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Election Ban on Sharif Is Upheld

By THE NEW YORK TIMES

ISLAMABAD, [Pakistan](#) — Pakistan's election commission has upheld an earlier ruling barring the former prime minister [Nawaz Sharif](#) from running in general elections scheduled for next month.

The commission rejected Mr. Sharif's appeal on Monday, as well as one by his brother Shahbaz Sharif, who was also barred from running in elections set for Jan. 8, government officials and opposition politicians confirmed Tuesday.

Leaders of the former prime minister's political party criticized the decisions as politically motivated.

Nawaz Sharif is a bitter opponent of [Pervez Musharraf](#), Pakistan's president. Mr. Musharraf overthrew the Sharif government in a bloodless coup in 1999, after Mr. Sharif tried to stop his plane from landing. The next year, Mr. Sharif was convicted of terrorism and hijacking and was sentenced to life in prison. But the sentence was commuted in an agreement under which he was exiled to Saudi Arabia. He tried to return in September, only to be deported back to Saudi Arabia. But he was allowed to return in November.

Mr. Sharif is visiting different parts of Punjab, the most populous of the nation's four provinces, to shore up support for his political party, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz.