



## **Lebanese Internet Governance Forum**

Report of 6th Annual Meeting

Held under the Theme:

**"Shaping a Resilient and Equitable Digital Ecosystem in Lebanon"**

Tuesday and Wednesday, February 11–12, 2025

Hosted by Saint Joseph University in Beirut

Faculty of Engineering, Mar Roukoz

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## A - Introduction

The Lebanese Internet Governance Forum (LIGF) is a national initiative established in 2017 that aims at opening dialogue on the challenges and opportunities facing the development of internet infrastructure and governance in Lebanon through a multistakeholder approach. The Lebanese Multistakeholder Advisory Group includes representatives from the public sector, academia, civil society, private sector, and technical community. (Attached is the list of advisory group members for 2024.)

Under the theme "**Shaping a Resilient and Equitable Digital Ecosystem in Lebanon,**" the committee organized the 6th annual meeting, which was postponed due to security concerns, and held on Tuesday and Wednesday, February 11–12, 2025, hosted by Saint Joseph University in Beirut at the Faculty of Engineering in Mar Roukoz and virtually via Zoom.

The forum hosted **160 in-person participants** and **55 Zoom attendees**. The participation breakdown was:

- **62%** men, 38% women
- **12%** from the public sector
- **39%** from civil society and academia
- **34%** from the private and technical sectors
- **14%** were students (youth)
- **1%** from international organizations

The meeting commenced with a message from **Mr. Chengetai Masango**, Head of the Secretariat Office of the UN Internet Governance Forum, from Geneva. He emphasized the importance of the current phase—especially with the launch of the Global Digital Compact and the upcoming review of the World Summit on the Information Society +20. He stressed the necessity of continued multistakeholder cooperation to keep pace with rapid digital transformation and encouraged participation in the upcoming global forum in Norway in June 2025.

Opening remarks were also made by **Ms. Zeina Bou Harb**, Head of the Forum Secretariat, **Dr. Chafic Chaya**, Chair of the Advisory Committee, and **Dr. Marc Ibrahim**, representative of the host university.

The 2024 LIGF program included **three main sessions, a parliamentary track, two capacity-building sessions, and a workshop**, with participation from experts and officials across all sectors: public, private, academic, civil society, technical community, and regional organizations. Discussions focused on themes defined by the advisory committee: Digital Inclusion and Resilience, Online Safety, Digital Transformation and collaboration, Global governance tracks, and legal frameworks.



The first day began with the main session "**Building an Inclusive, Connected, and Sustainable Digital Future**," organized by OGERO and RIPE NCC.

The second main session, organized by ESCWA and RIPE NCC, was titled "**Enhancing Digital Cooperation and Governance for a Resilient Digital Future**". It was followed by the workshop "**The Impact of Digital Transformation on Governance and Economy**" prepared by OGERO, then by the parliamentary track: Co-organized by OGERO, RIPE NCC, Tripoli Bar Association, ESCWA and ISOC. The parliamentary track included two parts: the global tracks of Internet Governance and the laws and regulations that govern the digital landscape in Lebanon.

The second day started with the first capacity building session on Fact Checking organized by Maharat, followed by the second capacity building session on Cybersecurity, digital evidence and cybercrime awareness, organized by the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority, Lebanese General Security, American University of Beirut, Digital Transformation Network.

Then the third main session "**Safeguarding Digital Safety and Human Rights in the Lebanese Internet Governance Context**" organized by Maharat, SMEX, Telecommunications Regulatory Authority, American University of Beirut.

Each session issued recommendations on the topics discussed, which are submitted to decision-makers in Lebanon and to UN IGF.

## B - Sessions of the Lebanese Internet Governance Forum 2024

### 1. Main Session One: Building an Inclusive, Connected, and Sustainable Digital Future

**Organizers:** OGERO and RIPE NCC

**Moderator:** Ms. Maha Zouwayhed, Director of the Talal and Madiha Zein Innovation Park – American University of Beirut

#### Speakers:

- Eng. Nisrine Turkey – Founder and Chair of InternetOfTrees, and Lecturer at LAU
- Ms. Zakie Karam – Treasurer and Board Member of LLWB
- Dr. Ali Atie – Director of Operations at OGERO
- Ms. Sandra Helou – CEO of MetaMinds and CEO, Office Member & GCC Lead of Zilliqa Group



**LEBANON IGF 24** | FEBRUARY 11, 2025 | 9:30 AT ESIB

**“BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE, CONNECTED AND SUSTAINABLE DIGITAL FUTURE”**

**MS. MAHA ZOUWAYHED**  
DIRECTOR, AUB INNOVATION PARK

**ENG. NISRINE TURKY**  
CEO & FOUNDER - IOTREE AND LECTURER AT LAU

**MS. ZAKIE KARAM**  
TREASURER & BOARD MEMBER - LLWB

**DR. ALI ATIE**  
DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS OGERO

**MS. SANDRA HELOU**  
CEO METAMINDS | ZILLIQA | CEO OFFICE MEMBER & GCC LEAD

ogero | RIPE NCC | Internet Society | USJ 150

#### Discussions:

- **Eng. Nisrine Turkey** explained about her focus on the agricultural sector and integrating technology to support farmers. She developed a Lebanese innovation using the latest technologies like Machine Learning, AI, and IoT—a device that helps farmers monitor and improve crop care. Field tests in several countries showed a 30% increase in productivity. She also emphasized the need for NGOs and municipalities to support digital literacy, noting that many people have internet access but lack the skills to use it properly.

- **Ms. Zakie Karam** stressed the importance of increasing women's participation in the digital world, highlighting the growing role of digital technologies in all areas of life. She advocated for programs that empower women with digital skills—from programming and data analysis to digital marketing—and called for training initiatives to integrate women into the tech field.
- **Dr. Ali Atie** spoke about OGERO’s operations, stating that approximately 200,000 subscribers connect to the internet via Fiber Optic and DSL. He criticized the private sector's monopoly, which inflates prices, while OGERO aims to reduce costs to make services more accessible.
- **Ms. Sandra Helou** focused on creative digital economies, gaming, the metaverse, and well-being. Her company MetaMinds develops custom metaverse and spatial technology solutions, including virtual worlds, augmented and virtual reality experiences, and games to help brands deliver immersive experiences that enhance value and loyalty.

## 2. Main Session Two: Enhancing Digital Cooperation and Governance for a Resilient Digital Future

**Organizers:** RIPE NCC and ESCWA

**Moderator:** Mr. Rudy Shoushany, CEO of DX Talks

**Speakers:**

- Dr. Lina Oueidat – National ICT & Cybersecurity Coordinator, PCM
- Mr. Dany Wazen – Regional Digital Transformation Specialist, UNDP
- Dr. Youssef Asfour – Chief Innovation and Transformation Officer, AUB
- Ms. Stephanie Azarian – General Manager Levant, Intalio



**LEBANON IGF 24** FEBRUARY 11, 2025 | 11:15 AT ESIB

“ENHANCING DIGITAL COOPERATION AND GOVERNANCE FOR A RESILIENT DIGITAL FUTURE”

**RUDY SHOUSHANY**  
STRATEGY COORDINATOR - DTGN

**DANY WAZEN**  
REGIONAL DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION SPECIALIST - UNDP

**STEPHANIE AZARIAN**  
GENERAL MANAGER LEVANT - INTALIO

**DR. YOUSIF ASFOUR**  
CHIEF INNOVATION AND TRANSFORMATION OFFICER - AUB

**DR. LINA OUEIDAT**  
NATIONAL ICT & CYBER SECURITY COORDINATOR - PCM

## Discussions:

This session addressed core themes for enhancing digital cooperation and governance in Lebanon. Key discussion points included regional collaboration, education and innovation, digital infrastructure, and the role of the private sector.

- **Mr. Dany Wazen** reviewed Lebanon's progress in administrative reforms and digital policies, underscoring the importance of civil society participation and coordination among ministries. He emphasized learning from successful regional experiences.
- **Dr. Youssef Asfour** called for embedding digital skills in educational curricula and developing a digital culture. He also emphasized the need to protect intellectual property to enable innovations to transition from research to market.
- **Dr. Lina Oueidat** confirmed the readiness of the national cybersecurity strategy and stressed the importance of adapting successful global models to Lebanon. She highlighted the need for clear regulatory frameworks to protect data, improve cybersecurity, and encourage responsible AI use.
- **Ms. Stephanie Azarian** highlighted the private sector's essential role and the importance of ensuring sustainable funding for digital transformation projects. She advocated for greater involvement of local private companies in planning and implementation.

## 3. Main Session Three: Safeguarding Digital Safety and Human Rights in the Lebanese Context

**Organizer:** Maharat

**Moderator:** Journalist Edmond Sassine

### Speakers:

- MP Razi El Hage, Member of Parliament IT Committee
- Dr. Maria Bou Zeid – Dean Faculty of Humanities, Notre Dame University (NDU)
- Lawyer Farouk Moghrabi



**LEBANON IGF 24** FEBRUARY 12, 2025 | 11:00 AT ESIB

**“SAFEGUARDING DIGITAL SAFETY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE LEBANESE CONTEXT”**

MODERATED BY JOURNALIST  
**EDMOND SASSINE**

**DR MARIA BOU ZEID**  
DEAN FACULTY OF HUMANITIES, NDU

**MP RAZI EL HAGE**  
IT COMMITTEE

**FAROUK MOGHRABI**  
LAWYER

مهارات  
Maharat

ogero | RIPE NCC | Internet Society | USJ

## Discussions:

This session emphasized the need for modern legislation that balances digital security, freedom of expression, and human rights. Participants argued against managing the media sector with a traditional mindset and called for media law drafts to address emerging technologies like AI, beyond just freedom of speech concerns.

Key points included:

- **Digital security is essential**, especially to protect users, who are often the most vulnerable, from control by governments and corporations.
- **Universities and experts** should support policymakers with their expertise, applying lessons from other countries to the Lebanese context.
- A call was made for an **independent, specialized digital transformation body** to lead this effort.
- The importance of integrating **digital literacy into education** to enable societal change through an informed citizenry, even in the absence of formal legal reforms.

**MP Razi El Hage** shared his legislative experience since June 2022, noting he proposed 18 laws, but only two reached parliamentary committees. He critiqued the inefficiency of parliament and emphasized the lack of legal expertise, especially regarding digital transformation. He proposed creating a **National Digital Transformation Agency** and stressed that real transformation requires a political decision and long-term commitment.

**Dr. Maria Bou Zeid** stressed the need for collaboration between academia, civil society, and policymakers. She referenced joint studies with Maharat Foundation that should inform policy. She also emphasized the importance of adapting media laws to regulate AI rather than focusing



solely on outdated criminal provisions. **Lawyer Farouk Moghrabi** considered that there is a gap with regard to the work of the parliamentary committees, as its sessions are confidential, even the Access to Information Law did not prevent access to discussions that take place in the committees, but the Council prevented them, as politicians are accustomed to talking in these committees is one thing and in front of the media is another. Presence of civil society and experts is important and motivating for the attendance of deputies and discussion of basic issues. Regarding the sessions of the subcommittee discussing a new media law, Al-Maghrabi explained that the committee includes important competencies and civil society that are seriously engaged in the discussions. This issue should not be approached in the traditional way as the world around us is changing. Al-Maghrabi stressed that the longer the adoption of the draft media law is delayed, the more it requires amendments, and there is a constant debate on the balance between the protection of freedom of expression and the protection of personal dignity, as for the issue of arresting journalists, the problem lies in the public prosecutions, which impose penalties for defamation and slander outside the scope of their powers.

Rola Mikhael, Executive Director of Maharat, emphasized in an intervention that legislation should follow a national strategy led by the Prime Minister's office and supported by ministerial decrees. She concluded that the first step toward reform is fixing Parliament's internal regulations to enable effective lawmaking aligned with strategic national plans.

## Second: Parliamentary Track

### Part 1: Global Internet Governance Tracks

### Part 2: Laws and Regulations Governing the Digital Landscape in Lebanon

**Organizers:** OGERO and RIPE NCC

**Moderators:** Mr. Charbel Chbeir and Dr. Chafic Chaya

**Speakers:**

- Mr. Qusai Al-Shatti
- MP Elias Hankach
- Lawyer Rani Sader



**LEBANON IGF 24**

**FEBRUARY 11, 2025 | 2:30 AT ESIB**

**“PARLIAMENTARY TRACK: GLOBAL PROCESSES ON IG AND LAWS & REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE DIGITAL SCENE IN LEBANON”**



**DR CHAFIC CHAYA**  
REGIONAL MANAGER FOR PUBLIC POLICY AND GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS IN THE MIDDLE EAST FOR RIPE NCC



**ME CHARBEL CHBEIR**  
ATTORNEY  
PRESIDENT OF ISOC LEBANON CHAPTER



**MR QUSAI EL SHATTI**  
INTERNET GOVERNANCE EXPERT  
CHAIRMAN OF AUTOMATED SYSTEMS COMPANY



**MP ELIAS HANKASH**  
MEMBER OF THE LEBANESE PARLIAMENT, RAPPOURTEUR OF ICT COMMITTEE



**ME RANY SADER**  
ATTORNEY AND CHIEF LEGAL INNOVATION OFFICER & SENIOR PARTNER AT SADER & ASSOCIATES



**MP NICOLAS SEHNAOUI**  
FORMER MINISTER OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS  
MP FOR BEIRUT DISTRICT



### Discussions:

This session provided a presentation by Mr. Qusai Al-Shatti on the international tracks related to Internet governance and the importance of engaging in these discussions.

Followed by valuable insights into the legislative efforts related to technology in Lebanon. It highlighted the urgent need to involve **experts** in policy-making to bridge the gap between rapid technological advancements and outdated legal frameworks.

- **Lawyer Rani Sader** discussed the transformative impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on society and governance. He asserted that AI is not just an extension of current



technologies but a **revolutionary force** that will significantly alter business, law, and daily life. He emphasized the need for regulatory frameworks that can **adapt to AI's rapid evolution** while ensuring ethical and responsible use.

- **MP Elias Hankach** spoke about the challenges faced by the Lebanese Parliament in holding sessions due to ongoing national crises. He stressed that, despite these difficulties, digital and technology-related legislation remains a **priority**. However, he admitted that Parliament **lacks technical expertise**, hindering the creation of comprehensive legal frameworks for digital governance.
- MP Hankach called on **private sector experts and civil society organizations** to engage with lawmakers. He emphasized that collaboration between legislators and technical professionals is crucial to ensure that digital laws are practical and forward-looking. He also urged stakeholders to help shape policies aligned with **international best practices** and Lebanon's unique social and economic context.

## Third: Capacity Building

### 1. Fact-Checking

**Organizer:** Maharat News – Fact-o-Meter

**Speakers:**

- Ms. Laura Rahal
- Mr. Hussein Al-Sharif
- Mr. Bilal Yassine



LEBANON  
IGF 24

FEBRUARY 12, 2025 | 9:00  
AT ESIB

“FACTCHECKING WORKSHOP WITH MAHARAT'S  
TEAM OF JOURNALISTS AND FACTCHECKERS”

LAURA RAHAL

HUSSEIN SHERIF

BILAL YASSINE

مهارات  
Maharat



### Topics Covered:

- **AI’s role in misinformation during conflict** – AI was used to fabricate facts and spread propaganda during wartime, complicating the verification process due to restricted access and psychological stress on citizens.
- **Types of false information:**
  - **Misinformation:** Shared unintentionally.
  - **Disinformation:** Intentionally false to cause harm.
  - **Malinformation:** True information used to cause harm.
  - Formats included photos, videos, audio clips, and written reports.
- **Fact-o-Meter methodology:**  
Focused on energy, governance, and public health. The fact-checking process is rooted in

journalistic principles: independence, transparency, and accuracy, using verified sources and data.

- **Tools introduced:**

TinEye, Google Images, Yandex, FotoForensics, InVid, Frame By Frame — all used for verifying media content.

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## 2. Navigating the world of Cybercrime and Cybersecurity: A Digital Eye-Opener

**Organizers:** Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA), Lebanese General Security, American University of Beirut, Digital Transformation Network

**Speakers:**

- Captain Eng. Malak Charaf
- Captain Eng. Ali Azwar



LEBANON  
IGF 24

FEBRUARY 12, 2025 | 10:00  
AT ESIB

“NAVIGATING THE WORLD OF CYBERCRIME AND  
CYBERSECURITY: A DIGITAL EYE-OPENER”

  
CAPTAIN ENGINEER MALAK CHARAF  
GENERAL SECURITY – TELECOM DEPARTMENT

  
CAPTAIN ENGINEER ALI AZWAR  
GENERAL SECURITY – TELECOM DEPARTMENT



**Session Structure:**

- **Awareness Segment:**

Covered the main types of cyber threats facing Lebanese citizens:

- Identity theft
- Sextortion
- Digital drug addiction
- Scams via fake job ads and crypto platforms
- Online recruitment by terrorist groups and foreign intelligence



Introduced the **#Don'tBeAVictim** campaign launched in 2018, including booklets and video content shared with students and municipalities. Guidelines covered:

- Password protection
  - Safe browsing
  - Parental controls
  - Installing verified apps
  - Two-factor authentication
  - Regular backups
  - Antivirus tools
- **Technical Segment:**
    - Outlined the evolution of **General Security's cybersecurity strategy** since 2019, aligned with ISO/IEC 27001.
    - Explained the internal **incident response mechanisms**, creation of a **Security Operations Center (SOC)**, and national coordination protocols.
    - Emphasized **AI-supported cyberattacks** like voice/image spoofing, and also AI's role in defense through threat detection and faster response.

## Fourth: Workshop – The Impact of Digital Transformation on Governance and Economy

**Organizer:** OGERO

**Moderator:** Eng. Rola El Hafi

**Speakers:**

- Ms. Jessica Zakhour, Attorney at law
- Mr. Albert Kostanian, Journalist and Economist
- Dr. RabiHassan, Engineer- Board Member and Head of AI committee at OEA
- Mr. Charles Chedraoui, Fintech Expert



LEBANON  
IGF 24

FEBRUARY 11, 2025 | 12:45  
AT ESIB

“THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION  
ON GOVERNANCE AND ECONOMICS”

ENG. ROLA EL HAFI  
REGIONAL PROJECTS MANAGER  
OGERO TELECOM

JESSICA ZAKHOUR  
ATTORNEY AT LAW

ALBERT KOSTANIAN  
JOURNALIST AND ECONOMIST

DR. ENG. RABIH HASSAN  
BOARD MEMBER AND HEAD OF AI  
COMMITTEE AT OEA

CHARLES CHEDRAOUI  
FINTECH EXPERT AND FOUNDER OF  
INTERNATIONAL FINTECH  
COMPANIES



### Highlights:

- **Albert Kostanian:**  
Stressed that **governance is key** to economic benefit and fighting corruption. Recommended privatizing telecom under Law 431, introducing 3+ operators to boost competition, and emphasized the need for **digital payments and forensic audits**.
- **Dr. Rabi' Hassan:**  
Advocated for transitioning to **digital finance** using mobile payments, e-wallets, blockchain. Called for **strict public-private integration regulations** and for Banque du Liban to open up to private sector innovation.



- **Charles Chahdaoui:**  
Highlighted AI's potential to reorganize regulatory structures and decision-making.
- **Jessica Zakhour:**  
Stressed that **digital governance** improves public service delivery but must be backed by **updated laws**. Improper use of technology should be legally recognized as a **crime**.

## **C - Outcomes and Recommendations**

### **On Sustainability and Digital Inclusion:**

- Promote internet and technology as tools for inclusive sustainability.
- Support tech applications in sectors like agriculture.
- Encourage NGO-municipality partnerships to improve digital literacy.
- Empower women in decision-making and leadership in digital sectors.
- Offer affordable internet packages for all.
- Use modern tech to build brand loyalty and innovate in all sectors.

### **On Digital Governance and Cooperation:**

- Improve governmental coordination for digital transformation.
- Apply best regional practices, adapted to Lebanon's context.
- Integrate digital skills and emerging tech in education.
- Protect intellectual property to foster innovation.
- Develop a secure and sustainable digital infrastructure.
- Enhance collaboration among the tech community, MoT, OGERO, and ISPs.
- Activate national cybersecurity strategies and responsible AI use.
- Ensure funding continuity for digital projects.
- Build effective public-private-international partnerships.
- Leverage local talent in all phases of transformation.

### **On Digital Safety and Human Rights:**

- Seize the political moment to pass a modern media law that ensures digital freedom.
- Ground policy in academic research and civil society input.
- Decriminalize journalism and online expression.
- Replace outdated courts with civil chambers for media cases.
- Reform Parliament's internal structure to improve legislative efficiency.
- Co-draft media laws with politicians, experts, academia, and civil society.
- Establish a competent independent digital authority.
- Draft AI legislation aligned with international norms.
- Form a High Council for Digital Transformation including all stakeholders.
- Center digital protection laws on user safety—often the weakest link.
- Anchor digital reform in national strategies—not political cycles.

List of LMAG 2024 members

Name	Organization	Stakeholder Group
Mr Fawzi Baroud	NDU	AC
Ms Suzanne El Horr	AUB	AC
Mr Marc Ibrahim	USJ	AC
Ms Roula Mkhael	Maharat	CS
Mr Abed Kataya	SMEEX	CS
Mr Charbel Chbeir	Beirut Bar	CS
Ms Jessie Tannous	Digital World Program	CS
Ms Jessica Zakhour	Tripoli Bar	CS
Mr Amin Hacha	LCA	CS
Ms Manal Shihab	TRA	Gov
Ms Zeina Bou Harb	OGERO	Gov
Capt Malak Charaf	Gen Sec.	Gov
Col. Nader Abdallah Col Marc Sawan	Internal Security	Gov
Mr Georges Awad	UNESCO	IGO
Ms Mirna Barbar	ESCWA	IGO
Mr Hassan Dhaini	Touch	TC & PS
Mr Rudy Shoushany	DT Network	TC & PS
Ms Tanya Zaroubi	ISACA Leb.	TC & PS
Mr Jack Bakaev	ISOC	TC & PS
Mr Chafic Chaya	Ripe NCC	TC & PS
Mr Talal Assaf	Alfa	TC & PS