

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

3rd February 2007

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

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

-- ALERT ! --

**PAKISTANI BLOGGERS SHOULD NOT
UPGRADE TO BLOGGER BETA**

It has been over eleven months since the Pakistan Telecommunications Authority has enforced a blanket block on the entire blogspot.com domain and so far there seems no recourse to the ban despite the repeated attempts of a strong lobby of concerned individuals pressuring the concerned authorities to review this unfair ban. The latest series of improvements undertaken by Google to improve the blogspot interface seem to be causing problems for Pakistani Bloggers. previously the despite the blockade the bloggers were able to easily access the back-end of Blogspot.com which by chance happened to exist on a different IP address, with the recent improvements in Blogspot, it now is difficult to even access the back-end of the popular interface, in effect completely blocking the Google service.

The **Don't Block the Blog (DBTB)** team, (with support of other Pakistani and international bloggers) would like to issue an ALERT to all Pakistani bloggers to resist the urge to voluntarily upgrade the account and start initiating steps to move to alternate hosting solutions once the upgrade becomes compulsory as it would definitely block access to their blog.

As an update, the team members of **Don't Block the Blog** would like to issue an advisory to all affected and prospective bloggers in Pakistan to establish new blogs preferably on other free blog hosting services like <http://wordpress.com>, <http://www.livejournal.com> or <http://movabletype.com> which will ensure the domain outside the envelop of the blanket ban URLs blocked by the authorities in Pakistan.

The **Don't Block the Blog (DBTB)** team, continues to highlight the issues which have plagued the Pakistani blogosphere since March of 2006 in the national and the international press. Since the blockade, a couple of savvy Pakistani programmers have created sites that help by-pass the unfair blanket ban for internet users in Pakistan. The DBTB team specifically, launched the **Bloggers.Pakistan** web site (www.bloggers.pk), the first Pakistani Blog Aggregator, to help encourage blogging and to ensure that those unfairly banned Pakistani blogs that were not officially censored by the Supreme Court of Pakistan, have a chance to be read by the global internet audience.

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

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DON'T BLOCK THE BLOG strongly opposes any form of internet censorship and request the national and international bloggers, media and free speech organizations to help support our cause and to continue to highlight this 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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