

Recalling traditional Eid practices

Story by Nadia Haddash
Photos by Samar Qaed

Animal markets across Yemen experience a growth spurt prior to the Eid Feast of Sacrifice. Locals flock to shops to buy goats, sheep and camels to be slaughtered in the name of this religious feast. Traditionally, Yemenis abide by these religious customs even in the face of tough economic circumstances. However, some of the dictated norms that follow this holiday have been forgotten or ignored, causing some to express the importance of celebrating the holiday in a safe and traditional way.

Sheikh Mohammed Al-Maswari, the head of the Al-Dhikra Charitable Foundation, said, "There are many mistakes committed during the slaughtering of the animals,



Where the knife is prepared and the slaughter occurs should be pristine, according to Sheikh Mohammed Al-Maswari.

including the absence of the one who owns the sacrificed animal. Even if he has a proxy to perform the duty [of slaughter], [the owner] must be in attendance."

He expanded, "Some slaughter the animals before the time of Eid prayers. This is not right. It should be slaughtered after the Eid prayer."

"There is also a common mistake, particularly in rural areas, where two people or more share one sacrifice. Some deem the sacrifice for the sake of God, and oth-

ers intend to obtain the meat only. Their intention should be one: sacrifice for the sake of God."

Although there are legislative laws that regulate the slaughter of animals, unhygienic practices often lead to health concerns. Al-Maswari stressed the importance of taking care of these animals prior to slaughter.

He said animals should be given special dry fodder and clean water, in addition to being kept in a clean place.

"This helps preserve the meat



Special care should be taken of the animals prior to the sacrifice to that meat is kept in hygienic conditions.

in good hygienic conditions," he said.

According to the sheikh, the area where the knife is prepared and the person who does the slaughtering should be pristine. He said the slaughter process should be pure so that the meat will also be.

"The knife should be washed, and the hands ought to be cleaned continuously. When extracting the inner organs, they should be placed in a special clean container," Al-Maswari advised.

On a final note, he said the animal's leather should not be torn during the slaughter so it can be sold for money to be granted to the poor.

Sheikh Jabri Ibrahim, the manager of the Preaching and Guidance department in the Endowment and Guidance office, also offered his input on how to celebrate the holiday.

He said when sacrificing, Muslims should be close to Allah, without seeking attention, reputation or pride.

Another sheikh, Abdulwa-

slaughtered animal is free of any imperfections so as to avoid unnecessary health risks. He said the animal should not be older than two.

Al-Humanikani also stressed the importance of charity during Eid. While everyone should eat from the sacrifice, he says some of the meat should be distributed to neighbors, relatives and the poor according to the Quran's instructions.

"Eat from it and feed the desperate and the needy," he said.

According to Al-Humanikani, a good guideline is as follows: one should give one-third of the sacrificed animal to charity, another third should be allotted as a gift and the remaining is to be consumed by the slaughterer.

It is, however, forbidden to sell part of the animal.

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Ma'awiz an enduring Yemeni cloth

Story and photos by Ashraf Al-Muraqab

Ma'awiz, plural for Miwaz, are open rectangular cloths usually made of embroidered or patterned material. Worn around the waist like a belt, it is fixed to the body by folding the top in.

The Yemeni Miwaz is distinguished for its unique and harmonious method of embroidery. Many Yemenis put on the Ma'awiz either at home or at work.

Haj Ahmed Bashuaeib, an owner of a Ma'awiz shop in Sana'a, said the traditional knitting of Ma'awiz has gained tremendous popularity in Yemen.

"Ma'awiz wearing has become common in Yemen among different groups and various ages," Bashuaeib said. "There is a great continuous demand for this kind of clothing either in Yemen or some countries abroad."

Bashuaeib said the profession of knitting Ma'awiz has preserved its status and traditions despite the onset of more modern, western clothing in Yemeni markets. He said Ma'awiz will remain a conventional inheritance in Yemeni society.

Drawings and statues of the ancient Yemeni civilizations, he said, reveal that Miwaz is a part of Ye-

men's past. Hundreds of years have elapsed, and during that time Yemenis spread the Miwaz to other parts of the world, including Africa and parts of Asia, by means of Yemeni immigrants or through navigation, according to Bashuaeib.

But the cloth has evolved over the years, changing with time and updating to fit trends.

Mona Saleh, an employee in the Yemeni House for Heritage, said the traditional cloth is no longer as it was in the past; it used to be simply knitted without the elaborate embroidery and inscriptions seen today.

Today, Ma'awiz has been exhibited in different types and colors with diverse embroideries and inscriptions.

Alawi Al-Harazi, the owner of a Yemeni clothes shop, said Yemenis in ancient times used to make ropes from animal wool and cotton, and they knitted Ma'awiz, sheets and black scarves with the wool.

"Knitting is not that easy," Al-Harazi said. "It requires dexterity and concentration during work in order to obtain a nice, attractive piece of clothing."

The knitting machine is simply assembled, but its operation is unique. It includes a cluster of wood pieces.

"Today's knitting machine is different from the past one," Haj



The Yemeni Miwaz is known for its method of embroidery. The cloth is weaved together using a variety of colors and styles, and certain colors are more common in specific Yemeni regions.

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The Yemeni Miwaz is distinguished for its unique and harmonious method of embroidery. Many Yemenis put on the Ma'awiz either at home or at work.



Creating the cloth can be a long process that requires dexterity and concentration, according to one weaver.



The cloth can be worn in different ways, but oftentimes it is wrapped around the waist like a belt.

Nasser Al-Ahmadi said. "It was large and required a wide space to be installed in a ground hole. The knitter sits on the edge of the machine and stretches his legs to the hole to start operating."

Al-Ahmadi said the knitter was able to produce three Ma'awiz per day with the old knitting machine, but the low thread quality made the final product of low quality. The thread was subject to fraying during the knitting process."

Knitter Ahmed Husein Hamza, 70, expressed his pride in this profession, deeming it a noble one.

"My father helped me learn knitting; this profession was inherited from my grandfather," he said. "Now, I will pass it to my children. They are currently practicing it."

He added, "I started this profession when I was fourteen, just as many others in the village. There were many who were good at this profession."

Some areas are famous for making Ma'awiz, including Bani Hutam and Bani Abdulla in Wesab of Dhamar governorate. Other areas such as Zabid, Tehama, Shabwa, Hadramaut and Aden are also well known for making different textiles, including Ma'awiz.

In Wesab, certain families are known for Ma'awiz such as the Al-Mahjari family. In the past, Yemenis used to bring women's clothing from several markets except for



Today, the Ma'awiz is created using different styles, colors and embroideries

“

The Ma'awiz that are made by new machines affected the traditionally made ones in spite of their low quality compared to the traditional Ma'awiz, which are known for their high quality.

—Mohammed Ahmed Al-Qori, Knitter

the things that were made in local areas such as black scarves. However locally made black scarves couldn't compete with modern, imported ones, and consequently disappeared. By contrast, the Ma'awiz industry kept improving by creat-

ing new styles.

Hamza said Ma'awiz witnessed real development during the last decade of the twentieth century, when many Yemeni expatriates returned to Yemen after the Gulf War. They brought this industry to new areas. In return, people learned how to make Ma'awiz, and the demand for the cloth increased.

Ahmed Hussein Hamza, a Ma'awiz weaver, said profits from the cloth have improved because Ma'awiz are popular in local markets and in Arab countries.

Knitter Mohammed Ahmed Al-Qori, 35, said Ma'awiz with modern embroidery and pale colors are in high demand. People from different regions prefer different styles of Ma'awiz, he said. For instance, in Tehama, people prefer Ma'awiz with heavy embroidery and bright colors such as light green, red and pink. In general, people prefer Ma'awiz with white and beige colors.

Al-Qori said Ma'awiz is very popular during Eid because people buy new clothes to celebrate the holiday. Demand decreases during the rest of the year. Therefore, the Ma'awiz weavers prepare for Eid with new styles.

He said the work is competitive

due to the large number of knitters; therefore, everyone works hard to invent new and attractive styles and embroidery. Sometimes, they invent new designs with the help of computers and then apply these designs to the cloth.

"The Ma'awiz that are made by new machines affected the traditionally made ones in spite of their low quality compared to the traditional Ma'awiz, which are known for their high quality."

Al-Qori said each weaver hides his own designs so others won't imitate them, and then he can sell for the price he wants.

The price depends on the embroidery, brand of threads, experience of the maker and color.

Weavers said they hope the government will adopt a project to support this industry and put forth a mechanism to provide high-quality threads for good prices as well as encouraging investors to construct local factories to produce threads, particularly because Yemen is a cotton-producing country.

Child labor a worrying phenomenon in Yemen



During the past few years, the political impasse and the poor economic situation in Yemen has attributed to the increase in child labor.

Story and photos by Samar Qaed

Khalid Barman, a one-time fourth grader, dreams of going back to school with classmates he left behind more than a year and a half ago.

He now fills his days with hard labor by toiling in a mechanic's shop, earning a scant wage.

"I left the school following a dispute between me and my teacher, who beat me," the 12-year-old said. "The teacher had trouble with my father, who coerced me into working in a mechanic shop owned by

my cousin. I do my work for lengthy hours. It is really hard. I wish I could return to school and meet with my classmates. I am bored of the arduous work in this shop."

He is not the only one resorting to spending his adolescence laboring. There are thousands of Yemeni children who drop out of school to earn money as mechanics, blacksmiths, carpenters, agriculturalists and other fields with high human capital demands.

Political analysts believe the skyrocketing cost of living in Yemen is a major cause driving children into workplaces, where the tasks are often dangerous and the pay abysmal.

There are many families that are forced to deprive their children of an education and send them into the labor markets in the name of financial gain, according to Mona Salem, the manager of the Child Labor Combat division at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor. She says families are often aware of the hazards child laborers face, but are burdened by their

own nominal earning power.

Salem says the worst kind of work children can partake in is agricultural-related because of the risk of ingestion of pesticides. Children often buy the chemicals and spray them without protection.

Abdulhameed Abu Hatim, a pediatrician at Al-Thwara Hospital in Sana'a, says this is a cause for concern. Pesticides have become a main cause behind the spread of cancer in Yemen because of the excessive use by the farmers, according to him. Hatim thinks awareness about the spread of pesticides should be just as important as the awareness of the child labor.

The child labor phenomenon has increased over the course of the past three years, becoming particularly evident during the political impasse the country witnessed last year, said Fuad Al-Jumaei, a sociology professor at Sana'a University. According to him, this is due to the absence of labor laws that prohibit children under 18 from working as well as an absence of state and civil institutional oversight.

"The state should support the families of these children so that they will not resort to the labor market," he said.

Though almost all agree that the economic situation is the behind child labor increases in Yemen, Al-Jumaei opined that traditional culture is a culprit as well.

"There are some families who are well-off, but they encourage their children to work as work is a sign of masculinity," he said.

Dr. Jamal Al-Hadi, the former manager of the Access Bliss Project in Yemen, said the child labor phenomenon has led to smuggling children out of the country. Since the project began five years ago they have rescued almost 5,000 children from this lifestyle.

Many activists and experts have warned against the increase of child labor in Yemen, foreseeing the spike as a result of deteriorating economics. It has dire consequences for an educated future populous as many of the children never return to school.

Jamal Al-Shami, the head of the Democracy School, an NGO that advocates human rights, said from 2008-2012, the shaky economic situation has led approximately two million children to drop out of school and instead support their families all across Yemen.

A recently-published report prepared by the Child Labor Combat Administration at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, indicated



The General Union of Laborers Syndicate found that 76 percent of working children do so just to cover their families' daily expenses.



According to the NGO Democracy School, between 2008 and 2012, two million Yemeni children have dropped out of school and begun working to provide for their families.

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that currently 189,000 children in the governorates of Aden, Taiz, Haja, Sana'a, Ibb and Hodeida work, with the majority of these jobs being hazardous.

The paper points out these governorates have especially high numbers of child laborers due to a lack of self-sustaining job opportunities for adults.

With regard to the motives of the child labor, the General Union of the Laborers Syndicate published a field study indicating that 76 percent of working children do so to cover their families' daily expenses, 8 percent work to afford costs associated with school and the remaining work to feed themselves.

Government sources said in various statements that the 2008-2012 action plan pertinent to combating child labor was recently fulfilled. They claim a total of \$8,448,300 was spent on rehabilitation and education programs to highlight the dangers of child labor.

A report released by the Chil-

dren's Parliament in Yemen said that government efforts are unconvincing.

Although laws in Yemen ban children from working in 72 different fields like agriculture and mechanics shops, the enforcement is very ineffective. Laws also prohibit working over six a day, but the report found children that work 17 hours a day.

The study recommends the implementation of a comprehensive strategy in order to alleviate poverty and better the situation of children in Yemen by the means of increasing childhood benefits in education, health and social welfare. It also advocates for those in poverty to be connected with microfinance projects so as to generate family income and not rely on children as a source.

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Children work all sorts of labor-intensive jobs to provide for their families and, occasionally, for themselves.

Open Hearts youth initiative sends college students to orphan school with supplies

Photo Essay by Amira Nasser

As a part of the Open Hearts initiative, college students in Sana'a spent a day hanging out with orphans who attend school together. Before arriving on the school campus, the volunteers prepared packages of school supplies and organized activities for the schoolchildren.



By the end of the school day, all the students were excited about their new supplies and their decorated faces.



College students prepared boxes of school supplies to bring to the students and to the school.



The volunteers spent part of the day just playing outside with the youth.



The volunteers played the part of "teacher" throughout the day, passing out school supplies and leading the classes in lessons.



Each volunteer had an assigned role, and some of them were tasked with preparing and moving the supplies to the school.



An orphan smiles after he finishes getting his face painted.



The students participated in a singing activity, where they showed off their voices and sang songs together.



On slips of paper, the students wrote down their dreams, goals and aspirations for the future.

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Teachers at the orphan school welcomes the visit by the college students.



Students waited impatiently in their seats to receive the gifts and to answer questions posed by the visitors.



Some students chose to have the flag of Yemen painted on their faces.

Abdulkawi Mohammed Rashad Al-Shaabi to Yemen Times:

“If the situation worsens, then south Yemen won’t be one south but will divide into small areas and villages.”

Interview by Mohammed Bin Sallam

Abdulkawi Mohammed Rashad Al-Shaabi, a member of the Technical Committee of the National Dialogue, is now in his seventies. And his past is deep. During the rule of the Socialist Party, Al-Shabi was imprisoned

for more than 13 years due to his association with Qahtan Mohammed Al-Shaabi, the first president of the People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen—also known as South Yemen—after decolonization in 1967. Although Abdulkawi Al-Shaabi spent the best years of his age in prison, he accepted his situation and moved forward after his release.

Nowadays, Al-Shaabi says he suffers greatly. His house in Al-Ma’ala, a neighborhood in Aden, was destroyed, and his daughters’ car windshields were destroyed, too. Moreover, his daughters are exposed to offensive and filthy words daily, and people in his neighborhood throw stones at them and at him. He says it is because of his work on the Technical Committee.

“Those who trouble me should listen to my point of view first instead of disturbing me and my family,” he says bitterly, reflecting on his current distress. “If they are able to convince me, I will leave the committee, but intimidation isn’t accepted at all.”

“They must know that I can defend myself, and if worse comes to worst, I will use force to protect my family and property, but I’m committed to the civilized way and won’t use force. I have a tribe, supporters and strong relatives who can defend me, but I call on those people to stop annoying me.”

Al-Shaabi said his daughter cannot even go to work because of the continuous threats she receives from “gangs.”

“Now I’m 72, and I can’t tolerate all this annoyance,” he says. “Those who bother me in my neighborhood know nothing about my great past.”

“I don’t care whether I die or live because I have lived my whole life, but I’m concerned only for my daughters. My eldest daughter has been working in Yemen’s Airlines in Aden since 17 years old, and now her coworkers are starting to bother her.”

Al-Shabi says, “Excessive violence is the reason behind the current situation both in the south and the north. I’m afraid that the Southern Issue will move to be an international one because some people want that. If the situation worsens,

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then south Yemen won’t be one south but will divide into small areas and villages.”

“I’m concerned for the escalation of the situation because I experienced a bitter situation in my adulthood. I witnessed the death of my brother Faisal Al-Shaabi at the hands of unknown people for political and sectarian reasons. This, after all we sacrificed so that our children can live peacefully.”

Al-Shaabi addressed those who

try to create chaos in Yemen.

“I see you don’t know the truth. You just perform the role of the enemies who don’t want stability and security in Yemen. If you went on the same way, the country will be divided into small governorates, and fighting won’t come to an end. Not only the country will be destroyed, but also our children will lose everything nice. What happened during 1986 when Yemenis fought with each other is enough.”

Mutabak continues legacy as fast, popular Yemeni snack

Photo essay by Ashraf Al-Muraqab



▲ Mutabak is well known in Yemen. Abu Qasim’s restaurant is one of the most well known restaurants for Mutabak. He makes the Mutabak himself.

▼ Mutabak is a simple but tasty meal. It is cheap, and usually people have it at night for dinner.



▲ Mutabak is a traditional food. Many dishes have disappeared from the Yemeni diet, but Mutabak remains popular.



▲ Mutabak spread to several neighboring countries due to its taste and popularity. It is easily prepared, and meat, eggs, cheese or tuna can be stuffed inside.

▶ Mutabak is composed of chicken or meat, leek and eggs and spices such as salt, cumin and black pepper. Cheese or bananas are added to sweeten the dish.



▼ Ingredients to Mutabak have changed with the passage of time. Now minced chicken, tuna or butter are added.

Houthis refute human rights violations report

Story by Sadeq Al-Wesabi
Photos courtesy of Wethaq Foundation

A controversial report about human rights violations in Sa'ada and Hajja issued by the Wethaq Foundation for Civil Orientation has triggered a strong argument between Houthis and those who wrote the report.

The report revealed that approximately 13,905 human rights violations were monitored in Hajja and Sa'ada governorates by Houthis and by the Yemeni military from June 2004 to June 2012. It found that 531 murders were committed in Sa'ada by Houthi members, and they destroyed 497 houses. The report also claimed that 124 murders were done by Houthis in Hajja.

The findings casted light on different forms of violations committed by Houthis and by the Yemeni military. These crimes included kidnapping, forced displacement, torture, looting, occupying houses

and destroying shops farms, cars, mosques and health facilities.

Mohammed Al-Emad, editor-in-chief of Al-Howiya newspaper, said the report held little weight.

"Those who issued the report are partisan people and irrelevant to the human rights activities here," Al-Emad said. "They also didn't include Islah Party crimes in the governorates, and this is proof that it's written by Islahis."

He said it's not logical to accuse just one of the parties of committing crimes.

"Yes, there are crimes committed by Houthis, but we should also mention that Islahis and the government are also involved in many crimes in these areas."

"Since 2004," he continued, "Houthis have been arrested, killed and mistreated, and now we are attacking them."

Abdul-Hadi Al-Azazi, a human rights activist who also helped prepare the report, told the Yemen Times that there are many complaints by civilians about Houthi involvement with human rights

violations.

"We depend on facts on the ground, and we spread our team over the areas to document Houthi crimes," he said.

Dhaif Allah Al-Shami, a member of the political council of Houthis, said the report depends on lies. He said the report will not affect the Houthis' growth or their activities.

"We challenge them to prove that we committed such crimes," he said.

"This report was issued as a response to our campaign against American intervention in Yemen. The report aims to destroy our reputation after many Yemenis started supporting us," he said.

Al-Shami said the report was prepared earlier by Islamic Islah Party members, and the Wethaq Foundation rewrote it.

He said the violations mentioned in the report were illogical.

"How did they talk about such horrible violations while the world hasn't heard about them?"

Al-Shami said there were no any violations by Houthis in these gov-

ernorates.

"Those who are involved in these violations are irrelevant to Houthis. They are just drug and hashish dealers."

In recent months, media outlets loyal to the Islah Party waged a fierce campaign against Houthis, accusing them of committing numerous crimes. Other media outlets supported by Houthis did the same against Islah.

Hadi Wardan, a member of the local council in Sharas district in Hajja, said the report was accurate.

"All violations in the report are documented, and the real number of violations is higher than mentioned."

Wardan, who participated in preparing the report, said Wethaq is ready to face Houthis with the facts. He said the violations in the report are not based on Google searches but based on field visits to places that witnessed crimes by armed Houthi militias.

"We didn't issue this report as act of defiance against Houthis,"



This girl was disabled after a Houthi attacked her, according to Wethaq Foundation's report.

Wardan said. "There are real human rights violations in these governorates. Houthis committed crimes not only during wars but during peace."

Wardan did say the report also included details of human rights against Houthis.

"This is a proof that the report is not biased."



A disabled woman stands with her children in Al-Tahjir camp in Hajja.



This Yemeni man alleges he was attacked by Houthis, leaving him with physical injuries.



This elderly women was displaced to Al-Tahjir camp in Hajja.



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The deadline for the purchase of Tender Document is 21/11/2012.

Tenders shall be submitted in a red-waxed sealed envelope to the address indicated above, marked with the name of the Entity, project name, tender number, and the name of the tenderer, together with following documents:

1. A bank guarantee as per the enclosed format in the Tender Document for a lump-sum amount of (US \$24,000), or certified cheque, valid for a period of 120 days from the date of the opening of envelopes.
2. A copy of valid registration and classification certificates.
3. A copy of valid sales tax certificate + tax card.
4. A copy of insurance card + Zakat Card
5. A copy of practicing license.

Foreign companies are excluded from providing certificates, licenses and cards referred to above, and shall be required only to provide legal documents of eligibility issued by country of origin of these companies.

The deadline for receipt of tenders and opening of envelopes is at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday on 27/11/2012. Tenders received after this deadline shall not be accepted and shall be returned unopened to the sender.

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Sudoku

Easy

8	3	1	1					
	4	9		5	2			
3	7		4					
1			6		9	4		
4		2		5				
3	4			3		6		
		1		7				
9	7		2	4				
	3	7		4				

Intermediate

	3		4			7		
			1			9		
	6			4				
5				2				
7		3						
	1	9	8					
4		5		7		9		
2		7		9				

Difficult

		4	1	9			3	
5	2			7				
			8					
4	2						7	8
							9	5
		5					9	1
			1	8	4			

Chess

Solutions

Chess: Bxg7+

Sudoku

White plays and wins in the 4th move

Speech by U.N. Special Envoy Jamal Benomar, awarded Yemen Times' 2011 Person of the Year

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,
I stand before you extremely humbled. I always say that Yemen is my second home as you have always welcomed me, and I am truly humbled to have been named as the Person of the Year for 2011. Thank you, Yemen Times, and thank you to your readers.

In fact, the ones who really deserve this are you, my Yemeni friends and family:

- You, the youth who opened the doors and took the courageous first steps to seek change.

- You, the Yemeni leaders who chose to step back from the spectre of civil war and come to a negotiated solution.

I hold my praise to you.
2011 was indeed a turbulent, trying and yet triumphant year. This award is truly humbling because the work of my team and I has been modest. What has been achieved so far is the result of the wisdom, courage and leadership of the Yemeni people. It is you who chose to dialogue over violence.

In fact, I not only feel humbled but

also very proud. This Yemen Times award reflect Yemenis' confidence in the U.N. mission, which also bolsters our commitment to support you. Allow me to recall my first visits to Sana'a.

As many of you know, when we, as the United Nations, showed up in Sana'a, many asked what we could do that hadn't been done already. What I said at the time is that we do not have any magical solutions. We carried with us the understanding that Yemenis wanted to find a solution to the impasse and a sincere desire to assist this goal. We also, as the United Nations, have the unique role of not holding any vested interests. We bring impartiality, transparency and neutrality.

I still recall the moment in November when both sides requested me to delay my briefing to the Security Council to assist them in reaching an agreement. At the time, many had good reason to be skeptical. But we held our ground. And what we brought to the table is simple:

1. That a solution should be achieved through peaceful means.

2. The idea that the conflict could only be resolved through face-to-face dialogue among all parties.

3. That an agreement should be based on the GCC initiative but in conformity with Security Council Resolution 2014 and international law.

4. And that the outcome should open the way to responding to legitimate aspirations of the youth for change, to build a democratic state based on the rule of law.

I also pressed that the political process should go beyond political parties and include for the first time other stakeholders like the Houthis, Hiraak, and the youth. I also took special care to ensure that women would have a role in shaping the country's future.

The U.N. is used to dealing with protracted conflicts, hopeless situations. What keeps us going is the belief that we should keep trying no matter what. Definitely, in Yemen, there have been ups and downs. However, the will of the people allowed for effective change.

The agreement reached in November is not perfect, but it provides a

comprehensive roadmap for a negotiated transition. Since November 2011, Yemen has witnessed a number of critical events, including the presidential elections in February, which secured a peaceful transfer of power.

I take this opportunity to praise President Hadi for his stewardship of the country during this transition period. Working under a heavily challenging environment, he has brought the country forward on the political, security and economic fronts, with concrete measures of change.

Here, too, the efforts of Prime Minister Mohamed Salem Basindawa and the Government of National Unity have been commendable. No power-sharing agreement is easy, and they have been able to progress despite the unhappy marriage.

I would also like to extend my deepest thanks to the regional and international communities for supporting Yemen's transition, through a united Security Council, through the Friends of Yemen, the GCC as well as the active support of the diplomatic corps here in Sana'a.



Benomar with Yemen Times Editor-in-Chief Nadia Sakkaf

Before concluding, I would like to stress the importance of the media's role for the nation. The media plays a critical role in fostering a national landscape that is conducive to dialogue. Your role can be divisive, OR, it can be supportive to enhancing a peaceful change, to abandoning incitement and contributing to a new Yemen.

Finally, I would like to thank again the Yemen Times, your readership and the Yemeni people for nominating me for this award. I take this as my responsibility to rise to the challenge of supporting Yemen, particularly the priority to support the National Dialogue Conference in a meaningful manner where the Yemeni people are able to speak freely, candidly and constructively in shaping the country's future.



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