How relevant is social media in the country and region?
Internet access, internet penetration, gender ratio, demographics, etc.
- ITU and World Bank Data Catalogue or statistics of internet users
- Social media ads manager for demographic stats (e.g., Facebook Ads Manager)
- Even if the ratio seems insufficient for nation-wide analysis, consider assessment of a specific group of stakeholders

Who is leading the debate on social media, how and why?
Political party leaders, public institutions, civil society activists, bloggers, etc.
- Use influencer ranking platforms such as Social Bakers, Klear, SproutSocial
- For Twitter: catalogue and cluster influencers in Twitter lists to map the main stakeholders
- View who key influencers follow to expand your network and get the full spectrum of views

What social media channel is relevant, and why?
Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, etc.
- Analyze purpose of social media use (information exchange, social mobilization, etc.)
- Social media stats on StatCounter.com (filter by country, platform, time)

Where do the news, media, tweets, and comments originate from?
Public geolocation of social media post, details of author, post appearing inside or outside the country, etc.
- Most social media tools offer geolocation search (e.g., Twitter Advanced Search, Instagram location search)
- Analyze whether posts originate from the diaspora or domestic political constituency
- Consider that users might have geolocation switched off or internationally misrepresent their location

What languages and dialects need to be considered?
Natural languages, dialects and coded language
- Assess which languages used on social media with regard to a particular country
- Analyze when social media posts are not in the native language of the author
- Identify coded language, such as when words are used to camouflage the real meaning

Is the post real or fabricated?
Use of bots and misinformation
- Check user name for authenticity, some official sounding Twitter handles do not belong to the person they purport to belong to
- Be mindful that not just third parties, but also the main stakeholders and political actors themselves could spread misinformation
- Use Botometer to identify bots
- SocialBlade or Twitter Audit assess how many bots follow a user

What are key issues of debate (keywords), and major social media campaigns (usually hashtags)?
Example: Yemen peace talks [keywords], #YemenCanWait (hashtag campaign)
- Follow topics over time to see how they correlate with real-life events, and notice when they appear or disappear
- Analyze whether debates respond to news or are making the news
- Categorize positions in online debates, the same hashtag might be used by opposing sides
- Trends24 for top tweets worldwide with customizable country-filters
- Ritetag for hashtag analytics
- Google Trends to identify trending search terms

How do online debates resemble or differ from debates taking place in the real world?
Conversation only among circle of likeminded online, or use of hate speech to drive advocacy campaign, etc.
- Analyze who is tagged in conversations, and/or who responds to conversations, and why
- Clarify whether there is a representative of the online group in the real world, and who they are
- Try to detect if the social media posts are coordinated, random or spontaneous, and whether there is a coordinated response
- Evaluate reactions in response to the topic being discussed (e.g., indifference, suppression, internet blackouts)
Social media has become a powerful channel for political campaigns, governing, and social mobilisation. It carries great promise for facilitating participation and connecting people worldwide by enabling a seamless exchange of information and ideas. Yet, social media has also accelerated the spread of harmful content, including misinformation, hate speech and incitement to violence.

As it can do good, social media can also be exploited by tapping into users’ desire to belong, and promoting messaging that divides the world into “us” versus “them.” Social media algorithms are often designed to maximize user time on the site. As studies have found, posts that tap into negative emotions such as anger or fear produce the highest engagement. In fragile conflict contexts where reputable news sources are scarce, emotionally charged rumors run rampant and can feed violence.