



## Content Blocking, Restriction and Takedown Requests

Sr. No.	Date	Content Takedown Requests, Restrictions and Removals
1	2006	PTA blocks more than a 1000 websites due to SC ruling on blocking of “blasphemous” websites, however more than pornographic or offensive content websites were blocked
2	February 2006- April 2006	A website, www.blogspot.com, used by bloggers was <u>blocked twice</u> : first in February, and then blocked again on May 6 after being unblocked for four days.; Pakistani bloggers launched a campaign against it, and it was restored after a few days..
3	March 2006	Supreme Court’s Order on Ban of Blasphemour Websites  The government was directed by the Supreme Court to ban all sites displaying sacrilegious cartoons.
4	March 2007	Search Engines and News Sources among Websites Blocked due to PTCL fumble  Due to PTCL fumble on censorship, Google, Yahoo, BBC, CCN and many other websites were inaccessible to the citizens of Pakistan
5	May 2007	Increase in Internet Censorship  A survey of the Pakistani government’s internet filtering systems revealed that the government does indeed censor or block internet content, and has been increasing their censorship over the years.
6	February 22nd- 26th 2008	YouTube Blocked  Due to hosting of Geert Wilder’s film “Fitna”, PTA attempted to block Youtube in Pakistan; while they successfully managed to block it in Pakistan, a misconfiguration caused a worldwide blackout of Youtube. This ban was later lifted as Youtube complied with the government to remove this video.
7	June 4th -15th 2009	Monitoring of VOIP  PTA decision for ISPs to monitor voice traffic, such as Skype, but ISPs urged the decision to be reversed due to high expenditure.

8	May 31st – June 14th 2010	<p>Facebook banned in Pakistan</p> <p>PTA blocked Facebook for 2 weeks in response to a competition that encouraged users to post cartoons of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH). While the ban was eventually lifted, those pages remained blocked.</p>
9	June 2010	<p>Effective Monitoring Policy Guidelines Revealed</p> <p>Confidential Pakistani document reveals plans for stricter control of the internet and freedom of expression</p>
10	November 14th – 21st 2011	<p>PTA Bans 1,695 Words (later revoked)</p> <p>Mobile phone companies were given a list of words that they had to block from being used over text messages. Companies were threatened with legal action if they didn't comply; this was revoked later due to public ridicule.</p>
11	December 19th 2011	<p>Misuse of Electronic Equipment Bill</p> <p>Rehman Malik formed a committee to examine draft bill regarding any misuse of electronic equipment, including but not limited to, emails, SMS, MMS, in relation to national security activities.</p>
12	February 24th 2012	<p>Proposals for National Filtering and Blocking System</p> <p>PTA released a Request for Proposals (RFP) in order to enhance the development, deployment and operations of national filtering and blocking systems.</p>
13	February 26th 2012	<p>\$10 million calculated costs of Filtering Systems</p> <p>It was calculated that the internet filtering and blocking systems wanted to be developed would cost a total of \$10 million.</p>
14	February 27 2012	<p>Anti-Censorship Campaign</p> <p>Bolo Bhi launched an anti censorship campaign and reached out to the CEOs of 8 companies asking them to publicly not to comply with the national filtering and blocking systems or apply for any such license.</p>
15	March 1st 2012	<p>Global Network Initiative (GNI) Statement on Pakistan's RFP: made it clear that the companies would be going against users' right to free expression and privacy if they would respond to the RFP.</p> <p>Bolo Bhi initiated a petition in response to the Ministry of Information Technology's announcement of RFP for filtering and blocking system.</p>
16	March 2nd 2012	<p>Electronic Frontier Foundation on Filtering Software Companies</p>

		It was discovered that the censorship regime would enable blocking of 50 million URLs without any delays.
17	March 2nd 2012	<p>Websense Applauded for Declining Contract of Censorship Partnership</p> <p>Human Rights First urges companies to follow suit and decline contracts that help develop internet filtering systems.</p>
18	March 15th 2012	<p>Pledge to NOT Help Pakistan</p> <p>Companies pledge not to aid the Pakistani government in developing filtering technology.</p>
19	April 7th 2012	<p>Websense Promises not to Honor Proposal</p> <p>Websense refuses to respond to any RFP and urges other providers to do the same and protect the rights of the citizens of Pakistan</p>
20	April 12th 2012	<p>Government Forced to Backtrack Internet Filtering</p> <p>Anti-censorship campaigns and vocal discontentment of citizens caused the Pakistani government to shelve their plans of developing a national internet filtering system.</p>
21	April 17th -24th 2012	<p>Sindh High Court Rules in Favor of Citizens.</p> <p>Bolo Bhi's petition was successfully received by the Sindh High Court, which called for PTA to stop illegal website censorship.</p>
22	May 20th 2012	<p>Temporary Twitter Ban</p> <p>Ministry of Information Technology banned Twitter for a few hours due to Twitters failure to respond to the published blasphemous content. Ban was lifted few hours later.</p>
23	September 2012	<p>YouTube Blocked in Pakistan</p> <p>YouTube's hosting of the video "Innocence of Muslims" caused uproar amongst Muslim countries, which led to it being banned in some, including Pakistan. Along with YouTube, other anti Islamic video websites have been blocked. YouTube is currently still banned</p>
24	November 9th 2012	<p>YouTube Ban Review</p> <p>Interior Minister Rehman Malik forms committee to review the ban on YouTube.</p>
25	November 11th 2012	<p>Options for Filtering YouTube</p> <p>Interior Minister Rehman Malik discusses the government's plan to form a committee that would find a way to filter anti Islamic content on YouTube</p>

26	May 29th 2013	<p>Potential Ban on Facebook</p> <p>Peshawar High Court discussed immediate steps with authorities to block “blasphemous material” on Facebook and demand response in 20 days.</p>
27	June 9th- 13th 2013	<p>Ministry of Information Technology Announces Plans For Filters Before Unblocking Youtube</p> <p>Anusha Rehman, Minister of IT, tweets about filtration and unlocking YouTube after filtration is done to eliminate the presence of blasphemous and pornographic material in Pakistan.</p>
28	June 13th 2013	<p>Pakistan Demands Filters on YouTube</p> <p>Pakistan pushes Google to install filtering systems on YouTube before lifting its ban</p>
29	June 20th 2013	<p>Netsweeper Filtration Equipment Discovered in Pakistan – Research</p> <p>The Citizens Lab (Toronto based research group ) discovered the installation and use of Netsweeper filtering products at national levels in Pakistan.</p>
30	November 2013	<p>Internet Movies Database (IMDb) blocked in the country. The ban was later reversed.</p>
31	25 November, 2013	<p>First case of selective blocking, where the government managed to target specific pages rather than entire platforms.</p> <p>Users across the country reported the inaccessibility of Baloch movie “The Line of Freedom”. While IMDb, Vimeo and other sites remained accessible, the pages of the aforementioned movie were blocked.</p>
32	Jan 2014	<p>Between July to December 2013, Facebook restricted 163 pieces of content in Pakistan under local blasphemy laws and prohibition of criticism on the state.</p>
33	July 2014	<p>Between January to June 2014, Facebook restricted 1,773 pieces of content in Pakistan under local blasphemy laws and prohibition of criticism on the state.</p> <p>Twitter: Following a demand made by the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority to block content which violated local blasphemy law that we had originally complied with, we reversed our action and restored access to all previously withheld content (23 accounts and 15 Tweets).</p>
34	December 2014	<p>The Islamabad High Court restrained the Inter-Ministerial Committee for the Evaluation of Web Sites (IMCEW) from blocking websites until any conclusion on its role is reached, following a petition challenging IMCEW’s authority.</p>
35	Jan 2015	<p>Between July to December 2014, Facebook restricted 54 pieces of content in Pakistan</p>
36	March 2015	<p>The Inter-Ministerial Committee for the Evaluation of Web Sites (IMCEW) was disbanded and the PTA was authorized to undertake content management.</p>

37	April 2015	PTA also blocked a political forum Siasat.PK, which has a known anti-government stance. Siasat.pk is a famous platform where people express their criticism against the government. The case was reported in Pakistani media and after receiving public pressure, the government restored the forum.
38	July 2015	According to Facebook's Transparency Report for Jan-June 2015, 0 total content restrictions on Facebook according to government takedown requests  Twitter: We received six requests from the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA). We denied all requests to limit speech about territorial conflicts involving Pakistan.
39	January 2016	According to Facebook's Transparency Report for July-December 2015, 6 total content restrictions on Facebook according to government takedown requests  According to Twitter's Transparency Report for July-December 2015, 12 content removal requests, Twitter complied with 0% of requests.
40	March 2016	PTA submitted a report in the Supreme Court stating that <u>access to at least 84,000 websites and pages have been restricted in Pakistan</u> on account of salacious content. The report further informed the court that another list containing 400,000 links was also handed over to ISPs for blocking at domain level. PTCL informed that it had blocked 200,000 links.
41	July 2016	According to Facebook's Transparency Report for Jan-June 2016, 25 total restrictions were made on facebook according to government take down requests.  According to Twitter's Transparency Report for Jan-June 2016, Pakistan made a total of 8 removal requests from Twitter. Twitter complied with 05 of requests.
42	January 2017	According to <u>Facebook's Transparency Report for July-Dec 2016</u> , Pakistan made 1,002 requests to Facebook for content restriction. There were 6 total restrictions.  According to <u>Twitter's Transparency Report for July-Dec 2016</u> , Pakistan (government agency, police, other) made 13 removal requests to Twitter and reported 19 accounts. Some content from 12 accounts removed for violating terms of service.  According to <u>Google's Transparency Report for July-Dec 2016</u> , Pakistan made 6 requests to Google for account removal.
43	25 January 2017	<u>Khabaristan Times</u> , a satirical website, was blocked. According to the PTA, they received complaints against the website for "objectionable content," however no notice was served to the website or its editors, nor avenue for an appeal or hearing provided. The ban was initiated under Section 37 of PECA.
44	July 2017	According to <u>Facebook's Transparency Report for Jan-June 2017</u> , Pakistan made 1,050 requests to Facebook for content restriction. There were 177 total restrictions.

		<p>According to <a href="#">Twitter’s Transparency Report for Jan-June 2017</a>, Pakistan (government agency, police, other) made 24 removal requests and reported 82 accounts. Some content from 19 accounts removed for violating terms of service.</p> <p>According to <a href="#">Google’s Transparency Report for Jan-June 2017</a>, Pakistan made 14 requests to Google for account removal.</p>
45	20 November 2017	<p><a href="#">Twitter suspended verified account of “Pakistan Defence”</a> [<a href="#">@defence.pk</a>] reportedly over a complaint filed by an Indian student from New Delhi whose photograph had been misused by the handle.</p>
46	January 2018	<p>According to <a href="#">Facebook’s Transparency Report for July-Dec 2017</a>, Pakistan made 1,320 requests to Facebook for content restriction. There were 301 total restrictions</p> <p>According to <a href="#">Twitter’s Transparency Report for July-Dec 2017</a>, Pakistan (government agency, police, other) made 75 requests to Twitter for content removal and reported 674 accounts. Some content from 42 accounts removed for violating terms of service.</p> <p>According to <a href="#">Google’s Transparency Report for July-Dec 2017</a>, Pakistan made 27 requests to Google for account removal.</p>
47	24 April 2018	<p>The Twitter account of Manzoor Pashteen appeared to be <u>suspended</u> for less than 24 hours in relation to his online activity for the Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement.</p>
48	11 May 2018	<p><a href="#">Facebook blocked Dawn.com’s Facebook post</a> linked to a politician Javed Hashmi’s statement’s criticising judiciary for allegedly “violating local laws.” The post was then restored on 12 May 2018 with Facebook apologising for the content being "incorrectly restricted."</p>
49	02 June 2018	<p>A total of <a href="#">6,149 websites were blocked by the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) last year</a> on the recommendation of Web Evaluation Cell (WEC) which was established by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Inter-faith Harmony. So far, WEC has evaluated as many as 46,200 websites out of which 15,481 were those identified through complaints by the public.</p>
50	03 June 2018	<p>Awami Workers Party (AWP) website <u>blocked</u> by PTA just weeks before the general election.</p>
51	July 2018	<p>According to <a href="#">Facebook’s Transparency Report for Jan-June 2018</a>, <a href="#">Pakistan made 1,233 requests to Facebook for content restriction</a>. There were 2203 total restrictions.</p> <p>According to <a href="#">Twitter’s Transparency Report for Jan-June 2018</a>, Pakistan (government agency, police, other) made <u>240 requests to Twitter</u> for content removal and reported 3004 accounts. 3 account removal requests were made through court orders. Some content from 141 accounts removed for violating terms of service.</p> <p>According to <a href="#">Google’s Transparency Report for Jan-June 2018</a>, Pakistan made 196 requests to Google for account removal.</p>

52	06 July 2018	Punjab government decided to <u>refer ‘hurtful’ social media posts during the election campaign to the FIA</u> . In this regard, the Home Department had been directed to coordinate with FIA and refer reports received from divisional and district authorities about hurtful posts.
53	20 October 2018	<u>PTA blocked 800,000 websites and pages for blasphemous, anti-state and other objectionable content</u> . The content was on Daily Motion, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and other miscellaneous sites. In two years, 769,870 porn sites or pages were blocked, 5,064 websites or web pages with anti-state content and 4,528 with anti-judiciary content. 3,086 anti-judiciary pages were also blocked on Facebook.
54	04 November 2018	Khadim Hussain Rizvi's <u>Twitter account suspended</u> . Upon visiting the handle @KhadimRizviReal, an error notification appeared, stating that the account had been suspended "for violating Twitter rules".
55	10 November 2018	Twitter sent a <u>notice</u> to Taha Siddiqui citing some of his tweets as being in violation of Pakistani law.
56	13 November 2018	Twitter sent a <u>notice</u> to columnist Gul Bukhari for her <u>tweet</u> in which she criticized the government’s lack of action against Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) Chief Khadim Hussain Rizvi.
57	19 November 2018	The National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) revealed that <u>208 cases of online sectarian and anti-state propaganda have been registered</u> in Gilgit Baltistan since the inception of the Special Branch's Information Technology cell in 2017. Of these, 75 cases pertained to sectarian propaganda, and 133 cases pertaining to anti-state propaganda on social media.
58	13 December 2018	<u>The Urdu and Pashto websites of international news organisation Voice of America (VOA) were reportedly blocked in Pakistan</u> . An official who works for VOA said that the Pashto website had been blocked a few months ago, <i>“however, the Urdu website became inaccessible last week after the coverage of a press conference held by the leader of Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement (PTM), Mohsin Dawar. Initially, we received complaints that the website was not accessible at some places, but later it was completely blocked”</i> .
59	14 December 2018	Pakistan made 234 content restriction requests and reported 3,004 accounts between January 2018 to June 2018. <u>Twitter</u> did not comply with any of the requests.
60	January 2019	According to <u>Facebook’s Transparency Report for July-Dec 2018</u> , Government of Pakistan made 4,200 requests to Facebook for content restriction, which were accepted.  According to <u>Twitter’s Transparency Report for July - December 2018</u> , Pakistan (government agency, police, other) made 192 requests to Twitter for content removal and 2349 accounts reported. 1 account removal request was made through court order. Some content from 204 accounts was removed for violating terms of service.  According to <u>Google’s Transparency Report for July-December 2018</u> , Pakistan made 214 requests to Google for account removal.

61	03 January 2019	Twitter sent a <u>notice</u> to senior journalist Mubashir Zaidi against one of his <u>tweets</u> regarding the murders of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa SP Tahir Dawar and MQM leader Ali Raza Abidi for being "in violation of Pakistani law".
62	21 Jan 2019	Twitter sent a notice to Reema Omer that Pakistani government request had been received claiming her <u>tweets</u> questioning the procedures of military courts were in violation Pakistani law.
63	21 Jan 2019	Twitter sent a <u>notice</u> to Nida Kirmani that Pakistani government request had been received claiming her picture with Manzoor Pashteen violated Pakistani law.
64	20 Feb 2019	Twitter temporarily suspended the account of Pakistan Foreign Office spokesperson, <u>Dr Mohammad Faisal</u> over ' <u>Indian complaint</u> ' of his tweets regarding the Kashmir issue.
65	01 April 2019	<u>Facebook deleted 712 accounts and 390 pages in India and Pakistan for "inauthentic behaviour"</u> . In Pakistan, it removed 57 accounts, 24 pages, 7 groups and 15 Instagram accounts, as part of a network that originated there and was allegedly linked to employees of a unit of the Pakistani military. <u>ISPR rejected claims that the blocked accounts were controlled by the military.</u>
66	13 May 2019	Twitter temporarily <u>suspended the account of Dr Shahbaz Gill</u> , the Punjab Chief Minister's Spokesperson, upon complaints that he shared personal health information of former Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif.
67	25 May 2019	According to <u>Facebook's transparency report</u> Pakistan ranked second in the list of countries where Facebook restricted maximum content restricting 4,174 items within Pakistan during the second half of 2018.
68	July 2019	According to <u>Facebook's Transparency Report for January - June 2019</u> , Government of Pakistan's 5,700 requests to Facebook for content restriction were accepted.  According to <u>Twitter's Transparency Report for January - June 2019</u> , Pakistan (government agency, police, other) made 265 requests to Twitter for content removal and 1798 accounts reported. 8 account removal requests were made through court order. No tweets, accounts or content were withheld.  According to <u>Google's Transparency Report for January - June 2019</u> , Government of Pakistan made 301 content removal requests regarding 3,486 items to Google, of which 1193 (34.3%) items were restricted by Google.
69	07 July 2019	Twitter sent a <u>notice</u> to journalist Hasan Zaidi and informed him that it received a request from Pakistan that claims that <u>one of his tweets</u> violates the laws of Pakistan.
70	18 July 2019	Hasan Zaidi <u>tweets</u> that he was unable to access the Politico website without VPN. Storm Fiber, a private internet service provider, responded to his tweet <u>confirming that the website was blocked as per PTA directives</u> .
71	05 November 2019	The human rights watchdog Freedom House said in its annual report Freedom On The Net 2019 that <u>Pakistan's score was 26 on a scale of 100, which classified it to be among the states where the</u>



		<p><u>internet is “not free”</u>. The report further expressed concern over the government's surveillance, social media monitoring and continued lack of data protection laws in the country”.</p> <p>It also said that the internet freedom has declined in Pakistan due to the increased blocking of political, social, and cultural websites highlighting that over 800,000 websites were blocked, including political, religious, and social content.</p>
72	January 2020	<p>According to <u>Facebook’s Transparency Report for July - December 2019</u>, Facebook made 2300 restrictions in Pakistan.</p> <p>From July - December 2019, Facebook “restricted access in Pakistan to items reported by the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) as allegedly violating local laws prohibiting advocacy against the polio vaccine, blasphemy, anti-judiciary content, proscribed organizations supporting separatism, defamation, and condemnation of the country's independence”. Facebook said that it also restricted access to five items in response to private reports of defamation.</p>
73	15 January 2020	<p>In the Senate Standing Committee on Information Technology and Telecommunication meeting, “the <u>members stressed the need for legislation</u> on posting of pictures without permission and defamation [of lawmakers] for the sake of money. They also urged imposition of Rs5 million fine and seven-year imprisonment for the culprit”.</p> <p>Senator Rehman Malik asked the PTA to send a delegation to the Twitter headquarters for conveying the concerns of Pakistan about fake accounts with various names suggesting that Twitter should be asked to close the fake accounts and in case of non-compliance the PTA should issue a warning that Twitter would be banned.</p>
74	30 January 2020	<p>Journalist Mariana Baabar reports receiving a <u>Twitter notice</u> that said that it received a request from Pakistan claiming that <u>one of her tweets</u> violates the laws of Pakistan.</p>
75	21 July 2020	<p>Through a notification <u>the PTA said</u> that it identified “high volume of immoral content” served through Content Delivery Networks (CDNs) and that it was the responsibility of the operators to ensure no objectionable content was served. The PTA has also asked for a compliance report to be submitted within ten (10) days and threatened regulatory action in case of non-compliance.</p>
76	20 July 2020	<p>The PTA released a press release via a <u>tweet</u> whereby it announced that it has banned Bigo application in Pakistan and has issued a final warning to TikTok over “immoral, obscene and vulgar” content. The press release said that the PTA had issued notices to the companies “under law to moderate the socialization and content within legal and moral limits, in accordance with the laws of the country”. The PTA said that the response by the companies was not satisfactory. The PTA said that it drew its powers from PECA to block Bigo and issue a final warning to TikTok “to put in place a comprehensive mechanism to control obscenity, vulgarity and immorality”.</p> <p>TikTok <u>responded to Pakistan's final warning</u> over "immoral, obscene and vulgar” content on 22 July 2020 through a statement where it said that the company's topmost priority was to maintain "a safe and positive in-app environment". The company said that it deployed "a combination of technologies, and moderation strategies to detect and review problematic content that violates our</p>

		<p>terms of use and comprehensive Community Guidelines, and implement appropriate penalties including removing videos and banning accounts".</p> <p>TikTok further said that it had removed 3,728,162 user videos from 01 July 2019 to 31 December 2019 as according to its transparency report the videos were found to be in violation of regulations from Pakistan. It also shared the number of controls, tools and privacy settings available to users to report inappropriate content to claim that their moderation system “proactively caught and removed 98.2% of videos before a user reported them; of the total videos removed, 89.4% were taken down before these videos received any views”.</p> <p>TikTok stated that it is increasing dialogue with the authorities to ensure user security.</p> <p>Minister for Science and Technology Fawad Chaudhry criticized the ban and warning by PTA via a <u>tweet</u> dated 22 July 2020 where he said that the Courts must stay away from their ill advised interference and PTA should not moral police and adopt “ban approach”. He said that such bans will destroy Pakistan’s tech industry and will permanently hamper development of technology.</p> <p>On 28 July 2020, in a meeting called by Prime Minister Imran Khan’s focal person on Social Media Arsalan Khalid with Youtube Vloggers to discuss restrictions on social media platforms, <u>the PTA chairman said</u> that Tik Tok and Bigo have started cooperation with the local authorities and that the TikTok have removed 3.8 million links over complaints. He also said that Facebook has extended better cooperation as compared to other platforms adding that Youtube and PUBG cooperated least with the authorities.</p> <p>On 30 July 2020, the PTA announced through a <u>press release</u> that it had unbanned Bigo application in Pakistan. According to the press release, PTA decided to lift the ban as a result of constant engagement and assurance by Bigo to continue to engage with PTA with regards to moderation of “immoral and indecent content” in accordance with Pakistani laws.</p> <p>On 18 August 2020, TikTok updated the application for Pakistani users by <u>issuing guidelines</u> in Urdu. Some ground rules of creating the content have been laid down that will help in creating a beneficial experience on the platform.</p>
77	26 July 2020	<p>The PTA released a press release regarding the temporary suspension of PUBG game via a <u>tweet</u>. According to the press release, “PTA has received numerous complaints against PUBG wherein it is stated that the game is addictive, wastage of time and poses serious negative impact on physical and psychological health of the children”. The press release also mentioned media reports attributing cases of suicide to the game saying that they have a direction by the Lahore High Court (LHC) to “look into the issue and decide the matter after hearing the complainants”. The PTA invited comments and feedback from the public regarding the issue through the same press release.</p> <p>Islamabad High Court <u>took up a petition against the PUBG ban</u> on 06 July 2020. Justice Aamer Farooq asked the PTA counsel to explain the reasons leading to the decision of the ban to which the counsel replied that the Punjab Police had written a letter to the PTA requesting the ban in light of suicides linked to PUBG. The counsel further said, “we have also received complaints from parents requesting us to impose a ban on the game”. The PTA's counsel in their argument</p>

		<p>also made a claim that the had been banned after anti-Islam material was witnessed on it. On linking PUBG with suicide cases, the <u>IHC judge questioned PTA</u> as to why mental health experts were not consulted regarding the claim. The Court disposed of the petition ordering the PTA to issue a written order regarding the ban stating the laws under which the power of ban was exercised. The PTA committed to issue an order on 08 July 2020 after hearing the petitioner.</p> <p>Minister for Science and Technology Fawad Chaudhry shared via a <u>tweet</u> dated 19 July 2020, that he was <u>against the PUBG ban</u> as according to him “such attitude is killing tech industry”. He further said that the country cannot afford such bans. “I hope concerned minister @SyedAminulHaque ll take note of this ban and PTA ll be instructed not to encourage such bans as it hinders tech growth in the long run”, he tweeted. In response to this, the Minister for Information Technology Aminul Haque said that <u>he is against restrictions that could hamper any progress</u> and Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) does not fall under his ministry. He said that his Ministry did not have control over the PTA and that. “only the Cabinet Division could comment regarding the ban on PUBG” as the PTA is overseen by the Cabinet Division.</p> <p>PTA shared via a <u>tweet</u> on 24 July 2020 that it has decided that PUBG will remain banned in the country. It <u>further said that</u> PUBG management has been approached regarding data sharing about PUBG sessions and users in Pakistan and controls in place by the company. It said that the response from PUBG is awaited. On the same day, <u>the IHC had ordered restoration of PUBG</u>.</p> <p>On 27 July 2020, PTA through a <u>press release</u> announced that it has issued a detailed order regarding banning of PUBG and said that the game will remain banned. It said that the detailed order was released in accordance with IHC’s orders.</p> <p>In a meeting called by Prime Minister Imran Khan’s focal person on Social Media Arsalan Khalid on 28 July 2020 with Youtube Vloggers to discuss restrictions on social media platforms, the PTA chairman Major General (retd) Amir Azeem, <u>said that the PUBG gaming company was not cooperating</u> with them and therefore there was no chance of immediate restoration of the PUBG game. He further said that “they respect the court orders and would implement them, however, they have received several complaints regarding PUBG from different circles. Punjab police have also raised the issue with us over rising incidents of suicides due to the PUBG game, he said and warned of registering cases against the company in case of its non-compliance”. The PTA chairman said that Tik Tok and Bigo have started cooperation with the local authorities and that the TikTok have removed 3.8 million links over complaints. He also said that Facebook has extended better cooperation as compared to other platforms adding that Youtube and PUBG cooperated least with the authorities.</p> <p>On 30 July 2020, the <u>PTA announced unbanning PUBG</u> as a result of “positive engagement” with the company. According to the press release, the PTA was satisfied with the measures PUBG had adopted in response to the ban and concerns raised by PTA. It emphasized on continued engagement and a comprehensive control mechanism.</p>
78	26 August 2020	Pakistani human rights news platform Voicepk.net <u>tweeted</u> that YouTube has taken down their video on THE BALOCH BATTLEFIELD citing guideline violations.
79	27 August	PTA in a <u>press release</u> revealed it has asked YouTube to block all “vulgar, indecent, immoral,

	2020	<p>nude and hate speech content for viewing in Pakistan”. PTA said that it had done so “keeping in view the extremely negative effects of indecent/immoral/nude content available on YouTube and to prevent repugnant discord due to the presence of hate speech and sectarian material”. The PTA directed YouTube to “immediately ensure blocking of objectionable content and to prevent the usage of its platform for disseminating such content”.</p> <p>PTA in another tweet dated 02.09.2020 <u>announced</u> that it has “once again approached YouTube to immediately block vulgar, indecent, immoral, nude and hate speech content for viewing in Pakistan”. The press release said that it directed YouTube to ‘place an effective content monitoring and moderation mechanism to expeditiously respond to PTA’s requests for removal of illegal and harmful online content”. PTA also said that it remains “committed to facilitate and support YouTube to excel in Pakistan’s digital market, while remaining compliant with local laws, societal norms and YouTube’s own community standards”.</p>
80	September 2020	<p>According to Twitter’s <u>Transparency Report for July-December 2019</u>, Pakistan made a total of 13 requests to Twitter to produce account information specifying 18 accounts. Out of these 13 requests, 5 were emergency requests and 8 were routine requests.</p> <p>The report explains that it is an "emergency request" where Twitter is requested to disclose account information to law enforcement in response to provision of sufficient information to support a good faith belief that there is a valid emergency and an imminent threat involving danger of death or serious physical injury to a person. It explains "routine requests" as non-emergency requests that are legal demands issued by government or law enforcement authorities (e.g., subpoenas, court orders, search warrants) that compel Twitter to turn over account information.</p> <p>Twitter said that it made 0% compliance.</p> <p>According to the report, Pakistan also made a total of 219 legal demands for removal of content from Pakistan specifying 1500 accounts. Twitter complied with 35.1% of content take down requests for violating Twitter rules impacting 191 accounts.</p>
81	24 September 2020	<p>Co-founder and CEO Nayatel Wahaj Siraj <u>tweeted</u>, “Call centers, Internet VPNs, Gaming servers, effected countrywide, apparently by PTA’s blocking. Business @ snail speed”.</p>
82	09 October 2020	<p>The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority on <u>twitter announced</u> that it has blocked TikTok, in view of a number of complaints from different segments of the society against immoral/indecent content on the video sharing application TikTok. The Authority (PTA) further said that it had “issued a final notice to the application and gave considerable time to respond and comply with the Authority instructions for development of an effective mechanism for proactive moderation of unlawful online content. However, the application failed to fully comply with the instructions, therefore, directions were issued for blocking of TikTok application in the country.”</p> <p>Advocate Usama Khawar on behalf of Muhammad Ashfaq Jutt <u>filed a writ petition W.P. 3028/2020</u> before the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on 14 October 2020, challenging the PTA’s ban on TikTok. The petitioner argued that he has been associated with Mixed Martial Arts for the past 26 years and runs a private training club. He said that he has been using TikTok to promote</p>

		<p>his skills and club to earn a living. The petitioner has requested the court to suspend the ban declaring it violative of the fundamental rights.</p> <p>Vide its order dated 15 October 2020, Justice Athar Minallah directed PTA to nominate a senior official to appear before the Court in person on the next date and explain as to why their order banning the application should not be suspended and why no action should be taken against them for violating the previous orders of the court.</p> <p>PTA in a <u>tweet</u> announced that it has decided to unblock TikTok. It said “TikTok is being unlocked after assurance from management that they will block all accounts repeatedly involved in spreading obscenity and immorality. TikTok will moderate the account in accordance with local laws.”</p>
83	22 October 2020	<p>PTA announced via a <u>tweet</u> that it “approached Twitter administration to immediately sensitize its moderation teams and ensure that the platform is not used as a propaganda tool for spreading fake information”.</p> <p>The PTA said that it took this decision “In the wake of current smear campaign of spreading false and baseless information targeting Pakistan, its cities and institutions” and also asked Twitter “to effectively block handles involved in the campaign”. It further said that the accounts “involved in propagation of untrue stories, are Twitter verified” and “are operating with immunity”..</p>
84	24 October 2020	<p>Twitter sent a <u>notice</u> to journalist Gul Bukhari against one of her <u>tweets</u> that shared a statement by South Asians Against Terrorism and for Human Rights (SAATH) Forum condemning storming of Maryam Nawaz’s hotel room, the abduction of IG Police Sindh, and the interference in the running of the Sindh govt by the Pakistan Army demanding the resignations of Chief Of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa, and Director General Inter-Services Intelligence General Faiz Hameed. Her tweet said:</p> <p>“I just received an email from @Twitter that an “authorised entity” from Pakistan (such as govt or law enforcement) has written to them that this tweet of mine “violates the law(s) of Pakistan”.</p>