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## **‘We respect courts, courts should respect us’: Khawaja Asif defends govt’s move to ban PTI**

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The PML-N government’s bid to ban the PTI has met with scant support from both allies and foes—drawing sharp criticism as a “desperate, self-destructive” measure, however, the government is staunchly standing by its decision. Today, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif joined in the defence, emphasising mutual respect between the judiciary and politicians, “politicians

should not be underestimated,” he asserted. Addressing a press conference in Sialkot, Asif stated that they respect the courts, and in return, the courts should also respect them. He asserted that the right to constitutional amendment lies with politicians and must not be usurped. “Politicians should not be seen as weak. Why is contempt of court always directed at politicians?” he questioned. The PML-N leader highlighted that consultations with parliamentarians would be held regarding a potential ban on Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). It is pertinent to note that several political forces including PPP, JI, JUI-F and as of today, ANP have condemned the government’s decision to call a political party, mostly deeming it as “undemocratic”. Asif described the events of May 9 as a direct attack on Pakistan’s existence, criticising PTI’s focus on power. “Playing political games is damaging the country. PTI’s sole aim is to gain power,” he remarked. The defence minister also pointed out the issue of terrorism, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), stating, “Terrorism is most prevalent in KP, yet the KP government is not prepared to participate in operations.”