

Arab Free Press Forum opens with call for more gains

TUNIS, TUNISIA: The Arab Free Press Forum opened today, 23 January, in Tunisia with a celebration of the gains that have been made in Middle East press freedom, but with a reminder that much more needs to be done.



"If Tunisia is the country in the region that has most advanced in the construction of democracy, other countries in the region are still suffering under the yoke of authoritarianism," said Moroccan journalist Aboubakr Jamaï, opening the conference on behalf of the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA). "Reporters thus face different situations.

"Some have won - like their fellow citizens - their freedom of speech, while others continue to risk their freedom and even their lives. Some are more advanced than others in constructing democratic society, but if the levels of democratisation differ, there is little doubt about the dynamics that have begun in our societies," said Jamaï, laureate of WAN-IFRA's Gebran Tueni Award. "There is a sense of history, one that leads to respect for liberty and dignity."

Encouraging turnout

More than 200 journalists, editors, publishers and others from the region and beyond gathered in Tunis for the [two-day annual conference](#), organised by WAN-IFRA.

The event, supported by a partnership between WAN-IFRA and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), is unique among conferences in the region in that it brings together discussions about press freedom with practical strategic advice for building viable media businesses.

More on WAN-IFRA's media development work and the projects conducted under the partnership with Sida can be found at <http://www.wan-ifra.org/microsites/media-development>.

Other partners in the Arab Free Press Forum include UNESCO, the World Editors Forum, Google, Agence France-Presse, International Media Support, World Press Photo and the Dutch Ambassador to Tunisia.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>