

Monday, 20 May 2013

## Imran Khan's party wins revote in Karachi amid political tensions



Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehrik-i-Insaf (PTI) party won a revote in an upmarket constituency of Karachi, unofficial results showed in the early hours of Monday, according to Reuters news agency.

But the win was clouded by violence, after gunmen killed a PTI party leader of Zara Shahid Hussain, setting the stage for expected protests and counter-protests.

Khan blamed the killing on the Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM) party, which has a strangle hold on the city. Furious MQM leaders denied responsibility, condemned the killing and demanded a retraction from Khan.

"I hold (MQM leader) Altaf Hussain directly responsible for the murder as he openly threatened PTI workers and leaders through public broadcasts," Khan, recovering in hospital from a fall during campaigning, said in a tweet.

Altaf Hussain is accused of murder in Pakistan and leads his party remotely from exile in England. "I also hold the British government responsible as I had warned them about British citizen Altaf Hussain after his open threats."

The PTI have called for protests on Monday in retaliation.

The revote came after the May 11 general elections, which handed a landslide victory to opposition leader Nawaz Sharif and his Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N).

But results from a handful of constituencies across the country are still uncertain amid accusations of vote-rigging. There is re-polling in a few others where security issues prevented voting.

Karachi, the nuclear-armed country's key port, is home to 18million people. It typically sees about a dozen murders a day, a combination of political killings, attacks by the Pakistan Taliban and sectarian militant groups, and street crime. Last week's election gave the MQM 18 of 19 national assembly seats in Karachi. Now the PTI has one seat, according to unofficial results. Imran's campaign electrified many Pakistanis, pushing the PTI from a marginal party to Pakistan's third largest.