



## **Roula Mikhael**

Roula Mikhael is the founder and Executive Director of the Beirut based [Maharat Foundation](#) which operates [Maharat-News](#). Mikhael has an MA in journalism from the Lebanese University and Paris II University. She has more than 20 years of national, regional, and international experience ranging from senior reporting, editorial positions, to media development, activism and civil society engagement in a challenging and hostile environment and conflict zone. With her commitment to defend human rights focusing on freedom of expression, women's rights, and peace building initiatives in the MENA region, she led Maharat and voiced freedom of expression challenges at both local and international levels, laying concrete solutions to advance the situation. She was the convenor of the board of the International Freedom of Expression Exchange, IFEX for the 2017-2019 mandates. Mikhael is the founder of [Digital Media Viability Lab](#), an initiative to support independent media platforms in the MENA. She has contributed in many research and policy papers including the [indicators of media viability](#) published by Deutsche Welle Akademie. Under her leadership, Maharat joined GFMD (Global Forum for Media Development) and is currently taking part in the Dynamic Online Coalition on Media Viability. She was nominated by OHCHR as one of the Arab defenders rights. At the national level, Mrs Mikhael contributed in the launching of the national Lebanon IGF and is currently the chair of the Lebanese Multistakeholder Advisory Group.