

COUNTERING MISINFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION IN LEBANON:

Promoting Information Integrity and
Protecting Freedom of Expression through
Media Reforms

Report on Countering Misinformation and Disinformation in Lebanon: Promoting Information Integrity and Protecting Freedom of Expression through Media Reforms, produced by Maharat Foundation within the project “Mobilize and strengthen the coalition on information and democracy in order to promote the implementation of democratic safeguards in the global information and communication space.”, in partnership with The Forum on Information and Democracy.

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Countering Misinformation and Disinformation in Lebanon: Promoting Information Integrity and Protecting Freedom of Expression through Media Reforms

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper aims to highlight the importance of combating misinformation and disinformation within the Lebanese media ecosystem to promote information integrity. It analyzes the prevalence of these issues in the current Lebanese media landscape, focusing on trends such as their increase during times of crisis. The paper also examines the existing legal framework used to regulate disinformation and misinformation, its inconsistencies with international human rights standards, and the prospects for reform through the proposed new media law. The subsequent section explores other approaches to addressing misinformation and disinformation such as the state's role in improving public communication, promoting the right to access information, and enhancing media and information literacy. It also examines the contributions of other stakeholders in fostering a healthier information ecosystem and concludes with a set of recommendations.

INTRODUCTION



01

The following definition of disinformation and misinformation will be used in this policy paper:

“Disinformation is understood as false information that is disseminated intentionally to cause serious social harm and misinformation as the dissemination of false information unknowingly”.^[1]

1.1 The importance of combatting misinformation and disinformation to foster information integrity

Disinformation and misinformation have become increasingly problematic, driven by the rapid growth of new technologies. The internet and social media platforms have transformed every user into a potential publisher, making it harder for people to distinguish facts from falsehood ^[2]. Furthermore, innovative technologies enable the dissemination of unparalleled volumes of content at unprecedented speeds. This environment has created fertile ground for disinformation and misinformation, fostering distrust within society. Ensuring information integrity is essential for maintaining public trust and fostering an informed society. Accurate and transparent information enables individuals to assess public policies, make informed decisions, hold authorities accountable, and engage meaningfully in public discourse. Conversely, the spread of false or misleading information undermines trust in institutions, fuels confusion, and can incite violence ^[3]. In already volatile social and political contexts, disinformation can have particularly dangerous consequences. As highlighted in a 2022 report by the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, weaponized information has been shown to sow confusion, fuel hatred, incite violence, and prolong conflict. ^[4]

1- OHCHR. (2021). Disinformation and freedom of opinion and expression. <https://documents-ddsny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G21/085/64/PDF/G2108564.pdf?OpenElement>.

2- Ireton, C., & Posetti, J. (Eds.). (2018). Journalism, fake news & disinformation: Handbook for journalism education and training. UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf00000265552>

3- United Nations. (2022, August 12). Countering disinformation for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms (Report of the Secretary-General, A/77/287). <https://undocs.org/en/A/77/287>

4- United Nations. (2022, August 12). Countering disinformation for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms (Report of the Secretary-General, A/77/287). <https://undocs.org/en/A/77/287>

1.2. Disinformation and misinformation in the Lebanese media landscape

In Lebanon, traditional media outlets, including TV channels, radio stations, and newspapers, are widely perceived as biased or untrustworthy due to their political affiliations, lack of transparency, and tendency to serve political and economic interests. However, the aftermath of the October 17 uprising saw the emergence of alternative media platforms that seek to challenge traditional narratives, adapt to socio-political changes, and combat disinformation and misinformation. [5] A key focus of these new digital media platforms has been fact-checking and verifying information published by mainstream media.

1.2.1 The rise of disinformation in times of crisis in Lebanon

Periods of crisis in Lebanon have consistently fueled surges in disinformation and misinformation. These trends are driven by a deeply divided society with conflicting political and sectarian narratives, a prolonged multi-layered crisis—including war, political paralysis, the refugee crisis, and the economic collapse that began in late 2019—as well as the dominance of political propaganda shaping public discourse. Major events such as the COVID-19 pandemic further exposed the media's struggle to curb misinformation, as rumors spread widely regarding the virus's origin, transmission, and prevention. Similarly, Maharat documented various instances of misinformation and disinformation during and after the October 17 uprising. Additionally, following the Beirut port explosion, misinformation and conspiracy theories proliferated across media platforms, with unfounded claims about the explosion's nature, magnitude, and intended target. [6]

Disinformation and misinformation have also surrounded economic and financial reforms, particularly in relation to Lebanon's negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). While some of this content appears to be deliberately crafted to incite fear and confusion by opponents of reforms, another portion stems from a lack of expertise among online media outlets, which often operate with limited budgets and insufficiently trained journalists, contributing to the unintentional spread of inaccurate information.

5- Internews & Maharat Foundation. (2021). Media and information landscape assessment: Advancing diverse voices in Lebanon. <https://maharatfoundation.org/media/1943/internews-final-20-10.pdf>

6- Ghanem, M. (2023, April 6). Lebanon's information environment: Exploring appropriate responses. National Democratic Institute for International Affairs. https://www.skeyesmedia.org/documents/bo_filemanager/Lebanons-Information-Environment_EN_20230619.pdf

Finally, the last Israeli war on Lebanon further illustrated how crises create fertile ground for disinformation and misinformation, turning social media platforms into a battleground.

In such a volatile environment, misinformation and disinformation posed significant risks, fueling societal divides and deepening internal tensions. False narratives, including those driven by AI-generated deepfakes, gained prominence and deepened societal mistrust, particularly by exploiting political and social divides. [7]

This persistent environment of misinformation and disinformation has only deepened public skepticism and exacerbated the challenge citizens face in accessing reliable information.

1.2.2 Disinformation and misinformation during electoral periods

The electoral period during the 2022 parliamentary elections was no exception to the spread of disinformation, a phenomenon that poses a serious risk to citizens' ability to make informed choices, undermining the democratic process and the integrity of free and fair elections.

According to the media monitoring conducted by Maharat, during the months of February and March 2022 which preceded the parliamentary elections, discourses of political actors including candidates, politicians and influencers contained an important share of information aiming at misleading the public through the promotion of conspiracy theories as well as unfounded accusations, although they were expected to build their discourse on facts and evidence. Furthermore, well-known militant political groups sought to manipulate the democratic discourse on social media through what is known in the Lebanese context as “electronic armies” aiming to spread disinformation. [8]

7- Maharat Foundation. (2024, November 1). Challenges of media coverage of Israel's war on Lebanon. <https://maharatfoundation.org/media/2816/report-journalists-challenges-during-war-eng-final.pdf>

8- Maharat Foundation. (2022). Misleading political discourse and manipulation campaigns during the Lebanese parliamentary elections of 2022. <https://maharatfoundation.org/media/2438/misleading-discourse.pdf>

REGULATION OF DISINFORMATION AND MISINFORMATION IN LEBANON



02

2.1 Current legal frameworks

While Article 13 of the Lebanese Constitution guarantees the right to freedom of expression, as does Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), ratified by Lebanon in 1972, which states that "everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression"; domestic laws such as the Penal Code, the Publications Law, and the Military Code of Justice contain provisions that do not align with international standards and have been used to prosecute the publication of false news.



- **Some articles in the Lebanese Penal Code specifically criminalize the dissemination of false news, while others, such as Article 317, are more broadly framed, targeting “any acts or words, spoken or written, intended to or resulting in inciting sectarian or racial strife, or that provoke conflict between the sects”, which could be interpreted to include misinformation and disinformation.**
- **Article 295** of the Lebanese Penal Code stipulates that during times of war or imminent threat, engaging in propaganda aimed at weakening national sentiment or inciting racial or sectarian strife is punishable by a prison sentence.
- **Article 296** targets individuals who, under similar circumstances, spread news they know to be false or exaggerated and that could affect national morale. Such actions are subject to the same punishment as outlined in Article 295.
- **Article 297** stipulates that any Lebanese person who, in full awareness of the matter, disseminates false or exaggerated news abroad that “distorts the image of the state or its financial status” shall be subject to imprisonment for at least six months and a fine.

- Article 317 stipulates that “any acts or words, spoken or written, intended to or resulting in inciting sectarian or racial strife, or that provoke conflict between the sects” shall be punished by imprisonment from one to three years and a fine, and the prohibition from exercising certain civil rights, including the right to assume employment in administrations related to one’s religious confession or to one’s labor union and the right to vote or be elected to all union and confessional organizations.
- Article 319 stipulates that anyone who disseminates “ fabricated facts or false claims intended to devalue the national currency or undermine confidence in the strength of the state's currency, its bonds, or any other securities related to public financial trust” shall be punished with imprisonment for a period ranging from six months to three years and a fine.



- **Additionally, the Lebanese Publications Law includes a provision that explicitly addresses false news, as well as another one that, while not specifically mentioning it, has been interpreted and used to prosecute its dissemination. These provisions apply to print and audiovisual media, and have also been extended by courts to cover news websites, which are treated as equivalent to print media.**
- **Article 3** states that if a publication disseminates false news that may disturb public peace, those responsible shall be punished by imprisonment from six months to one and a half years and a fine, or one of these penalties.
- **Article 25** prohibits the publication of anything that contains an insult to one of the recognized religions in the country and that would instigate confessional or racial bigotry, disrupt the public peace, or jeopardize the integrity, sovereignty, unity, or borders of the state or its external relations. Such actions are punishable by imprisonment and a fine.



- **The Military Code of Justice also includes an article that enables the prosecution of individuals for spreading false information related to the military institution.**

Article 157 stipulates that anyone “who insults the flag or the army, or harms its dignity, reputation, or morale, or engages in actions that could weaken the military or the obedience to superiors and the respect due to them”, shall be punished with imprisonment for a period ranging from three months to three years.

Additionally, **Article 24** grants the military court jurisdiction to prosecute any crimes committed against members of the military, including the spread of false information. [9]

It is important to note that when false news is considered to involve defamation or insults, two distinct sanctions may apply: one for the dissemination of false information and another one for defamation or insults. Provisions addressing defamation or insult can be found in the Penal Code, the Publications Law, and the Military Code of Justice.

In Lebanon, laws addressing cases of defamation or insult are increasingly weaponized by powerful political and religious figures to silence peaceful dissent due to their vague and ambiguous wording. Defamation charges, particularly for criticizing the army, the president, or public officials, can lead to imprisonment for up to three years, thereby encouraging self-censorship. Additionally, the judiciary often treats reports from journalists and activists on corruption, abuse of power, and illicit enrichment as defamation cases against those in power. [10]

9- Amnesty International. (2023). Lebanon: Defamation and insult laws weaponized to silence criticism. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/MDE1870462023ENGLISH.pdf>

10- Maharat Foundation. (2020). Universal Periodic Review (UPR) – Third Cycle: Submission to the Human Rights Council – Lebanon. <https://maharatfoundation.org/media/1864/maharat-upr-lebanon-english.pdf>

2.2 International law and standards

Regulatory approaches initiated by states to combat disinformation and false news must be carefully designed to avoid imposing an undue burden on freedom of expression or being weaponized by authorities and powerful figures to silence critics and dissent.

Restrictions on freedom of expression must satisfy the three conditions provided by Article 19 (3) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) to be lawful – they must be clearly articulated in laws, they must be intended to protect a legitimate aim, and they must be both necessary to accomplish the aim and proportionate.

In Lebanon, existing laws used to prosecute the dissemination of disinformation and the publication of false news are inconsistent with the above mentioned article, failing to align with international human rights standards for the following reasons:

- **Disproportionate Sanctions:** Lebanese laws mentioned above impose disproportionate penalties, including imprisonment, for the dissemination of false news and other forms of expression. Such punitive measures, especially when coupled with the overbroad scope of many laws, can discourage legitimate speech and foster self-censorship among journalists, activists, and others, in violation of the principle of necessity and proportionality required under international human rights law.
- **Vague Definitions:** According to the Report on Disinformation and Freedom of Opinion and Expression of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, the principle of legality requires the scope, meaning and effect of the law to be sufficiently clear, precise and public. Vague laws that confer excessive discretion can lead to arbitrary decision-making and are incompatible with article 19(3) of the Covenant. [11]

11- A/HRC/47/25, para. 40. <https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/47/25>

Lebanese laws mentioned above often lack clear definitions, failing to define with sufficient clarity and precision what information is within their scope. This ambiguity has a chilling effect on free speech and allows for arbitrary interpretation, enabling authorities to weaponize these laws against journalists and activists to silence dissent and criticism. For instance, the provision of article 317 of the Penal Code does not specify what constitutes “confessional or racial strife”, nor does it require that the speech be likely to, or even intended to, incite discrimination, hostility, or violence. [12] Similarly, international human rights mechanisms have raised concerns about “false information laws” that restrict and criminalize a broad range of content, including provisions targeting “false, offensive or harmful information”, information deemed “prejudicial” to public tranquility or public finances, as well as content that “damages the reputation of public institutions.” [13] These concerns are relevant to Lebanon’s laws.

2.3 Legislative Evolution

A new media law proposal has been before parliament since 2010, when it was submitted by Maharat and former MP Ghassan Moukheiber. It was discussed in the Media and Telecommunications Parliamentary Committee until 2016, after which it was transferred to the Justice and Administration Committee. As part of the latest legislative development, the Parliamentary Committee of Justice and Administration convened on January 9, 2024, to review the media law proposal in light of feedback from the Ministry of Information and UNESCO.

Subsequently, a subcommittee, led by MP George Okais was formed to delve into the proposal and deliver a report.

A major achievement was a consensus reached on decriminalisation, entailing the elimination of imprisonment penalties and cautionary arrests for freedom of expression related-cases, with a preference for referring cases to civil court procedures akin to civil offenses. Additionally, agreement was built on applying the same procedures to journalists and anyone expressing their opinion, with protection being applied to acts rather than individuals. Furthermore, under the new media law, the exception to decriminalisation is limited to hate speech. A new “crime” has also been defined based on the criteria of the Rabat Plan of Action to narrow the definition.

12- Human Rights Watch. (2019, November 15). “There is a price to pay”: The criminalization of peaceful speech in Lebanon. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2019/11/15/there-price-pay/criminalization-peaceful-speech-lebanon>

13- United Nations. (2022, August 12). Countering disinformation for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms (Report of the Secretary-General, A/77/287). <https://undocs.org/en/A/77/287>

Thus, the new media law proposal eliminates all above-mentioned articles which criminalize disinformation and misinformation or include vague and overly broad language that could lead to disproportionate and unnecessary penal sanctions.

Furthermore, one of the prerogatives of the newly proposed regulatory authority, the National Media Council, as outlined in the media law proposal, is to support individuals who have been denied their right to reply. The Council should particularly assist in cases where inaccurate news or misinformation about an individual is repeatedly disseminated.

As for social media governance during elections, the current electoral law does not include any provisions on the matter. However the new media law proposal included a provision that amends the penal code in order to criminalize “deepfakes”, particularly the “forgery” crime. A new article was introduced to add the forgery methods that remain criminal, including a voice recording, an image, and a video. The draft provisions stipulated clearly that forgery is not applied when the content is clearly labelled as altered through technology or when it is obviously being used for sarcasm or arts.

**OTHER
PATHWAYS TO
COUNTER
MISINFORMATION
AND
DISINFORMATION**



03

3.1 Effective pathways for the Lebanese state to combat misinformation and disinformation

3.1.1 Improving public communication and promoting the right to access information.

When governments, politicians and public officials operate transparently, maintain regular communication with the people they serve, provide timely, evidence-based information and are open to scrutiny, they contribute to building legitimate, accountable, effective institutions, which can reinforce public trust in the information system and reduce susceptibility of people and communities to disinformation. [14]

An OECD report found that public communication in Lebanon is hindered by weak institutional frameworks, a shortage of dedicated and skilled professionals, and a politically influenced approach. Moreover, coordination between government ministries remains limited, with each ministry communicating independently rather than presenting a unified message. These shortcomings became particularly evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, which exposed the fragmented and ad-hoc approach of information dissemination to the public and media. [15] Similarly, the lack of effective public communication contributed to the spread of misinformation during the 2022 parliamentary elections in Lebanon. Maharat's fact-checking unit, Fact-O-Meter, revealed that most of the misinformation surrounding the elections stemmed from a lack of understanding of the electoral law. This issue could have been mitigated through sound public communication. However, Maharat's media monitoring report during the electoral campaign highlighted the Ministry of Interior's silence, [16] which contributed to public confusion and inadvertently facilitated the spread of misinformation.

Hence, this lack of effective public communication exacerbates the vulnerability of the Lebanese public to disinformation and misinformation.

In addition, ensuring access to information is another essential factor in fostering information integrity and combating disinformation and misinformation.

14- Human Rights Council resolution 49/21, sixteenth preambular para.

15- OECD (2021), Citizens' Voice in Lebanon: The Role of Public Communication and Media for a More Open Government, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/17a0fdc0-en>.

16- Maharat Foundation. (2022, February 16). TV coverage report for the parliamentary elections: Those in charge of the electoral process are absent. Maharat Foundation. <https://maharatfoundation.org/media/2073/jan-report-elections-en.pdf>

The Right of Access to Information Law in Lebanon faces significant challenges that hinder its implementation, most notably the failure of administrations to publish information automatically, the refusal or disregard of information requests without legal justification, and selectivity in their responses, with some requests being rejected for unclear reasons, especially those related to corruption issues. Additionally, the absence of a unified mechanism for processing requests, insufficient training of relevant staff, and the lack of digital infrastructure further exacerbate the problem. These barriers limit transparency and reduce the ability of journalists to access information [17], increasing the circulation of misinformation and disinformation.

3.1.2 The state's role in supporting media and information literacy



In its resolution 76/227, the General Assembly of the United Nations called upon States “to counter all forms of disinformation through policy measures, including education, capacity-building for prevention and resilience to disinformation, advocacy and awareness raising”.

Some States have carried out media literacy programmes to enable more resilient and meaningful participation online, including among populations most at risk of being left behind.

In Lebanon, however, media and information initiatives carried out by the State remain limited. For instance, the media and information literacy program, which should be embedded in all schools' curricula across Lebanon, remains under development and has yet to be institutionalized. According to Hiam Ishak, President of the Center for Educational Research and Development—a public institution directly linked to the Minister of Education and Higher Education—media and information literacy is expected to be incorporated into the curriculum under the subject of “Life and Cultural Activities,” following a competency-based approach and in coordination with a specialized expert from the curriculum development committee.

17- Maharat Foundation. (2025). Law on the Right of Access to Information: Journalists describe the reality. Maharat Foundation. <https://maharatfoundation.org/media/2927/eng-access-to-information-report-2025.pdf>

3.2 Role of Civil Society, International Organizations and Media Development Organizations in Building a Healthier Information Ecosystem

3.2.1 Building the capacities of journalists and fact-checkers

Civil society, international organizations and media development organizations contribute to fighting the spread of misinformation and disinformation by building the capacities of journalists, providing training on professional and ethical reporting as well as evidence-based journalism, thereby fostering the development of a healthier information ecosystem.

Most importantly, these actors play a role in equipping a community of journalists with fact-checking skills, thereby contributing to the creation of a network of fact-checkers which will be able to integrate robust fact-checking mechanisms into newsrooms.

As part of these efforts, Maharat Foundation has been actively contributing over the years by focusing on building a community of journalists skilled in combating misinformation and disinformation, particularly in the context of governance and reform processes. Through ongoing training, capacity building, and fellowship programs, Maharat empowers journalists to act as watchdogs, equipped with the knowledge and tools needed to engage the public in fact-based discussions and counter disinformation effectively.

A donor mapping conducted by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the Samir Kassir Foundation (SKF) examined projects implemented between 2019 and 2022 that addressed issues related to the information environment. The mapping identified 13 projects during this period that focused on training journalists in fact-checking, information verification, countering false narratives, and using relevant tools and techniques in their investigations. [18]

Simultaneously, other projects implemented in Lebanon during the same period targeted the public, with the objective of raising awareness around disinformation and the way fake news influences media consumption.

18- Ghanem, M. (2023, April 6). Lebanon's information environment: Exploring appropriate responses. National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, https://www.skeyesmedia.org/documents/bo_filemanager/Lebanons-Information-Environment_EN_20230619.pdf

3.2.2 Empowering alternative and local voices

It is also worth mentioning that civil society plays an active role in empowering alternative voices by building the capacities of alternative media platforms, often referred to as independent media. These platforms aim to counter the existing narratives disseminated by traditional media which are perceived as biased and politically affiliated. Many of these outlets have attempted to challenge traditional media by addressing its shortcomings and holding those in power to account, providing more trustworthy and accurate information that represents the reality and the views of the public. [19]

The role of alternative media is key in order to foster information integrity as the Special Rapporteur on the right to freedom of opinion and expression stated that “if independent public interest media cannot survive – let alone thrive – disinformation will flourish, journalists will be further imperilled and societies’ right to information will be undermined”. [20]

Additionally, many analysts have called for investing in local journalism—especially print and digital media—as a way to counter disinformation, relying on the fact that high-quality local journalism can inform democratic deliberation and debunk false claims. [21]

In this context, Maharat has consistently supported alternative media, including those operating in marginalized areas, by providing training, intensive coaching, advice on resilience, quality journalism, and economic sustainability over the years. This support aims to strengthen their resilience during Lebanon's ongoing crisis and empowers them to amplify marginalized voices, fostering inclusive dialogue that counters disinformation and promotes a more informed public discourse.

19- Internews & Maharat Foundation. (2021). Media and information landscape assessment: Advancing diverse voices in Lebanon. <https://maharatfoundation.org/media/1943/internews-final-20-10.pdf>

20- A/HRC/50/29, para. 85.

21- Bateman, J., & Jackson, D. (2024). Countering disinformation effectively: An evidence-based policy guide. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, https://carnegie-production-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/static/files/Carnegie_Countering_Disinformation_Effectively.pdf

3.2.3 Importance of multi-stakeholder approach

Furthermore, it is important to highlight that the credibility and effectiveness of efforts to counter disinformation are significantly enhanced when approached in a multi-stakeholder manner, as cooperation between Governments, civil society organizations, companies and other stakeholders is essential. [22]

In Lebanon, the Internet Governance Forum (LIGF) exemplifies this collaborative approach. As a national initiative dedicated to fostering open, inclusive, and transparent dialogue on internet governance issues, the Lebanon IGF brings together representatives from civil society, academia, and the public and private sectors.

During the last Lebanon IGF, Maharat organized a session titled Safeguarding Digital Safety and Human Rights in the Lebanese Context. The session highlighted the importance of engaging all stakeholders, particularly academia and civil society, in shaping public policies on internet governance, including to maintain information integrity, while safeguarding human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In addition, Maharat News' Fact-o-meter team conducted a fact-checking workshop during the forum. The workshop introduced participants to various verification tools and shared examples of wartime misinformation that had been successfully debunked. This initiative underscored the vital role of collaborative efforts in protecting information integrity in an increasingly complex digital landscape.

22- United Nations. (2022, August 12). Countering disinformation for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms (Report of the Secretary-General, A/77/287). <https://undocs.org/en/A/77/287>

RECOMMENDATIONS



04

FOR THE LEBANESE STATE AND PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS



- Adopt the new media law, which aims to decriminalize a wide range of expression-related offenses—including the dissemination of misinformation and disinformation—while aligning with international human rights standards. This reform is essential to prevent legal abuse, subjective interpretation and protect freedom of expression.



- Establish structured communication channels with digital platforms to promote transparency and accountability, ensuring that content moderation respects human rights, particularly during elections.



- Fully implement the Right of Access to Information Law by requiring public institutions to disclose and publish key information automatically and respond to requests transparently.



- Strengthen institutional frameworks for public communication by ensuring regular, evidence-based, and transparent information sharing from all government bodies.



- Provide consistent, timely, and evidence-based public information during crises to preempt misinformation and restore public trust.



- The Ministry of Education should integrate media and information literacy programs into school curricula to enable students to navigate the information landscape critically and responsibly.

FOR MEDIA INSTITUTIONS



- Establish dedicated fact-checking units within media outlets and adopt rigorous verification processes, especially during elections or crises.



- Create a shared fact-checking alliance to coordinate responses to viral disinformation, especially during high-risk periods like elections.



- Create a national or regional media alliance to enable collective engagement with tech platforms on issues such as algorithmic impact and the spread of disinformation, pushing for greater transparency and fairer treatment of reliable content.

FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS



- Expand Media and Information Literacy programmes, especially those targeting youth and underserved communities, to enable them to critically evaluate information and identify misinformation and disinformation.



- Continue equipping a community of journalists with fact-checking skills, thereby contributing to the creation of a network of fact-checkers which will be able to integrate robust fact-checking mechanisms into newsrooms.



- Support alternative media platforms to enable them to provide free, independent, and pluralistic information.



- Continue documenting disinformation trends, speech-related prosecutions, and legal abuses that undermine freedom of expression.

FOR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS



- Invest in content moderation by hiring staff that understand the Lebanese dialect and local context to better identify harmful content and disinformation.



- Involve civil society and independent experts in decision-making processes, including content moderation.



- Increase transparency by granting independent researchers and civil society organizations access to key data and AI systems, which would allow them to assess online risks and better understand how algorithmic processes and AI systems contribute to the spread of disinformation and misinformation.



- Adopt labeling and authenticity standards, enhancing trustworthiness and allowing users to identify trusted sources.



- Amplify authenticated public interest media content in recommender systems, such as content certified by the Journalism Trust Initiative or IFCN or other trusted certifying bodies.

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