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KP Chief Minister Seeks Court Ruling to Declare Independents as PTI MPAs

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Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur has petitioned the Peshawar High Court (PHC) on July 17, 2025, to recognize Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-backed independent Members of the Provincial Assembly (MPAs) as official PTI representatives and to reallocate reserved seats, challenging the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) recent decisions. This move underscores PTI's fight to secure its electoral mandate amid ongoing political disputes.

Gandapur's petition contests Rule 94 of the Election Rules, which denies political parties without an election symbol, like PTI after a Supreme Court ruling, access to reserved seats. The ECP's July 4 notification allocated 21 women and four minority seats in the KP Assembly to opposition parties, prompting Gandapur to argue it undermines PTI's voter support. "Denying PTI reserved seats distorts the people's mandate," he stated in the filing, as reported by Dawn, warning of an unrepresentative assembly. The petition also challenges the ECP's July 14 letter demanding a KP Assembly session to swear in these members, calling it unconstitutional.

The backdrop is PTI's strong performance in the February 2024 elections, where its backed independents won 92 National Assembly seats despite losing their cricket bat symbol due to intra-party election disputes. In KP, PTI holds 58 seats, with 34 independents, but the ECP's ruling barred them from reserved seats, which were instead awarded to parties like Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan People's Party (PPP). PTI's alignment with the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) to claim these seats was rejected, intensifying the legal battle.

Analysts see this as PTI's push to reclaim political ground against a coalition government led by PML-N's Shehbaz Sharif, formed after PTI failed to secure a majority. "This is about ensuring the voters' will isn't sidelined," said political commentator Zahid Hussain on X. The July 20 KP Assembly session, set for oath-taking, faces potential disruption, with PTI allegedly planning to avoid a quorum to block opposition gains. As Pakistan grapples with economic and security challenges, Gandapur's court challenge signals PTI's resolve to fight for its rightful representation, keeping the province's political landscape on edge.