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Government is Guilty of Selective Consultation on Cybercrime Bill

Quetta, Internet Policy Observatory Pakistan (iPOP) has urged the government to include all stakeholders' for consultation on Prevention of Electronic Crimes Bill 2015 especially Civil Society organizations and IT experts from the province of Balochistan. At the moment the government is holding consultations with selective stakeholders acting as government surrogates. There is no transparency in the consultation process and a deep cover of secrecy is being wrapped around the bill.

We at Internet Policy Observatory Pakistan oppose this phony consultation process and reiterate our stance that the bill contains inadequate protections for privacy and imposes a fake compromise between security and our most basic rights. Furthermore, the bill does not include a clause giving Pakistani citizens the right to sue government and law enforcement agencies in courts over misuse of their personal data said, Director iPOP Arzak Khan.

The impact of the internet on economic development is shifting in two important directions. First, given the aging population and near-saturated market penetration in the advanced economies, most of the expansion of the internet related market will take place in developing countries like Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh. Secondly, the globalization of the internet is expected to increase the share of developing countries in the internet economy presenting a historic opportunity for the young and poor in Pakistan to improve their economic condition said, Arzak Khan.

Overregulation of internet with proposed Cybercrime bill might deprive these users of major benefits the information economy brings. To fully reap the benefits of a modern, rapidly changing economy, Pakistan need to better prepare their citizens for the demands of a changing information economy, and they need to adjust tax and social protection systems to ease the transition from labor market to information one said, Arzak Khan.

The Internet Policy Observatory Pakistan would appeal to the government to review the Cybercrime bill also from the perspective of development rather than the narrow window of national security and include stakeholders from all provinces in the consultation process.

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