

Pakistan's ruling establishment—led by the military leadership under **Field Marshal Asim Munir** alongside the civilian coalition government of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif—is executing systemic maneuvers that critics and international watchdogs label a "legal coup" and an aggressive rollback of democratic principles. Rather than using historic over-the-board military takeovers, the current rulers are utilizing constitutional reshaping, legal suppression, and institutional remodeling to bypass the public will. [\[1, 2, 3, 4, 5\]](#)

The democratic erosion in Pakistan manifests through several aggressive tactics:

1. Centralization of Total Power

In August 2026, the parliament passed the **Defense Forces of Pakistan Act 2026** and key amendments to the National Command Authority Act. [\[1\]](#)

- **Absolute Command:** These changes effectively stripped away civilian oversight, handing Field Marshal Munir unprecedented, absolute control over all service branches, appointments, dismissals, and strategic nuclear assets. [\[1, 2\]](#)
- **Institutional Restructuring:** The state has moved to establish a loyal Federal Constitutional Court while stripping the traditional judiciary of its independent powers to balance executive overreach. [\[1, 2\]](#)

2. Dismantling of Provincial Autonomy

To counter popular opposition support, federal rulers have directly targeted regional governing powers. [\[1\]](#)

- **State of Emergency in KP:** In October 2026, the federal government suspended the provincial administration of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP)—the last remaining stronghold of Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party. [\[1, 2\]](#)
- **Military Deployment:** By invoking emergency rule, the state deployed the military, stripped elected regional officials of their power, and suspended fundamental rights to free assembly and speech in the province. [\[1, 2\]](#)
- **Redrawing Political Maps:** The military command has floated proposals to dismantle and partition historic large provinces like Punjab and Sindh. Analysts note this is structurally designed to shatter the regional strongholds of traditional and alternative political parties alike. [\[1\]](#)

3. Legal and Civil Crackdowns

Freedom House and Human Rights Watch classify Pakistan as an authoritarian or "partly free" regime heavily subverted by military dominance. [\[1, 2\]](#)