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## Punjab Assembly Protests ATC Verdicts, Session Ends

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**LAHORE** – A heated session of the Punjab Assembly ended abruptly amid protests and a lack of quorum, as Opposition lawmakers sharply criticised recent anti-terrorism court (ATC) verdicts against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) members.

Chairing the session was Ghulam Raza from the Panel of Chairmen.

Deputy Opposition Leader Muhammad Moeenuddin Riaz led the charge, denouncing the ATC rulings as “scripted” and “politically motivated.” He accused the government of

pursuing political vendettas while neglecting critical national issues, such as flood response and public welfare.

“Spend resources on people, not persecution,” he said, alleging that state funds were being misused to build cases against PTI supporters.

In protest, the Opposition staged a brief walkout, exiting the assembly in a symbolic act of dissent.

Responding to the accusations, PML-N’s Chief Whip Rana Muhammad Arshad defended the ATC verdicts and criticised the PTI’s actions on May 9. He questioned the moral standing of the Opposition, saying, “Those who support sedition cannot speak of justice.”

Other lawmakers raised unrelated governance concerns during the session. Treasury MPA Amjad Ali Javed spotlighted the unauthorized use of Section 97-A under the Provincial Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act 2016 by law enforcement officers. He stated that the section was not yet legally enforced and urged corrective action. The issue was forwarded to the relevant committee.

Javed also urged the government to implement the 3% job quota for special persons, noting delays in execution. Similarly, Treasury MPA Sohail Khan Zahid requested a waiver of agriculture taxes in flood-affected regions.

IPP’s Muhammad Shoaib Siddiqui called on Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz to address poor drainage in Lahore’s Railway Colony and nearby areas following recent rains.

Upon the Opposition’s return to the assembly, lawmakers attempted to resume criticism of the ATC sentences. However, the chair denied further debate on the matter, prompting renewed sloganeering from the benches.

Amid escalating tensions, a member raised the issue of a lack of quorum. With not enough legislators present to continue proceedings, the session was adjourned until 2:00pm on July 28.