

Justice Isa case

Editorial | 26 Oct 2020

THE 174-page detailed judgement of the 10-member Supreme Court bench on the reference filed against Justice Qazi Faez Isa lays bare some severe deficiencies کمیاں شدید in the government process. The court held موقف اختیار کیا that President Arif Alvi did not form a considered کیا غور opinion under Article 209(5) of the Constitution, hence the reference against Justice Isa "suffered with multiple defects نقائص". It also said that since there was no valid authorisation مجازت for the investigation, the tax records of Justice Isa were illegally accessed غیر قانونی طور پہ حاصل .

In clear terms, the judgement said that although the preparation and framing of the reference were not patently واضح motivated by malice عداوت , the scale and degree of the illegalities کاروائی were such that the reference was deemed سمجھا جانا to be tainted دار with mala fide ایمانی سے in law and therefore ختم کر دیا گیا quashed .

This is serious critique سنگین تنقید from the highest court in the land and it requires a thorough مکمل probe into how these "multiple defects" happened and who is responsible. It is a travesty تمسخرانہ that an

investigation was ordered against a judge of the Supreme Court – who will serve as the chief justice of Pakistan in the near future – without due

authorisation اجازت from the president or the prime minister and instead such authorisation was obtained from the law minister. This aspect requires being investigated so that the people responsible for this **grave irregularity** سنگین بے ضابطگی are identified and taken to task.

Randomly authorised investigations against judges by the executive must not be allowed, and a clear message must be sent to all concerned that such abuse of power has consequences for those who **indulge** شامل in it. This also **applies** لاگو to the illegal accessing of Justice Isa's tax records. The government has crossed many lines that are not meant to be crossed.

Delving لینا جائزہ into the tax records of a serving judge of the Supreme Court **illustrates** عکاسی کرتا ہے the weakness of our system and of those who manage it in government offices. How is it possible that no one in a long line of people who were involved in authorising access to Justice Isa's tax records, and then providing the **access** رسائی via the department that holds this data, could muster the **courage** جرت کرنا to call out the orders as illegal? This matter must not be brushed under the **carpet** کسی بھی چیز سے لاعلم ہو جانا as is the norm.

At the same time, **discomfort** سکونی ہے **persists** برقرار around the Supreme Court order for the FBR to further probe the sources of funds for properties owned by Justice Isa's family. Every care must be taken that this does not turn into a **witch-hunt** تخریب کاری کا پتہ چلانے کے لیے **witch-hunt** کے لیے بظاہر کی جانے والی عوامی تفتیش۔ الزام تراشی The entire issue has **reeked** راغب of intentions اداروں that may not be entirely honourable and this has created an unnecessary **controversy** تنازعہ around the person of a respected judge. Now that the Supreme Court judgement has identified the illegalities in the process initiated and followed through by the government, those involved must be held accountable for these **misdeeds** غلط کام .

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The politics of messaging

Article

Maleeha Lodhi Updated | 26 Oct 2020

THE opposition's rallies and **protest campaign** احتجاجی have **intensified** شدت پیدا کرنا a bitter **verbal duel** verbal between representatives of the government and the opposition. The clash of **narratives** بیانیہ shines a light on the kind of political communication being used by the two sides.

The environment obviously shapes the **messaging** پیغام رسانی by both sides. The atmosphere today is **marked** نشان زدہ by **heightened political tensions** سخت as **confrontation** محاذ آرائی intensifies between the government and the opposition alliance. The opposition is hoping to **leverage** دور کردینا growing public disappointment with the PTI government's two-year performance as rising **inflation** مہنگائی and **economic hardship** معاشی مشکلات continue to fuel increasing **discontent** عدم اطمینان. The lack of governance in Punjab has also provided the opposition with political **ammunition** سامان, helped by the absence of any spirited defence of the provincial leadership by PTI members.

The government, **for its part** اپنی طرف سے, continues to place **unifocal emphasis** زور یکساں in its messaging on casting the opposition as a bunch of **venal politicians** گروہ of **diverting attention** ضمیر فروش more interested in **diverting attention** بٹانا from their court cases than any **concern** تشویش for governance issues. Where politics is **intensely** شدت سے personal, it is no surprise that **polemics** بحث مباحثہ from both sides have assumed an increasingly **personal nature** ذاتی نوعیت, including character attacks – however unseemly.

Effective public communication depends on a number

of factors. They include building trust with the audience, making claims **congruent with reality** کو دعویٰ کرنا , framing narratives that strike a public **chord** ہم آہنگی by **reflecting people's concerns** ازالہ کی پریشانیوں کا , avoiding **overkill** تعیناتی ' or overspin and **deploying** تعیناتی **credible** قابل اعتماد **spokespersons** ترجمان to make the case. Any **primer** پہلو on public communication aimed at **shaping** دینا the political environment and popular **perceptions** عوامی تاثرات will tell you that both the message and messenger are important to win hearts and minds.

Beyond the war of words, confrontational politics risks **plunging** جھونکنا the country into prolonged instability . طویل عدم استحکام .

How does messaging from the two sides measure up against these **essentials** لوازمات ? The government's ability to communicate effectively is especially critical as it has to set the agenda and maintain the **initiative** اقدام . Governments in any case have to **articulate** واضح their purpose and performance in office on a continuing basis to **sustain** برقرار and **widen** وسیع their support. It would therefore be appropriate to consider this first and in greater detail.

The most **striking aspect** حیران کن پہلو of the government's messaging is its **predominantly** بنیادی negative nature. Statements by official spokespersons are **overwhelmingly** ے انتہا **dominated** رکھنا by how corrupt and unpatriotic the opposition is. This reflects an **obsessive** جنونی **preoccupation** مشغولیت with the opposition and while it aims to **denude** باز رکھنا political adversaries of **legitimacy** قانونی, such **rhetoric** بیان بازی tells the public little about how the government is dealing with people's problems.

In fact, **disproportionate** متناسب focus on **deriding** opponents does two things. It creates an **impression** تاثر that officials have little to say on the government's performance. And **constant** مستقل **harping** اٹھانا on a single theme produces public **fatigue** تھکاوٹ with a **hackneyed** معمولی message. The principal task of spokesmen is to articulate and explain official policy not just **demonise** کرنا بدنام **adversaries** مخالفین. Endlessly engaging in the latter creates a disconnect with **public concerns** عوامی as these are **eclipsed** چھا جانا by **incessant** خدشات **verbal** حملے **assaults** زبانی on the opposition. That also does little to build public confidence.

Another aspect of the PTI's strategy is to **roll out** نئی

its spokesmen as often as possible – as witnessed after the opposition’s public rallies and the shocking Karachi incident – sometimes several times in the day, to **blunt** دبانا the opposition’s criticism.

Mounting بڑھانا the **airwaves** لہریں with a competing ‘story’ to prevent opponents from **dominating** غالب ہونا the media is a **time-worn tactic** ایک وقت کی حکمت عملی and common in politics everywhere. But to do so every few hours with the same message is **tiresome** تکلیف دہ for the audience and **counterproductive** متناسب as news is created by saying something new, not being an **echo** گونگا chamber churning out worn-out **messages** بعد ضائع شدہ that people switch off from.

The problem is **compounded** زیادہ بڑھ جانا when spokespersons delivering the government’s message lack **political standing** سیاسی موقف and persuasive **appeal** قائل اپیل . The PTI has enough people to effectively convey its messages than those its leadership has chosen. In Punjab, for example, their main capability seems to be the number of insults they can hurl in pressers rather than any communication skill. Defence of the government has to rest on facts, **arguments** دلائل and **rational points** نکات عقلی , not on **ridicule** تضحیک and **slander** بہتان of others. This actually does the leadership a **disservice** پربادی .

An unfortunate aspect of the political culture today, to
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which the ruling party has contributed, is the use of **abrasive** خراش آمیز and **incendiary** گستاخانہ language in political conversation, upending norms of political debate. This has debased the political **discourse** گفت و شنید and **undermined** مجروح the image of the government of being a mature team while **eroding** ختم public respect for politicians in general. People expect elected representatives to set an example of responsible leadership, not use the **immoderate** غیر اعتدال language of a street **brawl** جھگڑا.

The opposition's focus is obviously on exposing what it sees as the ruling party's **ineptitude** نا اہلی and failure to govern competently. While some of its spokespersons have been **effective** ہوتے، کارگر ثابت ہوئے، it too needs to raise the game in its messaging. It is also **resorting** لینا to personal attacks which has two effects. It **detracts** روکتا from issues on the public mind and shifts focus away from the country's problems that need to be addressed. Of course, the principal role of oppositions everywhere is to subject government policies and actions to **scrutiny** پڑتال . But it is also to explain how it would solve national problems. That has been lacking in the opposition's messaging. **Crucial** عوامی ضروری for **building wider public support** عوامی حمایت کا حصول is to convey how the opposition would deal with issues that it critiques the government for failing to **tackle** نمٹنا . Its main message is also lost in long-winded and **verbose** زبانی public speeches by some

of its leaders, who need to speak less about their **plight** حالت زار and more about the people's concerns.

A challenge for the **heterogeneous** متنوعه opposition alliance is how to speak with a coherent voice on key issues especially its principal objectives and **tactics** تدابیر. The PDM's 26-point resolution – a common minimum agenda – is one thing, but core messages are quite another as it is the latter that impacts on the public. On this count speeches and pressers by opposition leaders leave questions on the public mind about whether these parties even agree on the main goal.

Words have consequences. But beyond the war of words, confrontational politics can plunge the country into prolonged instability in tough economic times with **far-reaching repercussions** دور رس تکالیف for all stakeholders. Non-stop political **combat** لڑائی also risks a loss of public confidence in political leaders, which can be **consequential** خیز نتیجه for Pakistan's democracy.

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