

**[Pakistan] The Asia Internet Coalition (AIC) publishes statement on “Removal and Blocking of Unlawful Content (Procedure, Oversight and Safeguards) Rules”**

The Asia Internet Coalition (AIC) and its member companies object to the process through which the “Removal and Blocking of Unlawful Content (Procedure, Oversight and Safeguards) Rules” – formerly known as the “Citizens Protection (Against Online Harm) Rules” – were formulated.

The lack of transparency conflicts with the Prime Minister’s February statement that urged the consultation committee to “undertake extensive and broad-based consultation” with all relevant stakeholders.

AIC and its members are committed to helping Pakistan realize its digital economy ambitions. Our members have invested significantly in supporting public health, digital literacy, and economic growth in the country. However, this process calls into question the government’s commitment to public-private dialogue that is needed to realise Pakistan’s digital policy goals. It is also causing international companies to re-evaluate their view of the regulatory environment in Pakistan, as well as their willingness to operate in the country.

We strongly urge the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication to reconsider its approach in working with Industry and to adopt policy approaches that will support, not impede, the growth of Pakistan’s digital economy. We request that the Ministry release the latest version of the Rules. We also request that the Government hold the “extensive and broad-based consultation process” that the Prime Minister himself called for.