

Electronic Crimes Act 2003

A

Bill

to provide for punishment of the electronic crimes and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto;

Whereas it is expedient to deter action directed against the confidentiality, integrity and availability of electronic system, networks and data as well as the misuse of such system, networks and data by providing for the punishment of such conduct and providing for sufficient powers to effectively combat such offences by facilitate their detection, investigation and prosecution and for matters ancillary thereto;

It is hereby enacted as follows:—

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY

1. **Short title, extent and commencement:—** (1) This Act may be called the Electronic crimes Act 2003.

(2) It shall extend to the whole of Pakistan.

(3) It shall come into force at once.

2. **Territorial scope of offences under this Act.—** Every person shall be liable to punishment under this Act for every act or omission contrary to the provisions thereof, if:

- (a) the offence was committed in Pakistan;
- (b) any act of preparation towards the offence or any part of the offence was committed in Pakistan, or where any result of the offence has had an effect in Pakistan;
- (c) the offence was committed by a Pakistani national or a person resident or carrying out business in Pakistan;
- (d) the offence was committed in relation to or connected with an electronic system or data in Pakistan or capable of being connected, sent to, used by or with any electronic system in Pakistan; or
- (e) the offence was committed by any person, of any nationality or citizenship whatsoever or in any place outside or inside Pakistan, having an effect on

the security of Pakistan or its nationals or having universal application under international law, custom and usage.

3. **Interpretation:—** (1) In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires --

- (a) “access” means gaining access to any electronic system or data held in an electronic system by causing the electronic system to perform any function to achieve that objective;
- (b) “corporation” for the purposes of Section 25 means a body of persons incorporated under any law such as trust, waqf, association, statutory body, company including joint venture or consortium;
- (c) “cyber stalking” means criminal intimidation, insult and annoyance through electronic system as defined in Chapter XXII of the Pakistan Penal Code (XLV of 1860);
- (d) “damage” includes modifying, altering, deleting, erasing, suppressing, changing location or making temporarily unavailable data, halting electronic system or chocking the networks;
- (e) “data ” means representations of information or of concepts that are being prepared or have been prepared in a form suitable for use in an electronic system including computer programme, text, images, sound, video and information within a database or electronic system;
- (f) “decryption information” means information or technology that enables a person to readily retransform or unscramble encrypted data from its unreadable and incomprehensible format to its plain version;
- (g) “defamation” means defamation as defined in Section 499 of the Pakistan Penal code (XLV of 1860);
- (h) “electronic” includes electrical, digital, magnetic, optical, biometric, electro-chemical, wireless or electromagnetic technology;
- (i) “electronic crime” means any offence committed through or by using any electronic system or means and includes offences established under this Act;
- (j) “electronic system” means any electronic system, device or a group of interconnected or related devices, one or more of which, pursuant to a program, performs automatic processing of data and includes an electronic storage medium;

- (k) “encrypted data” means data which has been transformed or scrambled from its plain version to an unreadable or incomprehensible format, regardless of the technique utilized for such transformation or scrambling and irrespective of the medium in which such data occurs or can be found for the purposes of protecting such data;
- (l) “spoofing” means establishing a website or sending an electronic message with a counterfeit source intended to be believed by the recipient or visitor or its electronic system to be an authentic source;
- (m) “function” includes logic, control, arithmetic, deletion, storage and retrieval and communication or telecommunication to, from or within an electronic system;
- (n) “Interpol” means International Criminal Police Organisation;
- (o) “malicious code” means a computer program or a hidden function in a program that infects data with or without attaching its copy to a file and is capable of spreading over electronic system with or without human intervention including virus, worm or Trojan horse.
- (p) “minor” means a person below the age of eighteen years;
- (q) “plain version” means original data before it has been transformed or scrambled to an unreadable or incomprehensible format;
- (r) “sensitive electronic system” is an electronic system used directly in connection with or necessary for —
- (i) the security, defence or international relations of Pakistan;
 - (ii) the existence or identity of a confidential source of information relating to the enforcement of criminal law;
 - (iii) the provision of services directly related to communications infrastructure, banking and financial services, public utilities, courts, public transportation or public key infrastructure;
 - (iv) the protection of public safety including systems related to essential emergency services such as police, civil defence and medical services ; or
 - (v) the purpose declared as such by the Federal Government in the official Gazette; or
 - (vi) containing any data or database protected as such, by any other law.
- (s) “service provider” means,—
- (i) a person acting as a service provider in relation to the sending, receiving, storing or processing of the electronic communication or the provision of other services in relation to it through any electronic system;

- (ii) a person who owns, possesses, operates, manages or controls a public switched network or provides telecommunication services; or
 - (iii) any other person that processes or stores data on behalf of such electronic communication service or users of such service;
- (t) “subscriber information” means any information contained in any form that is held by a service provider, relating to subscribers of its services other than traffic data and by which can be established:—
- (i) the type of communication service used, the technical provisions taken thereto and the period of service;
 - (ii) the subscriber’s identity, postal or geographic address, telephone and other access number, billing and payment information, available on the basis of the service agreement or arrangement; or
 - (iii) any other information on the site of the installation of communication equipment, available on the basis of the service agreement or arrangement.
- (u) “other crime” means a crime made punishable under any law for the time being in force;
- (v) “traffic data” means any data relating to a communication by means of an electronic system, generated by an electronic system that formed a part in the chain of communication, indicating the communication’s origin, destination, route, time, date, size, duration, or type of underlying service; and
- (w) “unauthorized access” means access of any kind by any person to any electronic system or data held in an electronic system is unauthorised or done without authority or in excess of authority, if he is not himself entitled to control access of the kind in question to the electronic system, or data and he does not have consent to such access from any person, so entitled.

CHAPTER II

OFFENCES

4. **Criminal access.**— (1) Whoever gains unauthorized access to the whole or any part of an electronic system with or without infringing security measures, with intent to infringe privacy or commit further offence is said to commit the offence of criminal access.

(2) Whoever commits the offence of criminal access shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years, or with fine not exceeding three hundred thousand rupees or with both.

5. **Criminal data access.**— (1) Whoever causes electronic system to perform any function for the purpose of gaining unauthorized access to any data held in any electronic system is said to commit the offence of criminal data access.

(2) Whoever commits the offence of criminal data access shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years, or with fine not exceeding three hundred thousand rupees or with both.

6. **Data damage.**— (1) Whoever with intent to cause damage to the public or any person, damages any data is said to commit the offence of data damage.

(2) Whoever commits the offence of data damage shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years, or with fine not exceeding three hundred thousand rupees or with both.

7. **System damage.**— (1) Whoever with intent to cause damage to the public or any person interferes with or interrupts or obstructs the functioning, reliability or usefulness of an electronic system by inputting, transmitting, damaging or deteriorating any data is said to commit system damage.

(2) Whoever commits the offence of system damage shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years, or with fine not exceeding three hundred thousand rupees or with both.

8. **Electronic fraud.**— (1) Whoever for gain interferes with data or electronic system to induce any person to enter into a relationship or with intent to deceive any person, which act or omission is likely to cause damage or harm to that person or any other person, commits electronic fraud.

(2) Whoever commits the offence of electronic fraud shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to seven years, or with fine not exceeding seven hundred thousand rupees or with both.

9. **Electronic forgery.**— (1) Whoever for gain interferes with data or electronic system, with intent to cause injury to the public or to any person, or to support any claim or title or to cause any person to part with property or to enter into any express or implied contract, or with intent to commit fraud, commits electronic forgery, regardless of the fact that the data is directly readable and intelligible or not.

(2) Whoever commits the offence of electronic forgery shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to seven years, or with fine not exceeding seven hundred thousand rupees or with both.

10. Misuse of devices.— (1) Whoever produces, possesses, sells, procures, imports, distributes or otherwise makes available a device, including a computer program, designed or adapted primarily for the purpose of committing any of the offences established under this Act or a password, access code, or similar data by which the whole or any part of an electronic system is capable of being accessed, with the intent that it be used for the purpose of committing any of the offences established under this Act, is said to commit offence of misuse of devices.

Provided that this Section shall not extend to a case where the production, possession, sale, procurement, import, distribution or otherwise making available of a device is not primarily for the purpose of committing an offence established under this Act but is for other lawful purposes, such as, for the authorized testing or protection of an electronic system.

(2) Whoever commits the offence of misuse of devices shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years, or with fine not exceeding three hundred thousand rupees or with both.

11. Unauthorized access to code.— (1) Whoever discloses or obtains any password, access code or any other means of gaining access to any electronic system or data with intent to obtain wrongful gain or inflict wrongful loss to any person or for any other unlawful purpose, commits offence of unauthorized access to code.

(2) Whoever commits the offence of unauthorized access to code shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years, or with fine not exceeding three hundred thousand rupees or with both.

12. Misuse of encryption.— (1) Whoever for the purpose of commission of an offence or concealment of incriminating evidence, knowingly and willfully encrypts any incriminating communication or data contained in electronic system relating to that crime or incriminating evidence, commits the offence of misuse of encryption.

(2) Whoever commits the offence of misuse of encryption shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to five years, or with fine not exceeding five hundred thousand rupees or with both.

13. Malicious code.— (1) Whoever writes, offers, makes available, distributes or transmits malicious code through an electronic system is said to commit the offence of malicious code.

(2) Whoever commits the offence of malicious code shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to five years, or with fine not exceeding five hundred thousand rupees or with both.

14. **Defamation.**— Whoever defames another in any form using electronic system shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years or with fine not exceeding three hundred thousand rupees or with both.

15. **Cyber stalking.**— Whoever commits the offence of cyber stalking shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years or with fine not exceeding three hundred thousand rupees or with both.

16. **Spamming.**— Whoever transmits unsolicited electronic messages to any person or causes any electronic system to show an unsolicited message, for commercial purposes shall be guilty of spamming.

(2) Whoever commits the offence of spamming shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to six months, or with fine not exceeding fifty thousand rupees or with both.

17. **Spoofing.**— Whoever does spoofing or uses other device to attract or solicit people or electronic systems for the purpose of gaining unauthorized access to commit further offence or obtain their valuable information which later can be used for unlawful purposes, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years, or with fine not exceeding three hundred thousand rupees or with both.

18. **Pornography.**— (1) Whoever intentionally—

- (a) produces pornographic material for the purpose of its distribution;
- (b) offers or makes it available;
- (c) distributes or transmit it;
- (d) procures it for himself or for another person; or
- (e) retains it;

through or in an electronic system, is said to commit the offence of pornography.

(2) If the pornographic material contains a minor or a person appearing to be minor engaged in sexually explicit conduct, or images representing a minor engaged in sexually explicit conduct, the offender shall be guilty of child pornography.

Provided always that this Section does not extend to any material produced, offered, distributed, procured or kept for *bona fide* religious, research or medical purposes.

(3) Whoever commits the offence of pornography shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to five years, or with fine not exceeding five hundred thousand rupees or with both.

(4) Whoever commits the offence of child pornography shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, or with fine not exceeding one million rupees or with both.

19. Unauthorized interception.— (1) Whoever without lawful authority intercepts by technical means, non-public transmissions of data to, from or within an electronic system, including electromagnetic emissions from an electronic system carrying such data, commits unauthorized interception.

(2) Whoever commits the offence of unauthorized interception shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to five years, or with fine not exceeding five hundred thousand rupees or with both.

20. Cyber Terrorism.— (1) Whoever in furtherance of political or social objectives commits a premeditated, attack against electronic systems or data, which results in violence against peaceful community or creates panic or an atmosphere of fear or anxiety amongst the public or a section thereof or causes extreme financial harm, shall be guilty of cyber terrorism.

(2) Whoever commits the offence of cyber terrorism shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, or with fine not exceeding one million rupees or with both.

21. Waging cyber war.— Whoever lodges offensive against the sensitive electronic system in Pakistan, disables communications systems and energy facilities or systems or attempts to do so, shall be punished with death, or imprisonment for life and shall also be liable to fine.

22. Enhanced punishment for offences involving sensitive electronic systems.— (1) Whoever obtains criminal access to any sensitive electronic system in the course of the commission of any of the offences established under this Act shall, in addition to the punishment prescribed in those sections, be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, or with fine not exceeding one million rupees or with both.

(2) For the purposes of any prosecution under this section, it shall be presumed, until contrary is proved, that the accused has the requisite knowledge that it was a sensitive electronic system.

23. **Attempt and aiding or abetting.**— (1) Any person who abets the commission of or who attempts to commit or does any act preparatory to or in furtherance of the commission of any offence under this Act shall be guilty of that offence and shall be liable on conviction to the punishment provided for the offence.

(2) For an offence to be committed under this section, it is immaterial where the act in question took place or not.

24. **Other crimes.**— Whoever commits any crime other than those established under this Act, with the help of an electronic system shall be punished, in addition to the punishment provided for that crime, with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years, or with fine not exceeding two hundred thousand rupees or with both.

25. **Corporate liability.**— A corporation shall be held liable for a criminal offence committed on its instructions or for its benefit or lack of required supervision by any natural person, acting either individually or as part of an organ of the corporation, who has a leading position within it, based on a power of representation of the corporation; an authority to take decisions on behalf of the corporation; or an authority to exercise control within it. The corporation can be punished with fine not exceeding ten million rupees.

Provided that such punishment shall not absolve the criminal liability of the natural person, who has committed the offence.

CHAPTER III

COGNIZANCE AND TRIAL

26. **Offences to be compoundable and cognizable.**—All offences under this Act shall be non-bailable, compoundable and cognizable.

27. **Prosecution and trial of offences.**—No Court inferior to the Court of Sessions shall try any offence under this Act.

28. **Order for payment of compensation.**— The court while awarding punishment may make an order for the payment of a sum to be fixed by the court by way of compensation to any person for any damage caused to his electronic system or data by the offence, for which the punishment is awarded. The compensation so awarded shall be recoverable as arrears of land revenue.

Provided that the compensation awarded by the court shall not prejudice any right to a civil remedy for the recovery of damages beyond the amount of compensation awarded.

CHAPTER IV

POWERS OF INVESTIGATION

29. **Special agency.**—The Federal Government immediately after the commencement of this Act shall constitute a special agency or cell within any agency or designate any existing agency or its cell to investigate the electronic crimes and prosecute the offenders under this Act.

30. **Saving for investigations by police officers.**— Nothing in this Act shall prohibit a police officer from lawfully conducting investigations pursuant to his powers conferred under any law for the time being in force.

31. **Power of police officer to access electronic system and data.**— (1) An Investigating officer, not below the rank of sub-Inspector for the purpose of investigating any offence under this Act or any other offence which has been disclosed in the course of the lawful exercise of the powers under this section, after obtaining search warrant and subject to the terms of the warrant, shall —

(a) be entitled at any time to —

- (i) have access to and inspect the operation of any electronic system;
- (ii) use or cause to be used any such electronic system to search any data contained in or available to such electronic system; or
- (iii) have access to any information, code or technology which has the capability of retransforming or unscrambling encrypted data contained or available to such electronic system into readable and comprehensible format or plain version;

(b) be entitled to require —

- (i) the person by whom or on whose behalf, the investigating officer has reasonable cause to suspect, any electronic system is or has been used; or
- (ii) any person having charge of, or otherwise concerned with the operation of, such electronic system,

to provide him with such reasonable technical and other assistance as he may require for the purposes of clause (a); or

- (c) be entitled to require any person in possession of decryption information to grant him access to such decryption information necessary to decrypt data required for the purpose of investigating any such offence.

(2) The Investigating Officer may also require a service provider to submit subscriber information relating to such services in that service provider's possession or control necessary for the investigation of that offence.

(3) Any person who obstructs the lawful exercise of the powers under sub-section (1) or fails to comply with a request made under the said sub-section shall be liable to be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to one year, or with fine not exceeding one hundred thousand rupees or with both.

32. **Expedited preservation of evidence.**— If the Investigating Officer reasonably belief that the electronic system or data contained therein or traffic data is vulnerable to loss or modification, he may take steps necessary for its expeditious preservation including taking into safe custody upto a maximum period of fifteen days or making or retaining a copy of such data. However the court for reasons to be recorded, can renew the period on the written request of the Investigating Officer.

33. **Real-time collection of traffic data.**— (1) The Federal Government may compel a service provider, within its existing or required technical capability to collect or record through the application of technical means or to co-operate and assist any law enforcement or counter-intelligence agency in the collection or recording of traffic data or data, in real-time, associated with specified communications transmitted by means of a electronic system.

(2) The Federal Government may also require the service provider to keep confidential the fact of the execution of any power provided for in this section and any information relating to it.

34. **Trans-border access.**— The Federal Government or its authorized agency may, without the permission of any foreign government or international agency access publicly available electronic system or data, regardless of where the electronic system or data is located geographically or access or receive, through an electronic system, data located in foreign country or territory, if it obtains the lawful and voluntary consent of the person who has the lawful authority to disclose the data to it through that electronic system.

CHAPTER V

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

35. **International co-operation.**— (1) The Federal Government may co-operate with any foreign government, Interpol or other international agency with whom it has reciprocal arrangements for the purposes of investigations or proceedings concerning criminal offences related to electronic system and data, or for the collection of evidence

in electronic form of a criminal offence or obtaining expeditious preservation and disclosure of traffic data or data by means of a electronic system or real-time collection of traffic data associated with specified communications or interception of data.

(2) The Federal Government may without prior request forward to such foreign government, Interpol or other international agency, any information obtained from its own investigations if it considers that the disclosure of such information might assist the other government or agency in initiating or carrying out investigations or proceedings concerning the criminal offences.

(3) The Federal Government may require such foreign government, Interpol or other international agency to keep the information provided confidential or use it subject to some conditions.

(4) The Federal Government immediately after the commencement of this Act shall nominate any agency or authority responsible for sending and answering requests for mutual assistance, the execution of such requests or their transmission to the authorities competent for their execution.

(5) The Federal Government may refuse to accede to any request made by such foreign government, Interpol or international agency if the request concerns an offence which it considers a political offence or an offence connected with a political offence, or that execution of the request is likely to prejudice its sovereignty, security, *ordre public* or other essential interests.

(6) The Federal Government may postpone action on a request if such action would prejudice criminal investigations or proceedings conducted by its authorities.

CHAPTER VI

MISCELLANEOUS

36. Amendment of Ordinance LI of 2002.—(1) In the Electronic Transactions Ordinance, 2002 (LI of 2002), Sections 36 and 37 shall be omitted.

37. Overriding effect. ~~3~~ The provisions of this Act shall apply notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in any other law for the time being in force.