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## Punjab Speaker Pauses Action Against Suspended PTI MPAs

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On July 15, 2025, Punjab Assembly Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan paused disciplinary actions against 26 suspended Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Members of the Provincial Assembly (MPAs), signaling a potential de-escalation in the tense standoff with the opposition. The decision halts fines, salary deductions, and no-confidence motions against PTI lawmakers, pending ongoing

negotiations, as the speaker seeks to restore order and dignity in the assembly following chaotic protests.

The suspensions stemmed from a tumultuous June 27 session, where PTI MPAs disrupted Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz's address with sloganeering, document-tearing, and alleged vandalism, prompting Speaker Khan to suspend them under Rule 210(3) of the Punjab Assembly's Rules of Procedure, 1997. Ten MPAs faced fines totaling over Rs2 million for damaging property, including eight microphones, with each fined Rs203,550. The speaker also filed disqualification references with the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) against the 26 MPAs, which included Malik Farhad Masood, Muhammad Tanveer Aslam, and others. The opposition, led by Malik Ahmad Khan Bhachar, condemned the measures as biased, with Bhachar stating, "No one can stop us from protesting," during a press conference.

In a bid to resolve the impasse, Speaker Khan formed an eight-member negotiation committee, including treasury members like Rana Arshad and opposition representatives, to foster dialogue. Punjab Finance Minister Mian Mujtaba Shuja-ur-Rehman expressed optimism, noting, "The treasury wants to restore the respect and dignity of the house," and anticipated resolution within one or two more meetings. The pause in actions, including halting plans to remove nine opposition chairpersons from standing committees, reflects a willingness to prioritize dialogue over confrontation.

The decision has sparked mixed reactions, reflecting the ongoing tension between the ruling party and opposition. As negotiations continue, the speaker's move underscores a commitment to democratic norms, though

the opposition remains wary of compromises that could curb their right to protest.