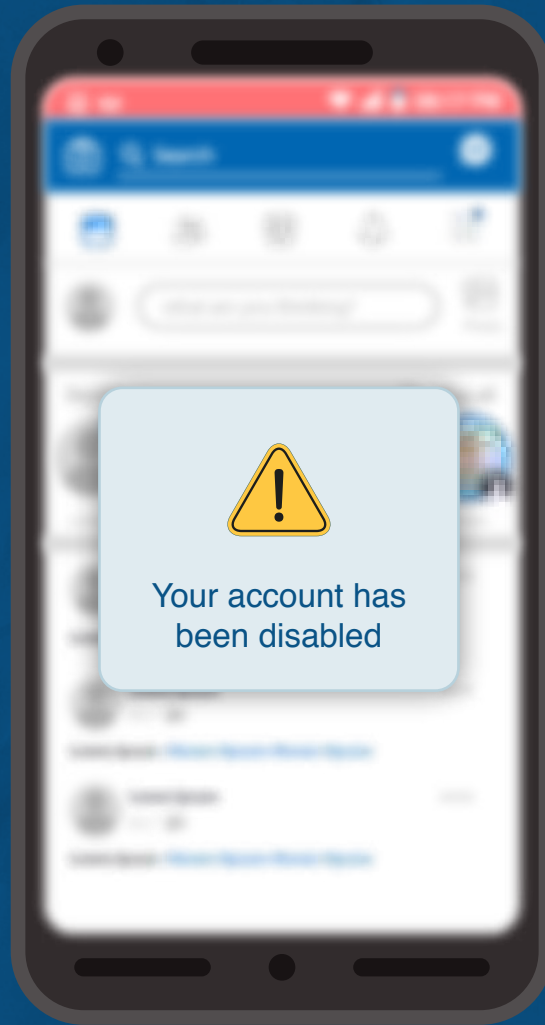




# Quarterly Report

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Q<sub>1</sub>

January-March 2023

## Introduction

7amleh, through the Palestinian Observatory of Digital Rights Violations (7or), observed a large number of violations in the first quarter of 2023, compared to previous years. Social media companies, Israeli authorities and, on occasion, members of society against one another, primarily committed these violations. The frequency of Israeli digital violence and incitement against the Palestinian people was perhaps the most noticeable feature of the first quarter of this year, despite the short reporting period, which also witnessed intense political and field events that reflected on the digital space and Palestinian digital rights.

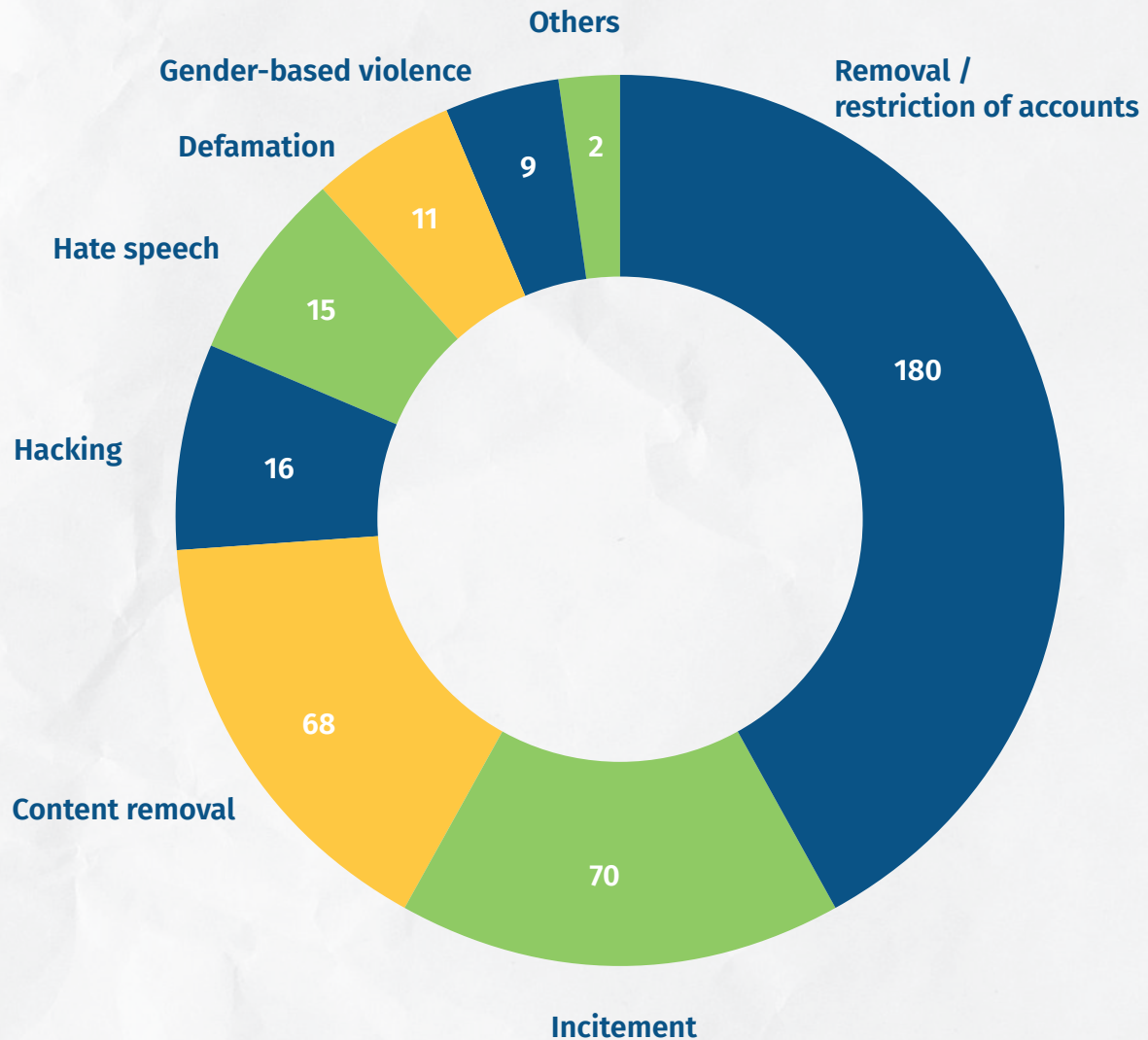
According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, the number of Palestinian's killed in the first three months of this year reached 90. This large number reflects the magnitude of Israeli attacks on Palestinians during the reporting period, and this military escalation in the field is usually accompanied by an increase in Israeli incitement via social media platforms, as well as the pace of restricting and removing Palestinian content online.

Patterns of violations such as blackmailing and account hacking appeared at an unprecedented rate during the first quarter of the year, as did a high percentage of Israeli incitement posts and a continuous rise in restricting Palestinian content and accounts on social media platforms. The following is a list of the most notable digital violations committed against Palestinians in the digital space, as well as their classifications on various social media platforms and the nature of their perpetrators.

## Violations

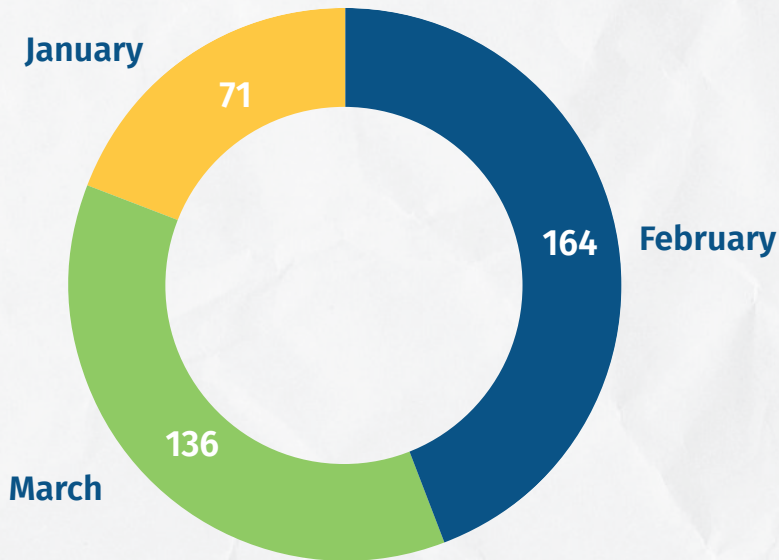
During the first quarter of the year, social media companies continued to censor the Palestinian narrative and content. The total number of violations reached 371, as reported by 7amleh.

Violations classified by type



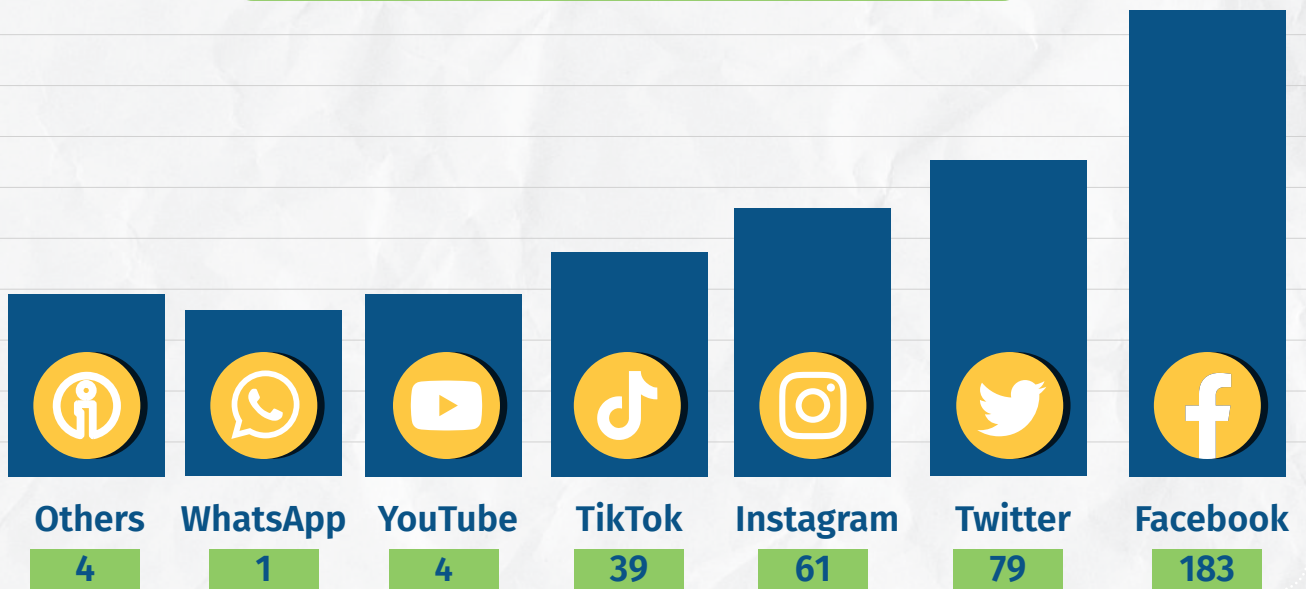
The most visible form of restricting Palestinians' digital rights appears to be the removal or restriction of accounts and content on social media platforms. Social media companies usually impose punitive measures against Palestinian accounts and content automatically based on artificial intelligence algorithm models, official Israeli requests, or mass flagging campaigns targeting Palestinian content. However, the rate of incitement hit alarming levels, with 70 cases documented and dealt with, a higher number than in previous months.

Violations classified according to months



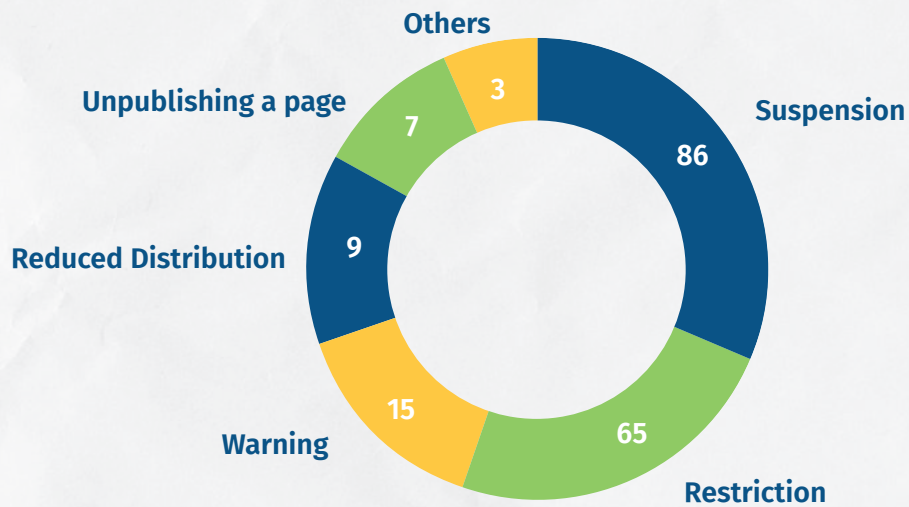
The frequency of violations has clearly increased from one month to the next, with March being the most restrictive and offensive month on Palestinian content and Palestinians on the digital space in the first three months.

Violations classified based on social media platforms



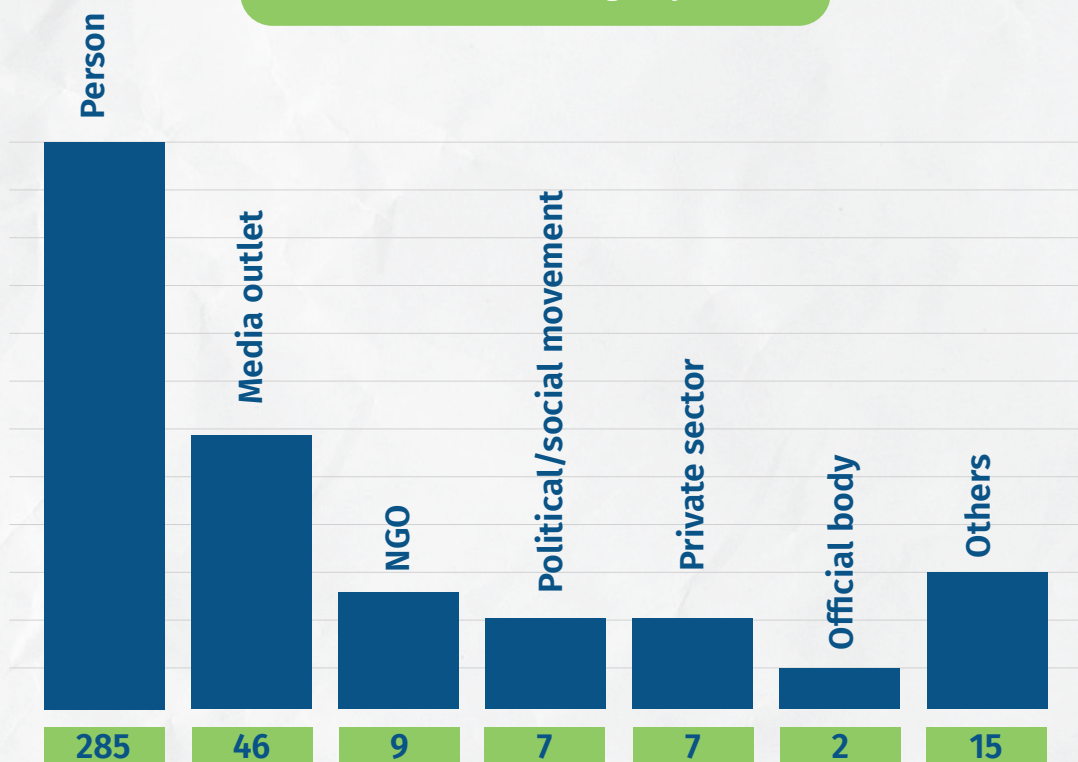
Since the beginning of the year, Meta platforms have been the most repressive and restrictive of Palestinians. The combined violations of the three Meta platforms amounted to 245 out of 371 digital violations against Palestinians, despite the fact that the vast majority of Israeli incitement to violence occurred on Twitter.

### Procedures classified based on removal/restriction type



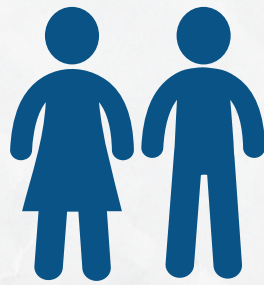
It appears that the complete suspension of Palestinian accounts and pages is the most prominent pattern in the punitive measures taken by social media companies against Palestinian content, although this measure is supposed to be the last resort and the most extreme step in the system of punitive measures for social media companies.

### Violations based on the group affected



It turns out that the vast majority of accounts subject to violations are individual accounts/profiles, indicating that they are private/personal accounts. However, the percentage of Palestinian media outlets and civil society institutions targeted is high when their number is compared to digital violations and the number of pro-Palestinian media outlets and civil society institutions online.

### Violations classified based on the victims' type\*



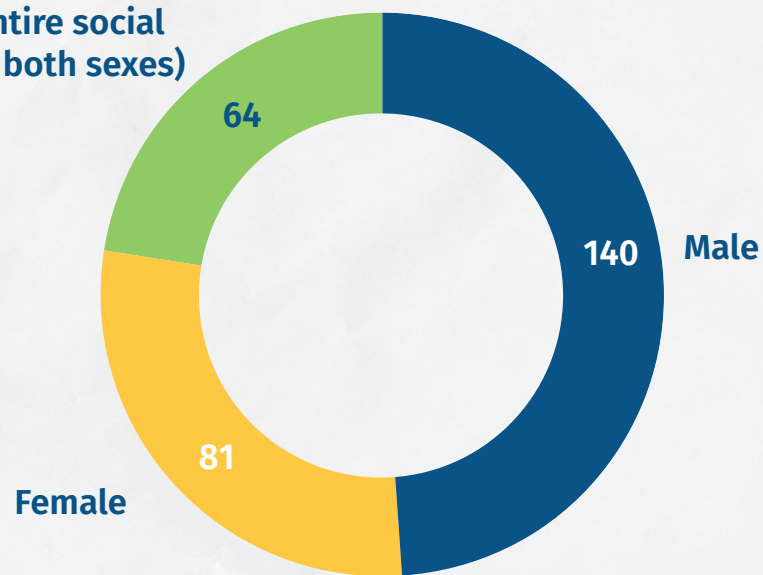
Others	Author/academics	Influencers	Human rights defenders	Journalists	Activists
109	18	30	38	77	88

Activists and journalists appear to be among the groups most exposed to violations on social media platforms in Palestine, as they are the most published and involved in public affairs, making them more vulnerable to violations. It turns out that social media companies still do not distinguish between news content and other content, and as a result, they appear to target journalists intensively, despite the companies' official policies that differentiate and allow news content, regardless of its subject matter or form.

\* A person may have more than one title at the same time, for example, a political activist and a journalist; therefore, the number of titles is greater than the number of affected persons.

## Victims classified based on sex

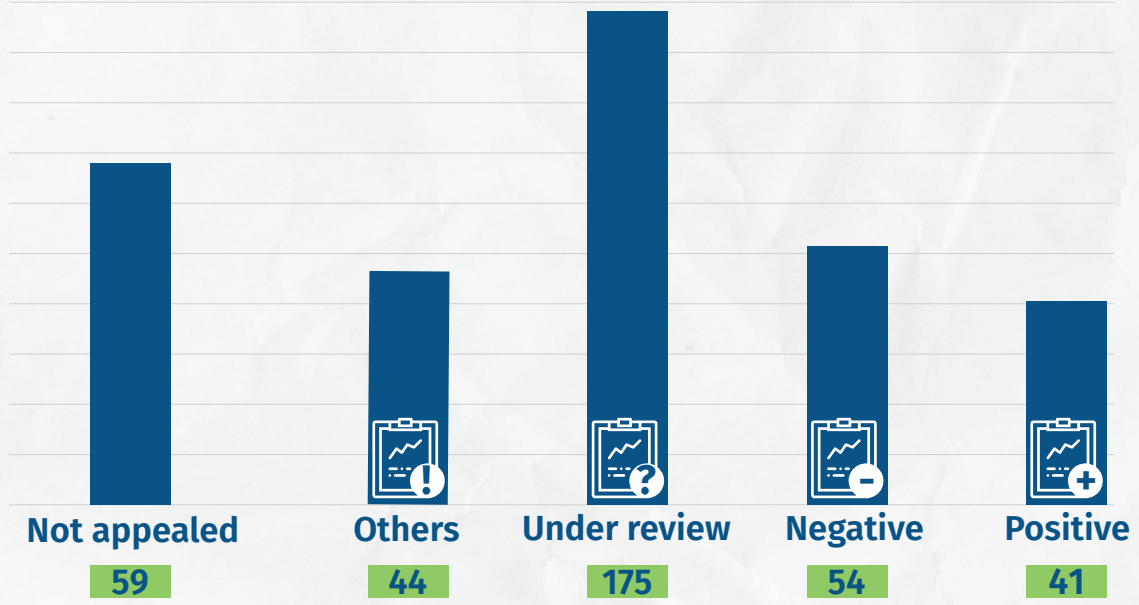
Both (targeting entire social groups, including both sexes)



## Victims classified based on the type of social media account



Social media companies' responses to the follow-ups by 7amleh so far





## Conclusion

Following the release of the findings and recommendations of the "Human Rights Due Diligence of Meta's Impacts in Israel and Palestine in May 2021," the performance of social media companies was expected to improve. The aforementioned is specifically relevant to "Meta" Company, which is considered the most social media platform that violates Palestinians' right of expression; however, this year's indicators, so far, assume the continuation of the same approach in dealing with the Palestinian content. Dealing with the word "martyr" is a clear example of this, as there were more removals of any content featuring this word on Meta platforms than any other single word or phrase. As a result, Meta Supervisory Board announced the start of public consultations on the company's policies in this regard.<sup>1</sup>

While companies remove and restrict Palestinian content under the pretext of supporting "violence and terrorism", they also tolerate Israeli or Hebrew-language content that is violent against Palestinians. The recently released 7amleh "Index of Racism and Incitement 2022" report revealed a significant increase in racist and violent discourse against Palestinians in the Israeli digital space, with the number of racist, inciteful and insulting content reaching 685 thousand, representing a 10% increase in the level of violent discourse in the Hebrew language over the previous year.<sup>2</sup>

This comes at a time when Israeli authorities are exerting efforts to restrict and remove Palestinian content from various social media platforms, particularly TikTok. According to official Israeli sources, "TikTok" removed more than 680 thousand video clips from "Palestinian/Israeli" digital spaces in the third quarter of 2022 under the pretext of "incitement." This is due to Israeli authorities submitting 9.2% of all requests to remove content from "TikTok" around the globe during the same time, indicating that Israel is one of the countries with the most requests to remove content from social media platforms.<sup>3</sup>

1 Arabi21. "'Meta' is studying amending its platforms' policy towards the word 'martyr'", March 2023.

<https://arabi21.com/story/1498898/%D985%D98%A%D8AA%D8A7-%D8AA%D8AF%D8B1%D8B3-%D8AA%D8B9%D8AF%D98A%D984-%D8B3%D98A%D8A7%D8B3%D8A9-%D985%D986%D8B5-%D8A7%D8AA%D987%D8A7-%D8AA%D8AC%D8A7%D987-%D983%D984%D985%D8A9-%D8B4%D987%D98A%D8AF>

2 7amleh. "Index of Racism and Incitement: 7amleh monitored 685 thousand racist and inciting speeches in the Hebrew language during 2022." March 2023.

<https://7amleh.org/202328/03//mushr-alansryh-walthrydh-mrkz-hmlh-yrsd-685-alf-khtab-ansry-wmhrdh-fy-allghh-alabryh-fy-alaam-2022>

3 Israeli Committee for Immigration, Absorption and Diaspora Affairs. "The fight against online violence: Tiktok Israel removed over 680 thousand videos in the third quarter of 2022." March 2023.

<https://m.knesset.gov.il/Activity/committees/Immigration/News/Pages/%D790%D7A0%D798%D799%D7A9%D79E%D799%D795%D7AA%D791%D7A8%D7A9%D7AA%D795%D7AA.aspx>

حملة - المركز العربي  
لتطوير الإعلام الاجتماعي  
7amleh - The Arab Center For  
the Advancement of Social Media



Q<sub>1</sub>

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