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## PTI to Fight ATC Verdicts, Gohar Calls It Democracy's Dark Day

August 1, 2025

— Categories: Politics & Government



Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan has announced plans to challenge Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) verdicts sentencing party leaders to 10 years in prison over the May 9, 2023, unrest. He described the July 31, 2025, rulings as a “sorrowful day for democracy” and raised concerns about trial procedures, including hearings that reportedly extended into late hours.

Speaking to journalists in Islamabad, Gohar condemned the convictions handed down in Faisalabad, which affected 108 PTI members and allied figures, including National Assembly Opposition Leader Omar Ayub, Senate Opposition Leader Shibli Faraz, and parliamentary leader Zartaj Gul. He stated that PTI would file appeals in higher courts and

may consider parliamentary boycotts or political mobilisation, with decisions to be made after consultation with party founder Imran Khan, according to The Express Tribune.

The ATC verdicts also included the conviction of Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) head Sahibzada Hamid Raza, while some individuals, such as former PTI leader Fawad Chaudhry, were acquitted due to insufficient evidence, per Geo.tv. Gohar claimed the judicial process was unfair and accused the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) of undermining democratic representation by disqualifying elected PTI members.

The sentencing follows a broader legal campaign against PTI figures in connection with the May 9 events, which were triggered by Imran Khan's arrest. Similar ATC decisions have previously resulted in 10-year sentences for other PTI leaders, including Dr Yasmin Rashid and Mian Mehmood ur Rasheed.

Gohar reiterated PTI's support for constitutional politics, stating the party has remained within legal frameworks despite political challenges. He called on the Chief Justice of Pakistan to review the cases, voicing concern that continued judicial pressure may harm Pakistan's democratic institutions. As the party considers its legal and political options, any boycott could impact parliamentary proceedings, where PTI currently holds 75 seats, according to the Election Commission of Pakistan.

The developments occur against the backdrop of ongoing political uncertainty, which analysts warn could impact investor sentiment in Pakistan's \$350 billion economy.