

**UNITED NATIONS  
COMMITTEE AGAINST TORTURE**  
*Eighty-fourth Session*

---

**ALTERNATIVE REPORT**

---

Submitted pursuant to Article 19 of the Convention against Torture and  
Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

*Concerning the*  
**ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN**

**Custodial Torture, Arbitrary Detention, and Systematic Persecution**

---

**of Former Prime Minister Imran Ahmad Khan Niazi, his Family,  
Members of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Party and Members of Civil Society**

*Date of Submission: March 2026*

*Submitted by:*

**Pakistan World Alliance Ltd. (PWA)**

info@pakistanworldalliance.com

<https://www.pakistanworldalliance.com>

## I. SUMMARY

Pakistan World Alliance kindly submits this shadow report to the Committee against Torture (“the Committee”) for its 84th session in relation with the consideration of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan’s compliance with the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (“UNCAT” or “the Convention”). This submission focuses on the documented treatment of former Prime Minister Imran Ahmad Khan Niazi (“Mr. Khan”), his wife Mrs. Bushra Bibi Khan, members of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (“PTI”) political party since 2022 and members of civil society.

### Key Findings

**1. Prolonged solitary confinement amounting to torture:** Since September 2023, Mr. Khan has been held in solitary confinement for approximately 23 hours per day at Adiala Jail, Rawalpindi, under constant camera surveillance, in conditions that the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture has warned “could amount to torture and other inhuman or degrading treatment.” This exceeds the 15-day threshold established by the Nelson Mandela Rules (Rules 43–45) by a margin several months, constituting prolonged solitary confinement and engaging Articles 1, 2, 11, and 16 of UNCAT.

**2. Denial of medical care resulting in severe and irreversible harm:** Mr. Khan, aged 73, with documented medical needs from a 2013 spinal injury and 2022 gunshot wounds from an assassination attempt, has been systematically denied access to personal physicians and independent medical professionals. In February 2026, it was reported in the Supreme Court of Pakistan that Mr. Khan had lost approximately 85 percent of the vision in his right eye due to Central Retinal Vein Occlusion, after jail authorities allegedly ignored his complaints for over three months. These conditions engage Articles 1, 2, and 16 of UNCAT.

**3. Arbitrary detention found by the UN Working Group:** In Opinion No. 22/2024, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention concluded that Mr. Khan’s detention has no legal basis, is politically motivated, and resulted from the exercise of protected fundamental freedoms. The Working Group called for his immediate release and compensation.

**4. Systematic manipulation of the legal system through serial convictions and immediate re-arrest:** Mr. Khan has been subjected to over 150 legal cases since 2022, with convictions strategically timed before elections. When higher courts have acquitted or suspended sentences, including the Cypher case (acquitted June 2024), the Iddat marriage case (acquitted July 2024), and Toshakhana-1 case (suspended April 2024), new charges have been filed on the same day to prevent his release. New convictions were imposed in the Al-Qadir Trust case (14 years, January 2025) and the Toshakhana-2 case (17 years, December 2025). This pattern demonstrates the use of the legal system as an instrument of indefinite detention.

**5. Trial of civilians in military courts:** At least 85 civilians, including Mr. Khan’s nephew Barrister Hassan Niazi, have been sentenced to prison terms of 2–10 years by military courts in proceedings characterised by Amnesty International as lacking due process, transparency, and independent judicial review – in violation of Article 15 of UNCAT.

**6. Lethal force against protesters and cover-up:** On November 26<sup>th</sup> 2024 pro-democracy protests, security forces were witnessed to have fired live ammunition at unarmed protesters, killing at least 12 civilians. Medical records were confiscated, hospitals forbidden from sharing casualty information,

and a journalist, Matiullah Jan, investigating the deaths was arrested. These actions engage Articles 12 and 13 of UNCAT.

**7. Abductions and Enforced Disappearances:** Reports and witness accounts state that several journalists, lawyers, members of the opposition and social media activists (and family members of persons in these categories) have been abducted by state authorities, held incommunicado, beaten in custody, and denied access to lawyers, family members and fair judicial proceedings. Such practices raise serious concerns under Articles 2, 11, 12, 13, 15 and 16 of the Convention Against Torture, which require States to prevent torture, ensure lawful detention conditions, investigate allegations of abuse and prohibit the use of evidence obtained through coercion.

**8. Arbitrary detention of political opposition figures, journalists, and human rights defenders:** Since 2023, numerous political opposition figures, journalists, and human rights defenders in Pakistan have been subjected to arbitrary arrest, prolonged detention, and criminal prosecution in proceedings raising serious fair-trial concerns. Those affected include senior political leaders such as Dr Yasmin Rashid, Baloch activist Dr Mahrang Baloch and human rights lawyer Iman Zainab Mazari-Hazir. Reports indicate that several detainees have been held for extended periods without timely or effective judicial review, while access to legal counsel, family members, and adequate medical care has at times been restricted. The death of PTI political worker Ali Bilal (known as Zille Shah) in March 2023 raised serious concerns of custodial torture. A post-mortem examination reportedly documented multiple injuries consistent with assault and excessive internal bleeding following his detention during a police crackdown on protesters in Lahore. Such practices raise serious concerns under **Articles 2, 11, 12, 13 and 16 of the Convention against Torture**, which require States to prevent ill-treatment in detention, ensure prompt access to legal safeguards, investigate allegations of abuse, and protect individuals from cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

**9. Degrading detention of Mrs. Bushra Bibi Khan:** The UN Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, raised concerns that Mrs. Khan has been confined to a filthy, unventilated cell infested with insects and rodents, given unclean water and deliberately inedible food, and held in near total isolation for more than 22 hours per day, with limited access to family and legal counsel and inadequate medical care, and that conditions that fall below international standards for the treatment of detainees. Mrs. Khan was released on bail in October 2024 but was immediately re-arrested in January 2025 upon conviction in the Al-Qadir Trust case (7 years) and sentenced again in December 2025 in the Toshakhana-2 case (17 years). On 18 December 2025, Alice Jill Edwards, UN Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, raised concerns about the detention conditions of Bushra Bibi in Pakistan, warning that they may pose a risk to her physical and psychological integrity. The expert reported that she was held in near-total isolation for more than 22 hours per day, with limited access to family and legal counsel and inadequate medical care, conditions that fall below international standards for the treatment of detainees. Mrs. Khan is a non-political and has never held a public office. She remains imprisoned in Adiala jail.

## **II. THE SUBMITTING ORGANISATION**

Pakistan World Alliance (PWA) is an international coalition of human rights organisations, founded on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2024 and incorporated in the United Kingdom on 4 September 2025 (Companies House No. 16694097). Founded in the immediate aftermath of the state massacre of unarmed protesters in Islamabad on 26th November 2024, the PWA aimed to unite activists across the world to address human rights and civil liberties violations in Pakistan and to contribute to such causes worldwide. The PWA's mission is to stand and work for human rights, democracy, and the rule of law in Pakistan and across the world through engaging with governments, international institutions, and human rights organisations. Member organisations actively engage with their local governments, policymakers, independent journalists, analysts, and activists worldwide.

This submission is based on a review of: **(a)** the formal opinions and statements of UN Special Procedures mandate-holders; **(b)** the findings of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; **(c)** reports by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch; **(d)** verified court documents and legal proceedings in Pakistani courts; **(e)** the UK Home Office Country Policy and Information Note on Pakistan (February 2026); **(f)** the report of the Supreme Court-appointed amicus curiae, Barrister Salman Safdar (February 2026); and **(g)** credible international media reporting from Al Jazeera, Reuters, the BBC, Bloomberg, The Guardian, CNN, Dawn, and other established outlets.

### III. PAKISTAN'S OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE CONVENTION

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan signed UNCAT on 17 April 2008 and ratified it on 3 June 2010. [1] Pakistan also ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) on 23 June 2010. [2] The following articles of the Convention are directly engaged by the facts presented in this submission:

**Article 1 (Definition of Torture):** Defines torture as any act by which severe pain or suffering, physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for purposes including punishment, intimidation, or coercion, when inflicted by or with the acquiescence of a public official.

**Article 2 (Obligation to Prevent Torture):** Requires each State Party to take effective legislative, administrative, judicial or other measures to prevent acts of torture. No exceptional circumstances whatsoever may be invoked as a justification of torture.

**Article 11 (Systematic Review of Detention):** Requires each State Party to keep under systematic review interrogation rules, instructions, methods and practices as well as arrangements for the custody and treatment of persons subjected to any form of arrest, detention or imprisonment.

**Article 12 (Prompt and Impartial Investigation):** Requires each State Party to ensure that its competent authorities proceed to a prompt and impartial investigation wherever there is reasonable ground to believe that an act of torture has been committed.

**Article 13 (Right to Complain):** Requires each State Party to ensure that any individual who alleges he has been subjected to torture has the right to complain and have his case examined. Steps shall be taken to protect the complainant and witnesses against ill-treatment or intimidation.

**Article 14 (Right to Redress and Compensation):** Requires each State Party to ensure that the victim of an act of torture obtains redress and has an enforceable right to fair and adequate compensation.

**Article 15 (Exclusion of Coerced Evidence):** Requires each State Party to ensure that any statement established to have been made because of torture shall not be invoked as evidence in any proceedings.

**Article 16 (Other Acts of Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment):** Requires each State Party to prevent acts of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment which do not amount to torture as defined in Article 1.

Pakistan's Constitution, under Article 14, guarantees the inviolability of the dignity of person and provides that "no person shall be subjected to torture for the purpose of extracting evidence." However, Pakistan has not enacted standalone domestic legislation criminalising torture as required by Article 4 of the Convention. [3] This legislative gap is a fundamental barrier to the effective prevention of torture and the prosecution of perpetrators.

Such practices raise serious concerns under Articles 2, 11, 12, 13, 15 and 16 of the Convention Against Torture, which require States to prevent torture, ensure lawful detention conditions, investigate allegations of abuse and prohibit the use of evidence obtained through coercion.

## IV. BACKGROUND AND CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

### A. Ouster and Assassination Attempt (April–November 2022)

On 10 April 2022, Mr. Khan was removed as Prime Minister following a parliamentary vote of no confidence. [4] He subsequently led a sustained political campaign demanding fresh elections. On 3 November 2022, during a protest march from Lahore to Islamabad, Mr. Khan was shot in the right leg in Wazirabad, Punjab. One supporter was killed and at least 13 others wounded. [5] Mr. Khan stated that authorities initially refused to register a First Information Report (FIR) naming individuals he accused of involvement in the assassination attempt, alleging obstruction and inaction by police authorities before a complaint was eventually registered. [6] The gunman was later convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment in 2024. Mr. Khan sustained bullet fragments in his leg and a chipped tibia, requiring surgery. In October 2022, the Election Commission of Pakistan disqualified Mr. Khan from holding public office for five years. The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention subsequently found this disqualification was designed to exclude him from the political process. [7]

### B. Arrest of 9 May 2023 and Military Crackdown

On 9 May 2023, Mr. Khan was forcibly arrested by Pakistan Rangers from within the Islamabad High Court. According to eyewitness testimony, Rangers broke a window, pepper-sprayed Mr. Khan, and physically manhandled him. [8] On 11 May, the Supreme Court of Pakistan declared the arrest unlawful. [9] The arrest triggered nationwide protests. Thousands of protesters were arrested and some abducted and forcibly disappeared. In the aftermath, the National Security Committee approved the trial of civilian protesters in military courts. [10] By December 2024, military courts had sentenced 85 civilians to prison terms of 2–10 years in proceedings described as lacking due process, transparency, and independent judicial review. [11] A media blackout on all coverage of Mr. Khan was imposed. [12]

### C. Serial Convictions, Acquittals, and Immediate Re-arrests (August 2023–December 2025)

The pattern of Mr. Khan’s legal treatment since August 2023 demonstrates a systematic instrumentalisation of the judicial process to ensure his indefinite detention. In the months immediately preceding the 8 February 2024 general elections, three convictions were imposed in rapid succession:

**Pre-election convictions (August 2023–February 2024):** On 5 August 2023, Mr. Khan was sentenced to three years in the Toshakhana-1 case and imprisoned at Attock Jail before transfer to Adiala Jail on 26 September 2023. [13] On 30 January 2024, he was sentenced to 10 years in the Cypher case; on 31 January, 14 years in Toshakhana I (amended conviction) with a fine; and on 3 February, 7 years for an allegedly unlawful marriage (the “Iddat case”) – the first known prosecution of its kind in Pakistan. [14] Amnesty International documented fair trial violations, including denial of the right to cross-examine witnesses, and concluded the legal system had been “weaponised.” [15]

**Higher court acquittals and suspensions (April–July 2024):** Importantly, higher courts subsequently overturned or suspended all three of these pre-election convictions: the Islamabad High Court (IHC) suspended the Toshakhana-1 sentence in April 2024; the IHC acquitted Mr. Khan and Shah Mahmood Qureshi in the Cypher case on 3 June 2024, finding the prosecution had failed to

prove its case; [16] and an Islamabad sessions court acquitted Mr. Khan and Mrs. Khan in the Iddat marriage case on 13 July 2024. [17] These acquittals reflect the findings of the UN Working Group and Amnesty International that the original convictions were politically motivated.

**Pattern of immediate re-arrest:** However, on the very same day as the Iddat acquittal (13 July 2024), the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) arrested Mr. Khan and Mrs. Khan in a new Toshakhana case, ensuring their continued detention. [18] This pattern of immediate re-arrest upon acquittal or bail – repeated across multiple cases – was explicitly identified by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention as part of a “much larger campaign of repression.” [19]

**Al-Qadir Trust conviction (January 2025):** On 17 January 2025, Mr. Khan was sentenced to 14 years and Mrs. Khan to 7 years in the Al-Qadir Trust corruption case (£190 million), with additional fines. [20] The conviction was delivered at a makeshift courtroom inside Adiala Jail. PTI described the verdict as politically motivated and pre-determined. An appeal has been filed before the Islamabad High Court, with hearing scheduled for 11 March 2026. [21]

**Toshakhana-2 conviction (December 2025):** On 20 December 2025, Mr. Khan and Mrs. Khan were each sentenced to 17 years in the Toshakhana-2 case, relating to a Bulgari jewellery set gifted by the Saudi Crown Prince during an official visit in May 2021. [22] PTI stated that Mr. Khan’s family was prevented from entering Adiala Jail during the hearing and that his lawyers were given less than 24 hours’ notice. [23] The party described the proceedings as “a closed-door jail trial ... in fact a military trial.” [24]

Taken together, the chronology demonstrates that every time a court acquits or grants bail, the state files new charges to prevent Mr. Khan’s release. Mr. Khan now faces cumulative sentences of over 45 years across multiple cases, while the convictions that provided the original basis for his detention have been overturned.

#### **D. February 2024 Elections and Disenfranchisement**

PTI’s electoral symbol was stripped by the Election Commission on 13 January 2024, forcing candidates to run as independents. [25] Despite these obstacles, PTI-backed independents won the most seats, but the UN Working Group described “widespread fraud on election day.” [26] The UK Home Office concluded in February 2026 that observers widely deemed the elections “neither free nor fair.” This supports the findings of a leaked Commonwealth Pakistan 2024 Election Observer report which describes the military regime to have ‘stolen’ 2024 election from Imran Khan’s PTI party using fraud and voter manipulation. [27]

#### **E. Enforced Disappearances of Family Members (June 2024)**

As an example of enforced disappearances, in June 2024, three family members of PTI officials were forcibly disappeared: Professors Mazhar-ul-Hassan and Zahoor-ul-Hassan on 6 June, and Ghulam Shabbir on 9 June. [28] Amnesty International characterised this as a pattern “designed to intimidate those living abroad who are critical of the Pakistani government and the military.” [29] This pattern of transnational repression has continued against multiple dissidents such as Barrister Shahzad Akbar in the UK, journalists, members of the opposition, civil society and social media activists outside of Pakistan and has been documented by the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission of the United States, and the Joint Committee of Human Rights of the UK.

## **F. November 2024 Protests and Lethal Crackdown**

Between 24 and 27 November 2024, PTI organised protests in Islamabad against the 26th constitutional amendment, which the International Committee of Jurists described as “a full-frontal assault of the rule of law.” The government responded with internet shutdowns, mass pre-emptive arrests (approximately 4,000), deployment of military forces under Article 245, and enforcement of Section 144 banning gatherings. [30] On the night of 26–27 November, security forces launched a crackdown. PTI reported at least 12 supporters killed by gunshot wounds. An anonymous emergency doctor confirmed treating over 40 gunshot patients in one night and stated that all records had been confiscated by authorities. [31] Hospitals were forbidden from sharing casualty information. [32] Journalist Matiullah Jan, investigating the deaths, was arrested under fabricated charges including drug trafficking. [33] His legal battle continues to date.

## **G. Conditions of Detention: Prolonged Solitary Confinement and Medical Neglect (September 2023–Present)**

On 12 December 2025, the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, Ms. Alice Jill Edwards, issued a formal public statement based on her communication dated 10 December 2025, warning about torture and other inhuman or degrading treatment” of Khan. [34] The Special Rapporteur documented the following:

Mr. Khan has been held in solitary confinement for approximately 23 hours per day since 26 September 2023 under constant CCTV surveillance. He has been denied outdoor activity, interaction with other prisoners, and communal prayers. His cell lacks natural light and adequate ventilation, with extreme temperatures and poor air circulation leading to foul odours and insect infestations. He has reportedly suffered nausea, vomiting, and noticeable weight loss. Visits by lawyers and family members have been frequently blocked despite court orders. [35]

The Special Rapporteur stressed that prolonged solitary confinement exceeding 15 consecutive days constitutes psychological torture under the Nelson Mandela Rules (Rules 43–45). [36] Mr. Khan’s isolation of 23 hours per day over a continuous period exceeding many months vastly exceeds this threshold.

**February 2026 – severe vision loss from medical neglect:** In February 2026, the Supreme Court-appointed amicus curiae, Barrister Salman Safdar, conducted an almost 3-hour interview with Mr. Khan on 10 February and submitted a seven-page report to the court. The report documented that Mr. Khan had lost approximately 85 percent of the vision in his right eye due to Central Retinal Vein Occlusion (CRVO; the main retinal vein becomes blocked, this can lead to permanent blindness if not treated urgently and adequately). [37] The report stated that Mr. Khan had suffered rapid vision loss over the preceding three months while in custody under the former jail superintendent, and that despite “repeated complaints of persistent blurred and hazy vision, no action was taken by the jail authorities to address these complaints.” [38] A medical report dated 6 February 2026 confirmed the diagnosis. The Supreme Court of Pakistan, under Chief Justice Yahya Afridi, moved to order the formation of a medical team and directed that Mr. Khan be allowed phone contact with his sons in the United Kingdom. [39] Mr. Khan subsequently underwent a medical procedure at a government hospital (not independent medical care or from his own medical team) on approximately 25 January 2026, but his family and legal team stated they were not informed before or after the procedure. [40]

Repeated public statements from Mr. Khan’s personal physicians – two highly respected medical professionals at the Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Centre, emphasised the

urgent need for full independent and specialised clinical access to investigate the possible causes of the CRVO. These requests received no response. The Special Rapporteur formally requested the Government to provide detailed information on Mr. Khan's conditions and sought permission for an independent visit. The Government's response was to claim through an aide that Mr. Khan receives facilities "greater than his rights." [41]

#### **H. Degrading Detention of Mrs. Bushra Bibi Khan**

In a separate statement in December 2025, the Special Rapporteur raised alarm about the detention conditions of Mrs. Bushra Bibi Khan. She was reportedly confined to a small, airless cell described as filthy, overheated, and infested with insects and rodents. Power cuts plunged the cell into darkness. She was given unclean drinking water and food rendered inedible by excessive chilli powder. She suffered significant weight loss, infections, fainting, and symptoms of a stomach ulcer. She was held in near-total isolation for more than 22 hours per day, denied family visits and access to legal counsel and personal physicians. [42] In April 2024, a spokesperson for Mrs. Khan alleged she had been poisoned in prison through the addition of toilet cleaner to her meal. [43] Mrs. Khan was released on bail in October 2024 but was immediately re-arrested in January 2025 upon conviction in the Al-Qadir Trust case and sentenced again to 17 years in December 2025. [44] She remains imprisoned at Adiala Jail.

## **V. ARTICLE-BY-ARTICLE ANALYSIS OF VIOLATIONS**

### **A. Article 1: Definition of Torture**

The conditions described by the UN Special Rapporteur satisfy each element of Article 1. The prolonged solitary confinement (23 hours/day for over two years), constant surveillance, denial of medical care leading to irreversible vision loss, restriction of family and legal access, and deliberate degradation of living conditions inflict severe physical and mental suffering. These acts are intentional and purposive: inflicted by public officials for purposes including punishment, intimidation, and coercion connected to Mr. Khan's political activities and his refusal to accept terms dictated by the military establishment. [45] The treatment of Mrs. Khan – particularly the provision of deliberately inedible food, unclean water, and alleged poisoning – further demonstrates intentional infliction of suffering. The Committee's General Comment No. 2 (2008) confirms that conditions of detention can themselves constitute torture. [46]

### **B. Article 2: Obligation to Prevent Torture**

Pakistan has failed in its obligation to take effective measures to prevent torture. Pakistan has not enacted standalone domestic legislation criminalising torture as required by Article 4 of the Convention, despite ratifying UNCAT in 2010. [47] The conditions that enabled Mr. Khan's treatment to continue unchecked – the absence of independent prison monitoring, the obstruction of court-ordered visits, and the failure to respond to UN expert communications – demonstrate systemic failure.

### **C. Article 11: Review of Detention Practices**

Article 11 requires Pakistan to keep under systematic review its arrangements for the custody of detained persons. Mr. Khan has been held in solitary confinement for over two years without any review of necessity or proportionality. His complaints about vision loss were ignored for three months until irreversible damage occurred. The prison authorities maintained these conditions despite court orders. There is no evidence that Pakistan has conducted any systematic review of custody arrangements applied to political detainees.

### **D. Article 12: Obligation to Investigate**

No investigation has been initiated into the conditions of Mr. Khan's solitary confinement despite the Special Rapporteur's findings. No investigation has been conducted into the reported lethal use of force in November 2024, despite credible evidence of gunshot deaths and confiscation of medical records. No investigation has been conducted into the enforced disappearances of June 2024, or any independent investigation into the May 9<sup>th</sup> 2023 riots that led to thousands of arrests including 105 civilians being abducted and then incarcerated in military prison. Many also remain detained in civilian prison, including 50 detainees in the Gujrawala district.

### **E. Article 13: Right to Complain**

Mr. Khan's ability to complain has been systematically obstructed. He has on multiple occasions been kept incommunicado for months. His access to lawyers has been frequently blocked. When family members attempted to raise concerns publicly, they were subjected to reprisals: his sisters were manhandled during a peaceful protest outside Adiala Jail, and have been water cannoned in similar peaceful sit-in protests outside of prison on their allocated meeting days where the meetings have not

been permitted despite court orders. [48] PTI Senators who filed constitutional petitions against solitary confinement faced political pressure. [49] The intimidation of complainants and witnesses directly violates Article 13.

#### **F. Article 14: Right to Redress and Compensation**

The UN Working Group, in Opinion No. 22/2024, called for Mr. Khan's immediate release and an enforceable right to compensation. [50] Pakistan has not complied. There has been no offer of redress for documented violations. No reparation has been made to families of persons killed during the November 2024 protests. The absence of standalone anti-torture legislation means there is no domestic mechanism for victims to seek the compensation required by Article 14.

#### **G. Article 15: Exclusion of Coerced Evidence**

The trial of over 85 civilians in military courts raises serious concerns. Amnesty International documented coerced confessions and lack of transparency. [51] Proceedings were conducted within military establishments in secrecy. Defendants could appeal only to a military appellate tribunal, not independent civilian courts. The Supreme Court of Pakistan itself ruled in October 2023 that such trials were unconstitutional, a decision subsequently overturned through a constitutional amendment in 2025. [52]

#### **H. Article 16: Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment**

The cumulative treatment constitutes cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment under Article 16. This includes: the deliberate provision of inedible food and unclean water to Mrs. Khan; constant surveillance during prayer; denial of communal religious observance; the serial use of overlapping criminal charges designed to ensure perpetual detention; the pattern of acquittal followed by same-day re-arrest; persecution of family members through enforced disappearance; and the use of anti-terrorism legislation to criminalise peaceful assembly.

## **VI. SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR THE DELEGATION OF PAKISTAN**

The Pakistan World Alliance respectfully requests the Committee to consider posing the following questions:

- 1: What steps has the Government taken to comply with the findings of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention in Opinion No. 22/2024 regarding the detention of former Prime Minister Imran Khan?
- 2: How does the Government justify the prolonged solitary confinement of Mr. Imran Khan in light of the Nelson Mandela Rules, which prohibit prolonged solitary confinement exceeding 15 days?
- 3: What explanation can the Government provide regarding the reported severe loss of vision suffered by Mr. Khan while in custody, what investigation has been conducted into allegations that prison authorities failed to respond to repeated medical complaints, and why is independent medical access being denied?
- 4: What safeguards exist to ensure that detainees including political figures, journalists, and human rights defenders have prompt and regular access to lawyers, family members, and independent medical care while in custody?
- 5: On what legal basis were civilians prosecuted in military courts following the events of 9 May 2023, and how does the Government ensure that such proceedings comply with fair trial guarantees and Article 15 of the Convention?
- 6: Has the Government conducted any independent investigation into allegations of torture, enforced disappearances, and ill-treatment of detainees following the 9 May 2023 protests and the November 2024 crackdown on protesters?
- 7: What progress has Pakistan made toward enacting comprehensive legislation criminalising torture in accordance with Articles 1 and 4 of the Convention?

## VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Pakistan World Alliance respectfully urges the Committee to recommend that the Government of Pakistan take the following measures to ensure compliance with its obligations under the Convention against Torture:

### Immediate Measures

1. **End the prolonged solitary confinement of Mr. Imran Khan and Mrs Bushra Bibi Khan** and ensure that all detainees are held in conditions consistent with the Nelson Mandela Rules.
2. **Ensure immediate and unrestricted access to independent medical care**, legal counsel, and family members for all detainees, including Mr. Imran Khan and Mrs. Bushra Bibi Khan.
3. **Guarantee detention conditions consistent with human dignity**, including adequate nutrition, clean drinking water, ventilation, and access to medical treatment.
4. **Ensure prompt and effective judicial review of detention**, and release any individuals whose detention has been found to be arbitrary under international law.

### Legislative and Institutional Reform

5. **Adopt comprehensive legislation criminalising torture** in accordance with Articles 1 and 4 of the Convention.
6. **Establish an independent national preventive mechanism** for the monitoring of all places of detention and ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (OPCAT).
7. **Amend domestic legislation to prohibit the trial of civilians in military courts**, ensuring that all civilians are tried by independent civilian courts in accordance with international fair trial standards.
8. **Criminalise enforced disappearance as a distinct offence** and consider ratifying the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

### Investigation and Accountability

9. **Conduct prompt, independent, and impartial investigations** into allegations of torture, medical neglect in detention, enforced disappearances, and the use of excessive force against protesters.
10. **Ensure accountability and effective remedies for victims**, including prosecution of responsible officials and access to compensation and rehabilitation.

## **VIII. CONCLUSION**

Recent constitutional changes of the 26th and 27th amendments restructuring Pakistan's judicial system, have prompted warnings from UN human rights experts that weakening judicial independence risks eroding protections against arbitrary detention and abuse in custody. Such developments have dismantled effective judicial oversight in politically sensitive prosecutions, meaning detention, coercion, and ill-treatment occur without meaningful accountability.

The treatment of Mr. Imran Khan, Mrs. Bushra Bibi Khan, and members of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party since 2022 represents a grave and systematic violation of the Convention against Torture. The documented facts demonstrate that Pakistan has failed in its obligations to conduct fair trials, prevent torture, to investigate allegations, to protect the right to complain, to exclude coerced evidence, and to provide redress to victims.

The pattern is unmistakable: serial convictions timed to prevent electoral participation; acquittals by higher courts met with immediate re-arrest on fresh charges; prolonged solitary confinement that the UN Special Rapporteur has warned constitutes torture; medical neglect leading to irreversible harm; enforced disappearances of family members; lethal force against peaceful protesters followed by cover-up; and military trials of civilians. Each element, taken alone, would constitute a serious violation. Together, they reveal a state apparatus systematically deploying the instruments of law and detention to break the resistance of a political leader and suppress an entire political movement.

This submission addresses, at its core, the absolute prohibition of torture. Regardless of the charges a person faces, regardless of the political controversy that surrounds them, every human being in state custody is entitled to treatment that respects their inherent human dignity. The prohibition of torture admits of no exception. It is not suspended by allegations of corruption, by national security concerns, or by political instability.

Given that the matter directly affects a population of approximately 250 million people, PWA urges the Committee to give this matter its most serious consideration and to ensure that its concluding observations and recommendations reflect the gravity and urgency of the situation.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Pakistan signed UNCAT on 17 April 2008 and ratified it on 3 June 2010. UN Treaty Body Database. [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Countries.aspx?CountryCode=PAK&Lang=EN](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Countries.aspx?CountryCode=PAK&Lang=EN).
- [2] Pakistan ratified the ICCPR on 23 June 2010. UN Human Rights Portal. [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Countries.aspx?CountryCode=PAK&Lang=EN](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Countries.aspx?CountryCode=PAK&Lang=EN)
- [3] See ICJ, “ICJ Welcomes UN Human Rights Committee’s Concluding Observations on Pakistan,” 8 November 2024; see also Muhammad Hamza Haider, University College Lahore Human Rights Review, Vol. III. <https://www.icj.org/pakistan-icj-welcomes-un-human-rights-committees-concluding-observations-on-pakistan/>
- [4] Al Jazeera, “Imran Khan vs Pakistan’s Government: A Timeline,” updated 26 November 2024. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/5/9/timeline-a-year-of-ex-pm-imran-khans-arrest-may-9-violence-in-pakistan>
- [5] Al Jazeera, “Pakistan’s ex-PM Imran Khan Shot in Leg at Protest March,” 3 November 2022. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/11/3/pakistans-ex-pm-imran-khan-injured-by-gunfire-during-long-march>
- [6] Dawn, “Deadlock Persists Over Wazirabad Incident FIR,” 6 November 2022 ;
- [7] UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, Opinion No. 22/2024 concerning Imran Ahmad Khan Niazi (Pakistan), A/HRC/WGAD/2024/22, paras. 62–70. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4064719?ln=en&v=pdf>
- [8] Al Jazeera, “Former Pakistani PM Imran Khan Arrested at Islamabad Court,” 9 May 2023. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/5/9/former-pakistan-pm-imran-khan-arrested-outside-islamabad-court>; CNN, 9 May 2023. <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/05/09/asia/imran-khan-arrest-intl>
- [9] Dawn, “Special report: May 9, Mayhem and Military Trials a Year On,” 25 June 2024. [Special report: May 9, mayhem and military trials — a year on](https://www.dawn.com/news/1837519)
- [10] Al Jazeera, Timeline, supra note 4 (entry for 17 May 2023).
- [11] Al Jazeera, “Pakistan Military Court Sentences 60 More Civilians,” 26 December 2024. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/12/26/pakistan-military-court-sentences-60-more-civilians-over-pro-khan-protests>; Amnesty International, “Pakistan: Civilians Must Not Be Tried Under Military Laws,” 16 May 2023. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/05/pakistan-civilians-must-not-be-tried-under-military-laws/>
- [12] The Intercept (media outlets directed by Pakistan Army to ban coverage of Imran Khan). <https://theintercept.com/2023/06/02/imran-khan-pakistan-military-coverage-ban/>
- [13] Amnesty International, ASA 33/8507/2024, pp. 3–5. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa33/8507/2024/en/>
- [14] UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, Opinion No. 22/2024, supra note 7, paras. 29–35.
- [15] Amnesty International, ASA 33/8507/2024, supra note 13, p. 1 and passim.
- [16] Dawn, “IHC Acquits Imran, Qureshi in Cipher Case,” 3 June 2024. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1837519>; Al Jazeera, “Islamabad Court Nullifies Imran Khan Conviction in State Secrets Leak,” 3 June 2024. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/6/3/islamabad-court-nullifies-imran-khan-conviction-in-state-secrets-leak>
- [17] The Nation (Pakistan), “Imran Khan, Bushra Bibi Acquitted in Iddat Case,” 13 July 2024. <https://www.nation.com.pk/13-Jul-2024/imran-khan-bushra-bibi-acquitted-in-iddat-case>
- [18] Dawn, “Release from Jail Remains Elusive as Imran, Bushra ‘Arrested’ in New Case After Iddat Conviction Overturned,” 13 July 2024. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1845567>
- [19] UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, Opinion No. 22/2024, supra note 7.
- [20] JURIST, “Pakistan Former PM Imran Khan and Wife Sentenced in Al-Qadir Corruption Case,” 17 January 2025. <https://www.jurist.org/news/2025/01/pakistan-former-pm-imran-khan-and-wife-sentenced-in-al-qadir-corruption-case/>
- [21] Devdiscourse, “High Court to Hear Imran Khan’s Appeal in Al-Qadir Trust Case,” 26 February 2026 (IHC set hearing for 11 March 2026). <https://www.devdiscourse.com/article/law-order/3818885-high-court-to-hear-imran-khans-appeal-in-al-qadir-trust-case>
- [22] Dawn, “Imran Khan, Bushra Bibi Sentenced to 17 Years in Toshakhana 2 Case,” 20 December 2025. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1962237>
- [23] The Express Tribune, “Imran Khan, Bushra Bibi Sentenced to 17 Years in Toshakhana 2.0,” 20 December 2025. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2583147/imran-khan-bushra-bibi-sentenced-to-17-years-in-toshakhana-20>
- [24] PTI official statement on X (formerly Twitter), 20 December 2025; The Express Tribune, *ibid*.
- [25] Al Jazeera, Timeline, supra note 4 (entry for 13 January 2024). <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/5/9/timeline-a-year-of-ex-pm-imran-khans-arrest-may-9-violence-in-pakistan>
- [26] UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, Opinion No. 22/2024, supra note 7, para. 71.
- [27] UK Home Office, Country Policy and Information Note: Political Parties and Affiliation, Pakistan, February 2026, para. 3.1.5; The Telegraph, “Commonwealth Helped Hide Pakistan Election Rigging” 15 September 2025. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pakistan-country-policy-and-information-notes>  
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2025/09/15/commonwealth-eu-pakistan-election-rigging-imran-khan/>
- [28] Amnesty International, “Urgent Action: Disappearances of Family Members of Politicians (Pakistan 58.24),” July 2024. <https://www.amnestyusa.org/urgent-actions/urgent-action-disappearances-of-family-members-of-politicians-pakistan-58-24/>

[29] Amnesty International, “Urgent Action: Disappearances of Family Members of Politicians (Pakistan 58.24),” July 2024. <https://www.amnestyusa.org/urgent-actions/urgent-action-disappearances-of-family-members-of-politicians-pakistan-58-24/>

[30] Amnesty International, “Urgent and Transparent Investigation Needed into Deadly Crackdown,” 28 November 2024. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/11/urgent-and-transparent-investigation-needed-into-deadly-crackdown-on-opposition-protesters/>

[31] Common Dreams, “Pakistani Authorities Accused of Trying to Cover Up Killings,” 29 November 2024.

<https://www.commondreams.org/news/pakistan-protests#:~:text=Police%20fire%20tear%20gas%20shells,are%20not%20allowed%20to%20talk.>

[32] Al Jazeera, “Dead but Not Counted: Hidden Victims of Pakistan’s Latest Political Clash,” 4 December 2024.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2024/12/4/dead-but-not-counted-hidden-victims-of-pakistans-latest-political-clash>

[33] Al Jazeera, 28 November 2024; The Nation (Pakistan), 2 December 2024.

[34] OHCHR, “Pakistan: Imran Khan’s Solitary Confinement and Inhumane Detention Conditions Must End, UN Expert Says,” 12 December 2025. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/12/pakistan-imran-khans-solitary-confinement-and-inhumane-detention-conditions>

[35] OHCHR, *ibid.*; VoicePK.net, “UN Rapporteur Flags Alleged Rights Violations Against Imran Khan in Adiala Jail,” citing communication dated 10 December 2025; JURIST, 14 December 2025.

[36] Nelson Mandela Rules (UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners), Rules 43–45, GA Resolution 70/175 (2015). [https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/Nelson\\_Mandela\\_Rules-E-book.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/Nelson_Mandela_Rules-E-book.pdf)

[37] Al Jazeera, “Ex-Pakistan PM Imran Khan Left with 15% Vision in Right Eye, Court Told,” 12 February 2026 (reporting on amicus curiae report of Barrister Salman Safdar dated 10 February 2026). <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/2/12/ex-pakistan-pm-imran-khan-left-with-15-vision-in-right-eye-court-told>

[38] Al Jazeera, “Ex-Pakistan PM Imran Khan Left with 15% Vision in Right Eye, Court Told,” 12 February 2026 (reporting on amicus curiae report of Barrister Salman Safdar dated 10 February 2026). <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/2/12/ex-pakistan-pm-imran-khan-left-with-15-vision-in-right-eye-court-told>

[39] Al Jazeera, *ibid.* (Chief Justice Yahya Afridi: “The issue of Imran’s health is most important”; ordered medical team and phone contact before 16 February).

[40] AP News AP, “Pakistan Says Imprisoned Ex-PM Imran Khan ‘In Good Health’ After Eye Procedure,” 29 January 2026. <https://apnews.com/article/pakistan-khan-eye-procedure-hospital-214e59efc0daeac65a62bd4c4660dc2>

[41] VoicePK.net, “UN Rapporteur Raises Alarm Over Imran Khan’s Jail Conditions; Govt Dismisses Concerns,” 13 December 2025. <https://voicepk.net/2025/12/un-rapporteur-raises-alarm-over-imran-khans-jail-conditions-govt-dismisses-concerns/>

[42] OHCHR, “Pakistan: UN Expert Raises Alarm Over Substandard Detention Conditions of Bushra Bibi Khan,” 24 December 2025. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/12/pakistan-un-expert-raises-alarm-over-substandard-detention-conditions-bushra>

[43] Wikipedia, “Bushra Bibi,” citing Mashal Yousafzai spokesperson statement of 25 April 2024.

[44] Bushra Bibi was released on bail 24 October 2024 (Geo.tv, Al Jazeera, 24 October 2024); re-arrested 17 January 2025 upon Al-Qadir Trust conviction (The Express Tribune, 17 January 2025); sentenced to 17 years in Toshakhana-2 case 20 December 2025 (Dawn, 20 December 2025).

[45] Al Jazeera, 3 December 2025 (political analyst Imtiaz Gul: “the primary objective ... is apparently meant to break him into a compromise”). <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/12/3/why-jail-access-to-pakistans-imran-khan-has-caused-a-political-storm>

[46] Committee against Torture, General Comment No. 2 (2008), CAT/C/GC/2, 24 January 2008, para. 6. <https://www.refworld.org/legal/cat/2008/53514>

[47] *Supra* note 3.

[48] Al Jazeera, 3 December 2025. *Supra* note 45.

[49] The Express Tribune, “PTI Senators Move IHC Over Imran Khan, Bushra Bibi’s Solitary Confinement,” 20 January 2026. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2588115/pti-senators-move-ihc-against-imran-khan-and-bushra-bibis-solitary-confinement-bar-on-visits>

[50] UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, Opinion No. 22/2024, *supra* note 7, operative paragraph.

[51] Amnesty International, *supra* note 11.

[52] Supreme Court of Pakistan, October 2023 ruling on military courts; 26th Constitutional Amendment, May 2025.

---

**Note:** This submission has been prepared in accordance with the guidelines for NGO submissions to the Committee against Torture. All individuals named are public figures in cases already in the public domain. The Government of Pakistan disputes many of the characterisations set out above. Where relevant, the Government’s position has been noted. .

