



Quarterly Report



January-March 2022

Introduction

The first quarter of the new year witnessed a calmness regarding major political and social events in the Palestinian society, but the daily practices of the Israeli Authorities, and the daily treatment of companies that affect many digital rights, continued at the same pace. The most prominent feature of the first quarter of this year is the exposure of the biases of the policies of social media platforms, especially Meta, during the Russian-Ukrainian war.

Meta has officially tolerated hate speech against Russia on the pretext that the situation is exceptional during the war and that Ukrainians and their sympathizers must be allowed to express their opinions and criticize the Russian war. Additionally, many social media companies boycotted the Russian official bodies and blocked the media from social networking pages. This is at a time when communication companies continue to collude with the Israeli authorities, and do not adopt the same scales. It treats Palestinian's victims of the Israeli occupation as it does Russia, showing its clear bias against the digital rights of Palestinians despite 55 years of Israeli occupation.

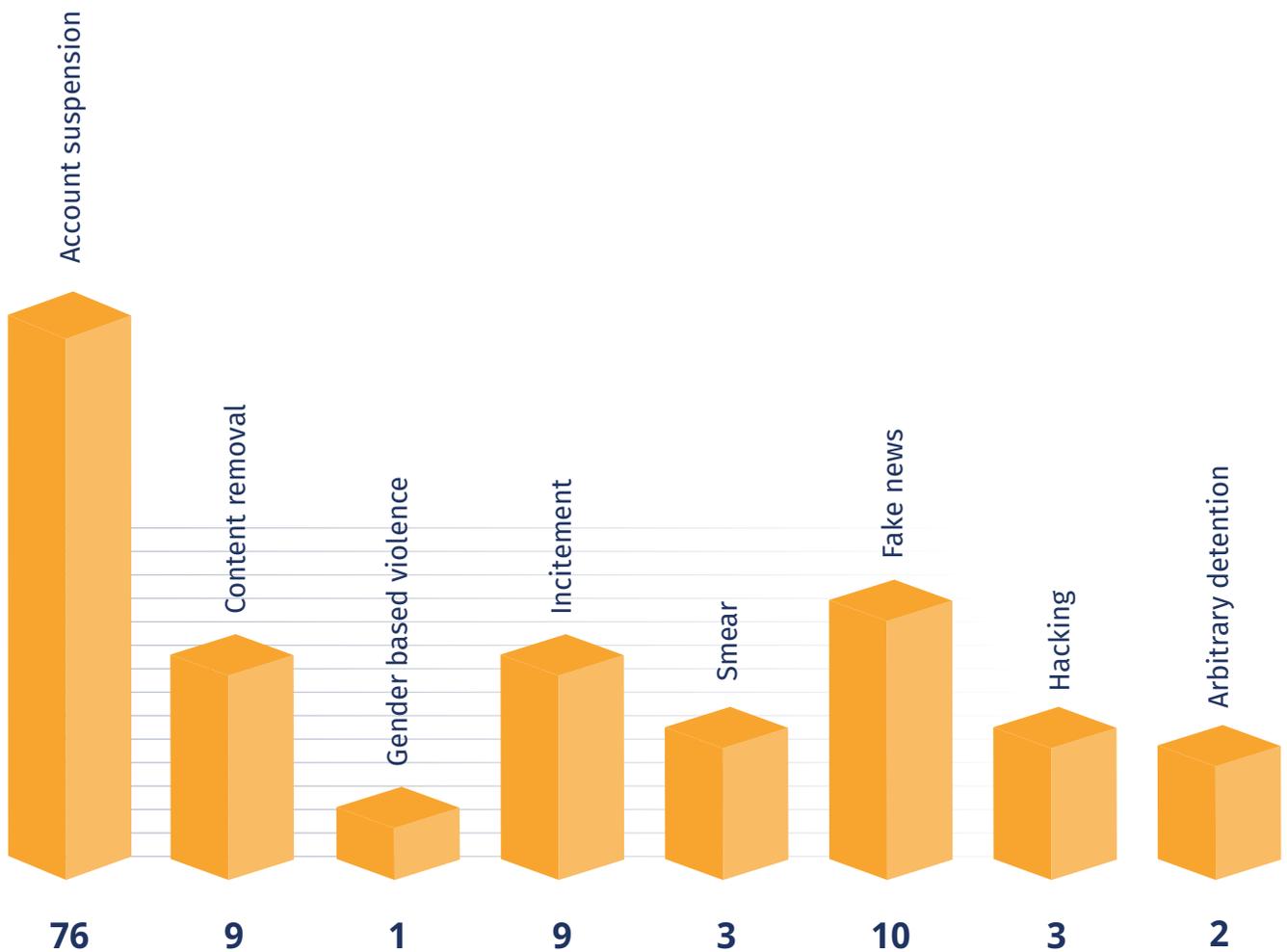
At the same time, Zionist groups and organizations supported by the Israeli government continued their smear campaigns against Palestinians and supporters of the Palestinian cause outside Palestine, and as a result of these efforts, **5 journalists were dismissed and 8 others were investigated** for expressing pro-Palestine opinions through their personal accounts on social media platforms. In addition, the British University of Sheffield suspended the lecturer Shahd Abu Salama because of her pro-Palestine positions, and then she was able to regain her position as a lecturer following the support campaign that followed the decision.

The occupation authorities continued to develop and use espionage techniques in the occupied Palestinian territory, and the latest revelations were that the occupation army provided incentives on the one hand and punishment on the other hand to the occupation soldiers who succeed or fail to photograph the required number of each Palestinian soldier in order to enter the images on the “Blue Wolf” project database, which aims to immediately categorize the danger of each Palestinian by matching his/her picture with the database of the project of the occupation army. In addition, the Israeli authorities are taking steps to enact a Facebook law that legally and based on court rulings allows them to remove any content and to require media and social media platforms to remove any “inflammatory” content. The law targets freedom of opinion and expression for Palestinians who express their criticism of the Israeli Authorities practices through social media platforms.

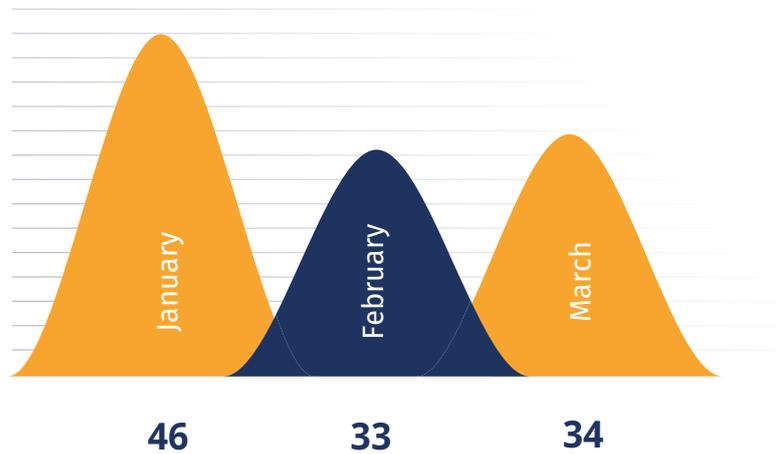
Violations

Social media companies continued to undermine Palestinian narratives and content during the first quarter of the year. Total violations: 113 violations.

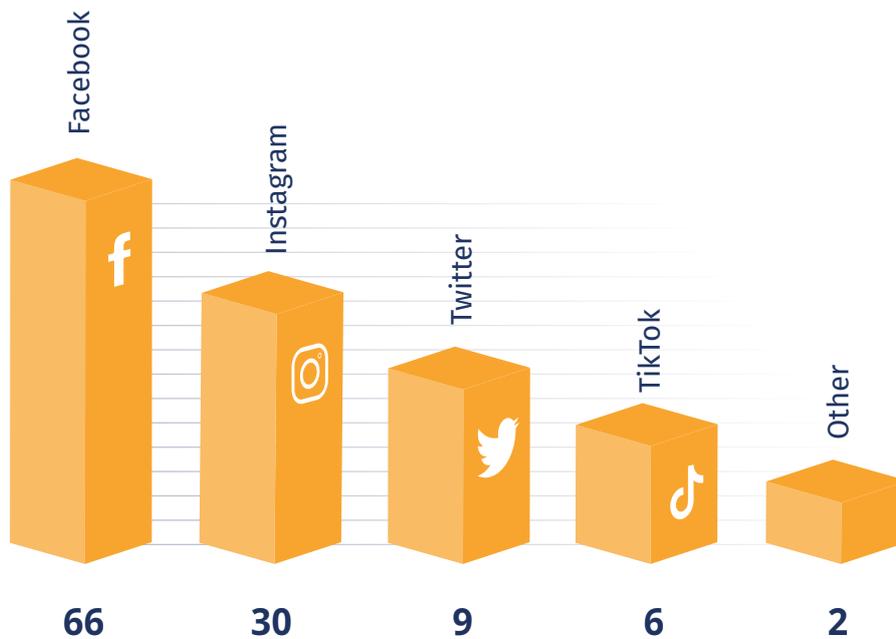
Distribution of violations by type



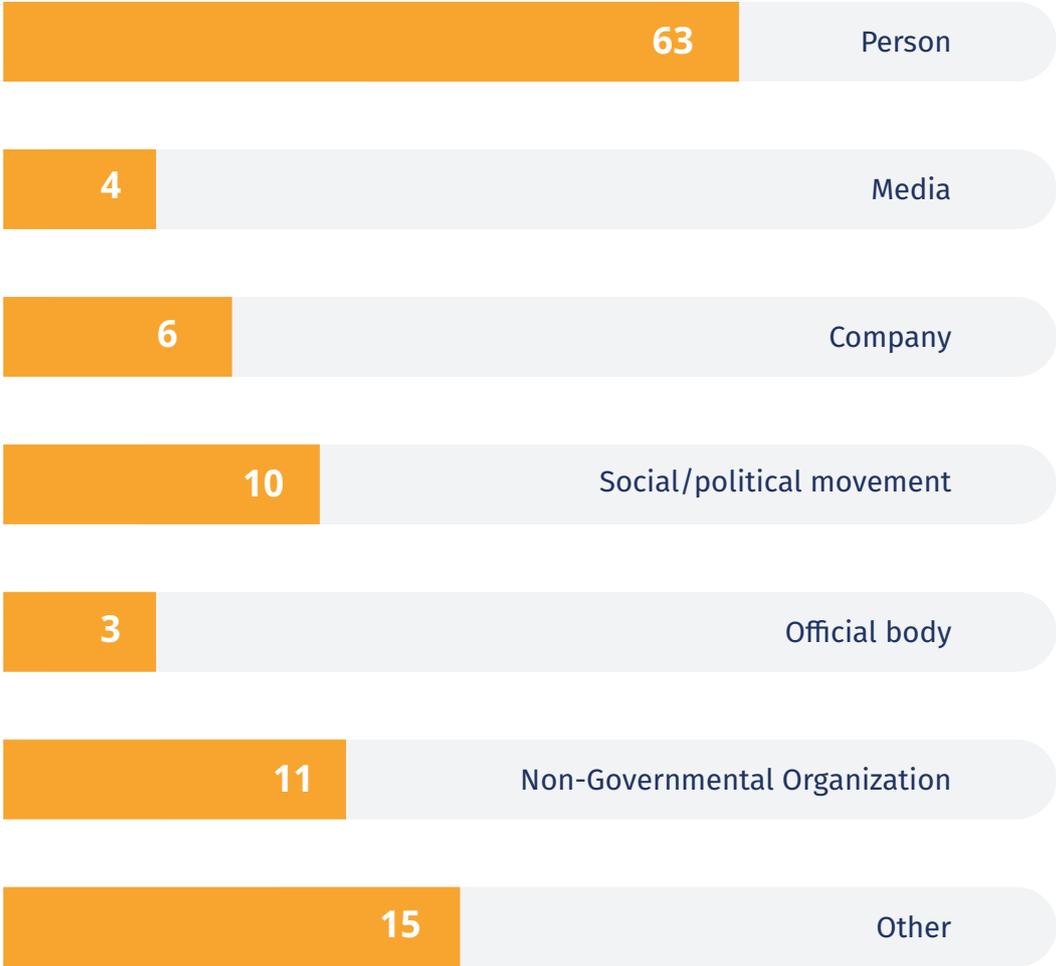
Distribution of violations by months



Distribution of violations by platforms



Distribution of violations by type of affected party

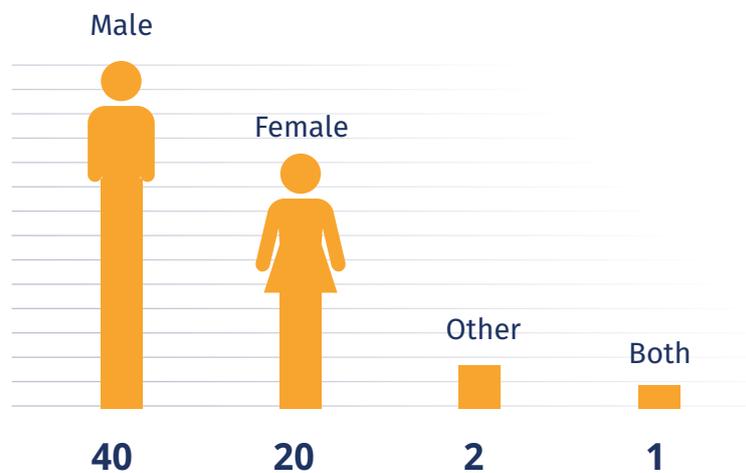


Distribution of violations by type of victim ¹

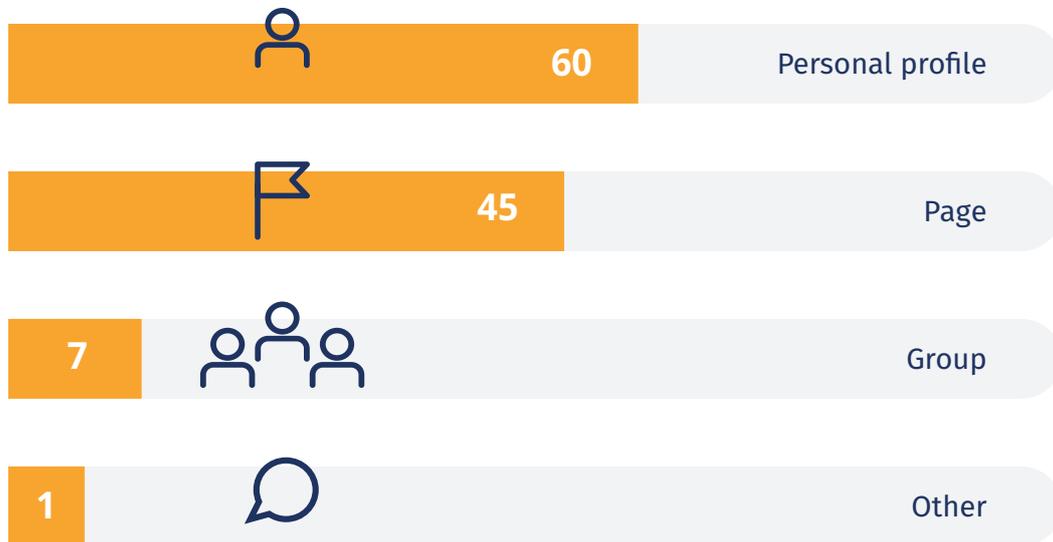


¹ This table could outnumber the real number of persons because several persons could have several capacities at once, i.e. one could be an activist and an author at the same time.

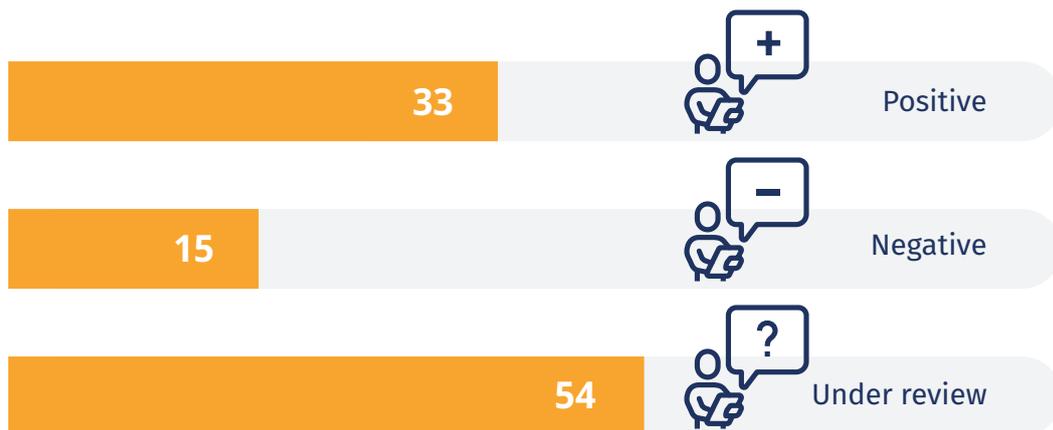
Classification of victims by gender



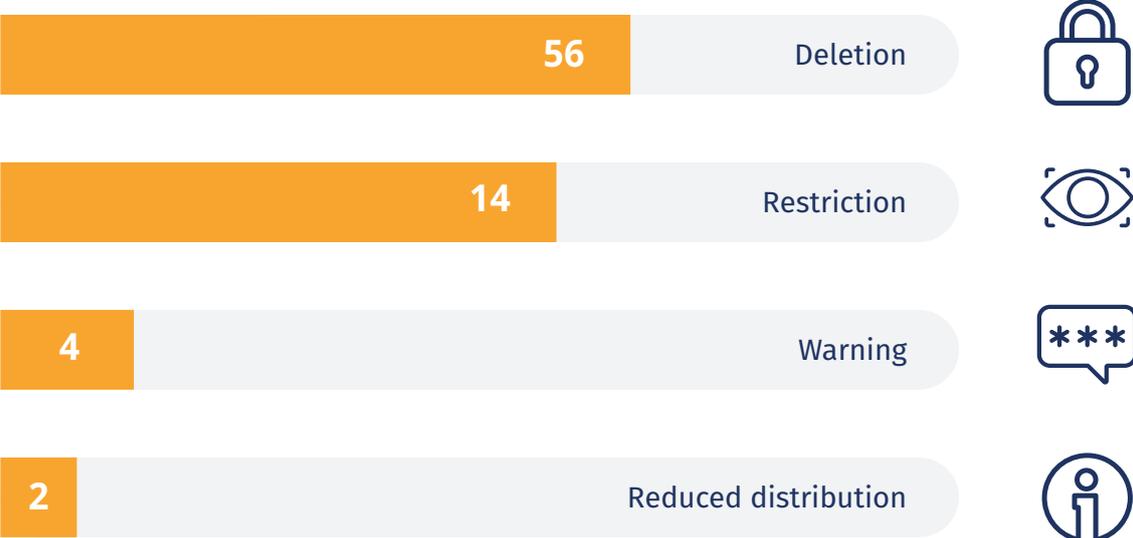
Classification of victims by account type on social media platforms



Distribution of companies' responses to 7amleh follow-ups (102 cases) so far



Distribution of actions by type of suspension



Conclusion

It is noted that the censorship of social media platform companies is still at the top of the challenges that threaten the freedom of opinion and expression of the Palestinian people through social media platforms, despite the criticism of the companies' practices and their restriction of Palestinian content, especially the Meta company, and despite the ongoing investigation by the BSR Foundation with a recommendation from the oversight board about the company's bias in its handling of Arabic and Hebrew content.

Perhaps the most prominent corporate practices, as the results show, are deleting accounts/pages, restricting accounts by imposing restrictions on commenting, live broadcasting or publishing, reducing content distribution, warning accounts and pages, and removing content. These acts indiscriminately target individuals because of their political opinions, but also affect private companies, human rights and non-governmental organizations, government institutions, as well as media pages, even though they publish mere news.

This restriction and deletion have paralyzed the ability of many companies to market their products, many non-governmental organizations from reaching the beneficiaries of their programs, the media from reaching their audience, and individuals from personal communication, expressing opinions, accessing and circulating information, and losing their own archives. Consequently, censorship of the Palestinian digital space, the only refuge for collective action following the policies of geographical fragmentation and Palestinian dispersal, has become seriously threatened.



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