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ECP Dismisses Barrister Gohar's Claim on Three Disqualified PTI Lawmakers

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The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on July 28, 2025, firmly rejected Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan's claim that three disqualified PTI lawmakers had their convictions overturned, asserting that their disqualifications remain intact. This decision underscores ongoing tensions between PTI and the ECP, raising questions about the commission's impartiality.

The ECP's statement clarified that Senator Ejaz Chaudhry, Member of the National Assembly (MNA) Muhammad Ahmad Chattha, and Punjab Assembly Opposition Leader

Malik Ahmad Khan Bhachar remain disqualified under Article 63(1)(h) of the Constitution, following convictions by an anti-terrorism court (ATC) for their roles in the May 9, 2023, riots. These riots erupted after the arrest of PTI founder Imran Khan, targeting civil and military installations. The ECP emphasized, “Their convictions handed down by an anti-terrorism court still stand,” refuting Gohar’s assertion that the lawmakers’ statuses had been restored. The disqualifications, announced on July 28, 2025, stem from 10-year prison sentences handed to Chaudhry, Chattha, and Bhachar for anti-terrorism charges related to vandalism at Sherpao Bridge.

Barrister Gohar, in a post on X, decried the ECP’s decision as evidence of bias, stating, “This must stop. Democracy is at stake!” He argued that the ECP’s actions reflect a pattern of targeting PTI, citing delays in reserved seat allocations and intra-party election certifications. The ECP, however, distinguished the case of Abdul Latif Chitrali, noting that his co-accused in the May 9 case had their convictions overturned by the Islamabad High Court (IHC), but Chitrali himself did not appeal.

This clash highlights deeper concerns about the ECP’s role in Pakistan’s polarized political landscape. While the commission insists it upholds constitutional mandates, PTI’s leadership perceives a concerted effort to undermine their influence. The disqualifications weaken PTI’s parliamentary presence, especially with Bhachar’s role as Punjab’s opposition leader. As Pakistan navigates economic and political challenges, such disputes risk further eroding public trust in institutions, with PTI vowing to challenge what they see as an overreach of authority.