

August 24, 2021

## **Official work at field formations: KTBA concerned at involvement of ex-FBR staff**

**KARACHI:** Karachi Tax Bar Association (KTBA) has expressed serious concern over the involvement of retired FBR employees and other private persons in the official work across field formations including the access to private information of taxpayers.

In a letter to the chairman FBR, the KTBA said that the reports regarding the hacking of taxpayers' data which was managed by the FBR for automation and integration of federal and provincial taxes were matter of concern.

The letter said that the system-based notices issued mechanically under section 122(5) of the Income Tax Ordinance, 2001, to the taxpayers in bulk but were yielded in a compromising manner when the same was highlighted by the KTBA. "Surely, this manifests the vulnerability of external tinkering in the system. The silence as to denial or acceptance of the reports by FBR is bizarre either!" the letter said.

Furthermore, it said that the data contained sensitive information comprising personal and business information including but not limited to IBANs, CNIC, date of birth, passport which in many ways are associated with taxpayers' banks (both individual and business accounts) and other DFIs both domestically and internationally.

The data is hosted and archived at cloud system resource, hence any casual approach in its protection may not only compromise the sovereignty of Pakistan but is likely to end up in grave consequences for taxpayers domestically and internationally, it added.

Therefore, KTBA expressed serious concern over the involvement of retired FBR employees and other private persons in the official work across field formations, who were hired by the officers and supervisory staff and were allowed access to private information/data of taxpayers in soft as well as in hard contents that also make the data vulnerable.

The KTBA through a letter urged the authority concerned to eradicate the role of its retired officers from the tax matters along with other foolproof securities to avert cyber-attacks.