Iran launches cyber crime unit: police

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An Iranian youth browses at an internet cafe in the city of Hamadan in 2009. Iran on Sunday officially launched its cyber police unit to confront Internet crimes and counter social networks that spread "espionage and riots," police chief Esmaeil Ahmadi Moghaddam said.

Iran on Sunday officially launched its cyber police unit to confront Internet crimes and counter social networks that spread "espionage and riots," police chief Esmaeil Ahmadi Moghaddam said.

The country's first web watchdog team was now operational in the capital, Tehran, while police stations throughout the country would have their cyber units by the end of the Iranian year, March 21, he was quoted as saying by state news agency IRNA.

Ahmadi Moghaddam said the cyber police would take on anti-revolutionary and dissident groups who used Internet-based social networks in 2009 to trigger protests against the re-election of President

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

"Through these very social networks in our country, anti-revolutionary groups and dissidents found each other and contacted foreign countries and triggered riots," he said, referring to anti-Ahmadinejad protests that led to widespread unrest in Tehran in which dozens were killed.

Supporters of rival candidates used the Internet and social networks such as [Facebook](link) and [Twitter](link) to swap information and coordinate protests against Ahmadinejad after his re-election.

The government, however, rapidly clamped down heavily on the Internet making access difficult at times.

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