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Mounting Rights Concerns as Imran Khan Remains in Solitary Confinement and PTI Leaders Jailed

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As Pakistan's political crisis deepens, grave concerns are mounting over the treatment of former Prime Minister Imran Khan and members of his political party, Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf (PTI). Khan, who remains in solitary confinement without access to basic necessities, is reportedly being denied clean water, fresh food, sunlight, medical care and contact

with his legal team or family. His sister, Aleema Khan, has described the conditions as a “violation of every human right and every international law”, drawing attention to the state’s aggressive campaign against political dissent.

The alarming situation follows a series of harsh sentences handed down to PTI leaders by anti-terrorism courts under the military establishment’s watch. More than 35 senior figures and supporters, including elected lawmakers and prominent PTI members, have been sentenced to 10 years in prison. These sentences are linked to the May 9, 2023 protests  that erupted after Khan’s brief arrest. The demonstrations, which the state claims targeted military installations, have been labelled by PTI as a false flag operation dubbed #May9th_FalseFlag by the party and its supporters engineered to dismantle opposition leadership.

General Asim Munir, Pakistan’s current Chief of Army Staff, has been at the centre of this crackdown, as military influence over civilian politics continues to intensify. Critics argue the sweeping legal actions amount to the weaponisation of anti-terror laws against political opponents. The trials have raised red flags among international human rights observers, particularly regarding the speed and secrecy with which they were conducted, and the lack of transparency afforded to those accused. Imran Khan, once democratically elected, now finds himself held incommunicado while many of his closest aides languish in prison.

This moment marks a critical point for Pakistan’s democracy. The country appears to be moving further away from constitutional governance and deeper into authoritarian tendencies driven by the military’s unchecked power. The systematic targeting of the political opposition sets a dangerous precedent, casting a long shadow over future electoral

processes and civic freedoms. With the former prime minister held under conditions that defy international standards of justice and due process, the current trajectory of the state threatens not just PTI but the democratic rights of all Pakistanis. Restoring trust in national institutions will require an immediate end to political victimization and a return to rule of law.

