

SUPPORTED BY  
PAKISTANI  
BLOGGERS &  
FRIENDS

**DONT BLOCK THE BLOG!**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**BLOGSPOT BLANKET BAN APPEARS TO BE LIFTED**

Yesterday, on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2006, after almost two months since the initial ban was imposed, the Alvi-e Team, comprised of Dr, Awab Alvi and Omer Alvie, and supported by tens of bloggers worldwide joining under the "**Don't Block the Blog**" banner are please to report that they again have access to blogspot blogs in Pakistan. The PTA (Pakistan Telecommunication Authority) had, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March 2006, blocked access to a number of websites for the internet users in Pakistan. This ban was in response to a list submitted by a Supreme Court decision dated 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2006 instructing the PTA to ban 12 offending websites which highlighted the blasphemous cartoons on the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). In adherence to the Supreme Court ruling, all 12 sites were blocked including one that was hosted on the blogspot domain. But rather than block the offending blogspot website, the PTA blocked the entire domain (www.blogspot.com) which happens to be one of the most popular blog hosting domains hosting approximately upwards of ten million blogs globally.

We believe that this development can be credited to the collective efforts of dozens of free speech activists of the **Don't Block the Blog** Campaign and the **Action Group Against Blogspot Ban in Pakistan**. The peaceful activities were primarily responsible for creating a massive awareness campaign nationally (within Pakistan), as well as internationally

The **DON'T BLOCK THE BLOG (DBTB)** campaign (<http://www.help-pakistan.com/main/dont-block-the-blog/>) was launched by Dr. Awab Alvi and Omer Alvie on 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2006 in order to highlight the unfair blanket ban of the blogspot domain and additionally to show support for free internet speech in general. Approximately at the same time the **ACTION GROUP AGAINST BLOGSPOT BAN IN PAKISTAN (AGABBIP)** (<http://groups.google.com/group/AGABBIP>), a mailing list with hundreds of contributing members also was formed to protest this blogspot ban and in support of free speech

Of the sixteen websites listed on two circulars issued by the PTA (28<sup>th</sup> Feb & 25<sup>th</sup> April) only three are presently unblocked and the rest are still inaccessible to internet surfers in Pakistan, we continue our efforts to push for a censorship free Internet

The Pakistan internet blockade issue and the resulting efforts of DBTB campaign, along with those of AGABBIP group, were reported in a number of mainstream news media, including Washington Post, IFEX, Global Voices, Voice of America, The News, Reporters Sans Borders, Dawn Newspaper and Spider Magazine.

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