

SENATE OF PAKISTAN



(Report No. 4/2021)

**REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY & TELECOM**

*'ON THE SUBJECT MATTER OF POINT OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE RAISED BY
BARRISTER MUHAMMAD ALI KHAN SAIF IN THE SENATE SITTING HELD ON 22nd
JANUARY, 2021, REGARDING GROWING TREND OF BLASPHEMY THROUGH
INTERNET.'*

PRESENTED BY

**SENATOR RUBINA KHALID
CHAIRPERSON**

SENATE SECRETARIAT

**REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY & TELECOM**

1, Chairperson, Standing Committee on I.T & Telecom, would like to present report of the Standing Committee *on the subject matter of point of public importance raised by Senator Muhammad Ali Khan Saif, in the Senate sitting held on 22nd January, 2021, regarding growing trend of blasphemy through internet*. The matter was referred by the Hon'ble Chairman Senate for consideration and report.

2. The composition of the Committee is as under: -

1.	Senator Rubina Khalid	Chairperson
2.	Senator Dr. Shahzad Waseem	Member
3.	Senator Abdul Rehman Malik	Member
4.	Senator Taj Muhammad Afridi	Member
5.	Senator Fida Muhammad	Member
6.	Senator Faisal Javed	Member
7.	Senator Sana Jamali	Member
8.	Senator Engr. Rukhsana Zuberi	Member
9.	Senator Hilal-ur-Rehman	Member
10.	Senator Molana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri	Member
11.	Senator Naseebullah Bazai	Member
12.	Senator Muhammad Khalid Bizenjo	Member
13.	Senator Nusrat Shaheen	Member

3. The matter was taken up for consideration in the Committee meeting held on 9th February, 2021 which was attended by the following members of the Committee: -

1.	Senator Rubina Khalid	Chairperson
2.	Senator Abdul Rehman Malik	Member
3.	Senator Engr. Rukhsana Zuberi	Member
4.	Senator Fida Muhammad	Member
5.	Senator Taj Muhammad Afridi	Member
6.	Senator Faisal Javed	Member
7.	Minister for IT & Telecommunication	Ex. Officio Member
8.	Senator Barrister Saif Ali Khan	Mover



4. During the discussion on the issue, Senator Muhammad Ali Khan Saif pointed out that there were certain social media groups, websites and pages portraying and spreading sacrilegious contents and unfortunately these incidents are day by day growing aimed to harm sentiments of the Muslims. Being Muslims, it should be our collective responsibility to ensure the sanctity of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). He was also of the view that in the name of freedom of expression and freedom of social media, users cannot be allowed to make fun of Islam and Islamic Holy personalities, in order to curtail this growing trend social media strict regulations should be made which would be observed and followed by every user. He also demanded the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) should take concrete steps to block such websites, pages and applications etc. through which such material is being spread.

5. The Chairman PTA responding the issue apprised the Committee that under section 37 of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016, (PEC Act) PTA was mandated to block and remove any unlawful online content including glory of Islam and sectarian/hate speech. Accordingly, the PTA upon receipt of information from various resources and proactive search, has processed 102412 links/URLs w.r. to blasphemous and hate speech/sectarian content for blocking. He also shared details of technical measures, public awareness by means of SMS, online awareness campaign, print and electronic media ads and more importantly key actions on blasphemy issues. He further shared that recently the PTA had issued a notice to Google by exercising its powers pursuant to Rule 6 of the Telecommunication Rules which requires to remedy the contravention by removing/geofencing the search results associated with the description of "Caliph of Islam", "Present Caliph of Islam", "5th caliph of Islam" and all other additional/ancillary descriptions on search engine that lead to such wrong, deceptive and deceitful information. Furthermore, the Chairman PTA also shared actions taken against *Wikipedia* for removal of misleading and deceitful content uploaded in an article related to Mirza Masroor Ahmad and Ahmadiyya Caliphate.

6. Since, the PTA being responsible for taking action as required under the law is being playing its active role and the Mover was satisfied with the response given by the Chairman PTA, hence, the Committee decided to dispose of the matter accordingly.



(HAFEEZULLAH SHEIKH)
AS/Secretary Committee



(SENATOR RUBINA KHALID)
Chairperson Committee