

New PECA amendment bill: Capital punishment for online blasphemy and false accusations of blasphemy proposed

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Islamabad: In the light of orders by Islamabad High Court earlier this year, the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecom, MOITT has proposed the incorporation of six new clauses in the 2016 Pakistan Electronic Crimes Act, including those related to pornography and blasphemy through amendment bill.

According to the copy of Draft amendment available with Digital Rights Monitor, the new amendment proposes two to four years imprisonment against production and dissemination of pornography online (22 A), life imprisonment for desecrating Holy Quran through information system (27 B) and death sentence for blasphemy against Holy Prophet (27 C).



A number of new offenses have also been proposed.

These include dissemination of content outraging religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs (27A). Use of derogatory remarks, etc. in respect of holy personages such as Prophet's wives or his family members and companions of Holy Prophet, (27D), Misuse of epithets, descriptions and titles etc, reserved for certain holy personages and places (27 E), Person of Qadiani group calling himself Muslim or preaching or propagating his faith (27 F) and falsely accusing person of committing offences mentioned in 27 C and 27 D (27 G).

A table of offenses and punishments proposed in the amendment are listed below:



Clause No.	Offenses	Punishment
22 A (1)	Production and offer of sale of Pornography	Imprisonment for a term which may extend up to four years imprisonment and fine up to three million rupees
22 A (2)	Distribution of Pornography	Imprisonment for up to three years and fine up to two million rupees fine
27 A	Dissemination of content outraging religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs	Up to Ten years imprisonment or with fine or both
27 B	Defiling, etc. copy of Holy Quran	Imprisonment for life
27 C	Blasphemy in respect of Holy Prophet PBUH	Capital punishment and liable to fine
27 D	Use of derogatory remarks, etc. in respect of holy personages such as Prophet's wives or his family members and companions of Holy Prophet	Imprisonment up to three years or with fine or both
27 E	Misuse of epithets, descriptions, and titles etc, reserved for certain holy personages and places	Up to three years imprisonment and liable to fine
27 F	Person of Qadiani group calling himself Muslim or preaching or propagating his faith	Up to three years and liable to fine
27 G	Falsely accusing a person of committing offenses mentioned in 27 C and 27 D	Same punishment as in 27 C and 27 D

It's important to mention here that Qadiani is a derogatory term used to refer to the Ahmadi community.

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