

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



Third Quarterly Report

2024

July - September

Introduction

Throughout the third quarter of the year, Palestinian voices and pro-Palestinian content continued to face significant censorship across social media platforms, as digital violations against these narratives persist. A total of 808 documented cases of digital violations were recorded by 7amleh, highlighting the ongoing challenges faced by Palestinians in maintaining a digital presence free from undue restriction or harmful content.

These violations manifest in various ways, including account restrictions, suspensions, content removal, and the spread of harmful content—particularly violent speech in Hebrew, which remains inadequately addressed by social media companies. Meta platforms (Facebook and Instagram) account for a substantial portion of these violations, with X (formerly Twitter) emerging as a major platform for the dissemination of violent and hateful speech targeting Palestinians.

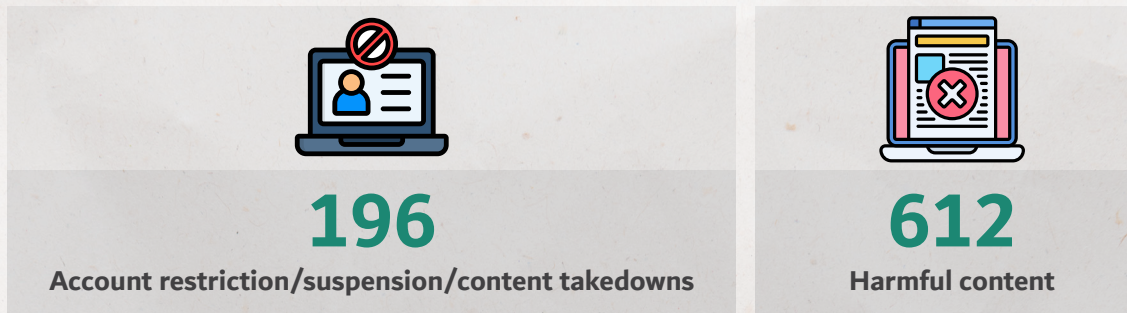
While many of the violations are directed at individual users—especially activists, journalists, and human rights defenders—other entities such as media outlets, NGOs, and political movements are also affected. The report provides a detailed breakdown of violations by type, platform, and victim category, revealing a disturbing trend: despite ongoing advocacy efforts, the rate of violations remains consistent, with social media companies failing to adjust their policies or improve protections for Palestinian users.

This report sheds light on the disproportionate censorship faced by Palestinian content creators, activists, and the broader community, as well as the inadequate response from platforms, which continues to impact the free expression of Palestinian narratives online.

The Violations

Social media companies continued to censor Palestinian content and on the other hand tolerate violent content against Palestinians and their supporters online. 7amleh documented a total of 808 digital violations during the third quarter of the year.

Distribution of violations by type:



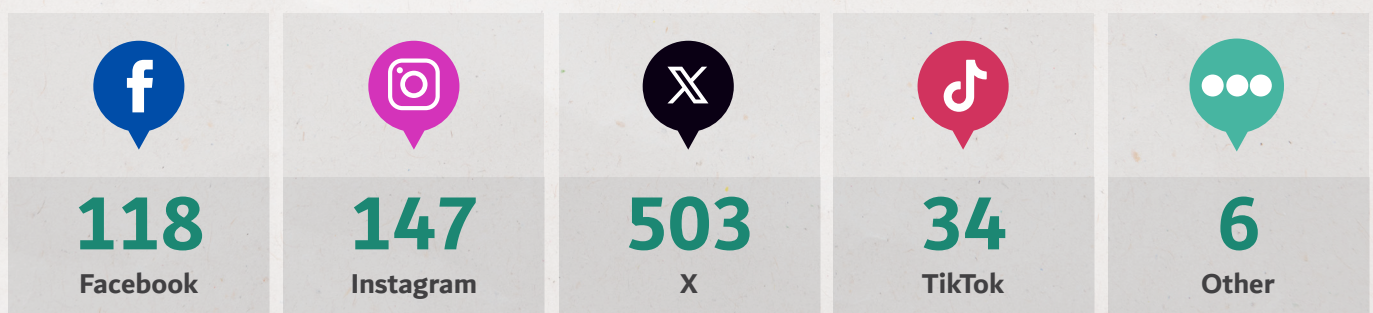
The pattern of censoring pro-Palestine content and accounts continues, despite recent surveys by 7amleh showing that 60-70% of Palestinians engage in self-censorship. This indicates that while Palestinians make efforts to comply with platform policies, even when they disagree with them, their content is still subject to censorship.

Distribution of violations by months:



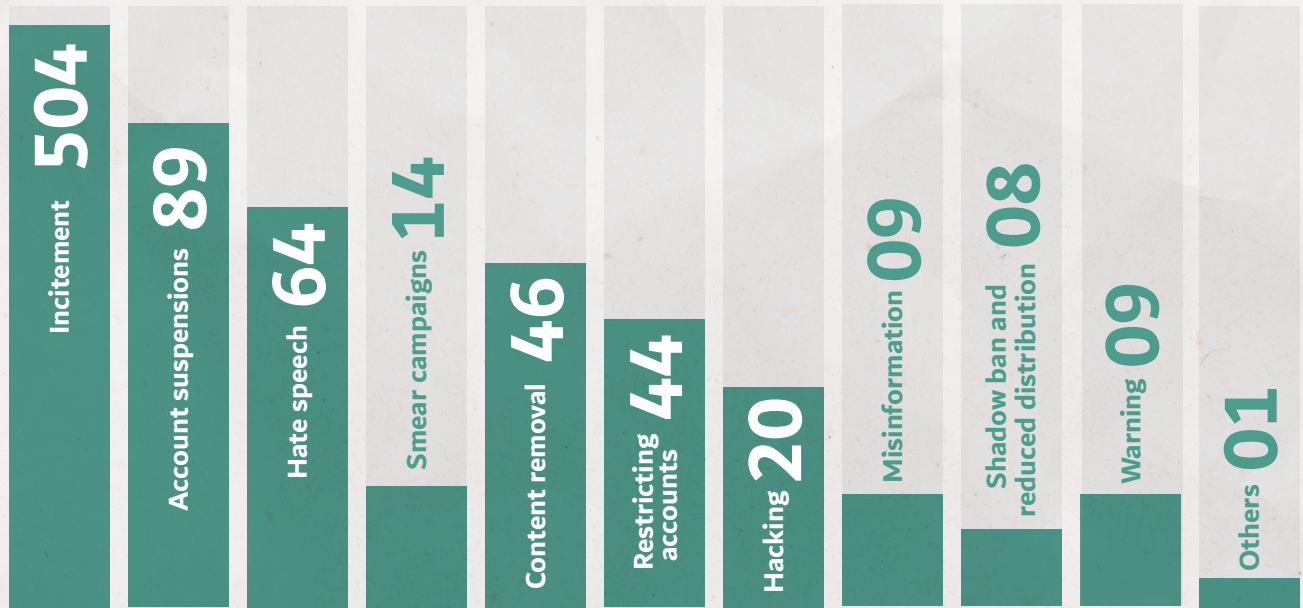
Digital rights violations by social media companies have persisted over the past three months, showing no signs of decline. The number of cases reported each month varies, depending on how many 7amleh is able to document and reach.

Distribution of violations by platforms:



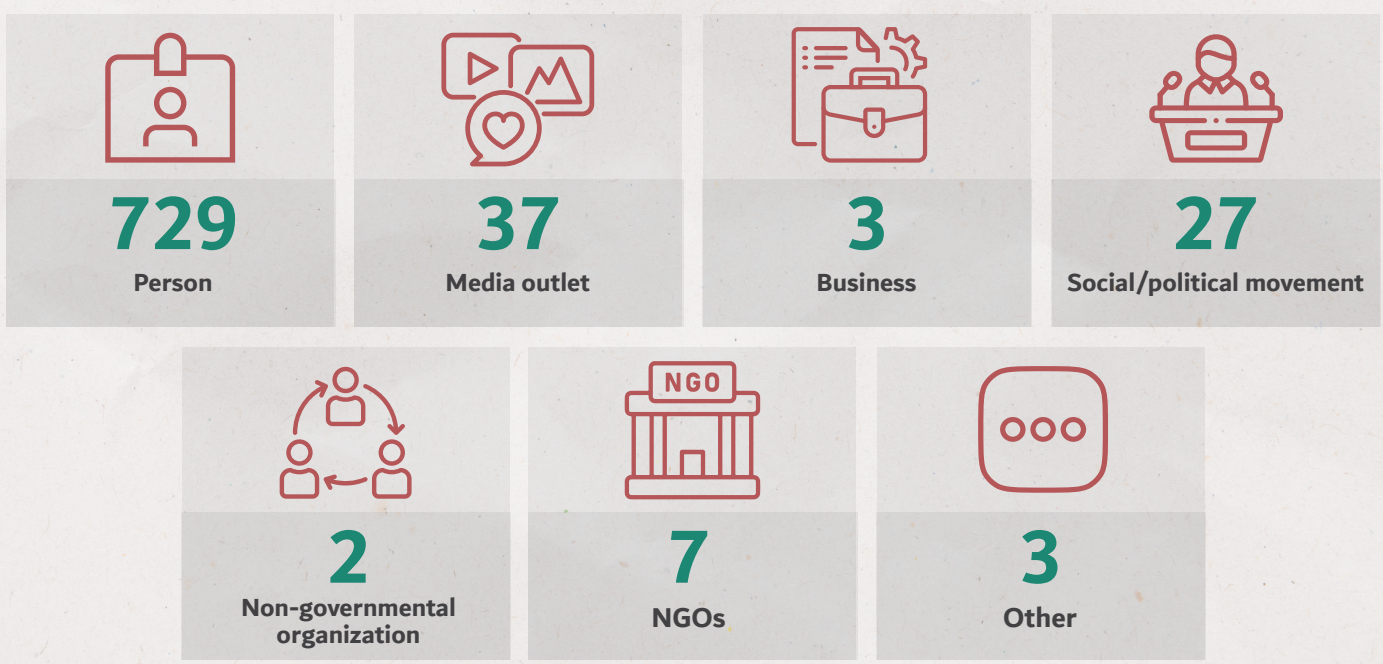
It's evident that X platform hosts a significant amount of violent and harmful content online. While Meta's platforms follow closely, they rank highest in terms of both content censorship and violent content. Other platforms, such as Telegram, are also involved, but technical challenges limit the ability to effectively detect content there, especially violent material.

Distribution of actions by type of violation:



The two most prevalent categories of violations are incitement to violence and account suspensions. Alongside these, issues such as content takedowns, misinformation, and hate speech are also widespread. However, the most extreme threats, particularly incitement to violence and account suspensions tend to go viral more frequently, amplifying their impact.

Distribution of violations by category of affected entity:



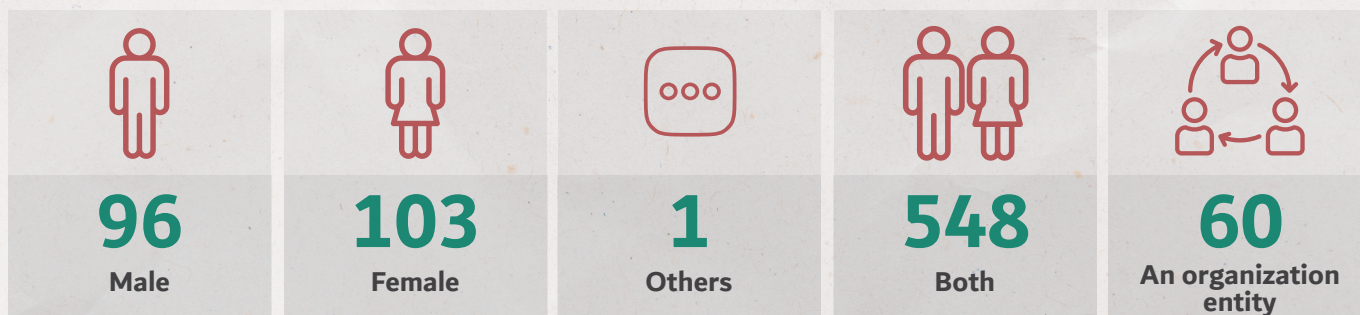
Individuals are the most affected by violations on social media platforms, as personal accounts are more numerous than pages, channels, or groups. However, when it comes to organizations, media outlets and NGOs face the greatest impact.

Distribution of violations by category of victim:



Among individuals affected, many self-identified journalists, human rights defenders, and activists report being targeted by censorship or violent attacks from bad actors, social media platforms and the Israeli government.

Gender Breakdown of Victims:



Classification of victims by type of account on social media platforms:



Distribution of companies' responses to 7amleh's escalations so far:



Social media platforms, particularly Meta, continue to respond slowly to escalations concerning Palestinian digital rights violations, despite their obligation to address such human rights issues promptly, especially during the ongoing conflict. Nevertheless, positive responses from Meta significantly outnumber negative ones. In contrast, X has failed to respond to escalations, with no progress since the dissolution of the trusted partnership program.

¹ Some of the cases are not escalated because they don't meet the documentation standards. For instance, when cases don't have enough information or evidence to be verified and processed.

Conclusions

- The data from the third quarter of the year reveals several important trends in the digital violations targeting Palestinians and pro-Palestinian content on social media platforms. Below are the key conclusions and insights derived from the data:
- **High Volume of Digital Violations:** With 808 documented violations, the scale of digital censorship and harmful content targeting Palestinians remains alarming. The consistency of violations across all three months (July: 189, August: 195, September: 424) shows no significant reduction in these practices, indicating that social media platforms have not taken meaningful action to mitigate the issue.
- **Prevalence of Harmful Content:** A significant portion of the violations (612 cases) involved harmful content, particularly violent and hateful speech in Hebrew, which continues to be inadequately addressed by platforms. This unchecked harmful content contrasts sharply with the frequent restrictions and suspensions imposed on Palestinian and pro-Palestinian accounts.
- **Platform-Specific Trends:** X (formerly Twitter) was the leading platform for violations, with 503 incidents, primarily involving the dissemination of violent speech. Meta's platforms (Facebook and Instagram) accounted for a combined 265 violations, making up 37.3% of the total violations.
- **Types of Violations:** The majority of violations were related to incitement (504 cases), with other significant categories including account suspensions (89), hate speech (37), and content removals (46). This suggests that while platforms are swift to restrict pro-Palestinian content, they are slower to tackle harmful speech targeting Palestinians.
- **Limited Platform Accountability:** The response from social media companies to escalations was largely insufficient, with 497 cases receiving no reply and 140 receiving only autoresponses.
- **Gender Distribution:** The data reveals that both men (96) and women (103) were nearly equally affected by digital violations. However, a significant number of cases (548) involved accounts or entities that affected both genders, reinforcing the widespread nature of these issues.

In summary, the data shows a persistent and disproportionate pattern of censorship and harmful content targeting Palestinians on social media, while harmful speech against Palestinians remains underregulated. This highlights the urgent need for platforms to reevaluate their policies and ensure more balanced enforcement to protect the digital rights of all users.

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