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# Foreigners flee Aden as violence escalates

By: Tom Finn

SANA'A, Feb. 27 – Foreigner workers in Aden are being told to evacuate as violent anti-government protests continue to flare in the southern port city of Yemen, according to local residents.

At least 12 people, many of them teenagers, have been killed during two weeks of fierce street battles between the army and anti-government demonstrators.

"Most of the foreigners have left," said Jonathan Gray, an NGO worker living in the Khormaksar district of Aden. "We just bought two weeks worth of food and withdrew money from the bank in case things get worse. I hear gunfire every night."

Four people were killed on Friday when security forces fired on protesters from armoured vehicles, as well as attacking houses where protesters were believed to have been seeking shelter. Two men were reportedly killed in their houses during a period of intensive gunfire, both of them shot in the head.

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Footage from video, uploaded to YouTube on Friday by protesters in Aden, shows injured men following the security forces' crack down on demonstrators late on Feb. 25 in the city. At least four people were killed and dozens wounded.



Protesters scramble as shots ring out in the southern city of Aden during protests on Friday, Feb. 25. Four people were killed in Aden last Friday during fresh clashes between security forces and anti-government demonstrators.

# JMP attempts to control protests at Sana'a University

By: Shatha Al-Harazi

SANA'A, Feb. 27 — Tensions have surfaced among the young people at Al-Tagheer Square by Sana'a University, with many believing that the protests are becoming controlled by political parties.

Many members of the Islah Party, the largest and most conservative party in the opposition Joint Meeting Parties, joined protesters at Al-Tagheer Square as independents. On Sunday, a group called the Yemeni Youth Initiative called on all young independent protesters to coordinate their work and to choose new committees that respect the "aims of the revolution." Other protesters are calling on young demonstrators to protest separately from the tribes and members of the Joint Meeting Party.

"I have been participating in the revolution for change for ten days now. I lost my enthusiasm as it became controlled by the Joint Meeting Parties, especially Islah," said Ameera Ali, one of the anti-government protesters.

The number of protesters from tribes

has started to out-number the students and young people, and the stage has become more organized by Islah members, according to young protesters. The procedures at Al-Tagheer Square have become more organized, and different committees are in charge of everything.

"The only solution now to keep the young people true to their protests for change, without being used to serve a political purpose by the JMP," said Amira. "What we need to do now is find a place that is not controlled by any party, and stop them from joining us to control us, like what they have done at Al-Tagheer Square," said Amira.

Hani Al-Arasi was studying in Russia, but he put his studies on hold to come join the protests to change the regime. He said that he was disappointed that the protest that didn't relate to young. "The young protesters now have no effect in Al-Tagheer Square. They have to find another place and to be careful not to be used by any political party," said Al-Arasi.

Continued on page 3

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# Taiz protests continue to grow

By: Imad Al-Sakkaf and Waheed Al-Samai

SANA'A, Feb. 27 — The youth of Taiz have continued their sit-in for the second week in a row, demanding that President Ali Abdullah Saleh resign from his post. Their well-organized protests — which take place in an area that has been nicknamed 'Freedom Space' by demonstrators — are enthusiastic events echoing with the sounds of loud cheering, joyful weeping, national anthems and revolutionary poems.

In the past several days, the protests in Taiz have evolved rapidly. The youth sit-in has acquired broad public support and has recently been joined by a number of professional groups including medical and legal associations, and various civil society organizations from around the governorate.

Approximately 60,000 opposition protesters demonstrated in front of the governorate's Ministry of Education building on Tuesday. They demanded the execution of the third phase of President Saleh's payment strategy, and an annual raise that the president had promised after repeated calls for reform.

Teachers who support the opposition movement in Taiz are currently being led by the head of the Yemeni teachers' association, MP Fuad Dahabab, who recently called for more youth to join the sit-in at Freedom Space.

In a special statement to the Yemen Times, MP Dahabab explained that, "We came from Sana'a to learn the meaning of freedom from the youth in Taiz and to announce our solidarity with



As protest numbers grow across Yemen, more demonstrators are being wounded in clashes with pro-Saleh demonstrators and security forces

them. These young people have proven that they are intellectual, aware and deserve to be the new future of Yemen."

Teacher Nadhem Al-Dubai said, "We went out to demand our rights that were

promised to us six years ago. The president said that we would all receive a raise as part of his new payment strategy, but the month of February was not included within the salary plan."

According to a media source in the education office at Taiz, the new payment plan and the teachers' raise will come into effect in March. The source confirmed that he stands behind the

teachers, though quality education must continue throughout the demonstrations for the benefit of the students.

## 10,500 graduates promised jobs in Taiz

In an attempt to absorb the anger in the streets, the government has promised to employ 10,500 new university graduates in Taiz. The governorate is home to the largest population in Yemen, yet there is a comparative dearth of graduates from the area considering its large size.

## Five general managers dismissed

Earlier this week, the local authority in Taiz, which has been under great pressure to centralize, dismissed five general managers from key government offices. The general manager of the civil service office had been in the position for ten years before his dismissal. Youth protested for his removal years ago, but their efforts were ignored. He was involved in various allegations of fraud, administrative violations and was accused of "manipulating" graduates employed by the governorate.

## Protests Grow

Over 100,000 protesters joined together for Friday prayers and to protest against the Saleh government. The Taiz sit-in began over two weeks ago and has continued to grow since then, following the resignation of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. For the first time people from rural areas of Taiz governorate have joined the protests, swelling its numbers.

# In Brief

## SANA'A

### President Saleh: there is a plot against Yemen's unity

President Ali Abdullah Saleh presided over a meeting of the leaders of the armed forces on Saturday. He pointed to the importance of the meeting, which comes during a complex and difficult period being experienced by the Arab world, and Yemen in particular. "The country is going through great difficulties after four years of fits and starts between the various political parts. We are trying all means to address and overcome these difficulties through democratic means, but to no avail, although the political leadership has provided a package of reforms," Saleh explained. "This package of reforms is designed to calm the situation and heal the rift between all political forces and maintain the security, stability and unity of the country." Saleh noted that since the 1994 civil war there has been a hidden agenda, which has put fire under the ashes. He pointed out that there is a plot against the unity of Yemen, from two directions, which have emerged clearly over the past years. The first one seeks to separate the south from the north and the other one seeks to return the north to the priesthood Imamate. "We are confident that our people and the great national institution of the military will foil any plots, and they will not accept a return to the past," Saleh said.

On the issue of sit-ins, president Saleh said that peaceful protests are guaranteed by the constitution and the law. He pointed out that the military bears full responsibility in maintaining security, unity, freedom and democracy in Yemen. He added that the military is the rock on which all foreign plots and agendas shall be shattered. Yemeni people express everyday their love to their homeland and their readiness to stand by the military to defend the country and its gains, said Saleh. "We say to the Yemeni people, that the homeland is safe as long as it is in the hands of their brave sons, who will defend their unity," said Saleh. "They are now destroying every nice thing in Aden, for nothing but selfishness and the remnants of colonialism," said Saleh, adding that some of those who commit the acts of vandalism are mercenaries.

## Yemenis return from Libya

About 60 Yemenis, including 30 students, arrived back to Sana'a International Airport from Libya on Saturday. Under a presidential directive, Yemeni Airways has started flights to Libya to evacuate Yemenis and students who wish to return home. President Saleh's directive was to follow up on the situation of Yemenis in Libya and provide support for them. This followed calls from Yemenis stuck with their families in Libya, which is currently witnessing widespread bloodshed amidst a civil society revolt. Last month, President Saleh gave similar orders for Yemenis living in Tunisia and Egypt when those two nations experienced upheaval.

## SHABWA

**49 Somalis drown off Yemeni coast**  
An estimated 49 Somalis drowned off the coast of Radhom district in Shabwa governorate after their boat sank four nautical miles off the coast, the Interior Ministry reported on Feb. 24. The Radhom district security office reported the incident to the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) office in the governorate. The security office was notified by a Somali who survived the incident. A search and rescue mission for more survivors was launched, the ministry said.

## NATIONAL

### 33 people killed last week on Yemeni roads

The Public Traffic Department in the Interior Ministry registered 194 road accidents throughout the country last week, killing 33 people and leaving 259 people injured. Approximately YR 34.4 million worth of losses were accrued according to a report issued by the department. The report showed that the capital Sana'a ranked first in terms of number of accidents with 57, followed by Taiz governorate with 37 and Hodeida governorate with 25 accidents. Only four accidents were registered in Marib governorate placing it at the bottom of the list. The causes of the accidents were excessive speed, careless driving and technical faults. The Interior Ministry has announced that some 109 people were killed and 664 injured in 494 road accidents throughout the country in the first half of February.

# Government bans media coverage of anti-regime protests

By: Ali Saeed and Sadeq Al-Wesabi

SANA'A, Feb. 27 — For the fifth time, Al-Masdar online, an independent local news website, was blocked by the government last Saturday night, according to Yaser Al-Arami, editor-in-chief of Al-Masdar online.

Al-Arami told the Yemen Times that the website was blocked because of its news about recent developments in Aden, Sana'a and other governorates. He indicated that the website has become successful by reporting breaking news and using multimedia to accompany such reports.

"The success of our website has annoyed the government," he said.

He said that there were many attempts to hack the websites but all of these attempts have failed because of the websites highly capable technical staff.

Al-Arami revealed that the National Security Bureau has a department specifically tasked with monitoring Yemeni news websites.

"I am not ruling out the possibility that the National Security Bureau has blocked the website," he said.

"When the regime resorts to censorship it indicated that the government fears the media. Freedom of expression annoys the regime," he said.

"We hold the government responsible for blocking our website. This also

negatively affects our relations with advertisers and has a terrible affect on our reputation with business partners," he said.

Al-Masdar online website ranked first in Yemen last year, according to an evaluation carried out by Yemeni websites, prominent journalists and readers.

Similarly, Al-Jazeera Arabic TV channel reported on Saturday evening that the Yemeni government requested that two correspondents of the channel to Yemen, Abdulhaq Sadah and Ahmed Zaidan, to leave the country immediately.

The channel explained that, "Yemen's Deputy Minister of Information told the director of the channel office in Sana'a, Saeed Thabet, to ban the two journalists from reporting on the current protests in Yemen. He also asked them to leave the country entirely."

Al-Jazeera added that this is the second time that the Yemeni Government has attempted to ban these two journalists from covering anti-government protests that are taking place in several Yemeni cities.

Jamal An'am, chairman of the freedoms' committee at the Yemeni Journalists' Syndicate told the Yemen Times that the, "Syndicate issued a statement condemning this action by the Yemeni regime against the freedom of press."

"It has shown that the regime has no



Al-Masdar Online is now inaccessible to Yemeni internet users do to a government block on the website, according to Editor-In-Chief Yaser Al-Arami

patience for good journalism."

He explained that "this step comes within a policy by the regime to keep the media distant from the protests."

He added that, "Since the anti-government protests broke out in the coun-

try, the Yemeni government launched a war against journalists in an attempt to falsify information and distort the reality of what is going on."

An'am said that several journalists have been threatened recently in Yem-

en. They have also been physically assaulted while covering anti-government protests.

"We are worried that the regime is preparing to oppress both protesters and journalists," he said

# Yemen poorest women and children involved in six-year plan

By: Malak Shaher

SANA'A, Feb. 27 — A six-year plan by the Yemeni Ministry of Health and Population will involve a million of Yemen's poorest women and children from rural areas, according to Ali Jahaf, general manager of the Department of Family Health.

The project, approved by the World Bank, will cost USD 35 million and be implemented over the next six years.

"Yemeni women in remote areas need help," said Jahaf. "The project will involve the poorest women and children in six governorates over the six coming years."

According to the World Bank the child

mortality rate in Yemen is 69 deaths to every 1,000 live births, the highest rate in the Middle East and North Africa region. Yemen also has the second-highest rate in the world of child malnutrition for height and age. Maternal mortality is the second highest in the Middle East with 210 deaths for each 1,000 live births according to 2008 figures.

The project will be initiated in the remote areas of Sana'a this year and extend to other areas with the highest concentration of poor health indicators. It will involve the governorates of Ibb, Reima, Al-Dhale', Al-Baydha and the slums of Aden. The project will also include the remote areas of these governorates after the six years.

Jahaf said that the ministry aims to send small medical teams consisting of: a doctor, a midwife, social worker and a person to register their findings of the field visits.

The visits, which will be held four times a year, will target pregnant women and their children under the age of five and will provide them with basic medication, vaccinations and awareness campaigns for family planning, added Jahaf.

Caption: The Ministry of Health project aims to help women and children in rural areas and provide family planning advice. Frequent pregnancy contributes to Yemen's high child mortality rate.





# Largest protests yet in Yemen's capital Sana'a



Anti-government protesters perform Friday prayers outside the University of Sana'a, mourning the death of two protesters shot during clashes on Tuesday.



Pro-government supporter at Tahrir Square, where thousands of supporters of the president are camped out.

By: Tom Finn

SANA'A, Feb. 27 — Tens of thousands of people took to the streets of Sana'a on Friday, calling for an end to the reign of President Ali Abdullah Saleh in the biggest pro-democracy rally seen in Yemen's recent history.

Small yet violent protests have been taking place across Yemen since the resignation of Hosni Mubarak two weeks ago, but Friday's protests drew much larger crowds.

Students, tribesmen, opposition activists and young professionals flooded the streets surrounding Sana'a University, where protesters have been camped

out since Sunday Feb. 20, chanting for President Saleh to quit after 32 years in power. Local media reported between 30,000 to 40,000 anti-government demonstrators were present.

"The people want the regime to fall," shouted the sea of protesters, rising from their knees after a Friday prayer ceremony, mourning the death of two men shot dead on Tuesday in violent clashes between the pro- and anti-government supporters.

Protesters are demanding improvements in living conditions as well as political reform. One banner read simply: "Look at the gap between the rich and poor."

The protest was a peaceful affair, though at times tense. A group of riot police who tried to seize an anti-government protester fired their guns in the air to disperse a mob of angry students demanding his release.

A few miles away, government loyalists staged a counter-demonstration in Tahrir Square, where thousands of impoverished tribesmen, some of whom are bussed in from outside the capital, have been holding pro-Saleh rallies for over a month. Food, drinks and placards were provided for the demonstrators who were directed towards a main road and filmed by state media who were out in force.

Giant beige marquees have been erected to accommodate the tribesmen and prevent anti-government demonstrators from occupying the square. Around 10,000 middle-aged men, many carrying batons, marched up and down the streets yelling, «Saleh means stability."

Anti-government protesters claim the loyalists are balataj, hired thugs using violence to quash the opposition, but Yemeni authorities deny any connection with the armed men.

Saleh has instructed his security forces to protect both sets of demonstrators to prevent further clashes between them.

## Continued from Page 1

### Foreigners flee Aden as violence escalates

Roadblocks are currently in place across the city. In addition many schools and shops are closed, and public transport is severely disrupted.

"The violence usually starts around 3pm and then continues all night," said Gray. "The protesters burn tyres and throw stones and the police respond by firing tear gas and bullets at them."

The worst of the violence has been centred in Al-Mualla, a busy main road flanked on either side by high rise flats and shops. According to Marib Press one man, Salam Basha-tah, was killed on Friday by a stray bullet to the head whilst watching the protests from his balcony.

Nigel Dawkins, a British resident who lives in the Tawahi district of Aden, said that the roads were littered with debris on Saturday morning after a night of "continuous and bloody fighting" on Friday.

"I heard that the German Embassy is now advising its citizens to leave," he told the Yemen Times in a phone interview.

Nadia Jamal, a 26 year-old marketing assistant from Aden, told the Yemen Times via Facebook that she'd seen the army chasing and shooting indiscriminately at unarmed protesters on Friday, many of whom "did not have shoes on their feet."

The reason for the increased violence is the absence of international press, poorly organized demonstrations and fear from the government that Aden may fall into the hands of

the southern separatists, according to Ala'a Al-Aghbari, a youth activist and social entrepreneur from Aden.

On Saturday, an unnamed defense official denied reports that four people were killed by police on Friday, instead blaming a secessionist group for the attack. Quoted on the government 26sep.net news website, he said that an armed separatist group loyal to the Hirak or the Southern Movement, "randomly opened fire", targeting security forces and citizens.

### Ambulances blocked

Amnesty International said yesterday it had received reports that security forces in Aden refused to allow residents to take the injured to hospital after Central Security forces fired on anti-government protesters on Friday.

One doctor told Amnesty International: "I went to the Al-Mualla area to take those injured to hospital, but when I reached there, security forces refused to allow me in, and told me to go back."

"Events in Yemen are taking a serious turn for the worse and the Yemeni security forces are showing reckless disregard for human life," said Philip Luther, Amnesty International's Deputy Director for the Middle East and North Africa in a statement.

"The Yemeni authorities have a duty to ensure that those injured receive medical treatment. They must on no account block access to urgently needed medical assistance, particularly when people's lives may be at risk."

The death toll in recent protests, calling on President Ali Abdullah Saleh to stand down, has now reached

27, with an average of nearly three people killed every day since February 16. Twenty-four of them have been killed in Aden, two in Sana'a and one in Taiz.

### JMP attempting to control protests at Sana'a University

Al-Arasi said that the young protesters now have to put more effort towards raising awareness of how to hold their sit-in legally, as they are facing threats that can negatively affect the revolution. "The people who live in Al-Tagheer Square area complained to the police that they can't continue their normal lives because of the protest, and some of them are getting annoyed," Al-Arasi explained. "We need to understand the laws to avoid giving anyone the chance to stop us."

### Foud Dahaba

Another point of view being voiced by some protesters is that the anti-government protests were planned by the JMP from the beginning, and that they misled the independent youth to serve their own aims of achieving power. "How would we know if it was a pure young revolution that had no political games from the beginning? I think maybe it was planned by the Joint Meeting Parties to put pressure on the ruling party. So they sent their young members to lead in the streets as independent young people, so they can reach some political agreement with the ruling party," said Yasmin Ali, another participant at Al-Tagheer

Square.

Foud Dahaba, an MP from the Islah Party who resigned on Feb. 23 this year and joined the sit-in at Al-Tagheer Square, told the Yemen Times that his resignation was because the parliament had lost its legitimacy: "The parliament has been illegal since 23 Feb. 2009, and that's why I chose to resign on the same date in 2011."

Dahaba said that the people no longer acknowledge the parliament, as they are asking to remove the regime which includes all the constitutional organizations in the country.

Dahaba, who is a public figure at Al-Tagheer Square, denied that the Islah party controlled the stage or the square. "The media committee does not control the stage, they just organize it. Even when they check the text that will be announced, it is so they can make sure nothing contrary to the revolutionary aims goes out," Dahaba explained.

Alaa Al-Jarban from the Yemeni Youth Initiative, called for reorganizing the committees based upon independence. "The committees have to be independent people who don't have membership in any party. That was the way it was at the beginning [of the protests], but somehow something changed in the middle, and we need to rearrange everything again," said Al-Jarban.

About the tactics on how to differentiate between the independent people and parties' members, Al-Jarban said "It's hard to differentiate but we will start with those whom we know and trust, and we will also distribute questionnaires."

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# Oil prices soar raising concerns over the cost of basic commodities

By: Iona Craig

SANA'A, Feb. 27 — Amid the growing turmoil in Libya, oil prices last week jumped nearly 10 percent to their highest levels since August 2008, boosting Yemeni oil revenues.

Brent crude oil rose to over USD 112 a barrel on the London-based ICE Futures Europe Exchange, while New York futures surged to a near two and a half year high last Thursday. Libya's oil output was estimated to be cut by as much as two-thirds. Oil fell below USD 100 a barrel after announcements that Saudi Arabia, the US and the International Energy Agency would compensate for any supply shortfalls from Libya.

The increase will have both negative and positive impacts in Yemen, according to Adel Al-Ashdal, economist at the General Investment Authority.

"The best thing is it might lead to a surplus of oil revenues," said Al-Ashdal. "The negative thing is that when the oil price increases, basic commodities go up as Yemen is an importing country."

The economist explained that the price of imported goods would rise in the wake of the oil price hike on increased transportation, energy and

manufacturing costs, causing a knock on effect to the price of goods such as wheat, rice, sugar and dried beans.

"To utilize the surplus of revenue the government should subsidize the increase in basic commodities," said Al-Ashdal.

Last year exports amounted to just under USD 6 billion, while imports dropped by nearly 15 percent to USD 7.5 billion, according to the CIA World Factbook.

World Bank figures show that Yemen exports around 85 percent of its daily oil output of 298,000 barrels, with oil exports accounting for 65 percent of Yemen's fiscal revenue.

The recent unrest in Libya was sparked by the arrest of a human rights campaigner earlier this month. Violent protests began in the eastern city of Benghazi, and rapidly spread to other cities. President Muammar Gaddafi, Libya's ruler for more than 40 years, has used aircraft and helicopters to attack protesters. Several Libyan diplomats have resign in protest. Gaddafi insists that he will not step down and remains in control of the capital, Tripoli.

The Yemeni Rial has remained steady against the USD at around YR 214 to the dollar.

# Yemen ruled unsafe for Olympic football Qualifier

By: Yemen Times Staff

SANA'A, Feb. 27 — Local fans could be denied a rare chance to support their national football team after a ruling by FIFA to postpone Yemen's qualifying match for the 2012 Olympics because of pro-democracy protests raging in the capital.

FIFA says both legs of the first round against Singapore must be played on 'neutral territory' to ensure that matches proceed "in a totally safe and secure environment."

Yemen was scheduled to host Singapore on Feb. 16 in Sana'a but the match was delayed by a week because of violent protests demanding the removal of President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

Fifa then pushed the tie back for a second time on Friday, adding that it will work with the Asian Football Confederation to find a neutral host city and new match dates, which are likely to be in mid-March.

A source at the Ministry of Youth and

Sports Ministry told the Yemen Times that they were disappointed by FIFA's ruling but that it was 'understandable' given the current security situation in the country.

"We understand the need to play Yemen's home leg at a neutral venue to ensure fairness for both teams. This is an exceptional situation because of what is happening in Yemen," the source said.

In November 2010, Yemen hosted the gulf cup, a major regional sports tournament involving eight teams from the Gulf Arab oil-producing nations. The tournament was a success and went off peacefully despite fears from regional security officials that the event would pose a tempting target for terrorists.

Despite Yemen's dismal performance, crashing out in the first round, Yemeni officials championed the tournament as a major success for the country. President Saleh called it "a political and moral victory for Yemen."



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Yemen Times interviews Leslie Campbell from the National Democratic Institute

# “The international community is watching Yemen today like a hawk.”

Leslie Campbell is the National Democratic Institute's (NDI) senior associate and regional director for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). He joined NDI in 1994 and has directed the institute's programs in the MENA region since 1996.

Mr. Campbell has overseen a vast expansion of NDI's programs in the Middle East. Nine permanent offices have been established and dozens of programs developed that furnish assistance with political, civic and governance reform, and development throughout the Arab world.

Nadia Al-Sakkaf interviewed Campbell on his recent visit to Yemen on his role in the national dialogue between the ruling party and opposition coalition.

Campbell is in Sana'a on a mission to mediate between the ruling General People's Congress (GPC) and the opposition coalition the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP). He met with the president on Feb. 23 after extensive meetings with the opposition leaders.

“The idea is to promote a different path now the path is moving toward more violent confrontation and stand-offs. What we are trying to do is get people from all sides to perceive a different way forward,” explained Campbell.

His understanding of the situation is

either an agreement is reached through which compromises are made on both sides and a confrontation is postponed until 2013 through the electoral process, or reaching a peaceful transition of power sooner than that.

“Yemen has the potential to be one of the rare examples in the region where a peaceful rotation of power takes place,” he said.

Through his meeting with JMP leaders Campbell was under the impression that they present a disciplined united front that knows what it wants. But what he thinks will happen is that both sides have to have their energy dissipated. This is why we will see more demonstrations in Yemen where both the GPC and the JMP will mobilize their people to show their strength. Campbell believes once they are able to do that, they will reach an agreement and the protests will die down considerably.

“The killings at protests will have to be addressed in a way satisfactory to Yemenis. I am talking about the process, not the details. It is Yemenis who will need to sit down and figure out how to run the country,” he said.

According to Campbell, one of the most important fundamentals that needs to be adhered to is people's right to protest and freedom of expression which is a universal value. This has to be endorsed throughout the dialogue process and it is. Free and fair elections with international observers are equally important, but all these are part of the agreement process. His role is to help construct a framework for reconciliation.

### The dialogue

Currently the dialogue, in principle based on the February agreement of 2006, focuses on six points:

Freedom of expression (including protesting) is guaranteed if done by peaceful means without violence.

Ceasing public demonstrations and attacks on the media to create a better environment for returning to dialogue.

Conducting a national dialogue beginning with the quartet committee, then to the committee of 30, and finally to the 200 member committee.

Formation of a national coalition government to oversee the parliamentary



Leslie Campbell

election and to guarantee its conduct in a free, fair and transparent way under local, national and international monitoring.

The President commits to not running in 2013 and reaffirms what he announced in the two-chamber meeting, that is no extension of his presidency, no hereditary succession and no renewal of his term.

The President is committed constitutionally to preserve and maintain security and stability in the homeland and to maintain the tranquility of Yemeni citizens.

Although there is no specific time frame for the elections, Campbell thinks that it should happen this year. “If they run well it will make a difference and create a change for people and provide clear alternatives,” he said. It is then up to the Yemeni people to decide on whom they elect as president.

“What needs to happen is the combined opposition should put forward a credible person. This is the role of civil society and civic education. There is a lot of work that has to be done between now and 2013 for Yemenis to understand that this is a big choice,” he said.

Campbell says he is optimistic about dialogue because the president has agreed to both the steps and the timetable to leave. The question is whether this is good enough for the opposition or not?

The answer to this depends on who the opposition is. If it is the JMP they

are already in agreement, and according to Campbell's meetings with several of the coalition's leaders, they agree on 2013 as the timeframe for Saleh's regime end. However, it may not be good enough today for the youth and Southern Movement.

“But if people chose this path of peaceful transition then you introduce all of those points in the negotiation process, whether it is the southern grievances or the demands of the youth,” he explained.

Campbell is optimistic because he sees that both the GPC and the JMP seem to agree on the same issues such as the president leaving at the end of his term and no inheritance of power. He believes that Saleh is sincere in his decision not to run again this time because not only has the president said this locally in front of various local institutions, but also in front of the international community.

### Unclear alternatives

Although the opposition parties have displayed their wide grassroots support and debated strongly in the political discussions, Campbell was not certain that they have a clear plan as what to do if Saleh actually decided to leave tomorrow.

“As it is, it is not the JMP who is asking Saleh to leave tomorrow, it is the youth in the streets. I don't think the JMP is ready to handle the situation if Saleh does this,” he said.

Currently the streets are mobilized mainly by political parties, but they are also mobilized by the youth and civil society which are yet not strong enough, in Campbell's view, to really make a change in Yemen's current situation.

The youth are driven by a feeling of euphoria derived from the experiences of Tunisia and Egypt. This is why even when the JMP and the GPC actually sign an agreement, the protests may not die down right away because the youth are feeling euphoric and idealistic.

“I don't like to see people dying especially when I am not sure what they are dying for,” said Campbell on the violence against protestors. “There are many struggles in the world worth dying for, but if the question is between president Saleh and the complete unknown, then I don't think violence is the right path.”

Another point is about the involvement of tribal leaders in the political dialogue. Campbell realizes that there is an element of tribal undercurrents. “There is a subtle threat out there of tribal mobilization. But we met with Sadeq Al-Ahmar who has also met with president. He assured us that he wants to bring the national dialogue committee together with the president without mobilizing the tribal forces,” he said.

According to Campbell, Sadeq Al-Ahmar does not like the accusation that the Hashed tribe is mobilizing the protests. There had been a meeting of many tribal sheikhs at Sadeq's house presenting papers on their vision for Yemen. One paper was about a negotiated transition in 2013, which Campbell thought to be very good.

### The president gets it

Campbell believes that President Saleh today genuinely understands the situation and is willing to take a comprehensive look at the country from the larger perspective. This is why he has agreed to talk to the various stakeholders including the Southern Movement and the Houthis, which he did not in the past.

“Saleh has got the message. No more business as usual,” said Campbell. Saleh is now allowing the process to play out. It is up to civil society to come in and make the democracy a real one. “Without civil society, media and youth organizations, change cannot happen.” The upheaval in the Arab world is created by civil society and Campbell believes this will change its significance.

The Preparatory Committee for National Dialogue's original demands back in 2006 included issues such as decentralization and fighting corruption, along with the political demands such as changing the electoral system and Saleh not running again.

And Saleh has agreed to it all, although the talk today is mainly on the

political front. Issues of decentralization and corruption have taken a step back on the priority list in favor of agreement between the two political parties.

“Currently these issues [of corruption, decentralization ect.] are probably not the deal breaker,” said Campbell.

However, while the protests in the streets are not the same as in Egypt and Tunisia, and are not perceived as a direct threat to the regime, they are growing in momentum.

“What they [the protesting youth] have done is change the debate. It is no longer possible for the parties to simply have a political deal. They [the GPC and JMP] have to incorporate the bigger issues, such as corruption, economic challenges and hope. The protesters are demanding dignity and a better life for the people,” he added.

This is why there has been several concessions on the president's part that directly affect Yemenis livelihood, but it will eventually be the responsibility of the negotiating parties to make space in their agreements to review the grievances of the people.

### The role of the international community

One of the points of dispute between the opposition coalition and the ruling party is the international community's level of involvement. The opposition wants guarantees from the international community that the ruling party will live up to its promises this time.

“The JMP wants us [the international community] to be in the room. But the international community doesn't want to be in the room. It does not want to interfere,” said Campbell.

As an alternative, explained Campbell, what they can do is act like a sounding board. Civil society can monitor the dialogue process, just like in election monitoring, and then present reports to the media and the international community. In turn, the community will make comments and recommendations and this is the guarantee the international community can provide through following the progress from outside.

Despite Saleh's history of saying he will not run for president, and then participating in the elections, Campbell was certain it will not happen again 2013.

“He made the promise to the world. And the whole world is watching him. The international community is watching Yemen today like a hawk. They don't want Yemen to descend into chaos and the elections are very important for the international community,” said Campbell.

“I really care about what happens to Yemen. It is an interesting place which will go through big change, I hope with very little violence.”

### The 4, 16, and 200 person committees

- To facilitate dialogue as efficiently as possible, the Yemeni government has created three dialogue committees of varying sizes and have included different parties and groups in each.
- The top committee includes four members, two from the GPC and two from the JMP.
- Representing the GPC are Abdul Kareem Iryani (the president's political advisor) and Abd Rabo Mansoor Hadi (the vice president). The JMP is represented by Abdul Wahab Al-Ansi (general secretary to the Islah Party) and Yasin Saeed No'man (general secretary to the Socialist Party).
- What this committee agrees upon is sent to a 16 person committee made up of eight members of the GPC and eight members of the JMP.
- Legislation that is agreed upon by this committee is sent to a 200 person committee made up of members of the GPC, the JMP, the Houthis, the Southern Movement, representatives of civil society organizations and social dignitaries.
- Once the 200 member committee agrees upon legislation, it is sent back up through the two smaller committees before it is voted on by the entire parliament.

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# Say CHEESE!

In a small rural directorate, 18 kilometers west of Taiz, live Yemen's most famous cheese merchants. These men have inherited secret and delicious recipes, passed down from generation to generation, and they now sell their expensive produce all across the country. In fact, the special cheeses of Maqbanah have even reached the shores of the US, Britain, France, China and other Gulf countries, though only as cherished gifts from Yemeni friends.

By: Mohammed Sa'ad \*

In Taiz governorate, the most famous cheese-producing villages are Araf, Awshaq, Akhuz, Bargah, Barah, Jumah, Mukyas, Suayra, Kamb and Hajda.

Customers buy the cheese from different local markets for either domestic consumption or as gifts for foreign friends.

Ali Qaseem, a shepherd who produces a celebrated variety of cheese in the Araf area of Maqbanah, said, "The price of cheese tends to decrease in the summer because of the fertility of farms and the heavy rains, which lead to the increased production of milk. In the winter, the price of cheese increases due to a lack of water and grass for grazing. Nevertheless, the price of a piece of cheese usually varies between YR 400 and YR 4,000, depending on its size."

## Marketing cheese

Abdullah Alshamiri, a cheese merchant in the Shineni market of Taiz, said "There are two different kinds of cheese that we buy from producers, generally ranging between YR 1,500 and YR 3,000." He also said that many of his weekly clients are connoisseurs who select products on the basis of quality, size and hygienic standards.

According to Mohammed Sulatan, who also works at Shineni market, customers usually buy sheep's cheese more often than cow's cheese. Prices differ from market to market and is highly dependent upon quality. The highest price for one of his cheeses is YR2,000, while the cheapest is YR 500.

Zaid Ahmed Al-Madari, a cheese merchant at Barah market, emphasized that "The cheese brought in from Araf is of the highest quality because it is produced from livestock milk and is extremely fresh. It usually remains on the market for no longer than three to five days. The cheeses from Awshaq are next and they can remain fresh for months, especially when stored in cold places."

Al-Madari continued by saying that, "We receive weekly shipments of Sawaba cheese from the shepherds of Araf and Awshaq. Sawaba refers to a variety of cheese that takes one week to produce. Its sales are dependent upon the availability of quality livestock milk."

Zaid Mutea Al-Thurafi, another cheese merchant in Barah market, believes that Awshaqi cheese – not Araf – is the most popular nationwide. He also sells this variety of cheese to clients in Saudi Arabia, mostly during holidays and on special occasions.

Yaseer Ghaleb, a shopper at Barah market, said that "Cheese usually arrives on a daily basis from Maqbanah and Mauza directorates. Awshaqi cheese is sold on Saturdays and Sundays, while Araf varieties are sold on Monday, Thursday and Friday."

Cheese zahauik is a mixture of cheese and tomatoes. In Taiz, many youth make it every day, as it is a key ingredient in fish dishes.

Bab Mousa is one of the most famous places in Taiz where cheese zahauik is consumed, mostly by workers, students, qat chewers and security forces. Citizens of the upper classes tend to eat it at restaurants downtown, though cheese zahauik is generally an ingredient for the poor.

## A women's business

Naturally, women play their own part in the production and marketing of Yemeni cheese, eggs and margarine. For example, Mariam and her 12-year old daughter Fatima sell cheese in a rural market. She said that she chose to sell Sawaba cheese because of its high quality and the excellent price that it commands. She said, "My cheese is hugely popular because it is fresh and usually made from livestock

milk. It generally costs between YR 500 and YR 1,000 for a single piece."

Mariam lives in Shameer village in Maqbanah directorate. She earns a living for her five family members and has 10 livestock that she milks every day for her own personal wealth. It's an excellent example of how some Yemeni women are combating poverty in their households.

Aisha Alrai, a cheese-maker, describes the steps of cheese-making in this way: "The process must take place very quickly. You milk the livestock and divide the milk into several containers. You then add several drops of fahl, which is milk taken from baby livestock that have been killed and left for fifteen minutes. After that, the chemical reactions begin and the milk starts to deposit. After one day, the cheese is removed from its container and left to dry in a room made of palm fronds for a whole week. Salt is then added as a preservative. Finally, the cheese is put through a process of kapi, which means that it is smoked on the wood of a sidr tree, so as to give it a good smell. A similar process is employed when making yogurt, so as to give it a unique flavor."

Aisha doesn't sell her cheese to any particular merchant, but rather to the inhabitants of neighboring villages. She has a total 150 livestock and she moves



Customers buy the cheese from different local markets for either domestic consumption or as gifts for foreign friends.

constantly, so as to ensure that her animals have proper water and grass.

Hasan Abduh Bagash, a former member of the local council in Maqbanah directorate, told the Yemen Times that "Many areas in the directorate are famous for cheese-making. A research

team from the French organization DYA has done studies in the region so as to learn how the industry might develop. One member of the team has said that the study will be handed over to the Ministry of Agriculture, as well as to a European Union program that supports Yemeni

cheese-making. She also recommended that we support the industry by establishing a laboratory, which DYA is unfortunately unable to do. As such, we must fund such a laboratory ourselves."

\* Courtesy of Trade Magazine



People produce a celebrated variety of cheese in the Araf area.



Yemeni women combat poverty in their homes by selling cheese.



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# The Children's Parliament in Yemen

**“The Children's Parliament is a platform from which we can advocate for our rights as children.” – Sharuq Al-Anisi, member of the Children's Parliament.**

By: Fatima Al-Ajel

She was confident while asking the parliamentary representatives about the role government should play in improving children's health-care. She supported her questions with statistics, so as to illustrate the real situation faced by children in Yemen.

Sharuq Al-Anisi, a 14-year old from Sana'a, is a member of the Children's Parliament for the 2010-2012 period, and a representative for the parliament's orphans. She is a regular participant in the meetings of the Children's Parliament, which held its most recent session from the 14th to the 16th of Feb.

2011. This session was about healthcare and the nutritional challenges of children in Yemen. All of the parliament's members were deeply interested in the topic and were keen to discuss it with the relevant agencies. “It is our role to make the protection of children from infectious diseases, drugs and expired food a serious issue for the authorities,” Sharuq explained during the session.

### Sharuq's experience with the Children's Parliament

Since she joined the Children's Parliament in 2010, Sharuq has been raising awareness of different problems faced by children from her school and community. She is a very talented actor and singer, and she uses her skills as a tool for advocacy. “The banning of early marriage,” says Sharuq, “is one of the main issues I am currently addressing. Last year, I facilitated orientation sessions for 70 girls in my school, teaching them the negative effects of early marriage. Now I plan to do more. I will do sketches and compose songs with the help of my friends, and then perform shows in schools and in the community.”

### Early marriage and the child's right to protection

In 2009, the focus of the Children's Parliament was on how

to protect children from sexual abuse, specifically within the early marriage. Endemic cultural practices such as early marriage, coupled with negative attitudes towards girls faced with sexual abuse and exploitation, undermine the protection of children. The practice of early marriage is common amongst a majority of Yemen's rural population and it can affect girls as young as 10 years old. There is currently no law that defines the minimum age of marriage in Yemen. The draft law only stipulates that girls should not marry until they have reached sexual maturity. Recent legislation from the Yemeni Parliament has suggested a minimum age of 17 for all girls, but this has been challenged by some hardliners.

In the beginning, it was difficult for Sharuq to advocate, as there were many people who tried to dissuade her from discussing certain issues publicly. However, she believes strongly that early marriage is the primary cause of many problems affecting children in Yemen. “When a girl marries and has a baby at an early age,” explains Sharuq, “her child will most likely suffer from poor health and malnutrition, and it will be difficult for the young mother to care for the child. If the minimum age for marriage were legislated at 18, girls will be mature enough to look after and raise their children, thereby improving the general wellbeing of Yemeni youth.”

### The history of the Children's Parliament in Yemen

The Children's Parliament has existed since 2000 and it has been supported by the Democratic School since 2002. The Parliament has held five elections – one every two years – organized by the Democratic School. Parliament members are elected according to a democratic process that accords with Yemeni election laws. Um Kalthum Al-Shami, the Children's Parliament Coordinator, explains how the parliament functions as an advocacy platform for all Yemeni children: “Through the election of one member from each governorate – in-



Children's parliament

cluding orphans, children with disabilities and youth belonging to marginalized groups – all children in Yemen are represented.” The parliament regularly meets with government departments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in Yemen, and spends its various sessions calling for these bodies to be more active in the protection of children's rights.

In 2008, the parliament developed an alternative report on the situation of children in Yemen, which was later presented to the public. In 2010, the parliament received assistance to carry out a national campaign intended to illustrate the impact of early marriage of the lives and health of young girls. Similarly, parliamentarians have visited internally displaced peoples' (IDP) camps in Sa'ada, Amran and the city of Haradh, to learn more about issues that IDP children are facing in the northern

governorates of Yemen.

### Children's rights and the Children's Parliament

Every year, the Children's Parliament adopts a specific advocacy issue related to the status of children in Yemen. This issue is explored through awareness campaigns, meetings with the government and various NGOs, familiarization with mass media and field visits to different areas in Yemen where children are experiencing serious violations of their rights. Health and nutrition is the main issue for discussion this year. The new parliament's first session concluded on February 16th, having produced a list of key recommendations for government and other related agencies. According to the parliament, the task of the government is to develop a national action plan for tackling malnutrition that involves children in its awareness

campaigns.

The Children's Parliament has recommended that the Ministry of Health put more emphasis on children who live in dire circumstances, including children affected by armed conflict and children living in care centers. The parliament should coordinate with the Ministry of Education to incorporate health and nutritional information into the national curriculum, to develop and strengthen the role of school-based health and nutrition programs, and to advocate for the importance of breastfeeding. In addition, the recommendations call for the Ministry of Finance to allocate more funding towards nutrition programs. “This is a part of Save the Children's global ‘Every One’ campaign, which aims to reduce child mortality by two-thirds by the year 2015. This would save the lives of almost six million children each year,” explains Al-Khamisi.



Sharuq Al-Anisi

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## VACANCIES



Title: Driver  
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Under the general supervision of the Project Manager, the incumbent will be responsible for the safe operation of IRD Yemen transport, passenger safety, care and maintenance of vehicles and related equipment, its care, as well as vehicle use and security under a UNHCR funded Community Services Assistance to Refugees Project.

### Main Responsibilities

- Drive safely and in accordance with the posted traffic laws
- Assure that IRD staff and other persons are transported in a safe and secure manner
- Ensure that the IRD vehicles are maintained in good working order and properly cared for
- Maintain vehicle log book/s
- Keep the vehicle in good working shape and maintain the required records
- Report any vehicle damage or malfunction
- Undertake the delivery of mail, materials, and equipment.
- Undertake other duties as assigned by the supervisor

### Required Qualifications

1. Yemeni national
2. Completed High School education
3. Excellent driving skills, a safe driving record and a current valid driving license
4. Previous driving working experience with NGOs or other IOs desired
5. Some knowledge of English
6. Ability to work effectively in a fast-paced, stressful environment. Must be flexible, willing to perform other duties and work irregular hours.

Title: Early Childhood Development Specialist

Location: Sana'a  
Terms: Full Time Position

### General Description of Role

Under the general supervision of the Project Manager, the incumbent will hold a new position and be responsible for activities related to early childhood development in community based day care centres in the refugee communities of Sana'a under a UNHCR funded Community Services Assistance to Refugees Project.

### Main Responsibilities

- Develop and carry out training and orientation sessions for carers, mothers and outreach workers to support refugee community-based day care centres for refugees
- Develop and provide operational plans and develop short-term plans to support 30 community based day care centres
- Implement objectives and milestones as jointly determined with the project manager
- Serve as an expert in the field of infant/toddler development; program implementation and provide expertise in Early Childhood Development to IRD
- Be accountable for achieving results described in the short-term plans developed in coordination with the project manager
- Conduct regular monitoring of community based day care centres in various field locations in Sana'a
- Identify and implement appropriate ways to support refugee community based day care centres
- Map refugee community based day care centres around Sana'a
- Register children attending the daycare centres
- Collect, report and analyse data for project evaluation
- Perform any other duties that the supervisor may assign

### Required Qualifications

1. Good knowledge of English
2. Previous work experience with children
3. Previous experience in health and childhood development, preferably with an NGO
4. Ability to work effectively in a fast-paced, stressful environment. Must be flexible, willing to perform other duties and work irregular hours.
5. Strong interpersonal and cross-cultural skills and ‘team player’ attitude

Candidates are requested to apply on-line with their CV and cover letter at: [irdyemen@irdglobal.org](mailto:irdyemen@irdglobal.org) by 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2010.



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Prof. Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf,  
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OUR  
OPINIONA story  
of two rivals

Once upon a time there were two rivals. One was called GPC and the other JMP. GPC was much more powerful and experienced in life, while JMP was closer to the people and had relatively more credibility.

However, the two rivals competed for one thing: power. What they wanted was to control resources and have command over the people, whom they used extensively in their struggle against each other.

One day, JMP realized that he can use the people's aspirations for a better life and present himself as their savior. He also realized, being the underdog, that he can build on the regional momentum where other underdogs have succeeded in their struggle against points of power.

Yet, GPC was very smart.

He understood the dynamics of the struggle and decided to play it wisely and provide concessions and compromises in order to reach an agreement.

But while he was at the negotiating table with JMP, he also sent some of his men to beat up JMP's supporters in a show of power. As if he was saying, "it's true that I want to reach an agreement with you, but you need to remember who is boss around here."

Eventually, after flexing their muscles and after their supporters, mainly the JMP's, were beaten black and blue, the two rivals reached an agreement and signed a pact for power distribution.

Finally the area saw relative peace with the two rivals becoming partners in command.

While they were patting each others' shoulders and celebrating their new found friendship a new contender was being born.

She used to be one of JMP's supporters, but was let down by its deal signing and change of attitude. Unlike JMP, she was not seeking to share power; she just wanted a fair life and dignity for herself and others.

Also, being one of the normal people, she knew exactly what they wanted and understood their suffering. Soon she lead another movement against the old rivals and pushed them out.

JMP desperately tried to revive his old face which he used before tasting power, but it was too late. The people had lost faith in him and put him in the same category as GPC.

Like any fictional story, the good defeated the bad and they lived happily ever after.

The motto of this story is: never trust your leaders if they demand power for themselves, even if they seem the underdogs, for they will eventually let you down.

Nadia Al-Sakkaf

## What to do about Yemen?

By: Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi  
For Foreign Policy Journal

While there has been much analysis on the recent uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt, comparatively little attention has been devoted to the situation in Yemen, where there have been ongoing protests, particularly in the south, against the government of President Ali Abdullah Saleh, who has announced that he will not seek another term in office. This raises two important questions. What is the present state of Western governments' policies towards Yemen? How, if at all, should they be changed? These problems are urgent to resolve in light of the active Al-Qaeda insurgency ('Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula' - AQAP) in the south of the country, which is likely to have been responsible for the failed Christmas Day bombing attempt by Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab.

Currently, the main financial backer of Saleh's government is the US, which has dramatically increased military aid to Yemen since the failed Christmas plot. This aid has effectively been doubled and could well reach \$250 million in 2011, excluding the substantial amounts of development aid that will probably increase too. The US also occasionally carries out drone attacks in counter-terrorism operations. Despite such measures, however, the country has become progressively more unstable, as Al-Qaeda now has a well-established foothold in the south, which is itself mostly in the hands of separatist movements that Saleh failed to integrate into the political system after the Yemeni civil war in the 1990s.

One useful way to look into the failures of Western policies in Yemen is through examining the Wikileaks cables, which show that US diplomats were actually well aware of Saleh's double game of diverting aid to suppress internal opponents. For example, U.S. ambassador Stephen Seche noted in one cable that Saleh was using a commando group (funded and trained by Britain and the US since 2002 to fight Al-Qaeda) and perhaps American Humvees against Houthis. The Houthis are a Shi'a movement in the north of the country that began a revolt in 2004, primarily in opposition to what they regard as discrimination by Saleh's government against the north in terms of jobs, development and lack of political autonomy. Although Qatar was able to mediate a ceasefire between the Houthis and Saleh's government back in August, a lasting peace agreement failed to materialise. Seche himself merely protests vainly against what he rightly sees as the Yemeni government's misuse of US military aid.

Incidentally, the cables dispel the myth that US officials regard Al-Qaeda as being in any sort of alliance with the Houthis. For example, in a meeting in September 2009 with White House counter-terrorism advisor John Brennan, Saleh specifically pressured the US to provide armoured vehicles, airplanes and ambulances for his campaign against the Houthis. Brennan rejected Saleh's pleas, affirming that 'the USG [U.S. government] is prohibited by law from

providing military support to the [Yemeni government] to be used against the Houthis since the USG considers the group a domestic insurgency'.

Meanwhile, Saleh has been remarkably tolerant of Al-Qaeda figures in Yemen. At lunch with a US envoy in 2007, he openly bragged about having met with Jamal Badawi for a chat only two weeks earlier. Badawi was the chief Al-Qaeda member responsible for orchestrating the bombing of the USS Cole in 2000 that killed seventeen people. Though Badawi's whereabouts are unknown today, it is clear that Saleh has been pursuing a strategy of attempting to co-opt Al-Qaeda leaders in Yemen rather than crack down on them. When one also takes into account the diversion of Western support to crush internal opposition, is it any wonder that Al-Qaeda is so well entrenched in the country, in contrast to an estimate of only 50-100 Al-Qaeda fighters in Afghanistan?

So what is the best course of action for Western governments vis-à-vis Yemen? Given the corruption and unpopularity of Saleh's regime, together with its unreliability as an ally in counter-terrorism operations against AQAP, it seems that the most sensible option is to simply end aid to his government and allow it to fall at the hands of the current wave of protests in Yemen.

One might object that such a move would instead help AQAP by creating a power vacuum. This would certainly be a risk, but not if the West backs the Houthis, who are themselves opposed to Al-Qaeda, with the latter now having declared jihad against the Houthis in an audio message posted on the Internet. As Saeed Ali al-Shihri, the deputy leader of AQAP, puts it: 'to our Sunni fellows in northern Yemeni provinces of Saada, Al-Jouf and Amran, we (AQAP) announced jihad (holy war) against Iranian-backed Houthi Shiite advocates'. In this context, it should be pointed out that there is no evidence that Iran is backing the Houthi rebels. Even so, with Western support and guarantees for protection, the Houthis could well serve as a containment force, diverting AQAP's attention from waging international jihad and spreading beyond Yemen into the Arabian Peninsula, since the group's primary goal is to unite Yemen as an Islamist state.

On the other hand, the US should end drone attacks in Yemen (where overt military intervention, as in Somalia and Pakistan, undermines our own security interests), whilst Western governments should make it clear to AQAP that any further aggression will be met with severe retaliation. Furthermore, if our governments are to win over the Houthis, who are at present resentful of Western support for Saleh, they should also put pressure on Saudi Arabia to stop conducting airstrikes against Houthis in Yemeni territory, a fact of which US officials have long been aware.

By adopting a strategy of containment as outlined, it does not follow that AQAP will be eradicated from Yemen, but we will at least be able to safeguard our security interests against any threats emanating from Islamist militants in that country. For too long, review of policy towards Yemen has been neglected. A major shift is desperately needed.

## Yemen trying to explode

By: Joseph Mayton

Yemen is not Egypt. Still, thousands of demonstrators have taken to the streets in the country in an effort to force President Ali Abdullah Saleh to step down after decades in power.

"Yesterday Tunisia, today Egypt, tomorrow Yemen," demonstrators chanted on Saturday.

The government, however, moved quickly to quell the unrest sparked by the fall of Saleh's fellow dictator in Egypt, Hosni Mubarak. According to local human rights groups, anti-government demonstrators in the capital, Sanaa, were attacked by men armed with knives and affiliated with the government.

"Security forces brought out military and police in civilian clothes with knives, and they went into the crowd and started to attack the demonstrators," said Khaled Al-Anesi, a Yemeni human rights lawyer, to CNN.

Saleh has been in power in Yemen since 1978 and last week promised to step down when his term ends in 2013, hoping to appease demonstrators. He also promised not to pass power to his son.

Both Yemen and Algeria saw demonstrations and clashes with police on Saturday, the day after Mubarak resigned as Egypt's president, a post he held for thirty years.

At least 10 people were detained Friday night after anti-government demonstrators in Sanaa celebrated Mubarak's resignation, according to Human Rights Watch.

## The struggle forward

The difficulty for Yemen is that there are two conflicting opposition movements in the country that makes one unified force against Saleh extremely

tenuous and difficult. In the southern part of the country, there is a movement to secede and form "South Arabia."

Obviously, this counters any nationwide protest movement aimed at ousting Saleh.

In Egypt, all Egyptians formed a cross-section of its 80 million people in demanding an end to Mubarak's reign. In Yemen, this is proving difficult.

"Yemen's opposition is still figuring out how to deal with Mubarak stepping down. The anti-government protest in Sanaa today wasn't huge and reports of clashes between pro and anti government factions have been exaggerated," freelance American journalist Laura Kasinof told Bikya Masr on Saturday.

She said the opposition does not yet have the desire to directly confront the government security in Yemen's Tahrir Square, "because many people know that violence in Yemen will escalate extremely quickly."

"Everyone is armed here, and it is believed that many of the pro-Saleh guys in Tahrir have guns in their cars," she added.

## Shows of support

Still, the Arab world is watching with anticipation. Egyptians, a day removed from the end of their dictator, have already begun to throw their support behind the nascent protests in Yemen and elsewhere, including Algeria.

"We will support freedom against dictators. We know the costs can be high, but the result is sweet and the celebrations are a lot of fun," said Yussif Tarek, a 20-year-old Cairo University student.

He said that Yemen and Algeria are different situations, with a history of violence. "but if the nations' people unite, they will win like we did and like Tunisia before."

## COMMON SENSE

The age of Yemen's  
disillusionment

Yemen probably has one of the most corrupt regimes in the world, with development indicators across the board placing the country among the bottom thirty countries out of some 200 countries. When trying to assess the situation in Yemen, one must think that this is not the Earth anymore but have landed on another planet. Only misdeeds and evil prevail in this land of misfortune and there is absolutely no room for right or good! Over the span of three and a half decades, a metamorphoses of Yemeni society unfolded from the very innocent and decent society that existed in pre and early post revolutionary years, (when Yemen was actually still under civilian rule) and the short lived tranquility enjoyed in the mid-Seventies, when Yemen was still headed by the more cultured and relatively popular "colonel" Ibrahim Al-Hamidy. The latter, however, got too overconfident of himself and was overthrown by his own military Chief of Staff and a few military thugs (including Saleh!), in 1978. The latter successor (Saleh's predecessor, Colonel Ahmed Al-Ghashmi) was bizarrely blown to pieces 7 months later, and Saleh took over by the barrels of tanks and Saudi funding [which incidentally bankrolled the overthrows that toppled the civilian Government (1968 - 1973) by the Hamedy regime, the bloody coup that brought the short lived Ghashmi regime and the takeover of Ali Abdullah Saleh in Midyear 1978.

Since then, it has been downhill all the way, and everything simply deteriorated. Values were expeditiously and systematically written off, not to mention ethics and a sincere religious moral fabric that, prior to all this period of political tumult, almost kept Yemen free of any of the crimes one finds readily in more advanced western and even some traditional eastern societies (You could go through the market places at lunchtime during the midday break and find most shops sufficing with a piece of cloth to cover the door or merchandise on display outside and you could walk around with a cloth sack full of money over one's back and would never think of being robbed).

The family oligarchy that took over the helms of authority, consisting of the President's close relatives of brothers and extended family links of second cousins and in-laws held on firmly, using every trick in the book and every Yemeni Riyal in the Government treasury to ensure his continued grip on the country.

The regime of Saleh continued to keep various factions in the country pitted against each other in violent conflicts almost throughout the past thirty three years, with the Saleh led Government taking sides interchangeably from faction to faction, as political advantage would seem to dictate. He was lucky on the regional and international arena, with Saudi Arabia always taking the lead in funding the deficit of the Yemeni budget and bolstering and finding comfort in keeping Yemen in continuous disarray and violent conflict. Yemen's violence has almost been uninterrupted since Saleh took over the helms, relying on the old dreaded code of authoritarian rule: divide and rule.

On another note, the Saleh regime allowed a complex elaborate network of corruption to become entrenched, while his relatives were given full liberty to exploit their clannish association to the maximum and plunder the Government and even private assets as they liked, with the law actually exempting them from any legal prosecution or trial. Opposition was always punitively subdued. Some of the most influential people inside and outside government have been victims of still unresolved premature death. The Saleh regime has turned the social contract into a perpetual mandate to just about break every moral, legal and even religious rule or concept. The social fabric of the society was corrupted by rendering the rule of law and civil order as subservient to the justice for the strong, and the whimsical and very expensive (while being seldom effective) rulings supposedly based on tribal customs and traditions, most of which have succumbed to the greed of spongy tribal chiefs. Even the honorable tribal and social traditions and customs, which Saleh claims to uphold, have been twisted beyond repair. In the past, these tribal codes were replete with a chivalrous honor code and used to even be a healthy social valve that prevented Yemen from falling into degenerate social disequilibrium and loss of conscientiousness, when government was non-existent, which happened frequently in Yemen's erratic political history.

One can easily state that Yemen has literally reached the bottom of social and communal disorientation and disharmony and simply cannot withstand any further plunge into poverty, severe repression and lawlessness, most of which are the fruits of the enduring reign of the Saleh regime. If anyone has failed to look at modern Yemeni history with more scrutiny, they might have overlooked the ominous reality that even terrorism is one of the nurtured byproducts of the Saleh regime.

Most sagacious Yemenis would not hesitate to point out that there is no scope for the regime to reform itself and bring the country on a more stable socio-economic orientation, since economic activity has been monopolized by a cutthroat mercantile establishment of family traders, often in collusion with the iconic elements that keep the regime in power and free from any meaningful opposition.

Yemen is desperately in need of regime change and socio-economic restructuring and the sooner the better. The young people in the streets of Sana'a, Aden and Ta'ez are resonating the depressive mood of most of the people of Yemen, and the mercenary so called "backers" of the regime could never overshadow the miserable paradoxical conditions their hirers have created for their homeland, with a very small narrow minded minority reaping the fruits of an undeserved extravagant prosperity at the expense and the pain of the overwhelming majority of the land, more than half of whom have been pushed ever deeper into deliberate, painful, and sublime destitution.

Hassan Al-Haifi has been a Yemeni political economist and journalist for more than 20 years. His blog may be read at: <http://com-senfromyem.blogspot.com>



By: Hassan Al-Haifi

## SKETCHED OPINION

By: Hamid



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# Oil prices squeeze small businesses as transportation costs rise

By: William Alden  
Huffington Post

Sharon James, co-owner of a carpet-cleaning company in the San Francisco Bay Area, thought her business was finally recovering from the Great Recession.

After a difficult 2010, in which sales dropped five percent, it seemed that business at Stanley Steemer was starting to pick up. Former customers came back. The spring-like weather in the community of San Leandro made people more willing to spend money, she said. Her Stanley Steemer franchise, part of a larger company, was poised to benefit from a new advertisement on national television. She planned to hire four new technicians in anticipation of extra business in the spring.

Then, oil prices soared. "Every day that I see on the news that it's gone up over a hundred dollars a barrel, I cringe," James said. "That's coming out of our profit line."

Oil prices have spiked in recent weeks, as purchasers fear upheaval in the Middle East could disrupt the world's supply. A higher oil price translates into higher gas prices for consumers and higher transportation costs for businesses. Small businesses, which create 70 percent of the nation's jobs, according to government estimates, have been hit especially hard.

Just as the economy has begun showing signs that a real recovery is gathering momentum, high fuel prices now threaten to impede progress. The price of a barrel of Brent crude, an industry benchmark, has risen 20 percent since the beginning of the year, going from about \$95 to nearly \$114. It's the highest price since the fall of 2008, after a summer of record-high oil prices helped drag the economy into recession.

Every penny increase in the cost of a gallon of gas tears more than a billion dollars from the economy each year, experts say. It takes those dollars out of the hands of people who might spend them in their communities -- at restaurants and craft shops, or on the services of the local carpenter -- and sends them instead to large oil companies.

Given that consumer spending makes up roughly two-thirds of economic activity, that's a considerable concern: Recent surveys have shown marked improvement in so-called consumer confidence, but as the numbers increase at the gas pump, so does worry about the future, sowing a new reluctance to spend.

"I don't think the economy is going to contract, but it is going to cause consumers and business to rethink their spending plans and hiring for this year," said Bernard Baumohl, chief global economist at the Economic Outlook Group, who until recently stood out as one of the more optimistic forecasters. "Uncertainty and instability will cast a big cloud."

James' carpet-cleaning company in the Bay Area has poured money into fuel in the weeks since protests began in the Middle East. Gasoline powers the eight trucks the business sends out daily and also the machines it uses to clean carpets, upholstery and hardwood floors. Each truck typically uses a full tank of gas every day.

In January of 2010, the business' fuel cost, its largest expense after payroll, was \$4,966, James said. In January of this year, it was \$6,572, an increase of 32 percent. James dreads seeing February's bill.

"I don't even want to look at it for this February, to be quite honest," she said. "We might not be able to expand the business."

Her business currently offers a seasonal discount of 15 percent. James said she is trying not to pass the higher fuel cost onto customers. But as the business makes other concessions -- such as not replacing its aging fleet of trucks -- she might not have any other choice.

Middle East protests haven't caused the major disruption in the world's oil supply that investors fear, and Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries has pledged to correct any short-

age. But as protests in Tunisia led to protests in Egypt, which led to protests in Bahrain, Libya and elsewhere, unexpected events have been occurring daily. Even if supply isn't affected, prices have risen on fears, and economists say the oil price is likely to stay high for some time.

"The middle east thing was something that -- I don't think anybody saw that coming," said Nigel Gault, chief U.S. economist at IHS Global Insight. "It's a big, big threat to growth."

Many businesses are still recovering from the crisis of 2008, when the price of a barrel Brent crude hit nearly \$150. Joanne Gomez, manager of West Bay Plastics, a family-owned counter-top manufacturer in San Francisco, said her company saw weekly delivery costs increase to between \$200 and \$300 as the economy fell into recession. Those higher fees never came down, and Gomez now worries they'll rise again.

"It's only a matter of time," she said. "For a small company to have over a thousand dollars in delivery charges a month, it kills you."

Some businesses are already preparing to raise prices. Sherry Wuebben is a co-owner of St. Joseph Equipment, a distributor of agricultural and construction machinery in La Crosse, Wisconsin. Starting Monday, she said, she could raise delivery fees 10 percent.

"I know our customers are watching it just as we are," she said. "Who's prepared to make these kinds of adjustments, these expenses you were not anticipating?"

Even businesses that don't transport goods have felt the squeeze. Michael Sinensky owns Village Pourhouse, a sports bar with four locations in the New York tri-state area. He's seen the prices of all the goods he buys from vendors rise between three and five percent in the last month or so, he said. He blames the rising price of oil.

"The manufacturers have to pay more to get their stuff to Cisco, and Cisco, the wholesaler, has to pay more to get their stuff to me, the small business owner," he said. "Obviously manufacturers and wholesalers have to make their money back some way, so they're raising their prices on me."

The oil price sends shock-waves globally. Even a small supply disruption could catapult the price. Saudi Arabia produces 12 percent of the world's oil. Iran produces 5.3 percent. Kuwait produces 3.2 percent. Algeria and Libya each produce 2 percent. All of those countries have been hit by protests in recent weeks, prompting fears that social strife will interfere with the work of extracting and refining oil.

One of the most promising areas of the economic growth, the technology sector, could be especially hard-hit.

As oil becomes more expensive, so does the cost of transporting consumer electronics from factories in East Asia and the price of the raw materials used in manufacturing the latest must-have gadgets. Both companies and consumers are expected to feel the pinch: Firms will likely pass along costs by raising prices on laptops, cellphones and other devices, dissuading consumers, already reeling from the recession, from upgrading to the latest models on offer from Silicon Valley.

Experts predict sagging demand, coupled with the costs of ballooning oil prices, may prompt high-tech firms to scale back their investment in research and development.

"I assume the oil price hikes would be passed through to end users," ING chief economist Tim Condon told IDG. "Activity would slow because consumers wouldn't be parting with their money. Demand would go down, you'd see unwanted inventory accumulating, and you'd see product cutbacks and employment effects."

Small business owners, meanwhile, watch the news obsessively. Events halfway around the world have become local forces, already eroding their bottom lines. The price of oil has become an index of worry.

"Every day that it goes up is an added burden to us," said James, who runs the carpet-cleaning business. "It's wait and see."

# Libya protests: Obama says Muammar Gaddafi must 'Leave Now'

Huffington Post

Reacting up the pressure, President Barack Obama on Saturday said Moammar Gadhafi has lost his legitimacy to rule and urged the Libyan leader to leave power immediately.

It was the first time Obama has called for Gadhafi to step down, coming after days of bloodshed in Libya. Gadhafi has vowed to fight to the end to keep his four-decade grip on power in the North African country.

"When a leader's only means of staying in power is to use mass violence against his own people, he has lost the legitimacy to rule and needs to do what is right for his country by leaving now," the White House said in a statement, summarizing Obama's telephone conversation with German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Until now, U.S. officials have held back from such a pronouncement, insisting it is for the Libyan people to decide who their leader should be.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said Libyans "have made themselves clear."

"Gadhafi has lost the confidence of his people and he should go without further bloodshed and violence," she said in a separate statement. "The Libyan people deserve a government that is responsive to their aspirations and that protects their universally recognized human rights."

The administration upped its pressure

a day after it froze all Libyan assets in the U.S. that belong to Gadhafi, his government and four of his children. The U.S. also closed its embassy in Libya and suspended the limited defense trade between the countries.

Clinton announced further sanctions Saturday, revoking visas for senior Libyan officials and their immediate family members. She said applications from these people for travel to the United States would be rejected.

Obama has been conferring with world leaders about the unrest in Libya. The administration is hoping that the world speaks with a single voice against Gadhafi's violent crackdown on protesters, and Obama is sending Clinton to Geneva on Sunday to coordinate with foreign policy chiefs from several countries.

The U.N. Security Council met Saturday to debate new sanctions against Libya but disagreed over a proposal to refer Gadhafi and his top lieutenants to an international war crimes tribunal.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon wants immediate action to protect Libyan civilians. The U.N. chief was due in Washington on Monday for talks with Obama at the White House.

The administration has faced increasing pressure to more forcefully condemn Gadhafi and explicitly call for his ouster, as demanded by French President Nicolas Sarkozy. Witnesses in Libya said Gadhafi is arming civilian supporters to set up checkpoints and roving patrols in Tripoli, the capital.

The U.S. held back, but its tone shift-



Muammar Gaddafi

ed sharply Friday after Americans in Libya were evacuated to safety by ferry and a chartered airplane.

Shortly after, Obama signed an executive order outlining financial penalties designed to pressure Gadhafi's government into halting the violence. The order said that the instability in Libya constituted an "unusual and extraordinary threat" to U.S. national security and foreign policy.

A nonviolent revolt against Gadhafi's government began Feb. 15 amid a wave of uprisings in the Arab world. Most of Libya's eastern half is under the control of rebels. Witnesses say Gadhafi's government has responded by shooting at protesters in numerous cities.

Meanwhile, Libya's top envoy to the U.S. claimed that Gadhafi's opponents

were rallying behind efforts to establish an alternative government led by a former Libyan minister. He said the international community should back the movement.

The claim by Ambassador Ali Aujali couldn't be immediately verified and it was unclear what support the "caretaker government" led by ex-Justice Minister Mustafa Abdel-Jalil commanded.

But Aujali said the U.S. and other countries could accelerate Gadhafi's exit by supporting Abdel-Jalil.

"He is a very honest man, a man with dignity," Aujali told The Associated Press. "I hope this caretaker government will get the support of Libyans and of the international community."

The State Department said it had no knowledge of Abdel-Jalil's effort.

# Israel to World: Don't be so fast to push democracy on Middle East

Netanyahu and other fears democracy will lead to chaos, bringing Islamists to power

By: Arieh O'Sullivan  
The Media Line

While touting its own democratic credentials, Israel has been warning the world not to let experiments in democracy spread across the Middle East, lest Islamic fundamentalists are voted in.

"We don't want to stay the only democracy in the Middle East. We would love to live in a neighborhood where all countries are democratic. But is it feasible now?" Deputy Prime Minister Dan Meridor said in an interview with The Media Line.

An enormously popular revolt in Egypt has morphed into what appears to be an unofficial coup d'état, with the army in control. Bahrain's monarch has ruthlessly crushed a budding rebellion in its capital Manama. In Tunisia, public discontent succeeded in ousting its long-time president, and a caretaker government is trying to stabilize the country ahead of elections later this year.

In Yemen, President Ali Abdullah Saleh, who has been in power for 33 years, blasted anti-government protesters, saying "whoever wants to take the power, he must take it through the ballot boxes, not through chaos in streets."

"We want democratization, but everyone has to understand, especially President [Barack] Obama, that democracy is not just the rule of majority and free election," said Uzi Dayan, a former National Security Adviser.

"It's not just take off dictators and democracy will emerge from grass roots," Dayan told The Media Line. "The enemy of this democratic revolution is the extremists because they are much more well organized."

Israel has witnessed rays of democracy emerge in the Arab world only to be disappointed when Islamist extremists take over. The U.S. insisted that the Palestinians hold free and fair parliamentary elections in 2006, a vote that the Hamas movement -- an Islamist movement sworn to Israel's destruction -- won.

In Lebanon, democratic elections have gradually led to Hezbollah's control of the government. Last month, the Shiite Muslim movement forced Prime Minister Saad Hariri to step down and has named its own candidate to succeed him. Both Hamas and Hezbollah play democratic politics while controlling their own armies and conducting private foreign policy, Israel says.

More distantly, Israel lost one of its



greatest regional allies in 1979 with the fall of the Shah when the world supported the Iranian revolution that led to a theocratic anti-Israel regime of ayatollahs.

Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu told visiting American Jewish leaders on Wednesday that Israel hoped Egypt would emerge as a true democracy, but that the government must prepare for the worst.

"Part of that preparation is to alert the leaders and policymakers around the world to the possible dangers that may lie ahead," Netanyahu said. "No one knows what the future in Egypt will bring. People in Washington don't know. People in Tehran don't know... even columnists for The New York Times don't know."

Netanyahu's comment was directed at New York Times columnist Thomas L. Friedman who wrote this week that Israel was using the anti-government demonstrations across the Arab world to "score propaganda points" by spotlighting its own democracy and stability.

Friedman also accused Netanyahu's "out-of-touch, in-bred, unimaginative and cliché-driven" cabinet of siding with Egypt's "Pharaoh" and urging the U.S. not to dump the Egyptian leader and thus open the way there for democracy.

"Israel has very little to contribute to democracy building," Friedman wrote.

Indeed, Israel had been so concerned fall of Mubarak's stable rule would lead to a rupture in the peace treaty it dispatched Defense Minister Ehud Barak to Washington to urge them not to abandon the Egyptian leader.

Meridor, who is also Israel's minister for intelligence and atomic energy, defined the conditions necessary for democracy to flourish.

"Democracy is more than elections and this has to do with my basic rights, inalienable rights, that cannot be taken away from me; the right to vote, the right to speak my mind the right to coalesce with others the right to assemble. These are the basic tenants of democracy," Meridor said.

"Some people thought that if we al-

officer for the Israel Defense Forces. "Look around the Middle East: if there is a democratic process here, it will bring, for sure, hell."

Speaking at the Herzliya conference on security and policy near Tel Aviv last week, Gilad assessed that the only place in the region where democracy had a real chance of taking root was Iran, a non-Arab nation.

Dayan said the path to democracy needed to be encouraged and nursed and this required cultural and educational processes in regional societies.

"A revolution toward democracy might go through a lot of crises, instability and even another dictatorship or an Islamic dictatorship which is much worse," Dayan said. "But in the long run this democratic revolution can be exactly what we are trying to achieve in this region, which is democracy and prosperity for everyone."

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Mohsin Mohammed Bin Fareed, RAY opposition party chairman, on the political state of Yemen

# “Most of the citizens in our country live in miserable conditions.”

Mohsin Mohammed Bin Fareed is the secretary general of the Sons of Yemen (RAY), a fringe opposition party that dates back to the 1950s and calls for a decentralised federal government in Yemen. On Saturday Feb. 19th Bin Fareed said that dialogue with the government “has become a waste of time”. “The solution to these problems is the departure of the regime,” he told a news conference in Aden. It was the first time an opposition party has publicly called for the ouster of president Saleh.

Mohsin Mohammed Bin Fareed was born in Shabwa and is from the Awal-iq tribe. He earned a BA in economics and political science in 1969 from Cairo University and an M.A. in the same specialization from the U.S.A. in 1973. He has five children, three daughters, two sons, and has two grandsons.

The Yemen Times' Mohammad Bin Sallam, met Bin Fareed and conducted the following interview in Sana'a.

**What is your opinion on delaying presidential elections as a way of ending the political deadlock in Yemen?**

Firstly the delaying of the presidential elections by two years in 2009 was unconstitutional and this was admitted by some of the ruling party leaders in a recent seminar I attended at the Sheba Tower Hotel. If we try to delay the elections again it will not help at all. We have a new initiative for the elections made up of nine points but no will one listen to us.

**How do you evaluate the current situation in Yemen politically, economically, socially and security-wise?**

The situation is miserable. In Sa'ada the conflict is still raging also the southern movement situation still hasn't settled down and the economic situation is miserable. Most of the citizens in our country live in miserable conditions. One feels sorry when he walks in the streets of the capital and finds people crowding over garbage dumps. From the point of view of security if anyone wants to kill his opponent he only has to come to the capital, how ridiculous is that?

**In the past Abdurahman Al-Jafri, head of your party demanded the necessity to 'change the ruling system' could you explain what meant he meant by that demand?**

In 1997 we presented an alternative system of governance, we didn't see any point in applying direct rule over the whole country especially considering the grievances of the Southern Separatists. We called for a decentralized system but no one would listen to us. However, our voice will be always loud and the first important thing is to set on the dialogue table, then we will agree upon the system way of ruling either a parliamentary or presidential. We don't see any real change in our country unless they adopt the proportional system.

**One of the big leaders in the ruling party said to me that Ali Abdullah Saleh could hold a symbolic position where he could be a supervisor or**

**public mentor in order to let him to stay. In your opinion what does that mean?**

Sharing and talking in general are no longer helpful in our country. After that the president can stay as a king, or whatever you want, as long as the basics are correct.

In the RAY opposition party we see that the presidential system is best in Yemen, for more than one reason, but we don't insist on it and if the majority chooses the parliamentary system then we will be with them.

**It was suggested to divide the country to five states. Why do you insist on the decentralization between the north and the south? Why would Yemen be divided into three or five states?**

We introduced the complete reforming project in November 2005. We refer in that project to a composite country as a solution. The composite country is politically known as the decentralization or federal system. We hope that the project can be discussed with others and to agree upon its existence. But when we see the southern separation, which has risen since 2007, we understand what is happening in the south and what can put out the fire. We, the party, developed in 2008 a proposal that Yemen should be divided into five states, with Sana'a as the political capital and Aden as the trading capital. But no one listens to our voice. Now the southern call for separation is increasing and it is getting dangerous.

How we should divide the country in to four or five states can be left to specialist, but we still need to bear in mind that it is better for the south to be split into two states for two reasons:

First reason: There was an independent state in the south and no one can deny that. The protesters are calling for their country, so the state solution is a good alternative to the separation idea.

Second Reason: Even if the decentralization happened then the south itself would be split into two or three units. Also the north can be divided into two or three units. Taiz could be a unit with Hodeida and some of the governorate



Mohsin Mohammed Bin Fareed

beside it, another unit Sana'a, with the remainder another unit. Then it would be divided into states that would do the same purpose. However, at the end we will leave this job to the economists and technicians to decide themselves.

**Do you think that the ruling party will enter the election alone? And if so how would it deal with it?**

Despite all the noises that have been made within the ruling party, personally, I don't expect that that they will go it alone. They are rescheduling their steps and you know that they are looking for a way out. I imagine that if the ruling party did go it alone it would be suicide and would increase problems rather than resolve them.

**The demonstration that the JMP threatened have already started at Sana'a University and Taiz. Will this force the ruling party, in your opinion, to obey the JMP's demands or at least to give in to compromise?**

When people go on to the streets as a movement then they will have an impact over the actions in the country. The Tunisian experience is clear evidence of that and what is happening today in Egypt and other Arab countries.

We shouldn't underestimate the demonstrators. There is a chance things may get out of hand. Neither the ruling party nor the opposition has control of it. The people are the real weapon of change but this weapon should be under a reasonable authority or political power. If people just go out in the streets with no guidance, then it will be a dangerous thing.

**What are the compromises that the opposition parties and the authority could present to solve the crisis?**

The country is ours it doesn't belong to the ruling party alone, nor the opposition parties. It belongs to all of us and we, as a political power, should be the directors and guiders of the people. We should find the point where we can solve arguments and stop holding people up for criticism and feel the responsibility. I think the country no longer needs small projects and agreements for the elections or the supreme committee of elections. We should agree upon a modern project to build a modern Yemen. What we and the opposition parties and the ruling party already have is enough dialogue to take the country out of crises. But there is no political administration to execute that.

**Do you think what happened in Tunisia can be repeated in Yemen?**

Sure, there are not any obstacles. But we are afraid of becoming like Somalia, which is the worst-case scenario. Personally I believe we should think together, the ruling party and the opposition parties, and agree upon complete reparation, which I mentioned in the nine points earlier. That will avoid us becoming like Libya. Then we have two options either to be like Tunisia or Somalia. The Tunisian situation is better, but if we aim to be like them, then we have a chance of being only like Somalia and Yemen will face a horrible situation. So if we open that door I think it can be closed. We still have the chance, the ruling party and the opposition, to avoid entering that dark tunnel.

**Do you think that the system will fall apart within the next two years, as some political observers predict?**

Views differ from one analyst to another, but I don't think that the system can stay for long if it maintains its stubborn view that Yemen doesn't have any problems, and continues with symbolic gestures. About the timing, it may be two years, or sooner or later. The important thing is that if the system stays as it is, we will certainly face a coming disaster.

**What is your opinion about the demonstrations that are happening today?**

Surely the people are the tools for change. It is better that the crowd goes and changes the system for themselves than remain chained in the coming years.

**Some academics suggest that democracy is bound and has become tired in Yemen, which it is now in its dying stages. What is your opinion about that?**

Democracy in our country just a formality, as you and I know. If we look at the elections and the parliament, then you and I know how it has been dealt with, how public money is spent, and consciences are bought. So democracy is only a formality here because the basis is not right. It is no wonder that democracy has declined.

**What about the dialogue that was asked for? Why it is closed? From your point of view, who is undermining it, the ruling party or the JMP?**

I can say that it is a joint responsibility, because we follow what happens behind the scenes. In the background they are scheming against each other. I don't want to accuse anyone in particular. Since the ruling party and the JMP have appointed themselves as the guardians of Yemen, we can say that it is a joint responsibility of the two parties. But the ruling party is the one who must take a large part of the responsibility, because it owns the keys of the process. They can walk in the true path, create a true base and follow the national path. And as I have said, the rul-

ing party owns everything. But we the opposition don't have anything.

**What prevented you from joining the JMP or any other group?**

There are no obstacles except that we have our own opinions. We sometimes are closer or further away from the others. We had a dialogue with the ruling party a year ago, but we didn't find any acceptance of our views. And we have a lot of common positions with our brothers in the JMP. We met with them frequently before, and we wanted to reach an agreement or true union with them.

**What is your attitude of the Southern Movement?**

We sympathize a lot with them since they started demanding their rights, and the ruling party did not listen to them until they called for the separation. We are not with the separatists. We present a civilized alternative, which is to reform the political system in our country, and to adopt a system of decentralization. However, we don't mock the Southern Movement or underestimate their efforts or good will. Maybe they went towards separation when they realized that the system in Sana'a does not deal with them seriously. The real problem is that the southerners do not have a fair position in the politics of Yemen. Partnership in the wealth of the country does not exist, which is surely unacceptable.

With all due respect to the prime minister, the real matter is that we realize who rules the country. When you know who the people in power are in the country, then you will find that the south doesn't have any place in the structures of power at all. However, I say again that we are not with the separatists. We are for a solution that preserves Yemen in a united, but decentralized way.

**The Southern Movement is divided into seven parts and many say that they cannot agree upon anything. How do you evaluate the current situation in the south now?**

We shouldn't under any circumstances underestimate the Southern Movement at the current moment, no matter how varied the leaders are and the variety of visions they hold. The goals of the people in the south are born through suffering, and their rights and demands should be respected.

**What about Al-Qaeda? The ruling party has said that its reach has widened to include Shabwa, Marib and other places? Do you think that Al-Qaeda exists in Yemen? Especially since we know that some who call themselves Al-Qaeda are from camps in Abyan and other places, where they have had the authority's physical support and protection?**

I agree with you that Al-Qaeda has been exaggerated in Yemen. It has become a bogey man, maybe used by the authorities to show that the authorities will protect the country and foreign interests from Al-Qaeda. Actually, I think that Al-Qaeda is not that big and they are only of limited numbers in Yemen. Once they were trained by the country's organizations, and the system was satisfied with it and used them to solve some political matters between us Yemenis.

**Do you think that the peaceful Southern Movement will turn to violence, and how disastrous would the results be to the whole country?**

If the Southern Movement and the Houthis and the opposition parties in Yemen are not listened to, and are not included within a true and serious national dialogue to find an exit to the crisis, then the violence will start. All feel injustice in all their areas of life which they will express by using weapons.

**Do you have some last words to conclude this interview?**

The important thing that I can say to President Ali Abdullah Saleh, the man who we either love or hate, is he can still find a way to get the country out of the current crisis if he is faithful and finds the political will.

We have to have an inclusive national dialogue and agree upon a true and natural coexistence to make a real change in the country. And I say to all the parties and political powers in Yemen, that the current situation is so sensitive that we should omit narrow political interests. Yemen's interests are beyond all other small interests.

**IRD International Relief & Development**

IRD is seeking a dynamic individual to lead an anticipated Youth Leadership Initiative in Yemen. The project will focus on building relations between young leaders and providing them with support and skills to make a positive contribution to Yemen's society. IRD's general strategy is to build human and social capital by engaging young leaders from a number of governorates in an intensive experiential leadership development project. The ideal candidate will possess the following skills and experience. Please note that if you have some, but not all, of the qualifications listed below and you are passionate about leading an innovative program focused on youth in Yemen, we sincerely encourage you to apply.

**General Skills and Experience:**

- A Yemeni national or an international with significant experience working in Yemen.
- Significant experience working with youth in conflict environments.
- Experience managing projects funded by international donors.
- Knowledge of Conflict Management and Mitigation or a related field.
- Theoretical knowledge of "Process of Change" and "People to People" programming.
- Excellent written and spoken English language and presentation skills.
- Ability and willingness to travel throughout Yemen.
- Ability to speak Arabic.

**Specific Responsibilities:**

- Lead program management, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation with support from IRD's Yemen office.
- Ensure the program reaches and exceeds all programmatic targets, goals and desired outcomes/results. Ultimately responsible for tracking progress toward these targets and outcomes and taking corrective action should problems arise.
- Recruit, supervise, and train technical and administrative staff within IRD guidelines.
- Oversee all financial management and reporting.
- Oversee sub-contractor and sub-recipient compliance with their contract, cooperation agreement or grant as well as donor and IRD regulations.
- Coordinate implementation with other IRD program and staff particularly those program managers/chiefs of party.
- Train with other organizations and build strategic partnerships when appropriate to enhance the effectiveness and impact of the program.

Candidates are requested to apply on line with their CV and cover letter to: [irdyemen@irdglobal.org](mailto:irdyemen@irdglobal.org) by 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2011

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تَتَقَدَّمُ بِأَحْرَ التَّعَاذِي وَعَظِيمِ الْمَوَاسَاةِ  
لِعَائِلَتِهِ الْفَقِيدِ الْعَقِيدِ  
**عَبْدَةَ مَصْلِحِ الصِّيَادِي**  
سَائِلِينَ الْمَوْلَى عَزَّوَجَلَّ أَنْ يَتَغَمَّدَ الْفَقِيدَ بِوَاسِعِ  
رَحْمَتِهِ وَمَغْفِرَتِهِ وَأَنْ يَسْكُنَهُ فَسِيحُ جَنَاتِهِ  
وَيُلْهِمَهُ أَهْلَهُ وَذَوِيهِ الصَّبْرَ وَالسَّلْوَانَ  
**المعززون**  
الرَّائِدُ/ عَبْدُالْفَتْاحِ مُحَمَّدُ عَبْدُالصِّيَادِي  
وكافة آل الصيادي





**Training Administrator Position# 4-14/4-62A**  
**CPF - Massila (B14)**  
**For Yemeni Nationals Only**

**Basic Function:**

The primary function of this position is to facilitate the skill development of Yemeni (National) staff within assigned Departments (particularly Drilling and Production) in order to achieve the Company's Yemenization objectives (staffing the organization with qualified National employees). Responsible for general administration of services, data and information to the Development & Learning Systems Department.

**Job Duties:**

- Works with direct supervisory staff to develop and coach on-the-job training for National trainees & personnel in order that they can work independently and develop logical thinking skills.
- Works with Line Departments on IDP preparation.
- Administers and Monitors Skills Ladder Progression and or Individual Development Program (IDP's) as applicable.
- Facilitates or organizes training and coaching in the application of Individual Development Programs. Ensures that all IDP interviews are conducted as required with all personnel and recorded into the Nexen "National Meeting Data Base".
- Schedules attendance and monitors progress in required EH&S, English, I.T., Business Skills and Technical Training.
- Liaises with other training resources / course providers to source external and internal training programs applicable to Massila Operations and Individual Development as identified in the I.D.P and or Technical & Company needs.
- Maintains open and clear communication with all levels of Department Supervision, along with all applicable personnel to manage training needs within the constraints of ongoing workload.
- Gathers and enters training data. Ensures the integrity of data in Abstrain and runs a monthly and annual statistical report from the database.
- Assists with the coordination of Out of Yemen training and In-Country course training as required and when deemed appropriate by the D&LS Superintendent and / or the D&LS Manager.
- Maintains D&LS Department hard copy filing system for all the nationals employees in the company
- Prepares in SAP purchase and service requisitions, materials reservation from warehouse and maintenance notification.
- Responsible for all nations, provisions and supplies required by the D&LS Department staff at the CPF.
- Assists with the preparation of presentations, reports, roll-ups, budgets, course manuals, training completion certificates and materials, etc. by using appropriate computer applications and other presentation technology. Obtains signatures as required on certificates.
- Coordinates arrangements for meetings, conferences, and special events such as Leadership Forums (including all travel / accommodation requirements), graduation ceremonies. Maintain roster for reserving training venues.
- Assists visiting instructor with "meet & greet," by setting up class, materials producing, certificates issuance and other general supportive services.

**Minimum Requirements:**

- Technical/Technology Diploma or equivalent certification with 5 years + experience in an industrial setting.
- 2 to 3 Experience with administering Training systems and training department organization.
- Instructional/Training experience or exposure would be a definite asset.
- Strong Computer skills, including Word, Excel, and Outlook.
- Strong communication and administration skills necessary.

- ◆ To Apply for this Job please apply to: [recruiting\\_yemensana@nexasn.com](mailto:recruiting_yemensana@nexasn.com)
- ◆ Applications should be submitted NO later than Mar. 14<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Faxed applications will not be considered.
- ◆ Make sure that you mention the job title you are applying for in the email subject.
- ◆ Only short listed candidates will be contacted.

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**برعاية دولة الدكتور  
علي محمد مجور  
رئيس مجلس الوزراء**

**المهرجان التدريبي القيادي  
فبراير - مارس 2011م**

أ. هشام حسين

• الأمايب الحديثة في إدارة التسويق  
26 فبراير - 3 مارس

• الأمايب الحديثة في إدارة المبيعات  
5 - 10 مارس

• التسويق الدولي  
26 فبراير - 28

د. محمود أبو الوفاء

• قيادة الحاضر والمستقبل  
21 - 23 فبراير

• التميز والتجاع الاستراتيجي للقياديين  
21 - 23 فبراير

أ.د. داود عبدالمالك الجداني

• صلاء إلى الأبد  
20 - 21 مارس

د. علي الجمادي

• هندسة الحياة وسلامة التفكير  
14 - 15 فبراير

• إدارة اللقطة الواحدة  
14 - 15 فبراير

د. أحمد جمال

• الأناص العالمية  
في بناء مسار الشخصية  
13 - 16 مارس

د. أحمد صبيد

• دبلوم تدريب المدربين TOT  
19 فبراير - 1 مارس

• الأمايب الحديثة في إدارة المستشفيات  
5 - 13 مارس

أ. محمد إبراهيم

• دبلوم تدريب المدربين TOT  
19 فبراير - 1 مارس

د. محمد فتحي

• الأمايب الحديثة  
في إدارة المستشفيات  
5 - 13 مارس

الرعاية الإعلامية: **الثورة**، **YEMEN TIMES**

الرعاية المشاركين: **Yemenia**, **Mobil**, **SHEBA HOTEL**

الرعاية الرئيسي: **AMTC**

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## Huniash obtains the first ITIL Expert certificate in Yemen through ExecuTrain



Eng. Tawfik Hunaish

ExecuTrain/Egypte institute in Sana'a has granted the first ITIL Expert certificate in Yemen to Tawfik Hunaish, IT manager in the Yemeni Commercial Bank.

The institute had launched training in IT Governance for the first time in Yemen. This field grants ITIL Expert certificate that owned intellectually to OGC, British (Organization), in collaboration with Egyptian expert Mostafa Al-Shami, EGYBYTE training manager.

The certificate provides learners with experience and ability to implement best practices in the IT process, according to Al-Shami.

"Many companies seek to provide this certificate for their employees. The certificate requires a success in six levels," he said.

"This achievement came after agreements between us and several leading companies and banks that seek distinction for their employees and obtaining a quality certificate in the information technology," Al-Shami said.

Mostafa Al-Shami, ITIL expert said that the ITIL stands for IT Infrastructure Library and it is a public framework that includes the best practices in the field of IT Service Management. It divided the IT Service lifecycle into five stages which are Service Strategy, Service Design, Service Transition, Service Operation and Continual Service Improvement. The latest version of the ITIL is the current one V3 which was released at 2007. But its history goes back to the year 1989 at England.

EGYBYTE has been accredited as a worldwide ATO (Accredited Training Organization) for ITIL v3 and CPDE (Certified Process Design Engineer) in 2009. EGYBYTE provides its clients with ITSM training and consultation to increase their productivity and governance.

For myself as an AT (Accredited Trainer) I have delivered ITIL v3 courses to more than 100 attendees in Yemen in 2010 and 2011 through EXECUTRAIN's Excellent Facilities and there will be more in the future. The Yemeni IT market is now mature enough to learn and implement ITIL v3 best practices to increase efficiency, effectiveness and productivity in a standardized way and that is why some big organizations in Yemen have asked to implement ITIL v3 best practices in them in preparation to ISO/IEC 20000 certification.

Eng. Tawfik Hunaish has taken all the ITIL v3 Expert track with me in EXECUTRAIN in Yemen and EGYBYTE in Egypt and now he is the first ITIL v3 Expert in Yemen. He enjoyed ITIL v3 as he knew from his position as the IT Manager in Yemen Commercial Bank that his bank needs ITIL v3 best practices to meet today and future challenges easily. He was one of my best attendees in the past and now he is one of my best friends and his next step is ISO/IEC 20000 training to help his organization to achieve this international ITSM quality standard. I hope to meet many other Yemeni people like Eng. Tawfik who is very promising and ready to build new future for new Yemen.

Ahmed Jafar, IT manager at ExecuTrain said that the training company "ExecuTrain" tries to achieve high quality of service by providing international training programs and be the first in conducting such programs based on our Vision "Remaining the leading training services provider in the market, making customers satisfaction our top priority by applying high quality standards to our services" to achieve our Mission "To be a key player in the deployment of knowledge and technology".



One of the programs that we have conducted and for the first time in Yemen was ITIL. The awareness of targeted market, specifically who works in the IT department, was high and striving to learn such new standards and best practices that will help them enhance, improve, and develop their management and work environment. We sense and measure our achievement when we see trainees from different companies start to adopt and implement what they have learned in their companies and make a difference. We also feel proud when we see a trainee, such as Mr. Tawfik Hunaish, continue in the learning path and acquire an international certificate and be the first in Yemen.



Eng. Ahmed Jafar



Mr. Mostafa Al-Shami

Tawfik Hunaish, IT manager in the Yemeni Commercial Bank who was the first one in Yemen to obtain ITIL Expert certificate, said that this experience had added many things to him.

"Now, I'm able to implement what I had studied in this institute. The training gave me comprehensive study about information technology in the short time," Hunaish said.

He indicated that he studied many different lessons related to the information technology such as IT Project framework, Change management and event management etc...

"Professionally, I had learnt from this training how to organize my work well, moreover, I had learnt about the importance of management," he said.

"Continuing progress is the basis of success and distinction."



# New five-year plan to empower Yemeni women

By: Sadeq Al-Wesabi

The Women's National Committee (WNC) issued its fourth five-year plan on Feb. 22nd, that aims to empower Yemeni women in economic, social, educational, cultural and political fields.

The plan seeks to increase the rate of female employment to 30 percent over the next five years. The plan also aims to train 15,000 women and provide them with financial support and jobs opportunities, as well as open new doors for female entrepreneurs to start their own businesses. The plan endeavors to integrate women into the job market and increase their competitiveness in applying for top positions.

Hooria Mashoor, head of the WNC said during a press conference last Tuesday, that all previous plans relating to women have focused solely on issues of health and education, because women working in these fields are considered socially acceptable.

Mashoor told the Yemen Times that the new plan attempts to integrate women into four of the most promising economic fields in Yemen, including fisheries, agriculture, tourism and startup industrial projects. She also stressed the importance of education, describing it as "a cornerstone of women's success."

"We cannot empower women economically or politically if they do not have access to a proper education," she said.

Mashoor indicated that the last three five-year plans were not implemented as required. She said that the government authorities involved lacked skilled employees which negatively affected the implementation of previous plans.

"Corruption and unskilled employees in these sectors put obstacles in the way of the success of these plans. We



The fourth five-year plan devised by Women National Committee aims to provide 15000 Yemeni women with financial support, training and jobs opportunities.

don't suffer from a financial crisis in Yemen, but from a lack of honest and professional government employees," she explained.

"In some government sectors, employees have been chosen only for political reasons. Those sectors don't hire qualified people who can work well and implement these plans," she said.

She expressed her fears about current events and the unstable political climate in Yemen that, according to her, will hinder implementing the plan. "If there is no political stability in the coming days, the plan will be impeded," she said.

Hana'a Howedi, executive director of the WNC said that many field teams have worked on this plan for months, including the work of different ministries and officials.

In the education sector, Howedi said that the plan endeavors to increase girls' enrollment in schools to 95 percent by 2015, and augment scholarship programs for female students attending university.

According to the Howedi, the plan also aims to reduce the rate of maternal mortality, increase the use of family planning methods, and expand sanitation services.

In the legal and political arena, Howedi said that the plan aims at amending discriminatory language in 32 Yemeni laws. "In addition, the plan will establish special departments to help Yemeni female lawyers and litigators into the courts to argue for their rights," she said.

There are also attempts at curtailing violence against women. Howedi indicated that one of the objectives of the plan is the building of 10 special houses for battered women, and the establishing new departments in police stations to receive domestic violence reports.

# Saleh to ask Friends of Yemen to pay for employing Yemeni graduates

By: Ali Saeed

The Yemeni government will seek financial aid from donors at the Friends of Yemen conference purportedly to go ahead at the end of March in Riyadh. Some of these funds are needed to implement President Saleh's directive on recruiting university graduates, according to Yemen's Ministry of Civil Service and Insurance.

The Yemeni government hires around 10,000 graduates out of 30,000 who finish each year from universities and colleges in Yemen. With the wave of social unrest sweeping the Arab world this year, Saleh has instructed the government to increase the number of public sector opportunities for graduates.

Nabeel Shamsan, Deputy Minister of the Civil Service, stated on Feb. 9 to Al-Motamar.net, the mouthpiece of the ruling party, that his ministry "started the arrangements for creating a youth support fund to support job seekers and propose 50,000 job positions to be implemented during 2011." This would provide jobs for over 25 percent of the 192,000 job applicants registered at the ministry, according to Shamsan.

He explained that the government is looking for financial resources to implement the program this year, and the government hopes that donors during the Riyadh conference will be able to contribute.

In President Saleh's dual-chamber emergency speech to Parliament and the Shura Council on Feb. 2, he emphasized the role of donors to assist Yemen in providing youth with employment benefits.

"We will undertake comprehensive reforms... accommodating graduates from universities, colleges and institutions for recruitment either in the public, mixed or private sector, and I call on donors who will meet in the Riyadh

conference to create a youth support fund," he said.

Saleh said that Yemen has not received most of the money the donors promised to Yemen at the 2009 London conference. Yet he said, "Now we suggest to the Riyadh Friends of Yemen Conference, the creation of a fund to finance projects in Yemen to reduce unemployment and in order to save the youth from extremism."

Dr. Mohammad Jubran, professor of economics at the University of Sana'a, told the Yemen Times last week that Saleh's proposed reforms included an initiative of hiring 50,000 job applicants will cost around USD 2.3 billion.

He pointed out that the announcement of this expenditure came in February after the 2011 budget had been set. The 2011 budget deficit which was predicted to be USD 1.4 billion will now increase to USD 3.7 billion because of the new initiatives.

Ali Al-Wafi, a Yemeni economist with 25 years experience in Yemen's economy and is former chairman of the financial committee at the parliament, told the Yemen Times that budget deficits have become common in Yemen due to overspending on unplanned decisions outside the budget framework. He added that additional funds outside of planned budgets from 2004 to 2010 have exceeded USD 14 billion.

Abdo Al-Saadi, 36, who studied accountancy and graduated in 2001, has been registered as seeking employment at the Ministry of Civil Service since 2003. He told the Yemen Times that he hopes the government is serious about implementing this pledge, as he and many other job applicants have been waiting for employment for up to ten years.

Al-Saadi said that since his graduation he has worked as an accountant in short-term jobs in the private sector, "but the problem is that none of these jobs last longer than a year."

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## Youth Talk

Compiled by Mahmood Al-Matari and Safiya Al-Jabry

In this new section we talk to young people about their concerns, hopes and dreams. Every week we hit the streets and share what young people have to say right here.

### This week's question:

#### What are your views regarding male-female friendships in the Yemeni society?

##### Khaled Alanhami

Yemen is a conservative Islamic country. Our traditions and culture don't allow such kinds of friendships. However, these days it's easy to see such friendships and as young people we have to hold on to our beliefs and stop these new mentalities of having undesired friendships.

##### Noha Yazeed

In Yemen, the word friendship in such relationships is assumed not to be genuine. I prefer to give it a name like colleague that is more accurate. In the end friends or colleagues are probably the same thing but at least the word colleague carries less weight to people.

##### Wala'a Almaktari

As far as I'm concerned, no friendship can exist between a man and a woman due to human nature. Moreover, this kind of relationship isn't considered in our conservative society. In Islam it is forbidden, Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) said men and women must be separated in order to avoid Satan's footsteps.

##### Bachir Salim

Well, in Yemeni society people always think there is something fishy in such friendships even if they are pure and genuine.

##### Nadia Al-Jabry

It's difficult to have and keep such friendships because of society. Most of the time, people will end up misunderstanding the girl in such a situation. Another thing is male mentality, especially Arab, it is twisted. They end up misinterpreting open friendship with something else.

##### Jamal Sultan

Yemeni society views such friendships as shameful and considers it impossible to have honest male-female friendships. In fact the society looks down on such friendships.

##### Ibrahim Hofaid

Male-female friendships in Yemen are something that rarely happens. And if there is such a friendship, it's one that will be secretive through phone or online chatting. Women, especially young women, seek men to be their friends only if they believe they'll be their husbands in the future. On the other hand, some men look for temporary friendship just to pass time while others hope it will last. I believe all this happens because of the social barriers in our society.

##### Samira Lardhi

I would say such friendships can be possible for people who have been outside Yemen and have adopted so-called 'open minds'. But for Yemenis who are born and live in Yemen, I don't think it's possible.

##### Aamer Mohammed Al-Dbyani

Friendship between females and males is viewed as strange in Yemeni society. But in my opinion, it is not dangerous or as hazardous as people think. These friendships are common in many countries. Many girls have boyfriends and many boys have girlfriends who are just friends in a respectful manner.

##### Hanan Ali

In my opinion, a girl in our society can have and keep friendships with a guy whereas a guy cannot. A guy will end up misunderstanding an honest friendship with something else.

### Next Week's Question:

#### How do social networks like Facebook and Twitter have an impact on people?

Follow this section for a new question every week and feel free to reply with your answers or feedback by sending an e-mail to [tyyouth@gmail.com](mailto:tyyouth@gmail.com)

So this is your chance to share your humorous stories, poems or opinions with other young readers!



A child works in his family construction business in Sana'a. Yemen's population is characterised by its youth bulge where around 60 percent of the population is below 16 years old. This causes a high dependency rate on adults which because of poverty children are forced to work. According to UNICEF reports in 2008, more than 10 percent of Yemen's workforce are children.

YT Photo by Amira Al-Sharif

## The advantages of planting trees

By: Shamsan Dabwan Saeed  
[shamsan@blumail.org](mailto:shamsan@blumail.org)

Talking about trees and green lands is not a modern idea or the output of advanced technology. The idea of taking care of and planting trees was mentioned hundreds of years ago. Islam puts great stress on the planting of trees for their various benefits. Planting trees makes us live a healthy and pleasant life. They play a vital role in maintaining the balance of the ecosystem. Trees have their benefits not only in supporting life, but they are considered an effective tool for removing various kinds of impurities from our atmosphere. In addition to their environmental benefits, there are also social benefits. Here let us go through these benefits, but after we discuss some benefits of trees in general.

Trees are a tool used by lovers to change and convey the meaning of love, a place where you can protect yourself from the heat of the sun, and a place for those who are suffering psychological distress. The tree is a symbol of optimism that creates happiness for everyone. Birds proudly sing on their swinging boughs, humans take rest under their shade, breath its clean air, and smell their charming flowers. Trees are a symbol of humility and beauty. Tree means life in words. So

humans should plant more and more trees to improve and decorate their life due to their undeniable profits. The advantages of tree are uncountable.

First of all, let me shed some lights on the benefits of trees from the perspective of general and psychological health. Advanced research has revealed that trees have an impact on improving the psychological health of those who are suffering from psychological stress, such as anxiety disorder and depression. This is attained merely through visiting greenery. A Norwegian study states that "about 60 percent of patients who have psychological problems, overcome an anxiety disorder and increase their self-confidence in new situations by visiting gardens for three hours a week." So most people in Yemen who have a bad mood or family problems chew qat in gardens alone or with a group of his friends. An American study has revealed that planting more trees decreases the causes of asthma. The study states that cases of asthma decreased about 25 percent where more trees were planted.

Trees mean life itself for humans. They are the food, drink, clothes and house. They are considered one of the most important fundamentals for human life. So planting trees has its benefits not only for humans, but for the environment itself.

Planting trees plays an important role

in creating a good environment for living on this earth. First of all, planting trees removes excess amounts of carbon dioxide and air pollutants present in the atmosphere, such as sulfur dioxide, ozone and nitrogen oxide. They give us oxygen that is required for life. Second, trees help in controlling the climate. This is done through moderating the effects of sun, wind and rain. They moderate the temperature of the summer by providing shade and act as windbreaks in winter. Reducing soil erosion is another benefit of planting trees. They bind the soil with their roots, preventing the soil being washed away in rainstorms and floods. Third, absorbing noise is another advantage of planting trees. They decrease noise to a great extent.

Fourth, planting trees plays an important role in flood water management and in providing clean drinking water. In some rural areas of Taiz, people depend on rain water flowing in from surrounding plots of land and captured in dams. They plant grass around the dams as away to purify the water. Trees also moderate flood hazards, by allowing the rainwater to percolate into the soil instead of running over it. Planting more and more trees helps in filtering water to make it clean. Forests and plant cover naturally slows the runoff of rainwater, thereby filtering it. Once slowed, rainwater seeps down to refill underground reservoirs. In other

words, the environmental advantages are not the only benefits of planting trees, there are also social profits.

Planting trees draws an aesthetic picture of society. Humans feel serene, peaceful, rested and tranquil in a grove of trees. Trees are used as ornaments in houses, schools, hospitals and offices. They are living ornaments that arouse happiness in humanity. Even though trees may be private property, their size often makes them part of the community as well. Because trees occupy considerable space, planning them benefits both you and your neighbors. With proper selection and maintenance, trees can enhance and function on one property without infringing on the rights and privileges of neighbors. City trees often serve several architectural and engineering functions. They provide privacy, emphasize views, or screen out objectionable views. They reduce glare and reflection. They direct pedestrian traffic. They provide a background to and soften, complement, or enhance architecture.

I feel that what I have mentioned is something known to everyone, but I write as a way of remaining ourselves of the great advantages of planting trees. It is time to plant trees to decorate our country, to get happy and to create a balance in the ecosystem. So planting trees is a desired religious task and a national duty that falls on the shoulders of everyone in Yemen.

## Experience, a requirement or obstacle against job seekers?

By: Mohammed Hamoud Ali  
[mohammedeebo@yahoo.com](mailto:mohammedeebo@yahoo.com)

"Nothing impairs the dignity of a person so much as not being able to find work."

—Nelson Mandela

Young people, including fresh graduates, often have trouble getting a job because they don't have experience. So youth who are first-time job seekers, look at the requirement for experience as a kind of stumbling-block, like other obstacles put before them by either government or private institutions. That is, these institutions shrug off their responsibilities toward the youth when they don't offer proper job opportunities to them, assist them in the complexities of living, and help them stand as better seeds for economic and social development in our country. Is experience an absolute requirement, or just a mere obstacle against job seekers?

Experience means that any job applicant should have some highly sought after qualifications, a condition that's being looked at in an utterly exaggerated way. For institutions, this is a basic requirement and allows them to accept applicants, who seek to work for them, or drive them away as the number of job applicants continues to increase. It has become as a routine tool for institutions to get rid of applicants.

Businessmen, when announcing a

job vacancy, state some acceptable educational and technical requirements, but we are dumb-founded when we come across an additional condition, work experience. What is far worse, is that this experience should be not less than five years in the required field. As a result, this makes applicants who are new graduates highly depressed.

Ahmed Qasim Al-Higri, an accountancy graduate from 2005-2006, indicated that he applied for an accountancy job at a medical company. He applied and passed all the tests, but when interviewed, he was told that experience was a requirement for him to work for them as an accountant. He ended up working for YG Insurance Company, which is not in his field.

If we look deeply to try and figure out the reasons behind this serious problem, the absence of a work law, in my viewpoint, is a major one. In our society, there is no law to organize the employment system. This law, if it existed, would certify what jobs require experience from others. But we can witness nowadays that all announced job vacancies required experience, and rather a long one. As can be noted in some newspapers and job websites, some companies announce their need for five to seven positions and experience is a requirement, where at most they offer two or three positions to fresh graduates. I suggest that a work law would help measure and organize the employment system, and give more chances to young people who are unemployed. As

a result, unemployment would decline and young graduates would get a chance to build up their society.

Another benefit of this law would be that fresh graduates would not be negatively exploited. They should not be 'employed' for no pay unless they are volunteers. Mohammad Ali Mansoor Al-Zaem, a fresh graduate with a bachelor in English language, said "some institutes to which I applied for teaching, made an absolute condition that I had to teach one course without payment so as to acquire experience."

As a result of the requirement of experience by government and private institutions, a large number of graduates increases the rate of unemployment in our country.

Abdulrahman Al-Huthaifi, assistant professor of English Language at Taiz University said "experience is a worldwide requirement, but it shouldn't be misused as a means to prevent graduates from getting jobs. Rather, it should be understood as another qualification which an applicant should be paid more for." He added that in Yemen, one has to work freely, without payment, until you have acquired experience, a practice that some institutions have become notorious for.

Mr. Maged Thabet Al-Khulaidi, director of the Youth Development Organization, a teacher of English language at Taiz University, and commercial correspondent at Arab Bank, said that "experience was the ghost that I faced when I started applying for job vacancies. It

did depress me at that time. Now, after having about seven years of work experience in different fields, I realize that it is not only the institutions that are to be blamed, but the fresh applicants as well. The big companies require experienced staff because they want to ensure the quality of the work performed by such applicants. This can be attributed to financial reasons, because some jobs may cost companies a lot of money if the job is not performed well. I advice fresh applicants to do their best to acquire experience and build their capacities in small companies, so that they can be confident enough to apply for well-paid job vacancies in leading companies.

But, I would also like to deliver a message to companies, telling them that not all jobs require experience, and there is no need to exaggerate by requesting long experience (three or more years). That should only be for jobs that really do need experience. Otherwise it just becomes a way of blocking those young fresh applicants who are more active and energetic, and can learn fast and perform better if they get the opportunity."

University graduates, on one hand, believe that experience is just a to make a chasm between them and the institutions. A way of getting rid of them instead of offering them a chance at a job. On the other hand, institutions, both government and private, impose the requirement of experience as an intended set-back so as not to spend effort on training applicants, a philosophy ex-

pressed to me by one business man.

Thus, an employment law should propose training and provide experience for fresh graduates, and as they are trained their productivity will grow. There should be work assistance. Instead of employing three to four experienced accountants, for instance, I would suggest it is better to invest in two fresh graduates under the supervision of an experienced accountant.

Mr. Bakir Al-Munshi, General Manager of YG Insurance Company, said that "experience is not a must, but rather a preferable condition for a company or institution. It helps in productivity and reliable performance from the start when experienced applicants are hired." He added that "international companies require experience, but don't set it as a block against fresh graduates as is witnessed in some local companies. That is, fresh graduates, promising ones, should also get their chance as they can be trained and refined so that they can be fruitful seeds for the company they join. Some of the skilled graduates are promising and productive from day one."

Let me not forget to point out a crucial absence in the Ministry of Higher Education to implement creative plans and methods in university education. That is, it should offer a solution to youth unemployment by addressing the disparity between the many skills needed in the workplace and the limited skills taught in universities, and bring them into the main stream to respond to the community and the labor

market. That is, the universities should prepare chances for student engineers, for instance, to practice and experience their studies in some projects or in companies for few hours a day. That would give them a real chance to be in constant touch with experienced engineers so as to acquire experience besides their education. Training gives undergraduates the tools needed to secure their first job and excel in it.

Another suggestion to highlight is volunteer jobs. The lack of volunteer jobs is what prevents fresh graduates from acquiring experience through which they get training and their skills are polished. And here are the roles of development organizations and institutions that play a significant part in developing our youth. Experience can be acquired through training by organizations and companies, and hence training should be available.

The youth, fresh graduates, who leave no job opportunity unapplied for, see after the hard labor of getting a university degree, the nasty fact that most of government and private companies request experience. This raises the serious question "how can the youth fulfill such a request for work experience when experience is impossible to attain?" University graduates are unable to apply and reap the fruits of their education, and thus, the fruitful seeds for a strong and prosperous country, along with their education and skills, are unable to grow. As a result, the country does not reap the benefits, but instead declines.



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	1230	1000	Sanaa Sayoun / Sanaa	CRJ 200	FO 182.3
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Continental Airline 278668/283082  
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Shamil Bank of Yemen & Bahrain Tel: 264775 264702. Fax: 264703 503350

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 CAC Bank 01 563813

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 ALIT 01-274221  
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 E-mail: filizpene@hotmail.com Fax: 601889  
 Al-Jumhuri Hospital 01 274286/87  
 Hadda Hospital 01 412981  
 Al-Thawra Hospital 01 246967/66  
 Al-Jumaid Hospital 01-424765  
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 Science and Technology Hospital 01-500000  
 Al-Kuwait Hospital 01-283283  
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L'AZURDE suites hotel 01-432020/3040

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 Taiz 250029 Hodeidah 219941/46  
 Marib Insurance Sana'a: 206129/8/13  
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Yemen Islamic Insurance Co. Sana'a 284193,  
 5 lines, Taiz: 258881, Aden: 244280

Yemen Insurance company Sana'a: 272806/ 272962/43,  
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 Taiz 205593  
 Al-Majd Yemen School Tel: 206159  
 Manarat Schools 01-410011

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### TRANSLATIONS

Urwa Wautqa Int. Auth. Trans. Arabic-English-French  
 -German-Russian-Italian- Spanish-Polish-Dutch- Iranian-  
 Turkish-Eritrean-Amharic. Tel: 01-240515

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 Al-Naeim Travel 270750  
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 Aden: 234533 / 234960

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 Sana'a University Tel: 250553/4/5  
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### MINISTRIES

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 Prime Minister 01-490 800  
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 Ministry of Awqaf and Guidance 01-274439  
 Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research 01-535031  
 Ministry of Fisheries 01-268583  
 Ministry of Culture 01-274640  
 Ministry of Civil Service and Insurance 01-294579  
 Ministry of Defence 01-282963  
 Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation 01-262809  
 Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour 01-402213  
 Ministry of Legal Affairs 01-289577  
 Ministry of Public Health and Population 01-252211  
 Ministry of Youth and Sports w01-472913  
 Ministry of Industry and Trade 01-235462  
 Ministry of Justice 01-236512  
 Ministry of Tourism 01-220050  
 Ministry of Expatriates 01-402254  
 Ministry of Petroleum and Minerals 01-202309  
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 Ministry of Human Rights 01-444831  
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 Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation 01-250101  
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## NEXT ISSUE

Don't miss the Yemen Times interview with prominent opposition figure Hameed Al-Ahmar.



- Tuesday is our Day of Rage (Anger Day) protesting against the killings in Aden
- Saleh has one week to remove his family from security and army positions
- If Saleh leaves power peacefully, we will forgive him for what he has done to Yemen. Else we will make him pay
- Saleh's first crime is that he stayed in power for 33 years
- Yaseen Saeed Noman is an excellent candidate for president, I will personally vote for him
- My position is that of the JMP and the dialogue committee
- The international community has nothing to fear from the tribes. In fact they will probably be the balancing power against the army
- Yemen will not be Libya, and the blood of protest victims is on the hands of the security forces



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