

SUPPORTED BY
PAKISTANI
BLOGGERS &
FRIENDS

DONT BLOCK THE BLOG!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

31st March 2006

For Further Information:

Dr. Awab Alvi (Pakistan)
Cell: 92-333-2373493
Email: drawab@cyber.net.pk
Blog: <http://www.teeth.com.pk/blog/>

Omar Alvie (UAE)
Cell: 00971-50-6268410
Email: over_email@yahoo.co
Blog: <http://oream.blogspot.com>

URL: <http://help-pakistan.com/main/dont-block-the-blog/>

PAKISTAN BLOCKS WIKIPEDIA

Today, 31 March 2006, at around 13:00 Pakistan Standard Time, it has come to our attention that another important website was added to the blacklisted domains from Pakistan: that is the entire domain of Wikipedia.org. Wikipedia, the free online encyclopaedia, was likely blocked because one article of the massive 3.5 million topics covered on the website contained information pertaining to the controversial cartoons on the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). While the block appeared to be limited in duration, having been lifted at 20:00 (PST) seven hours after the initiation, the real issues remain about the future censorship of education and knowledge in Pakistan.

We request the international print and electronic media to bring this issue to light in order to ensure that the concerned Pakistani authorities and ISPs understand the importance of free access to the Internet.

A month back, the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) blocked access to upwards of 10 million websites being hosted on the blogspot.com domain, following a Supreme Court order issued on March 3rd condemning the controversial cartoons. The judicial order instructed the PTA to regulate only twelve offending websites which were promoting the blasphemous cartoons on the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). One of the offending websites happened to be hosted on the domain www.blogspot.com. The PTA, as the supreme controlling body of internet access in Pakistan, entirely blocked access to upwards of 10 millions websites.

Wikipedia is the world's largest online encyclopaedia and is considered as the single largest online storehouse of knowledge having over 3.5 million articles on every imaginable topic conceivable in the world. These articles are gradually improved by contributors and then the topics are stored safely to then be freely shared with the entire world. The wikipedia project is translated into over 200 languages with over one million pages written in the English language, and it even contains hundreds of topics specifically written in the Urdu language. It should be important to point out that the largest printable encyclopaedia Britannica can only cover 65,000 topics which is easily

Sent by: Help-Pakistan.com & Action Group Against Blogspot Ban in Pakistan
Info@Help-Pakistan.com
Media Contact – 92-333-2373493 (Cell) & 92-21-4313069 (Fax)

**SUPPORTED BY
PAKISTANI
BLOGGERS &
FRIENDS**

DONT BLOCK THE BLOG!

dwarfed by the 3.5 million topics on Wikipedia. Simultaneously the printed version of the Britannica Encyclopaedia can cost upwards of \$1400 to purchase but on the other hand each and every article on Wikipedia is free to read by anyone having an internet connection.

The **DON'T BLOCK THE BLOG** campaign (<http://www.help-pakistan.com/main/dont-block-the-blog/>) was launched on 3rd March, 2006 in order to highlight and protest the issue of the blockage of blogs in Pakistan. We now extend our campaign to protest any blockage of Wikipedia in Pakistan. Both these issues are important to a developing nation such as Pakistan. What began as censorship of simple freedom of speech appears to have the real possibility of being extended to censorship of education and knowledge in Pakistan.

Sent by: Help-Pakistan.com & Action Group Against Blogspot Ban in Pakistan
Info@Help-Pakistan.com
Media Contact – 92-333-2373493 (Cell) & 92-21-4313069 (Fax)