

IHC overturns restriction on political discussions in jail visits



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The Islamabad High Court has declared the ban on political discussions among prisoners as conflicting with constitutional provisions. Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaq Khan issued the ruling in response to a petition filed by Sher Afzal Marwat, stating that the absolute prohibition on political conversations violates the constitutional rights to association and freedom of expression. This ruling comes in light of restrictions on meetings between leaders of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and the party's founder, Imran Khan, which were attributed to this specific jail rule.

Following the ban on meetings with the PTI founder, a request was made in the Islamabad High Court to annul Section 265 of the jail rules. Speaking to the media outside Adiala Jail, Senate Opposition Leader Shibli Faraz commented that after six weeks of waiting to meet the PTI founder, the court granted permission, but the prison administration still refused the meeting. “If we can’t discuss politics with Imran Khan, should we just tell him about the weather?” he stated. Faraz added that the treatment meted out to the PTI founder over the past three weeks is well known. He suggested that the intention behind this treatment was to undermine the PTI founder, but he remains steadfast in faith and resolve. Faraz emphasised that the PTI founder is sacrificing for the nation and its people. “His wife has been imprisoned for nine months, and his sisters have also faced incarceration. We waited outside Adiala Jail since two o’clock. We are representatives of our party and elected officials.” He noted that the jail administration asked them to provide a written assurance that they would not engage in political discussions. “Do we only report the weather to the PTI founder? We were told to give an undertaking. We condemn the behaviour of the jail administration. Such tactics will not lead to political stability.”