# Yemenis use Facebook in anti-regime revolt

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Yemeni anti-government protesters attend a demonstration demanding the resignation of Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh, in Sanaa. Many in the Arab world have grown to trust material diffused through social media networks on the Internet, to fill a gap in information caused by state censorship.

Young and educated, like most protesters in Sanaa, the Shamakh brothers shoot videos of demonstrations and post them on the Internet as part of an uprising against President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

Protesters upload videos and pictures of their revolt on Facebook from Internet cafes around a square outside Sanaa University, which has become the epicentre of demonstrations demanding Saleh's departure.

"We use Facebook to share some of our videos and pictures from the protests. It is like an operation room that we distribute the truth and reality of Yemeni revolution through," said Ibrahim Shamakh, 24.

"Facebook proved to be a success in Egypt and Tunisia, and now it works in Yemen," he added, referring to the uprisings in two Arab countries that succeeded in ousting their long-time presidents and inspired people in a number of other Arab states to revolt against their own long-serving autocrats.

Facebook and other networking websites like micro-blogging site Twitter played a significant role in mobilising demonstrators and distributing footage of the uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia.

They also continue to contribute strongly to the coverage of unrest in Bahrain, Libya and Syria.

"Facebook was the main reason behind this revolution and it played a golden role in creating this revolution," said Ismael Shamakh.

"We use Facebook to show facts, and we believe that Facebook will lead our revolution to victory soon," he said.

Many in the Arab world have grown to trust material diffused through social media networks on the Internet, to fill a gap in information caused by state censorship.

"What we believe is that the truth is found on Facebook and social networks instead of the news channels that use a specific policy far from neutrality," said Hamoud Hazaa, a journalist and activist at the protest sit-in camp at the University Square, which has been dubbed "Taghyir (Change) Square."

The square has seen deadly confrontations between partisans of Saleh and protesters.

On March 18, regime loyalists gunned down 52 people near the square,

prompting the president, who has been in office since 1978, to declare a state of emergency.

But protesters have not left the square, just as fellow comrades in other cities dug in their heels deep and held ground at main squares that have been turned into protest stages.

"We are able to be the news broadcasters and the viewers by Facebook," said Hazaa, who quit his job at the state news agency and joined the protest at University Square.

"We have created groups and movements on Facebook which we coordinate with everything related to our revolution. It's a way of communicating between groups and movements," he said.

Hazaa has set up a Facebook page that breaks news to some 15,000 followers.

"We started to form the revolution principles and targets and put them on Facebook. We can discuss our aims, plans and everything related to our revolution through Facebook," he said.

The groups calling themselves the Youth Revolution in Sanaa have said they would not end their sit-in near Sanaa University until Saleh and his allies are removed from power.

Around 130 people have been killed since protests broke out late January.

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