

UN Human Rights committee: Yemen is facing deliberate humanitarian and economic crises

By: Nadia Al-Sakkaf

SANA'A, July 6 — A three member human rights committee concluded its investigations on the human rights situation of Yemen during a 9 day visit that included Sana'a, Taiz and Aden governorates.

The committee headed by Mr. Hani Majali addressed media on Wednesday and briefed them on the progress promising a full report to be published prior to the discussion at the UN assembly in September this year.

The report due later will reveal the situation of human rights in the three governorates with special focus on violations during conflict. For the purpose of investigations, the team met with officials, opposition leaders, civil society and journalists and visited some of the

revolution squares, prisons, hospitals and other relevant institutions. They have also met with victims of human rights violations.

The report will also provide a set of recommendations offered to the Yemeni government and other stakeholders.

The committee thanked the Yemeni government for facilitating their visit and giving them access to the places they visited.

The first thing the committee emphasized was a call for ending violence and provision humanitarian support to civilians. "We have to protect the rights of civilians whose rights are threatened including the right to life," said the committee's team leader Hani Majali.

"But we can't leave the country without addressing two points: The first point is that Yemenis have organized

themselves bravely and in a peaceful way despite the fact that weapons are very much present in abundance in the country," said Majali.

He said that the protestors should be allowed to continue their peaceful protests and not be attacked by live bullets or abused by armed gangs because other than being a violation of human rights it will also lead to more violence.

"The Yemeni government must respect its commitments to the international human rights conventions and abstain from using excessive force against protestors," he said.

He urged all Yemenis to make sure that protest grounds are free from arms and remain safe spaces for expression.

"The other point is the humanitarian situation in the country," continued Majali. "There is a rapid deterioration

in this issue and a growing presence of insecurity combined with absences of rule of law and lack of basic services such as fuel and electricity which affect health, education and other important sectors of life."

"All these have lead to further inflation of prices, increase unemployment and created a black market," he said.

The committee concluded that Yemen is facing deliberate humanitarian and economic crises and urged stakeholders to remember that civilians must not be a part of this political conflict and be subjected to collective punishment.

"Officials on both sides must realize that they are violating international human rights with what they are doing. We also urge the international community to support Yemen during this difficult time," concluded Majali.

Yemeni opposition figure accused of links with Iran



Hassan Zaid

By: Mohamed Bin Sallam

SANA'A, July 6 — On Tuesday, Yemen's National Security barred the opposition figure, Hassan Zaid - general secretary of the Al-Haq Islamic Zaydi Party - from travelling to Saudi Arabia, accusing him of having connections with Iran.

"A group of national security police who work at the Sana'a international airport kidnapped me at 9:00 am on Tuesday morning, in barbaric manner, while I was at the airport heading to Mecca in Saudi Arabia to do the religious duties of Islamic Umra," said Zaid, who is also a member of opposition coalition known as the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP), in a telephone call with the Yemen Times on Tuesday.

"Then two hours later they moved me to the special criminal prosecution department, despite the fact that they have no legal justification or a warrant of arrest from the prosecution to ban me from travelling," he said.

He explained that the prosecutor has released him on the same day at 1:00 pm "because, basically, there is no case to answer."

Head of the special criminal prosecution, which is a state security court, has asked Zaid to attend on Wednesday to listen to the accusations that have been made by agents of national security and the criminal investigation department, wherein they claimed Zaid has incited the pro-change protesters to occupy governmental buildings, according to Zaid.

But on Wednesday Zaid did not go to the prosecution, due to warnings from American officials at the US Embassy in Sana'a.

"They advised me not to go to the prosecution and promised me the return

of my passport which was seized by national security," Zaid told the Yemen Times on Wednesday afternoon.

He added that officers of the national security and criminal investigation, including the chief of criminal investigation in the capital Sana'a, Rizq Al-Jawfi, have charged him with a list of accusations saying "I'm Hashemite, a traitor, and a spy for Iran."

He said that Ali Al-Samet, head of the special criminal prosecution, denied issuing any such order to ban Zaid from traveling, or any arrest warrant; he stated that it was solely the security department of the capital Sana'a that issued orders to arrest him.

"The policemen commanded by Rizq Al-Jawfi, chief of criminal investigation, held their guns to the face of the prosecution chief, and threatened to kill him if he released me," said Zaid.

"The chief of the prosecution was forced to run away after he issued my release warrant, since when the criminal investigation policemen have blockaded the court building" he said "They also raised their guns to my face and threatened to kill me."

Despite instructions from the Vice President, Abd Raboo Mansour Hadi, to drop Zaid's case, and the charge against him of incitement to occupy state's institutions, through insufficient evidence to convict him, the opposition figure is still vulnerable to arrest and barring of his travel.

The Yemen's opposition coalition, known as the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP), warned last week against arresting outstanding opposition and political figures on the basis of evidence prepared by the national security amidst the popular uprisings demanding the departure of the Saleh's regime and of his family.

The Al-Haq Islamic Zaydi opposition party is the closest political party to the Houthi rebels in Sa'ada, Northern Yemen, who have been battling against Yemen's army since 2004, with intermittent ceasefires.

On March 24, the Houthis took control of Sa'ada after the governor appointed by President Saleh vacated his governorate office the previous day. This occurred as part of the popular revolution against Saleh's rule, which started five months ago.

The other story of the Revolution Squares

By: Amira Al-Arasi

SANA'A, July 6 — Although initially they were meant as locations for Yemeni activists and revolutionaries to express their views and their thirst for change, Yemen's revolution squares also attract another kind of crowd.

Almost invisible, yet very much in keeping with all the revolution squares across the country, are the child street vendors. With economic deterioration from loss of jobs coupled with price hikes, many children found themselves forced into supporting their families by selling wares in these crowded areas.

Ahmed Al-Badani is only ten years old,

he has developed lines on his face that express suffering unsuited to his tender age. He is so busy selling cold water bottles to the protestors that he has no time to tell his story unless it ensures a sale. He walks around with one bottle in his hand; the other he keeps to his cheek to cool the heat lest he suffers heat stroke.

"I hate this work. I just want to be a happy kid who has a normal life," he said in a frustrated tone. "I can't even go to school regularly because I keep falling sick from exhaustion."

Ahmed has many siblings who also work in the streets selling a variety of items, or who beg, he is the lucky one, having managed to secure a pitch (terri-

YT Photo by Amira Al-Arasi



Almost invisible, yet very much in keeping with all the revolution squares across the country, are the child street vendors.

tory) in the crowded protest area, which generates greater income.

Considering the current political environs of Yemen, the most sought-after areas for a child vendor are the freedom squares, in which gather at least 10,000 people at any given time.

Fawaz Saleh is a young teenager who sells fresh cucumber to the protestors in Change Square, Sana'a. He is new to the area as his regular work is helping to run his family's farm.

"I used to help my brothers bring the farm's produce to the vegetable market. But things have turned bad and my family suggested I come here. But even this is not really good business," he said.

While the children try to persuade protestors to buy from them, they are also being exposed to an overwhelmingly politicized environment. They often hear political jargon and discussions they

don't fully understand. Yet they adapt to their surroundings and pick up the points of view by rote, which frequently gets them in trouble.

"I feel like I have a dual personality, because all my day I am with the protestors but where I live most people are loyal to the regime," said Osama Saif, a 13-year-old boy selling sweet-corn. "I am so confused."

The young vendors are also subjected to personal danger, especially in other governorates such as Taiz and Aden, where the protest areas have been attacked and burned.

Yet all these risks make no difference to these children, who were forced by their hardships to grow up too quickly. To them, it is just an opportunity for income and to be at the center of events; but they receive a unique education that never would they find at school.

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Technical failure behind recent power blackout, officials

By: Sadeq Al-Wesabi

SANA'A, July 6 — The sudden improvement in electricity since last Friday has raised the question of the reason behind this unexpected improvement.

During the last five months, the electricity situation was getting worse and attacks on the power supply lines in Marib drastically increased.

Many Yemenis accused the regime of creating the crisis to punish most Yemenis, who demanded the ouster of President Ali Abdullah Saleh, but officials from the Public Electricity Corporation say the problem is technical and not political.

Mohammed Al-Shaibani, the general manager of power supply lines in Yemen, told the Yemen Times that the im-

provement with electricity is irrelevant to any political agenda.

"It's just a technical problem. There were problems in the power supply lines due to repeated attacks on them and we have repaired this problem," he said.

However, the power supply lines were repaired dozens of times due to frequent attacks by the groups of Al-Damasheqa, Al-Shabwan and Al-Jada'an tribes in Marib. These attacks led the Public Electricity Corporation to lose millions of dollars and created great suffering for Yemenis, especially in governorates that experience high temperature.

Al-Shaibani said the tribesmen in Marib agreed to stop attacking power supply lines.

"I'm relatively optimistic that the power supply lines will not be attacked

anymore," he said. "Electric power is an important service to all Yemenis and it shouldn't be involved in political conflicts."

He said that the gas-powered station in Marib provides two-thirds of Yemen with electric power. "The average life of the station is about 25 years, but the repeated attacks have decreased the average life of the station to almost five years," he said.

Al-Shaibani said the power supply lines were built in desert areas in Marib and it's difficult to protect these lines because of the size of the areas.

Role of Marib's sheikhs

Sheikh Abdullah Al-Zaidi from Marib Governorate condemned the latest attacks on power supply lines in

Marib, confirming that the most sheikhs in Marib totally reject these attacks on important and vital facilities.

Speaking to the Yemen Times, Al-Zaidi said, "Unfortunately, these attacks target normal and poor Yemenis. I call these attacks a piracy by some savage attackers."

He said the tribe has traditions and laws that protect facilities of Marib. "This is not a technical problem. The power supply lines were attacked for political aims," he said.

"A great cooperation between security and tribesmen is needed to prevent those attackers from damaging our interests," he said. "The security in Marib should be replaced with tougher security. The current security is weak and afraid of some tribes."

Yemeni press under more threat

By: Shatha Al-Harazi

SANA'A, July 5 — The Yemeni Journalists Syndicate launched a campaign on Tuesday called "in solidarity with the first line journalists of the Arab Spring" to support journalists who suffered during covering the political events.

The syndicate plans to start different workshops to train journalists on how to protect themselves while covering clashes. The training will include security and medical sessions.

"We [the journalists] must strengthen our relationships with International civil society organizations," said Mohammed Al-Ghubari, Reuter's correspondent in Yemen. "We have to expand our cooperation with human rights organizations locally and internationally as a means of protection that may help reducing the continued attacks," he added.

According to Al-Gubari the pressure on the journalist nowadays is doubled as both the state and opposition expect him to serve their point of view.

Amar Al-Sakkaf, independent freelance reporter from Change Square said that the independent journalists suffer the most. "The state accuses us of serving foreign agendas and the opposition accuses us of being national security agents," he said.

During the campaign's launch journalists complained that violations against them and against newspapers increased recently by different governmental bodies.

For example, journalist Mohammed Al-Yafe'e, deputy director of the Yemeni Educational Channel affiliated with the Ministry of Education was kidnapped from the street while heading to his work at the channel. His colleagues in the diplomatic and administrators coalition accused the state of orchestrating this since he has joined the revolution.

Also, BBC correspondent Abdullah Ghurab complained that he was threatened twice by Ahmed Al-Sofi the

president's media advisor because of his critical coverage. Ghurab was beaten by thugs while covering one of the clashes between the security and anti-government protesters last February.

Some national newspapers including The Yemen Times, were prevented from being distributed outside the capital city and some were even confiscated by security officers.

Al-Oula, a daily independent newspaper was confiscated 22 times during last month according to its management; it was only allowed to be distributed outside Sana'a eight times.

Other opposition newspapers suffer the same fate.

"It has been two months now and the newspaper can't get out of Sana'a" said Rajeh Badi, Editor-in-chief of Al-Sahwa newspaper affiliated with the Islah opposition party. Newspapers depending on sales are going through a real financial crisis these days. Many newspapers face the threat of closing down due."

Some journalists are complaining of more difficulties in accessing information.

"There is confusion over the credibility of what is being reported even in the same media outlet because we don't have access to information, which makes the news misleading and lack credibility," said editor Sameer Al-Yousifi.

Some international press correspondents' licenses were confiscated according to Jamal An'am, Rights and Freedoms officer at the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate.

Shawqi Shaher, head of the media department of the Information Ministry responded that the correspondents themselves don't follow the legal procedures in renewing their licenses.

Moreover, the official state news agency Saba was attacked during the Al-Hasab armed conflict; the journalists were surrounded and trapped inside the building for more than 6 hours, said Mansour Al-Jaradi of the agency.

Security violently disperses angry refugee protesters

By: Shatha Al-Harazi

Sana'a, July, 5 – One child was killed and five adults were injured from the refugee community in Sana'a as Yemeni security tried to disperse the around 700 of angry Eritrean refugees surrounding the UNHCR premises last Tuesday.

This marked the third day in which the protestors were attacked by security men after more than a month long camping outside UNHCR offices. The refugees were demanding assistance for resettling outside Sana'a as they said the city is not safe anymore because of the current political unrest in the city.

According to eyewitness the political security tried to remove the protestors using tear gas shooting in the air the first day on Sunday. The second day the police also tried dispersing them again and became more aggressive causing an injury in the leg of one of the protestors.

The third day five protestors and one child was killed during the security attack against the protestors.

"They [the security] surrounded us using water hoses, black sticks; beating us and even chased us to Baghdad Street after we ran away," said Solomon Ghebretatios one of the attacked refugees.

According to the UNHCR, the refu-

gees have been camping in front of the office since May 28 to protest against the price hikes and the general insecurity in the country. Throughout this period, UNHCR has made all possible efforts to discuss with protesters the available services to support them, co-operating closely with Yemeni authorities and UNHCR implementing partners. The refugees demanded a safer place; resettlement to a third country.

A colonel who is a member in the National Committee for Refugees Affairs attended some of the negotiations with the refugees and told the Yemen Times that the attack was because the refugees "made chaos and prevented the UNHCR employees from doing their work and from getting out of the office as the refugee's camp was right in front the front gate of the office."

According to their representatives, the Eritrean refugees consider themselves "humanitarian refugees" but not "economic refugees" although the difference is known yet they say the UNHCR deals with them as an economic refugees.

"We went to them [UNHCR] because we had no solution for ourselves it's their job to protect us," said Ali Hassan the representative of the Eritrean refugees.

According to Hassan the threat on the refugees' lives is high nowadays as Ye-

men lives exceptional circumstances, many of the refugees were displaced from their houses in Al-Hassaba when the armed conflict between the tribes and state took place. At the end of May and the beginning of June the situation in Sana'a was about to explode into a civil war, it was hard to find a safe place in the city and many families left to their villages.

However, the threat is not the same any more as the city is quiet, yet the refugees are still uncertain on what is going on and want to be placed anywhere else but Sana'a.

"The danger is still there, no one knows what is going on, whether Saleh is coming back or not and how it will be," said Hassan.

Hassan explained that the refugees rights state three main rights: Integration with the host society or resettlement in a third country or to return to their country.

As the refugees are not accepted by the Yemeni people and it's hard to integrate in Yemen and the threat on their



lives is still the same back if they considered returning to their country that leaves the last option the only possible solution for them.

"Although refugees often find it hard to believe, resettlement to third countries is only an option for a few vulnerable cases and at the discretion of the resettlement countries themselves – not UNHCR," read a press release by the UNHCR on this issue.

"Since resettlement is not a realistic option, the protesting refugees were instead advised to choose on the immediately available options- transfer to a camp, a transit shelter on outskirts of Sana'a or financial support to vulnerable families so they can afford to pay rent and put food on table."

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Acquire quotations and negotiate best prices for repairs and spare parts so far organized externally (e.g. Toyota workshop in Alhoudeida or Sana'a). All the repairs or purchases done in the Mission must to be authorised by the Log Co

Report monthly to the Logistic Coordinator, all the services, repairs done at the Mission. Report any "overdue" of the services schedule. Report any "weakness or negligence" note at the Weekly checks done by the drivers. All the reports must be send to the Log Co by the end on each month.

Liaise with and supervise the external maintenance and repair on the office generators of the mission

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Technically responsible for the follow up of the fuel consumption on cars and generators.

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MSF only accepts candidates fulfilling the above criteria. Those should send their contact details, CV and a covering letter before 15th of July, 2011 at msfe-sanaa-logco@barcelona.msf.org Phone: 01 454 079 and Fax 01 454 078 Médecins Sans Frontières – Spain

Training opportunity

The EC-UNDP Joint Electoral Assistance Project in partnership with Yemen 21 Century Forum is pleased to announce training opportunities for Yemeni women for political empowerment. The training includes the following issues:

1. Understanding media and how it works
2. Creating press releases and giving interviews
3. Mobilizing public in mass communication sessions
4. Online campaigning and using social networks
5. Political campaigning, planning, budgeting and fund raising

The first part will be a workshop to train Yemeni women who are interested in politics in media communication, public events and how to promote themselves in politics. The participants will be trained on how to utilize all types of media and mass communication to support their positions in politics.

The training will take place in Sana'a across 6 days between 18 and 23 July, 2011. Travel, and accommodation costs for participants from outside Sana'a will be covered.

Participation requirements:

- Older than 25 years old
- Ninth grade education minimum
- Has experience in political or community work at the local or national levels
- Is well known in her direct environment
- Has a clear interest in political and public work
- Has the ability to travel to Sana'a for the training
- Commitment to participating in later activities of this project

Participants in the training will automatically be included as founding members of a national political women network that aims at empowering women politically and enabling them to play their required role in their local communities and on the national level.

Interested candidates must send a letter of interest including their name, age, work, address, political or public experience, political affiliation, direct and mobile numbers and email.

Letters should be sent by fax to 01-268276 or email to yemen21forum@gmail.com no later than **13 July 2011.**

All applicants will be contacted for an interview and **only 60** will be selected for this training.

Youth in post-revolution Yemen: A view from the ground

By: Rafat Al-Akhali

The Yemeni revolution, which began in January 2011, has brought hundreds of thousands of youths to the streets, transforming these individuals into grassroots political activists and ending many years of youth disenfranchisement in Yemeni politics. This article will look at the current configuration of Yemen's youth movement, and outline potential ways in which the international community can provide this movement with much needed support.

The evolution of Yemen's youth movement

The development and organization of Yemen's youth movement has not been instantaneous but, rather, has taken several months. At the start of the revolution, the youth gathered in hundreds of small groups. These groups then formed alliances with each other, eventually creating cross-country youth coalitions. The youth movement's diverse membership also contributed to its growth and development. For instance, while some leaders took to the streets, living in open-air squares dubbed 'Change' and 'Freedom' and rallying grass-root support for the protests, other leaders interfaced with international media, arranged meetings with representatives from the international community, and spread news about the protests via blogs and social media sites.

The protests, which have been ongoing for the last four months, gave youth leaders and their movement time to mature and overcome deep fissures among group members. During this period, the message of the youth movement has also evolved, moving away from simply calling for the ouster of the regime and towards developing a comprehensive list of **demands** that include establishing a parliamentary system in Yemen and adopting an electoral system based on proportionate representation.

The youth leaders who have emerged from this process have also begun to challenge the traditional influence of Yemen's established political parties.

Towards the end of April, many members of the youth movement began thinking about and discussing next steps, including their future role in post-revolution Yemen. These varying views on the movement's future track the diverse political configurations among Yemen's youth and fall along the following lines:

a. Non-Political Youth: These consist of youth who are disinterested in taking an active role in the 'political process' during the post-revolutionary period. Instead, their goal is for the movement to become a grassroots, opposition group focused on mobilizing, when necessary, to protest unfavorable government policies.

b. Youth aligned to existing political parties: These consist of youth who were members of established opposition parties before the revolution started, and intend to return to their parties during the post-revolutionary period. Their reasons for returning to these groups include a desire to change the parties from within and to play a more active role within the parties.

c. Independent youth: These include independent youth activists who believe that the only way for the movement to sustain its position in post-revolution Yemen is for it to become part of the political process. This group is further subdivided into two categories:

I. Youth who are working on establishing their own "youth" political parties: Many of these youth are convinced that the majority of existing political parties and politicians are corrupt and ill-suited to represent the post-revolution state the youth are demanding.

II. Independent youth who are convinced that success in the political arena requires experience in politics and who are therefore looking to join with established, progressive and trustworthy political figures to form new parties

that will represent the youth's vision of the new Yemen. An example of this is the newly formed Justice and Building party that is composed of well-known political figures in Yemen as well as emerging youth leaders.

The international community & the youth movement

Given these realities, there are several ways the international community can help the youth movement become an active part of building post-revolutionary Yemen. These areas can be divided into the following short-term and long-term measures.

Short term assistance

Political party support: The new political parties (whether founded by the youth or by established political figures) will need assistance in self-structuring, establishing their internal policies and regulations, creating a party platform, holding a party convention, and much more. These parties will also benefit from learning about the best practices of political parties in other parts of the world; for example, Yemen's new political parties would benefit from understanding how the Green Party in Germany used grassroots democracy to transform itself from a fringe group to a power political organization. Yemen's established political parties will also need assistance in re-designing their internal structures and processes in order to remain competitive and attractive to their base. These groups, which have often failed to embrace that youth and women and have lost significant grassroots support, would benefit from trainings on the importance of popular inclusion, advocacy and grassroots mobilization.^[1]

Constitutional Convention: Inevitably, during the transitional period, the youth movement and opposition members will continue to press their demand for an overhaul of the Yemeni constitution. In order to avoid the pitfalls of the Egyptian constitutional referendum and

to gain the youth's support for the new constitution, it is crucial that the youth are fully engaged and included in the redrafting process.^[2] This means that members of the youth movement should have access to awareness campaigns and capacity building workshops. On a more general level, the process of changing the constitution should be as transparent and inclusive as possible, in order to ensure that the new Yemen gets off on the right track.

Elections: In order to sustain their influence over the political future of the country, Yemen's youth will need to actively engage in all processes related to the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections. This includes electioneering, voting, monitoring and campaigning. Securing active youth involvement requires: (1) building awareness and capacity for the youth to better understand and engage with electoral law and processes; (2) building the youth movement's capacities to organize and to participate in campaigns to bring voters to the polls; (3) making political debates among different candidates accessible to the youth in order to give them a better understanding of the different political platforms; and (4) involving the youth in election monitoring teams across the country to ensure the fairness and accuracy of these elections.

Long-term assistance

Government monitoring: Increasing government transparency, as well as opportunities for popular participation and deliberative politics, is necessary for the youth (and the public in general) to track the state's progress towards addressing the various challenges currently facing Yemen. One means of engaging youth in government processes is to make Undersecretary and General Manager positions in all Government ministries open for hiring through transparent processes that ensure the most qualified people fill these positions. These processes can be managed



Yemen's youth have used different peaceful methods to express their demands for building a modern state.

by a professional Human Resources company and overseen by a council that includes Government, youth, and private sector representatives. Another possibility is to adopt a project similar to that of the Transparency Website, launched by British Prime Minister David Cameron, which allows British citizens to track government progress along with details of government job listings, salary information, meeting schedules of ministers, and government contracts. Such a project, if implemented correctly in Yemen, will help to re-establish trust between Yemenis and their government.

Lobbying: The lack of transparency in the pre-revolution period, and the disenfranchising of the general public, resulted in the greatest levels of corruption the country had ever seen. Oil and gas exploration and production agreements have been a particularly well-publicized example of the government's back door dealings and corrupt policies, a circumstance evident in recent calls to cancel the Liquefied Natural Gas agreement signed with the French oil and gas group Total.

Although increased transparency will help in addressing these issues, Yemeni youth will need to develop their lobbying capacity in order to ensure that future legislative actions are fair and in the public interest.

Conclusion

Practitioners, activists, and Non-Governmental Organizations are encouraged to build on the above and design detailed programs to help Yemen move towards a more "participatory" democratic model. This new form of governance must emphasize public deliberation and dialogue, develop the channels of communication between politicians and the public, and empower Yemeni youth and citizens to play a more active role in shaping the future of their country.

Rafat Al-Akhali is a youth activist and the co-founder of **Resonate! Yemen** initiative. *Resonate!* is a youth initiative that aims to bring the voices and ideas of young Yemenis to Yemen's public policy discourse and support youth action on issues of national and international significance.

[1] Over the years, Yemen's established political parties have been losing popular support. A poll by the Yemen Polling Centre reveals that only 12.3% of Yemenis have confidence in their political parties, with only 10% satisfied with their parties' performance.

[2] Many members of the Egyptian youth movement were disappointed by the constitutional changes that followed the overthrow of Mubarak, voting in droves against the amendment during the March 2011 constitutional referendum.

Austro-Yemeni Society organizes festival in Austria

Text by: Annelies Glander
Photos by: Omar Salim

The Yemeni Embassy in Burgenland, Austria on Saturday held a festival to celebrate Yemen culture.

The Yemeni community and lovers of Yemen, members of the Austro-Yemeni Society, met at the home of Mohammed Charkasi, the society's president. H.E. Abdul Hakim al-Eryani, the acting Yemeni ambassador, also attended.

The festival included refreshments and a carefully-composed souq, the best possible imitation of the market in old Sana'a, which featured products for sale that had been specially flown in.

A joint team of Austrian women and embassy employees prepared meat grilled in situ, as well as hummus, shafut, tabulia, lamb chops, chicken, pita bread, bint al-sahn and

an abundant collection of desserts such as Viennese chocolate and fruitcakes.

Omar Salim, a genial representative of Hadramauti wisdom, prepared rice and Charkasi prepared ratatouille.

Arab musicians played traditional music, and two versions of the madah received delighted praise. If it had not suddenly began to rain, the party would have continued all night.

Yemeni participants said they felt "at home" in the environment, and



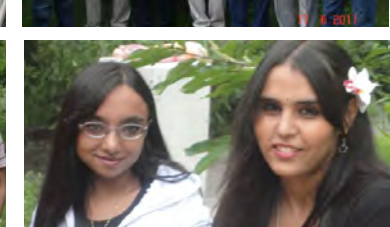
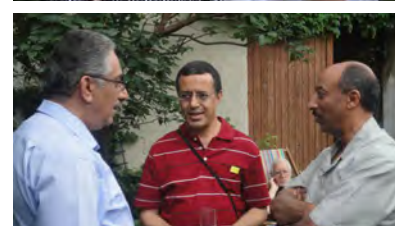
Austrian guests said they felt as if they were in Yemen.

The organizers held a minute of silence to commemorate victims of the political crisis in Yemen. They also prayed for an end to the crisis to come

as soon as possible.

All proceeds from the souq will go to The Yemeni Education and Relief Organization (YERO). YERO is a non-governmental, non-profit making organization established in April 2003. It

aims to facilitate access to education to children (both girls and boys) of poor families and street children and help those children enrol in government schools as well as support their families with income generating skills.



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Yemen: Thinking outside the AQAP box

By: Ibrahim Mothana

Young protesters taking to the streets of Yemen have caused al-Qaeda more damage than Ali Abdullah Saleh's government, with all its counter-terrorism allies, has ever managed. The notion that change can only be achieved through force, power and violence has been refuted once and for all. With peaceful protest, the youth of Yemen has reunited the shattered streams of Yemeni society in a brave and determined call for democracy.

Nevertheless, after years of economic crisis, months of national unrest and weeks of intensifying clashes, Yemen is currently in no better shape than its wounded president. Fears of a security vacuum and economic collapse are gradually becoming a reality on the ground, and the poorest Arab country

is inching towards becoming a failed state. Among regional neighbours and international allies fears are growing about the country that is classically viewed as a safe haven for al-Qaeda and the homeland of its strongest "franchise" AQAP, or al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.

In reality, however, the Yemeni regime has been exaggerating the threat from AQAP and exploiting fear to draw crucial financial support from the international community, particularly after the US cut its funding for Yemen to \$4.6 million in 2006. That year, twenty-three al-Qaeda suspects suspiciously escaped from a Yemeni prison, and since then al-Qaeda has been increasingly portrayed as a looming bogeyman to get funds from the international community. President Saleh, like many of his counterparts in the Arab world, has implicitly asserted the need for countries to ally with authoritarian regimes

as a sole resort to tackle the nightmare of extremist movements, all the while taking advantage of this narrative to repress Yemen's people and bury their dreams of a free democratic state. Even following the recent events in the South of Yemen, some army generals accused the president of deliberately surrendering provinces to "terrorists" and using the elite CT unit, which has received hundreds of millions dollars of support, in irrelevant conflicts in Sadaa and, more recently, in Sanaa.

With the government receiving abundant military support, lacking legitimacy and maintaining poor relations with the local communities in areas where extremist groups operate, the counter terrorism policy continues to be a Sisyphean task. The regime's narrow-minded strategy has been largely ineffective and in many cases caused more harm than good, with serious economic repercussions.

All the options in Yemen are exceptionally challenging and there is no doubt that in the current state of instability and uncertainty, there is no ideal solution; however, achieving the best future for Yemen will require "thinking outside Al-Qaeda box," as former US Ambassador to Sanaa Barbara Bodine once stated.

Yemen is suffering from grinding poverty and a challenging combination of high unemployment and a youth bulge, with 70 per cent of the population under the age of 25. Forty per cent of Yemen's 23 million people live on less than two dollars a day. One third of the population face chronic hunger. Unemployment stands at an estimated 35 per cent. Oil exports are in decline, hard currency is running out in the banks and the local currency is becoming critically devalued. There is a need for at least two billion dollars in the next six to twelve months to keep basic

public services running. Although the international concern is largely focused on al-Qaeda and the security threat, the real untold story is one of devastating famine and humanitarian crisis. Food, water and fuel prices are skyrocketing and a collapsing economy is at the heart of every other problem the country is facing.

Perhaps the economic and social aspects alone do not explain the uprising in Yemen, but they are a crucial part of the cause.

Spending time in Sanaa's extensive change square has become a daily ritual for me and thousands of other young people. There we share our ambitions and thoughts of a better future. I cannot forget my friend Mohamed's words during our last meeting in one of the square's innumerable tents: "I lost my dignity, hope and dreams and I will not return home until I get them back." He was an unemployed university graduate

who spent the past couple of years trying to find a job that does not even meet his qualifications. A few days later, Mohamed was shot dead on the Friday of dignity - the name given to the day when snipers opened fire and killed 52 peaceful protesters - leaving his aspiration for millions of other youth to fulfill. He is but one example of the millions of Yemeni youth who have lost everything and for whom life has become so miserable that dying honorably has become a blessing.

Extremist groups and al-Qaeda pose an undeniable challenge to Yemen, which needs to be tackled. Drones and air strikes, however, will never be a silver bullet in a context where extreme poverty and hunger prevail. Immediate and comprehensive action on issues across the spectrum, rather than focusing solely on security dilemmas, is essential if the people of Yemen are to be given the future they deserve.

Yemen's revolution and US intervention

By: Mohamed Elmasry
For The Egyptian Gazette

Yemen's revolution is not covered by the Western media. The US direct intervention in Yemen is set against the people's struggle for freedom and democracy. During the last five months, thousands of civilians were killed or wounded by President Ali Abdullah Saleh's regime.

The US still has the option to avoid more bloodshed by encouraging Saleh to step down. The contrast between Western intervention in Yemen, siding with a dictator and its enthusiasm for overthrowing another dictator Muammar Gaddafi of Libya is stark.

Yemen is a conservative country where some 80 per cent of its women wear the niqab and the rest wear the hijab. But this did not prevent Yemeni women from leading a historical revolution to get rid of Saleh, a dictator who ruled for 32 years.

His sons, his family and members of his tribe have ruled the country of 24 million as a private enterprise with the blessing of the US.

Muslim women leading revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Bahrain and Yemen is a great story for the West-

ern media to cover. But because of the fear that such coverage will improve the image of Islam and Muslims it has not been widely covered.

I visited Yemen six years ago. I witnessed a country with a hospitable people, a natural beauty, history and culture that could make it one of the world's top tourist attractions. But Saleh's investment in human development was none. More than 50 per cent of the Yeminis live today on less than \$2 per day.

Saleh used scare tactics allowing the US to carry covert air war against "al-Qaeda targets" in Yemen. The opposition parties said Saleh and his loyalists train and finance armed agents to play the role of al-Qaeda to gain political and financial support from the Americans and the Saudis.

The Yemeni youth followed the footsteps of the Egyptian revolution, calling peacefully for change.

Millions of them marched to the streets in every city of the country since February, especially in the capital Sanaa and the country's second-biggest city Taiz. People has joined the youth calling for Saleh to step down. Soon they were joined with ambassadors, professors, police and army officers, ministers, religious and opposing party leaders and even members of Saleh's

ruling party.

To keep the uprising peaceful was a huge achievement, and still is, as most Yemeni households is traditionally armed. Another achievement is that the country's separatist movements in the north and the south joined the revolution.

But the US for the last 100 days has given Saleh political, military and financial support to stay on. The US never put political pressure for the dictator to step down. Its military and financial support was either direct or via the Saudis.

People across Yemen are beginning to go hungry. The prices of flour, sugar and vegetables have doubled. There is also a shortage of medicine, fuel, water, gas and electricity.

Saleh is now in a Saudi hospital being treated for wounds sustained in an explosion in his presidential compound last week. Over 40 per cent of his body was burnt and it would be months before he would fully recover.

The revolutionary youth have called for a "Transitional Council" to rule the country. They also, as in the case of Tunisia and Egypt, call to bring Saleh, his family and his men to a court of law, for murdering protesters, and for political and financial corruption for the last 32

years of his rule.

The Yemeni youth in the streets celebrated after Saleh was injured and left to Saudi Arabia but rejected transfer of power to his VP Abd Rabu Mansour Hadi as he is part of Saleh's corrupt regime.

They rightly insisted any "constitutional transfer of power" is meaningless in the light of the "revolutionary legitimacy" - a lesson they have learned very well from the Egyptian revolution.

Meanwhile, the US pilotless drones have been used in attacks in south Yemen last week as they were doing for years. The Americans are doing nothing to stop the country from descending into civil war as Saleh's government disintegrates. If Saleh does return, fighting will surly erupt immediately in a wider scale.

Would the US let Saleh return to Yemen? Would the US encourage Saleh to step down? Would the US facilitate the formation of a Transitional Council? Or push for Saleh's regime to form a coalition government with the opposition, a solution, which will be rejected by the revolutionary youth?

The US administration must side with the Yemeni people up holding American values of freedom and democracy.

Volume II – until everyone else has starved to death

What is happening in Yemen?

By: Jeb Boone

I was browsing Yemen on google news today and I was floored by what I saw. Not a single news publication really has any idea about what is going on in Yemen. As usual, the wires are all over the place, quoting "sources". Quoting a "source" is so irresponsible it makes cringe and it doesn't warrant its own news story. Here are some examples of recent headlines.

- » Yemen's Saleh not returning soon
- » Burned Saleh set to the return as unrest continues
- » Yemen power transfer ruled out
- » Saleh to hand power over to transition council
- » Wounded Yemeni president to return home within days
- » Saleh should stay in Saudi Arabia 'for a while' says doctor
- » Saleh to reappear as violence grips south
- » Yemen's Saleh not returning soon
- » Saleh to make public appearance in 48 hours (these headlines were from 27 June)

In short, no one knows what is happening in Yemen or in Saleh's hospital bed. I can make a solid guess (its more than a guess really, some of this is sourced) that may be closer to the truth.

Saleh is not going to return to Yemen. If he does, its going to be too far in the future to bear significant weight on the political crisis. The important thing to remember about Saleh's return is that it doesn't really matter. As long as his son Ahmed and his nephew Yahya remain in the country, Ali Abdullah Saleh is still in power.

Protesters know this and last Friday called for them to leave the country. They won't. If protesters want them out of power in Yemen, they're going to have to kill them. Either that, or Saleh is going to tell them its over, give it up. If that seems likely to you then you have much more faith in humanity than I do.

What is happening in Yemen is a political game being played by Saleh and his rivals. As we saw him do with the GCC deal, he's going to drag this out for as long as he possibly can. He was in the process of doing this before but

someone tried to kill him.

Its also important to remember that this fight is personal for Saleh and his family. Ali, Ahmed, Yahya and the whole crew are waiting to take revenge on the Al-Ahmar family and Ali Mohsen. They can do this through political maneuvering or through war. Ahmed and Yahya think they can crush Ali Mohsen's first armored division. They can't. All you need to know about the Republican Guard is that a few weeks ago, tribesmen in Nahm trounced them.

So, in short, what is happening in Yemen? It's a waiting game. Unfortunately, Saleh and the boys seem to be unaware that Yemen's economy is all but collapsed. The longer it takes to find a resolution, the worse it's going to get. In any other country in the world, people would be killing each other at gas stations. Why that isn't happening in Yemen is anyone's guess. The Yemenis are an incredibly patient people but I don't expect them to be patient for much longer.

And don't forget, Ramadan is just around the corner. Ramadan is awful for the Yemeni economy to begin with and this Ramadan is going to be the worst. The only thing that can save Yemen's economy is Saudi money - lots and lots of Saudi money - In the billions of dollars.

The protests are almost a non-issue at this point. At this point, most average Yemenis could care less whether Saleh is the president or not, they want the economy back to normal. They're right, the economy is a much more important issue at this point.

One Yemeni cab driver said it all to me the other night.

"Were you here during the Al-Hasaba war?" he asked me.

"Yes I was. It was an incredibly nervous time for Yemen," I said.

"Yes, yes it was. Thank God its over. Its so strange, did you know that Saleh is also from bayt Al-Ahmar?" he asked me.

"Yes, I did and yes, its strange," I replied.

"Yeah, I just hope the southerners are smart enough rebuild their country while the northerners fight it out. The two Al-Ahmar houses will be fighting long after the rest of us have starved to death."

SKETCHED OPINION

By: Carlos Latuff



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More efforts needed to fight blindness in Yemen

By: Sadeq Al-Wesabi

Around 1.5 percent of the Yemeni population suffers from eye diseases, and more than 150,000 Yemenis are infected with white pupil yearly, according to a speech by the Minister of Public Health and Population, Abdul Karim Rase.

In Yemen, many people cannot afford the high cost of eye treatment, and some resort to folk medicine which often leads them to losing their sight.

The Yemeni Ministry of Public Health and Population points to the extreme shortage of eye doctors in Yemen, and hopes for further cooperation between the ministry and the World Health Organization (WHO) to increase the number of eye doctors.

The recently established Ebsar Foundation aims to provide children suffering from eye disease with free treatment. It also donates half the costs for people requiring eye operations, and provides free treatment to impoverished people and orphans.

Ahmed Ziyad, executive manager of the Ebsar Foundation, said that the foundation will endeavor to improve the level of ophthalmology in Yemen, and continue to build real cooperation with the government and other organizations with the aim of fighting blindness.

He said that health services in government and private hospitals in Yemen need to restructure, indicating that Yemeni health charities have been



Many Yemenis cannot afford the high cost of eye treatment

established as a result of poverty in Yemen.

According to Ziyad, one of the aims of the foundation is to train doctors in the field of ophthalmology and to improve their performance in ophthalmology.

"The foundation aspires to establish an 'eye bank' that will help thousands of people suffering from eye diseases. We are working on establishing this bank with other organizations," he ex-

plained.

Ziyad revealed that eye hospitals and clinics in Yemen are poorly equipped due to the lack of purchasing power. "The foundation endeavors to provide these hospitals and clinics with modern equipment in cooperation with international organizations that are concerned with health."

"Every city in Yemen should have at least one eye clinic. Unfortunately, most eye hospitals are in the big cities

and people in other governorates and cities suffer from a lack of these hospitals in their areas, and need to travel to be able to get themselves treated," he said.

"Although ophthalmology in Yemen is a new field, Yemeni staff are very skilled and good at ophthalmology," he said.

The foundation, according to Ziyad, also aims to fight visual disturbances among children before they enter school. "We can treat eyes problems at an early age easily," he said.

Ziyad stressed the importance of awareness of eye disease in Yemen. "An awareness of the eye disease is lacking. We don't raise awareness of blindness among Yemenis even on World Sight Day," he said. "One of our most important aims is to raise awareness about eye diseases among Yemenis."

Ziyad indicated that the government provides only 30 percent of health services for Yemenis, with the private sector providing the remaining 70 percent.

He added that about 70 percent of rural areas in Yemen lack health services including eye treatment. He criticized the absence of ophthalmologists in some Yemeni governorates such as Dhamar and Raima among others.

"Yemen needs about 80,000 eye operations annually, but in reality less than half this number can be treated because of our weak health services," he said.

Ziyad warns Yemenis about the danger of eye folk medicine, indicat-

ing that some people lose their sight due to unskilled so called 'doctors' who offer their 'services' in return for cheap prices.

"Yemenis care about the cost of eye treatment and forget about the quality of the treatment and the danger of such medicines," he said.

Dr. Mutahar Al-Shaer, consultant ophthalmologist and assistant profes-

sor at Sana'a University, spoke to the Yemen Times. He said that some eye hospitals in Yemen are getting better in terms of modern equipment and staff, but he urged concerned bodies to expand eye hospitals and clinics.

"Other governorates need more equipment and more staff. Unfortunately, most of the expansion of eye hospitals is only in Sana'a," he said.



Dr. Mutahar Al-Shaer (left) and Ahmed Ziyad (right) are trying their best to improve the level of ophthalmology in Yemen and help people suffering eye diseases

Modern marriage customs in Yemen

Yemen, a country of diversity has many aspects that have never been told before. Many reports have talked about marriage in Yemen mainly discussing arranged marriage or child marriage; without paying any attention to other marriage customs that exist in Yemen and represent its modern face.

That is marriage by mutual love of couples who are unrelated but got to know each other and decided to marry, settle down and make their own family.

By Afrah Nasser

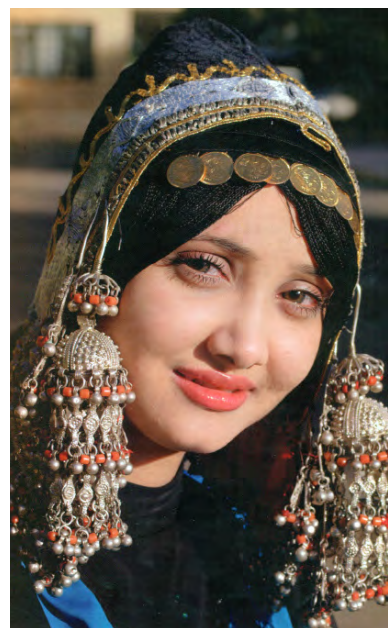
Courtesy of Al-Yemenia Magazine

In addition to the so called 'traditional marriage', which is arranged for by families and decided solely by parents, there is another type of marriage in Yemen that the younger generation is adopting increasingly. It is a relatively modern type of marriage in Yemen, where the decision is made by the couples themselves without the involvement of their families.

"The majority of Yemeni people believe that marriage is a physical and a holy bond between a man and a woman that introduces love into their life after marriage. Consequently, marriage follows a set of specific traditions and customs; one would be obeying parents' will and desire at the time of marriage by picking their choice for either the bride or the groom" explained Amani al-Arasi, an academic researcher at Social Science Dept., Sana'a University.

Traditionally, the socio-cultural factors play a major role in shaping and timing marriage. However, it seems that younger generations are breaking the mold and setting new socio-cultural factors for marriage customs in the Yemeni society.

"Today, the Yemeni youth is introducing totally new socio-cultural concepts in that regard. Many of them are taking independent decisions in terms of when and whom to marry. I believe that such a change in concepts could be attributed mostly to the impact of information and communication technologies. That is not the case in general, but more and more people are shaping their lives and taking independent decisions concerning their marriage without much interference from their families. So far, the outcome in most cases has been successful, yet still, there are few cases of failure and divorce. No matter what, the couples are aware of their sole responsibility for their choices and decisions and accept the consequences. Generally speaking, a new generation of Yemenis are



having a better grip in shaping and controlling their lives and relationships." Added al-Arasi.

Social networks provide a new platform for friendship and dating
ICT has changed the way young people interact socially; dating and marrying is possible today in a very dif-



ferent manner than old traditions that have always been strictly controlled by socio-cultural concepts. Digital communication has increasingly replaced traditional forms of interaction. Social networks offer youth autonomy from families and provide more instantly-gratifying, but less personal interactions.



Face to face communication among unrelated men and women is challenging in Yemen and dating is prohibited and rarely practiced among youths. However, such networks have helped in crossing societal barriers to satisfy curiosities. One of the latest trend among Yemeni youth is the excessive use of Facebook for social networking finding it a perfect place for dating.

Fundamentally, dating in the hopes of having a meaningful relationship, is considered a disgrace in Yemen. The authenticated method for engagement and marriage is often arranged by families and other people that are considered acceptable according to social standards. A relationship between member of opposite sex is not permitted by guardians and families unless an engagement has already taken place at least.

Regardless of all that, the youth of today are using virtual social networks to bridge their world of reality and reach out to find their soul mates. They would usually inform and convince their families about their choices and decisions, but if that doesn't work, they might complete their marriage project without the involvement of their families. Many young adults find social networks such as Facebook an appropriate way to search for a potential spouse and meet members of the opposite sex. In some instances, they end up engaging or marrying through Facebook.

Najat Ali, a psychologist, explained the reason behind such a tendency, "youth tend to be curious and have desire to know more about members of the opposite sex, especially in Yemen where males and females are separated at early stages of childhood due to social, religious and/or traditional concepts.

Nevertheless, humans seek to fulfill their communication necessities in different ways. For Yemeni youth, Facebook is currently the answer and prevalent in terms of communication methods."

On Facebook, girls and boys have the opportunity to find information about others, see photos, and discuss matters using the chat feature. "For me, it's a great chance to get to know the girl I'm dating. I can better understand her attitude and interests from the photos she posts and the groups she joins," said Osmah Sa'ad, 23.

A negative aspect of Facebook is

ambiguity. "I urge boys to be careful about the girls they meet on Facebook. It can be very deceptive. From personal experience, I advise boys to make sure that the girls they are getting to know are 'real' girls before proceeding with their relationship. A few months ago, I got to know what I thought was a girl for weeks and at the end I found out that the human behind the keyboard on the other side was a guy who wanted to make fun of me. I was so upset and angry when I found out by calling to the 'girls' mobile number. It was so silly," Said Munir Mansour, 20.

Form the girl's perspective, Facebook is the best and safest communication method. "I got to know many guys on Facebook and once I feel that the guy was not my type, I simply deactivate my account and start another

one. Another positive feature of Facebook is that you can interact with the friends of your friend and discover if that guy is cheating all the girls on his list. Mutual friends help also in revealing more about his character and personality: said Manal Rajab, 10, a female college student.

Interestingly, dating on Facebook can lead to real relationships like engagement and marriage. "I met my fiancé online after dating him for a couple of months. I owe this to Facebook. We had so much in common, e both felt a strong attraction, so we decided to get engaged," Rasha Saeed, 21, female college student.

Rasha's family was against the idea of getting engaged at first, but the couple were determined enough to fight for their relationship and they eventually convinced their families.

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By: Ali Saeed

Saeed Al-Mohsen

Saeed Al-Mohsen was born in 1975, in the village of Al-Ma'di in Al-Shehr district of Hadramout governorate. He started his education under the socialist regime before the reunification of Yemen. He said that his eight-year schooling was half-education and half-military training. His school had a principal appointed by the Ministry of Education and a military leader appointed by the Ministry of Defense.

"We used to study in the morning and receive military training in the evening from the military leader of the school," he said.

The school was responsible for providing food and accommodation for students. They used to isolate the children from their families to enable the students to grow up with a military rather than a civilian character.

"The students were raised more as soldiers than students," he said.

The school used to house around 600 children from the nomadic people of Wadi Hadramout and "we were allowed to see our parents every two months."

Saeed finished his eight years of primary school education and then moved to Bin Shehab secondary school in Al-Mukalla in 1991. This was one year after the unification between the communist regime of the south (the Peoples' Democratic Republic of Yemen) and the northern tribal Arab Republic of Yemen.

In his second year at Bin Shehab Secondary School he started organizing student demonstrations in Mukalla City, demanding the establishment of a students' council for the Bin Shehab Secondary School.

"All the students' activities were controlled by the socialist party at the school, so we organized demonstrations to march across the city to attract the peoples' support for our side," he said. "At



Hadramout protesting square in Al-Mukalla

the time, demonstrations were strange in Al-Mukalla and people were not familiar to this kind of activity."

Saeed was expelled from the school for organizing demonstrations and for violating school rules, but with the help of some relatives who were social leaders he was able to return to the school on the condition he not organize any more demonstrations.

However, the students continued to demonstrate. Studies were suspended and this put pressure on the administration to allow students to establish a council to speak for their rights and address their grievances, according Saeed. He was elected as the leader of the student council until he finished his secondary education in 1994.

When Saeed entered the Faculty of Education in Hadramout University, he again started struggling with the administration of the university to allow them create their own council to represent their complaints and problems. The administration of the university was not loyal to the socialist party, but to the Saleh's regime in the capital Sana'a.

"Because of instructions from Sana'a, the rector of the university

refused to allow us to establish a students' union. So we created a preparatory committee for Hadramout University students, and issued our first statement from the committee," he said.

"The administration of the university considered this as a challenge and decided to expel all students who were members of the committee. This was shocking, because we would not be able to complete our university education. Any student who has been expelled from a public university is deprived from a [Yemeni] education forever."

"We waited for five days and organized a festival in front of the administration building of the university and announced the suspension of the studies until our demands were met. We wanted the establishment our union and our expulsions to be canceled," he said.

During the festival, the deputy governor of Hadramout came to discuss the students' issues and took members of the committee to the university administration. However, the rector refused to meet the committee saying "he can only meet us as individual students, not as a committee."

"The students insisted on their demands and under this pressure the expulsions were canceled. We continued to run our committee without the approval of the university administration," he said.

Saeed is a member of the opposition Islah Party, and a general secretary of the Teachers' Syndicate in Hadramout. He said that "because Hadramout is considered a southern area previously ruled by the socialist regime before the unity in 1990, demonstrations and protests against the Saleh regime have been taking to the streets since 2006, along with the emergence of the Southern Movement."

Retired military and civil leaders and soldiers from the south, including those in Hadramout who used to occupy high positions, found themselves without jobs or dignity. They started demanding their rights, but given the negligence shown to them by the central government in Sana'a, those demands turned into a call

for separation between south and north Yemen.

With the beginning of Yemen's youth protests in Feb. 2011, the people of Hadramout have joined the popular uprising against Saleh's 33-year regime. They are saying: "Saleh has mismanaged the unity and used it for his family."

Saeed, who is now the deputy leader of 'Freedom Square' in Hadramout, and organizes the cultural, political and media activities for the anti-regime protests says: "This is the Yemeni people's revolution, and we are part of it to pull Yemen out of this political, economic and social deterioration."

He explained that Hadramout is one of Yemen's oil producing areas. However, most parts of the governorate are not connected to the national power grid, or the water network.

"The Bin Yameen district, where the oil pipelines pass through has no water services. It is not connected to the power station and has no health facilities," he said. "And many other districts are like this."

"Qualified people of Hadramout are without jobs, and the state's institutions in the governorate are being run by influential northerners from the capital Sana'a. We demand a good governing civil state to treat all citizens as equal," he said.

"If the coming state treated all Yemenis as equal citizens and provided basic services, no one would be interested in separation," he stated.

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