

Protesters challenge red lines

By: Sadeq Al-Wesabi

SANA'A, Oct. 2—Tens of thousands of pro-democracy protesters in Sana'a held a massive demonstration last Sunday, demanding the departure of the regime and trial of President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

The demonstrators also strongly condemned the 'inflammatory fatwa' issued by some of Saleh's clerics to prohibit the protests against the leader. The demonstrators considered this fatwa a declaration of war and a justification for the regime to kill more protesters.

The march passed through new areas in which many pro-regime soldiers have been deployed. Many protesters greeted the soldiers of Republican Guard and Central Security. The demonstration was staged amid a political standoff. President Saleh still refuses to sign the Gulf initiative that grants him immunity from prosecution.

However, the revolutionaries



The revolutionaries vowed to escalate their actions and hold demonstrations in new areas of the capital.

vowed to escalate their actions and hold demonstrations in new areas of the capital, in which snipers are

portedly deployed in the rooftops of many buildings.

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Yemen's unreported holy war - or hidden hunger for power?

By: Ali Saeed

SANA'A, Oct. 1 — There are several active armed conflicts in Yemen which are based on religious affiliations. However, the facts of these remain unknown to all - including Yemenis themselves - due to a total media blackout imposed on the war-torn areas and a lack of thorough investigations of affected populations.

The Yemen Times here presents some details for one model of this war which essentially broke out between two warring Muslim parties as a result of different interpretations of Islam based on different Islamic sects.

Sunni-Shiites war in Al-Jawf

War broke out five months ago between Houthi rebels - who are Shiite Muslims - and the locals of Al-Jawf governorate - themselves Sunni Muslims - 143 km northwest of the

capital city of Sana'a.

Around 470 Houthis were killed and over 85 of Al-Jawf's citizens lost their lives in this four-month-long war, Sheikh Arif Bin Hadban, a local tribal leader in Al-Jawf, told the Yemen Times.

"This is a religious war. The tribesmen here had fought against the Houthis after they [Houthis] came to our land and attempted to impose their doctrine, which is Shiite, and no one in our area believed in it. This doctrine insults the wives of the prophet Mohamed PBUH and his companions and this is not permissible in our religion," said Hadban.

Both sides have used a large variety of weapons during the bloody confrontations, an exception being use of planes, according to the tribal leader.

"All of the population here is heavily armed, and the Houthis are equipped with advanced weapons because they occupied some state- military camps

during their fighting with the government's army in the six rounds of war," he said.

Two months ago, a local tribal mediation committee was able to bring about a truce between the two sides. According to a tribal leader who participated in the battles with the Houthis, the ceasefire was conditional on the Houthis withdrawing non-resident elements from Al-Jawf, as well as on a cessation of their disseminating religious ideas in the governorate.

Local sources state that the Houthis did indeed abide by the conditions, leading to a suspension of war since that point. But this truce may break at any moment amidst a lack of state control after opposition forces took over the governorate last April, in line with nationwide protests demanding an end to president Ali Abdullah Saleh's 33-year rule.

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Yemen's politics on the brink

By: Mohammed Bin Sallam and Shatha Al-Harazi

SANA'A, Oct. 2 - The United Nations Secretary General advisor on

Yemen, Jamal Benomar expanded his visit for two more days after he was scheduled to leave on Thursday Sept. 29. He was set to leave Yemen on Monday Oct. 3 heading back to

brief the UN Security Council on the political conflict in Yemen and his mediation efforts.

"If there is a 1% chance for a solution we have to pursue it. We are not giving up," said Benomar to The Yemen Times regarding his efforts to reach an agreement between the political parties in conflict.

This was the second time the UN mission delayed its travel in response to Vice President Abdu Rabu Hadi hoping reach some conclusions between the political rivals.

The Yemen Times learnt that both US and Saudi ambassadors played a role to make him stay as well hoping that he will achieve a political agreement between Hadi and the opposition leaders.

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Details of Al-Awklai's death

By: Ali Saeed

SANA'A, Oct. 2 — The Yemeni government and the United States have announced on Friday Sept 30 the death of the American-born cleric of Yemeni origin Anwar Al-Awlaqi. Al-Awlaqi is alleged to have been behind numerous Al-Qaeda plots targeting US citizens.

Al-Awlaqi, said to be the spiritual leader of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula is said to have plotted some "terrorist" operations including the failed Detroit underwear bomber Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab in late December 2009, and the Fort Hood mass shooting by an American soldier of Palestinian origin, who on November 5 2009 shot dead 13 people on the US army base and wounded another 29.

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Despite Al-Qaeda's spiritual leader, Anwar Al-Awlaqi, the American born cleric of Yemeni origin said to be killed, there will be no much significance of his death toward Al-Qaeda's performance, said a Yemeni expert on Al-Qaeda.

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Protesters challenge red lines

One protester, Mohammed Al-Emad, said that although the protesters passed through dangerous areas there were no new attacks Sunday. "We crossed the red lines for the first time. It's our escalation plan to cross new places to reach new districts in Sana'a." Al-Emad indicated that the revolutionaries plan to intensify their demonstrations until the regime leaves office.

Mohammed Saeed, a youth activist and anti-regime protester, said that the demonstration was exceptional.

"Our demonstration was not obstructed by the security and was not assaulted by thugs and snipers as usual. The regime is now deploying its heavy security and snipers on the roads leading to the presidential palace only," said Saeed.

"We aimed in this well-planned dem-

onstration to raise awareness of the importance of people's participation in the revolution in different areas of Yemen," he said. "Many people from different districts joined Sunday's demonstration enthusiastically and chanted against the regime."

Saeed said that the announcement of the demonstration was sudden. He noted that the next rallies will also be announced on short notice to confuse the regime. According to Saeed, the revolutionaries will continue to escalate their actions over the next two weeks.

"If UN envoy Bin Omar doesn't secure a political solution we will hold rallies in the ways into the presidential palace," said Saeed.

"Unfortunately, the regime keeps on providing justifications for avoiding a po-

litical agreement," he said. "The regime wants to ignite a civil war. Some of the regime's officials think they will defeat the revolutionaries. They don't know that it's impossible to defeat all Yemenis."

Although the tensions between defected army units and the Republican Guards have not exploded militarily, intermittent clashes renewed on Saturday night at Hail and 16th Streets, one of the entry points to Change Square where the anti-government sit-ins are focused.

"Last night the Republican Guards fired two RPG blasts into Hail and 16th Streets to discover how many of the First Armored Division [the defected army] are in the area," said Adnan Al-Rajhi who was present when the fighting erupted. "The Division replied using medium-size weapons," he said.

Yemen's politics on the brink

In the past days the Saudi ambassador Ali Hamdan and the US ambassador Gerald Feierstein held talks with Hadi, the ruling party's leaders, the Joint Meeting Parties' leaders [the coalition of the opposition political parties] and eventually they assured bin Omar that the Yemeni regime is willing to sign the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative [on transferring the power peacefully] according to the delegation of authority the president gave to the vice president.

However, despite the international mediation efforts the country witnessed the worst violence against civilians and anti-government protesters end of last month claiming the lives of around 120 peaceful protesters.

The Yemen Times learnt from a close source who asked to remain anonymous that ambassador Feierstein during his visit to Hadi, urged him to start implementing the GCC initiative terms and to speed the procedures of power transition showing his concerns of exploding the military situation in the country if the power transition took any longer.

Moreover, a high official at the Yemeni foreign ministry told the Yemen Times that VP Hadi's request to Benomar

came after "warnings" the Yemeni government received from the US and the Gulf countries' ambassadors that Yemen's file will be brought to the Security Council to decide international penalties against the regime unless an immediate start of transition takes place.

Similarly, in a press conference on Friday the UN SG advisor emphasized that Yemen cannot bear any delay in reaching a political agreement, indicating that already the conflicting parties had negotiated a two-phase transition agreement last July.

The first stage was for president Saleh to lurch a presidential decree calling for early elections by the end of 2011, delegating his authorities to his deputy who would form a National Transitional Government as well as restructure the armed forces.

The second stage was to look into the long standing issues in term of amending the constitution, conduct parliamentary elections according to a new political system as well as addressing a proposed federal system and other grievances.

Regardless of the political negotiations and proposed UN roadmap, Ye-

meni Information Ministry deputy, Abdu Al-Janadi, strongly criticized Abdullah Al-Zayani, GCC secretary-general in a press conference last Saturday.

Al-Janadi criticized the last press release of the GCC saying that "Zayani's press release tougher than the Security Council's press release" said Al-Janadi. Al-Zayani earlier condemned using violence against the protesters he also called for forming an investigation committee to follow up on the latest violence.

Al-Janadi said that al-Zayani did not speak to Saleh in a proper way instead he was "rude" when he asked him to sign the initiative.

Al-Janadi also criticized the international community stands saying that it is not balanced when it comes to Yemen; he also called on the GCC leaders not to force Saleh to not cooperate with them this way which will lead to hard consequences.

He also indicate his sorrow for the US stance saying that the US did not respect the democracy and its partners in counter-terrorism by renewing their call for Saleh to step down after hours of announcing Al-Awlaki's death.

Yemen's unreported holy war - or hidden hunger for power?

"Nowadays there is an uneasy calm in the governorate and we think it is merely a break; if they attack us again, we will fight back," said the tribal leader in Al-Jawf. "They have no land, nor inheritance or power in our area."

The same opposition forces affiliated with the traditional opposition coalition known as the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) - which itself participated in fighting against the Houthi Shiites - were also involved in a four-month war against the Houthis, but not for religious purposes.

"The local Islah opposition members who are affiliated with the JMP have entered into open battles with the Houthis over the 115th Military Brigade [which was occupied by tribesmen opposed to the current regime] and other state buildings in the governorate," said Bin Hadban "They [Houthis] said that they are present in the change squares, so they want their share in the military camp and other state facilities."

"The Islah members who are in control of the governorate have refused the Houthis' demand and said that they will not hand over the camp and state facilities until a new regime is in place," he added.

Paradoxically, the Houthis are united in peaceful protest with JMP members in the change squares against Saleh's regime but at the same time engaged in war in areas where allies have taken control due to different religious backgrounds or interests.

Other tribal sources told the Yemen Times that a tribal negotiation committee suggested that the 115th Military Brigade, now opposition-held, be handed over to leading army defector Ali Mohsen's First Armored Division?

"Now some military teams of the first armored division are being prepared to be sent to take over the camp," according to a local source.

However, Dr. Ahmed Al-Daghashi, an expert on Islamic movements, said in an interview with the Yemen Times that "in general, what has been taking place between the Houthis and their rivals is not based on religion, but they [Houthis] use religion to extend their influence."

"I think that the Houthis are moving on the basis of expanding their influence in an attempt to take over as much area as they can," said Al-Daghashi.

He highlighted that the recent developments in Al-Jawf have revealed that "the

Houthis were not serious when they used to say in the past that they were defending themselves."

He explained that the Houthis used to speak about self-defense during their fighting against government forces, but after moving to Harf Sufyan of Amran governorate, some parts of Hajja and, recently, Al-Jawf, "this has clearly emphasized that they [Houthis] are working to take control of as much as possible of Yemen's northern areas."

"It is irrational that the Houthis fight violently against their current allies in the political work [Islahis] who are well-connected to one another during this revolution against Saleh. They attempted to prevent the Islahis from protecting state buildings in the governorate until handing them over to the coming regime when the revolution succeeds, according to the statements of the Islahis," he said.

"And this is the thing the Houthis did not like which confirms that religion has nothing to do with what is going on," he said "They are not moved by the religion in their conflict either before the 2011 revolution or after it, but only power longing to rule Yemen."

Details of Al-Awlaki's death

A local tribal source in the Khashef area of Al-Jawf governorate where the strike took place, around 143 km northeast of the capital Sana'a told the Yemen Times that at around 10:00 am on Friday morning he heard the sound of two US drones which fired three missiles.

"Two US drones fired three missiles killing four or five people while they were about to get into their vehicle," the local said.

The strike left nothing of the target but small human parts, which were later collected together and buried in one tomb, according to a local source who requested his name remain unpublished for security reasons.

He explained that one of the dead is from the local Al-Marwan clan in Khashef of Al-Jawf called Salem Saleh Arfaj and the other one is Saleh Mohsen Al-Naj of the Abida tribe in Mareb, 173 km northeast the capital Sana'a.

"The two people mentioned were easy to identify because we know them, but it was hard to identify the other two since they were not from our area," he said.

He indicated that one of the killed persons of his area was a well-known Al-Qaeda member among the population.

He described the area where the strike was carried out as "a plain surrounded by five mountains in the desert."

"The vehicle which was said to be Al-Awlaki's car was totally torn up into pieces and another car belonging to one of the citizens whose brother was killed in this strike was smashed," he said.

And while the local relatives of the dead person were picking up the human parts of the dead bodies, they found two na-

tional security cards - one for their kinsman and the other for the dead person of Mareb, according to the local source.

"They were really Yemen's national security agents recruited by Amar Saleh [chief of Yemen's intelligence service]," he said.

"We do not know who the other two victims are. Some people are saying it is Al-Awlaki and his fellow," he said.

This operation was similar to the one which took place on December 17 2009 in Al-Ma'jala of Abyan governorate which killed over 42 civilians and 14 Al-Qaeda members, but this time the same strike method caused no more casualties because it was done in an unpopulated area, according to the local source.

The British Guardian newspaper reported on its website on Friday that the US president, Barack Obama, had authorized the targeting of Al-Awlaki in April last year to be the first US citizen to be a legal target for killing since the US started its war on terrorism in Sept 11 2001.

The Yemeni National Organization for Defending Rights and Freedoms Known as HOOD has condemned the killing of Al-Awlaki and said in a statement that "it is of the crime of murder above the law and the USA has violated the Yemen's sovereignty."

"Sheikh Anwar Al-Awlaki is the first American citizen to be executed by a presidential decree out of court," read the statement.

It added that "HOOD views the crime of Al-Awlaki's murder as crime of state terrorism in which the US works to create and spark the hatred culture and hostility toward the west in general as well as

USS Cole defendant faces death penalty

By: Malak Shaher

Sana'a, Oct. 2 - After spending nine years in CIA custody, the death penalty case of a defendant connected with the bombing of the USS Cole was referred to trial by military commission at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba by a senior Pentagon official.

The defendant is Abdu Al-Rahim Al-Nashiri, a Saudi citizen of Yemeni descent who was captured in 2002 for his role in the bombing of the USS Cole. The US navy destroyer was stationed in the Gulf of Aden in October 2000 when it was attacked, leaving 17 American soldiers dead.

Al-Nashiri was charged by US military prosecutors in April 2011 with murder, terrorism and other violations of internationally-sanctioned laws of war.

Despite the gravity of the charges Al-Nashiri faced, his attorneys argued that no case should be brought against him as he was tortured while in CIA custody. They argued that the government cannot use any statements obtained from a defendant while under such duress.

Navy Lt. Cmdr. Stephen Reyes, one of Al-Nashiri's attorneys, said after the case was referred to trial that he intended to call to the stand CIA officials involved in his client's interrogation.

Al-Nashiri said in 2007 at a closed military hearing that he confessed to involvement in the bombing of the US Cole in part because he was tortured.

The European Parliamentary Assembly has released a declaration signed by 28 of its members in which they call on the United States "not to subject Guantanamo prisoner Al-Nashiri to death penalty observing that his trial by a military commission would not meet international fair trial standards".

The declaration mentioned that Al-Nashiri was held incommunicado in

a secret CIA prison in Poland in 2002 and 2003, where he was tortured before being transferred from Poland. He was later detained for some time between 2003 and 2006 at a secret CIA prison in Bucharest, Romania.

Al-Nashiri's Confessions

According to a report published in Arabic on NewsYemen's website regarding Al-Nashiri's confessions, he stated that he was recruited by Osama Bin Laden to participate in the USS Cole operation.

Before Al-Nashiri became part of Al-Qaeda, Al-Nashiri also stated that he joined a group of 30 jihadis in Tajikistan in 1996. But, according to the report, he did not participate in any "serious battles" with security forces there.

He mentioned in his confession that he and his group attended a sermon given by Osama Bin Laden in which the latter spoke about the importance of "Jihad against the Americans" before inviting the group to join Al-Qaeda - at which point Al-Nashiri refused.

Still according to Al-Nashiri's confessions, after he visited relatives in Yemen in 1997, he saw "American and foreign ships sailing" in the southeast area of the Gulf of Aden. He said that the idea of bombing attacks "sprung" to his mind.

The NewsYemen report mentioned that Al-Nashiri joined Al-Qaeda in 1998. He was told by Bin Laden to first carry out the bombing operation on the west coast of Yemen. Al-Nashiri, however, did not find any "American ship" there. In turn, Bin Laden suggested that Al-Nashiri perform the operation on the coast of Aden.

The first operation was against the American Ship The Sullivans in January 2000, but it failed. Al-Nashiri said in his confession that he wanted simply to bomb an oil carrier, but that Bin Laden insisted that the target should be an American ship.

The Latest Buzz

By: Mohammed bin Sallam

- Opposition leader in the Joint Meeting Parties Mohammed Saleh AL-Noaimi head of the political department of the Popular Forces Movement was detained on Wednesday at Sana'a airport and was prevented from traveling.
- The Yemeni government spent one billion and 650 million dollars to purchase oil derivatives during the last seven months of this year. The Central Bank announced that Yemen's revenues from oil during the same period reached around two billion dollars.
- Aden governorate's mosque imam's and preachers attacked the Fatwa legitimizing killings of the protesters, saying that the Yemeni Scholars Association would not produce such statement.
- The marine base in Aden held an Indian ship affiliated to Yemeni investors after the ship swayed towards Shuqra coasts in Aben, however the ship was released afterwards.
- The revolution's youth demanded the prosecution of the 500 scholars who issued a fatwa saying that protests against the president are forbidden by religion.
- Six of the prisoners of the central prison in Rada were injured, two of whom are in critical conditions as the prison's security opened fire on the prisoners who were protesting against their bad circumstances.
- A source at the Defense Ministry denied on Sunday what was mentioned in news agencies which said 30 soldiers were killed in Zanjubar by a state security airstrike by mistake.



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OUR OPINION

Next stop: Security Council

The UN system is comprised of two parallel worlds. One is that of the UN institutions, which includes the Security Council and the General Assembly. The other is the UN Secretariat, led by the Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon, and a large team of advisers.

One of these advisers is Dr. Jamal Addin Benomar, who made an official visit to Yemen as UN envoy last week to encourage Yemen's leadership and opposition to come to a political solution.

The UN Charter allows the Secretary General to undertake preventive diplomacy, or in UN terms, "good offices," without the sanction of the member states of the Security Council. These efforts, of which Benomar's mission to Yemen was one example, attempt to help countries suffering political conflict solve their issues before matters turn ugly, or are referred to the Security Council.

Although it has not been said directly, this could be Benomar's last visit to Yemen on friendly terms. On his next visit he will likely come with a decree that could impose sanctions on Yemen—or worse.

Although there has been no talk of deploying international troops to Yemen, such an outcome is not out of the picture, especially since Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula is very much thriving in the country.

Recognizing this threat, the regime is desperately trying to convince the member states— especially the Permanent Five countries—to stay their guns. Vice President Abdorabu Mansur Hadi, who is probably one of the very few people in the top ranks of Saleh's regime who sincerely cares about Yemen, has been meeting with the P5 and outlining the regime's plan to "fix things."

One wonders whether the recent killing of radical cleric and Al-Qaeda leader, Anwar Al-Awlaki, is part of this plan. Just two days after Hadi met the P5 representatives, Al-Awlaki was announced dead.

On Friday I received a message from a Gmail account of the Republic of Yemen Foreign Press Office, which said that Al-Awlaki was deliberately targeted and killed 8 KM from the town of Khashef in the Province of Jawf (140KM east of the capital Sana'a). The operation was launched Friday, September 30, at around 9:55 AM, local time.

The precision and details of the e-mail intrigue me. Not only is someone in the regime making sure that the world knows about this man's death, but he or she is publicizing these details in English.

The timing of this event tells me that the regime wants to prove that it is the world's best shot at fighting terrorism in Yemen. So the Security Council should not pay attention to the lousy protestors or the armed conflict all over the country. They want AQAP members dead? Well, here you go. The rest to follow, just please don't wave the Security Council card.

What this comes down to is an important test of the world powers' commitment to supporting democracies abroad. Will they listen to Benomar's briefings and with a shrug dismiss the hundreds of Yemenis who have been killed, opting instead to stick with Saleh as long as he takes care of Al-Qaeda? Or will they learn from the lessons of democratic transitions in the past and start to show some teeth in defense of Yemen's disaffected public? And now that Al-Awlaki is presumed dead, will the regime get away with killing its own people?

The next two weeks will be crucial for Yemen. They will probably be the determining matches in this political game. Unfortunately, this match does not have overtime.

Nadia Al-Sakkaf

In Yemen, soldiers blur lines of peaceful protests

By: Erika Solomon Reuters

The line between protesters and mutinying soldiers backing them is becoming increasingly blurred in Yemen's eight-month revolt against President Ali Abdullah Saleh's 33-year rule, raising the risk of a more violent conflict that may presage civil war.

As they march past troops at the ready holding machine guns, rifles and rocket-propelled grenades, Yemeni protesters holding up peace signs are joined by groups of armed deserters.

"There are definitely more of them with us these days. I was surprised how many soldiers were around today. I wonder if something is happening," said Omar, a 20-year-old student who looks warily over his shoulder at dozens of troops standing by.

Around Omar, protesters shout "Peaceful, peaceful, no to civil war." In the alleys of the capital Sanaa, near the march, anti-Saleh forces wait in armored trucks with machine guns.

The city is carved into enclaves between soldiers loyal to Saleh and troops following a general who backs the opposition, and is still reeling from a week of shelling and shooting which killed more than 100 people.

Global powers have been pressing Saleh to sign a Gulf-mediated deal to hand over power to stem spreading chaos in Yemen, a haven for al Qaeda militants and neighbor to the world's biggest oil exporter, Saudi Arabia.

Saleh returned to Yemen last week after spending three months in Riyadh recovering from an assassination attempt.

Until recently, the line was clear. Civilians protested against the government while General Ali Mohsen's soldiers watched on from afar, a buffer against attack.

But protesters, frustrated by months of political deadlock, left Mohsen's demarcated zone last week and marched into government-held territory flanked by the general's forces.

For diplomats trying to negotiate a long-stalled peace deal, the threat of military escalation was their worst nightmare.

Despite a return to tenuous calm, last week's fighting already derailed one near deal, and it has further unsettled a volatile, impoverished nation where al Qaeda is seeking to gain a larger foothold amid the unrest.

In last week's violent collision, protesters suffered most of the deaths and casualties.

"They can protect us, I believe that," Omar said, his voice shaking. "Maybe it's dangerous to have them here, but it is dangerous not to have them too. I just hope this won't cause more trouble."

Many observers accuse General Mohsen and the powerful tribal leader Sadeq al-Ahmar, both formerly among the government elite, of exploiting the protesters by allowing them to march into the danger zone that ignited a massive battle.

"This is part of the hijacking of the youth revolution," said Yemeni analyst Abdulghani al-Iryani. "The day the big massacres took place the youth were clearly interspersed with a number of First Armoured Division (Mohsen) fighters."

Diplomats say that both Mohsen's forces and divisions led by Saleh's son and nephew are testing the waters to see who would prevail should they ditch political transition plans that would mean both government and opposition leaders could see their grip on power loosened.

"We need them"

Protesters refuse to believe they are merely pawns.

"The soldiers are here for us, to protect us and our revolution," said unemployed protester Abdelsalam, 40, waving to soldiers who have joined

the march.

"We need them," he says, echoing a popular sentiment in Change Square, the four-kilometer encampment that is the heart of Yemen's protests.

But only last week, the camp was dotted with pools of blood and pockmarked by bullets. Protesters were hit by mortar fire and attacked by snipers lurking on rooftops.

"We hope if they are around they can scare away the snipers. But then, they are also a target, so maybe they are a risky form of protection," laughs protester Mohammed Mashni, 34. "I just don't think we have any other choice."

Along the rows of ramshackle plastic tents in Change Square, soldiers with rifles slung on their backs sit cross-legged and share lunch with protesters.

Armed Mohsen troops zip past the crowds on trucks with mounted automatic rifles. When the imam calls out to the crowd, soldiers lay their weapons on mats and pray with the protesters.

"We are part of the peaceful revolution, we are not here to fight" says Abdullah, a scrawny 19-year-old soldier, sitting in a tent with a group of young protesters. As he gets up to leave, he picks up his rifle, and slings a long bullet-belt across his chest.

His companion, a young soldier Rashad Shirayi is less diplomatic, "If the president wants war, he'll get it."

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The long struggle for peace in Yemen

Every time progress takes place in the political dialogue between the regime and its opponents something comes up and talks falter. Dedicated to making the process a success, UN Secretary General Special Advisor Jamaladdin Benomar has not yet given up. Nadia Al-Sakkaf interviewed Benomar on the latest of his current visit to Yemen and what could be anticipated in the near future.

The Security Council has issued this year three statements on the Yemeni crisis. The first statement was after Benomar briefed the 15 members of the SC for the fourth time on Yemen. The statement issued on June 24 said the members of the Security Council expressed their grave concern at the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation in Yemen. They urged all the parties to show maximum restraint and to engage in an inclusive political dialogue.

"My briefings help the Security Council members make their decisions regarding Yemen. However, the member states have different interests and their decisions are usually based on their national security interests and their concerns about threats to international peace and security," said Benomar.

"The Secretary General is impartial and often makes recommendations based on our best knowledge of the country and also based on international law and UN norms and standards."

After the first statement came the United Nation's Human Rights Mission that visited Yemen and recently produced a sharp toned report on the human rights violations in the country, mainly committed by the regime.

A team from the High Commissioner's office that visited Yemen from 28 June to 6 July has called for an independent probe into alleged human rights abuses committed since the start of protests earlier this year. So far there have not been concrete answers on the Yemeni side to this demand.

The third statement was issued on Sept. 24, 2011 while Benomar

“My briefings help the Security Council members make their decisions regarding Yemen. However, the member states have different interests and their views are usually based on their national security interests.”

was still in Yemen on his fifth visit. This time the statement was more pressing.

The member states called on President Saleh "to reject violence, including against peaceful and unarmed civilians, and show maximum restraint."

Although there is no deadline set by the UN or Benomar, he agreed that there is a sense of urgency. The lack of state control over several Yemeni governorates and the increasing strength of the Al-Qaeda in Yemen along with the hundreds of killed protesters are three main reasons why the UN SC member states are considering taking action urgently.

"The trend among the Security Council 15 members including the permanent five is clear. As you can see from their three statements, they are united in their position towards Yemen. They believe that the situation is deteriorating rapidly and a peaceful political transition is urgently needed to save Yemen from chaos and collapse," he said.

The point according to Benomar is that now we have reached a point where everyone is in agreement that there should be a peaceful orderly transition of power including those in the regime.

"Beyond politics there are humanitarian, economic and security implications," said Benomar. "But there is a sense of urgency, and this is the reason why I am here now and I keep coming back to Yemen. I hope there will be no need for me to come back again in the context of mediations."

Baby steps towards a just social contract

However, the question is if everyone is in agreement then why hasn't any solution come so far? Benomar, being an impartial mediator cannot point fingers but he tries to give some answers.

"There is an issue with trust. And

the resurgence of conflict around the country also hampers negotiations," he explained. "Although there is consensus that the Gulf Initiative is a base for any power transfer deal to happen."

He believes that there is a roadmap for Yemen's political deal being devised currently. And he hoped that moderates from all sides will be able to bridge the differences.

"The so called roadmap is basically a framework for organizing, administering and sequencing the various actions that will need to take place within an orderly transition. This may take up to two years. Within this framework a constitution making process will address issues regarding the political system, the structure of the state, center-periphery relations, electoral system, and many grievances and other long standing issues," explained Benomar.

He did add that as the UN and even the international community, they are ready to assist Yemen with the transition. Already all Yemeni sides have voiced their request for assistance to establish new institutions or reform existing ones to implement the tasks as needed.

There is probably not a single group Benomar has not met with, whether it is youth from all sides, women, businessmen and of course all the political factions. His consultations focused on moving forward and building on the wealth of expertise the UN has to offer in conflict resolution it seems that the UN advisor is able to make achieve certain successes no matter how small.

"Yemen is unlike any other country where there is conflict. It is not fair to compare and there is no one size fits all solution," he argues. "Perhaps the most unique issue about Yemen is that there are so many stakeholders who are part of the conflict. Yemen is unique and it has its own conflict dynamics."

He pointed that when working on Yemeni problems one must not forget the country's history and how starting from its ancient civilization and until today there is the whole legacy of the internal struggle especially that between center and periphery.

"It is not a coincidence that there was trouble in Sa'ada, and the South. Yemen is very diverse and I learned from experience that it is very difficult to generalize," he added.

What he was hoping to achieve in his current visit that was extended upon a request from the Vice Presi-

“Civil society organizations and individual groups are making their voices heard whether through banners during demonstrations that are broadcasted on TV or through direct messages addressed to countries of the region and international community.”

dent and both sides to Monday is to reach a solution to the immediate crisis.

He fully understands that there are so many major problems Yemen has to deal with including water and oil shortages, war and land grievances and all of these are not going to be solved by a political deal that enters Yemeni into a transition.

"We are talking about a mechanism through which these long term issues will be addressed. What is lacking now in Yemen is an agreed social contract among Yemenis on how to govern themselves. During the transition, an open, participatory, and inclusive constitution making process will aim to achieve that," explained Benomar about

“None of the official delegations on either side had female members or raised women's issues as a key priority in the ongoing political discussions.”

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“This is an opportunity for Yemenis to develop a social contract on a voluntary and consensual basis on how this country is going to move forward, how power is going to be exercised and a political system to be established.. The way this process is conducted will largely determine if the new constitution is going to last or not. If the process is participatory, inclusive and open Yemenis will be more likely to defend it if it comes under threat.”

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when he was hastily summoned to the warden's office. The match was put on hold until the news came that Jamal had been released with immediate effect. They say he fainted at the news, but nevertheless without even given the chance to change his sports attire he was sent off as a free man in 1983.

Jamal continued his human rights activities and became targeted again for arrest. He was in his home town in Titwan when a violent uprising erupted in 1984. He was arrested again Jamal found himself and tortured but this time it was only for ten days.

Upon his release Jamal smuggled his way across the Mediterranean Sea risking his life in search for freedom.

Prior to Jamal's release from prison human rights activist with Amnesty International had written to Jamal and advocated for his release through the organization and wrote a book about him narrating his struggle "My Dear Jamal: Morocco Bound."

Through his contacts with human rights activists he managed to get political asylum in UK

Yemen's problem.

"Yemenis need the opportunity to freely think of what kind of Yemen they want and what governance system is best for them."

As to whether Yemenis are ready and able to decide what is best for them, Benomar aggressively argues against that notion saying that this is the argument of despotic rulers to deny people their right.

"The people don't have to be all highly educated to know what is best for them. All they need is common sense and their personal experiences that comes from the hardships they suffered as a result of conflict and instability. They all aspire to better their lives and to live in freedom and dignity."

He believes that this is an opportunity for Yemenis to develop a social contract on how this country is going to move forward, how power is going to be exercised and what governance system is to be established.

"The way this process is conducted will largely determine if the new constitution is going to last or not. If the process is participatory, inclusive and open Yemenis will defend their new constitution," he said.

What politicians want vrs. what Yemenis want

Whether directly or through his state officials President Ali Abdullah Saleh had repeatedly shown he was willing to compromise and reform, such as his announced intention earlier this year not to run again for the presidency. However, whenever it came to action matters stalled.

"Yemeni decision makers need to realize that the continuation of this conflict is not in their best interest personally or the country or even the world. The sooner they realize this the sooner we can move on

“The trend among the Security Council 15 members including the permanent five is clear. As you can see from their three statements, they are united in their position towards Yemen. They believe that the situation is deteriorating rapidly and a peaceful political transition is urgently needed to save Yemen from chaos and collapse.”

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with the details of the power transfer mechanism," said Benomar.

What is being discussed now is a roadmap for a mechanism of implementation of a new power transfer deal that would appeal to all parts.

"Yemenis want change. Political leaders should allow this change to happen peacefully in an orderly manner," said Benomar. "Otherwise the country will descend into chaos and lawlessness."

Whether this is the Saleh and his regime's last opportunity for a graceful exit Benomar would not say. What he did say is that matters are deteriorating rapidly and the Security Council is deeply concerned. He also added that the solution to Yemen's problems has to be Yemeni.

Y e -

men's youth and civil society according to Jamal Benomar's observations have been quite visible and participatory in the current uprise. Civil society organizations and individual groups are making their voices heard whether through banners during demonstrations that are broadcasted on TV or through direct messages addressed to countries of the region and international community.

"I know from my conversations with the diplomatic community that youth groups and civil society have come in contact with them and I also know that while there is an official Yemeni delegation at the UN meetings in Geneva now there is also a group of civil society representatives urging the Human Rights Council to take stronger action," he said.

However, he did urge Yemen's civil society to continue to raise their issues especially women who are hardly visible behind closed doors in the official delegations of all parties.

When asked whether any of the political delegations for negotiations had female members Benomar had to admit that so far none of the official delegations on either side had female members or raised women's issues as a key priority in the political discussions. Women were not present or involved in the discussion or the planning of the transitional process or even later.

"It is up to the women themselves to demand their fair participation and put pressure on the various parties to include them. We in the UN are committed to promoting international human rights including women's rights and promoting the

empowerment of women as equal partners in any society's development," he said.

This is why he made the time to meet different delegations of women from various political orientations to hear their thoughts and include their feedback in his report to the UN Security Council. He was impressed at their abilities and openness to discuss Yemeni issues and their willingness to be active participants in the political process.



Jamal Benomar in one of his earlier visits with Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh on April 10, 2011. Until Sunday Oct. 2, 2011 evening such a meeting, which could have broken the political deadlock, was not possible.

Who is Jamal Benomar?

For many Yemenis Dr. Jameddin Benomar represents the UN Secretary General special advisor on Yemen who has just concluded his fifth mediation visit to the country. But there is much more to Jamal than his UN hat.

Yemen as a complicated diverse country has long suffered from political problems and armed conflict throughout history. In fact, the current issues are actually the new version of a political struggle between the regime's ruling party the General People's Congress and the opposition parties was quite visible in 1997 albeit started years before that.

And because of Yemen's strategic location and significance whether related to terrorism or piracy, there had been many mediation efforts, regionally and internationally, all of which were not even remotely successful to the current UN one lead by Benomar.

It turned out that when realizing who this man is, this result comes as no surprise. First of all Jamal Benomar is an Arab from Morocco who has lived a fascinating life struggling for freedom and human rights himself. Perhaps this is why he really understands the dynamics of Yemen's uprise, of course coupled with the fact that he represents the UN, supposedly the world's most neutral body.

In fact, the revolutionary youth of Yemen would be surprised to know that Jamal who was born in April 1957 is the Rif rebellious region of Morocco. He is the grand son of one of the most well known leaders of the uprising against colonial powers that established the Rif Republic led by Emir Abdelkrim Al Khatabi. He was arrested while he was a uni-

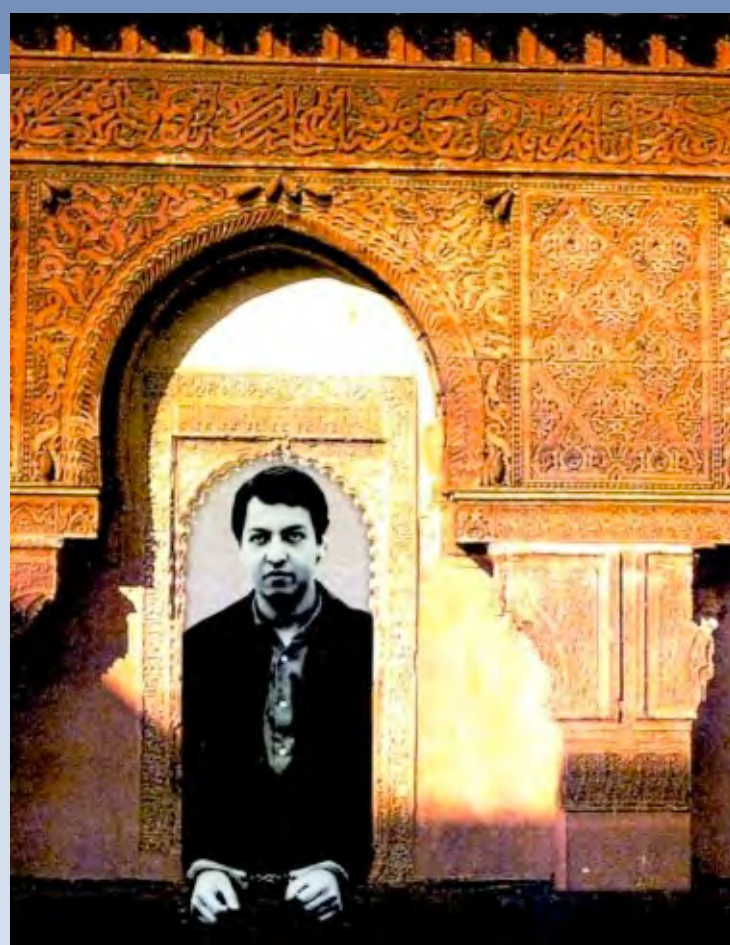
versity student in 1976 because of his opposition to the government and the leading role he played in organizing a youth movement against King Hassan. This was not the first time he was arrested because of his embracing revolutionary ideas. His first arrest when he was only 19 years old because of being in possession of revolutionary leaflets that instigate against the regime.

He was demanding good governance, respect for human rights and in return. He was first held handcuffed and blindfolded, and tortured or one year in a secret detention center in Casablanca and then imprisoned for eight harsh years at the notorious Kenitra Central Prison where he was kept in solitary confinement for long periods.

The years in prison did not kill this young man's spirit and he somehow managed to continue his education and complete a bachelor degree in prison, with a focus on trade union rights in memory of his father a member of the Moroccan Labor Union who died while Jamal was in prison. He even started a distance learning master degree in International Law from The Sorbonne University in Paris. Later on he also availed a PhD from University of London in Economics and Political Science.

Ironically his French masters degree supervisor was the very same professor who advised the late King AL-Hassan the second on legal issues. The professor, recognizing his student's talent intervened with the King during his visit to France and requested an amnesty for Jamal Benomar, a request that was immediately granted.

According to Jamal's prison mates, they were preparing for a football match at the prison yard



Cover page of the book My Dear Jamal written describing Joyce Edling's narration of Jamal's experience as a prisoner of conscience for eight years at Kentira Central Prison in Rabat.

when he was hastily summoned to the warden's office. The match was put on hold until the news came that Jamal had been released with immediate effect. They say he fainted at the news, but nevertheless without even given the chance to change his sports attire he was sent off as a free man in 1983.

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and worked with Amnesty International in London continuing by that his fight for freedom and human rights. Amnesty produced a documentary in 1987 named Long Term Prison where Jamal tell his story as a prisoner of conscience.

Because of his hard work and intelligence, Jamal Benomar made his way up the ranks in Amnesty always campaigning against dictators who abuse their people. In the early nineties he became the Director of the Carter center in the United States and worked closely with former President Carter mediating many conflicts around the world. Jamal joined the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva and again made his point when it came to Moroccan delegations to the UN which included oppressive figures. Today he is settled in New York where he takes the position as the UN Secretary General Special Advisor, currently on Yemen.

Previous to his post as a special advisor Benomar has served as Senior Advisor on Governance and the Rule of Law in Conflict and Post-Conflict Countries and Head of the Conflict Prevention and Peace-building Unit, UNDP which he helped establish in 2006. His work with UNDP focused on peace building, governance and rule of law issues in conflict countries.

He was also Director of Rule of law in the secretary general office and also director of the peace building office which assist countries in post conflict situations. He served in Afghanistan and Iraq and played a key role in mediating the agreement that led to the setting up of the first interim government in Iraq and the Bonn Agreement that brought Karzai to power

Benomar advised the UN on political and governance transition issues in more than 30 conflict countries and now Yemen.

He has numerous publications on human rights, governance, rule of law, democratization, constitution making and peace building issues.

Since his father died while he was in prison and his mother died while he was in exile. So Jamal reluctantly kept his distance from his motherland until 2005 during what was termed as the new era after King Al-Hassan the Second passed away and his son took over the Kingdom.

Holding a British passport with one hand and years of anxiety and apprehension in his heart Jamal arrived at Tanja Airport in 2005 after many years in exile and was by met by many of his family and friends, including his prison mates who had not seen him during his many years in exile.

His dreams for his fellow freedom fighters and the memories of the old times of struggle were shattered as he saw how compromises were made and how many of the old fighters became more lenient towards a regime they once fought with all their might.

He still returns to Morocco every now and then. He seems to have good relations with both King Mohamed Sixth and the opposition. He turned down offers to join the government as foreign minister and prefers to continue his work with the UN. But his struggle for freedom and human rights remains his first priority. Jamal Benomar is married to Elizabeth Davison and has four children.

Special thanks to Ali Anouzla of Lakome website

Crunchy crickets going mainstream in Australia

By: Pauline Askin

Looking for a taste treat for a special snack? Perhaps a packet of chocolate covered bugs, chocolate-chip mealworms or cricket lollipops will hit the spot.

Australia's Aborigines have been eating witchetty grubs for centuries, but now entomologist Skye Blackburn is breeding edible bugs and selling them to Australians from all walks of life, and as special treats at corporate functions and children's parties. "Eating insects is a fairly new concept," said Blackburn, who runs The Green Scorpion and bug shop, a Sydney-based online venture that sells the creatures for human and animal consumption, as well as for collections.

"On Father's Day we sold a lot of gift packs, which included chocolate covered bugs, choc-chip mealworm cookies and flavored lollipops with bugs in the center."

As with many business ventures, the beginning was serendipitous.

"We were doing a pet and animal expo, and needed a good promotional item to get people to come over to the stall. So we started making the lollipops and they were really successful," she said.

She also sells bugs ground up into chocolate-coated cookies, frozen



Crickets are seen on a plastic barrel at a farm in Ho Chi Minh city September 13, 2006.

bugs and roasted bugs, so they can be mailed to customers.

A trial pack retails for A\$20 (\$19.64). The bugs can be bought by the 100 grams or in kilogram lots.

"You would use them like you would use meat really," said Blackburn, adding that mealworms have a nutty mild flavor and are a little bit more crunchy than crickets.

"If you put crickets into a hot dish, like a stir fry or a curry, they do absorb the flavor a little bit better than the mealworm."

Blackburn said edible bugs also offer nutritional benefits.

"Crickets are high in calcium, termites are high in iron and silk worms have special amino acid and good fats in them, while tarantula and water bugs mainly have protein

factor," she said, noting that they are also low in fat.

Sales are picking up. Blackburn said the shop sells 1,000 lollipops a week and that she has about 100 regular customers who buy raw insects to use as part of their daily diet, including university professors, doctors and lawyers.

But eating bugs can still be a hard swallow in the land of the barbecue.

"Some people can't get past the fact they are eating a bug," she said.

"Some people spit it out because that would be a normal reaction if you got a bug in your food. Others are willing to try and love it." (\$1 = 1.018 Australian dollars) (Reuters)

Hero rabbit saves owners from house fire

A pet rabbit is being credited for saving its owners from a house fire in southeastern Alaska before it died of smoke inhalation, fire officials said on Friday.

The rabbit woke up the homeowner early on Tuesday morning by scratching on her chest, the Ketchikan Fire Department said in a

statement.

The homeowner realized that the house was full of smoke, woke up her daughter and fled the house.

The fire was brought under control fairly quickly, with four engines, a ladder truck and 33 firefighters responding.

Damage to the house from flames, smoke and water was considered moderate.

While there were no injuries to the mother or daughter, the rabbit was not so lucky. The animal succumbed to smoke inhalation and did not survive, the fire department said. (Reuters)



It's a small world: Life in a basket

Weird Asia News

They say that home is "where the heart is," but for one 27-year-old woman from Changzhi in northern China's Shanxi Province named Mo Hong-ping, home for the last sixteen years has been a four-foot long and 1-and-one-half foot wide basket

She had been a sickly child, as according to her mother, Wang Xiuhua, she fell seriously ill with a fever when she was barely three weeks old. Inclement conditions and a mountain passage blocked with snow prevented an immediate trip to the nearest hospital.

When they finally were able to take the child to the hospital, Mo was diagnosed with meningitis. Although she miraculously survived, she didn't thrive, and her life thereafter was fraught with seizures, constant pain and other develop-



mental problem

She was 11 years old when her "basket life" began. One day, during autumn harvest season, her mother placed her in a basket usually reserved for maize and noticed that the child seemed content just to remain there

Her mother also discovered that the rims of the basket relieved some of her pain because they functioned as supports for her body, which

slightly folded her frame.

The basket was subsequently fitted with wheels to permit mobility, and it has been the core of her existence ever since.

Is there more medical help for this poor woman, whose only crime appears to be that of poverty?

Somehow, there must be, but for now life remains not a bowl of cherries, but rather a basket usually reserved for corn.

Sean Penn joins protest in Egypt

By: Bruna Nessif

It's hard to forget how dramatic the Egyptian protests trying to overthrow President Hosni Mubarak were. Now another protest has occurred, and one of Hollywood's finest is getting a piece of the action.

Sean Penn, seen with an Egyptian flag alongside actor Khaled el-Nabawi in Tahrir Square, joined thousands of activists demanding that military rulers speed up the transfer of power to civilians and end emergency laws once used by the president against his opponents, according to Australia's ABC News.

"The world is inspired by the call for freedom by the courageous revolution of Egypt for its freedom," Penn told Al-Ahram newspaper.

"Clearly that is not a completion overnight, there are still struggles



forward, there are constitutional issues, there is a transition of power from the military to the people."

Although Mubarak is no longer in power, citizens are worried his supporters will go into office.

Nabawi said he had invited the Oscar winner to visit Egypt to try and prove that despite the uprising, it is not a place of harm.

"We want to show that Egypt is safe," he said.





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The ice cream has melted in the uprising



Ragheed Al-Hashimi sells ice cream in his cart which costs YR 50,000 or USD 230. He needs to buy ice and put it inside the container to keep the ice cream cold. He said he does not sell much ice cream nowadays.

By: Malak Shaher

If you are a fan of ice cream, the journey to enjoy and find ice cream in Sana'a will not be a short one. Since the attack on the station providing Sana'a with electricity in April, the power cut outs have prevented refrigerators from performing their task: they no longer can freeze ice cream.

Wafa Ali, a fan of ice cream said that it is very difficult now to find ice cream in Sana'a.

"All the grocery stores near our house do not have ice cream," sighed the 15 year-old girl.

"When I ask them, where is the

ice cream, they reply desperately :

Where is the electricity," she said.

She said that she now buys ice cream from the small carts if she finds one of those carts or from some of the "expensive" ice cream stores.

The prices of the ice cream have increased based on the place -- the store and it's location -- that sell it. In Baskin Robins for example, the prices have increased one fifth.

But for Abdulrahman Al-Same'i a worker at Baskin Robins, he said they had lose a lot of money on generators to "keep the ice cream in its same condition"

He said that they use the generators all day long. Al-Same'i said

that their business was affected since the company is very well known and needs to offer the ice cream all the time.

He added that the business was hardest hit in the month of April when the power suddenly went off without prior notice. The internationally reknowned ice cream brand and chain has lost around 400 gallons of ice cream since the crises last April, according to Al-Same'i.

"We have to keep the ice cream we get from Canada in the same condition.

Therefore, we keep the generators working all day long," he said.

In certain times, Ahmad Al-Sodi, another worker in the same ice cream place in Hadda street said that "they had to close for a week due to the security situation."

He said that sometimes they had to give people free ice cream. This was because should they have to close the franchise that week they did not want to lose the remaining quantity.

Baskin Robins has six ice parlours in Sana'a some of which were closed at different times depending on the status of the fighting. The other three places in Aden and Taiz were not affected as much as the ones in Sana'a.

Ice cream has become not only a problem for the ice cream places but for those who earn their living by selling ice cream in their small carts.

Saleh Al-Samawi works with a small cart he bought before the uprising for YR 50,000 or nearly USD. He said that it is extremely expensive now for him to buy the big slabs of ice that he uses in the ice cream container to make the ice cream "cold".

"I buy the ice from a trader who brings it from Al-Hodida. The amount of ice I used to buy for 500 hundred [USD 2, 5] is now four times the original price," said Saleh Al-Samawi.

Al-Samawi said that even though he buys the pieces of ices to keep his ice cream cool, he has been thinking of switching his small business into another thing.

"I do not sell a lot of ice cream nowadays because people are no more interested. They pass by me, almost like I am part of the decoration in the market," said Al-Samawi who usually sells in Al-Safia district.

"Ice cream has now become only for a few people who have money."



Shehab Al-Sharabi



By: Sadeq Al-Wesabi and Fakhr Al-Azab

Shehab Al-Sharabi, 21, a student at Education College, English Department, Sana'a University. Shehab was one of the few students who spearheaded the youth revolution from Sana'a University earlier this year.

He was inspired by the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions and decided to raise awareness of Yemen's own revolution among the youth.

"I feel so proud that I was one of the students who started the revolution and spread it quickly in the capital, Sana'a," he said.

Shehab is known for his valor and acts of heroism. He is described among his colleagues as a leader because of his bravery.

He has been exposed to several assaults by security forces and pro-government "thugs".

He also received a gunshot wound in his shoulder during one of the demonstrations.

"I was severely beaten by some armed thugs at the beginning of the revolution after enthusiastically chanting 'the people want to overthrow the regime'," Shehab recalls.

"I was seized but could escape only after receiving help from my companions."

Although the focus of his studies is English, Shehab holds political interests and is one of the youth leaders of the opposition Nasserist Party.

"The only guarantee for the success of the Yemeni revolution is the strong revolutionary awareness of every Yemeni

youth and students," he said.

"We're betting on the Yemeni youth's great determination to achieve the aims of the revolution."

Unlike many revolutionaries, Shehab isn't worried about the 'theft of the revolution' by rival opposition political parties.

"The Yemeni youth will protect their revolution and repel all those who try to confiscate the revolution. We are the protectors of our revolution."

"The revolution will win and revolutionaries will topple the corrupt regime. We believe in our legitimate demands and that's why I'm confident that we will win," he said.

Shehab hopes to return to study at Sana'a University but he makes his revolutionary concerns a top priority. "I will not return to my college before the success of our revolution,"

"We cannot study while under the control of the youth's killers. How can we study when the blood of our colleagues is not dry yet, and the tears of the mothers of martyrs haven't stopped?" he said. "We must be loyal to all the martyrs of the revolution."

Shehab has had many unforgettable moments at Change Square in Sana'a. He cannot forget the "regime's massacres" and the scenes of revolutionaries' deaths.

"I'm proud of my role in holding many demonstrations. I've seen many revolutionaries brutally killed and injured by security forces and pro-regime snipers," he said. "I feel that my heartbeats stop when I recall these moments."

During the last eight months, Shehab has witnessed "the ug-

liest scenes" in his life. "I was deeply shocked to hear that my close friend Rajaie Al-Hammadi was killed. I also become so angry when I remember my friend Zaher Al-Hammadi's injured right lung."

Shehab considers that Yemen's revolution has already succeeded. "The revolution continues to succeed despite the challenges and difficulties we face."

He criticized international and regional stances on Yemen's revolution. "Unfortunately, the stances of the international community, especially those of Saudi Arabia and America, are disappointing and don't amount to much,"

Shehab called for the international community to take responsibility for, and respect the will of, the people in Yemen.

"It should support our demands for change. We are calling for peace, and so we will create strong relations with other countries based on respect and mutual cooperation."

"Yemen after Ali Abdullah Saleh will be better. Yemen without this man will be without terrorism, al-Qaeda, and without further violence," he said.

Shehab seeks a new Yemen based on a fair judiciary system, equality, peace, freedom and democracy. He dreams about building a new civil state.

"We want the new leadership to respect Yemenis and give them equal opportunities," he said.

"Yemenis don't want to lose their dignity anymore."



Hilal Hamoud a worker in Baskin Robins said that sometimes they close the place due to the fighting in nearby areas.

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