The use of Artificial Intelligence in electoral processes in Lebanon GB (English)

[00:00:18] Hello, I am Ghassen Selmi, a digital transformation and media specialist. I work at the United Nations Development Programme. In this video, I am going to introduce you to the e-Monitor+ platform. This platform uses new technologies and artificial intelligence to monitor and analyze media landscapes during elections. In recent years, election campaigns have increasingly taken place in digital space. The classic image of a political leader giving a speech in a public space has disappeared and has given way to tweets, Facebook posts, small images, videos, etc., on YouTube. Starting in 2016, there has been more and more talk about the manipulation of public opinion during elections. Moreover, 2016 was marked by the Cambridge Analytica scandal and the use of the private data of millions of citizens for political purposes. Since and during each election, there has been widespread disagreement about the role of social networks in the conduct of elections and the results of the elections. Credible elections require voters to make informed choices based on verified information. This is particularly important in the digital age, where misinformation, hate speech, targeting, and automated and adapted messages have become increasingly common and have posed an increasing threat to credible, peaceful, and transparent elections. So, from this observation, the idea of e-Monitor + emerged, which is a platform composed mainly of two modules. The first module is a fact-checking module that provides a collaborative space for journalists to report false information where they can use digital tools to verify images, videos, etc., and to publish their work on verifying this false information in a public web window. The second module consists of monitoring and analyzing social networks through the collection of information during election periods to analyze political polarity and pluralism, hate speech, violence against women, election offenses, abuse, etc. Also, this module can be used outside the election period to analyze thematic topics or to conduct studies on thematic topics such as violence against women in the digital space, the presence of young people on social networks, and several other specific topics on the web.

[00:03:48] The UNDP electoral project first developed e-Monitor+ in Tunisia in collaboration with the High Authority for Audiovisual Communication on the occasion of the 2019 Tunisian legislative and presidential elections. Afterward, the UNDP electoral project adopted the experience, developed it, and made it available to the entire Arab region. In this context, and as part of UNDP support to the Lebanese election supervision commission, the e-Monitoring+ platform was used to support the implementation of its media monitoring mandate during the election period. This was the result of a collaboration between three UNDP projects, namely the regional electoral project Arab based in Amman, the Lebanese electoral project, and the Tunisian electoral project. Initially, the platform was adapted to the Lebanese context and laws. Then about 30 instructors attended an intensive training session on the methodology for monitoring social networks and the detection of fake news and especially on the use of the e-Monitor+ platform. During this experience, e-Monitoring+ made it possible to identify electoral violations, disinformation content, hate speech, violence against women, political pluralism, and political polarization. The platform has also been able to follow a significant amount of content on traditional and digital media, i.e., audiovisual media and the digital space, especially on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, also via electronic media, television, print media, and radio, in three languages, Arabic, French, and even English. Indeed, the platform collects online content through the web "scrapping" and "crawling" this content comes mainly from Facebook and Twitter pages, candidates and influencer pages, web pages, as well as Facebook and Twitter pages of traditional media. Content is also added to the platform through instructors already trained in the subject. Then, all this content and

all this data are automatically analyzed by various algorithms, developed internally by UNDP, but also by other "open source" algorithms that use artificial intelligence to detect hate speech and to detect violence against women and violence in general on the web. It also includes various machine learning algorithms to detect hate speech and perform sentiment analysis, classification of topics, themes, posts, etc.

[00:07:17] The results of the analysis of machine and monitor data were visualized on the platform and published in periodic reports. This first use of artificial intelligence in the institutional work of the Lebanese election commission allowed it to improve the work, monitoring, and analysis of data. This is strictly in line with its mandate. For example, during the 2022 legislative elections, more than 1,300 electronic press articles were analyzed, and approximately 1,500 hours of audiovisual content were monitored. The platform automatically analyzed more than 250,000 Facebook and Twitter posts, of which 15,000 posts were analyzed directly by the monitors. All of this was done over a period of two months. In addition, e-Monitor + helped to analyze financial expenses during the election campaign, not only on TV and radio, i.e., related to the passage of candidates on the audiovisual space, but also financial expenses on the web space and especially on Facebook. Finally, artificial intelligence makes it possible to analyze a large quantity of data but does not always give accurate and precise results. There is always room for error, as these are non-specific models that try to analyze big data according to a pre-determined learning model. Thus, building a very high-level artificial intelligence model requires an enormous amount of data processed according to assumptions that may be partly biased. A combination with human verification - in our case, the work of these 30 monitors -allows the results to be compared with greater precision. Such a surveillance mandate requires a minimum of autonomy in terms of human and material resources and, therefore, a clear mandate at the legal level for the State institution conducting it. Finally, initial experiences with this technology have shown that it is also very important to monitor and analyze social networks over the long term on a permanent basis, outside the election period, to monitor thematic issues, regardless of elections and electoral constraints. Thanks