



BY-ELECTION

# OBSERVATION REPORT

NA-258 Karachi-XX District Malir

## KARACHI SEES PEACEFUL BUT LACKLUSTER BY-ELECTION IN NA-258

### ECP improves training of security staff, enhances monitoring

ISLAMABAD, November 28, 2016: Large-scale deployment of police and Rangers ensured peaceful conduct of by-election in NA-258 (Malir, Karachi-XX) amid lack of political interest and low voter turnout, says Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN).

Alleging interference by the PP-led provincial government, Muttahida Qaumi Movement, Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaaf and Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamat boycotted the by-election, dampening the interest of the voters as well. PML-N had not fielded any candidate. PPP's Abdul Hakeem Baloch was among 11 candidates who were vying for the seat. Baloch had earlier won the same seat on a PML-N ticket in the General Election 2013 but resigned after developing differences with his party. He later joined PPP, which fielded him as its candidate for the by-election.

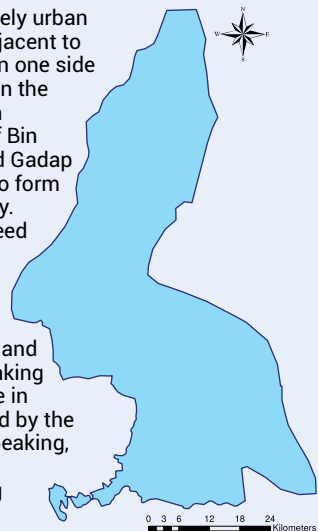
FAFEN trained and deployed 40 (34 men and six women) non-partisan citizens to observe the polling processes at 287 polling stations. However, this preliminary report contains information gathered telephonically from 127 polling stations (14 male, 14 female and 99 combined) on Election Day. The observers were trained to observe the opening, closing and counting processes at the polling stations.

According to FAFEN observers, voters showed little interest in the election as the overall turnout in the constituency that sprawled over rural and semi-urban neighborhoods of Karachi remained low. Although the electoral exercise remained peaceful, observers reported procedural irregularities from different polling stations observed throughout the day. There were 271 reports of irregularities from 127 polling stations – 14 male, 14 female and 99 combined observed on polling day, averaging 2.1 incidents per polling station. This is significantly higher than the average of one irregularity per polling station recorded during Shikarpur by-election (PS-11) held last month.

Insufficient availability of critical election materials such as election forms continued to be one of the major issues reported by the observers. Observers from 70 (55.1%) of the total 127 polling stations observed through the day reported insufficient availability of Form-XIV Statement of the Count whereas Ballot

### CONSTITUENCY HIGHLIGHTS ...

NA-258 is a largely urban constituency adjacent to Thatta district on one side and Jamshoro on the other. Five union councils each of Bin Qasim Town and Gadap Town combine to form this constituency. Gulshan-e-Hadeed is the most populated area of the constituency while the Sindhi and the Balochi speaking communities are in majority followed by the Punjabi, Urdu speaking, Pashto and the Saraiki speaking communities.



### REGISTERED VOTERS

There were 408,613 registered voters in the National Assembly constituency. Among these 241,792 were men and 166,821 were women voters.

GENERAL ELECTION 2013

232,005 160,747 392,752

BY-ELECTION 2016

241,792 166,821 408,613

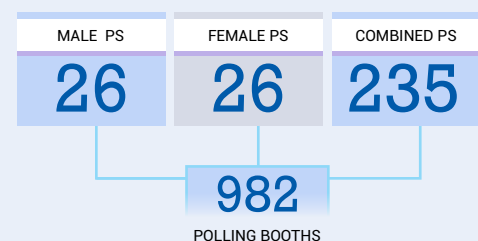
PERCENTAGE CHANGE

+4.2% +3.8% +4.0%

Male Female Total

### POLLING STATIONS (PS)

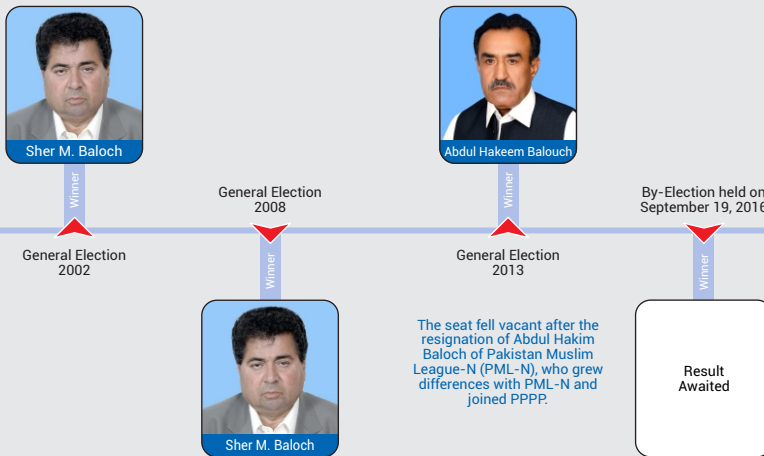
ECP established 287 polling stations in the constituency. Among them, 26 each for male and female while 235 were combined polling stations. A total of 982 polling booths were set up for the by-poll.



Account Forms (Form-XV) were found to be short at 50 (39.4%) of the polling stations.

Widespread presence of security personnel could not ensure the enforcement of ECP's Code of Conduct for Political Parties and Contesting Candidates that prohibits contestants from establishing election camps within 400-yards of the polling stations. Observers reported the presence of such camps outside 31 (24.4%) polling stations. These camps continued to issue serial number slips holding party symbol to potential voters. Voters carrying such serial number slips were seen to be present

### TIMELINE OF ELECTIONS



inside 53 (41.7%) of the observed polling stations.

Candidates and parties resorted to other campaigning and canvassing tactics as well. Reports from 17 (13.4%) polling stations showed campaign materials displayed on polling stations' boundary walls whereas candidates were seen providing transportation to potential voters at 13 (10.2%) of the observed polling stations.

Secrecy of ballot continued to be an issue, once again, with observers reporting unauthorized persons accompanying voters behind secrecy screens at six (4.7%) of the observed polling stations. ECP was able to ensure independence of observation as only one observer was reportedly stopped from observing the electoral processes.

Keeping in view the security concerns in the constituency, ECP deployed heavy security inside and outside the polling stations. FAFEN observers reported that security officials were present inside 116 polling stations. Compared to previous by-elections, this time around, training of security officials for the by-election improved where security officials at 64 polling stations were given training on electoral processes.

ECP showed greater interest in monitoring its own staff on the polling day as presiding officers at 27 polling stations told FAFEN observers that monitoring teams had visited their polling stations. Similarly, Returning Officers or other ECP designated officials visited 35 polling stations.

## CONSTITUENCY HIGHLIGHTS ...

### SENSITIVE POLLING STATIONS

**68** Polling stations were identified as highly sensitive.

**219** Polling stations were identified as sensitive.

### MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES

As many as 14 candidates – six party ticket holders and eight independents – contested the by-poll.



### TOTAL CONTESTING CANDIDATES

MALE	FEMALE
14	0

### POLLING PERSONNEL

PRESIDING OFFICERS	287
ASSISTANT PRESIDING OFFICERS	982
POLLING OFFICERS	982

### ELECTIONS' HISTORY

GENERAL ELECTION 2013		
VALID VOTES	REJECTED VOTES	VOTER TURNOUT
171,331	4,226	44.6%

GENERAL ELECTION 2008		
VALID VOTES	REJECTED VOTES	VOTER TURNOUT
169,235	2,572	41.0%

GENERAL ELECTION 2002		
VALID VOTES	REJECTED VOTES	VOTER TURNOUT
106,656	2,233	41.3%

### ELECTION OBSERVERS DEPLOYED

MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
34	06	40