

government, IGOs and the private sector). All three groups have generated tools which are

impact of social media. There was much debate surrounding the precise role of Twitter campaigns in releasing prisoners such as Eltahawy. While some participants argued that Eltahawy's status as a well-known journalist and her online presence was more responsible for her release than the hashtag #FreeMona, others believed that Twitter campaigns have the ability to affect the treatment of prisoners positively because of the publicity around a given case. The group concluded that it is wise for journalists and activists to create online networks in advance so that if they go missing, their absence is quickly detectable.

2.

The next session was dedicated to discussing the relationship between traditional and new media in the context of the Arab Spring. By traditional media, the group referred to journalistic sources such as newspapers, television and radio reports (even if available on the Internet), and by new media, they referred to social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, blogs and forums.

Participants noted that the role of traditional media has been altered by the introduction of new media and its ability to provide quick and concise reports. While the two types of media compete in many ways, they also rely on one another. For example, when a news organization does not have a reporter on the ground, it is forced to rely on social media for the latest details, or it risks missing the story. Traditional media are under more time constraints than ever before to verify and post stories as quickly as possible. While new media are able to attain footage and reports out of countries such as Syria, conference participants agreed that traditional media are still central because of their reputation as a reliable source.

During the debate regarding the relationship between traditional and new media, citizen journalism was identified as a key factor drawing these two sorts of media together. News organizations increasingly rely on the work on citizen journalists for tweets, blog posts and live coverage from the ground. The new media remain a critical reporting tool for traditional media in following the Arab Spring. Newsrooms now have their own Twitter, Facebook and YouTube accounts and receive large amounts of attention through the use of these social media. For instance, the

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The discussion of this topic began with the question of whether the demonstrations in MENA would have occurred without the presence of Internet-based media. It was concluded that the Tunisian protests were probably inevitable, but -- would activists in other countries in the region have followed suit without social media? Participants noted that the use of photographs, videos and comments on social media provided the international community with a glance into the Arab Spring. However, the notion of "bearing witness" had an even more important role beyond informing the world at large. As Tunisia's revolution engulfed the country, the images and reports of the revolution on social media inspired Egyptians and Libyans as well.

Participants agreed that in states with limited or no Internet access, the social media have not been as effective. In the case of Syria, President Bashar al-Assad has banned journalists from the country, forcing protestors to secretly capture their own video and export it. Technological sanctions have also been applied by the government (meaning citizens cannot access simple tools such as GoogleMaps or Skype), while the government itself is able to work around sanctions and utilize these critical technologies.

The group then considered how the notion of "bearing witness" has sometimes distorted the situation on the ground. One participant reported that in Cairo during the elections at the

internal community. For example, if a community in Egypt has a problem with potholes and

Minister, 15 of which he answered. After the project was complete, the Minister asked for a

that new forms of democracy which emerged in the wake of country-specific revolutions might not always resemble Westminster-style processes, especially at the beginning.

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