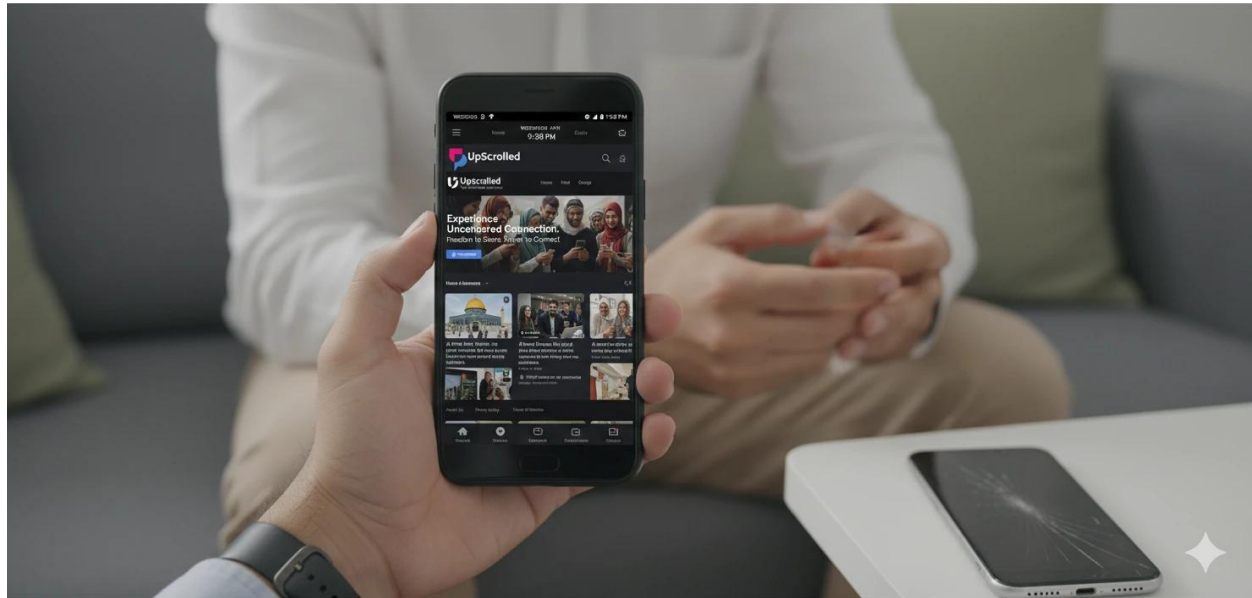


The Arab Alternative: Is Freedom Just a Slogan or a Possible Reality?

Hamza Hassan | January 28, 2026



In recent days, the application Upscrolled has emerged as a promising alternative to platforms that systematically suppress the Arabic and Islamic narrative, especially regarding issues related to occupation and sacred sites. However, enthusiasm quickly turned to suspicion as soon as indicators linking the app's management to certain political geographies appeared. Beyond the debate about the identities of individuals or those regions, a deeper question arises: Can any Arab application, technically and legally, provide Arabs or those seeking freedom of expression in the electronic space with the freedom they aspire to?

The answer I provide to you, dear reader, in brief, is: no, and here you can stop reading. But if you wish to know the reasons, continue.

The "Sovereignty" Dilemma over Servers

Many believe that owning an application means owning the decision-making power, but the truth is that applications exist on the territory of others, and

merely having the application online does not mean it is beyond control. This means that these applications are subject to many factors that control them, such as:

- The mercy of major companies: Even if the programmer is Arab, the application requires cloud services (like Amazon AWS, Google Cloud, or Microsoft Azure) or other cloud and hosting services. These companies' owners of those services are bound by international laws and security agreements; if these companies decide that the published content violates their standards, the simplest thing they can do is shut down the servers entirely, causing the application to disappear in an instant.
- The geopolitical landscape of servers: Suppose major companies decide to overlook the published content; the geography and location of the server impose new, and more dangerous, restrictions on them. If the application is hosted on servers in the West, it is subject to their laws. If the application is hosted in the Arab region, it becomes directly under the control of regimes that do not recognize data privacy or freedom of opinion, making users' data an "open book" for security agencies without any international legal barriers.

The Trap of Online Stores (Apple & Google)

Freedom in the electronic space does not stop at writing a post but at the ability to deliver it to people. Any application that wants to spread must be available on platforms like App Store and Google Play. These stores impose strict conditions regarding "hate speech" (which is often interpreted according to the Western agenda). Any application that refuses to delete content deemed "violating" by these stores will be removed from the store, meaning the application will clinically die and cease to reach a large number of users worldwide.

The Lesson of "Telegram" and Security Control

To avoid going too far, the story of Telegram's founder, Pavel Durov, and what happened to him in France is the greatest evidence that "people" are the weakest link, and here, in my opinion, the discussion about the individual and their nationality will end before it even begins.

No matter how strong the encryption is, the application owner remains human

and can be pursued, pressured, or even arrested. When the application owner is faced with the choice of imprisonment or handing over the encryption keys, the advantage always lies with those who hold the power of the land. This means that any application with a known "head" is one that can easily have its will broken.

Is the "Regular Internet" the Right Place?

We must realize that the internet we use daily (Surface Web) is inherently a centralized system. Absolute freedom that is not subject to oversight cannot be achieved in an environment controlled by wires, satellites, and stores affiliated with major powers. Therefore, alternatives are difficult and unfeasible in the long and medium term.

The Difficult Alternative:

The only technical solution to escape imposed agendas is to move towards decentralized systems, where end-to-end encryption (P2P) is used, employing "dark web" or "crypto" technologies for communication and decentralizing servers. However, even this alternative faces numerous and difficult challenges, including that these solutions are technically complex for the elite; what about the general populace? Additionally, they always place the user in a circle of security targeting under the pretext of using "suspicious" programs.

Conclusion

Escaping from "Twitter - X" or "Facebook" to another application simply because its owner is Arab is a more emotional than strategic solution. Unless Arabs possess a digital infrastructure (servers, operating systems, and application stores) completely independent of the global system and with the will of Arab governments, every new application will remain just a "rented room" in a building owned by their adversaries, who can evict them whenever they wish or eavesdrop on them whenever they desire.

This is an AI-generated English translation. The original text is in Arabic.

