The Federal Shariat Court constitutes another key pillar of the judiciary and consists of eight Muslim judges, including a chief justice appointed by the President. Three of the judges are ulema, that is, Islamic Scholars, and are supposed to be well versed in Islamic law. The Federal Shariat Court has original and appellate jurisdiction. This court decides whether any law is repugnant to the injunctions of Islam. When a law is deemed repugnant to Islam, the President, in the case of a federal law, or the governor, in the case of a provincial law, is charged with taking steps to bring the law into conformity with the injunctions of Islam. The court also hears appeals from decisions of criminal courts under laws relating to the enforcement of hukum laws that is, laws pertaining to such offenses as intoxication, theft, and sexual intercourse outside marriage.

In addition, there are special courts and tribunals to deal with specific kinds of cases, such as drug courts, commercial courts, labour courts, traffic courts, an insurance appellate tribunal, an income tax appellate tribunal, and special courts for bank offenses. There are also special courts to try terrorists. Appeals from special courts go to high courts, with the exception of labour and traffic courts, which have their own forums for appeals. Appeals from the tribunals go to the Supreme Court.

Within this context, the office of Wafaqi Mohtasib Ombudsman is provided for, as established in many early Muslim states, to ensure that citizens had a forum on which to register complaints against public officials. Appointed by the President, the Mohtasib holds office for four years. The term cannot be extended or renewed. The Mohtasib's purpose is to institutionalize a system for enforcing administrative accountability, through investigating and rectifying any injustice done to a person through maladministration by a federal agency or a federal government official. The Mohtasib is empowered to award compensation to those who have suffered loss or damage as a result of maladministration. Excluded from jurisdiction, however, are personal grievances or service matters of a public servant as well as matters relating to foreign affairs, national defence, and the armed services. This institution is designed to bridge the gap between administrator and citizen, to improve administrative processes and procedures, and to help curb misuse of discretionary powers.

Military

The military in Pakistan has played an influential role in mainstream politics, having taken over from civilian governments on four occasions. Military governments were led by (in the 1960s) General Ayub Khan and General Yahya Khan, (in the late 1970s and 1980s) General Zia-ul-Haq, and (from 1999 to 2008), General Pervez Musharraf. In total, military or military backed civilian regimes have been in power for half of the late 1970s and 1980s) General Ayub Khan and General Yahya Khan, (in the late 1970s and 1980s) General Zia-ul-Haq, and (from 1999 to 2008), General Pervez Musharraf. In total, military or military backed civilian regimes have been in power for half of the years of the country’s existence.

The influence of the military extends far beyond its constitutional role even in times of civilian rule. The military high command has on occasion acted as a mediator between the government and other state actors, and between political leaders. In addition it has exerted strong behind the