

Media is one of the strongest weapons that can be used either by the state itself or by their opponents. That is a worldly well-known fact. On one hand, we see fox news adopting the vision of the republicans. On the other hand, we find different media organizations that adopt other point of views.

Well this is not the case in the MENA region. Most of the time there is only one point of view. The state's point of view to be more specific. Many restrictions are imposed on the opponent's media. Like newspapers, channels, or even the electronic websites and newspapers.

In Egypt for example, the government censored and blocked about 400 websites. Most of those are news ones. On August 2018 the Egyptian president Abd-Elfatah ElSisi ratified the law "The Anti-Cyber and Information Technology Crimes" the law which ostensibly aims to combat extremism and terrorism allows authorities to block websites that are considered "a threat to national security" or to "the national economy". Individuals who visit these websites can face steep fines and penalties for hacking government systems. While also Prohibiting the publishing of information on topics that relates to the military or the police.

Yet, Egypt is not the only state imposing restrictions on the media.

In Turkey we find that Wikipedia had been blocked for over a year. In Bahrain the interior ministry warned that it would be taking new measures to crack down on activists who criticize the government on social media.

Israa AL-ghomgham –a Saudi citizen- is facing punishments up to death penalties, her charges include filming and publishing protests on social media. In Iran the government has blocked several number of social media platforms which the protesters use<sup>i</sup>

MENA states has always limited the power of media and the transfer of information.

Back to the era of the Egyptian president Gamal Abd-Elnasser.

After the 23 of July movement. Nationalization was a common thing in Egypt, Which was not only for assets and for possessions of foreigners. In 1960 Abd-Elnasser regime nationalized el akhbar newspaper which was owned by Ali and Mostafa amin.

That started when the newspaper published two different news on the first page. The first said "Death of the butcher" and the second below it said "Abd el Nasser in Pakistan" the regime claimed that they are trying to say that abd el Nasser is a butcher, they took that as an excuse for taking the administration from the two brothers and el akhbar newspaper became a state owned since then.<sup>ii</sup>

But this is not how it works these days, money and corporates related to the regime play the role now.

For example on December 2017 "eagle capital" a company that is managed by Dalia Khorshid the former minister of investment merged with the media emperor of the Egyptian business-man Ahmed Abo Hashima.

The deal was for 6 billion and 800 million Egyptian pounds, putting in mind that “Eagle capital” also owns a media production company called :synergy”<sup>iii</sup>

Regarding this deal, “Mada masr” an Egyptian news and investigation website – which is blocked by the Egyptian regime- claimed that they know some details about that deal. Mada Masr elaborated that “Eagle capital for investment” is a private equity fund owned by the Egyptian central intelligence.<sup>iv</sup> The deal with Ahmed Abo Hashima wasn’t the only deal for “Eagle capital”, that same institution seized in September 2018, CBC channels after “Eagle capital” bought “EL-mostaqbal” group which owned the CBC channels’

This institution with its new name “Egyptian media” now controls about 17 media entities. This varies between radio channels, newspapers, advertising agencies, online marketing companies; as well as owning “presentation” institution which has the exclusive right of marketing for the sport in Egypt.

Another story is told by “Reporters without borders” is about Al hayah channel which was owned by el-Sayd el Badawy, the former president of el-wafd political party. The ownership of those channels transferred to some anonymous institution. Some reports indicated that the new owner is “Falcon” company that is managed by the former manager of security sector and intelligence<sup>vi</sup>.

We should mention that before the deal was closed, the former board of the channel found themselves demanded to pay a large amount of money to the government, that just happened after some members of El-wafd party opposed the deal of selling teran and sanafer islands.

Another story is about the direct interference by some officers.

New York Times published a report: "after president trump moved to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, an Egyptian intelligence officer placed phone calls to several influential talk shows in Egypt, stating “like all our Arab brothers, Egypt will denounce the decision in public, but really what is the difference between Ram-allah and Jerusalem?” said the officer as NYT claimed<sup>viii</sup>"

That was Egypt.

In 2007 “the Arabic network for human rights” published a paper about paid Tunisian ads to polish the reputation of the former president Ben-Ali, those paid ads was published in the Egyptian newspapers as reports and news without mentioning that they were paid for it<sup>viii</sup>

In another published paper for “the Arabic network for human rights” about the Saudi intervention in media, Ahmed Samer -a journalist- found that the Saudi minister of media hosted dozens of journalists and TV shows' hosts for ALhijj (pilgrimage), all costs and expenses paid, as a form of a concealed bribery so they would turn their heads away from the doings of the Saudi regime.

Another leaked document from wikileaks stated that the Saudi regime paid lots of money in order to polish the regime's reputation<sup>ix</sup>

-Another case we can consider is the case of khashughshy's death.

In October 2018, after the above mentioned entered the Saudi consulate in turkey he disappeared. At first –before any official statement about the accident was published - media channels said that it was just rumors. Al- Arabiyah channel for example accused Al-jazera reporter and khashughshy's fiancée of being a tool to publish fake news.<sup>x</sup>

Another newspaper accused Qatar of publishing fake news also. However, after the Saudi general prosecutor stated khashughshy was murdered and king Salman-bin Abd el aziz fired some officers in the intelligence sector, the tone of those channels changed, they praised what the king did.<sup>xi</sup>

-Media is a double-edged weapon, may easily be used by all parties to support different views of the same cause. But in underdeveloped countries and especially ones that are ruled by dictators it's a very powerful weapon. Dictators realized that the hard way.

In accordance to the Arab countries' revolutions, governors decided to exert more effort to confiscate and control this weapon and not leave space for opponents like before. Which we will discuss in the next few papers.

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<sup>i</sup> <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/egypt-leads-the-pack-in-internet-censorship-across-the-middle-east>

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<https://nl.hideproxy.me/go.php?u=gpZKnHIYQPov%2BY2B%2B4InIbfVxPDbAYOUGAdRmeIAT9ypY6LWOkS3Ao0vDhXhGZ9Df%2FhxeERsI1RZuXvr2VTJiQ2DW5ex5tp49G0X%2BU%2FRr43yxYobbdCfBUxGGwJ8HrktZJmtgjOGD7HvMAJ8dIxTqMgqoEjulth2Fgt8oiroAd5iq6AymyVdnAsrTuUcu2D2KjMGJWt%2BSPb2fntkFmg4Wc02pFTOIjKhhMicFD%2BGyOidxZ7oLubhx5WTjS9SrTCFHlu0%2F7os7%2By%2F590esZj1YJpqH4gifiEbe53OGD5G6NZN9sEKB1bRMSHxwEPfM4qUpmzuTKH%2BeCPFzmJ0tGseuWivLDDfLWKXMI9Ts54%3D&b=5&f=norefer>

<sup>iii</sup>

<https://nl.hideproxy.me/go.php?u=y4NKxHIYGbkV5p6S9opsbrbTi6vTQYrSWyUJ1PVZD%2Br1KPWXOPDcPa4AhYcDp9GBfh0BUQqNFQlwHvu11S1hgWeLorQnMociXoDJE7B0obuqo0TDKyDYTVeGwJ9HsAuZJmtgjPzD7HvMAF%2BdlxTqMtfqCmSirx5C3d1tz%2F8YKN%2FttQu8jk8nBpPSfl9uwSRXy9nJHnjTeqXf2hxBgIERKk0uD3S9ZkU4M2AdT%2Ffirj%2BBpJ%2F6O%2FaAu4n39Esz0CyYZUvd4ttViYjM%2BxmrIWFffsQC%2BcyH10GH%2B%2BveUJbjk9fl7wWGIbNMSHwwDrRO%2BvougviWmCDZD68qgto1WoOpBmyTUndQnL2Tki0yloReHdRdZoGr0dMfBUgJzCleijLTYBMNsqGPEIBkyWD%2FW9fO052i98nJnX6%2FqkXAr%2F%2B5PGq8CUJcPuv5XJePMSq%2FJLhXUqJnOxjMP7CUQBr2Bi2Q5QsfqfXMsUKN8WKq1C00B306hk%2FfUI2E49jFO03pnMuLeARCYffgZrVVUDIUTNBGH88bMo6TfSCxRyR9ZlytKQ4%3D&b=5&f=norefer>

<sup>iv</sup>

<https://nl.hideproxy.me/go.php?u=jfe4woo%2F%2BhgKiqKjPKG6SVwPYmgj5%2B%2FBEL09EtxH2TnJxAICX%2FAn8FqBio6DOFvM75qZBXWtYCX8suZKpqqdUSuhO8cOLEOMa1BxQ1h5SfJ32VZAzbw8YF1ke%2FMI%2FJg4uFVpZmB1YKQ446mQOU%2FWI2dozQXwOdXbilbVT8zP2THGKQ7OpwzkQNBju8DvHaW%2BJW4VtS5nFk7GBkWY2ZJBDjp3m%2B2EwKLPq7mdj25uV%2B30Xza6Tcf%2FLk3HfX0I2iZxapsODEurxsoeZESukZ8DQCUWm2JEd0%2FfdLImdu78vEIGPVcy2%2FhC5CO6InkIUWIBDg4U1VLO6dzIVpo07d%2FpPcJ&b=5&f=norefer>

<sup>v</sup> <https://almesryoon.com/story/1192039/%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%B9-%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%85%D9%88%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D9%82%D9%86%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AA-CBC-%D9%88-%D9%87%D8%B0%D8%A7-%D9%87%D9%88-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B4%D8%AA%D8%B1%D9%8A>

<sup>vi</sup>

<https://nl.hideproxy.me/go.php?u=jfe4wpUt%2BFclmbb%2Bc7D6ShYZY2h%2FsqmFWAt2TzoelzGBzBNDSPIkVHncwa%2FVMGyQuNsXQ1TmaAGz48cc58gNGwHtbOlBlgm%2BNgcdbxhZGby%3D&b=5&f=norefer>

<sup>vii</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/06/world/middleeast/egypt-jerusalem-talk-shows.html>

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<https://nl.hideproxy.me/go.php?u=cuMVsu4Htxslg2aag10RZChiplEchouHUPRYtorZvnry87pSFHoVYR4s71Yrz06sTUjoyv5EwZQ6CI0H1lzGbxlvR%2F5HP%2FjgPO7QZsVqLr9eiSHgtFTIMqHrbyWR0U%2BqE3cRDnJjjMi9UCGQSym4VA%2Bm1m7ZbQAVNRKocsSz6w0HEpASHkFVs6iPRmz9An8xm%2FR0yRHRb%2Bz3A3qun9F80ADRX4fE7GyQMxmOIEsUR1JflcBcr3TECISAxjaX2OZ7t%2F%2BWIKt6WQYw%2F651rQQnMNDAVXw%3D&b=5&f=norefer>

<sup>ix</sup> <https://nl.hideproxy.me/go.php?u=cuMVsu4Htxslg2aag0lsbTXop4s%3D&b=5&f=norefer>

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<sup>xi</sup> <http://www.bhttps://www.trtarabi.com/now/%D9%83%D9%8A%D9%81-%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B9%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%B9%D9%88%D8%AF%D9%8A-%D9%85%D8%B9-%D8%A3%D8%B2%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D8%AE%D8%AA%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%AE%D8%A7%D8%B4%D9%82%D8%AC%D9%8A-14637bc.com/arabic/inthepress-45933299>