

Dima Samaro
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WORK EXPERIENCE

Sep 2023- Present

DAI/ USAID, Digital Frontiers and Digital Ecosystem Country Assessment (DECA) Project
Lead Researcher — Internet Freedoms, Digital Society, Rights, and Governance

- Conducting desk research to gather, analyze, and synthesize comprehensive information and key data sources related to Tunisia's digital ecosystems.
- Undertaking +40 interviews with key stakeholders, including government officials, regulators, donors, implementing partners, private sector representatives, civil society members, and academia, to identify critical gaps in Tunisia's digital ecosystem concerning online freedoms and the role of civil society and media.
- Preparing and delivering high-level presentations with key findings to a broad USG audience, which includes the US Embassy in Tunisia, the USAID office, State Department among others.
- Providing specific, actionable recommendations on how the USG can integrate digital technologies into their programs and processes to achieve their development objectives.

Jul 2022- Jan 2024

Internews
Global Platform Impacts Researcher, Technical Leadership Unit (TLU)

- Assisting the Platform Accountability Team with global partner communications, problem solving, and donor reporting requirements.
- Developing and managing relationships with external partners globally, including community groups in the platform accountability space, advocacy organizations, and tech platforms.
- Conducting desk research, interviews, and surveys to identify and map stakeholders working on platform accountability, including INGOs, CSOs, regulatory bodies, academics, and funders with the aim of developing alliances and informing internal priorities.
- Conducting review of platforms policies on key issues including online gender-based violence (OGBV), doxxing of women HRDs, targeted ads and dangerous organizations policy in conflict settings.
- I've also held the position of Project Officer where I was responsible for managing the implementation, communication, and streamlining of +10 subgrants under the Platform Impacts Fund. This includes collecting, reviewing, and drafting necessary subgrant packages; contracting; budget negotiations; payments; and partner reporting.

Apr 2021- Oct 2022

Business & Human Rights Resource Centre (BHRRC)
MENA Regional Researcher and Representative

- Managed multiple projects and researched key trends related to the broader BHR issues, including the export and provision of surveillance tech to authoritarian governments, attacks on women HRDs and female union leaders, privacy violations by delivery-based apps, algorithmic bias of Arabic content on platforms, among other cases.
- Acted as the regional representative of BHRRC in the MENA region, building partnerships with civil society, NGOs, investors, companies, and handled media relations with local and international press.
- Conducted mass and targeted outreach and inviting companies and their investors to respond to concerns raised by civil society about their conduct and operations.
- Prepared regional briefing papers and reports about business & human rights issues in the region.
- Built a website revamp of BHRRC in Arabic language, including creating and inputting content (e.g., long stories, articles, reports, company response) on the website.
- Assisted the organisation-wide projects such as Human Rights Defenders Project and Tech & Rights Project.
- Designed and fundraised for regional programmes and reported back to donors such as Ford Foundation and the Swiss Federal Office of Foreign Affairs.

Jun 2018- Apr 2021

Access Now

Policy Analyst – Middle East and North Africa

- Developed strong expertise in areas such as privacy and data protection, content moderation, targeted ads, and digital surveillance.
- Provided regional and thematic political, social and economic expertise and evidence-based analysis to internal and external stakeholders.
- Organized roundtables and private meetings with Tech platforms, Telcos and ISPs, UN bodies, and civil society representatives to discuss key cases related to privacy and processing of personal information.
- Crafted legal, policy, and legislative analysis and I wrote briefs, and comments to formulate and build out evidence-based positions.
- Engaged with legislative bodies, government representatives, lawmakers and stakeholders in the MENA region to advance regional community objectives on digital rights.
- Represented AN at conferences, meetings and events as well as in regional and international media.
- Played a key role in the strategic planning and execution of projects, contributing to the successful implementation of initiatives funded by Open Society Foundation and the German Foreign Office.
- Provided rapid response support for chapters under attack.

May 2020- Present

Global Voices (GV)

Author

I write news stories and blogs on digital rights issues, violations of media freedoms and freedom of expression in the MENA region for GV, a global anti-censorship network of bloggers and activists dedicated to protect freedom of expression online. I also contributed to the Advox project on Unfreedom Monitor and Digital Authoritarianism, where I led research and data analysis for country reports on digital authoritarianism trends in Morocco. I maintained an up-to-date Airtable database on networked authoritarianism and produced two blog posts on pandemic tech and online gender-based violence against women HRDs in Morocco.

Jun 2017- Jun 2018

International Commission of Jurists (ICJ)

Legal Researcher - Middle East & North Africa

Closely tracked and analyzed legal and political developments in the Middle East and North Africa region, including Tunisia, Morocco, Palestine and Lebanon, that pertained to the rule of law, human rights, and the independence of the judiciary and legal profession. Additionally, I played an integral role in establishing and fostering productive relationships with counterparts in relevant human rights organizations, with the ultimate aim of cultivating networks, alliances, and coalitions to drive meaningful change.

Jul 2017- Present

Independent Researcher, Consultant and Advocate on Digital Rights

I have been working independently on digital rights issues in the MENA region and have also provided consulting services to international organizations. This includes:

- Monitoring, documenting, and publishing reports and media articles on digital rights violations, online content moderation, mass surveillance, predictive policing and artificial intelligence (AI).
- Participating as a speaker and panelist at regional and international conferences and meetings.
- Designed and facilitated a 3-day extensive workshop for Democracy Reporting International on “Content Moderation Decisions in the MENA Region - Challenging Discriminatory Practices in the Digital Sphere.”
- Developed proposals and advocacy plans for EuroMed Rights aimed at promoting digital security and boosting digital rights in the Southern Mediterranean region for the European Commission.
- Crafted and facilitated a 4-Day workshop on “Global Unequal Access to the Internet and Bridging the Digital Divide” for CrossCulture Programme, Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (ifa). The workshop engaged 35 participants from the Global South, focusing on content moderation, mass harassment, disinformation, hate speech, and doxing of women HRDs.

Oct 2015- Present **Palestinian Law Bar Association (PBA)**
Licensed attorney

Completed 2-year legal training at the PBA, during which I supported PBA lawyers in legal research & analysis by conducting in-depth research on complex issues, analyzing relevant case law and legal precedents, and preparing concise and informative summaries of the findings. Provided legal guidance on property & business law to Palestinian law offices. Maintained legal databases for PBA staff.

EDUCATION

2011- 2015 **Bachelor of Laws (L.L.B)**
An-Najah National University — Nablus, Palestine

OTHER ENGAGEMENTS

2024- Present **Center for Digital Resilience**
CDR Service Provider Incubator Program Fellow
Currently participating in intensive digital security and cyber hygiene training to support civil society groups and individuals in high-risk environments with incident response, security audits, threat analysis, and digital safety training.

2021- Present **Innovation for Change (I4C)**
Board of Directors
I provide support and advice on tech and rights to I4C strategic priorities, advocacy campaigns as well as build partnerships with activists, technologists and regional and international organisations working in the field.

2020- 2022 **Palestine’s Digital Activism Forum (PDAF), and Bread & Net**
Member of the Advisory Committee
Served as a Member of the Advisory Committee, shaping the program agenda for the two largest digital rights events in the MENA region. In this capacity, I helped identify program tracks, set criteria for session selection, and participated in finalizing the agenda and program.

2020- 2022 **ICANN Middle East Space**
Co-Chair
Led the identification of key policy topics for discussion with ICANN's regional community in the MENA region. I also provided my expertise to formulate policy positions on behalf of the MENA space, and drafted statements and recommendations for the ICANN Board.

Feb 2019 **RightsCon Summit of Access Now**
Co-Chair
I evaluated proposal submissions for RightsCon, drawing on my expertise in privacy and surveillance, as well as laws and jurisdictions. I then provided recommendations and made decisions on which proposals would be successful.

RELEVANT CONFERENCES

- Speaker on “[Countering Digital Repression: Considerations for Civil Society Coalition Building](#),” Global Digital Development Forum (GDFF), Remote, June 2024.
- Expert contributor, “[Digital Democracy Initiative in the Middle East and North Africa](#),” organized by Civicus and I4C MENA, Remote/ Turkey, February 2024.
- Speaker on “Data Protection and Privacy: Legal Exemptions and their Impact in MENA,” Bread & Net, November 2022.

- Speaker on [“End-to-End Encryption for Messaging Apps: Important for Whom, How, and What Does the Future Hold?”](#) Centre for Media Engagement, The University of Texas at Austin, RightsCon, Remote, June 2022.
- Facilitator of a workshop on [“Clubhouse as a tool for mobilization and organization”](#) with Clubhouse Public Policy team Amro Metwally and Jessica Mason, Palestine Digital Activism Forum, Remote, May 2022.
- Speaker on [“Digital Surveillance Technologies in the Arab region: The role of governments, corporates and civil society,”](#) Bread&Net, November 2021.
- Speaker on [“Biometrics data in Jordan; Threats and Regulation,”](#) Jordan Open Source Association, Remote, November 2021.
- Speaker on [“Data protection in the Arab region”](#), 7amleh, Palestine Digital Activism Forum, Remote, April 2021.
- Expert guest, [“The cybercrime landscape: definitions and approaches session,”](#) Chatham House, Remote, February 2021.
- Expert guest, Digitally Yours podcast, [“Tracing technology and outdated law- Data protection in the Maghreb,”](#) Remote, February 2021.
- Speaker on [“Consumer Privacy Expectations: Building a Digital World We Can Trust,”](#) Article 19, FGI (Benin), CIPESA and Facebook, Remote, January 2021.
- Expert guest, [“Closing activities for the business and human rights project initiation plan: Consultation on respect for human rights in economic activities,”](#) UNDP Tunisia, Remote, December 2021.
- Speaker in a roundtable on “Expert consultation with UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Disinformation,” Article 19, Remote, December 2020.
- Speaker on [“Internet Data Protection Under Different Jurisdictions,”](#) ICANN, IGF, November Remote 2020.
- Facilitator of session on “The implications of Twitter’s public policies on Global South users” with Twitter’s public policy team Nick Pickles, Cynthia Wong and Monique Meche, RightsCon, July 2020.
- Facilitator of Regional workshop on [“Enhancing civic space and addressing hate speech in MENA region”](#), OHCHR, Tunisia, October 2019.
- Speaker in a roundtable on [“UNESCO DOAM-X Internet Universality Indicators”](#), RightsCon, June 2019.

AWARDS

2019- Present	<p>Digital Forensic Research Lab, Atlantic Council Digital Sherlock</p> <p>I became part of a global initiative that engages experts, governments, private sector, researchers and policymakers and aims to shape both global and local solutions to promote information security, inclusive and affirmative digital policy, and a digital economy for all.</p>
July 2019	<p>Middle East & Adjoining Countries, School on Internet Governance RIPE-NCC and Internet Society</p> <p>I was chosen as a fellow and a lecturer to speak on content moderation policies and censorship on social media in the context of the MENA region (link).</p>
Feb-April, 2018	<p>Visiting Researcher, The King’s Programme for Middle East Dialogue King’s College London</p> <p>Undertook a short-research course within the Department of War Studies at KCL, and published research focused on the political participation of Palestinian women and the power of freedom of expression in strengthening their role in the political process.</p>

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

- [Digital Blackout: Systematic censorship of Palestinian voices](#), Op-ed, Global Voices, November 2023.
- [Scrutinizing Migration Surveillance: Human Rights Responsibilities of Tech Companies Operating in MENA](#), Report, BHRRC, September 2022.
- [Unfreedom Monitor and Digital Authoritarianism in Morocco](#), Report, Global Voices, September 2022.
- [Pandemic tech and digital rights in Morocco](#), Op-ed, Global Voices, March 2022.
- [An Exploratory Study: The Reality of Privacy and Digital Data Protection in Palestine](#), Expert contributor, 7amleh, August 2021.
- [Digital Dominion: How the Syrian regime’s mass digital surveillance violates human rights](#), Report, International Human Rights Clinic (IHC), John Marshall Law School, 16 March 2021.
- [Exposed and Exploited: Data Protection in the Middle East & North Africa](#), Report, Access Now, 28 January 2021.

- [Tunisia's Police Protection Law Brings a Memory of Years of Silence](#), Op-ed, Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy, 17 December 2020.
- [Restricting cybersecurity, violating human rights: cybercrime laws in MENA region](#), Op-ed, Open Global Rights, 10 January 2019.
- [Privacy Violated: Jordanian Internet Service Provider \(ISPs\) violate customers' privacy](#), Report, ImpACT Policies for Human Rights & Access Now, 22 November 2019; [Tunisian ISPs violate customers' privacy](#), 20 July 2020.

LANGUAGES

Arabic Native

English Fluent

French Intermediate

REFERENCES

References are available upon request.