

## **Introduction blog.**

Online activism is the use of the internet and social media sites such as TikTok or Instagram, to enable faster and more effective communication on a political or social movement. The BBC states that “online activism is far more effective than it first appears” and I would agree with this, although a single post will not change a government, millions of them will. Online activism often times results in other forms of activism, such as protests and it is so effective in doing so because of the way the internet works. The internet as we are all aware at this stage, targets posts to you, which may be bad for our bank accounts when every ad we see is showing us exactly what we want and convince ourselves we need but it is good at getting the right movements to the right people. Online activism allows information about movements to get onto the feeds of people who will show a genuine interest in them and may take action. A great example of the effectiveness of online activism can be seen when we look at the protests in Iran that at the time of writing this blog are still happening. Many of us will be familiar with the #MahsaAmini, which was spreading across the world during the autumn months of 2022, began in September. Mahsa Amini was a 22 year old woman who was murdered by the morality police in Iran after not wearing a hijab. Her story became part of a bigger movement which highlighted the oppression faced by women in Iran, though not exclusive to just women. This was the beginning of a revolution in Iran and although a lot of the activism was not online activism, which protests happening all over the world, online activism played a vital role. The fact that I as a girl in Ireland who admittedly doesn't watch the news as much as she should knows about this case, shows the impact and effectiveness of online activism in itself.

## **How has online activism been used in the case of the Iran revolution 2022.**

Currently there is a revolution occurring in Iran and I know this because of the use of online activism to aid this revolution. Although the revolution has consisted of many incredible street protest that have result in some incredibly brave people losing their lives, it has utilised online activism to gain more support and attention. This has been done in a number of ways, videos and hashtags and pictures have been filling up on for you pages and feeds. The #mahsaamini has 1.8 million posts on instagram and has 2.3 billion views on TikTok. The #womanlifefreedom (a chant shouted at the protests) only has 264,000 posts on instagram but has 136.3 million views on TikTok, making the app famous for dancing teenage girls a hotspot for online activism. This is a clear piece of evidence as to how online activism is being used to spread awareness about the injustices experienced under the Iran government. One of the biggest ways the internet has been used during this protests is to spread solidarity from people all over the world, this is often an aspect of protesting that is overlooked with people not appreciating the significance of it. We can see this by the way that women on social media began to cut off their hair in response to women in Iran at protests began to cut off their hair as this goes against the principles of the Islamic state. This may seem like a small act but shows how online activism is being used to show solidarity. Online activism can also influence the effectiveness of real life activism, groups such as Rosa an Irish feminist group, have been using the internet to advertise protests in solidarity with Iran and is personally how I found out about the protests in Ireland myself. From the hashtags to the online tokens of solidarity it is clear that internet activism has played a huge role in the protests but the question still remains, does it work?

## **The effectiveness of online activism in the case of the Iran revolution 2022.**

Bringing about the changes the protesters in Iran want, are very difficult to do and often times take years of trying. As I am writing this, the protests are still going on and justice has not been served for #mahsaamini and change has not occurred in any significant way really. The biggest development we had occurred in December, when the government of Iran stated that they were reviewing the law

surrounding women being forced to wear headscarves. As of now this has not resulted in any change but online activism may have had an impact on this. Although the state have not come out and stated that they were reviewing the headscarf laws because of online activism, it would be fair to assume that it had an impact. Online activism has a chain reaction in the case of Iran, videos posted by activists in Iran spread across the world, people in other countries begin to display solidarity and can organise protests which forces their states and governments to take action and increase the foreign pressure. All of this comes back to online activism, although it is not hard facts, I would argue that there is a clear link between foreign pressure and online activism, if we don't care it is unlikely the government will. We can also not undermine the power of solidarity and how it can help keep the spark going long enough to create great change. Although from this case we have no hard evidence that online activism is having any sort of an impact on a global, political scale, the fighting is not over and we do not know what impact our posts and likes may have in the end. This is only one case of online activism and many others have shown us a clear link between a successful protest and online activism, take BLM protests of 2020, George Floyd video was posted everywhere and that is what put pressure on the police and lead to the arrest of Derek Chauvin, the police man who killed him. So although online activism maybe hasn't made huge waves of change in Iran just yet, that does not mean it will not do over time. Change on the scale the people of Iran want may take years or even decades and the impacts of the activism we are doing at the moment, may not be felt by the women of our generation but may very well be felt by our children's generation.

### **The researching process.**

My researching process was conducted all online, the protest has only been going on for a couple of months at this state and so no books have been published as of yet that I could find and all the articles I needed were online. I found the research very hard to be honest, I tried to look up articles on the Iran protests and online activism but they didn't come up for me. I couldn't find any source that I felt was reliable enough that combined the two. In the end I decided that it was best to look at the protests and then online activism separately and combine the two. This was very difficult and I had to make sure I wasn't making any connections that I wanted to be there when they simply weren't. For the blogs I found this quite effective, I could do my own research by looking up hashtags and finding out how many people have watched a video or like a post. I also found that in politics, no one agrees on anything. Bias is everywhere and one source will tell you that online activism is simply a way for privilege people to feel less bad about the silver spoon in their mouths, while others will tell you it will save the world and you have to make sure to be critical of both sides, although it is impossible to be completely objective on anything. I also found that with political research there is no hard cut facts in many ways, you cannot say that online activism is the reason the protests in Iran have gone on for so long but you can make connections. To give weight to my arguments I gathered quantitative information, you may not be able to prove your point but you do have to back it up. I gathered all my information for each blog before I started to write them, this meant I knew exactly what I was going to write before I wrote it. If you were to write do your own research, maybe even for your own citizenship project in the future, I would tell you to look at articles from all different perspectives, to make connections without pretending they are facts and to pick a topic that you like, you will have to spend a lot of time researching and you don't want to spend a lot of time researching something that bores you.