

Saudi Media Forum 2026: 300 Leaders Map the Global Media Future

Saudi Media Forum 2026: An Exceptional Presence of 300 Global Leaders Across More Than 100 Dialogue Sessions Mapping the Media Landscape

RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA, January 10, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Saudi Media Forum, in its fifth edition, taking place from 2 to 4 February 2026 under the patronage of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, will witness an exceptional presence of more than 300 prominent global media leaders. This major media gathering, comprising more than 100 dialogue sessions, represents a pivotal platform for exploring the future of media in a rapidly transforming world, reflecting the dynamic cultural and developmental landscape of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its openness to global voices.



The Forum attracts an elite group of decision-makers and media professionals who lead the global media scene. From the United States, participants include Karen Elliott House, former Executive Editor of The Wall Street Journal; Julie Pace, Executive Editor and Senior Vice President of the Associated Press; Ben Smith, Co-Founder and Editor-in-Chief of the global news platform Semafor; and Earl Wilkinson, Executive Director and CEO of the International News Media Association (INMA). From the United Kingdom, attendees include Tony Gallagher, Editor of The Times of London; Rohit Kachroo, Global Security Editor at ITV News; and Con Coughlin, Executive Foreign and Defence Editor at The Daily Telegraph. France is represented by prominent figures such as Vincent Peyrène, former CEO of the World Association of News Publishers; Sam Barnett, CEO of Central European Media Enterprises; Éric Létolu, Director of Content and Partnerships at the World AI Film Festival; and Lucy Smith, Head of Entertainment at RX France.

The geographical diversity of participants extends to Spain, with figures such as Emili Planas Quintana, Chief Technology Officer and Chief Operating Officer at GRUP MEDIAPRO; André Rodríguez, President and Founder of SPAINMEDIA; Claudia Savont, Head of Asia and the Middle East at Tinkle Public Relations and Media; and Mariana Fernández, Founder of Pick One, a company specializing in high-quality content development. From Germany, participants include Peter Kropsch, CEO of the German Press Agency (dpa) Group, and Thomas Gunkel, Global Director of Broadcasting at Skyline Communications. Italy is represented by Monica Maggioni, former President of Italian Radio and Television (RAI) and Vice President of the European Broadcasting Union; Isabella Brancolini, Co-Founder and Director at Showcase Culture; and Agnese Pini, Editor-in-Chief of the Italian National Newspaper Group. From Canada, participants include Pierre Fitzgibbon, former Minister of Economy, Innovation, and Energy; David Ross, CEO and Chairman of Ross Video, a global industry leader; and François Legrand, Senior Project Manager at the national broadcaster CBC/Radio-Canada. From South Korea, attendees include Park Jang-beom, President and CEO of the Korean Broadcasting Organization, and Oh Young-jin, Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of The Korea Times.

The dialogue sessions address pivotal issues shaping the future of the media industry. The session "How Do Alliances Shape Global Public Opinion?" offers an in-depth analysis of the power of alliances and partnerships between media institutions in engineering convictions and directing public opinion toward specific issues. The session "Between Political Analysis and Public Diplomacy: The Future of Discourse on the Region" discusses the intertwined relationship between media and diplomacy in shaping narratives about the Middle East. The session "When Media Leads Major Transformations" analyzes the role of media in explaining and conveying messages accompanying major social and economic reforms.

The session "How Does Media Survive the Trap of Misinformation?" holds particular importance amid the accelerating flow of information, presenting strategies that enable media institutions to avoid the spread of rumors during crises, as well as digital verification tools to ensure credibility and enhance public trust. The session "Growth Strategies: How to Build Your Presence in a Crowded Media Market" discusses competitive challenges in the content market and how to formulate strategies for growth and distinction. Meanwhile, the session "Television and Streaming Platforms: Battle or Opportunity?" analyzes the strengths of both sectors and explores ideas for integration or alignment that ensure television's continuity and digital platforms' stability and growth.

The session "Are We Media Professionals of the 21st Century?" raises an existential question about the readiness of media professionals for the future, delving into the communication and professional skills required in a rapidly changing digital media environment. The session "Leveraging Digitalization to Enhance Productive Competitiveness" addresses strategies for transforming technology into a driver of innovation and increased competitiveness, emphasizing the importance of developing media production skills to keep pace with contemporary changes. The session "Modern Technologies and Media Messages: The Beginning of the Harmony Challenge" explores strategies for integrating traditional media with digital media to achieve the

highest levels of immediate responsiveness in crisis management and to unify media messages across platforms.

The session “Empowering Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises: Partnership Between Guarantee Programs and the Banking Sector” examines the role of collaboration between credit guarantee programs and the banking sector in empowering and financing SMEs, highlighting future opportunities and challenges to enhance access to finance and support national economic growth. The session “The Media Industry as Soft Power: Where Do the Opportunities Lie?” explores opportunities for building competitive platforms, developing modern skills, and marketing cultural identity to achieve sustainable economic returns. The session “How Media Partnerships Succeed in Creating a Sustainable Economy” examines opportunities arising from the convergence of the media sector with sustainable companies to create long-term successes. The session “Media Investment: From Initiatives to Returns” analyzes the feasibility of investing in media within the programs of Saudi Vision 2030.

The Saudi Media Forum represents a leading Saudi platform for media exchange and cooperation, fostering capacity building, stimulating innovation, and building bridges of communication locally and globally. It aims to explore challenges and opportunities that contribute to the development of the media industry at the local and regional levels, reflecting the Kingdom’s dynamic cultural and developmental landscape characterized by a flourishing ecosystem of specialized events and an open spirit welcoming global voices.

This fifth edition of the Forum reaffirms its status as a pivotal event in the year of media transformation, bringing together the most prominent media minds to discuss the issues and challenges facing the sector and ways to keep pace with a rapidly changing world. The Forum offers an exceptional opportunity for interaction and deeper engagement with Saudi Arabia’s rich and deeply rooted culture, reinforcing the Kingdom’s role as a regional and global hub for media dialogue, innovation, and content creation. For the first time, the fifth edition will also witness the launch of “Boulevard 2030,” a space adjacent to the Future of Media Exhibition (FOMEX), where achievements of Saudi Vision 2030 programs and major megaprojects – such as Diriyah Gate, AlUla, the Red Sea Project, and Qiddiya – will be showcased.

The Forum’s fifth edition also features the expansion of the Saudi Media Award, one of its key events, across four main tracks forming a comprehensive framework covering fourteen categories of media practice. Within the visual and audio media content track, the award introduces the category of AI-generated content as an unprecedented qualitative addition in the history of media awards. This category represents a fundamental shift redefining the concept of the creative industry, as it is the first global award dedicated to this field within a professional awards ecosystem. Intelligent content thus emerges as a standalone creative stream, reflecting Saudi Arabia’s ambitious direction toward leadership in employing artificial intelligence to build advanced content that merges human imagination with advanced technological capabilities, offering content creators new space to explore the boundaries of innovation and transcend traditional production frameworks. Through this track, a new concept of digital content quality is

formed – based on intelligence, innovation, and cross-border impact.

The Saudi Media Forum has launched a package of specialized initiatives, including the Saudi Media Innovation Bootcamp (Saudi MIB), which focuses on the future technological dimension of the media industry through training camps and intensive programs in artificial intelligence, data analysis, and digital media product development. The “SMF GROW UP” initiative targets emerging media companies and entrepreneurs in production, digital platforms, and supporting media services.

The “Brainstorm Room” initiative stands out as a space designed for ideation and brainstorming, bringing together talented youth with experts and specialists in structured sessions to explore current media issues and generate programmatic and digital ideas and awareness campaigns. The “SMF Connect” initiative serves as the Forum’s international arm, connecting Saudi media professionals with their counterparts worldwide and facilitating cooperation between local and global institutions in training and co-content development. The “Forum Spotlight” initiative aims to transform the Forum from an annual event into an ongoing media movement through meetings and dialogues held across different regions of the Kingdom, enabling exploration of each region’s unique media characteristics. The initiatives package also includes the “Media Ambassadors” initiative, which selects male and female media students from Saudi universities and prepares them to serve as a link between the Forum and the academic community by involving them in coverage, events, and workshops – providing early field experience, building professional networks with media institutions and experts, and contributing to the preparation of a new generation of Saudi professionals capable of representing Saudi media on regional and international platforms.

The Saudi Media Forum also includes the Future of Media Exhibition (FOMEX), a leading platform that brings together government entities and private companies – local and international – under one roof. Exhibitor pavilions showcase the latest products and contributions in media, radio, and television. These pavilions, alongside the dedicated presentation platform, provide an exceptional opportunity for participants to share their innovations and specialized services with visitors. The “Launch Zone” stands out as a vibrant space enabling companies to unveil the latest media technologies and forge strategic partnerships that shape the future of the media ecosystem.

The FOMEX Theatre, the exhibition’s main stage, offers comprehensive insights into the media sector through panel discussions, dialogues, and workshops featuring prominent local and international speakers, while also providing opportunities for signing cooperation agreements and partnerships.

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