

Oil workers' strike costs \$17 million in daily losses

By: Ali Saeed

SANA'A, Feb. 15 — Yemen has been losing \$17.5 million every day since Thursday, February 9 when workers at the newly-established Petromasila National Company went on strike to demand severance payment from the previous foreign operator, Canadian Nexen.

Canadian Nexen left Hadramout's Al-Masila field last December.

The strike has stopped the exportation of around 160,000 barrels of oil from Al-Masila, Yemen's major field, according to a source at an oil company in Hadramout.

"No doubt, this has seriously impacted Yemen. It is depriving Yemen's budget of around \$17.5 million every day, with 160,000 barrels halted," Dr. Mohamed Jubran, a professor of economics and financial analysis at the University of Sana'a told the Yemen Times.

This halt will also negatively affect the country's public budget, as the government will be obliged to take loans to cover expenditures, according to Jubran.

He also added the payments and trade balance will be impacted, as the incoming cash flow will be lower than that of outgoing cash.

A Total spokesman told Reuters on Wednesday that his company -

which is one of the operators at Al-Masila field, with a share of 70,000 barrels day — had to halt production after workers at the newly established company went on strike.

A source from another oil company explained that Total stopped its production at block 10 because the workers' strike at Petromasila had suspended output exportation.

Jubran criticized the strike, saying "they should demand rights from Canadian Nexen. Their present actions only punish their country."

A statement released by the Petromasila Company workers' union read that corruption at the Yemen's Oil Ministry and Oil Exploration Authority is behind the bad situation at the newly established company.

"They [the Oil Ministry and Oil Exploration Authority] have allowed Nexen to leave the block without paying its financial commitment," read the workers' statement.

"Despite communication from the workers' union to the Oil Ministry not to let Nexen leave until it covers its financial and technical obligations, Nexen left without paying," the statement read. "We therefore resorted to our legal right, which is to strike."

Controversy over upcoming presidential election

By: Sadeq Al-Wesabi

SANA'A, Feb. 15 — Millions of Yemenis, along with the international community, are closely watching the country's controversial presidential election, which is now less than a week away.

The election, which has provoked controversy among Yemenis, is considered by political analysts and the international community as the best solution for the country's complicated crisis.

Ali Abu Lohoom, a pro-democracy protester in Sana'a, told the Yemen Times that he would participate to free his country from the political standoff that erupted during Yemen's 2011 upheaval.

He talked about those people who are withholding their vote, saying, "Your voice may protect Yemen; if you abstain you will not have merit."

While many Yemenis are enthusiastic about the election, which will officially remove Ali Abdullah Saleh from office, many political, social and revolutionary entities are boycotting the election, questioning its legality.

As well as having only one candidate, Vice President Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi, next week's election requires no minimum turnout.

Mohammed Amin Al-Sharabi, an anti-regime protester from Taiz, said he was not planning on voting. "I refuse to participate in the election but also refuse to pre-

vent other people from participating if they choose," he told the Yemen Times.

A violent reaction

The election campaign is continuing amid tensions in some Yemeni cities.

In Hadramout governorate, armed men stormed polling station on Wednesday to prevent the election from taking place. There were also unconfirmed reports of an attack on a polling station in Aden on Wednesday, while a suicide bomber died after failing to blow up an electoral center in the city on Tuesday — though there were no other casualties.

Tensions began to rise in the port city came after members of the Southern Movement declared that they would boycott the election.

Abdul-Rahman Anees, a journalist from Aden, told the Times that the city's locals fear violence in the coming days — especially on February 21.

"I think that the polling day will witness clashes and tensions," he said. "I think it will be a bloody day."

Anees added that publications about boycott have been distributed in the city and rallies against the election have also been held. According to Anees, there are counter calls by the Islah Party urging people to participate in the election.

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Next week's election is a cause of controversy among many Yemenis and some observers expect violence on polling day.

Analysts: 'Fighting Al-Qaeda at this time is pointless'



Presidential candidate Hadi said there will be no compromising with terrorist groups, stressing the importance of persuading Al-Qaeda.

By: Sadeq Al-Wesabi

SANA'A, Feb. 15 — Al-Qaeda movement poses the biggest challenge and threat to Yemen in the current period, according to experts.

This week, Al-Qaeda members executed three Yemenis by sword after accusing them of spying for the US.

And recent movement by the militant group in Abyan, Shabwa, Rada'a and other parts of Yemen has provoked harsh criticism against lax security and raised

doubts about ambiguous relations between some security officers and Al-Qaeda members.

Fears are rising over possible Al-Qaeda expansion to other cities and while some Yemenis stress the importance of using force against Al-Qaeda, others believe that dialogue is the best way to curb the group's expansion, arguing that any use of force will simply create more sympathizers and make it easier to recruit new members.

Last Wednesday, Vice President Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi said that there is will be no compromise with terrorist groups, stressing the importance of tracking Al-Qaeda to elimination.

But some sheikhs and tribal leaders reject the idea, calling for direct dialogue with Al-Qaeda.

Sheikh Abdurrahman Al-Marwani, head of the Dar Al-Salam Organization, told the Yemen Times that using force against Al-Qaeda is meaningless.

"We should confront their thought with our thought," he said. "We should put pressure on them

by drying up their funding sources and we must support other modest intellectual groups."

Al-Marwani added that using force against Al-Qaeda would lead many uneducated people and disenfranchised youths to sympathize with them.

"Al-Qaeda always exploits people's sympathies," he said, urging clerics and NGOs to play a vital role in confronting the danger of Al-Qaeda.

Dar Al-Salam

Dar Al-Salam, a peace organization with a tribal base, has played an important role in raising awareness about the danger of terrorism and revenge among tribesmen, promoting reconciliation rather than revenge in tribal communities.

Al-Marwani indicated that the coming months would likely witness conflict between Al-Qaeda members and Houthi groups. "They are ideologically different and both have vast resources," he said.

While he confirmed that Al-Qaeda has substantial financial re-

sources, he played down the group's capability to expand to other cities in Yemen.

According to Al-Marwani, Al-Qaeda militants have exploited Yemen's unstable security situation, trying to represent a number of tribes and speak in their name. However, he added that tribes are coming to realize the danger that Al-Qaeda represents.

Ali Al-Munaifi, a tribal leader from Marib governorate, also voiced his concern about using force against Al-Qaeda.

"It's very important to create a proper solution instead of fighting them," he said. "We must begin a serious and honest dialogue with them."

Al-Munaifi explained that many people have joined the group seeking revenge for the deaths of relatives who were members and were killed by Yemeni and American strikes.

Speaking to the Yemen Times, he said: "If they refuse dialogue we should use force to eradicate them. "But any commitment to force

should be taken seriously and without the risk of betrayal by some security officers who are known for their secret relations with Al-Qaeda."

According to Al-Munaifi, many Al-Qaeda members are moving and gathering in Marib. "They have a wonderful ability to influence people to join them. They use the Quran and hadiths to persuade people about their ideology and aims in a clever way.

"They can expand because they are well organized," he added.

Gains and losses

Khaled Al-Abd, an activist and journalist from the Southern Movement (Hirak) in Abyan, specializes in Al-Qaeda affairs from war-torn Abyan governorate. "Fighting Al-Qaeda at this time is pointless," he said.

According to Al-Abd, Al-Qaeda has received logistical support by the remnants of the regime that empowered Al-Qaeda members to take up arms.

"Fighting Al-Qaeda needs preparation, planning and funds — and needs a long time as well," he told the Yemen Times.

Al-Abd revealed that Al-Qaeda utilizes both regional and international links to implement a special agenda in Yemen, accusing some officials from the Political Security Organization of supporting the militants.

He added that Al-Qaeda exploits unemployment and poor education to recruit many youths to Al-Qaeda.

"They offer financial temptations to those deprived youths who are known for their poor behavior," he said.

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Peace agreement between Houthis and Islah party fails

By: Mohamed Bin Sallam

SANA'A, Feb. 15 – With a renewal of clashes between the two sides, the peace agreement signed one week ago between the Houthis and the Islah Party has failed.

In Hajoor Al-Sham, one mother along with her five children died on Monday when Houthi fighters launched heavy attacks on populated areas east of Hajja governorate, according to tribal sources.

Violent clashes between the Houthis and Hajoor tribes in the district of Kushar have continued since last November in the east of Hajja governorate which borders Sa'ada, the Houthis' stronghold.

Sheikh Zaid Arjash, spokesman of the Hajoor tribes, told media outlets that the Houthis attacked populated areas in Ahem using mortars. Violent clashes there have led to the displacement of thousands of local citizens, according to people from the area and international rights groups.

"One woman and her five children were killed when shells were launched upon her house in the Rakeb area," he added, before accusing the Houthi group of attacking populated villages and markets.

Arjash said the Houthis have bombed water wells as media and human rights organizations have been completely absent.

The tribal leader confirmed that the clashes have been taking place since Friday evening, even after a

ceasefire agreement was brokered on Thursday between political parties.

He said that the tribesmen have different weapons than those belonging to the Houthi fighters, and pointed out that the latter engaged in six wars with the Yemeni government forces from 2004 to 2009 and that they possess heavy weapons.

Arjash demanded that the Yemeni government assume its responsibility for what is happening in Hajja, and also called upon media and rights groups to shoulder their responsibilities.

For its part, the Yemeni Interior Ministry said that three tribesmen were killed and four others wounded as a result of confrontations with the Houthi group, and accused the Houthi fighters of shelling and completely demolishing a government jail in Ahem.

On its online website, the ministry said the Houthis sustained numerous casualties, and added that the group attempts to conceal the number of its victims.

The eruption of clashes occurred simultaneously with crossfire between the Houthis and armed men from the hard-line Salafi group in some areas in Sa'ada.

The Salafists' center is in the district of Damaj, two kilometers south of Sa'ada and where their religion's stronghold has existed since the mid-1980s.

The Houthis have accused the Islamist Islah party – the main party

in the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) – of being involved with fighting in Hajja, affirming in a statement distributed to the media that some fighters affiliated with Islah work to provoke sedition.

The Islah party has also been accused of being behind the failure of the agreement reached on Thursday with tribes in Hajoor, with a Houthi statement adding that regional powers attempt to provoke conflicts.

The Houthi group also criticized the Interior Ministry, saying in a statement that the ministry had sided with the "aggressors," denying, in the meanwhile, the ministry's own statement.

The Houthi group dubbed the Interior Ministry's "ominous."

Houthis' weapons supply

The Iranian Embassy in Yemen meanwhile strongly criticized news reports from some media outlets which stated that Iran provided the Houthis with assortments of weapons lately since 2009, and hinted that it would send a complaint to the Yemeni Foreign Affairs Ministry.

The Iranian Deputy Ambassador to Yemen, told the Yemen Times that some Yemeni newspapers and websites reported that an Iranian ship provided weapons to the Houthis, before denying these reports and calling them "groundless."

"This is the restoration of an old issue; we don't know the reasons behind it in these days, except that



Samples of weapons the Houthis claim were supplied by Saudi Arabia to Salafis in north Yemen to fuel sectarian conflict.



it is an attempt to provoke hatred among Yemenis against Iran," he added.

"We issued a statement on Oct. 10, 2009 in which we affirmed that the seizure of the ship was illegal... as the ship was empty of any commodities. We have documents that prove this, and the ship's manifest confirms that," he said. "The ship was en route to the Red Sea, the Mediterranean Sea, the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea for the continuation of its business."

"The ship stayed a week at the Omani Salalah Port after the death of one of its crew, an Indian national. It left the port in the direction of

the Caspian Sea after its legal procedures were completed," read the statement.

Colonel Ahmed Mishly, director of the Yemeni Coastguard's Sea Sector, stated that the Iranian ship, Haman, was seized on Dec. 9, 2009 at Midi port while being loaded with different types of weapons. In a statement to Al-Jumhuria state-run newspaper, Mishly said that Sana'a's Specialized Penal Appeal Court had issued a sentence that the ship be sold at public auction.

Mishly said the ship's crew was released three months ago, and said that the public auction would be held after February.

Yemenis to participate in SMS election monitoring

By: Anas Rawi

SANA'A, Feb. 12 – For the first time, ordinary Yemenis will be able to monitor the country's elections as they go to the polls on February 21.

Many people – including the youth whose determination led to the downfall of Ali Abdullah Saleh's 33-year reign – feel they have been

excluded from the political process. Being unable to run for presidency or even choose from more than one candidate, large numbers of Yemenis do not feel their vote will make a difference.

Now the Resonate! Yemen foundation has come up with a project it believes will bring hope back to the people by involving them in Yemen's political transition.

The project, called "Ersod" in Arabic or "Watch" in English, allows people to monitor the elections, reporting any violations or suspicious activities by sending an SMS message to 3377. Resonate! hopes the project will instill more confidence in Yemenis about the election process.

Each text message then goes to a committee that will investigate any

alleged violations, such as the use of state-owned cars to transport voters, threatening and intimidating voters, or failing to check ID cards.

Reports can also be submitted online through the www.ersod.net website, or using the #ersod hashtag on Twitter.

All reports will be uploaded to an interactive map that will be on the project website, where people will be able to track the election.

The Supreme Committee for Election and Referendum (SCER) has also said it will monitor the map, with the Youth Political Inclusion Center (YPIC) at Resonate!

The project also includes training for a group of youths who will monitor the election in the capital Sana'a. 250 supervisors have already been trained by Ersod to operate in Sana'a, while 1,000 more will operate in other parts of the country.

In addition to the Ersod project designed for the February 21 elections, the Public Committee to Monitor Yemeni Elections is running a pilot project to prepare Yemenis to use new SMS to monitor the elections that will be held at the

end of the two-year transitional period, according to Suhail Al-Junaid, officer of the YPIC at Resonate!

"The Ersod project will make people more confident as they themselves will monitor the elections," said Al-Junaid.

The foundation will distribute more than 20,000 posters in six governorates informing people about the project and publicizing the SMS code as well as running TV and newspaper ads.

The Ersod project is being run in partnership with the European Commission and the United Nations Development Programme electoral support in Yemen, with an approximate cost of \$20,000 USD, explained Al-Junaid.

The Resonate! Yemen foundation is a youth initiative designed to merge the voices and ideas of young Yemenis with their country's public policy.

It also works on providing opportunities for young Yemenis to build their political leadership skills, encouraging Yemen's policy makers to accept the youth as major stakeholders in the country's decision making process.

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Controversy over upcoming presidential election

The Peaceful Salvation Revolution Front, established by revolution activists with the aim of "saving" the revolution, has also called for an election boycott.

The front condemned, in statement released last Monday, what it called the "exclusionary practices of some parties in the authority that aim to abort the revolution and violate the freedom and rights of Yemenis."

It stated that the election lacks the minimum democratic standards and, with Hadi as the only candidate, deprives other Yemenis of running for presidency.

However, Farooq Al-Hakimi, a member of the Front's preparatory committee, rejected the Front's boycott and expressed his support of the election.

"We want to avoid a constitutional vacuum and total absence of state authority," he said. "That's why I support this election."

Al-Hakimi indicated that the election might open new prospects to gradually tackle the deteriorating situation in Yemen and provide Yemenis with fundamental

services such as electricity, water, diesel, cooking gas and food.

"I hope that the election will contribute to achieving security and safety, uniting the security and army institutions to serve the homeland under legitimate national constitutional leadership," he said.

Al-Hakimi added that his participation in the election does not mean he is against the objectives of the youth who seek equality, stability, justice and prosperity.

For his part, Ahmed Saif Hashed, an independent MP and head of the Peaceful Salvation Revolution Front, said the February 21 election "confiscated Yemeni's rights".

"Vice President Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi doesn't recognize the revolution," he said. "Unfortunately, the Gulf Initiative didn't deal positively with the constitutional and revolutionary legitimacy."

According to Hashed, the Gulf deal failed to recognize Yemenis' aspirations and instead aimed to abort the revolution and give immunity to criminals and killers.

Asked about any viable alternative to next week's election, he said, "They could have inaugurated Vice President [Hadi] in par-

The Latest Buzz

By: Nadia Al-Sakkaf

▶ A parade of hundreds of motorcycles arrived in Sana'a from Dhamar's Freedom Square in an effort to advocate for the upcoming election and encourage Yemenis to vote.

▶ A workshop was held in Aden by the UNAIDS program in partnership with local authorities to educate 27 educational experts about AIDS/HIV, as well as how to educate their community about the topic.

▶ The Yemeni Journalists Syndicate organized a demonstration near the US embassy in Sana'a to protest against US inference in Yemeni journalist Abdulrahman Haidar's case. He has been in prison for about two years.

▶ Al-Dhale governorate has been living in the dark since Tuesday, after protesters from neighboring Lahj governorate who are not connected to the grid vandalized the electricity network.

▶ Over 500 students from Aden's technical education institute completed their first year of education in ten different specializations, including petroleum studies. Graduates from the institute will cover some of the labor market's technical vocation gaps.

▶ According to the Ministry of Planning, the deficit in the current accounting of GDP for 2012 is expected to be -3percent of the GDP, an improvement from 2010 when it was -5.6 percent.

▶ The DNO company said that the strike by Petromasila employees has affected them and that DNO's production – which reached 4,000 barrels a day – was sent to storage. At the moment, with limited options for storage, production has been halted.

▶ The Shoura Council's main committee held a meeting headed council president Abdulrahman Othman to discuss progress in preparations for the presidential elections and what can be done to support them.

▶ Aden's Clerics Association, a group of religious scholars, will hold an event on Thursday to launch a code of ethics with the aim of protecting the governorate from violence and lawlessness.

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- Resolves customer problems and issues around the delivery and support of products and services

Rapid population growth threatens Dhamar

By: Abdulkareem Al-Nahari

With a focus on Dhamar governorate's scarcity of resources, a study released in December 2011 has cautioned against the risks of future population growth there.

The study was conducted by a team from the General Secretariat of the National Population Council in collaboration with the Health and Population Council and the Reproductive Health Program.

Funded by the Dutch government, the study, titled "Population, Development and Future Challenges in Dhamar," stated that further population growth will worsen already deteriorating economic conditions and put increased pressure on service sectors such as education, health, food, energy, water, effectively doubling expenditures.

It is anticipated that by 2034, Dhamar governorate's population will increase to around four million people if the current fertility rate doesn't shift, translating to an increase of more than two million people when compared to numbers from the 2004 census.

Growing need for schools

The boom in newborns will also put a huge strain on primary education in the governorate. With an increase of 500,000 students, school enrollment jumped to around one million between 2004 and 2009, according to the study.

These extra students obviously mean that more teachers will be required; approximately 23,765 teachers for primary education will be needed if it is assumed that there will be one teacher for every 26 students.

It is expected that the number of teachers required for secondary



Because of its high population growth, Dhamar will require an additional 266 million cubic meters of water by 2034. 454 million cubic meters of water will then be needed each year.

schools in Dhamar would amount to 4,184 – an increase of 2,187 – while secondary education costs would rise to over YR 10 billion (\$44 million).

The study pointed out that extra classrooms would be required, at a cost of \$738 million, including \$77 million to establish secondary school classrooms.

"Every primary school classroom will cost about \$27,500, while the cost of the secondary school will be some \$32,500," read the study.

The health sector would also require significant economic resources

in 2034. It would be extremely difficult to improve the current service level with continued population growth at the current fertility rate. Costs for the health sector are projected to be over \$43 million, an increase of \$25 million compared with 2009.

The number of doctors needed to cover these requirements will rise to 630.

Arable land

Arable land per capita is to fall to 201 square meters, compared to 494 in 2009, while agricultural

crops (grains) would fall from 61kg to 22kg per head – all while the growing population will actually need more land and grain to meet demand.

Water availability – which is falling across Yemen – will decline in the governorate from 102 cubic meters to only 42 if the current levels of water produced in the region remain the same.

At present, Dhamar requires 188 million cubic meters of water per year, but accounting for population growth, an additional 266 million cubic meters will be required by

2034 – a total of 454 million cubic meters of water a year.

Community response

The study was designed to demonstrate the impacts of population growth in order that officials in the planning sector may have a clearer vision in working to reduce Yemen's fertility rate, this according to Abdul-Salam Al-Ahsab, director of the Public Health and Population Center in Dhamar.

Al-Ahsab affirmed that a national population policy would be achieved only if all government institutions and civil society organizations could cooperate with each other.

However, a source at the planning office in Dhamar told the Yemen Times that he has no details of this study.

He added that until now, it is the responsibility of Yemen's central government to design plans for each governorate, as local council authorities are still limited.

Mujahid Al-Khatari, director of Dhamar's Early Healthcare Office, said that Dhamar would not be able to meet the increasing requirements of its growing population.

"This obliges more efforts to reduce the high fertility rate, as it is the reason for population growth, which, in turn, leads to low incomes and more poverty, unemployment and deteriorated living standards," he said.

"More awareness of reproductive health and family planning are needed," Al-Khatari concluded.

Abdullah Salim, director of the Follow-up and Evaluation Office in Dhamar, said that the demand for birth control methods is still low due to a lack of awareness – particularly in rural areas – and fears among families of any side effects and risks. Religious views on contraception are also a factor.

Director of Reproductive Health Office in Dhamar Amira Arraf said that a reduced population growth rate would be achieved only if politicians would commit to population issues and reproductive health problems.

"This can be done by increasing budgets for reproductive health services, child health and family planning," she said.

"The government must offer free delivery services and family planning at medical centers. They must take actions to make families send their children to schools," Arraf said.

"Decisions to set the marriage age at 18 and the banning of female genital mutilation have to be supported," she added.

Abdulkareem Khaled Ali, a development activist in Dhamar, stressed the importance of female education to reduce incidences of early marriage as educated women get married at older ages when compared with those lacking an education.

"Also, educated women make their own decisions in family planning," said Ali. "More efforts are needed to raise female enrollment numbers and have effective literacy eradication programs."

"Unfortunately, decision makers do not take such studies seriously and plan randomly and with no consideration of reality and statistics," the local council member added.

He demanded that members of local councils receive training on how to make decisions and plan according to statistics and studies.

Studies confirm that Yemen's population will increase from 23 million in 2008 to 61 million in 2035 as a result of the high fertility rate – maintaining its position as the fastest growing Arab country. These rates could be reduced to 46 million in 2035 if proper health and population measures are taken.

Republic of Yemen Council of Ministers Economic Opportunities Fund

A. Background

The GoY and IFAD, IDB and EU are jointly investing in an Economic Opportunities Programme (EOP) to reduce poverty in rural Yemen. The goal of the EOP is to improve status of poor rural women and men. Its objective is to create sustainable economic opportunities for poor women and men in the programme area. The outputs of the EOP are to stimulate growth and technological improvements of selected value chains and rural business; promote linkages between producers' organisations and markets on contractual basis; promote compliance with national and international food quality and safety standards; develop public economic infrastructure in support of selected value chains; and, expand the rural outreach of financial institutions and enhance access to sustainable financial services.

The programme is national in scope, and the coffee value chain derives its geographical coverage. It will initially cover mountain settlements where business relationships already exist between poor coffee farmers and processors. It will subsequently expand to other mountain settlements where it will support contractual linkages between poor coffee producers and the market. In these (or adjacent) settlements, there is also potential for pro-poor investments in horticultural, honey production and micro-enterprises and a limited number of small enterprises. In order to consolidate investments, the programme will initially focus on a limited number of coffee-producing districts within eight governorates (Abyan, Amran, Dhamar, Hodeida, Ibb, Lahej, Taiz, Sana'a) but will have the flexibility to cover other governorate based on other value chain, the business case, and market demand (such as honey production in districts of Hadramout and Shabwa).

More specifically the Value Chain Component will support value chain actors and processes, improve market relationships governance, and promote economically viable investments at various stages of production. Three sub-components will be financed to: (i) cluster development consisting of support for producers associations, strengthening of value chain linkages,

and capacity building of value chain actors (particularly poor producers); (ii) export promotion consisting of improved access to markets, development of classification and certification services, and promotion of quality and food safety standards; (iii) MES development consisting of capacity building for entrepreneurs (primarily women) and facilitation of access to rural finance.

B. Duties of the Value Chain Manager

The VCM would operate under the oversight of the EOF's CEO. He/she would be responsible to independently manage the day-to-day VCDC in collaboration with the components for rural finance and economic infrastructure. The duties of the VCM would not be limited to:

- Prepare detailed Annual Work Plans and Budgets related to the VCDC;
- Prepare ToR for consultants for: (i) provision of technical advice in respect of primary production of the commodities under the three value chains; (ii) undertaking adoptive research for the three value chains; (iii) provision of specialised input into the establishment and operation of producers associations; (iv) value chain analysis for selected MES; and (v) development of business plans for MSEs;
- Manage consultancy input and output;
- Organize participation in key trade fares/exhibitions by respective representatives of the value chain in the Programme. Any positive response should be follow up by trial shipments and assistance to formulize contract with new markets. This activity could include the necessity of hiring a consultant for assistance;

- Assist the value chains under the Programme develop national branding and company specific branding;
- Competitive selections of the Value Chain Consolidators (exporters/processors);
- Hire Supply Chain Managers (SCM) on a competitive basis, assess their training need, and organize relevant training;
- Together with SCM assistance to farmers and VCC to develop contract agreements;
- Provision of support to the SCM and YSMO in providing GGAP training to producers association in selected settlements;
- Selection of an International Accreditation Institute (IAI) for provision of support to YSMO;
- Provide ongoing support to SCM;
- Provide input into the M&E system and impact assessment;
- Prepare quarterly report on the component progress.

C. Qualifications of the Value Chain Manager

- The position requires a person with a strong commercial orientation, with a detailed sense of urgency and the capacity to motivate the actors in the Programme value chains and the skills to negotiate with the actors in the chain;
- Have a university degree in finance, economics, agriculture economics, or similar relevant field;
- Working experience from similar positions an added advantage;
- Willing to undergo intensive training in all aspects of value chain management related to Programme activities;
- Fluency in written and spoken Yemeni and English.

How to apply

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eofyemen@yahoo.co.uk or could be delivered to EOF office located in Hadda zone, near German Embassy, telephone (000967- 433919/8), Sana'a.

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NDT TECHNICIAN - Site (1 Position)

Within the Inspection & Corrosion department, the job holder will report to the Head of Inspection & Corrosion. This position is based in Block 10 sites (Kharir and Atuf) located 600 km East of Sana'a and will work in Close cooperation with field operations to perform Non Destructive Testing (UT, MPI, PT & other) survey, corrosion monitoring and prepare reports to verify and ensure the integrity of the production facilities.

THE JOB HOLDER IS TO:

- Perform Non Destructive Testing(NDT) and visual inspection on facilities (Pressure vessels, Fire heaters, Flares, Tanks , pipe lines and lifting gear), as per inspection plan validated by its hierarchy.
- Prepare all NDT inspection reports and submit them to integrity engineer for review and to HTS for approval.
- Execute all NDT inspection activities such as thickness measurement, and flaw detection by UT scanning, Magnetic Particle inspection etc. specified by the Inspection plan and procedure and reports all the information in the report.
- Prepare all isometric drawings when required to perform necessary NDT.
- Report any new base lines which were not updated in the inspection plan and carry necessary inspection in order to update Integrity Monitoring Database (CREDO) and/or CMMS.
- Carry out NDT activities in accordance with company procedure and international standard.
- Carry out corrosion monitoring such as corrosion coupons retrieval and corrosion probes readings.
- Carry out Cathodic protection readings on rectifiers and test posts.
- Assist third party for certification of lifting equipments and assure that all equipments are correctly marked.
- Prepares weekly and monthly NDT inspection activity and performance indicators reports.
- Updates the NDT inspection activity planning in coordination with the Integrity engineer .
- Maintain the inspection tools in accurate and good condition and report if any defect or repair
- Maintain and update the documentation related to inspection such as NDT inspection reports, Equipments calibration reports, monitoring reports and ensures historical data integrity.
- Checks new works and modifications on facilities NDT inspection wise.
- Provide training and hand on training on NDT to local personnel to be put as trainee.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS / EXPERIENCE :

- ASNT level II or equivalent in Ultrasonic testing (UT), Magnetic particle Inspection (MPI) & Penetrant Testing (PT).
- Minimum of 5 years practical experience in thickness gauging, UT scanning and performing UT,MT and PT of static equipment & pipelines in Oil and Gas Industry
- Required know-how : metallurgy / welding techniques, corrosion, non destructive tests (ultrasound, dye penetrant, Radiography, etc.) and NDT standards
- Good ability to understand and for adaptation to the local customs.
- Minimum English Level of 2/4
- Be proficient on Microsoft office (word, excel and etc)
- Autonomous, rigorous and methodical, with initiative and good interpersonal relational skills

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Time to help Somalia

By William Hague
Khaleejtimes.com

In September 1992 Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd visited Mogadishu. He could not have known that it would be 20 years before any of his successors set foot in the country again. Shortly after his visit Britain's Embassy was shut and Somalia plunged deeper into the vortex of suffering and violence that has consumed it ever since.

Today, it is the world's worst failed state, one that is staggering back onto its feet.

This week I visited Somalia's capital. Mogadishu is a city where people until recently were surviving, not really living. As its Mayor said to me, a 20-year-old Somali has never known anything other than violence and war.

The road I took from the airport to the city is flanked by derelict and bullet-ridden houses that used to be homes, and torn roads that used to lead somewhere but have been savaged by fighting.

One million people have died in those 20 years, out of an average population of nine million. More people are dependent on food aid – literally kept from starvation – than the entire population of Edinburgh, Manchester, Sheffield, Leeds and Liverpool put together. If you are born in Somalia today you can hope to live to the age of 48, roughly the same average life expectancy of people in Britain in 1880.

Large areas of the country are controlled by extremists and militants.

Most people live without access to justice and human rights, and Somalia has become a haven for the some of the worst criminality and terrorism in the world. Piracy has flourished and innocent British holidaymakers have been seized in neighboring countries and surrounding waters, including Kenya and the Seychelles.

During my visit I met the President, members of Somalia civil society and the Mayor of Mogadishu.

I wanted to hear their views and their view of the world. I was struck by their resilience and their desire to move on and to experience peace and some semblance of normality.

Our presence was greeted with enthusiasm, as was the visit of Andrew Mitchell, International Development Secretary, to other parts to Somalia last week. I took with me Britain's newly-appointed Ambassador to Somalia and I pledged that we will re-open an Embassy in Mogadishu as soon as local circumstances permit. We are making active preparations for this.

I left Somalia more convinced than ever that we have a responsibility to do our utmost to stem the decline of Somalia.

Its people deserve a better future, and our own security requires their country to become more stable. In three weeks' time Britain will host a Conference on Somalia in London. It will bring together 50 countries and organizations to try to agree a new international and Somali strategy to turn around the failed state that is Somalia today. There are two reasons why the time is right for this effort.

The first is that the African Union troops in Somalia have made some important progress, wresting nearly all of Mogadishu from the control of insurgents, and making other security gains.

Second, the mandate of Somalia's Transitional Federal Government expires in August. This gives an opening to launch a new and broader political process embracing all Somalis, with a greater emphasis on supporting regional governance as well as stronger and more representative government from the center.

This sense of a moment of opportunity was shared by the Somali leaders and citizens that I met, who welcomed Britain's engagement.

The London Conference will aim to agree practical steps to support a new political process, as well as assistance to Somalia's regions, funding for the African

Union Mission, more effective arrangements to tackle piracy and terrorism, and increased humanitarian coordination. It will be different from previous conferences because it will put the needs of Somalis front and center, not just our own security, and it will attempt to address the root causes of the conflict rather than just the symptoms.

Somalia's problems are extraordinarily complex and dangerous and clearly cannot be resolved by one conference. Somalis have struggled with these challenges for years, aided by many valiant aid workers, diplomats, charities and individuals. Royal Navy vessels are carrying out the fight against piracy, along with ships from 15 other nations. A huge amount of international aid has poured into the country, but only a coordinated approach of the kind we are proposing will make it really effective for the long term.

Somalia is part of a wider problem. The international community needs to get more effective at conflict prevention and supporting weak states.

This is a major emphasis in British foreign policy today. Not only are we trying to ensure that we bring our own national resources to bear in foreign policy more effectively than in the past through our National Security Council, but we are urging better coordination by the international community as a whole. Somalia may well be the hardest case of all, but there can be fewer countries in the world where an investment in peace and security is more desperately needed, or where international effort can more worthily be devoted.

By devoting diplomatic time and effort into Somalia today, we are investing in our own security and prosperity in years to come. Britain is committed to playing its part not only with the London Conference, but for the years to come.

William Hague is British Foreign Secretary. This article was first published in the Huffington Post, UK.

Who reviews the US 'kill list'?

By: Doyle McManus
LA Times

There has been remarkably little public debate in the US about drone strikes, which have killed at least 1,300 people in Pakistan alone since President Obama came to office.

When it comes to national security, Michael V. Hayden is no shrinking violet. As CIA director, he ran the Bush administration's program of warrantless wiretaps against suspected terrorists.

But the retired air force general admits to being a little squeamish about the Obama administration's expanding use of pilotless drones to kill suspected terrorists around the world – including, occasionally, US citizens.

"Right now, there isn't a government on the planet that agrees with our legal rationale for these operations, except for Afghanistan and maybe Israel," Hayden told me recently.

As an example of the problem, he cites the example of Anwar Al-Awlaki, the New Mexico-born member of Al-Qaeda who was killed by a US drone in Yemen last September. "We needed a court order to eavesdrop on him," Hayden notes, "but we didn't need a court order to kill him. Isn't that something?"

Hayden isn't the only one who has qualms about the "targeted killing" program. The chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), has been pressing the administration to explain its rules for months.

In a written statement, Feinstein said she thinks Al-Awlaki was "a lawful target" but added that she still thinks the administration should explain its reasoning more openly "to maintain public support of secret operations."

As Hayden puts it, "This program rests on the personal legitimacy of the president, and that's dangerous."

There has been remarkably little public debate about the drone strikes, which have killed at least 1,300 people in Pakistan alone since President Obama came to office. Little debate inside the United States, that is. But overseas, the operations have prompted increasing opposition and could turn into a foreign policy headache.

It's odd that the Obama administration, which came into office

promising to be more open and more attentive to civil liberties than the previous one, has been so reluctant to explain its policies in this area. Obama and his aides have refused to answer questions about drone strikes because they are part of a covert program, yet they have repeatedly taken credit for their victories in public. After months of negotiations, Atty. Gen. Eric H. Holder Jr. won approval from the White House to spell out some of the administration's legal thinking in the Al-Awlaki case. But his statement, originally promised for last month, has been delayed by continued internal wrangling.

When it is issued, officials said, the statement is likely to add a few details to the bare-bones rationale the administration has offered in a handful of public statements and court proceedings. The administration has said that strikes against suspected terrorists are justified for two reasons: First, that Al-Qaeda is at war with the United States, which makes any participant in Al-Qaeda operations an enemy combatant; and second, that anyone directly involved in terrorist plots against Americans poses an "imminent danger" to US security.

Holder may also shed light on an issue that has been less clear: Should a terrorist suspect who is a US citizen get special treatment? Some in the intelligence community argue that the answer is no – that a US-born member of Al-Qaeda is no different from an American who joined, say, the German army in World War II. But civil libertarians argue that in a murky war against terrorism, an American such as Al-Awlaki deserves some kind of due process before his name goes on the CIA's "kill list."

In fact, officials say, Al-Awlaki did get more due process than most Al-Qaeda suspects on the list. They say the administration made a point of naming Al-Awlaki publicly as an Al-Qaeda leader – putting him on notice, in effect – before he was killed. And they say the Justice Department held that Al-Awlaki could be killed only if it was not feasible to capture him. The administration has refused to release that legal opinion, in part because it's not sure it wants those standards to turn into a binding precedent for later cases.

But there are questions that go beyond the legal underpinning of targeted killing. Who puts names

on the "kill list," and who reviews them? And is the process rigorous enough to withstand outside scrutiny?

In the case of a US citizen such as Al-Awlaki, Obama makes the final call. Or so said Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, who offered a rare bit of on-the-record clarity in an interview with CBS' "60 Minutes" last week. "In the end, when it comes to going after someone like that, the president of the United States has to sign off," Panetta said.

There's also scrutiny from Congress. "There is no intelligence activity the [Senate] Intelligence Committee follows more closely, or conducts more oversight on, than CIA counter-terrorism operations along the Afghan-Pakistan border," Feinstein said, studiously avoiding the word "drone."

But congressional oversight comes after the fact, and it is divided between Congress' intelligence committees, which review CIA operations, and its armed forces committees, which review military operations.

That's one reason some former officials argue that the administration needs to set up a clearer, more rigorous system of internal review – for its own good. John B. Bellinger III, who served as the State Department's top lawyer during the Bush administration, believes a good solution would be to expand the jurisdiction of the judges who currently authorize wiretaps to cover targeted killing cases as well.

But most intelligence officials hate that idea. "Why on earth would you want to get a judge involved?" asked one. A better solution, he said, would be appointing a special review office made up of seasoned officials who can't be fired, to insulate them from bureaucratic pressure. But that would still invest life-or-death power in a secret corner of the intelligence community, without a clear constitutional foundation.

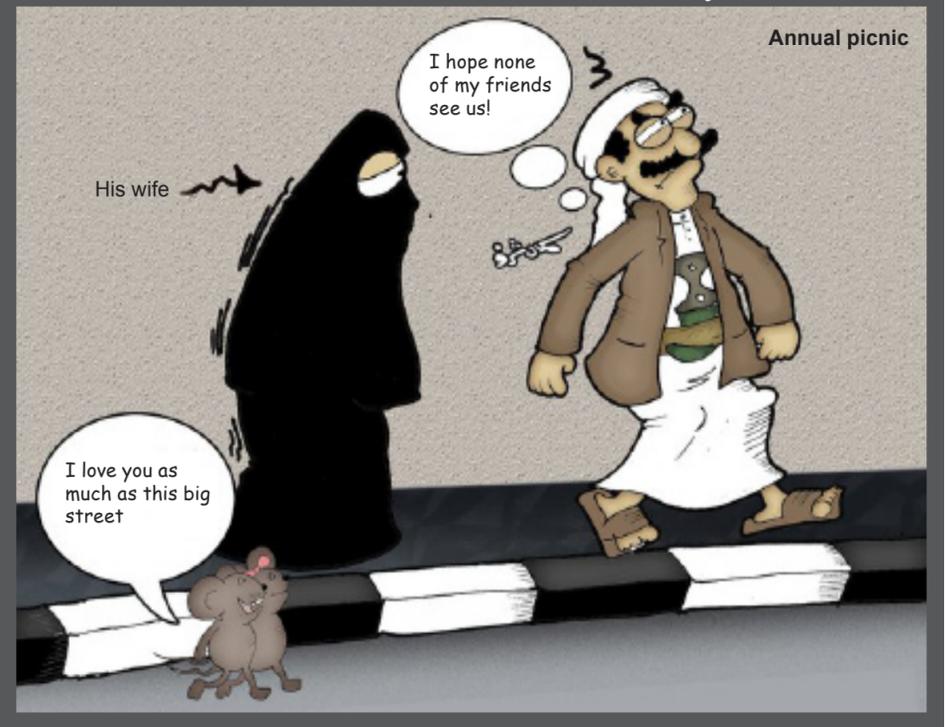
The biggest problem with this newly invented form of clandestine warfare is that its rules have been made on the fly. The Obama administration, like the Bush administration, has made crucial decisions with little outside review and virtually no public scrutiny.

The administration says it has the authority to kill US citizens who are active in Al-Qaeda, but it's never explained how that squares with the Constitution's guarantee of due process. It's past time that it did so.

SKETCHED OPINION

By Kamal Sharaf

Annual picnic



Testing limits in Syria

Editorial
khaleejtimes.com

The violence in Syria is fast spreading. With Homs continuing to face shelling and a blockade from government forces, there have been explosions targeting government installations, killing at least 25 in Aleppo in northern Syria.

These have triggered a fresh round of allegations and counter allegations. In the midst of this vicious violence comes US President Barack Obama's condemnation of the "outrageous bloodshed" in Homs. Obama has also again called on President Bashar Al-Assad to step down. This call, like others, will go unheeded in Damascus.

But continued negotiation of the ground reality by Damascus is hardly an option Assad can exer-

cise, given how rapidly the situation is unraveling. According to US Republican Senator John McCain, at least 40,000 Syrian forces have quit Assad's camp – based on Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu's sharing of information. While it is not possible to validate these figures at this point, the fact remains that defections have increased and is a major reason for the intensification in fighting over the past weeks.

Assad may have received a temporary reprieve from the Russian and Chinese veto of the Security Council resolution but his options are severely limited. He is also under pressure from these very allies, especially Russia, to declare a truce and start political negotiations with the opposition – a seemingly impossible prospect unless he decides to call it quits.

The Arab states too are discuss-

ing the formation of a joint UN Arab League mission with a different mandate than the previous observers' initiative. Hopefully, the new mission will be a more effective deterrent if it comes into being and is allowed in by Damascus. Assad, at this point may not be able to deny this since even Moscow is likely to pressure him to cede ground.

Other options that have come to the forefront after the latest resolution's failure to take off are the arming of the Syrian opposition groups to fight Assad's forces and providing humanitarian assistance to civilians. There has as yet been no decision on what plan of action to adopt. Unfortunately, the longer it takes, the higher the number of casualties. Therefore the best option at this point may be to pressure Russia and China to influence Assad and call for a truce before anything else.

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كريدي أجريكول
بنك التمويل والاستثمار

YEMEN BRANCH

ANNOUNCEMENT

OF THE VOLUNTARY LIQUIDATION OF
CREDIT AGRICOLE CORPORATE AND INVESTMENT BANK, YEMEN BRANCH
(PREVIOUSLY "CALYON, YEMEN")

TO ALL CUSTOMERS

OF CREDIT AGRICOLE CORPORATE AND INVESTMENT BANK, YEMEN BRANCH

FURTHER TO OUR FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT MADE ON NOVEMBER 24, 27 AND 28, 2011 CONCERNING THE VOLUNTARY LIQUIDATION OF THE BANK, AND, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE DECISION TAKEN BY THE HEAD OFFICE OF CREDIT AGRICOLE CORPORATE AND INVESTMENT BANK (PARIS) CONCERNING THE LIQUIDATION OF ITS BRANCH IN YEMEN WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE WORLDWIDE RESTRUCTURING OF ITS ACTIVITIES AND THE APPROVAL THEREOF RECEIVED FROM THE CENTRAL BANK OF YEMEN DATED NOVEMBER 1ST, 2011, CREDIT AGRICOLE CORPORATE AND INVESTMENT BANK, YEMEN BRANCH REITERATES ITS ANNOUNCEMENT FOR THE VOLUNTARY LIQUIDATION OF ITS OPERATIONS WHICH WILL START FROM MARCH 1ST, 2012 AND THE GRADUAL CLOSURE OF ALL ITS BRANCHES IN YEMEN WHOSE CLOSING DATES ARE SCHEDULED BELOW;

- CLOSING OF ADEN BRANCH ON MARCH 31, 2012
- CLOSING OF MUKALLA BRANCH ON MARCH 31, 2012
- CLOSING OF TAIZ BRANCH ON APRIL 30, 2012
- CLOSING OF HODEIDAH BRANCH ON APRIL 30, 2012
- CLOSING OF ZUBEIRY BRANCH AND HEAD OFFICE IN SANA'A ON JUNE 30, 2012

THE BANK CONFIRMS THAT THE PROCEDURES ON THE VOLUNTARY LIQUIDATION AND CLOSING OF CREDIT AGRICOLE CORPORATE AND INVESTMENT BANK, YEMEN BRANCH WILL BE CONDUCTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE APPLICABLE BANKING LAW IN THE REPUBLIC OF YEMEN NO (38)/ 1998 AND THE CENTRAL BANK OF YEMEN REGULATIONS WITH THE AIM OF SECURING ALL LEGITIMATE RIGHTS OF ITS CUSTOMERS.

STARTING MARCH 1ST 2012, CREDIT AGRICOLE CORPORATE AND INVESTMENT BANK, YEMEN BRANCH WILL NO LONGER BE AUTHORIZED TO:

- ACCEPT AND EXECUTE ANY OTHER BANKING TRANSACTIONS FOR ITS CUSTOMERS THAN THOSE RELATED TO CLEARING AND CLOSING CUSTOMERS ACCOUNTS WITH THE BANK;
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UPON THE CLOSURE OF ADEN, MUKALLA, TAIZ AND HODEIDAH BRANCHES, UNCLAIMED CREDIT BALANCES AND THEIR RELATED ACCOUNTS WILL BE:

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CREDIT AGRICOLE CORPORATE AND INVESTMENT BANK, YEMEN BRANCH WISHES TO THANK ALL ITS CUSTOMERS FOR THEIR TRUST IN DEALING WITH OUR BRANCH ALL OVER THE YEARS AND FOR THEIR SUPPORT THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS OF ITS VOLUNTARY LIQUIDATION, AND ASSURES ITS CUSTOMERS THAT THE VOLUNTARY LIQUIDATION OF ITS YEMEN OPERATIONS AND CLOSING OF ITS BRANCHES WILL BE CONDUCTED IN AN ORDERLY MANNER TO FINALIZE THE WINDING UP AND CLOSURE PROCESS IN THE SMOOTHEST AND MOST EFFICIENT MANNER.

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بنك التمويل والإستثمار

YEMEN BRANCH

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سابقاً «كاليون - فرع اليمن»

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- فرع المكلا: لشارع الرئيسي - حي الديس، (صندوق بريد ٥٠٢٢٧، هاتف ٢/٢٨٨٣٠١) (٩٦٧٥)

الحاقاً لإعلاننا السابق بتاريخ ٢٤-٢٧-٢٨/١١/٢٠١١ بخصوص التصفية الإختيارية للبنك،

واستناداً لقرار بنك كريدي أجريكول للتمويل والإستثمار في فرنسا من خلال عملية إعادة هيكلة نشاطه عالمياً، وطبقاً لموافقة البنك المركزي اليمني على ذلك بتاريخ الأول من نوفمبر سنة ٢٠١١م، يعلن بنك كريدي أجريكول للتمويل والإستثمار - فرع اليمن لجميع عملائه عن قيام البنك بالتصفية الإختيارية لعملياته ابتداءً من الأول من مارس سنة ٢٠١٢م والإغلاق التدريجي لكافة فروعها في اليمن وفقاً للتواريخ التالية:

- إغلاق فرع المكلا في ٣١/٣/٢٠١٢م.
- إغلاق فرع عدن في ٣١/٣/٢٠١٢م.
- إغلاق فرع تعز في ٣٠/٤/٢٠١٢م.
- إغلاق فرع الحديدة في ٣٠/٤/٢٠١٢م.
- إغلاق فرعنا والمركز الرئيسي في صنعاء في ٣٠ يونيو ٢٠١٢.

ويؤكد البنك أن إجراءات التصفية الإختيارية وإغلاق بنك كريدي أجريكول للتمويل والإستثمار - فرع اليمن سيتم وفقاً للقانون رقم (٣٨) لسنة ١٩٩٨م بشأن البنوك النافذ في الجمهورية اليمنية وكذلك تعليمات البنك المركزي اليمني بهدف تأمين الحقوق الشرعية لكافة عملائه.

كما يؤكد بنك كريدي أجريكول للتمويل والإستثمار فرع اليمن لعملائه الكرام بأنه ابتداءً من ١ مارس ٢٠١٢م سيتوقف البنك تماماً:

- عن قبول أو إجراء أي عمليات بنكية لعملائه بخلاف ما هو متعلق بتصفية وإغلاق حسابات العملاء مع البنك،
- عن دفع أي فوائد على الودائع وحسابات التوفير الغير مطالب بها بعد هذا التاريخ.

على كل عملائنا الكرام الذين لم يتقدموا إلى البنك لإغلاق حساباتهم بسرعة التوجه - دون أي تأخير - لفرع البنك المعني قبل التواريخ المذكورة أعلاه لسحب أرصدتهم.

Lack of awareness undermines free delivery law

By: Malak Shafer

The Yemeni government issued the Law of Free Delivery in 1998 to help reduce the high mortality rate in Yemen, but the benefits are not extended to Yemenis in rural areas and public clinics.

"I do not understand how such a decree can be carried out if there is no support for clinics and hospitals," said Hana Al-Hubaishi, who participated in a USAID workshop on implementing the law and providing access to care.

Such decrees should be funded before issued, Al-Hubaishi said, adding that delivery requires tools and medications that the government does not provide.

In spite of the law providing free deliveries, only 14 percent of women giving birth knew the law existed, according to a study by Oxfam in 2007. The study also revealed that implementation of the decree was limited to main hospitals, and not carried out in rural areas and public clinics.

Yemen has among the highest maternal mortality rates, with 365 deaths for each 100,000 live births, according to local official statistics. This is because of the long delivery period where people travel long distances to reach hospitals and lack of emergency obstetric care policies. Out of 1,000 infants, 69 die due to a lack of health services. Only 47 percent of women receive care during pregnancy.

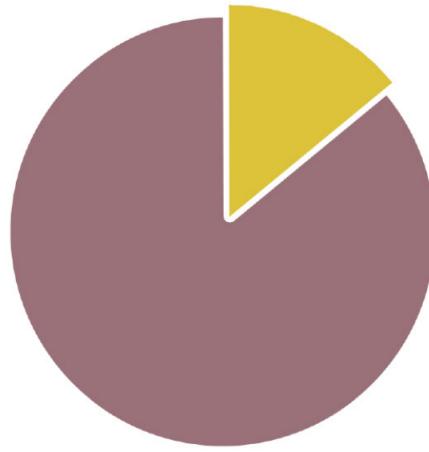
Last week, as part of the Responsive Governance Project, USAID conducted an advocacy training workshop on "Free Delivery, Family Planning and Emergency Obstetric Care" for 90 representatives from the Ministry of Health, National Safe Motherhood Alliance (NSMA) and the Yemen Family Care Association (YFCA). The workshop consisted of discussions on how to advocate for the implementation of the free delivery law, as well as family planning and emergency obstetric care policies to promote maternal health in Yemen.

Rami Al-Maqtari of NSMA presented a survey conducted in 2003

on maternal and child mortality rates at the USAID workshop. At least 40 percent of newborn babies whose mother died during delivery lived for less than a year, 27 percent of the children died during birth. Furthermore, for each of seven deaths due to delivery, 210 women face dangerous complications. The survey showed that 93 percent of mortalities happened in rural areas. At least 65 percent of the 365 died while delivering their babies at home.

According to UNICEF, one of the main reasons behind the high mortality rate in Yemen is that there is only one doctor per 1,000 people in Yemen and that only 60 percent of the Yemeni population has access to medical care. At least 80 percent of women deliver their babies at home in Yemen.

At least 74 percent of the mortality rate in Yemen is in rural areas. The distance between home and hospitals and clinics, along with the expenses of medication, medical checkups, and transportation are the main reasons for the deaths of women delivering their



According to a study by Oxfam, only 14 percent of people know about the free delivery law issued in 1998 which has only been implemented in Yemen's main public hospitals.

babies at home, according to the World Health Organization.

Nearly 15 percent of women delivering their babies at home did

not go to hospitals due to the expense of delivery services, 11 percent were turned from the hospital because they could not pay, and

five percent did not have transportation from home to the nearest clinic or hospital.

According to YFCA, of 1,000 infants, 69 die during their first two years and 78 die in their first five years, and seven mothers die each day while giving birth or within a month due to the complications of delivery.

The recommendations from the workshop focused on shifting the law to a decree issued by the Prime Minister for Yemen to implement the laws more quickly.

Charles Swagman, Technical Director of USAID, said the implementation of free delivery and free contraceptive decrees, as well as the formulation of a policy of obstetric care are two crucial issues.

It was recommended that the Ministry of Health and other Civil Society Organizations form a committee to monitor implementation of the law, especially in remote areas. In addition, the workshop suggested campaigns to increase awareness and sending teams from the ministry to different parts of the country.

Orchid Arabia

By: Eric Hansen

I wasn't looking for orchids when my driver, Abdul Ali, pulled to the side of the road at the top of the Summarah Pass between Taiz and Jiblah in Yemen. For a better view and to stretch our legs after a long morning in the car, we decided to hike up a grassy slope to a spot where, at around 2500 meters' (8000') elevation, we came upon a population of unusually beautiful flowers. At the time, I didn't suspect that the plant was an orchid – *Habenaria macrantha*, to be exact – or that orchids grew anywhere in the Arabian Peninsula. I thought orchids were just exotic tropical plants that produced showy flowers for ladies' ball gowns or the lobbies of five-star hotels. So limited was my knowledge at the time, in fact, that I assumed orchids grew only in humid jungles.

As I later discovered while writing my book *Orchid Fever* (2001), the family Orchidaceae is an adaptable and opportunistic one with worldwide distribution over a wide range of ecological niches. Orchids are a highly evolved – and still very much evolving – group of plants. According to recent estimates, there are approximately 25,000 naturally occurring orchid species in the wild, and artificial orchid hybrids, developed for the horticultural trade, now number in the hundreds of thousands.

To give an idea of their range, orchid species grow from just below the Arctic Circle southward on



Habenaria macrantha is the most common of the eight known *Habenaria* orchids in the Arabian Peninsula, and it can grow in stony as well as grassy areas. It flowers in summer.

all continents except Antarctica. In addition to this distribution, orchids have adapted to habitats as diverse as peat bogs, forests, mountain tops, deserts and coastal areas. They grow in soil, sand, trees and rock cliffs; *Rizanthella gardneri*, an Australian species, spends its entire life underground, and even flowers there.

They told me that to the west of Sana'a, on the terraced slopes of Jabal Al-Nabi Shu'ayb, they had even found the orchid *Epipactis veratrifolia* growing by a tree-

shaded irrigation channel. Surprisingly enough, this orchid species, with its distinctive greenish-yellow flowers with bands of reddish purple, growing from creeping rhizomes, has a wide distribution that ranges from the mountains of Ethiopia and Somalia to the Himalayas.

Reading up on the botany of the region, I quickly came across the account of Carsten Niebuhr's ill-fated Danish-sponsored expedition to Yemen in 1762-1763. One of the six members of the expedition was the Swedish botanist Pehr Forsskål, who had been a student of Linnaeus, the father of taxonomy. Toward the end of the expedition, Forsskål had also crossed the Summarah Pass headed toward Sana'a, but this was 315 years before Abdul Ali and I stumbled upon our botanical discovery.

As a frequent visitor to Yemen and the Arabian Peninsula, I wanted to find Forsskål's orchids for myself, and search for the Evanses' species too. And so on my subsequent trips to the region I made a point of looking for orchids when I was out in the field, with the assistance of amateur botanists and local farmers. I also sought out historical accounts and pre-Linnaean plant studies by Arab writers, such as *Kitab Al-Nabat* (The Book of Plants) by Abu Hanifa Al-Dinawari (about 895), and *Bughyat al Falahin* (partly translated as *The Cultivation of Cereals in Mediaeval Yemen*), compiled about 1370 for the Rasulid Sultan Al-Malik Al-Afdal Al-Abbas ibn 'Ali. As it turned out, these earlier works concentrated on cultivated crops and the economic and medicinal uses of plants, so orchids were neither collected nor identified. I then turned my attention to more contemporary accounts, written mostly by European botanists of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Later, in 1996, while on an as-



Eulophia petersii is the most common of the Arabian Peninsula's orchids. It flowers year-round and adapts to drought better than any other local orchid species.

signment for this magazine to write about the history of Yemeni coffee, I visited the mountain village of Al-Udayn, at the end of a long dusty road west of Jiblah. The



There are some 25,00 orchid species in the wild, and they grow from just below the Arctic Circle southward on all continents except Antarctica, in habitats as diverse as forests, peat bogs, mountain tops, deserts and coasts

area is considered prime coffee-growing country, with narrow terraced fields that climb from the riverbeds to high up on the mountains. Rich volcanic soil and steady breezes bringing moisture off the Red Sea have created a habitat ideal not only for coffee, but also for orchids.

The plant turned out to be an orchid, but I wasn't immediately sure which one. It had multiple flowering stems that emerged from a mass of pyramidal pseudobulbs at the base of the plant. Each stem was arrayed with a dozen or more very attractive flowers. They had erect brownish petals, a white throat and a pinkish lip veined with lines of violet-purple. It took me almost two years to identify the plant, but eventually, thanks to the help of German orchid taxonomist Guido Braem, we confirmed it was *Eulophia guineensis* – one of

the rarest.

My final orchid discovery, and the most unexpected, came in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, at the Date Palm Research Center near Al-Hasa, which I visited while researching an article – also for this magazine – on dates. The ancient oasis is home to an estimated three million date palms. I was in the midst of discussing the technique of tissue-culturing different varieties of date palms with Abdullatif Alkhateeb, director of the center, when out of the corner of my eye I noticed a potted plant that looked nothing like a date-palm seedling. It was not in flower and it seemed half-dead, but the identification tag read, "*Orchis laxiflora/ subspecies palustris*."

"Recently collected from Al-Ha-

sa oasis," Alkhateeb told me in an offhand manner. "Collected and described in *Flora Arabica* by the botanist Blatter in 1919. It was the first orchid species discovered in Saudi Arabia."

We went back to looking at the expanse of tissue-cultured date-palm seedlings, but I couldn't help wondering how a specimen of a non-African terrestrial orchid, more commonly found in the meadows and marshlands of Europe and far across the Gulf in Iraq and Iran, had ended up living with three million irrigated date palms in Al-Hasa – and to what other unexpected location it and its fellow orchid species might next adapt.

Courtesy of Saudi Aramco World Magazine



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The deadline for receiving applications is **23 February 2012**



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Only online applications will be accepted
The deadline for receiving applications is **29 February 2012**



From the tip of Yemen to southern Saudi Arabia, the western escarpments of the Arabian Peninsula catch monsoon winds carrying moisture from Central Africa eastward toward Asia. The resulting rainfall makes for the wettest environment in the Arabian Peninsula. Photo by Eric Hansen.

Valentine's day, the Yemeni way



YT photo by Nadia Haddash

Some Yemenis celebrate Valentine's day by giving red roses and teddy bears to their lovers.

By: Nadia Haddash

On February 14 at 7:00 p.m., the coffee shop in Sana'a's Yemen Mall Center was turned in to a sea of red. Most stores displayed a crimson shop front, while customers decorated themselves in bright clothes – all with a hint of the color of love.

The mall was crowded young people, mostly boys and girls, each one carrying red gift bags containing a symbol of their love.

A security guard at the Yemen Mall said, "Most of the stores here have changed their look to red over the last two days to attract customers. It's a good opportunity to boost sales."

While millions celebrate Valentine's Day across the world, in Yemen, the controversy between those who support it, and those who forbid Valentine's Day, is renewed every February 14.

Although it is a relatively new idea in Yemeni society, only really becoming popular over the last five years, the signs of Valentine's Day were present in markets and shops across the capital, which were crammed with red roses, teddy bears, and heart-shaped cards.

Yet in Yemen's conservative society, very few people are familiar with "Valentine's Day", and the celebration of this occasion remains confined to a small percentage of young people, concentrated in the country's major cities.

Sadeq Abdul-Salam, 27, highly criticized the religious men who try to forbid the celebration of Valentine's Day, saying that it is a good chance for all people, including married couples, to exchange gifts and flowers.

"It's a golden opportunity for me to take my wife to a romantic place, eat special food, remember the best moments in our life and buy her a small gift," he said.

Abdul-Salam called for all married and engaged people to celebrate this day and buy flowers to their lovers, adding that it was even more important after the difficult year Yemen has faced. "All people must forget their disagreements and open a new page on this day," he said.

But not all young people agree with Abdul-Salam's romantic sentiments. Mohammed Al-Nashir and Dunia Al-Adeimi, a couple both aged 22, do not support the celebration of the Valentine's Day.

"I will spend this day as normal because for me every day is a love day and I'm not forced to follow the Western culture," said Al-Nashir.

Dunia agreed but added that she

might still bring him a gift and a red rose "just to express my love more on Valentine's".

Amal Mansour, 24, added, "It's so funny to see boys and girls wearing red and walking on the streets, in malls and markets on Valentine's Day. When everything suddenly turns red its sort of silly, it doesn't match the standards of our Yemeni and most of those wearing red are teenagers."

However, 40-year-old Hagage Musaed, a music director at Shabab FM Radio, said, "I think Yemeni's have the wrong impression of Valentine's Day it's a day to remind those that you love that they are special."

"For me, I bought a teddy bear for my wife, perfume and candy just to let her know I love her. Unfortunately I can't afford to take her out to dinner, so maybe I'll cook for her," Musaed added.

"I just wish I could show her what a real Valentine's Day is supposed to be like, maybe we could escape on a two-day trip to a romantic city," he said.

Abdulrazaq Al-Azazi, is a 25-year-old student in his final year and a member of the "Intelaq Initiative", which supports new youth interests, at Sana'a University. Each year the initiative celebrates Valentine's with a small, open party at the University's College of Press and Media.

"We distribute posters with love quotes and red roses to everyone who comes and visit us," he said. "It's a chance to spread peace, love and forgiveness. Valentine's Day is a logo for love, which unites humanity."

"Personally, I celebrate Valentine's Day with my friends, family and a special celebration with the life partner that my heart chose," he added.

Love is good for business

Bilal Al-Sabri, the owner of Ameer Awards store for gifts and flowers in Hadda, was busy preparing gifts and flowers for customers when he spoke to the Yemen Times. "Frankly I don't believe in Valentine's Day; I don't care about it because it is against Islam. My store is open every day, not only on Valentine's but it is still a source of income," he said.

"The price for roses increases on this day," added Al-Sabri. "Usually we sell one red flower for around YR 400, but on Valentine's the cost goes up to YR 1,000."

"Let [customers] buy them since it is us who gains the biggest benefits from this day."

Omer Abdulamluk, owner of May for Gifts, enjoys Valentine's Day. "I'm always very excited for Valentine's Day," he said. "I have been

working here for more than three years, and it's always good to see those who love each other express their love through my store's gifts and roses."

However, he added that after Yemen's turbulent year, less people were spending money on Valentine's Day. "This year's demand is less compared to the past because of the revolution. It really affected our sales."

Valentine's Day and Islam

Dr. Ali Al-Ahdel, professor of Islamic culture at Sana'a University, explained why many Yemenis oppose Valentine's Day. "Celebrating Valentine's Day is not permitted in Islam because it is an imitation of the West and Christian culture."

He cited a statement by the Prophet Mohamed, who said, "The one who imitates any non-Islamic nation is from that place."

Al-Ahdel continued, "We are now in bad situation and our people are suffering from poverty we need help and charity for our people rather than spending thousands on flowers that will die after just a few hours."



YT photo by Nadia Haddash

The price of one red rose on jumps from YR 400 to YR 1,000 on Valentine's day.

"We can celebrate and express our love on any day. Our religion is the source of peace and love and it has no specific day to express love at any

time," he added.

"I say to those who celebrate this day, that I hope the Arab and Muslim people can imitate western

countries in industry, science and development to raise our country to better situation," Al-Ahdel concluded.









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Political unrest slows poultry sector



Over 400,000 people work in Yemen's poultry sector and its related industries and services. Some 1.2 million rural families also raise backyard poultry, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization. However, Yemen is still failing to meet demand.

By: Marwa Najmaldin & Ali Saeed

Over the last 18 months, the cost of a single egg has soared to YR 40 – having not exceeded YR 15 in the previous five years – as Yemen's ongoing political instability continues to affect food prices.

While the local commercial production of eggs covers all domestic needs, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), rising prices are forcing more people into food insecurity.

Yemen now has the fastest growing population in the Arab world, and due to the high annual population growth – which now exceeds 3 percent a year – food security is becoming an increasing problem. On average, each Yemeni consumes



Yemen is using a quarter of its total export revenues (or nearly \$1.8 billion in 2010) to finance food imports – compared to an international average of 9 percent.

3.8kg of red meat, 6kg of white meat, and 48.9 eggs a year. According to the FAO, the recommended animal protein requirement can be fulfilled by 43.5kg meat (white or red), 100 eggs and 90 liters of milk.

Bilal Al-Eryani, who owns a grocery store in Sana'a, said that eggs used to be the most popular item in his shop, but many customers have been forced to stop buying them because of the high prices.

"Some people are forced to continue buying eggs as they are essential to children, but they are pinning their hopes on the idea that prices will fall soon," he said.

Abu Mazen, a family breadwinner in the capital, said he was shocked over the drastically rising prices, which jumped more than 160 percent over the past 18 months.

He added that since he could not afford to buy as many eggs, he began researching their disadvantages to feel better about reducing their consumption. "So we decided that every member of family should have 2-4 eggs per week under the pretext that eggs are the main cause of high cholesterol," he explained.

Mansour Al-Fadhali, owner of a school cafeteria, said people always complain about the price hikes – especially when it comes to essential foodstuffs.

"However, people ultimately accept and live with the new prices or adapt their habits," he said. "Nowadays, students and staff have

stopped buying egg sandwiches and instead buy cheese and beans sandwiches."

Egg consumption

In 2010 Yemen produced 1,160 million eggs, up from 960 million in 2006, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation – however, demand is rising faster than domestic production.

Marzooq Mohsen, chief of the Yemen-based Economic and Social Development Research Centre, attributed the rising cost of eggs prices to the fact that locally produced eggs no longer meet the demands of consumers.

Rising fuel prices and the deterioration of Yemen's farming infrastructure also contributed to the rising cost.

"Yemen has thousands of poultry farms that produce hens and eggs in the uplands, including Dhamar, Amran, Sana'a, Marib and Sa'ada, but the consumption of eggs always increase due to the high population growth," he explained.

Abdul-Azeez Mutea, an investor in the poultry market, said that one of the main challenges is the spread of epidemics that lead to big losses but stressed that diesel fuel costs and power outages are also disrupting production. "Thousands of hens died in the past two months due to the cold winter," he said.

Yemen's food security has deteriorated over the past decade due to declining oil production, mount-

ing food import costs and socio-political instability – all of which were exacerbated during the unrest in 2011. The UN's World Food Programme (WFP) has warned that the situation is likely to deteriorate further in 2012 as Yemen struggles with ongoing fuel shortages and rising prices, thousands of internally displaced people (IDPs) and refugees from the Horn of Africa, to name just a few issues the country is tackling.

The International Food Policy Research Institute indicates that Yemen is using a quarter of its total export revenues (or nearly \$1.8 billion in 2010) to finance food imports – compared to an international average of 9 percent.

According to the WFP, 80 percent of Yemen's food is imported.

Poultry industry

Over 400,000 people work in Yemen's poultry sector and its related industries and services, while some 1.2 million rural families also raise backyard poultry, according to FAO.

But last year's political unrest – which resulted in large-scale power cuts and fuel shortages – slowed progress of the industry, further increasing the cost of eggs and chicken.

Yemen's poultry sector is one of the biggest in the country and makes up the largest part of the country's livestock industry, with capital estimated at more than \$1.5

million, according to a 2008 FAO study.

The total annual meat consumption – including both red meat and poultry – is estimated at about 371,500 tons, with poultry making up 251,500 tons. This means that the poultry sector supplies 67.7 percent of Yemen's meat consumption.

Large-scale poultry production covered just over half the domestic demand, while 3.4 percent comes from backyard production and imported frozen chickens are used to meet any remaining demand.

However, the FAO statistics are based on a 2006 survey that showed 1,566 poultry farms across Yemen, with 3,282 sheds.

The highest density of poultry farms is found in the highlands but all hatcheries are located in the lowlands of Tihama, west Yemen's hot, coastal region.

More poultry investments needed

Although the industry is struggling to meet consumer demands, the FAO estimated in 2008 that Yemen's poultry sector would grow by 10 percent over the next decade.

Therefore, poultry meat production could be increased up to 253,000 tons.

Adel Al-Shtal, official at the General Investment Authority (GIA), told the Yemen Times that chickens are easy to keep and are the only animal products on the rise.

"Animals producing red meat



"Today's poor investment situation is exceptional and will not continue," he said. "If any investor is interested in starting up his business in this field, they should base their project on Yemen's long-term business environment," concluded Al-Ashtal.

such as sheep, or fish that produce white meat are all decreasing, but poultry is on the rise," Al-Ashtal said. He added that there are currently 300 large poultry farms registered by the GIA, explaining that with Yemen's high population growth and the increasing demand on the white meat, investment in this sector is on rise.

"Today's poor investment situation is exceptional and will not continue," he said. "If any investor is interested in starting up his business in this field, they should base their project on Yemen's long-term business environment," concluded Al-Ashtal.



Power outages and high fuel costs, coupled with an increasing demand resulted in Yemen's soaring egg prices. The cost of one egg has jumped from YR15 to YR40 over the last 18 months.

Yemen deprived of \$33 billion

By: Sadeq Al-Wesabi

A recent study has shown that \$33 billion has been invested in foreign economies by Yemeni expatriates.

The study, carried out by Minister of State Shayef Ezzi Sagheer, showed that the government and private sector have been unable to create successful relations and partnerships with expatriates or to benefit from large companies and political figures of Yemeni origin, particularly in Indonesia and Malaysia.

Over the last few years, many Yemeni expatriate businessmen have been reluctant to invest their money in Yemen because of a lack of security and laws to guarantee investors' rights.

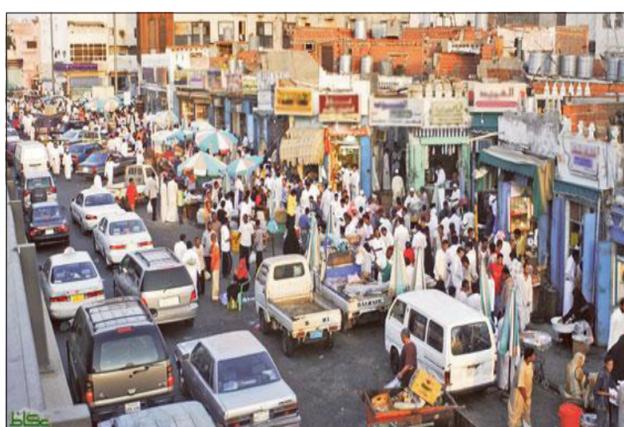
Some six million Yemeni expatriates live in 55 countries around the world; thousands are businessmen and businesswomen and are highly qualified.

According to the study, around 315 businessmen live in neighboring Saudi Arabia.

The study showed that Yemeni expatriates currently have \$5 billion invested within Yemen, less than a quarter of the total amount invested abroad.

Dr. Ali Saif, professor of Economics at Sana'a University, told the Yemen Times that if such an amount of money was smartly invested in Yemen, it would greatly improve the nation's economy and the fight against unemployment.

"We would be on the same level as other Gulf countries if we invested



Jeddah's Al-Balad Market in Saudi Arabia is a business center for hundreds of Yemenis. Many are reluctant to invest in Yemen's economy because of domestic political insecurity.

this money well," he said. "Unfortunately, Yemen's investment environment is not encouraging. Land disputes and a lack of fair justice and security make Yemeni and foreign investors reluctant to invest their money in Yemen."

He said that the amount of investments made by Yemeni expatriates is not high enough, and that he holds the regime responsible for this.

"Investors need enforced legislation and fair justice to guarantee their rights," he said.

Saif criticized influential officials who have hindered Yemen's economy. "Yemen has lost out on many projects due to extortion by influential figures, under the pretext of protection."

However, Saif is optimistic about the possibility of a better economic

situation during the transitional period.

Saif called on the government to build up an infrastructure that is able to encourage businessmen to invest in Yemen.

Deteriorating economy

Since the beginning of last year's uprising, Yemen's economy has sharply deteriorated, leading to the closure of many private companies and unemployment for thousands of workers.

Mohammed Al-Asadi, Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, has stated that Yemen's economy needs about \$15 billion to recover. Al-Asadi also stated that Yemen needs urgent support for electricity, health, fuel and other basic services.

Tihama shows off its brightness

Story and photos by Nadia Haddash

Art from Yemen's coastal Tihama region went on display at the Egyptian Cultural Center this week, in collaboration with the Hodeida Culture House.

Titled *Ishraqaat* from Tihama, which translates as "Brightness from Tihama," the show features 14 artists and showed off a wide range of painting techniques, including water, oil and acrylic paints, glass art and graphics.

Shefa'a Mohammed Al-Shaibi told the Yemen Times, "The exhibition explains the simplicity and purity of Tihama and the brightness of Tihama even though there is suffering there." The collection of around 60 paintings

attracted many visitors to the exhibition, which will run for a further three days.

Hend Al-Shaqa'a presented her work at the exhibition. "I'm so glad to share some ideas through my paintings and express the bright feeling from Tihama," she said.

"Many people who attended asked me to explain my point view in the paintings and that's a good sign that our people care about art."

Saeed Al-Shaibi, another artists, said "It's motivating when I see people react and encourage us. I have a strange painting style that is related to the freedom of thinking and improving your mind, and most of youth like it."

