

## Chief Judge in Musharraf treason trial quits bench

Written by JPNN

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JPNN|Islamabad| Justice Faisal Arab who is heading the three-judge special court trying former President Gen. (ret'd) Pervez Musharraf for high treason on Thursday said he could not proceed further with the case. He was responding to a statement from defence lawyer Anwar Mansoor who said that he was not comfortable with the court. An order is to be issued on whether the judge is recusing himself from the case at 3 p.m. Proceedings opened on Thursday morning with Mr. Mansoor seeking a correction in the order of March 14, 2014 where Justice Arab had issued a non-bailable warrant against Gen. Musharraf after he repeatedly did not appear in court for indictment. On that day he had cited a high security risk. Mr. Mansoor said that the order stated that his client did not intend to come to court and attributed it to him (Mr. Mansoor). He said that he had not said that Gen. Musharraf didn't intend to come to court, and the reason he couldn't come was because of security threats.

When the court asked special public prosecutor Akram Sheikh for his views, the defence objected saying that the judgement on their application against the appointment of Mr. Sheikh was reserved on Wednesday by the court, and he could not argue. Justice Arab said that it was an application seeking a correction and he had the right to rebuttal. However, the defence continued to object and Justice Arab asked Mr. Mansoor if he was not comfortable with the court. When Mr. Mansoor said he was not, Justice Arab said he would not sit on the bench. He said that the court had been patient and given a lot of time to the defence arguments and if this had not convinced them that he was impartial then he had no wish to continue. He also said that the ruling on the prosecutor can go either way and he had still not passed an order. He added that there was no dearth of judges to continue with this case. The prosecution said the case could continue with the two other judges, but the turn of events has cast doubts on the future of the case for now. Hindu