

To:
The Chairman,
National Standing Committee on Information Technology & Telecom,
National Assembly of Pakistan

August 11, 2015

Dear Sir,

On May 22, 2015, in light of reservations expressed regarding the proposed draft of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Bill 2015 by digital and human rights organizations and industry groups, collectively under the umbrella of the Joint Action Committee (JAC), a subcommittee was constituted so that the bill may be reviewed and reservations addressed. Further, the legal team of the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecom was instructed to hold a meeting with members of JAC who attended the meeting.

Contact details for all the groups and their representatives were submitted the same day at the Parliament House to the IT committee secretary. However, to date, we have received no formal notification for any meeting to discuss the bill – not by the Ministry and neither the subcommittee.

On August 3 and 4, members of the JAC initiated meetings with the legal team of the Ministry of IT & Telecom and the Federal Investigation Agency. On August 5, it was through a television show that we learned a Standing Committee meeting had been called for the next day to finalize the bill. Members of opposition on the committee hardly received a day's notice for the meeting, and recorded their protest at the meeting held on August 6. The committee meeting on August 6, chaired by Major Tahir Iqbal concluded there would be one more meeting before the bill is finalized.

We request that industry groups as well as digital and human rights organizations be given one opportunity to present the recommended amendments to the proposed bill before it is finalized. Our proposed amendments, in legal language, as solicited, are attached. We would appreciate if a meeting can be called to discuss this.

Signed: Joint Action Committee

Bolo Bhi
Bytes For All (B4A)
Freedom Network (FN)
Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP)
Internet Service Providers Association of Pakistan (ISPAK)
Institute for Research, Advocacy & Development (IRAADA)
Media Matters for Democracy (MMFD)
Pakistan Software Houses Association (P@SHA)
Reporters Without Borders (RWB)
The Environment Protection Fund (TEPF)

CC:
Speaker, National Assembly of Pakistan
Leader of Opposition, National Assembly of Pakistan
Chairman, Senate of Pakistan
Chairman, Standing Committee on Information Technology, Senate of Pakistan
Federal Minister, Ministry of Information
Minister for State, Ministry of Information Technology and Telecom