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# MENA Media Law Reform

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The MENA Media Law Reform programme supports regional exchanges and dialogues that bring together legal experts, men and women, civil society organisations and other stakeholders from across North Africa and the Middle East, as well as international experts, to address and advocate for much needed media legal and regulatory reforms.

[www.menamedialaw.org](http://www.menamedialaw.org)



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## We focus on

- Sharing and building knowledge about media policy and regulatory frameworks and relevant internationally recognised freedom of expression standards
- Focusing on building support for standards/principles rather than prescriptive approaches
- Building more coordinated advocacy platforms, including through broader coalitions of stakeholders
- Fostering participatory and gender-inclusive processes and greater pressure for law reform
- Making resource materials accessible to all through a digital library
- Furthering exchanges and dialogues among different stakeholders through a dedicated forum

## Impact

- Growing connections among local and international partners in media reform policy issues to address contexts where the legal environment restricts freedom of expression and media freedom and explore solutions.
- Focus workshops gathering regional lawyers, rights defenders and journalists on issues such as criminal restrictions on media content in MENA; broadcasting policy, law and regulation; the regulation of the profession of journalist; and access to information. Backgrounders and statements are shared publicly after the workshops to broaden audiences and engagement.
- A digital library featuring key resource materials in English and in Arabic on issues such as digital rights, defamation, policy and regulation, hate speech, gender, and right to information.

- Series of studies on the tension points between laws pertaining to freedom of expression, political actors and the judiciary practice in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya, including key recommendations to address the deficiencies in law or practice. These recommendations are a means by which non-governmental organisations and rights defenders can pursue their critical advocacy work.

## Legal framework overview

- Although much of the Middle East and North Africa has seen a marked shift over the past years toward unstable authoritarianism and violent conflict following the region's popular uprisings, significant gains have however been achieved since 2011.
- Many of these gains have been driven by media communities and civil society, now battling new forms of control and repression. Nonetheless, many reform-oriented actors still operate in a space that, while confined, in most cases barely existed before.
- Following the 2011 uprisings, new constitutional and legal guarantees for freedom of expression and media freedoms were introduced in several MENA countries. Yet, the rights and freedoms the new laws affirm remain challenged by the hostility of duty-bearers and a hardly reformed judiciary practice. Moreover, those rights and their advocates are increasingly misrepresented as threats to stability and security in MENA and globally.
- Whereas prospects of effectively reforming the media's legal framework and the judiciary practice in favour of freedom of expression and safety of journalists seem limited in the years to come, there is, however, space and determination to advance an agenda for enhancing legal and structural reforms.



paving the way for good journalism

IMS is a non-profit organisation working to support local media in countries affected by armed conflict, human insecurity and political transition. [www.mediasupport.org](http://www.mediasupport.org)

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