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Opposition Demands CJP Intervention in May 9 Trials

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The Opposition in the Punjab Assembly has urged Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Yahya Afridi to intervene in the Anti-Terrorism Courts' (ATCs) handling of the May 9, 2023, cases, alleging serious violations of fair trial rights for Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) members.

The Opposition in the Punjab Assembly has formally requested Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Yahya Afridi to address alleged irregularities in the trial proceedings of the Anti-Terrorism Courts (ATCs) concerning the May 9, 2023, cases involving Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) lawmakers, workers, and supporters. In a letter sent to the CJP on July 28, 2025, the Opposition outlined concerns over what they described as significant breaches of due process, claiming that PTI members are being denied their

constitutional right to a fair trial under Article 10-A of the Constitution of Pakistan. The letter, as reported by The Express Tribune, emphasized that the trials are marred by procedural flaws and violations that undermine judicial integrity.

Deputy Opposition Leader Muhammad Moeenuddin Riaz, speaking to journalists at the Punjab Assembly on July 29, 2025, highlighted the urgency of the CJP's intervention, alleging "sheer violations" in the legal process. He called for the formation of a judicial commission to investigate the May 9 cases, which stem from violent protests following the arrest of former Prime Minister Imran Khan. Riaz also demanded that media be granted access to court proceedings to ensure transparency, arguing that the current restrictions fuel perceptions of bias. He stressed that the Opposition seeks justice, not political leverage, and warned that public trust in the judiciary is at risk if these issues persist.

The May 9 cases involve PTI members accused of attacking military installations during the 2023 riots, with some trials conducted in military courts, a practice previously declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court on October 23, 2023. Despite this ruling, the Opposition claims that ATCs continue to handle these cases with undue haste and bias, often denying defendants access to legal counsel. The letter to CJP Afridi underscores the need for judicial oversight to ensure compliance with constitutional safeguards. Opposition leaders, including PTI's chief whip Rana Shahbaz Ahmad, have vowed to challenge ATC verdicts in appellate courts, asserting that the convictions rely on fabricated evidence.

The Opposition's plea reflects broader concerns about judicial independence in Pakistan, particularly amid tensions between the government and PTI. By appealing to the CJP, the Opposition hopes to restore fairness in the judicial process and protect the rights of those accused in the politically charged May 9 cases.