

Pakistan Blocks 500 Extremist-Linked Social Media Accounts

August 15, 2025

— Categories: Crime

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Pakistan has blocked over 500 social media accounts connected to banned militant groups in a nationwide crackdown aimed at curbing extremist propaganda. Authorities said that more than 850 accounts had been identified as linked to groups including Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), and Baloch Liberation Front (BLF). These organizations are already banned by the United Nations, the United States, and the United Kingdom.

Officials reported that the blocked accounts collectively had more than two million followers. The effort was led by the newly established National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) in coordination with the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA).

The accounts targeted were active on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X (formerly Twitter), Telegram, and WhatsApp. Federal IT Minister Shaza Fatima Khawaja also secured cooperation from Telegram, despite the platform being banned in Pakistan, to expedite the removal of flagged accounts.

Compliance levels varied among platforms. According to Pakistani authorities, Facebook and TikTok acted on over 90 percent of the removal requests, while X and WhatsApp complied with about 30 percent. Islamabad has urged all global social media companies to improve monitoring systems and maintain direct contact with Pakistani officials to ensure the swift removal of extremist-linked accounts.

The government is also calling for permanent blocking measures against these accounts and the adoption of artificial intelligence tools to detect and remove extremist material more effectively. Officials believe such tools are essential in reducing the speed and reach of militant propaganda.

Authorities noted that mainstream Pakistani media remains free of extremist content, but militant groups have increasingly turned to social media and messaging apps to recruit members, spread propaganda, and encourage acts of violence. By removing these accounts, officials aim to disrupt recruitment channels and reduce the groups' ability to influence vulnerable individuals online.

Pakistan has also appealed for greater international cooperation to combat the spread of extremist content on digital platforms. Officials stressed that online militancy is not confined to national borders and requires a coordinated global response. Without stronger and faster international measures, they warned, militant networks will continue to exploit digital platforms to grow their influence.

The crackdown comes amid rising concerns about the role of online platforms in enabling extremist activities. Authorities in Pakistan see this latest move as an important step in dismantling the digital infrastructure used by banned militant groups, while pushing for long-term, cooperative solutions to the global challenge of online extremism.