

DIGITAL RIGHTS FOUNDATION

+ Annual Report +

2025



About Digital Rights Foundation

Digital Rights Foundation (DRF) is a women-led, not-for-profit organization working since 2013 to advance digital rights and online freedoms across South Asia and the broader Global Majority. We advocate for inclusive, rights-respecting digital spaces by driving policy change through strategic engagement with relevant stakeholders. Our work focuses on making digital platforms and emerging technologies more equitable, accessible, and accountable. At the grassroots level, we empower individuals particularly women, marginalized communities, and human rights defenders with the tools and knowledge to navigate the Internet safely and assert their rights online.

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Note From Our Executive Director

There are years that feel like turning points; years in which the forces shaping our digital lives move faster than the laws, institutions, and norms meant to govern them. 2025 was one of those years.

Across the world, and especially here in Pakistan and our broader region, we watched as artificial intelligence transformed from a promise into a pressure, felt most acutely by those already navigating systems not designed with them in mind. We saw digital spaces weaponised during conflict, with women's bodies made into symbols of conquest and humiliation in the fog of information warfare. We saw monitoring infrastructure expand under the banner of safety. We saw laws that were supposed to protect people used to silence them instead. And we saw platforms fail — repeatedly, and at scale — to moderate harm in languages other than English, or in moments of crisis when speed mattered most.

And yet, this report is not a record of despair. It is a record of resistance, solidarity, and the quiet, determined work of building something better.

In 2025, DRF's Digital Security Helpline — now in its ninth year, and newly expanded as the Digital Security Threat Lab — received 3,012 calls, and 776 additional followups. Behind each of those calls is a person: often a woman, often facing harassment, blackmail, or the threat of intimate image abuse, often with nowhere else to turn. Since our Helpline's inception, we have now crossed 23,000 cases, a milestone that is both a source of pride and a sobering reminder of how much need persists. Our legal team handled 68 cases this year, assisting people who could not otherwise afford to fight back. We reached over 750 people through 34 sessions, including students, journalists, activists, religious and gender minorities, to equip them with knowledge that is, quite literally, protective.

This year also saw DRF step more firmly onto the global stage. At the AI Action Summit in Paris, I joined a roundtable on cybersecurity, privacy, and democracy to make a case I believe deeply: that AI governance without diverse voices is not governance at all. It is a blueprint written by the few, for the few. At RightsCon in Taipei, our team raised the voices of the Majority World in rooms where those voices are still too often missing. At DRAPAC, we led sessions on image-based abuse and feminist approaches to digital security. At Global Gathering, we co-hosted the South Asia Village — a space to collectively resist digital injustice and build regional resilience. We brought Pakistan's perspective to President Macron's Global Tech Thinkers Meeting and to a European Commission panel at the Paris Peace Forum, because the future of technology must include those of us who live at the sharpest edge of its consequences.

At home, we launched DACSA — the Digital Accountability Collective South Asia — at a convening in Colombo, bringing together partners from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal to hold platforms accountable across our region together, because no single organization can do this alone. We signed an MoU with the Pakistan Solar Association to restore digital access to flood-devastated communities in Jhang and Chiniot, because digital rights are inseparable from the right to electricity, to connectivity, and to a liveable climate. We convened policymakers, civil society, and UN agencies to scrutinize the Digital Nation Pakistan Act, and we published rigorous analyses of PECA amendments, the National AI Policy, and the voter data landscape — not to oppose progress, but to insist that progress must be accountable.

Crucially, our research this year followed the fault lines of 2025: the gendered disinformation that surged during the Indo-Pak escalations; the AI-generated misinformation that flooded our feeds alongside the floodwaters; the viral misogyny that followed the murder of 17-year-old content creator Sana Yousaf; the systematic weaponisation of PECA against journalists. We documented, we analyzed, and we published, because evidence is the foundation of any meaningful advocacy.

Four editions of Digital 50.50 amplified 40 voices from Pakistan and beyond, exploring platform accountability, press freedom, hate speech, and digital violence. Our Helpline analysts traveled to Barcelona to share our survivor-centred model with feminist helplines from around the world. We gathered women journalists in the hills of Nathia Gali for a retreat that reminded us all: you cannot sustain digital resilience without emotional resilience.

None of this happened in isolation. It happened because of a team that shows up, every day, with both rigour and heart. It happened because of partners, funders, and allies who understand that digital rights are human rights. And it happened because of the survivors, the students, the journalists, and the activists who trusted us with their stories and their safety.

As we move into 2026, the challenges will not diminish. AI will become more powerful and more pervasive. Monitoring infrastructure will continue to expand. The pressure on civil society in Pakistan and across the Global Majority will intensify. But so will we.

DRF was built on the conviction that technology should serve people; all people, not just those with power or proximity to it. That conviction has not wavered. If anything, the urgency of 2025 has sharpened our resolve. We will continue to fight for the internet we believe in: open, safe, accountable, and built for everyone.

With determination,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nighat Dad". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nighat Dad
Executive Director, Digital Rights Foundation

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Introduction

Every annual report is, at its heart, a love letter to a year's worth of work. This one is no different, except that 2025 gave us more to write about than most.

The pages that follow are a record of where DRF showed up, what we said, who we stood beside, and what we built. They document a year in which the digital rights landscape shifted rapidly and often uncomfortably: new laws, new monitoring tools, and new ways for technology to be turned against the very people it promises to serve. But they also document a team, a network, and a community of allies that met each of those shifts with clarity, care, and an unrelenting commitment to doing the work.

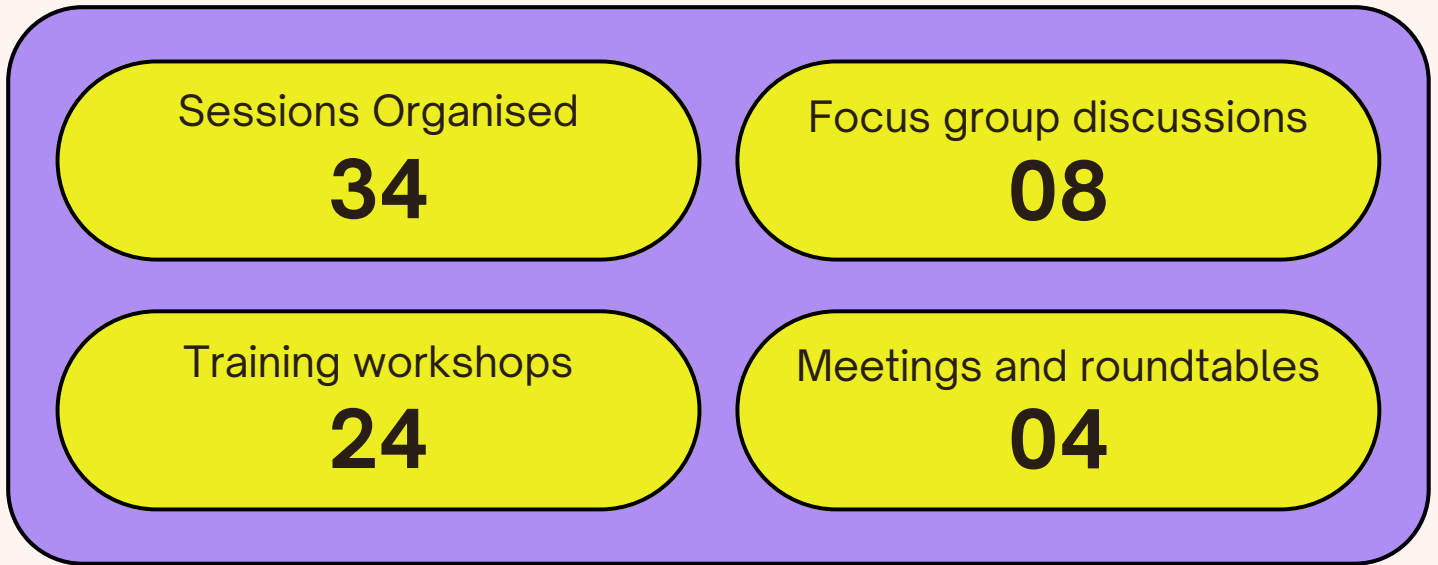
Enclosed in these pages, you will find the stories behind our numbers: the 3,012 calls our Helpline answered, the 68 cases referred to our legal team, the students, journalists, and activists we trained and stood beside across the country. You will also find our research, always timely, rigorous, and unflinching, on everything from AI-fuelled disinformation to gendered hate speech in conflict. You will find the global stages we stepped onto and the grassroots spaces we never left.

This report belongs to everyone who made it possible. Our team, our partners, and every person who trusted DRF in a difficult moment. We hope it reflects not just what was accomplished, but what is possible when people refuse to cede digital spaces to those who would make them less free.

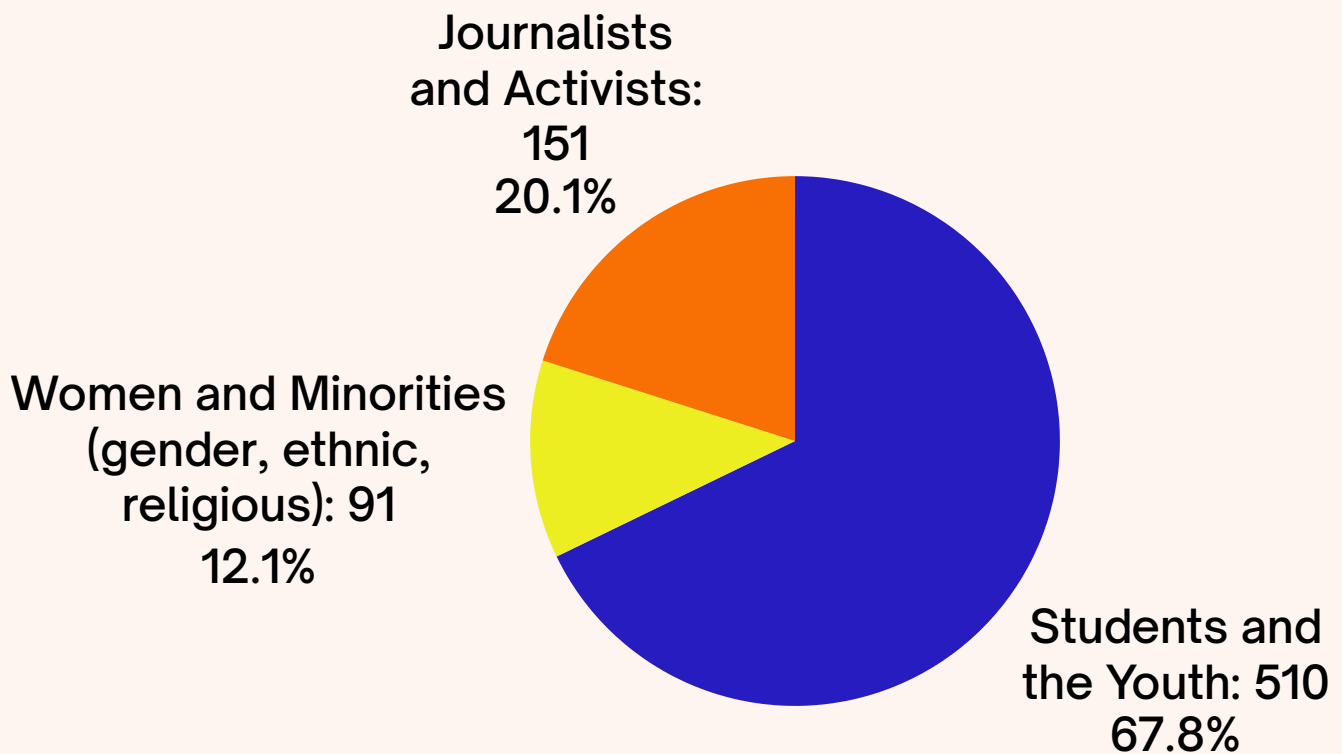
The work continues. We are glad you are part of it.

Vaneeza Jawad,
Communications Lead, Digital Rights Foundation

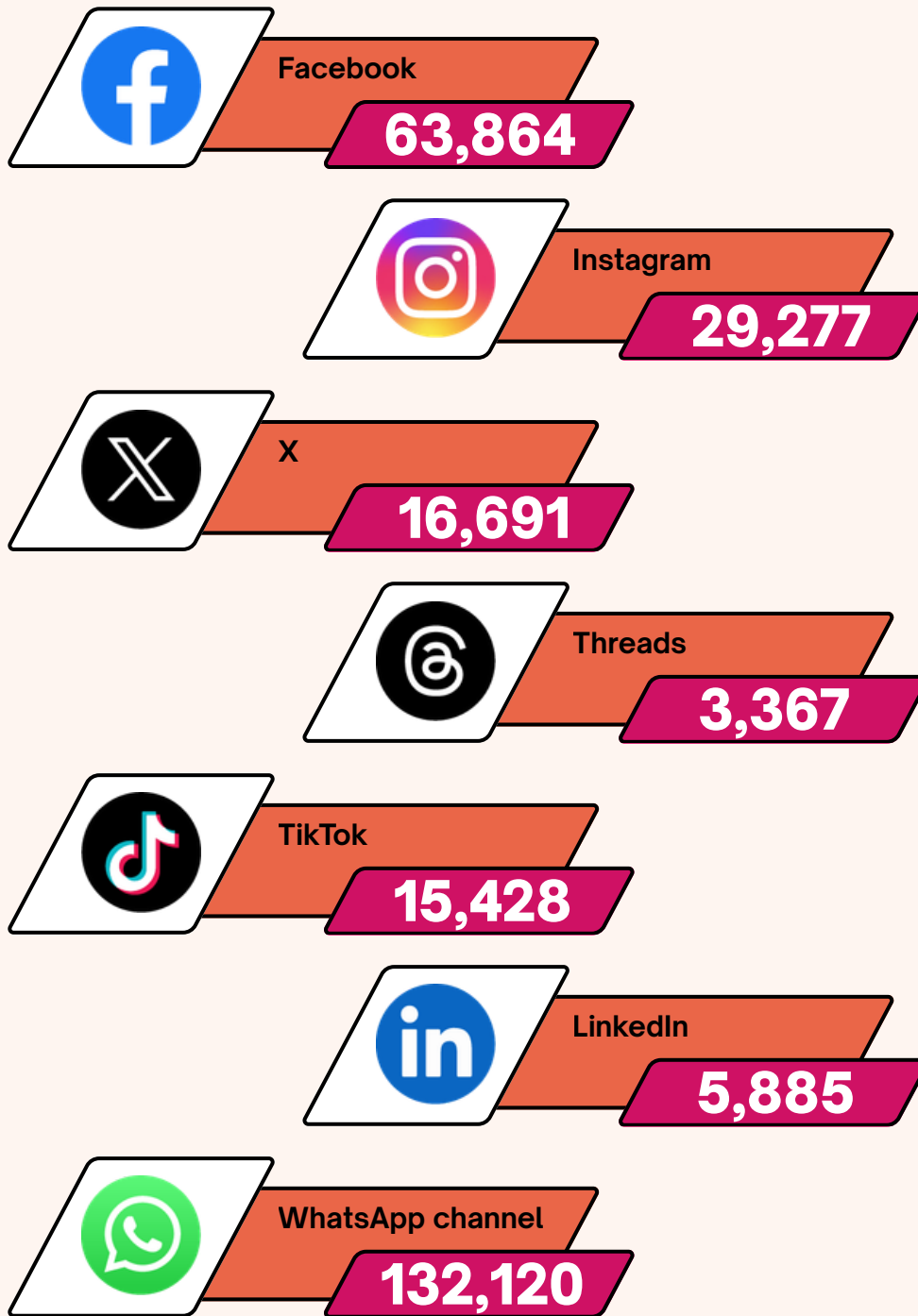
Our Impact and Outreach



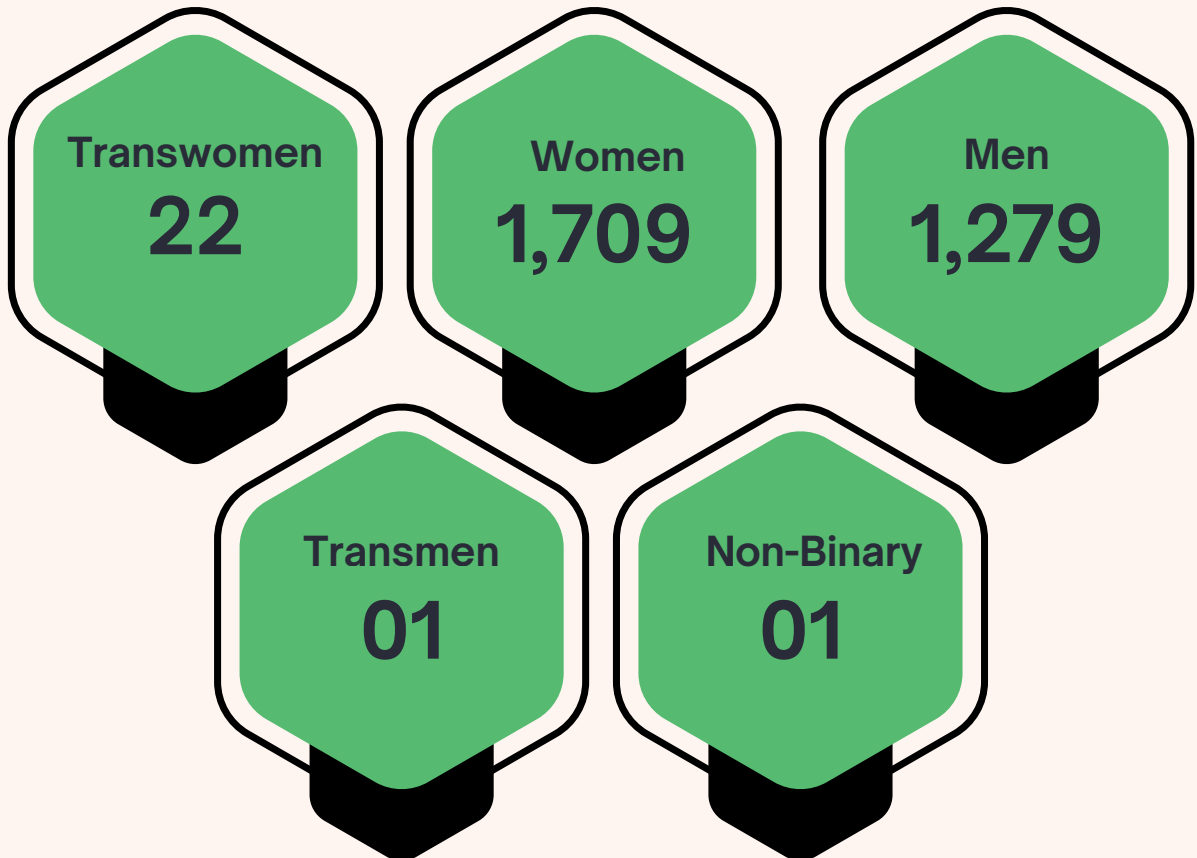
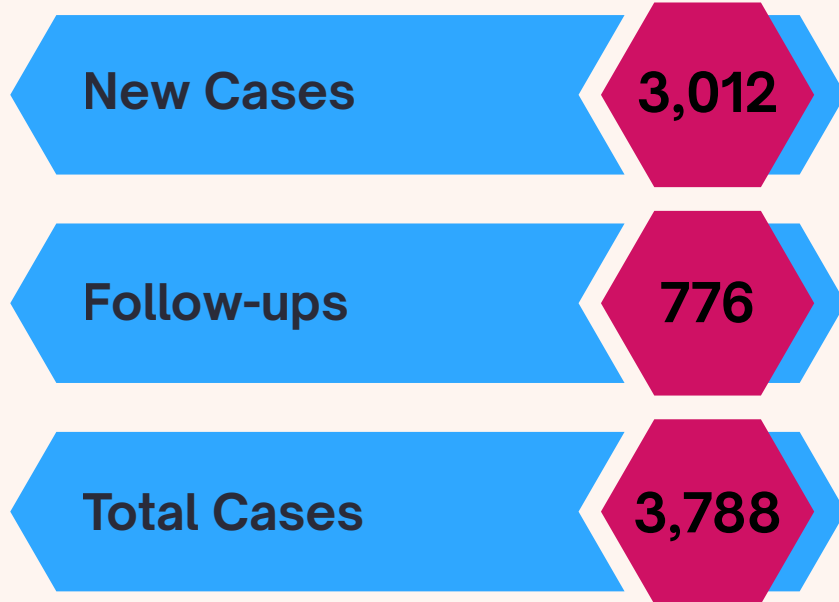
People Reached:



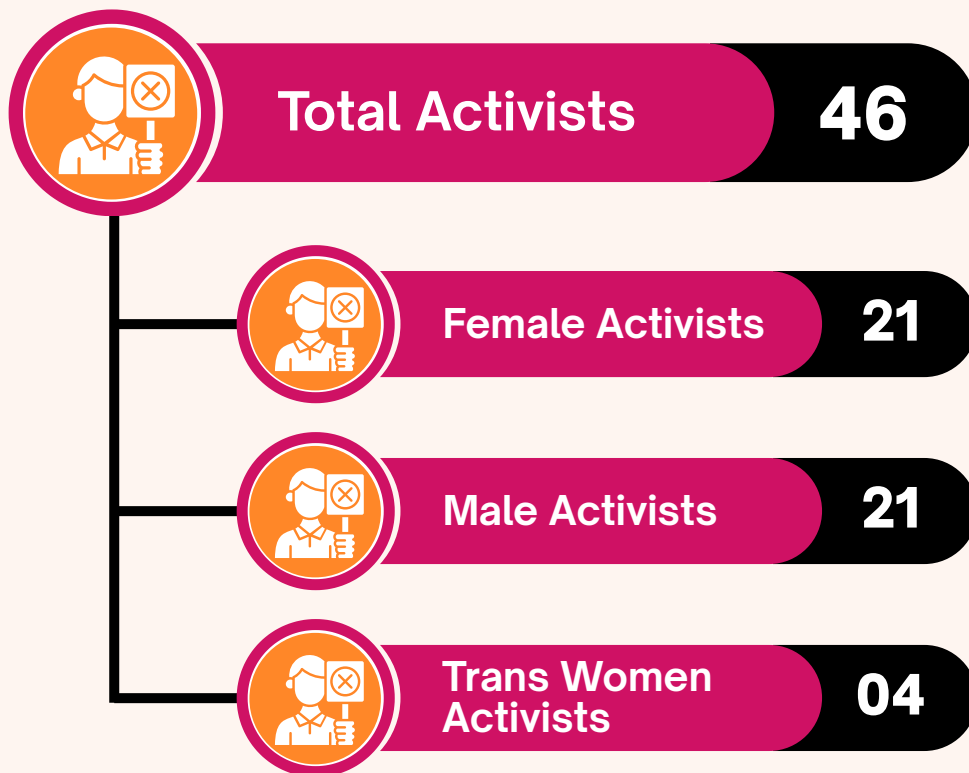
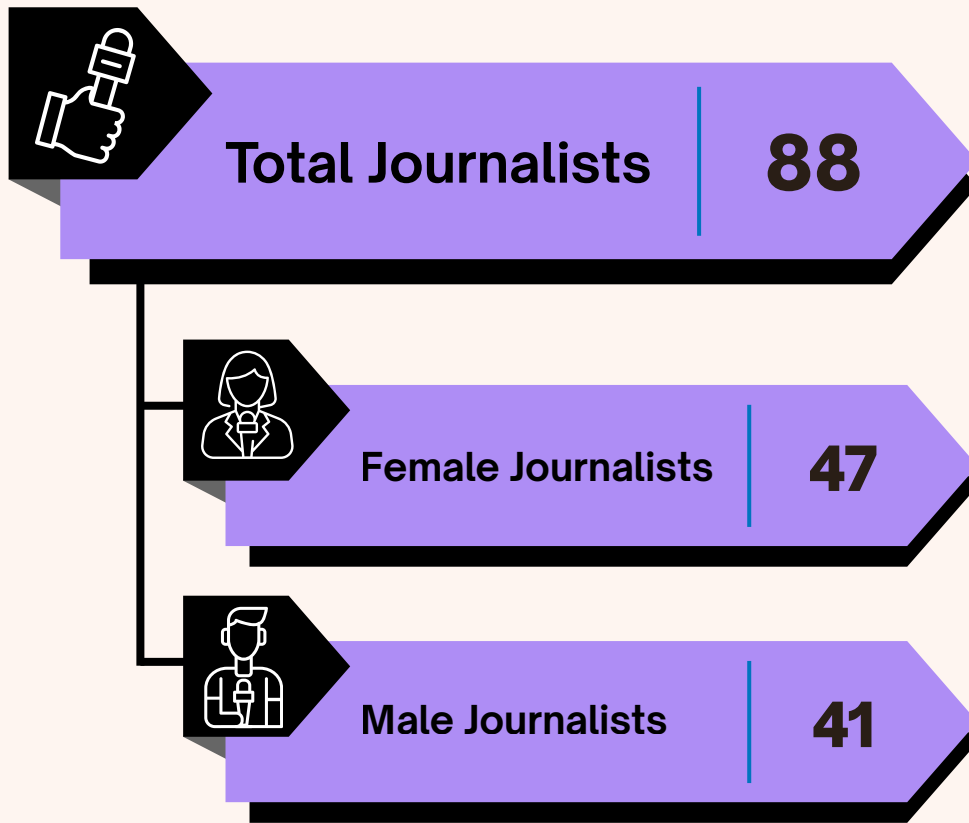
DRF on Social Media



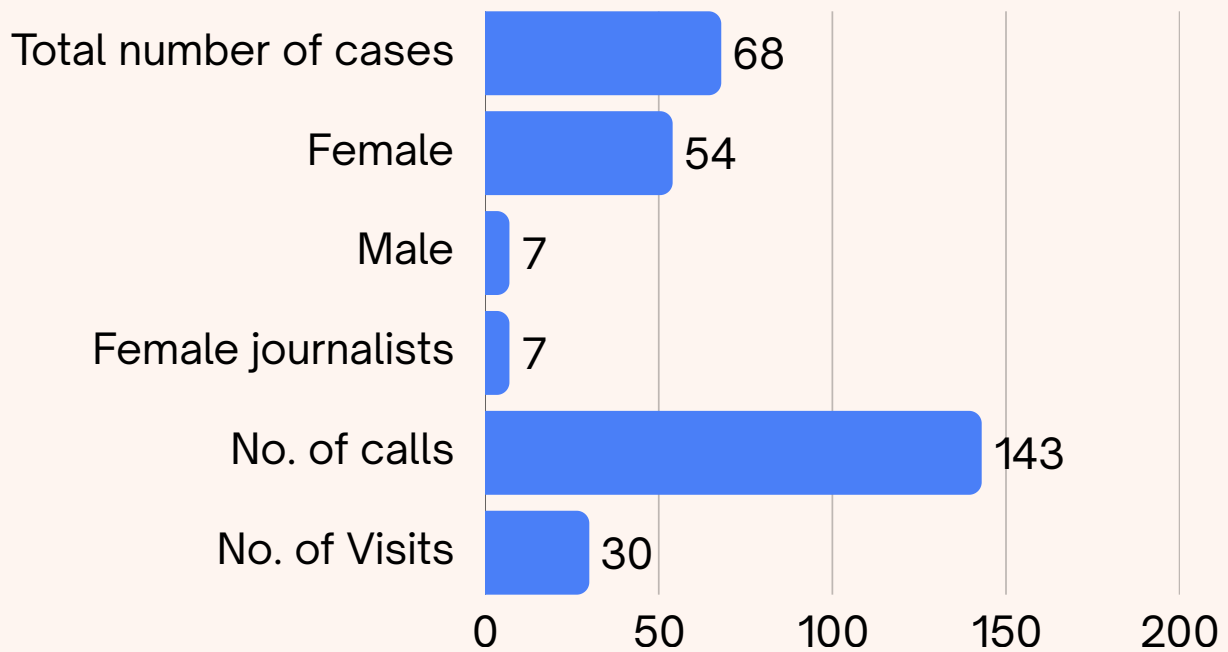
Digital Security Helpline 2025 Overview



Vulnerable Groups Helped



Legal Complaints Handled



Majority Categories: Cyber Harassment, Blackmailing, and Defamation (primarily under Sections 20, 21, and 24 of PECA 2016)

General categories

Cyber harassment

**Blackmailing
(including threats to leak intimate content)**

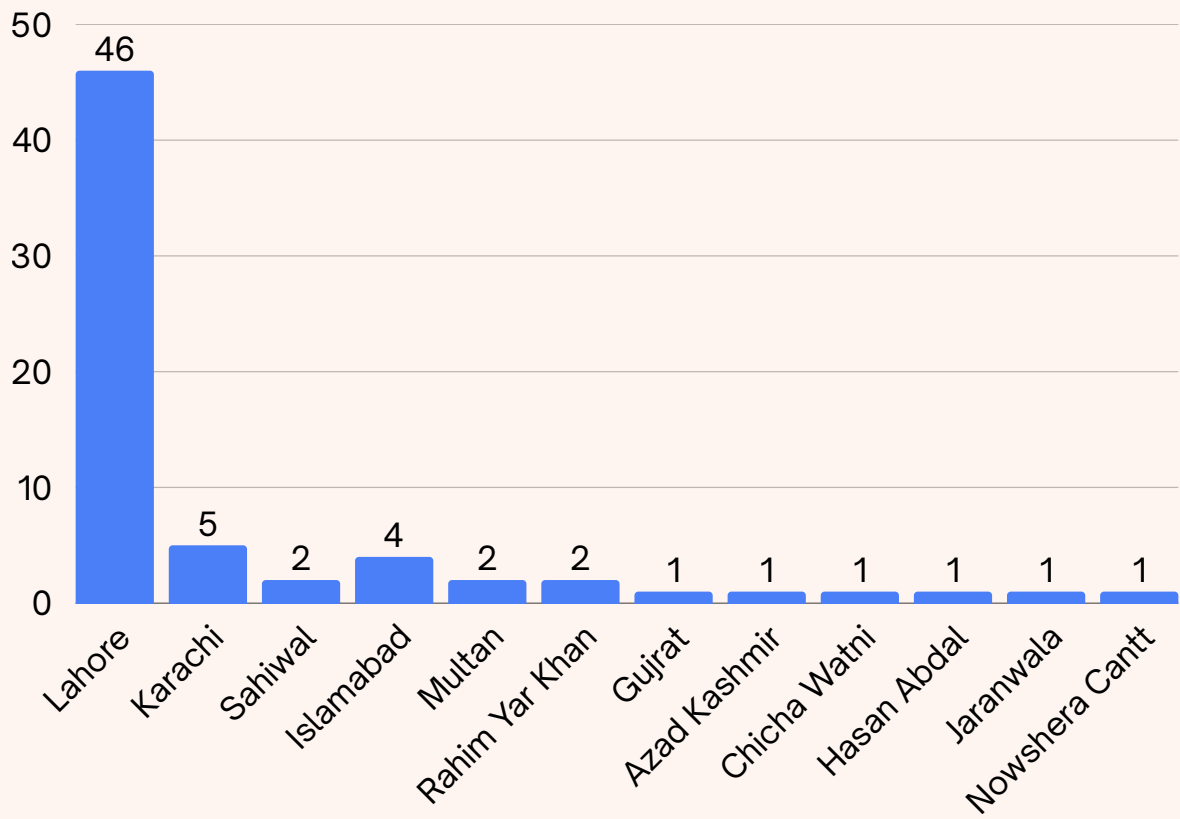
Defamation

Cyber stalking

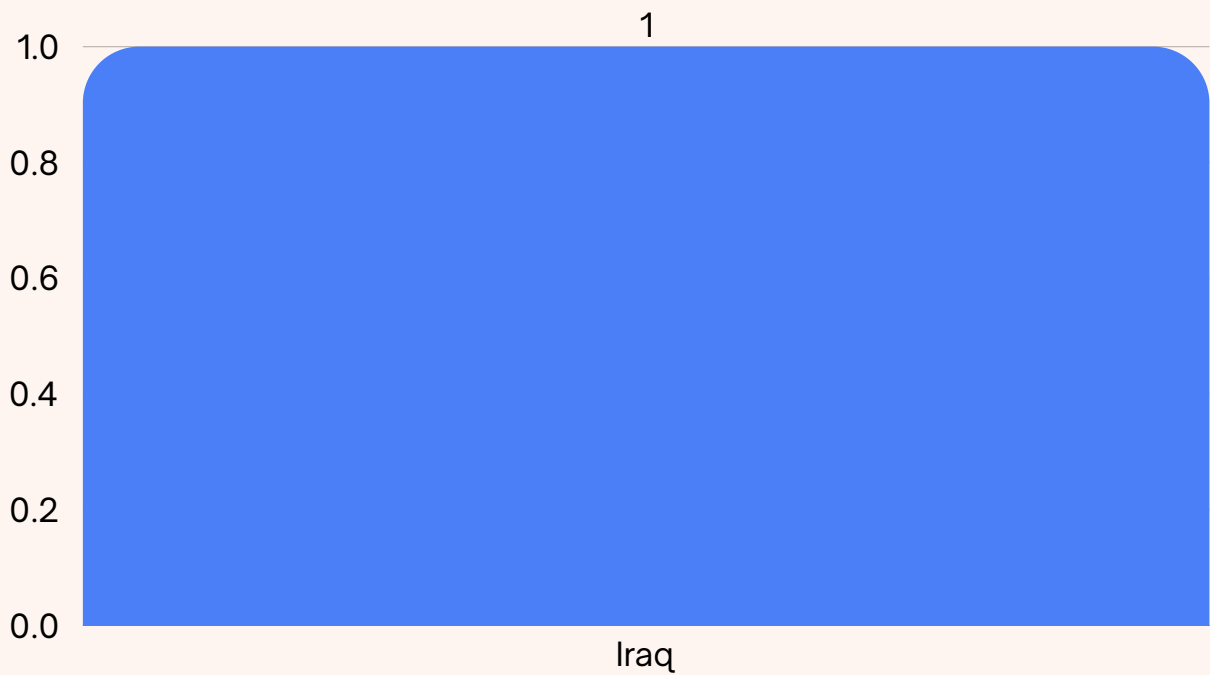
Unauthorized access/use of personal data

General queries

Cities



Country



2025 in Pakistan: The Digital Rights Landscape

January

29 January: PECA Amendments Act (2025) and Digital Nation Pakistan Act (2025) passed.

February

12 February: PTA announces biometric verification is set to include facial recognition and iris scanning.

March

15 March: Pakistan Government officially launches “Crypto Council”.

April

22 April: Pakistan Government formally establishes the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency as an independent institution.

24 April: DRF launches annual Digital Security Helpline report.

May

6 May: DRF releases report on digital misinformation and Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV) in the wake of the Pahalgam attack.

7 May: National access to social media platform X partially restored amidst tensions with India.

8 May: Senior NADRA official arrested for alleged anti-military remarks in WhatsApp group under PECA

June

2 June: Social media influencer Sana Yousaf killed, followed by graphic, misogynistic content and hate-speech praising her murderer.

11 June: Government introduces digital tax law targeting social media and online businesses.

July

1 July: Punjab Home Department launches Cyber Cell to monitor sectarian content ahead of Muharram, with 17 arrested.

5 July: Microsoft lays off all Pakistan-based staff as part of global restructuring.

August

7 August: National Assembly passes a resolution against capturing of non-consensual videos and images.

21 August: Mobile internet services suspended across Balochistan, including in Quetta, for “security reasons”. Services restored after 15 days with immediate effect.

28 August: YouTuber Saad “Ducky Bhai” Rehman arrested under PECA for electronic fraud, scamming, and spoofing.

September

3 September: Over Rs. 2 billion in online fraud reported in Pakistan.

8 September: Case registered against a TikToker under PECA for spreading misinformation about flooding in the country.

October

7 October: PTA issues statement asking citizens to be wary of data theft under the guise of “fake job offers”.

21 October: Karachi police begin using facial recognition to make arrests.

November

13 November: “Safe Secure Islamabad” initiative launched by the federal government, with surveys collecting sensitive information from residents.

December

2 December: Punjab Safe Cities Authority launches “Connect to PSCA”, allowing citizens to stream directly to the Safe Cities control room through their smartphones during emergencies.

7 December: Sindh Government proposes new cybercrime unit to strengthen provincial digital security

4th highest economic impact of internet shutdowns

\$1.13 billion lost, 110 million users affected
([Top10VPN](#), 2025)

144th globally for Internet speed

([Ookla Speedtest Global Index](#), 2025)

27/100 Internet Freedom Score: “Not Free”

([Freedom House](#), 2025)

Landmark Achievements

Knowledge Sharing Across Borders

DACSA: Our Shared Commitment to Digital Rights

At a convening in Colombo in January 2025, The Digital Rights Foundation launched DACSA - the Digital Accountability Collective South Asia - to demonstrate a shared commitment to address growing issues of platform governance, accountability, and the impact of emerging technologies in the region. With founding partners including Digitally Right from Bangladesh and Hashtag Generation from Sri Lanka, the collective has grown across the year to include Digital Rights Nepal, and the Center for the Study for Organised Hate.

Now five members strong, DACSA strives to collaboratively foster equality in digital spaces, and hold tech platforms accountable.

DRF at the AI Action Summit

Founder Nighat Dad shared her expertise at a roundtable titled ‘Cybersecurity, privacy, information integrity: leveraging AI to protect democracies’ at the AI Action Summit in Paris. The panelists debated the impact that AI could have on democracy. Given her experience on the UN Secretary General’s High-Level Advisory Board on AI Governance, Nighat Dad emphasized that inclusivity is essential in AI governance, stating “we just cannot take this progress forward when we are not including diverse voices”, reaffirming DRF’s commitment to tech justice.



RightsCon 2025

DRF Executive Director Nighat Dad, Programs Lead Irum Shujah, Research Lead Talal Raza, Digital Security Helpline Lead Hyra Basit and Digital Security Lead Danish Umar attended RightsCon 2025 in Taipei. With workshops on digital safety and panel discussions on gendered disinformation, DRF collaborated with civil society organizations around the world, particularly from the Majority World, to raise our voices for tech justice. DRF also set up a booth to showcase our work, such as major achievements from our Digital Security Helpline.



Cross-Border Solidarity in Action: DRF at #DRAPAC25

DRF was proud to take part in three days of powerful conversations and collaborations with civil society, researchers, and activists from across the Asia-Pacific.

Programs Lead Anam Baloch co-facilitated the opening workshop on strengthening feminist helplines for OGBV survivors, alongside rich discussions on neuro-technology, mental privacy and feminist, decolonial approaches to AI. At DRAPAC, we also joined the roundtable on internet measurement and community resilience, met with DACSA partners, connected with feminist helplines, and explored sessions on platform monetization and accountability. We also led a threat modelling session on image-based abuse featuring case studies from our helpline, explored tech tools for community archiving and evidence verification, and joined the Tech Global Institute convening on regional priorities for platform governance.

These exchanges reaffirmed the importance of cross-border solidarity and collaboration in building safer, more inclusive digital futures for our region.



Mental Health, AI, and Journalist Safety: DRF at SWIFT 2025

Our team joined hands with the SWIFT group, a journalist safety response platform for Asia. DRF participated in the 4th regional meeting held in Indonesia, which focused on safety and support for journalists. Key topics included the mental health of journalists, the role of AI in journalism, and how we can come together to support journalists in distress.



DRF at Global Gathering 2025

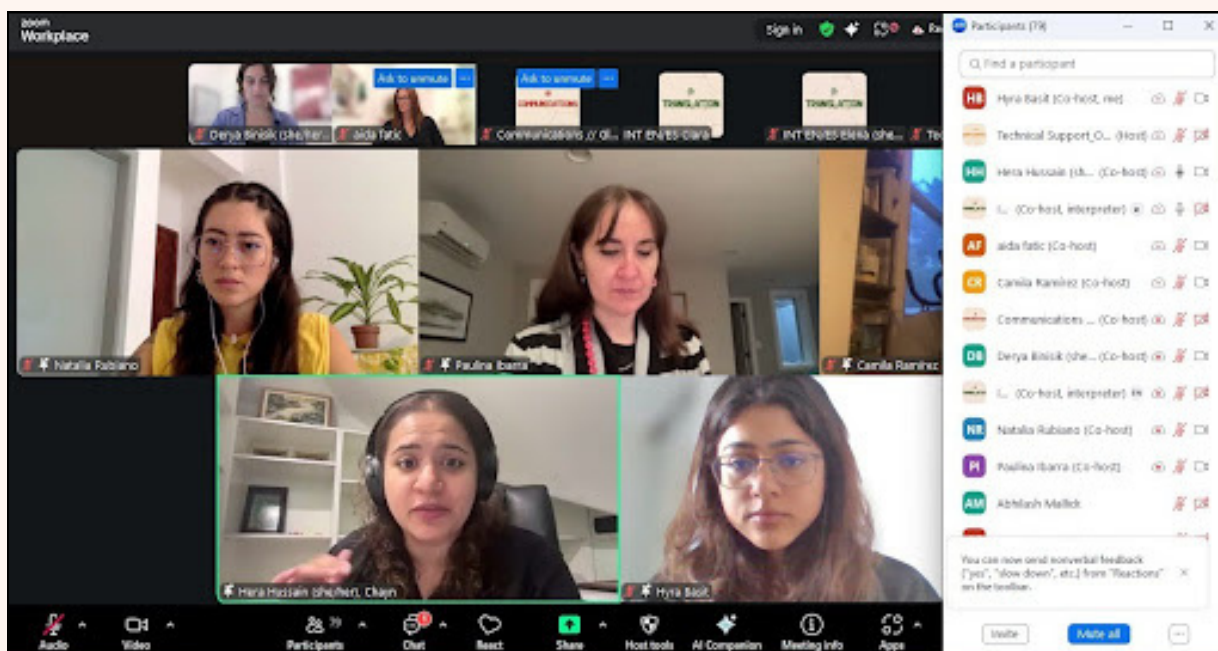
At Global Gathering 2025, our team had the opportunity to bring South Asian perspectives on digital rights, accountability, and resilience to a global stage. On September 9, we co-hosted the South Asia Village: Resisting Digital Injustice, Building Collective Resilience with DACSA, Hashtag Generation (Sri Lanka), Digitally Right (Bangladesh) spotlighting platform accountability, AI governance, and data justice and showcased demos from our Digital Security Helpline, and community-driven tools for protection. We also hosted and joined key Circles, including TFGBV, Disinformation & Platform Accountability in the Indo-Pak Conflict of 2025, and Mapping the Global Spyware Landscape: Perspectives, Gaps & Possibilities.



On 10 September, we hosted a Circle on Meta's Shifting Moderation Model with Zamleh - The Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media, rethinking the role of trusted partner escalations in platform accountability. Forensics for All: Democratizing Digital Forensics for Accountability in the Global Majority highlighted consent-based digital forensics, incident response, and collective pathways to strengthen forensic capacities across the Global South. These conversations reinforced the importance of cross-border solidarity, community-led resilience, and holding power to account in the digital sphere.

Reclaiming Tech: Countering Digital Violence against Women Environmental Defenders in the Global South

DRF was invited to speak at the Reclaiming Tech webinar hosted by Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, as part of a discussion on the weaponisation of technology to perpetrate violence against environmental and human rights defenders in the Global South. The event brought together activists and experts from Latin America and South Asia to share regional perspectives on technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) and exchange strategies, tools, and practices to protect WERHDs and strengthen transnational solidarity.



South Asia Safety Showcase

DRF Founder Nighat Dad joined the Asia Safety Showcase led by the UNFPA, the first of its kind in its region, to take part in a session on policies and features that prevent, protect from, or respond to TFGBV across Asia. Dad outlined the problems with E-safety laws in the region, while also acknowledging the creative feminist solutions championed by South Asian civil society when it comes to tackling TFGBV.

Putting Pakistan on the Global Tech Map

DRF Founder Nighat Dad joined world leaders and thinkers in Paris for the Global Tech Thinkers Meeting, hosted by President Emmanuel Macron, and a European Commission panel at the Paris Peace Forum, bringing sharp insights on digital rights and policy to the global stage. Her presence marked a powerful moment for Pakistan in the conversations defining the future of technology and digital rights.



DRF's Digital Security Helpline Joins the International Meeting of Feminist Helplines

As Pakistan's first feminist, survivor-centred Helpline, our expertise comes from our work on the ground. This December, DRF's Incident Response Analysts Ayesha and Anmol participated in the meeting of the Feminist Helpline Community 2025, organised by Digital Defenders Partnership in Barcelona. Our Analysts emphasised upon the importance of co-building strategies to escalate cases to social media platforms, and lead an insightful talk around the role of escalations in addressing TFGBV. Through case study based activities and interactive examples, our Analysts demonstrated how to make checklists for drafting escalations, and also highlighted difficulties with escalations such as internal and external barriers in the Trusted Partner Channels. They also participated in a roundtable on tech facilitated gender based violence organized by the Department of Feminism of the Diputació of Barcelona along with Fembloc and presented DRF's pioneering work. The roundtable hosted representatives from around the globe, including from Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Catalonia, Ecuador, Eastern Europe, France, Pakistan, Peru, and Venezuela.



National Engagements

Digital Rights Foundation and Pakistan Solar Association Join Forces To Bring Relief and Rehabilitation To Flood-Hit Communities



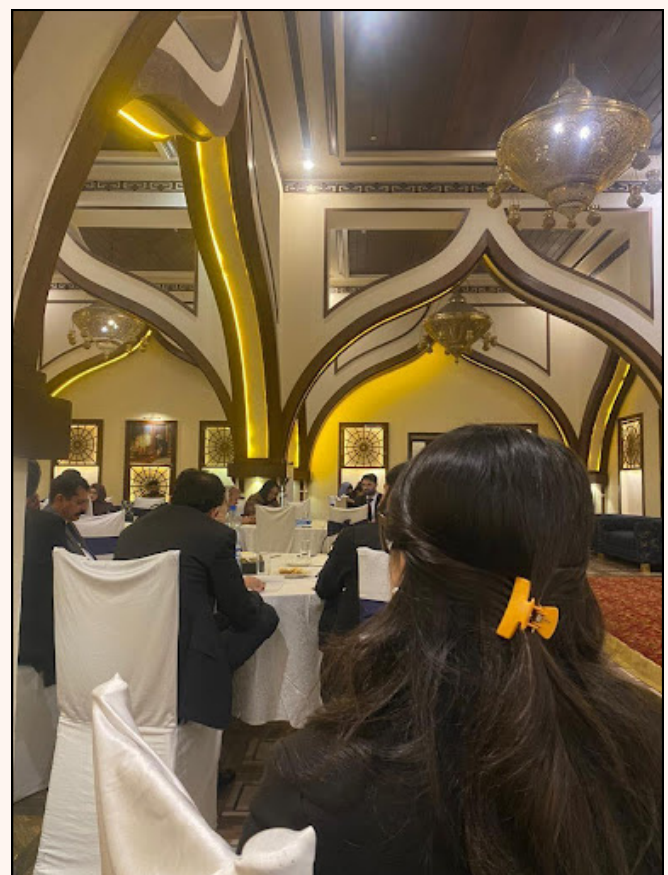
In September 2025, The Digital Rights Foundation joined hands with the Pakistan Solar Association to sign a landmark MoU to restore electricity, and with it, digital access, to some of Pakistan’s hardest-hit flood zones following calamities during June 2025. Beginning with the districts of Jhang and Chiniot, the partnership is set to deliver solar-powered energy hubs to communities where homes, schools, and livelihoods were devastated. This initiative provides a renewable, reliable lifeline, ensuring that connectivity and technology are not casualties of climate disaster. Under the agreement signed between Mr. Aafaaq Ali Khan, Vice Chairman of the Pakistan Solar Association, and Ms. Nighat Dad, Executive Director of DRF, the PSA will mobilize funds through its industry network, while the DRF will direct those resources to solar installations and technology-based solutions that rebuild communication networks, power learning centers, and create safe digital spaces. Beyond immediate relief, the project lays the groundwork for expansion to other flood-affected areas, helping survivors regain agency, access markets, and rebuild their lives.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Aafaaq Ali Khan said: “This partnership is more than just about restoring electricity – it is about restoring hope, dignity, and opportunities for our people. Through renewable energy, we are ensuring that communities not only recover from today’s challenges but are also better prepared for the future. PSA remains fully committed to working with DRF and other partners to bring sustainable, impactful solutions to flood-affected areas across Pakistan.”

Underscoring the importance of restoring digital access for marginalized groups, especially women and girls severely affected by the floods, Ms. Dad said: “Together, DRF and PSA are committed to proving that clean energy and digital rights can and must go hand in hand to rebuild lives, bridge digital divides, and strengthen resilience against future climate shocks.”

DRF Joins Provincial Consultation for National Action Plan on Human Rights

On October 28, 2025 DRF’s Legal Team participated in a multi-stakeholder consultation on the revision of the National Action Plan on Human Rights. The session brought together representatives from key sectors, including health, education, and civil society, who shared valuable recommendations to strengthen and shape the revised National Action Plan 2026.



Our Digital Security Helpline: Better Than Ever

On 25 November, DRF hosted the relaunch of its Helpline, now expanded and reintroduced as the Digital Security Threat Lab, which will operate alongside our existing support system for survivors of online harassment. The new model reflects our growing mandate to address not only individual cases of cyber harassment but also complex digital threats faced by civil society, journalists, human rights defenders, and at-risk communities. As part of this expansion, we proudly introduced South Asia's first Emerging Threat Lab, designed to enhance our capacity to monitor, analyze, and respond to evolving digital security challenges. This marks a significant milestone in our journey.

With a keynote addresses from DRF Founder Nighat Dad and First Secretary Political Affairs at the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Islamabad, Laurens Bistervels, the event brought together journalists, civil society members, digital rights advocates, lawyers to celebrate the Helpline's 9th anniversary and acknowledge the collective efforts that have strengthened our response mechanisms. This relaunch also coincided with the beginning of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, with this year's campaign focusing on ending digital violence against women and girls.



DRF Organises Roundtable Questioning the Real Cost of Going Digital

In December, we convened a multi-stakeholder roundtable to explore findings from its policy brief, *The Cost of Going Digital: Evaluating Rights Risks in Pakistan’s Digital Governance*, prepared by the DRF team, including Legal Associate Minahil Farooq and Program Coordinator Ayesha Babar. The discussion focused on the implications of the Digital Nation Act 2025, particularly in the absence of a comprehensive data protection framework. Participants included national commissions, UN Women, HRCP, civil society organizations, digital rights groups, and activists. The roundtable provided a vital platform for informed exchange, underscoring the importance of inclusive, rights-based approaches to Pakistan’s evolving digital governance landscape.



DRF Advancing Survivor-Centred Responses to Digital Abuse

14 of the UN’s 17 SDGs depend on ending Gender-Based Violence. For over a decade, the Digital Rights Foundation has been at the forefront of this mission, especially in the rapidly evolving realm of TFGBV. Representing DRF at the Lahore College for Women University at a UNDP Pakistan-led panel, Research and Grants Lead Seerat Khan highlighted how TFGBV manifests uniquely within Pakistan’s cultural and socio-digital landscape, and stressed the urgent need for redressal mechanisms that can keep pace with emerging online threats. She also briefed students on DRF’s survivor-centred Digital Security Helpline, which continues to serve as a critical support system for individuals facing digital violence.



Scaling Digital Solutions for Punjab: DRF’s Expertise for Global Development

Communications Lead Vaneeza Jawad represented DRF at a UNDP Pakistan-led civil society dialogue on Punjab’s development landscape. Vaneeza highlighted the importance of scaling proven solutions, including DRF’s flagship Digital Security Helpline, and emphasized the urgent need to strengthen digital connectivity as communities grapple with climate-driven disruptions.



DRF's Emotional Resilience and Well-Being Retreat for Women Journalists

Even the most unstoppable storytellers need a story of their own: one that's about slowing down and remembering what balance feels like. In October 2025, DRF's much-loved Emotional Resilience and Well-Being Retreat took over the hills of Nathia Gali for three days of laughter, learning, and deep restoration.



Our participants' mornings started with yoga under clear skies, followed by rejuvenation sessions; both small but meaningful reminders to care for the body that carries so much of the world's weight. Between stretches and endless cups of tea, the DRF team led sessions that blended emphases on digital rights and security with emotional care.

DRF's Emotional Resilience and Well-Being Retreat for Women Journalists



The IT Team kicked things off with *Cyber-Wellbeing: Navigating the Digital Landscape Securely*, while the Helpline Team unpacked *Navigating Journalism and Community Guidelines on Social Media*. The Communications Team's *Beyond the Byline: Reimagining Storytelling* inspired participants to see their work, and themselves, in new ways, and the Research Team's *How to Pitch a Story* gave everyone the tools to make ideas shine. Add in art therapy, a powerful trust circle, and a heart-opening mental health session, and the retreat became exactly what it aimed to be: a gentle reset.



DRF's Emotional Resilience and Well-Being Retreat for Women Journalists

At its heart, the retreat reminded everyone of something simple but vital: that emotional resilience is the foundation of digital resilience. In caring for women journalists, DRF continues to champion not just safer digital spaces, but more sustainable ones too.



Advancing Digital Literacy and Empowerment: Our Year in Review

January

On 20th January, DRF and The Learning Hub College, Gujranwala (TLHC), signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaboratively promote digital rights and raise online safety awareness among students at TLHC and other institutions within its chain and The Jadeed Dastgir Ideal Schools. DRF also gave a training session on digital security, legal and well being to 100 students in the college.

A four-day training program titled Securing Your Digital World 2025 was held from 22 to 25 January. The training aimed to equip early-career professionals with essential knowledge on digital security, online spaces, digital laws, and practical tools to enhance their safety in the digital environment.

The program was attended by 20 journalists, 10 representatives from religious minorities, 5 gender minorities, 10 activists and human rights defenders (HRDs), and 10 lawyers.

February

On 6th February, DRF in collaboration with the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) in Islamabad organized a roundtable on the recent amendments to the Pakistan Electronic Crimes Act (PECA). 8 Senior journalists shared their views on the amendments and their impact on freedom of expression. The discussion was attended by 5 human rights defenders also.

DRF conducted two sessions at BeaconHouse Newlands School—one with over 200 students aged 11 to 15, and another with 50 students aged 15 to 18 on 4th and 7th February respectively. The sessions focused on promoting responsible online behavior, addressing concerning trends such as the creation of confession pages and meme-based content targeting peers, instances of students attempting to hack or access each other's accounts, and the misuse of internet access. Students' voices demanding safer online spaces were also amplified for DRF's online campaign on #SaferInternetDay.

April

On 28th April, DRF, in collaboration with its consortium partners—the Pakistan Press Foundation and Tribal News Network—conducted a one-day training workshop in Karachi focused on gender-sensitive and inclusive reporting. 24 Journalists from rural media outlets across all four provinces attended the training that focused on digital safety and workplace safety policies.

June

From June 11-13, DRF spent three days in Murree with 10 journalists from rural media outlets across the country. The goal was to collaboratively shape safer, more ethical workspaces, and understand the realities they face on the ground. Through open dialogue and hands-on guidance, participants explored the challenges they face, discussed the responsible use of AI in journalism, and were given guidance to draft tailored policies for safer, more supportive newsrooms.

On 20th June, DRF held a digital safety session for 40 O Level students at the Akhuwat Foundation Lahore, diving into some of the most urgent issues facing young people online today. The session unpacked the difference between bullying and cyberbullying, highlighted the importance of consent and privacy, broke down different types of information and why fact-checking matters, and addressed gender-based online harm. Students also explored the ethical use of AI and gained insight into the legal framework surrounding cybercrime.

December

On 2nd December, DRF conducted a cyberbullying and online safety session for over 80 students at TNS Beaconhouse School Lahore. The session aimed to help students understand responsible online behavior, recognize the impact of cyberbullying, and learn practical strategies for staying safe in digital spaces.

On 5th December, in partnership with the Pakistan Press Foundation and Tribal News Network, DRF organized a one-day training workshop in Lahore centered on promoting gender-sensitive and inclusive journalism. The workshop brought together 20 media professionals from rural outlets representing all four provinces and also included dedicated sessions on digital security and workplace safety policies. This was an extension of a fellowship held in April.

Knowing Your Rights: A Spotlight on DRF's Legal Team

May

Offline:

DRF's Legal Manager, Irum Shujah, addressed a Media Safety Workshop co-hosted by the Parliamentarians Commission for Human Rights (PCHR), Media Matters for Democracy Pakistan, and the European Union. The session engaged journalists and media professionals, focusing on gaps in Pakistan's cybersecurity laws. It provided an overview of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA), its recent amendments, and Pakistan's data protection landscape. The session was attended by approximately 25 participants.

May

Online:

On 19 June 2025, DRF's Legal and Digital Security teams conducted an online session with young girls from Saidpur Village in collaboration with Aurat Tech. The session focused on cyber harassment and online safety, highlighting relevant cyber laws, common digital threats, and practical safety tools. It aimed to empower participants to navigate online spaces safely and confidently. The session was attended by approximately 25 participants.

August

Offline:

On 18 August 2025, the DRF Legal Team participated in a Cyberbullying Awareness panel discussion at the University College of Medicine & Dentistry (UCMD). The session targeted medical students and focused on understanding the impact of cyberbullying, its psychological and professional consequences, and ways to address online abuse. The discussion encouraged responsible digital engagement. The session was attended by approximately 50 students.

September

Online:

On 9 September 2025, the DRF Legal Team conducted an online session titled “Social Media: Reality, Risk & Responsibility” for students of LACAS and The Milestone School across all campuses. The session focused on responsible social media use, online risks, and practical safety measures. Students were encouraged to critically engage with digital platforms while protecting their privacy. The session was attended by approximately 150 students from different branches of LACAS.

Offline:

On 18 September 2025, the DRF Legal Team delivered an interactive session for A and O Level students at SICAS titled “Digital Harms and Legal Rights & Duties.” The discussion focused on digital risks, responsible online behavior, and legal protections available under Pakistani law. The session aimed to empower students with legal awareness and digital safety knowledge. The session was attended by 200 students.

Offline:

DRF's Legal and IT teams conducted a training session for Dastak on cyber harassment and digital security. The session addressed secure browsing, safe digital communication, and legal remedies available under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act 2016. Participants were guided on practical steps to mitigate online harms. The session was attended by approximately 15 participants.

In collaboration with Voicepk.net and the AGHS Legal Aid Cell, and with support from the European Union in Pakistan, DRF conducted online safety workshops for rights-based content creators in Multan and Karachi. Led by Legal Lead Irum Shujah and Digital Security Trainer Noman Fareed, the sessions focused on digital safety, online expression, and risk mitigation. The workshops aimed to strengthen the digital resilience of content creators. The sessions were attended by approximately 17 participants.

Offline:

DRF Legal Associate Romasa participated in an HRCP-led civil society dialogue on Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence. The session brought together digital rights and gender justice advocates to discuss emerging online harms and safety concerns. Representing DRF, she introduced the organization's legal services, digital helpline, and relevant legal frameworks, highlighting the impact of patriarchal norms on online spaces. The session was attended by approximately 10 participants.

DRF Legal Associate Minahil Farooq, in collaboration with PCL Shutterbug, delivered a digital rights awareness session at Pakistan Law College. The discussion focused on Pakistan's digital legal framework and the rights protecting users online. The session aimed to equip law students with practical knowledge to navigate digital spaces safely. The session was attended by approximately 20 students.

Following successful workshops in Multan and Karachi, DRF conducted online safety workshops for rights-based content creators in Peshawar. Led by Legal Associate Minahil Farooq and Digital Security Trainer Noman Fareed, the sessions focused on digital safety practices and protecting online expression. Participants actively engaged in discussions on managing digital risks. The sessions were attended by approximately 17 participants.

Offline:

DRF Legal Associate Minahil Farooq led a session at the University of Engineering and Technology (UET) as part of the 16 Days of Activism. The session focused on online safety, the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA), and navigating the cybercrime complaint process. Students were guided on legal protections and practical reporting mechanisms. The session was attended by 90 students.

Policy Research and Analyses

In 2025, DRF’s research centered on safeguarding and advancing digital rights in Pakistan. As part of this commitment, DRF’s research team carried out comprehensive short investigative reports and case studies on platform accountability and emerging social media threats online.

Voter Data Privacy in Pakistan: Privacy Risks, Data Protection, and Legislative Shortcomings During Data-Driven Elections

DRF’s Voter Data Privacy in Pakistan report examines the growing risks to voter privacy during Pakistan’s 2024 General Elections, highlighting how increasing digitisation of political campaigning has exposed significant gaps in data protection and regulatory oversight. As political parties relied more heavily on digital tools, automated calls, targeted messaging, and social media outreach, concerns emerged regarding how personal voter data, including names, CNIC numbers, addresses, and contact details, were accessed and utilised.



Drawing on a nationwide survey of 271 respondents and interviews with voters, political party representatives, and a former NADRA official, the study finds widespread unease about the misuse of personal data for political campaigning. Over 46% of surveyed participants reported receiving unsolicited political messages or calls. Many respondents questioned how their contact information was obtained, particularly given that official voter rolls do not include phone numbers.

The report identifies structural vulnerabilities in Pakistan’s data governance framework, including weak enforcement mechanisms, recurring data breaches, and the continued absence of a comprehensive data protection law. While the proposed Personal Data Protection Bill 2023 introduces important safeguards, it contains ambiguities and loopholes that may undermine effective protection of voter data.

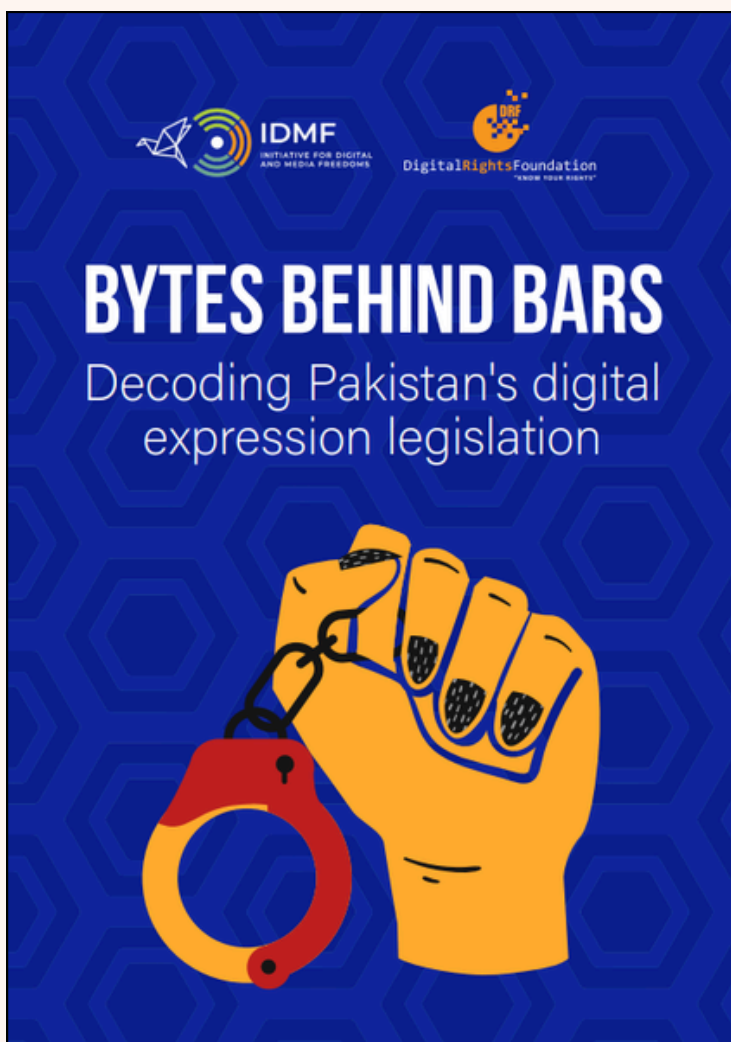
<https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Voter-Data-Privacy-in-Pakistan.pdf>

Bytes Behind Bars: Decoding Pakistan's digital expression legislation

The report “Bytes Behind Bars: Decoding Pakistan’s Digital Expression Legislation” analyses how Pakistan’s evolving legal framework is being used to regulate and increasingly restrict online expression. Focusing primarily on the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) and subsequent amendments, the report examines how provisions such as Section 20 (online defamation) have been applied in practice, particularly against journalists and critics of state institutions

Although aspects of Section 20 were challenged in court, the report notes that it continues to be invoked in FIRs, creating legal uncertainty and a chilling effect on speech. It further highlights how additional provisions, including those related to cyberterrorism, hate speech, and false information, have broadened the scope for criminal liability in digital spaces.

<https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Bytes-Behind-Bars-Decoding-Pakistans-digital-expression-legislation.pdf>



Short Investigative Report: India Bans Pakistani YouTube Channels, Withholds Several X Accounts in Wake of Pahalgam

The short investigative report “India Bans Pakistani YouTube Channels, Withholds Several X Accounts in Wake of Pahalgam” documents the large-scale geoblocking of Pakistani media, journalists, government officials, and entertainment figures in India following the April 22 Pahalgam attack. It details how at least 17 Pakistani YouTube channels, including major news outlets and multiple X (formerly Twitter) accounts, were initially withheld, with the number continuing to grow. Subsequent measures also targeted Pakistani entertainment channels and artists, broadening the scope beyond political content.

The report examines the legal basis cited for these actions, particularly Section 69A of India’s Information Technology Act, 2000, and related IT Rules 2021 provisions, which grant the government authority to block public access to online content on grounds such as national security and public order . It analyses how platforms, including X, YouTube, and Meta responded to government directives, raising concerns about transparency, due process, and consistency with their own content moderation policies.

https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Short-Investigative-Report-India-bans-Pakistani-YouTube-channels-withholds-several-X-accounts_compressed.pdf



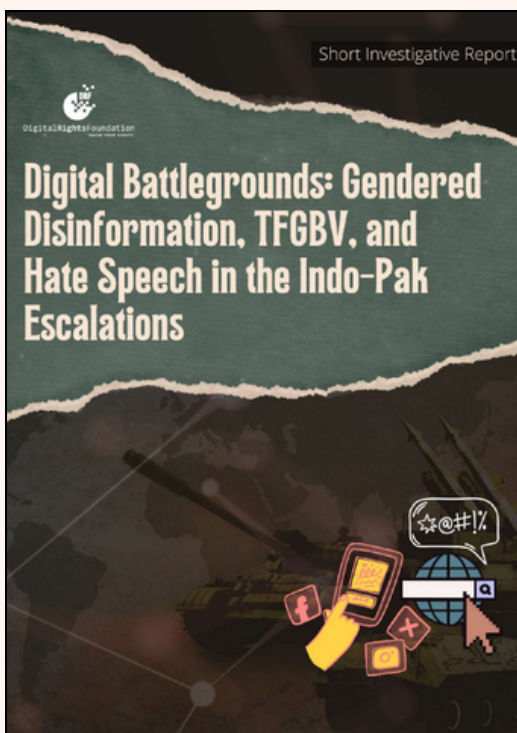
Digital Battlegrounds: Gendered Disinformation, TFGBV, and Hate Speech in the Indo-Pak Escalations

This investigative report examines the surge in technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV), gendered disinformation, and hate speech during the May 2025 military escalations between India and Pakistan. Drawing on real-time monitoring of 295 social media posts across X, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, the report finds that 25% of analyzed content directly targeted women and gender minorities through misogynistic, hyper-sexualized, and transphobic narratives.

The conflict’s digital dimension revealed how gender becomes a strategic tool in information warfare. Viral misinformation, including AI-generated content and doctored visuals, weaponized women’s bodies as symbols of conquest, while rape threats, “spoils of war” tropes, and sexualized memes normalized violence under the guise of humor and nationalism. Women public figures, journalists, and content creators were subjected to coordinated harassment, moral policing, and fabricated allegations, often amplified by platform algorithms.

The findings highlight systemic failures by major social media platforms to moderate content in local languages or intervene during high-risk escalation periods, despite their responsibilities under international human rights frameworks.

<https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Digital-Battlegrounds-Report.pdf>

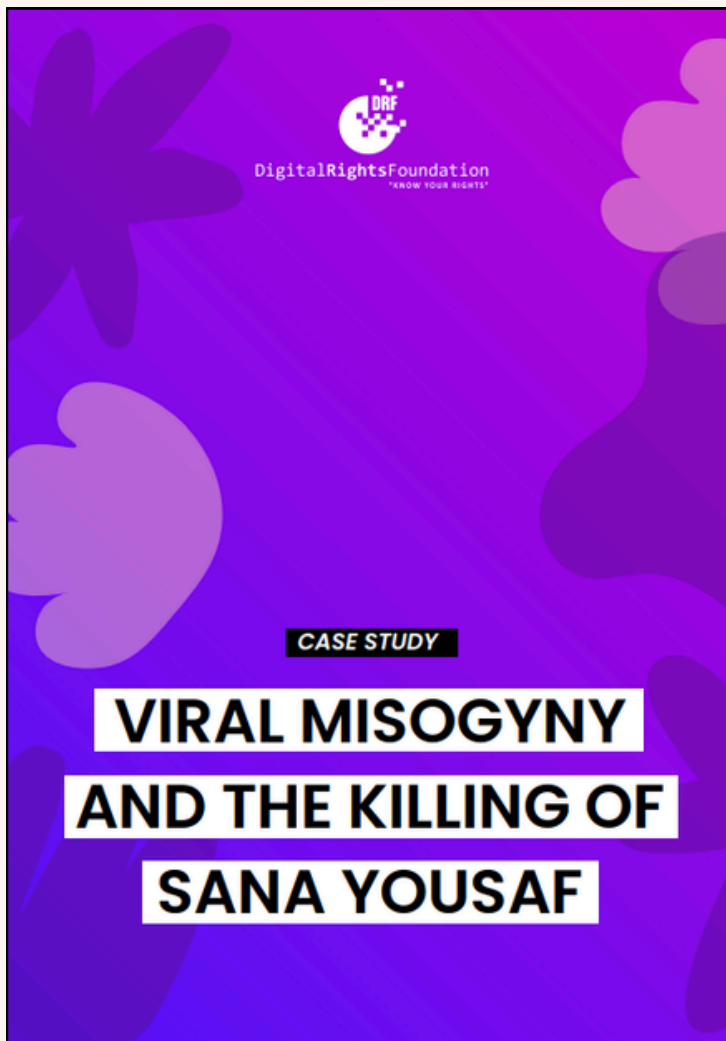


Viral Misogyny and the Killing of Sana Yousaf

This case study examines the murder of 17-year-old content creator Sana Yousaf and the surge of online misogyny, victim-blaming, and gendered disinformation that followed her death. Drawing on an analysis of 180 comments and posts across TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and X, the report documents how digital platforms became sites of technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV), where users not only justified the killing but, in many cases, celebrated it.

The findings reveal patterns of glorification of violence, sexualization of a minor, ethnic hate speech, parental shaming, and cross-border abuse. Many users framed Sana’s public presence on social media as immoral, using religious and cultural narratives to rationalize her murder. Others issued threats toward additional women content creators, normalizing violence as a consequence of female visibility online. The report also highlights how platform moderation systems failed to respond swiftly, allowing harmful content to go viral during a critical period.

<https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Case-Study-Viral-Misogyny-and-the-Killing-of-Sana-Yousaf.pdf>

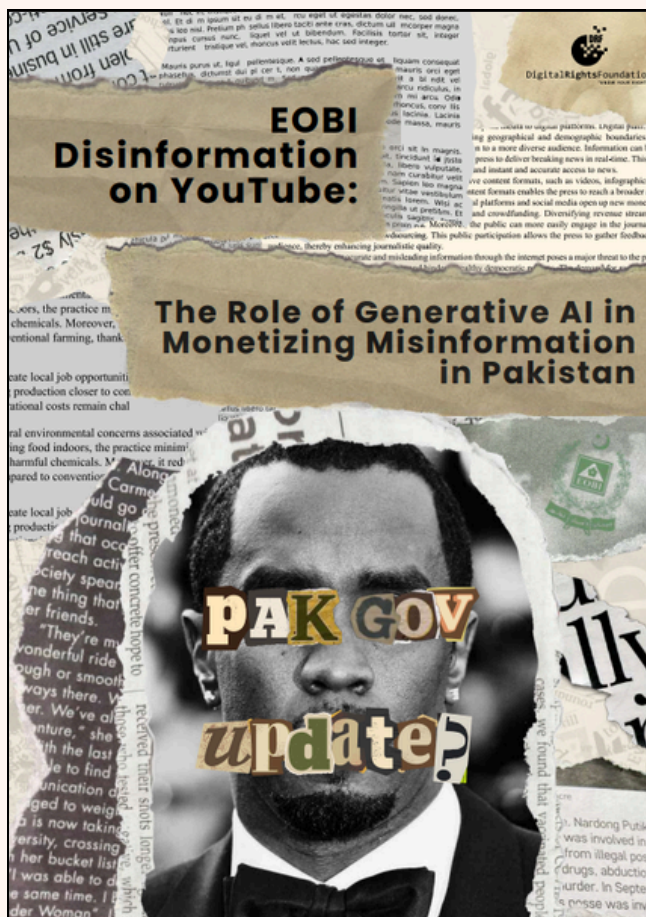


EOBI Disinformation on YouTube: The Role of Generative AI in Monetizing Misinformation in Pakistan

This case study examines the murder of 17-year-old content creator Sana Yousaf and the surge of online misogyny, victim-blaming, and gendered disinformation that followed her death. Drawing on an analysis of 180 comments and posts across TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and X, the report documents how digital platforms became sites of technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV), where users not only justified the killing but, in many cases, celebrated it.

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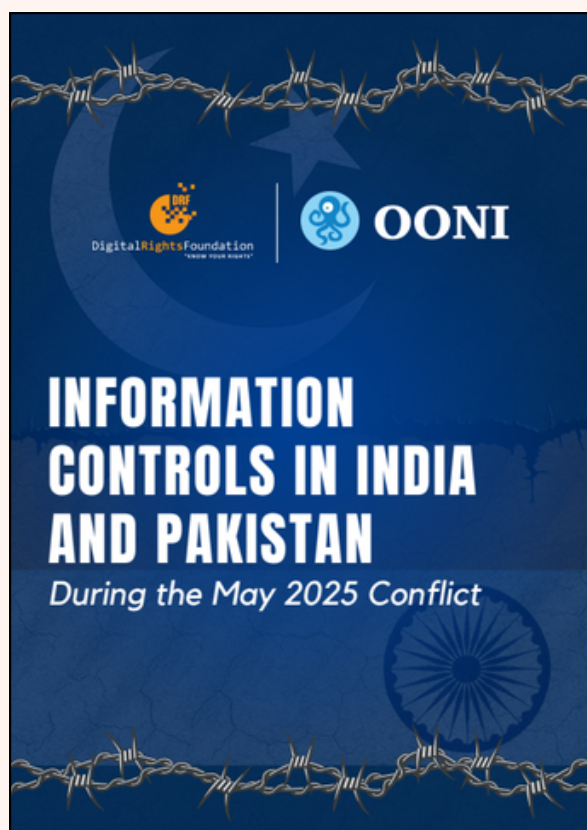


Information Controls In India and Pakistan - During the May 2025 Conflict

The report *Information Controls in India and Pakistan During the May 2025 Conflict* examines the escalation of internet censorship and platform-based content restrictions during and after the four-day military conflict between India and Pakistan in May 2025. Following the April 22 terrorist attack in Pahalgam and subsequent cross-border hostilities, both governments intensified efforts to control online narratives, citing concerns over disinformation and national security.

Drawing on network measurement data collected by the Open Observatory of Network Interference (OONI) and monitoring by the Digital Rights Foundation (DRF), the report documents the blocking of at least 12 news media websites in India and 8 Indian news outlets in Pakistan across multiple networks. Many of these restrictions persisted beyond the ceasefire announced on May 10, 2025. Beyond website blocking, the report highlights a sharp rise in platform-based censorship. India issued thousands of takedown requests to social media platforms, resulting in the geo-blocking of over 8,000 X (formerly Twitter) accounts, the restriction of at least 16 Pakistani YouTube channels, and the suspension of numerous Pakistani journalists, entertainers, and public officials' accounts.

<https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Information-Controls-in-India-and-Pakistan-during-the-May-2025-Conflict-DRF-OONI.pdf>

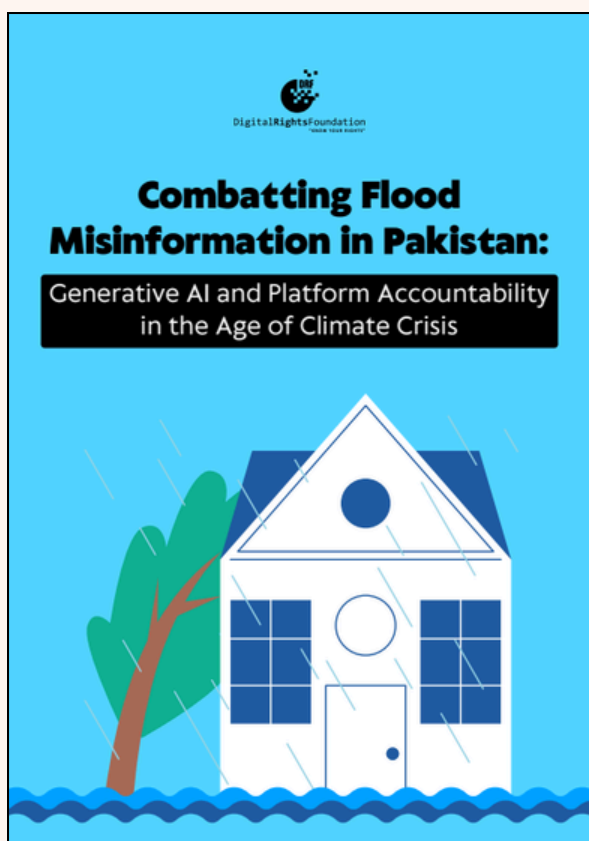


Combating Flood Misinformation in Pakistan: Generative AI and Platform Accountability in the Age of Climate Crisis

The report *Combating Flood Misinformation in Pakistan: Generative AI and Platform Accountability in the Age of Climate Crisis* examines how misinformation, particularly AI-generated content, has increased the impact of recurring climate-induced floods in Pakistan. Against the backdrop of catastrophic flooding in 2022 and renewed devastation in 2025, the report highlights how millions of citizens increasingly rely on social media for real-time updates, even as these platforms become saturated with false, sensationalized, and politically charged content.

Drawing on investigative monitoring of platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and X (formerly Twitter), the report documents a surge in generative AI videos that fabricate rescue scenes, dramatize geopolitical tensions with India over water releases, and exploit religious narratives to frame floods as divine punishment. It further identifies a disturbing trend of AI-generated depictions of women in flood scenarios designed to elicit sympathy or sexualize tragedy for engagement. Many such posts lack clear AI labeling, allowing misinformation to spread unchecked, particularly among users with low digital literacy.

<https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Combating-Flood-Misinformation-in-Pakistan.pdf>



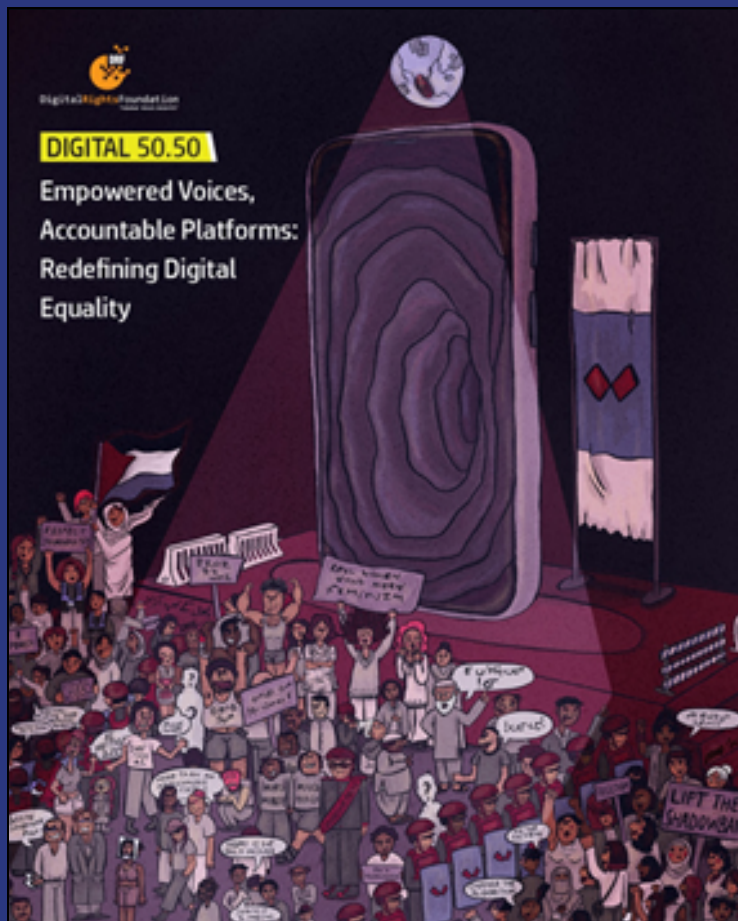
Digital 50.50

In 2025, DRF’s research team published four editions of Digital 50.50, each exploring distinct themes and featuring contributions from writers across Pakistan and beyond. Over the course of the year, DRF received 117 pitches from both local and international contributors, of which 40 were selected for publication across the four editions.

Edition 1: Empowered Voices, Accountable Platforms: Redefining Digital Equality

The first 2025 edition of Digital 50.50 in 2025, titled “Empowered Voices, Accountable Platforms: Redefining Digital Equality,” was released on 8 March in celebration of International Women’s Day. This issue brings together 10 compelling stories that explore the theme from diverse perspectives, including the moderation of gendered slurs in Urdu on social media, the impact of excessive reliance on AI-driven content moderation on user experience, and the effects of controversial PECA amendments on women’s digital livelihoods. The publication also features striking cover art and illustrations by Emil Hasnain.

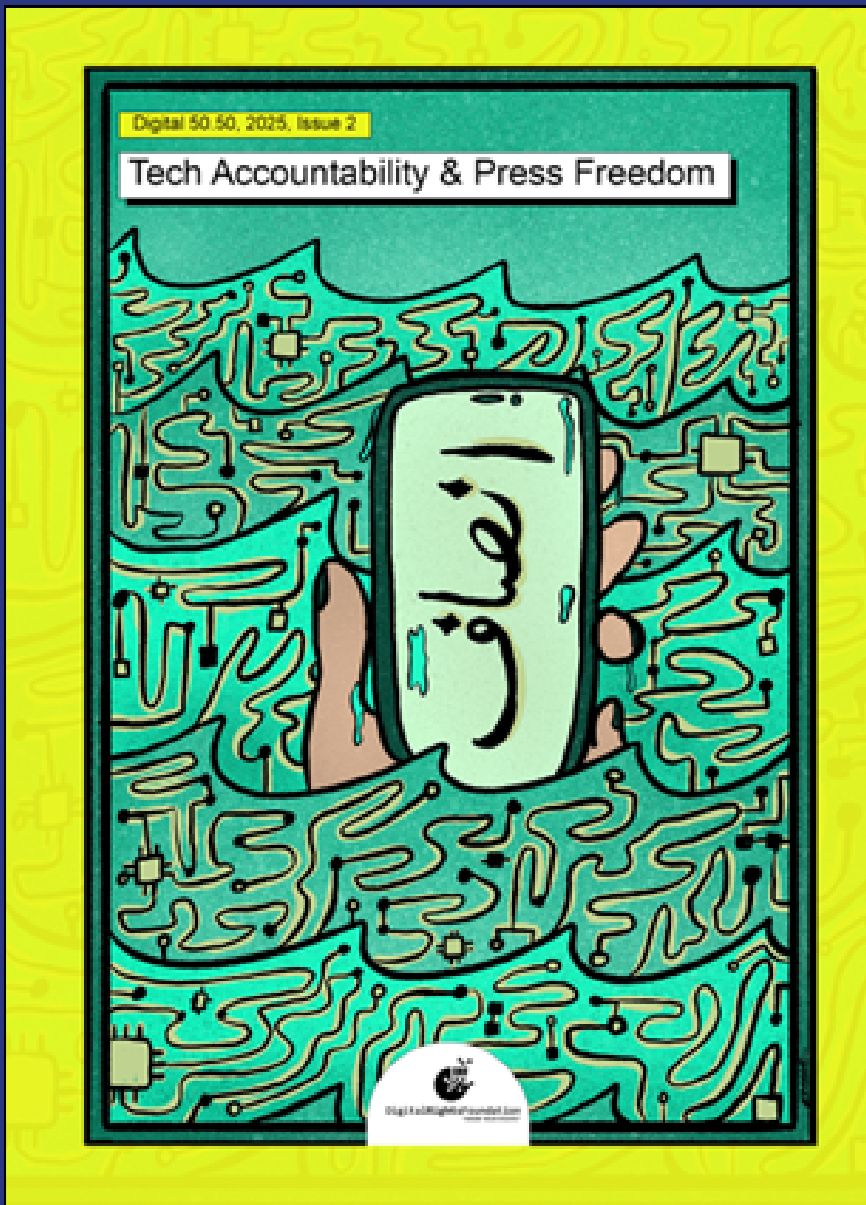
Read [here](#).



Edition 2: Tech Accountability & Press Freedom

This issue sheds light on the troubling alliance between technology platforms and malicious actors that is being used to curb free expression online, putting journalists' safety and fundamental human rights at risk across digital spaces. In the context of recent Indo-Pak tensions marked by cyber warfare and coordinated disinformation campaigns, the publication underscores the urgent need for media, civil society, and digital rights advocates to safeguard and reclaim online spaces from these growing threats.

Read [here](#).



Edition 3: Platform Accountability & Countering Hate Speech

To commemorate the International Day for Countering Hate Speech, DRF released the third edition of Digital 50.50, centering on platform accountability and the pressing need to address online hate speech. This issue examines the rise of coordinated hate campaigns and highlights how digital platforms have increasingly enabled targeted abuse, endangering not only individuals but also the democratic foundations of our societies.

Read [here](#).



Edition 4: “Beyond the Screen: Confronting Digital Violence, Demanding Platform Accountability,”

Under the theme “Beyond the Screen: Confronting Digital Violence, Demanding Platform Accountability,” DRF released the final 2025 edition of Digital 50.50, focusing on the growing crisis of technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) and the urgent need for stronger platform accountability. Published as part of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, this edition examines how online harms, including image-based abuse, deepfakes, gendered disinformation, doxxing, and coordinated harassment, silence women, gender and religious minorities, journalists, and activists, often with real-world consequences. It highlights the systemic nature of digital violence and calls for transparent moderation practices and safety mechanisms that prioritize users over profit, urging sustained collective action to create safer and more inclusive digital spaces.

Read [here](#).



Legal Analyses

At DRF, our 2025 advocacy efforts were focused on protecting and promoting digital rights in Pakistan. As part of this work, we conducted in-depth analyses of key laws and policies shaping the digital landscape, providing insights and recommendations to ensure these frameworks serve the public interest, as professed.

- **National Artificial Intelligence Policy 2025:**

DRF reviewed Pakistan’s National AI Policy 2025 to assess its implications for rights, privacy, and ethical governance. While the policy aims to harness AI for economic growth and public services, DRF highlighted serious concerns regarding algorithmic bias, surveillance risks, and a lack of transparency within the Policy. The analysis points out the absence of independent oversight mechanisms and safeguards for marginalized communities. DRF emphasized the need for clear ethical standards, data protection measures, and accountability frameworks. The analysis also called for inclusive public consultation in policy formulation. Without these protections, AI adoption risks undermining fundamental rights. DRF recommends aligning the policy with international human rights principles to ensure responsible and equitable AI deployment. Read the analysis [here](#).

- **Digital Nation Pakistan Act, 2025:**

DRF closely examined the Digital Nation Pakistan Bill 2024, which was later passed in 2025 and enacted into law, and highlighted serious concerns about its potential impact on fundamental rights and digital freedoms. While the bill’s stated aim is to transform Pakistan into a digitized society with streamlined governance, a unified digital identity, and enhanced service delivery, DRF and other civil society groups warned that it contains overly broad powers and lacks sufficient safeguards for privacy, freedom of expression, and data protection. DRF emphasized the risks of centralized data oversight, vague legal terms that could be misused to curb dissent, and the absence of meaningful judicial oversight or independent privacy protections. The analysis highlighted the need for greater transparency, robust human-rights aligned safeguards, and inclusive stakeholder consultation to ensure that digital transformation does not erode constitutional freedoms or enable unchecked state control. Read the analysis [here](#).

- **The Prevention of Electronic Crimes (Amendment) Act, 2025:**

In 2025, DRF conducted a comprehensive analysis of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes (Amendment) Act, 2025, critically examining how the amendments reshape Pakistan’s digital legal landscape. The analysis highlights that while the government frames the law as modernizing cybercrime regulation, the changes involve overly broad and vague definitions, expansive powers for authorities to regulate and block online content, and the creation of new bodies such as the Social Media Protection and Regulatory Authority and related tribunals. DRF raised serious concerns that these provisions risk undermining fundamental rights, particularly freedom of expression and digital privacy, by granting discretionary power to state bodies and potentially enabling misuse against journalists, activists, and ordinary internet users. The analysis stresses the need for clearer safeguards, judicial oversight, and inclusive stakeholder consultation to ensure that digital safety measures do not come at the expense of constitutional freedoms and democratic discourse. Read the analysis [here](#).

- **Probing Attacks on Journalists: Investigative Analysis of PECA’s Post-Amendment 2025 Cases**

During the year, the DRF team also produced in depth investigative analysis examining the post amendment application of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA), particularly its impact on journalists. This analysis documented how PECA, originally enacted to address cybercrime, has increasingly been used to harass, intimidate, and silence journalists, especially following the 2025 amendment introducing vague offences such as “fake news.” Through legal analysis and case studies from across Pakistan, DRF highlighted the growing pattern of FIRs, arrests, content blocking, and legal intimidation targeting investigative and accountability reporting. The findings underscored the widening gap between Pakistan’s constitutional and international commitments to press freedom and the reality of digital censorship, reinforcing the urgent need for legal reform to protect free expression and independent journalism. Read [here](#).

Our Stances

DRF's press statements throughout 2025 reflect our commitment to equal participation in digital spaces, democratic digital governance, online freedom of expression and safer online spaces for all citizens, especially those vulnerable to gendered hate, disinformation or other forms of tech-facilitated harm.

Digital Rights Foundation and The Learning Hub College, Gujranwala, sign an MoU to promote digital rights and online safety awareness among students

January 2025: DRF and The Learning Hub College signed an MOU to collectively promote digital rights and online safety awareness for students in the TLHC educational institution, a timely intervention given the fast-evolving nature of digital threats. With the intent of engaging with 10,000 students and 1,000 teachers over the course of two years, the collaboration aims to address cyberbullying, emphasize responsible online engagement, and build resilience and capacity in navigating digital spaces.



Additionally, these engagements also connect DRF with the broader network of institutions within the TLH chain and The Jadeed Dastgir Ideal Schools. Under the programme, students and teachers will learn how to recognize misinformation and disinformation, understand what support mechanisms are in place when encountering cyberbullying and harassment, and how to ethically use social media platforms in their day-to-day lives.

The MoU was signed by TLHC Director Mr. Allauddin Jameel, and DRF Programs Lead Ms. Irum Shujah on behalf of DRF Executive Director Ms. Nighat Dad.

Marking Its Launch the Digital Accountability Collective South Asia Calls for Stronger Platform Governance and User Protection

January 2025: Digitally Right (Bangladesh), Digital Rights Foundation (Pakistan), and Hashtag Generation (Sri Lanka) convened in Colombo and the Digital Accountability Collective South Asia (DACSA) emerged from a shared commitment to address pressing concerns regarding platform governance, accountability, and the broader impact of existing and emerging technologies in South Asia.

Focused on regional political shifts affecting digital access and accountability across South Asia, the collective remains focused in monitoring the region's shifting digital landscape.

National Privacy Conference 2025 Highlights Gaps in Data Protection and Launches Research Paper on Voter Data Privacy

January 2025: DRF hosted the annual National Privacy Conference 2025, jointly marking Global Data Protection Day with the launch of its research paper Voter Data Privacy in Pakistan: Privacy Risks, Data Protection, and Legislative Shortcomings During Data-Driven Elections. Organised to address critical issues surrounding voter data privacy and the state of data protection legislation in Pakistan and comprising two panels flanked by experts, the conference brought together policymakers, academics, digital rights savants, civil society organisations, and political party representatives.

Statement by the Network of Women Journalists for Digital Rights

February 2025: DRF joined the Network of Women Journalists in condemning the campaign of threats and targeted disinformation against senior journalist and anchor Munizae Jahangir by extremist elements. The call to action urged decisive, legal recourse, and reaffirmed DRF's commitment to standing shoulder-to-shoulder with women journalists, and groups at higher risk for harm.

Digital Rights Foundation Study Sheds Lights on Repressive Digital Expression Legislation, Including PECA

February 2025: The month marked the release of the Digital Rights Foundation's report *Bytes Behind Bars: Decoding Pakistan's Digital Expression Legislation*, examining the impact of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) and other laws that are ostensibly designed to tackle cybercrime, but in reality have detrimental impacts on the freedom of expression in Pakistan for journalists. Launched through the Initiative for Digital and Media Freedoms project, *Bytes Behind Bars* focuses on how PECA and other overly broad legislations play out in Pakistan's legal system and, along with the nation's law enforcement agencies, continue to restrict the freedom of expression of journalists, and by extension, greatly weaken healthy political and social discourse in Pakistan.

DRF Condemns Violation of Privacy Rights in Police Raid

April 2025: DRF strongly condemned the Mustafabad Police's actions in recording and sharing images and videos of young individuals following their arrest at a party. The violation of privacy is a direct breach of citizens' fundamental rights under Article 14 of the Constitution of Pakistan, which stipulates that the protection of citizens' personal information and their dignity must be upheld. The unauthorized recording and dissemination of such videos not only compromise the safety and privacy of individuals but also reflect a disturbing disregard for basic human rights.

Over 20,000 cases of Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV) received by Digital Rights Foundation's Helpline during 8 years of operation

April 2025: DRF released its annual Digital Security Helpline report. The Helpline received 3,171 cases in the year of 2024, bringing the total number of cases addressed since its inception to 20,020. As the region's first helpline addressing TFGBV and other online harms throughout the week from 9 AM to 5 PM, the Helpline offers holistic support for survivors of digital abuse, and saw to an average of 264 cases every month over the course of 2024, per the report. An overwhelming majority of the complaints were related to cyber harassment (2,741), of which only 36% (619) of the cases originated from cities where an FIA cybercrime wing is operational.

According to the Helpline’s data, women continue to be the primary targets of online harassment, with 1,772 cases received involving women. Moreover, the data indicates that women are disproportionately targeted through NCII and image-based abuse (IBA), with 85% of all NCII cases and 81% of all IBA cases recorded targeting women in order to coerce, blackmail or inflict reputational damage. Further, a notable number of cases involved high-risk individuals and other vulnerable groups, such as journalists and media practitioners (121), human rights defenders (HRDS) (44), religious and ethnic minorities (24) and minors (124).

DRF Condemns Honour Killing in Balochistan and the AI-Fuelled Glorification of Gender-Based Violence Online

July 2025: DRF strongly condemned the killing of a married couple in Balochistan for “honour”, the aftermath of which served as a reminder of how violence against women and marginalised individuals continues to be normalised, justified, and even celebrated in Pakistan, both offline and online. Following the double-murder, there was a surge of AI-generated videos spreading misinformation, glorifying and justifying violence under the guise of honor and virtue, and, in some cases, disturbingly romanticizing the violence across social media, and on TikTok specifically. This glorification of a murder, paired with the spread of graphic footage of the killings, is an indictment of the way digital spaces are being weaponised to promote misogyny, incite violence, and dehumanise victims. DRF strongly urged for justice to be served.

DACSA Statement on Nepal Social Media Ban and Protest Casualties

September 2025: DACSA members joined hands to strongly condemn the Nepalese social media ban amidst national tensions, which led to the loss of 19 lives while over 100 - including students - were injured. The government’s decision to block 26 major social media platforms, including Facebook and YouTube, under the pretext of combating misinformation and online fraud acted as a flashpoint for these protests. DACSA unequivocally condemned the tragic loss of life and the violent response to peaceful protestors, highlighting the urgent need for governments in South Asia to prioritize human rights over authoritarian control in digital governance. DACSA further called on the Government of Nepal to ensure transparency, restore public trust, and refrain from further measures that restrict freedom of expression and access to information.



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