



THE TAHRIR INSTITUTE FOR MIDDLE EAST POLICY

2022

TIMER
**ANNUAL
REPORT**

The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (TIMEP) centers localized perspectives in the policy discourse to foster transparent, accountable, and just societies in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

TIMEP was founded in 2013 and is headquartered in Washington, D.C., with a network of expert fellows and partners located on the ground in the Middle East and North Africa and throughout the world. TIMEP is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit in the District of Columbia.

For more information about TIMEP's mission, programming, or upcoming events, please visit timep.org.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2022, the Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (TIMEP) spent the year in reflection and active learning, particularly as the institute geared up to celebrate its ten year anniversary in February 2023.

Throughout the year, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region continued to experience critical contestations, in the aftermath of consequential moments in 2021 from an authoritarian power grab in Tunisia to a military coup in Sudan. Twelve years after the Arab Uprisings, the pro-democracy and civil society movements standing in the face of these power dynamics also find themselves in moments of reflection, regrouping, and reorientation. These moments have served, for TIMEP and for the larger community of which it is a part, as opportunities to understand and analyze what has happened, to come together in solidarity, and to identify creative and innovative tactics on the ways going forward in the decade to come.

Amid this sentiment, the TIMEP team spent 2022 convening its partners and its allies; it brought together human rights lawyers for action-oriented conversations on the ways in which to address a deteriorating rule of law and accountability space; and it cultivated networks of changemakers, from climate change advocates to women journalists, whose power could together be leveraged toward impacts.

It invested in the people of the region by growing its fellowship and capacity-building programming. It invited a larger cohort in response to a growing call for applicants and brought back the Bassem Sabry Democracy Fellowship in-person following a period of virtual work. It produced practical materials and resources that could be leveraged by advocates, including tools on targeted human rights sanctions and guides on corporate accountability mechanisms.

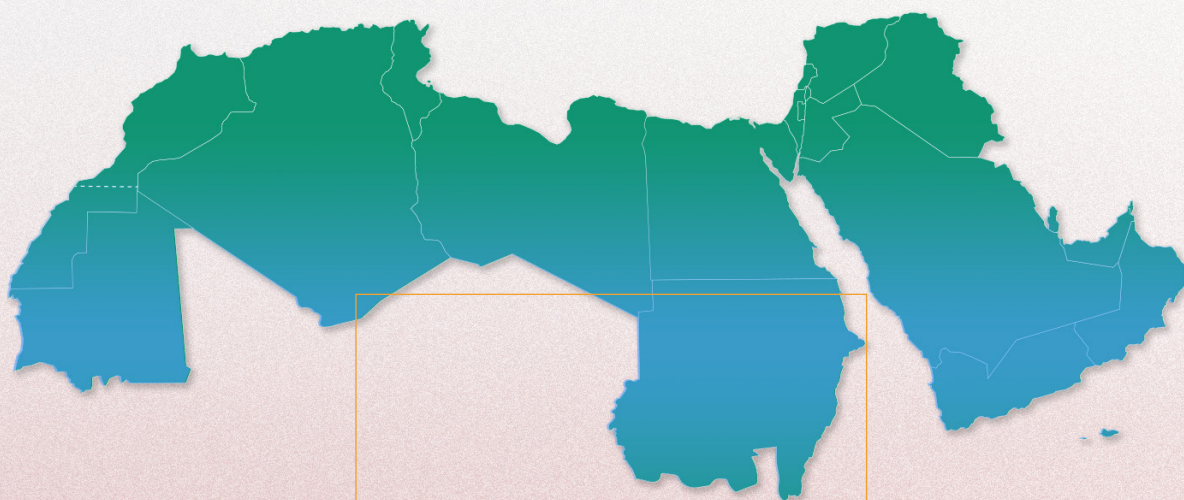
And it platformed analysis that took stock of the region's unfolding developments with a critical eye, while presenting tangible recommendations, in English and Arabic pieces, public webinars and short podcast episodes, and in briefings, meetings, and private roundtables with decision makers from government, multilateral organizations, and international financial institutions, on areas from accountability in Lebanon to normalization in Syria.

Across all of its work, TIMEP remained true to its foundational commitment to center insights and perspectives on the MENA region from the MENA region, amplifying the voices of those most impacted and at times, those most vulnerable. It continued to grow its programming and impact across its five priority countries: Egypt, Tunisia, Sudan, Syria, and Lebanon. And it invested further in its thematic areas of focus, from programming to advance inclusive economies across the MENA region to first-of-its-kind project interventions on the pressing issue of climate change.

As it looks ahead to 2023, TIMEP will welcome its second decade with open arms, cognizant of the immense challenges facing the region as the international policy community turns its attention away from MENA. TIMEP remains committed more than ever to investing long-term in the people, organizations, and movements that are here to stay and that will ultimately deliver on change for the region.

COP Comes to MENA:

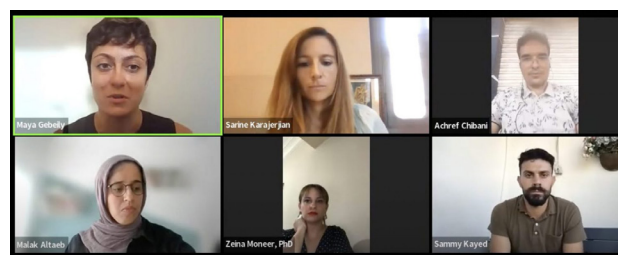
Examining Climate Change in the Region



SPOTLIGHT: COP COMES TO MENA

In 2022, the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP) came to the MENA region. COP 27 took place in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt in November 2022; in November 2023, COP 28 is set to take place in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. The arrival of this high-profile, global convening to the region has brought with it an unprecedented opportunity to highlight the most pressing climate change issues affecting the countries and people of MENA. Recognizing this consequential moment, the team at TIMEP spent months strategically mapping existing programming in the space, talking to partners, and interviewing experts in order to build out and establish climate change as a new, priority area that could be folded into the institute's strategic growth plan.

These efforts culminated with the public-facing release of **"COP Comes to MENA: Examining Climate Change in the Region"**, a project that is working to cultivate a community and a platform through which experts, advocates, and impacted persons are able to drive the climate policy agency in the face of insufficient engagement at home and underrepresentation of MENA in





A Tunisian protester shuts down a valve at the oil and gas plant in El-Kamour, in the desert of Tunisia's southern state of Tataouine, July 16, 2020. (Photo by FATHI NASRI/AFP via Getty Images)

the global climate conversation. Through written and audiovisual content and programming, the project is centering perspectives and insights on pressing climate change issues and their impact, and is offering ground-up solutions that facilitate adaptation to and/or mitigation of these challenges.

The project continues through 2023, and some of its key successes in 2022 have included:

- Welcoming, training, and spotlighting the institute's first-ever nonresident fellows working on climate change: Tunisian climate journalist [Achref Chibani](#) and Libyan food security analyst [Malak Altaeb](#).
- Convening two dynamic, online-based conversations that brought together experts from across different countries and disciplines to set the [COP MENA agenda](#) ahead of the conference and to exchange lessons around [effective youth advocacy in the climate change space](#).
- Platforming unique, policy-facing analysis in English and Arabic that highlights key climate change challenges and impacts, including pieces on [urbanism in Egypt](#), [industrial pollution in Tunisia](#), and [the intersection of political stability and climate change in Sudan](#).

- Spotlighting indigenous adaptation and mitigation strategies proposed by actors in the region, including on [water management in Libya](#) and [land restoration and smart irrigation in Iraq](#).



Aerial view of the Chibayesh marshland in Iraq's southern Ahwar area. (Photo by ASAAD NIAZI/AFP via Getty Images)

- Interrogating the relationship between climate change, governance, and human rights, including the [climate movement's stance on other rights issues](#) and [the Global South-led conversation on loss and damages](#).
- Building the groundwork for a nascent network of journalists, researchers, and advocates working in and on MENA climate change and cultivating a space for them to be able to exchange opportunities, participate in discussions intended to facilitate collaboration, and organize to multiply impact ahead of critical fora like COP.

In the years to come, TIMEP will continue programming through and beyond this project on the issue of climate change in a manner commensurate with the critical importance of this issue.



A worker on a bike delivers Egyptian traditional 'Baladi' bread from a bakery in Sayeda Zeinab neighborhood to bread stands in Cairo, May 9, 2022. (Photo by Roger Anis/Getty Images)

ANALYSIS

In 2022, TIMEP's editorial programming expanded its network of experts and contributors from the MENA region. Many of the new contributors the editorial department worked with in 2022 are first-time writers, but also advocates and experts in their fields of work.

TIMEP published 113 in-depth and timely articles in 2022, both in English and Arabic, that aimed to further amplify the voices of those on the ground, and help inform, showcase, and advocate for policy solutions for the region.

Throughout the year, several of TIMEP's priority countries were going through catastrophic economic and financial crises, heavily impacting these countries' populations, especially the most vulnerable. TIMEP published detailed and thorough analysis pieces from several countries. Some of the most-read articles were from Egypt, and they included pieces on understanding the country's economic troubles and its infinite economic crisis, how to avoid the failures of the past IMF deals, and the expected wave of privatization that an IMF deal would bring. Tunisian contributors published on the impact of an IMF deal on their country's subsidies and

on the tough road ahead to economic recovery. From Lebanon, TIMEP produced content on the illusion of reforms pushed by the country's elite and how an IMF deal should not be the only solution for the country.

The worsening socioeconomic situation has also gone hand in hand with a decline of political rights and freedoms, and the consolidation of autocratic rule over the region. TIMEP's editorial department covered this alarming trend with pieces on Kais Saied's hold on the judiciary system in Tunisia and the democratic shortcomings ahead of the country's July 2022 referendum, as well as articles on the crackdown on civil society in Libya, sham trials in Sudan, and the increase of arbitrary detentions in Egypt.

In 2022, TIMEP's editorial department engaged new contributors and experts from Sudan, in order to draw attention to the country's continued protest movements and social mobilization, the military coup, and the international community's role. This included publishing on the resistance committees' political charters, the participatory political process, and the failure of the international mediation in ending the country's political deadlock, among many other articles.



People march with a banner reading in Arabic "no negotiation, no partnership, no compromise" in a demonstration in Khartoum, November 30, 2021. (Photo by Ashraf Shazly/AFP via Getty Images)

TIMEP continued centering the stories of minorities and marginalized communities, including the shortcomings of Iraq's judicial system at prosecuting crimes against the Yazidi community, Coptic prison services offered to prisoners in Egypt, the systemic sectarian discrimination in Egypt, and the socioeconomic challenges faced by Copts, among other topics.

As the Assad regime is gearing toward normalization, TIMEP focused on debunking the Syrian regime's official narrative, through a variety of pieces on the authorities' cosmetic legal and military changes, Assad's deceptive amnesty claims, the regime's post-conflict narrative in the international arena, and the

new cyber crackdown targeting opposing voices. As calls to expel Syrian refugees to Syria continued to grow stronger, TIMEP published pieces from neighboring countries, including on the legal frameworks and political developments on the status of Syrian refugees in Turkey, the Lebanese authorities' changing repatriation plans, and Lebanon's refugee and asylum legal framework.

Accountability, or the lack thereof, was a major theme in 2022. TIMEP published an explainer on the first-ever case in U.S. court involving the Beirut blast, pieces on the continued crackdown on civil society in Libya, the prosecution of a Syrian regime doctor in Germany, and on the



Syrians await the release of relatives held in regime prisons in the center of Damascus, after a general amnesty was issued by the Syrian president, Damascus, May 3, 2022. (Photo by Louai Beshara/AFP via Getty Images)

similarities between the Russian aggressions in Syria and Ukraine. The first-hand testimonies of contributors were essential in humanizing these calls for accountability as well, such as the story of a former political prisoner's years of unfair imprisonment in Egypt and the recollection of the horrors of war in the village of Khattab in Syria.

Gender and LGBTQ+ rights were highlighted throughout 2022, with articles on morality charges in Egypt, the impact of Lebanon's economic crisis and policies on the queer community, on transgender policy in Egypt, and the situation of transgender people in the MENA region. For International Women's Day, TIMEP published a Q&A series with inspiring women from and in the region, on the role of women in public spheres in Lebanon, the issues that Syrian women refugees face in Lebanon, the challenges and issues that women face in Egypt, the role of women in Sudan's resistance and political arena, and the status of women in Kais Saied's Tunisia.

In 2022, TIMEP continued to live up to its commitment to tackling language barriers in the policy space, aiming to make its platform



Mural in Beirut, that reads in Arabic: "I hear your silence", January 15, 2018. (JOSEPH EID/AFP via Getty Images)

increasingly accessible to Arabic writers and readers, and expanding its Arabic audience in general. To this end, the editorial department continued to publish policy articles written by writers in Arabic, and also translated some of its most relevant pieces in order to make them available in both English and Arabic. Some of TIMEP's most popular Arabic content included articles on Egyptian activists in exile, the impact of climate change in Sudan, the selective return of Syrian refugees to Syria, the alternative modes of transportation in Lebanon, and the Russia-Egypt partnership.



Inmates attend a chapel with a Coptic priest and supervisors at al-Qanatir women's prison, in the Qalyoubiya province, about 30 kilometers north of Cairo, on December 27, 2020. (Photo by KHALED DESOUKI/AFP via Getty Images)



FELLOWSHIPS

Syrian women walk by as smoke billows in the area of the Syrian village of az-Ziyarah, in the agricultural al-Ghab plain of the Hama province, on June 6, 2021, following reported pro-government bombardment. (Photo by ABDULAZIZ KETAZ/AFP via Getty Images)

TIMEP's fellowships are an investment in the future of the MENA region. They provide an opportunity for early and mid-career advocates, scholars, journalists, and lawyers based in the region or with significant ties to it with the space, resources, and tools to develop critical programming on key issues, while accessing targeted and tailored skills-building, network-expanding, and spotlighting opportunities.

Nonresident Fellowships

Each May, TIMEP welcomes a new cohort of nonresident fellows from countries across the MENA region on critical and timely topics. Each nonresident fellow has a thematic and/or country-focused mandate on which they leverage TIMEP's tools, including analysis, events, podcasts, legal interventions, and advocacy. TIMEP creates opportunities to cultivate collaboration within fellow cohorts as well as with former fellows, contributing to cross-regional learning and lasting connections among a new generation of advocates committed to transparency, accountability, and justice in the MENA region.

Through the nonresident fellowship program, TIMEP empowers a cohort of changemakers to shape the global policy discourse in a lasting and impactful way, while leveraging its network, partnerships, and programming to realize each fellow's personal and professional objectives.

In the first half of 2022, TIMEP continued to invest in and support the work of its outgoing 2021-2022 nonresident fellows. The institute provided space for fellows to publish impactful analysis, including a series of articles on political reform in Jordan, a survey of the political charters of Sudan's resistance committees, and cyber-violence affecting women in Egypt; convened in-depth panel discussions on prospects for accountability in Syria after over a decade of conflict and unchecked impunity, the role of international financial institutions in Lebanon, Egypt, and Tunisia, and Sudan's bitter struggle to resist a brutal military regime after its October 2021 coup; and hosted trainings on how fellows could build their online profiles using social media and on the essential digital security practices they needed to keep their information and work safe online.

2022-2023 Nonresident Fellowship Cohort

In May 2022, TIMEP welcomed nine fellows to its 2022-2023 nonresident cohort.

Muhsen AlMustafa is a researcher at the Omran Center for Strategic Studies. He has published on the Syrian military establishment, legal issues, gender, and elections in the context of the Syrian army and constitution.

- **Mandate:** Security, Military, and Governance (Syria)
- As the Syrian regime began laying the groundwork for normalization and marketing a post-conflict narrative, AlMustafa published illuminating analysis on key legal, political, economic, and security developments in Syria in English and in Arabic, including on the Syrian regime's policy of prioritizing certain demographics of refugees for return and on the authorities' continued arrests, arbitrary detentions, and other human rights abuses even after its 2022 general amnesty decree. He also worked on a UN submission on Syria in response to a call for input from the Special Rapporteur on Counter-terrorism and Human Rights for the first global study on the impact of counterterrorism measures on civil society. AlMustafa consistently served as a critical resource for lawyers and policymakers on the regime's repressive use of cybersecurity and counterterrorism laws; access to justice; accountability; and corruption in Syria.



Malak Altaeb is an independent consultant, analyst, and researcher. She has published policy papers on water-related issues. She holds a master's degree in Environmental Policy from Sciences Po, Paris, and a bachelor's degree in Chemical Engineering from Tripoli, Libya.

- **Mandate:** Food Security (North Africa)
- As food security across the MENA region rapidly deteriorated amid the ripple effects of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and multiple economic collapses, Altaeb closely examined food systems and agricultural sectors across North Africa at a key moment. She played a pivotal role in TIMEP's "COP Comes to MENA" climate change project, providing expert review from a food security perspective, authoring analysis on agriculture and reflections on COP 27, participating in the project's launch event, and leading the way in bringing together youth climate activists across the MENA region to discuss barriers to youth participation and meaningful integration in global climate policy.



Aymen Bessalah is a researcher and political analyst on governance in Tunisia. He was previously the Advocacy and Policy Analyst at Al Bawsala, a Tunisian NGO promoting democracy and human rights; there, he led the organization's human rights scope across different projects.

- **Mandate:** Governance and the Rule of Law (Tunisia)
- Amid Tunisian President Kais Saied's continued consolidation of power, Bessalah provided essential insight into Tunisia's politics, civil society dynamics, and economy at a pivotal moment for the country's increasingly fragile democracy. Bessalah produced timely analysis of the structural problems with Saied's July 25, 2022 constitutional referendum and informed policymakers of the shortcomings of the proposed IMF strategy to stabilize the economy as rapid inflation, food shortages, and skyrocketing unemployment took a toll on Tunisia's people and exacerbated popular feelings of dissatisfaction with the fruits of the country's hard-won democracy.



Hussein Cheaito is a Development Economist at The Policy Initiative, a Beirut-based research center that aims to empirically assess existing policies and generate viable alternatives. His professional interests include the economics of decentralization, gender and queer economics, and development economics.

- **Mandate:** Governance and Economic Development (Lebanon)
- As Lebanon struggles with one of the world's worst economic crises in modern history, Cheaito led the institute's work on examining Lebanon's political economy and engagement with international financial institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank. He also unpacked timely developments such as a string of bank heists by people wanting to withdraw their own money and the Ministry of Interior's crackdown on LGBTQ+ pride celebrations via short podcast episodes. Moreover, he published analysis on the political elite's strategies to elude justice or meaningful reform, the layered economic marginalization of Lebanon's LGBTQ+ community, and the high cost of a power vacuum as Lebanon's parliament repeatedly fails to elect a new president and activate a new government.



Achref Chibani is a Tunisian journalist, researcher, and civil society activist whose core areas of focus are climate change, renewable energies, and environmental protection. Based in Tataouine, southern Tunisia, Chibani is also an Early Career Researcher Representative at the MENA Social Policy Network.

- **Mandate:** Climate Change (MENA)
- Ahead of COP 27 in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, Chibani played an essential role in shaping TIMEP's climate change programming across the MENA region. He researched and analyzed a variety of major climate challenges, policy strategies, and emerging technologies, including Tunisia's green energy transition; water management in Libya; and Algeria's oil and gas sector. His leadership and expert review informed TIMEP's "COP Comes to MENA" project and engagement with COP 27. During his fellowship, he worked to cultivate a new climate change network to bring together journalists, activists, lawyers, and academics across MENA who are working on addressing the most pressing climate challenges the region faces.



Samia Errazzouki is a co-founder of Khmissa, an NGO that advocates for women's rights in Morocco through an intersectional lens. She has worked as a Morocco-based journalist, reporting for the Associated Press, and later with Reuters.

- **Mandate:** Press Freedom (North Africa)
- A former Morocco-based journalist herself, Errazzouki worked to shed light on the increasingly draconian policies restricting press freedom and free expression across North Africa. As Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia all came under review by the UN for their human rights records, she drew on her personal and professional experience to lead the institute's engagement with the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process and to collaborate with the advocacy department to meet with U.S. and EU policymakers ahead of, during, and after the review to inform global policy on press freedom in North Africa. She also created the framework for a network that brings together women journalists in and from the North Africa region to exchange resources and explore legal pathways for protection and accountability as women journalists experienced gendered vulnerabilities.



Hamid Khalafallah is a development practitioner, researcher, and policy analyst, currently working as a Program Officer for the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA). Over the years, he has worked for international and national organizations in Sudan on governance and development issues. He has been active with various civil resistance groups in Sudan.

- **Mandate:** Inclusive Governance and Mobilization (Sudan)
- As Sudan marked one year since the military coup that derailed the country's transition to a civilian-led government, Khalafallah provided indispensable analysis on the international community's engagement and attempts at mediation as well as the dynamics and resistance on the ground in Sudan. Through written analysis, timely podcasts, and dynamic panel discussions, Khalafallah shed light on the top challenges facing civilians and pro-democracy actors in Sudan; he examined the various dialogue tracks and interventions led by regional and international powers; and he offered quick reactions and insights grounded in a local Sudanese perspective and a commitment to democratic, civilian-led governance.



Rima Sghaier is an intersectional feminist activist, researcher, policy analyst, FOSS (Free and Open Source Software) enthusiast, and an avid advocate for internet freedom. She is currently Senior Program Manager at Team CommUNITY @ ARTICLE 19. She is a member of the Advisory Committee of the digital rights unconference, Bread&Net.

- **Mandate:** Power and Technology (MENA)
- Amid rising surveillance and digital tactics for repression across the MENA region, Sghaier documented and analyzed critical developments in privacy and technology, including the role of tech companies. She authored analysis on the findings of an independent report on the human rights impact of Meta's policies and activities on Arabic and Hebrew content in May 2021, provided insight into Kais Saied's crackdowns on journalists, opponents, and human rights defenders in Tunisia, and served as a resource for policymakers on the impact of increasing cyber-authoritarianism across MENA.



Mona Zeineddine is the Advocacy Manager at Women Now for Development, a feminist, women-led NGO dedicated to deepening and strengthening women's role in Syrian and host communities by enhancing their political, social, and economic participation.

- **Mandate:** Gender Transformative Justice (Syria)
- As a deeply committed advocate for gender justice in Syria and for Syrian women refugees displaced by over a decade of conflict, Zeineddine worked to craft an in-depth, practical guide to a gender-sensitive approach to litigation in Syria, informed by her engagement and interviews with Syrian women human rights defenders, Syrian civil society, and victim- and family-led organizations. She also worked to inform TIMEP's accountability and advocacy programming on Syria.

The Bassem Sabry Democracy Fellowship

The Bassem Sabry Democracy Fellowship was established in memory of Egyptian political writer and commentator Bassem Sabry, who was widely-recognized and respected for his nuanced and balanced analysis, his ability to bring people from across the political spectrum together, and his love and vision for the MENA region. Every year, TIMEP hosts one to two Bassem Sabry

Democracy Fellows at its Washington, D.C. offices, providing young analysts from the region with the opportunity to learn the ins and outs of policymaking, to gain exposure to the workings of a nonprofit in the U.S. capital, and to produce policy-relevant programming that is informed by their first-hand knowledge.



The Bassem Sabry Democracy Fellowship was established in memory of Egyptian political writer and commentator Bassem Sabry.

In late 2022, TIMEP was privileged to welcome its newest Bassem Sabry Fellow, journalist, human rights defender, and former political prisoner Solafa Magdy. Amid changing safety and travel restrictions as the world continued to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2022, TIMEP offered a hybrid virtual and in-person fellowship arrangement whereby Magdy's fellowship began abroad in France, where she had relocated after being released from prison, but she soon traveled to Washington, D.C. to work in person with the TIMEP team for the remainder of her fellowship.

Prior to the fellowship, Magdy was imprisoned for almost two years in Egypt for her work

as a journalist and human rights defender. She is a recipient of the prestigious Courage in Journalism Award from the International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF). Magdy's work with TIMEP has focused on women in Egypt's prisons, including the conditions to which they are subjected and day-to-day life for women in detention, as well as the social, political, and economic impacts of detention for women, their families, and their societies. During her time with TIMEP in Washington, D.C., she seeks to inform policy recommendations that tangibly improve detention conditions, bring about releases and closure of cases, and inform the discourse on deep-rooted, systemic change.



LEGAL UNIT

Relatives of victims of the August 4 Beirut port explosion stage a protest in the Justice Palace to support the judge investigating the blast, Beirut, February 10, 2022. (Photo by Houssam Shbaro/Anadolu Agency via Getty Images)

TIMEP's Legal Unit leverages the law as a tool for transformative change that can bring about societies in the MENA region that are grounded in transparency, accountability, and justice. It does so first by making the law accessible, understandable, and actionable for lawyers and non-lawyers alike. It ensures that lawyers and justice advocates have access to the protection, connectivity, resources, and support they need in order to be able to defend citizens and societies at-large. And it works to identify and carve out creative pathways to access justice inside the region and outside of it.

Law

In 2022, the Legal Unit served as a resource on legal, judicial, and accountability-related issues for a non-technical audience, unpacking, presenting, and contextualizing the top developments in reports, analysis pieces, and explainers. This included:

- A **joint report** on Egyptian authorities' use of politically-motivated travel bans and travel-related restrictions, including first-of-its-kind research unpacking the devastating toll that these measures have on the personal and professional lives of those targeted;



- Analysis pieces delving into the Syrian regime's new cybercrime law and its impact on expression online, Kais Saied's steps to make permanent exceptional measures advancing one-man rule, and the first-ever case in U.S. court involving the Beirut Port explosion.



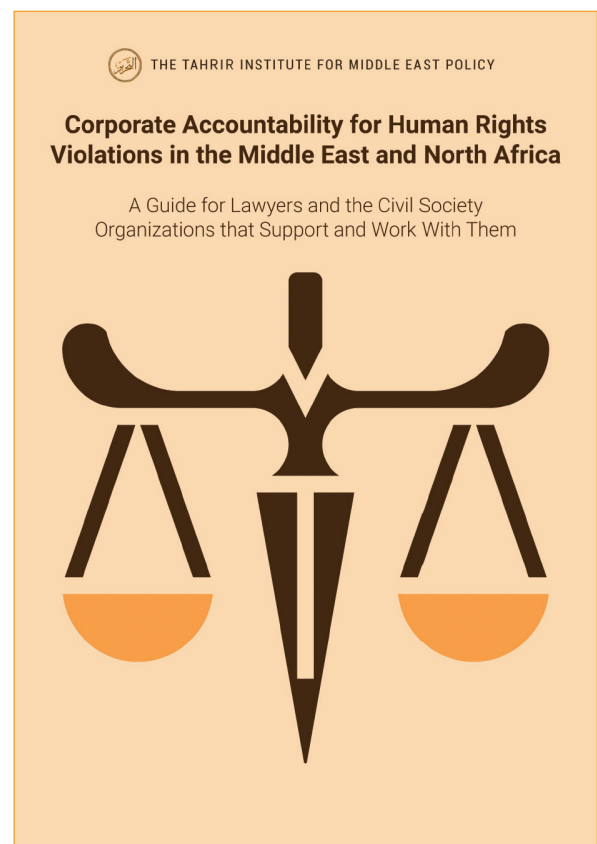
Tunisian President Kais Saied meets with some of his ministers at the Carthage Palace in Tunis, April 1, 2022. (Photo by Tunisian Presidency/Anadolu Agency via Getty Images)

- Innovative research identifying trends in how prosecutions for expression on social media are proceeding across the MENA region, coupled with in-person and virtual convenings on online and offline harms on contexts including online sexual and gender-based violence, as well as before, during, and after elections.

Lawyers

Committed to ensuring that lawyers in the MENA region are best-positioned for success in their critical roles, the Legal Unit documented, drew attention to, and responded to the challenges and opportunities facing the legal community. In 2022, this programming included:

- Convening +20 human rights lawyers from across the MENA region for a two-day convening of focus group discussions on the state of lawyers and expert-led training sessions on topics including strategic litigation and digital security.
- Highlighting the situation of lawyers behind bars, such as the case of Egyptian human rights lawyer Mohamed el-Baqer, through paradigmatic storytelling, award nominations, and advocacy.
- Hosting lawyers traveling through Washington, D.C. for collaborative strategy meetings on Syria and Lebanon with civil society and legal organizations, and providing space for joint discussion and work.
- Producing practical, bilingual toolkits and guides for lawyers to ensure that they have the resources they need to protect individual advocates and advance rights in society at-large, including a **Q&A** on how targeted human rights sanctions can be leveraged to advance justice objectives in the MENA region and a **guide** on the corporate accountability mechanisms available for lawyers working to address human rights violations taking place in the MENA region.



Access to Justice

Also in 2022, the Legal Unit identified, carved out, and strengthened pathways to justice at the international, foreign, and regional levels, while also continuing to support in-country legal and justice reform efforts. Some key programming successes included:

- Joining partners in a **legal complaint** before the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights to seek a finding that Egypt's detention of activist and former political prisoner Ramy Shaath for two and a half years without trial, and making his release conditional on the forced renunciation of his citizenship, violated the African Charter.
- Getting **a number of recommendations to Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia on press freedom and freedom of expression** advanced by UN Member States during the Universal Periodic Review process as part of a co-led effort in collaboration with the Committee to Protect Journalists and the National Syndicate of Tunisian Journalists, which involved joint effort from TIMEP's legal unit, advocacy department, and Nonresident Fellow Samia Errazzouki.
- Convening a group of Egyptian lawyers and legal researchers to reimagine the criminal justice system through a series of discussions, debates, and writing exercises intended to put forward a series of reforms around the police, prosecution, prisons, and terrorism circuits.





ADVOCACY

Zena Wakim, Tania Daou Alam, Monika Borgmann speak with TIMEP's Mai El-Sadany in a panel on accountability in Lebanon hosted by TIMEP at the National Press Club in Washington, DC. (Photo by Amir Abdelmalek).

TIMEP's advocacy work is central to TIMEP's mission to center the region's voices in policy debates and decision-making involving the region. Throughout 2022, TIMEP fellows and staff engaged Global North governments, multilateral institutions, and international financial institutions as part of a multipronged effort to inform and influence stakeholders to constructively engage in the region, with a particular focus on TIMEP's five priority countries: Egypt, Lebanon, Sudan, Syria, and Tunisia.

Over the years, TIMEP has successfully established a strong reputation as a reliable source for informed, sober, and credible information and analysis. In 2022, TIMEP fellows and staff engaged with officials from over a dozen countries and dozens of congressional offices. TIMEP's team delivered briefings at the request of several governments as they worked to develop and amend their engagements in the region. The team hosted a number of private roundtables with government officials to offer opportunities for frank exchanges and informed discussions with local stakeholders addressing an array of issues, including transnational repression, democratic backsliding in Tunisia, Egypt's political economy, and accountability in Lebanon.

Throughout the year, major news outlets regularly turned to TIMEP fellows and staff for analysis and context to enrich their coverage and inform their readers. Some examples where TIMEP expertise was featured include The New York Times, The Financial Times, The Wall Street Journal, DW, CNN, Le Monde, Foreign Policy, Bloomberg, and Reuters.

The work of TIMEP's advocacy department frames policymakers' understandings of the region's key challenges, contributes to setting the policy agenda, and equips decision makers with impactful policy solutions. In 2022, briefings with policymakers covered a range of topics including updates on Sudan's political transition, challenges faced by religious minorities in Egypt, Tunisia's constitutional referendum, and conditions in North Eastern Syria.

The IMF in Egypt

In 2022, TIMEP worked with a coalition of civil society organizations to inform the program design for the IMF's latest program in Egypt. TIMEP successfully pressed both the Fund and shareholder countries for improved governance, transparency, rule of law, and more robust social protection. TIMEP policy fellow, Timothy Kaldas,

led TIMEP's efforts on this front engaging with both IMF staff as well as key shareholders at the Fund, ensuring they understood vital political economic context as they crafted the conditions for the newest program and to avoid evasions by Egypt's leadership.



Portraits of Egyptian Pound notes and coins on October 12, 2016. (Photo by David Degner/Getty Images).

The new extended fund facility approved by the IMF's board in December of 2022 included several of TIMEP's recommendations. For the first time, the IMF named military-owned companies in the program as being subject to the program's conditions. Another first was articulating clear benchmarks for social protection coverage, something TIMEP and its partners pressed for. Additionally, the IMF heeded recommendations to ensure that the proceeds of all sales of public assets, including military-owned companies, would go to the Egyptian state. The recommendations made by TIMEP and partners have the potential to affect hundreds of millions—if not billions—of dollars and include conditions that will hinder graft, strengthen the Egyptian state's solvency, and help protect the most vulnerable sections of Egypt's population. The success of this advocacy campaign will be used as a model for future advocacy work aimed at advancing inclusive economies in the MENA region.

Accountability and the Rule of Law in Lebanon

In September 2022, TIMEP hosted a delegation of three women advocates from Lebanon in Washington, D.C., to press the U.S. government to take a leadership role in advancing accountability and the rule of law in Lebanon. The delegation included international lawyer Zena Wakim, lawyer Tania Daou Alam, whose husband was killed in the Beirut Port explosion and; activist, filmmaker, and widow of assassinated Lebanese intellectual Lokman Slim, Monika Borgmann Slim.

Throughout weeklong meetings with congressional and administration policymakers, the group urged the United States to support an independent, impartial UN fact-finding mission into the Beirut Port explosion; to levy targeted sanctions against those culpable for systematically obstructing justice inside the country; and to make public statements in support of accountability and anti-corruption. The group also sought to bring awareness to avenues toward justice in the United States including a recently filed federal lawsuit against the Texas-based geophysical services firm, TGS. According to the lawsuit, TGS, through its subsidiary Spectrum Geo, chartered the substandard, Moldovan flagged vessel Rhosus, which was responsible for illegally transporting military-grade ammonium nitrate to the Port of Beirut which later triggered the devastating explosion.

Normalization and Interpol Abuse by Assad's Regime

As early indications of normalization began to become more visible, TIMEP worked to brief government officials on the issues of critical importance to Syrian survivors and victims, including those in diaspora. These efforts included those by 2021-2022 nonresident fellows Noura Ghazi and Veronica Bellintani who collaborated with the advocacy team to identify the risk of abuses likely to come as the Assad regime was reintegrated into Interpol. They worked to inform U.S. government and multilateral

stakeholders of the risk faced by Syrians living in the diaspora if Assad-linked officials were to use and instrumentalize red notices to engage in transnational repression. Together they held meetings with several congressional offices in the House and Senate to inform them of the issue and encourage them to take steps to prevent future abuses.

Political Prisoners in Egypt

TIMEP's advocacy team continued to work to press for the release of unjustly held prisoners of conscience in Egypt. In one prominent example, it continues to take collaborative action in the paradigmatic case of Alaa Abdel Fattah.

In coordination with Alaa's family, TIMEP joined efforts to publicly and privately press for Alaa's release, regularly briefing government officials on developments in his case while TIMEP fellows drafted a **statement** in support of Alaa to coincide with events surrounding his detention that took place as Egypt hosted COP 27 in Sharm El Sheikh. Along with the the Project on Middle East Democracy (POMED) and the Freedom Initiative, TIMEP co-hosted Sanaa Seif, Alaa's sister, as well as an Egyptian filmmaker, activist, and former political prisoner, for a book talk in Washington, D.C., marking the publication of Alaa's book "You Have Not Yet Been Defeated," as part of a larger engagement push.



Alaa Abdel Fattah's family has focused attention on the continued imprisonment of the Egyptian activist, in the hope that world leaders attending COP27 in Sharm el-Sheikh will push for his release. (Khaled Desouki/AFP)



Protesters march toward the Presidential Palace during a demonstration demanding the restoration of civilian rule in Khartoum, on January 6, 2022. (Photo by Mahmoud Hjjaj/Anadolu Agency via Getty Images)

EVENTS AND CONVERSATIONS

In line with its mission to center MENA voices in global conversations on MENA policy, in 2022, TIMEP regularly convened panel discussions, book talks, and short podcast episodes to unpack the region's most pressing challenges and to explore thoughtful solutions and ideas from the ground. Through dynamic virtual and in-person conversations, TIMEP proactively set the policy agenda, offered thoughtful reflections to recent events and ongoing trends, and has strengthened its ties to civil society and social movements across the MENA region and beyond.

Digital Rights and Cyberspace

TIMEP joined Bread&Net, the Arabic-speaking region's largest digital rights conference, as a community partner for the third consecutive year to help shape regional discourse on digital rights and some of the most critical challenges affecting the region. In addition to this institutional collaboration, several members of the TIMEP team organized and participated in sessions during Bread&Net, including in-person in Beirut, Lebanon.

TIMEP Executive Director Ramy Yaacoub participated in the conference's opening session,



"Geopolitics, Rights, and Freedoms: Threats and Opportunities in our Region," in which speakers examined the state of rights and freedoms at the intersection of technology, from the relationship between authoritarian regimes and tech companies in our region to restrictive laws and regulations to control entertainment and online streaming services. Mai El-Sadany, TIMEP's Managing Director, hosted and facilitated the session "Combating Sexual & Gender-based Violence Online in MENA," in which panelists discussed online forms of SGBV, including cyber bullying, cyber harassment, doxxing, revenge porn, cyberstalking, and public shaming, and the responses of governments and tech companies in light of the growing problem. TIMEP Legal Associate Meroua Zouai hosted "Litigating the Online Space in MENA," which examined opportunities and challenges that advocates face when litigating digital rights domestically and



any alternative tools available to them to hold the government and tech companies accountable for digital rights violations. On the sidelines of the conference, team members connected with old and new partners and participated in private conversations, including on timely topics like elections and online harms.

For the fifth year in a row, TIMEP joined **RightsCon**, a global conference on human rights in the digital age hosted by **Access Now**. TIMEP organized two sessions and participated in additional conversations. Nonresident Fellow Rima Sghaier spoke in the session “Tunisia post-July 25: shrinking spaces for free expression online and offline.” TIMEP’s Mai El-Sadany facilitated “**The Internet in Critical Moments of Transition: Tunisia, Sudan, and Beyond**” featuring Marwa Fatafta, Bissan Fakihi, Khatib Hamad, and Aymen Zaghdoudi, which explored how civil society, citizen journalists, and diaspora activists have leveraged the online space as well as how government actors, from Tunisian President Kais Saied himself to the Sudanese military, have weaponized online expression and exerted control over what’s said online. TIMEP’s Ramy Yaacoub facilitated “**The Power of Art in Mobilizing Social Movements**,” a conversation with Dayna Ash, Khalid Albaih, and Ahmed Naji that unpacked the role art has played in social movements across the MENA region as a form of expression and resistance.

Resisting Sudan's Military Coup

Over the course of 2022, and following Sudan's military coup, authorities consolidated power and violently clamped down on protests as the country's tenacious neighborhood resistance committees continued to organize politically and advocate for civilian rule. TIMEP hosted several conversations to amplify the voices of Sudan's pro-democracy movement and to explore pathways to return the country to democratic governance and away from military rule.

- 2021-2022 Nonresident fellow Muzan Alneel spoke at TIMEP's virtual panel, “**The Sudan Military Coup: Resistance in the Face of State Brutality**,” which unpacked the military's consolidation of power in Sudan and analyzed efforts by various international actors to bring the military to the negotiating table.
- As the world marked the one-year anniversary of Sudan's military seizing power from its civilian counterparts, TIMEP convened “**Sudan's Military Coup: One Year On**,” featuring Nonresident Fellow Hamid Khalafallah.
- In July, Nonresident Fellow Hamid Khalafallah spoke with TIMEP Senior Programs and Communications Associate Audrey Bolus on a short **podcast episode** to break down



the announcement by General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan that a new transitional government would be formed. In December, he discussed the newly announced transitional agreement in a second episode.

Political Economy of Egypt, Lebanon, and Tunisia

As Egypt, Tunisia, and Lebanon each reckoned with quickly deteriorating economic conditions throughout 2022, TIMEP convened several discussions to compare and contrast the three countries' economic policies, their engagements with the IMF and other international financial institutions, and potential pathways to reform and revitalization in each context.



- Ahead of IMF and World Bank's annual Spring Meetings, TIMEP Policy Fellow Timothy Kaldas spoke at TIMEP's virtual discussion "Governance and Growth: The Role of IFIs in the MENA Region" on the intersection of governance issues and economic growth in Lebanon, Tunisia, and Egypt, and the role IFIs can play in both promoting economic reform and encouraging positive changes in governance.
- TIMEP Nonresident Fellows Aymen Bessalah and Hussein Cheaito and Policy Fellow Timothy Kaldas participated in "The IMF and Social Welfare in MENA: Prospects for Alleviating Crises in Egypt, Tunisia, and

Lebanon" on the status of each country's staff-level agreements with the IMF and the architecture of social welfare in each context.

Nonresident Fellow Hussein Cheaito joined the Regional Studies Association International Hour on fiscal decentralization in Lebanon.

Repression in Egypt and Resistance in Exile

As President Abdelfattah El-Sisi's regime continues to foster a closed and repressive environment inside Egypt, TIMEP organized virtual and in-person discussions to unpack the regime's human rights violations, political prisoners, and the impact of the regime's policies on everyday people.

- TIMEP jointly hosted a launch of its report with the Freedom Initiative, "Abuse of Travel Bans in Egypt."
- Outgoing TIMEP Bassem Sabry Fellow Mohamed Mandour spoke at TIMEP's launch of his output "A Homeland Lives Within Us, But We Cannot Live in It: Egyptian Organizing and Activism from Exile."
- TIMEP and POMED jointly hosted "Ahead of the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit: Examining Egypt's Record on Anti-Corruption and Women's Rights."



Protest held in Berlin, Germany, denouncing military rule in Egypt and calling for the release of political prisoners. (Hossam el-Hamalawy)

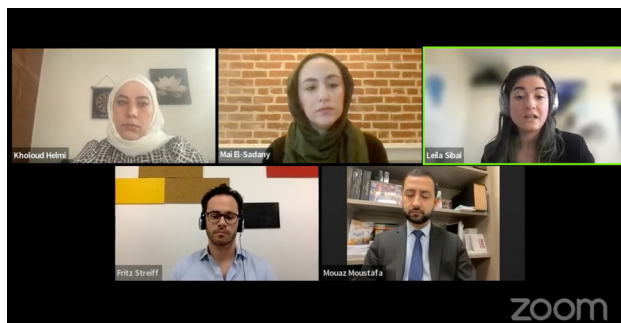
Accountability in Lebanon

In 2022, as the Lebanese people took to the polls to elect new representatives for the first time since the October 17, 2019 uprising movement and the onset of the financial crisis, Lebanon's political elite continued to evade accountability for their many crimes against their own people. TIMEP convened both virtual and in-person discussions to examine the impact of these abuses and to understand what pathways exist to pursue justice and accountability.

- Ahead of the May 2022 parliamentary elections, 2021-2022 Nonresident Fellow Karim Merhej spoke at TIMEP's event "**Cracks in Lebanon's Culture of Impunity? Prospects for Accountability in the Midst of Crisis**" to explore the potential of a new political class to challenge the impunity of the elite and what challenges and opportunities exist in the pursuit of accountability.
- TIMEP Nonresident Fellow Hussein Cheaito spoke at "**Pathways to Accountability for the Beirut Blast Two Years on: From Investigative Journalism to the Courts**," moderated by Mai El-Sadany and co-hosted with Human Rights Watch, Accountability Now, the Project on Middle East Democracy, and Daraj Media.
- TIMEP Executive Director Ramy Yaacoub interviewed Omar Badr from the Sawti initiative in a **podcast episode** on Lebanon's parliamentary elections and the policy potential of a newly elected parliament amid entrenched impunity for the corruption and abuses that led to Lebanon's current crisis.
- TIMEP's Audrey Bolus and Nonresident Fellow Hussein Cheaito spoke in a podcast episode about the phenomenon of bank heists across Lebanon whereby individuals held up banks to withdraw money from their own accounts amid a crumbling financial infrastructure and no redress in sight for the theft of millions of dollars from the Lebanese people.

Exile, Narrative, and the Pursuit of Justice for Syrians

In 2022, the world marked 11 years since the start of Syria's revolution. After more than a decade of conflict, the rights and freedoms Syrians fearlessly called for are further out of reach than ever under the brutality of the Assad regime and amid continued territorial fracturing inside the country. TIMEP hosted virtual and in-person conversations to reflect on the state of refugees in neighboring countries and in Europe, pathways to victim-centric justice and accountability for the Assad regime's crimes, and international policy on Syria today.



- TIMEP Managing Director Mai El-Sadany moderated "**Eleven Years On: The Path to Accountability in Syria**," which explored ways the international community can support Syrians' calls for justice and pathways for the Assad regime to be held to account for its decades of abuses against its own people.
- In September, TIMEP and the Atlantic Council Syria Initiative jointly hosted a film **screening** of *The Story Won't Die* and discussed the film's themes and implications, including the experiences of exiled Syrians and those seeking asylum abroad and the power of storytelling.

SPOTLIGHT: INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

In 2022, TIMEP's Internship Program continued to grow and provide valuable experiences for TIMEP's expanding Internship cohort. Over the course of the year, TIMEP was pleased to welcome nine interns. In addition to continuing the Legal and Policy, Digital Engagement, and Advocacy Internship programs in 2022, TIMEP had the opportunity to further expand its

internship program and recruit for a new internship position: the Programs and Events Intern, a role that provides critical support for the institute's events and fellow programming.

Here is what two of TIMEP's 2022 interns had to say about their internship experience:



Mauricio Rios-Molina
Former TIMEP Summer
Advocacy Intern

I have been exposed to sound advocacy work and have been able to gradually build up a toolkit for this purpose. TIMEP's advocacy team and incumbents from different countries have offered me a firsthand experience on how advocacy can be conducted, the many challenges that it entails.

In the same vein, my internship has enabled me to dive into a comprehensive array of topics and connect with regional experts or advocates. TIMEP also opened the door for me to interact with primary sources, including TIMEP's extraordinary staff and its [nonresident fellow] cohort and other individuals from partner organizations.

Furthermore, I have been a witness of TIMEP's enthusiastic work environment in which a welcoming, supportive and, at the same time, demanding team thrives to its fullest. I am also flattered by the advocacy team's receptiveness to my ideas and thankful for trusting my proficiencies in order to take the lead and oversee assignments, which has bolstered my self-confidence, and management and teamwork skills."



Julia Kempton
Former TIMEP Summer
Digital Communications
Intern

I had an incredible experience as an intern, learning about and supporting research and reporting on Middle East human rights policy and politics. The work I encountered while at TIMEP inspired my proposal for my masters thesis—I want to write about digital surveillance in Tunisia post-2011. Best of all, I loved working with the fellows; they are all so skilled in their fields of speciality and passionate about their research, but they also took the time to engage in interdisciplinary work with each other and (occasionally) give guidance to an intern.

After my internship at TIMEP ended, I interned virtually for the U.S. Department of State during my senior year at NYU. I received a Fulbright grant, and will be spending the next 10 months teaching English in Tajikistan. When I get back, I'll be attending Harvard for a Masters in Middle Eastern Studies. That's where I plan to do my field research on Tunisia; and while I knew I wanted to do something regarding human rights and Middle East or African politics before interning at TIMEP, the work I helped share and the articles our fellows wrote crystallized that interest for me."



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