

Local Government System in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT)

After Pakistan came into being as an independent state on 14 August 1947, the port city of Karachi was declared capital of the country. However, it was felt that a new and permanent capital city had to be built to reflect the diversity of the Pakistani nation.



A commission was accordingly set in motion in 1958, entrusted with the task of selecting a suitable site for the new capital with particular emphasis on location, climate, logistics and defense requirements. The commission finally selected a place along with scenic Margalla Hills, north east of garrison city of Rawalpindi for construction of new capital of the country. Federal offices were shifted from Karachi to Rawalpindi in 1960 and later when adequate infrastructure was built, these offices were relocated to newly built capital Islamabad in 1966.

Islamabad was administratively divided into two segments, namely Islamabad urban and Islamabad rural under the name of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). Since the very beginning it was directly governed by the Federal Government through Capital Development Authority (CDA). The mandate of this corporate body included undertaking planning and development of the Federal Capital and to perform all municipal functions required to run the capital city.

However the Constitution of Pakistan makes it obligatory to establish a Local Government system and to devolve political, administrative and financial responsibility and authority to the elected representatives of the Local Governments. A local government system plays a key role in providing democratic and accountable governments for local communities and ensuring that the communities receive sustainable civic services.

The Islamabad Capital Territory Local Government Act, 2015 (ICTLA, 2015) is currently being debated by the Parliament. Once passed, this law will provide the basis for establishment and functioning of local governments in the Federal Capital. At the same time the Supreme Court in its judgment has fixed 25 July 2015, as the day for conducting election in ICT and also declared that Local Government Elections in the Federal Capital are responsibility of the Election Commission.

The Local Governments in ICT will consist of 79 Union Councils (UC) and a Metropolitan Corporation (MC) for Islamabad City.

Seats Allocation

Union Councils	Metropolitan Corporation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Chairman and Vice Chairman; as joint candidatesSix General MembersTwo Women Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Mayor and Deputy Mayor; as joint candidatesChairmen of all Union CouncilsWomen Members

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One Peasants or Worker Member • One Youth Member; and • One Non-Muslim Member 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peasants / Workers Members • Technocrat Members • Youth Members • Non-Muslim Members
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The municipal functions under the ICTLGA 2015 will be divided between the UCs and the MC. The Union Councils or Metropolitan Corporation may, subject to the vetting and approval by the Government, by notification in the official gazette, levy any tax, fee, rate, rent, toll, charge or surcharge.

With the creation of local bodies system in Islamabad, the CDA would lose many municipal and development functions to the local government and the Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation. According to the Islamabad Capital Territory Local Government Act, the MC would execute and manage development plans. It would provide and maintain municipal services like water supply, sewage treatment, sanitation and solid waste collection, roads and streets, street lighting, playgrounds, open spaces, graveyards, maintain regional markets and commercial centers. The MC would also collect approved taxes, rates, rents, tolls, charges, fines and penalties, regulate markets and issue licenses, permits, grant permissions and impose penalties for violations, manage properties, assets and funds vested in the local government. Presently, all these functions are being performed by CDA

Elections will be on non-party basis and the term of the Local Government shall be five years from the date of its first meeting. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor can be removed from their office by two third majorities of the members.

In case of Union Councils, they will be a multiple member constituencies and members of each UC would be elected directly by the voters registered in the Union Council through secret ballot on the basis of adult franchise. A voter will have to cast six votes at a time for electing Members and Chairman and Vice Chairman of a Union Council.

The members of the MC on reserved seats would be elected by the members of the union councils present and voting. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor are to be elected as joint candidates by the chairmen of all UCs and members elected on the reserved seats.

Electoral rolls for local government elections are to be prepared by ECP in the same manner as for other local government elections. A person is entitled to be enrolled as a voter if he/she is a citizen of Pakistan and registered as a voter in the Union Council, is not less than eighteen years of age and fulfils such other conditions as the Election Commission may specify.