



PHOTO: AFP

Massive demonstrations rock Yemen

UK issues new warning for Britons

AFP, Sanaa

A massive security operation kept huge rival protests apart and split the Yemeni capital on another Friday political showdown on the streets between the president's backers and his foes.

"I pledge... to sacrifice myself for the people, with my blood and with everything I hold dear," President Ali Abdullah Saleh said, thanking his supporters in the face of two months of escalating demands for his ouster.

Despite fears of an outbreak of violence, a crush of pro-regime supporters waving flags and banners packed squares around Sanaa, streaming through checkpoints manned by security forces armed with guns and batons. Tanks and armoured cars were stationed at the city's entry points

the surrounding countryside for the pro-Saleh rally. "The people want Ali Abdullah Saleh," they chanted.

"The crowds stretched as far as the eye could see," an AFP correspondent said, while state media said "millions" turned out for the president.

In a deeply tribal society, many of the demonstrators carried large portraits of the 69-year-old president in tribal head-dress rather than his usual suit and tie.

The demonstrators, who also turned out in force on the Muslim weekly day of prayers and rest, set up camp in the area in late February, but appeared to have been put on the back foot yesterday.

In Tahrir Square, about two kilometres (less than two miles) away, security forces channelled the influx of regime supporters, many of them tribesmen mobilised by the president, a former military man

Saleh's supporters trudged the four to five kilometres to Sabiine Square, next to the president's palace, in the opposite direction of the rival protest.

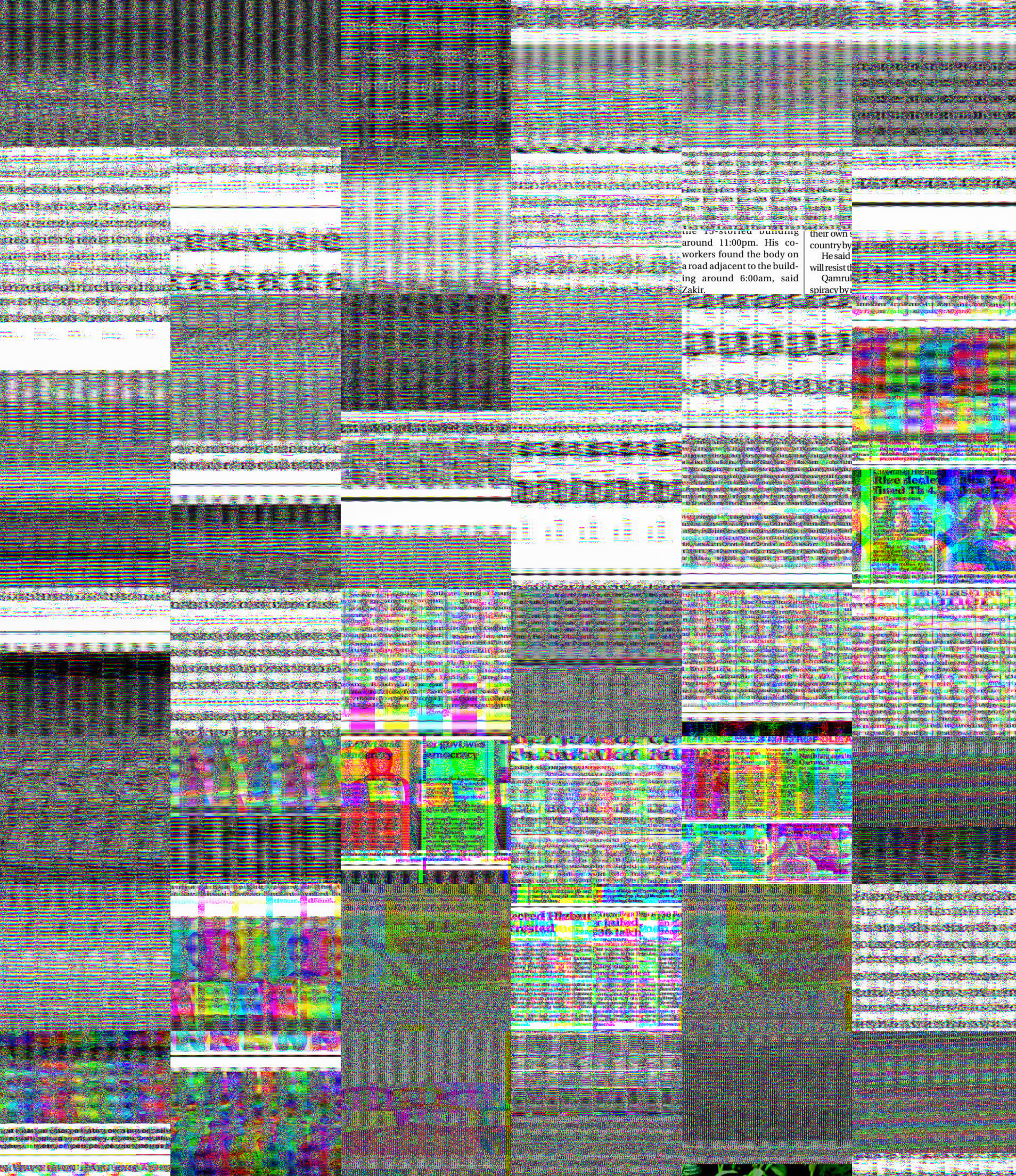
According to Adel al-Walibi, a leader of the anti-Saleh protests, the ranks of the president's supporters yesterday were swollen by "out-of-uniform soldiers and armed tribesmen."

Although no violence was reported in Sanaa, a soldier was killed in south Yemen in clashes with tribal and Al-Qaeda forces, a security source said.

The UK has urged Britons to leave Yemen while commercial airlines are still flying as it warned of a possible "rapid deterioration in security".

UK citizens have been advised against travel to Yemen since 4 March and urged to leave immediately since 12 March.

Updated Foreign Office travel advice



the 15-storey building around 11:00pm. His co-workers found the body on a road adjacent to the building around 6:00am, said Zakir.

their own country by He said will resist the Qamrul spiracy by

