MENA Network for Countering Hate Speech welcomes the Recommendations of Facebook's Review Report

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MENA Network for Countering Hate Speech welcomes the recommendations of the Facebook own civil rights review report, and stresses the importance of taking them into consideration, especially those related to stopping hate speech in general, and to the destructive hate speech practiced by heads of states and governments in particular for the great impact they have on their supporters and followers reflected in the escalation of polarization level and subsequently in the rise of hate speech in many regions, including MENA region, which is currently witnessing numerous conflicts and civil wars.

The Network emphasizes the importance of the recommendation "more concrete, specific actions to address worries about bias in the company's algorithms",

Especially those related to Arabic language content that came mainly as a result of understandings between Facebook Company and the Government of Israel in 2016, leaving negative repercussions on freedom of expression in Palestine in particular and in the Arab region in general. At present, these repercussions synchronized with the increasing dependence on communication, disseminating opinions and circulating news over social media platforms at a time of imposition of preventive measures due to coronavirus pandemic such as home quarantine, movement restrictions, and other means of protection.

The report expressed great concern about the firm commitment of Facebook Company to protect a specific definition of freedom of expression, even if that means permitting an offensive speech, stirring divisions, perpetuating hate speech, and threatening civil rights.

We thus stress the importance of increasing consultation with human rights organizations especially who concerned with freedom of expression, and that the compliance with international human rights laws, particularly the right to freedom of expression, must be respected, especially that such a right is intimately related to the tremendously widespread of social media platforms over the globe.

We also believe that Facebook Company should contribute more to the programs on media development in our region in particular, and the rest of the world in general for the challenges it currently encounters, especially after the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic , as many of media outlets are currently facing the risk of closure, resulting in the loss of many journalists of their jobs as well as the closure's implications on pluralism, diversity, and freedom of expression, allowing for

vacating the stage for government-owned media merely.

It is noteworthy that about one thousand advertisers, including major companies such as Coca-Cola, Ford, Adidas and Unilever, are carrying out a campaign to “Stop Hate for Profit” in aim to boycott ads on the company’s website and to put pressure on them to prevent hate speech.

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