

FIA received 30,000 cybercrime complaints in 30 months

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has received almost 30,000 complaints of alleged cybercrimes from citizens in the last 30 months, but says it does not know how many of these complaints have been investigated or addressed overall.

Speaking before the National Assembly Standing Committee on IT and Telecommunication on Monday, FIA Cyber Crime Wing Director Afzal Mehmood Butt said 15,433 complaints have been lodged “related to misuse of Facebook, 6,607 cases have been registered over issues related to Twitter and over 3,000 people have contacted us as they suffered through Whatsapp.”

Mr Butt said 4,332 complaints involved misuse of Instagram, 85 involved Gmail, 230 involved Hotmail, 55 involved Youtube and 13 each involved Snapchat and LinkedIn.

When asked by committee chair MNA Ali Khan Jadoon about the number of cases the agency has addressed, the cyber crime wing director said it was not possible for him to share the exact number of investigations completed because complainants and accused individuals reach agreements between themselves in a large number of cases.

15,433 complaints involved misuse of Facebook, 3,000 pertained to Whatsapp, NA body told

MNA Makhdoom Zain Qureshi added that an online tracking system should be made available for complaints, a facility that parliamentarians were told is available on the prime minister’s complaints portal.

Mr Butt said the agency would look into setting up such a facility.

Mr Jadoon also said that many people do not know how to lodge complaints, and some are directed to visit provincial headquarters to do so, which they are unable to do.

He said 30,000 complaints was a small number compared to the scale of the problem, adding that most parliamentarians in the meeting had faced social media misuse as well.

MNA Naz Baloch said there are many fake social media accounts operating in her name. She told the FIA director that “some of them have tens of thousands of followers.”

She added: “I have lodged complaints but no one has ever approached me. If my issue could not be addressed, how can common people get justice?” She also suggested employed women at complaints centres so female complainants can air their concerns comfortably.

Mr Butt, however, said he believed 30,000 was a “huge number” and added that “the FIA cannot start investigations unless someone lodges a complaint with it.”

Pakistan Telecommunication Authority Chairman retired Maj Gen Amir Azeem Bajwa said that many people are not aware that they can lodge complaints over email and UAN, and need to be informed.

IT Secretary Maroof Afzal told committee members efforts are being made to bring the public relief.

“We will ensure that people get relief and that they get feedback on their complaints,” he said.

MNA Maiza Hameed said that most people cannot even lodge complaints, and steps should be taken to ensure they can do so without facing any issues.

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