional, procedural and other matters as would assist the holding of future elections.

The Mission is to submit its report to the Commonwealth Secretary-General who will forward it to the Government of Pakistan, the Election Commission of Pakistan, political and civil society organisations and thereafter to all Commonwealth governments.'

Activities

The Observer Mission members arrived in Pakistan between 4 and 6 May 2013. During three days of briefings, the Mission met with the Election Commission, political party representatives, civil society groups, media, Commonwealth High Commissions, and national and international observer missions.

An Arrival Statement was issued on 9 May 2013 (Annex 2). The Observer Mission was deployed from 9–13 May 2013. Teams were based in the two most-populous Provinces – Punjab and Sindh – plus the capital, Islamabad. During deployment the teams met with election officials,

civil society representatives, security agencies as well as other observers.

On the basis of the Mission's initial findings and observations, the Chairperson issued an Interim Statement on 13 May 2013 (Annex 3). The Mission's Final Report was completed in Islamabad prior to departure on 18 May 2013 and thereafter transmitted to the Commonwealth Secretary-General.