**Aftermath of Election 2024**

**Pakistan is passing through the most critical period in its history.**

[M. Fazal Elahi](https://www.nation.com.pk/columnist/m-fazal-elahi)

February 20, 2024

[Opinions](https://www.nation.com.pk/opinions), [Columns](https://www.nation.com.pk/columns), [Newspaper](https://www.nation.com.pk/newspaper)

At a presser held after the Central Executive Committee (CEC) Meet­ing of the party held on February 13 the Chairman Pakistan Peo­ple’s Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto categorically stated that his party will extend full support to PML-N in forming the government at the Cen­tre. In the same breath, Bilawal also categorically stated that his par­ty will not join the cabinet.

On the contrary, PPP co-chairman and former President, Asif Ali Zardari speaking at a presser held at the residence of the PML-Q President, Chaudhry Shujat Hussain on February 13 co­gently said “We have decided today that we will get together and form the government to lift Pakistan from difficulty.” The refer­enced presser was participated by PML-N President Mian Sheh­baz Sharif, member of Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) and incumbent Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani, MQM-P Convener Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui and Istehqam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) leader Abdul Aleem Khan. The Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman was con­spicuous by his absence at the news conference. None of the leaders pres­ent on the occasion could provide a tangible reason for his absence.

[Thousands in Gaza suffering 'cruelty of hunger and malnutrition': UN](https://www.nation.com.pk/23-Feb-2024/thousands-in-gaza-suffering-cruelty-of-hunger-and-malnutrition-un)

Though vague, one has to admit that the stance of Co-chairman PPP Asif Ali Zardari was a little different from the party’s chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. While Bilawal Bhutto has been utterly blunt in venting his views on the issue of PPP’s role in the coalition government in the making, Co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari was comparatively subtle and diplomatic. This compels one to conclude that basically both are on the same page. Should this move of chairman PPP, Bilawal Bhutto and Co-chairman Asif Zardari be termed as smart? Yes, it should. By making this smart move, the PPP has played it safe. It has astutely maneuvered the situation in its favor. But such moves, one has to admit, are absolutely contrary to what the coun­try badly needs today. It is known to all and sundry, Pakistan is passing through the most critical period in its history. What Pakistan direly needs today is political stability, so as to be able to steer itself out of its gargantu­an socioeconomic and political predicaments.

[18 students held in Punjab University clash](https://www.nation.com.pk/23-Feb-2024/18-students-held-in-punjab-university-clash)

The chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto appreciates that the country is confront­ing an unparalleled crisis, and also asserts his party’s principal decision to take Pakistan out of the current crisis, but at the same time he is not prepared to take equal responsibility and be an integral part of the cabinet of the co­alition government. He says his party will sit in the opposition, and will sup­port the government on issue to issue basis. Isn’t all this a little too confusing? How can one sit in the opposition and at the same time outrightly support the policies and plans of the government in the saddle? This is something beyond one’s stretch of imagination to understand. Bilawal Bhutto says, he wants to see his father as the president of Pakistan. Why not? Co-chairman PPP Asif Ali Zardari has been the President of Pakistan, once before. During his 5-year stint as the president, he outstandingly represented Pakistan at the highest level at all international forums. One doesn’t see any reason why he cannot or should not be elected as the president of the country, once again. Bilawal is also aspiring to see his party’s candidates at the helm in the Senate and Na­tional Assembly of Pakistan. No one should have any reservations vis-à-vis Bilawal’s aspirations. But one certainly has the right to ask, what is it that is holding PPP from being an active part of the coalition government?

[Two killed in petrol agency fire incident](https://www.nation.com.pk/23-Feb-2024/two-killed-in-petrol-agency-fire-incident)

The Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman who was conspicuous by his absence at the presser jointly held on February 13, fi­nally broke his silence on February 14. At a presser held in Islamabad on February 14 he categorically said “We are not aligned with any political party, including PML-N.” He further said “We will not endorse Shehbaz Sharif as the prime ministerial candidate in the parliament, as our party has prohibited him from forming the government.”

What does the prevailing scenario in the political arena of the country re­flect? It, for sure, does not reflect optimism. It speaks volumes about the threat of social unrest brewing up to confront the country in the days to come. It appears, the political forces have become totally oblivious of the gi­gantic economic predicaments that Pakistan faces today. They don’t seem to have learnt any lesson from the past. How very sad, after having spent billions of tax payers’ money (over Rs.17 billion as reported in the media) on the recently held national elections, we are back to square one.

[Pneumonia claims five more lives in 24 hours](https://www.nation.com.pk/23-Feb-2024/pneumonia-claims-five-more-lives-in-24-hours)

The looming political crisis cannot, repeat cannot be amicably resolved by the political forces by themselves. History bears testimony to the fact, they have not been able to do so in the past, and they would not be able to do it now. One is compelled by circumstances to say that time has come for those who possess the capacity to exercise its influence on the political forces of the country, to act briskly and bring them together on one plat­form in the larger interest of this country. If this is not done, one clearly sees burgeoning political instability and chaos in the country.

**M Fazal Elahi**
The writer is a columnist and analyst based in Islamabad and can be contacted at geniousfazal@hotmail.com