



REBOOTING SOCIAL MEDIA

Holding Big Tech Accountable for Young People's Digital Rights in Palestine

RNW Media is an international digital media organisation, **working for social change**. We work with those who, like us, want to unleash the potential of young people aged 15 to 30, using the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** relevant to young people as our compass. The inclusive digital and learning solutions we co-create, **aim to accelerate change in behaviour, attitudes, social norms and policies**.

Digital rights of young people represent the continuum of human rights offline that must be respected, protected and fulfilled while bringing up to the fore the ubiquitous nature of virtual spaces which **renders elements like transmissibility, searchability and traceability even more challenging**. Thus disproportionately affecting young people at the confluence of age, class, gender, religion among others.

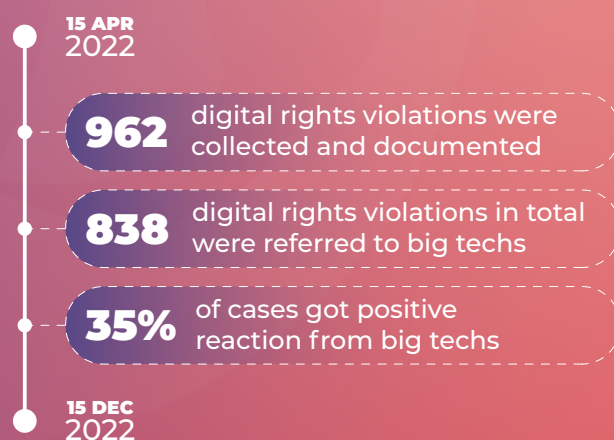
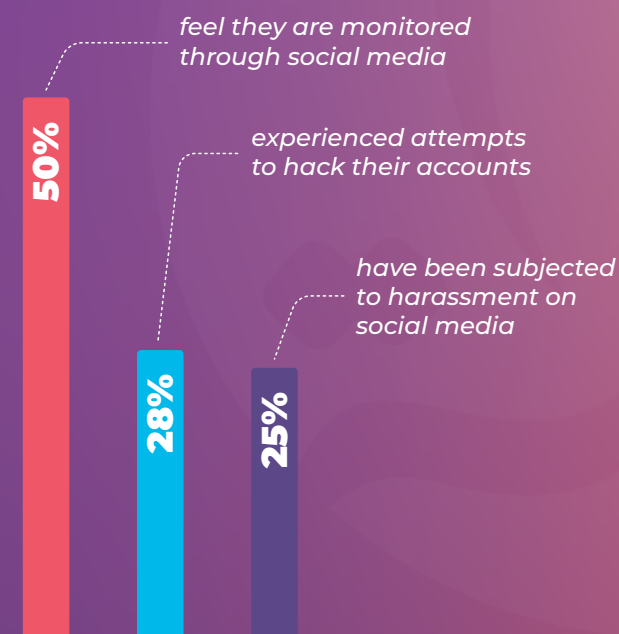
As we work in young people's digital rights, we must ensure to explore how digital technologies, including ICTs, encompass an understanding of **infrastructure, state power and hegemony, technology, society, culture and gender**, as it is evident from the work of projects, organisations, and individuals that we partner with.

In 2022 RNW Media launched its "**Innovation Fun-d**". This grant mechanism was sought to be a way by which RNW Media, jointly with its partners could come up with **innovative project ideas that would support young people in all their diversity, confidently claim their rights, assume their place in society and drive social change**.



As part of the Innovation Fun-d and in collaboration with **7amleh - The Arab Centre for the Advancement of Social Media**, we launched a project to enhance the rights of young Palestinians in online spaces and hold tech companies accountable for offering more transparency in their content moderation strategies in the Palestinian context. Rebooting Social Media (RSM), aimed to safeguard the rights of young Palestinian online users, especially women and members of the LGBTQI+ communities, by **offering digital media solutions and conducting data-driven advocacy**. To achieve this, we focused on strengthening 7amleh's platform, **7or** (meaning freedom in Arabic).

Through 7or, 7amleh offers support to affected users, and collects evidence of digital rights violations. 7or's latest data shows that women's privacy is a major issue on social media. In addition to this, online bullying and harassment stand out as major challenges.



There has been a steady increase in digital rights violations for Palestinians, particularly against historically excluded groups: 7amleh keeps reporting these violations. The work of RSM has been essential as it protects the rights of young online users. In July 2022 during an overwhelming rise in attacks against members of the LGBTQI+ community, 7amleh's advocacy team organised 18 meetings with representatives of tech companies (e.g. Meta), Telecommunications Companies (e.g. Paltel Group), governmental agencies (e.g. Palestine Election Committee and Juvenile Attorney General), and international and national civil society organisations.

Tech companies refused to take down hateful content, justifying their position on the 'protection of free speech'. 7amleh provided an in-depth report on the use of specific words in Arabic language and referred to cases of harassment to prove that these attacks were a violation of the rights of these young people. As a result,



Meta removed more than **86%** of the content we reported.

As part of RSM, RNW Media and 7amleh co-created a toolkit called

'Evidence-based advocacy for digital rights'

which can be used in other countries or adopted by other initiatives on tech companies' accountability. Additionally, as RNW Media, **we will continue to collect data and amplify the voices of young people on the role that big tech and social media channels have in ensuring that young people's digital rights are accounted for.**

