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## Imran Khan cites message of ‘potential chaos’ as reason for postponing Islamabad rally

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RAWALPINDI:

Founding chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Imran Khan, has clarified that he had not held discussions with the government regarding the Islamabad rally, and maintained that while in jail he was informed that holding the rally could “lead to nationwide chaos,” which ultimately prompted his decision to cancel it. Yesterday, the PTI announced the postponement of its planned rally in Islamabad’s Tarnol Chowk until September 8. In an informal conversation with journalists at Adiala Jail on Friday, the former PM explained that the rally, initially planned around the Khatm-e-Nubuwwat issue, was postponed after he was advised that it could escalate tensions. He stated, “I was told that the Khatm-e-Nubuwwat is a sensitive matter, with religious groups already protesting in Islamabad”. He explained that “fearing unrest,” the party decided to call off

the rally. “If we had proceeded with the event, there was a risk of a repeat of the May 9 events, and the previous judicial inquiry into 9 May hasn’t been conducted yet.” Imran issued a stern warning, stating, “If you grant permission and then attempt to stop the rally, the government will be fully responsible”. “This time, it’s a matter of the judiciary’s credibility—whether the court grants us permission or the administration cancels it”. Imran stated that he had directed the party not to tolerate any obstacles on 8 September. He mentioned that the Islamabad rally had been postponed for the last time. He added that the party leadership had been instructed to meet before September 8 to decide when to protest if the Supreme Court’s decision was not implemented. PTI founder also warned that if anyone tried to stop them, “this time, they would not back down”. When asked about the trial of General (Retd) Faiz, and the response from the other side questioning who Imran Khan is to demand an open trial, Khan responded, “I am the head of the country’s largest party, and I’m calling for an open trial. You are making a grave accusation that Faiz and I conspired on 9 May”. “I started my party from scratch and have struggled within the constitution for 28 years. If Faiz was involved on May 9, then conduct an open trial. “This is not a military or secret international issue.” Imran Khan demanded an open trial of former Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) chief Lt-Gen (retd) Faiz Hameed who was taken into custody by the military on charges of abuse of power and violating the Army Act. “I demand that the army chief conduct the trial of

General Faiz in an open court,” the former prime minister said during an informal interaction with journalists in Rawalpindi’s Adiala Jail where he has been incarcerated for over a year in different cases ranging from corruption to terrorism. Imran also referenced the Hamoodur Rahman Commission Report, saying, “If the report had been implemented, we would have had democracy today. An open trial would benefit the country as much as implementing the Hamoodur Rahman Report would have”. “If the report had been enforced, we wouldn’t have had three martial laws, nor would we be under an undeclared martial law today”. The former premier alleged that the events of May 9 were “an attack on democracy.” “I am demanding a commission so that such mistakes are not repeated.” When questioned about Senator Azam Swati, Khan smiled and declined to comment Yesterday, Aleema Khan questioned why Azam Swati, a PTI leader, visited Imran Khan early in the morning and who instructed him to deliver the message about the rally postponement. She expressed scepticism about the feasibility of such a meeting at 7:30 AM at Adiala Jail and alleged that the decision to cancel the rally was made under pressure from the establishment. When questioned about an audio clip of his sister claiming that Imran had not ordered the rally’s cancellation, but party leaders were using his name to justify the decision, Khan acknowledged, “The entire party is upset and angry about the rally being cancelled”. “I, too, believe that the rally should not have been postponed; it should have taken place”. He then retired

that it was only postponed to “avoid chaos”. “However, from now on, regardless of the situation, we will hold rallies in every district,” he added. Khan denied any communication with the federal government regarding the rally when asked if he was warned about potential unrest by government officials. “I have had no talks with any Form 47 government. Whenever they suspect PTI has communicated with the establishment, they immediately recall May 9,” he clarified. The former PM then made an allegation regarding PML-N supremo, “Nawaz Sharif is ready to return to London”. “Nawaz Sharif’s backpack is ready; he just needs to pick up his essentials. All this is happening to secure an extension for Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa”. Imran Khan suggested that two strategies were at play: if they couldn’t extend Isa’s term, they would try to influence seniority to bring in their own person. He indicated that neither scenario was acceptable, and warned that if such attempts were made, there would be widespread protests across the country. Khan hinted at recent developments, noting, “Whenever you see turmoil in the PML-N, understand that they fear PTI has communicated with the establishment”. He concluded by emphasising the judiciary’s role, saying, “Now it’s about the judiciary’s reputation—whether the court grants us permission for the rally while the administration cancels the NOC”. “PTI is the only party being denied permission to hold a rally in Islamabad.”