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## Kasab's lawyer wants to quit, Nikam makes him stay on

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The drama at the special court in Mumbai's Arthur Road Jail, which is the venue for the trial in the Mumbai terror attacks case, continued on Thursday.

A day after Ajmal Amir Kasab, the lone terrorist arrested during the terror attacks on Mumbai last year, urged the special court to punish him by hanging, his lawyer Abbas Kazmi told the court that he wanted to withdraw from the case.

However, Kazmi later changed his mind and agreed to continue with the case after Special Public Prosecutor Ujjwal Nikam mediated between the lawyer and his client.

Judge M L Tahiliani also stated that Kasab's confession will be placed on record and his trial will continue. He also gave the prosecution a chance to summon more witnesses. Till now, 134 out of the 200-odd witnesses have been examined by the prosecution.

The judge stated that Kasab's statement could be looked into again at an appropriate stage.

Earlier, Kazmi told the court that he wanted to withdraw from the case as his client didn't have any confidence in him. On Wednesday, Kasab had contradicted his lawyer's statement in the court.

While Kazmi had stated that Kasab had confessed to his crimes under mental and physical torture, the prime accused in the Mumbai terror attacks case had refuted his lawyer's claim, saying he had not made the confession under any kind of pressure.

When Judge Tahiliani tried to convince Kazmi about how inappropriate it would be for him to withdraw from the case at this stage, the lawyer said, "My client has no confidence in me. He is not confiding in me. I think I should excuse myself from the case."

When Judge Tahiliani asked Kasab if this was true, he replied, "*Aisi koi baat nahi hai* (There is no issue like that)".

Judge Tahiliani then asked Kasab to talk to his lawyer again and sort out any misunderstanding between them. "*Gairzimedarana harkat mat kare* (Please don't behave irresponsibly)," he told Kasab.

Though Nikam earlier termed Kazmi's withdrawal as a drama, he later agreed to mediate between Kasab and his lawyer at the request of the court. Nikam talked to Kasab and asked him if he had faith in Kazmi, to which the accused said that he had confidence in his lawyer.

Nikam then requested Kazmi to continue with the case, and the latter agreed. Nikam later told mediapersons that this was not the first time that a public prosecutor had mediated between the accused in a case and his lawyer.

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