

5.3. Applicable laws (including Sharia)

Laws enacted during the reference period include the Prevention of Electronic Crimes (Amendment) Act, 2025,1105 the Anti-Terrorism (Amendment) Act, 2025,1106 the National Commission for Minority Rights Bill, 2025,1107 the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2026,1108 and the ICT Child Marriage Restraint Act, 2025.1109

The Prevention of Electronic Crimes (Amendment) Act, 2025, enacted in January 2025, inserted the new section 26A into the existing Prevention of Electronic Crimes, 2016, making the dissemination of 'false or fake' information a crime punishable by up to three years' imprisonment or a fine.1110 It uses vague language when referring to 'false or fake' information,1111 describing it as information 'likely to cause or create a sense of fear, panic or disorder or unrest in general public or society'.1112 The amendments also provide for the creation of four new government bodies for the regulation of online content.1113 Among them, the Social Media Protection and Regulation Authority was granted powers to remove and block various types of content, including information containing 'aspersions against any person including members of Judiciary; Armed Forces, Majlis-e Shoora (Parliament) or a Provincial Assembly'.1114 The term 'aspersion' is described as 'spreading false and harmful information which damages the reputation of a person'.1115 However, the amended act lacks a precise definition of what constitutes 'false' and 'harmful' information.1116

In the security realm, the reference period saw the enactment of the controversial federal Anti-Terrorism (Amendment) Act 20251117 and the Anti-Terrorism (Balochistan Amendment) Act, 2025, for Balochistan.1118 For more information, see section 5.5. Anti-Terrorism Acts.

Meanwhile, late December 2025 saw the adoption of the National Commission for Minority Rights Bill, 2025, that provides for the creation of a statutory body mandated to protect the rights of minorities and investigate violations.1119 Another piece of legislation, the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2026, enacted in January 2026, defines domestic violence as abuse (physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, or economic) occurring in a domestic setting that causes fear or physical/psychological harm. It specifies that acts already constituting an offence under the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) will be prosecuted under that code, while relevant acts not falling under the PPC's provisions will be treated as domestic violence under the new law, punishable by imprisonment ranging from six months to three years as well as a fine and compensation to be paid to the victim.1120 For further information, see sections 6.1.4. Women and girls and 6.1.5. Children.

In the capital territory, the ICT Child Marriage Restraint Bill, 2025, was enacted in May 2025. It repeals the federal Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929, as far as the ICT is concerned. It defines 'child' as a male or female person under 18 years of age and stipulates that a male adult (over

the age of 18) who marries a child faces between two and three years in prison and a fine. It also prohibits *Nikah* [Islamic marriage contract] registrars from registering marriages where one or both parties are below the age of 18. The Council of Islamic Ideology, a constitutional advisory body on issues relating to Sharia law, has criticised the ICT Child Marriage Restraint Bill as 'un-Islamic'1121 and also contrary to traditions and societal values.1122 For further information on Sharia law, see section 5.6. Punishments under the law of this report and section 5.2. Applicable laws (including *Sharia*) of the previous EUAA COI report Pakistan - Country Focus (December 2024).

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