

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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URL: <http://help-pakistan.com/main>

Press Releases: <http://help-pakistan.com/main/press-release/>

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-- ALERT ! --

PAKISTAN GOVERNMENT ISSUES
FURTHER ORDERS TO CONTROL
THE INTERNET IN PAKISTAN

Don't Block the Blog regrets to announce that the President of Pakistan, General Pervaiz Musharraf, has just signed into immediate effect measures which increase governmental control over the electronic media in Pakistan and which will further erode free speech by Pakistani citizens. The ordinance also extends the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority's (PEMRA) control over both the Internet and all mobile services. We, as representatives of the Society Against Internet Censorship in Pakistan and also Don't Block the Blog, are concerned that very soon a number of outspoken website which were without doubt a testimony to free speech in Pakistan will be silenced forever. Hence we fully condemn all actions taken by the government to censor and monitor all internet activity in Pakistan

Since March 9th 2007, which was a foiled bid by the President of Pakistan to unseat the Chief Justice of Pakistan, the electronic media has been openly suspicious about each move made by the military ruler. In response, the President of Pakistan has accused the media of sensationalism of all news items, and also blames the free press for destabilizing a positive image of Pakistan abroad.

The Internet in Pakistan has never been entirely free, as the Pakistan Telecommunications Authority (PTA) has in the past enforced a blanket block on a number of websites including the entire blogspot.com domain. Network administrators at the PTA still enforce an IP address block on the Blogspot domain. However, a few months ago, Google, which sponsors the blogspot domain, went through an upgrade in which they changed the IP address. In this confusion, the PTA was caught sleeping. For over three months the internet surfing community was treated to unrestricted access to blogspot.com, as the PTA was under the misconception that it was still enforcing the block

Don't Block the Blog & Help-Pakistan.com

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SUPPORTED BY
PAKISTANI
BLOGGERS &
FRIENDS

DONT BLOCK THE BLOG!

The Society Against Internet Censorship in Pakistan, previously known as Action Group Against Blogspot ban in Pakistan, and the **Don't Block the Blog (DBTB)** team, continues to highlight the issues which have plagued the Pakistani blogosphere since March of 2006, with updates issued to both the national and the international press. Since the blockade, a couple of savvy Pakistani programmers have created websites that help by-pass the ~~unfair~~ blanket ban for internet users in Pakistan.

DON'T BLOCK THE BLOG strongly opposes any form of internet censorship, and requests the support of national and international bloggers, media, and free speech organizations to help our cause by continuing to highlight the issue of the unfair blanket ban of blogs for the internet users in Pakistan.

Background:

The PTA (Pakistan Telecommunication Authority) ~~had~~ initially blocked access to the blogspot domain on the 3rd of March 2006, due to a Supreme Court decision dated 2nd 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 upwards of 8 million blogs globally, according to some estimates.

The **DON'T BLOCK THE BLOG (DBTB)** campaign (<http://www.help-pakistan.com/main/>) was launched by Dr. Awab Alvi and Omer Alvie on 3rd 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 **Society Against Internet Censorship in Pakistan** (formerly known as The Action Group Against Blogspot Ban in Pakistan - AGABBIP) (<http://groups.google.com/group/AGABBIP>), a mailing list with dozens of contributing members also was formed to protest this form of censorship in Pakistan.

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