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## 448 women candidates contesting general seats

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LAHORE: At least 147 women are contesting 105 National Assembly seats and 301 women are in the field for 203 provincial assembly general seats of the four provinces.

Twenty-one political parties have given 60 tickets to its female candidates, while 87 are independent candidates.

As per data analysis released by The Researchers (TR) Executive Director Aazar Ayaz for the National Assembly, the situation is as follows:

In Punjab 90 women candidates are contesting 66 seats, in Sindh 37 women are up for 24 seats, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 14 women are in the field in 10 constituencies, in Balochistan three

women candidates are contesting three seats, in Islamabad two women are contesting one seat and in Fata one female has filed nomination papers for one seat. In 2008 general elections 73 female candidates contested 64 NA seats, 41 of them on seven political parties' tickets and 32 as independent candidates.

For the PAs seats for which polling will be held on May 11, the situation is as follows:

Punjab 169 female candidates for 116 seats, Sindh 94 candidates for 59 seats, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 27 candidates for 20 seats, Balochistan 11 candidates for eight seats. 31 political parties have given party tickets to 111 to the female candidates while 190 women are contesting

the May 11 election as independent candidates.

According to TR data, in 2008, 195 women contested elections as against 448 for 2013; an increase of 129.8 percent over 2008 and 153.2 percent on 2002. Similarly in 2008, 25 (NA-15, PA-10) women were elected on general seats and out of them 18 (NA-11, PA-7) are re-contesting in 2013, when the same is compared with 2002 General Elections 14 (NA-9, PA-5) are contesting again on general seats. Interestingly, in NA five women are contesting from more than one constituency, for PA seats six women are contesting from more than one constituency while 16 women are contesting from both National and Provincial constituencies.