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## Ishaq Dar Addresses Misinterpreted Remarks on Dr Aafia Siddiqui

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On July 26, 2025, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar issued a public clarification regarding remarks he made about Dr Aafia Siddiqui, a Pakistani neuroscientist currently imprisoned in the United States. During a session at the Atlantic Council in Washington, D.C., Dar had responded to a question about former Prime Minister Imran Khan's imprisonment by drawing a parallel with Siddiqui's case. He stated that Pakistan did not interfere in the U.S. judicial process, implying that due process must be respected in all legal systems. These comments triggered criticism across Pakistan, with many interpreting them as dismissive of longstanding concerns over the fairness of Siddiqui's trial.

Dr Aafia Siddiqui was convicted in 2010 by a U.S. federal court of attempting to murder American personnel in Afghanistan and is currently serving an 86-year sentence. Her legal team and supporters have consistently maintained that her trial was deeply flawed, citing allegations of mistreatment, denial of legal rights, and lack of credible evidence. The comparison made by Dar was strongly criticized by Siddiqui's lawyer, who argued that the case represented a miscarriage of justice rather than an example of fair legal proceedings. The remarks fueled further public frustration and renewed calls for stronger government action on her behalf.

In response to the backlash, Senator Dar clarified that his comments had been taken out of context. He emphasized that the Government of Pakistan, particularly under the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), has consistently supported efforts to secure Dr Siddiqui's release through legal and diplomatic channels. Dar reaffirmed that Pakistan respects international judicial systems but remains fully committed to advocating for Siddiqui's repatriation. He underscored that her case continues to be a priority for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also reiterated the government's position by meeting with Dr Fouzia Siddiqui, Aafia's sister, and assuring her of continued diplomatic efforts. The government has previously written formal letters to U.S. leadership requesting clemency and has established committees to engage with American lawmakers on the matter. Meanwhile, the Islamabad High Court has issued notices to the government, questioning the progress of its efforts and demanding updates on the case. The situation highlights the delicate balance the government must strike between respecting international legal norms and responding to domestic expectations regarding a highly sensitive and emotionally charged issue.