

OpenVoiceNews Pakistan

Transparent. Unbiased. Yours.

Government Applauds, PTI Denounces Conviction of Bhachar, Others in May 9 Riots Case

July 23, 2025

– Categories: Politics & Government



On July 22, 2025, a Sargodha Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) sentenced 32 Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) members, including Punjab Assembly Opposition Leader Malik Ahmed Khan Bhachar, MNA Ahmed Chattha, and former MNA Chaudhry Bilal Ejaz, to 10 years in prison for their alleged roles in the May 9, 2023, riots. The court found them guilty of inciting violence and organizing attacks on state and military

installations, including Jinnah House and General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi.

The federal government welcomed the verdict. State Minister for Law and Justice Barrister Aqeel Malik called it a significant step in enforcing the rule of law. “No one is above the law, whether an MNA or an opposition leader,” he said, further alleging that the violence was premeditated and affected over 200 locations nationwide.

In contrast, PTI strongly condemned the decision. Party spokesperson Shafqat Awan described it as “horrific and brutal,” claiming that the legal proceedings lacked transparency. He argued that it was implausible for individuals to be simultaneously involved in multiple incidents across different cities. Malik Ahmed Khan Bhachar announced plans to appeal the verdict in the Lahore High Court, calling the conviction politically motivated. PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan went further, claiming the judiciary had “failed” and that public confidence in the legal system had been eroded.

The May 9 riots were triggered by the arrest of PTI founder Imran Khan outside the Islamabad High Court in a corruption case. The unrest escalated into violent attacks on military and civilian infrastructure. Official reports indicate that between 8 and 12 people were killed, more than 290 injured, and over 200 sites were damaged.

While the government views the convictions as a reaffirmation of the rule of law and a deterrent to future violence, PTI maintains that the sentences reflect political victimization. The deeply divided responses underscore persistent tensions between the ruling coalition and the opposition, raising questions about judicial impartiality, due process, and the future of democratic dialogue in Pakistan.