



“Confronting Silence: Digital Mapping to Fight Impunity”

A Sites of Conscience Global Webinar

March 31, 2022

9:00 am - 11:00 am EST

14:00 pm - 16:00 pm CET

15:00 pm - 17:00 om (Beirut time)

Please check your local time [here](#)

Overview

Impunity is built on silence. All over the world, Sites of Conscience confront the consequences of silence on a day to day basis.

Ongoing conflict and repressive regimes have made it extremely difficult for communities around the globe to account for - and even acknowledge – injustices and human rights violations committed by state and non-state actors in recent years. Documenting human right violations is essential for correcting the record, fighting impunity, and countering efforts on the part of authoritarian regimes to deny or rewrite history.

With this objective, in 2016, 14 members of the [MENA Sites of Conscience Network](#) partnered to create the Mena Mapping Project ([Damirouna](#)), and document sites of human rights violations in the region to ensure that the experiences of those who suffered such violations are not lost. The interactive digital map documents 152 sites in 8 countries, including detention centers and prisons where people were arbitrarily detained and tortured; checkpoints where people were kidnapped; sites of massacre and extra-judicial killings; sites of protest where political repression happened (i.e. clashes, arrests, killings, etc.), and cultural heritage sites that were intentionally destroyed constituting a violation of International Humanitarian Law (IHL).

Using the Mena Mapping Project as a springboard for a global conversation, the “Confronting Silence: Digital Mapping to Fight Impunity” webinar will shed light on the use of digital mapping to confront historical revisionism and denialism, and foster a culture of accountability in different contexts around the world.

The International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (ICSC) is the only worldwide network dedicated to transforming places that preserve the past into spaces that promote civic action. ICSC recognizes that the power of sites of memory is not inherent; it must be harnessed as a deliberate tactic in the service of human rights and citizen engagement. This conscious effort to connect past to present and memory to action is the hallmark of the Sites of Conscience movement. As a network of more than 300 Sites of Conscience in 65 countries, ICSC engages tens of millions of people every year in using the lessons of history to take action on challenges to democracy and human rights today. Through powerful participatory programs that bring people together across difference, ICSC advocates for every community's right to preserve places where struggles for human rights and democracy occurred, to talk openly about what happened there, and to harness the strengths of memory, heritage, arts and culture to build ethical societies that envision and shape a more just and humane future.

Agenda

March 31

9:00 – 9:05 am

Welcome and Introduction

Justine Di Mayo, Program Manager for Europe and MENA, International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (ICSC) (5')

9:05 – 9:25 am

KEYNOTE CONVERSATION: Resisting Distorted Histories, Enforced Amnesia, and Impunity: The Role of Digital Mapping as Collective Memorialization

Keynote Speaker:

Noha Aboueldahab teaches public international law and the law and politics of transitional justice at Georgetown University in Qatar. She is also a non-resident fellow at the Brookings Institution. An award-winning specialist in transitional justice, Aboueldahab co-chairs the American Society of International Law's Transitional Justice and Rule of Law interest group. Her forthcoming book examines how Arab diasporas have expanded the political, intellectual, and socio-legal spaces of transitional justice. This keynote will address the importance of memorialization initiatives in shining a light on forgotten pasts in order to strengthen solidarity, and foster inter-generational conversations about how examinations of the past can help recovering societies heal and prosper. (15')

9:25 – 9:35 am

Presentation of the MENA Mapping Project (“[Damirouna](#)”)

Justine Di Mayo, Program Manager for Europe and MENA, International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (ICSC)

This session will present Damirouna, a project led by 14 MENA Sites of Conscience aimed to document political repression across the MENA region to fight denialism and pursue accountability. The interactive map documents 152 detention centers, prisons, places of kidnappings, massacres and extra-judicial killings and cultural heritage sites destroyed. The session will explore how the MENA digital map can serve as a key instrument to engage communities across the region in promoting a rights-based society. (10’)

9:35 – 10:20 am
Accountability

Global Panel: Case Studies - Digital Mapping Tools to Foster

Through the presentation of three Sites of Conscience case studies, this panel will explore how digital mapping capabilities can be used to confront historical revisionism and denialism, and foster a culture of accountability. It will showcase examples of strategies used in different contexts to investigate human rights violations, give visibility to victims and survivors’ stories, raise public awareness, and generate engagement among the youth.

- **Veronica Torras, [Memoria Abierta](#) - Argentina** (15’)
Memoria Abierta will present their [mapping and 3D reconstruction](#) of clandestine detention centers used during the dictatorship in Argentina and how their work is being used in trials against perpetrators.
- **Naji Sayah, [Act for the Disappeared](#) – Lebanon** (15’)
Act for the Disappeared will present their [interactive mapping](#) of sites where people disappeared during the Lebanese civil war and how it’s being used to fight collective amnesia and engage citizens in truth-seeking efforts.
- **Stepan Cernousek, [Gulag.cz](#) – Czech Republic** (15’)
Gulag.cz will present their [mapping](#) showing the phenomenon of the Gulag prison system in all countries of the Soviet Union aimed at preserving and protecting these places of memory and sparking dialogue about past human rights violations.

10:20 – 11:00 am

Open Discussion