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Omar Ayub Urges CJP to Ensure Fair May 9 Trials

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Opposition Leader Omar Ayub Khan has appealed to Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Yahya Afridi to ensure fair trials for Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) members facing charges in Anti-Terrorism Courts (ATCs) over the May 9, 2023, riots.

On July 27, 2025, Omar Ayub Khan, the Opposition Leader in the National Assembly (NA), wrote to Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Yahya Afridi, urging immediate intervention to guarantee fair trial rights for Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) members prosecuted in Anti-Terrorism Courts (ATCs) for their alleged involvement in the May 9, 2023, riots. The riots, sparked by the arrest of PTI founder Imran Khan, saw violent protests targeting military and public installations, including Jinnah House in Lahore. In his letter, titled “Urgent

Appeal Against Constitutional and Procedural Violations,” Ayub highlighted systemic flaws in the judicial process, as reported by The Express Tribune.

Ayub emphasized that the trials violate Article 10-A of the Constitution, which guarantees the right to a fair trial. He cited rushed hearings, often extending past midnight, and the denial of chosen legal counsel, with courts appointing state counsels against defendants’ wishes, as reported by Geo.tv. Speaking to reporters outside the Supreme Court in Islamabad on July 29, 2025, Ayub stressed that fabricated First Information Reports (FIRs) and coercive tactics undermine justice, risking public trust in the judiciary. He requested a judicial inquiry into prosecutorial misconduct and full media access to ensure transparency in court proceedings.

The May 9 cases have seen PTI leaders like Dr. Yasmin Rashid and Malik Ahmed Khan Bhachar sentenced to 10 years’ imprisonment, with convictions criticized as politically motivated. Ayub referenced the Supreme Court’s October 23, 2023, ruling against military trials for civilians, arguing that ATCs’ handling of these cases similarly disregards due process. He noted that 127 PTI workers remain in custody, with many denied bail, as reported by Dawn. The opposition leader urged the CJP to review ongoing trials and, if necessary, reopen concluded cases to correct injustices.

Ayub’s appeal reflects growing concerns over judicial independence amid political tensions. The PTI claims the trials are a targeted campaign to suppress its leadership and supporters, a charge the government denies, citing evidence of vandalism. By seeking CJP Afridi’s oversight, Ayub aims to restore fairness and protect constitutional rights in one of Pakistan’s most contentious legal battles.