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Photographer and journalist Mohammed Al-Sayaghi speaks to the Yemen Times

# Unknown gas used to disperse anti-government protesters

By: Shatha Al-Harazi

SANA'A, Mar. 9 — Doctors from the medical committee of the anti-government protests at Sana'a University confirmed that the gas used on Tuesday night to disperse anti-government protesters was of unknown composition. Doctors from the Science and Technology Hospital who received the injured on that same night confirmed that it was not tear gas and that they still didn't know what kind of gas it was.

"We received different kinds of injuries last night. Some people were shot by bullets, some suffered from suffocation. The gas used yesterday can't be tear gas, as the symptoms are not the same at all," said Dr. Mohammad Al-Sheikh, a pathologist. A second doctor who treated the injured said, "This gas is unknown to us and it might be a gas that is internationally forbidden. We have never seen tear gas cause these symptoms."

One of the nine seriously wounded protesters who were transferred to the Science and Technology Hospital for treatment contacted the Yemen Times at 7am on Wednesday, breathlessly saying that



Protesters run from soldiers firing gas into crowds.



Protesters seized unidentified gas canisters after protesters in hopes of later identifying them.

his colleague had passed away 30 minutes before.

Rabie' Al-Zuraiqi, 23, who was at the hospital and gasping in pain, told the Yemen Times that this was the third time he had been injured by security forces since

the anti-government protests began. Al-Zuraiqi was hit by rocks during clashes on Rubbat Street and shocked by a taser in Change Square. On Tuesday night he was exposed to gas and struck by a rubber bullet.

He told the doctor that he could hardly breathe and that his chest felt "strangled." "I am the coordinator of the organizing committee at the protest. I was the one who told the media committee to call people in to support Sheikh Khalid Al-Qairi from Khawlan, so as to help get his tents on to the campus," said Al-Zuraiqi. "When I went with other people to protest, they had already started shooting. I immediately started carrying one of the injured to the medical tent. When I returned, I was shot by a rubber bullet at the base of my spine and was exposed to the gas. They say it's tear gas, though it's not. I can't move my body. I went into a coma for more than four hours and I can't see well now. I also have internal bleeding after being exposed to the gas," Al-Zuraiqi explained.

At the medical committee tent and at the field hospital, people were exhausted from the previous night. Some had not yet slept because they were still treating people. Dr. Amaar Nujaim, one of the field doctors, confirmed that the gas used against the protesters was unknown. "The material in this gas makes people convulse for hours. It paralyzes them. They couldn't move at all. We tried to give them oxygen but it didn't work," he said.

One of the paramedics told the Yemen Times that they had set up a medical tent on Freedom Street — the thoroughfare where the shooting started — to provide emergency first aid to injured people.

"When we put up the tent, security targeted us. They even stunned a paramedic with a taser," he said.

Majid Al-Awaj, a protester from Nihm, was also exposed to the gas. He said that this attack will increase the demands of the revolution. "We demand that Saleh be tried by the International Criminal Court," said Al-Awaj.

When the attack began, a Facebook campaign was initiated so as to keep people informed of the latest injuries coming from Change Square. It relayed what surgery equipment was required at the field hospital and called for donations from certain blood groups. On Wednesday, the doctors from the field hospital confirmed

that they had only managed to deal with the situation because of the help they received from the community.

At Change Square on Wednesday morning, groups of protesters were cleaning up the mess from the previous night. Others were looking tired and sad in their tents. A woman was crying, looking for her son that she had sent to take food to the protesters and had never returned. By the media center tent, many tribesmen were checking the list of wounded to see if it included any members of their tribe. Two men from the Hamadan tribe left the tent with sad faces after it was confirmed that the only person who was killed, Ali Mohammad Mutliq, was from their tribe.

Abdu Al-Salam Al-Zubairi, an anti-government protester who left his business in Qatar to join the demonstrations on the first day, told the Yemen Times that he had been told by a well-informed

source on Monday that security forces would attack the protesters. "I wasn't at the protest when the attack began, as I had been personally informed," said Al-Zubairi. "I had to take my children home at 8pm. But I did inform the protesters' security committee," he said.

Dr. Abdallah Dahan, head of the field hospital at the anti-government protest said that the gas used may have been a combination of nerve and tear gas. "It's definitely not tear gas, I had some suspicion that its nerve gas based on the symptoms but we need a blood test to know for sure."

Sami Zaid, a doctor at the Science and Technology hospital in Sana'a said, "This gas, for sure, is some kind of nerve gas. It's not tear gas because all the symptoms are seen on nerves only but not on the respiratory system. I'm 90% sure its nerve gas."

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## In Brief

## FM al-Qirbi returns home

SANA'A, March 09 (Saba) - Foreign Minister Abu Bakr al-Qirbi returned home on Wednesday after participating in the 6th Ministerial Coordination Meeting of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Yemen Foreign Ministers held in Abu Dhabi.

Al-Qirbi said that Foreign Ministers of the GCC's accented their government's support for Yemen's unity, security and stability as well as Yemen's efforts to enhance national dialogue to resolve civil unrest.

He added that the ministerial meeting discussed plans for the upcoming meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Friends of Yemen scheduled to be held in the Saudi capital, Riyadh, in March.

The Gulf Foreign Ministers were briefed by Qirbi on the last developments in Yemen and the initiatives of President Saleh to hold a national conference for all opposition political parties.

The coming Friends of Yemen meeting will focus on improving Yemen development plans to promote security and economic growth, al-Qirbi added.

## Security measures taken to ban weapons in major cities

SANA'A, March 08 (Saba) - The Interior Ministry ordered on Tuesday that security forces tighten security measures to enforce a ban on small arms in the capital Sana'a and major cities of the country.

In a press release, the Ministry said that all security patrols, checkpoints and security centers across Yemen should apply strict security measures against those carrying small arms.

The press release confirmed that all official permissions to carry weapons had been made invalid, excluding the permissions issued personally by the Interior Minister Mutahar al-Masry.

## Dialogue is the only way to solve Yemen problems, says U.S. diplomat

SANA'A, March 09 (Saba) - U.S. ambassador to Yemen Gerald Feierstein has stated that dialogue is the only way to resolve civil unrest in Yemen.

In an interview with Saba-run Alsayiah newspaper, he voiced his country's support for President Ali Abdullah Saleh's initiative calling for a national dialogue.

He also stressed the importance of involving young people in the political process in Yemen, describing the US government's warning to Americans against traveling to Yemen as a "precautionary measure".

## Cabinet discusses education obstacles

SANA'A, March 08 (Saba) - The cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Ali Mujawar, discussed on Tuesday attacks against some schools in a number of governorates and the Capital in an attempt to hinder education process.

He strongly asked all concerned institutions linked to education and securing education to shoulder their responsibilities to protect the education process against any attacks or practices affecting education and

## Street sweepers to resume strike if promises broken

By: Sadeq Al-Wesabi

SANA'A, Mar. 9 — Approximately 4,000 Sana'ani street sweepers resumed their work last Tuesday after a three-day strike against low wages.

The sweepers were also demanding to be registered as permanent employees by the Ministry of Civil Service.

On account of their successful protests, the Capital Secretariat promised the sweepers that they would receive a YR 5,000 (USD 23) increase in their monthly salary, which is currently below USD 100.

M.A. works as a supervisor for the municipality and receives a monthly salary of USD 30. He has two children and his total monthly income is equivalent to his monthly rent. He has asked that the Yemen Times respect his anonymity, stating that "We have been told we'd be fired if we speak to the media about our problems".

He said that when the sweepers met with Secretary of the Capital Abdurahman Al-Akwa'a to demand their rights, he ignored them and denounced them as being 'akhdam' (i.e. people with dark skin).

"After our strike, they promised to give us our rights within three days," said M.A. "If we don't receive anything by then, we will join the anti-govern-

ment protesters at Sana'a University."

He indicated that there are female and elderly street sweepers who continue to demand their own unique rights, and that there are many street sweepers who actually have university degrees.

"How can we live with only YR 20,000 a month," asked M.A. "Most sweepers resort to bottle collecting so as to provide their families with food. Some of them even beg for food in front of restaurants."

According to M.A., corruption is rampant within the Cleaning and Improvement Fund, and there are many fake names that are included on the salary roster.

Mohammed Al-Marzooqi, Director of the Association of Municipalities and Housing, told the Yemen Times that the sweepers' demands are clear and simple.

"They want to increase their salaries, their rewards and their holidays. They have no political demands and they don't want to cause trouble," he explained.

According to Al-Marzooqi, there are about 42,000 street sweepers in Yemen who suffer from poor economic conditions. This explains why sweepers' strikes occur so frequently across the country.

"The most recent strike was sponta-



As street cleaners went on strike, piles of trash began accumulating around the city

neous, but if the officials in the municipality break their promises to improve our financial situation, we will hold

even larger strikes until our demands are satisfied," said M.A. "We have been demanding our rights for 15 years.

Workers in the municipality live in poor conditions, but they will not remain silent for long."

## Yemen: Conflicting opinions from the street

ADEN, 8 March 2011 (IRIN) — Yemen President Ali Abdullah Saleh has been facing popular protests demanding an end to his 32 years in power since the beginning of February. The anti-government movement, emulating the tactics used in Tunisia and Egypt to depose their long-serving leaders has won political concessions, but Saleh has refused to step down before the end of his presidential term in 2013. At least 20 people have so far lost their lives in clashes with the security forces.

The demonstrators want an end to corruption, the delivery of jobs, a more equitable distribution of wealth, and the reform of a governmental system that presides over the worst development indicators in the Middle East. But given the tribal nature of Yemen politics and the large number of guns in private hands, a frequently voiced concern is that the country could descend into civil war under the pressure for change, adding to the country's humanitarian burden. IRIN spoke to protesters and government supporters on the streets of the capital, Sana'a, and the second city of Aden, on their hopes and fears.

## A protester in Aden (preferred anonymity)

Four people were killed here in Ma'alla [a district in Aden] on 28 February. The police were firing wildly; shots were going through people's windows. The Freon gas in people's AC's [air conditioning systems] was exploding... People of all ages are here on the street. We're learning as we go. We're learning that if you wash your face with Pepsi that can help against tear gas.

Yes the system is looking strong and some people are afraid, but we need to topple the system. We need the people who killed to come here. We want to show them to all the world, and then to take them to court. They killed honest people, what for? As if we were in a war.

If the president goes, maybe everything will be alright. We would risk civil war for the chance of a bet-



Yemen protesters demanding change

ter life. Almost nobody in Aden has a job. If [Saleh] goes there's a chance to build our country again. We just want to overthrow the system and improve ourselves.

## Mohammed al-Ghardi, pro-government teacher

I came to [Tahrir Square in Sana'a, from Raymah Governorate] to support the president. We are urging the opposition parties to stop fomenting unrest and come to the negotiating table. They have rejected all concessions and offers of dialogue. They have even rejected participating in elections [in 2013]. Everywhere else in the world the opposition is eager for elections, but Yemen is the only place where they reject elections.

Protester in Aden: «Why is the world ignoring what is happening here?» There are problems in Yemen, but these problems, like corruption, don't require the ousting of the president. And the opposition keeps increasing their list of demands, this is not right. Our president said we must discuss everything, they said No.

In 2013 there will be elections, but

I hope the protest turns out like Egypt, but it could be Libya. Saleh knows his mistakes though, and I don't think he will do anything bad [to the country]

## Protester at Sana'a University (preferred anonymity)

I was born in 1978 when this president assumed power. I finished primary, high school and did my bachelors degree and MA and PhD, and it's still the same president. Up until now I have no [full-time] job. I'm a PhD holder and I don't have a job.

The hope of all of us is to change this man and build a better Yemen, to have a fairer distribution of resources. This can't be achieved until Saleh and his relatives leave, they are controlling the wealth of this country.

He is a crisis creator, if he leaves Yemen we will be united, the Houthis [demanding greater autonomy in the northern Sa'ada region], the southern secessionist movement [will all work with a new government].

If the next president comes from the south, that would unify the whole country. The Houthi leaders say they are supporting change, the southern leaders abroad say they are supporting change. All liberal members of the armed forces are supporting change. The commanders of the security forces are the only ones that support the president, and they are his relatives. The ordinary soldiers are with the people.

## Pro-government businessman in Sana'a

The president has said he is willing and ready to quit power, but change must come through the ballot box. We are waiting for a good replacement, somebody effective and competent enough to lead this country. But the protesters want to oust the regime; they are frustrated and want to overthrow the entire ruling party. But Yemen has al-Qaeda, and they are trying to penetrate the demonstrators and provoke violence.

Demonstrators at Sana'a University search everyone before they enter the

area It's not tolerable for people to go onto the street and tell their president to leave. After all it was the people that elected him in 2006. If a new president comes to power, unity will be at risk. He won't last more than a month and Yemen could break into as many as four states.

The nature of Yemenis is that they always find themselves in conflict but at the last minute find a compromise. There are people behind the demonstrators, senior opposition leaders, and they will eventually negotiate. But if the current crisis is not resolved within one or two weeks, we will see assassinations on both sides and we will target those that sent the demonstrators.

Yes, civil war may be the only way. I'm ready to mobilize my supporters to fight for the president, and 60-80 percent of the tribal sheiks support Saleh.

## Mir Ali, a UK-based Yemeni protester in Aden

The West has a double-standard in maintaining these dictators. Why doesn't [US President Barack] Obama get mad when he sees young people without any future in Yemen? Why doesn't Obama stop giving Saleh military aid, especially when he knows the regime is going to use it to kill us?

The US has interests, we understand. But we have interests [regime change] they must also understand. All they are interested in is our oil.

The future could be bloody. But that scenario will only happen if the respectable people of the West don't do anything [to help overthrow the government]. Otherwise we could close Baab al-Mendab [a strategic chokehold that guards access to the Suez Canal and Red Sea], that tiny bit of sea. They're in recession now; let's see if Europe can do without us.

Arab leaders don't want young people to coalesce to form a movement, but things don't last forever... What will make a difference is if the army supports the people and says enough, and goes back to the barracks."

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# Yemeni soldiers open fire on protesters, killing one

By: Yemen Times Staff

SANA'A, Mar. 9 — Unrest in Yemen intensified on Tuesday night when police opened fire and used gas on anti-government demonstrators in Sana'a, killing one and injuring at least 50 others, doctors and witnesses said. It is the first time that Yemeni soldiers have shot at protesters in the capital since popular demonstrations began almost three weeks ago.

The violence erupted when riot police prevented a group of tribesmen from bringing tents into the university area. According to witnesses, the soldiers fired warning shots into the air before shooting tear gas and live bullets into a crowd of protesters. Seven people were shot, one of them in the back of the head, according to a doctor at the scene.

Yemen's government issued a statement this morning saying the violence was caused by people who resisted arrest when authorities caught them with automatic weapons.

"Police discovered individuals with a stash of fully automatic rifles hidden inside thick blankets and camping equipment," the statement read. "The suspects resisted arrest and soon thereafter a gun fight broke out, injuring dozens of suspected militants, policemen and innocent bystanders."

"The soldiers, who were outnumbered, panicked and started firing into the crowd," said Mohammed Yahya, one of the volunteers dragging the injured to a nearby mosque for treatment.

"I heard 30 shots ring out, maybe more, and then they fired tear gas straight into the crowd."

A man laid out on a stretcher with a blood-soaked bandage covering his face was piled into the back of an ambulance as ill-equipped doctors poured coca cola onto the faces of those suffering from exposure to the gas.

"The police have been shooting at these people with live fire," Dr. Abdullah Al-Hayma, a paediatrician who had travelled from across the city to answer



Over 50 protesters were taken to a nearby mosque for emergency medical treatment after being exposed to gas.

an urgent call for medical assistance, explained.

"I came down two hours ago and I've seen five people in critical condition — some have gunshot wounds, but must be suffering from gas suffocation."

There have been daily anti-government demonstrations in Sana'a and other cities around the country since Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's ouster on Feb. 11. During the past weeks, 29 have been killed in the unrest, according to international rights groups.

President Ali Abdullah Saleh has said he will step down when his term ends in 2013 but has vowed to defend his government

"with every drop of blood."

Protesters have expressed frustration with corruption and soaring unemployment in Yemen, where 40 percent of its 23 million people live on \$2 a day or less and a third face chronic hunger.

In a makeshift hospital at the grounds of a mosque next to the university, volunteer doctors administered IV drips and treated bullet wounds.

In the midst of one small group lay a man in his early 30s, his trouser leg pulled up to show a small, ugly puncture on the right side of his shin below the knee. A surgeon, still wearing his suit, probes it with forceps while the

man screams, pulling out a fragment of metal.

"See this?" the doctor says, holding it up. "Do you see this? They are shooting people with live rounds." Another volunteer brings over a handful of 7.62 calibre AK-47 shell casings and the blackened remains of a tear gas canister.

In a corner of the mosque, a younger man screamed as iodine was swabbed on his knee, which was punctured by a piece of shrapnel.

"Shaheed", the Arabic word for martyr, is chanted by the crowd. It is not the first time this cry goes out on this day of violence in the capital.

# Four killed by guards in riot at Sana'a Central Prison

By: Shatha Al-Harazi

SANA'A, Mar. 9 — The Interior Minister has not allowed an independent civil society committee to visit the Central Prison in Sana'a to check on the state of prisoners after violence broke out at the prison on Monday afternoon.

A committee was hastily formed on Tuesday morning from three human rights organizations to investigate violations that allegedly occurred over the last two days between the security forces and the prisoners. The committee was to mediate between the families of prisoners and the Interior Ministry, and the latter promised to set a time for the committee to visit the prison on Wednesday.

"Ever since that promise, they are saying the Minister of Interior is not at the office," said Abdelrahman Barman, one of the committee's lawyers. The prison management has not responded to phone calls from the committee.

"We have information confirming that the prison yard was covered by blood," said Barman. "We have the names of two of the people killed people so far. One is still unknown, but we saw his body. The last person we were informed of by our sources, but we still don't have his body or name."

The prisoners' families protested in front of the Central Prison on Tuesday. A family member confirmed to the Yemen Times that "thousands" of riot police broke into the prison to fight the prisoners.

The committee intends to try the violators, which include the interior minister and the prison management, according to Barman. "One of those killed, could have been rescued if they had let him receive medical treatment. He was shot in the leg, but died of bleeding. So it should be seen as murder with intention," he explained.

"The prisoners themselves also refused to be transferred to hospitals, thinking that they might receive treatment and later will be taken into political security detention instead of the central prison, as had happened to their colleagues before," said Abdelrahman.

On Monday afternoon, two prisoners

had a fight inside the prison. The prison management responded by preventing family visits, which increased the prisoners' anger. "More than 80 percent of prisoners' personal possessions and food are given to them by their visitors. That's why the visits are so important to them," said Sam Mohammad, brother of a prisoner.

The prisoners started shouting, objecting to the decision of the management. The management responded by canceling the prisoners' lunch. The prisoners gathered in the yard and started shouting for the head of the prison to be withdrawn. Every small group were shouting different demands, but once all of them shouted "the people want the president to resign."

The prison manager, Mutaheer Al-Shuaibi, came to calm the prisoners down. He then ordered guards to disperse them using sticks, which provoked the prisoners even more. The prisoners broke toilet covers into pieces and began throwing it at the guards.

"The manager who had security precautions in place because of the political situation, ordered the guards to use tear gas. So they started using tear gas, but the wind blew the gas back over the guards," said Sam, who has been in contact with the prisoners by phone for the last two days. When some of the guards collapsed due to tear gas, the prisoners managed to take their phones and guns, and break out from the prisoner's yard to the external yard within the prison, according to Sam.

Sam confirmed to the Yemen Times that some of the families that were contacted by their relatives in prison went to National Security and the Interior Minister. They handed over their phones so that prisoners could deliver their complaints directly to the concerned authorities. "The prisoners had not intended to take over the prison or escape. They were angry and things go out of control. All they asked for is better treatment. They were scared so they asked for a committee from the families and activists to visit them and to make sure of their safety before the Management were given back control," Sam explained.

# Al-Qaeda escalates its operations in Yemen

By: Ali Saeed

SANA'A, Mar. 9 — Al-Qaeda has escalated its operations this week against Yemeni security forces, killing three officers and four soldiers in three different attacks on Sunday, the Ministry of Interior reported on its website on Monday.

The ministry said that in the city of Sayun, in Hadramout governorate, 770km east of the capital Sana'a, "two veiled men on Sunday fired live ammunition from a motorbike without a number plate at Colonel Shayf Muthana Sha'fal, 50, while he was parking his car in the public market of the city."

"Two bullets hit him in his head and shoulder and he died immediately," the ministry reported.

Following this operation, security forces in the area have been on alert and have set up new security checkpoints looking for the murderers.

On the same day, in the Abyan city of Zinjibar, Colonel Abdulhameed Al-Shara'abi, 42, an intelligence officer in the governorate, was assassinated "by unknown men who were walking on foot and fired three bullets from a pistol at Al-Shara'abi's head, leading him to expire straightaway."

On Monday, the ministry said that security forces found two improvised explosive devices that had been placed in Zinjibar's main street. Explosives experts managed to disable both devices.

Similarly, on Sunday at 6:00am in Marib governorate, 25km to the north-east of the capital Sana'a, "an armed group suspected of being Al-Qaeda intercepted a military vehicle carrying supply items, killing one officer and four soldiers in the Al-Rawdhah region, to the north of Marib city."

"The armed group fired ammunition from a Suzuki Grand Vitara, killing all four soldiers and the officer before driving away," the ministry said.

On Sunday, following these three operations in a single 24-hour period, President Saleh held a meeting with his military and political advisors. According to the Ministry of Interior, "The meeting has condemned these crimes and holds Al-Qaeda elements accountable for these incidents."

Aysh Awas, a security researcher at the Saba Center for Strategic Studies, told the Yemen Times that this present escalation by Al-Qaeda "comes as a response to Ma'wda's arrest." Awas was referring to Abu Al-Bara'a Ma'wda, who has been accused of being the leader of Al-Qaeda in Marib and who was arrested by the Yemeni government on February 22nd.

"Ma'wda was Al-Qaeda's leader in Marib. He used to arrange the safe passage of suicide bombers to Sana'a, and he was one of the most dangerous and wanted men by the government," said Awas. The researcher does not believe that the Yemeni government is using "the Al-Qaeda card" to pressure the West to support the current regime during this period of political instability. According



Yemen will introduce a new security plan to the Al-Riyadh conference expected to be held at the end of March. The plan aims to enforce security presence in areas where Al-Qaeda heavily exists such as Hadramout, Shabwa, Mareb, and Abyan.

to Awas, "Al-Qaeda's operations happen to coincide with anti-government protests calling for the regime's removal, but it is clear that Al-Qaeda is targeting the government itself. Most of Al-Qaeda's attacks in the south were against Yemen's intelligence services."

"Al-Qaeda is attempting to weaken the regime," he emphasized. Awas predicted that during the ongoing



With thousands of demonstrators for Saleh's regime and against it (above), clashes around the country have grown increasingly violent

anti-government protests, "Al-Qaeda will escalate its activities while the government is busy trying to control demonstrators. This will facilitate Al-Qaeda's operations greatly."

He added that, "Dealing with Al-Qaeda effectively requires a strategic plan and not a spontaneous, reactive response."

Awas also revealed that the Yemeni government intends to introduce a new

counterterrorism strategy at the Friends of Yemen meeting in Riyadh, which is expected to take place at the end of March.

He explained that this strategy will focus on security reinforcement and the expansion of Yemen's security presence in governorates where Al-Qaeda is most active, including Hadramout, Shabwa, Marib and Abyan.

# Twelve year-old first victim of violent protests in Ibb

By: Malak Shaher

SANA'A, March 9 — Violent clashes between pro and anti-government demonstrators left dozens injured and at least one protester dead in Ibb governorate, 150 km south of Sana'a, on Sunday.

The casualty, twelve year old Omar Abdulrahman, was shot in the back and died from his injuries in hospital the following day, according to NewsYemen website. At least 20 others were wounded, two critically, after govern-

ment loyalists raided the protesters' sit-in and opened fire on Sunday, according to a local councilman.

The death raises the number of people killed since the beginning of the demonstrations in Yemen to 28. The majority of those killed have been anti-government protesters in the southern port city of Aden.

"I was at my home when I heard the fire. Immediately I called my son and asked him to come back," said Hana Muhammad, a local, who lives in a house relatively far away from the area

of demonstrations.

Before the clashes broke out the pro-Saleh loyalists were chanting, "Yes for development! Yes for stability," while the anti-government group was calling for president Saleh to step down to "allow for change." Hana said her son was in the demonstration and he saw pro-Saleh supporters waving pictures of the president and attacking the protesters with clubs before the shooting started.

On Tuesday protests were held in 12 governorates across Yemen, organised

by the Joint Meeting Parties, an opposition coalition of six parties, in response to the violent crackdown on Sunday.

Tens of thousands once again took to the streets of Ibb calling on the government to prosecute those responsible for Sunday's attack. Women threw candy to the protesters from the roofs of their houses, witnesses said.

Last week Saleh appeared on state TV ordering security forces not to shoot at demonstrators and asking the protesters to remain "peaceful and civilized".




Omar Abdulrahman

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رقم (٤٥) لسنة ٢٠١١  
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لمحافظة تعز للشؤون الفنية.  
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# Aden adapts to life with protests

By: Nashwan Al-Othmani

Since protests began in Aden on February 16th, at least 28 people have been killed and over 180 have been injured. Currently, the city is in a state of cautious calm, though sporadic gunshots can still be heard in some neighborhoods. The gunfire often picks up at night.

Due to the violence that has broken out during anti-government protests, many schools and government institutions have been completely paralyzed, while others remain only partially affected. Small businesses have also suffered, as fewer customers feel secure enough to shop in the streets.

Yet it is the routine of daily Adeni life that has suffered most as a result of the demonstrations. The omnipresence of security forces, with their armored patrol vehicles stationed on every main thoroughfare, has made it difficult for civilians to move around. Sometimes, inner-city roads connecting Aden's main districts are completely blocked by security. This has caused problems for people working in both the public and private sectors. Some government buildings – such as the local council offices in Sheikh Othman and Al-Mansoura, and offices belonging to the ruling party in Al-Mulla – have even been burnt down by protesters.

## Everything is changing

As far as 26-year old Mu'ath Al-Shaibani is concerned, people are just demanding their rights and bringing corrupt politicians to account.

"Everything has changed in Aden," says Al-Shaibani, "and it seems that the city, which has been put through so much over the years, is preparing to dust itself off and come back to life." As for



Military vehicle being used to disperse protesters in Aden.

what makes him happy, he says, "It's seeing the youth coming from every corner of the city to join the revolutionary sit-ins."

Al-Shaibani, who recently graduated from Aden University, has no government job, is still single and works as an instructor at APP, a centre for English language and computer training in Crater district. Because the city has been subject to occasional violent clashes, it is now swarming with security forces and Al-Shaibani's commute to work has become increasingly difficult.

On the other hand, Mrs. Mayada Sallam, a 39-year old housewife and mother of one, says, "My daily routine hasn't changed a bit." She told the Yemen Times that she never felt it necessary to purchase extra supplies in case of a civil emergency. She explains that, "Aden is one of the safest cities in Yemen, despite some recent commotions. It's people are known as being both cultured and civilized."

Sallam, who works for the government, adds that, "When visiting the local market, I have found some shops to be closed, but their closure has had no major effect on business here. I find Aden to be as beautiful and wonderful as ever, and I hope that peace will prevail in all Arab countries."

Ms. Shatha Al-Alimi, 25, works as a journalist at Aden City Hall. Unlike Sallam, she says her daily schedule has been dramatically altered. "I don't savor being confined to my house all the time because of the riots," she says. "I prefer to go shopping, to visit my girlfriends and to sometimes go on picnics with family and friends. But now, I've been absent from work for the second week in a row. I have to stay at home most of the time, and when I do go out, I have to return before night falls. Families have clearly become more worried about their children, and in many cases, leaving home is strictly prohibited."



As violence increases in Aden, the streets are left empty as people are afraid to leave their homes

## A stumbling agenda

Mr. Mansour Hariri, 30, believes that the demonstrations have freed him from many of his old responsibilities. "I used to occupy myself with future projects and would constantly receive phone calls about one crisis or another. But now, I only receive calls about the protests."

Hariri used to be the head of the Aden Yemen Youth Federation, which is largely dominated by the ruling party. He resigned in protest on February 19th, in response to the violence that broke out in Aden on February 16th.

"After escaping the ruling party's protective shell," explains Hariri, "my friends and I established a youth forum that convenes every Thursday. Recent developments, however, have obstructed many of its initiatives. I was supposed to sign off on two development projects that would have greatly benefitted the Adeni people, worth USD 200,000 and USD 50,000 respectively. [But this has

no longer been possible.]"

In his capacity as a coordinator for the Relief International Youth Enterprise Program in Aden, Hariri was working to set up a network of youth organizations across the city. But for him, all of his plans have evaporated due to the protests. Nevertheless, if the situation were to improve, Hariri would be keen to "help Aden return to normal."

While Hariri has joined the Adeni youth in their peaceful demonstrations against President Saleh's government, and although his Facebook profile is a hive of lively political activity, he believes that his hometown of Al-Tawahi has continued to go about business as usual, albeit with very slight changes.

## No more school

"Raise your heads if you are Yemeni," proclaims Kimo, 16, who prefers his family name to remain anonymous. "I feel so much more patriotic now. In the past, I used to feel lost."

Kimo used to attend school between 12:00pm and 6:00pm every weekday. He was a hard-working student who would stay at home every evening to study. But ever since the protests erupted, he has been sleeping past noon. He now spends most of his nights demonstrating and communicating via Facebook. "If there's a demonstration after sunset, I will join. Otherwise, I spend my time at the Internet café or hanging out with friends."

"Aden has become a city of killing and suppression," laments Kimo. "Beforehand, it was a place of sweet smelling incense."

## A city on lockdown

Ala'a Isam Hassan, a 28-year old youth activist, says that anyone touring Aden can sense the heightened urgency and tension. "The roads that connect the city's eight districts are sealed off by checkpoints controlled by the Central Security Forces. In hotter spots like Al-Mansoura, Mulla and Khour Maksar, there are armored vehicles, tanks, anti-aircraft guns and soldiers."

Hassan, who is a member of Twitter and the author of a personal blog called 'Opinions', says that Aden has been cut off from other governorates to the north. Free passage is only allowed in instances of severe medical emergencies. Even qat traders, who come from Al-Dhale' 100km north of Aden, have had difficulties entering the city. This has resulted in a significant rise in qat prices.

Hassan adds that although the protests do bring a significant amount of distress, the security forces' response has been heavy and inhumane. "The video clips that show the fierce government reaction to protests in Al-Mansoura, Mulla and Khour Maksar give an accurate sense of what's really happening on the ground."

# Yemen's Vision for National Salvation

Authored by the Preparatory Committee for National Dialogue

A group of 200 politicians, social leaders, businessmen, scholars, intellectuals, feminists, and youth leaders, the PCND makes up the largest part of a three tier dialogue system. The following is a short summary of their more than 40 page plan for national salvation that will be considered by the two smaller dialogue committees, made of 16 and four people, respectively. If approved by all committees, the plan will be introduced to the parliament to become law.

## OBJECTIVE DIAGNOSIS OF THE CURRENT CRISIS

### SECTION ONE

#### Roots of the Crisis:

Despotic and autocratic clan or race based regimes that fostered central un-institutional power as a mean to justify and cover up its clan or race based monopoly of power, authority and resources. This is the true impasse and crisis that wasted the right of people in power and the right of country in its human and material resources and, thus, deepening retardation and waste.

#### Key Manifestations of the Crisis

##### a. Political Manifestations:

Replacing the project of building an institutionalized nation state by autocratic authority that mobilized the state elements outside their institutional scope to secure the needed authority, in part, to hinder the building of a state and, in the other part, to protect the family power; the two processes lead to the same outcome

##### b. Main national manifestations of the crisis:

###### 1. The Southern Cause

The southern cause represents the most serious hotspot of the national crisis. In the evolution of this crisis, an unprecedented state of people's dissatisfaction emerged in southern governorate.

### 2. Sada War

The repeated eruptions, and expansion of scope, of Sada war since June 2004 until it reaches the vicinity of the capital, represented a serious situation reflecting the lack of an institutional system capable of dealing with social, cultural, political and security challenges from a national perspective avoiding the slippage into factional and sectarian wars.

### c. Economic Manifestations of the Crisis

The Economic crisis, which is ruthlessly crunching the vast majority of the poor people, is one of the products of this autocratic regime. Corruption forces amplified, their interests enlarged and their financial balances grew. These forces are dominating different elements in the country and a substantial part of the economic resources of the country are private assets and properties for grand corrupts.

### SECTION TWO

#### Solutions

The essence of these solutions is to revive the spirit and contents of the peaceful unification (on the 22nd of May 990), restore the respect to the Yemeni revolution goals, and to rejuvenate the national democratic project as a key entry point to solve and address different aspects of this perilous crisis.

#### First: Urgent Salvation Tasks and Solutions (halting the collapse)

1. Make appropriate political atmosphere by ceasing all acts of violence in political and civil life, stop all military campaigns against activists, immediately releasing all political prisoners, abolish all laws that restrict public rights and freedoms, and restore equal citizenship right
  - The Immediate relinquishment of the use of force, violence and civil wars as well as the militarization of political and civil life under any justifications and work to bring back hope to those having rightful demands and claims.
  - Stop military campaigns, apprehensions and chasing ac-

tivists. The immediate release of political prisoners and compensate them. Prosecute and trial all those who violated human rights.

- Abolish all laws, resolutions, instructions and orders that restrict public rights and freedoms in violation to the constitution and loosen the security fist on the administrative body of the state.
  - Restore equal citizenship rights with all associated obligations of not endangering the right in public jobs.
2. Remove the impacts of 1994 war through a comprehensive national settlement leading to resolving the southern cause with its righteous and political dimensions fairly and comprehensively putting the south in its natural position as party in the national equation and as a real partner in power and wealth in a national partnership state. This is a critical entry point for a comprehensive national solution for the aggravating situation under which the vast majority of people in all parts of the country live.
  3. Address all impacts of previous political wars and conflicts including the 1978 events, compensate for all material and moral damages inflicted to organizations and people as a result thereof.
  4. Stopping the bloodshed in Sada by expeditiously working to resolve the volatile situation in Sada by putting it on a comprehensive national dialogue table where the Houthis are party to. Renewed hostilities triggers, causes and reasons should be eliminated in this part of the country (Sada).
  5. Resolving revenge and local violence issues, concluding a general settlement between disputing tribes in preparation to address and conclusively resolve all pending revenge cases, criminalizing revenge acts and all those who commit these acts thereafter.
- Second: Building a modern national state**  
Building a democratic state that promotes the values of freedom, social

justice and national independence on the base of decentralization in a form that materializes national partnership in power and resources for all Yemenis as through:

1. Developing the state structure on the base of decentralization:
2. Decentralized and regional unit should be divided and identified according to a field study taking into account objective standards as well as political, economic and social dimensions including:
3. Free, fair and direct elections for decentralized authorities and leaders and adopting the principle of rotation of jobs to ensure real materialization of democratic practiced broadly and to motivate the peoples' participation in political life.
4. Clear constitutional definitions for centralized and decentralized powers and authorities based on the principle of power sharing and to enable decentralized elected bodies of administering their affairs in relation to issues of labor, public jobs, education, health, housing, transportation, roads, construction, urban planning, domestic trade, social and economic affairs, cultural events, police and security tasks.... and other public services including the right to appoint executive leaders, state employees and dismissing them, the right of monitoring and holding accountable different implementation activities in the region, the right to set local taxes and fees, issuing regulations related to the decentralized governance, taking measures to protect state lands and properties, the endowments in the regions and other non-sovereign functions in line with the general policies of the state and the applicable constitution.

#### Establishing a parliamentary political system

As an option put forward by the PCND but it does not seize the right of others partaking in national dialogue to make their own proposals within a serious national dialogue. The parliamentary system proposed in this vision is as follows:

3. Reforming Judicial authority by ensuring independence of judiciary from the executive authority and to finalize the structure of judicial authority through: election of the Supreme Judicial Council and granting it full powers to administer the affairs of judicial authority, creation of a constitutional court with its independent structure, establish administrative courts as a separate body from conventional courts and prohibit the creation of extraordinary courts.
4. Reforming the electoral system by adopting proportional representation system. Impartiality of the Supreme Elections commission shall be guaranteed plus the independence of the electoral administration in all its phases.
5. Reforming administration and combating corruption:
6. Restoring the national nature of armed forces and security, define their role in harmony with the constitution, the democratic parliamentary system, the requirements of political pluralism and peaceful transfer of power

#### Third: Economic and Social Reforms:

Reform the economic administration within comprehensive institutional reforms. A national strategy for sustainable and comprehensive development (human and productive) to develop economic resources, expand sources of national income, strengthening the role of public, private and cooperative sectors to ensure increased production, fair distribution, alleviating poverty and unemployment and achieving social peace.

Reform monetary policy, adopt full clarity and transparency in the state budget and not including any unclassified items in the budget under any justifications. Abolish the practice of supplementary budgets, reform financial legislations and add new and strict controls and conditions preventing such cases.

Reform fiscal policy and ensure full autonomy of the Central Bank of Yemen to enable it of undertaking its role following advanced objective and practical bases as the institution

in charge of drawing the fiscal policy, control over the banking sector, developing and investing the cash reserves of the country, stabilizing prices, curbing inflation pressures, stabilizing the value of national currency and boosting economic growth.

Ensure that the state does not relinquish its social functions and constitutional duties including: free education, provision of health care and services, maternal and child care, environment protection... and other basic services enshrined in the constitution and international human rights treaties.

Implement educational reforms, linking education outputs to development and labor market requirements.

Implement a national strategy for culture and cultural development to preserve the identity of the society, its religion, ethics and affiliations and deepening the culture of dialogue, tolerance and respect for human rights.

Serious attention to the water and power crisis affecting vast areas of the country and adversely reflecting itself on human life, agricultural and economic development.

#### Fourth: Yemeni Women Empowerment:

By enhancing the position and role of women in the society and empowering them to practice all their constitutional and legal rights and their active participation in public life.

#### Fifth: Reforming external policy:

Reformulate the foreign policy of the Republic of Yemen on the base of national partnership and transparent relations in formulating and setting its objectives and directions under the priorities that reflect the cultural affiliations of Yemen and its geographic location and to translate the principles, objectives and ambitions of the Yemeni people including preserving the independence and sovereignty of Yemen, protecting its security and its territorial integrity. Enabling Yemen of actively contributing in boosting regional and international security and stability, defending the Arab and Muslim causes, on top of which are the Palestine and Iraq causes, and supporting human causes to fulfill the Yemen's cultural mission.

# Stoppage time initiatives!

By: Zaid Al-Shami

A revolution is not a pastime like stamp collecting, that you can change for another hobby. Nor is it a penchant for something like coffee that can be replaced by drinking lemonade. It is not a trip or a picnic that can be called off. Rather it is a test of patience, an explosion of suffering, a bearing of horrors, a making slight of hazards and a sacrificing of things most precious – as a means to get rid of oppression and tyranny, and to seek a life of dignity and pride.

The people's rage is not affected. It is the harvest of autocracy, injustice, discrimination and monopolization suffered by Yemenis who now seek to avenge themselves on the regime. It is not easy to convince Taiz people to forget their sufferance of water that is available only every 40 days, without any reaction whatsoever on the part of authorities to alleviate such hardship. And citizens in Aden and Al-Dhale' will not accept their innocent people being killed in cold blood for just staging a peaceful demonstration. And can the people in Ibb be slaughtered like sheep, and then accept a bull as a means of settlement in order to pardon the killers?

Tens of thousands of people – from both the civil and military services – were dismissed from their jobs and many of them left to work in neighboring countries. Could they forget such unjust treatment that ignored all their legal, constitutional and humanitarian rights?

Hundreds of thousands of young people, many of them graduates, were denied fair job opportunities as they

watched the children of powerful people assume leading positions that they do not deserve. Is it logical to tell these youth to applaud unemployment, hail nepotism and dance to the tune of public job snatchers?

What can we possibly say to the citizens of Hajja who pay up to YR 25,000 to fill a tank with fresh water? Is it enough for such people to be transported to a public square and given a cold bottle of water?

How do the people of Hodeida feel about a regime that has made them stand by the roadside, begging for alms from the owners of luxury vehicles before returning to their tin houses? How do they feel about powerful people being granted vast areas by the regime to invest in or establish endless farms?

And how should the people of Marib, Abyan and Shabwa feel about a regime that has allowed foreign aircraft to kill their relatives and shed the blood of innocent people, including children and women, under the pretext of fighting terrorism?

There are youths denied education, patients denied medicine, wronged people denied justice. There are families whose relatives have been put in jail for years without trial. And on the other side there is vanity, a stubborn refusal to listen to such people's grievances, let alone complying with the law, the constitution, and treating the wronged with fairness.

We have become used to the fact that the authorities listen when it is too late, and respond when it is too late. It is not possible here to list the gripes of the people from Al-Mahara and Hadramout to Sa'ada, because they are simply too numerous to count, despite their lucid-

ity and range. The one thing they have in common is their being unrecognized by the regime.

The train of change has moved, and what is rejected by the rulers today will be left behind by the people tomorrow. It is for the regime's own good to listen to the public without delay. And for the record, the Joint Meeting Parties introduced a political reform program in 2005 that was completely rejected by the authority. The same authority denied the existence of any crisis in the country, but it is recognizing it today when it is now too late.

While the opposition kept demanding dialogue, the authority was stalling and accepted forming the '200 Committee' only after political life was in crisis. When the '4 Committee' presented a road map to discuss all national issues, the ruling party held a press conference in which it closed the door on dialogue. The party was encouraged by the latest Egyptian election, so it declared that it would run in the election alone. It went further to approve the law of elections and set up the election supreme committee to serve the party's purposes. It turned a deaf ear to advice and did not make any effort to talk to parliament members when they staged a sit-in. Instead this party kept mocking them and downplaying the whole matter. The MPs were even told: "Go to the people because no one supports you. Leave the closed chambers!"

The opposition was forced to take a one-way path to find out that the public were way ahead, and that they were waiting for the moment of fusion and have now risen up all over the country. Now the authority is seeking dialogue that it earlier rejected, something that is

not easy for the opposition today!

The JMP and their partners announced that they would hold a festival at Al-Tahrir Square, upon which the authority hurried to occupy the location, set up tents, block roads and scare shopkeepers. The public masses took their sit-in to the university. And now the same authority is demanding those tents be removed, after it was the one who started erecting tents in Al-Tahrir Square, on Siteen Street and elsewhere.

The authority had shoved constitutional amendments upon the parliament, "removed" presidential terms, and accepted neither advice nor objection to the provocation of the Yemeni people. But today the regime says that they have withdrawn the amendments through the President's announcement at the joint Parliament/Shura Council meeting. However, this "initiative" has not been implemented, neither were the election laws withdrawn, nor was the supreme election committee disabled, or any measures taken to withdraw the constitutional amendments, nor was the bequeathal abolished. There then are pro-regime demonstrations that require the JMP to respond to the President's initiative, which we have not seen any practical steps to implement.

The authorities still claim that demonstrators demanding change are in groups of tens or hundreds, and that their own supporters are in the millions. When they finally recognize the people, the people will have discarded the regime.

So can the regime set things right in stoppage time?

The people, while not seeking chaos or sedition, will not give up what is rightfully theirs.

## COMMON SENSE

### Don't count on Western support for the Arab revolt

The recent tide, or tsunami, as many have opted to call it, which began its rise in Tunisia at the turn of the year, was indeed a surprise to many people. This was especially so for those in the West, who fail to recognize that the people of this region, especially in the Arab World, could have the audacity to think that they have any level of political or intellectual sophistication.

As the tsunami picked up significant momentum in Egypt, it turned into a nightmare for many in the West, who saw "evil" in these development, which does not conform to their narrow minded interests and naive biases. The first indication of such idiotic sentiments appeared early enough in an article (January 31, 2011) titled: "Tunis: Desperate Revolt of Frustrated Poor or the Jasmine Revolution?" by Gregory Tinsky (link: [http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/6250978/tunis\\_desperate\\_revolt\\_of\\_frustrated.html?cat=9](http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/6250978/tunis_desperate_revolt_of_frustrated.html?cat=9)). He gets down to the nitty gritty by starting his insult of the Tunisian revolt as follows: "Commentators tend to think that Tunisians have demonstrated their urge for democracy and disproved a thought that Arabs can exist only under the rough authoritarian regime". Surely these commentators are out of this world! Tinsky's view will straighten them out for sure: "I'm sure that Tunisians – frustrated with the poverty and desperation – have no interest in the liberal values at all. What they have interest in are the banal, yet essentially important things for a person to survive – food, water and a roof over your head. Tunisian common folk was deprived of those for their entire history." (Excuse the poor English and grammar; that is the author's). BEGGARS CAN'T BE CHOOSY! And note this, "For their entire history". That does away with Carthage, the Phoenician Empire, the cultural upsurge during the Islamic Cultural Epoch (in the Middle Ages, when Europeans were then the desperate of the World) and the struggle for liberation against the dreaded French colonialists.

Why Mr. Tinsky would rush to pass a clearly obvious bigoted judgment on the Tunisians could only be rationalized by the delivery of a message: Forget about any hopes for the Arabs to come out of the severe oppression they have suffered from for the last half century. Mr. Tinsky, being so knowledgeable about the region, has forgotten that the West has been party to the institution and maintenance of the autocratic regimes, which have prevailed in the region, mainly thanks to Western help, by deed or material and moral support. Mr. Tinsky does not want any thoughts to circulate among Western observers of the region that Arabs could ever strive for freedom, social justice and liberty. He shows this in more than one way: "We may, of course, partially agree with an opinion of certain commentators, stating that (the) Tunisian 'revolution' was Julian Assange's fault, who published an information regarding the luxurious lifestyle of President Zine el - Abidine Ben Ali." To suggest that the starving Arabs of Tunisia (I am sure his argument would still be applicable to the Arabs of Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Bahrain, Jordan, etc.) can vie for such western "norms", as some similar bigoted commentators would like to call them, such as freedom, political and civil rights is ridiculous. Assange should be hanged! He caused so much mayhem in the region. But alas, Tinsky was not going to leave the reader with his rendition of the final outcome (in Tunisia): "The state where each one of 50 citizens serves in military or police (army-police strength ratio is 30 thousands of servicemen to 160 thousands of policemen) failed to stand a clash against its own nation. Everyone knows what happened next. President has fled at his Air Force One, Tunisia (ia) was salvaged. However, it's all just for show. Yet another virtuous ruler is to come and rob his own people as it happened before him – what an endless grief. Is there a way out of this dead-end? I have no idea but how about inviting the French back?" (Again, excuse the English). Thanks God! All is well that ends well!

#### Then There is the Islamic Threat

As the Tsunami began to engulf the entire region, worried elements of western media and even policy makers in the West began to sound edgy; where do Islamists fit in, in these latest developments? Is Al-Qaeda behind these crazy ideas that are overtaking the minds of these mad hungry Arabs? Arab leaders even gave such prognosis their own calculated twist of the facts as shown here, *Political Games People Play: Yemen's Terrorism Card!* – link: <http://commonsense575.wordpress.com/2011/03/02/political-games-people-play-yemens-terrorism-card/>. Needless to say, the Saleh regime in Yemen was under the influence of thinking propagated by articles like this (<http://globalmbreport.com/?p=775>), in order to convince the West that rebels in the region pose a high risk for the terror frightened West, "so don't forsake us!" Official Western suggestions go even further, by seeing the always evil stained hand of Iran at play in their crystal balls: *Iran trying to influence Mideast uprisings: Clinton*, linked here (<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2011/03/03/3153712.htm?section=world>), and ridiculed here (<http://bigthink.com/ideas/31527>). All one can say insistently is that the people who are really behind these revolts are the grass roots and downtrodden people of the region, yearning to be free and who are out of range of Iran, Al-Qaeda or the charity rolls of western humanitarian organizations. These are people who are risking their lives now, as many of their past fellow citizens have done in the prisons and torture chambers of the regimes of Ben Ali, Mubarak, Qadhafi, Saleh, etc over the last half century. To Mr. Tinsky, "You can keep your breadcrumbs", and to the Islamic horror mongers, including the supposedly knowledgeable Hillary Clinton, "You can enjoy your bizarre scenarios". The freedom loving people of the region and their many understanding sympathizers, even in your own countries, know exactly what you are all driving at. There was never any good coming from you for any freedom loving people, Christian, Moslem, Pagan or Jewish in the past, and none should be expected now!

One wonders if the obvious strong resistance shown recently by the Qadhafi regime, and the persistence of the Saleh regime and the others to quell their people's genuine desire for freedom and liberty and for the end of their oppressive dictatorial regimes is not in keeping with the desires of the very same Western interests that have kept these autocratic regimes going for so many decades, as they not only robbed their subjects' liberty but their humanity as well. After all, one should never forget that these tyrants know better than to turn against their masters: (<http://www.jpost.com/International/Article.aspx?id=210559> - Yemeni pres. apologizes for saying US, Israel behind unrest in the Jerusalem Post).

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

# President Saleh is not Gaddafi

By: Ali Ahmed Al-Amrani

I have said before that Yemen is neither Tunis nor Egypt. And now I say that Yemen is not Libya, and Ali Abdullah Saleh is not Muammar Al-Gaddafi, nor should he be. I doubt that we will hear Saleh shouting: "Forward! March! Fight from alley to alley and from window to window until I complete my term in 2013!"

Should the situation remain normal, there is no harm if the president trudges on to 2013. But the situation

is becoming more complicated and further aggravated by the hour. Saleh keeps boasting that he did not come to power on a tank, that he refused (at first) to run for president in 2006, and that his electoral program included limiting presidency terms to five years and to only two terms. He talks about this profusely and such things could be a point in his favor.

However, he may find that it is not reasonable or acceptable to insist on completing 35 years in power at any cost or come what may. If this happens, it would be an unprecedented

anachronism. So I do not think that the president will continue clinging to the chair that he says is made of fire, and which may actually turn into an inferno. I do not think that he would insist on dancing with snakes. Especially after the snakes turn out to be meek lambs, peaceful and good creatures that set up tents, and use the streets and pavements as beds. They dream of a truly better future, and request change peacefully but with determination. We are aware that some are keen on keeping Saleh in power not till 2013, but forever. Nonetheless, we realize,

and so does His Excellency, that such a desire is not for the good of Yemen or of his personal history. He knows that the incentives of those that want to keep him in power are personal gain and infinite greed, incentives that have already burdened both the country and the people for three decades.

I can confidently state that there are some common people who still love President Saleh. This is the norm throughout history, although some of these people can hardly make ends meet, and do not exist as far as the government, rulers, elites and political parties are concerned. They do not care about politics either. But as soon as these good people see more dead bodies, destruction and witness their relatives getting killed, they may start asking: why? And the situation will be reversed and the feelings change.

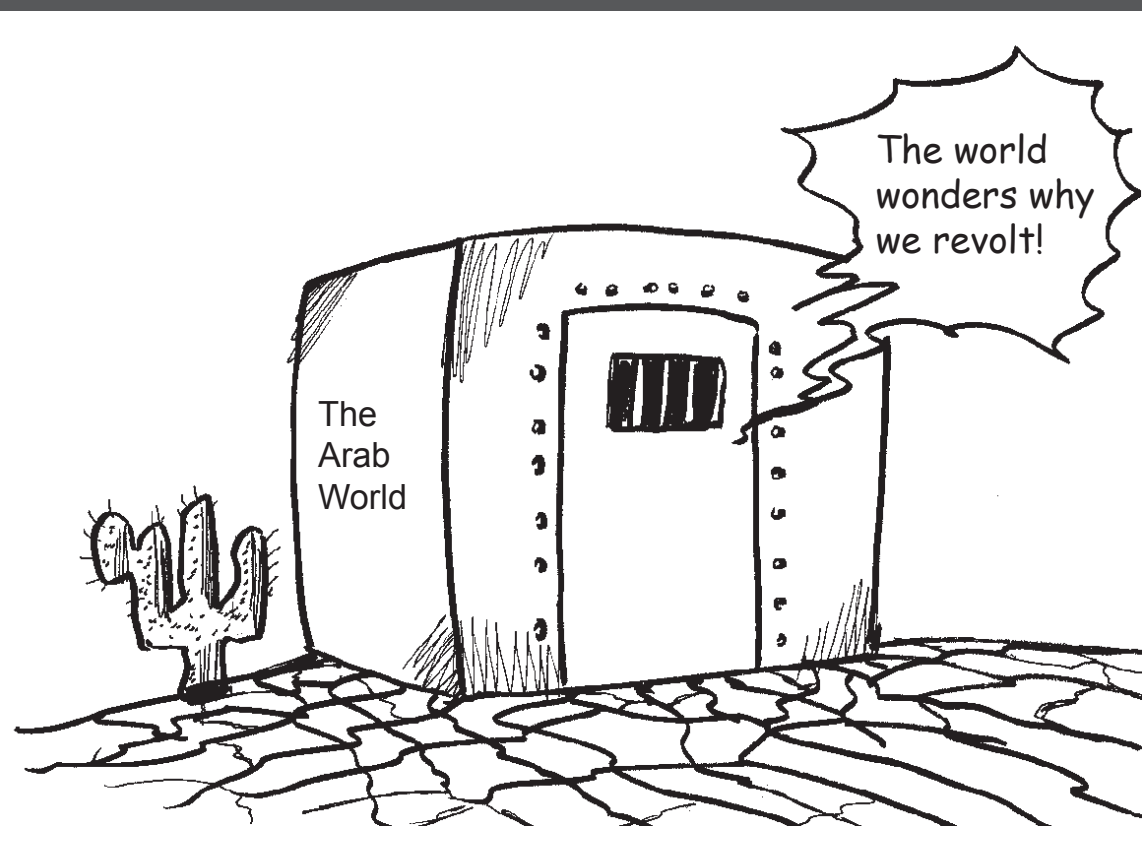
I wish that president Saleh would understand that he is left with but one national mission. He has an historical and ethical responsibility to conclude his reign, focusing his efforts on making change a reality at minimal cost, or if possible, no cost at all. Yemeni people have suffered enough bloodshed in 50 years of wars, most of which could have been averted. But battling for the sake of finishing his term in 2013 cannot be a smart political move. It cannot even boast of being a noble goal, even an illusory one. And in no time, people will shun the president's war to merely stay in power.

The world will never ignore, nor will history forget, that the one responsible for this is a president who has ruled Yemen for over three decades. And that his failure in many fields was inseparable from his reign, especially during the last two decades.

How beautiful it would be for President Ali Abdullah Saleh to become an ex-president with his dignity and honor preserved. He could spare the country tragedy and destruction, and avoid what occurred to Bin Ali, Mubarak and Gaddafi.

## SKETCHED OPINION

By: Hamid



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## Environmental Compliance Monitoring Expert

International Business & Technical Consultants, Inc., a US based development consulting firm (www.ibtci.com), is currently seeking candidates for an Activity-Level Environmental Compliance Monitoring Expert for an assignment with a US Government (USG) project focused on monitoring & evaluation (M&E) activities. The project is responsible for ensuring that all activities funded by USAID are in compliance with US Government and Yemeni Government environmental protection laws and regulations. These assignments entail applying your knowledge of US Government and Yemeni Government laws and regulations to the examination of individual project activities in the field.

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4. Experience working on donor funded projects, especially USAID.
5. Knowledge of Yemeni environmental legislation and USAID environmental guidelines.
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2. Follow up financiers, identify and classify survey expenditures
3. Prepare discharge documents and account review
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5. Prepare a weekly financial report showing expenditures and balance
6. Develop financial regulation in coordination with survey technical management

The ideal candidate should fulfill the following requirements:

### Professional Qualifications:

The professional qualifications of the consultant should be as follows:

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3. A minimum of 3 years experience in working with surveys projects
4. Proficiency in written and spoken English and prepare financial reports in English language.
5. Competency in relevant computer applications
6. Familiarity with the government and donors financial and accounting procedures and guidelines

Interested candidates should submit their applications, consisting of a cover letter and curriculum vitae (CV), to the following address:

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بمناسبة إزفاة المولود الذي أسماه  
**أيمن**  
جعل الله قرّة عين لوالديه  
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وجميع الأهل والأصدقاء

# Smuggled medications seized from pharmacies

By: Malak Shaher

**O**n the desk in front of Muhsen Mayyas, head of the Health and Population Office, there laid a large amount of contaminated, smuggled and illegal medications confiscated from 14 pharmacies around Sana'a.

This pile of medications was confiscated in Jan. 2010 when the office started conducting surprise visits of pharmacies in Sana'a. According to Mayyas, the medications were seized from pharmacies near prominent hospitals. They included medicines smuggled from Saudi Arabia that had been stored in bad conditions before finally reaching its destination in Yemeni pharmacies.

Mayyas said that pharmacy owners from whom the medicines were confiscated were asked to sign a pledge not to sell these medications again in any amount. He added that they were also fined upwards of YR 50,000 or about USD 250. The fine can be more depending on the violation and the medicines sold.

The office started checking pharmacies two months ago, however, one problem they have faced is that the pharmacies hold the illegal medicine in the morning, and sell it in the afternoon or the evening. Mayyas said that the health offices in Yemen do not have an authorization letter from the Ministry of Justice to check the pharmacies outside of the office working hours – which close at 1pm.

The seized medicines do not have a sealed guarantee from any accredited agent in Yemen. According to Mayyas, there are nearly 70 accredited agents for medication in Yemen. They have licenses to import medicine into Yemen from known providers and that these medications are stored under suitable conditions that guarantee its efficacy until the due date.

"If the medications are stored under bad conditions, like changeable or high temperatures or they are exposed to pressure, its compounds can change. This can cause serious side effects in the patient once the medication is taken," said Najeeb Saif, head of the Supreme Medication Committee in the Ministry of Health and Population.

According to AbdulHafeeth Al-Ariqi, head of the medications stores at natco, Yemeni company operating as medication agent, the medication is stored at 2-8 ° C. Al-Ariqi said that some medication are not kept in cold temperature as there is no need for the law temperature. However, he added, the temperature of the store should not



It is often difficult to distinguish from real and counterfeit drugs. All drugs pictured here are counterfeit.

exceed 18° C.

Mayyas said that the smugglers buy the medication cheaply from the manufacturing company or the black market in other countries and smuggle it into Yemen.

"Sometimes smugglers, who bring medicine from Saudi Arabia, hide it in cardboard boxes inside the hot desert sands which can negatively affect the medicine," explained Mayyas.

He pointed to a box of Voltaren, an anti-inflammatory cream that was brought from Saudi Arabia. The packaging did not have a stamp from any known medical agent in Yemen. The package has a sticker that shows it is sold for YR 1,300 or USD 6. Under the sticker is the real price in Saudi riyal, which is SR 17 or USD 4.50.

#### A means of earning a living

"For many reasons, medicine has become a means of earning money. Some people do not have a conscience and prefer to get rich at the expense of other people's health," said Mayyas.

The Yemeni government spends a lot of money on medication that is to be distributed free to Yemeni soldiers or to people with special needs. However, some of these free medications are later found being sold in pharmacies for profit, said Mayyas.

Mayyas called on Yemeni hospitals that receive free medication to ensure that its employees are not earning a liv-

ing by selling these free medicines to pharmacies. Such medications include Micronor, an oral birth control tablet, and Supplementary Plumpy'Nut, a food supplement for children supplied by UNICEF. He said that pharmacies should not be selling medications intended to be freely distributed, as they will be held accountable.

Mayyas added that many patients with chronic diseases such as diabetes, renal failure and heart disease buy medication without feeling better. He said that these patients should consult a doctor after buying the medication.

#### Forbidden and anonymously-sourced medicines

Among the pile of seized medicines, there were two packages that Mayyas said were amongst the most smuggled into the country. Spanische Fliege drops (Spanish Fly) and Ginseng Kianpi Pil were found in many pharmacies around Sana'a. The first is used to increase

sexual desire and the second to gain weight. According to Mayyas, Fliege was commonly found with a chewing gum used for the same purpose.

He said that the Fliege drops are not approved by Yemeni law and that they are illegally given to girls to make them ask for sex against their consent. The Ginseng Kianpi Pil, however, are used to gain weight and stimulate the appetite. Its source is anonymous and it does not have a list of ingredients. According to Mayyas, taking Ginseng Kianpi Pil can eventually cause renal fail

#### 4U

Check the medication before you buy it. The package should not be scratched at any place. Do not forget to look at the expiry date. If it is blurred or scratched, do not buy the medication and call the General Health office: 01-218 318

## Mysterious disease hits Hodeida

By: Tom Finn

**A** highly contagious unidentified disease has claimed the lives of 114 people in Yemen's governorate of Al-Hodeida igniting concerns that it may spread into Saudi Arabia, a health official said on Wednesday.

Doctors have yet to reach a consensus on the cause of the disease which can kill people within two days of being contracted, according to Najib Malhi, head of the Yemeni doctors and pharmacists union.

"The disease's symptoms include acute bleeding, rapid kidney failure, and high fever followed by a brief coma and sudden death," Dr. Malhi said in a statement.

Two weeks ago Yemen's cabinet announced that, "Al-Hodeida governorate had been infected with a mysterious disease," and instructed the Ministry of Health to locate the disease and explore its causes and possible remedies.

According to local Arabic media, people in the Hodeida area are shocked at the loss of life. Arafat Maki, a local journalist who contracted the illness, said the disease has caused panic in the area.

"Lots of people are thought to have died. The health facilities in Hodeida and hospitals are working overtime to cope with the influx of patients," he said.

Medical supplies to the governorate have been doubled and anti-mosquito teams have been dispatched to carry out wide-scale insecticide spraying and prevent the disease from spreading, the Health Minister Abdulkarim Rasa was quoted as saying last week.

#### Chikungunya?

Some local doctors are claiming the

mysterious disease is Chikungunya (in the Makonde language "that which bends up"), a mosquito-borne virus with symptoms similar to dengue fever found mainly in Africa, Asia and the Indian subcontinent.

"Forty-five percent of the cases are chikungunya, 10 percent malaria and the rest dengue fever," said Dr. Abdul Hakim Al-Khohlaini, manager of the epidemiological surveillance department at the Yemeni Ministry of Health.

However, Dr. Najeeb Molhahead of the Hodeidah doctors' syndicate refuted this. "Chikungunya doesn't claim this many lives. It's a disease which appeared here in the last three months of 2010 and does not exist anymore," he said. "I think it is a kind of hemorrhagic fever. Our work has helped in bringing down the number of victims and lessening the panic," he said.

#### Spreading into the Kingdom?

The deadly disease has sparked fears that it may spread into Saudi Arabia.

Dr. Mohsen Al-Tobaiki, director of health in Jazan, said the Saudi authorities have been following closely developments across the border.

"Saudi health officials called us and inquired about the spread of a disease in the border provinces," Abdul Hakim Al Khohlaini, an official at the Yemeni Health Ministry, said. "We assured them that the disease is under control and far away from the Saudi border."

But this has not mitigated the anxieties of the Saudi authorities who pointed to hundreds of unregistered migrants crossing the border every day without health certificates proving they have taken necessary vaccinations.

At the moment health officials say that the border provinces in the south of Saudi Arabia are free from the disease.

## HEALTH WATCH

By: Dr. Siva



This weekly column disseminates health information to readers in Yemen and beyond. Dr. Siva currently works at Aden Refinery Company Hospital. Lifestyle, diseases and cancer prevention are his special interests. Complementary medicine and naturopathy are his passions.

## Safeguarding your sight

**A**lthough aging puts people at greater risk for serious eye disease and other eye problems, loss of sight need not go hand in hand with growing older. Practical, preventive measures can help protect against devastating impairment. An estimated 40% to 50% of all blindness can be avoided or treated, mainly through regular visits to a vision specialist.

Regular eye exams are the cornerstone of visual health as people age. Individuals who have a family history of eye disease or other risk factors should have more frequent exams. Don't wait until your vision deteriorates to have an eye exam. One eye can often compensate for the other while an eye condition progresses. Frequently, only an exam can detect eye disease in its earliest stages.



You can take other steps on your own. First, if you smoke, stop. Smoking increases the risk of several eye disorders, including age-related macular degeneration. Next, take a look at your diet. Maintaining a nutritious diet, with lots of fruits and vegetables and minimal saturated fats and hydrogenated oils, promotes sound health and may boost your resistance to eye disease. Wearing sunglasses and hats is important for people of any age. Taking the time to learn about the aging eye and recognizing risks and symptoms can alert you to the warning signs of vision problems.

Although eyestrain, spending many hours in front of a television or computer screen, or working in poor light does not cause harmful medical conditions, it can tire the eyes and, ultimately, their owner. The eyes are priceless and deserve to be treated with care and respect — and that is as true for the adult of 80 as it is for the teenager of 18.

#### Common eye myths regarding preservation of eye sight

##### 1. Doing eye exercises will delay the need for glasses.

**Fact:** Eye exercises will not improve or preserve vision or reduce the need for glasses. Your vision depends on many factors, including the shape of your eye and the health of the eye tissues, none of which can be significantly altered with eye exercises.

##### 2. Reading in dim light will worsen your vision.

**Fact:** Although dim lighting will not adversely affect your eyesight, it will tire your eyes out more quickly. The best way to position a reading light is to have it shine directly onto the page, not over your shoulder. A desk lamp with an opaque shade pointing directly at the reading material is the best possible arrangement. A light that shines over your shoulder will cause a glare, making it more difficult to see the reading material.

##### 3. Eating carrots is good for the eyes.

**Fact:** There is some truth in this one. Carrots, which contain vitamin A, are one of several vegetables that are good for the eyes. But fresh fruits and dark green leafy vegetables, which contain more antioxidant vitamins such as C and E, are even better. Antioxidant vitamins may help protect the eyes against cataract and age-related macular degeneration. But eating any vegetables or supplements containing these vitamins or substances will not prevent or correct basic vision problems such as nearsightedness or farsightedness.

##### 4. It's best not to wear glasses all the time. Taking a break from glasses or contact lenses allows your eyes to rest.

**Fact:** If you need glasses for distance or reading, use them. Attempting to read without reading glasses will simply strain your eyes and tire them out. Using your glasses won't worsen your vision or lead to any eye disease.

##### 6. Staring at a computer screen all day is bad for the eyes.

**Fact:** Although using a computer will not harm your eyes, staring at a computer screen all day will contribute to eyestrain or tired eyes. Adjust lighting so that it does not create a glare or harsh reflection on the screen. Also, when you're working on a computer or doing other close work such as reading or sewing, it's a good idea to rest your eyes briefly every hour or so to lessen eye fatigue. Finally, people who stare at a computer screen for long periods tend not to blink as often as usual, which can cause the eyes to feel dry and uncomfortable. Make a conscious effort to blink regularly so that the eyes stay well lubricated and do not dry out.

Ref: Harvard Medical School Health Bulletin

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TRIPOLI, March 6, 2011 — Two children celebrate in Tripoli, Libya, March 6, 2011. Libyan state television said government troops loyal to leader Moamer Gaddafi had recaptured Misrata, Libya's third-largest city early Sunday



GAZA, March 6, 2011 — Palestinians survey the damage at the Islamic University building after Israeli air raid overnight, in Gaza City on March 6, 2011. Israeli warplanes struck with missiles on Saturday night several targets in the Gaza Strip in response to earlier homemade rockets attacks launched by Palestinian fighters.



MULHEIM, March 7, 2011 — South Korean players Sa Rang Kim and Ki Jung Kim (R) return a shot to their compatriots Jae Sung Jung and Yong Dae Lee during the final of men's doubles at the Yonex German Open Badminton Grand Prix Gold 2011 in Mulheim, Germany, March 6, 2011. Jae Sung Jung and Yong Dae Lee won 2-1 to claim the champion.



KUWAIT CITY, March 5, 2011 — A man kisses his camel prior to a camel race competition at a club, some 40 kilometers southwest of Kuwait City, Kuwait, March 5, 2011. The traditional camel race is held every weekend from late September to next year's March.



ABIDJAN, March 5, 2011 — A man lays clothes under the sunshine in a refugee camp at a church in Cocody district of Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, March 5, 2011. In Abidjan, the estimated number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) has exceeded 200,000, most of them former residents of the northern suburb of Abobo, where fighting has raged in recent days, according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).



MANAMA, March 6, 2011 — Anti-government protesters take part in a demonstration in front of prime minister's office in Manama, capital of Bahrain, March 6, 2011. Protesters, most of them Shiites, have been pressing for political reforms, including the release of political prisoners and the sack of the incumbent prime minister.



ALGIERS, March 6, 2011 — Algerian students rally in front of the Ministry of Higher Education and Science Research in Algiers, capital of Algeria, on March 6, 2011. They required the improvement of their social and educational status as well as amendment of teaching system.



ALGIERS, March 5, 2011 — Algerians hold rallies in Algiers, capital of Algeria, on March 5, 2011. There are opposition supporters calling for political reform in the demonstrations, and also supporters of Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika.



Kabul, March 6, 2011 — Afghan protesters shout slogans during the demonstration against civilian casualties in Kabul, capital of Afghanistan on March 6, 2011. Hundreds of people demonstrated on the streets of Afghanistan's capital to protest against the deaths of nine children killed during an air raid on Feb. 28.

Photographer and journalist Mohammed Al-Sayaghi speaks to the Yemen Times:

# “Photographers in Yemen are marginalized and they are unappreciated”

Mohammed Al-Sayaghi is one of the few prominent photographers in Yemen. He works as a photographer and a journalist for Saba News Agency and has his own website, Yemen lens, the first Yemeni website that provides subscribers with high-resolution photographs. Al-Sayaghi speaks to the Yemen Times about the difficulties that face Yemeni photographers and the absence of photographic art in Yemen.

By: Sadeq Al-Wesabi

**First of all, tell us about your new website “Yemen lens”?**

The idea of the website was in my mind for a long time. It was one of my dreams that I have recently achieved. The website is like an agency that provides professional pictures for subscribers. My aim for this website is to provide subscribers with high quality pictures.

**You are both a journalist and a professional photographer. What’s the importance of being a journalist and photographer at the same time**

I cannot imagine a journalist without a camera. I think that journalists lose their credibility when they publish their stories without pictures. It surprises me when I see a journalist working without camera. Journalists must have a camera and they should learn at least the fundamentals of photography, because the picture is the most important part in journalism.

**But most journalists have no idea about photography. Do you consider this a big mistake?**

Yes, it’s a mistake and all journalists should avoid it. Journalists should have different skills to be distinguished. The nature of their work requires them to be different from other people. Anyway, I am working these days on a project of establishing a center for learning photography. Photography in Yemen is an absent art and most people in Yemen don’t realize the importance of pictures.

**Many Yemeni photographers complain that their editors don’t care about them. Do you suffer from that?**

Unfortunately, photographers in Yemen are marginalized and Yemenis don’t appreciate their efforts and creations. There is no syndicate or entity that cover Yemeni photographers. In Yemen, anyone can hold a camera and describe himself as a photographer. Our editors-in-chief don’t train photographers. Editors of newspapers send their photographers to dangerous events to take pictures, but they will not send them abroad to teach them photography.

**Do Yemeni photographers plan to establish a syndicate for themselves?**

I’ve already tried to set up an association for Yemeni photographers, belonging to the Yemen Journalists’ Syndicate. But many photographers didn’t cooperate with me because most of them are outsiders to the profession. They don’t care about establishing any entity to represent and cover them.

**What do Yemeni photographers need to improve their profession?**

They need improved cameras and equipment, continued training and an association that will organize them.

**Professional pictures are absent in our newspapers. Why?**

The editors of our newspapers should answer that question.

**Many photographers face problems when taking pictures in public places. Do you face such problems?**

Yes. I’ve always been subjected to problems and detention because of taking pictures. For example, if I want to take pictures inside the airport they will prevent me, although there are no laws banning it. But some people like preventing us from taking pictures without reason. “You are not allowed to take



Photographer and journalist Mohammed Al-Sayaghi: “Photography is an absent art in Yemen.”

pictures, man.” I’ve always heard this expression from curious people.

**Why are the financial returns for Yemeni photographers weak compared with photographers in other countries?**

Yemeni photographers, and journalists as well, suffer from this problem. The main problem is in the dysfunctional media system.

**Humanitarian pictures are almost absent in Yemeni newspapers, while**

**pictures of Yemeni officials have a strongly presence. How do you explain this?**

Regrettably, journalism in Yemen isn’t objective. It doesn’t focus on humanitarian, social and economic issues. The most important thing for most of our newspapers are official activities. They don’t care about issues of public opinion or the suffering of the poor.

**Does Yemen lack professional photographers?**

Absolutely, yes.

**What countries have you traveled to and photographed?**

I’ve visited many places and countries like France, America, Spain, the island of Sicily, Switzerland, Greece, Malaysia, the Alps, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, and Saudi Arabia. I’ve taken unforgettable pictures of all these countries that have fascinating nature.

**What picture are you most proud of?**

I’m proud of all my pictures.

**Who are the most prominent figures that you have photographed?**

Bill Clinton and his wife Hillary, Gerhard Schroeder, Mahathir Mohammed, President Saleh and different political, cultural and artistic figures.

**What’s your ambition as a photographer?**

My ambition is to travel to study and delve deeply into photography. I hope to have the purchasing power to be able to buy all the new techniques in the field of photography.

## Stories from Real Life

By: Nawal Zaid  
For the Yemen Times

### How families mistreat their children

#### She found solace in the kindness of neighbors

**H**ouida Mohammad is 37 years old. She is single and lives with her family, doing housework at home.

Houida was deprived of an education after finishing elementary school. She likes to study and tried hard to convince her father to let her, even begging him, but he refused. He used to beat her and make her stay at home. She cried a lot because of this injustice. When any man proposed to Houida, her parents refused him. She was the only daughter and they wanted her to stay as a servant and do all the housework.

Houida was always thinking of running away from the house, but she was afraid that if any of her family caught her they would kill her without hesitation. She also thought of suicide, but she was a religious woman and afraid of God. Her life became living hell. She lacked all tenderness, safety and kindness from her family.

After several years a new set of neighbors, Ahmed’s family, moved into the same building as Houida’s family. Ahmed’s family was from Taiz, and they had four daughters and three sons. They were a very nice family. Houida became friends with their daughters and considered their sons

as her own brothers. Ahmed’s family became like her own family. After finishing her housework in the morning she used to go to them. She had found people who would listen to her problems. She felt so relieved and comfortable around them, listening to their great advice. Without them she would have become lost, or one of the runaway girls.

After fifteen years, Ahmed’s family bought a new house in the Shomila area. They will move to there. Houida is no longer a young girl and now she gets all the tenderness that she needs. She can depend upon herself and take care of herself now. She has become an aware woman who can face all her problems. She hopes all the best for Ahmed’s family, and she will always remember their advice and the good days that they spent together.

#### Cruel uncles destroy a boys education and mind

**A**li Mohammad is 15 years old. He lives in Sana’a with his family. He has a very low level of education. He is single and has five sisters and one brother. When Ali first entered school he was very smart and passed with great marks.

When he was ten years old, he went

to his grandmother’s house. When any of his uncles demanded that he buy something for them, he refused, and they used to beat him badly. His mother tried to keep him at home, but whenever any of his uncles found him at school or on the street they would hit him around the head. They would slap him in the presence of his friends, and threatened that if he told his mother they would kill him. The beatings caused Ali permanent brain damage. He had problems with his memory and other health problems. He could no longer concentrate on his studies or even write his own name, and kept forgetting many things.

Ali couldn’t finish his education and he forgot everything he had previously learned. He started going to internet cafes and looking at bad websites. He also started smoking and chewing qat when he was fifteen years old. Ali’s father started to beat him for such behavior, but beatings no longer worked with Ali. What he actually needs is a therapist.

Now Ali has become like a servant for anyone who asks him to do anything. Of course if he refuses, they beat him. No one takes care of him or his unfinished education. They do not consider his not finishing his education as a big problem because they are not aware people.

One day as he sat with his aunt,

Sana’a, she tried to understand how he thinks. He asked her if someone wants to get married and their family prevents this, what should they do? His aunt asked him who was that ‘someone’, and he answered, ‘me’. His aunt was surprised of what he was thinking at this young age. She said that he still too young to be thinking in such a way, and he should think of finishing his education and getting a job so then he could get married.

Ali doesn’t get any support from his family. He needs to see a therapist. Ali is the victim of his unaware parents who only think of marrying Ali off when he gets older.

#### A hard working man destroyed by his brothers and father

**M**ohammad Badawi is 50 years old. He is single, uneducated and sometimes works as a builder. He doesn’t live in a fixed place, sometimes living in Sana’a, or Bani Mater, or Al-Rahaba village.

After the death of Mohammad’s mother a long time ago, he decided to emigrate to Saudi Arabia. He wanted to work there and save some money so he could return and get married. He made a lot of friends there in Al-Ta’aef

city where they worked together farming. He used to make a lot of money and sent it back to his father and brothers back in Yemen. He told them to deposit it in a bank for him until he returned. He also sent house supplies back for himself. He even sent YR 20 million back to buy a house for all the supplies he had brought. Whenever he asked his relatives to save his money, or do anything for him they answered that they will do as he asked.

After many years Mohammad returned wanting to marry. He asked his father where all the possessions that he had sent back were. His father gave him a few blankets and kicked him out of the house saying that was all there was. His father told him if he didn’t believe him he could ask his brothers. His brother’s answers were the same.

Mohammad was shocked and couldn’t believe it. Neither could he report his father and brothers to the police because he loved them a lot. He tried to seek the help of the tribe’s Sheikh to gain back his possessions from his family. When all the tribe gathered, his family swore on the Holy Qura’an that they didn’t have any of Mohammad’s possessions except the few blankets that they had already given him. The Sheikh judged that Mohammad should no longer demand from his family possessions that did not exist.

Mohammad was horribly shocked

and he saw his life collapsing around him and his pockets empty. He went crying to his aunt, his mother’s sister, in Sana’a and tried to convince some of his relatives to talk his father into returning his possessions. His father started telling people that Mohammad was insane. And there was some truth to this now. He had started losing his mind after what had happened to him, after he had lost his fortune and future because of his unjust father. Mohammad’s father even deprived him of his heritage and gave him some food and insects.

Mohammad lived secluded and alone. He sometimes went to his aunt for a year or so, sometimes to his uncle, his mother’s brother. They pitied him and gave him some food and money, but he cried when they gave him things as he used to be the one who gave, not the one who received.

Now he just fulfills the demands of other people, such as buying groceries. At other times he works as a builder. But when he returns to his village he remembers all his sorrows that his family caused him. His life has become so complicated. He is now fifty years old and homeless, without a wife or kids. Whenever he sees kids playing on the street, he feels sorrow for not having any. All of this, because of his father and brothers’ injustice.



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# Change is a necessary goal amongst anti-government protestors

By: Ola Al-Shami

Anti-government protestors in Sana'a have faced numerous problems, including many reported injuries and several deaths. The Yemen Times interviewed some of the demonstrators to learn more about their motivations, goals, demands, and achievements.

Maizar Al-Azazi, a student protester who is demonstrating against the regime, claimed that the student or youth movement started on January 17th, 2011. "The Tunisian revolution had a big impact on us," said Al-Azazi. "Personally, I worked on a bulletin entitled 'The Revolutionary Release' in the name of the students who belong to the Yemen Capitalist Society at Sana'a University, in which we demand the collapse of the dictatorship."

"After that, Tawakol Karman, the human rights activist, called me and we agreed to work together to achieve this goal. Later, we had a meeting with activists, students and unemployed people, during which we decided to protest until the present regime falls," he added.

Al-Azazi said that he did not join the student movement. Rather, he was the first person to issue a release wherein it was acknowledged that there was a revolutionary movement appearing in Yemen – inspired by the Tunisian example – and that it could be worked upon and improved.

Regarding their requests, Al-Azazi



said, "The demand that we have been working on right from the very beginning has been to get rid of the ruling elite. We entitled this demand 'The Public Wants the Regime to Leave', as we were inspired by the youth revolution in Tunisia."

"Now we're increasing in numbers every day, despite the harm we face from the police and security forces. The real role of the youth is to make things change."

Ahmed Saif Hashid, a MP and the Director of the Organization for Change, said, "This movement was initiated at Sana'a University. The students were inspired by the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions, and by the long presidency that has lasted more than 32 years."

"I joined this movement because I found the ember of a real revolution within it. Students are demanding

the birth of a new national, civil and democratic government which achieves true social justice, not just ink on paper," said Hashid.

He added that the state has actually consented to some of the protesters' demands. "However," said Hashid, "these concessions are useless because change has now become a necessity and there is no other choice."

"There is a huge amount of interaction between the public and this movement. The evidence is the spread of anti-government protests across many governorates in Yemen," explained Hashid. "The biggest achievement of this movement has been the youth breaking the fear barrier. They were finally encouraged to demand a change of the regime," he added.

Sameeh Al-Wajeeh, a student participating in the anti-government

demonstrations, said, "Our country is ruled by a tyrannical government. We face a great deal of repression and all kinds of abuse. We started this movement at the front of the university because we believe that change must be the basis for any reformation that will lift this country into modernity."

At the beginning, Al-Wajeeh said protesters started coordinating youth via Facebook and SMS messages, as well as through hand-delivered invitations to join the campaign. "I was attracted to this movement because I am a part of this country and because I am one of thousands who are unemployed."

"Our demand is that the present regime depart. First, we do not trust what the president promises, because he has promised so much and has fulfilled so little. Second, we – the youth – believe that dialog with this regime is useless. So we remain committed our demands," Al-Wajeeh explained.

Al-Wajeeh added that the youth join this movement because it represents the real demands of the people, and that those who join are ready to sacrifice a great deal to get rid of the present system.

"Our goal is to get the present regime to leave. I think the Egyptian revolution made it easier for ours to progress. Although the regime has canceled all fees for the parallel education system and has established a fund for youth, these external solutions do not match our demands and we won't stop until this regime departs," insisted Al-Wajeeh.

"This movement has already achieved

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many things, such as breaking the fear barrier amongst people who were initially afraid to voice their demands. We will not stop this movement nor these demonstrations until the present regime leaves our country," said Al-Wajeeh.

Rayan Al-Shaibani, a social activist and university student in Sana'a, said, "In my opinion, this movement was not organized in the beginning. Rather, it was spontaneous. We were voicing our shared demands and worries, expressing our rights to freedom of opinion, democracy and an honorable kind of living."

Al-Shaibani said that he joined the movement because he hopes to see his country escape the monopolistic control of resources and finances by the ruling elite and their family members.

"For three decades, the ruling system has been based on fake promises and the playing of endless political cards so as to maintain control. We can no longer trust the present regime and so we want it to get out," said Al-Shaibani.

"Our aim is to break the fear barrier amongst the youth so that the public can take to the streets," added Al-Shaibani.

Al-Shaibani said that continuity is the main achievement of this movement and that the protesters do not care about what the president or the current government promises. He claims that the regime's warnings, as spread by the media, are not frightening the protesters in the least.

"Time passes and it is over for the current regime. If the government truly values Yemen, it must leave this instant," said Al-Shaibani.

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