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Lahore Court Releases Man Over Anti-Punjab CM Outburst

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A Lahore sessions court has discharged Sajid Nawaz, an elderly man arrested for using offensive language against Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif in a viral video, citing insufficient evidence. This article explores the case, its implications for free speech, and the broader context of public frustration in Punjab.

On July 15, 2025, a Lahore court, presided over by Judicial Magistrate Qistar Riaz, released Sajid Nawaz after rejecting the Punjab Police's request for physical remand. The case originated from a First Information Report (FIR) filed in 2024, following the circulation of a video in which Nawaz, visibly upset by severe flooding in Lahore, criticized the provincial administration and used abusive language directed at Maryam Nawaz and other government officials.

According to Dawn.com, the court noted that there was no incriminating evidence to support charges under Sections 290 (public nuisance), 291 (continuance of nuisance), 186 (obstructing public servant), 147 (rioting), and 149 (unlawful assembly) of the Pakistan Penal Code. The court stated that the investigating officer failed to present any material justifying custody and pointed out the absence of private witnesses, despite the incident taking place in a public setting. It was also observed that other individuals named in the same FIR had already been discharged.

Nawaz's arrest came after the video went viral on social media, prompting his son, Muhammad Umar, to file a habeas corpus petition seeking his father's recovery. After being released, Sajid Nawaz issued a public apology, stating, *"I apologise to the Government of Pakistan for my actions,"* as reported by The News.

The incident highlights growing public dissatisfaction with the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government in Punjab. Many citizens have criticized the administration's response to flooding and the city's inadequate drainage infrastructure. Just days before Nawaz's video was filmed, heavy rainfall had inundated low-lying areas of Lahore, disrupted

transportation, and resulted in the tragic electrocution of a child near Lari Adda.

The case has raised important questions about freedom of expression and law enforcement practices in Pakistan. Human rights advocates argue that the arrest was a disproportionate response to public criticism of the government. The court's decision to discharge Nawaz reflects the judiciary's commitment to upholding evidence-based prosecution and resisting arbitrary or politically motivated police actions.

At the same time, the case underscores the volatile political climate in Punjab, where public frustration over governance continues to grow. As Pakistan grapples with these challenges, Nawaz's release serves as a reminder of the delicate balance between maintaining public order and protecting individual rights.