

Yemen's power transition deal hindered by politicians interests

By: Nadia Al-Sakkaf

SANA'A, Sept. 21 – As thousands walked in an overwhelming funeral mourning the death of the 77 killed revolutionary protesters on Wednesday Sept 21, politicians continued to negotiate a power transfer deal.

"What is happening currently is very sad and we urge all parties not to refer to violence. The political negotiations are progressing and it is important to create a constructive atmosphere for the negotiations to succeed," said Jamal bin Omar the UN Secretary General envoy who

has been in Yemen since Monday. The challenge now is how to reach agreed compromises by all parties and they are many. The protesters lead by the Joint Meeting Parties have warned last week that they will escalate their peaceful protests and Sunday was marked Escalation Day. According to JMP leading figure and head of the revolution's National Council Mohammed Basundwa there is an escalation plan that will continue until a breakthrough in the political stalemate is achieved.

"We will continue our protests and we have an escalation plan," said Basundwa. "The plan is peaceful

but it will challenge red lines set around the revolution's square but we will not attack any government institution."

The escalation by protesters seem to be a contradiction with the proposed negotiations and the visits of Jamal bin Omar and the Gulf Council Countries' representative Abdulateef Al-Zaiyani who also arrived on Monday but left the following day. However, Al-Zaiyani's visit is not part of the UN delegation's efforts to coordinate a deal between the regime and the opposition.

Moreover, Al-Zaiyani's visit to Yemen comes one day after Saleh

received Saudi King for the first time since his arrival to Riyadh for medical treatment in June this year.

King Abdullah of KSA's visit to Saleh although seen as a sign for an approaching deal has met with resentment by the protesting youth in Yemen. This would not be the first time they complained about the Saudi's perceived siding by Saleh's regime, as earlier in September the protesters in Sana'a's Change Square burned a module symbolizing King Abdullah in one of their demonstrations.

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King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz of Saudi Arabia visits President Saleh for the first time in a public visit on Monday September 19, 2011. Is this an indication that Saleh is coming home soon?

Ceasefire broken, Al-Zayani left Sana'a with no progress

By: Ali Saeed

SANA'A, Sept 21 – Five people were killed today in as government forces sporadically fired shells into Change Square in the capital Sana'a, where protesters against the regime of President Ali Abdullah Saleh have been camping out since February.

The regime has accused the "militias of the Islah Islamic Party and the First Armored Division, commanded defected army general and Saleh's kinsman, Ali Mohsen Al-

Ahmar, of breaching the ceasefire at 1:30 pm of Wednesday on Hail Street in front of Al-Quba mosque, and the electricity area in Al-Tawfeeq St," the state-owned Saba news agency quoted a security source from the Ministry of Interior on Wednesday evening.

The one-day ceasefire, which was proposed by Abd Rabo Hadi, Saleh's deputy, faces a total breakdown after each warring party began accusing the other of breaching the agreement. The accusations followed

a week of political deadlock among the warring parties, UN envoy Jamal Bin Omar and Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council Abd Al-Taeef Al-Zayani, who visited Yemen this week.

Abd Al-Sallam Al-Alyani, a colonel of the First Armored Division, denied that the ceasefire was broken, saying, "The Republican Guards [the Yemeni army's elite fighting force commanded by President Saleh's son] often provokes us. These are normal provocations to trap the revolution-

sided army into violence." The First Armored Division, which sided with the revolution last March, has been in fierce clashes with Saleh's loyal forces in the capital Sana'a since September 18.

Ameen Dabwan, an independent activist in the youth movement told the Yemen Times that two shells fell on a Quranic school belonging to the Islah Party on Al-Siteen Road, north of Change Square, at 11:00 am. The attacks occurred while the activists were mourning 40 martyrs

who were shot dead three days ago by security forces.

The two shells, which were fired from the Republican Guard garrison in the Asr area, left three persons dead, according to Dabwan. A medical source at the field hospital told the Yemen Times that the death toll on Wednesday has risen to five persons after security forces intercepted a march attempting to leave the square into Al-Zubairi Street.

Amidst this violence, the Secretary

General of the GCC, Al-Zayani, left Yemen on Wednesday after a three-day visit to the country yielded no progress on the Gulf-brokered power transition plan. Leaders of the formal opposition coalition known as the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) seemed to were left struggling to agree on a unified position on resuming talks and dialogue with Saleh's regime to revive the power transition deal brokered by the GCC. Al-Zayani left Sana'a without meeting the opposition leaders.

Locals asked to evacuate their homes

By: Nadia Al-Sakkaf

SANA'A, Sept. 21 – Residents in Hael Street in Sana'a said that they had been hearing announcements by security men on microphones since Tuesday night telling the locals to leave their homes at once.

"I have no intention of leaving my home. I have heard the neighbors saying that they are thinking of leaving but this is my home and I

am staying here," said a local lady living in Hael Street.

Others have decided to take no risks. Hani Abdulghani rushed home from work once his wife called with the news.

"My problem is that the city entry points are closed so I can at least send my family to our village. Now I am just taking them to some of our relatives' home in a safer place," he said.

In Hael Street the residents are living in fear especially since there is a lot of shooting.

"Most of my neighbors have left their homes and gone to other places. I have nowhere to go already there is no electricity and no land lines, and the mobile phone services are terrible," said Sawzan Mohammed a resident in Hael Street as she prayed for the conflict storm to subside.

Sana'a University students education remains on hold

By: Yemen Times Staff

SANA'A, Sept. 21 – After three days of continuous protests demanding their right to education, Sana'a University students have surrendered temporary to the pressures preventing them from continuing their schooling.

The protests which started on Saturday marking the supposed beginning of the term announced by the Ministry of Higher Education to compensate for the lost time since the uprising at Change Square near the campus.

"It is not possible to get back to the university now because it is too risky since the escalation of the revolution's protesters," said Abdullah Jaber of the Engineering College.

The more than 77 killed men and hundreds of wounded because of the attack on protestors, many of whom were university students, has also shadowed the education plight.

"I feel ashamed to call for a protest demanding the opening of the university while there is a bigger crisis present. In a way it is like we need to wait for our day and we have to respect that," said Mahmoud Al-Matari from the Commerce College.

However, other universities across the country have relatively resumed classes and the students are regularly going to lectures. Which leaves the Sana'a University students again at risk of losing a whole academic year.



The college gates were locked up in advance and on them was written "It is difficult to convince a slave that he is now free."



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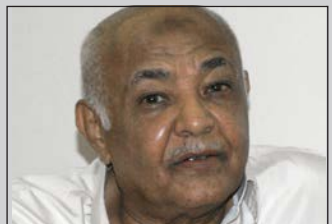


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Opposition leader to The Yemen Times



Dear esteemed readers,
Because of recent events, the interview with Basundwa needed to be updated and will accordingly be published next issue. Don't miss it



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Zunjbar still in the hands of armed Islamists

By: Ali Saeed

ABYAN, Sept. 21 — Zunjbar, the capital of Abyan governorate, is still controlled by the armed Islamists, suspected to be linked to Al-Qaeda, who took over the area late May, according to local security officials and journalists.

This is in contrast to official statements issued by the Yemeni government and the opposition army, who said that they liberated the area from Al-Qaeda on September 10.

"Al-Qaeda is still dominating Shaqra and Al-Arkoob areas. If it were true that they [the state security forces and opposition army] eliminated the armed group from Zunjbar, they still will have no capacity to control these two areas," Colonel Abdullah Ali Saeed, chief of security in Moudya district told the Yemen Times on Wednesday.

"The army is stationed on the Abyan coast. They did not even enter Zunjbar," said the Colonel.

Anees Mansour, a local journalist who is reporting specifically on Al-Qaeda issues in the governorate told the Yemen Times, "Al-Qaeda still exists in Zunjbar and the army has just left the 25th Mechanical brigade with responsibility for the siege."

On Tuesday, three soldiers of the 119th Brigade were killed and seven others wounded in clashes between the self-described "Revolution's Loyal Army" and the armed Islamist

group. The fighting centered on Al-Qarna'a, an area just outside Zunjbar, according to Mansour.

"The victory in Zunjbar announced by the government's forces and the opposition's army was merely a farce. The armed groups still dominate Zunjbar," he said.

The armed group who has been dominating the city of Zunjbar and other towns of Abyan for the last four months enforces Islamic law in the area. On Monday the group executed a murderer. On Sunday they killed a magician by sword, in accordance with the rule of Islamic Sharia Law, Mansour said.

On May 22nd, President Ali Abdullah Saleh, who has retained power in Yemen for over three decades, warned the international community that if his regime falls, Al-Qaeda will dominate Yemen. It was only a few days after Saleh's speech that the armed Islamists took over Zunjbar. The government identified the group that as an Al-Qaeda cell.

The opposition initially accused Saleh's regime of handing over southern governorates in Yemen country to armed groups in order to scare the West and the United States.

Saeed Ubaid, an expert on Al-Qaeda in Yemen, told the Yemen Times that both Saleh's regime and the traditional opposition are using the Al-Qaeda threat to gain western support.

Violence renewed in Taiz

By: Emad al-Sakkaf

TAIZ, Sept. 20 - Four revolution youths were killed and 35 other injured including 26 with bullets in addition to 10 suffocation cases with tear gas during last Monday clash between the youth and pro-regime security when the latter was trying to prevent the youth from controlling Hawdh Al-Ashraf Street, one of Taiz most important roads.

Security dispersed the demonstration by firing their heavy guns as well as water hoses and large quantity of tear gas which enraged the surrounding neighborhood where people suffered asphyxia.

Anas al-Mashreqi, an eyewitness, told Yemen Times that the revolution youth rally tried to take over Hawdh al-Ashraf street in protest against al-Qa'a incident in Sana'a, where 20 demonstrators were killed and hundreds were injured on Sunday, September 18.

"Upon that", went on Al-Mashreqi, "violent clashes broke out between some pro-revolution gunmen hiding in alleys, by-streets and buildings near Al-Sha'ab school and pro-regime snipers on rooftops in the area. We saw persons fall from both sides."

"We were surrounded in a cafeteria and I was scared and expecting to be hit by a stray bullet," he added, "I wonder why should a Yemeni kill another Yemeni? Why should the

regime insist on crushing the people to stay in power? The ruling party should submit to the will of the people demanding change, a more favorable present and a better future."

Revolutionaries also took over Jamal Street to the area where Education Bureau is located and have been there since Tuesday evening. They consider this step a part of the escalation program that would be performed until the regime is ousted.

Security forces did not cut the demonstrators off which was interpreted by analysts as a way to arouse the surround area people antagonism against the youth.

In the meanwhile, a GPC source in Taiz said to Yemen Times, "Whenever there are signs of a breakthrough in the political crisis, the JMP resort to blowing up the situation. The Muslim Brotherhood militias perform armed rallies and blockade streets, break into government offices and plan killing demonstrators themselves and attribute their crimes to the government." The source affirmed security forces' commitment to directions by the president and



The protesters in Taiz marching towards security who created a human barrier determined to stop the protesters from advancing forward.

his deputy not to shoot fire no matter what and the necessity for self-restraint.

"The JMP," added the source, "realize that they do not have a popular basis and that they cannot assume power through democracy and ballots, so they wish to take it over through coups and victims' blood. They [the JMP] should know that the only exit out of this crisis is dialogue and even if we fight, we would eventually come back to it." He called upon the JMP to shun violence in order not to involve the country in the unthinkable.

In the same context, Al-Rawdha and Zaid al-Moushki neighborhoods were shelled and thrown with sound bombs from midnight to Tuesday morning resulting in the death of one person and injury of four others.

Al-Siteen street in the city also witnessed violent clashes between the Republican Guard and the revolution protectors.

Youth forming political parties

By: Shatha Al-Harazi

SANA'A, Sept. 20 — Yemen forms new political parties these days either as a solution to the political unrest, to empower the youth in order for them to be part of any political talks and negotiations or for purposes of power that would enable them to seek benefits in the next stage.

Although licenses for the legal for-

mation of a party has not been given to any of these new parties from the political parties' affairs committee, these parties are carrying forth with the needed procedures.

"The parties' affairs committee at first offered to ease the procedures and give us the license only if we agreed in promoting Saleh and that we leave change square," said Yahia Hujera, a member of the "youth of

testament" party.

Hujera said that the party had rejected the offer and decided to complete everything that was needed and postpone the licensing as it posed difficulties.

Other youth from the new parties agree that the license is not a huge obstacle to the formation of new parties. The Youth of testament party has claimed to have 30 thousands

member in 16 governorates so far. Meanwhile the Democratic Movement for Change and the Construction party claimed to have over 46 thousands members nationwide.

A fear over the aims behind the formation of parties at this time is that it might be sponsored by the regime itself or that party's may operate with foreign agendas, according to Zakarya Ahmed, a member of Justice and Construction block -- the block is also planning to be a political party in the near future and was established by the former ruling party's figures.

"Although I as an independent youth chose to be a member of this party, I hesitated in continuing with them as many big names have joined," Zakaria explained. "The need for these political parties is immense as we need to break the existence ones."

Hujera said that this stage is for political work and not for revolutionary actions, "It's not acceptable to tell the youth in the square to go home because its the politicians turn now. Thus the youth, who brought about the change must be included and that will happen simply by them forming their own political parties" said Hujera.

One different party that would make real change if their plans are implemented completely is "the Yemeni youth and labours party". The Party is confident of acquiring the license as "we have gotten the green light from Ahmed Ali," said one of its key members.

10 youth came together to formulate the idea of the party, some of them are well known for being for-

mer members of the General People's Conference, the Yemeni ruling party.

"Our main aim is to reach the power," said Nasr Al-Harazi, a member of the Youth and Labours party. "The parties aim is clear in its name, we care for everything in the country and we are the only party that will protect the labours rights".

Al-Harazi is optimistic over the role the party can play in the future using other labours parties in the world as evidence.

The Democratic Movement for Change and Construction party was formed in 2009 but they failed to acquire the license so they have reformed it now. They say that the general situation in the country is motivating many to form parties.

"The revolution gives everyone a chance to become a politician, many political parties will be formed at this stage but few will stand and actually be active," said Abdalqados al-Sada, the secretary general of the party.

Al-Sada has said that all the new parties present are encouraged but the youth do suffer from a lack in organization and this will not allow them to continue their political work.

According to Hujera the license is not important now as all the formed parties should be considered as entities despite the licensing issue. "It does not make sense to have revolted against the regime only to later ask for their permission to be opponents," said Hujera. "But a revolutionary committee should be formed to make sure it's not random work and to ensure that not anyone can take advantage of the failure in the smooth operation of license laws.

The Latest BuZZ

By: Mohammed bin Sallam

► Yemen foreign minister Abu Bakr al-Kirbi refused a request presented during the UN Human Rights Council 18th session held in Geneva to send an international mission to Yemen to investigate violations against human rights during recent clashes in Sana'a. He also rejected the opening of an office of the council in Yemen.

► Consolidated balance sheet of commercial and Islamic banks working in Yemen suffered record decline by the end of last July to YR1737.6 billion compared to YR1905.3 in the same period last year with a decrease YR167.7 billion.

► BBC World Service stated that it was deeply concerned for the safety of its Arabic service correspondent in Yemen Abdullah Ghurab after he was specifically subjected to a verbal attack by deputy information minister during a press conference on September 19, 2011.

► A source close to vice-president Abdu Rabu Mansour Hadi denied in a statement to al-Wasat newspaper what was rumored of Hadi's sending his family to Aden for fear of situation breakout in Sana'a. He considered such news an attempt to kindle conditions and scare people.

► News that Al-Hurra photographer, Hassan al-Wadhaf who had been shot in the face by a sniper during recent demonstration at Kentucky roundabout, had passed away has been refuted.

► A spokesman of YLNG said on Wednesday that violence in Yemen has not affected gas exports and that Yemen intends to export 6.7 million tons this year as planned.

اعلان قضائي

عبد محمد صالح الجعدي

تعلم محكمة استئناف محافظة إب - الشعبة الشخصية بأن على المذكور الحضور إلى الشعبة الشخصية خلال شهر من تاريخ هذا الإعلان للرد على الطعن المقدم ضده من المستأنف حزام مهدي علي القيفي في القضية الشخصية رقم (٢٥) لسنة ١٤٣٢ هـ وفي حالة عدم الحضور فسيتم التنصيب عنه والسير في إجراءات القضية وفقاً للشرع والقانون.

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رئيس الشعبة الشخصية بمحكمة استئناف م/إب

القاضي عياش أحمد عياش علوي

Judicial Summons

Abdo Mohamed Saleh Al-Gaadi

Ibb Appeal Court, Personal Affairs Dept, announces that the aforementioned should appear before the Personal Affairs Dept within one month from the date of the publication of this announcement to reply of the appeal against him which submitted by the appealed Mr. Hizam Mahdi Ali Al-Kaifi regarding the Personal Case No. (25) for the Year 1432 Hijriah. In case of non-appearance an appointee on his behalf will be appointed and the court will go in the legal proceedings of the case pursuant to the law and Islamic law.

Best Regards

Chief of Personal Affairs Dept. At Ibb Appeal Court

Judge: Ayash Ahmed Ayash Alawi

Continuing from page 1

Yemen's power transition deal

According to political analysts King Abdullah's visit to Saleh may be a "good-bye" courtesy and indicate that Saleh's return to Yemen is near.

Defecting General Major Ali Muhsin Al-Ahmar has met with bin Omar in his first day visiting Sana'a and with coordination from a mediation committee composed of respected figures from both sides a 24 hour truce was agreed on starting Tuesday noon.

The truce came after two days of continuous armed conflict mostly directed against the protestors and Al-Ahmar's First Armored Division. The truce required the division to retreat

from Kinaki round-about termed later as Victory Round-About to the previous revolutionary grounds near the old University campus on Dairi Street.

The division was also ordered to evacuate a Republican Guards food supplies and ammunition camp in Zubairi Street which it did.

However, the shelling started again on Wednesday soon after the funeral of the deceased protestors at noon time.

Sultan Al-Barakani assistant Secretary General of the ruling party and one of its high level leaders blames the opposition and the Gen. Major Al-Ahmar for causing the bloodshed.

"We have proven more than once our will to come to an agreement and pull Yemen out of this mess," said Al-Barakani to The Yemen Times. "We warned the division and the protestors from challenging our authority and heading outside their protest grounds towards government institutions but they did not listen."

He mentioned that the negotiations are still on-going and that the ruling party is committed to the directives of its leader President Saleh in Riyadh who earlier this month instructed his deputy to negotiate a peaceful transition of power on his behalf.

Yemen is threatening to turn into another Somalia

The US fears pulling the plug on Saleh will destabilise Yemen. But the political impasse, hunger and conflict are doing it already

By: Simon Tisdall
The Guardian

The Yemeni regime's indiscriminate machine-gunning of demonstrators in the capital, Sana'a, and the opposition's furious reaction, suggests the country's eight-month-old crisis may be coming to a head. But the interests of two key outside players, the US and Saudi Arabia, remain focused more on strategic security and terrorism concerns than on spreading democracy and prosperity in the Arabian peninsula.

The US stepped up pressure last week for an end to the rule of President Ali Abdullah Saleh, urging the regime to accept a previously formu-

lated political transition deal within seven days. The plan, mediated by the Saudis and other members of the Gulf Co-operation Council, calls for a government of national unity, presidential elections and a new constitution.

But Saleh, holed up in Saudi Arabia after an assassination attempt in June, has so far resisted the plan's key provision – that he step down and hand over power to his vice-president in exchange for immunity. Although the US state department said it was “encouraged” that Saleh had ceded negotiating authority to his deputy, there is as yet no sign that either the US or the Saudis are ready or willing to force his departure from the scene. If they were, they surely would have done it months ago, one way or another. This hesitation to definitively pull the plug, despite rising mayhem in Sana'a and other Yemeni cities, contrasts sharply with the way Washington ruthlessly cut Hosni Muba-

rak's legs from under him in Egypt. Indeed, Riyadh's unelected princelings strongly objected to Mubarak's treatment, viewing it as a dangerous precedent, and now appear doubly determined to prevent Saleh being disposed of in the same manner. Even if a transition deal is agreed, Saleh might remain in power almost indefinitely by finessing its terms.

Yet the principal reason why the regime is still in power is overriding US and Saudi worries about the potentially hugely destabilising ramifications of what may follow. The street-level, pro-democracy, Arab-spring struggle is but one aspect of a wider, more complex Yemeni conflict.

Others facets include power struggles between military and business elites, long-standing tribal rivalries, armed separatism in the south, Iranian-fomented Shia Muslim rebellion in the north, and most significant of all (for the Saudis and Americans), the tightening grip on

Yemen of al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula – viewed by Washington as a bigger threat than al-Qaida in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Saleh, for all his faults, was a staunch post-9/11 “war on terror” ally. The bottom-line fear shared in European capitals is that without Saleh Yemen could become a failed state, threatening Saudi Arabia's soft underbelly and thus western oil and gas supplies.

This may help explain why the US has been much more active bombing Yemen than reforming it in recent months. Obama administration officials told Karen DeYoung of the Washington Post this weekend that the US has “significantly increased” the number of Pakistan-style unmanned drone attacks on White House-approved al-Qaida targets, mostly in south Yemen. The CIA had been told to expand its Yemen operations and was building a new regional base, the officials said. Several drone attacks each week

have been reported by local media. None of the attacks is publicly acknowledged.

In a speech at Harvard last week, John Brennan, Barack Obama's counter-terrorism adviser, indicated that Washington sees Yemen first and foremost as an important new battleground rather than a future bastion of Arab democracy. “The United States does not view our authority to use military force against al-Qaida as being restricted solely to ‘hot’ battlefields like Afghanistan,” he said. “We reserve the right to take unilateral action if or when other governments are unwilling or unable to take the necessary actions themselves.” Brennan maintained that this doctrine did not mean the US could use military force “whenever we want, wherever we want” – but it certainly points that way.

Amid the military escalation and political wrangling, another battle is taking shape in Yemen that could be more lethal than all that has gone

before. According to a new report published by Oxfam, many Yemeni communities are “on the brink of disaster” due to rising hunger caused by rocketing food and fuel prices. Child malnutrition in Yemen, already the third highest in the world, is rising. Making matters worse, about 90,000 people have been displaced by fighting in the south.

But instead of increasing humanitarian relief and other assistance to Yemen as the crisis deepens, the World Bank has cut back on aid, citing the uncertain political and security situation. The UN and other agencies have also been handicapped by funding shortfalls as recession-hit wealthy countries keep their hands in their pockets. A UN-administered emergency relief fund only has 57% of its required funding for 2011.

With the political impasse continuing, and fighting flaring on all fronts, fears grow that Yemen may be reincarnated as Somalia II.

The costs of ignoring Yemen

By: Marc Lynch
Foreign Policy

The long stalemate in Yemen took a bloody turn yesterday which was as horrifying as it was utterly predictable.

Regime forces opened fire on the tenacious, peaceful protestors in Change Square in Sana'a, killing dozens and flooding the hospitals with the wounded. The internet has been flooded with horrific videos which could easily have come from Libya or Syria. The violent crisis which many of us have been warning would result from neglecting Yemen and allowing its political stalemate to grind on has now arrived. The Sana'a massacre should be a crystal clear signal that the Yemeni status quo is neither stable nor sustainable, and that the failure to find a political resolution ensures escalating bloodshed and humanitarian crisis. It is time to push for an immediate political transition -- and one which does not include immunity for Saleh's men.

It has been difficult to get anyone to pay attention to Yemen. For months, ever since President Ali Abdullah Saleh had been rushed to Saudi Arabia for treatment of wounds from an apparent assassination attempt. Distracted by hot wars in Libya and Syria, the struggling transition in Egypt, and the

diplomatic train wreck between Israel and the Palestinians, the U.S. and most of the region put Yemen on the back burner. Even though thousands of incredibly determined and resilient Yemenis continued to protest regularly, and analysts warned with increasing desperation that missing the opportunity to bring about a transition would be a disastrous mistake, the urgency faded away. Indeed, Saleh's regime counted on that fading external urgency as part of its strategy of delay and distraction, hoping to outlast, confuse, divide, and where possible crush the protest movement. Now, Yemenis are paying for that neglect in blood.

The U.S., the GCC, the U.N., and Yemen's opposition need to push for Saleh to leave power now and for Yemen to immediately begin a meaningful political transition. Not in a few months, not in a few years, and not empty promises of future change which no Yemeni any longer believes. This does not mean calling for military intervention. After Libya and the debate over Syria, military action has regrettably become many peoples' first rather than last instinct even when it is very clearly neither appropriate nor likely. It means throwing full political support to Yemen's opposition, making clear that Yemeni officials will be held accountable before international tribunals for their role

in violence against civilians, and pushing hard to end a stalemate which too many saw as an acceptable state of affairs.

Months of inattention have made this task harder, not easier. Yemen's protest movement had been one of the most impressive and even astonishing of its Arab counterparts, and by March it seemed inevitable that Saleh's regime would soon fall in the face of a peaceful, mass uprising. But it did not fall, even after Saleh's departure, and a grinding stalemate ensued. The U.S. and the international community essentially delegated the Yemen file to Saudi Arabia and the GCC, which quickly proved that it was either not up to the task or not interested in finding a real solution. The Yemeni regime played on that inattention, looking to buy time and muddle through. The protestors instead proved amazingly resilient, turning out tens of thousands of people even as they struggled to find any way to achieve a political breakthrough. Qaddafi's fall from Tripoli had inspired the Yemeni protestors, renewing hope and galvanizing their efforts --- making this week's escalation and brutality all the more significant not only in Yemen but across the region.

The atrocities should generate renewed urgency, but there should be no illusion that a solution will now be any easier to find. After long,



difficult months the opposition is more fragmented. People are really suffering from the economic collapse. The regime's survival after it seemed on the brink of collapse has baffled its adversaries. Battle lines have hardened, and offers which once might have seemed reasonable now seem unacceptable. With the list of dead and wounded Yemeni civilians growing and rage swelling across the country, few are likely to be interested in the GCC's deal granting amnesty to those responsible for a fresh massacre. I agree with them. One of the most important accomplishments of Libya and of the rapidly evolving international norms around the Arab uprisings has been the rejection of impunity for such atrocities,

and Saleh's regime should be no exception.

This week's violence should be a spur to break this stalemate. But I fear that it is more likely that the world will simply continue to ignore what's happening in Yemen. Most of the attention of the Middle East policy community this week will be directed instead towards the drama of the Palestinian bid for recognition at the United Nations. Few in the West see many major interests in Yemen beyond the narrow, exclusive -- and in today's context nearly indefensible -- focus on al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula. The endless reports of horrors from Syria, and before that Libya, have numbed people to what must seem just one more episode in an endless

lity of atrocities.

But all of this would be a mistake. For half a year now there has been a chance for Yemenis themselves to bring about genuine, positive change and break the dominance of a repressive and corrupt regime. The new round of violence makes achieving that change more urgent -- and, if the U.S., the UN, the GCC and others could only be brought to notice, finally possible. Yemen matters. Yemenis matter. Ignoring them has allowed a hurting political stalemate and a worsening humanitarian crisis. A non-policy of inattention to Yemen has only increased the risk of collapse into a real civil war, which would pose infinitely worse policy choices. Don't wait for that.

Yemen, the family war

While elite rivalries are fuelling the violence in Yemen, US anti-terror loyalties compound the suffering

By: Ginny Hill
The Guardian

On Monday, when the UN envoy Jamal Benomar and Abdulatif al-Zayani of the Gulf Co-operation Council flew into Yemen, they hoped for agreement on a transition plan that would see President Ali Abdullah Saleh step down after 33 years in power. Instead they found themselves in the middle of an urban battlefield, trying to negotiate an immediate ceasefire be-

tween rival elite families.

Negotiations over the timing of elections have gone back and forth between the ruling party and the opposition coalition since the spring. The beleaguered Gulf-backed transition plan still forms the basis of these negotiations, with support from the UN. But it increasingly appears that too much energy has been expended on technical and constitutional issues and too much faith placed in politicians from Yemen's formal institutions. Mediators have yet to find a successful way to manage the rivalries between unaccountable elite families who have slowly divided the capital, Sana'a, into zones of personal influence.

Those rivalries are playing a

crucial part in the latest violence, which pits troops under the control of Saleh's family against those loyal to Ali Mohsen, the general who defected to the opposition and is related to Saleh through Saleh's mother's second marriage. The two men have shared power for decades but in recent years, as Saleh began to position his son Ahmed for succession, relations have grown increasingly tense.

When General Mohsen broke ranks after a sniper attack on protesters in March, many Yemenis feared that war between the two was imminent. Instead, they met one night at the house of the vice-president, Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi, and both agreed to step down and leave the country. But the

deal fell apart and a protest camp sprang up, sprawling through the streets around the university under General Mohsen's protection. Saleh's rivalry with a powerful tribal family, the al-Ahmar, eventually led to fighting between Saleh's troops and tribal militia in Sana'a in May – ending when Saleh was evacuated to Riyadh for treatment after a bomb blast in his palace mosque.

Saleh remains in Riyadh, and the US state department continues to call for a “peaceful and orderly transition”. But the Pentagon has been slow to cut ties to Saleh's son and his three cousins, who control Yemen's elite security and intelligence units. These units were created, funded and trained with

western help after al-Qaida's 2000 attack on the USS Cole, and this local “capacity building” has formed a central pillar of the west's anti-terror strategy in Yemen's terrorist threat for much of the last decade. John Brennan, the White House counterterrorism adviser, stated this month that “counterterrorism co-operation with Yemen is better than it's been in years”.

But the Pentagon's reliance on Ahmed and his cousins is distorting Yemen's domestic politics, and the options for transition. Even if Saleh himself might be ready to stand down – which many doubt – it is clear that he still expects a prominent role for Ahmed.

Meanwhile, Ahmed and his cousins are entrenched in the presiden-

tial palace in Sana'a, and gunmen under their control opened fire on demonstrators on Sunday. Neither Ali Mohsen nor the al-Ahmar family show any sign of consenting to a transition deal that leaves Saleh's inheritors in place.

Yemen's protesters are bearing the bloody brunt of these elite rivalries. Not all the protesters are independent – many are allied to a party funded by one of the al-Ahmar brothers. But restructuring the military and purging the security services of corruption are among the independent protesters' top priorities. They want to see an end to the military, political and economic control of Saleh and his relatives. But they are paying for this demand with their lives.

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Youth activist Sabah Badri Bakir speaks to Yemen Times

Yemen's youth have great values and different thoughts

By: Sadeq Al-Wesabi

Sabah Badri Bakir is a struggling youth activist who has dedicated herself to the development of youth in Yemen. She is widely admired for her valuable contribution towards the Yemeni youth.

Many Yemeni youth have been trained by her. Thus, some of them describe her as a mother of many Yemeni children.

Since her childhood, Sabah was a very active and eager to be a volunteer. She was working hard and enthusiastically and she didn't care about financial returns at all. "Volunteerism in Yemen is misunderstood. For me, Volunteerism means how to invest your time and your efforts well without any return."

Sabah has a different vision of how Yemeni NGOs should work. She is dissatisfied with the current performance of Yemen's NGOs that, "Put their interest above public interest," she said.

"Unfortunately, cooperation and coordination between Yemeni NGOs is very weak," she added.

She is also known for her developmental philosophy. "Development doesn't mean building schools or hospitals. Development means creating chances for people," she said.

For over ten years, Sabah has been working for several reputable



Sabah Badri Bakir

organizations, foundations, and initiatives.

Her expertise is in youth programming, participatory planning with youth, capacity building, civil society strengthening, community mobilization, and training.

She has worked with mainstream youth and with youth with disabilities as a professional and as a volunteer, with the aim of empowering them and making their voices

heard. She has also worked in the field of conflict management during the war of secession in 1994.

In 2004, she was the office manager of the Commission of Scouting in Yemen. She took the lead in re-organizing scouting as it was implemented in Yemen and managed to get much more girls involved in scouting activities. She was also responsible in organizing an annual summer camps for scouts and others all over the country.

She was also able to generate a range of extra resources for youth to support the Siraj Youth Empowerment Program in Yemen.

However, Sabah hasn't always had good experiences in her work. "During my work in many organizations, I was fully exploited instead of being invested well," she said.

However, Sabah isn't depressed about her experience. "Although I was exploited I still gained skills and knowledge from these experiences."

Earlier this year, she became an executive manager of the newly established For All Foundation.

"I aspire, through this foundation, to change the life of many Yemeni youths for the better," said Sabah.

One of the recent positions given to Sabah is the office manager of the Ministry of Sports and Youth. She was directly reporting to the Minister of Youth and Sports where

she took the lead in the setting up and strengthening the office into a ministry that now has an important function in the government.

Sabah criticized Yemeni NGOs that depend totally on international donations, stressing the importance of Yemen's private sector contribution towards the Yemeni NGOs.

She indicated that some beneficiaries of international donation have become dependent on the funding. "Some IDPs in Haradh camps, Hajja Governorate, are completely dependent upon international donations. They don't depend on themselves even in simple things that don't need help such as re-erecting their tents."

"We should provide those IDPs with useful projects that help them for the rest of their life," said Sabah.

Presently, Sabah is fully occupied with a new challenging project. She is gearing up for a seven-month project that aims to qualify 140 young people from war-torn Abyan Governorate to be able to start their own businesses. "Yemeni youth have great skills but need support and encouragement,"

According to Sabah, there are many Yemeni organizations that work without offices and some founders of such organizations hold stamps and all documents of their foundations in their briefcases. "We have many fake organizations



Sabah is talking to some IDPs' in Haradh's camps, Hajja governorate

and foundations that have licenses from the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs but have no any activity or any active programs."

"All organizations and foundations in Yemen must be under careful and serious observation," she added.

"Yemen's youth are very enthusiastic about development and have intellectual abilities to change into better but they didn't find the organization or the foundation that support them and make their

voices heard. Our youth have great values and different thoughts," she said, praising the ability of Yemeni youth.

Anas Al-Kherbi, a youth activist and one of the Sabah's trainees, talked about Sabah, saying, "Sabah has changed my character. She has taught me how to be effective in changing my community."

"She gave me a new perspective on life and she has expanded my horizons. She is really the mother of Yemeni youth," said Al-Kherbi.

Growing unrest disturbs social life in Yemen

By: Sadeq Al-Wesabi

Many Yemenis are waiting for unknown destiny as a political deadlock continues among warns of eruption of a civil war. Plans are put on hold and even the wedding season which is almost ending was shadowed with concerns and depression.

"Most weddings end by seven or eight in the evening because of security reasons while in the past they used to last until midnight," said Maryam Al-Yamani.

Hana Al-Sanhani recalls how in one wedding a rumor spread among the women that there was armed conflict at some are in Sana'a, so the women just panicked and rushed to their homes. "The bride was in tears because her wedding was ruined," she said.

Even the Eid celebration last month was tainted with instability. Many Yemeni families said that this year's celebration was "without flavor".

Abdulwali Al-Abdali, 25, from Sana'a, said that Eid had no joy this year. "People were depressed as the political and economic crises negatively affected the general moral during Eid."

Socializing during the summer season was also affected by the instability in the country. Every year thousands of Yemenis abroad are used to returning to Yemen to spend several months especially during Eid time. This year was different and very few Yemenis returned home.

Haifa Abdulaziz a resident in Italy with her family says that every year she comes to Yemen but this year because of the conflict they could not. "So we decided to go as close as we can to our mother country, and therefore we went for Omra in Saudi Arabia."

Similarly, Asem Al-Ghurbani, a Yemeni expatriate in Saudi Arabia didn't come to Yemen in eid as planned. His wife lives in Yemen and he used to visit her every year but he couldn't this year due to the bad security situation. "I don't want to risk my life coming to Yemen. My mother warned me about visiting Yemen in such cir-



Yemeni men walk in a street decorated with wedding lights. Wedding streets used to be packed with dancing men until after midnight, these days a wedding celebration is rushed because of the instability sweeping across the country.

cumstances. I'm worried about my wife and my relatives there."

Others took their chances. Mohammed Amin, a Yemeni resident in Saudi Arabia used to spend Eid in Hodeida governorate every year. "Although the recent critical events in Yemen I decided to come to Yemen as usual to celebrate Eid with my relatives and friends."

"I wasn't comfortable with Eid this year. It was totally different and people here were debating hotly over the political issues. Moreover, there were no suitable places to go and checkpoints were in every place," he said.

According to Amin, the manifestations of Eid this year was not magnificent as usual. "Even the games of children have changed. I was annoyed when I noticed that many children use fireworks and toy guns."

Not only is this true about Yemenis abroad but it is also true for internal tourism and travelling within the country. Many Yemeni families who used to go to other cities especially coastal town where there are beaches such as Aden and Hodeida have refrained from doing so.

"Summer used to be a time where we travel and explore the country and every year we went somewhere. This year we just stayed in Sana'a and got bored," said Um Rasheed a mother of two

living in Sana'a. "Also finances this year were not as good."

The economic crunch got the better of many people in the country as many lost their jobs while others lost their source of income such as those working in tourism or construction. Abdullah Qaed, a municipality worker, told the Yemen Times that he couldn't buy clothes to his children because of bad economic situation and "crazy

price hikes".

"I sold my TV to buy food. Actually, I feel depressed every Eid because I cannot provide my children with their needs but this year the Eid was more depressed," he said.

The general depression reached the media people as many of the usual entertainment programs especially on Eid were cancelled this year. Art producer Nader Al-

Madh'haji is known for making a festival every Eid in Sana'a and gathers hundreds of Yemenis in one place to provide them with entertainment shows.

This year, Nader prepared for the festival but he was not authorized to make it due to critical security situation.

According to Nader, this festival brings hundreds of children and their families together to enjoy the

events of the festival that includes songs, plays, entertainment shows and competitions.

"I don't care about my financial returns from this festival but I'm sad that I couldn't see the smiles of children in the festival this year. It was a gloomy Eid for me and for many of my friends," he said. "I promise children to provide them with exceptional festival in the next Eid."



Boys play with toy guns, as others enjoy a match of the board game, carrom.

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Tackling trauma in displaced children

By: IRIN

Children make up 60 percent of the 100,000-plus internally displaced persons (IDPs) in southern Yemen, Geert Cappelaere, a UNICEF representative in Yemen, told IRIN. "Almost all child IDPs in the south had distress or trauma upon their arrival in areas of displacement," he said.

Unconscious urination, nightmares and bedwetting were common among children reaching Aden and Lahj governorates from strife-torn Abyan Governorate, said Ahmad al-Qurashi, chairman of local NGO Seyaj Organization for Childhood Protection.

But aid organizations are beginning to provide help.

A 29 August report by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, said 8,773 unrest-affected children from Aden, Lahj, Ibb, Hodeidah, Taiz and Sana'a governorates had been given access to recreational activities such as sports and crafts, and over 3,780 IDPs had been trained on how to spot signs of distress in displaced children.

Though no formal evaluation of recreational activities set up for child IDPs in Aden and Lahj governorates had been conducted, Stina Carlsson, advocacy and communication manager with Save The Children Sweden (SCS), said: "From observations by volunteers and staff monitoring these activities, it has been found that children participating in the activities are getting increased psychological well-being... Nightmares and bedwetting, which affected the children when they had just arrived from Abyan, have decreased," she told IRIN.

Yemen has seen nationwide protests with unrest, displacement



A boy in Mazrak IDP camp in north-west Yemen eats Plumpy'nut, a peanut-based food used in famine relief

and violence in several parts of the country since February 2011.

Football and puzzles

Playing with other displaced children in a child-friendly space (CFS) at Uqba Bin Nafea School in Aden, seven-year-old Munir Abdurrahman has overcome the distress he experienced in Abyan Governorate (hit by fighting between the army and Islamist militants since May).

"Unlike in the early days of his displacement, when Munir refused even to leave the classroom [his family's shelter], now he enjoys playing football with other children," his 33-year-old mother Asmaa told IRIN. "He no longer has distress or nightmares... I feel happy when I see him feeling happy."

Munir is one of several hundred IDP children enjoying games such as football, volleyball, puzzle-solving and skipping, as well as puppet theatre and other art activities in CFSs set up by SCS and funded to the tune of US\$200,000 by the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF).

According to Yuko Osawa, a UNICEF child protection specialist, 70 percent of affected children recover through a normal healing process with play and following an improvement in their physical surroundings. The objective of each CFS is healing through "playing" to draw out their inner resilience, Osawa told IRIN.

"We have 45 CFS in IDP settlements - 17 in Lahj and 28 in Aden. Since the first one was opened in June, 2,957 children have been benefiting from these spaces, SCS's Carlsson told IRIN. "The activities are simple but effective."

According to Reham Basheer, a project officer with SCS in Aden, each CFS is managed by trained volunteers from host communities or from the IDP population.

"Some of the daily recreational sessions in these spaces have been extended from one hour up to four hours as children, most notably girls, appear to be extremely fond of them," said Amal Abdullah, a CFS volunteer.

Bad management to blame for water scarcity



Two women collecting water from a pond of rain water in Bait Bos just in the outskirts of Sana'a, the first capital in the world threatened to run dry.

By: Ali Saeed

Currently, most Yemenis in urban areas, including those with access to the water network, obtain their water from water truck distributors who sell 2,000 liters of water for approximately YR 3000 (USD15).

Only some households in urban areas can afford to buy water from these trucks whereas a large number of poor families have left the city, returning to their ancestral villages when they find it difficult to adjust to these increasing prices of basic necessities.

The price of 10 liter jug of drinkable water in the capital Sana'a has gone up recently from YR 50 to YR 80 and the price of one bottle of water (less than one liter) which are sold in groceries in different brands have jumped up from YR 50 to YR 100.

Many households in the capital Sana'a are standing in lines every day in front of scattered water wells around the city, carrying water home in jugs from the wells.

The situation of water access in Yemen is worsening with a recent governmental document released this week predicting that the water sector in Yemen will need around USD 4.5 billion for the coming ten years.

However, a prominent Yemeni water resources management expert, Dr. Abdullah Al-Noman, told the Yemen Times that, "It is hard to figure out a specific amount of money for a specific sector without the existence of good administration."

"The problem of water in Yemen is clear, it is the lack of good management," he said.

And even if Yemen had the chance to get this money from donors, the present capacities of Yemen's public institutions can't properly use these funds due to the rampant corruption and the lack of coordination and cooperation among the water institutions, according to the expert.

The water coverage in Yemen's rural areas at the moment does not exceed more than 50 percent with repeated cuts due to the nationwide power outage caused by alleged sabotage against electricity towers and power lines.

In rural areas where the population makes up over 70 percent of Yemen's 25 million people, only 15 percent are connected to the water network, according to Al-Noman.

Despite the existence of many international development agencies working in Yemen, millions of Yemenis still have no access to the water and get it only from wells or other traditional techniques.

Last year, the Yemen Times

spoke with a rural area water projects office in mountainous Mahweet Governorate, which belonged to the state-run rural water project authority, to find out why only less than one percent of Melhan's 100,000 people are connected to the one water project of the district.

The office director said that the district gets water projects from some international funding agencies and from the governorate's budget, but leaders of the local council who are also influential tribal leaders in the district divide the projects' allocations for their own pockets.

The average annual water consumption in Yemen is estimated at 3.4 billion cubic meters whereas the average of annual recharge does not exceed more than 2.5 billion cubic meters. This means that the country is losing 900 million cubic meters of water every year.

About water resources in Yemen

Surface water in Yemen is estimated to be about 1,500 Mm³/year. Around 50 diversion weirs and main distribution canals have been built by the government and dikes are built on many main wadis for the purpose of directing

spate waters into branches of the wadis to earth canal spate irrigation systems, which irrigate around 120,000-150,000 hectares in the low lands of the country. There are also around of 800 medium & small dams for rainfall water harvesting in the highlands.

Groundwater resources are vital for Yemen's agriculture. For their recharge they depend mainly on spate running water and rainfall. Runoffs and springs in catchment's areas are the main sources of groundwater recharges. In Yemen, the estimated groundwater is around 1000MCM, which makes the total renewable water resource sum 2.5 MCM, while the total demand is estimated to be 3,400MCM with 900MCM deficit, which is covered from deep aquifers.

Ground water aquifers decline 1-7 meters annually with very rare recharge. This raises the cost of pumping and causes a deterioration of ground water quality including sea (salt) water intrusion in the coastal plain areas. Some basins have become very dry and some cultivation has been uprooted due to the depletion of the ground water which is highest, up to 6m per year, in the north side of the country (Sa'adh basin). The drillings then went deeper up to 800 m depth.

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Salmon Fishing in the Yemen

Lasse Hallstrom has sweetened the satire right out of Paul Torday's side-splitting political sendup.

By: Peter Debruge
www.variety.com

Like one of those kitchen machines that can turn nearly any ingredient into ice cream, Lasse Hallstrom has sweetened the satire right out of Paul Torday's side-splitting political sendup "Salmon Fishing in the Yemen." Considering that the novel's following is almost exclusively in the U.K., where awareness could realistically recoup most of the budget, said schmaltzification shouldn't affect the film's chances of hooking the "Chocolat" set Stateside. If anything, Hallstrom's cuddly approach will improve word of mouth. Still, with most of the book's major themes gutted, it begs the question: Who wants to see a film about salmon fishing in the Yemen?

As Torday conceived it, the novel's

ludicrous-sounding title -- repeated often and evolving slyly from outright incredulity to skeptical plausibility to exultant rallying cry for Euro-Mideast relations -- provides the ultimate MacGuffin for a look at bureaucratic buffoonery. It all starts when a Yemeni sheikh (Amr Waked) proposes a no-expense-spared project to introduce British sport fishing to his arid homeland. As opportunistic politicians waffle between attaching themselves to and distancing themselves from the project, the whole loony endeavor snowballs so far out of control that (book-only spoiler alert) the British prime minister ends up buried at the bottom of the Red Sea.

Reeling things back, Hallstrom and screenwriter Simon Beaufoy instead focus on the romance between stuffy fisheries scientist Dr. Alfred Jones (Ewan McGregor) and stunning Harriet Chetwode-Talbot

(Emily Blunt), the young businesswoman tasked with implementing the sheikh's crazy plan. The two actors have genuine chemistry, which means the pic's low-target romantic comedy ambitions are well within reach, though there are certainly easier ways to bring two souls together than tasking them with filling Western Yemen's arid Wadi Aleyn with water and 10,000 North Atlantic salmon.

Described as the sort of fellow who "didn't look as if he told many jokes," Dr. Jones is on the brink of the biggest achievement of his career (publishing the definitive article on caddis fly larvae) when he receives a preposterous request from Ms. Chetwode-Talbot outlining the sheikh's dream project. He politely declines. And so the plan might wither, had the prime minister's personal spokesperson, Patricia Maxwell (Kristin Scott Thomas, in a role gender-swapped to accommodate her), not targeted it as the perfect good-news distraction from negative headlines in the Middle East.

Thomas' delightful force-of-nature turn suggests what "Salmon Fishing" could have been, hinting at the wild "Dr. Strangelove" potential beneath the surface. Tossing off orders like a general, Maxwell is energized by the discovery that fishing enthusiasts account for 2 million British voters, juggling the P.M.'s image and her own frantic home life with equal zest. Thomas cuts such a strong impression that her presence is felt even offscreen in a series of scalding IM messages clearly injected to supply more laughs.

As for Dr. Jones, although McGregor is a bit young to be fac-



Amr Waked and Ewan McGregor work together on to bring sport fishing to the Middle East, touching on political ground, in Lasse Hallstrom's adaptation of "Salmon Fishing in the Yemen."

ing a midlife crisis, the thesp conveys many of Dr. Jones' endearingly awkward qualities simply by dusting off his Scottish accent. Too bad Hallstrom's tastes in costume and production design are so obsessive-compulsive; mismatched socks or soup-stained shirts would have served a character conceived in the Hugh Grant mold far better than the film's virtual Pottery Barn catalog of perfectly lit, distractingly "pleasant" interiors.

As Fred and Harriet grow closer -- to the extent they agree to address one another on first-name terms -- whatever passion they feel is complicated by the fact he has an

independent-minded wife (Rachael Sterling) and she has a military b.f. (Tom Mison) missing in the field. Granted, love is undeniably more interesting than talk of "migratory salmonids," but romance doesn't necessarily follow from their respective circumstances.

Though Dr. Jones is a man of science, the sheikh is a man of faith, and the degree to which the former is willing to listen to his benefactor's radically different worldview defines what makes this story so special. Of all the reasons various characters want the project to succeed -- not to mention the awkward subplot in which Muslim terrorists

scheme for it to fail -- none is more eloquent than the sheikh's own motives. Beaufoy captures a bit of that spirit in the script, but not enough for auds to really comprehend why he's doing it.

Hallstrom has built a respectable career bringing surface polish to feel-good stories, and he's not about to get all philosophical now. No wonder the invasively upbeat score (from Dario Marianelli) and the obviously reshot ending, which would have played either outrageously comedic or profoundly tragic in its original form, but instead just brings our attention back to the fish.



Politics impacts annual stationery sales

By: Ali Saeed

The stationery sale season begins in September of each year in Yemen. This month often marks the start of the new academic year. This year however is novel: the season comes following eight months of nationwide uprisings that are demanding an end to Saleh's 33-year rule.

The eight-month political turmoil has had economic repercussions and has brought many business sectors in the country to a standstill. This was particularly felt with the power outage and fuel shortage that started last March.

Further study in public universities have been suspended as countrywide protests called for the departure of president Saleh. Saleh is currently in Saudi Arabia for treatment of injuries he sustained in an assassination attempt at the presidential palace last June.

This political unrest has gotten further complicated as armed conflict broke out in the heart of the capital Sana'a in May gone. The fight was between the influential opposition tribal leader, Sadeq Al-Ahmar and the government forces. Many families have been displaced from their homes in the war-torn area of Al-Hasaba district. Several buildings of public institutions were also destroyed during the 13-day war.

Unsurprisingly these developments have affected this year's stationery season including the price, customers turnout and importing process, wholesalers and retailers told the Yemen Times this week.

"The price of stationery has increased this season by 30 per cent when compared to last year due to the rising exchange rate and shipment costs have been affected by the fuel price," said Waleed Al-Shamiri, a stationery retailer in Sana'a.

The price of 20-liter fuel in-



The stationery price has increased 30 percent in this season due to the political turmoil, say wholesalers and retailers.

creased earlier in August from YR 1,500 to 3,500. Diesel however continues to only be sold on the black market at four to six folds of the regular price.

Hibatallah Al-Khadoor, a stationery wholesaler explained that the dollar exchange rate last September was valued at YR 214 for one dollar whereas this year's season the price rises to around YR 240 for the dollar.

"The fuel price has greatly affected the stationery price. We used to pay only YR 90,000 for the truck fare carrying the shipment from the Hodeida or Aden ports to Sana'a but the fare has jumped to YR 250,000," said Abu Bakr Al-Jumae, a salesperson at a stationery importing company in Sana'a.

However the turnout rate on stationery has been "excellent" in most governorates in the country except for in Sana'a where people have had security worries over political

tension, according to Mohamed Al-Haj, a big stationery wholesaler.

Al-Haj thus indicated that for this reason stationery agents and importing companies in Yemen have not imported large quantities of stationery as most people are uncertain about the political situation to come.

"Most of the items that were exhibited -- writing and office materials -- in the market were not imported this year. Instead they were brought from stores of last year imports," said Al-Shamiri.

Over 95 per cent of stationery in Yemen is being imported by local merchants and agents from China, India and Indonesia, according to Ali Ghaleb, a stationery wholesaler.

He added that some wholesalers and retailers have been purchasing from importing companies or agents whereas others have gone to China to import the good.

Huge decline in Yemeni imports

Recent statistics reveal an alarming fall in import traffic to Yemen of various commodities and products, since peaceful protests demanding the fall of the regime broke out. The imports usually constitute 90 per cent of Yemen's needs.

The Yemen Chamber of Commerce and Industry said last week that in the first half of the current year, imports declined by 80 per cent compared to the same period in 2010. The decline includes essential goods, foodstuffs, juices, oils, baby milk, construction and textile products, clothing, electronic goods, cement, steel, timber, furniture and car parts and accessories.

Voices from Yemen's economic quarters expressed concern, especially regarding strategic commodities, the depletion of which will lead to famine if the country slides into a civil war. The same group believes that a million workers would lose their jobs in the construction sector, let alone the loss of customs and tax revenues that provide the bulk of the state treasuries finances. This could in turn make the government unable to meet its monthly obligation to employees, and its development projects.

The Yemeni Centre for Media and Economic Studies had previously noted that available strategic commodities, lead by wheat and flour, can only meet the country's needs



Yemen's industrial sector forms 5.14 percent of gross domestic product (GDP). Now the whole economy is threatened by the instability.

for six months, putting Yemen in a serious dilemma in the wake of the import decline, according to the centre's director Mustafa Nasr. He believes that the scarcity of basic commodities will raise prices to record levels most families will not be able to afford, and create social turmoil especially if Yemen fails to reach a political solution to the current impasse.

The effects of the price rises are evident in the inflated price of a 50KG bag of flour, rocketing to 5,800 Riyals (\$27.12), whilst a bag of sugar has reached 14,000 Riyals (\$65.48). Mr Nasr believes that the import decline will cast a dark shadow over state tax and customs revenues as traders are refusing to pay tax fees since suspending work.

Muhammad Jibrán, Professor of Accountancy at Sana'a University, said that tax revenues during the first half of 2011 fell, with income tax dropping by 60 billion Riyals (\$272

million). He expects the customs and tax deficit to reach 200 billion Riyals (\$935 million) in next year's budget due to a decline in imports, falling company profits, hundreds of factories suspending operations, and the paralysis of trade and banking activity.

The Customs Department revealed last Wednesday that total state revenue from customs fees between January and June fell 13% to 75.8 billion Riyals (\$354 million) from 87.6 billion Riyals (\$406 million) in the same period of 2010.

Muhammad Salah, Vice President of the Sana'a Chamber of Commerce, warned of continued import declines, and affirmed that market activity has been significantly affected by turmoil that wrought unprecedented damage on the economy not seen since the 26 September revolution of 1962.

(Source: www.yallafinance.com)



Mohammed Al-Rubo'a, media revolutionary

By: Amira al-Arasi

Mohammed Al-Rubo'a, 24, is a student at Mass Communication Faculty and a director at Suhail channel. He has a television show called Bilquis in which he discusses a number of issues of interest to women and looks for solutions to such problems through the people attending his show.

Al-Rubo'a is a multi-talented actor, producer and director. His debut was a social television series. He then worked on a series of satirical sketches called "Convey Your Voice." His on-screen personality creates a close affinity with his audience. He is known in particular for his wit and cynicism in discussing Yemen's political situation. He has used his media presence to disclose several of the government's misleading and illegal practices. Al-Rubo'a spots gaffes and lies made by officials to reveal the depth of the regime's deception. In this capacity Al-Rubo'a has established himself as a voice of the revolution.

"I joined the revolution," he says, "to mobilize people and convince them that our reality needs more than just one revolution. We

endeavored through the media to show the people our real life and that the nation is at stake and that we must reach a solution before it is too late."

"Every week, I produce an episode of 'Convey Your Voice' to raise a particular issue and to reflect a defect in our collective life, be it political or social," he explains. "And there is also my other program, 'Akes Khatt' or 'Violator,' which presents many subjects to show a real picture of the country's condition and what we should be concerned about."

He continues, "The revolution has restored hope for Yemenis and made us believe that Yemen still has goodness and that there is still room for improvement, that Yemenis are not Al-Qaeda, tourist-kidnappers or highwaymen. Or that we are a hopeless country or a freeloader. This is the picture the regime gives to the world. The revolution has rehabilitated this people. Citizens now realize that they are the ones calling the shots and that they are the source of power after so many years of seeing roads and schools as graces paid from the president's own treasury

and given to them as charity."

As for his family, Al-Rubo'a says that his father and brothers are in Change Square contributing to the revolution and that they all wish for the revolution to succeed



and for the people to retrieve their nation.

As for threats, Al-Rubo'a says, "We are in the country of 'grand democracy.' Threats are inevitable. If the average employee, like a teacher or a soldier, is threatened with losing his salary or even his job when he disagrees with his bosses or criticizes what he doesn't

like in the workplace, imagine what would happen to someone who censures them publicly on TV using videos and pictures. He sure will be targeted! I've received tons of calls and messages full of threats and

menace, but what makes us go on and ignore them is our belief in what we are doing, as well as the positive reaction to it that is evidence that we have put our finger on something. My house was broken into after I had a hypothetical interview with president Saleh. Since then I've been living in Change Square.

And even here, I'm subjected to harassments from infiltrators. I've also survived an attempted kidnapping. The perpetrators were arrested later. This has deprived me of the freedom to visit relatives since the beginning

of the revolution to spare them harm. My relatives come to visit me here, and my family is exposed to harassment and threats, the last of which was yesterday when my brother went to obtain an ID card, only to discover that my family and I have been categorized as 'wanted'. One of the employees advised him not to enter lest he should be seized

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A new city built in six months

By: Malak Shaher

Walking in Change Square or "Sahat Al-Tagheer" in Arabic, the tents suggest dwellers plan to reside there for unknown time.

Protesting in Change Square and living under tents made of fabric are now old fashion. So the new comers from Sana'a and other cities, who want to join the protesters, prefer to "build rooms" that are somewhat similar to the older tents. Old tents are thus supported by cement bricks and wood in order to make them stronger in the face of blowing winds. The bricks too serve a purpose: to prevent the rain from ruining the inside of these makeshift homes.

As each day passes, a new room is prepared or an old tent is supported with bricks. Whenever people in Yemen talk about the square, they say the protesters are in however the reality is somewhat different. They now live in actual rooms. This trend of building sturdier tents started three months ago as the rainy season ap-

proached. The rains start in June in Yemen.

The tents or the rooms are furnished enough for the protesters to live inside them. Some of the rooms are occupied by seven or eight people whereas the maximum seen is twenty, depending on the size of the dwelling.

The dwellers of the tents have been calling for the president to step down since last February. As time passes, people from other cities have been encouraged to make their voices heard and have arrived to Change Square. The square is located in front of Sana'a University. There are those who not to only call the president to step down but are present for they have cases against the state that need to be addressed and solved, according to Mohammad Al-Shara'bi. Al-shara'bi is a protester who has been living in the square since February. He is also an activist and a freelance journalist.

"Some of the demonstrators in the Change Square have cases that have not been dealt with, cases with the state and they maintain they will not



Many home have been constructed by brick and wood. Some residents before this not necessarily had a home.

leave before a closure to their issues occurs. Not even if the president steps down," said Al-Shara'bi.

Al-Shara'bi used to live in a tent before June. However, after his tent could not withstand the effects of wind and rain, he and the others in the same tent surrounded their tent with blocks and wood. This cost them 10,000 YR (nearly USD 50). His tent is cheap compared to the new trend-

er ones seen in Change Square.

"The small fabric tents did not stand a chance against the rain and the wind and we had to find way," said Al-Shara'bi.

Hisham Ahmad, 21, a freelance journalist from the city of Ibb came last month to join the demonstrators. He established his own tent, as he calls it, with the help of seven others. Their tent is in Al-Adel Street and it



cost 50,000 YR or USD 250. The average salary in Yemen is USD 200.

This is no average tent. Inside one finds a desktop where he writes news. Ahmad said that he will not leave his room on the street even if the president steps because he and "the demonstrators have other demands like establishing a civil state".

The square resembles an independent city in which some protesters have never left their spot for months. More than 45,000 meals are distributed every day, according to Al-Shara'bi.

"These meals are provided by the organizing committee of the protests. It is funded by traders and Sheiks [tribal leaders] who have joined the protesters," he said.

"I have been there since last February and I do not want to leave the place," he said.

There are hundreds of people do not live in actual houses and three public toilets have been built for the protesters. They also use bathrooms in the nearby mosques, according to Al-Shara'bi.

With new rooms built in the middle of the streets problems have risen for nearby residents. "I have to walk through the narrow streets and pass by tents until I reach the nearest bus," said Mohammad Ali who lives near Change Square in Al-Dairy street.

"No more buses or cars can cross that street as it becomes a resident area for the protesters. If I have heavy stuff, I can no longer depend on a taxi. I just carry it myself with the help of my brother."

The demonstrators, who have been trying to overthrow the regime for seven months, have become a "thorn in the neck" especially for the female students, according to Hanan Sa'eed.

"My mother prevented me from going to University because the bus routes have changed. I now have to walk among the tents until I reach the university".

Nafe' Al-Musa'di, a male student from the Faculty of Languages, commented on the situation saying he and the other students "would better not go to the University until the current situation in Yemen is settled".



There is a training center for awareness and other activities.



Even kids benefited from the new construction which included entertainment corner for kids.