Twitter Thread by Alkhatab Alrawhani



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#Yemen is a very active topic on Twitter these days, with a number of online campaigns underway, some of which are trending globally. What's new and interesting is the massive participation by Yemenis using these hashtags #HouthiTerrorismInYemen & #StopHouthiTerrorismInYemen 1/13

These hashtags were started by a group called "Aqyal," an emerging social movement that fights Hashemite supremacy and calls for equal opportunities for all Yemenis. It's widely supported by Yemeni youth, including those affiliated with the existing political parties. 2/13

Aqyal was able to rally people across the political spectrum against Houthis for the first time, and this success was due to 1) their independence, 2) all of them are volunteers, 3) transparency in organizing, and 4) the fact that it's a just cause. 3/13

On the other hand, Houthi supporters have rallied behind these two hashtags #YemenCantWait & #DayofAction4Yemen These hashtags were originally started by NGOs& independent activists, but their goal coincided with the goal of t Houthi, which is ending support for Saudi Arabia 4/13

The top goal of Houthis since 2015 is to neutralize Saudi Arabia, so the group can more easily take control over the rest of Yemen. Therefore, Houthis hid behind these campaigns, taking advantage of NGOs' anti-Saudi message.5/13

Amid this flurry of hashtags, many have been quick to accuse the anti-Houthi campaigns of being bots funded by Saudis. While the Saudis are guilty of deploying armies of bots in a number of past online influence campaigns, that is not the case in this instance. 6/13

The reason for this rush to judgment is the result of an incorrect interpretation of the situation in Yemen, which some mistakenly believe is a Saudi war against Yemen.
Some justified the accusations that Saudi bots are behind the anti-Houthi campaigns by citing...7/13

Citing the high frequency of tweets and that some tweets were coming from new Twitter accounts. But I believe there are three reasons that explain the latter observations: 1) 95% of Yemenis are Facebook users, so many had to register Twitter accounts for the first time and..8/13

learn how to use the platform to participate in the campaign. 2)The majority of Yemenis participating in the anti-Houthi campaigns don't speak English, but they wanted to make their voices heard among Yemen experts who don't SPEAK ARABIC. So what they did in many cases was..9/13

copy and paste from previously-translated English tweets, regardless of the context, in an attempt to convey their voices. 3) Many activists participating in the campaigns live in Houthis-controlled areas and aren't able to use their real names out of fear of retaliation. 10/13

Yemenis used to not care much about what foreigners wrote about them until they saw what they considered a bold and uninformed defense of the Houthis, accompanied by rational arguments against the FTO designation. 11/13

As a result,they have felt insulted and threatened and less tolerant of what's being written about the conflict in English. Before judging Yemeni English-speaking campaigns, remember that for you,Yemen is a job opportunity that may end with the end of your work contract.But.12/13

But most of the activists tweeting about Houthi acts of terror are former prisoners, displaced or continue to live under the brutal Houthi authorities, and they have to live with the consequences of the Houthis' rise to power forever. 13/13