**Under the cover of democracy?**

[Sajjad Shaukat](https://nation.com.pk/authorpost/columnist/sajjad-shaukat/)

On **Apr 1, 2022**

A gulf which had already been created between the ruling party PTI, led by Prime Minister Imran Khan, and the PDM-alliance of the opposition parties, which includes PPP and PML-N, widened after the Opposition submitted the no-confidence motion against the prime minister in the National Assembly (NA).  
Since then, a political crisis is rapidly brewing as various developments such as the police operation at Parliament Lodges, the attack on Sindh House where some 13 dissidents from PTI had taken shelter, the allegations of horse trading, the long march, and a sit-in in Islamabad by the PDM have been witnessed.  
Additionally, a show of political strength by PM Imran at a public rally in the same city, the session of the NA summoned by the speaker, then by the deputy speaker to be held within some days to conduct the no-confidence motion, the submission of a no-confidence motion by the Opposition against the PTI Chief Minister Usman Buzdar in the Punjab Assembly, the nomination of PML-Q leader Pervez Elahi by the prime minister as the chief minister of Punjab and the resignation of Usman Buzdar show that political parties are dividing the general public at this critical hour when the country is facing multiple problems.  
In fact, under the cover of democracy, politicians are employing undemocratic means to fulfil their personal and selfish interests.  
Undoubtedly, the democratic form of government has displayed its success in the west, but it has proved to be fruitless in Pakistan.  
Pakistan’s politicians have always claimed that they nourish democratic ideals, but we could not establish this system on a strong footing due to the irresponsible approach of our political entities. Hence, democracy remains weak, working in uncertainty.  
Under the democratic system, the people of Pakistan participate in the process of elections, and elect their own representatives to run the affairs of state, while, the system also empowers the voters to take away the powers of the elected members through a no-confidence motion, if they fall short of popular aspirations.  
Regrettably, voters, after having elected their representatives, virtually become subjects of the powerful elite who tend to shatter all hopes of voters by neglecting their social problems and financial difficulties.  
Promises made during election campaigns are quickly forgotten, while perks of public offices are fully enjoyed. Unfortunately, voters, owing to their extreme poverty and lack of political power, become trading pawns in the hands of politicians who regard elections as windows of business.  
The concentration of wealth in a few hands has created a privileged class of landowners and industrialists (the elite group) who contest elections, competing against each other again and again.  
During the election campaign, they employ all means, fair or foul, to defeat their opponents and capture political power.  
Various malpractices such as horse-trading, nepotism, bribery and illegal obligations are very common among our politicians.  
The elite group of elected members uses powers of their public offices to advance their personal interests, including engagement in the politics of the police and courts, earnestly seeking allotment of development and discretion funds, and timely steps to please the top party leaders.  
The group also remains oblivious of world politics and philosophical aspirations of great leaders like Nelson Mandela and many others.  
In order to divert the attention of the general masses from real problems, government’s elected politicians and opposition leaders manipulate various issues not only against each other, but also against the key institutes of the country.  
Acting upon the principles like hostility for the sake of hostility, alliances are formed to win the elections or topple the rival regime. They also misguide the general masses by forming extreme opinions among them against their opponents.  
Notably, a blind dedication to one’s own race, tribe, creed and community creates hatred in one entity against the other, which ends in violence. Regional and provincial political leaders also exploit these disparities which have hindered the smooth working of democracy.  
At this crucial hour, besides several external threats, including different war against terrorism—the challenge of hybrid war by the external enemies, Pakistan is also facing grave crises and problems like corruption, soaring prices, energy-shortage, unemployment, crimes, lack of health facilities, and dependence upon US-led developed countries, the IMF and the World Bank for financial aid.  
Taking cognisance of these anti-Pakistan phenomena, the government, the opposition leaders, (PDM) must sign a charter by showing selfless national unity to pull the country out of the ongoing serious crises and to promote democracy in its real sense.

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