CHANGE IS COMING

Democracy for the Arab World Now
Annual Report 2022
A Note From
DAWN’s Executive Director

Magnifying The Basic Principles

Dear Friends and Supporters,

DAWN completed its second year of operation in 2022, marked by its progress as the leading advocate for reforming U.S. policies that support the worst governments in the Middle East and North Africa and holding accountable not just serial human rights abusers but also the U.S. lobbyists who aid and abet them. In seeking both enforcement and reform of U.S. laws that permit foreign influence in our government, we are working to preserve America’s democracy as well.

DAWN’s clear diagnosis of the failed U.S. approach to the region and unequivocal demands about what needs to change resonated in the media and among policymakers, broadening the parameters of debate and discussion among the foreign policy community. We are heartened by the expansion of support for our organization from donors and the public, both in the U.S. and from the region. We know we speak for the many when we—along with DAWN’s renowned fellows and board members—assert and magnify the basic principles that the people of the MENA region deserve democracy and respect for their human rights—the essential ingredients for peace, freedom, equality, and justice.

DAWN focuses on the MENA governments that receive the most U.S. support, and we were proud to launch our Israel/Palestine Program to include it in our priority programs. Our work included numerous exposés of some of the region’s worst abuses, generating regular breaking news stories. We submitted detailed case files targeting abusive judges, lawyers, prosecutors, and spies for sanctions under the Magnitsky Law and the Khashoggi Ban and presented the first case of an individual Israeli culprit for prosecution by the International Criminal Court. We exposed the treacherous role of lobbyists for Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Israel in whitewashing these countries’ deplorable rights records to persuade our government to sell them more weapons. We were happiest of all to see the release of a number of imprisoned journalists and lawyers in Egypt, whose cases we extensively documented and on whose behalf we strenuously advocated.
DAWN also expanded its policy work this year, producing a series of analysis and recommendations to the U.S. government, some of which we were pleased to see adopted, including an FBI investigation into the murder of Shireen Abu Akleh by Israeli forces, and a Congressional inquiry into payments by Saudi Arabia to former Trump administration officials Jared Kushner and Steven Mnuchin. DAWN also focused a great deal of its advocacy on the U.S. foreign policy and human rights communities, seeking to reform our methodologies and update our collective approaches to the MENA region. In 2022, DAWN organized a second major symposium critically examining and urging an end to calls for “humanitarian military intervention” by rights groups.

Moreover, DAWN continued its efforts to demand justice for our slain founder, Jamal Khashoggi. While the Biden administration intervened in our lawsuit to provide immunity for Khashoggi’s murderer, Crown Prince Mohamed bin Salman, we secured a permanent memorial for Khashoggi, successfully renaming the street in front of the Saudi Embassy in Washington “Jamal Khashoggi Way.” We succeeded in securing the introduction of legislation that will codify the Khashoggi Ban and support advocacy groups seeking to prevent and punish extraterritorial repression in our country.

Finally, DAWN’s premier publication, Democracy in Exile, expanded its reach this year, not only centering the voices of MENA activists but spearheading discussions on the most pressing issues from the region, including the impacts of the Ukraine war and the Iran protests, and interviewing some of the sharpest analysts and activists of the region.

We are proud of all that we have accomplished this year, which I hope you will take some time to learn more about in this report. Let me take this moment to thank our board and our supporters for your help in building and strengthening our organization, but most of all, my colleagues, each of whom served as a tireless and dedicated champion for rights and freedom in their own right.

Sarah Leah Whitson
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“Democracy remains the most effective way to tackle terror, stop bloodshed and political violence in Arab countries.”

Jamal Khashoggi
DAWN’s Founder
Mission

Democracy for the Arab World Now (DAWN) is a nonprofit organization that supports democracy and human rights in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Our vision is for a world where the human rights, liberty, and dignity of every person in the Middle East and North Africa are upheld by democratically elected governments, safeguarded by independent institutions and civil society organizations working under the rule of law, and supported by international governments and institutions around the world.

As a U.S.-based organization, DAWN focuses its research, analysis, and foreign policy advocacy on MENA governments with close ties to the United States and on the military, diplomatic, and economic support the U.S. government provides them, since that is where we believe we have the greatest responsibility and the greatest opportunity for influence.

Our goal is to ensure that U.S. foreign policy supports the people in the MENA region by ending support for their abusive, undemocratic governments. We believe that U.S. national interests are ill-served by support for these governments and better protected by policies that foster peace, freedom, equality, and justice.

Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi founded DAWN in June 2018—just a few months before he was murdered in Istanbul by a hit squad dispatched by Saudi Crown Prince Mohamned bin Salman.

DAWN's diverse, multinational staff have an average of 15 years of relevant experience and include lawyers, journalists, scholars, activists, and advocates with roots in the MENA region and the United States. Our nine-member Board includes leading Arab- and Muslim-American activists, human rights and legal experts, and a Nobel laureate from Yemen.

DAWN does not accept funding from any MENA governments. We are currently supported solely by private foundations and individuals.
Methodology

Through rigorous research and analysis, relentless media outreach, targeted advocacy with policymakers, and convenings of leading human rights and foreign policy experts, DAWN challenges conventional wisdom about the MENA region and the U.S. role in it, rallies support for policies that uphold human rights, and leads the brainstorming of new solutions to long-standing regional problems.

**INCLUSIVE:** DAWN works to position the voices of activists and political exiles from the MENA region alongside those of regional and U.S. foreign policy experts, and to amplify those voices with policymakers and the broader foreign policy community. We believe the people most affected by abusive governance in the MENA region should have a say in the American policies that affect them.

**INNOVATIVE:** Activists and policymakers need new approaches to address long-standing problems affecting the Middle East and North Africa. Instead of limiting itself to a singular method or process, DAWN remains nimble and open to experimentation.

**COLLABORATIVE:** DAWN often partners with allies in the movement, taking the lead on new initiatives, co-sponsoring projects and advocacy campaigns, and providing strategic support to strengthen existing efforts.
TIMELINE 2022

JAN 28
Biden administration withholds $130 million in conditioned military aid to Egypt following pressure by DAWN-led coalition

JAN 31
DAWN launches Israel and Palestine Program, hires new staff

FEB 23
Israel-Palestine Experts Diana Buttu, Leena Dallasheh and Syria Expert Yassin al-Haj Saleh join DAWN as Non-Resident Fellows

MAR 14
Jordan travel ban on staff member Taghreed Risheq lifted, court dismisses “Cybercrime Suit”

MAR 30
DAWN delegation visits Israel, Palestine, meets with six civil society org representatives

MAR 31
Turkey transfers Khashoggi case to Saudi Arabia

APR 13
DAWN breaks news on Nine Prominent Saudi Judges Arrested. Accused of High Treason

APR 15
Senator Elizabeth Warren calls for DOJ to investigate Jared Kushner, following DAWN’s meeting with her office and using DAWN’s language

MAY 11
DAWN leads calls for FBI investigation of Shireen Abu Akleh’s murder

MAY 13
DAWN facilitates Human Rights Goes to War workshop

JUN 15
DAWN unveils “Jamal Khashoggi Way” street sign in front of Saudi Embassy, D.C.

JUL 21
DAWN publishes the profiles of four NSO Group lobbyist and files complaints with the DoJ

JUL 28
DAWN and other rights groups file complaint in a French court to investigate MBS

AUG 3
DAWN publishes Human Rights Goes to War workshop papers

AUG 25
DAWN leads event with representatives of #StandWiththe6 NGOs

AUG 29
Michele Alexander joins DAWN board

AUG 30
DAWN breaks news about 45-year sentence by Saudi court for woman’s tweets

SEP 30
DAWN holds an anniversary event to remember Khashoggi. Reps. McCollum and Schiff announce Jamal Khashoggi Act

DEC 6
US District Court dismisses DAWN’s lawsuit

DEC 18
DAWN cohosted a virtual event with Mondoweiss on Israeli Attacks on Palestinians, Reporting and Accountability. (546 listeners)

NOV 14
Israel acknowledges FBI investigation into Shireen Abu Akleh’s murder following DAWN advocacy

NOV 17
Biden Administration grants MBS immunity from DAWN lawsuit

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Democracy in the Arab World Now (DAWN) focuses on democracy and human rights in the greater Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Our vision is for a world where the human rights, liberty, and dignity of every person in the region are upheld by democratically elected governments, safeguarded by independent institutions and civil society organizations working under the rule of law.

Our goal is to ensure that U.S. foreign policy supports the people in MENA by ending support for their abusive, undemocratic governments. We are proud to recognize the following institutional supporters who help further our work.
Analysis and Policy Recommendations

Introduction

Unjust Prosecutions

Culprits Gallery

Lobbyist Hall of Shame

Political Analysis
Introduction

DAWN’s advocacy-driven research aims to uncover the anti-democratic practices and human rights violations of MENA governments supported by the United States, exposing the officials who serve as the agents of repression and the U.S.-based lobbyists promoting the interests of these abusive governments, and seek to hold them accountable.

DAWN’s foreign policy analysis examines political developments in the region and the impact of US policies on democracy, human rights, and national interests. DAWN critically examines the approaches and methodologies to the region by the U.S. foreign policy community, including its role in maintaining support for militarized, abusive U.S. policies in the region, and offers recommendations for change.

RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS HIGHLIGHTS

DAWN’s signature research projects include the Lobbyist Hall of Shame, where we reveal the roles of individual U.S.-based lobbyists in legitimizing and securing U.S. support for abusive MENA governments; the Culprits Gallery, where we expose the mid-level MENA government officials responsible for ongoing repression and abuse and the Unjust Prosecutions Gallery, where we exhaustively document emblematic cases of political prisoners in the MENA region.

DAWN continuously monitors developments in the United States and MENA countries, producing a steady stream of commentary and analysis on critical developments related to human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. Through a variety of mediums including briefing papers or long-form analysis, workshops, and roundtables, DAWN has magnified these analyses, incorporated the perspectives of influential thinkers in the community, and engaged wider audiences.
DAWN’s Lobbyist Hall of Shame exposes the U.S.-based lobbyists paid to keep U.S. support flowing to some of the MENA region’s worst human rights violators. We use each profile to call the lobbyist out by name, challenge their ethics, and publicize the harmful role they play in aiding and abetting human rights violators. We also offer detailed recommendations to Congress, lobbyists, and U.S. State Bar Associations to help them uphold their domestic and international legal obligations.
DAWN seeks to disclose the identity of the state agents who enable repression, to make them recognizable at home and abroad. These includes interior ministry agents who identity citizens demanding reform as a threat to be crushed; police and national security forces who arrest and beat citizens; interrogators who torture and terrorize; prosecutors who bring patently abusive charges for conduct that is protected by human rights law, sometimes without evidence; state officials, acting as witnesses, who perjure themselves for petty gains; judges who enforce unjust laws; jailers who harm captive detainees at their mercy; and propagandists who slander and vilify detainees.

**UAE**

- **Judge Muhammad Abd al-Qadir**
  Ignored Allegations of Torture

- **Captain Ali Saif**
  Responsible for the Arrest of Prominent UAE Democracy Activists

- **Judge Shabeeb al-Damarany**
  Enforces Arbitrary Detentions, Indiscriminate Sentences

- **Assistant Minister Tarek Marzouk**
  Responsible for Systematic and Widespread Torture

**SAUDI ARABIA**

- **Judge Awadh al-Ahmari**
  Implicated in the Detention, Torture, and Extraction of Forced Confessions of Peaceful Human Rights Activists

**EGYPT**

- **Judge Shabeeb al-Damarany**
  Enforces Arbitrary Detentions, Indiscriminate Sentences

- **Assistant Minister Tarek Marzouk**
  Responsible for Systematic and Widespread Torture

**ISRAEL**

- **Col. Eyal Toledano**
  Former IDF West Bank Legal Advisor, Authorized Collective Punishment

- **Netzah Yehuda Battalion**
  Carries Out War Crimes In the West Bank
Unjust Prosecutions

SAUDI ARABIA

Salem Almuzaini
Detained, Extorted, Tortured, and Disappeared — Saudi Businessman Implicates MBS’s Tiger Squad in Further Abuses

EGYPT

Anas El-Beltagy
19-Year-Old Student Denied Fair Trial, Remains Unjustly Imprisoned after Four Separate Acquittals Eight Years After His Arrest

DAWN’s Unjust Prosecutions Gallery documents individual cases of political detainees being held unjustly. Drawing upon primary and secondary sources, these comprehensive case files document the conditions of arrest and charges brought against each detainee, their detention conditions, trials or sentencing, and instances of government retaliation against their family members. Those profiles reflect a cross-section of society and include not only human rights activists and journalists, but also businesspeople, former government officials, and other elites.
POLITICAL ANALYSIS

SELECT SAMPLE

FOREIGN AID
- U.S.: Biden Administration Withholds $130 Million in Military Aid to Egypt 1/28

ACCOUNTABILITY
- "Jamal Khashoggi" Way Street Sign Memorializing Murder of Saudi Journalist Unveiled in Front of the Saudi Embassy in Washington, D.C. 6/15
- Four Years Since Murder of Jamal Khashoggi, Accountability Advances in Legislation, Lawsuit, and Memorial 9/13
- U.S.: Investigate Israeli Killing of Palestinian-American Journalist Shireen Abu Akleh 5/11

U.S. FOREIGN POLICY
- U.S.: Six Measures President Biden Should Take During Trip to Israel and Saudi Arabia 7/12
- U.S.: Reject Israeli "Terrorist" Designation of Palestinian Rights Groups 4/26
- U.S.: End Economic Support for Tunisian Coup Government 12/23

SECURITY AND DEFENSE
- U.S.: Human Rights Organizations Should Reassess Approaches to International Law During Armed Conflict 8/3

RULE OF LAW & GOOD GOVERNANCE
- U.S.: Investigate Kushner Business Dealings with Mohamed bin Salman 4/22
- Saudi Arabia: Government Appoints Agent Involved in Khashoggi Murder Cover-Up As President of Counter-Terrorism Court 10/12
- Jordan: Mass "Preemptive" Arrests to Block Protests Against Government 4/6
- Nine Prominent Saudi Judges Arrested, Accused of High Treason 4/13
- United States: Biden Administration Recognition of Saudi Crown Prince Immunity is Bad Policy and Bad Law 11/17

HUMAN RIGHTS
- The Jeddah Demolitions: Forced Evictions and Neighborhood Destruction Put More than a Million Residents at Risk 10/17
- Saudi Arabia: Government Sentences Woman to 45 Years for Her Tweets 8/30
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Advocacy Priorities

Introduction

Focus Areas

Ending Support for Abusive Governments

Accountability for Abusers and Enablers

Reforming US Laws

Revitalizing Human Rights Advocacy
Introduction

We believe that as a U.S.-based organization our responsibility and potential for most impact is to address the abuses to which our own government contributes.

We pursue this mission by exposing and seeking accountability for the abuses by governments in the region that receive U.S. support.

We recognize, however, that changes in U.S. policies require far more than exposing and sanctioning wrongdoers. That’s why we also seek to reform the U.S. laws that allow these regimes to have influence over U.S. policies and legislators, including lax lobbying rules and conflict of interest laws.

We strive to persuade our allies and friends in the foreign policy community to critically evaluate the methodology, analysis and recommendations the community has used to shape U.S. MENA policy, to ensure that it is aligned with the best interests of the American people and does not harm the people of the region.

Advocacy Priorities

Government Advocacy
DAWN facilitated dozens of meetings with Congress, State Department, White House staff and other elected officials to:
• Brief government officials about the unlawful Jeddah home demolitions.
• Introduce the Khashoggi Act and codify the Khashoggi Ban into law with Reps. Betty McCollum and Adam Schiff.
• DAWN issued public statements and led coalition statements on issues regarding arms sales to Saudi Arabia and the UAE; a cut in military assistance to Egypt; and the opening of an FBI investigation into the murder of Shireen Abu Akleh by Israeli forces.
• Press the State Department on matters related to the Khashoggi Ban as chair of the Khashoggi Ban Working Group.

Convenings
DAWN assembled 35 participants from leading think tanks, human rights groups, universities, and advocacy organizations for a workshop addressing issues of armed conflict and published 6 papers presented by the panelists.

Partnerships
DAWN published 49 sign-on letters with over 25 major human rights organizations.
DAWN’s second year of advocacy work coalesced around four focus areas, all of which were heavily informed by our research and analysis. Direct advocacy with U.S. policymakers focused on issues where we have specific and unique expertise or experience, including by bringing in the voices of political exiles.
The U.S. is the largest weapons supplier to abusive, authoritarian, and apartheid governments in MENA, with transfers equalling approximately $23 billion in 2022. The U.S. also has more military bases in the region than all of the other countries in the world combined. America’s military support and protection for these abusive governments are coupled with economic and political support and help shield them from accountability.

**Ending Support for Abusive Governments**

- **Enforce largely ignored U.S. laws** that ban the transfer of arms to systematically abusive governments, identifying how such transfers violate our government’s own obligation not to contribute to, or benefit from, human rights abuses.

- **Challenge and disrupt each individual U.S. arms deal** with these governments and require the State and Defense Departments to disclose and justify each proposed sale.

- **Expose the political protection** and dangerous compromises our government provides these abusive regimes and document how they harm U.S. national interests.

- **Develop new policies** for the U.S. government that align with the national interests of the American people and do not harm the people of the Middle East.

Analysis and Policy Recommendations

- **Influencing Public Opinion**
- **Engaging Online**
- **Revitalizing Human Rights Advocacy**
Seeking the imposition of sanctions under the Magnitsky Act, Leahy Law, and Khashoggi Ban against mid-level government abusers who have committed human rights abuses including torture, abuse, and murder. In 2022, DAWN filed 6 sanctions requests against abusers in Egypt, Israel, and Saudi Arabia.

Supporting legal prosecutions underway in international courts to hold abusers accountable, submitting detailed case files for investigation. In 2022, DAWN filed the first two complaints to the International Criminal Court against individual Israeli government officials for crimes against Palestinians.

Pushing lobbyists to end their contracts with abusive regimes, legislators to refuse to meet with such lobbyists until they do, and regulators to ensure that lobbyists are complying with existing laws. In 2022, DAWN exposed the role of 6 lobbyists contributing to human rights abuses in the MENA region.
Without reform in U.S. laws that permit our government to find end-runs around legislation designed to prohibit arms transfers to abusive governments, and that permit foreign governments to access and influence our legislators, we know that there can be no serious reform of U.S. policies in the Middle East. Such reforms are vital not only to protect the people harmed by MENA governments enabled by the U.S., but to protect the integrity of our own democracy which is increasingly corrupted by foreign governments. Our work includes:

**Passing new laws** that will ban senior government and military officials from working for or doing business with foreign governments for at least three years after leaving office.

**Eliminating loopholes** in existing legislation that allow the executive branch to waive laws prohibiting arms transfers to systematically abusive governments.

**Requiring lobbyists to disclose** the complete substance of their interactions with lawmakers, banning their work for abusive governments, and prohibiting their campaign contributions.

**Analysis and Policy Recommendations**

Reforming US Laws

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**Eliminating loopholes** in existing legislation that allow the executive branch to waive laws prohibiting arms transfers to systematically abusive governments.

**Requiring lobbyists to disclose** the complete substance of their interactions with lawmakers, banning their work for abusive governments, and prohibiting their campaign contributions.
DAWN believes that the success of our goals depends on the support and participation of the broader foreign policy community and its approach to advocacy for reform of U.S. policies in the MENA region.

We seek to unify and activate the foreign policy community through a shared understanding of how our government contributes to rights abuses in the MENA region, the role our analysis and advocacy play in such abuses, and what needs to change here at home to further democracy and human rights in the MENA region.

In 2022, DAWN organized a number of conferences, workshops, and discussions to evaluate advocacy approaches to US policies in the region, and to encourage new methodologies and policies. For example, DAWN organized a workshop examining advocacy for US military humanitarian intervention and approaches to international humanitarian law that fail to address the broader problems of U.S. militarism and primacy.

We seek to ensure that this community includes the voices and experiences of people from the region who are most directly affected by US policies in their deliberations about and recommendations for the region.

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Revitalizing Human Rights Advocacy

Unify and activate the Foreign Policy Community

Include voices and experiences of those most affected

Organize conferences, workshops, and discussions
“Democracy in Exile's mission is to be a home for regional experts and exiles from the region, together. The journal is committed to magnifying voices from the Middle East and North Africa and giving them an equal platform to those in the West.”

Frederick Deknatel
Executive Editor
INTRODUCTION

DAWN’s online journal, Democracy in Exile, is a space for political exiles and activists from the Middle East and North Africa to elevate their voices in key policy debates alongside those of leading MENA experts, journalists, and other commentators.

For too long, the views of those most affected by violence and repression in the MENA region have been silenced by their governments and overlooked by U.S. policymakers. Democracy in Exile is committed to magnifying these voices, which are essential to understanding the state of human rights and democracy in the region.

In everything the journal publishes, including first-hand reporting, analysis, opinion, and interviews, Democracy in Exile works to promote a new vision for the future of the MENA region, where democratic governments respect citizens’ fundamental rights.

DAWN’S JOURNAL HIGHLIGHTS

Since DAWN’s launch, Democracy in Exile has published over 225 articles from more than 175 different authors from dissidents and activists to academics, journalists and policymakers.

Journal articles include critical assessments of U.S. foreign policy, exposés about the anti-democratic practices and human rights violations of America’s closest regional allies, and first-person reflections on what it’s like to live under abusive regional governments.

The most widely read articles over the past year include an essay by Syrian exile and writer Yassin al-Haj Saleh, one of DAWN’s non-resident fellows, on how Russia’s war in Ukraine, in both means and aims, is a continuation of its war in Syria; an extensive interview with the renowned intellectual Noam Chomsky; and an in-depth report by academic Monica Marks on Tunisia’s fragmented political opposition under President Kais Saied.
COUNTRIES AND ISSUES

Democracy in Exile’s three roundtables have brought together nearly 70 experts to debate the biggest policy issues in the MENA region.

Is Biden’s Trip to Saudi Arabia in America’s Interests? A Democracy in Exile Roundtable 7/13
The Ukraine War’s Impacts in the Middle East: A Democracy in Exile Roundtable 4/6
What Do Iran’s Protests Mean for the Arab World? A Democracy in Exile Roundtable 10/31

COUNTRY TOPIC BREAKDOWN

Percent of total coverage

- Palestine (27%)
- United States (14%)
- Saudi Arabia (11%)
- Egypt (10%)
- Yemen (9%)
- Iran (7%)
- Syria (6%)
- Tunisia (6%)
- Middle East (5%)

Remaining coverage includes the United Arab Emirates, Lebanon, Turkey, Bahrain, and Algeria.

1,123 Average views per article
113+ Total articles published
75 Different authors

The variety of topics and regions addressed in Democracy in Exile are varying and intersectional, seeking to include a plurality of political exiles’ experiences and visions for democracy in the region.
Democratic in Exile conducts thought-provoking interviews with leading experts, as well as exiles abroad and activists in the region, giving voice to their political struggles.
Influencing Public Opinion

Introduction

Media Coverage

Opinion Pieces by Staff

TV-Radio Appearances
Influencing public opinion through the media is one way DAWN works to shift the broader narrative around the Middle East and North Africa and change U.S. foreign policy toward it. The scope of DAWN’s media coverage is, quite simply, remarkable for an organization of our size and tenure.

During our second year, we have built the organizational infrastructure for successful media outreach, including investing in advanced, cutting-edge tools to expand our media footprint and track our reach. We have embedded communications principles into our content development processes, refined our press release format, and honed our organizational voice all with the goal of maximizing press pick-up. We have pitched our content widely, nurtured relationships with key journalists, and responded swiftly to breaking events. In our second year we:

- Reached out to over 275 of the top media personalities covering the MENA region and U.S. foreign policy. Many of these journalists now regularly contact us for commentary and analysis.
- Published 20 op-eds in major publications—an outstanding number for an organization of our size—establishing ourselves as a go-to source of commentary and analysis on developments affecting the region.
- Earned an average of 25 citations a day in global media coverage, with 40% appearing in U.S. outlets.
“We intend to remind the people who are hiding behind these doors ... that we hold them responsible and we will hold them accountable for the murder of our friend.”

—SARAH LEAH WHITSON, JUNE 16

“People can see for themselves what’s happening in a way they didn’t before. It’s made it harder, particularly in the United States, for the emotional defenders of Israel, who’ve had this mythology about Israel and the kibbutz and sowing the land and this sort of fantasy of what Israel’s like, confronted with the reality of what they see in front of their faces.”

—SARAH LEAH WHITSON, FEBRUARY 3

“MBS has blood on his hands. If Biden gives him the US meeting MBS so desperately wants, the bloody handshake will send a clear message to tyrants everywhere: you can always count on America to betray its values and reward bad behavior.”

—ABDULLAH ALAOUDH, JUNE 4

“A variety of different outlets with a diversity of audiences have consistently quoted staff or covered the organization’s research and advocacy. DAWN regularly maximizes the coverage of these citations by publishing them as individual tweets or graphic quote cards.

—SARAH LEAH WHITSON, NOVEMBER 18
Introduction   |   Media Coverage   |   Opinion Pieces by Staff   |   TV-Radio Appearances

**About DAWN Advocating for Change**

**DAWN’s Journal**

**Influencing Public Opinion**

**Engaging Online**

**Impact**

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**MEDIA COVERAGE**

**The World**

“Saudi society doesn’t have any elected parliament, they go to Twitter to express themselves. When MBS rose to power, he wanted to completely shut down every aspect of this public sphere that once existed.

— **ABDULLAH ALAOUDH**, AUGUST 18

**The Jerusalem Post**

“It is rare that you find one person like Toledano tied to so many types of war crimes and crimes against humanity, and with so much documentary evidence freely available. Usually the ICC would look at whether the state, Israel, conducted its own investigation into the crimes to determine if it has jurisdiction.

— **MICHAEL SCHAEFFER OMER-MAN**, OCTOBER 31

**The Washington Post**

**Financial Times**

**The Wall Street Journal**

**AP**

**HUFFPOST**

**VOA**

**The Guardian**

“It is impossible not to connect the dots between Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman’s meeting with President Biden last month in Jeddah and the uptick in the repressive attacks against anyone who dares criticize the crown prince or the Saudi government for well-documented abuses.”

— **ABDULLAH ALAOUDH**, SEPTEMBER 6

“What’s distracting from climate commitments is that this conference is being hosted in a country that is responsible for some of the worst abuses.”

— **SARAH LEAH WHITSON ON COP27**, NOVEMBER 11
OP-EDS IN LEADING PUBLICATIONS

Q1 2022: 9
Foreign Policy (logo), The Human Rights vs. National Security Dilemma Is a Fallacy, Sarah Leah Whitson, January 10

Opinion: Here’s a Vice headline for you: ‘We took millions to improve the image of a murderous dictator’ Abdullah Alaoudh and John Hursh, February 4

Q2 2022: 4
Saudi Arabia executes 81 people in show of force by an emboldened Mohammed bin Salman, Abdullah Alaoudh and John Hursh, March 18

America’s Middle East ‘Withdrawal’ Breathes Its Last Breath, Sarah Leah Whitson, June 24

Q3 2022: 4
Biden’s trip to make up with Mohammed bin Salman won’t help anyone in Saudi Arabia or America, Abdullah Alaoudh, July 12

Biden is mending ties with our oppressors. He should listen to us instead, Abdullah Alaoudh, September 28

Q4 2022: 2
MBS can’t escape Khashoggi lawsuit with sudden ‘prime minister’ appointment, Sarah Leah Whitson, October 7

America’s Autocratic Persian Gulf ‘Partners’ Are Actually Liabilities, Abdullah Alaoudh and Jon Hoffman, November 15
DAWN has become a reliable source for commentary on breaking news, current events, and U.S. foreign policy analysis and recommendations.
Engaging Online

Introduction
Website
Social Media
Virtual Events
Introduction

Online engagement is an integral part of DAWN’s work to shift narratives, amplify pro-democracy voices from the Middle East and North Africa, and influence U.S. policy in the region.

DAWN’s online engagement tools include our English and Arabic websites and 10 social media accounts, including that of DAWN’s journal. To maximize our reach with target audiences, we publish and promote our content in both English and Arabic, and curate separate English and Arabic social media accounts. We also host stand-alone Twitter accounts for Egypt and Saudi Arabia, each of which carries country-specific content users inside Egypt and Saudi Arabia cannot access elsewhere due to government censorship.

DAWN’s English social media accounts have attracted followers from leading influencers including U.S. journalists, policymakers, and human rights and foreign policy experts. Our Arabic accounts attract Arabic media personalities, scholars, and everyday people from the MENA region.

Twitter is the main carrier of DAWN’s content. We receive an average of almost 1.5 million impressions a month and have been retweeted by prominent figures such as Agnes Callamard, Mehdi Hassan, Jake Tapper, Christiane Amanpour, and U.S. government officials like Senator Rand Paul and Congress member Ilhan Omar.

Our compelling content and live events on Twitter Spaces, Zoom events, and Facebook Live have helped fuel continuous organic growth across platforms and connected us to new allies in the policy, activist, and academic communities.
*DAWN's Website is blocked in Saudi Arabia and the UAE, therefore their statistics do not appear. Alternatively, users can access DAWN's content through a VPN.

www.DAWNmena.org is the final destination for all social media traffic. Dynamic, engaging, and increasingly user friendly, we make continuous advancements and updates to the website based on feedback from staff and close monitoring of user behavior, engagement, and traffic.
Twitter continues to be the main carrier of DAWN’s content. We maintain 10 social media profiles across 4 different platforms, to effectively reach audiences in regions where different platforms are more popular.

DAWN also hosts public profiles in both Arabic and English on these platforms:
VIRTUAL EVENTS

DAWN HOSTED EVENTS

SELECT SAMPLE

FACEBOOK LIVE

Zoom: Political Repression in Egypt: Courts Under Military Dictatorship (2/22/22)
Jamal Khashoggi Way Ceremony (6/15/22)
Israeli Raids on Palestinian Civil Society (8/25/22)
A Conversation with Ramy Shaath and Celine Lebrun-Shaath (9/23/22)

TWITTER SPACES

Escalation of War in Yemen and Biden’s Policy (2/21/22)
Pelosi in Israel: What to Expect (2/16/22)
Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine: Consequences in the Middle East (3/14/22)
The Human Costs of Social Reforms in Saudi Arabia (6/8/22)
Israeli Attacks on Palestinians, Reporting and Accountability (12/18/22)

These increasingly popular virtual event hosting platforms are an important way for DAWN to engage a broader audience in our work, offering a space for discussions that invite participatory debate.

STAFF SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Freedom is in Retreat in the Middle East: 11 Years After the Arab Spring, National Interest Foundation January 26

Human Rights and Humanitarian Action in an Increasingly Authoritarian Middle East, Brown University February 24

‘Flipping the Script’ on US Arms Sales, Demand Progress March 28

Protecting The Right to Boycott: Preventing Impunity, International Centre of Justice for Palestinians in London October 17

US Foreign Policy and Human Rights Advocacy in the Middle East and North Africa, Harvard University April 15

Egypt’s Uncertain Future: Political, Economic, and Human Rights Challenges, Arab Center July 23

5 Years of MBS, human rights, security reforms, MENA Rights Group July 21

The Crisis in Ukraine and the Middle East, Middle East Studies Association Conference December 2

Digital Authoritarianism, Bread and Net Conference, Lebanon November 17
Impact

Introduction
Impact Highlights
Accountability for Khashoggi Murder
Introduction

DAWN believes that only democratic governance rooted in human rights and the rule of law will create the conditions necessary for a peaceful and stable Middle East and North Africa where people live with dignity and in freedom. Our theory of change is premised on work that seeks to (1) end the United States’ central role in supporting abusive MENA governments that quash democracy and rights; (2) promotes the political exile community as an important asset to develop, protect, and nurture prospects for rights-respecting, democratic change in the region; and (3) holds accountable abusive foreign government officials and their American enablers.

The forces working against us are formidable: from dictators with bottomless bank accounts and sophisticated digital surveillance tools, to weapons manufacturers who profit through military support to these dictators, to multi-million-dollar lobbying firms with behemoth public relations teams. Yet despite the challenges, our nascent organization is already having an impact. In our second year we made notable strides toward:

**Influencing U.S. foreign policy toward the region**, including by mobilizing a growing number of members of Congress to oppose arms transfers to MENA countries. Throughout the year, we worked closely with members of Congress to put forward historic resolutions of disapproval on proposed arms sales to Israel—the first time such a resolution was ever tabled—as well as to Saudi Arabia, and issued press releases and op-eds challenging harmful arms transfers to Egypt, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

**Shifting the narrative around the region and the U.S. role in it**, including by influencing media coverage and launching a publishing platform featuring a steady stream of articles from political exiles and activists.

**Holding regional human rights abusers and their enablers accountable**, including by successfully pressuring a U.S-based lobbying firm to drop their contract with a Saudi government agency, creating a civil society working group to support the implementation of the Khashoggi Ban, renaming the street in front of the Saudi Embassy “Khashoggi Way”, and advancing justice for our founder’s murder.
In 2022, DAWN saw its credibility and reputation grow significantly in the media and foreign policy community as we pursued our mission to hold accountable abusive Middle Eastern governments and the lobbyists at home that promote them even as they weaken our democracy and core values in the process. Some noteworthy examples of our impact include:

**IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS**

**Complaint to ICC About Eyal Toledano**
DAWN filed a submission to the International Criminal Court identifying for the first time an individual abuser, senior Israeli military lawyer Eyal Toledano, for prosecution by the court in its ongoing investigation into Israel/Palestine, and we also submitted the first Leahy Law sanctions request for an Israeli military unit, the Netzah Yehuda Battalion, engaging in human rights violations.

**DOJ Investigates Kushner**
In the wake of the April 2022 news that a Saudi Arabia’s sovereign wealth fund led by Mohammad bin Salman (MBS) had invested $2.1 billion in Jared Kushner’s private equity firm, Affinity Partners, DAWN wrote to the US Department of Justice and Congress asking them to open investigations into possible corruption and craft new legislation to prohibit senior officials from doing business with foreign governments. The House Oversight Committee opened an investigation into the matter in June 2022, and there are now two pieces of draft legislation including such prohibitions.

**FBI Investigates Shireen Abu Akleh’s Murder**
Following advocacy by DAWN, partner organizations, and the Shireen Abu Akleh family demanding the Administration open an FBI investigation into the May 11, 2022 murder in Jenin by Israeli forces of Palestinian American journalist, Shireen Abu Akleh, the FBI opened an investigation in November 2022.
Four Prisoners Released
Following our extensive documentation and unrelenting advocacy, in 2022, the Egyptian government released four political prisoners whose cases we had highlighted, including Walid Ahmed Shawky and Ibrahim Ezz el-Din in April; Kholoud Said Amer in June; and Haitham Mohamedain in September.

Biden Cuts Egypt Aid
In the wake of DAWN’s advocacy demanding a cut in military aid to the Sisi government, the Biden administration announced in January 2022 that it would cancel $130 million of its $1.3 billion aid package, in light of the country’s deplorable human rights record. While the aid withheld accounts for only 10% of Egypt’s annual $1.3 billion, it marked a victory in our ongoing fight against U.S. military support for Egypt’s dictatorship.

Jordan Stops Airport Arrests
In March 2022, DAWN exposed and publicly challenged the arrest of our staff member, Taghreed Risheq, in Jordan based on a private complaint against her under the Cybercrimes Law for her political commentary. We secured her immediate release and a commitment from the government that it would end airport arrests based on this law.
ACCOUNTABILITY FOR KHASHOGGI MURDER

Introducing the Khashoggi Act

In September 2022, DAWN helped draft and lobbied for the introduction of The Khashoggi Act, a legislation to amend the U.S. Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act to allow lawsuits against foreign governments engaged in transnational aggression. The Act would also codify the Khashoggi Ban into law. DAWN has continued chairing the Khashoggi Ban Working Group, which is recognized by the State Department, and nominated a number of individuals to be sanctioned under the Khashoggi Ban, including Saudi agent Ibrahim Alhussayen.

Khashoggi Way

We achieved an important milestone in accountability efforts for Jamal Khashoggi’s murder, securing the official renaming of the street in front of the Saudi Embassy in Washington D.C. “Jamal Khashoggi Way,” a fitting memorial that received wide press exposure. Although MBS obtained a grant of sovereign immunity from the Biden administration in our civil lawsuit against him for the murder of Khashoggi, the case generated tremendous global media coverage, kept the issue of the murder in the spotlight, and forced MBS to seek protection from U.S. courts by adding the official title of Prime Minister to his name.
Join Us!

While the change DAWN seeks will take time, we believe our impact to date is a harbinger of what is to come—but only if we maintain our momentum and expand our network of allies and supporters. There are many ways to support DAWN’s mission, including by donating to our cause, sharing our messages on social media, and joining our online events. Please sign up for our email updates, visit us at dawnmena.org, or send a message to info@dawnmena.org to learn more.

If you are already an ally, partner, or supporter, thank you for being part of the movement to build a more peaceful, prosperous, and democratic Middle East and North Africa, where the human rights of all people are respected and upheld.