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Two PTI Backup Candidates Pull Out of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Senate Elections

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Two Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) covering candidates, Faizur Rehman and Shafqat Ayaz, have withdrawn their nominations for the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Senate elections scheduled for July 21, 2025, following party directives. This article examines the withdrawals, the internal rifts within PTI, and the broader implications for Pakistan's democratic process, highlighting the importance of party discipline and electoral integrity.

The decision by Faizur Rehman and Shafqat Ayaz to step back from the KP Senate race comes after intense negotiations led by Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur and PTI's leadership to ensure unopposed elections. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) is overseeing the polls for 11 Senate seats, including seven general, two women's, and two technocrat seats, as reported by ARY News. PTI's strategy, endorsed by founder Imran Khan, aims to curb vote-buying and secure six seats, leaving five for opposition parties like Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP). The withdrawals reflect PTI's push for unity, with Barrister Gohar Ali stating, "The party's decision is final," as quoted by Dunya News.

Despite the resolution, internal dissent persists. PTI's covering candidates, including Irfan Saleem and Ayesha Bano, initially resisted withdrawing, accusing the leadership of compromising party principles. Saleem declared, "We will not become part of this flawed system," in a video message, per Express News. However, the party's political committee, after late-night talks, enforced discipline, warning of expulsion for non-compliance. The agreement with opposition parties, confirmed by Opposition Leader Dr. Ibadullah, ensures a 6-5 seat-sharing formula, with PTI nominating Murad Saeed, Faisal Javed, and others.

The KP Senate elections highlight broader challenges in Pakistan's political landscape. While PTI's move to avoid contested polls aims to uphold electoral integrity, the internal revolt underscores tensions over ticket distribution. As the ECP prepares for Monday's vote, the focus remains on ensuring a transparent process. The withdrawals signal a step toward party cohesion, but lingering dissent could test PTI's grip on KP's political machinery.