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#### About PATTAN-Coalition38

PATTAN is one of the leading civil society organisations of Pakistan and has been working to empower marginalised classes to make state and govt bodies accountable for improving governance of elections, disasters and rights. Currently, PATTAN is the secretariat of Coalition38 - a largest network of CSOs, labour unions, CBOs, and intellectuals.

Coalition38 aims to influence the state institutions for the implementation of Articles 3; 29; 37, and 38 of Pakistan's Constitution in letter and spirit through research, awareness raising, social mobilization, networking of civil society including marginalised people and women.

## RESS RELEASE

### Civil society expresses serious concern for causing unnecessary delay in the distribution of quota seats reserved for women and religious minorities.

Islamabad, 23 February: The Election Commission ought to allocate and announce the quota seats reserved for women and religious minorities of national and provincial assemblies to each qualifying party proportionately to their general seats simultaneously and without any delay. We note with deep concern that the Election Commission has ignored not only the best practice of previous election commissions but also neglected the Constitution Article 51 and 106, the Elections Act 2017 and the Election Rules, while distributing and announcing seats to various parties.

We also note with utmost dismay that an incomplete assembly has taken oath in the Punjab province, which is a clear violation of Article 91(4) and 130 (4) of the Constitution. Under these articles, taking oath, election of prime minister and chief ministers and speakers only be held when assemblies are completed.

It is worth reminding that in the past reserved seats used to be announced simultaneously to all parties, but till today 23 February the ECP could only announce distribution of few seats of national and provincial assemblies only to some parties, while it has withheld announcement of rest of the seats to other parties. In our view this partial announcement has further eroded the credibility of the ECP as well as enhanced the mistrust in the country.

According to the ECP notification on the issue, so far ECP has notified only 38 of 60 reserved seats of the national assembly and 93 of 156 of provincial assemblies to some parties including Pakistan Muslim League (N), Pakistan Peoples' Party, Mutahida Quomi Movement, Jamiat-Ulema Islam (F) etc. while ECP has not allocated a single seat to Sunni Itihad Council/or Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, which is strengthening feelings of the public regarding ECP's partisanship behaviour.

Reserved Seats					
Assembly	Women	Minority	Total	Allocated	Remaining
NA	60	10	70	38	32
PAs	132	24	156	93	63
<b>Total</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>95</b>

Source: ECP Website notifications

Moreover, PATTAN-Coalition38 – an independent and self-reliant civil society group would like to remind the ECP that new assemblies under Article 91 (2) of the Constitution must meet by the twenty first day following the day on which a general election is held'. Therefore, we strongly demand of the ECP to announce allocation of rest of the reserved seats to all the parties who have elected members in assemblies without any further delay. We note with deep distress that only six days are left to the meeting of the assemblies, and there appears no signs of urgency inside the ECP.

If ECP fails to allocate all the quota seats to the deserving parties immediately it could lower the ranking of Pakistan on the gender equality indices. Please also note, we must adhere to the conditions of the European Union's Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+) which is extremely crucial to our economy and exports as fulfilling human and women rights is an integral part of the GSP+. Also, our government must fulfill its commitment regarding Goal 5 – Gender Equality of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) should we want to continue benefiting from the UN support.

We also urge the political parties not to politicise the allocation of reserved seats and we appeal to the higher judiciary to take up this public interest issue on priority basis before it becomes a spectacle and bashing tool against the country.

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