



متوفر لدى جميع
الموزعين المعتمدين
ومراكز خدمة سبأفون

400

ريال إشتراك شهري
حسب سنة الإشتراك

200

فائز شهرياً

خط الفوترة لتبدأ حُلة جديدة ومزايا فريدة

67%

تخفيض في خدمة
الأهل والأصدقاء

100%

الخط مجاني

800

ريال بداية لباقات
الإنترنت

خط سبأ الجديد كلياً ... تحدث ، اربح ، شارك ، قل مرحباً بمزايا لا حصر لها .

- قيمة خط الفوترة سبأ مجاناً (فقط دفع مبلغ التأمين) .
- إشتراك شهري يبدأ من 400 إلى 750 ريال ، وذلك حسب سنة الإشتراك حيث يحصل المشترك على 5% تخفيض عن كل سنة .
- فقط 150 ريال إشتراك لخدمة الأهل والأصدقاء ، أول 6 أرقام تضاف مجاناً ويتخفيض في المكالمات والإشتراك الشهري يصل إلى 67% .
- تأهل للسحب ضمن 200 فائز شهرياً بجوائز قيمة وذلك لكل 2500 ريال يتم سدادها شهرياً وتستطيع مضاعفة فرصك للفوز .
- باقات إنترنت متنوعة تبدأ من 800 ريال فقط (40 ميجا بايت) .
- (الأسعار غير شاملة للضريبة)

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ستايشن 3 ، مسرح منزلي وجوائز أخرى متنوعة .

جائزة
200 تنهرياً

لمزيد من المعلومات أرسل (سبأ) إلى الرقم ٢١١ مجاناً



تواصل لا يشترى ...

تخفيض حتى 60%



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خدمة الأهل والأصدقاء تتيح لمشاركي نظام الفوترة إضافة 6 أرقام
ولنظام الدفع المسبق إضافة 3 أرقام
والحصول على تخفيض في المكالمات والرسائل يصل إلى 60%.

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Funny faces: A troupe of performers are taking Yemen by storm with their puppet shows for children. The Thra'a Team for Puppet Theater uses comedy in their presentations to talk about some tough issues facing youngsters today, like child labor and marriage. They are now reaching young audiences in Sana'a, Aden and Taiz governorates. **Read more on Page 5**
(Photo courtesy of Hadeel Al-Jawzi)

Former ruling party signs NDC document, Southerners still lukewarm about conference's success

Ali Saeed

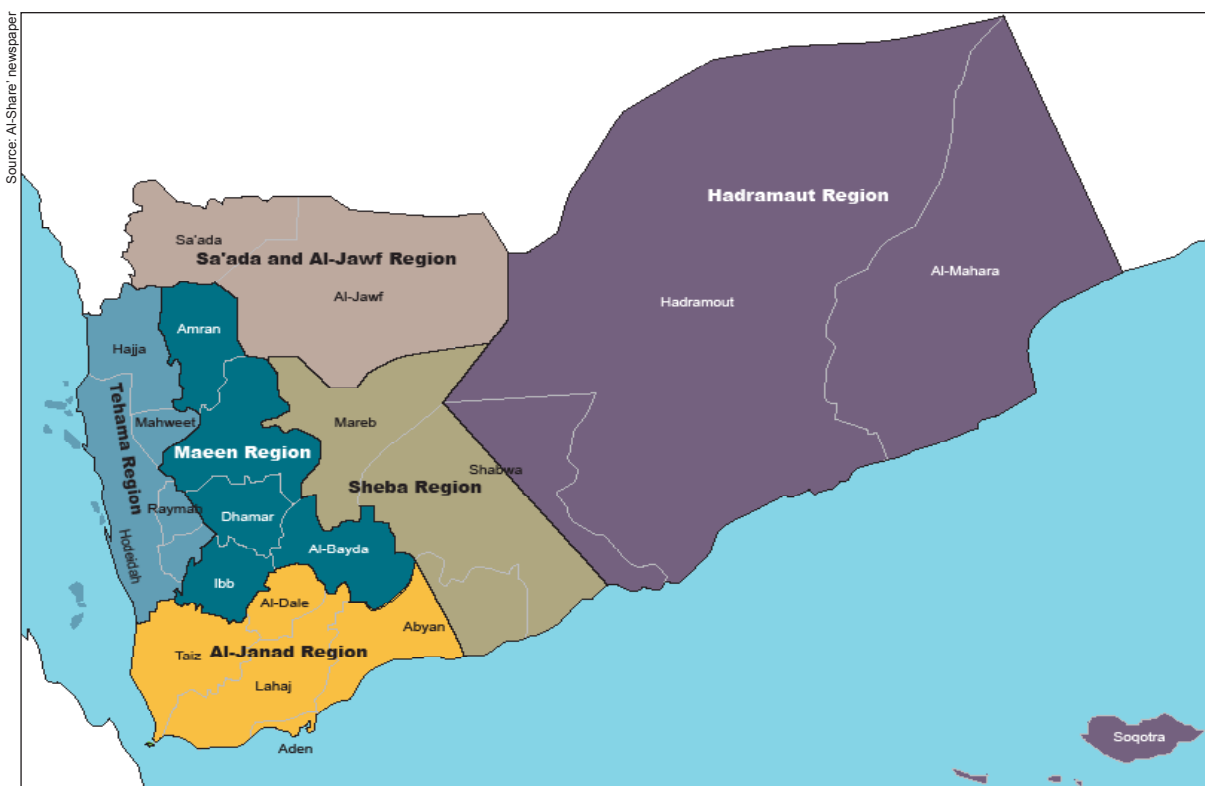
SANAA, Jan. 8—The General People's Congress (GPC), Yemen's former ruling party, and the Al-Rashad Union, the Salafi political party, signed the Southern Issue Solution Document on Wednesday following two weeks of negotiations, according to Yasser Al-Ruainee, the deputy secretary general of the National Dialogue Conference (NDC).

The GPC initially refused to sign the document, saying it jeopardized the nation's unity and placed Yemen under unwanted international influence.

The document, designed as a political compromise, reads that all signatories "pledge a fair solution to the Southern Issue under a united federal democratic state."

The government has to tackle all old grievances in the South during a transitional period that will pave the way for the new federal system," a copy of the document, published by the state-run Saba News Agency, reads.

The document calls for the creation of a new committee to be appointed by the president. The committee's main task will be to decide on the number of political divisions (states) the country will have under a new federal system. Up for debate is whether Yemen will become a two, five or six-region nation.



One of Yemen's possible federal maps.

New NDC Southern Movement members determined to move dialogue forward

In an effort to keep the South—who is pushing for a two-region federal system—engaged in the NDC's proceedings, conference officials recently invited over 20 new mem-

bers to replace delegates that have withdrawn from the talks.

Yazeed Al-Kazimi, a member of the Southern Movement (Hirak) in Lahj received a phone call in late December from Sana'a inviting him to participate in the conference, which was originally supposed to end in September. (Leaders later promised to have it conclude before the end of the year).

Al-Kazimi is one of the many Southerners who welcomed the invitation.

"I will attend the dialogue even if only one day remains to ensure the success of the dialogue outcomes," he said.

Former representatives from the South have not issued a unified statement clarifying the reasons behind their resignations. However, Khaled Ba Madhaf, a delegate from the South who left the NDC in November, said he and many of his colleagues quit because they felt that general secretary of the conference wanted to replace Southern

Movement leaders with others who would be more compliant.

"The president and the general secretary of the NDC intimidated and placed pressure on Hirak members to compel them to agree with their decisions," Ba Madhaf said.

The conference, which began March 18, is expected to conclude soon amid local and international efforts to get participants to agree on pending issues including the Southern Issue.

"We are determined to continue [until we] restore our rights. The Southern Issue Solution Document is a great achievement [on the road to] reestablishing the rights of the Southern people," said Al-Kazimi.

Al-Kazimi says his participation in the dialogue is "significant in regard to accomplishing what my comrades began, and no one entity or person [can speak on behalf of the entire South]."

In 2007, residents of Southern governorates, including Aden, Lahj, Al-Dhale took to the streets in ral-

lies and marches, demanding the restoration of property and jobs that were seized following Yemen's brief civil war in 1994. Calls for secession and the formation of the Southern Movement followed in response the authorities ruthless crackdowns on the protests.

North and South Yemen were united to form one single republic in 1990. In recent years renewed calls for the South's secession have grown louder.

Differing views on the Southern Issue Solution Document

While Al-Kazimi believes that the NDC's newcomers should work towards a future for all Yemenis, both in the South and in the North, another new participant from Aden says his sole purpose at the dialogue is to achieve "the right of self-determination" for the Southern people.

"We are determined to obtain the right of self-determination for the Southern people, and if we cannot make that happen, we will [return to the streets for public protests]," said Alla Al-Ghawba, who recently joined the conference's delegation.

Difficult task in the South

There is no united position in the

South towards the NDC and its expected outcomes, according to a new Southern Movement NDC member from Shabwa, Hamid Al-Kirbi.

"Some people support the conference and others feel indifferent about it," he said.

Jamal Al-Awlaqi, an NDC member from Shabwa who withdrew from the conference in April 2013, said in a conversation with the Yemen Times that he rejoined the conference in November to support a federalist system.

"I personally support...the Southern Issue Solution Document even if the option for more than two regions is adopted," he said.

There is tough work ahead, says Al-Kirbi. He says in order to win the trust of the Southern people, the government must first carry out its duties to maintain security, improve education and provide access to health services nationwide.

"Citizens do not feel the presence of a central authority, insecurity is widespread, and government offices are not functioning," he said.

"The people need, first of all, to feel that decisions will actually be implemented, otherwise they will bring about separation by force."



Ahmed Obaid Mubarak Bin Dagher, the GPC's assistant secretary general, (second from the left) signed the Southern Issue Solution Document on Wednesday.



Ceasefire brokered between Houthis and Salafis in Haradh

Fighting elsewhere continues

Nasser Al-Sakkaf

SANA'A, Jan. 8—The encampments of two warring parties in the Haradh area in Hajja governorate were being evacuated and surrendered to security forces on Wednesday, a day after the Houthis and pro-Salafi fighters signed a ceasefire agreement brokered by a presidential committee on Tuesday.

Local sources say the pro-Salafi fighters removed blocks on the Haradh-Sa'ada road, which they had been occupying for three months, preventing the transport of goods and services to the area.

The presidential committee, headed by Gen. Mohammed Al-Qasimi, the army's general inspector, and Hajja's governor, Ali Al-Qaisi, supervised the signing of the document.

The agreement stipulated that both sides should direct their fighters to cease firing at one another, according to a report by the state-run Saba news agency.

However, clashes between the Houthis, a group of Zaidi Shiites who operate outside government control in the North, and their Salafi opponents (a conservative Sunni sect) continue in other areas such as Hashid in Amran governorate, Barat in Al-Jawf governorate and Arhab in Sana'a.

Peace negotiations have failed in these areas as well as in the small town of Dammaj in Sa'ada, which has been the epicenter of fighting between the two groups.

Hassan Humran, the foreign relations coordinator for the Houthis in Sa'ada, said government forces are securing the main road into Sa'ada and working to prevent future roadblocks from being erected.

Humran said the road is a huge lifeline for the area.

In addition to the Haradh route, there are two other major roads connecting Sa'ada governorate to the rest of the country. The Arhab-Sa'ada and the Amran-Sa'ada routes remain blocked due to ongoing fighting between the two groups.

Food and oil prices have risen in Sa'ada as a result of the roadblocks, according to Mohammed Al-Bukhaiti, a Houthi representative at the National Dialogue Conference. He says the price of one gas cylinder has reached YR3,000 (\$14). This is more than double the price, YR1,200-1,400 (\$5.60-\$6.50) in the capital, Sana'a.

Initially, it seemed the presidential committee assigned to Dammaj had convinced the Houthis to lift their siege on the city, but local resident Ismael Al-Wadei said Wednesday afternoon that clashes continue.

He added, "The block which the pro-Salafi supporters are running at the entrances to Sa'ada governorate is no worse than the months-long siege the Houthis have placed on Dammaj," he said.

In order to broker an agreement, Al-Wadei believes both sides will have to concede.

It is not the first time the two sides have signed an agreement to end fighting in Dammaj. Previous agreements signed by both parties failed to be implemented.

Yemen seizes Egyptian ship on Arabian Sea coast

Government investigations underway

Nasser Al-Sakkaf

SANA'A, Jan. 8—Interrogations of the crew of an Egyptian ship seized by Yemeni naval forces on Sunday in the Nashton Port of Mahra governorate are still underway.

Yemeni authorities have yet to provide any information about the ship's cargo but a committee that includes representatives from the general prosecutor's office, the public security office, the Ministry of Fisheries and military intelligence began their investigations on Tuesday, said Mohammed Al-Mawiri, a spokesperson for the Interior Ministry.

Col. Shuja Mahdi, the operations director for the coastal forces, told the Yemen Times the Egyptian ship was seized due to "suspicious" activities. He said the ship made multiple, unannounced stops as it moved slowly along the Yemeni coastline.

"The ship stopped in places where foreign ships that were smuggling goods or fishing illegally had been caught previously," said Mahdi.

Mahdi praised the nation's coastal forces for helping track the ship down. According to preliminary investigations, the crew said the ship was having mechanical



issues, prompting them to make multiple stops. However, Mahdi has dismissed the claims.

The ship was coming from Egypt and headed to Dubai in the UAE. The ship's seven-member crew is currently detained at the port.

The smuggling of goods and weapons is not uncommon in Yemen's regional waters and over the past year, at least one other ship was seized at Nashton Port for allegations of smuggling.

"Coastal forces do not maintain a strong presence in the Nashton Port due to lack of infrastructure," said Mahdi. "This is the reason behind the increase in smuggling in this area."

In January of last year, at Nash-

ton Port, Yemen stopped a ship that originated in Iran.

At the beginning of November, the Specialized Criminal Court in Aden sentenced nine people convicted of smuggling weapons on the ship, the Jehan 1, to various sentences of one to 10 years in prison.

According to Mohammed Al-Qaedi, the public relations manager at the Interior Ministry, the ship was carrying 73 tons of diesel, 40 tons of weapons and explosives, and \$30,000. Yemeni forces seized the ship and its cargo.

The Yemen Times contacted the Egyptian embassy for comment on the story, but they provided no additional information.

Police accused of protecting sheikh in killing of local welder

Mohammed Al-Hassani

SANA'A, Jan. 8—Tension is high in Sana'a's southern neighborhood of Al-Asbahi following the death of a resident, Dawood Al-Sroori, who was allegedly shot by guards of an influential tribal sheikh last week.

The victim's relatives accuse the police of protecting the sheikh, who is originally from Ibb governorate. A man originally arrested in connection to the killing was later released by police.

This week, relatives of the victim staged a protest in front of Al-Sroori's workshop to denounce the killing.

They blocked at least one street in the Al-Asbahi neighborhood and set up tents.

Police quickly reacted, sending

seven military vehicles from the Al-Syaghi Police Station to disperse the protestors. Two protestors were arrested and the tents confiscated, eyewitnesses said.

Watheeq Ameen, an Al-Asbahi resident and eyewitness to Al-Sroori's shooting, said four gunmen entered Al-Sroori's welding workshop and started to beat him. As the man attempted to flee, Ameen says the gunmen shot him.

Al-Sroori was later pronounced dead at the state-run Al-Thawra Hospital in Sana'a.

Ameen said that the locals in the neighborhood are very upset about the murder and that the case highlights the authorities' inability to hold influential leaders accountable for crimes, even in cases of murder.

Wadee Al-Sroori, the son of the victim, said a forensic expert conducted an autopsy on his father on Tuesday and investigations are still underway. No results have been made public, he said.

Currently the case is at the Capital City Southeastern Court.

"We will await the ruling of the court; if it does not act, we will take matters into our own hands," Wadee said.

An officer at the Al-Syaghi Police Station said, "Investigations are presently being conducted." He declined to comment further.

The Yemen Times also contacted family members of those being accused of connections to the shooting, but they declined to comment.

The fate of the welding workshop is unknown.

Following shelling of funeral tent, local gunmen continue to clash with brigade in Al-Dhale

Fighting is taking place at night

Ali Ibrahim Al-Moshki

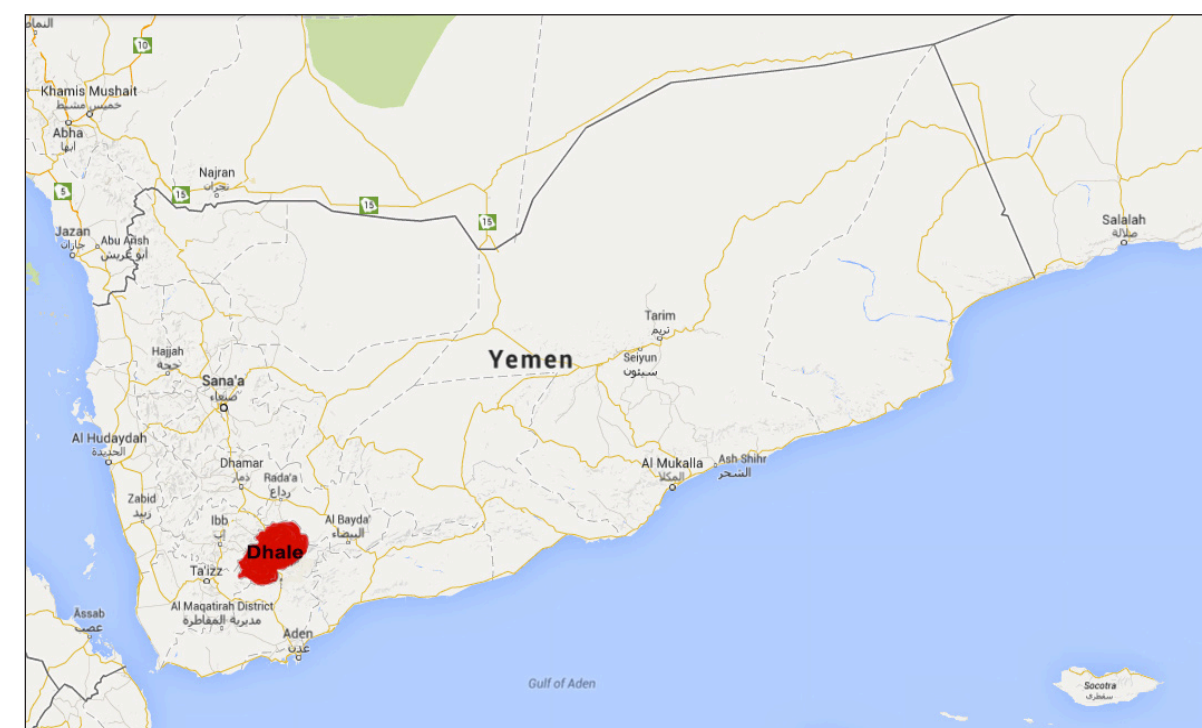
SANA'A, Jan. 8—Sporadic violent clashes in the Sanah area of Al-Dhale governorate between unidentified gunmen and the army's Brigade 33 are entering their third week following the Brigade's shelling of a funeral tent at the end of December.

On Dec. 27, Brigade 33 allegedly fired multiple times at a funeral procession. According to area security officials, 22 people were killed in the attack and 29 injured.

Since then, protests have been taking place in the area as well as nocturnal fighting. Several residents have been reported killed in the exchange of gunfire between the groups. However, there has been no statement on the number of casualties from local officials.

On Tuesday morning, three civilians were wounded in an hour-long gun battle between the gunmen and soldiers from the brigade, said Mohammed Al-Shaeri, Al-Dhale's security chief.

While there are reports that the men shooting at the Brigade are associated with the Southern Movement, a group of separatists



who have also been linked to the funeral that was shelled, Al-Shaeri believes the gunmen fighting with the brigade are not affiliated with any group.

Despite the nightly gunfire, Al-Shaeri says "the security situation is stable in the governorate and the protests continue peacefully." The number of protesters continues to dwindle each day, he says.

Al-Shaeri said his forces are working with local tribesmen and Southern Movement leaders to continue to improve the security situation in the area.

Members of Brigade 33 and locals each blame the other side for initiating the nocturnal gunfire.

"The insurgents have spread in the streets and attack the brigade," said Sadeq Mohammed Al-Haka-

mi, the spokesperson for Brigade 33. "We counterattack to defend ourselves."

Majed Al-Shuaibi, a local resident and member of the Southern Movement, said the brigade's forces are shelling haphazardly outside of the nocturnal fighting.

"The brigade has shelled several neighborhoods and areas in the city," he said.

Two die and one injured in two separate attacks in Aden

Ali Ibrahim Al-Moshki

SANA'A, Jan. 8—Two security personnel were shot dead by unidentified gunmen in Aden on Tuesday, according to security officials. On the same day, also in Aden, a political security officer was injured in a car bombing believed to have been an assassination attempt.

At around 11:00 a.m., gunmen in Hilux model Toyota pickup truck fired at Officer Mubarak Lashram and Mohammed Ali Hussein, a soldier, in the Sheikh Othman district as they were leaving the Al-Nasr Military Camp, according to a security source who spoke

to the Yemen Times on condition of anonymity.

Both men, who were working with the local police force, died at the scene.

Earlier in the morning, at 9:00 a.m., a car bomb attached to high-ranking Political Security Officer Col. Mohammed Al-Qadi's car exploded in the Saira district in a believed assignment attempt.

Brig. Sadeq Haid, Aden's security chief, said Al-Qadi lost a leg in the explosion and is currently being treated in a local hospital.

No one has yet been blamed for the explosion, said Haid.

The anonymous source said that despite incidents like those on

Tuesday, "the security situation in Aden is 80 percent stable."

People are losing faith in the government's ability to ensure order as a result of such incidents, said Abdulrahman Anees, an Aden-based journalist.

While some have pinned possible blame on Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula for the car bomb, many security officials shot down such claims.

Last Thursday, Col. Marwan Moqbel, a member of the Political Security Forces, was assassinated as he was leaving his house in Aden's Al-Qalooah area.

No one has been arrested in connection with the crime.

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

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Use of historic castle in Hodeida in question

Story and photos by Samar Qaed

Corniche Al-Hodeida Castle sits on the coast of the Red Sea in Hodeida's Al-Hawak district. The castle was constructed as a military fortress in 1538 during the Ottoman occupation of Yemen. It is considered one of the most important historic landmarks in Hodeida governorate, although its current use is leading many to wonder how dedicated the state is to preserving its history.

Following the 1962 revolution—when the imam's rule came to an

end—antiquities, including manuscripts, were collected and stored in the castle, and eventually these treasures were made public.

However, the ancient building was closed in March 2012 following an attack and subsequent looting that took place during local, political demonstrations.

Now the castle is used as the headquarters for Hodeida governorate's antiquities office and other local administrative offices including the land authority, sanitation and tourism.

What was once a small tourist destination is now a place of business, with government employees

coming and going.

There are no more students or researchers, says Enas Mohamed, who had worked as the museum's secretary and is currently a secretary for the district director's office.

Around eight years ago, the Al-Hawak district's local council repaired the castle at a cost of YR250 million (nearly \$1.2 million). The castle was then handed over to the antiquities office of Hodeida governorate. But in 2012, clashes erupted in nearby Hiraq Square, between members of the Tehama Movement, local authorities and the Central Security Forces.

The Tehama Movement, a popular group that formed in 2012 to organize against what they call the marginalization of Tehama locals by the central government, took refuge in the castle in March 2012 after fighting erupted. As a result, security forces stormed the fortress, damaging the castle's antique, wooden doors. An undocumented number of historic items were looted from the castle during the fighting.

"We had asked the police and movement members to stay away from the castle," said Ahmed Al-Deek, the director of Hodeida's antiquities office. "Some historic manuscripts and weapons were stolen. We don't know what happened to them."

Following the clashes, the local district authority moved out, leaving the remaining relics at the castle to sit collecting dust. Although the antiquities office still operates within the castle, the local authority is pushing for them to move.

Ali Al-Hindi, the manager of the Al-Hawak district, explained that the local district moved its offices into the castle because they believe the antiquities office was not properly protecting it. The local district blames the office for the loss of the historical treasures.

"The current administration neglected the castle. We do not object to the evacuation of [all of the offices, both the local ones and the antiquities authority] from the castle provided that it is handed

over to an authority capable of protecting and securing the building. But it is impossible to leave it now because we are [the ones keeping it safe]," Al-Hindi said.

It doesn't seem anyone will be moving anytime soon or that the

castle will be restored as a historic site.

In the meantime, the Tehama Movement's blue, white and green flag still flies above the castle's facade as a reminder of the change in guard.



Prior to 2012, the castle used to attract a number of local and international researchers.



Locals say no one has bothered to remove the Tehama Movement's flag since it was erected in March 2012.



An undocumented number of relics were stolen from the castle.

ADVERTORIAL

Emirates SkyCargo Completes Another Remarkable Year

DUBAI, UAE – 6th January 2014 – Emirates SkyCargo, one of the largest and most progressive air cargo operators globally, has achieved another successful year and major milestones over the past twelve months.

In 2013, Emirates SkyCargo expanded its network and range of destination options for its customers by launching four new cargo-only destinations which began with Hanoi in Vietnam on 6 February, Chicago in the US on 3 March, Kano in Nigeria on 4 October, and Quito in Ecuador on 3 December. It also began services to Warsaw, Algiers, Haneda, Stockholm Clark, Conakry, Sialkot and Kabul – with the launch of passenger services offering belly-hold capacity to these eight destinations.

To support its network growth, Emirates' SkyCargo expanded its fleet during 2013 by adding three new Boeing 777 Freighter aircraft. It now operates 12 freighters, 10 B777 Fs and two B747-400 ERFs which currently serve 43 destinations around the world.

In March 2013, the freight division of Emirates strengthened its Cool Chain Premium Service with the appointment of an additional cool chain solutions provider, CSafe. In 2013, SkyCargo carried more than 4000 tonnes of temperature-sensitive pharmaceutical and healthcare products through its Cool Chain Premium Service.

With the Emirates and Qantas partnership that began in March 2013, Emirates SkyCargo and Qantas Freight cooperated on cargo capacity on each other's



passenger services offering cargo capacity to a combined total of over 200 ports across six continents.

In April 2013, Emirates SkyCargo became the first carrier to implement Electronic-Air Waybill (e-AWB) shipments under the industry's recently ratified multilateral e-AWB standard, demonstrating its continued leadership in adopting the latest innovations and industry standards.

During the year Emirates SkyCargo has entered into over 190 global and local bilateral and multi-lateral e-AWB agreements with its customers to support the transition from paper Air Waybills (AWB) to electronic Air waybills.

In May 2013, the Emirates Group which includes SkyCargo announced its annual results. For the first time Emirates SkyCargo reported a revenue over

AED 10 billion reaching AED 10.3 billion (US\$ 2.8 billion) mark, an 8 per cent increase over last year. Its tonnage increased 16 per cent reaching a remarkable 2.1 million tonnes in a shrinking airfreight market, highlighting its ability to grow revenues against the industry norm.

The airline carried 2.1 million tonnes of cargo across its network in the 2012-13 financial year and was ranked number one amongst the top airlines for scheduled Freight Tonne Kilometres flown internationally according to the latest World Airline Transport Statistics published by IATA.

This year SkyCargo has won numerous of prestigious industry awards, including 'Cargo Airline of the Year 2013' (Air Cargo Week), 'Cargo Airline of the Year 2013', 'Best Middle East Cargo Airline' (both Air Cargo News), 'Best Air Cargo Carrier Middle East' (AFSCA), 'Cargo Operator of the Year' (SCATA) and 'Air Cargo Excellence Award' (Air Cargo World), to name but few.

Looking forward into 2014, Emirates SkyCargo operations will move to Dubai World Central Al Maktoum International Airport which is set to become the home of its freighter operations from April 2014.

Upon completion of the first phase, followed by the installation of the cargo handling system and the fitment of the interior by April 2014 and full completion by mid-September, the terminal will be equipped to handle 700,000 tonnes of cargo and can be further expanded by an additional 300,000 tonnes in the second phase.



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YT vision statement "To make Yemen a good world citizen."

Prof. Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf,
(1951 - 1999)
Founder of Yemen Times



OUR OPINION

The Yemen Times' Person of the Year

The Yemen Times has an annual tradition of celebrating a person who has contributed positively to the country's development. The criteria is simple: he or she should have given to the community during the year and left a positive mark on society, whether on a professional, public or personal level.

He or she can be someone as powerful as a minister or the president, or they simply can be a school principal, who has turned a school around and made it into an exemplary educational institution.

The point is simple—to celebrate and appreciate good initiatives and create role models for others to follow.

The process of selecting the person of the year is an interactive one that involves our readers—both print and online—as well as the listeners of Radio Yemen Times. This year, Dr. Yasin Sa'ed Noman received the majority of votes because the public recognized and valued his efforts to support the country's development. He is a rare, honest politician and has displayed a strong commitment to justice and modernization over the years.

There were other strong contenders this year, such as the late Ibrahim Mothana, a young Yemeni activist who died in 2013 at the age of 24 and who, despite his young age, left his mark on the world.

There was also Dr. Ahmed Awad Bin Mubarak, the secretary general of the National Dialogue Conference, who proved that a young, energetic man is capable of successfully managing a huge event and positively contributing to the country's peaceful transition of power.

Among the candidates, there was also Amr Jamal, the young director who has reinvented Yemeni drama. With very modest resources, he has managed to produce theatrical and TV masterpieces, simultaneously putting Yemeni drama on the regional, artistic map.

There was Noria Naji, the director of YERO, a charity that educates vulnerable children, and the first Arab woman to receive an Order of the British Empire (OBE) from Queen Elizabeth. She has dedicated her life to improving access to education for Yemeni children.

Also on the list was Murad Subay, an activist and artist who initiated public campaigns advocating for human rights. He has fought against political imprisonments ("disappearances") and hunger. He has won international awards for his campaigns and has very creatively used the walls of Sana'a to convey his messages.

There was also Farea Al-Muslimi, the first Yemeni to address the U.S. Congress. He was named one of Foreign Policy magazine's 100 global change makers for 2013 for his role as a youth activist and international speaker against drones.

It is exciting to see that Yemen has a wealth of young change agents who take risks for the sake of improving the country. This is a relatively new phenomenon that I believe is somewhat related to the 2011 uprising. Even before that, we knew we were responsible for creating change and that we each have to do our share and not just rely on the established decision-makers.

But the truth is that most of the rising Yemeni professionals and civil society activists were working alone and did not really believe that things could significantly change. When 2011 happened—and with it, youth's major contribution to regime change—spirits soared. Since then, many youth-based initiatives and civil society projects have been created.

Dr. Yasin Sa'ed Noman is indeed a remarkable person with ample experience and impressive achievements. He is the Yemen Times' Person of the Year for 2013, and he was chosen by our readers and listeners. The other good news is that 2013 also brought us many young, new faces of change who, individually and collectively, are just beginning to leave positive marks on the nation.

Nadia Al-Sakkaf

US drone attacks in Yemen protect no one but Al-Qaeda

Farea Al Muslimi
Theational.ae
First Published Jan. 5

On Dec. 5, Yemenis woke to one of the most horrifying massacres in recent memory. Militants dressed in army uniforms attacked a hospital inside the ministry of defense compound in the capital, Sana'a, killing more than 50 and wounding more than 150.

The victims were men, women and children; patients, doctors and nurses; locals and foreigners. Footage from surveillance cameras showed a gunman attacking a surgeon as he operated on a patient in the emergency room, and another casually lobbing a grenade into a crowd of people cowering on the floor.

The spontaneous public backlash against Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) was more intense than anything the country has witnessed in decades. AQAP, which has long tried to cultivate an image of fighting on behalf of ordinary Yemenis against foreign aggression, was excoriated on TV, newspapers, radio and social media—all this was even before the group announced responsibility for the attack.

But then, on the following night after the government began broadcasting the videos, and as rage against AQAP was reaching a fevered pitch, an unmanned American military drone flying over the Rada'a province, some 150 kilometers south-east of Sana'a, fired a missile into Yemen. It struck a vehicle in a wedding

procession, killing 12 people and wounding dozens more. Almost instantly, the public discourse shifted, the anger redirected. Al-Qaeda had almost destroyed itself but America came to its rescue.

In a country that has suffered almost a decade of U.S. drone strikes and watched them obliterate hundreds of innocent lives, it mattered little that the "official" target in Rada'a were several militants among the wedding goers. Rather, that drone strike reminded Yemenis, once again, that it is American terror that looms over them—constantly. As one Yemeni activist said: "If you escape AQAP, you don't escape U.S. drones."

AQAP seized the opportunity. On Dec. 22, the group's military leader, Qasim Al-Raimi, apologized for the hospital attack in a video statement and promised to pay compensation to survivors and victims' families. The mistake, he claimed, was that the group had attacked the wrong building, that their actual target had been the drone control center within the ministry of defense compound, jointly run by U.S. and Yemeni military personnel. However implausible this story may be, the apology and promise of compensation are in stark contrast to America's cold silence for the civilians it killed.

American intervention did years worth of public relations on behalf of AQAP. While this is the latest and certainly the most blatant example, it is far from the only instance of the U.S. indirectly assisting Al-Qaeda's PR machine—and even its human resources department. It was actually in the Rada'a district that a researcher, who recently visited the

area, discovered a local AQAP leader who was complaining about new recruits not carrying out their regular religious prayers—they did not join Al-Qaeda for ideological reasons, but because they saw the group as a means to avenge relatives killed in U.S. drone strikes and for other reasons that have nothing to do with ideology.

In many parts of Yemen, it is not AQAP that is feared, but America. Not long ago, I visited the area of Khawlan, a 30-minute drive from Sana'a, where a U.S. missile struck a vehicle full of passengers, killing everyone, including a local schoolteacher. He'd been with his cousin, the driver, who had picked up other people as a normal fare ride. How were the cousins to know that these people were on the U.S. kill list? Children were waiting in the classroom for two hours the next morning before the news came that their teacher, Ali, was dead. Now, whenever teachers are late for class, students at the school become terrified that the U.S. may have killed them.

U.S. drones also undermine the legitimacy of America's valuable ally in Yemen, president Abdu Rabu Mansour Hadi. In August, Hadi visited the U.S., and while meeting with CIA director John Brennan a drone was fired into his hometown of Abyan. The president's return to Yemen was followed by days of intensive drone strikes across the country. Hadi then publicly defended the drone strikes—all of which made him look like more of an American stooge than a man of his people. Hadi is already in an uphill battle to prove himself to Yemenis, as regional

and Western powers had selected him as the only name on the ballot to replace former President Ali Abdulla Saleh.

There are also economic consequences for drone strikes. For example, the same month that Hadi was in the U.S., the Yemeni government announced that it qualified 18 international oil companies to bid on 20 onshore exploration blocks, mostly in the provinces of Hadramout and Marib, which hold more than 85 percent of the country's oil reserves.

Hadramout and Marib also happen to be the sites of regular U.S. strikes that targeted not only suspected Islamic militants but also powerful local leaders, including a prominent religious cleric who preached against Al-Qaeda and many civilians. This has had locals increasingly protesting against U.S. drones and the central government's complicity. This also exacerbates pre-existing tensions in Hadramout, where many Yemenis have long sought autonomy from Sana'a.

In such an environment, it is unclear how oil companies would mitigate the risk of their staff and operations being held hostage to angry locals after another drone strike.

While the U.S. is the largest donor of humanitarian aid to Yemen, Washington has done an excellent job of having itself perceived as the enemy of the Yemeni people while helping Al-Qaeda in ways Al-Qaeda could never have dreamt of itself.

Farea Al Muslimi is a Yemeni activist and writer.

Say yes to the homeland

Mohammed Al-Khulaqi

Following the mass anti-government rallies in Hadramout on Dec. 20, the question that keeps nagging me and several others is why the rallies were so wide-reaching and are now a major topic of discussion?

The answer is: because it's Hadramout.

Some have tried to jump on the band wagon. The Southern Movement (Hirak) tried to turn the day into a rally call for the South, but the day was really about Hadramout, a real Hadrami day.

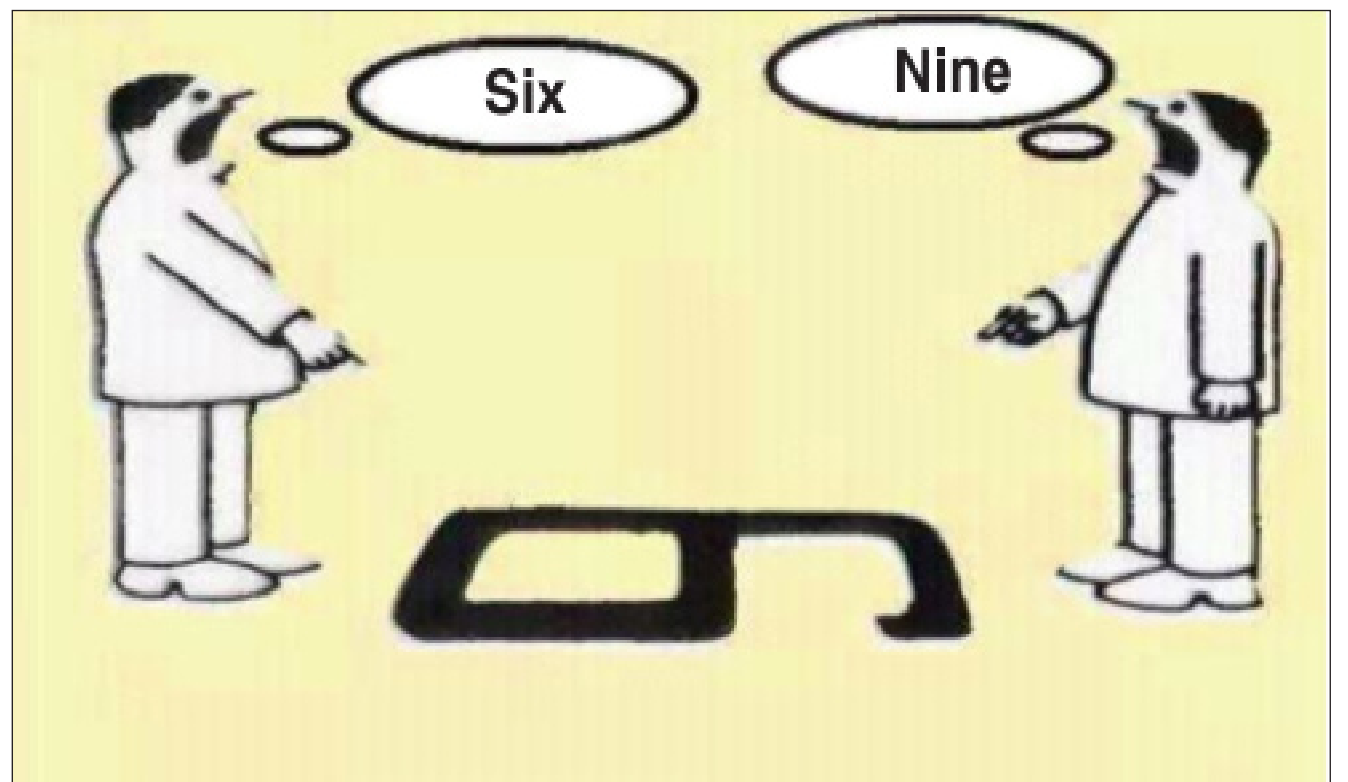
The mass rallies in Hadramout were a reflection of a governorate that in many ways operates as its own state.

There are thousands of Hadramis living outside the governorate, around the world. They still have strong ties to Hadramout, using the Arabic dialect associated with the area. Many hailing from the governorate have achieved great commercial and scientific success in the countries where they now reside.

"The history of the people of Hadramout, and their real glory is outside of Hadramout," said a well-known sheikh from Hadramout, Shakib Arslan, known as Amir Al-Bayān.

But there are those that are stealing the spotlight from Hadramout. They are trying to use the unrest in Hadramout to further the agenda of the Southern Movement. The Southern Movement and Hadramout have very different goals.

While factions of the Southern Movement continue to push for secession in the South, in Hadramout there are a variety of opinions about the future of the governorate. Many tribes support



a unified Yemen, but one that provides them more autonomy and local decision-making power.

There are those that think Hadramout should be its own independent state. Of course, there are also those that lump Hadramout with the South and are pushing for its independence from the North.

So, who is right?

We are like the people in the image above. One says the number is nine, and the other says it's six. Both are right, but each one should understand the other's perspective.

Unfortunately, the Southern Movement is having a hard time doing that and is currently out powering other

voices. They say those that are for unity, are betrayers, spies and should be ignored.

The Southern Movement is using money to create block roads in Aden and provoke soldiers, practices they say they condemn.

The Southern Movement talks about building an open state and free democracy but simultaneously prevents others from voicing their opinions. Should the Southern Movement have the ultimate voice?

The Southern Movement has legitimate demands, but why has the issue been turned into a case where it's either me or you? Why can't it be us, as partners in the homeland, making decisions

that benefit everyone?

Open your hearts to the homeland! We are one. There are millions of Southerners residing in the North. If the country separates, will we tell them to return to the South? There are just as many Northerners in Southern governorates. Who is and is not a Southerner?

These questions are not easy ones. The only answer is to put faith in our dialogue and accept its outcomes, which will hopefully keep the homeland in mind.

Mohammed Al-Khulaqi is a business owner in Hadramout.

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Offices

Taiz Bureau:

Imad Ahmed Al-Saqqaf

Tel: +967 (4) 217-156,

Telefax: +967 (4) 217157

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Combining laughter with lessons

Puppet troupe uses comedy to convey messages to children

Story and photos by **Ali Abulohoom**

Children squeal with laughter as the hand-made puppets in front of them narrate a popular Yemeni folk tale.

At the headquarters of the Childhood Forum for Development in Sana'a's, a non-profit that supports extracurricular activities for children, the two-year-old Thra'a Team for Puppet Theater put on one of their shows designed to build life skills and deal with difficult situations in a light-hearted manner.

The interactive shows touch on issues affecting children including the tough ones: early marriage, sexual abuse and child labor. They also teach about such life skills as first aid.

When one of the puppet charac-

ters finds himself with a cut foot and isn't sure what to do, the puppeteers solicit their young audience for solutions. The children brainstorm together and then shout out how the puppet should proceed. They tell him to tell an adult, make sure the cut is cleaned thoroughly and wrapped in a bandage.

"I'm very happy being here today watching the puppets in person rather than on TV," said 10-year-old audience member, Ahlam Saeed.

In its short existence, the small troupe of puppeteers has made a name for itself and they are recruiting others to join their creative endeavors.

Founded by 20-year-old Sadam Al-Adlah, the idea for the troupe was born after a trip the young man took to Egypt, where he studied the art of puppet making.

"I had already read about and



Girls participating in a Thra'a workshop at the Childhood Forum for Development show off the puppets they made out of recyclable materials

tried to make puppets before I went to Egypt, but my experience and skills were honed there," Al-Adlah said. "I learned a lot in terms of making puppets and how to stage plays."

The Thra'a team has grown to eight members, four girls and four boys, ranging in age from 16 to 25.

The team has travelled to Sana'a, Taiz and Aden governorates to perform, and they also hold workshops to teach children how to make their

own puppets.

When the team approached Amal Al-Mjeedi, the director of the Childhood Forum for Development, about giving them a regular performance time slot, she welcomed the idea.

"We are always trying to come up with creative ideas to involve as many children as possible in activities," she said.

For troupe member Ahmed Al-Balasi, becoming a puppeteer has allowed him to not only connect with children but also to instill messages he wishes he would have been taught as a child.

Members of the group have also had to challenge themselves. Most recently, they took their show to the Arhab district, about 10 miles north of Sana'a. The Arhab area is known for tribal warfare and sporadic clashes between tribesmen and the state's army.

"I hesitated several times before finally deciding to go there," said Hadeel Al-Jawzi, another puppeteer. The 20-year-old says she had concerns about her safety in Arhab. However Al-Jawzi says her "fears were totally groundless," and all her stereotypes about the area were dispelled.

"We were warmly welcomed by locals who opened their houses and the school for us to stay in and perform at," she said.

The group, like many young artists' collectives, struggles with funding. While they would like a local NGO to eventually sponsor them, for now they depend on partner organizations in Egypt, Bahrain, Tunisia and Lebanon to provide them with ongoing training and technical

support.

Most recently the troupe had to pass up an opportunity to go to Tunisia for a conference because they couldn't afford the airfare.

But, the group says, funding or not, they will continue to perform.

"I feel absolutely ecstatic when I finish performing and get a standing ovation," said Al-Balasi.



A visitor from Egypt learns mask-making techniques from the Thra'a team



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CSO-MU Background
 In January 2012, the Center of Business Administration (CBA) established the Civil Society Organizations Management Unit (CSO-MU) in partnership with Responsive Governance Project, USAID. The main purpose of this partnership is to strengthen the Yemeni civil society by bridging the information and credibility gap exists between the donors and recipient organizations. CSO-MU in CBA has also extended the CSO-MU module to a unit within Aden University with the purpose of expanding the coverage to nearby governorates. The capacity building of targeted CSOs will guarantee their sustainability and accountability to ultimately help them function effectively and enable them to play their legitimate role in the upcoming critical period.

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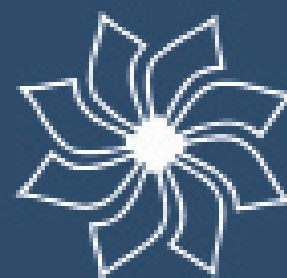
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The program airs on Radio Yemen Times, 88.8 FM, on Wednesdays at 8 p.m. and is rebroadcast on Saturdays at 11 a.m.

المادة 19 هو برنامج توعوي يتحدث عن حق الفرد والمجتمع في حرية التعبير عن الرأي التي كُفلت كفالته كاملة بالنص الصريح بالمادة 19 في العهد الدولي للحقوق المدنية والسياسية، والإعلان العالمي لحقوق الإنسان والتي نصت على أنه لكل شخص الحق في حرية الرأي والتعبير، ويشمل هذا الحق حرية اعتناق الآراء وإداعتها بأي وسيلة كانت دون تقيد بالحدود الجغرافية.

هذا البرنامج يبث كل أربعاء الساعة 8 مساءً ويعاد يوم السبت الساعة 11 صباحاً على أثير راديو يمن تايمز 88,8.

الحق في التجمع السلمي

ناقشت الحلقة الخامسة من برنامج المادة 19 الحق في التجمع السلمي كحق من الحقوق المكفولة بنص المادة 20 من الإعلان العالمي لحقوق الإنسان والمادة 21 من العهد الدولي للحقوق المدنية والسياسية وتؤكد المادتان حق كل إنسان في التجمع السلمي دون المساس بالصالح العام والأمن القومي والصحة العامة أو الأدب العام في المجتمع.

معرفة المجتمع بأشكال التجمع السلمي، صورة وأدواته كانت المحور الأساسية للحلقة، واستضافت الحلقة كلاً من المحامي أحمد عمران بمنظمة هود، ود. غادة البخيتي - أستاذة بكلية الطب جامعة صنعاء.

معنى التجمع السلمي

أحمد عمران: دائماً ما يفهم أن التجمع السلمي هو المسيرات والمظاهرات والإعتصامات، لكنه يقصد به الحق في تشكيل الأحزاب السياسية أو مؤسسات المجتمع المدني والجمعيات الخيرية وغيرها، ويصل هذا الحق أيضاً للاحتجاج المطالب. لكن نص القانون يشترط إلا تقوم هذه التجمعات على التحريض للكرهية أو العنف والقتل وإباحة الدماء.

غادة البخيتي: هذا ما اتبعناه في حركة (بس)، وهي تجمع سلمي للاطباء والشباب اليمنيين وشكلت تزامناً مع الجريمة الشنعاء التي تعرض لها مستشفى العرضي والتي قوبلت بردة فعل سلبية من المجتمع والمسؤولين بعد الحادثة.

نظرة القانون للتجمع السلمي

أحمد عمران: "من حق أي مجموعة من الناس أن يجتهدوا على أي فعل سلمي وهذه المجموعات لا يشترط أن تحتج لأي تصريح لقيامها". أدوات التجمع السلمي

غادة البخيتي: "هناك خطوات عملية لتوعية المجتمع ورفع الحس الإنساني أولاً قبل أي أنتماءات حزبية أو طائفية أو مناطقية، فأدوات لفت النظر لأي شيء سلمي في المجتمع يمكن أن تستخدم فيه الوسائل الإعلامية والميدانية والشعبية".

حقوق الإنسان في التجمعات السلمية

أحمد عمران: "غيايب تطبيق القانون في اليمن مشكلة متجذرة من زمن طويل، فالجهل بالقانون أو بوظيفة الدولة يجعل منظمات المجتمع المدني تقوم بدور الدولة في الدفاع عن حقوق الإنسان في حالات انتهاك الحقوق، رغم أنها دورها هو توعية المجتمع بحقوق الإنسان، ودور الدولة التوعية والضبط أيضاً".

غادة البخيتي: "لا يكفي أن تكون التجمعات أو الحركات السلمية موجهة لشرائع معينة من المجتمع إنما يجب أن يصل صوتها إلى جميع شرائح المجتمع وأن تقوم بدورها التوعوي عن الحقوق لكافة شرائح المجتمع ليصل الشعب نسبة للإيمان بالمطالبة بحقوقه".

الوعي المجتمعي بالحقوق ومنها الحق في حرية التعبير عن رأيه أثناء التجمعات السلمية

أحمد عمران: "هناك إشكالية عندنا في اليمن في غياب ذلك الوعي في ظل غياب تطبيق القانون وضعف منظومة التعليم، فمفهوم حقوق الإنسان

أحمد عمران:

أحمد عمران: "وطننا للعنف في اليمن نتيجته لغياب تطبيق القانون وعدم قيام السلطة القضائية بدورها، وغياب دور المجتمع الحقيقي لمنع الأفعال السلبية سواءً من الناحية السياسية أو الفكرية بسبب عدم وعيه الكافي بحقوقه".

تقرير ميداني:

- ❖ **علي حسين هزازي** (ناشط حقوقي): "هناك ضوابط للحق في التجمع السلمي وأهمها أن لا يتم الإضرار بالصلحة العامة للبلاد وأن لا يعتدى على مصالح الآخرين أو يخلق السكينة العامة، وعند الاحتجاج يجب ألا تتجاوز تلك الضوابط كأن نخرّب المحلات التجارية أو الطرقات أو يكسر الزجاج أو حرق إطارات السيارات أو إيقاف المصالح والخدمات العامة للبلد".
- ❖ **عبيد القديس:** "أي تجمع سلمي لا يؤتي نتائج بتظاهرة واحدة، لذا يجب أن يكون هناك إصرار لإيصال القضية لصانع القرار".
- ❖ **سليم علاو** (محامي): "لا يجوز للدولة قرض أي اعتصامات سلمية بأي وسيلة كانت، لأن الاعتصامات السلمية حق من الحقوق المكفولة بالقوانين والمواثيق الدولية المصادق عليها اليمن، فقمع أي اعتصامات أو تجمع سلمي يعتبر جريمة دولية تستوجب المحاكمة".

مداخلات هاتفية:

- ❖ **محمد مطهر:** "نحن نسال عن المساجين اليمنيين في السجون السعودية، كيف يمكن أن يوصلوا صوتهم ومن يمكن أن ينصفهم؟".
- ❖ **علي عبدالله:** "مشكلتنا في اليمن أنه لا توجد توعية من وزارة حقوق الإنسان ومنظمات المجتمع المدني الحقوقية، فعند خروج أي مظاهرة للمطالبة بأي حق تبدأ سلمية وبعد ذلك تتطور لحالات عنف وذلك لعدم وجود الوعي عند المجتمع".
- ❖ **د. هيفير:** "لا انتمى لأي حزب وعليه أنا لست قادر على المطالبة بحقي للرجوع لوظيفتي التي فصلت منها بقرار تعسفي رغم صدور قرار من رئيس مجلس الوزراء بعودتي لوظيفتي".

Facebook Comments

- ❖ **عبدالفتاح الكهلاني:** "من حق أي شخص التجمع والتظاهر والتعبير عن رأيه والمطالبة بحقوقه أو حقوق الجماعة أو الفئة أو المؤسسة التي ينتمي إليها، لكن بطريقة حضارية بحيث لا يعتدى على حقوق الآخرين كإغلاق المؤسسات أو قطع الطرق".
- ❖ **عبدالسلام:** "الاحتجاج السلمي حق للجميع مع احترام حقوق الآخرين".

The right to peaceful demonstrations and gatherings

This week, the Article 19 radio program delved into themes relating to the international right to peaceful demonstrations and gatherings as outlined in Article 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Via these documents, globally, citizens are guaranteed the right to peacefully gather as long as demonstrations do not put national security or public health at risk.

The program's guest this week, Ahmed Arman, a lawyer with the National Organization for Defending Rights and Freedoms, know as HOOD, and Dr. Ghada Al-Bukhaiti, a professor at the Medicine College of Sana'a University, discussed how the right to gather and demonstrate plays out in Yemen and the ways that people can go about exercising that right.

On the definition of a peaceful gathering:

Arman: "Peaceful gatherings are often only understood in the context of protests, demonstrations and sit-ins. However, the right guarantees individuals the ability to establish political parties, civil society organizations, charitable organizations, etc. This right covers the right to protest to call for demands, but the law stipulates that these gatherings must not incite hatred, violence, murder or killings."

Al-Bukhaiti: "We exercised this right via the 'Bas' Movement, an Arabic term that means 'enough.' It was a peaceful gathering for Yemeni doctors and youth who wanted [to shed light on] the heinous attack on the Defense Ministry's hospital."

On the legality of peaceful gatherings:

Arman: "Any group of people has the right to protest. Groups do not need permission to establish themselves."

On the role human rights play at peaceful gatherings:

Arman: "The lack of law enforcement in Yemen is a deep-rooted problem. Because of a lack of awareness of the state's function, civil society organizations must step in for the state and defend human rights."

On community awareness of such rights, including the right to the freedom of expression during peaceful gatherings:

Arman: "There are problems in Yemen due to a lack of overall awareness, the absence of law enforcement and a weak education system. The basics of human rights are not taught in schools. [If they were taught in schools, peo-

Amran:

Any group of people has the right to protest. Groups do not need permission to establish themselves

YOUR TURN

Callers, Facebook followers and persons on the street have their say

- ❖ "Yemen is locked in violence due to a lack of law enforcement and because of an ineffective judiciary. Society, as a whole, is not aware of human rights," said **Ahmed Arman**.
- ❖ "The problem is that the Ministry of Human Rights and civil society organizations do not educate people about how to demand their rights," said **Ali Abdulla**. "A protest, where people are asking for certain rights, can begin peacefully but turn violent. This happens because of a lack of awareness on society's part."
- ❖ "Everyone has the right to peacefully gather, but there are restrictions, including keeping the public's interest in mind," said **Ali Hassn**

Al-Bukhaiti:

The problem is that a person's partisan affiliation often trumps one's commitment to human rights.

ple would be more likely to take civil action.] The state should involve the community [more]."

Al-Bukhaiti: "We need more positive role models because Yemeni society tends to [be overly influenced] by tribes and the military."

On the politicization of peaceful gatherings:

Arman: "When a person joins a political party, that party is entitled to defend its members and their rights through peaceful gatherings."

Al-Bukhaiti: "Partisan affiliation is a good thing in communities. However, the horizon of partisan affiliation in Yemen is narrow and unions are often divided because of partisan affiliation."

Arman: "The problem isn't in the political affiliation of gatherings or unions, but rather lies in the application of personal, partisan policies that play out in these gatherings or institutions."

Al-Bukhaiti: "The problem is that a person's partisan affiliation often trumps one's commitment to human rights. The usual goal of a peaceful gathering is to bring attention to human, intellectual or political issues that are important to communities. [The goal is] to apply pressure on those in authority to get them to negotiate with the people and meet their demands."

On the state's role in suppressing peaceful gatherings:

Arman: "The state doesn't have the right, in any way, to suppress a demonstration, a sit-in or a political gathering as long as there is an adherence to peaceful [guidelines]."

غادة البخيتي:

رغم معرفة المجتمع بالنصوص القانونية في فترة سابقة إلا أنه لم يكن لديه الجراءة في التفكير بالمطالبة بها

لا يُدرس في المراحل الدراسية المختلفة لتمكين المجتمع من معرفة حقوقه، لذا يجب على الدولة إشراك المجتمع في إدارة شؤونه عبر تلبية مطالب التجمعات السلمية والتعامل معها".

غادة البخيتي: "أي قضايا إنسانية يجب أن يتبناها أي تجمع سلمي أياً كان بغض النظر عن الانتماءات السياسية، فعلى سبيل المثال الإنفلات الأمني هو من أهم القضايا التي يجب أن تخرج من أجلبها التجمعات السلمية للمطالبة بضبط الأمن وإشياء السلم والأمان في هذا الوطن".

أحمد عمران: "في أي مجتمع ديمقراطي يحق للتجمعات السلمية الاحتجاج على الممارسات السلبية، والقيام (بهبة) مثلاً، لكن بشرط عدم استخدام العنف، والجهود الجماعية يجب أن تستمر لأن الجهود الفردية تتوقف ولا تستمر إن لم تكن ضمن عمل منظم أو كتكتل سلمي معين".

التجمعات السلمية وتسييسها أو تحزيبها أو توجيهها لصالح حزب معين

أحمد عمران: "دور النقابات داخل المؤسسات غائب، وغياب الوعي بالقانون يلعب دور كبير في تجاهل الحقوق وعدم الوصول إليها، وبالتالي عند إنتماء أي شخص لحزب معين يحق لذلك الحزب الدفاع عن حقوق أفرادها وأعضائه عبر التجمعات السلمية".

غادة البخيتي: "الحزبية مظهر صحي في التجمعات والشعوب الواعية بالحقوق الإنسانية أما في اليمن فإن الحزبية إظهاره ضيق والنقابات أصبحت منقسمة بسبب تدخل الحزبية في كيانها".

أحمد عمران: "المشكلة ليست في حزبية التجمعات أو النقابات، إنما في تطبيق الأشخاص لسياساتهم الحزبية داخل تلك التجمعات أو النقابات".

غادة البخيتي: "المشكلة في أن الوعي والانتماء الحزبي لأي شخص أو فرد أكبر من وانتمائه لقضايا الإنسانية، فالفكرة الأساسية التي يقوم من أجلها أي تجمع هي المطالبة بقضايا إنسانية أو فكرية أو سياسية تهم كل المجتمع لتشكيل الضغط على السلطة للتفاوض مع الشعب لتحقيق مطالبهم".

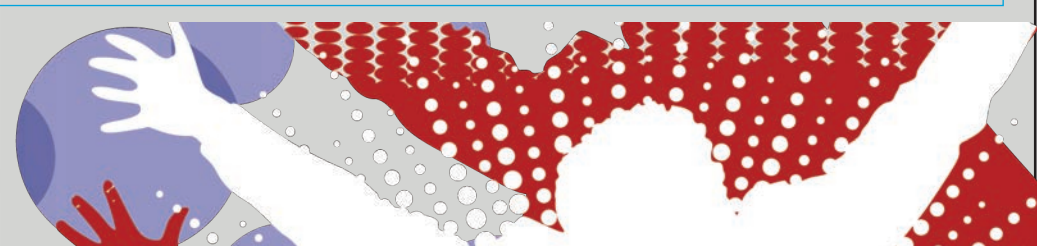
هل يحق للدولة قمع التجمعات السلمية؟

عمران: "لا يحق للدولة بأي شكل من الأشكال أن تقوم بقمع أي تظاهرة أو اعتصام أو تجمع سلمي طالما وهو ملتزم بالسلمية".

وعي المجتمع بأدوات التعبير أثناء التجمعات السلمية

غادة البخيتي: "نحن في المجتمع اليمني بحاجة إلى قدومه، مجتمعنا اليمني يعيل للعنف بطبيعته تحت مسمى القبيلة والعسكر".

أحمد عمران: "مشكلتنا في اليمن أننا دائماً ما نراهن على الأشخاص، المطلوب في الوقت الراهن وبعد 2011 دولة يحكمها القانون ويطبق فيها بغض النظر عن شخص الحاكم أو المسؤول، وإن ذلكت المشاكل بالقانون لن تكون بحاجة للتجمعات أصلاً".



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On the trail of migrant smugglers

Kristy Siegfried
Irinnews.org
First Published Jan. 7

When the corpses of migrants are discovered in the desert, floating at sea, or in airless container trucks, the official response often includes calls to take action

against the smugglers. Following the deaths of over 300 migrants who drowned trying to cross the Mediterranean in October 2013, for example, Italy's integration minister, Cecile Kyenge, declared, "Behind these tragedies...there are human traffickers who are enriching themselves on the backs of people who are fleeing war and hunger," and urged increased patrols to target people smugglers.

Statements like Kyenge's reflect the widely held perception that "human trafficker" and "people smuggler" can be used interchangeably to describe shadowy criminal networks preying on desperate and naïve people. The small number of researchers worldwide who study migrant smuggling say the truth is often less malevolent and more complex.

To begin with, smugglers—unlike traffickers—provide a service that migrants willingly pay for. The definition provided by the Smuggling of Migrants Protocol, which forms part of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, says that service must involve helping someone to gain illegal entry to another country in return for "financial or other material benefit."

The demand for such services has increased as states around the world have shored up their borders over the last 10 to 15 years, making it more difficult for would-be migrants and asylum seekers to enter countries legally.

In a statement released on International Migrants Day (Dec. 18), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) pointed to the "direct link between tighter border controls and increases in people smuggling", which it described as a \$35-billion-a-year business.

Noting that at least 2,360 migrants had died trying to cross borders clandestinely in 2013—the deadliest year on record—IOM suggested that unless the international community takes decisive action to address the causes of irregular migration, "more migrant lives will be lost at the hands of people smugglers and traffickers."

Smugglers as protectors?

Gabriella Sanchez, a social and cultural anthropologist who has researched migrant smuggling in a number of countries, disputes the notion that migrants who use smugglers run a greater risk. "Most people who die crossing borders die proceeding on their own," she told IRIN on the phone from the Border Crossing Observatory, a research center at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia. "Most people die because of exposure to the elements, not because of violence."

She says migrants typically think of smugglers as "mechanisms of protection", who can increase their chances of crossing a border successfully. "Of course, there's going to be a level of risk, but people calculate their risk...Migrants and refugees are not ignorant or gullible."

The level of risk migrants are exposed to often depends on how much money they can afford to spend. Those who can buy plane tickets, pay for forged visas and passports, and bribes for customs and immigration officers, are much more likely to reach their destination safely. Migrants who use longer land and sea routes, travelling with different smugglers who may or may not be linked to one another—what the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) describes as a "pay-as-you-go" package—run the highest risk of being stranded or exposed to abuse.

More abuse by smugglers

Routes from West and East Africa to Europe, and from the Horn of Africa to the Middle East, with their treacherous sea and desert crossings, have become even more dangerous in recent years. Smugglers have increasingly taken to extorting more than the agreed upon sum from migrants, often by means of holding them captive along the way or even at their destination, and forcing them to phone relatives to ask for money under threat of torture. Reports of such abuses, which blur the line between smuggling and trafficking, have emerged from Sudan, Yemen, Egypt's Sinai desert and Libya.

"What's happening now is unprecedented," says Yitna Getachew, a regional thematic specialist with IOM's East and Southern Africa office in Pretoria, South Africa. "Up until recently, you didn't see abuse of migrants by smugglers. It's a business and they have reputations to think of."

Christopher Horwood, coordinator of the Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (RMMS) which pub-

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lished a report in June 2013 on migrant smuggling between the Horn of Africa and Yemen, speculated that the large numbers of migrants from Eritrea and Ethiopia have pushed up demand for smugglers' services, and also the temptation to extort ever larger sums of money. "In the case of Ethiopians and Eritreans, the sums are so large it's become irresistible," he told IRIN.

Migrants who experience the highest levels of violence are those who travel "without smuggling references", Sanchez says. "Most people travel with smugglers who are known to them and recommended by others."

However, on the long "pay-as-you-go" routes, such as the one from Eritrea to Israel or from Somalia to South Africa, migrants generally only know the smugglers who take them on the first leg of their journey. Thereafter, they may travel alone for part of the way or be passed from one smuggler to another through what Horwood describes as "informal chains" or "loose alliances" that differ from the more organized networks typical of human trafficking.

Obstacles to prosecution

The extent to which abuse by smugglers occurs, even on the most notoriously dangerous routes, is unclear. "Most stories you hear are the stories of the people who had a bad experience with a smuggler. You don't tend to hear the stories of the people who didn't experience abuse," said Sanchez, who argued that the majority of migrants do not experience abuse at the hands of smugglers.

Those migrants who do experience abuse rarely report it, particularly if they have reached their destination and are trying to steer clear of the authorities. The lack of formal complaints by migrants has added to the difficulties of prosecuting smugglers, who can be difficult even to identify.

"Unlike trafficking, smuggling isn't done by professionals, it's done by people who have other jobs. These aren't arch-criminals, but people who are making money on the side," said Khalid Koser, deputy director of the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, who has done extensive research on migrant smuggling.

"There's no profile for a smuggler," agreed Sanchez. "The smugglers I interviewed in Arizona [near the U.S. border with Mexico] were teenagers who guided people through the desert... you have a single mother of three who was housing people overnight and...grandmothers feeding people." Migrants may also assist by cooking at a safe house, steering a boat or driving a vehicle in return for a lower fee. This sometimes results in their arrest for smuggling.

Migrants criminalized

"The determination of who is a smuggler is quite problematic. We think about smuggling as becoming more organized and structured, but what we're actually seeing is how the risk is being transferred onto the migrants and refugees," said Sanchez. "Most of the people who are prosecuted for smuggling are migrants

themselves."

Even countries that are signatories to the Smuggling Protocol often have no specific legislation to target people-smuggling. Samantha Mundeta, a regional legal adviser with UNODC's Southern Africa office, noted that most countries in her region rely on immigration laws that "tend not to get to the bottom of the crime [smuggling] and the people who perpetuate it", and which are more often used to criminalize migrants.

"There's no attempt to go after the smugglers, it's all about irregular entry by the migrants," agreed Getachew of IOM, who says the lack of capacity and resources in local law enforcement authorities has also hampered efforts to investigate smuggling.

UNODC has set up a voluntary reporting system in Asia that allows countries in the region to collect and share data on smuggling trends and networks. In eastern and southern Africa there is no such system, and "weak coordination regionally on these issues", said Mundeta.

The role of corruption in facilitating almost every stage of a smuggling operation presents another major obstacle. In a paper published recently by UNODC, the authors note that "Migrant smuggling could not occur on the large scale that it so often does without collusion between corrupt officials and criminals."

Smugglers are often able to bribe their way out of trouble, and the combination of corruption and light penalties for the small number of smugglers who are prosecuted has made it "a very attractive activity" for criminals, commented Horwood.

Allowing mobility

Several researchers IRIN spoke to suggested that the most effective deterrent to smuggling may be fewer border controls, not more. "Countries tend to focus on border security, and that doesn't seem to work," said Koser. "The unintended consequence of more restrictive immigration policy is more illegal migration."

In the West Africa region, where a protocol on freedom of movement allows people living in member states to travel within the region without visas, there is little demand for smugglers. "Smuggling can't operate without restrictions," said Horwood.

"We need to look at visas and passports, we don't need to look at any more criminalization or deterrents," said Sanchez. "We need to look at mechanisms that are going to facilitate mobility."

However, the political sensitivities that inform debates about irregular migration around the world make it unlikely that such mechanisms will be introduced in the near future. As long as public sentiment remains anti-immigration, governments will continue to make it more difficult for migrants to enter their countries legally, perpetuating the demand for smugglers.

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