

## IHC removes objections on petition against internet slowdown

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The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has removed the Registrar's Office's objections to a petition challenging the installation of a firewall and the slowdown of internet services. The court has scheduled the petition for hearing on Tuesday. IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq presided over the hearing regarding the petition. During the proceedings, the petitioner's counsel, Imaan Mazari, argued that the objections raised by the Registrar's Office were unjustified. The petition urged the court to halt the installation of the firewall, arguing that it infringes on citizens' fundamental rights. It further requests that the installation of the firewall be subject to consultation with all stakeholders and be conditioned on the protection of basic rights. The petition also called for internet access to be recognised as a fundamental human right under the Constitution, as it is essential for livelihoods. Justice Farooq remarked that three of the objections would be considered

on the judicial side, while the fourth objection pertained to the alleged use of inappropriate language in the petition. The counsel clarified that the petition only included a tweet, which did not contain any inappropriate language. Following this clarification, the court removed the objections and directed that the case be scheduled for hearing the next day. The petition, filed by a senior journalist, challenged the installation of a firewall and the resultant internet disruptions. The petition named the cabinet division secretary, IT ministry secretary, Interior ministry secretary, the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority, and the human rights ministry as respondents.