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Islamabad Denies PTI Rally Permit, Deploys 2,500 Police

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The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration has denied the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party's request to hold a political gathering at F-9 Park on August 5, 2025. The denial, issued on August 3, cites intelligence reports warning of a medium-level terrorism threat, particularly from banned outfits such as the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). In response, the party announced that it would shift to holding smaller, constituency-level protests instead.

PTI had intended the gathering to mark two years since the arrest of its founding chairman and former Prime Minister Imran Khan. The party's Islamabad chapter, led by Regional President Amir Masood Mughal and General Secretary Malik Amir Ali, submitted a formal application to the Islamabad Deputy Commissioner, stating that the rally would

be peaceful and comply with public safety guidelines. However, the administration rejected the application, pointing to previous PTI rallies that escalated into violence, including the events of May 9, 2023.

To prevent any disruption, law enforcement authorities deployed approximately 2,500 police personnel throughout the capital. Additional security measures include roadblocks on major arteries and increased surveillance around sensitive locations such as the Red Zone, which houses Parliament, the Supreme Court, and several foreign embassies.

PTI leaders, including Aamir Mughal, have publicly criticized the decision, calling it politically motivated. Mughal said the party would adopt a decentralized strategy of “flash protests” to avoid mass arrests while continuing to campaign for Khan’s release. Party Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan confirmed via social media that the central rally had been canceled in favor of local protests to avoid confrontation with law enforcement.

This is not the first time the Islamabad administration has denied PTI’s request for a public gathering. Earlier applications in March and July 2025 were also rejected on similar security grounds. PTI maintains that such decisions amount to suppression of political dissent, while the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government denies targeting opposition voices.

As of August 4, no formal appeal has been accepted by the Islamabad High Court. The administration has advised the public to avoid protest-prone areas due to possible disruptions to traffic and public services.