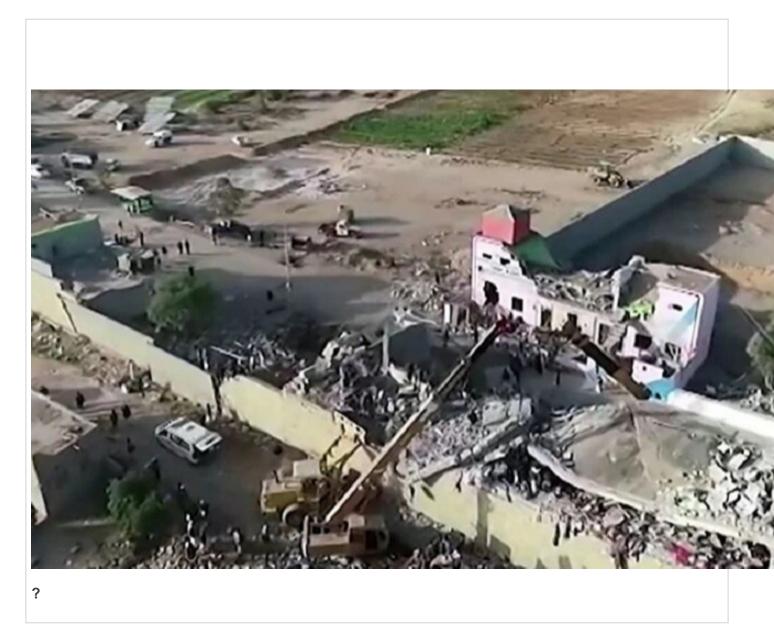# Internet returns to Yemen after air raid caused four-day outage and killed dozens

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Sanaa, January 26 (RHC)-- Internet services have returned to Yemen after a four-day outage caused by deadly Saudi-led coalition air raids that marked a dramatic escalation in the seven-year war. An attack by the Saudi-led coalition that targeted a telecoms facility in Hodeidah late on Thursday killed three children and was blamed for knocking out the internet nationwide.

The air raid coincided with an attack on a prison in rebel-held Saada which left at least 70 people dead and wounded more than 100. The Saudi-led coalition denied bombing the prison.

The internet outage affected emergency operations after the attacks as rescuers scrabbled through the rubble for survivors and the hospitals in Saada were overwhelmed. On Tuesday, web monitor NetBlocks said internet was "being restored" in the country and several social media users and correspondents in the capital Sanaa and port city Hodeidah reported they were back online shortly after midnight.

"Connectivity collapsed after a series of deadly airstrikes. The incident severely limited independent media and human rights monitoring efforts," NetBlocks said.

During the four-day blackout, Yemenis struggled to fulfil daily needs. Many livelihoods that depend on working online or communicating with companies and clients outside the country were forced to a halt.

In Sanaa, Majid Abdullah said he was unable to receive money from relatives in Saudi Arabia at an exchange office as a result of the ongoing outage. "I don't know what to do. We eat and drink from the [money sent by] expatriates," he said.

Thousands of Yemeni expats, who rely on video calls to communicate with their families, were deprived of the precious contact. Muammar Abdullah, a Yemeni living in Saudi Arabia, said he was not able to continue his daily online checks on his family in Sanaa – more important now as coalition air raids increase – as a result of the blackout and instead had to make costly international calls.

Meanwhile, Sanaa-based university student Maha Muhammad said she turned to the television after being cut off from her internet chats with friends and family. "We went back to watching television to follow the news. I used to rely on websites and social networking sites for the latest war developments," she said.

The internet blackout caused outrage among Yemen observers and social media users, who complained that not enough attention was being paid to an entire nation left in darkness. Shireen Al-Adeimi, an assistant professor at Michigan State University, expressed her dismay at the muted reaction the appalling events in Yemen received from news providers.

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