

## Facebook Twitter used for Arab Revolt

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Websites involved in the Arab Revolts - Facebook, Twitter

The April 6 youth .. APRIL 6 YOUTH MOVEMENT

- for Egypt

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=9973986703&v=wall>

We Khalid Saeed

<http://www.facebook.com/EIShaheeed>

The Syrian Revolution 2011 Syrian revolt against Bashar al-Assad

<http://www.facebook.com/Syrian.Revolution?v=wall>

Reform Party of Syria <http://reformsyria.org/> ----- Revolution by Internet Egyptians began their protests online and then added hard tactics on the ground in an effort to bring down a crushingly effective police state. Basem Fathi, an organizer of Monday's protests in Cairo, was scrambling around the capital, trying to buy towels and tents. On a day in which tens of thousands of people thronged the streets in the type of large-scale protests that authoritarian Egypt hasn't seen in decades, demonstrators had occupied the central Tahrir Square, where they had the Parliament building surrounded. Now they looked ready to stay the night. Fathi seemed taken aback by the success. "We didn't have a boss for this, but the heads of the protest are trying to supply some logistics," he said. He added that he had no idea what came next. "Nobody knows. But at least people are starting to believe that they can do something—and not just today." Inspired by the revolution in Tunisia, the Monday protests began a little more than a week ago with a campaign on a popular Facebook page. Even as online pledges to participate approached 90,000, however, a large-scale demonstration in the Tunisia mold seemed unlikely. The so-called Jasmine Revolution was spontaneous, sparked by a college-educated fruit vendor's self-immolation, not an organized activist push. And Egypt is a crushingly effective police state, with a long history of imprisoning dissidents and no-holds-barred crowd control. Attempts to organize large-scale protests in Egypt tend to fall flat. Mohammed ElBaradei and the Muslim Brotherhood, the two opposition players most likely to draw people to the street, had offered only moral support. The Brotherhood in particular had been viewed as the only group in Egypt capable of bringing big numbers to the streets. "The pattern in the past is that there's a lot of Internet activism, but there's not always a big turnout on the streets," says Jason Brownlee, a visiting fellow at the Woodrow Wilson Center who specializes in U.S.-Egypt relations. Yet protest organizers combined an Internet savvy with hard tactics on the ground. They got online supporters to coordinate with friends and family by text and word of mouth, and to join with traditional activists to put up fliers and reach out to people on the street. In an interview last week, "EIShaheeed," the anonymous administrator of the main Facebook page behind the protest, told NEWSWEEK that organizing something significant would take more than just activism on the Web. "It's not just posting," he said. "To get people to the streets you need to rally. Rally very hard." Protest organizers, who also included the April 6 Student Movement and a number of smaller opposition groups, also came up with a strategy for subverting government efforts at crowd control. In the interview, EIShaheeed said protesters would meet in three squares next to poorer areas throughout the city and converge from there on a preselected place. He hoped this would give the protests time to attract ordinary people from the street. Instructions to that effect were posted on the Facebook page. The plan paid off, despite the reported presence of 20,000 police. The Cairo protests began in Mostafa Mahmoud, Matraya, and Shubra squares, before the crowd met to occupy Tahrir Square. As many as 12 cities across the country, meanwhile, had smaller but like-minded protests underway. In the Nile Delta city of Mahallah, successive protests seemed only to gain steam, according to Ahmad Abdel Fattah, a journalist covering the events for the daily newspaper Almasry-Alyoum. An afternoon march of a couple of thousand had been followed by one three times as large, he estimated, and protesters were taking the bold steps of tearing apart the posters of President Hosni Mubarak that lined the streets, even setting some on fire. By nightfall, a third protest was taking shape. "In the first

demonstration it was mainly activists. The second group was normal people," Fattah said. That protests so large in scale could be organized largely over the Internet and independent of Egypt's traditional opposition, particularly the Muslim Brotherhood, should give Mubarak plenty of cause for concern, says Shadi Hamid, director of research at the Brookings Institution's Doha Center. It shows the extent to which regular Egyptians are fed up with authoritarian rule, and how quickly that frustration can spread—lending it shades of the uprising in Tunisia. "It's not an Islamist-organized protest. This really is unprecedented. It's just everyday Egyptians getting angry," he says. "If I was a regime official, I'd be pacing in my room right now." <http://www.newsweek.com/2011/01/26/revolution-by-internet.html>

**Inside Egypt's Facebook Revolt**

After hundreds of arrests in Cairo Wednesday, some protest organizers have gone missing and are presumed jailed. Now activists are using Egypt's oldest social medium to keep up the fight. AP Protesters shout anti-government slogans during a protest in Suez, Egypt. In the days leading up to this week's street protests in Egypt, the largest the country has seen since the 1970s, Ahmed Salah was busy spreading the word around Cairo—in every possible way, as he put it. A veteran activist who said agitation is his genes, Salah, 45, tapped into his usual network, called family and friends, hit the streets, and posted updates on the Web. "On the 25th, we are trying to give people a bit of hope, and a chance to express themselves," he said in a phone interview last week. But he said the regime would fight back. Salah had been pulled from demonstrations and arrested in the past. He'd been blindfolded and beaten by police, he said, and staged a hunger strike in jail. He calmly predicted that, this time around, an even worse fate might be in store. "I'm already a burned card. No matter what I do, it's all the same now," he said. "We're all in danger. If I get arrested again, I'm sure I will not come out alive." Salah kept organizing until the night before the protest, a friend said. On Tuesday morning, he joined the crowds with his fiancée. The two were separated, and Salah hasn't been seen since. His cell-phone number is no longer in service. Friends and family say they believe he's been arrested. "We don't know where he is," the friend says. The Front to Defend Egypt's Protesters, an alliance of lawyers and human-rights groups in Cairo, lists a man with a similar name among the more than 400 arrestees it had assembled so far, a list that continued to grow Wednesday as protests continued into a second day. "The estimates are much larger," says Sally Sami, a volunteer with the group. "This is not the final number." In the interview last week, Salah said online activism, such as the push coming from popular Facebook groups, was an integral part of the overall effort. Now, with street organizers like Salah disappearing or under threat, and the police state moving to smother dissent, protesters have come up with a new way to combine online and street activism by issuing a very traditional protest call—to make use of the nation's oldest social network. After this week's Friday prayers, which are always heavily attended, people will be asked to take to the streets anew. On one of the protest's main Facebook pages, more than 43,000 people have already signed up for the event, which was posted Wednesday. "A lot of organizers are arrested," says "ElShaheed," the page's anonymous administrator. "We are hoping it will virally spread, and people will assume responsibility [by spreading the word] in their mosques and churches." Post-prayer protests have been effective in Egypt for years. "It's incredibly smart, because they can't close off the mosques," says Joshua Stacher, a Middle East specialist at Kent State who lived in Cairo for almost a decade. "They don't know who's showing up to pray and who's showing up to protest." ElShaheed says that though the arrests could hurt the effort, the protests, which sprouted simultaneously in cities across the country, have lacked traditional leadership from the start—which could make them difficult to stop. "Nobody can think what will happen next, including Mubarak," he said. This story originally ran on The Daily Beast. <http://www.newsweek.com/2011/01/27/inside-egypt-s-facebook-revolt.html>