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## PTI approaches SC to enforce ruling on reserved seats eligibility

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Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has filed a petition with the Supreme Court of Pakistan, seeking the enforcement of a ruling that confirmed the party's eligibility for reserved seats in parliament. This move follows a significant July 12 verdict that favoured PTI, potentially threatening the ruling coalition led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, which could lose its two-thirds majority in the assembly. The controversy stems from the February 8 national elections, where PTI candidates were forced to run as independents after the party was disqualified from participating under its own banner due to a failure to hold intra-party elections. Despite this setback, PTI-backed independents secured 93 seats, the highest number in the election. However, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) ruled that these independents were not entitled to the 70 reserved seats, including 60 for women and 10 for non-Muslims, which were then allocated to other

parties, predominantly those in the ruling coalition. This decision was contested by the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC), which was later joined by the PTI-backed independents in their claim to these reserved seats. In its recent petition, PTI has requested the Supreme Court to direct the ECP to recognise the party affiliations and confirmations signed by PTI Chairman Gohar Khan and General Secretary Omar Ayub and to enforce the court's July 12 ruling. The petition also asks the court to grant any other relief deemed appropriate under the circumstances. In contrast, the government has also approached the Supreme Court, seeking a review of the July 12 ruling. The government argues that the issue of PTI's eligibility for reserved seats was never raised by the SIC in its legal challenges before the ECP, Peshawar High Court, or the Supreme Court, and therefore, the relief granted to PTI was unwarranted. The government's petition contends that PTI and SIC are separate political entities, and the court's order improperly treated them as a single party. The dispute arises from the ECP's decision to strip PTI of its election symbol after it failed to conduct the legally required intra-party elections. As a result, PTI candidates had to contest the polls as independents. The party now asserts its right to reserved seats in both the national and provincial assemblies.