

Justice Minallah expresses desire for open courts during martial law threats

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Justice Athar Minallah of the Supreme Court of Pakistan has expressed his desire for courts to remain open whenever there is a threat of martial law in the country. Speaking at the New York City Bar in New York, he said, “I want the courts to be open whenever there is a danger of martial law.” Justice Minallah criticised certain television channels for creating an environment suggestive of imminent martial law in Pakistan, although he refrained from naming any specific channels. “A martial law atmosphere is being created. I don’t want to name the TV channel, but it is making it seem as if martial law is about to be imposed,” he remarked. Reflecting on historical events, he lamented that the courts were not open on key dates when martial laws were imposed. “I wish the courts were open on 12 October 1999, when Pervez Musharraf ousted the elected prime minister. I wish the courts were open on 5 July 1977, when Ziaul Haq removed the elected prime

minister,” he said. He further added that any attempt to unconstitutionally remove former prime minister Imran Khan would have been a test for the Islamabad High Court. “It would have been a test to see whether the Islamabad High Court would stand for the supremacy of the Constitution,” he stated.