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## PM Shehbaz Vows Ongoing Support for Dr. Aafia Siddiqui's Family

July 26, 2025

– Categories: Politics & Government



On July 25, 2025, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif met Dr. Fouzia Siddiqui, sister of Dr. Aafia Siddiqui, in Islamabad. During the meeting, Sharif reaffirmed the government's commitment to providing comprehensive legal and diplomatic support in her sister's case, emphasizing that "the government is in no way negligent regarding the case of Dr. Aafia Siddiqui." He noted that under his instructions, a committee chaired by Federal Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar was already in place to work closely with Dr. Fouzia on advancing the case.

The meeting occurred just days after the Islamabad High Court (IHC) issued contempt notices (on July 21, 2025) to the prime minister and federal cabinet for failing to submit a required report on Pakistan's cooperation in Aafia's legal proceedings. Justice

Sardar Ejaz Ishaq Khan had expressed frustration over the delay in response, warning that contempt action might extend to all federal cabinet members unless compliance was met within two weeks.

Dr Aafia Siddiqui, a Pakistani neuroscientist, was convicted by a U.S. federal court in 2010 on charges including attempted murder of U.S. personnel in Afghanistan. She is currently serving an 86-year sentence at a high-security facility in Texas. Her case has long remained a significant point of public concern in Pakistan, where many view her as a victim of injustice. Sharif had previously submitted a clemency appeal to former U.S. President Joe Biden, who declined to intervene.

The court hearing on July 12, 2025, had already drawn criticism for government inaction. Justice Khan questioned why the federal government had failed to respond to multiple directives dating back to June and criticized administrative interference in court scheduling as undermining judicial authority. He warned repeatedly that if the report was not produced, the court would initiate contempt proceedings.

During the meeting with Dr Fouzia, Prime Minister Sharif reiterated that all possible avenues, legal, diplomatic, and political, were being pursued to support Aafia's case. The standing committee led by Minister Tarar will maintain ongoing communication with Dr Fouzia and coordinate further representation.

This high-level engagement underscores the mounting public and judicial pressure on Pakistan's government to act decisively in Aafia's case. While Sharif's commitment signals administrative resolve, the urgency and scrutiny from the IHC suggest that timely follow-up and transparency are critical. As Pakistan continues to navigate complex diplomatic terrain with the United States, progress, or lack thereof, in the Siddiqui case will serve as an important indicator of governmental accountability.