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Senator Siddiqui Defends Armed Forces at Islamabad APC

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ISLAMABAD, Senator Irfan Siddiqui, parliamentary leader of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) in the Senate, emphasised the importance of defending Pakistan's armed forces and safeguarding the 1973 Constitution during an All Parties Conference (APC) hosted by the Awami National Party (ANP) on Sunday.

Addressing political leaders gathered in Islamabad, Siddiqui cautioned against the trend of targeting the military in political debates. He highlighted that Pakistan's security forces have made unparalleled sacrifices in the fight against terrorism and in protecting national sovereignty. "Our military comprises our children, who sacrifice their lives in places like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan," he stated. "Their sacrifices are a testament to our patriotism and must be honoured."

The senator underscored the human cost of conflict, noting that more than 90,000 Pakistanis, including soldiers, police personnel, and civilians, have lost their lives in the struggle against terrorism. He stressed that such sacrifices should not be undermined for short-term political gain.

Siddiqui further linked Pakistan's national security and unity to the preservation of the 1973 Constitution, describing it as a "unanimous national document" that anchors the country's democratic system. "No one will be allowed to erode it," he declared, adding that open political forums such as the APC would not be possible under martial law.

Acknowledging the heated exchanges during the APC, Siddiqui urged political leaders to exercise restraint and engage constructively. He pointed to the resilience of leaders such as

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Benazir Bhutto, Asif Ali Zardari, Khan Abdul Wali Khan, and Nawaz Sharif, noting that despite facing political persecution, they never sought to weaken state institutions.

The PML-N leader also drew attention to Pakistan's federal legislative framework, highlighting that no law affecting a province can be passed without the involvement of that province's representatives. He urged leaders to adopt a broader national perspective rather than limiting themselves to provincial concerns.

On the subject of political reconciliation, Siddiqui endorsed a proposal by Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman for initiating a national dialogue. He pledged to personally convey this suggestion to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. The call for dialogue also received support from Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader Nayyar Hussain Bokhari.

Concluding his remarks, Siddiqui reaffirmed the commitment of political parties to protect democracy and reject any form of dictatorship. The APC, chaired by ANP chief Aimal Wali Khan, was attended by representatives from multiple political parties. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had nominated Senator Irfan Siddiqui and Federal Minister Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry to represent PML-N at the event.