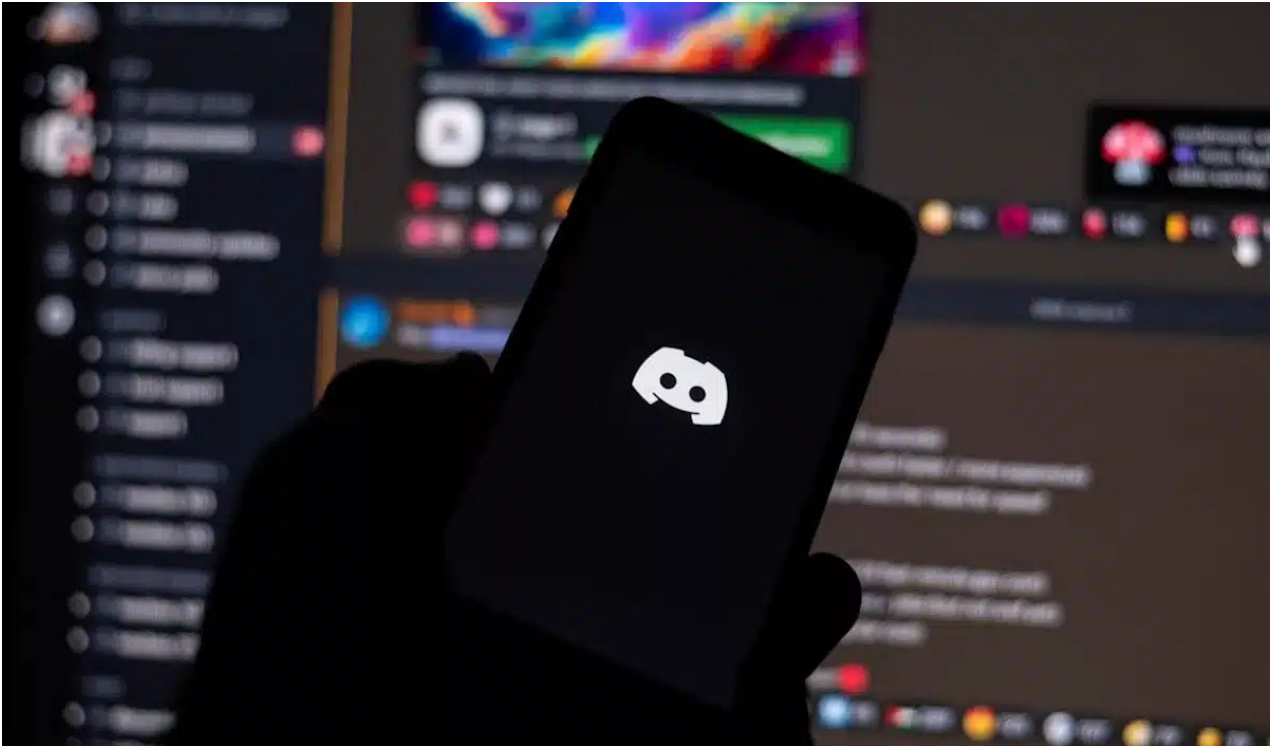


## Morocco's Gen Z: How Discord Became a Political Forum



The widespread use of Discord by Morocco's Gen Z protest movement has helped shape new visions of the public sphere, creating alternative digital spaces where political, cultural, and communicative elements converge.

The "Gen Z 212" server, which counted 211,505 members as of October 16, has become a platform for open dialogue between young people and various human rights and political actors.

Topics range from media and freedom of expression to individual liberties and participatory democracy.

### Gaming Platform or Coordination Hub?

Originally launched as a free communication app for voice, video, and text chat among gamers and developers, Discord is now used by hundreds of millions of users worldwide, making it one of the most popular online communication platforms.

Over time, Discord evolved from a gaming hub into an operational center for coordination and mobilization in protests across the globe.

This shift began in Nepal on September 4, when the government blocked 26 social media platforms including Facebook, YouTube, X, and WhatsApp citing content regulation and fake account prevention.

But for most Nepalis, the ban was seen as an attempt to silence dissent and

restrict freedom of speech.

As state violence erupted in the streets, Gen Z the cohort born from the late 1990s to the early 2010s turned to digital tools to organize political protests.

In Nepal, they launched a Discord server to debate government policies, created a virtual parliament, and voted to appoint Karki as interim prime minister after the previous regime collapsed.

Similarly, on September 20, 2025, mass protests led by Peru's Gen Z broke out in response to pension reform, fueled by long-standing anger at President Dina Boluarte and the legislature.

This youth-led wave of protest reached Morocco on September 27, following the deaths of eight women during childbirth at Hassan II Hospital in Agadir a tragic event that, alongside other incidents, ignited public outrage. Health care reform demands surged back to the forefront of the national conversation.

Discord quickly became the organizational backbone of these protests. Young demonstrators used it to coordinate demonstration times and locations across different cities. Unlike mainstream social platforms, Discord offers more freedom from algorithmic control and surveillance, creating intimate online communities called "servers" based on shared interests.

In contrast to the Arab Spring generation who relied heavily on Facebook and Twitter this new wave of digital protesters has opted for less open, more private platforms like Discord.

Gen Z in Morocco intentionally distanced themselves from large, state-monitored platforms, gravitating instead toward digital environments that afford privacy and control. This marks a generational shift in protest culture: from open digital public squares to exclusive and secure online enclaves.

In Morocco, Discord has become a forum for political engagement. The movement launched a podcast series focused on public and human rights discussions. Gen Z activists have harnessed Discord's voice chat feature one of its most interactive tools to amplify opposition voices that have been silenced for years.

### Counter-Narratives

The Gen Z podcast has evolved into a digital media outlet that produces knowledge aimed at challenging official state narratives. It has brought together a wide range of journalists and human rights advocates many of whom are marginalized by mainstream media and enabled them to reach broad youth audiences.

Discord has opened the public discourse to fresh ideas, diverse perspectives, and new methodologies, injecting pluralism into Morocco's political and media landscapes.

The podcast serves as a bridge between critical thought and collective action, featuring voices outside the political mainstream individuals with views that defy the dominant state narrative.

These include former MP Omar Balafrej of the Democratic Left Federation, political activist Omar Radi, journalist and former detainee Taoufik Bouachrine, economist Najib Akesbi, and rights advocate Ahmed Benchemsi.

This diversity reflects the pluralistic vision young protesters aim to embed in the public discourse a discourse that rejects narrow ideological frameworks. Discord also allows real-time engagement between youth and guests, demonstrating a horizontal model of democratic dialogue.

Participants are not receiving top-down directives but are instead free to express themselves, as seen in the Gen Z server.

The podcast's guests represent a new kind of "digital intellectual" producers of alternative, critical knowledge outside traditional state institutions. These figures include academics, entrepreneurs, journalists, the unemployed, and the marginalized.

They typically operate beyond the realms of government, political parties, or formal organizations, crafting counter-narratives about public affairs and disseminating them through digital platforms.

Social media has redefined the role of the intellectual. No longer confined to academia or political circles, today's digital intellectuals need only a smartphone or computer to join public debate. The internet has replaced traditional gatekeepers with vast user networks, where reading, writing, and discussion flourish.

Today, the Gen Z Discord server serves as a reclaimed space for freedom of expression after years of suppression, growing imprisonment of journalists and activists, and increasing state control.

Through this platform, Gen Z is restoring the streets and squares as public forums for protest and reclaiming digital spaces as sites of resistance and dissent where narratives of the marginalized thrive and circulate.