



DIGITAL RIGHTS FOUNDATION ANNUAL REPORT 2018



DigitalRightsFoundation
"KNOW YOUR RIGHTS"



Founded in 2012, Digital Rights Foundation is a registered research-based advocacy NGO focusing on ICTs to support human rights, democratic processes and digital governance.

DRF envisions a place where all people, and especially women, are able to exercise their right to expression without being threatened.



DigitalRightsFoundation
"KNOW YOUR RIGHTS"



2018 has been an interesting year for Digital Rights Foundation with a lot of highs and lows. We saw the Me Too movement evolve in Pakistan with multiple instances of claims being issued by women against their harassers. DRF has been at the forefront this year to extend all sorts of support to victims and provide them with avenues to pursue cases against their harassers so that the perpetrators are accountable for their actions. We fully realize that it isn't easy to speak up about the trauma that victims go through mentally and physically when they are harassed/abused. As members of the society, the responsibility falls on all of us to hearout victims who approach us regarding such heinous crimes and to also extend our support to them.

Being activists and working closely with women from across the country has made us realize that each one of us has a story to tell and sometimes that story isn't as pretty as we'd like it to be. However owning those stories and making sure to be empathetic and sympathetic to each other's experiences is extremely important and this cannot be done without acceptance and tolerance towards each other. We saw women speaking about their experiences in 2018 and the backlash they received for sharing their stories, and it deeply impacted us all as individuals because what we have seen is how low some people can stoop to in order to not take responsibility for their actions.

This year we start off with new hopes and dreams to make online and offline spaces safer for women. We also hope that women across the country are supported for whatever hardships they've endured and are treated with respect and equality they so very well deserve.

Digital Rights Foundation is a small organization with very limited resources and a very hardworking team who try their level best to promote the democratic process in the country and work on human rights. We've had quite a lot of stories to tell of our own this year and would like to dedicate our success this year to all our callers for being resilient and patient and for showing so much strength in whatever hardships they face. We are working day in and day out towards a better society, which does not discriminate against gender, sexual identity, class and religious and ethnic communities. We also fight against various other factors that promote the oppressive structures to further marginalize people.

This report sheds light on our journey in 2018 and the milestones we've achieved this year with the hard work of our team and partners. Our partners, stakeholders and well-wishers have been with us through thick and thin and we'd like to thank

them for their overwhelming support and encouragement throughout. We've made the most out of this year and we are really excited to take our journey ahead to 2019.

Happy new year from my DRF family and me.
In solidarity,

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

Nighat Dad
Founder and Executive Director
Digital Rights Foundation

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Introduction

This report compiles the brief overview of activities of the Digital Rights Foundation (DRF) during the year 2018 as we enter the new year with optimism to tackle new challenges and making online spaces accessible and safer for everyone.

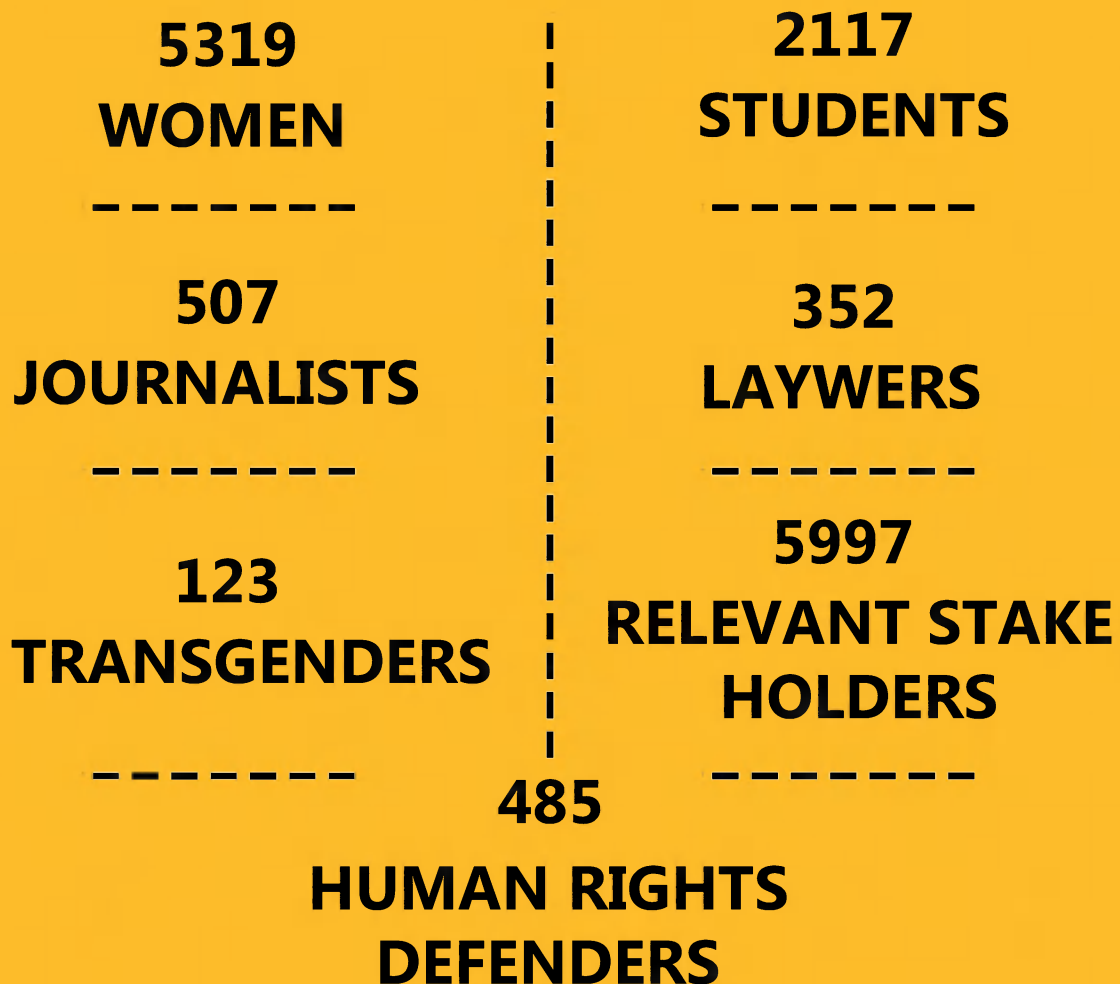
Here's the year 2018 in review:



DRF reached out to

14900

direct beneficiaries



Above is the breakdown of the direct beneficiaries that DRF has reached out to through trainings, workshops, awareness raising sessions, close group discussions, conferences and seminars throughout 2018.

80
WORKSHOPS

29
CONFERENCES

28
**INTERNATIONAL
EVENTS**

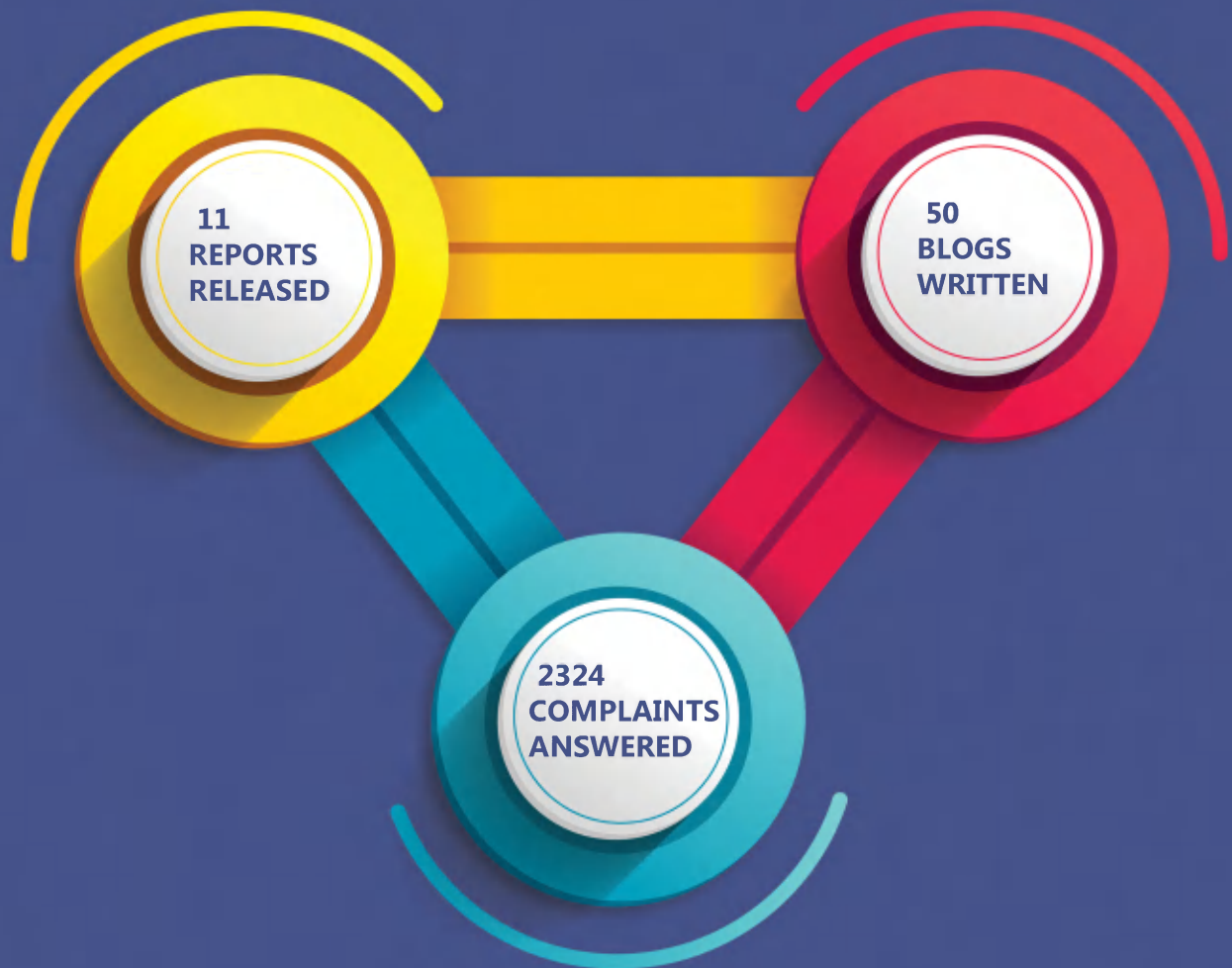
60
TOTAL EVENTS

**9 LOCATIONS ACROSS
PAKISTAN** 

19 COUNTRIES

MILESTONES





ACHIEVEMENTS



Forbes named Digital Rights Foundation among the top 10 social entrepreneurs at the UN General Assembly 2018



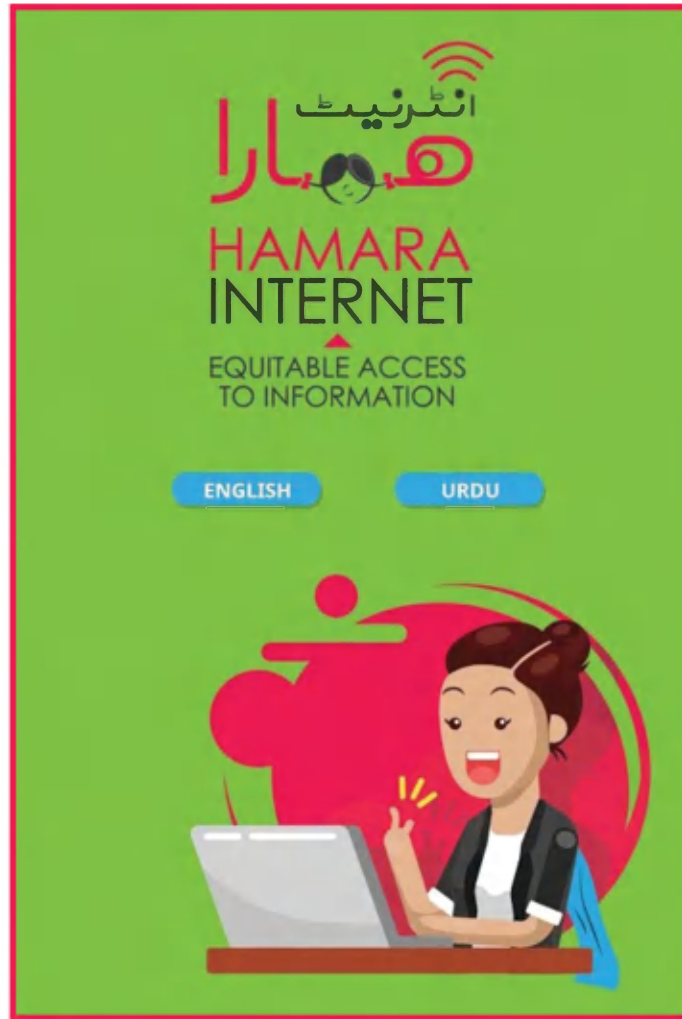
We pride ourselves in the work that we do and this year we reached new heights when we went to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and our very own cyber harassment helpline was selected as one of the innovative solutions addressing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We presented the helpline as the Top Ten Entrepreneur contenders at the summit. The summit took place during the UNGA meetings at the UN's SDG Media Zone. Our Executive Director (ED) highlighted the work that we have done on the cyber harassment helpline and elaborated about the three basic services that we offer which are legal aid, digital security assistance and psychological help. She explained about the nature of cases that we have received on the helpline and how women are usually the target of online violence in Pakistan since they are already vulnerable members of the society. Forbes also mentioned our work in their article and highlighted the cyber harassment helpline as an entrepreneurial innovation at the UNGA.

Link to article:

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/nishacharya/2018/09/28/the-top-10-entrepreneurs-at-the-un-general-assembly/#5ea3c0084592>

Hamara Internet App

DRF released the one-of-a-kind Hamara Internet App in July to make access to information to every individual much easier. Through the application we plan to create awareness regarding cyber harassment and online violence. The app provides insight in to the Prevention of Electronics Crime Act (PECA) and resources available to victims of online harassment incase they seek counsel. The app also provides tips and tidbits regarding online safety and a directory of relevant organizations and law enforcement agencies such as Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), Punjab Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) and Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA).



<https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/work/hamara-internet/>

Cyber Harassment Helpline:

The Helpline seeks to address gaps in the system by providing a gender-sensitive, confidential and safe space for those facing online harassment. The Helpline Support Staff has developed comprehensive policies around privacy, caller confidentiality and high-quality service.

DRF's Cyber Harassment Helpline is the region's first dedicated helpline for cases of online harassment and violence. The Support Team includes a qualified psychologist, digital security expert, and a lawyer, all of whom provide specialised assistance when needed. The Helpline strives to help women, children, human rights defenders, minority communities and anyone who is made to feel unsafe in digital spaces. Furthermore, we have developed a network of pro bono lawyers and practitioners who can be contacted in case a complainant cannot afford a lawyer. The network draws members from across Pakistan and can be accessed on our website Ab Aur Nahin: <https://abaurnahin.pk/>.

The helpline officially began taking calls on December 1, 2016. The Helpline is operational everyday between 9 a.m. to 5 p.m through our toll-free number. The Helpline team can also be contacted outside of office timings through email at helpdesk@digitalrightsfoundation.pk



HELPLINE REPORTS



Two Year Helpline Report:

On December 2018, the Cyber Harassment Helpline marked two incredible years of its operation. Back in 2016, the Helpline pledged to address harassment sphere and since then we have only been fruitful in our journey.

The Helpline received 2,915 complaints in the form of calls and emails between December 1, 2016 till November 30, 2018, out of which 2,781 are cases received over calls. Out of the calls received at the helpline, 59% identified as women, 41% of the callers were men and 0.3% were non-binary individuals. Facebook has yet again come up as the most widely reported platform, given that 29% callers experienced harassment through Facebook. Among the types of cases received by us, complaints of non-consensual usage of information, blackmailing, hacking and unsolicited contact were the most common types.



Access Full Report:

<https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Booklet-Helpline.pdf>

Bi-annual Report:

In July 2018, Digital Rights Foundation released its bi-annual report for the Cyber Harassment Helpline. The report detailed the data collected by the helpline team and recommendations on how to improve the institutional response to online harassment.

According to the findings, the Cyber Harassment Helpline received 1,908 complaints in the form of calls from December 1, 2016 to May 30, 2018. In all calls, 63 % of the calls were made by women, whereas 37% of the calls were made by men.



Access Full Report:

<https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Bi-annual-Report..pdf>

Helpline Team Members

ASMA PARVEZ



The biggest lesson one can learn from working at the helpline is self-care. Engaging in the helpline teaches you the importance of taking out time for yourself physically, emotionally and mentally, to recharge. Learning self-care is imperative in any such job because it teaches you to not lose the ability to empathize and give compassion. This drives responsible actions since the world needs more ears that will listen. Ultimately, helping our callers to know that we are there for them and helping us to keep the tap of kindness flowing always. Moreover, I couldn't be more grateful for being part of such an empathetic and intelligent team who always look out for each other and work together to make the world a better and safer place."

SHMYLA KHAN



I was overwhelmed by the response that we received for the Helpline these past two years. We started out with just a phone line and a voice on the other end, but over time we've been able to develop dynamic response systems and innovative ways of addressing online harassment. This is not to say there haven't been disappointments, there were days when we went home feeling useless or carrying the stress of a case with us. However, I am glad to be working with such empathetic and intelligent young women—they lift me up when my passion is flagging. We hope that our victim-centric and gender-sensitive approach changes the way people look at internet-based violence and we're able to push for more human rights friendly policies through our advocacy. Here's to a difficult 2018 and an even more challenging 2019!

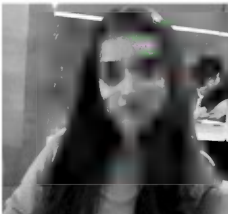
Helpline Team Members

JANNAT FAZAL



It's never easy to make yourself vulnerable, to come out as a victim, or to seek help when one is guilt ridden for something one has no control over. Cyber harassment helpline is a safe haven for individuals who have been targeted, blackmailed and made to feel as if they were at fault. The victim - centered approach helps the callers to trust us and openly talk about their problems. Taking responsibility of other's problems and ensuring their safety is demanding and burdensome and some days we too get burned out but the amazing team at the helpline pulls you back up and goes the extra mile to make sure you are well. The helpline team is compassionate and goes up and beyond their duty to resolve issues and that's the reason of our increased outreach and success.

AREEBA AHMED



I joined the helpline team when it was already pretty much in full swing which was in May 2018. It took me some time and observation to realize that one needs to be extremely patient and empathetic while dealing with the cases we get at the helpline. When you spend a certain time as a team member and listen to people from all over the country telling you their deepest worries, saddest stories and their greatest fears you realize that they are so helpless and you just want to help them and comfort them in any way that you can. So in a way the helpline made me a better person.

REPORTS AND SUBMISSIONS



DRF submits recommendations for Journalists Welfare, Safety and Protections Bill

After repeated consultations with members of the Network of Women Journalists for Digital Rights, DRF submitted recommendations for the Bill on Journalist Welfare and Safety in January 2018 which was under consideration by the Senate Standing Committee on Information, Broadcasting and National Heritage. A Writer's Retreat for Journalists was held in Islamabad, in partnership with Privacy International and Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom - Pakistan, during which the Journalist Welfare, Safety and Protection Bill was discussed and the recommendations compiled were submitted to the Senate Standing Committee on Information, Broadcasting & National Heritage.



<https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Recommendations-Bill-on-Journalist-Welfare-and-Safety.pdf>

DRF releases new report "Digital (in)Security of Journalists in Pakistan"

Digital Rights Foundation launched its new report titled "Digital (in)security of Journalists in Pakistan" which explores the levels of digital threats that journalists face, records their experiences of online insecurity, and concludes what protections they desire from the journalists community, their respective media organisations, and the government.

The report points at the appalling condition of online harassment and the sense of discomfort that journalists face while being online because of their work. It finds that 78% of the respondents of the survey had experienced some form of online threat or harassment; 92% respondents think that online harassment is really common; 45.5% of them thought that online insecurity resulted in them self-censoring themselves; and 56% of them think that online insecurity is tied with their physical safety.

In the light of some really serious statistics collected from the working journalists, the DRF has put forward some recommendations that the journalists can benefit from if they are implemented in the form of policies.



<https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Report-Digi-Insecurity-of-Journos.pdf>

DRF submits recommendations to OHCHR on Right to Privacy in the Digital Age

In April, in response to the Office of the High Commissioner of the UN's Human Rights (OHCHR)'s call for input to its report on the right to privacy in the digital age, DRF submitted its recommendations and observations.



https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/wpcontent/uploads/2018/04/OHCHR_-Call-for-inputs-to-a-report-on-_the-right-to-privacy-in-the-digital-age_.pdf/

DRF expresses concerns over the security breach of Careem's servers

In April of 2018, we saw that there was a massive breach in Careem's userdata. DRF responded to this news of the 'Careem' ride-share apps data breach with a campaign to highlight the issue and to encourage the prioritisation of transparency for Careem and similar apps' business models. It is important for ride sharing apps like Careem to have a data protection policy in place to avoid such instances.



<https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/statement-drf-expresses-concerns-over-the-security-breach-of-careems-servers/>

DRF condemns Google's alliance with Pentagon

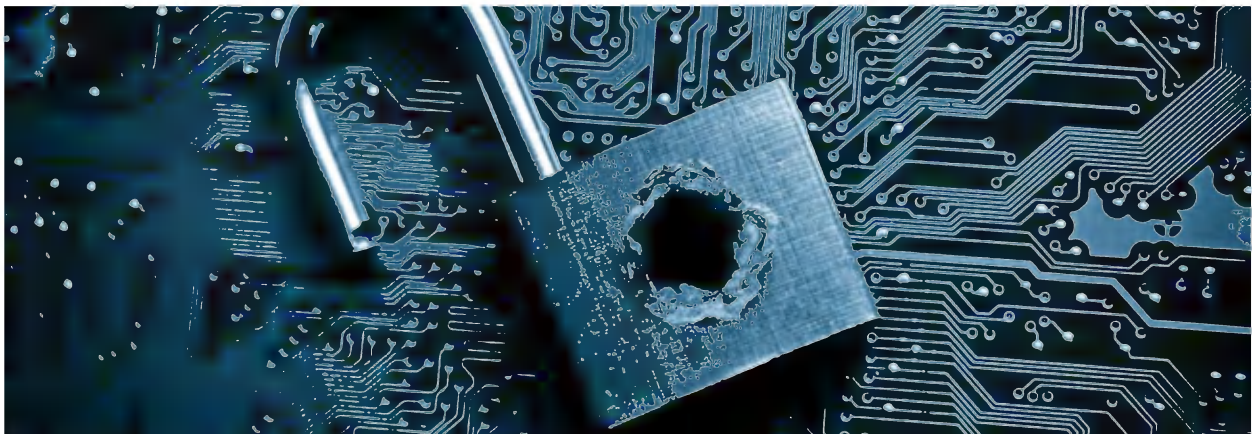
Digital Rights Foundation (DRF) strictly condemned the involvement of technology giant Google with the US Department of Defense's (DoD) Project Maven, an initiative that intends to deploy machine learning for military purposes, particularly in terms of using artificial intelligence to interpret video imagery which will potentially be used to improve the targeting of drone strikes. This state of affairs is alarming for a multitude of reasons, the most crucial of which is the possible trend that this could give rise to in terms of overlapping roles being played by organisations that deal in mass data collection to operate and streamline their products in collaboration with state apparatus.



<https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/statement-drf-condemns-googles-alliance-with-pentagon/>

DRF condemns yet another breach of NADRA database and demands strong data protection legislation

There have been a staggering number of instances of mismanagement of personal data that can be traced back to NADRA, the most recent of which is a reported breach into Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) that has resulted in the loss of a critical amount of confidential data, access to which was granted by NADRA and which is being sold over the internet for as low as Rs.100 (equivalent to almost \$1). This hit, which is as recent as May 2018 is yet another forced intrusion into our private lives at the hands of hackers, however the reason our personal data has been so easily plucked is the abysmal state of affairs is our data protection policies, or lack thereof.



<https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/drif-condemns-yet-another-breach-of-nadra-database-and-demands-strong-data-protection-legislation/>

Open Letter to Twitter: Please Do Better about Misinformation during General Elections 2018

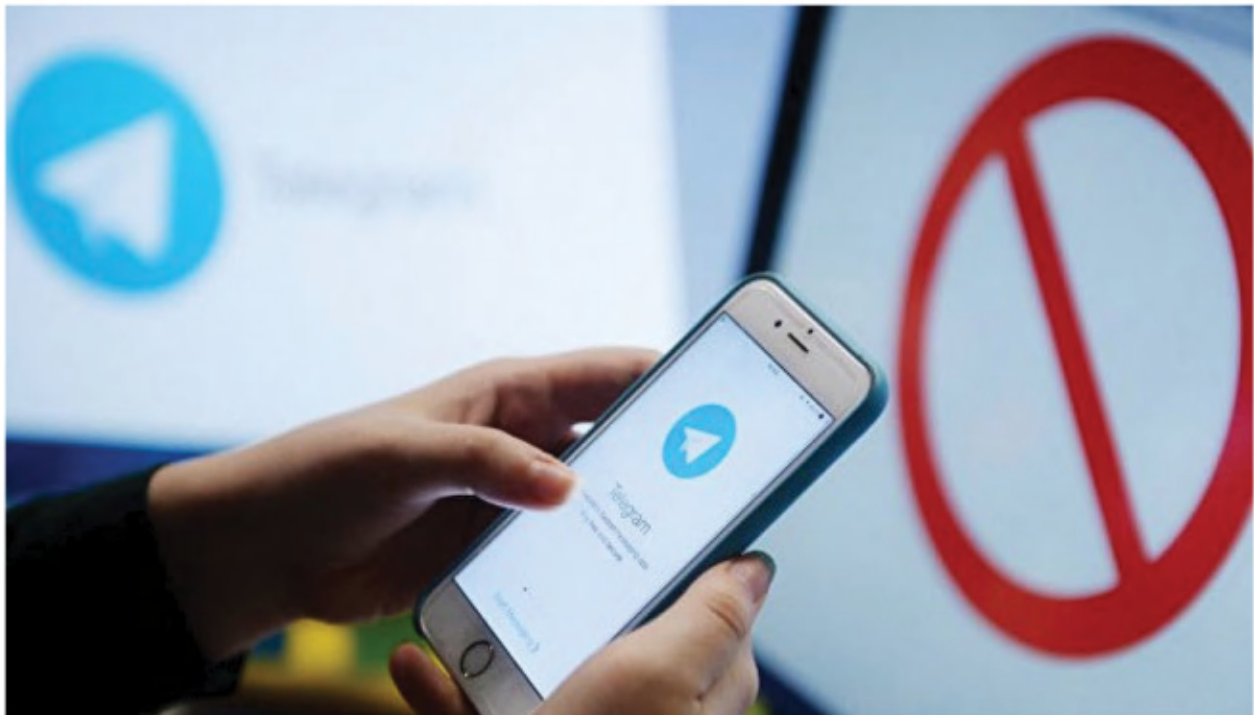
Pakistan experienced the general elections 2018 after completing the five year term this past year successfully. Social Media platforms have always been used the most during these times as seen during the US elections. Similarly, we saw this in Pakistan when fake accounts took to twitter to spread misinformation and fake news regarding certain political parties for more votes.



<https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/open-letter-to-twitter-please-do-better-about-misinformation-during-general-elections-2018/>

Statement: DRF expresses concerns over the ban on the messaging app Telegram in Pakistan

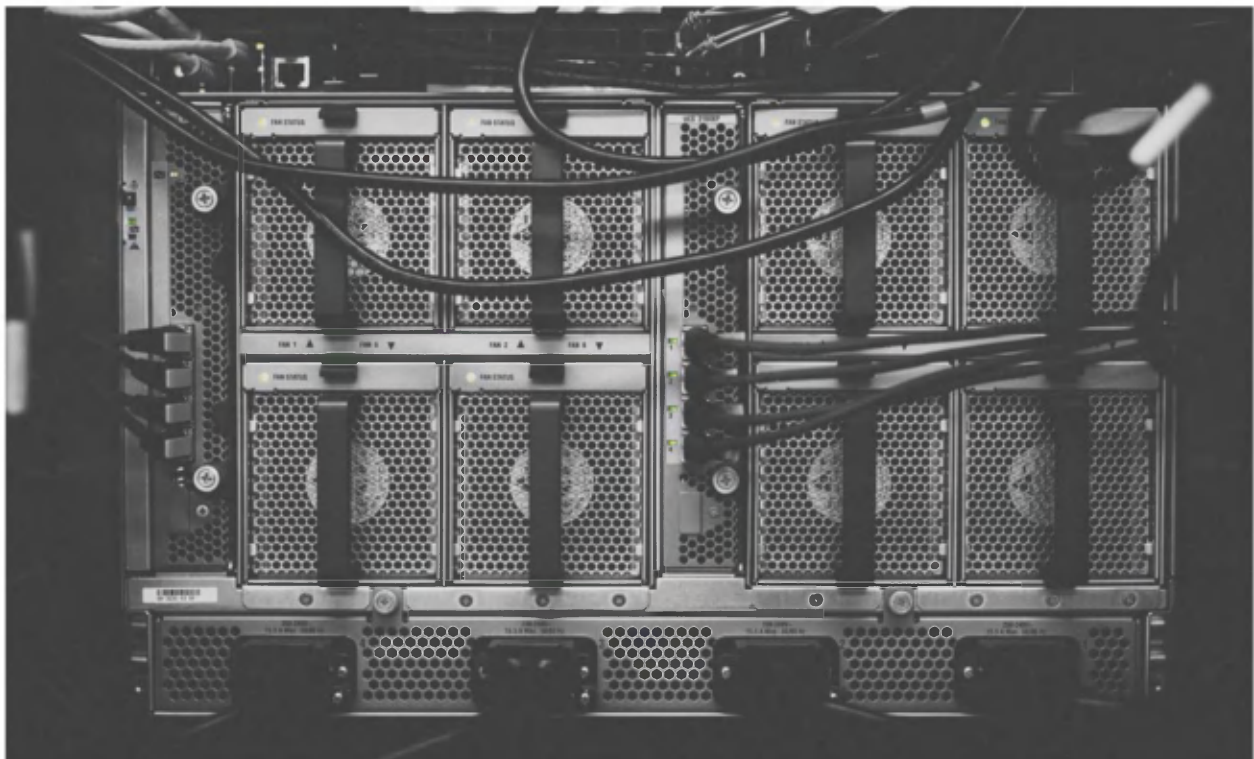
The popular app telegram was banned across the country without any prior notice given by the government. DRF in its statement highlighted that it is important to note that the app provides a safer avenue for communication between individuals and by banning it across the country the right to communicate amongst individuals is taken away.



<https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/statement-drf-expresses-concerns-over-the-ban-on-the-messaging-app-telegram-in-pakistan/>

DRF Statement: Ministry of IT and Telecom introduces the Personal Data Protection Bill

The Digital Rights Foundation has been advocating for the need of a concrete data protection legislation in Pakistan that addresses the issues of security breaches and unwarranted use of personal information by various organisations and institutions, and grant the protection and power of data to their rightful owners - the users. It is for this reason, we commend the efforts of the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MoITT) to put the preliminary bill of the Personal Data Protection Act for comments by the civil society. The initial overview of the draft by the DRF team suggests that while the bill is comprehensive in its scope and underscores the importance of data protection and consent of the user before using and/or transmitting their data, some loopholes were identified, including overlapping of some sections with PECA 2016, lack of clarity on certain terms including 'consent' and 'public interest'.



<https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/drfs-statement-moitt-introduces-the-personal-data-protection-bill/>

Release of Urdu translation of Freedom on the Internet Report 2017

Digital Rights Foundation translated the Freedom on the Net 2017 (FOTN 2017) report in Urdu for wider readership. This translation of FOTN2017 was possible with the support of vpnMentor. VpnMentor was created in order to offer users a really honest, committed and helpful tool when navigating VPNs and web privacy.

Translation of the freedom of the internet report:

<https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/freedom-on-the-net-2017-urdu/>

Follow vpnMentor here: <https://www.vpnmentor.com/>

Freedom House released the Freedom on the Net (FoTN) report for the year 2017 which assesses internet freedom in 65 countries, accounting for 87 percent of internet users worldwide. The report primarily focuses on developments that occurred between June 2016 and May 2017.

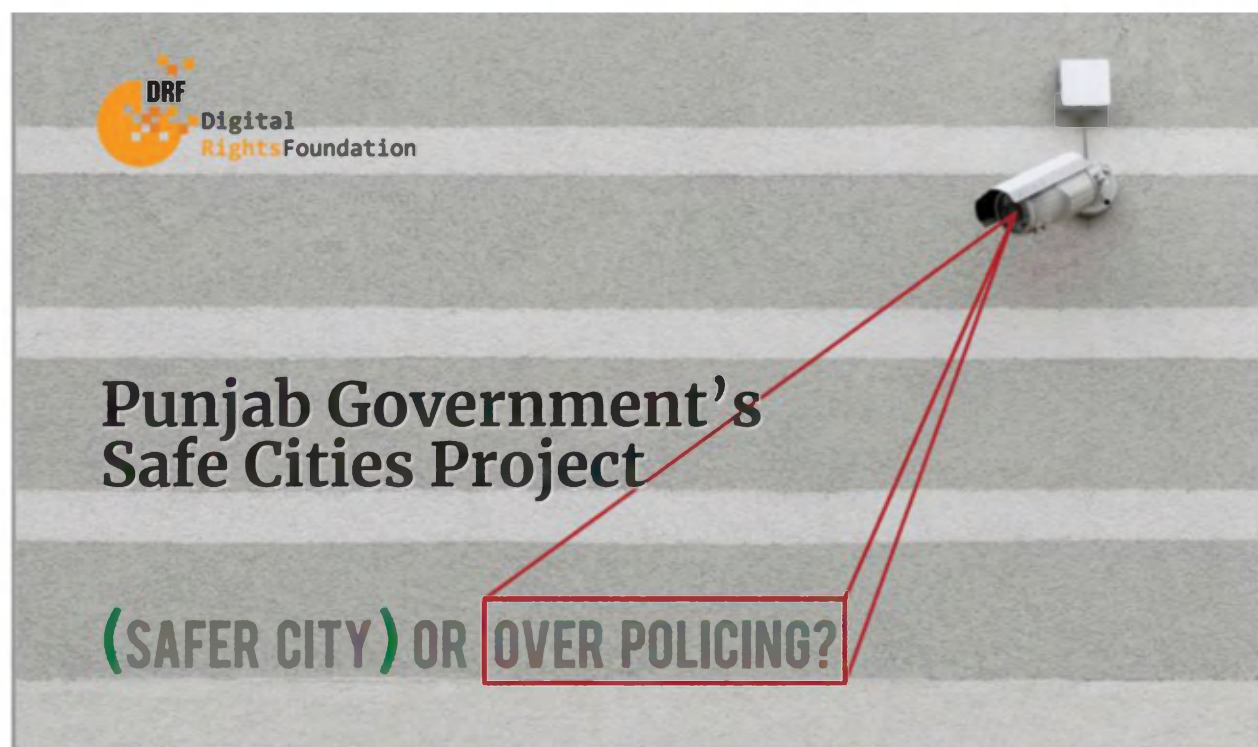
Freedom of the internet report 2017

https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/FOTN-2017_Pakistan.pdf



A study on the Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA)

DRF launched its pilot report on the Punjab Safe Cities Project highlighting the progress of the project from a human rights perspective. The report titled “Punjab Government’s Safe Cities Project: Safer City or Over Policing?” aimed to generate a conversation regarding the use of technologies in urban policing both locally and regionally. The report raised concerns regarding the lack of privacy policies of the PSCA, noting that it has very little accountability and transparency for the Authority and its operations. Furthermore, given the scope and ambit of surveillance powers exercised by the Authority, there are no laws or policies regarding data protection. The findings revealed that the Safe Cities Authority has been engaging in issues of digital spaces without any legislative mandate.



<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Uc3blQzQB-L7tbFt2IBewCIK3Fc535H2/view?ts=5b731638>

Guidebook on Ethical Journalism on Digital Platforms

Digital Rights Foundation published a “Guidebook on Ethical Journalism on Digital Platforms”. New digital forms of media are more interactive, immediate and always on, and the media landscape is evolving at a furious pace. This has led to professional journalists sharing the same online space with tweeters, bloggers and social media users. The Guidebook looks at the question of whether the existing media ethics are suitable for this evolving digital media landscape or new and different standards are needed. It discusses how the growing use of digital platforms for the creation and dissemination of news and information and spread of hoaxes, rumors and disinformation through this medium has led to demands for consistent ethical standards for online spaces.



<https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Guidebook-on-Ethical-Journalism-e-version-copy.pdf>

Recommendations for the Personal Data Protection Bill, 2018

The MoITT put forth its draft Personal Data Protection Bill, 2018. DRF, in collaboration with Privacy International, submitted their joint comments regarding the Personal Data Protection Bill 2018. The Bill aims to protect two types of data: 1) personal data and 2) sensitive personal data. The processing of personal data can only be done where there is consent of the data subject and notice has been given. In the case of sensitive personal data, explicit consent and along the requirement of necessity are required to collect, process, store and share sensitive personal data. We posit, however, that the definitions of personal data and sensitive personal data are limited in their scope as the former is confined to commercial transactions, whereas the latter does not include within its ambit biometric and genetic data. These definitional limitations essentially mean that government bodies and data held for non-commercial purposes are not governed by the Bill. Given the vast amount of citizens' data held by the government and its various bodies, this limitations leaves the Bill inadequate in its goal of protecting the privacy of Pakistani citizens.



<https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/DP-Comments-Brief-Final-8.8.18-1.pdf>

Freedom on the Net Report, 2018

Freedom House released the Freedom on the Net (FoTN) report for 2018, titled “The Rise of Digital Authoritarianism” globally. The report focuses on developments that occurred between June 2017 and May 2018. The report finds that, out of the 65 countries assessed in Freedom on the Net, 26 experienced a deterioration in internet freedom and almost half of all declines were related to elections.

Pakistan report which is authored by Digital Rights Foundation, remains marked as “Not Free” for the coverage period. Internet freedom was marked with continuity of trends that were set in motion last year, and it declined in some aspects following some dramatic incidents of intimidation and violence related to online activities. Internet shutdowns, a problematic cybercrime law, and cyberattacks against political dissenters contributed to the ongoing deterioration. Political speech is vulnerable to restriction as Pakistan entered the election year in 2018.

During the reporting period, internet freedom was undermined on national security grounds, which justified a number of network shutdowns; one has remained in place for more than a year. And websites operated by a political party in Sindh province were blocked when officials accused members of violence and “anti-Pakistan” positions.



<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/freedom-net-2018>

"Participants of female politicians in Pakistan's General Election 2018"

With the rise of social media as a tool for electioneering and political engagement, DRF monitored social media activities of female politicians from major political parties across Pakistan. The report provides data-based evidence for the volume and nature of online harassment faced by female politicians. It was found that based on 216,849 Facebook comments directed at the women in our dataset and 843,943 comments directed at three prominent male politicians - Imran Khan, Shehbaz Sharif, and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari - it was seen that women were much more likely to receive objectifying, personal, sexualised and sexist comments, whereas the abuse faced by men was focused on their political integrity rather than their appearance. Analysis of 43,372 comments from the Facebook pages of 43 women politicians from 7 parties was such: 90% neutral, 6% unwelcoming, and 4% abusive. A large majority of both abusive and unwelcoming comments were classified as political victimization (49%), with 25% of comments classified as sexist, 23% as personal abuse, 2% as threats, and 1% as racist.



<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1862432/1-report-online-harassment-female-politicians-likely-face-objectifying-comments-online/>

CONFERENCES AND EVENTS



University sessions Hamara Internet Sessions 'Our Right to Safe Online Spaces'

DRF started off with it's series of sessions in universities across Pakistan under the Hamara Internet banner with the help of our partners Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom titled ' Our Right to Safe Online Spaces'. Our team travelled across the country to conduct awareness raising sessions with students from different universities regarding data protection and online violence. Through these sessions we were able to have a much needed debate around online violence and the importance of a data protection legislation in Pakistan. These sessions were held at the following universities:

- Iqra University, Karachi
- BUITEMS Quetta
- University of Management and Technology Lahore
- Superior University Lahore
- Islamia University Peshawar
- Bahria University
- SZABIST University Karachi
- Habib University Karachi



Online safe spaces for students of journalism and mass communication

DRF held workshops at different universities across the country with the students of Journalism and Mass Communication. The workshops included awareness raising session on digital rights and the legal landscape that governs digital platforms. In the second half of the workshop, the participants were given digital security training and were also provided with CDs which included security toolkits and a guidebook on digital security. These workshops were held at the following universities:

- University of Management and Technology, Lahore
- Superior University, Lahore
- Karakoram International University, Gilgit
- University of Peshawar, Peshawar
- University of Balochistan, Quetta
- University of Sindh, Jamshoro



Workshops for Lawyers on Digital Rights

DRF conducted a series of workshops for lawyers in different cities across the country. The workshop aimed to create awareness on the legal landscape that governs digital platforms. A comprehensive training session, complemented by specifically designed toolkits, was delivered to lawyers to guide them on how they can make online spaces safe for themselves by adopting various tools and resources available to them. These workshops were held with in Lahore, Gilgit, Quetta, Karachi and Peshawar.



Training of Lawyers on Digital Rights and Cybercrime Laws in Lahore

DRF arranged a training in Lahore for lawyers on digital rights and cybercrime laws in Pakistan. The workshop was arranged in collaboration with UN Women. The aim of this workshop was to create awareness regarding laws governing digital spaces, an under litigated area in Pakistani law. The workshop was attended by over 20 lawyers from several parts of the country.



Training of Lawyers on Digital Rights and Cybercrime Laws in Islamabad

DRF followed up its Lahore training with a similar one in Islamabad. In collaboration with UN Women and our trainer Haider Imtiaz, the one day workshop covered constitutional law, the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, the FIA Act and electronic evidence. Digital freedoms in Pakistan were discussed at length and the participants were encouraged to take up cases regarding digital spaces.



Workshops with journalists in Lahore and Karachi on ethical journalism

DRF organized two capacity strengthening workshops for journalists on ethical journalism and digital rights in Lahore and Karachi. The aim of these workshop was to discuss whether the existing media ethics are suitable for the evolving digital media landscape or new and different standards are needed. The session also highlighted what are digital rights and created awareness about the legal landscape that governs digital platforms for freedom of media and journalists as many journalists who actively use the digital media are still shockingly unaware of these.



Workshops with journalists in Quetta and Gilgit on investigative reporting, ethical journalism and digital rights

DRF conducted two 2-day workshops with journalists in Quetta and Gilgit on 'Investigative Reporting, Ethical Journalism and Digital Rights'. One of the sessions focused on the tools needed to conduct investigations on digital platforms and how journalists could tackle the spread of fake news and disinformation online, particularly as digital misinformation is extremely potent in Pakistan. Another session was aimed at creating awareness about the legal landscape that governs digital platforms for freedom of media and journalists. The participants were also given hands-on training and specifically designed toolkits to guide them on how they can make online spaces safe for themselves.



Workshop for Journalists on Digital Rights

A series of workshops were held for journalists in different cities across the country. The workshops focussed on raising awareness regarding making online spaces safe for them, considering the sensitive nature of their field. The deliberations also allowed participants to discuss the underpinnings of their role in digital advocacy. They were also given security training to protect themselves from harassment and threat online. These were conducted in Lahore, Gilgit, Karachi, Quetta and Peshawar.



Workshops on online safety with media houses

Three workshops were held with media houses, including Dawn newspaper in Karachi, Digital Broadcast TV in Islamabad and Hum News in Islamabad. The workshops were part of DRF's initiative of conducting online safety training with media houses considering the increasing importance of cyber security, particularly for media organisations, whose most valuable assets are their content. Effective tools and protocols were discussed to safeguard the highly sensitive information of media houses and maintain its privacy. A preliminary need assessment was conducted which helped the DRF digital security trainers to customise the focus of the training according to their needs. Additional sessions were conducted on ethical journalism and fake news in the digital era so two interactive sessions were conducted on the same, which the participants found quite useful.



Women in Law Seminar

In partnership with LEARN Pakistan, DRF helped organize a seminar for female lawyers focusing on issues of technology, harassment and participation in digital spaces. The speakers at the event shared their experience as well as offering solutions to misogyny faced by those in the field.



Seminar on Protecting and Promoting the Electoral Rights of Women

Digital Rights Foundation, along with its partner Trust for Democratic Education and Accountability, held a seminar in Lahore on 'Protecting and Promoting the Electoral Rights of Women' in July. The seminars focus was to promote women's participation in the upcoming general elections and also discuss the challenges women face in politics in Pakistan. Fake news and its impact on hate speech and freedom of expression were also discussed in detail in the seminar in their relation to the electoral process.



Hamara Internet: Multi stakeholder Consultation on Data Protection and Privacy

Digital Rights Foundation hosted the Hamara Internet: multi stakeholder Consultation on Data Protection and Privacy in collaboration with our partners Fur Die Freiheit (FNF) with lawyer, journalists and civil society members in October. The consultation focused on the Personal Data Protection Bill 2018 and advocated for privacy rights in Pakistan. Participants were enthusiastic to give recommendations regarding the bill and also emphasized on similar consultations happening in other cities.



National Privacy Conference, Islamabad

DRF, along with its partners Privacy International and Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom - Pakistan, organized the National Privacy Conference on 'Data Protection and the Intersection between Gender and Privacy' in Islamabad on November 19th, 2018.

The conference aimed to generate a comprehensive and interactive discussion with relevant stakeholders on data protection and the right to privacy in Pakistan. International and national trends and developments with regard to digital rights, data protection and gender and privacy were discussed at the event, which was attended by participants from across Pakistan.

The conference covered the themes of data protection and gender and privacy on the internet within the Pakistani context through panel discussions. The first panel, titled "Legal Framework of Data Protection in Pakistan", was moderated by Sana Farrukh. The second panel, titled "Gender and Privacy", addressed the gendered nature of the right to privacy. The panel, moderated by Shmyla Khan, brought together diverse perspectives on the variations as well as overlap of the gendered nature of the privacy discourse within Pakistan. Women and sexual minorities have different privacy concerns and experience social surveillance from the society, as well as the state, which makes them all the more vulnerable.



Writers Retreat held in Islamabad

DRF, along with its partners Privacy International organized the Writers' Retreat for Journalists held in Islamabad, on November 19th, 2018. The main aim of the event was to learn from the joint experiences of journalists working in print media, and to work on strategies to combat their difficulties together. A selected group of journalists from across Pakistan came together to discuss the risks and hurdles associated with their work, the mental health concerns that arise due to the same, and coping methods and strategies they currently employ and can use in the future.

Additionally, the Journalist Safety and Protection Bill was discussed, with the journalists giving their recommendations on the same, which we aim to present to the ministry of information.



Launch of report titled “Participants of female politicians Pakistan’s General Election 2018” Islamabad

Our report titled “Online Political Participation of Female Politicians in Pakistan’s General Election 2018” on December 7 in Islamabad. The event was organized in partnership with Democracy Reporting International (DRI) and the report has been supported by Heinrich Boll Stiftung Pakistan (HBS). The event was marked by panel discussion titled “Social media for female political engagement: a tool or a curse?” The panel was moderated by Nighat Dad and the panelists included Senator Faratullah Babar, Senator Quratulain Marri, PMA Sumera Shams, MNA Shandana Gulzar, journalist Amber Shamsi, civil society member Nosheen Khurram from TDEA, activist Usama Khilji from Bolo Bhi and Mavra Bari from HBS.



<https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Booklet-Elections-Web-low.pdf>

Safer Internet Day



Digital Rights Foundation conducted a session on cyberbullying with students of grade 6, 7, 8 and 9 on account of Safer Internet Day at the Iqra Education Centre, Lahore. The session raised awareness amongst the students regarding the safer usage of the internet and also emphasized on the importance of reporting bullying in schools and online.

Awareness Raising Sessions with Women Voters



This election season DRF along with its partners Trust for Democratic Education and Accountability conducted a series of 5 sessions with women from varied cross-sections of our society, especially those from the working class. The sessions were conducted with domestic and factory workers from Kot Lakhpat, Youhanabad, Ahmed Town, Defence and Sundar Industrial Estate. The session covered the processes of CNIC registration, vote registration and the need and importance of voting as well as a general overview of why elections are required in the first place. More than 100 women attended these awareness raising sessions.

Election Day Observation



DRF with its partner Trust for Democratic Education and Accountability attended 16 corner meetings/jalsas/rallies of different political parties of the country. The team observed the campaigning process of 8 women candidates and 8 national assembly candidates to see how inclusive these public spaces and these meetings are for women.

DRF Train-the-Trainer Training in Islamabad



DRF's team conducted a train-the-trainer training in collaboration with Facebook on the 13th of September, 2018 where Facebook's safety modules were discussed with and communicated to 50 Computer Science teachers from federal schools and colleges in order to enable them to deliver online safety and security sessions to their students.

INTERNATIONAL EVENTS



Expert workshop on the right to privacy in the digital age - organised by OHCHR

Digital Rights Foundation was invited to be part of the expert workshop on the right to privacy in the digital age, organised by the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR) on February 19-20, 2018 in Geneva, Switzerland. The workshop gathered government representatives, lawmakers, civil society organisations and individuals, and businesses to identify and clarify principles, standards and best practices regarding the promotion and protection of the right to privacy in the digital age, including the responsibility of business enterprises in this regard. The objective of the workshop was the exchange of international, regional and national experiences and practices concerning the protection and promotion of the right to privacy in the digital age.



<https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/DigitalAge/ConceptNote.pdf>

Nighat Dad speaks at TEDxLuziraPrison in Kampala, Uganda

Nighat Dad spoke at the TEDx organised in Luzira Prison in Kampala, Uganda. The event was attended by around 3000 inmates. Nighat spoke to the audience about how in the world with technological advancement, digital rights are as important for the people as their offline rights are and these rights should be seen collectively and equally. Nighat's intervention was based on her own experiences as a woman from a conservative family who was barred from accessing the world in its entirety due to various influences rooted in patriarchal notions of the society. She emphasised that public spaces, both online and offline, are as much of women as anyone else's, and acquiring these right shouldn't be a struggle but should be granted by default.



Digital Rights Foundation was at the Internet Freedom Festival 2018

Digital Rights Foundation attended the 5th Annual Internet Freedom Festival held on March 5 through March 9, 2018 in Valencia, Spain. The festival addresses the issues pertaining to digital rights from around the world and seeks to formulate solutions as a community towards safe and inclusive online spaces.



<https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/digital-rights-foundation-was-at-the-internet-freedom-festival-2018/>

Workshop: Digital Rights in Asia | University of Sydney, April 12-13, 2018

Digital Rights Foundation took part in an academic workshop with experts in internet law and policy from around Asia. Representing Pakistan, DRF spoke about its activism, work in protecting freedom of expression and gender perspective that it offers to digital rights.



#MoneyAndMovement - Count Me In! Consortium, Kenya

Our ED visited Kenya to attend the Count me In! (CMI!) Consortium organized in partnership with the Urgent Action Fund- Africa, Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID- Canada), Crea (India), Just Associates (JASS, USA) and led by Mama Cash (The Netherlands). The meeting brought together activists and funders to work on strategies for future feminist movements globally. DRF also hosted a Digital Security Clinic at the event to help people with all their queries and concerns regarding their personal digital security.



Open Government Partnership Network Meeting - Bellagio, Italy

DRF participated in the OGP Champions Network Meeting, "Building an Opening Government Champions Network", on April 25, 2018 in Bellagio, Italy - attended by 30 world-class political leaders, civil society heads, and thought leaders all working toward smarter & more ambitious open government reforms.



UNESCO World Press Freedom Day Celebrations in Accra, Ghana

DRF's Hija Kamran was at the World Press Freedom Day celebration which was organized by UNESCO in Accra, Ghana. She was part of some very important conversations around journalists right to online safety and their right to freedom of expression. Hija was part of a panel titled 'Artistic Freedom in the Digital Age' in which she addressed how women artists experience online spaces differently than men.



<https://en.unesco.org/creativity/news/press-freedom-artistic-freedom-upholding-rights-all>

'Advocacy for Digital Rights' - Training Session in Accra, Ghana

Hija Kamran conducted a training session hosted by Media Foundation for West Africa with the partner organisations from around West Africa, in Accra, Ghana. The training titled "Advocacy for Digital Rights" aimed to equip advocates of free expression for journalists in the region to raise issues of digital rights in a manner that is inclusive and effective.



Freedom of Expression, Privacy and Rights of the Marginalised: DRF discusses at RightsCon 2018

Digital Rights Foundation headed to Toronto in May to attend RightsCon 2018. At the leading conference on human rights in the digital age, DRF's intensive participation was focused on Freedom of Expression, Data Protection, and Gender. All of these areas are related to human and digital rights, they are all causes that DRF has been working hard for whether through research, on-the-ground assistance, or advocacy.



<https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/freedom-of-expression-privacy-and-rights-of-the-marginalised-drf-discusses-at-rightscon-2018/>

Digital rights defenders under threat: Strategies to resist fear, surveillance and (self-) censorship: re:publica 18

Nighat Dad spoke at the panel titled "Digital rights defenders under threat: Strategies to resist fear, surveillance and (self) censorship" at re:publica18 in Berlin, Germany. The discussion focused on digital attacks against human rights defenders that have expanded dramatically. The session presented experiences from human rights activists in the Global South and discussed success stories and lessons learned from digital security and privacy initiatives.



<https://18.re-publica.com/en/session/digital-rights-defenders-under-threat-strategies-resist-fear-surveillance-self-censorship>

Responding to Risks and Challenges: Human Rights Frameworks in the Digital Age - HRBDT

Nighat Dad attended the HRBDT Conference (Human Rights in the Digital Age) to be part of the panel titled "Responding to Risks and Challenges: Human Rights Frameworks in the Digital Age" in Geneva. Nighat highlighted the issues that human rights defenders and advocates for social change face in the global south, and emphasised particularly on issues in the context of Pakistan.



Digital Rights: A Global Action Plan | Global Media Forum

Nighat Dad was at the Global Media Forum in Bonn, Germany. Nighat's talk titled "Digital Rights: A Global Action Plan" addressed the issues pertaining to digital rights and explored the possible actions required to be taken collectively for a safe and inclusive internet.



DRF at Decentralized Web Summit

Our ED Nighat Dad spoke at the the 'Decentralized Web Summit' at the panel titled "Stories from the Field—A View of the Internet from the Global South" where she talked about the impact of the first of it's kind cyber harassment helpline and the implications of cyber harassment on women in Pakistan.



<https://www.decentralizedweb.net/stories-from-the-field/>

DRF at RSF's launch on groundbreaking Global Information and Democracy Commission

DRF's Executive Director, Ms. Nighat Dad became a part of Information & Democracy Commission launched by Reporters Without Borders, along with Nobel Peace prize laureates, Shirin Ebadi, Amartya Sen & 22 global leaders. Commission had its first meeting in Paris, along with the French President.

Ms. Dad was honoured to be a part of this prestigious Committee and focused on talking about digital rights and human rights in online spaces.



<https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/press-release-drf-at-rsfs-launch-on-groundbreaking-global-information-and-democracy-commission-70-years-after-the-un-general-assembly-adopted-the-universal-declaration-of-human-rights/>

DRF at #EmpoderaxlosODS in Malaga, Spain

In September our ED spoke at the #EmpoderaxlosODS in Malaga, Spain about women reclaiming online spaces and how they can use the internet to express and empower themselves. The talk focused on DRF's journey from the beginning and how women are more vulnerable over the internet and how they need to take extra precautions to protect themselves. Ms. Dad talked about the Cyber Harassment Helpline as well.



Digital Rights Foundation at the Consultation on the rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association in the Digital Space

DRF participated in a two-day consultation between the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Clément Voule, and delegates from civil society organizations and NGOs. The consultation brought together 32 participants from North and South America, Africa, Europe, Asia and the Middle East to share experiences and insights on exercising and protecting the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association in the digital space. The participants discussed a broad range of topics, including the notions and definitions of the rights as they apply to the digital space: freedom of assembly and association in facilitating the enjoyment of other human rights; the monitoring and surveillance of online activities, jurisdiction and territorial reach of such measures; and the responsibilities of businesses and other parties beyond the primary responsibility of the state.



Internet Governance Forum 2018, Paris

DRF took part in the Internet Governance Forum 2018 (IGF) in Paris, France to represent Pakistan at the UN's foremost multi-stakeholder conference. The conference, from November 12 to 14, saw DRF's Shmyla Khan speak on the panel "Media and Content". The conference also saw important discussions on topics such as fake news, freedom of expression online and gender in online spaces and DRF ensured that the perspective from South Asia, and the Global South in general, was represented.



Nighat Dad represented Pakistan at Paris Peace Forum

The International Declaration on Information and Democracy was signed by different heads of States at the Paris Peace Forum held in November. The Executive Director of DRF, Nighat Dad, who is a member of the Information and Democracy Commission, contributed in the Declaration, especially in the Principle related to Right to Privacy. The 6-page document sets out democratic guarantees for the freedom, independence, pluralism, and reliability of information at a time when the public space has been globalized, digitalized and destabilized.



<https://rsf.org/en/global-communication-and-information-space-common-good-humankind>

Nighat Dad attends The Global Future Council on Human Rights and Technology by World Economic Forum

Nighat Dad attended the council meeting which focused on leveraging technology for human rights promotion and advocacy, and brought together academics, business leaders, and civil society to identify ways to strengthen responsible use of data and promote evidence-based policy-making.



DRF at Q Berlin Questions 2018

Nighat Dad was invited as a speaker at Q Berlin Questions 2018. The city hosted a broad scientific and scholarly debate with speakers from a range of countries and sectors. The event comprised of speeches, discussions and music and was attended by around 400 participants.



Istanbul Innovation Days 2018



The Istanbul Innovation Days (IID), organised this year in partnership with Dark Matter Laboratories of London, brought together internal and external partners to showcase methodologies and practical examples of innovative governance and peacebuilding practices in different countries and settings. DRF was asked to present its work and reflect on the experiments engaged in over the conference and their applications to its work and policy and governance.

Sana Farrukh, research associate at DRF, was a panelist on the closing panel, "Reflections on the future of Governance and Peacebuilding" alongside Hossein Derakhshan, Research fellow at Harvard Kennedy School's Shorenstein Center, Martin Gramatikov, Director Measuring Justice, HiIL, Jonathan Cohen, Executive Director, Conciliation Resources, Shakirat Toktosunova, Country Representative International Alert, Kyrgyzstan, and Leif Kalev, Professor of State and Citizenship Theory, School of Governance, Law and Society, Tallinn University.

DRF at Warsaw Dialogue for Democracy 2018

DRF participated in the Warsaw Dialogue for Democracy held in Poland's capital for the seventh time. This year's edition focused on the potential and challenges emerging from a growing role of new technologies at today's political scene. Experts from across the world put the spotlight on the influence of new media on the processes of democratization and human rights respect. The speakers put an emphasis on the very popular social media, specifically in the context of fake news and free elections.

AWARD



Digital Rights Foundation receives I Am The Change (IATC) 2017 Award

Digital Rights Foundation receives the I Am The Change (IATC) 2017 Award by the Engro Foundation in the category of Social Development. IATC looks to empower organizations to make a large and sustainable impact in the social sector of Pakistan by aiding institutions that have joined forces in a relentless pursuit of shaping a better tomorrow, as they strive for change through long-term investments in the two areas of Social Development (in the case of Not-for-profit Organizations) and Social Enterprise.



BOOTH SETUP



DRF hosts a booth at Face Music Mela, Islamabad



The Cyber Harassment Helpline set up a booth on the campaign 'No Means No' at the Face Music Mela in March in Islamabad. People from all walks of life showed up at the booth to discuss their concerns on harassment and abuse in detail with our team.

Digital Youth Summit - Peshawar



DRF set up a booth to raise awareness regarding the cyber harassment helpline at the Digital Youth Summit in Peshawar in April. The Summit had individuals from the tech industry come in and discuss the implications of the online world on the offline world with us. Around 350 to 400 individuals visited the booth and were given DRF merchandise.

DRF at FNF's 60 Year Celebrations

DRF along with its partners Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF) celebrated Liberal footprints - Contributions to Pakistan's advancement : 60 Year Celebrations of FNF at Islamabad in November. DRF set up the digital security clinic at the event where more than 300 people visited to discuss their personal digital security and the current legislation on digital rights in Pakistan in detail. The stall was visited by the German ambassador Martin Kobler and the Federal Minister of Education and National Heritage Shafqat Mehmood as well.



CAMPAIGNS



#YourDataProtectionBill

For the National Privacy Conference in 2018, DRF wanted to make the concept of personal data protection more accessible. It's important that the average citizen understand that the data in question is data that belongs to all of us, and hence this is an issue of overarching importance and the advocacy for which is universally valuable. Thus the hashtag [#yourdataprotectionbill](#) was started. It was used throughout the conference to improve connectivity on twitter between those in attendance and those following the same. It ensured that all the issues discussed and spoken of on twitter were connected to our hashtag which reminds us all that it is my data, our data and most importantly your data that needs protection.

<https://twitter.com/nighatdad/status/1064489292398043136>

<https://twitter.com/batoorian/status/1064491231638691840>

Hamara Internet Kya Hai

DRF has been working on digital gender divide and women's right to reclaim online spaces since its existence and we've always tried to keep our narrative unbiased and our conversations inclusive for all.

This year under the [#HamaraInternetKyaHai](#) campaign we wrote various blogposts and used the slogan to start a wider debate around what it means to be using the internet in Pakistan and are we doing enough to make the internet a safe space for all.

<https://www.facebook.com/DigitalRightsFoundation/videos/1140775082729719/>

<https://twitter.com/nighatdad/status/1030177398208253952>

<https://twitter.com/nighatdad/status/1089889720581132288>

16 Days of Activism

Digital Rights Foundation (DRF) launched the 16 Days of Activism campaign on the 25th of November which focused on gender based violence across the globe. The campaign focused on the theme of gender based violence at the workplace this year and DRF collaborated with the Network of Women Journalists for Digital Rights who shared their experiences and challenges from the field of journalism. The 16 Days of Activism also marked the International Day of Women Human Rights Defenders, held on 29th November. On this day DRF shared an infographic on the violence faced by women human rights defenders in Pakistan. Blogs were also shared during the 16 Days to emphasize the importance of taking measures to tackle violence against women in all fields.

DRF also released its study documenting the experiences of Pakistani women with online harassment during the 16 days of Activism Campaign. These case studies capture the experience of Pakistani women in digital spaces and puts forward recommendations based on these lived experiences. These cases highlight the seriousness of online violence against women and the challenges women face in these spaces.



World Press Freedom

Digital Rights Foundation celebrated World Press Freedom Day on May 3, 2018 alongside journalists and media, and discussed the important issues pertaining to press freedom - both locally and internationally. The conversations revolved around the safety of journalists in the digital world and their right to free speech without being subjected to violence that force them to self-censor, or censorship enforced by internal and external actors. The hashtag used was #WPFD2018.

According to a survey conducted by DRF, nearly 72% of female journalists in Pakistan and 61% of male journalists experience digital insecurity. Through our Network for Journalists for Digital Rights, we ensure empowerment with digital tools and security protocols in order to work more securely and efficiently.

Here's what our network members shared on World Press Freedom Day:

Anushe Noor: "Being in the media is not considered very feminine - so when a woman decides to take up journalism as a career, she's faced with criticism".

Umaima Ahmed: "The challenges faced by women in media include discrimination in position, pay and the beats assigned to them as well as emotional and sexual harassment. Today, I press for women's freedom in media so that they can place an active role in making this world a better place".

Zeenat Shehzadi: "Our culture is restrictive of women entering the media, which leads to a lack of reporting on women-centric issues. We must be provided with safe and secure environment to be able to shed light on the issues that people face".

Sabin Agha: "Women journalists face an added threat and that is character assassination. It is very easy to assassinate the character of a woman journalist as we live in a conservative society and they are considered easy target for intimidation".

Afia Salam: "The journalist community in Pakistan needs to take a stand against those who are suppressing their voices because without it people in this society won't be able to seek justice."

DEVELOPEMENTS IN DIGITAL RIGHTS 2018



Internet Shutdown

Internet Shutdowns in Pakistan haven't been a surprise to individuals in the country and this year was no different. According to Access Now, Pakistan experienced at least 11 shutdowns in the year of 2018. Multiple shutdowns were witnessed in a week, which created an alarming situation in the country. It is interesting to see that internet shutdowns this year had different themes. On one hand, internet shutdowns took place to silence protests which we saw year wide with the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement and the media blackout the movement is facing to this day. On October 28th several Pashtuns marched towards Bannu and organized an online movement with the hashtag #PashtunLongMarch2Bannu. The protest was a peaceful march to hold accountable the extrajudicial killings of Pashtuns. Participants who were tweeting and covering the event reported that they experienced mobile network shutdowns multiple times at the march. Internet shutdowns have also been frequent on public holidays like the Chehlam of Hazrat Imam Hussain. Perhaps the most widely controversial shut downs that the country experienced were around November when the verdict of the Aasia Bibi case was announced. In order to control the law and order situation of the country and from stopping people from pouring in on the streets network shutdowns took place for three days in the major cities of the country.



Fake News

With a myriad of news channels operating round the clock, the competition for ratings is one reason for fueling the fake news pandemic as they compete fiercely to beat one another in their effort to be the first to break a news. This has resulted in information being spread without due verification. Political parties in Pakistan have started relying on the power of social media for their respective election campaigns by projecting their party's image, activities and their manifestos. It has been reported that many major political parties use their social media teams to create fake profiles as part of their strategy. Ahead of elections 2018, there was a spike in fake news stories, or stories that are false and intentionally fabricated to mislead users. One major example includes Begum Kulsoom Nawaz's death hoax during the election campaign which went viral on social media as well as WhatsApp within a short time. In July, ahead of elections, WhatsApp initiated a major public awareness campaign "Together we can fight false information" to combat the fake news pandemic by publishing awareness-raising advertisements in local newspapers. In October, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has launched a Twitter account, titled 'FakeNewsBusterMoIB' to "tackle and expose" fake news that is spread through social media by giving official response to false propaganda on social media in a timely manner. It will also be used to identify users who spread fake news and requests will be made to take action against them. In October, the Minister of Information announced that a new media regulatory authority will be established and the existing Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority will be abolished. A draft law has been prepared in this regard which will also crackdown on fake news.



Online Gendered Violence

Online spaces are becoming increasingly popular with our lives integrated with the internet every step of the way. While the use of these spaces have made our lives easier and better in every aspect, it has also created unforeseen problems for individuals that are extremely difficult to tackle. Online gender-based violence is on the rise everyday with new ways with which perpetrators are using digital technologies to intimidate and harass people online. Over the year we've seen how online and offline spaces are correlated and problems in the online spaces replicate themselves in the offline spaces with devastating consequences. DRF aims to make online spaces safer and better for vulnerable communities. We focus on educating everyone around us about problems in the online realm and how they can be catered to and tackled effectively.

What happened during General Elections 2018 ?

The General Election in 2018 was marked by the extensive use of social media for electioneering purposes. This use of social media is part of a global trend of the role that social media now has in our democracies. Digital Rights Foundation sought to monitor the use of social media during the elections through accounts of female politicians and trending election-related hashtags. We found that while misinformation is a problem in online spaces, there was an absence of targeted misinformation campaigns against particular parties. There was a substantial amount of party-based abuse on social media. Our monitoring also revealed that advertising on social media is emerging as the significant medium for campaigning, and it was all the more glaring that the Election Commission of Pakistan had not applied the code of conduct towards online spaces. PTI, much like 2013 election, demonstrated that it was ahead of the curve when it came to embracing technologies-as they were able to use a mobile phone application to mobilize voters and conduct targeted campaigns during the election period and on election day.

PECA Cases in 2018

2018 saw the progression of cases from those involving blackmail such as the first case of the year (<https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/man-convicted-in-the-first-judgement-under-the-prevention-of-electronic-crimes-act-peca/>) to the conviction of Sarmad Liaquat under Ss.21 and 24 of PECA (<https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/state-vs-sarmad-liaquat/>) and varied to include the conviction of Saadat Amin, a man guilty of creating and disseminating child pornography which is a crime under s.22 of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act 2016 (<https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/man-convicted-under-cybercrime-law-for-child-pornography/>).

The Act encapsulates 28 counts of offences under its domain however the majority of the cases that have arisen under it have been charged under Ss. 20, 21 and 24 which pertain to offences against the modesty and dignity of a natural person and minor and cyber stalking, along with relevant sections from the Pakistan Penal Code.

This shows a predilection towards violation of privacy and a general lack of understanding of the concept of consent regarding personal data and the existence of women in online spheres. The cases themselves are being dispensed at regular intervals, however the lack of analysis in the judgements stands out and highlights the need for a deeper dive into rationale and how the honourable justice arrives at said conclusion, in order to allow for the jurisprudence of this particular area to develop maturely.

Data Protection and Privacy

The biggest development under this theme was the introduction of the Personal Data Protection Bill 2018. The bill, put forward by the Ministry of Informational Technology and Telecommunication (MoITT) was a definitive step in the right direction. However, its scope and contents left a lot to be desired and DRF used its own expertise and the expertise of its partner Privacy International to make recommendations on the bill. The Punjab government's resolve to make data more secure was also evident with the advent of their Data Sharing Protocols.

A strong personal data protection framework is what should hold individuals, companies and the government accountable to providing a standard of security to citizens. The security of their data is intrinsically linked to their financial, mental and physical security, and cannot be ignored.

Feminist Internet

DRF's mission and ultimate goal is to make the internet an inclusive and safe space for all. We want more representation on the internet of all communities. During the Aurat March 2018, we saw how comments regarding women reclaiming spaces became a wide debate across the country and how intolerant and derogatory terms were used for women when they asked for their fundamental human rights in online and offline spaces. DRF hopes to create an environment which is transparent and more accountable online and offline and will keep on striving to do so until and unless our goal is achieved.





Note from Team

2018 brought with itself successes and failures in digital rights which made our experience as a team extremely overwhelming. There have been days when we were lost and did not know how to go on, however we rose above the ashes and did our best as activists and human rights defenders to help every individual who approaches us. We're still learning and trying to find more ways with which we can be more approachable and helpful to the people who reach out to us. DRF's team vows and hopes to make the coming year 2019 better, bigger and brighter for all. We pride in ourselves for what we've achieved so far and what we'll be achieving ahead with the support of the community around us and our well wishers. We are trying to make this world a better place online and offline by doing our part and we hope we continue doing this for the years to come. Here's to 2019 where we'll have new challenges, new solutions and a new hope to truly be the best in what we do.

In solidarity and pride
DRF Team

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