

WSIS informal consultation 29/7/2025

Thank you, Chair, and greetings to all.

I'm Jalal Abukhater, Advocacy Director at 7amleh – The Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media, and a member of the Global Digital Justice Forum.

Under the Human Rights and Ethical Dimensions of the WSIS+20 process, I wish to stress that existing frameworks are failing to adequately regulate digital corporations who operate across borders with little regard for international human rights or humanitarian law.

From Gaza to other conflict zones, we are witnessing how Big Tech companies' unregulated power contributes to human rights violations and even enables atrocity crimes. Content moderation failures, data exploitation, and opaque algorithmic systems are not just business issues, but rather are life and death issues in conflict contexts.

In our joint submission, we called for a clear and specific recognition of states' obligations to rein in their digital corporations, especially when these corporations are headquartered in the Global North but cause harm globally. Paragraph 22 of the Global Digital Compact makes this commitment clear: states must protect human rights throughout the entire technology lifecycle. That must include regulating the extraterritorial activities of their tech companies.

We also recommend the Elements Paper include language that supports the implementation of the Human Rights Council's guidance for technology companies (A/HRC/50/56), including the right to remedy, and to add a specific provision under Paragraph 37: that, in line with the Genocide Convention, states must desist from weaponizing social media and ensure that platforms do not contribute to incitement.

These are not theoretical concerns. In our recent research on Gaza, we documented how platforms like Meta have allowed widespread incitement and dehumanization of Palestinians while suppressing legitimate expression.

We urge WSIS to prioritize enforceable accountability mechanisms for both states and corporations, especially in situations of conflict, occupation, and repression.

Thank you.