HATE SPEECH:

A STUDY OF PAKISTAN’S CYBERSPACE
[June 2014]

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CREDITS

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DISCLAIMER: THE STUDY INCLUDES EXAMPLES OF HATE SPEECH THAT ARE OFFENSIVE IN NATURE.
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PREFACE

We have undertaken this study on hate speech in Pakistan as a natural extension of the regional dialogue on freedom of expression for civil liberties organized by us in Bangkok in November 2013. The dialogue was held under the stewardship of Mr. Frank La Rue, UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression.

We often see Freedom of Expression, an inviolable fundamental human right, being fettered in false paradigms of morality, security, national interest, or obscenity etc. For the reason that speech is regularly gagged in Pakistan under these pretexts, we felt it important to study online hate speech in Pakistan to identify it as something quite distinct from the excuses often used to muzzle free expression. We believe that hate speech is the only real threat to free expression in Pakistan. This study, therefore, attempts to define hate speech based on Mr. La Rue’s recommendations and obtain some idea of its incidence in the country.

It is important that hate speech is clearly defined, and not confused with subjective ideas such as national security, religious sentiment, morality or decency etc.

We are proud to say this research study is the first in Pakistan on this subject, and will form the basis for many more such studies to take this important work further. A lot of work in the coming years needs to be done in this area to ensure that the threat of hate speech does not impinge upon the fundamental rights and freedoms we hold so dear.

Bytes for All, Pakistan extends its sincere gratitude to Jahanzaib Haque for leading this research, and to the B4A team for its support and invaluable input. We must also thank Annie Zaman and Rahma Mian for helping to review this report. Lastly, and most importantly, we are thankful to Global Partners Digital for their wholehearted support in making this critical study possible.

Shahzad Ahmad,
Country Director,
Bytes for All, Pakistan

June 2014
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Pakistan’s Internet penetration has expanded to an estimated 20 million users, and has gained increasing socio-political relevance. From online political campaigns in the 2013 general elections, to social media-led protests such as that over the murder of Shahzeb Khan, to political leadership joining Facebook and Twitter en masse, the impact of the Internet has been profound. For a country that has a mobile teledensity of 73.9%, this influence is set to grow exponentially with 3G/4G services launched in 2014, coupled with cheap internet-enabled mobile phones flooding the local market.

At the same time, this groundswell of online activity has seen the emergence of a dangerous trend – that of unchecked hate speech, sometimes in the form of organized campaigns. This trend first came under the spotlight in 2011 through mass media coverage of online hate speech after the killing of Punjab Governor Salman Taseer by his guard, Mumtaz Qadri for defending a Christian woman accused of blasphemy. At the time, hundreds of Facebook pages were launched celebrating the assassination and thousands of online Pakistanis joined in a campaign of hate against Taseer. Since then, an increasing number of instances of radicalized, xenophobic, racist and sexist discourse with threats of harassment and/or violence have been seen in local cyberspace, with targets ranging from religious groups and minorities such as Shias, Ahmadis, Hindus and Christians, to local ethnic groups, women, homosexuals, hatred of Americans, Jews, Indians, and Afghans among others. Specific to Pakistan’s ongoing war against terrorism, the online space has also seen a sharp increase in hate speech, often framed in extreme religious or ultranationalist rhetoric, that targets the pillars of the state i.e. politicians, members of the judiciary, media and the armed forces. Given Pakistan’s lack of cyber laws and lack of implementation of existing hate speech laws to the online space, the country’s online space has also been an unchecked breeding ground for extremism, intolerance and hate. Although very little research or documentation has been undertaken with regards to this phenomenon, with each passing crisis – such as the negative role social media played in fueling sectarian conflict during the Rawalpindi riots – the threat this poses to the country is increasingly clear.

This study is an attempt to understand and quantify hate speech online in a Pakistan context by examining the actual content produced in Pakistan’s cyberspace in high impact, high reach areas, and build a first quantitative snapshot of the extent to which hate speech occurs online, who is being targeted and what forms of hate speech are being created by whom.

Through a detailed data collection process and analysis (see section 1.2 for methodology and limitations of research), a first snapshot of hate speech has been developed. Two independent phases of the research included an online survey on hate speech (See Annex 3) responded to by 559 Pakistani Internet users, as well as detailed content analysis of published material and comments – both textual and iconographic – on high impact, high reach social media and accounts frequented by local audiences (See Annex 1,2).

Results from the online survey indicated that Pakistani internet users were largely unaware of hate speech laws in Pakistan, but were, in general, largely able to identify hate speech correctly. One trend observed in the survey results was the impact of income on views, attitudes and understanding of hate speech. In almost all cases, respondents in the high income bracket had progressive views on hate speech, expressed a greater understanding of the issue, and were better at identifying hate speech correctly, as compared to all other demographic groups. Conversely, respondents in the low income bracket showed the least understanding of hate speech and were markedly worse at identifying hate speech correctly as compared to all other groups.

Worryingly, 92% of total respondents replied “yes” to having come across hate speech online, while over half (51%) indicated they had been the target of hate speech online.

In terms of platforms, Facebook was highlighted as the most problematic, with 91% of respondents indicating they had come across
Hate speech on the social network. It is unclear whether this is the result of Facebook’s immense popularity in Pakistan, or the result of an endemic problem on the platform.

In the detailed analysis of high impact, high reach social media accounts, the 30 Facebook pages analyzed (3,000 shares and related comments) contained 10,329 counts of hate speech, which translates to more than three counts of hate speech on every single share. This high count of hate speech corresponds to a vast majority of respondents in the online survey indicating they had come across hate speech on Facebook.

Hate speech on Facebook that could fall under criminal offense based on the study’s definitions (see section 1.1) was negligible (less than 1%), suggesting that a solution to the problem does not lie in greater state action in catching and prosecuting individuals/groups, but through alternate means (see Section 4). The amount of hate speech published by the pages themselves was also less than 1% of the total, indicating, in general, that the top Facebook pages are not generating hate speech content as much as failing to regulate it on their pages. The fact that eight out of the top 10 Facebook pages were administered by traditional media groups or personalities and online media-related entities suggests that a part of the solution to the issue is better regulation by media, who are themselves one of the biggest targets of hate speech (see Section 3.6).

The 30 Twitter accounts analyzed (15,000 tweets, replies, mentions) contained 350 counts of hate speech i.e. only 2.3% of total updates examined, showing a remarkably different landscape compared to Facebook. Hate speech on Twitter that could fall under criminal offense based on the study’s definitions was negligible (less than 1%) similar to Facebook. The amount of hate speech published by the accounts themselves was 2% of the total, indicating that top accounts were not necessarily spreading hate speech as much as being targets of attack.

The top 10 Facebook pages analyzed formed the bulk of all hate speech recorded in the complete analysis of social media accounts.

In terms of language, hate speech recorded on Facebook was largely in Roman Urdu (74%) followed by English (22%) and Urdu script (4%). Hate speech collected on Twitter was largely in English (67%), followed by Roman Urdu (28%) and Urdu script (5%). This key
finding highlights the dire need to engage and work with the social networks, and Facebook in particular, on the issue of stemming hate speech that appears in Roman Urdu or Urdu script. Mechanisms need to be developed for blocking words in the Urdu script, as well as the ability of social networks to accurately review and remove reports of hate speech in Urdu.

The two largest groups that were a target for hate speech on Facebook were politicians (38% of all hate speech) and members of the media/media groups (10%). These attacks on politicians and the media formed nearly half of all hate speech on the Facebook pages analyzed. On Twitter, 20% of total records were targeted at pillars of the state, with attacks on politicians (11%) and media (7%) registering highest. This high level of hate speech is especially worrying given the context of the ongoing war against terrorism and the real-life threats to life both politicians and those working in the media face.

Such unchecked hate speech creates an environment where actual violence against politicians or journalists is not only condoned, but also celebrated, giving those carrying out such attacks greater space and encouragement to act.
## 1. OVERVIEW

### 1.0 Scope of study

The aim of this study was to examine the actual content produced in Pakistan's cyberspace in high impact, high reach areas, and build a first quantitative snapshot of the extent to which hate speech occurs online, who is being targeted and what forms of hate speech are being created by whom. All potential targets of hate speech, whether social or political, overtly or covertly referenced, were included in the analysis. The study did not however examine low impact, low reach areas of local cyberspace, which have been noted to contain extremists and terrorist elements. The reason for the exclusion of this highly problematic area is twofold: such individuals and groups have a temporary presence online due to frequent blocks, bans and deletion which does not allow for an accurate quantifiable snapshot, and secondly, as indicated by UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, Frank la Rue:

“Any contextual assessment must include consideration of various factors, including…the means of disseminating the expression of hate. For example, a statement released by an individual to a small and restricted group of Facebook users does not carry the same weight as a statement published on a mainstream website”.

In carrying out this analysis, the study aims to highlight key problem areas and fuel discourse, monitoring, further research and action against online hate speech, keeping in view that any recommended legislation or action should never result in censorship of legitimate views and curtail the fundamental human right to freedom of information and freedom of speech as outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of which Pakistan is a signatory.

As such, one of the aims is to distinguish between criminal hate speech that should be criminalized and acted against, and hate speech that falls outside the parameters that justify legal action, as outlined by the UN Special Rapporteur.

He emphasized the need to distinguish between three types of expression: “expression that constitutes an offence under international law and can be prosecuted criminally; expression that is not criminally punishable but may justify a restriction and a civil suit; and expression that does not give rise to criminal or civil sanctions, but still raises concerns in terms of tolerance, civility and respect for others. He underlined that those different categories posed different issues of principle and called for different legal and policy responses.”

The larger goal of this study is to work towards a decrease in the levels of discrimination, hatred and intolerance in Pakistan.

### 1.1 Definitions

#### 1.1.1 Local and global definitions

Within the law, defining hate speech and legislating against it has been a complex, often controversial exercise globally. Consequently, ranges of definitions exist, varying greatly from country to country. Along with multiple definitions of hate speech, each state also has its own standards for measuring and prosecuting those accused of hate speech, ranging from prosecution under criminal law and/or civil law, to the protection of hate speech as an extension of free speech, a fundamental human right enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In Pakistan’s Constitution, Article 19 titled, ‘Freedom of speech’ provides the overarching framework for what constitutes free speech in the country, along with its limitations: “Every citizen shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression, and there shall be freedom of the press, subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interest of the glory of Islam or the integrity, security or defence of Pakistan or any part thereof, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency or morality, or in relation to contempt of court, or incitement to an offence.” Additionally, Article 31 of the Constitution titled, ‘Islamic way of life’ says that the state shall endeavor, with respect to the Muslims of Pakistan, “to promote unity and the observance of the Islamic moral standards”, which may be interpreted to apply a restriction on religious hate speech specific to Islam.

The Pakistan Penal Code also addresses hate speech in Article 153-A titled ‘Promoting enmity between different groups’ that states:

“Whoever (a) by words, either spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representations or otherwise, promotes or instigates, or attempts to promote or incite, on grounds of religion, race, place of both, residence, language, caste or community or any other ground whatsoever, disharmony or feelings of enmity, hatred or ill-will between different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities; or
(b) commits, or incites any other person to commit, any act which is prejudicial to the maintenance of harmony between different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities or any group of persons identifiable as such on any ground whatsoever and which disturbs or is likely to disturb public tranquility; or
(c) organizes, or incites any other person to organize, and exercise, movement, drill or other similar activity intending that the participants in any such activity shall use or be trained to use criminal force or violence or knowing it to be likely that the participants in any such activity will use or be trained to use criminal force or violence or participates, or incites any other person to participate, in any such activity intending to use or be trained to use criminal force or violence...”
or knowing it to be likely that the participants in any such activity will use or be trained, to use criminal force or violence, against any religious, racial, language or regional group or caste of community or any group of persons identifiable as such on any ground whatsoever and any such activity for any reason whatsoever cause or is likely to cause fear or alarm or a feeling of insecurity amongst members of such religious, racial, language or regional group or caste or community, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to five years and with fine.”

Article 153-A also contains an explanation which clarifies that, “It does not amount to an offence within the meaning of this section to point but, without malicious intention and with an honest view to their removal, matters which are producing, or have a tendency to produce, feelings of enmity or hatred between different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities.”

The Penal Code’s articles 295-298, collectively known as the blasphemy laws, also contains very harsh punishments for religion-based hate speech, specifically against Islam. Article 295-B which relates to anyone who, “wilfully defiles, damages or desecrates a copy of the Holy Qur’an or of an extract therefrom or uses it in any derogatory manner or for any unlawful purpose,” carries a life sentence. Article 295-C related to, “whoever by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representation or by any imputation, innuendo, or insinuation, directly or indirectly, defiles the sacred name of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)” carries the death sentence or life imprisonment.

The Maintenance of Public Order Ordinance also legislates against speech that “causes or is likely to cause fear or alarm to the public or to any section of the public or is likely to further any activity prejudicial to public safety or the maintenance of public order” with a sentence of imprisonment of up to three years, with a fine.

The Anti Terrorism Act (ATA), 1997 prohibits speech that is intended to, or likely to stir up sectarian hatred: “A person who uses threatening, abusive or insulting words or behavior; or… displays, publishes or distributes any written material which is threatening, abusive or insulting; or words or behavior; or distributes or shows or plays a recording or visual images or sounds which are threatening, abusive or insulting; or in his possession written material or a recording or visual images or sounds which are threatening, abusive or insulting with a view to their being displayed or published by himself or another, shall be guilty of an offence if: he intends thereby to stir up sectarian hatred; or having regard to all the circumstances, sectarian hatred is likely to be stirred up thereby.”

The state’s media watchdog, Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) has a code of conduct for media broadcasters and cable operators that prevents the airing of any program that, “passes derogatory remarks about any religion or sect or community or uses visuals or words contemptuous of religious sects and ethnic groups or which promotes communal or sectarian attitudes or dis-harmony.” The code of conduct also places a ban on content that is “obscene or indecent” and “contains an abusive comment that, when taken in context, tends to or is likely to expose an individual or a group or class of individuals to hatred or contempt on the basis of race or caste, national, ethnic or linguistic origin, colour or religion or sect, sex, sexual orientation, age or mental or physical disability.”

Additionally, the PEMRA Ordinance 2002 states that all media broadcast licensees will, “ensure that all programmes and advertisements do not contain or encourage violence, terrorism, racial, ethnic or religious discrimination, sectarianism, extremism, militancy, hatred, pornography, obscenity, vulgarity or other material offensive to commonly accepted standards of decency.” Violation of these terms can include fines and imprisonment.

In the online context, monitoring hate speech, measuring its impact and implementing meaningful ways of regulating it poses an even greater challenge, as the rapid growth of the online space and continuous technological advancements make it very hard to qualify and quantify the phenomenon.

The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) is responsible for regulating the internet in Pakistan. The Pakistan Telecommunication (Re-organization) Act, 1996 legislates against speech in section 31, “Offences and penalties” extending to whoever, “unauthorisedly transmits through a telecommunication system or telecommunication service any intelligence which he knows or has reason to believe to be false, fabricated, indecent or obscene,” or “commits mischief.” This vague use of language in the Act has been criticized for being open to misinterpretation and abuse.

1.1.2 Definitions used in the study
In this study, hate speech is viewed as two distinct categories – hate speech that should be regulated and/or prohibited by law, and hate speech that is problematic but falls outside parameters requiring state action and regulation.

In common use, the term ‘hate speech’ is defined as, “speech that attacks a person or group on the basis of race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation.” In the study, both ethnicity and nationality were examined under the term ‘race’. While one of the features that define hate speech is the targeting of vulnerable individuals or groups, in Pakistan, politicians, members of the armed forces, the judiciary and the media have been included in this study, given the context of over a decade of terrorism that has specifically targeted individuals and groups that form the pillars of the state.
In such a volatile environment, the labeling of a politician, a member of the armed forces, judiciary or media person/organization as ‘the enemy’ working against either Islam or Pakistan has consequences that extend from harassment and threats to actual violence.

Hate speech that should be prohibited by law is determined in the study through the recommendations of Frank la Rue, based on the work of ARTICLE 19, a non-governmental organization, which proposed a seven-part test using the following elements:

(a) Severity of hatred, which should amount to “the most severe and deeply felt form of opprobrium”, including an assessment of the severity of what is said, the harm advocated, magnitude and intensity in terms of frequency, choice of media, reach and extent;

(b) Intent of the speaker to incite discrimination, hostility or violence;

(c) Content or form of the speech, including form, style, nature of the arguments deployed in the speech, magnitude or intensity of the speech, background of the inciter and the degree to which the speech is provocative or direct. Artistic expression should be considered with reference to its artistic value and context, given that individuals may use art to provoke strong feelings but without the intention of inciting violence, discrimination or hostility;

(d) Extent of the speech, in terms of its reach and the size of the audience;

(e) Likelihood or probability of harm occurring. While incitement by definition is an inchoate crime and the action advocated through incitement does not have to be committed for the speech to amount to a crime, a high degree of risk of resulting harm must be identified;

(f) Imminence of the acts called for by the speech;

(g) Context, including consideration of the speaker or author, audience, intended harm, existence of barriers in establishing media outlets, broad and unclear restrictions on content of what may be published or broadcast; absence of criticism of Government or wide-ranging policy debates in the media and other forms of communication; and the absence of broad social condemnation of hateful statements on specific grounds when they are disseminated.

All content was analyzed based on characteristics and elements of hate speech as outlined in the common definition of hate speech, Frank la Rue’s recommendations, as well as keeping in view past international studies, and in specific, “Media Watch on Hate Speech & Discriminatory Language May - August 2013 Report” – a study of hate speech undertaken in Turkey from which the following guidelines were derived:

**Exaggeration/Attribution/Distortion:** Any discourse that features negative generalization, distortion, exaggeration or negative attribution targeting a community as a whole, based on a specific individual or event (e.g. “Homosexuality is what caused the earthquake in Pakistan”)

**Insult/Degradation:** Any discourse that contains direct swearing, insult or denigration (e.g. use of words such as treacherous, traitor, dog, slut, kaafir etc.).

**Enmity/War-mongering:** Any discourse that includes hostile, warmongering expressions about a community (e.g. framing Shias as traitors following an Iranian agenda)

**Use of inherent identity as an element of hate or humiliation/ Symbolization:** Any discourse that uses various aspects of one’s natural identity as an element of hate, humiliation or symbolization. For example, use of phrases such as “Women are not intelligent enough to do this job” or “Is his name Khan? He probably likes young boys” with negative connotations.

### 1.2 Methodology

#### 1.2.1 Facebook & Twitter analysis

This section of the study (see Annex 1,2) of online hate speech used content analysis of published material and comments – both textual and iconographic – on social media. The criteria for recording hate speech was based on high reach areas of the local online space where the spread of hate speech would have the most impact, and be most harmful.

All content containing hate speech was captured using software tools and saved for record by a data collection team. The entire archive of saved content was then reexamined by a second independent team to double check, verify and confirm the content was correctly analyzed and labeled.

Data gathering and analysis was carried out on 30 Facebook pages, chosen based on their high ranking in Pakistan as determined by social media analytics site Social Bakers, with a further narrowing down of selection based on engagement levels (the ‘Talking about this’ metric) and category (brands, media, entertainment etc.).

One hundred public shares and their associated comments were examined on each of the 30 Facebook pages, totaling an analysis of 3,000 shares and their comments. Each Facebook page was examined from a specific date backward, up to the specified count of shares to be examined.
The study also looked at 30 Twitter accounts, chosen based on their high ranking in Pakistan as determined by Social Bakers\(^\text{23}\), with further additions based on number of followers from lists of top Pakistani accounts cited in news reports\(^\text{24}\). Five hundred Twitter updates, associated replies and mentions were examined for each of the Twitter accounts, totaling an analysis of 15,000 updates, replies and mentions. Like Facebook, each Twitter account was examined from a specific date backward, up to the specified count of published updates to be examined.

Each record of hate speech was analyzed keeping targets of attack as the primary means of segmentation. Each record could contain more than one target of attack based on the criteria identified in section 1.1.2, for example, a politician could be called a “Jewish agent” as well as a “Fag” in a single comment or tweet, which would be counted as three attacks on different groups – politicians, Jews and the LGBT community.

### 1.2.2 Online survey analysis

An anonymous online survey of Pakistani internet users was conducted in January 2014 to build a snapshot of the extent to which online hate speech is understood and perceived locally, as well as to capture user experience of hate speech in cyberspace (see Annex 3). The survey, which consisted of a set of multiple-choice questions, was made available online on the Bytes For All website and was circulated/promoted through social media. Targeted Facebook ads were also used to calibrate audience demographics to make the survey more representative of the overall population, particularly in the case of ratio of males to females.

The following formula was used to develop as representative a sample of Pakistani Internet users:

\[
\frac{N}{(1 + N*e^2)}
\]

Where \(N\) = the size of the entire population to be represented, and \(e\) = the set acceptable percentage margin of error. With Pakistan’s Internet population reported at 20 million users, a total of 559 survey responses were collected, bringing the margin of error to ±6-7%.
2. VIEWS ON HATE SPEECH

2.0 Overview

A snapshot of Pakistani Internet users’ views on online hate speech was constructed using an online survey of 559 respondents (see Section 1.2.2 for survey methodology and Annex 3 for full survey). Respondents were roughly evenly divided between those aged 0-25 (45%) and those over 25 (55%). The ratio of males (47%) to females (53%) was also roughly even.

A large majority of respondents (78%) were Pakistanis living in urban areas of the country. This corresponds with past surveys of Pakistan’s online population, which is heavily concentrated in urban areas due to a variety of factors including a lack of infrastructure, high costs and low benefits for ISPs to provide services in rural areas along with cultural barriers and low literacy rates in the rural population.

In terms of monthly household income, a little more than half (51%) of respondents fell in the medium income range (Rs50,000-200,000), while 25% were in the high income bracket (over Rs200,000) and 24% were in the low income bracket (below Rs50,000).

Male respondents were slightly overrepresented in the over 25 age group, which was 58% male, 42% female, and slightly underrepresented in the low income group, which was 44% male and 56% female.

2.1 Understanding hate speech

When asked about Pakistan’s hate speech laws, a large majority (83%) of total respondents indicated they were either unaware of laws related to hate speech (56%) or were not sure about the laws (27%). Only 17% of respondents indicated they were aware of Pakistan’s laws regarding hate speech. Males expressed significantly greater confidence (23%) in being aware of hate speech related laws as compared to females (12%).

In order to determine how well respondents were able to identify hate speech, a list of statements (based on parameters defined in section 1.1.2) was presented, from which respondents had to check off all the statements they personally believed constituted hate speech.

Respondents in the high income bracket correctly identified hate speech more than all other demographic groups. Conversely, respondents in the low income bracket correctly identified hate speech less than all other demographic groups. In terms of age, those over 25 identified hate speech correctly more than those aged 0-25. Females correctly identified hate speech less than males, except in the case of hate speech based on sex/gender. Male respondents also reported coming across hate speech slightly more than females.

The four statements that were clearly not hate speech were correctly skipped by a majority of respondents. Respondents in the high income bracket were significantly better at identifying and skipping statements that were not hate speech. Females incorrectly identified the four statements as hate speech more than males. Those in the low income bracket incorrectly identified the statement, “Pakistan’s ideology is hopeless and broken” as hate speech markedly more than other demographic groups.

In all, the highest percentage (89%) of respondents correctly identified hate speech terming followers of Shia Islam ‘kaafirs’ i.e. unbelievers/infidels.

A majority of correspondents identified hate speech that targeted
members of the minority Ahmadiyya religious group (80%), declared Pakistan a country for Muslims only (73%) and labeled an individual a blasphemer with his personal information attached (72%). A majority of respondents were able to correctly identify hate speech propagating that ‘evil’ Jews were manipulating the media (71%), labeling an individual a US agent who should be targeted by terrorists (70%) and to a lesser extent, labeling an NGO ‘anti-Pakistan’ and an ‘enemy’ (60%).

Only a little over half (56%) of respondents identified terming someone an ‘Indian agent’ as hate speech.

A majority of respondents (over 80%) were able to correctly identify hate speech related to the Pakhtun and Baloch ethnic groups.

A majority of respondents correctly identified hate speech related to women and homosexuals, however, there was a significant percentage (34%) of respondents who did not identify that saying homosexuals “have a disease that makes them perverts” was hate speech.

More than half (53%) of those in the low income bracket believed calling homosexuals “perverts” with a “disease” was not hate speech. In this one instance, female respondents were slightly better at identifying hate speech related to women and homosexuals as compared to males.

2.2 Experiencing hate speech

In total, 92% of respondents replied “yes” to having come across hate speech online, with 65% indicating they encountered hate speech “often”. Only 5% of total respondents said they had not encountered hate speech online. Male respondents reporting coming across hate speech often (68%) slightly more than females (63%).

Over half (51%) of total respondents indicated that they had been the target of hate speech online. Male respondents had the highest percentage (57%) of those who indicated they had been the target of first-hand experiences.
hate speech. The majority (85%) of respondents said those who targeted them did not face any consequences for the reported attack(s). Only 3% of those respondents who indicated that they had been the target of hate speech online said the person/group that targeted them faced any consequences.

Of those respondents who indicated that they had been the target of hate speech online, 42% said they were targeted for their religious beliefs, 23% for their nationality, 22% based on race/ethnicity and 16% for sex/gender/sexual orientation. Male respondents had the highest percentage of those who indicated they had been the target of hate speech based on religion (48%) and nationality (31%). Women (23%) and those in the low income bracket (23%) had the highest percentages of those targeted for sex/gender/sexual orientation.

Among religious targets, total respondents indicated that hate speech against Shias (70%) and Ahmadis (61%) was markedly high. Among targets related to sex/sexual identity, more than half of total respondents indicated that they had come across hate speech related to women (56%) and the LGBT community (55%). Among local ethnic groups, a majority of total respondents indicated that they had not come across hate speech related to Sindhis, Punjabis, Baloch and Pashtuns. Among targets related to nationality and race, over half of total respondents indicated that they had come across hate speech related to Jews (57%), Americans (51%) and Indians (51%). More than half of total respondents indicated they did not come across hate speech related to Pakistan’s pillars of state. The highest percentage of hate speech directed at an institution was the Pakistan government (41%) followed by the media (36%).

A majority of total respondents indicated that they had not come across hate speech related to NGOs, civil society organizations, human rights defenders/activists and liberal/secular thinking academics. A small percentage of respondents (6%) indicated they had engaged in creating/spreading hate speech online, while the majority (78%) indicated they had not created/spread hate speech online. Male respondents had the highest percentage (10%) of those who indicated they had engaged in creating/spreading hate speech online, followed by those in the low income bracket (9%).

Over half (51%) of total respondents indicated that they had been the target of hate speech online. Male respondents had the highest percentage (57%) of those who indicated they had been the target of hate speech online. Those in the high income bracket had the lowest percentage (45%) of those who had been the target of hate speech online.

The vast majority of total respondents indicated they had come across hate speech on Facebook (91%). Facebook was the only network/medium where more than half of respondents indicated they had encountered hate speech. Respondents in the low income bracket indicated that they had encountered hate speech less than all other demographic groups for the networks/mediums listed, except in the case of SMS/MMS. Those aged 0-25 encountered hate speech far less via email (9%) as compared to those over 25 (17%). Those aged 0-25 also encountered hate speech less on Twitter (43%) as compared to those over 25 (53%). Conversely, those aged 0-25 indicated they encountered hate speech more on video-sharing sites (48%) and SMS/MMS (41%) as compared to those over 25.

Male respondents indicated they encountered hate speech more than females in all the networks/mediums listed.
3. TARGETS OF HATE SPEECH

3.1 Shias

Millions in Pakistan practice Shia Islam, but the conflict with Sunni Islam (which forms the majority of Muslims in the country) has been a serious issue for decades. Over the years, the Shia community has seen target killings of its members as well as large-scale violence in the form of terror attacks, with some terming the current crisis “Shia genocide.”

The results of the conflict are very visible in Pakistan’s online space, where aside from general abuse and discrimination, many individuals and groups (some of whom have their roots in actual organisations) actively generate propaganda and hate against the community, its religious leaders and its practices.

In some instances, Shias have been identified, their personal information divulged online and calls have been made for violence against them.

The anti-Shia narrative is both religious and political in nature. In terms of religion, Shias are attacked for practicing the “wrong” form of Islam and for some religious practices and beliefs different from Sunni traditions. At its most extreme, Shias are termed “Kaafir” or “Non-Muslims” and “Anti-Islam”.

On the political front, the narrative is largely focused on a Shia “conspiracy” to take control of positions of power with backing from Shia-dominated Iran.

On Facebook and Twitter, hate speech against Shias formed 2% of total records in each case.

3.2 Muslims

Pakistanis are occasionally subject to hate speech emanating from neighboring countries, particularly India. Such online exchanges sometimes result in attacks on Islam, Muslims and the clergy in Pakistan.

In the online survey, the highest percentage of respondents correctly identifying hate speech was for the statement terming followers of Shia Islam ‘kaafirs’ i.e. unbelievers/infidels (89%). Among religious targets, total respondents indicated that hate speech against Shias (70%) was markedly high.
Attacks on Islam/Muslims were less than 1% of recorded hate speech on Facebook. Total hate speech recorded on Twitter contained some attacks on Deobandis (2%), Shias (2%), Muslim clerics (1%) and general attacks on Muslims/Islam (1%).

Forty-five per cent of respondents to the online survey on hate speech indicated they had come across hate speech related to Muslims. Respondents indicated that hate speech against Sunnis was lowest (27%) among target groups related to religion. Of those respondents who indicated that they had been the target of hate speech online, 42% said they were targeted for their religious beliefs. Male respondents had the highest percentage of those who indicated they had been the target of hate speech based on religion (48%).

### 3.3 Ahmadis

The Ahmadiyya community in Pakistan has faced constant discrimination, hate and often deadly violence as they are perceived as heretics, a viewpoint that has spread widely since 1974 when the government under Prime Minister Zulifqar Ali Bhutto passed a constitutional amendment that declared Ahmadis to be non-Muslims.

Further amendments to the blasphemy laws in Pakistan’s Penal Code (298-B and 298-C) made it illegal for Ahmadis to identify themselves as Muslims, practice their religion with terminology that may identify it with Islam, proselytize in any manner or even “outrage the religious feelings of Muslims” – the penalties for which is imprisonment. In such a hostile environment, Ahmadis have found themselves under constant threat and attack, and this is also the case online.

The narrative against Ahmadis in cyberspace is one of the most extreme; members of the community are termed as heretics and ‘enemies of Islam’ and are considered less-than-human. Vicious attacks on the Ahmadi community’s religious leaders and practices are circulated, with a common theme being one of a conspiracy wherein “cunning” or “crafty” Ahmadis are believed to be out to undermine Islam by taking up positions of power or secretly converting Muslims. In many cases, “Ahmadi” or “Qadiani” (an alternate name for the community) is used as a term of abuse, or a label to defame an individual/group.

Hate speech related to Ahmadis formed less than 1% of records gathered on Facebook, while on Twitter, attacks on the faith formed 1% of the total.

In the online survey, respondents were asked to identify whether they believed the statement, “If you see an Ahmadi pretending to be a Muslim, catch him. He must be punished severely,” qualified as hate speech. Eighty per cent of respondents identified this statement as hate speech. Those in the low income bracket identified this statement as hate speech markedly less than the average (58%). When asked which group they had seen hate speech against online, 61% of total respondents indicated they had seen hate speech related to Ahmadis, second only to Shias (70%).
3.4 Indians/Hindus

India has remained a principle focus of hate in Pakistan, a reality that has its roots in the partition of 1947, the resultant Kashmir crisis, war in 1965 and 1971, as well as many other armed engagements along the Line of Control that divides the two countries.

The consequence of decades of conflict and mistrust have fueled multiple narratives that frame Indians, and by extension, Hindus (including the local community) as ‘the enemy’ in connection to national security, politics and religion.

In terms of religion, India and Hinduism are directly connected in the Pakistani narrative, breeding intolerance and hate for Indians as well as those who practice Hinduism in Pakistan. In religious terms, Hinduism is perceived as a ‘primitive’ religion that is in direct conflict with monotheistic Islam. Terms such as ‘kaafir’ and ‘hindu’ and are often used as abuse.

Aside from personal attacks, hate speech against Indians/Hindus formed 7% of Facebook records – the highest of any group outside pillars of the state. On Twitter, 6% of total hate speech recorded was against Indians/Hindus.
3.5 Atheists/unbelievers
In the Pakistani narrative of hate, atheists and ‘unbelievers’ (also termed ‘kaafir’) are lumped together as heretics, apostates (also termed ‘murtad’), anti-Islam and subsequently, anti-Pakistan. Apostasy in Islam is generally considered an offence punishable by death, and a 2010 poll by Pew Research Center showed that 76% of Pakistani respondents agree with the death penalty for leaving Islam.

Consequently, labeling an individual or group atheists and unbelievers is an extreme, dangerous act. In such an environment, this form of hate speech is common wherever religious debate or even religious tolerance is propagated. Individuals and groups are sometimes attacked by labeling them “atheists” or “kaafirs” or connecting such individuals’ critique of religion as blasphemy.

Hatred and attacks on atheists/unbelievers constituted 3% of total Facebook hate speech records, and 1% of total Twitter records. A total of 48% of respondents indicated they had seen hate speech against atheists/unbelievers online.

3.6 Pillars of the state
While one of the features that define hate speech is the targeting of vulnerable individuals or groups, in Pakistan, politicians, the military, the judiciary and the media have been included in this study given the context of over a decade of terrorism that has specifically targeted individuals and groups that form the pillars of the state. In such a volatile environment, the labeling of a politician, a member of the armed forces, judiciary or media person/organization as ‘the enemy’ working against either Islam or Pakistan has consequences that may extend from harassment and threats to actual violence.

In these narratives, the Pakistan armed forces are framed as ‘anti-Islam’ or ‘Napak’ acting on the behest of foreign/western forces, and as such, making its members ‘Wajibul Qatl’ (liable to be killed).
Similarly, individual politicians and political parties are termed ‘Unislamic’ while democracy as a governing force is seen as a western system of control that needs to be overthrown, with violence if necessary. Character assassination of politicians using racist and homophobic slurs or depictions as animals are also common.

Members of the judiciary and the media are also considered complicit in this ‘anti-Islam’ agenda and are similarly considered targets of abuse, defamation and in the most extreme cases, labeled ‘Wajibul Qatl’ (liable to be killed).

The media in particular is said to be working on a Jewish, American or Indian sponsored agenda to destroy Pakistan.

The two largest groups that were a target for hate speech on Facebook were politicians (38% of all hate speech) and members of the media/media groups (10%).

These attacks on politicians and the media formed nearly half of all hate speech on the Facebook pages analyzed.

On Twitter, 20% of total records were targeted at pillars of the state, with attacks on politicians (11%) and media (7%) registering highest.

More than half of total respondents in the online survey indicated they did not come across hate speech related to Pakistan’s pillars of state. The highest percentages indicated were attacks on the government (41%) followed by the media (36%).
3.7 Females

Gender is a major principle upon which Pakistani society is organized, with females being subordinate to men in a conservative, patriarchal setup. As described in a Country Briefing Paper initiated by the Asia Development Bank, “An artificial divide between production and reproduction, created by the ideology of sexual division of labor, has placed women in reproductive roles as mothers and wives in the private arena of home and men in a productive role as breadwinners in the public arena… low investment in women’s human capital, compounded by the ideology of purdah (literally “veiled”), negative social biases, and cultural practices; the concept of honor linked with women’s sexuality; restrictions on women’s mobility; and the internalization of patriarchy by women themselves, becomes, the basis for gender discrimination and disparities in all spheres of life.”

In the online space, discrimination and hate speech related to females reflects this same intolerance found in society. Attacks consist of vilifying and ‘shaming’ females and individuals or groups that support women’s rights and any attempt to change or challenge the status quo. Women are attacked for working in the media, working in any profession, and given that the Internet is an extension of public space, they are attacked for sharing/posting photos or videos, engaging in discussions, blogging etc.

Labels such as ‘anti-Pakistan’ or ‘anti-Islam’ are common online as are suggestions of ‘dishonor’, ‘disobedience’ and ‘vulgarity’ aside from more typical derogatory and discriminatory remarks and other forms of character assassination.

Attacks on women are often made by females themselves, reflecting the internalization of patriarchy within society.

Hate speech against females formed less than 1% of Facebook records, and 3% of Twitter records.

In the online survey, respondents were asked to identify whether the statements, “Women who dress in Western clothes are asking to be raped” and, “Women working in showbiz are all of bad character” qualify as hate speech. In the case of the former, 77% of respondents identified it as hate speech. The same pattern was found for the latter statement, with 72% identifying it as hate speech.

In the online survey, respondents were asked to identify whether the statements, “Women who dress in Western clothes are asking to be raped” and, “Women working in showbiz are all of bad character” qualify as hate speech. In the case of the former, 77% of respondents identified it as hate speech. The same pattern was found for the latter statement, with 72% identifying it as hate speech.
respondents identified the statement as hate speech, and 72% said the same of the latter. Fifty six per cent of total respondents indicated they had come across hate speech related to women.

3.8 LGBT
Given Pakistani society’s conservative nature and coupled with the fact that homosexuality is considered a sin in Islam, the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community in Pakistan faces intense hatred and discrimination. Pakistan has laws that criminalize ‘unnatural offences’ including homosexuality in its Penal Code\textsuperscript{31}, while specific to the Internet, the state blocked the first gay website for Pakistani homosexuals, queerpk.com\textsuperscript{32}.

In such an environment, any individuals who declare themselves homosexuals become the target for vicious attacks online.

The taboo against the LGBT community runs so deep that any individual or group that speaks in support of LGBT rights is also a potential target for hate speech. Homophobic slurs in both English and Urdu are commonly used as a means to vilify an individual or group.

In the online survey, respondents were asked to identify whether, “Homosexuals have a disease of the mind that makes them perverts” qualified as hate speech. A total of 66% of respondents believed this statement to be hate speech. Respondents in the low income bracket had less than half (47%) the statement as hate speech. Fifty five per cent of respondents said they had encountered hate speech related to the LGBT community.

\begin{itemize}
  \item A total of 4% of Facebook hate speech records contained hate against the LGBT community, while 1% of Twitter records contained the same.
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{31} Pakistan Penal Code (Act XIV of 1860)
\textsuperscript{32} (Reuters, 2013)
3.9 Jews

Hatred against Jews, Judaism and Israel stems from both religious and political contexts in Pakistan. Judaism is perceived to be in direct conflict with Islam based on the popular interpretation and teaching of Islamic history, while the existing conflict between Israel and Palestine/the Middle East continues to fuel this perception.

Pakistan does not recognize the state of Israel and the popular narrative frames Jews as an occupying force in the ‘Holy land’.

From this stems further conspiracy theories regarding the influence of Jews on global media, the West and even inside Pakistan to hurt or destroy Islam.

Phrases such as ‘Jew’, ‘Yahoodi’, ‘Jewish agent’, ‘Mossad agent’ are used as derogatory terms to attack individuals and groups, particularly local media.

Hate speech on Facebook and Twitter that was anti-Semitic in nature formed 3% of total records on both social networks respectively.

In the online survey, respondents were asked whether, “The evil Jews/Zionists have control of our media. They are poisoning us with their filth” qualified as hate speech. Seventy one per cent of respondents identified the statement as hate speech. Over half of total respondents indicated that they had come across hate speech related to Jews (57%).

3.10 Local ethnicities

Pakhtuns or ‘Pathans’ who come from Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, FATA and parts of Balochistan are generally labeled ‘terrorists’, ‘extremists’, ‘illiterate’ or ‘stupid’ and are also commonly attacked using homophobic slurs and innuendo.

The Baloch are also labeled as ‘terrorists’ but are also commonly called ‘anti-Pakistan’ or ‘traitors’ given the political context of a local insurgency in the province that calls for secession from the state.

On Facebook, hate speech against Baloch ethnic groups was less than 1%, while it was 1% in relation to Pakhtuns. On Twitter, hate speech against Pakhtuns was recorded at 1% respectively, and less than 1% for Baloch.
In the online survey, respondents were asked whether “Pathans are brainless - we should only hire them for low level jobs” and “All Baloch are traitors to Pakistan” qualified as hate speech. A majority of respondents (over 80%) were able to identify the statement related to Pakhtuns and Baloch ethnic groups as hate speech. A majority of total respondents indicated that they had not come across hate speech related to Punjabis (only 27% of total), Baloch (31%) and Pakhtuns (38%).

3.11 Americans
In the backdrop of the war on terror, troubled Pak-US ties and the perceived global conflict between Islam and the West, the US and Americans are at par with India as Pakistan’s ‘enemy number one’. According to a 2012 report published by the Pew Research Centre, approximately three out of four Pakistanis (74%) consider the US an enemy — up from 69% in 2011\(^3\).

The popular narrative that breeds hatred and intolerance of Americans focuses on a US-led conspiracy to damage or even divide Pakistan through military, economic, political and cultural means, ostensibly due to Pakistan’s geo-strategic significance or, in the religion-based narrative, as a part of the battle against Islam.

Individuals or groups are often attacked by labeling them ‘American agents’, ‘CIA-funded’ or any other link (symbolic, cultural etc.) to the US as an identification of ‘the enemy’.

In the online survey, 70% of respondents identified “Person Y is a US agent. I hope the Taliban take care of him,” as hate speech. Respondents in the low income bracket were well below the average, at only 50% identifying the statement as hate speech. Fifty one per cent of respondents said they had come across hate speech related to Americans online.

3.12 Pakistanis
Given the open nature of cyberspace, hate speech related to Pakistanis is not uncommon, particularly on social media. Such hate speech usually comes in the form of labels such as ‘terrorist’, ‘extremist’ and attacks on the Islamic faith.

Much of the hate speech appeared to come from neighboring India, or supporters of the Baloch separatist movement.

A total of 2% of Facebook hate speech records were directed at Pakistanis, while 10% of Twitter hate speech was against Pakistanis. In the online survey, 38% of total respondents said they had encountered hate speech related to Pakistanis.
4. ADDRESSING ONLINE HATE SPEECH

The need to counter the spread of hate speech in Pakistan’s online space is a pressing concern that needs to be addressed through a multi-pronged approach that educates, creates awareness and discourages hate and intolerance, prohibits and criminalizes the most extreme and dangerous forms of hate speech by law, yet guarantees that fundamental human rights to free speech and information are safeguarded.

In order for such a multi-pronged approach to work, a plan of action that has multiple stakeholders involved would be necessary to maintain checks and balances, particularly to ensure that the issue of hate speech in cyberspace is not manipulated and used to further political agendas, increase censorship and/or target and discriminate against vulnerable individuals/groups.

The government would need to address the lack of legislation with regards to the Internet in general, and online hate speech specifically. Given the range of hate speech definitions and online regulatory efforts worldwide, a model that works for Pakistan could be developed building on best practices in collaboration with other states/state agencies or other global organizations working on the issue. Institutional support (both state and private) would be critical in any such effort. Major stakeholders that would need to work on the issue of hate speech include Internet service providers, the telecom industry, media groups, the IT sector, NGOs working in this area and other civil society groups. Institutions and bodies such as the Federal Investigation Agency, PTA, Ministry of IT, Internet Service Providers Association of Pakistan and the Pakistan Software Houses Association could all play a key role here.

The media in particular would need to look at its role in the spread of online hate speech, as many of the high impact, high reach areas of local cyberspace are operated/administered by them. The administrators of social media accounts, particularly Facebook, where hate speech is spread need to be engaged and educated to follow codes of conduct and best practices with regard to online community engagement and set up word-block lists for common hate speech terms in English and Roman Urdu where possible.

There is also a great need to develop better, closer relationships with online companies that own and operate the online space where hate speech is spread such as Facebook, Google and Twitter. Such companies would need to be educated on problems specific to Pakistan, and critically, would need to work with local stakeholders to address the issue of hate speech being spread in Roman Urdu and the Urdu script.

While regulation of the most extreme forms of online hate speech would be one course of action, the nature of the Internet lends itself to another solution to the issue: counter-speech i.e. collective, organized efforts by society and the state to create positive, progressive narratives to gain back any space occupied by hatred and intolerance. Such efforts could further extend to responding to individuals and groups spreading hate and engaging with them in high impact, high reach areas of cyberspace.

Finally, a much broader program to counter hate speech outside of the online context is needed in Pakistan, beginning from the education sector, to state-level campaigns and programs, civil-society led initiatives and more. One of the biggest challenges to such a broad effort is the lack of data collection and research (online-specific and otherwise) on hate speech in the country. The need for investment on research in this area by both the state and private enterprise would be critical in stemming the spread of hatred, intolerance and regressive narratives in Pakistan.
REFERENCES


Total Facebook pages analyzed: **30**
Total shares analyzed per page: **100**
Total shares analyzed: **3,000 (including all comments on shares)**
Date range of analysis: **December 2010 - February 2014**
Average date range for account analysis: **116 days**
Total hate speech records: **9,494**
Average hate speech records per share: **3**
Total attacks on hate speech targets in records: **10,329***
Average count of hate speech per share: **3.4**
Hate speech that could fall under criminal offense based on study’s definitions: **negligible**

*Each record of hate speech can contain more than one attack on more than one target*
The two largest groups that were a target for hate speech on Facebook were politicians (38% of all hate speech) and members of the media/media groups (10%). These attacks on pillars of the state formed nearly half of all hate speech on the Facebook pages analyzed. Personal attacks formed another 20% of hate speech, while hate speech against Indians/Hindus formed 7% of the total.
HATE SPEECH RELATED TO DIFFERENT INDIVIDUALS/GROUPS EXCLUDING PILLARS OF STATE
(% breakdown of 5,371 total attacks)

- Personal attack: 38%
- Other: 5%
- Pakistani: 4%
- Pakhtun: 2%
- Jew/Israel: 6%
- LGBT: 8%
- Females: 8%
- Indian/Hindus: 13%
- Shias: 4%
- Atheists/Unbelievers: 6%
- Americans/US: 6%
The top 10 Facebook pages analyzed formed the bulk of all hate speech recorded in the study. Eight out of the top 10 Facebook pages were administered by traditional media groups/personalities and online media-related entities.

### HATE SPEECH: TOP 10 FACEBOOK PAGES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facebook Page</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Avg Counts of Hate Speech per Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zem TV</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imran Khan</td>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zaid Hamid</td>
<td>Media/Politics</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siasat.pk</td>
<td>Media/Politics</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunya TV</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Express News</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hasb-e-Haal</td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan Zindabad</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(I Love Allah)</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samaa</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Campaign Against Jew TV</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In terms of language, hate speech recorded on Facebook was largely in Roman Urdu (74%) followed by English (22%) and Urdu script (4%).
FACEBOOK PAGES ANALYZED

FACEBOOK PAGES

1. https://www.facebook.com/arydigital.tv
2. https://www.facebook.com/etribune
5. https://www.facebook.com/zemtv
11. https://www.facebook.com/AllamaMIqbal
15. https://www.facebook.com/stringspage
17. https://www.facebook.com/aly.zafar
27. https://www.facebook.com/draqkhanpakistan
29. https://www.facebook.com/gogreenpak
Total Twitter accounts analyzed: 30
Total tweets analyzed per account: 500
Total tweets analyzed: 15,000
Date range of analysis: June 2013 - February 2014
Average date range for account analysis: 43 days
Total hate speech records*: 273 (out of 15,000 analyzed)
Percentage of total hate speech records to total tweets: 1.8%
Total attacks on hate speech targets in records*: 350
Percentage of total attacks on hate speech targets to total tweets: 2.3%
Hate speech that could fall under criminal offense based on study’s definitions: negligible

*Each record of hate speech can contain more than one attack on more than one target
The majority of hate speech recorded on Twitter was personal attacks and abuse (41%). Other major targets included politicians (11%), Pakistanis (10%), media persons/groups (7%), and Indians/Hindus (6%). Total hate speech recorded on Twitter contained some attacks on Deobandis (2%), Shias (2%), Muslim clerics (1%) and general attacks on Muslims/Islam (1%).
The top five Twitter accounts analyzed formed the bulk of total hate speech recorded from Twitter. Four of the top five Twitter accounts featuring hate speech in tweets/replies/mentions were traditional media personalities.

### HATE SPEECH ACCORDING TO LANGUAGE/SCRIPT:

- Traditional media personalities featured prominently in hate speech on Twitter.

### HATE SPEECH: TOP 10 TWITTER ACCOUNTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TWITTER ACCOUNT</th>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>% OF THE SPEECH IN TOTAL TWEETS/RPLIES/MENTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Zaid Hamid</td>
<td>Media/Politics</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Jamaat Ud Dawa</td>
<td>Charity/Politics</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Hamid Mir</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Mubasher Lucman</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Kamran Khan</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Nasim Zehra</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Venna Malik</td>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Radio Pakistan</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. PTI Official</td>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Shahbaz Sharif</td>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hate speech collected on Twitter was largely in English (67%), followed by Roman Urdu (28%) and Urdu script (5%).
The vast majority of hate speech recorded on Twitter was generated by users replying to/mentioning the accounts analyzed (98%) and not by the accounts themselves.
### TWITTER ACCOUNTS

1. https://twitter.com/HamidMirGEO
2. https://twitter.com/AliZafarsays
3. https://twitter.com/MubasherLucman
4. https://twitter.com/Shahidmasooddr
5. https://twitter.com/AajKamranKhan
6. https://twitter.com/itsaadee
7. https://twitter.com/CMShehbaz
8. https://twitter.com/ImranKhanPTI
9. https://twitter.com/sanabucha
10. https://twitter.com/marvi_memon
11. https://twitter.com/Maria_Memon
12. https://twitter.com/NasimZehra
13. https://twitter.com/sherryrehman
15. https://twitter.com/FauziaKasuri
16. https://twitter.com/realsanambaloch
17. https://twitter.com/TalatHussain12
18. https://twitter.com/PTIofficial
19. https://twitter.com/ExpressNewsPK
20. https://twitter.com/etribune
21. https://twitter.com/dawn_com
22. https://twitter.com/thenever_intl
23. https://twitter.com/geonews_urdu
24. https://twitter.com/RadioPakistan
25. https://twitter.com/usembislamabad
26. https://twitter.com/AamirLiaquat
27. https://twitter.com/TahirulQadri
30. https://twitter.com/ISPR_Official
Respondents were roughly evenly divided between those aged 0-25 (45%) and those over 25 (55%). The ratio of males (47%) to females (53%) was also roughly even. A large majority of respondents (78%) were Pakistanis living in urban areas of the country. In terms of monthly household income, a little more than half of respondents fell in the medium income range (51%), while 25% were in the high income bracket (over Rs200,000) and 24% were in the low income bracket (below Rs50,000). Male respondents were slightly overrepresented in the over 25 age group, which was 58% male, 42% female, and slightly underrepresented in the low income group, which was 44% male and 56% female.
A large majority (83%) of total respondents indicated they were either unaware of laws related to hate speech in Pakistan (56%) or not sure about the laws (27%). Only 17% of respondents indicated they were aware of Pakistan’s laws regarding hate speech.
BREAKDOWN: ARE YOU AWARE OF PAKISTAN’S LAWS REGARDING HATE SPEECH?

Respondents in the low income bracket had a slightly higher percentage (60%) of those indicating they were unaware of Pakistan’s laws related to hate speech as compared to high income (54%) and middle income (58%) respondents. Those aged 0-25 expressed slightly greater confidence (20%) in being aware of hate speech related laws as compared to those over 25 (16%). Respondents aged 0-25 also had a lower percentage of those who indicated they were unaware of hate speech laws (52%) as compared to those over 25 (59%). Males expressed significantly greater confidence (23%) in being aware of hate speech related laws as compared to females (12%).
WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS QUALIFY AS HATE SPEECH?

- "The evil Jews/Zionists have control of our media. They are poisoning us with their filth" 71%
- "Person Y is a US agent. I hope the Taliban take care of him" 70%
- "This NGO is anti-Pakistan, working on foreign funding - they are our enemy" 60%
- "Person X is a confirmed Indian agent" 56%

A majority of respondents identified hate speech propagating that ‘evil’ Jews are manipulating the media (71%), labeling an individual a US agent who should be targeted by terrorists (70%) and to a lesser extent, labeling an NGO ‘anti-Pakistan’ and an ‘enemy’ (60%). Only a little over half (56%) of respondents identified terming someone an ‘Indian agent’ as hate speech.
Respondents in the high income bracket identified hate speech more than all other demographic groups for the statements above. Conversely, respondents in the low income bracket identified hate speech less than all other demographic groups for the statements above, falling below 50% for hate speech labeling an NGO ‘anti-Pakistan’ and an ‘enemy’, and terming someone an ‘Indian agent’. Male respondents also fell below 50% in identifying terming someone an Indian agent as hate speech. Those over 25 identified hate speech more than those aged 0-25 for all the statements above. Aside from the statement propagating that ‘evil’ Jews are manipulating the media, females identified hate speech less than males.
In all, the highest percentage of respondents correctly identifying hate speech was for the statement terming followers of Shia Islam ‘kaafirs’ i.e. unbelievers/infidels (89%). A majority of correspondents identified hate speech that targeted members of the minority Ahmadiyya religious group (80%), declared Pakistan a country for Muslims only (73%) and labeled an individual a blasphemer with his personal information attached (72%).
Respondents in the high income bracket identified hate speech more than other demographic groups for the statements above. Conversely, respondents in the low income bracket identified hate speech markedly less than all other demographic groups for the statements above, falling below 50% for labeling an individual a blasphemer and identifying their address/phone number. Similarly, those in the low income bracket identified hate speech against Ahmadis markedly less than the average (58%). Those over 25 identified hate speech more than those aged 0-25 for all the statements above. Females identified hate speech slightly less than males in the statements above.
IDENTIFYING HATE SPEECH STATEMENTS: ONLINE SURVEY

The four statements that were not hate speech were correctly skipped by a majority of respondents, except in the case of a generalization of “rich and powerful” people being corrupt (50% identified the statement as hate speech).
Respondents in the high income bracket were significantly better at identifying and skipping statements that were not hate speech except in the case of a generalized attack on “rich and powerful people” which saw the high income bracket identify the statement as hate speech the most (55%) out of all demographic groups. Those in the low income bracket incorrectly identified the statement, “Pakistan’s ideology is hopeless and broken” as hate speech markedly more (47%) than other demographic groups. Age differences had no significant bearing on correctly skipping over statements that were not hate speech. Females incorrectly identified the statements above as hate speech more than males.
A majority of respondents (over 80%) were able to correctly identify hate speech related to the Pakhtun and Baloch ethnic groups.
Respondents in the high income bracket had the highest percentages for recognizing hate speech against Pakhtuns (88%) and Baloch (87%) compared to all other demographic groups. Conversely, those in the low income bracket had the lowest percentages for recognizing the statements above as hate speech. Those aged over 25 were slightly better at identifying hate speech related to Pakhtuns and Baloch as compared to those 0-25. Male respondents were slightly better at identifying hate speech related to Pakhtuns and Baloch as compared to females.
A majority of respondents correctly identified hate speech related to women and homosexuals, however, there was a significant percentage (34%) of respondents who did not identify that saying homosexuals “have a disease that makes them perverts” was hate speech.
Respondents in the high income bracket had the highest percentages for recognizing hate speech related to women and homosexuals compared to all other demographic groups. Those in the low income bracket had the lowest percentages for recognizing the statements above as hate speech, dropping to less than half (47%) identifying that calling homosexuals “perverts” with a “disease” was hate speech. Those aged over 25 were slightly better at identifying hate speech related to women and homosexuals as compared to those 0-25. Female respondents were slightly better at identifying hate speech related to women and homosexuals as compared to males.
HAVE YOU EVER COME ACROSS HATE SPEECH ONLINE?

In total, 92% of respondents replied “yes” to having come across hate speech online, with 65% indicating they encountered hate speech “often”. Only 5% of total respondents said they had not encountered hate speech online.
HAVE YOU EVER COME ACROSS HATE SPEECH ONLINE?

Respondents in the low income bracket had the highest percentages of those who indicated they had not encountered hate speech online (11%) or encountered hate speech rarely (15%).

Those over 25 reported coming across hate speech often (69%) more than those aged 0-25 (60%).

Male respondents reporting coming across hate speech often (68%) slightly more than females (63%).
Among religious targets, total respondents indicated that hate speech against Shias (70%) and Ahmadis (61%) was markedly high. Forty five per cent of respondents to the online survey on hate speech indicated they had come across hate speech targeting Muslims. Respondents indicated that hate speech against Sunnis was lowest (27%) among target groups related to religion.
Among targets related to sex/sexual identity, more than half of total respondents indicated that they had come across hate speech targeting women (56%) and LGBT (55%).
IF YOU HAVE COME ACROSS HATE SPEECH ONLINE, WHO/WATCH WAS THE HATE SPEECH TARGETING?

Among local ethnic groups, a majority of total respondents indicated that they had not come across hate speech targeting Sindhis (23%), Punjabis (27%), Baloch (31%) and Pakhtuns (38%).
Among targets related to nationality and race, over half of total respondents indicated that they had come across hate speech targeting Jews (57%), Americans (51%) and Indians (51%).
IF YOU HAVE COME ACROSS HATE SPEECH ONLINE, WHO/WHAT WAS THE HATE SPEECH TARGETING?

More than half of total respondents indicated they did not come across hate speech targeting Pakistan’s pillars of state. The highest percentage of hate speech directed at an institution was the Pakistan government (41%) followed by the media (36%).
A majority of total respondents indicated that they had not come across hate speech targeting NGOs, civil society organizations, human rights defenders/activists and liberal/secular thinking academics.
WHERE HAVE YOU COME ACROSS HATE SPEECH?

The vast majority of total respondents indicated they had come across hate speech on Facebook (91%). Facebook was the only network/medium where more than half of respondents indicated they had encountered hate speech.
Respondents in the low income bracket indicated that they had encountered hate speech less than all other demographic groups for the networks/mediums listed above, except in the case of SMS/MMS.

Those aged 0-25 encountered hate speech far less via email (9%) as compared to those over 25 (17%). Those aged 0-25 also encountered hate speech less on Twitter (43%) as compared to those over 25 (53%). Conversely, those aged 0-25 indicated they encountered hate speech more on video-sharing sites (48%) and SMS/MMS (41%) as compared to those over 25.

Male respondents indicated they encountered hate speech more than females in all the networks/mediums listed above.
HAVE YOU EVER ENGAGED IN CREATING/SPREADING HATE SPEECH ONLINE?

A small percentage of respondents (6%) indicated they had engaged in creating/spreading hate speech online, while the majority (78%) indicated they had not created/spread hate speech online.
Male respondents had the highest percentage (10%) of those who indicated they had engaged in creating/spreading hate speech online, followed by those in the low income bracket (9%). Conversely, females (3%) and those in the high income bracket (3%) had the lowest percentages for the same.
HAVE YOU EVER BEEN THE TARGET OF HATE SPEECH ONLINE?

Over half (51%) of total respondents indicated that they had been the target of hate speech online.
Male respondents had the highest percentage (57%) of those who indicated they had been the target of hate speech online. Those in the high income bracket had the lowest percentage (45%) of those who had been the target of hate speech online.
Of those respondents who indicated that they had been the target of hate speech online, 42% said they were targeted for their religious beliefs, 23% for their nationality, 22% based on race/ethnicity and 16% for sex/gender/sexual orientation.
Male respondents had the highest percentage of those who indicated they had been the target of hate speech based on religion (48%) and nationality (31%). Women (23%) and those in the low income bracket (23%) had the highest percentages of those targeted for sex/gender/sexual orientation. Those aged 0-25 had higher percentages of being the targets of hate speech related to sex/gender/sexual orientation (20%) and nationality (28%) than those over 25.
Only 3% of those respondents who indicated that they had been the target of hate speech online said the person/group that targeted them faced any consequences. The majority (85%) of respondents said those who targeted them did not face any consequences for the reported attack(s).
Bytes for All (B4A), Pakistan is a human rights organization and a research think tank with a focus on Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). It experiments with and organizes debate on the relevance of ICTs for sustainable development and strengthening human rights movements in the country. Its strategic plan delivers in following key result areas (KRA), which include:

1. Securing digital rights and freedom of expression for civil liberties;
2. Strengthening digital security of human rights defenders & media professionals;
3. Ending technology-driven gender-based violence;
4. Network building at national, regional and global level; and
5. Community development and communications for environmental sustainability

To deliver above-mentioned KRAs, B4A conducts research for evidence-based policy advocacy and capacity building of human rights defenders on their digital security, privacy, and online safety. Globally acclaimed Take Back The Tech Campaign is the flagship of Bytes for All, which focuses on strategic use of ICTs by the women and girls to fight violence against women in Pakistan.

For its work, B4A partners and collaborates with a large number of civil society organizations. B4A’s team is dedicatedly committed towards civil liberties in Pakistan.

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