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## Fake News Watchdog slams misinformation during PTI protests, calls for urgent action



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A newly released report by the Fake News Watchdog has detailed the spread of fabricated news during the recent protests by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), debunking several widely circulated stories while pointing to the damaging impact of misinformation. The fake news surrounding the protests has had a devastating impact,” said the report. “The unchecked spread of unverified information has tarnished Pakistan’s global image.” The watchdog’s investigation

specifically cited several false claims that made headlines during the protests. Among the most notable was a fabricated statement attributed to Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi regarding citizens from Azad Kashmir. There were also ongoing false reports surrounding a video message allegedly from PTI founder Imran Khan as well as fake news concerning the arrests of Ali Amin Gandapur and Bushra Bibi. Other misleading stories that spread included false reports of hundreds of bodies at PIMS and Polyclinic hospitals, and fabricated breaking news about Asad Qaiser's appointment as PTI chairman. The report also pointed to misinformation from a fake social media account purportedly belonging to Imran Khan's son, Suleman Isa Khan, which was used to incite party supporters. In addition, the watchdog highlighted false reports about the transfer of Imran Khan to Adiala Jail, and claims about 600 soldiers resigning from Army academies. Fabricated stories about gunfire aimed at Asad Qaiser and Mehmood Khan Achakzai were also flagged. The report further noted the negative impact of misleading statements made by former deputy speaker Qasim Suri regarding Imran Khan's health. A press conference by DPO Attock Dr Ghiyas Gul, in which an old image from PTI protests was shown, was also cited as another example of false information. One of the most widely circulated false stories was the death of a PTI worker who allegedly fell from a container during the protests. The report stressed that these reports were later proven to be false, despite gaining global attention. "Not only did the fake

news cause significant problems for security agencies, but it also severely affected PTI leadership,” it stated. The Fake News Watchdog concluded by stressing that the victims of this misinformation campaign included the government, security institutions, and political parties as it called for urgent measures to combat the spread of fake news in Pakistan.