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The Power of Information in the Middle East

As historic events unfold, local journalists, bloggers, and national media throughout the Middle East and North Africa are examining the role of information in popular movements and are working together to chart a new course for news media.

Internews and its local partners have [convened professional and citizen reporters](#) in Tunisia, Egypt and the West Bank/Gaza, sparking wide-ranging opinions on national media ownership, media law, and industry-wide ethics. Internews' [Jamal Dajani](#) has spoken nationally and internationally on the critical role of media in the region.

"We asked the same question in Tunisia and Egypt: 'What kept you going?' And they said the same thing: 'Because the world was watching.'"

– Jamal Dajani, Internews VP for the Middle East and North Africa

Elsewhere, amid a virtual information vacuum on the [Tunisian border with Libya](#), we have worked with humanitarian relief organizations to help those in transit from Libya get the information they desperately need.

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Journalists, Bloggers in the Middle East Examine Social Media and the Future of Journalism in Their Communities



A Tunisian protester holds a sign: "The Tunisian Revolution is not for sale or compromise."

In Tunis, more than 50 professional and citizen reporters gathered for a two-day seminar convened by Internews and the Mohamed Ali Center for Research, Studies and Training (CEMAREF) in February. Wide-ranging opinions on national media ownership, media law, industry-wide ethics, and the distinction between state and citizen-led media were discussed.

A week earlier, more than 40 Palestinian journalists gathered for a roundtable on the changes in social media and its impacts on society and journalism.

And in Egypt, a roundtable discussion for Egyptian journalists was hosted by Internews in Cairo on March 7. In an article about the event, Egyptian newspaper *Al Akhbar Newspaper*, said that media professional Hafez AIMerrazi pointed out that the former regime had deprived the youth of using organized media. Therefore, they resorted to Internet and cell phones. "While we media professionals were sitting idly by, the youth were making real media, which we used to present in the big media. They did the whole job." ([Full story](#))

Egypt & The Middle East: Revolutions 2.0

At the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco on March 10, Jamal Dajani, award winning producer and Internews Vice President of the Middle East and North Africa, joined journalists, political commentators and other Middle East experts to analyze the on-the-

ground story, explore the role of social media, and discuss the future of the Middle East and revolutions 2.0.

Referring to the use of social media in the revolutions, Dajani said, "...this is really important about the power of information, whether it is Facebook, Twitter, whatever. ...they don't cause the revolution but they certainly are the multiplier and they keep the flow of information going and that's where those young people drew their strength from." ([Video of the discussion](#))



See also, "[This is not an Allahu Akbar Revolution](#)," an interview with Jamal Dajani in *The European*

Internews Assesses Information Needs on the Tunisia/Libya border



Tens of thousands of people who have fled the violence in Libya to Tunisia are relying on informal word-of-mouth communication channels to gather information, according to an Internews assessment of information needs in the Choucha camp, the main transit site on the Tunisian border with Libya. Radio and television are not widely accessible, and though many stranded migrant workers have cell phones and are able to charge them at the camp, they lack direct information about their situation on the ground. ([More](#))

More on Internews' Programs in the Middle East and North Africa

Since 2004, Internews has trained thousands of journalists, jurists, students, teachers, and media professionals in the MENA region, and has been a pioneer in supporting underserved sectors and populations.

- [Internews Network in the Middle East and North Africa](#): Innovative Programs and Local Partners Have Created Regional Success Stories (PDF)
- ["Beat" Reporters Cover the Energy Industry in Iraq](#) – Internews' *Covering Energy* project in Iraq aims to enhance government accountability in the critically important oil industry through "beat journalism," where a cadre of reporters will build expertise in coverage of the sector. Ultimately the project will raise awareness of the energy industry and add a level of accountability to the sector.

About Internews

[Internews](#) is an international media development organization established in 1982. Its mission is to empower local media worldwide to provide people with the news and information that they need, the ability to connect, and the means to make their voices heard. Funding for Internews programs in the Middle East and North Africa has been provided by USAID, the US Department of State's Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, the John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and other government and private donors.

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Photos: Banner - Egyptians celebrate Mubarak's departure. (Huffington Post) | Tunisian protester by Jamal Dajani/Internews | Jamal Dajani by the Commonwealth Club | Libyan refugees by Jesse Hardman/Internews

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