



MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA

Journalism's New Frontier

An analysis of 188 global AI policy proposals and their impacts on journalism.



Read the full report at <https://bit.ly/4s7nVPq>.



The Center for News, Technology and Innovation reviewed 188 national and regional AI strategies, policies and laws around the world to determine how they impact journalism. We focused our analysis around how regulatory activity addresses seven policy components that are particularly likely to impact journalism.

Of the 19 AI strategies, policies and laws we reviewed in the Middle East and North Africa, two specifically mentioned journalism; none addressed freedom of speech or expression; 7 addressed manipulated or synthetic content; 13 addressed algorithmic discrimination and bias; six addressed intellectual property and copyright; 15 addressed transparency and accountability; 14 addressed data protection and privacy; and 6 addressed public information and awareness.

Freedom of speech and expression: AI proposals in the Middle East and North Africa do not mention freedom of speech or expression, reflecting the region's overall low ranking in press freedom and the ongoing threats journalists face.

Manipulated or synthetic content: Proposals from several countries in the region aim to address the risks of AI-generated disinformation by prohibiting certain uses of AI, setting standards for AI development or using AI to help detect false content — but some of these vague rules might lead journalists to self-censor.

Algorithmic discrimination and bias: In an effort to prevent bias and discrimination, several countries in the Middle East and North Africa are creating rules for how AI should be designed, which include requiring audits, using diverse datasets and fining those who create biased systems.

Intellectual property and copyright: Countries are taking different approaches to handle intellectual property and copyright for AI, such as requiring licenses for content, creating new patent systems or updating current laws.

Transparency and accountability: Most of the AI policies in the region require transparency and accountability, using methods like audits, user notices and rules for who is responsible for AI-caused harm.

Data protection and privacy: Countries in the Middle East and North Africa are working to protect data and privacy in their AI policies by updating current laws, creating new ones or setting up government agencies to oversee data protection. These rules can help protect journalists and their sources, but they may also be misused to limit reporting.

Public information and awareness: Across the region, countries are creating plans to increase public knowledge about AI through awareness campaigns, education and accessible resources.

Notable legislation

Bahrain: Bahrain's draft [AI Regulation Law](#) is the first comprehensive AI law in the region. It was unanimously approved by the Shura Council in 2024 and is awaiting parliament's approval. The law would impose fines and imprisonment for using AI to "infringe on personal freedom, violate the sanctity of private life, or contravene societal customs and traditions."