

## NEXT ISSUE

### Minister of Trade speaks on Yemen's economic and political crises



Among the many job descriptions he has, Engineer Hisham Sharaf is the Minister of Trade and Commerce, head of a ministerial committee to end the current fuel crisis, and responsible for consumer protection.

He has already taken measures to solve the fuel crisis and promises that by the end of this month, 20,000 tons of petrol will be available to Yemenis and another 200,000 tons is on its way to help satisfy the market needs until the end of September.

As for diesel, 270,000 tons of diesel will be available in the beginning of August 2011

In an interview with The Yemen Times he talks about the fundamentals of the economic situation of Yemen as well as the political crisis. He regretted the youth's creation of the transitional presidential council and called it unconstitutional and useless. Instead he is calling for the creation of a coalition government to be representative of all political stakeholders and that only this will be the way to lead Yemen out of the crisis.

He described in detail how and why the economic and humanitarian situations of Yemen are exaggerated in the media and what in his view they are.

He still believes that Yemen can make it peacefully through this difficult time but only if Yemenis of all political backgrounds come together keeping Yemen's best interest at heart instead of their own, and he especially warned the youth movement from allowing themselves to be used by opposition political parties. In fact, he urged them to create their own political parties and he promised that if they do so, they will ensure a place and voice for themselves in the transitional phase and afterwards.

**Don't miss the full interview by Nadia Al-Sakkaf with Minister of Trade next issue.**

## Ceasefire agreement to be signed in Taiz

By: Emad Al-Saqqaf

TAIZ, July 24 — A government envoy is currently in Taiz working to have a ceasefire agreement signed between forces loyal to President Saleh and armed tribesmen. The envoy has been authorized by Vice President Abd Rabo Mansour Hadi, and is headed by Abdulqadr Hilal, a former negotiator between the government and Houthis rebels in Sa'ada.

The Yemen Times has learned that the agreement includes nine points and is expected to be signed on Monday by the local authority and the opposition.

A source from the ceasefire committee told the Yemen Times: "Since arriving in Taiz seven days ago, we have been attempting to bring both parties closer due to the violence in the city. A ceasefire agreement with nine items has been proposed. It has been agreed that it will be signed on Monday."

The main points of the agreement include the ending of armed confrontations, the withdrawal of all unofficial armed groups from the city, the withdrawal of republican guard and central security units from the city, and the deployment of public police, according to the source.

The agreement also proposes that security forces not attack peaceful protests and demonstrations, and the return of any government or private buildings taken by any party to be handed over to the police, according to the same source. He added that the agreement also included the removal of any unlicensed arms from the city.

This comes after a woman and her child were killed on Friday evening by a falling shell in Kulaba, southeast of Taiz city, eyewitnesses told the Yemen Times.

On Friday, forces from the republican guard and central security loyal to President Saleh pursued armed tribesmen who had taken to streets of the city to defend peaceful protesters demanding an end to Saleh's 33-year rule. The government forces attacked tribesmen with artillery after "tribesmen had attacked the central security



Najwa Qayed, 12, was killed along with her mother on Friday evening by a shell sent from the republican palace in Taiz to their house in Kulaba area, southeast of the city of.

camp and the republican palace in the city", according to an eyewitness.

"Shrapnel from shells fired from the Republican Palace fell on the house of my neighbor. Asma'a Mohammad Ahmed Saeed, a 25 year-old housewife, and her daughter, Najwa Mouqbl Qayed, 12, were killed. Another child, Rayan Mohammad Qasim Saeed, was injured," said the eyewitness.

"We do not know why the government treats us with such brutality, making our families live in constant terror. We have no other place to go," he added.

A statement from the opposition Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) coalition in Taiz has condemned "the criminal acts of a discriminatory nature by the republican guards and central security

against the people of Taiz."

The opposition demanded the people of Taiz to "escalate their revolutionary activities to stand against murder, genocide, and regional hatred which are being practiced by the commander of the republican guards with an aim of creating chaos and breaking the people's unity."

They demanded humanitarian organizations and the international community "take a tough position against the daily crimes carried out by this regime against women and children. They are attacking residential neighborhoods."

The city witnessed violent clashes last weekend between government forces and armed tribesmen on Sixty St., where there are security checkpoints belonging to the republican guard. Both sides used light and heavy weapons during the clashes.

On Thursday, forces from the republican guard based next to Al-Thawra Hospital intercepted an anti-regime demonstration that was demanding the escalation of protests until the regime's remnants leave. One person was killed and three others wounded by live ammunition fired by snipers from the roofs of houses neighboring the public hospital, according to eyewitnesses.

A security source in Taiz told the Yemen Times that "armed militants of the JMP are working to make Taiz the 'Benghazi of Yemen'. They are making plots to trap the city into 'violence square'."

"The forces of the republican guard and central security protect citizens and the incident which took place in Kulaba area was perpetrated by JMP militias," said the security source. "They [JMP militias] targeted the houses of Abdulrahman Al-Udaini and Sadeq Ali Sa'd... Whenever mediation efforts come closer to success, these militias create a crisis to make the ceasefire fail."

Armed tribesmen took to streets of Taiz to defend anti-regime protesters after President Saleh's security forces stormed the main protest square in Taiz on May 29 killing over 50 protesters and burning their tents.

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# Fuel shortage to end this week, says government

By: Ali Saeed

SANA'A, July 24 — The three-month fuel shortage throughout Yemen is going to end this week, Hisham Sharaf, minister of industry and trade in Yemen's care-taker government said on Saturday in a statement to the state-owned Al-Thawra daily newspaper.

The shortage of fuel in Yemen has caused an economic collapse across the country. Thousands of Yemenis have lost their jobs as hundreds of businesses across all sectors have shut down due to the lack of fuel and electricity.

Farms in the western coastal areas of Yemen suspended activity when no diesel was available to pump water to irrigate their crops, or even to provide drinking water, locals told the Yemen Times.

The minister explained that the government had started supplying petrol

stations in the capital Sana'a and other major cities with benzene as a first step to end the crisis completely.

Yemen's daily need of benzene is around 4,500 tons, about half of which is consumed in the capital Sana'a, according to Sharaf. He explained that the country's daily requirement of diesel is around 8,000 tons, of which 140 tons is consumed in Sana'a.

The minister confirmed by phone to the Yemen Times on Sunday that the government resorted to importing oil to cover local needs after the Marib oil pipeline was blown up in March. The pipeline is Yemen's main channel for transferring crude oil to the Aden oil refineries.

This week around 90,000 tons out of total shipment of 270,000 tons of oil has reached the country, soon to be imported to cover the current shortage, according to the minister.



The government says that the three-month nationwide fuel shortage is going to disappear during this week by importing crude oil and refining it in Yemen.

Yemen's total production of crude oil is about 260,000 barrels a day, about 26 percent of which comes through the Marib oil pipeline, according to Yemen's deputy minister of finance, Ahmed Hajr.

Ten days ago, the Yemeni government announced that the damaged pipeline had been repaired. And last week the government said that international oil companies working in Yemen have restarted their production in Marib after an almost five month suspension.

The nationwide fuel shortage has driven a black market in the capital Sana'a where one liter of gasoline reached YR 500 (over USD 2), while the official price at petrol stations was only YR 75.

In June, Saudi Arabia granted Yemen 3 million barrels of oil to cover the increasing shortage. Until now, about half of the Saudi grant has been given to Yemen, but the shortage has continued with the price of 20 L of petrol on the black market in Sana'a being

around YR 10,000 (USD 50).

Sharaf told the Yemen Times that half of Saudi crude oil is refined into mazot, a type of oil derivative used for electricity generation, 45 percent into petrol and 25 percent into benzene, 25 percent into diesel, and 5 percent into other derivatives. "So there is no big petrol outcome from the Saudi oil," he said.

Electricity has returned to most parts of Yemen because such a large percentage of the fuel is reserved for electricity. Electricity will be sustained throughout the coming days so that Ramadan will not become a dark month.

He also accused some petrol station owners of selling the fuel to black market dealers at increased prices, who then resell it again at six to nine times the price.

Dr. Mohamed Jubran, a professor of economics at the University of Sana'a, told the Yemen Times that "in fact the fuel shortage was created on purpose to punish the people and to stop them demanding the resignation of Saleh."

He explained that, "the government is supposed to store a quantity of fuel that is sufficient for three months in case of any potential crisis. So where is this store? If they [the government] said they have not stored anything, we should say they are a failing government. If they said that they have stored it, then this is actually a deliberate economic crisis created by the regime against its people."

# Suicide car bomb kills nine soldiers in Aden

By: Shatha Al-Harazi

SANA'A, July 23 — A suicide car bomber targeted a military convoy in Beer Al-Fdhl, in the Al-Mansora district of Aden around 8am Sunday morning. A Toyota Hilux packed with explosives crashed into at least two armored vehicles from Air Defense that were headed to Abyan governorate.

The attack is believed to be by Al-Qaeda members that left at least nine soldiers dead, according to medical sources in Al-Buraishi Hospital. Associate Press quoted an official as saying that two senior officers, a major and a lieutenant-colonel, were among the killed.

At least 21 were wounded in the attack with the injured being distributed between Aden's hospitals, according to journalist Abdullah Al-Sharafi in Aden.

"Military sources confirmed to me that nine were killed and over 20 wounded. This attack against a military vehicle using a car bomb is not the first," said journalist Anees Mansour from Aden.

The attack on Sunday morning was the fifth car bomb attack in Aden over the last two months. Only last Wednesday, a British citizen working in the shipping industry was killed in car bombing also believed to be the work of Al-Qaeda.

On June 29, Colonel Mutee' Al-Syani, a high ranking colonel in the Yemeni military, was assassinated by a car bomb. On June 23, Colonel Khalid Al-Hubaishi, leader of Infantry Regiment Division 31, was bombed whilst driving his own car home at night. On June 13, a car packed with explosives attacked armored vehicles in Katliks.

Although security check points are spread across Aden, locals complain that they are ineffective. "The whole governorate is just check points, but they are useless," said local Al-Sharafi.

Political analysts warn that the same scenario that has played out in Abyan will soon be repeated in Aden if the state cannot stop Al-Qaeda and related militant groups.

"This [Sunday's] bombing is a message from Al-Qaeda, that they have started to penetrate more," said Man-

sour. "There are Al-Qaeda cells in Aden. They enter individually and have more than one active cell in the Dar Sa'ad area."

According to Mansour, Al-Qaeda cells inside the governorate exhaust the military, although the security belt in Aden is "enough". Mansour said that if the militant groups managed to defeat the 25th mechanized brigade in Abyan, then Aden will also have fallen to the militant groups.

"Since February there has been a lawlessness in Aden. The military have not been doing their duties. There are armed people wandering in the city at night, banners encouraging the Islamist Caliphate, that scare the locals," said Mansour.

Ahmed Al-Zurqa, a political analyst, told the Yemen Times that the Abyan scenario is repeating itself in Aden, and that Aden is more likely to descend into greater chaos.

"This is the fifth or sixth operation in Aden that a limited number of members have committed. But they are so aware of the area," said Al-Zurqa.

Al-Zurqa predicted that Aden faces a greater risk if the 25th mechanized brigade came under the militant groups control. "In Abyan, there is support by other brigades, and the tribes there are fighting to take back Abyan from the armed groups," he said. "In Aden there are around six military camps that follow the southern area, therefore it's hard to say that Aden will be an open area for armed fighting."

According to Al-Zurqa, the regime playing the Al-Qaeda card has become risky for both the country and the regime itself, especially in Aden. The area is of great importance due to its location on a major international sea route and as a path for a large volume of petroleum products.

Some locals believe that the US has had a hand in supporting terrorism in Yemen as a justification for sending in their troops with the excuse of counterterrorism. There is a fear that foreigners wish to gain access to Yemen's resources, of which Aden is of central importance. However, Al-Zurqa thinks that the US would avoid this step because of the potentially huge military and political cost.

# Conflict generating more child soldiers

SANA'A, 20 July 2011 (IRIN) — Clad in military fatigues at a recently established checkpoint west of the Yemeni capital, Sana'a, 15-year-old Walid tried to sling an AK-47 assault rifle over his shoulder but the gun was too big for his short physique.

"He is carrying a gun taller than him," mocked a passer-by.

Walid was recruited into the First Armoured Division after it defected from the government in protest at the killing of 15 protesters on 21 April. "It is better for me to work for YR25,000 [US\$110] a month than stay home without anything to do," he told IRIN.

He is one of the many children who have joined both government-aligned and defecting units of the Yemen army in an accelerated recruitment drive that has targeted children, according to child rights advocates. The drive has been fuelled by increased tensions in the country since February when protests against President Ali Abdullah Saleh began. The protests gained the support of the al-Houthi rebels in the north.

Each of the three main military units currently active in Yemen, namely the pro-government Republican Guards and Central Security, and the pro-opposition First Armoured Division, have been enlisting more children under 18.

Ahmad al-Qurashi, chairman of local NGO Seyaj Organization for Childhood Protection (SOCP), said the phenomenon became more widespread after the defection of Maj-Gen Ali Mohsen's First Armoured Division. The exact number of child soldiers in pro-government and defecting units is unknown owing to the reluctance of the relevant military authorities to divulge it, but SOCP estimates it at several thousand.

"During our recent observations at

checkpoints and other locations, we found many child soldiers wearing Republican Guard, First Armoured Division or Central Security uniforms," al-Qurashi said. "In Sa'dah [northern governorate and the centre of the al-Houthi rebel movement], 50 percent of pro-government fighters and al-Houthi gunmen were found to be under age 18."

## UN report

According to the UN, an estimated 20 percent of al-Houthi fighters and 15 percent of the tribal militia affiliated with the government (Al-Jaysh Al-Sha'bi) are children.

This year's UN annual report on child soldiers has added the al-Houthi and pro-government tribal militia in Yemen to its "list of shame" of 57 armed groups around the world that recruit child soldiers or commit other wartime abuses against youngsters.

Yemeni militias, it noted, deployed boys in fighting and logistical roles on the front line, while girls, some of whom are allegedly recruited after being forced to marry militia members, were used for cooking or to carry military and others supplies.

Human Rights Watch (HRW), in an April report, said it had, over the past few months, come across "dozens of armed soldiers who appeared to be younger than 18" in Sana'a.

"Twenty of them, who gave their ages as between 14 and 16, told HRW they had served for up to two years in a division under the command of top military defector Gen Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar," it said. According to Amnesty International, Yemeni government forces, have recruited children as young as 14.

Observers say child conscription

dates back to the start of intermittent fighting between the Yemeni government and Houthi-led Shia rebels in Sa'dah in 2004.

Several dozen child soldiers, according to SOCP's al-Qurashi, have been killed in these clashes. Last year, said the UN report, 42 were reportedly killed and 55 injured, allegedly as a direct result of fighting between Al-Houthi and pro-government militias. Twenty-four sustained serious injuries from explosive remnants of war, it added.

In April UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) spokesperson Marixie Mercado decried the increasing number of child deaths in conflict in Yemen, saying 26 children had been killed from 18 February to 19 April.

## Forged IDs

Yemeni law stipulates that army recruits must be 18, but recruiters sometimes forge children's IDs to get round this, sources said.

"Two months ago, my 14-year-old cousin got an ID card showing he is 18 and he joined the Republican Guards," Hamid al-Ghurbani, a high school teacher in Sana'a, told IRIN. "Last week, I saw him carrying a gun."

Ali al-Sayyaghi, a recruitment officer at the Ministry of Defence, admitted that some new recruits looked younger than the date of birth on their ID cards, but said the ID card was "the only reliable document for determining the age of an applicant".

Most child soldiers not only have the consent of their parents to join up, but the same parents are even complicit in forging their ID cards, because the family needs the extra income. Ibrahim Ali Saeed, who researches child rights abuses in Sana'a, told IRIN.

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# Yemen's human rights organizations under threat



By: Sadeq Al-Wesabi

Since the beginning of the uprising in Yemen, human rights activists have faced different challenges and threats in an attempt to stop their activities and hide their findings from the public.

The violations against the human rights activists were already harsh but the severity of these violations highly increased when the protests against the regime began across the country.

Last week, the violations against the human rights organizations reached their peak when the National Organization for Defending Rights and Freedoms was totally burned by an anonymous group.

The HOOD organization is commonly known for its advocacy and defense of human rights issues. HOOD's activities were more vigorous during the revolution and the organization revealed many crimes.

The incident was strongly condemned by national and international human rights organizations and by many Yemenis. Many activists hold the regime responsible for the incident.

Ali Al-Dailami, head of the Yemeni Network for Human Rights told the Yemen Times that the Human rights activists in Yemen were prosecuted, beaten up, tortured, threatened and they have received different violations during the reign of president Saleh.

The HOOD's incident is a message and threat to other hu-

man rights organizations by the regime, according to Al-Dailami. "This dangerous message aims to intimidate other organizations that work in the field of human rights," he said.

"We have repeatedly been detained in the airport for hours. They use a psychological warfare to frighten us," he said.

Regarding the investigations into the HOOD's incident, he commented: "I'm not optimistic about these investigations. The police will not be serious about this incident and it will hide the facts of the incident like many previous incidents and violations."

Al-Dailami called for different human rights organizations to make alternative archive for their documents in other offices.

"These days, I'm looking for a new office to be away from the soldiers of the republican guards who stationed near our office," he said.

Saleem Allow, a lawyer at the HOOD organization said that the police are still investigating the incident.

He said the initial investigations into the incident indicated that the HOOD's office was destroyed in an arson attack.

"The biggest legal library in Yemen was destroyed as well as thousands of documents for different crimes and issues," he said.

Speaking to the Yemen Times, Allow didn't rule out that the incident was done by the regime.

In spite of the fact that the all contents and equipment of the office were totally destroyed, Allow indicated that the HOOD has another copies for some documents in another place.

"Before the incident, we were facing many violations by the regime because of our effective human rights activities, especially since the beginning of the revolution," he said.

Allow said that they will hold a press conference during next days to reveal

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more facts about the incident.

Redhwan Al-Absi, a lawyer from Hodeida told the Yemen Times that the incident is a tangible proof that the regime has reached to the worst forms of moral decay in dealing with human rights organizations.

"The regime thinks that it can hide its heinous crimes against human rights by doing such destroying actions," he said. "HOOD is one of the oldest human rights organizations that support oppressed people and disclose many hidden facts. The regime is worried of the HOOD's documents so it resorted

to burn it."

"The human rights activists are the enemy of the regime," he said. "There is a big enmity between the regime and human rights organizations."

"The crime of burning HOOD organization has not only a criminal dimension but has a dangerous apolitical dimension. "Instead of protection of Yemenis, the Regime is committing crimes against those Yemenis."

He added, "As human rights activists and lawyers, we are facing difficulties and we are expected to be targeted in any time."

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For six intensive days around 60 Yemeni women from all over the country were participants in a workshop on women political empowerment.

The workshop was organized by Yemen Times NGO, Yemen 21 Forum and funded by the joint EU and UNDP elections project.

It was amazing how the women although they were from different political backgrounds and geographical locations got together fought, argued, agreed and moved ahead so much unlike our Yemeni men who seem not to find in their heart the will or the ability to compromise.

Meet Shafiq, she is a very strong talkative woman from Dhamar who adores the president. In the group photo she raised her certificate in one hand and the president's picture in the other. Some of the opposition participants were livid when they saw her and they scolded her and she automatically put it down. But do you know why? Latifa from Taiz told Shafiq, "This training is about us you fool! It is not about the president or the opposition or any of the ones who are already in power!"

It made sense to Shafiq and she immediately recognized the oneness in what is going on and the innovation in having a political movement, a political phase for women, only women regardless of what they represent.

This is something unfortunately our Yemeni men can't seem to comprehend.

The women were trained in communication, media and electoral campaigns, fund raising and budgeting for campaigns, understanding the voters, the importance of using the social media online, even understanding what went wrong if one fails in winning the elections... the questions they asked were so real. This is because most of the women's experiences were real. They usually did not have the cover of political parties, even those who were supposedly were supported by the strong ruling party, and had to really go through the motions of campaigning without much preparation.

We made a profiling for each of those women that included a question on what they wish to become in the future, their political ambition that is, the choices ranged a society leader, prominent journalist, head of an effective association, member of local council, member of parliament, governor to minister. It was as if they were given permission to dream and so many circled the higher up positions from MP, governor and ministers...

The last day was quite sad; we understood that we had created a family of them. There is eagerness and hunger to learn more but there are many challenges. One is computer literacy and internet access for women from rural area, so this is one aspect we need to work on in a new project, the other is advanced training on political empowerment. We might also just repeat this training all over again for a different group because we received hundreds of application and it was impossible to include all.

In order to seize the momentum of this network we created a facebook page called Nisaa Siyasiyat. It is still new but what we will do is that we will have the profiles of all our trainees in it and create a platform for discussion and ways forward. This will be the first electronic network for political Yemeni women and one that will make a difference in this phase and the future to come. So look out for us, we are coming.

**Nadia Al-Sakkaf**

## Commentary: Out of the fry pan

America is conducting an open war against Yemen's people, says James Gundun

He may not be aware of it, but President Barack Obama recently received a letter from Yemen's Coordinating Council for the Youth Revolution of Change (CCYRC). One of the leading street coalitions demanding freedom and equality in a country divided by Ali Abdullah Saleh, CCYRC celebrated America's Independence Day and wished prosperity to "his excellency" Obama. Yemen's revolutionaries, CCYRC counselled, seek the same freedom that American revolutionaries fought and died so valiantly for.

"The people of Yemen had really expected that the president, government and people of the United States will recognise these genuine aspirations of the Yemeni people," read CCYRC's letter, dated 6 July. "On the contrary, the White House and concerned administration departments seem to totally and almost deliberately avoid taking account of the great sacrifices made by the protesting masses of Yemenis."

The White House and State Department passed the next three days in silence, then Leon Panetta took the stage in Kabul. Telling his audience that Al-Qaeda is "on the run" and "close to defeat", Obama's new defense secretary pointed the Pentagon and CIA's laser-sights directly at Yemen. Given that its revolution is being suppressed in order to escalate military operations in the region, the drone-happy Panetta delivered what amounts to an open declaration of war on Yemen's people.

"There's no question when you look at what constitutes the biggest threat in terms of attacks on the United States right now, more of that comes from Yemen and people like Awlaki," Panetta said. "There are a number of operations that are being conducted not only by the Defense Department, but by my former agency to try to focus on going after those targets. I would say that's one of our top priorities right now."

That Panetta issued such a declaration is only exaggerated by the fact that America's war gears are already in motion. Maintaining strict counter-terrorism after Al-Qaeda bombed the USS Cole in Aden harbour, the Bush administration's one-dimensional policy helped set the conditions for future destabilisation. When Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) directed Omar Farouk Abdel-Mutallab to blow up a plane over Detroit nine years later, US policy escalated from sustenance aid for Saleh's regime to widening air-strikes and extra Special Forces and CIA trainers, active since 2002. One week before US warplanes and cruise missiles struck

suspected Al-Qaeda targets in the southern province of Shabwa, the northern Houthis tribe claimed that US airstrikes targeted their own forces.

Both attacks triggered local protests after slaughtering dozens of civilians, and both were subsequently justified by the Obama administration as striking Al-Qaeda operatives. WikiLeaks would later reveal that Washington, in addition to funding Saleh's campaign against the secessionist Southern Movement, also equipped Yemeni and Saudi security forces to combat the Houthis. The Zaidi Shia sect had been deemed a hassle to Saleh's cooperation against AQAP and an irritation to neighbouring Saudi Arabia. Undaunted by a corrupt, untrustworthy partner and rising anti-Americanism, the White House crafted a new "secret" agreement with Saleh to exchange military cooperation for \$1 billion in aid.

Yet the suppression of Yemen's revolution blew past all previous levels of foreign exploitation. Once a series of government massacres forced the White House to distance itself from Saleh, the Saudi-influenced Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) was deployed in April to manage a power transfer through the ruling General People's Congress (GPC). Its initiative, in CCYRC's words, "may be regarded as the best legal and political package, which any dictator has ever gotten, enjoying an unprecedented full immunity from legal pursuit for all the crimes inflicted against the Yemeni people."

Protesters naturally rejected the GCC's interference as a violation of their revolution, only for Saleh's ensuing "chaos" to justify continual US military operations through his murderous security apparatus. Drone strikes escalated in June and July, killing a number of civilians in between AQAP and local militants, and construction of a regional hub was duly shortened from two years to eight months.

"Time and again, the United States mistakenly provides the Saleh regime with sophisticated equipment, which your administration knows or should know Saleh and his cronies use to clamp down on peaceful protesters in most of the cities of Yemen, or in waging wars against northern and southern protesters against the oppression that has characterised the Saleh regime. The White House policy on Yemen has mistakenly persisted on the assumption that American security concerns can only be dealt with by the Saleh regime."

On 4 July, one month after Saleh landed in Riyadh to receive medical treatment for assassin-related injuries, US Ambassador Gerald Feierstein promised Yemenis that America stood by them "in their pursuit" of "universal rights". Unfortunately for Yemenis, US officials have spent most of their time meeting

with Saleh's regime and legitimising the negligible authority of Vice President Abdel-Rahman Mansour Al-Hadi. Days earlier millions of protesters rallied against US and Saudi interference, demanding total regime change and a transitional council of their choosing. CCYRC advised shortly thereafter, "The revolution of Yemen, as may be erroneously perceived by members of your distinguished administration at times, is not a dispute between a ruling party and a collection of opposition parties and/or some social dignitaries."

As if to soften Panetta's blow the following week, John Brennan also met with Saleh in Riyadh and urged him to sign the GCC's initiative — Yemen's "way forward", as US officials call it. Contrary to mainstream reporting on the Western front, the White House's counter-terror chief sanctioned Saleh's regime with his every move. Deploying a military official (twice) to do a civilian's job is inherently contradictory, although US policy is viewed primarily through the security lens. Brennan's visit was also heavily manipulated by Saleh's regime, which triggered Al-Qaeda's alarm and warned the oppositional Joint Meeting Parties' (JMP) against further "escalation". Washington's inaction has emboldened Saleh to continue overseeing Yemen from his Saudi refuge, but Brennan went so far as to inform the opposition that their nemesis would "return soon".

"It has been three months since the ambassador's promise and Saleh is still in power," said one youth representative, who met with Feierstein in April and asked to remain anonymous. "The US is stabbing the youth in the back and the youth will not forget this US stance."

Panetta confidently declared that, with "more work", Al-Qaeda can be brought to the brink of strategic defeat, and eliminating the 20 leaders remaining on the Pentagon's hit-list would deal a severe blow. However new leadership always emerges and Al-Qaeda's ideology will survive if US foreign policy fails to correct itself, particularly in regards to the Arab Spring. Current US strategy will never succeed in Yemen; backing Saleh's regime has forfeited all spheres — political, economic, social — to preserve military influence. Despite America's omnipotent appearance, some hundred CIA and Special Forces trainers (still increasing in number), a fleet of drones and a heavy naval presence in the Gulf of Aden mark the extent of US influence.

As usual Washington has created the anti-American hostility that it fears on the ground, and intelligence gathering will suffer as a result. Yemen's operations are reportedly shifting deeper into the CIA's shadows, around Congressional red-tape, in order to keep its campaign off grid. A war-weary and

debt-laden Congress supports "cheaper" counter-terror operations anyway, and provides no oversight to an immoral, illogical and illegal war. While Al-Qaeda is America's alleged target, the group has only flourished as Yemen's people suffer.

CCYRC lamented, "The United States government continues to draw up its foreign policy on Yemen with a blind eye towards all these violations of human rights and the extreme corruption that characterised the Saleh regime."

Calling for honest support of Yemen's revolutionaries underestimates the meltdown of US policy in their country. America must first end its naked war of aggression against the Yemeni people; supporting their revolution becomes a secondary condition. Lifelines to Saleh's entire regime must be severed and, instead of telling the opposition to prepare for his return, the Obama administration must assist in Saleh and his family's detention. Termination of the GCC's initiative must follow. Already a knot of demands, time-lines and expectations, Saleh and his GPC officials are pushing for new "dialogue" that would adhere to "the constitution", codewords for more political stalling. A fresh agreement must be drafted to transition through Yemen's revolution, one written by and favourable to the pro-democracy movement.

"To put it bluntly," says CCYRC, "the Yemeni protesters are against all interferences and interventions in Yemeni domestic political affairs... We call on Saudi Arabia and the United States not to intervene in the affairs of Yemen and the abortion of popular revolution... as we condemn and strongly condemn all their positions recent efforts to dilute the demands of the rebels... and prevent the establishment of a democratic system based on justice, freedom and equality."

After affirming a revolutionary transitional council, Washington must back away from military and financial aid, two strings with lengthy expectations attached. Speaking to Obama on behalf of every protester, CCYRC "assures you that it is a paramount goal of the revolution's work towards eliminating all facets of terrorism and all terrorist activity in Yemen." Many Yemenis believe that Saleh exaggerated AQAP's presence, that his regime is the main source of terrorism and that, once removed, Al-Qaeda will pose less of a threat than it already does. The Obama administration cannot expect to defeat AQAP using Saleh's old method.

Costly counterinsurgency is out post-bin Laden, and cheaper faster counter-terrorism is in under Panetta. Neither, though, will succeed in Yemen without popular support — support that cannot emerge until its revolutionaries free their country from tyranny and foreign interference.

## Drone strikes: the human cost

By: Louisa Loveluck

The efficacy of American drone strikes in Yemen has been well-explored in recent weeks. With those on both sides of the argument offering their own comprehensive analyses, I'd recommend a look at Frank Cilluffo and Clinton Watts' report, "Yemen & Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula: Exploiting a Window of Counterterrorism Opportunity", as well as Gregory Johnsen's excellent response over at Waq al-Waq.

Whilst the strike programme was initiated during President Bush's time in office, it has found real favour under the Obama administration. As Leonie Northedge points out, it is often justified by the "success" of similar tactics in Pakistan. There, the CIA runs a secret programme to assassinate al-Qaida and Taliban members seeking refuge in the remote Waziristan province. Accord-

ing to the New America Foundation, at least 118 attacks took place there in 2010, a figure almost four times higher than that for 2008.

And yet claims of success in the Pakistani context mask a bloody reality that few policymakers acknowledge. The Guardian ran an excellent piece this week on the human cost of Waziristan's drone strikes. Following the experiences of Noor Behram, a photographer who documents the civilian casualties, it makes for sobering reading:

"Noor Behram says his painstaking work has uncovered an important — and unreported — truth about the US drone campaign in Pakistan's tribal region: that far more civilians are being injured or dying than the Americans and Pakistanis admit [...] For every 10 to 15 people killed, maybe they get one militant," he said. "I don't go to count how many Taliban are killed. I go to count how many children, women, innocent people, are killed."

Behram's testimony is complemented by a growing body of anecdotal evidence suggesting the human cost of drone strikes far exceeds current estimates. In Yemen too, the impact on civilians has not gone unnoticed. Reports of targeted attacks are regularly followed by the stories of those who become collateral damage.

As Will Picard points out, the efficacy of drone strikes was not up for debate — publicly, at least — in Tuesday's Senate hearing on US policy in Yemen. Those testifying were drawn from the State Department or Washington-based think tanks. Military and intelligence officials were notably absent. Of course, there are undoubtedly a number of reasons for this, not least the desire to maintain operational secrecy. However, as Picard argues, the hearing effectively put US diplomacy and aid on trial at the expense of scrutiny over the drone programme:

At a time when the Congress is

looking for programs to cut, and politicians are looking to score points ahead of elections, this discrepancy is particularly noteworthy. The Obama administration loves drones and special ops (as does much of the public), and Congress is much more willing to fund military projects than diplomatic ones. A hearing like this one, in which senators challenged witnesses to prove the effectiveness of "soft" assistance to Yemen, could certainly aid in explaining the prioritization of the kinetic approach to America's problems in Yemen, while still maintaining the fiction that this country cares about the plight of the Yemeni people.

Whilst diplomatic efforts suggest concern for the Yemeni people, the military approach suggests quite the opposite. This cognitive dissonance deserves far more scrutiny than it is currently attracting. In the battle for hearts and minds, this is not a choice, but a necessity.

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# National Bank of Yemen Honoured Its Prominent Staff



Under the patronage of the acting Chairman of the Board Mr. Ahmed Obaid Alfadli and Mr. Esam Ahmed Alwi Alsakkaf the acting general manager of the National Bank of Yemen, and in conjunction with the Yemeni people's celebrating the 21st. National Anniversary of the Yemeni unity and the World Labor day, a number of the staff of the department and branches and retired employees were honoured in acknowledgement of their enormous efforts to achieve prosperity and progress of the bank.

At the function which was attended by members of the bank's Board of Directors and a large number of employees and workers, and representatives of the media Mr. Esam Ahmed Alwi Alsakkaf gave a speech in which he emphasized that this honour which was in acknowledgement of their great efforts in their performance was honour given to every employee and worker in the National Bank of Yemen which produced good fruits for the bank in 2010.

Mr. Esam Assakkaf added that the bank Board of Directors and its executive management had and will give to all employees and workers due care and attention through improvement of their living conditions through training and development thus providing them with opportunities to develop professionalization, so that they can take up the bank services and bring it to

its best levels. He stressed for necessity that this honour should motivate all to put more efforts to achieve progress and prosperity of the National Bank of Yemen in order to keep up with modern techniques enabling it to serve the national economy and mainly participate in the economic development process in our country. At the end of his speech he congratulated in his name and on behalf of all employees of the National Bank of Yemen and the attendances in the function His Excellency the President of the Republic and all Yemeni citizens for the 21st. anniversary of the blessed Yemeni unity and the thirty three anniversary of the 17th. of July. He wished our country and the dedicated leadership further achievements, progress and prosperity under the leadership of President Ali Abdulla Saleh.

A speech was also given on behalf of the honoured and the Bank employees Trade Union and the branch behalf of Aden Workers Trade Union Federation. It praised the efforts of all employees of National Bank of Yemen. In a statement the manager, financial and administrative department Dr. Ahmed Bin Sunker said that the National Bank of Yemen had achieved profits exceeding 3 billion Rials and that the bank Board of Directors is keen at increasing the performance of the National Bank of Yemen which is one of the national banks that contribute to the national economy.



## Youth Talk

Compiled by Mahmood Al-Matari and Safiya Al-Jabry

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

**This week's question:**

**What is your feedback regarding the president's first speech after his attempted assassination? Was it the speech that you expected?**

**Abdulnasser Al-Abdali**  
In my opinion, that speech was expected and it wasn't strange or new. The president just cares about himself, he doesn't care about anyone or anything else and we are all used to hearing such speeches from him. Furthermore, his speech is like our Salta and Asid, our daily meals - they never make a difference. The only thing that changed in him was his face but his character remains the same.

**Fatma Mohammed**  
After hearing the president's speech I was so moved and now I think that the ball landed in the court of the opposition. They should agree with the president and let us all live in peace and harmony. We have been living on the edge and enough is enough!

**Ahmed Ismail**  
The speech was the same old stuff that we have heard hundreds of times. I didn't know what to expect and when I saw the condition of the president, I thought to myself he will resign now but he did not! Even in the state that he is in he continues to lie, so much of a president he is.

**Layla M**  
**Next Week's Question:**

**How are you planning to welcome and cherish the Holy month of Ramadhan this year?**

Follow this section for a new question every week and feel free to reply with your answers or feedback by sending an e-mail to [tyyouth@gmail.com](mailto:tyyouth@gmail.com). So this is your chance to share your humorous stories, poems or opinions with other young readers!

I couldn't even concentrate on the speech, the whole time I was just looking at the president to make sure it's him and he is alive and I was happy to know it was him. But when I understood his speech after wards I was really disappointed with him for not even talking about solving the crisis we are in.

**Qais**  
When the revolution started, everyone was eager to hear the president's speeches and what he had to tell his people. I have to admit most of his speeches were touching and people supported him. But then the speeches turned to lies and we all stopped listening to them. His first speech after his "Attempted assassination" was full of nonsense, for the first time we had hope again that maybe he will just be fair, talk sense and step down but it was the same old speech and I feel ashamed to even call him our president.

**Aisha Jamil**  
It was expected from him to not even address the situation at hand and just talk the same lies we are used to hearing from him. I wasn't eager to listen to what he had to say, I just wanted to see him and make sure he it is him and not someone else hired to lie to us.

# Thousands of shots in the dark

By: Hani Malfi  
[chanceman2009@hotmail.com](mailto:chanceman2009@hotmail.com)

"This is what we were afraid of." These were the words most spoken in houses and every corner of every street during the most recent war between Sheik Abdullah's sons and President Ali Saleh's forces. Knowing nothing has to do with the very beginning of this war. Heavy gun shots have been heard in the skies of the capital Sana'a, sending out the fires of a civil war, which in turn decorates the long-term, one of its type, revolution of multipurpose revolutionists. No doubt, revolutions are known to be the dawn which marks the start of a new day, and has in its nature a commonly appreciated beauty.

Locally, the flat-tired Yemeni economy is clumsily pumping in the way of international development with a cargo of crisis. Meanwhile, monitors indicate that the circumstances will become worse and foretell of a possible four year reconstruction which will be, if the revolution succeeds, the period of next presidency. That's to say, this will be an inevitable result of civil war. "Out of the frying-pan and into the fire," can best explain an erroneous way of changing something. Internationally, the threats and warnings are increasing. They alert us that intransigence and negligence are leading to the fighting and to an insufferable pain mainly affecting Yemenis. As is clear, the thin rope of Yemen is being pulled strongly at both ends, and we wait in a transfixed silence, watching for a decisive end of to this risky game.



In different streets of Sana'a, people have been complaining about the many bullets falling from the sky which are the main cause of many innocent deaths. Having no one to complain about except the revolution, which manifests itself to be the main cause of people's suffering, people started to realize the mistaken ways the revolutionaries followed and the reactions they encountered. After almost all their efforts have come to a dead end, the situation became worse and consequently obliged many citizens to leave the city leaving a lot of empty

houses behind. As a matter of fact, the expectations of the people have decreased since life got more difficult, and the lack of essential things such as water, electricity and transportation means that even if these essentials can be found, one has to pay double to get less.

Obviously, the longer these circumstances continue, the more they deteriorate. It goes without saying that Yemen has passed through difficult times in the last few years, which has led to the destruction of the economy and the system. Among the causes are war and cor-

ruption, which is the number one reason behind the revolution. Any revolution must consist of and declare many obvious goals, and have well-organized leaders that gain the support of the majority of people to lead to success. Moreover, these goals must be of advantage to the public, and undoubtedly, should not be changed later on. In fact, this is the reason behind the breakdown of revolutions and their backers. If it happens that what seemed to be right is changed in the days to come, then we should go read George Orwell's 'Animal Farm' again.

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The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 1



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## Mohammed Saeed Al-Sharabi



Mohammed Al-Sharabi (right) with his friend in the beginning of uprising in Sana'a

By: Sadeq Al-Wesabi

Mohammed Saeed Al-Sharabi, 25, is one of the more prominent protesters, well known for his revolutionary and journalistic activities.

On Jan.15, Al-Sharabi with a small group of students started a protest against the regime in front of Sana'a University, leading them to face several attacks by security and so-called thugs.

Al-Sharabi was a particular source of concern for security because of his obvious activity at the time in mobilizing students and youth to protest. This activity led him to be arrested and repeatedly attacked by security and anonymous groups. He was individually targeted with violence many times as he was participating in marches and protests.

In addition to his activities in the field, he has written several reports and stories about corruption and the revolution and in various newspapers.

Describing his political affiliation, he said: "I'm a socialist and nationalist who is close to the Muslim Brotherhood."

"One of the most important achievements of the revolution is that it unified all Yemenis who have different attitudes and political agendas," he said. "The revolution has regained the dignity of Yemenis after three decades of injustice and tyranny."

Asked about his achievements and contributions towards the revolution, Al-Sharabi said: "There are no personal contributions or achievements. The achievements from the beginning of the revolution belong to all pro-democracy youth and the people."

For fear that he would be arrested or killed, Al-Sharabi has not left 'Change

Square' in Sana'a. He has had to stay in his tent and travel only to nearby places to be safe. "I've been tracked by national and political security since the beginning of the revolution. They see me as one of the political agitators who motivate the students and youth to demand change."

Under these circumstances, Al-Sharabi has become even more determined to continue his struggle until the fall of the regime.

Whilst security forces have intensified their attacks on anti-government protesters, they have failed to break the youth's will and determination for change, according to Al-Sharabi.

"Unfortunately, there are real fears that our revolution will be stolen by the political parties. These parties pretend that they have made this revolution," he said. "However, they will not be able to deceive millions of people who know that this revolution was created and led by the independent and free youth."

Occasionally, Al-Sharabi also writes critical essays about Taiz governorate. Subsequently, his father's home in their village has been repeatedly attacked.

He stated that the revolution restored its momentum again after the revolutionaries began escalating their protests. "The revolution started losing its momentum due to the Gulf initiative, but we have been able to gather momentum again."

He indicated that the youth revolution that started on Jan. 15 was the first spark that began a mass revolution all over Yemen.

"The youth who started the revolution are very active, enthusiastic and continue to struggle. They are working as independent youth and they don't follow or obey orders from any political parties. However, these principles have led those youth to face troubles with different political parties," he said.

"This revolution belongs to all Yemenis and nobody can pretend that he is a guardian of this revolution. The real backbone for this revolution are Yemen's youth and students," he said. "Without those youth, the opposing political parties would not be able to face the regime with confidence and

strength."

According to Al-Sahrabi, the control that opposing political parties have taken over various 'Change Squares', and their submissiveness to Saleh's regime, Gulf countries and the international community have led to delaying the revolution.

"I'm not against these parties. On the contrary, those political parties are an important part of the revolution, but they shouldn't be so easily controlled by the corrupt regime and other countries," he explained.

"All indicators confirm that the revolution will be resolved soon," he said confidently.

"The 'Change Square' in Sana'a is my safe and free home. I live with my other friends in this place and dream about our new country. We exchange our ideas enthusiastically," he said. "People who have not come to this place are politically ignorant."

"I'm looking for our dignity, so I'll continue my struggle for a decent life without corruption or dictators," he



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