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خدمة إتصل على حسابي ... لجميع مستخدمي الدفع المسبق

- استخدام الخدمة : إطلب *9 يليه رقم الموبايل المطلوب ثم إتصال.
- الخدمة متاحة لجميع خطوط الدفع المسبق ضمن شبكة سبافون ولا تحتاج إلى تفعيل.
- إمكانية الإتصال حتى بدون رصيد بالنسبة للمتصل، لكن يشترط توفر رصيد كاف لدى الطرف الآخر حتى تتم المكالمة.
- استقبال المكالمات : عند ورود المكالمات سيظهر رقم المتصل على شاشة الموبايل وعند الرد سيستمع المتلقي إلى رسالة صوتية تطلب منه قبول المكالمات على حسابه بالضغط على الرقم 1 أو رفضها بالضغط على الرقم 2 وفي حال كانت المكالمات من رقم موجود في قائمة السماح، سيظهر رقم المتصل على شاشة الموبايل وعند الرد سيتم استقبال المكالمات مباشرة دون إنتظار موافقة الطرف الآخر.
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Cabinet endorses bill granting amnesty for Southern leaders

■ Ali Ibrahim Al-Moshki

SANA'A, April 14—In a Cabinet meeting on Thursday, the government endorsed a bill granting amnesty to Southern leaders it had issued verdicts against in 1997 as a result of the 1994 civil war.

The Criminal Court assigned to resolve the state's security related issues in 1997 issued the verdicts against 16 Southern leaders accused of a secessionist plot. The verdicts ranged from imprisonment to the death sentence.

"The government's decision to abolish the verdicts issued against Southern leaders is an attempt to bridge the gap between the [former] South and North of Yemen and to close the book on the past, based on orders given by President Abdu Rabu Mansour Hadi," said a statement released on Thursday by the Cabinet.

The bill will be referred to Parliament in upcoming days, according to the statement.

The bill also called for the voiding of all judgments and penalties issued against Southern leaders after the war, allowing those who fled to return from abroad without any restrictions or exceptions. It also establishes a committee to resolve any remaining issues resulting from the criminal charges and judgements following the verdicts against Southern leaders.

"This decree will not influence our demands for separation," Abdu Al-Ma'tari, the spokesperson for the Southern Movement, told the Yemen Times.

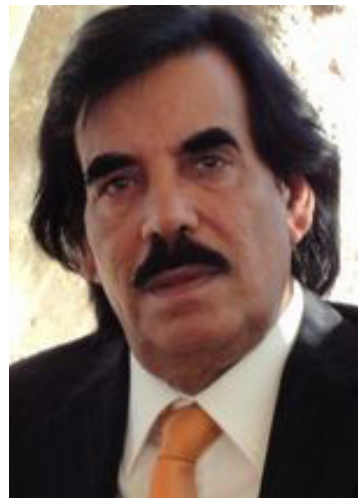
Al-Ma'tari said the amnesty has come too late for many because



Haitham Qasim



Haider Al-Atas



Ali Salim Al-Beidh

many of the people it would apply to have died.

"This is a serious step by the government to settle the situation, end the tension between the South and the North and resolve all mistakes and effects caused by the 1994 war and its impact on the lives of several Southern political leaders. It addresses the political exclusion and marginalization of all state institutions in the past," said the political analyst Fadhil Al-Rabei, head of Madar Studies Center in Aden.

"The decree reflects the government's intention to pave the way for an appropriate political environment that would involve all political components as it establishes a new democratic state based on equal citizenship and the rule of law."

According to Al-Rabei, the bill implements the third of the 11

points provided by the National Dialogue Conference (NDC) Technical Committee, which called for the revocation of all verdicts issued against Southern leaders.

In a speech delivered in 2003, during the 13th anniversary of unification, former President Ali Abdulla Saleh announced amnesty for 16 southern leaders who received verdicts following the civil war.

"This amnesty wasn't applied because it was announced in a speech delivered by Saleh. If the amnesty it would have strengthened unity among Southerners and Northerners," said Al-Ma'tari.

Abdulrahman Barman, a lawyer with the National Organization for Defending Rights and Freedoms (HOOD), said that the presidential amnesty in 2003 was only political rhetoric, and did not specifically

allow those concerned to return, nor did it prevent new verdicts from being issued against them. The new bill addressed these issues, Barman said.

Unity between former North and South Yemen was declared on May 22, 1990. Ali Abdulla Saleh was declared president of the new republic and Ali Salem Al-Beidh, the former president of the South, was appointed his vice president.

A civil war in 1994 threatened the fragile unity, but the North prevailed and the country remained unified. Al-Beidh and his allies fled the country.

Five of the 16 Southern leaders were issued death sentences, including Al-Beidh, who currently resides in Lebanon, Haider Al-Atas, who was prime minister following unity and currently resides in Egypt, and Haitham Qasim, the defense minister following unity.

16 Southerners granted amnesty by bill

Name	Punishment
Ali Saleh Al-Beidh - President of the South before unity and the post-unity vice president	Death sentence
Haider Abu Bakr Al-Atas - Post-unity prime minister	Death sentence
Saleh Mansr Al-Saifi (deceased)	Death sentence
Haithm Qasim Taher - First post-unity defense minister	Death sentence
Saleh Obaid Ahmed	Death sentence
Brigadier Muthna Salem Askr (deceased)	Ten-year imprisonment
Qasim Yahia Saleh	Ten-year imprisonment
Mohammed Ali Al-Qairahi	Ten-year imprisonment
Abdulrahman Al-Jifri	Ten-year imprisonment
Ali Sulaiman Nasser Masood	Seven-year imprisonment
Anees Hassn Yahia	Five-year imprisonment
Salem Mohammed Abdulla Jubran	Five-year imprisonment
Obaid Mubark bin Daghr	Three-year imprisonment
Saleh Abu Bakr bin Hasain (deceased)	Suspended sentence
Qasim Abdulrab Saleh	Suspended sentence
Saleh Shaef Hussein (deceased)	Suspended sentence

Families displaced in Shabwa violence

■ Nasser Al-Sakkaf

SHABWA, April 14—Fifty families have been displaced from Al-Ain district of Shabwa over the past week in clashes between two local tribes.

Violent clashes broke out between the Al-Ahwal and Al-Aslm tribes last Tuesday, leaving six people dead including two women. Four others were injured.

Zabin Atia, a journalist in Shabwa, said that there are humanitarian concerns as the displaced families have no access to food supplies.

The fighting was sparked by the killing of an Al-Aslm tribal sheikh by members of the rival tribe in Huraib market, according to Atia.

He added that the sheikh was thought to have been behind an attempt to assassinate Brigadier Ahmed Ali Mohsen, who belongs to the Al-Ahwal tribe, on Jan. 19.

Mohsen survived an ambush by armed men in Ain district. His bodyguard, Sheikh Ali Hashla was wounded.

"Electricity transformers, water projects and schools were damaged in the fighting from both sides. Human rights activists

called on the governorate leadership to step in, but in vain," Atia added.

Attempts by local tribal leaders to mediate have been unsuccessful so far, according to Atia.

Mubark Lazlm, the assistant security manager in the area, said that authorities would mandate tribal mediators to find a solution to the ongoing conflict, adding that tribal mediation is more effective in an area controlled by tribes such as Al-Ain.

"This is not the first time fighting has taken place between these two tribes. They have been in con-

flicts since 1996," said Lazlm.

Abdulsalam Zurara, a tribal sheikh from Shabwa, said that the root cause of the conflict between the two tribes began with a land dispute in 1996.

The dispute has escalated, said Zurara, and each tribe attempts to target leading tribal figures.

Abdurabu Al-Hashla, the secretary general of the local council who belongs to Al Al-Ahwal tribe, declined to comment on the story.

On March 10, four people were killed in clashes between Al-Askr tribe and Al-Dola tribe in Nisab district of Shabwa.

Uzbek doctor kidnapped in Marib

■ Ali Ibrahim Al-Moshki

SANA'A, April 13—Unidentified armed men kidnapped an Uzbek doctor from the heart of Marib city on Sunday afternoon.

The kidnapped, Saliv Momn Jon, worked for a public hospital in Marib, according to Ahmed Rafeeq, who said he lived in the same building as Jon.

"The kidnappers are a group of gunmen, some of whom were wearing military uniforms. They kidnapped the doctor when he was at a market in the heart of Marib city," Rafeeq told the Yemen Times.

"Armed men attempted two times to abduct me [from the market], but I escaped from inside the car. It was the first time my friend faced the kidnappers," said Rafeeq.

He said the Uzbek national was kidnapped in public.

"People were watching, but they did not lift a finger. He was shouting loudly, yet no one saved him. Though we have security forces devoted to protecting us, they did not do their job," said Rafeeq.

Abshal Abdulla Al-Fatini, a tribal sheikh from the Murad tribe in Marib, pointed the finger at the Al-Tuaiman tribe.

"We received news on Monday that the kidnappers belong to Al-Tuaiman tribe of Sirwah district. The other tribes will not be silent in the face of this act. The Uzbek doctor was popular," Al-Fatini said.

He denounced the kidnapping, saying that such acts harm the public interest and lead to a negative portrayal of Marib.

Colonel Mohammed Hizam, the deputy head of public relations at the Ministry of Interior, said that security forces closed all major routes in and out of the city for hours after the kidnapping. He said the kidnappers have not been identified and investigations are still underway.

According to Hizam, doctors working in the public hospital in Marib have protection from security services, but Jon preferred go to the market alone.

Al-Fatini says he has also been involved in attempts to locate a German national who was kidnapped from Sana'a in February and taken to Marib.

"We searched for him in every district but we found nothing," said Al-Fatini.

The fate of other kidnap victims such as Noor Ahmed, an Iranian embassy worker who was kidnapped on Aug. 21 from Sana'a, remains uncertain.

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Feb. 11 Movement marches through Sana'a, demands end to transitional government

■ Najma Ali

SANA'A, April 13—Around 300 protesters from groups affiliated with the February 11 Movement gathered in Bab al-Yemen on Sunday and marched to the Ministry of Finance on Zubairy Street calling for the overthrow of the government.

The group called on government employees to join the movement and for the international community to stop aid to Yemen until a more transparent and accountable government is installed, according to a press statement from the movement.

Starting at Bab Al-Yemen, protesters marched and chanted, calling for a second revolution. The February 11 Movement, established in January, consists of a number of allied political parties, including Ansar Allah (the political wing of the Houthis), the Baath Party, Al-Karamah Party, Al-Wafaq Party, and Al-Umah and Al-Salam Parties.

"We are representing the people, and I'm here to also show my support for Ansar Allah," said Abdulmalik Mohammed Kobar, who identified himself as the chief security officer of Alheimah district, west of the capital.

Abdulla bin Ammar, the spokesperson for the February 11 Movement, warned that the group would



The February 11 Movement has called on the international community to stopping providing aid to Yemen until a more transparent and accountable government is in place. Photo by Ahlam Mohsen

escalate protest action if there was no change in government. He would not give any details on what that might entail.

According to bin Ammar, the movement has now formed a preparatory committee led by the heads of the affiliated parties, which in-

clude prominent figures like Ahmed Saif Hashed, a former member of Parliament and a co-founder of the Save the Revolution Front, a group that participated in the 2011 uprising.

The political parties that make up the February 11 Movement were involved in the 2011 uprising that led to the stepping down of former President Ali Abdullah Saleh. They were also involved in a previous "Rescue Campaign" which sought a reshuffling of the government and the resignation of a number of ministers.

Peace March returns to Sana'a after three-day visit to Sa'ada and Amran

■ Nasser Al-Sakkaf

SANA'A, April 14—A group of about 50 peace activists arrived in Sana'a on Saturday after a three-day long "Peace March" in Amran and Sa'ada governorates.

Ez Al-deen Al-Sharabi, one of the march coordinators, said that the march was organized to draw attention to the deteriorating security situation and promote peace in the two governorates.

"The march was not a fact-finding committee. The activists aimed to meet with citizens and leading social figures in the conflict-stricken areas and to call on them to distance themselves from sectarianism," said Al-Sharabi.

The activists traveled in convoy to Amran and Sa'ada but avoided some of the most volatile areas such as Bait Badi, according to Al-

Sharabi.

He added that the activists were well received.

"We passed the Houthi-controlled Al-Dhabir camp in the Amran area. The Houthis thought we were affiliated with political parties. We told them our aim was only peace. They understood and sent some individuals to accompany us to Sa'ada governorate," said Al-Sharabi.

The Houthi group has been in control of most of Sa'ada since the 2011 uprising left a security vacuum in the country.

Over the last year, the Sana'a-Sa'ada road has been blocked by checkpoints, especially after fighting broke out between the Houthis and tribal opponents.

Before leaving Sana'a on Thursday, the organizers of the "Peace March" contacted tribal sheikhs in Sa'ada and Amran to request their

assistance in facilitating the march, Al-Sharabi said.

He claimed that dozens of locals in both governorates participated in the initiative.

Antar Al-Daifani, a resident in Amran, said the march successfully conveyed a message to those involved in the conflict, reminding them to avoid violence and resolve their differences peacefully.

However, the "Peace March" was not without its critics.

"This march was more troublesome than being peaceful," said Mohammed Al-Bukhaiti, a Houthi leader. Al-Bukhaiti accused the activists of having acted provocatively in Sa'ada.

"Peace is not realized by exaggerations. Those who want peace should bring the Houthis and their opponents to one table and resolve their issues," said Al-Bukhaiti.

Interior Ministry introduces new gun regulations

■ Ali Ibrahim AL-Moshki

SANA'A, April 14—The Ministry of Interior last week suspended the issuing and renewal of guns licenses in preparation for the implementation of a new regulatory mechanism, according to the ministry.

"The interior minister has given orders to suspend renewing or issuing gun licenses because of the proliferation of arms in the main cities," said Ahmed Harba, the press secretary for the Ministry of Interior.

Harba said that the easy access to licenses permitting gun owners to carry weapons in public has made it very difficult for the ministry to tighten up firearm regulations in the major cities.

Harba said that the ministry has begun implementing new regulatory measures, adding that whoever wants to acquire a gun license must bring the firearm to the Criminal Evidence Department at the ministry and provide the owner's name and fingerprints and register the gun's serial number.

Harba denied local media reports that the minister has suspended the current licenses. He added that the minister only gave orders not to renew them.

"This is a good decision because we should regulate the process of issuing gun licenses. I know people who carry more than one weapon using the same license," said Mosaed Al-Salimi, a resident of Sana'a.

Al-Salimi said that he hopes the ministry will seriously apply the decree this time, unlike in previ-

ous years.

The Supreme Security Committee and the Interior Ministry have carried out similar campaigns in the past aimed at maintaining security. Shops selling military uniforms were ordered to close and motorcycles were banned in the city last December after a spate of assassinations carried out on motorcycles.

A security campaign in November attempted to clamp down on people carrying weapons on major streets, and in the previous month the bearing of arms in popular marketplaces was banned. Neither of these initiatives, however, was successfully enforced.

Brigadier Mohsen Khasroof, a retired military expert, said that the latest decision to regulate firearm possession is a positive step by the ministry and was supposed to take place several years ago to reduce the level of crime.

According to Khasroof, taking the fingerprints of the gun owner and linking each license to a specific gun should reduce the number of weapons because many people use a single license for several weapons.

Under the new regulations, security officers do not need a license to carry their weapons—a military identification card is sufficient. Ordinary soldiers, however, require a military identification card in addition to an official letter from their unit.

Yemen has one of the highest levels of gun ownership in the world. A 2007 report by the Small Arms Survey put the rate of gun ownership (both licit and illicit) at 54.8 firearms per 100 people.

الجمهورية اليمنية
وزارة الكهرباء والطاقة
المؤسسة العامة للكهرباء

تمديد إعلان مناقصة رقم (٢٠١٤/٣)

الخاصة: بالتعبير عن الإهتمام لتقديم خدمات الشركات الفاحصة

((تعلن المؤسسة العامة للكهرباء عن تمديد موعد فتح المظاريف للمناقصة رقم (٢٠١٤/٣) الخاصة: بالتعبير عن الإهتمام لتقديم خدمات الشركات الفاحصة))
وبحسب الموعد المحدد أدناه:

رقم المناقصة	موضوع المناقصة	تاريخ فتح المظاريف
3/2014	التعبير عن الإهتمام لتقديم خدمات الشركات الفاحصة	29/4/2014

آخر موعد لاستلام العطاءات وفتح المظاريف هو الساعة الحادية عشر ظهراً بحسب الموعد أعلاه.

يتم ترقيم صفحات أصول العطاءات بصورة كسر إعتيادي (رقم الصفحة /إجمالي عدد الصفحات).

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the guests every Friday night and guests will enjoy good quality food and western music that is played around the swimming pool, as well as other services. Al-Shaibani said he was pleased to have worked on the planning of the events with local organizations. He especially enjoyed working with women and building tourism in the country. Two winners of a raffle last week won prizes, including trips to Jordan and a two-night-stay at Shahrhan Hotel.



Tit-for-tat: Tribe confiscates oil tankers to secure release of oil tanker

■ **Mohammed Al-Khayat**

When Mohammed Al-Hazizi of Beni Matr first purchased an oil tanker to increase his means of income, he never thought it would end up putting him in debt. But after it was confiscated at a roadblock, he found himself YR 6 million (about \$30,000) in debt. Although he owned the tanker, he did not own the oil.

He had hired a man to drive the tanker from Marib to Sana'a in October 2012 when the tanker was confiscated in the Nihm district of Sana'a governorate. He was transporting the oil for an oil company.

The roadblocks have become more commonplace in the past three years, as the deteriorating security situation has meant less governmental control, particularly in areas outside of Sana'a. The roadblocks are largely set-up in tribal areas.

"The oil company should have compensated me—not charged me for the price of the oil," Al-Hazizi said.

While in captivity, the driver told Al-Hazizi that the tribesmen had presented demands, and that the tanker would not be released until they had been met. The tribe wanted the government to return weapons and vehicles that it had seized from them.

"The tribe in Nihm took the oil tanker in order to pressure the government to return three cars and weapons taken by the 63rd Brigade in 2011," said Hamam Murait, a tribal sheikh in Nihm.

Murait said the tribesmen in Nihm thought that the oil tanker belonged to the oil company.

For Al-Hazizi, he felt he had no choice other than to set up his own roadblocks. Members of his tribe set up several in Beni Matr and confiscated two oil tankers owned by individuals from the Nihm area.

After Al-Hazizi's tribe confiscated the two oil tankers at a roadblock he set-up in Beni Matr, a mediation committee supervised by the International Organization for Peace stepped-in.

The committee requested the two sides to hand over the oil tankers to the Sana'a security department, according to Al-Hazizi.

After negotiations, the Nihm tribe that carried out the initial confiscation of the tanker eventually returned it, but returned it empty, after failing to recover the weapons or vehicle.

"We reached an agreement that the government would be liable and responsible for any damages to the tankers and for the cost of the oil," Al-Hazizi said.

The Yemen Petroleum Company, according to Al-Hazizi, continued to demand compensation from him for the missing oil.

The Yemen Times contacted the Yemen Petroleum Company but

they declined to comment.

Tribesmen from Nihm have continued to call for their weapons and vehicles to be returned, and are threatening to resume roadblocks if their requests continue to be ignored, according to Murait.

"We've done our role, which was to convince both sides to release the confiscated tankers. The government is now fulfilling its role—to uphold its responsibility for the financial losses resulting from the missing oil," said Sheikh Abdulrahman Al-Marwani, head of the International Organization for Peace.

Mohammed Hizam, the deputy head of public relations at the Interior Ministry told the Yemen Times that the government is not responsible for compensating the oil company or protecting oil tankers.

"The tribesmen who set up these roadblocks often have unreasonable demands, such as the release of a relative from prison who has been convicted of murder," Hizam said.

MERS claims first victim in Yemen

■ **Sina Khalid**

SANA'A, April 14—A Yemeni citizen died in Sana'a on Monday, one day after he was diagnosed with the Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV), according to Deputy Health Minister Nasser Ba'awn.

"Medical staff have recorded a case infected with the coronavirus in Sana'a. The victim is a Yemeni aeronautics engineer," the state-

run Al-Thawra Newspaper quoted Health Minister Ahmed Al-Ansi as saying on Sunday.

This was the first reported case of the virus in Yemen. In response, the Health Ministry on Sunday announced that it established a central control room to deal with the virus.

"Once we were informed about the reported case, we examined the patient and found out that it was a new kind of virus," said Abdul-

hakeem Al-Kuhlani, director of the Epidemiological Surveillance and Disease Control Department at the Health Ministry.

Al-Kuhlani said that the ministry would take urgent action to raise awareness about the virus' symptoms and ways to avoid infection.


"Coronavirus is new and we don't have sufficient knowledge about it, but the available information shows that the fatality rate of this virus is higher than swine flu or H1N1," said

Al-Kuhlani.

Dr. Abdulnasser Al-Robai, vaccination and observation officer at the World Health Organization, said that the organization, in collaboration with the National Center for Epidemiological Surveillance, sent a team to Sayoun district of Hadramout where the victim was from in order to assess the situation.

"A field team was appointed to investigate the case and take samples of those who came in contact

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Yemeni Discussion Forums: It is Good to Talk!

Robert Sharp and Murad Alazzany

An internet search of al-montdiat al-Yemniah (translated as 'Yemeni forums') will return many sites. But we do not mean to discuss electronic or virtual interaction, we are talking about the kind of discussion in which people gather in person and, through face-to-face human interaction, share views and opinions to foster learning. These include lectures, seminars, meetings, symposiums and roundtable interactions, both formal and informal.

These outlets provide the youth with opportunities to discuss challenging contemporary issues affecting Yemen. It is good to talk and Yemenis like it! The need to talk in this manner derives from a mix of social and political factors. The tension that has dominated Yemeni politics since 2000 has resulted in many problems, demands and disputes. The lack of truly independent and representative media, that could be utilized to bring people together on screen to discuss these issues and to ease the increasing mistrust between the public and the government, has forced many educated and savvy youth to search for alternative places to discuss, contribute and participate in both public and political discussion, and often at weekends. These informal groupings have developed because they provide space for discussion, the sharing of views and an environment to learn about urgent issues and challenges

facing the country.

One such notable platform for discussion is the Al-Ma'arefa Forum, which was established by a group of six educated Yemeni youth who share similar perspectives. Khalid Al-Jabli, the head of this forum, states that the initial purpose was to establish an alternative forum to qat chew sessions, where a lot of perceived 'negative talk' takes place. Yemenis are well known for their social gatherings. These are usually held at weekends in settings that are traditionally called Majlis, where participants chew qat and discuss all manner of issues. Discussion at these sessions is not usually planned or organized. On occasion, one person may speak throughout or there may be open discussion.

Some Yemeni youth, like Al-Jabli and his associates, view qat chews as places where people waste their time in un-substantive discussion. Spurred on by their willingness to support and foster social reform, they take the view that there is a need for change. They recommend an approach which requires generating greater benefit through discussion and the promotion of knowledge and awareness. They invite guest speakers to their forum and encourage the audience to listen, even while some are chewing. Through discussion and engagement, these sessions educate people about the problems facing Yemen and stimulate creative thinking concerning potential solutions. Al-Jabli states that: "We feel that we should do something for our society to enhance and improve the cultural

awareness among the people and youth in particular."

Guest speakers invited to these forums represent varying views and opinions. They are experts in the subject they talk about. Al-Jabli says that the invited guests could be either "youth, foreign experts or professional speakers specializing in subjects like the economy and sociology. They could equally be artists, singers, university lecturers, trainers or high ranking government officials." Since it was established, the forum's numerous guest speakers have discussed a wide range of issues, including social and political theories, economic topics, medical issues, the environment, water and resources, education, art, science, communication, et cetera.

Choosing a guest speaker will depend on the prevailing social mood and the latest contemporary issues deemed worthy of debate. A committee composed largely of the forum's permanent members discusses and votes on which topics are best for discussion and who the most appropriate speakers are. Permanent members of the forum and attendees are mostly youth who come from various backgrounds and who represent a multitude of perspectives. Some of them work in the public or private sector, some in international organizations and NGOs, foreign embassies and so forth.

The guest speaker normally talks for about one hour. The audience listens and some might chew qat. After the talk is over, a moderated question, comment and answer session occurs for at least the same amount of time as

the lecture and all are encouraged to contribute to the discussion. Technological accessories like Microsoft PowerPoint may be used by speakers.

We believe that there is little doubt that such forums could play a significant role in educating people, providing them with an opportunity to learn through sharing and to be updated on the relevant issues facing Yemen. Developed to their maximum potential, these groups could spread throughout the country and provide a much needed environment for youth engagement while expanding their intellectual, social and political views. We believe that, like the coffee houses during the French Revolution, these forums can contribute to youth discussion in support of Yemen's post-revolutionary development. These forums could help ensure constructive communication. They could provide real hope of encouraging enthusiasm and active participation among young people in the new Yemen.

Murad Alazzany is an associate professor at Sana'a University, Yemen. Robert Sharp is an associate professor at the U.S. National Defense University, Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies (NESA), Washington DC, USA.

The views expressed in this article are the authors' alone and do not represent the official policy or position of Sana'a University, the U.S. National Defense University, the U.S. Department of Defense or the U.S. or Yemeni government.

Tunisia's promise and strategic potential

Lara Talverdian atlanticcouncil.org First published April 9

After a year of heightened tensions, growing divisions, and two high-profile assassinations, Tunisians launched a national dialogue that culminated in the adoption of a progressive constitution in January 2014. This milestone, achieved by Tunisians themselves against all odds, was heralded by the international community and ignited a surge in attention to the small North African country. Caretaker-Prime Minister Mehdi Jomaa's recent trip to Washington marked several important steps forward with regard to the bilateral relationship between the two countries, but it also served as an opportunity for him to highlight key challenges Tunisia still faces. Sustained support, building on the recent wave of success and subsequent high-level diplomatic gestures, remains a critical component for Tunisia's democratic trajectory and potential positive impact in the region.

Citizens will head to the polls in coming months in a landscape characterized by growing insecurity and a faltering economy, the rebound from which will test the patience of an economically struggling population. Making diligent use of his Washington platform, PM Jomaa warned as much and in the same breath as he thanked the United States for its support, strongly advocated for more assistance. Tunisian authorities today are inexperienced in addressing terrorism in a democratic context and hope to work with

their international and regional partners in tackling the problem, which has reached the small, traditionally peaceful country. The prime minister also frankly admitted that Tunisia's leaders cannot confidently say they are providing jobs and a better way of life for their citizens—key demands behind the 2011 revolution. He called Tunisia a "democracy start-up": invest now and there will be great dividends. PM Jomaa's visit was a call for more robust assistance to what until now has been a more sporadic and inconsistent US aid policy. Tunisians have demonstrated their commitment to the transition and capacity for political compromise. Providing assistance (diplomatic, financial, material, or otherwise) would demonstrate that the United States is ready and willing to engage and support those countries that are willing to help themselves.

After lending only private and arguably not-so-strategic attention to Tunisia since the assaults on the US Embassy and an American school in September 2012, it now appears that the United States, eager to grasp at a potential Arab democracy success story, has refocused its attention on Tunisia's achievements and appears ready to reward the country on its merit and to engage more publicly. Last week, after President Barack Obama and PM Jomaa met at the White House, the US Administration announced a new \$500 million loan guarantee to mitigate challenges to investment in Tunisia. The visit also marked the launch of the US-Tunisia Strategic Dialogue as a means to elevate and institutionalize exchanges between the two countries.

Continued on the back page



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Age-old Qamaria industry struggles to keep its place in modern Yemen

Story and photo by **Mohammed Al-Khayat**

Mohammed Mokhtar is the owner of a workshop that makes and installs qamaras. He used to wake up early and get to work making the distinctive windows that adorn many Yemeni homes. These days, however, business is slow and there is little incentive to rise early. Qamaras are simply not in great demand.

The qamaria is an intricately patterned window made from stained glass and gypsum.

Mokhtar has been making qamaras for about 15 years. He inherited the skills from his father and grandfather but he is currently working as a bus driver to make ends meet.

"Qamaras were in great demand five years ago and I had 11 employees in my workshop, but then I laid off seven of them because of the decline in business," said Mokhtar.

"People began to use new architectural styles in construction. They think that the qamaria is old fashioned," he said.

Basim Ahmed, a resident of Sana'a, said he did not use the qamaria in his newly-constructed house in Hiziz area.

"Qamaras are of no use. They are expensive and fragile," he added.

Qamaras of various sizes are sold for \$18 to \$50 at the lower end of the market.

Emad Mohammed Ahmed, a resident of Sana'a, said: "qamaras are traditional and do not suit the modern architectural style. Qamaria craftsmen should come up with new

designs to keep up with the modern decoration of houses."

However, others have more appreciation for traditional architectural styles.

Abdulsalam Al-Khatibi, another resident, believes that people should buy qamaras to support local qamaria-makers and preserve Yemeni heritage.

"I used qamaria in my house because they are beautiful and are also a traditional Yemeni style which we should appreciate more," said Al-Khatibi.

Aymn Othman, a designer and maker of qamaras, attributed the decline in demand for the windows to the poorly-made qamaras on the market, adding that there are numerous qamaria-makers who lack the refined techniques needed to create the intricate designs.

The slump in the economy has also taken its toll on the qamaria industry.

According to Dr. Salah Al-Maqtari, a professor of economics at Sana'a University, people in lower-income brackets are too preoccupied with taking care of their basic needs to be concerned about such luxuries as qamaras.

For those who are still buying decorative windows, there are cheap mass-produced alternatives. "Chinese-made metal [windows] are currently found in Yemen's markets and people buy them because of their prices," Al-Maqtari added.

The downturn in tourism as a result of the political crisis that the country is going through has also had a highly detrimental effect on the qamaria industry. The windows used to be very popular

among foreign tourists, so far fewer tourists has meant fewer customers for qamaria-makers, according to Mokhtar.

Qamaria-makers say that government regulations aimed at protecting local manufacturers by restricting the import of goods that Yemen produces have not been enforced. "Instead of assisting us and saving the qamaria industry, the government is demanding we pay high taxes," said Khalid Jobara, the owner of a qamaria shop.

Jobara said that three years ago he had three shops but he currently only has one.

He said that metal qamaras are replacing ones made from gypsum because they are cheaper and more durable.

Ahmed Al-Bail, the director of programs and activities at the Ministry of Culture, said that the ministry coordinates between select qamaria makers and foreign customers and companies and has made efforts to encourage the qamaria industry.

"The government provides limited support to qamaria makers in terms of exhibiting qamaria at international exhibitions as an original Yemeni handcraft," said Al-Bail.

There is a popular market in Doha, Qatar, that emulates the style of Old Sana'a. Yemeni qamaras were incorporated in the design of the market, which is a popular tourist destination, according to Al-Bail.

Qamaras first appeared in Yemen around 4000 years ago, according to a 1997 study by Yemen expert Tim Mackintosh-Smith.



Tourists were reliable buyers of qamaras. With the decline of the tourism sector, qamaria makers say they have seen their industry and sales decline as well.



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How to stabilize Yemen

In today's fractured Yemen, the solution is not with Hellfire missiles, it is with fixing the economy.

Alastair Sloan
aljazeera.com
First published April 10

Recent developments in Yemen demonstrate that Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) is restive, capable and emboldened, but the militaristic approach of the United States is only worsening the situation.

According to the UK charity Reprieve, which has campaigned against the use of drone strikes, 10 provinces (roughly half the country) live under the hum of "unarmed aerial vehicles". The technology might look impressive to the top brass when it's being flown around an airfield in Virginia, but once deployed, these weapons create more problems than they solve.

One of the under-appreciated reasons to stop the drone strikes is the impact they have on Yemen's fragile transition process. The attacks have been technically illegal in Yemen since 2013, but their continued deployment by the CIA, leaning heavily on intelligence from the Yemeni security services, dangerously delegitimizes a beleaguered Sana'a government. The Houthi rebels in the north, the secessionist south and numerous tribal interests already deeply mistrust the elites in

the capital. To be sure, cronyism and corruption are their principal gripes - but collaborating with foreign powers, particularly on such a tendentious issue, puts President Abdu Rabu Mansour Hadi in an extremely awkward position.

People & Power - Attack of the Drones

Drone strikes are also the military equivalent of jabbing a large stick into a hornet's nest - hornets which are relatively well-armed, well-funded and dangerously indoctrinated. In one infamous botched attack, 12 wedding guests lost their lives under fire from US missiles. A mid-level Al-Qaeda leader, who was the intended target, escaped on foot. Similar tragedies have claimed the lives of up to 70 others since the CIA program began, according to the Bureau for Investigative Journalism. The Pentagon nicknamed these unfortunate incidents "bugsplats", and has yet to make apologies. The official position is that drone strikes are a secret programme—and as such will rarely be discussed publicly.

Hornet's nest and bugsplats

In both Yemen and the US this position needs to be questioned vigorously. The drone strikes are no longer a secret. Simply moving the program from the CIA to the Department of Defense would make

It might be that localized governments are seen as more legitimate, reducing unrest. Or the move may encourage southern secessionists, or Houthis in the north, to break away completely.

the operation acceptably transparent. And officials in Sana'a should be questioning whether involvement in the assassinations will help or hinder a delicate reform process.

With no remorse from the US

for innocent lives lost, the government in Sana'a typically steps in with compensation. It has also announced investigations into the most severe civilian bombings. But persuasive AQAP recruiters are also appearing around the smoking craters too. For those who have lost family members, recruiters offer far larger compensation packages, as well as the opportunity to become fighters, and avenge their families' deaths. This is the most compelling reason to stop the CIA from taking out Al-Qaeda targets in this fashion. They provide a short-term fix, but long-term they radicalize more Yemenis.

Inside Story—The new Yemen: United or divided?

Instead, the US and regional partners should properly address economic issues and help build civil institutions that strengthen the rule of law.

Yemen has the youngest population in the world, with an unemployment rate as high as 40 percent. A quarter of the Yemeni economy rests on oil - which will probably run out by 2017, and much-needed rebalancing plans have been overshadowed by unrest.

Half the population still lives below the poverty line. The International Monetary Fund has effectively offered a medium-term financing deal to Sana'a; the issue is that no

economic body yet exists to receive and manage the loan. Helping to set up this body would play to key capabilities within either the US or the UN, and should be done as a matter of priority. The US could also lean more heavily on local partners—Saudi Arabia has done a good job of marshaling aid and recently stepped in with \$3bn.

The planned federalization of Yemen, agreed in December and ratified in February, is undoubtedly a major development.

It might be that localized governments are seen as more legitimate, reducing unrest. Or the move may encourage southern secessionists, or Houthis in the north, to break away completely.

Either way, federalization should be seen as an opportunity for the US to stitch up some of the wounds laid bare in the last 20 years. Concerns have already been raised over the lack of detail in the plan—especially with regard to how civil institutions will be set up in each state to manage the local government. In fact, Washington is well positioned to assist Sana'a with filling in the details of their federalization scheme.

Yemen isn't a failed state yet, but it's come close too many times to mention.

What can be ascertained with some confidence is that the new government is weak. President Hadi must contend with powerful elite

interests, an economy that barely meets the needs of the people, let alone the government, and even ex-President Ali Abdulla Saleh, who still maintains influence over some parts of the military. The latter are stretched between an al-Houthi insurgency in the north and policing unrest in the south. Al-Qaeda is constantly antagonistic and their activity further threatens the peace process.

Just last week, AQAP announced the formation of a new armed unit—specifically tasked with attacking Houthi rebels, whose leaders already suspect that Sana'a politicians have stronger links with Al-Qaeda than they are admitting. These suspicions will only worsen when AQAP attacks on the Houthis begin.

Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia bear out a poignant hypothesis for the 21st century: Where there is chaos, there is blood. In today's fractured Yemen, a terrorist group could not choose a better place to call its home. But the answer to removing them is not with Hellfire missiles, it is with fixing Yemen.

Alastair Sloan is a London-based journalist. He focuses on injustice and human rights in the UK, and international affairs including human rights, the arms trade, censorship, political unrest and dictatorships.

The Arabs smitten by the Israeli lobby

Israel and the Gulf states sometimes tend to adopt a united regional vision regarding various issues, especially in the last three years

Mohamed Elmenshawy
ahram.org.eg
First published April 10

The most pessimistic Arab could never imagine the day would come when a US official would say, if "he covered the faces of top officials he met during the recent trip to Riyadh, Abu Dhabi and Tel Aviv, and listened to their perceptions on the issues and future of the Middle East, he would not be able to differentiate between the Saudi, Emirati and Israeli. Their views are the same on these issues."

This picture is not only bleak because Israeli and Gulf interests are the same, but because separate efforts to pressure the US administration into adopting positions that support this united regional vision are being expressed by Arabs in Washington. This is done through repeated praise (so far privately) and heavy reliance on activism by the Israeli lobby. A US expert justifies this situation by saying, "Israel, along with Arab Gulf states, has been the oasis of stability in the Middle East since the start of the Arab Spring three years ago. Naturally, they share the same concerns and fears about the elements of instability surrounding them."

These adversaries come together

on very general goals, such as not wanting Bashar Al-Assad's regime to make any gains in the civil war in Syria, and that the west does not reach a deal on Iran's nuclear capabilities. Also, that Egypt does not become a failed state and no democratic regime succeeds in the Arab region.

Last month, the annual meeting of AIPAC—the most powerful Jewish lobby in the US—was attended by nearly 14,000 people, making it the largest conference in the US capital. The conference focused on several issues, most notably how to handle Iran as 5+1 negotiations continue to resolve its nuclear issue. Discussions noted grave concern over the possibility of reaching an interim agreement that would end the sanctions regime, and lead to normalizing relations between the west, US and Iran. AIPAC believes if this happened, Tehran will automatically win. Saudi Arabia agrees with AIPAC. For many other reasons, both camps want to block this scenario by putting pressure through sanctions by Congress, despite White House objections. More importantly, there are repeated rumors about Iran's influence in the Arab Mashreq (east) as Tehran plays a greater role in the Syrian conflict. There are also repeated statements that Iran's Islamic regime has expanded to reach the shores of the Mediterranean Sea and Israel's borders.

The Gulf and Israeli adversaries are not allowing the US administration to come up for breath on Iran by highlighting the wide gap between the White House and Congress on the issue. They are also convincing Congress members to

continue pressuring US President Barack Obama until it becomes impossible to reach any agreement with Iran. The Israeli lobby believes that Hamas's weaknesses—because of losing its Syrian ally and Gulf funds as well as the rising hostility in Egypt—is a key development that must be exploited because it makes for an opportune moment to reach peace between the Palestinians and Israelis. There are many calling for Gulf states and Egypt to pressure Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to accept US Secretary of State John Kerry's proposal for a US framework agreement for peace between the two sides.

The ambitions of the Israeli lobby go even further. Many are calling to amend the Arab peace initiative proposed in 2002 by Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah bin Abdel-Aziz, which suggested creating a globally recognized Palestinian state within the 1967 borders, the return of refugees and complete withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

In return, there would be Arab recognition and normalization with Israel. Today's calls assert that any talk of withdrawing from the Golan Heights is a waste of time, and that the Palestinian leadership itself is open to ideas about the problem of the "right of return" for Palestinian refugees. Accordingly, the initiative should be revised and, naturally, Arabs—including Egyptians—should stop mentioning anything about halting settlement building in the West Bank, "right of return" or even the future of Jerusalem.

Glover Park Group (the lobby firm with which Egypt's interim government signed a contract six months ago) is competing with stronger,

wealthier and more versatile lobby groups to influence Congress members, their aides, key officials in the US administration and media.

AIPAC has not missed a chance to press on Congress the need to support the Egyptian army through continuing military aid. After hundreds of Egyptians died during the dispersal of the sit-ins at Rabaa and Nahda, the US administration was forced to suspend some military assistance. AIPAC, however, sent a letter to all members of Congress protesting the measure, claiming the step would increase instability in Egypt, threaten vital US interests and negatively impact its key ally in the region, Israel.

Meanwhile, Israel asked Washington not to reduce assistance to the Egyptian army in anticipation of its impact on Israel's security, or deterioration of security conditions in Sinai. After the suspension of aid, several Israeli officials visited Washington to highlight the risks of such a step on Israel's security and its negative impact on regional security issues in the Middle East.

Gulf countries adopt the same position—rejecting any pressure on the Egyptian government and demanding the return of the entire military package to Egypt. It is noteworthy that the managing director of the lobby group hired by the Egyptian government is Arik Ben-Zvi, a former officer in the Israeli army, an Israeli citizen who served in the Israeli army and a campaign adviser in several elections in Israel. The firm also works with Apple and Coca Cola, and the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority is its top foreign client.

Thus, Arabs in Washington are

immersed in playing a role that does not in any way confront Israel or its lobby group. Arabs decided to exchange what needs to be done in the world's most important capital with an easy agenda, namely con-

fronting their domestic political opponents and historic neighbors.

The writer is the correspondent for Al-Shorouk newspaper in Washington, D.C.

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WHO country office representative to the Yemen Times: "There are often reports on health matters which lack accuracy and credibility and which just instill panic in people"

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The continued instability in Yemen has seriously affected an already fraught health situation. In a country grappling with multiple health crises, the World Health Organization (WHO) has been working for over 60 years to provide technical assistance for public health, strengthen health services and help fight epidemic diseases. Yemen Times interviewed Dr. Ahmed Shadoul, the WHO country office representative, about the health situation and challenges that face the health sector in a country where health coverage fails to cover more than 45 percent of the total population.

Interviewed by
Ali Abulohoom

In the middle of last year Dr. Shadoul was appointed Yemen's WHO representative, coming from a previous WHO posting in Afghanistan. Before joining the organization, Shadoul was Sudan's minister of health from 2001 to 2003.

Earlier this month, on April 7, the WHO marked World Health Day. The theme for this year was vector-borne diseases such as malaria – a major health problem facing Yemen.

"Yemen is taking serious steps towards eradicating endemic diseases and the WHO's priority is to eradicate Malaria by 2020," Shadoul says.

"There is still a critical need to strengthen disease prevention through health education, relevant training for health workers and launching vaccination campaigns, particularly polio and measles mass campaigns, in order to contain disease outbreaks."

Shadoul graduated from the Faculty of Medicine, Khartoum University, and obtained his postgraduate degree in paediatrics from Liverpool University in the United Kingdom. His research interests include maternal health, neonatal health and child health and he has published articles in numerous medical journals.

Shadoul also has extensive experience in health emergencies and coordinating humanitarian responses. He says that the political unrest in Yemen poses the most serious threat to WHO activities in the country.

"Despite the lack of security and the threat of unrest, the WHO in most cases has succeeded in securing access to many Yemeni districts and providing health services in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and local community leaders," he adds.

Yemen also faces serious food shortages, with more than 40 percent of children under the age of five malnourished, according to WHO figures.

Shadoul says that this problem cannot be solved only through health care. Development and poverty reduction are crucial in fighting malnutrition.

"To reduce the problem of malnutrition we mainly target vulnerable returnees who were displaced from conflict-affected areas."

Shadoul also addresses the importance of the media's coverage of health issues, drawing particular attention to the damage done by alarmist reports.

"There are often reports on health matters which lack accuracy and credibility and which just instill panic in people," Shadoul claims.

Immunization challenges

By 2012, Yemen had made significant progress in introducing various types of preventative vaccinations that saved children's lives.

After it was reported that polio cases were diagnosed in Syria, Iraq and the Horn of Africa, the WHO office in Yemen stepped up efforts to confront the danger of the virus which health officials fear might be transmitted by refugees and migrants traveling to Yemen.

According to Shadoul, the WHO, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and other partners, conducted five rounds of polio vaccinations during 2013 to immunize children under the age of five and to stave off the virus.

The campaigns implemented by the WHO have succeeded in reaching targeted communities in all Yemeni districts, including remote areas where health facilities are non-existent, says Shadoul.

The WHO also supports outreach activities including reproductive health campaigns, immunization services, and public awareness drives to educate people about disease prevention and the utilization of available health care services.

Shadoul says that a fifth of childhood deaths are caused by respiratory diseases which are preventable through vaccination.

In 2012, a new rotavirus vaccine was introduced to Yemen and succeeded in reducing cases of diarrhea by 40 percent. Another vaccination program against German measles is scheduled to be implemented in late 2014, according to Shadoul.

Elaborating on the response strategy provided by the WHO

to internally displaced people, Shadoul explains that the organization focuses on rehabilitating and reactivating health facilities damaged in conflict-stricken areas like Sa'ada and Abyan. The WHO also prioritizes the training of medical staff and provides them with incentives and salaries.

The WHO has also trained 7,300 medical staff working to combat pneumonia, diarrhea, malaria and measles in 2,985 health facilities spread across 284 districts in Yemen, Shadoul says, adding that nutrition centers have also been established in various parts of the country.

The Ministry of Health, however, stated that functioning health facilities only cover 65 percent of the country.

Major priorities

Shadoul told the Yemen Times that combating malaria is among the WHO's top priorities in Yemen.

Bilharzia has also come into the WHO's focus after a request made by the Ministry of Health. As a result, the WHO began a six-year project in 2010 to fight bilharzia. The project is funded by the World Bank to the tune of \$25 million, according to Shadoul.

According to medical reports released by the Ministry of Health, the maternal mortality rate in Yemen reached 365 per 100,000 instances of labor, while infant mortality stood at 78 per 1,000 births.

"The fifth aim of the millennium is to reduce maternal mortality in Yemen by 75 percent by 2015," Shadoul said.

As for elimination of endemic diseases, Shadoul says that, "in addition to the eradication strategy for polio, the eradication of measles, which in 2006 accounted for 12 percent of infant mortality, is being run as planned."

Every two years the WHO grants a short-term and long-term medical scholarship for staff working for the Ministry of Health and in health offices across the country.

"The WHO through its scholarship program hopes to raise the number of cadres specializing in public health," Shadoul says.

أثرت حالة عدم الاستقرار المستمرة في اليمن بشكل كبير على الوضع الصحي الهش في البلاد. وتواصل منظمة الصحة العالمية عملها لأكثر من 60 عاماً لتقديم الدعم الفني في مجال الصحة العامة وتعزيز الخدمات الصحية والمساعدة في مكافحة الأمراض الوبائية في بلد يصارع العديد من الأزمات الصحية. أجرت صحيفة يمن تايمز مقابلة مع الدكتور أحمد شادول، ممثل المكتب القطري لمنظمة الصحة العالمية، حول الوضع الصحي والتحديات التي تواجه القطاع الصحي في البلد الذي يعجز عن توفير الخدمات الصحية لأكثر من 45% من إجمالي عدد السكان.

مقابلة
علي ابولحوم

ويسهب شادول في الحديث عن استراتيجية الاستجابة التي تقدمها منظمة الصحة العالمية للنازحين داخلياً موضحاً أن المنظمة تركز على إعادة تأهيل وتنشيط المرافق الصحية التي تضررت في مناطق النزاع مثل صعدة وأبين. وتعطي المنظمة الأولوية أيضاً لتدريب الكوادر الطبية وتوفير الحوافز والرواتب لهم.

كما دربت منظمة الصحة العالمية أيضاً 7.300 من الكوادر الطبية العاملة في مجال مكافحة الالتهاب الرئوي والإسهال والمalaria والحصبة في 2.985 مرفق صحي في 284 منطقة في اليمن، كما تم أيضاً إنشاء مراكز التغذية في مناطق مختلفة من البلاد، وفقاً لشادول.

وزارة الصحة، ومع ذلك، ذكرت أن المرافق الصحية العاملة لا تغطي سوى 65 في المئة من المناطق في اليمن.

الأولويات الرئيسية

قال شادول لليمن تايمز إن مكافحة الملاريا من بين أهم أولويات منظمة الصحة العالمية في اليمن.

ركزت منظمة الصحة العالمية أيضاً على البلهارسيا بعد طلب تقدمت به وزارة الصحة. ونتيجة لذلك، بدأت منظمة الصحة العالمية في عام 2010 مشروعاً لمدة ست سنوات لمكافحة البلهارسيا، ويتم تمويل المشروع بحوالي 25 مليون دولار من قبل البنك الدولي، وفقاً لشادول.

وحسب تقارير طبية صادرة عن وزارة الصحة، فقد بلغ معدل وفيات الأمهات في اليمن 365 حالة من إجمالي كل 100.000 حالة ولادة، في حين توقف معدل وفيات الرضع في 78 لكل 1.000 حالة ولادة.

وبخصوص هذه المسألة، قال شادول "الهدف الخامس من اهداف الألفية هو خفض معدل وفيات الأمهات في اليمن بنسبة 75 في المئة بحلول عام 2015."

وفيما يتعلق بالقضاء على الأمراض المتوطنة، يقول شادول "بالإضافة إلى استراتيجية القضاء على الأمراض، يجري تنفيذ استئصال الحصبة كما هو مخطط له حيث شكلت الحصبة 12% من وفيات الرضع في عام 2006."

وتقدم منظمة الصحة العالمية كل سنتين منحة دراسية طبية قصيرة وطويلة المدى للموظفي وزارة الصحة ومكاتب الصحة في جميع أنحاء البلاد.

يقول شادول "تأمل منظمة الصحة العالمية من خلال برنامج المنح الدراسية إلى رفع عدد الكوادر المتخصصة في مجال الصحة العامة."

"نستهدف بشكل رئيسي الضعفاء من العائدين الذين اجبرتهم النزاعات على النزوح من مناطقهم وذلك للحد من مشكلة سوء التغذية."

وشدد شادول أيضاً على أهمية التغطية الإعلامية للقضايا الصحية، لافتاً بشكل خاص إلى الضرر الناجم عن التقارير التي تعمل على إثارة المخاوف.

ويقول " هناك تقارير في كثير من الأحيان حول القضايا الصحية، ولكنها تفتقر إلى الدقة والمصداقية وتعمل فقط على خلق حالة من الذعر في أوساط الناس."

التحديات التي تواجه جهود التحصين

أحرزت اليمن في عام 2012 تقدماً كبيراً في إدخال أنواع مختلفة من اللقاحات الوقائية التي أنقذت حياة الأطفال.

وبعد أن أفادت تقارير بأنه تم تخصيص حالات شلل الأطفال في سوريا والعراق والقرن الأفريقي، صعد مكتب منظمة الصحة العالمية في اليمن جهوده لمواجهة خطر الفيروس الذي يخشى مسؤولو الصحة انه قد ينتقل عن طريق اللاجئين والمهاجرين القادمين إلى اليمن.

ووفقاً لشادول فقد أجرت منظمة الصحة العالمية خمس حملات لتحصين الأطفال دون سن الخامسة ضد فيروس شلل الأطفال ودرء الفيروس خلال عام 2013، بالتعاون مع وزارة الصحة والشركاء الآخرين.

ويقول شادول أن الحملات التي نفذتها منظمة الصحة العالمية قد نجحت في الوصول إلى المجتمعات المحلية المستهدفة في جميع المناطق اليمينية، بما في ذلك المناطق النائية التي تفتقر إلى المرافق الصحية.

كما تدعم منظمة الصحة العالمية أنشطة التوعية، بما في ذلك حملات الصحة الإنجابية وخدمات التحصين وحملة التوعية العامة لتثقيف المواطنين حول الوقاية من الأمراض والاستفادة من خدمات الرعاية الصحية المتاحة.

ووفقاً لشادول فإن خمس وفيات الأطفال سببها أمراض الجهاز التنفسي التي يمكن الوقاية منها عن طريق التطعيم.

وقد تم إدخال لقاح فيروس الروتا الجديد إلى اليمن في عام 2012 ونجح في الحد من حالات الإسهال بنسبة 40%. ومن المقرر تنفيذ برنامج التطعيم ضد الحصبة الألمانية في أواخر عام 2014، وفقاً لشادول.

وقد تم تعيين الدكتور شادول ممثلاً لمنظمة الصحة العالمية في اليمن في منتصف العام المنصرم حيث سبق وتولى نفس المنصب مع المنظمة في أفغانستان وشغل منصب وزير الصحة في السودان في الفترة بين 2003-2001 قبل أن ينضم إلى منظمة الصحة العالمية.

وأحتفلت منظمة الصحة العالمية بيوم الصحة العالمي في تاريخ 7 من الشهر الجاري، حيث كان الموضوع المخصص لهذا العام الأمراض المنقولة بالنواقل مثل الملاريا - والتي تعتبر مشكلة صحية كبيرة تواجه اليمن.

ويقول شادول "تخطو اليمن خطوات جادة نحو القضاء على الأمراض المتوطنة وقد وضعت منظمة الصحة العالمية ضمن أولوياتها القضاء على الملاريا بحلول عام 2020."

"ما زال هناك حاجة ماسة لتعزيز الوقاية من المرض من خلال التثقيف الصحي والتدريب ذات الصلة للعاملين الصحيين وإطلاق حملات التطعيم، وخاصة حملات التطعيم الشاملة ضد شلل الأطفال والحصبة، من أجل احتواء تفشي المرض."

تخرج شادول من كلية الطب بجامعة الخرطوم وحصل على درجة دراسات عليا في طب الأطفال من جامعة ليفربول في المملكة المتحدة. وتشمل اهتماماته البحثية، صحة الأم وحديثي الولادة وصحة الطفل وسبق وأن نشر مقالات في العديد من المجلات الطبية.

يمتلك شادول أيضاً خبرة واسعة في حالات الطوارئ الصحية وتنسيق الاستجابات الإنسانية، ويقول شادول إن الاضطرابات السياسية في اليمن تشكل أخطر تهديد على أنشطة منظمة الصحة العالمية.

"على الرغم من انعدام الأمن والتهديدات التي تسببها الاضطرابات، نجحت منظمة الصحة العالمية في معظم الحالات في تأمين الوصول إلى العديد من المناطق في اليمن وتوفير الخدمات الصحية بالتعاون مع وزارة الصحة والجهات المجتمعية" يضيف شادول.

ويواجه اليمن أيضاً نقصاً حاداً في الغذاء، حيث يعاني أكثر من 40% من الأطفال دون سن الخامسة من سوء التغذية، وفقاً لإحصائيات منظمة الصحة العالمية.

ويقول شادول أن هذه المشكلة لا يمكن حلها من خلال الرعاية الصحية فقط، حيث تشكل التنمية والحد من الفقر عاملان أساسيان في مكافحة سوء التغذية.

Unregulated food commodities pose risk to consumers

■ Emad Al-Sakkaf

Counterfeit food commodities have inundated the local market, particularly in the past three years as the security and economic deterioration of the country has left the government with fewer resources to monitor and regulate foodstuffs.

"We Yemeni mothers want healthy food for our children, but they are exposed to dangers because even the food served at school is of poor quality and is not regulated," said Noria Saeed, a resident of Taiz.

"My son Ahmed got food poisoning and diarrhea. The doctors said the hospital receives many similar cases."

Hamoud Duhaish, head of the Children's Oncology Unit at the National Oncology Center told the Yemen Times that children are particularly vulnerable to such hazards.

"Because of an absence of government monitoring and the greed of some manufacturers, consumers are exposed to unnecessary risk," Duhaish said.

The market is flooded with sweets, juices, candies and other goods whose countries of origins are unclear, he said, and which are sold very cheaply.

He accused merchants of capitalizing on the poverty. Many of these goods are purchased by children directly, he said.

Saeed accused companies of appealing to children directly through the use of marketing, including the colors, logos and mascots featured on products.

Many Yemeni mothers are unable to read ingredients due to the high illiteracy rate. Nearly half of Yemenis are illiterate, and the illiteracy rate among women is about 67 percent, according to the government.

Duhaish said that the food color-

ing added to these products should be subject to specific standards, be safe and should not be used excessively.

Bistam Al-Shaibani, the head of Consumer Protection Association in Taiz said that violations against consumers in Yemen are continuous.

He said there has been an increased spread of products, food commodities and medicines that do not comply to the Yemeni standards.

"Yemen has become a dump for smuggled goods. Powerful figures in the country systematically and continuously smuggle these items," Al-Shaibani said.

In addition to imported goods, he said there exist many unlicensed factories around the country, and these factories operate outside of government supervision and regulations. He urged residents to notify the concerned authorities.

Al-Shaibani said the association

has received many complaints from residents in Taiz. Residents say some products do not have expiration and production dates.

The association has taken action, confiscating or destroying products with the help of the judiciary.

One problem the association faces is the overlapping responsibilities of government authorities. He said each authority casts the blame on the other.

The association will adopt a campaign to raise awareness.

According to Al-Shaibani, these programs will mainly target school children in Taiz. The association will also coordinate with local authorities in Taiz to prevent these products from entering schools.

He called on the prime minister to respect consumers in Yemen and to take the necessary steps to ensure that products being imported or produced in the country are properly monitored.





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Republic of Yemen
Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation

**Position Vacancy Announcement
for Economic Opportunities Fund**

Chief Executive Officer

BACKGROUND

The Government of Yemen, represented by the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIIC), has received financing from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and several cofinanciers for the Economic Opportunities Programme (EOP) Fishery Investment Programme (FIP) and Rural Employment Programme (REP). These Programmes aim to improve the economic status of rural women and men through the creation of sustainable private sector-led economic opportunities. The EOP, FIP and REP as well as several future investments, will be managed by a Economic Opportunities Fund (EOF) which is created as a public-private partnership. The EOF is managing investments valued in the range of USD 150 million over the next six years. MOPIIC now seeks qualified Yemeni candidates for the key professional positions of the EOF as outlined below.

GENERAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Reporting to the EOF Board of Directors, the CEO is accountable for the EOF performance. He provides leadership and manages donors-financed programmes in accordance with the mission, values and strategic objectives established and/or approved by the Board. The CEO sits on the EOF Board of Directors as an observer.

NATURE AND SCOPE

The CEO has the responsibility to:

- Lead and manage the EOF within the guidelines established by the Board;
- Report to the Board of Directors;
- Recommend the AWP/B to the Board and implement the corresponding operational activities;
- Direct and monitor the activities of the EOF in a manner that ensures that the strategic, operational and capital plans are met and that the assets of the EOF are safeguarded and optimized in the best interests of the programme;
- Develop and implement operational policies set by the Board to guide the EOF within the limits prescribed by the EOF articles and the framework of strategic directions detailed in the project;
- Develop and recommend to the Board the overall corporate organizational structure and the appointment of Executive Management;
- Manage and oversee the required interfaces between the EOF and the public and act as the principal spokesperson for the EOF. This includes the responsibility for managing the equity and other financial market interfaces on behalf of the EOF.

JOB DESCRIPTION

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will lead the EOF to improve the economic status of poor women and men in creating sustainable economic opportunities in the programmes area. He/she will direct the EOF to stimulate the growth and technological improvement of selected value chains and the creation/growth of rural business activities and enterprises, promote linkages between producers' associations and markets through contractual arrangements; promote compliance with national and international food security and safety standards; develop public and private economic infrastructure in support to the selected value chains; expand the rural outreach of financial institutions; enhance access to sustainable rural financial services; promote alternative financial services to stakeholders of selected value chains.

MAJOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Guide programme implementation in accordance with provisions of the Grant/Financing Agreement between Government and IFAD and the guidelines of the Appraisal Report;
- Ensure the coordination of all programme components and activities between project staff, implementing partners, command area communities and other stakeholders;
- Approve the appointment of other EOF staff, participate to their evaluation and ensure that they are fulfilling their terms of reference;
- Ensure that Annual Work Plans and Budgets (AWPBs) are prepared and submitted in accordance with the Grant/Financing Agreement and with the rules of the Ministry of Finance;
- Ensure that gender is mainstreamed in all programme activities and that woman beneficiaries participate effectively in programme interventions and benefit in an equitable manner.
- Take responsibility for the overall use of the programme financial resources;
- Operating Account/s and the Special Account;
- Ensure that the terms and conditions of the agreements/contracts with all implementing partners are adhered to;
- Ensure that the necessary disbursement and reimbursement procedures and M&E activities follow those specified in the Grant/Financing Agreement;
- Submit programme financial and physical progress reports in compliance with the Grant/Financing Agreement, Government requirements and the Project M&E system.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- A graduate degree in business or financial management or similar subject;
- A minimum of 12 years managerial level experience in the private, and public sectors.
- working experience in donor-financed programmes .
- Wide network of contacts within MoPIC, MAI and MoF and the ability to communicate with and motivate a wide range of people including ministers, senior Government officials and leaders and ordinary members of civil society;
- Initiative, commitment, breadth of vision and capacity for innovative, lateral thinking;
- Leadership and team building qualities and experience;
- Fluency in spoken English in both writing and speaking.

General Information

- The recruitment process will be based on open competition and equal opportunity for women and men applicants. Only short-listed candidates will be informed and invited for detailed interviews.
- Interested candidates should submit their applications, consisting of a cover letter and curriculum vitae (CV), to the following email address: lfadumpic@gmail.com and icoyemen_ifad@yahoo.com
- The deadline for applications is **17.00 hrs on 23 April 2014**.

Vaccines alone cannot beat polio in Iraq

IRIN
First published April 10

A countrywide vaccination campaign is under way in Iraq following the country's first confirmed case of polio in 14 years, but public health experts warn it will take more than immunization to beat the virus.

Inadequate sanitation, contaminated water sources and poor public health systems are also major factors in the spread of polio, which —although easily preventable—is high contagious and incurable.

"Putting all your faith in vaccination alone is putting all your eggs in one basket," said paediatrician Annie Sparrow, assistant professor of global health and deputy director of the Human Rights Program at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City.

"When people are still living in abysmal conditions that are unsanitary, unhygienic and with contaminated water, there will still be exposure," she told IRIN.

For Adam Coutts, an honorary research fellow at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, the Iraq case says a lot "about the severity of poverty and state neglect of large numbers of the population as well as the decrepit condition of public health and healthcare services over the last 10 years in Iraq".

As IRIN documented in an in-depth series last year, the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 had a lasting impact on Iraq's healthcare system.

"The humanitarian response sectors need to look at how they explicitly interlink and affect each other rather than continuing to use the 'silo mentality'," Coutts said. "Without tackling sanitation and nutrition, any health interventions and vaccine programs are likely to fail or have reduced efficacy."

The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) said that in areas where poor sanitation, lack of hygiene and malnutrition were prevalent, additional awareness activities and sanitation drives would be carried out alongside the distribution of vaccines.

This is the second country-wide immunization drive to take place in Iraq this year, following an earlier campaign in March in response to cases discovered across the border in Syria in 2013. More rounds are planned for May and June.

"If we do the right job now, we can put anything difficult aside," Marzio Babilie, UNICEF's representative in Iraq, said, stressing the need to reach every child. "If we don't, then we are going to have 20 more or 200 more cases, and then things will become very difficult indeed."

"The problem is many countries in the region—not just Iraq—do not see public health as a key concern of human security or a driver of economic growth."

For every case of polio that results in paralysis, doctors estimate there could be as many as 250 other live cases of the virus. That means there could be many more polio cases in Iraq that remain undiagnosed.

Due to the social stigma attached to polio, parents may not want to put their children forward for testing, Sparrow said. Doctors who have not seen polio for a while may not even understand or recognize the symptoms, she added.

Baby Moossa

The parents of six-month-old Moossa Hezam, the baby boy at the heart of Iraq's outbreak, did take their son to the doctor when he became ill, but his father told staff from UNICEF that neither Moossa nor his four siblings had been immunized.

"I am working so hard to support my family and had no time to think about taking my children to the hospital for vaccinations," Abood Hezam, a driver who lives in Bagh-



Earlier this month a nationwide polio vaccination campaign was launched in Yemen amid a reemergence of the highly infectious disease in the region.

dad's impoverished northern suburbs, told health and nutrition officer Ali Abdul.

"I truly regret this now. If only Moossa was vaccinated, he would have been polio-free now." He added that he wanted to make sure all other parents knew the risk, so that their children would not be infected.

Health workers blame the resurgence on the civil war and the disruption it has caused to immunization activity and supply chains.

Lack of access

Iraq faces similar challenges. With parliamentary elections due to take place on 30 April, political and sectarian tensions are rising. According to the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), more than 2,000 people have been killed by acts of terrorism and violence since the start of the year.

Separately, the western province of Anbar, which shares a border with Deir-uz-Zor, where Syria's polio outbreak first occurred, has since January been caught up in fierce fighting between government forces, Islamist factions and other tribal militants.

More than 400,000 people have fled their homes and the insecurity has severely restricted humanitarian access. As a result, the last polio vaccination drive held in the province in March reached less than half of its target.

Health workers blame the resurgence on the civil war and the disruption it has caused to immunization activity and supply chains.

Ziad Tariq, a spokesperson at the Ministry of Health, played down the issue of poor sanitation and weak health systems, blaming the outbreak on the fact that insecurity within Iraq prevented all children from being reached in previous vaccination rounds. Some parents, he added, did not put their children forward to be immunized.

"This case was imported from Syria," he said. "We detected it because we have good surveillance systems in place. Now we are working hard to reach all five and half million children under the age of five to make sure they are vaccinated."

But even before the most recent escalation in fighting, health work-

ers struggled to ensure all Iraqi children received the three recommended doses of the vaccine. According to data from the World Health Organization (WHO), immunization coverage from 2009 to 2014 ranged from 70 to 87 percent of targeted children, and at times dropped to less than one-fifth of children in Diyala and Dahuk provinces.

Syed Jaffar Hussain, head of the Iraq mission for WHO, which is leading the response in conjunction with the Ministry of Health and UNICEF, told IRIN that despite the "challenging security situation", health workers planned to achieve "coverage of 100 percent" in this new round.

He said the immunization campaign, which in the rest of the country ran for five days (from 6-10 April), would continue longer in Anbar to ensure full reach. The "catch up" campaign will ensure no-one was missed, he added.

Public health a key priority?

But accessing funding remains a major hurdle, according to UNICEF's Babilie. With money only guaranteed for the next few months, agencies are putting steps in place for a potential emergency appeal to respond to the polio outbreak.

Babilie, a medical doctor, said he hoped the government would follow up on its pledges to provide financial support to the polio response, especially given the existing strains on UN budgets.

Critics have accused the government of being slow to put money towards the polio response.

"The Ministry of Health has more than enough money to fund vaccination coverage and basic sanitation and hygiene infrastructure and they should see it as a cost-saving measure," Coutts told IRIN.

"The problem is... many countries in the region - not just Iraq - do not see public health as a key concern of human security or a driver of economic growth. Public health in [the Middle East and North Africa] is seen as high-tech curative interventions performed in hospitals rather than low cost primary health care settings in poor neighborhoods."

But Tariq, of the Ministry of Health, insisted the government is funding the immunization campaign, with technical support from UNICEF and the WHO.

He added: "We have started a media campaign to reach all of Iraq to make sure parents get their children vaccinated and this will continue through the year. We want to make sure we reach every child."

Following Moossa's diagnosis in March, there has so far only been one other suspected case in Iraq: a young refugee girl who crossed the border from Syria into the semi-autonomous Kurdistan region. She was later found to have temporary vaccine-induced paralysis and has since made a full recovery.

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Natco Consumer Company hands over the first 50 gram gold bar

ناتكو الاستهلاكية تقوم بتسليم اول سبيكة ذهب ٥٠ جم من حليب أنكور



سلمت شركة ناتكو الاستهلاكية في ١٣/٤ من العام الجاري اول سبيكة ذهب ٥٠ جم للرايح/مبارك على ناجي من امانة العاصمة جاء ذلك في مقر الشركة بحضور الأخ / نائب المدير العام /عبد الحكيم محمد فارح و الأخ / المدير التجاري وليد عوهج والعديد من موظفي شركة ناتكو الاستهلاكية وفي كلمه القاها نائب المدير العام /عبد الحكيم محمد فارح خلال التكرم ان العديد من جوائز الذهب مازالت بانتظار من سيحالفه الحظ في الحصول على كوبون الذهب بداخل العلبة، بالإضافة الى الهدايا الفورية من قطع الذهب الاخرى. ويقضي الفوز بالجائزة إيجاد كوبون السبيكة الذهب ٥٠جم داخل علبة الحليب الانكور ٢٥٠٠جم للفوز بالمسابقة. وتتوزع القطع الذهبية ما بين (١ / ٢ / ٥ / ٥٠) جرام من الذهب في العلبة الراحبة، الجدير بالذكر ان المسابقة برعاية شركة ناتكو الاستهلاكية الوكلاء لحليب أنكور، حيث بدءا المسابقة في ١٥ مارس من العام الجاري و ستستمر حتى نفاذ الكمية.

Natco Consumer Company on April 13 handed over the first 50 gram gold bar to the first place winner Mubarak Ali Najji, a resident of Sana'a.

This took place at the company's headquarters in the presence of Abdulhakeem Mohammed Fare, deputy director of the company, Walid Awhj, the commercial director and several employees of the company.

In a speech delivered during the honoring, Fare said that there are still several gold bars to be distributed to winners who will find the coupons inside the Anchor milk cans, which they will be able to present for 1, 2 or 5 gold bars.

In order to win the prize, the winner must find a 50 g gold bar coupon inside Anchor milk can of 2500 g.

The offer is sponsored by the Natco Consumer Company, the agent of Anchor milk.

The offer began on March 15, 2014 and will continue until the quantity is over.

Anchor Trademark

- Anchor has become a distinguished New Zealand trademark in dairy products since 1886.
- Anchor has been focusing on innovation for over 120 years. It has become a leading brand in the field of dairy products worldwide.
- Anchor offers the best dairy products directly from farms to all consumers worldwide, ranging from powdered milk and cheese to butter. All of its products have been manufactured from the purest fresh milk at the highest levels of quality.
- Anchor has become a leading brand in dairy products by providing nearly 24 million daily rations.
- It is no wonder that mothers around the world trust Anchor.

Did you know?

- Anchor has more than four million cows.
- Anchor represents the largest source of dairy products in the world.
- Anchor cows grow and thrive in a natural environment and under special care throughout the day and week.

العلامة التجارية أنكور

لقد اصحت أنكور منذ عام ١٨٨٦ العلامة النيوزلندية المميزة في ابتكار منتجات الألبان . على مدى ١٢٠ عاماً و أنكور تركز على الابتكار ، فقد كبرت لتصبح العلامة التجارية الرائدة في عالم منتجات الألبان حول العالم . تقدم أنكور خيرة منتجات الألبان مباشرة من المزرعة إلى جميع أفراد العائلة حول العالم ، ابتداءً من الحليب المجفف ، الجبن ، وصولاً إلى الزبدة ، فقد تمت صناعة جميع منتجاتها من انقى أنواع الحليب الطازج وعلى أعلى مستويات الجودة . و اليوم أصبحت أنكور العلامة التجارية الرائدة في منتجات الألبان بتقدمها ما يقارب ٢٤ مليون حصة غذائية يومياً .

فلا عجب أن تلق الأمهات حول العالم بأنكور . هل تعلم :

تمتلك أنكور ما يزيد عن ٤ ملايين بقرة .

تمثل أنكور أكبر مصدر لمنتجات الألبان في العالم .

تغذي أبقار أنكور على العشب فقط طول أيام السنة . أي لا يتم إطعامها الحبوب أو الأعلاف أو اللحوم في مزارعها .

تنمو أبقار أنكور و تتعرض في بيئة طبيعية وتحت رعاية خاصة ، على مدار اليوم والأسبوع .



natco
Consumables

Head office Sana'a - Sixty Street (Southern)

Tel: 01-447344/2/3

Fax: 01-450585/444730

P.O.B: 1187

Email: consumables@natco.com.ye

ناتكو
الاستهلاكية

المركز الرئيسي صنعاء - شارع الستين (الجنوبي)

تلفون: 01-447344/2/3

فاكس: 01-450585/444730

ص.ب: 1187

إيميل: consumables@natco.com.ye

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Tunisia's promise and strategic potential

The State Department announced a follow-up meeting to take place in Tunis in 2015, suggesting exactly the type of sustained engagement that Tunisia needs. This forum, however, should only mark the beginning of a robust relationship that carries significant strategic advantages.

A prosperous, democratic Tunisia could wield influence and impact that outsize its more humble geographic characteristics and

could have a positive impact in the shared interests of the region and the world. A successful transition in Tunisia would serve as a significant example that Arab transition politics does not have to be a zero-sum game and that consensus is achievable. Moreover, as democratic principles take hold at the ballot box and in vibrant public debate that produce accountable, representative leadership and (over time) deliver better services and oppor-

tunities to the people, the Tunisia case could show that political compromise is a sign of strength. This development would be particularly helpful in a region where countries face seemingly insurmountable challenges to fulfilling the promise of their own revolutions.

The Tunisian experience of course occurred in its own unique social and political context, but it could positively influence other transitioning countries. In an effort to draw upon lessons learned, Tarek Mitri, head of the UN Special Mission in Libya, formally requested Tunisia's assistance in promoting a national dialogue in Libya—a testament to how much the international community hopes to make a shining example of Tunisia. While the idea of neighboring Arab countries helping one another is certainly laudable, world leaders should not forget that the respective countries' national dialogues occur in different environments. Tunisia's state institutions have remained intact, popular labor unions have wielded tremendous influence, and the large, educated middle class has channeled its grievances through civil society activist groups, even under dictatorship. In Libya, state institutions operate with limited capacity and legitimacy, and a security vacuum hampers progress. Nevertheless, Libya's National Dialogue Preparatory Commission has made great headway in its public outreach and awareness campaign. If the Tunisians provide mediating or moral support throughout this process, Libyans could be re-

mindful of the end goal and the success that they might achieve if they rally the political will to push back against centrifugal forces.

A robust Tunisia would also be better positioned to tackle transnational challenges. With authorities' bandwidth stretched thin due to the rocky political transitions sweeping North Africa, illegal activity in the region has seen a boost, marked by a growing drugs and weapons trade. Criminal elements capitalize on porous borders and weak law enforcement to smuggle arms from Libya's revolutionary war and fueling conflict elsewhere, according to a UN report. Illegal migrants use routes through North Africa and the Mediterranean to reach European shores. With the region in such turmoil and security deteriorating in neighboring Libya, the international community could use a strong linchpin to substantively curb the negative trends, particularly in light of extremist threats. Beyond standard counterterrorism efforts, Tunisia can address economic grievances and reduce the border regions' dependency on trafficking of goods to earn a living, adopting a development approach to address the root causes of insecurity. Only a prosperous Tunisia can work more effectively with its partners, including Libya and Algeria, with which it has discussed improved border security cooperation. In the long run, an economically secure Tunisia with more resources and attention means that the international community will have a reliable partner with which

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to meet various threats.

With much at stake, Tunisia faces challenges that will inevitably test its democratic experience. The US administration's Fiscal Year 2015 budget requests for Tunisia is lacking, despite the many ramifications that a Tunisian success story could have symbolically (in the short-term) and substantively (in the medium- and long-term). Nevertheless, the loan guarantees and the strategic dialogue initiative are promising signs that the United States, however restrained and cautious in its approach over the last couple of years, now feels more comfortable and confident in stepping forward to meet Tunisia's needs after it demonstrated

its commitment to the democratic process and earned its invitation to Washington. US engagement should build on this and not grow reticent with setbacks that will inevitably occur throughout this delicate period in Tunisia's history. A transition is not without pitfalls, but if they can be overcome, a democratic Tunisia could have far-reaching strategic implications.

Lara Talverdian is the assistant director for research with the Rafik Hariri Center for the Middle East where she researches the political transitions in North Africa.

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