



No. 2(119)/2021-Chair NCHR  
GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN  
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor Evacuee Trust Complex, F-5/1,  
Agha Khan Road, Islamabad.



Islamabad, the 6<sup>th</sup> February, 2023

Subject: **BAN OF WIKIPEDIA IN PAKISTAN**

Dear *Chairman,*  
*Salaam.*

The National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) is a statutory body set up under the NCHR Act XVI of 2012. The NCHR Act, 2012 stipulates a broad and overarching mandate for the promotion and protection of human rights, as provided for in Pakistan's Constitution, domestic law and international treaties. Amidst others, the primary functions of the NCHR include investigating into allegations of human rights abuses and advising the Government on legislative, policy and administrative matters pertaining to the situation of human rights in the country.

2. NCHR is alarmed by the blanket ban on Wikipedia by the Pakistan Telecommunications Authority (PTA). Wikipedia is run through crowd sourcing where anyone can add or delete information from the website without strict protocols and prohibitions. The ban of Wikipedia is disproportionate, violates citizens' right to access information, and against international human rights standards. Thousands of students and professionals rely on Wikipedia for their work, and it is an essential part of the digital information landscape in the country and worldwide.

3. In this regard NCHR urges PTA to review its decision of blocking the website in the country. We as a country cannot afford to be left behind the rest of the world in terms of education, commerce and citizen education— PTA must act swiftly to overturn the ban and ensure protection of citizens right to freedom of information.

Yours Sincerely,

*Rabiya J Agha*  
(Rabiya Javeri Agha)  
Chairperson (NCHR)

**The Chairman,**  
Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA),  
**Islamabad.**