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ANNUAL REPORT

INTRODUCTION:

This booklet provides guidelines to media organisations and journalists on ways of bringing gender equality into the mainstream of the profession. It gives added argument and dynamism to a campaign that should be taken up in every newsroom, every media house and every digital journalism platform. Journalism has its roots in the fight for decency, progress and rights for all. However it can only honour its tradition and reinvigorate the profession when the ideas, guidelines and advice on the issue of gender equality in these pages are put into practice.

All journalists, irrespective of their gender can help to change societal attitudes by portraying women as they really are rather than reinforcing gender-based stereotypes in and through the media of all forms, irrespective of the technology used.

NIGHAT'S NOTE:

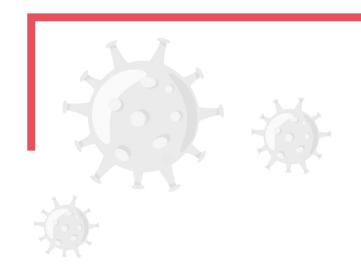
The COVID 19 pandemic affected our operations like it affected all of the world too, however, I am proud of my team for working together through these tough times, to keep doing the work that we do. Digital Rights Foundation's eighth year was probably one of the most challenging, but it was also one of the most rewarding too. My team and I innovated and brought to the fore new ways of engagement and grew our networks. We offered new services and worked on a grander local and international scale too.

Earlier in 2020, our team, in collaboration with the Internet Watch Foundation, launched the IWF's portal for the reporting of online child abuse. This portal was launched in multiple languages, so that more people in Pakistan could use this portal to report instances of child abuse. Also in February of 2020, we were able to host a forum titled 'Mobilising and Inspiring Action with Technology 2020' in collaboration with the World Economic Forum in Kathmandu, Nepal.

During the pandemic, I am most proud we have done with our Cyber Harassment Helpline. Due to a surge in complaints on our helpline, we decided to operate on a 24/7 basis for four months. Our team banded together to work through these tough times and were able to make a significant impact as we received a major increase in calls. I'm also proud of the two e-magazines we launched this year, the Digital 50.50 and 'Feminist Movements Go Online'. They were integral in us reaching out and enabling women writers and designers for the content.

Apart from the pandemic, digital rights in this country suffered in 2020, with multiple attempts at regulating the internet. Moreover, bans and notices were sent to apps and streaming services, leaving Pakistani audiences with a controlled and censored internet. DRF, along with other civil society organizations, raised their voices against these moves, and caused some change. 2020, while a difficult year, proved to me, and my team, how important the work we all do is. Digital

spaces are growing, however, rights and protections over them are not growing at the same time. We need to be a voice that calls for this balance, and for the protection of individual rights.



COVID-19 EFFECTS ON DRF TEAM:

Much like organizations around the world, the DRF office had to shut down in March as cases of COVID 19 rose in Pakistan. This was a time of immense uncertainty, and change for the team, especially for our cyber harassment helpline team, who operated out of our office, using landline connections.

We approached this new challenge as a team and began to work through using new technology and online services to keep in touch and work together. As we worked from home, we continued to strive towards our goals of equal internet access for all, and a safe internet for all in the country, especially for women.

As COVID raged in the country, it exposed the inequalities in our society in terms of technology and access to it. Additionally, we were reporting major infringements of digital rights, as well as increased control over online content in the country. 2020 brought with it a truly unique set of challenges for our team to work and advocate against.

Through this annual report you'll see how our fantastic team innovated in this difficult time. Our usual means of advocacy were limited, and our team had to get creative with how they use digital spaces to raise awareness and gain support for important issues pertaining to the digital spaces in the country.

DIGITAL RIGHTS LANDSCAPE IN PAKISTAN

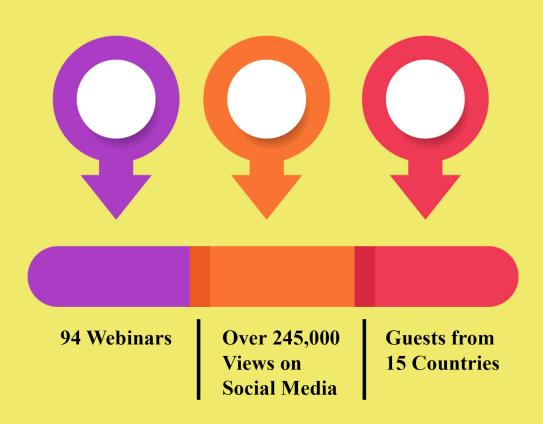
2020 has been a challenging year for digital rights in Pakistan, with COVID 19 presenting new challenges, as well as constant attempts to diminish the digital rights of Pakistan's citizens, and not to mention bans of popular apps such as Bigo Live and TikTok. These were scary developments during an already unstable and unpredictable year.

The first biggest challenge we saw to Pakistan's current digital rights landscape was the Online Harm Rules 2020 which demanded that social media companies establish databases in Pakistan and provide the government with any and all required information about its citizens. Additionally these Rules set up ambiguous limits to what can and cannot be said online in the Pakistani digital sphere. Due to pressure from civil society organizations, such as ourselves, and international internet coalitions, the government had to denotify these Rules and was tasked with reworking them, keeping in mind digital rights of all citizens. We, as the Digital Rights Foundation, fought against these Rules, and presented our concerns to the Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights. We also published an extensive statement condemning the Rules, and also a legal analysis.

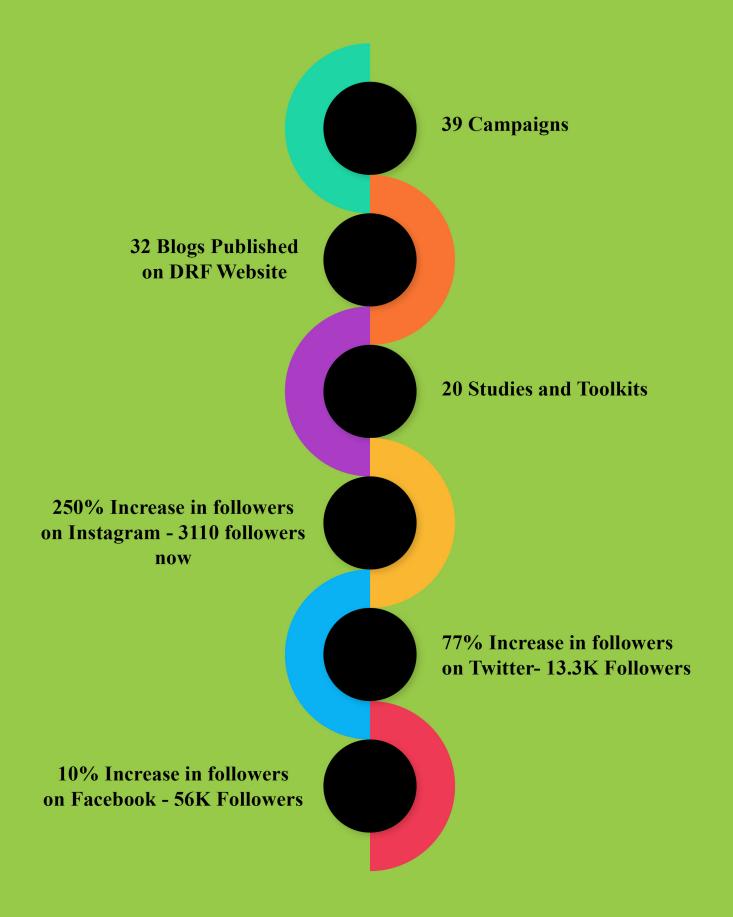
The first attempt at these Rules was made in February by the government. The new version of these Rules were published in November of 2020 and were somehow more draconian. A lot of things remained the same in the first and second versions of these Rules, however the second Rules gave the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority unchecked powers over matters pertaining to the blocking and removal of online content. These powers, given to the PTA go against their mandate established in a law passed earlier, the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) 2016. All organisations working for digital rights, here in Pakistan, have set up a concerted and combined effort against these new Rules and working towards having these Rules revised.

Digital Rights Foundation also registered its concerns with how digital spaces were governed and controlled in 2020. Authorities like the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) banned multiple social media apps this past year, citing immoral content and indecency as their reasons. These apps were popular among the young population in the country, thereby reducing avenues and means of self-expression. These bans also cut people off of

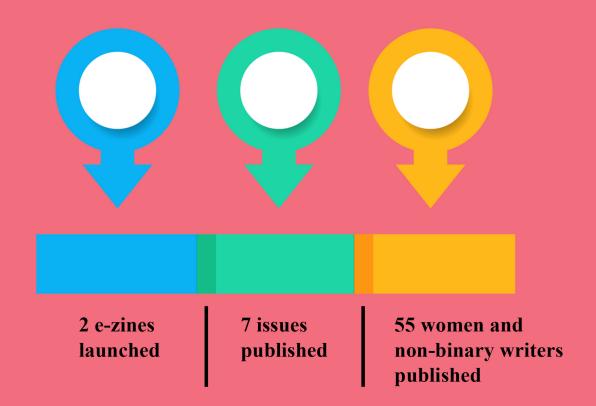
OUTREACH 2020



OUTREACH 2020



OUTREACH 2020



2020 DEVELOPMENTS

COVID-19 brought with itself a series of challenges for DRF as an organization and as a team. DRF was able to overcome these challenges through moral support and team spirit within the organization to help people and keep continuing the work that we do during these testing times. The team changed the courses of their project during the pandemic and realized that we'd need to work and innovate our projects keeping in mind the unusual circumstances we are in. DRF as an organization reached certain milestones that we're extremely proud of and we hope to maintain a streak of these achievements and developments in the coming years as well.



IWF PORTAL TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

In March Digital Rights Foundation (DRF) in collaboration with the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) and the Global Fund to End Violence Against Children launched a portal to combat children's online safety in Pakistan. The new portal allows internet users in Pakistan to anonymously report child sexual abuse material in three different languages – English, Urdu, and Pashto. The reports are then assessed by trained IWF analysts in the UK. The IWF portal in Pakistan is the 33rd portal set up around the world to fight the spread of online child sexual abuse material.

The new portal can be found at https://re-port.iwf.org.uk/pk



DRF'S CYBER HARASSMENT HELPLINE GOES 24/7

At the beginning of the pandemic keeping in mind the safety and well-being of DRF's team the cyber harassment helpline started functioning virtually in the month of March. The helpline was active through email and DRF's social media handles and the team witnessed a huge influx of complaints regarding cyber harassment throughout the country. Keeping in mind this increase in numbers the helpline resumed on call operations in April with the usual 9 am till 5 pm timings, Monday to Friday, however the number of complaints were becoming stagnantly high as observed by the team. DRF observed that complaints in March/April saw an increase of 189% as compared to January and February respectively. DRF wrote a detailed policy brief on the increase in cases during the lockdown and about the nature of these cases

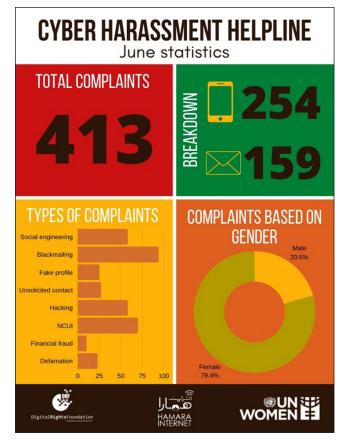


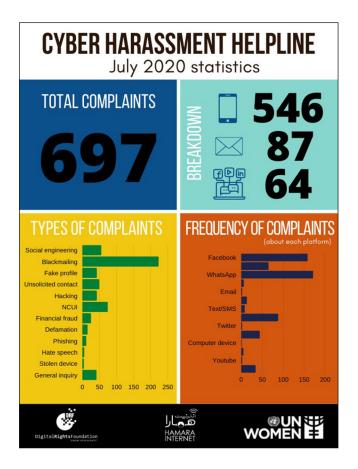
On 13th June given the rise of cyber harassment cases in the country during the lockdown DRF made the decision to make the helpline go 24/7 for three months during this time. The helpline will be providing legal aid, psychological help and digital security assistance to any individual who calls the helpline free of cost. The helpline's toll free

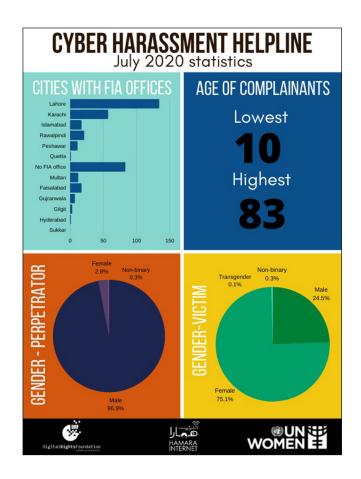
number was operating 7 days a week from 9 am till 5 pm and additionally the team gave mental health counselling services 7 days a week from 10 am till 9 pm. Apart from that DRF's digital help-desk of the helpline was available 24/7 for assistance.

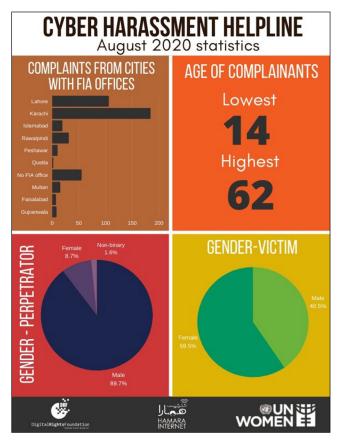


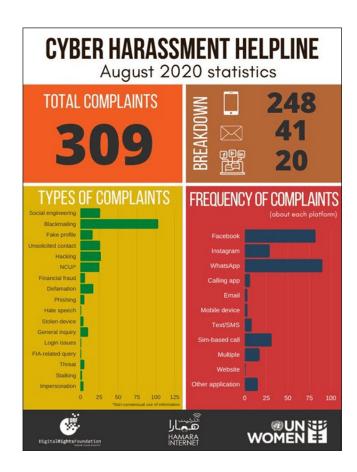
three months when DRF's cyber During the harassment helpline was functioning 24/7 the helpline in the month of June received 413 complaints which was considerably higher than the previous month. The complaints ranged from blackmailing to social engineering and to non consensual use of information (NCUI). In July DRF saw an almost 70% increase in cases reported to the Helpline. As was seen in the past, Facebook and WhatsApp were platforms from where the most cases originated. The total number of complaints in the month of July increased to 697 and with a large reporting problem since in Pakistan FIA offices aren't in every city, it was very difficult for victims of cyber harassment to file an official complaint. The cyber harassment helpline received 309 complaints in the month of August which was lower than the previous months however the nature of cases pretty much remained same with blackmailing and engineering being on the very top. In the month of September DRF saw a total number of 473 complaints which were slightly higher than the previous month.

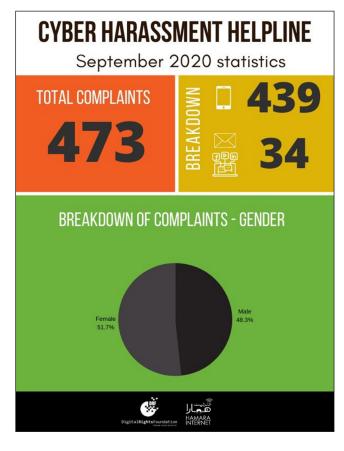












DRF's cyber harassment helpline went back to its usual timings in the month of October with the toll free number being available from Monday to Friday from 9 am till 5 pm.



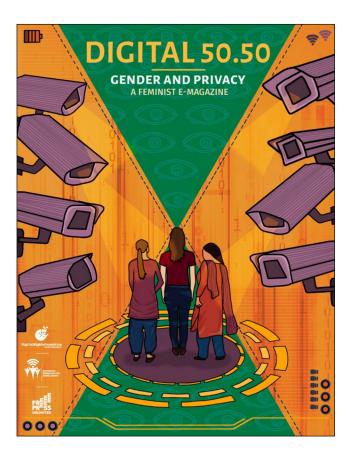
DRF LAUNCHES TWO DIGITAL E-MAGAZINES DURING THE PANDEMIC

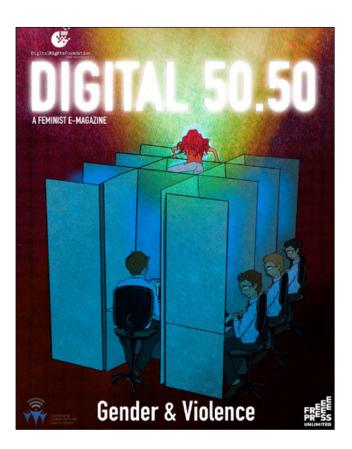
Digital 50.50











Digital Rights Foundation proudly launched its new initiative in the month of June titled Digital 50.50 which a feminist e-magazine which aims to create an open space for ideas, opinins, art, and discourse on a wide array of topics in the digital rights arena from an intersectional feminist lens. The <u>first edition</u> of the e-magazine focused on the impact of COVID-19 in women and girls in online and offline spaces. The edition covered a diverse range of opinions and how life after the pandemic has changed completely.

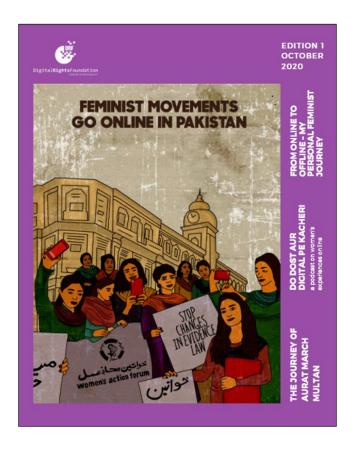
The second edition of the e-magazine focused on the mental health impact and coping strategies during the coronavirus pandemic. The second edition which came out in July focused on a feature on how children are making sense of the coronavirus lockdown, a narrative on digital healing and connectedness during the lockdown and listicle on strategies to do an effective digital detox for mental health and well-being.

The third edition which came out in September focused on navigating the digital spaces during the global pandemic. The e-magazine had a very interesting article which discussed the transition of civil society organisations and people from other professions to working in digital spaces. Another article used Taylor Swift's songs from her new album, Folklore, to talk about dating apps during the lockdown period.

The <u>fourth edition</u> of digital 50.50 was launched in November which focused on gender and privacy. The edition covered different aspects on the intersection of gender and privacy in the digital spaces, including privacy of journalists online, how women are constantly watched and how it impacts their behaviour in online spaces.

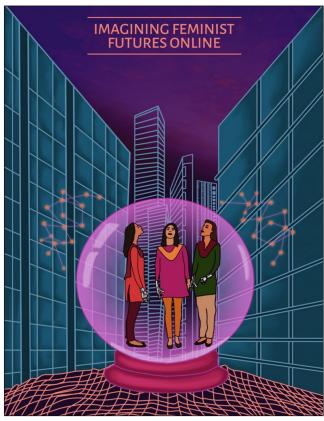
The <u>fifth edition</u> which was the last one for the year was launched in December and was an edition focusing on gender and violence. This particular edition was dedicated to the 16 days of activism of violence against women and focused on amplifying the voices of women and gender minorities and the violence that they face within their homes and outside.

LAUNCH OF TWO FEMINIST E-MAGAZINES



DRF launched it's first ever e-zine "feminist movements go online in Pakistan" in the month of October. The e-zine discusses the onset of feminist movements in the digital age and how social media has become a tool for rallying feminists online.

The launch of the second edition of ezine "Feminist Movements Go Online: Imagining Feminist Futures Online" was in November. In this edition the contributors looked at the internet and its role in movements from a critical lens in order to help develop possible futures of women and gender minorities on the internet.



A COMPILATION OF THE STUDIES/TOOLKITS/GUIDES RELEASED OVER THE YEAR.

Sifting truth from lies in the age of Fake News



Digital Rights Foundation released its report titled, 'Sifting Truth from Lies in the Era of Fake News', in January 2020. The study attempts to identify topics that are more susceptible to fake news, and common methods of its dissemination. It also examines the extent of fact-checking practiced in Pakistan's newsrooms and how often do journalists believe fake news to be true.

Citizens Protection (Against Online Harm) Rules 2020: Legal Analysis

The 'Citizens Protection (Against Online Harm) Rules, 2020' had been notified this year under sections of the Pakistan Telecommunication (Re-organisation) Act, 1996 and the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) 2016 (hereinafter collectively referred to as the 'Parent Acts'). Under these Rules, the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) is the designated Authority.

DRF did a legal analysis of these rules which highlights the jurisdictional and substantive issues with the Regulations in light of constitutional principles and precedent as well as larger policy questions.

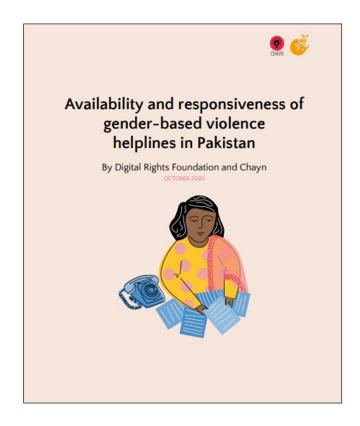
Recommendations for Personal Data Protection Bill 2020

DRF submitted a thorough legal analysis of the 'Personal Data Protection Bill 2020'. Within the bill recommendations were given to the government on how to further strengthen the bill. DRF also developed a video series around the bill to explain key terms and concerns within the bill.

Disinformation campaign on Twitter: Pro India accounts disseminating disinformation ahead of Pakistan FATF review

In October DRF's research team compiled a list of accounts and tweets disseminating disinformation through extensive Twitter searches online using keywords such as "Karachi", "Karachi blast", "civil war" and "FATF" based on an early analysis of sample tweets being identified by fact-checkers in Pakistan. The tweets were catalogued on this spreadsheet which contains 86 tweets originating from a total of 62 accounts. DRF released a report for the data on the disinformation campaign on Twitter.

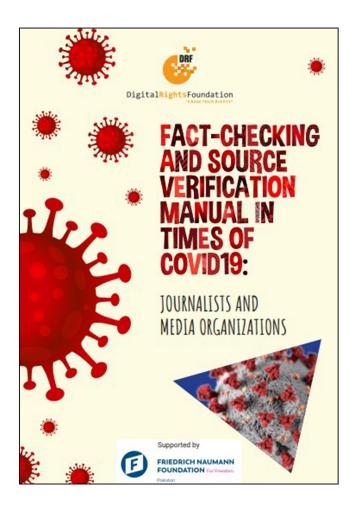
Availability and responsiveness of gender-based violence helplines in Pakistan



Chayn and Digital Rights Foundation (DRF) collaborated to conduct a comprehensive study of the helplines and resources available to support survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) in Pakistan

The study was conducted between May and June 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was conducted at a time when infection rates were rising across the country as the state gradually eased several lockdown restrictions. Over this period, reports of GBV, both online and offline, increased around the country.

Fact-Checking and Source Verification Manual in times of COVID10: Journalists and Media Organizations



DRF launched it's fact checking and source verification manual in times of COVID19 for journalists and information practitioners with the support of Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF). The manual was developed keeping in mind this disinfordemic age in times of COVID19.

Removal and Blocking of Online Content (Procedure, Oversight and safeguards) Rules 2020: Legal Analysis

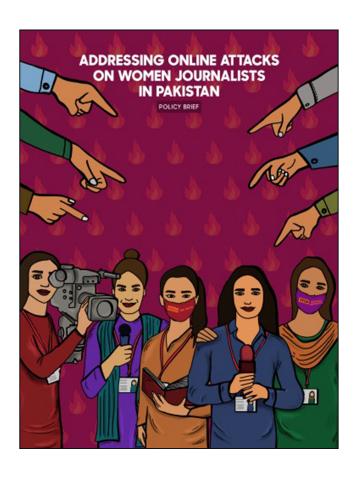
The 'Removal and Blocking of Unlawful Online Content (Procedure, Oversight and Safeguards), Rules, 2020 have been notified under section 37 (2) of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016 (PECA) and published in the Official Gazette on 20 October, 2020. Under these Rules, the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) is the designated Authority, vested with powers to remove and block content on the internet. DRF conducted a legal analysis which highlights the jurisdictional and substantive issues with the Rules in light of constitutional principles and precedent as well as larger policy questions.

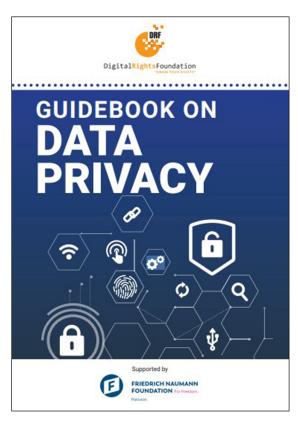
Gender Based Violence cases in Pakistan

DRF did a mapping exercise and tabulated data of gender-based violence cases since the Motorway Incident has revealed that in 64 days 123 cases of rape and gang rape have been reported across Pakistan.

Addressing online attacks on women journalists in Pakistan

Data Privacy Booklet in English and Urdu





DRF released a policy brief which aims to discuss the increased incidence of online violence and targeted harassment against female journalists, and its implications on freedom of speech and dissent.

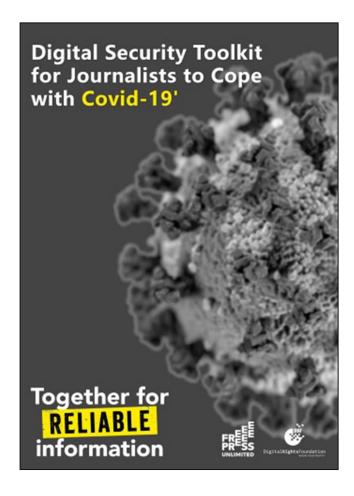
Impact and legality of Surveillance

DRF prepared a policy brief which discusses the issue of the constitutionality and social impact of surveillance, particularly from a human rights perspective, and its impact on democratic freedoms.



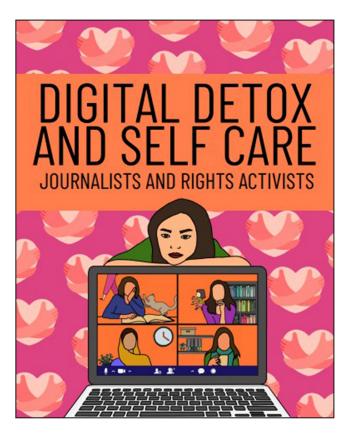
DRF with the support of Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF) released the data privacy booklet in urdu and english highlighting important privacy aspects for young adults. The booklet is specifically designed for young adults and the privacy issues they face online.

Digital Security Toolkit for journalists to cope with COVID-19



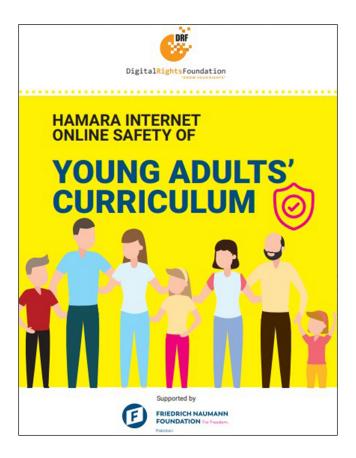
DRF in collaboration with Freedom Press Unlimited (FPU) released the digital security toolkit for journalists to cope with COVID-19. The toolkit highlights how journalists keep themselves safe online during the pandemic.

Digital Detox and Self Care Journalists and Rights Activists



2020 has been a difficult year for journalists and rights activists due to which DRF published it's toolkit on digital detox and self care. The toolkit highlights how a digital cleanse is important and and the need to address burnout and fatigue.

Hamara Internet Online Safety of Young Adults Curriculum



DRF with the support of Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF) released the Hamara Internet Online Safety of Young Adults Curriculum. The curriculum highlighted different themes of digital rights for young adults and how they navigate online spaces.

COMPILATION OF BLOGS

Quetta Internet Shutdown

DRF observed with great concern the internet shutdown in the provincial capital of Quetta earlier in May that affected the lives of the Baloch residents. The effects of cutting off an essential resource extend not only to the difficulties in the work of journalists who are covering the news in the midst of a pandemic but also to the safety of all those who have to venture out to work and have limited access to their families as well as the access of information to all citizens in the affected area.

 $\frac{https://digital rights foundation.pk/quetta-internet-shutdown/}{}$

Virtual 'Private' Networks no Longer Private as PTA Requires Registration

DRF's intern Areeba Jibril penned down her thoughts this summer around countries regulating and controlling VPNs and how that might be a direct threat to an individual's privacy, free speech, and elections.

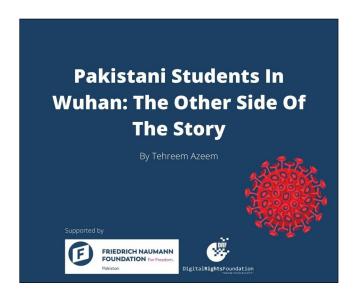
https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/virtual-private -networks-no-longer-private-as-pta-requiresregistration/

What is Emotional Regulation and Why is it so important?

DRF's Kashfa Zafar wrote about what is emotional regulation and why it is so important in this day and age.

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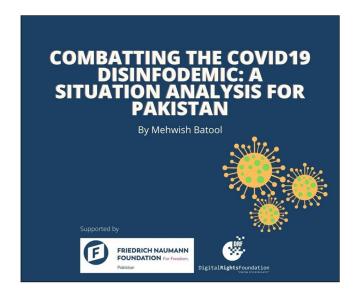
Pakistani students in Wuhan: the other side of the story



Tehreem Azeem wrote an investigative article on the Pakistani Students in Wuhan: the other side of the story. The piece highlighted how fake news originated at the start of the pandemic and how students faced problems in the beginning when they couldn't come back to Pakistan and were stuck in China. This piece was part of DRF's and Friedrich Naumann Foundation campaign on fake news.

https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/pakistani-students-in-wuhan-the-other-side-of-the-story/

Combatting the COVID19 Disinfodemic: A situation analysis for Pakistan



In this piece, written by Mehwish Batool, Pakistan's response to COVID-19 related fake news and the spread of the disinfodemic were discussed in detail, in addition to making numerous policy interventions to circumvent this problem. This piece was part of DRF's and Friedrich Naumann Foundation campaign on fake news.

https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/combatting-the-covid19-disinfodemic-a-situation-analysis-forpakistan/

SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS AND WEBINARS

Together For Reliable Information

DRF participated in Free Press Unlimited's Campaign to highlight the work that our organisation and its Network of Women Journalists' members are doing to provide people with reliable information. The campaign included five short video interviews from our team and women journalists working at the frontline to report covid-19 related news from the field. DRF developed a digital hygiene toolkit for journalists and the wider community of content creators and bloggers, which will be launched in June 2020. Ten picture stories covering the journalistic frontline of covid-19 were also included in the campaign.



Digital Rights Solidarity in South Asia

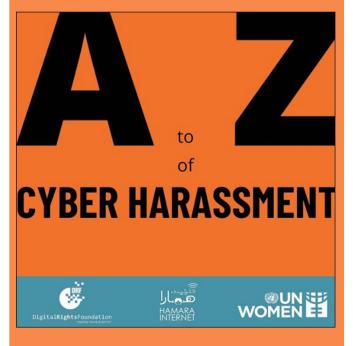
DRF hosted its community lab session on the state of digital rights in South Asia with participants from India, Bangladesh and Nepal to understand the common trends in digital rights and state policies in the region. The aim of this session was also to forge solidarities and partnerships in the region based on our shared histories and challenges.



Helpline Goes 24/7: #HamaraInternet #MehfoozInternet

As COVID cases rose, and lockdowns were in place, our helpline saw a massive surge in calls and complaints. Along with UN Women, we were able to run our Helpline 24/7 and with it we produced a four-month long campaign that was aimed at raising awareness about cyber harassment and how each internet can ensure that their internet experience is safe.





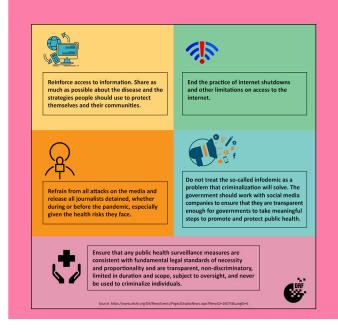
Cyber Harassment Helpline's Webinar Series

The Helpline team hosted a three-part series of webinars to cover the three services it offers, digital safety assistance, legal aid and mental health counseling. The webinars' speakers included experts in each of these fields as well as team members from DRF.



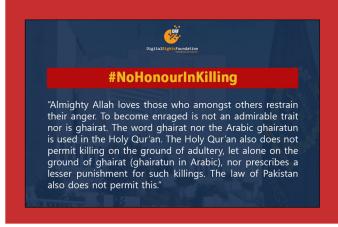
#ActivismInPandemic

DRF has launched the #ActivismInPandemic campaign highlighting the important work human rights defenders and journalists have been doing during COVID19. The campaign aims to share experiences of journalists and HRDs during the pandemic and also highlight the importance of managing work and stress during these testing times.



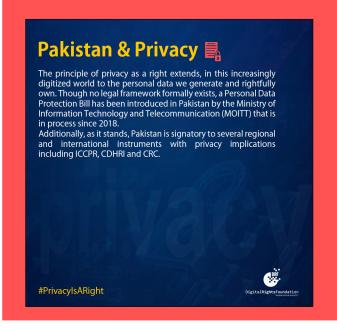
#NoHonourInKilling

While hearing a jail petition for leave to appeal in the case titled 'Muhammad Abbas vs The State', the Supreme Court of Pakistan made observations regarding honour killings in the country. DRF's campaign '#NoHonourInKilling' aims to shine a light on this and highlight some of the most powerful sections of the order.



#PrivacyIsARight

DRF conducted an awareness raising campaign through social media on the right to privacy in Pakistan's context. This included a week-long series of posts discussing encryption, VPNs and details of international treaties with privacy implications that Pakistan is signatory to, as well as a panel discussion titled 'Understanding VPNs: A Deep Dive into Privacy in Pakistan'. This was cast live via DRF's Facebook page and is available for viewing there.



#BeCyberSmart

Our team compiled an alphabet series covering the basic of cyber safety in this increasingly digital world.



Rapid Fire Chat Series

DRF launched a new initiative, Digital RapidFire Chat, to discuss issues around online freedom of expression and press freedom in the country. The Digital RapidFire was based on the idea that with the lockdown and the digital space being loaded with talk shows, workshops and webinars, DRF wanted to create a space where panelists could discuss serious, and heavy-loaded issues in a fun, interactive way and through some 'burning questions' that also reduces the cognitive load of the audiences. The first Chat was scheduled for 11th September, for which the decided format could not be implemented as the Motorway rape incident happened so the topic was changed to "Ab Aur Nahin: Ending violence against women's bodies". For the second Chat, we asked questions from our panelists on "How feminists in Pakistan deal with online hate?".



#SahafatAurSachayi

DRF, Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF) and Freedom Press Unlimited (FPU) launched a mini web series on the infodemic in times of COVID19. The #SahafatAurSachayi series focused on different aspects of fake news in times of the pandemic and what must we do in order to counter misinformation and disinformation online.

16 Days of Activism Campaign:

#16DaysOfActivism is an annual, international campaign against gender based violence. This campaign is spearheaded by the UN. This year's theme revolved about online gender based violence, and DRF's campaign highlighted the disturbing trend towards online violence in Pakistan, and has also laid out interventions, and solutions to this problem. During the 16 days of activism campaign DRF also recorded the cases of violence against women, minoors and transgenders in the country. 190 incidents of violence took place in the country since the horrific motorway case.





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