MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Freedom House

75 Years Championing Democracy

In response to pro-democracy uprisings across the Middle East and North Africa, authoritarian regimes cracked down severely on dissent, going to new extremes of political violence, mass arrests, and restrictive legislation. Freedom House supports democracy and human rights leaders across the region in exposing abuses and pressing for reform.

Iran

Restrictions on independent media in Iran are among the harshest in the world. Freedom House has worked with Iranian journalists to push the boundaries of free expression through a creative, high-quality publication for Iranian youth. The publication has tackled a range of sensitive subjects—from LGBT rights and women's empowerment to political satire, minority rights, underground culture, dress codes, happiness, love, death and grieving—and has reached over 9 million people through its Facebook page.

Tunisia

Tunisia has successfully transitioned to democracy but is still building its democratic institutions. In the early stages of the transition, Freedom House convened a task force of diverse stakeholders—lawyers, judges, activists, journalists, academics, and government officials—to draw up a blueprint to reform the justice sector. The blueprint and related white papers contributed to the reform process, for instance to prison reform. Tunisia's new Constitution, ratified in 2014, addressed many of the concerns raised by the task force about the initial 2012 draft constitution, including limitations on freedom of speech, religion, and women's rights.

Jordan

Freedom House has supported marginalized women in rural areas of Jordan to take on leadership roles in their communities. These women engaged with municipal government and men in their conservative communities to introduce local policy changes that improved daily life, for instance created public parking lots and stepped up enforcement of traffic laws.

Torture

Freedom House is working to end torture in Yemen, by supporting strategic litigation, and in Bahrain by sharpening the skills of human rights defenders to document cases of torture and advocate for redress. In recent years, a network of activists built by Freedom House in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, and Tunisia documented and publicized 160 cases of torture to show that torture is common practice in these countries,

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