



Press Statement by the Digital Freedom Coalition

April 26, 2025 Kathmandu

Digital Freedom Coalition is deeply concerned over the government intent, expressed by the Minister for Communication and Information Technology, to impose bans on social media platforms without following Nepal's constitutional and international obligations, giving networks a seven-day ultimatum.

Such actions lack transparency and public consultation, raising alarms about arbitrary decision-making that could severely impact digital freedoms. Regulatory measures that affect citizens' rights must undergo thorough legislative scrutiny, ensuring alignment with constitutional principles and democratic norms.

We recall that social media platforms have become indispensable tools for fostering free speech, enabling the right to association, and exercising democratic rights. They also play a pivotal role in driving Nepal's digital economy, empowering individuals, and amplifying the voices of marginalized communities. Any attempt to curtail these platforms jeopardizes these critical contributions.

Restrictive measures on social media will have far-reaching consequences, shrinking the space for the right to information and freedom of expression, which are essential to a functioning democracy. These controls also threaten the sustainability of media outlets, making it harder for journalists to report freely and amplifying the risk of censorship. The blocking of social media platforms would have far-reaching adverse effects on the digital economy, employment, and the overall quality and cost of internet services. A significant number of businesses — almost all, whether small, medium, or large enterprises — depend on social media for marketing, customer engagement, sales, online support, and more. These businesses would suffer major operational disruptions, resulting in widespread job losses across sectors such as digital marketing, content creation, online commerce, and customer service.

The government's threat to ban platforms under "**Directives for Managing the Use of Social Networks, 2023**" is insufficient to restrict citizen's rights to access to information and free speech. The Directives brought in the absence of parliamentary law has raised the concerns from the stakeholders from the beginning. The enactment of these directives, without meaningful consultation with stakeholders, violates the principles of transparency and accountability. Any law affecting citizens' rights must align with constitutional mandates and legislative processes. Arbitrary administrative actions should not infringe upon the constitutional rights of Nepali citizens.



The banning or undue restriction of social media platforms will erode civic engagement, stifle democratic practices, and undermine citizens' rights to freedom of expression and association. We call on all stakeholders to prioritize the protection of these rights and work collaboratively to create a legal framework that fosters a free, open, and inclusive digital environment.

We urge the government, platform owners, and all concerned parties to:

1. Uphold transparency and respect for national and international laws, commitments and practices on the protection of freedom of expression and digital rights.
2. Ensure that any legal framework governing social media is developed through inclusive consultations and adhere to constitutional and international standards.
3. Avoid actions that threaten democratic values, civic engagement, and the exercise of fundamental rights.

Note for the Editor:

The Digital Freedom Coalition, comprising a diverse group of 11 civil society organizations committed to safeguarding digital rights and freedoms in Nepal. The coalition stands united in addressing the pressing concerns surrounding control over digital space and its implications for democratic values and free speech and the organizer of the Digital Rights Festival, annually. For further information please contact Members of the Digital Freedom Coalition Mr. Taranath Dahal at Mobile no: +977 9851061389 and email: tndahal69@gmail.com or Mr. Laxman Datt Pant at Mobile no. +977 9851033539 or email laxmankasyap@gmail.com.

Thank you.

On behalf of the Coalition:

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Coalition Member Organizations

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Prabesh Subedi	Digital Media Foundation
Rajan Parajuli	Antenna Foundation Nepal
Roshan Pokharel	Internet Governance Institute
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