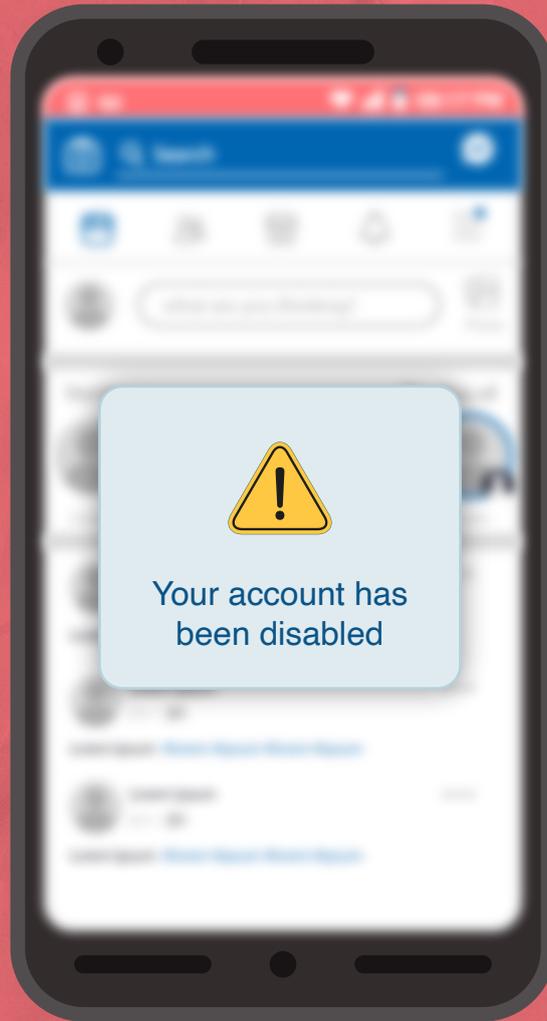




## Quarterly Report

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Q<sub>2</sub>

April-June 2023

## Introduction

The occupied Palestinian territory is currently experiencing persistent turmoil and tension, as ongoing events unfold. During the second quarter of this year, there was a notable increase in acts of violence and attacks by the Israeli occupation forces and settlers against the Palestinians. Subsequently, these occurrences had adverse repercussions on the human rights and freedoms of Palestinians within the digital space.

Through the utilization of artificial intelligence techniques and algorithms, social media companies persistently engaged in extensive content removal and account restrictions targeting Palestinians.<sup>1</sup> While broad protection is granted to violent and hateful discourse against the Palestinian people and pro-Palestinian activists in the Israeli digital space, recent research conducted by 7amleh - The Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media, which examined the dissemination of violent discourse on the Twitter platform, uncovered a pattern of distortion and repression inflicted upon Palestinian activists and supporters worldwide.<sup>2</sup> These actions hinder their ability to effectively communicate and engage in advocacy efforts.

Social media companies responded to these pressures by implementing punitive policies and measures targeting accounts and pages active in defending Palestinian rights. These policies block Palestinian content that covers the issues of the Israeli occupation and violations.

The following is an analysis of the most prominent digital violations documented by 7amleh through the Palestinian Observatory of Digital Rights Violations “7or” from April to June of this year.

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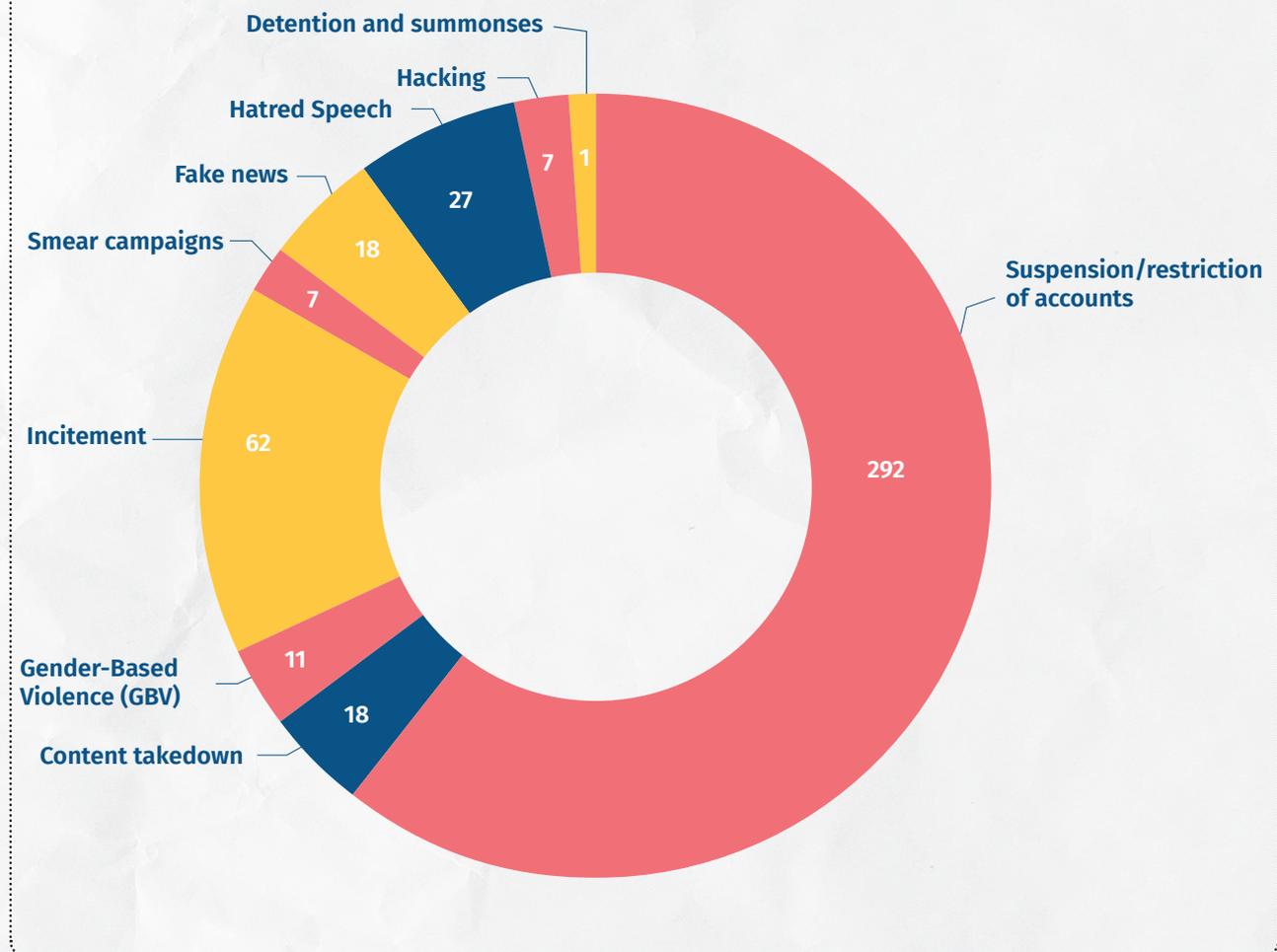
1 According to the documents of the 7amleh center through the Palestinian Observatory of Digital Rights Violations “7or”. Link: [7or.7amleh.org](https://7or.7amleh.org)

2 “An Analysis of the Inciting Israeli Discourse against the Town of Huwara.” 7amleh Center. 2023. Link: <https://7amleh.org/2023/06/01/hmlh-ysdr-tqryra-yhll-alkhtab-alisraelyl-althrydhy-dhd-bldh-hwarh-ala-mnsh-twytr>

## Violations

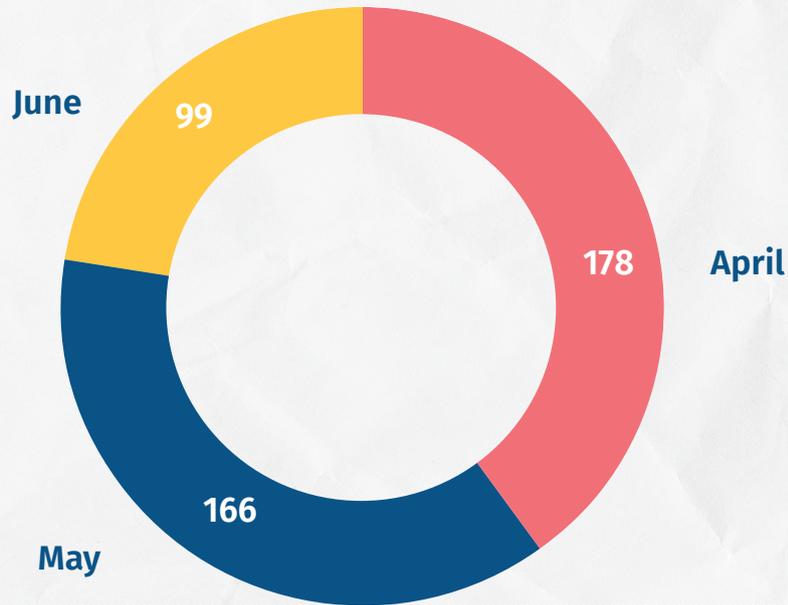
Social media companies continued to silence the Palestinian narrative and over moderate content during the second quarter of the year. The total number of violations documented was: 443

### Disaggregation of violations according to their form



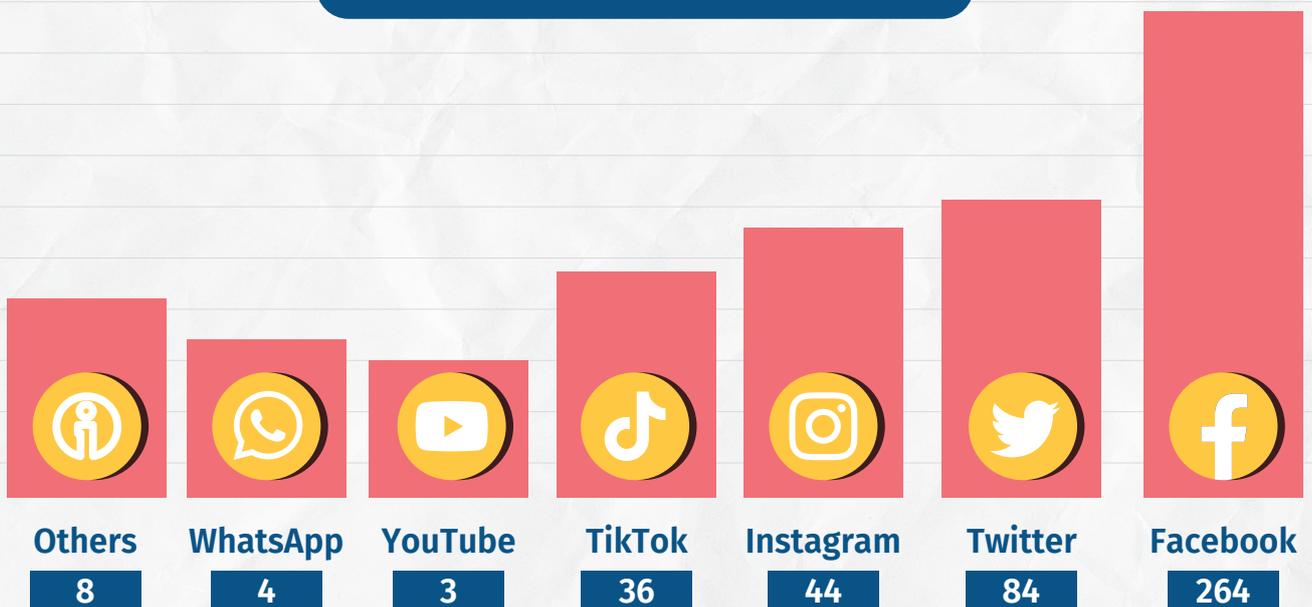
Punitive measures of social media platforms dominated against Palestinian pages and accounts advocating for the rights of Palestinians against the backdrop of expressing opinion and criticizing the practices and procedures of the occupation forces. As the indicators above show, the rate of restrictions and blocks reached 68% of the total number of violations in their various forms that 7amleh Center documented during the past three months.

### Disaggregation of violations by month



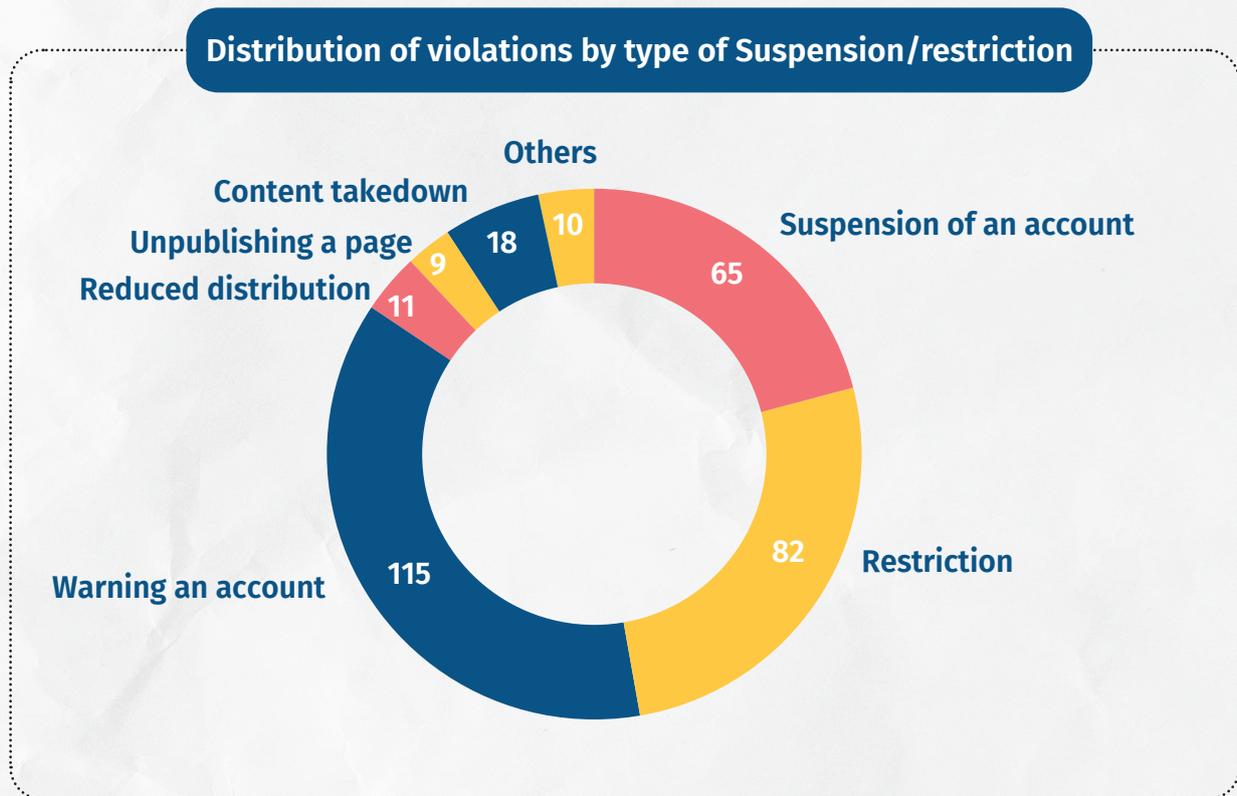
During the months of April and May, the occupied Palestinian territory experienced a significant surge in intense political and on the ground events. As anticipated, these events had a direct impact on the digital sphere, resulting in tightened restrictions on freedoms and the proliferation of hate speech and Israeli incitement. The rise in the frequency of digital violations against Palestinians and advocates of Palestinian rights worldwide within the first two months of the second quarter underscores the extent of repression and the daunting challenges they encounter in the digital realm.

### Disaggregation of violations by platform



“Meta” platforms still account for the largest percentage of violations against Palestinian digital rights. Violations on various Meta platforms amounted to 70% of all violations documented by 7amleh, especially the practices of restriction, block, and censorship of content in general, while the spread of hatred speech and incitement against the Palestinian people and activists advocating for their rights in the digital space is high.

## Suspension, restriction, and content removals



The results show that the procedures for warning accounts and then completely restricting and suspending them are among the most prominent punitive measures taken by companies against Palestinian content. In many cases, these measures are taken arbitrarily and without warning or without giving an opportunity for clarification from the parties and persons affected by the decisions.

### Disaggregation of violations by affected body

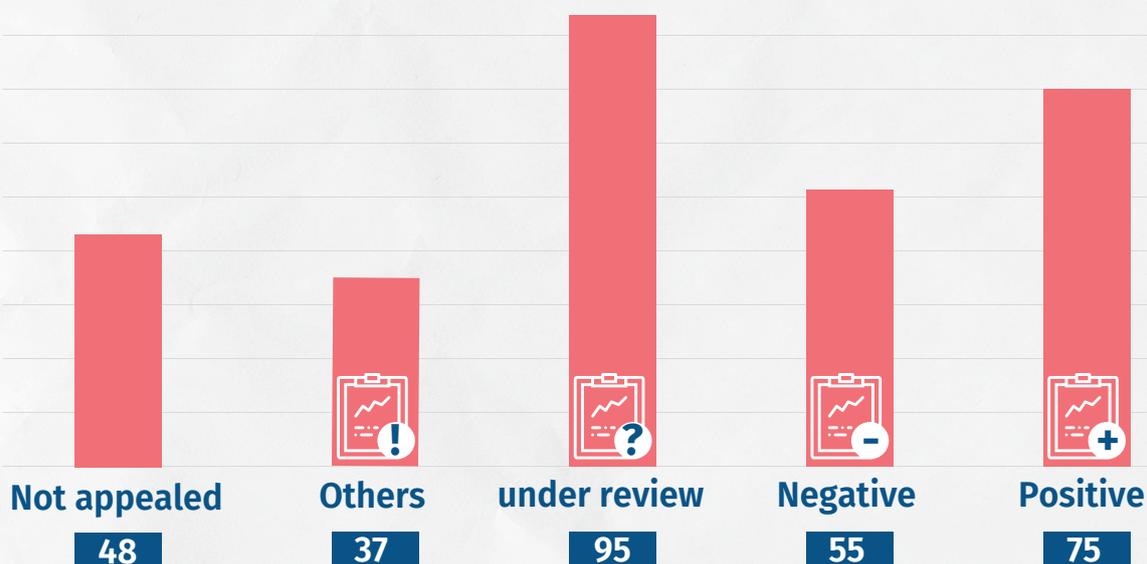


It is apparent that individuals, whether journalists, activists, or human rights defenders, are the most vulnerable to various forms of digital violations, while media pages have also been subjected to a large number of restrictions and violations in a way that impedes their work and activities through social media platforms.

### Classification of victims according to the type of account on the social media platforms

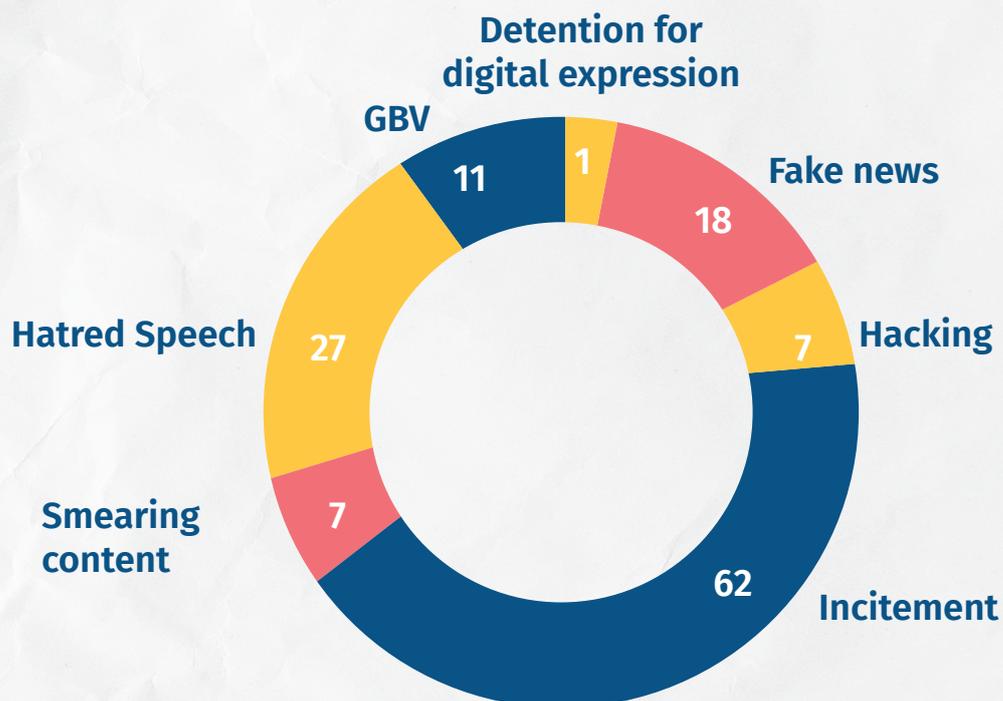


### Disaggregation of the companies' responses to the reports that the 7amleh Center has followed up to date

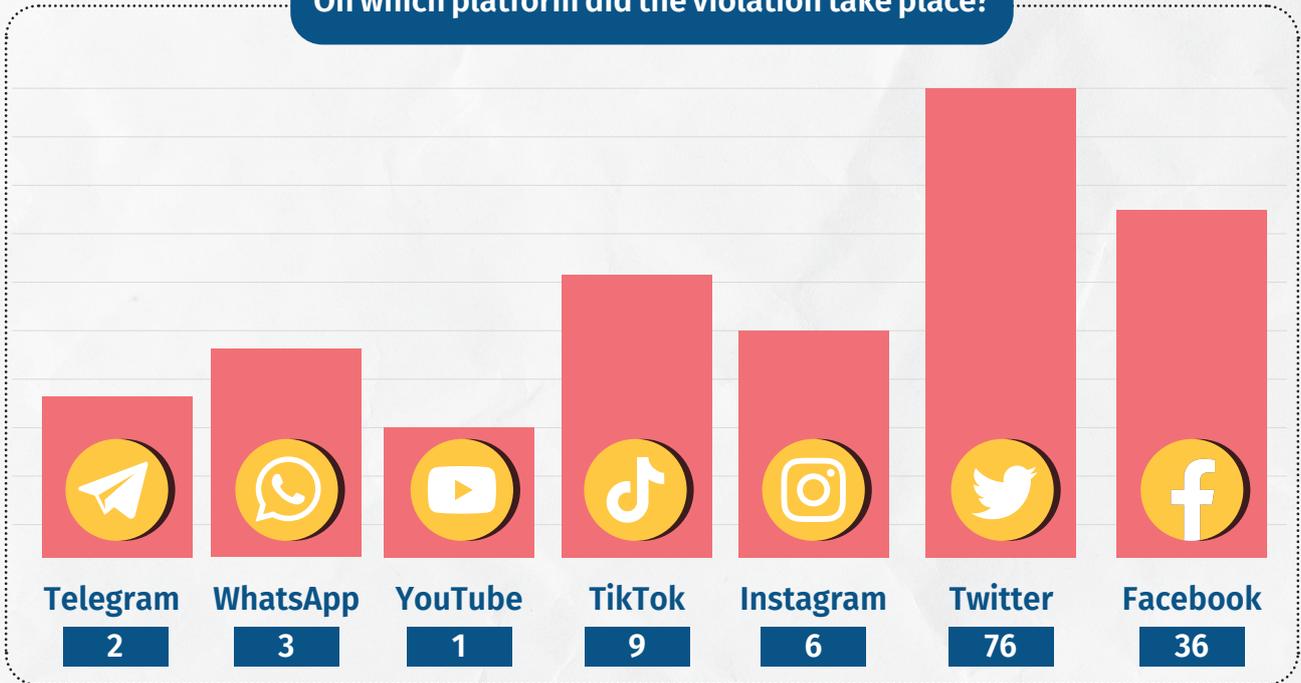


The success rate of companies' responses to requests to return content and accounts and lift restrictions was about 23%, while a substantial portion of the requests are still under review by companies, whether negative or positive, until the moment the report is issued.

### Harmful content and practices

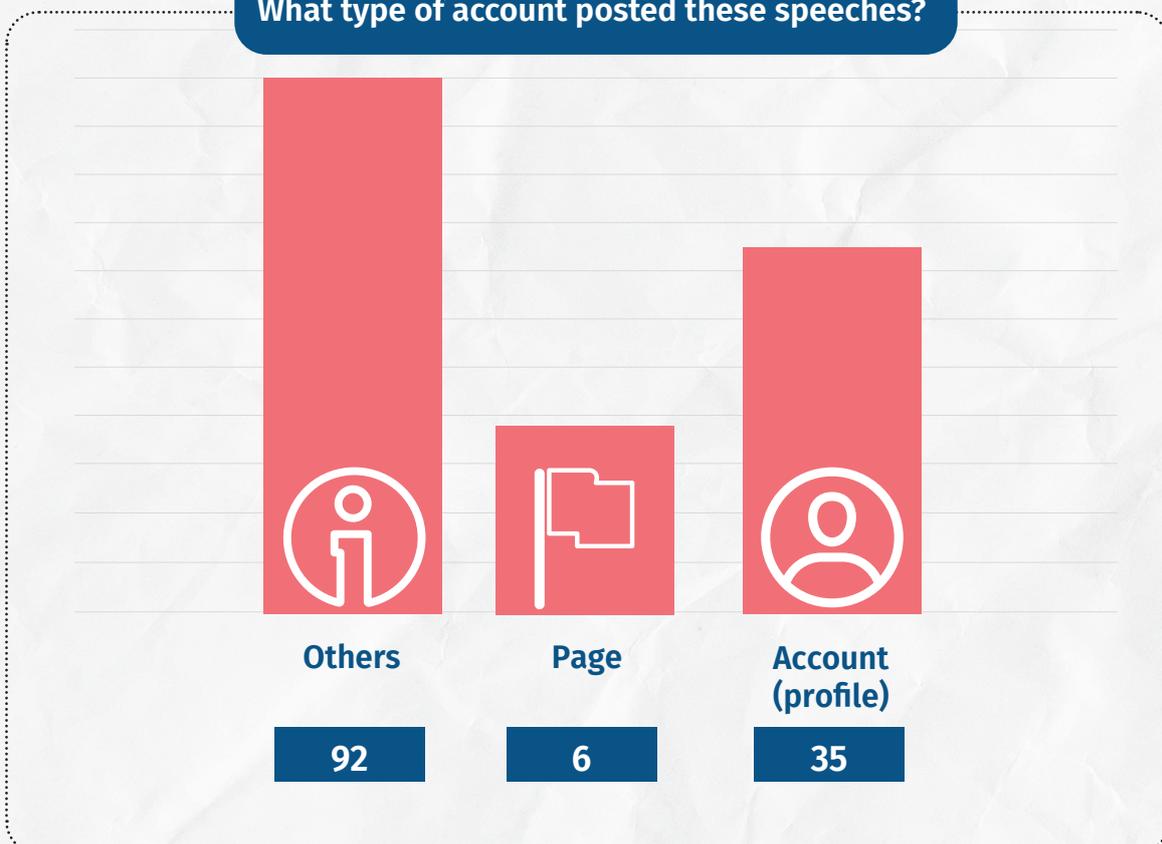


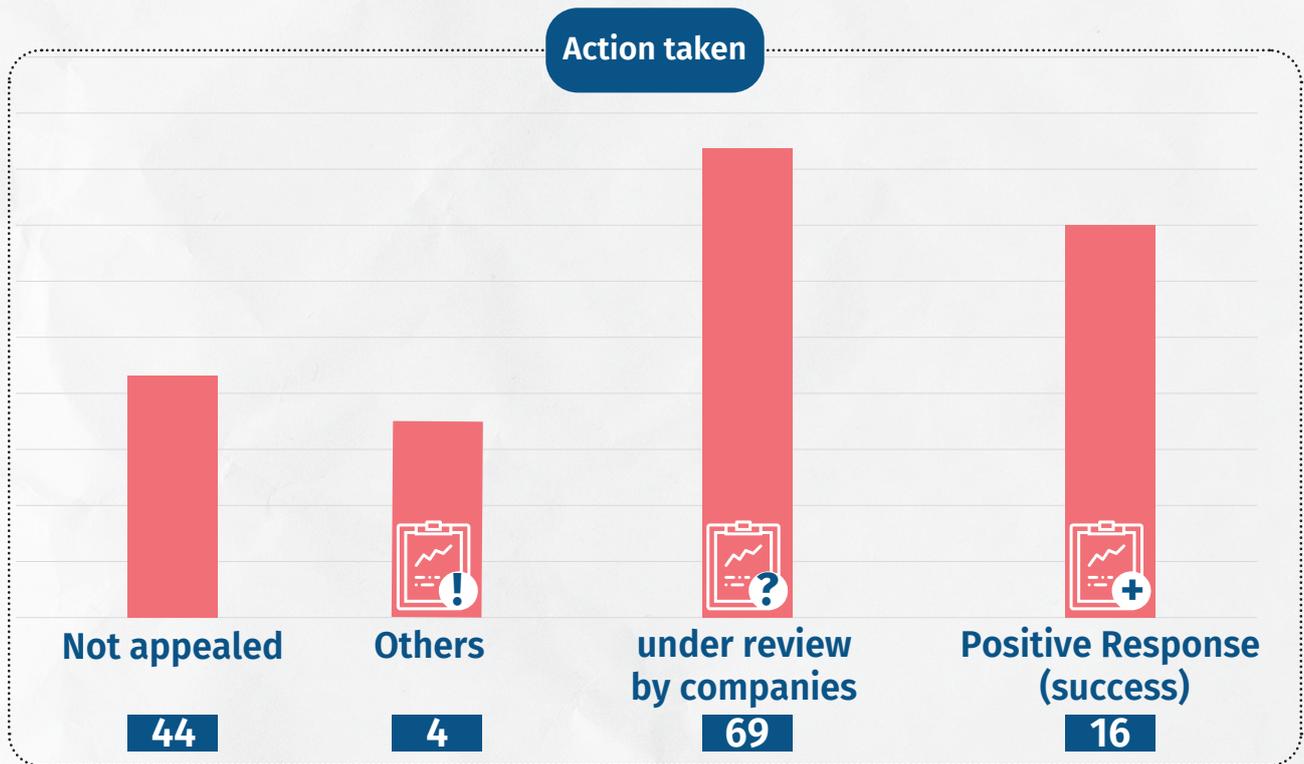
### On which platform did the violation take place?



The results show that the Twitter platform is still a fertile environment for the spread of hatred speech, incitement, and violence, as most of these contents were posted on the Twitter platform, followed by the Facebook platform.

### What type of account posted these speeches?





It is apparent that companies are taking slow action against violent and inciting content, especially Hebrew, against Palestinians. They do not take these violent discourses seriously, despite their negative impact in the digital space as well as on the ground. These violent discourses are translated very often into violent and destruction attacks against civilians.

## Conclusion

The above indications show that the authorities and social media companies are working to restrict and remove content and accounts that express the Palestinian point of view and criticize Israeli practices, which is considered a restriction of the freedoms of expression and opinion. The motives for the removal and restriction may be the algorithms themselves, or at the request of Israeli official bodies, or pressure from right-wing Israeli or Western groups working to conduct massive reporting campaigns against pages and content supporting Palestinian rights. It emerged that “Meta,” with its various platforms, is still at the top of the pyramid of companies that most restrict Palestinian digital rights.

On the other hand, hate speech and incitement against the Palestinians are still widespread on social media platforms, especially on Twitter. This inciting digital environment has led to the organization of attacks on the ground against the Palestinian population, which occurred, for example, in the towns of Hawara and Turmusaya. It is clear that the companies are tolerating such discourse, and the rate of their response to requests to remove and delete hateful content is not a priority to neutralize these attacks against the Palestinians and their supporters around the world.

The report highlights that numerous individuals, particularly journalists, activists, human rights defenders, media institutions, and civil society organizations, have been subjected to a high number of digital violations. These violations are a direct consequence of their active engagement in public affairs and unwavering defense of Palestinian rights. This clearly indicates that the endeavor to safeguard digital rights is still in its nascent stages and requires concerted efforts to protect the Palestinian digital space.

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



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