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Tens of thousands march in Sana'a against the Houthis



Story by **Ali Ibrahim Al-Moshki**
 Photos by **Brett Scott**

SANA'A, Aug. 25—Tens of thousands of people took to the streets of Sana'a on Sunday, protesting against the demands and growing presence of the Houthis in Sana'a, and rallying in support of President Abdu Rabu Mansour Hadi.

Marches started in Sana'a from Asser Roundabout, west of the capital, and protesters roared through the packed streets all the way to Bab Al-Yemen, the Old City. Along with a plethora of Yemeni flags, demonstrators held signs calling for the

expedited implementation of the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference (NDC), and announcing their rejection of any actions targeting the security, unity, and republican regime of the country.

Protesters were shouting slogans condemning the Houthis' presence in Sana'a, their encampments at the entrances to the city, and what many see as threats made by the Houthis' leader, Abdulmalik Al-Houthi.

They recited slogans accusing the Houthis of besieging Sana'a in preparation for an incursion of the city.

The protesters accused the Houthis of trying to instate a royal

regime, shouting "republican, republican, no royalty or Imamate, no price-increase, no Houthis, Houthis are terrorists," and "Houthi you are liars, you are befriending Jews."

Many protesters also announced their rejection of the government's decision to lift the fuel subsidies.

There were many independent youth activists attending the protest; the majority of protesters appeared to be roughly split between supporting the General People's Congress (GPC) and the Islah Party.

A statement made by members of the organizing committee of the protest demanded the government to spread its control nationwide;

disarm militias and armed groups wherever they are; undertake economic reforms to reduce the suffering of citizens; reinstate social justice; combat terrorism; and to try corrupt officials in court.

"We reject all actions by the Houthis and we reject the besieging of Sana'a to re-subsidize fuel prices," said Mohammed Ali Al-Bawda, a participant of Sunday's protest.

He confirmed "Al-Houthi is not the people. When he speaks and says he is the people, we refuse that." Al-Bawda also says that "in case the Houthis attacked Sana'a, we will fight them and defend the capital."

Political acts, security measures

Some political parties publicly announced their view on current events in Yemen. The GPC's official spokesperson, Abdu al-Ganadi, called on President Hadi to sack the government and freeze the price increase.

In a press statement issued on Sunday the Islah Party called for a stop to escalations, provocations, and marches in order to allow for the negotiation process to continue without any pressures, influences, or challenges.

The office of the United Nations Special Advisor to Yemen, Jamal Benomar, said in a statement that

Benomar is proceeding negotiating with various entities and political leaders to find a peaceful solution to the current tensions in the country.

Benomar is set to brief the UN Security Council on August 29.

The Ministry of Interior on Sunday ordered for all entrances leading to Sana'a to be closed in order to prevent the smuggling of arms and armed men into the capital.

The ministry announced on its website, "the armed sit-ins that are besieging the main entrances leading to Sana'a are causing real distractions and preventing the apprehension wanted men and suspicious cars."

Sana'a Tourism Summer Festival kicks off

Story and photo by **Ali Abulohoom**

SANA'A Aug. 25—The seventh Sana'a Tourism Summer Festival was inaugurated on Sunday in Al-Sabaeen Park under the slogan "towards a stable Yemen and prosperous tourism."

Over 2,500 individuals and organizations of different Yemeni governorates and Arabic countries are participating in this year's week-long festival, through activities and exhibitions reflecting their respective cultural backgrounds.

According to Mutahar Taqi, the deputy tourism minister, 90 handicrafts associations and non-governmental organizations participate in the festival, in addition to over 100 tourism-related institutions, including hotels, restaurants, and tourist agencies.

Speaker of Parliament Yahya Al-Raie and Yemeni Tourism Minister

Qasim Salam were among the attendees at Sunday's inauguration ceremony.

Al-Raie announced in his speech, "this festival will send a strong message to our enemies inside and outside Yemen, showing that our country is safe and will stay safe."

Tourism Minister Salam proclaimed that the ministry insisted on holding Sana'a's seventh tourism festival despite the security and economic unrest inside the country.

Salam hopes the festival will promote Yemen's tourism industry and offer cultural and entertaining activities to Yemeni families, balancing the negative psychological consequences caused by Yemen's deteriorating security, political, and economic situation.

According to Salam, "this is not only a summer festival... but it is the summer of love, safety, and stability."

The festival's cultural activities include art exhibitions, singing competitions, dancing, and sports activities.

Many Yemeni business companies and associations that work in the field of tourism or deal with cultural handicrafts have been invited by the Ministry of Tourism to exhibit and sell their products.

Yunis Al-Shami, a 45-year-old Yemeni, is participating in the festival for the seventh time. He appreciates that a large number of visitors are joining the festival in spite of Sana'a's multiple security and economic concerns.

Al-Shami, who sells traditional handicrafts such as necklaces, earrings, and bracelets, explains that he doesn't care how much he earns from the festival. "All I care about is introducing traditional Yemeni handicrafts," he said.

Continued on page 2



Sports, arts, singing, and dancing offer a much needed respite from Yemen's deteriorating security, political, and economic situation.

Fighting continues in Al-Jawf, casualties mounting

■ **Bassam Al-Khameri**

SANA'A, Aug. 25—Tribesmen in Al-Jawf governorate attacked Houthi posts in Al-Ghail district on Sunday night and Monday morning, leaving two tribesmen killed and six others injured, according to Saleh Al-Rawsa, the leader of the popular committees in Al-Jawf.

Al-Rawsa told the Yemen Times that the popular committees took over Houthi posts and killed several Houthis, adding that the number of Houthi casualties is unknown as Houthi members took the bodies.

Mohammed Al-Bukhaiti, a member of the Houthis' Political Office, confirmed to the Yemen Times that tribesmen launched an attack on Monday morning in Al-Ghail but he says they failed to gain control over posts that were attacked.

According to Al-Bukhaiti no Houthi militants were killed in the attack.

The attack on Monday morning

came amidst ongoing clashes that renewed on Friday, following the withdrawal of the presidential committee from Al-Ghail district, leaving two tribesmen killed and ten injured, according to Al-Rawsa.

Al-Bukhaiti said he has no information regarding Houthi casualties from the clashes on Friday.

"The Houthis are using the weaponry they looted from military camps in Amran, including tanks, military vehicles, and heavy weapons," said Al-Rawsa.

These allegations are refuted by Al-Bukhaiti, who denied that tanks are being used by the Houthis.

"We use light weapons, but the tribesmen and Islah Party members use tanks and weapons from the 115th Infantry Brigade in Al-Jawf," he claimed.

The clashes in Al-Ghail renewed after the presidential committee, tasked to broker a ceasefire in Al-Jawf, left the governorate on Friday.

The agreement it had brokered on

August 19 required all fighters in Al-Jawf who came from other governorates to return to the areas they came from and demanded for brigades and battalions to maintain security in Al-Jawf.

Mabkhout Mohammed, a journalist based in Al-Jawf, confirms that clashes renewed between the two warring parties on Friday and that the presidential committee left Al-Jawf without putting an end to the fighting.

Yahya Al-Thulaia, a senior freelance journalist who covered the fighting between the Houthis and opposing tribesmen in Amran governorate, emphasizes the uselessness of presidential committees sent to broker ceasefire agreements between the two warring parties.

"These committees are only established to calm the situation, not to reach a final resolution. The conflicting parties use these committees to reorganize themselves in order to then start fighting again," he asserts.

Clashes in Al-Jawf have been ongoing since late June. Several families have left their homes due to the fighting.

Increasing number of internally displaced persons in Al-Jawf

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported on August 14 that 650 families (about 4,550 people) have been displaced because of the clashes in Al-Jawf.

Mohammed estimates that the number of displaced families in Al-Jawf has reached 700.

Mohammed Nasser, the head of a displaced ten-member family in Al-Jawf, said that he left his house in Al-Ghail district in late June due to ongoing clashes and moved to Al-Rawd district.

"We moved from one area to another until we reached Al-Rawd district. I'm currently living with my family in an old house owned by a relative of mine," he added.

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Southern Movement watchful of Sana'a's developments

■ Ali Saeed

SANA'A, Aug. 25—The Southern Movement (Hirak) is closely watching recent developments in the capital Sana'a after members of the Houthis set up protest camps nearby three ministries in the city and growing numbers of their militants are gathering at camps at the city's main entrances.

The Southern Movement is a popular movement in south Yemen that appeared in 2007 and calls for the independence of the former South Yemen from the north.

Egypt-based journalist and Southern Movement supporter, Khaled Al-Kuthairy reported from Cairo that on Friday the prominent leader of the Southern Movement, Hassan Baom, met the exiled southern leader Haidar Al-Attas. The latter used to be the prime minister of the national unity government that followed the unification of the South and the North of Yemen in 1990.

Al-Kuthairy said that Al-Attas and Baom discussed new developments related to the southern issue.

The Southern governorates, which

include Aden, Lahj, Al-Dhale, Shabwa, Hadramout, Al-Mahra, and Abyan, saw no protests either for or against the Houthis, unlike northern governorates.

The Houthis took control of Amran governorate, 50km north of Sana'a, on July 8 and residents of Sana'a fear that the Houthis will take over the capital next. The Houthis' leader Abdulmalik Al-Houthi denied his intention to occupy Sana'a last Friday.

"We are watching carefully and waiting to see how the situation will go," said Abdu Al-Ma'atari, spokesperson of the Southern Movement and resident of Al-Dhale.

He said the Southern Movement does not care about who will win in the north "because our cause is to have our independence."

Mohamed Al-Sharafi, a political activist from Hadramout who supports the independence of South Yemen, said in a conversation with the Yemen Times that if the people in the south were to side with any rivals of Sana'a, this would spark sectarian conflict.

"We have Ansar Al-Sharia [Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula] supporters here and other Salafis and stand-

ing for any certain party will plunge us into sectarian conflict," said Al-Sharafi.

The government has been engaged in sporadic fighting with suspected Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) militants in Hadramout since August 4. AQAP executed 14 soldiers on August 9, accusing them and other soldiers of being pro-Houthi.

Religion plays a significant role in influencing people's attitudes and stances towards developments in Yemen. The Aden Al-Ghad, a pro-Southern Movement newspaper in Aden, reported on Sunday that pro-independence preachers in Aden called on people during the Friday sermons "to reinstall their state by force if the Houthis took control of the capital Sana'a."

Al-Ma'atari said it is not time to say what the Southern Movement will do if the Houthis were to take control of Sana'a, saying only that "when this happens, we will decide what to do."

The former President Ali Abdullah Saleh, who was ousted in a popular uprising in 2011, and the Islah Party, often considered Yemen's branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, dominated

the government after they defeated the former ruling party of South Yemen, the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP) during the 1994 civil war. YSP leaders attempted to separate the former South Yemen, yet had to ultimately flee the country.

Both Saleh's party, the General People's Congress (GPC), and the Islah Party are still in control of the government and the Houthis are calling for its removal.

"Toppling the government and canceling the fuel price increase are legal demands for all Yemenis [in the south and the north] because this government failed to react to the southern cause," said Al-Sharafi.

He explained that if the interim president Abdu Rabu Mansour Hadi sacked the current government and replaced it with a "technocratic government," he would be able to stabilize the country and improve public services for citizens nationwide.

"If this happened, the Southern Movement will lose 30 percent of its popularity in the south because people are only looking for security, good service, and stability," said Al-Sharafi.

IN BRIEF

Specialized Criminal Court issues death sentence

SANA'A, Aug. 25—The Specialized Criminal Court issued a death sentence on Monday convicting three suspects for the murder of Arafat Abdulmoghni, the deputy head of the Sana'a Public Works Office, and his escort Yahia Al-Jumale.

"The court sentenced Mohammed Al-Sawadi, Maeen Al-Sheikh, and Mohammed Hameed to death as they were convicted of murdering Abdulmoghni and his escort," stated a judicial source on the Defense Ministry's website.

The court also issued a two-year imprisonment verdict on one of the arrested suspects and acquitted another person accused of having been involved in the murder.

Engineer Abdulmoghni and Al-Jumale were killed in Hiziz area of Sana'a on March 1, 2013.

Two soldiers killed, eight others wounded in Hadramout

SANA'A, Aug. 25—Two soldiers were killed and eight others wounded on Sunday in a bomb explosion targeted at a military patrol in Al-Yahira area, between Seyoun and Shibam districts in Hadramout.

A source at the 135th Infantry Brigade spoke to the Yemen Times on condition of anonymity, saying, "some Al-Qaeda affiliates detonated a bomb when the patrol passed in the area."

"The soldiers pursued the militants who kept watching the explosion and arrested three of them," the source added.

The source denied the news reported by local media about the arrest of six militants, including an American and two Ethiopians.

Several clashes have taken place between the military and affiliates of Al-Qaeda in the

Arabian Peninsula in mid-August that have left dozens dead on both sides.

President Hadi calls for Houthis to withdraw from Amran

SANA'A, Aug. 25—President Abdu Rabu Mansour Hadi said the Houthis gained control over Amran while the military was battling affiliates of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula in Shabwa and Abyan, the state-run Saba News Agency reported. After a meeting with the ambassadors of the ten countries that support the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) initiative, on Monday, President Hadi said "the Houthis must withdraw from Amran and all gunmen from other governorates should leave Amran and submit all weapons they have taken to the state."

The Houthis took over Amran on July 8, after two-months of fighting with the 310th Armored Brigade, which was backed by armed Sunni tribesmen.

Aden Gulf Coastguard seizes 650 cartons of cigarettes

SANA'A, Aug. 25—The coast guard in Aden Gulf confiscated 650 cartons of smuggled cigarettes late Sunday evening.

Colonel Saleh Al-Fani, director of the coast guard's operations nationwide, told the Yemen Times the coast guard seized two ships carrying 650 cartons of cigarettes in Al-Kadaha at the coast of Gulf of Aden.

Al-Fani said, "the ships came from Djibouti and one of them unloaded half of its cargo in the sea because it was about to sink."

"The two ships and cargo are kept in the Al-Mocha Center of the coast guard in the Gulf of Aden to take the needed legal procedures," he added.

Houthis expand their presence in the capital

■ Nasser Al-Sakkaf

SANA'A Aug. 24—As a sign of their growing frustration with the government and unmet demands, Houthi supporters have set up dozens of tents inside Al-Thawra amusement park in Al-Jeraf area north of Sana'a on Friday.

Thousands of Houthi loyalists filled the streets on Friday, along the Airport Road, demanding the government's resignation, a reversal of its decision to raise fuel prices, and the implementation of the National Dialogue Conference (NDC) outcomes.

Several government offices and ministries are located in Al-Jeraf

area where Houthis have spread their encampments, including the ministries of interior, electricity, and telecommunication. "The group has erected new tents in Al-Thawra park. This is the beginning of the revolutionary phase which began on Friday and was announced by the group's leader, Abdulmalik Al-Houthi," said Hizam Al-Assad, a member of the Houthis' political office.

Saad Bin Aqeel, a Sunni Mufti from Taiz governorate, presented Friday's sermon to the Houthi masses in an attempt to show Sunni support for the Shia Houthi group.

A Mufti is an Islamic scholar who is consulted for religious rulings and judgments. The idea underlying Bin

Aqeel's sermon was to emphasize that all religious sects in Yemen are present in the sit-ins which the Houthis began on Monday in the vicinity of the residence of Sheikh Abdullah Bin Hussein Al-Ahmar's sons.

Since Hussein Al-Ahmar's sons witnessed feuds with the Houthis in the past, the current sit-in could create tension in the area, according to Nabeel Al-Sharjabi, a professor of political science at Sana'a University.

Houthis have previously engaged in fighting with tribesmen, including Al-Ahmar's sons, in different areas in Amran governorate, located 50 kilometers north of Sana'a. On July 8 Houthis took control over Amran.

Bin Aqeel requested his audience to

erect tents near the ministries and to peacefully exert pressure on the government to meet the people's demands.

"All sit-ins inside Sana'a will be peaceful, we will not use guns. Sana'a is not an ordinary governorate, it is the capital and it deserves respect," assured Al-Assad.

Since Monday armed Houthi supporters have spread their presence along the entrance of Sana'a in Al-Subaha area west of the capital, Hizyaz area, south of the capital, and in Al-Azzvaqain, north of the capital. The camps were established to repel potential attacks from the government forces on Houthi demonstrators in the capital.

Al-Mekhlafi: Houthis stalling, no agreement reached

■ Ali Ibrahim Al-Moshki

SANA'A, Aug. 25—Abdulmalik Al-Mekhlafi, the official spokesperson for the presidential committee tasked to reach an agreement between the government and the Houthis, revealed in an interview with Al-Jazeera channel on Sunday evening that Houthi leaders intentionally delayed their response to the suggestions offered by the committee and that further meetings planned for Monday were canceled.

A meeting between the presidential committee and the Houthis, which began on Thursday in Sa'ada to reach an agreement between the Houthis and the Yemeni government, was abruptly ended on Sunday.

In a recent development, Al-Mekhlafi told Al-Jazeera that the committee refused to meet the Houthis on Monday in reaction to the Houthis' continuous delay in responding to the committee's suggestions.

Al-Mekhlafi considered the Houthis' postponement as a strategy to buy more time and allow for more Houthi supporters to usurp Sana'a. Commenting on the failure of earlier talks, Al-Mekhlafi was quoted by Al-Jazeera as saying, "we have presented the Houthis with several written solutions," which include agreeing on a new unity government.

"We agreed on implementing the National Dialogue Conference (NDC) outcomes in accordance

with an agreed-upon timed mechanism from all parties, and we have also agreed on making major unprecedented economic reforms," he said.

At the beginning of its meeting, the presidential committee had requested the Houthis to submit an official letter listing all of the group's demands.

The Yemen Times learnt that instead of being delivered to the presidential committee on Thursday the letter was directly handed over by the Houthis to President Hadi on Monday.

"The letter was supposed to be delivered by the committee but they rushed leaving. Some of the committee members released unfair statements saying the committee failed, and that it intentionally ignored the letter," said Ali Al-Bukhaiti, a member of the Houthis' political office.

Al-Bukhaiti considered the letter sent by the Houthis' leader, Abdulmalik Al-Houthi, to be inclusive of the leader's vision.

"The letter they handed over to President Hadi demanded that fuel subsidy removal must be reviewed, corruption has to be controlled, and government jobs must be allocated on the basis of competency," Al-Bukhaiti said.

Al-Bukhaiti alluded that those who are quick to declare the committee's failure should wait for the president's reaction to Al-Houthi's letter.

The presidential committee and Al-Houthi failed to reach an agree-

ment after three days of talks. The committee filed its report to the president who received committee members in the presidential compound in Sana'a.

According to the state-run Saba News Agency, the committee's members have expressed frustration after the talks and discussions that took place with Al-Houthi, describing the preliminary report to be disappointing.

After failing to reach a reconciliation, Al-Mekhlafi told Agence France Press (AFP), "Houthis appear to be here for war, they have rejected all the proposals they have been given."

When the Yemen Times contacted the Houthi's office, Mohammed Abdulsalam, the Houthi's official spokesperson, referred to his personal Facebook account.

Abdulsalam stated online that "the committee had proposed we betray the people and take deals and avoid discussions on price hikes. We told them we are part of the people and we want a competent government not controlled by powerful figures, a government that represents a national partnership according to the NDC's outcomes."

He also accused members of the presidential committee of rejecting the numerous alternatives and solutions put forth by the Houthis. Abdulsalam called the alleged Houthi requests for a number of ministries as completely baseless, arguing that the Houthis do not aim to be part of any coming government.

his culture "in a very modern and peaceful way."

Jehad Othman, who heads a traditional Syrian music band, said "our participation comes while Yemeni and Syrian people are still suffering from the consequences of the 2011 uprising. We aim to show solidarity with Yemeni people and prove that we face the same destiny which means we should support each other to get through this crisis."

Sana'a Tourism Summer Festival was first inaugurated in 2008 with the

aim of promoting tourism in Yemen and introducing Yemenis and tourists alike to traditional handicrafts and Yemeni culture.

For the first time representatives of other Arabic countries are participating in the festival this year.

While the Sana'a Tourism Summer Festival used to last about a month, its duration this year has been shortened to only week as it coincides with the beginning of school. The festival was supposed to be held in early August but has been delayed for security reasons.



ISLAMIC HELP (UK) - YEMEN PROGRAM Notice for Pre-Qualification of Construction & Engineering Companies

Islamic Help UK (IHUK) is an international NGO with cooperative agreement with Ministry of Planning & International Cooperation and working in Yemen since 2012 in the sectors of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, Emergency response with food, non-food items and basic health services. IHUK is inviting contractors and engineering firms of good reputation and experience of working with UN and International NGOs in rehabilitation of water supply projects and water & sanitation services in schools and health centers to provide their profile and documentation of experience for registering as pre-qualified firms which will be invited to submit tenders, bids and quotations.

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Sana'a Tourism Summer Festival kicks off

The lifestyle of some Yemeni governorates, such as Marib and Shabwa, whose inhabitants are clinging on to their traditions, are also exhibited at the festival.

Visitors learn about Yemen's various styles in architecture, cooking, and dressing.

Taking a break from dancing to the traditional music of his governorate, 25-year-old Mohammed Saeed from Shabwa says he is proud to introduce

The popular committees of Abyan

Nearly four years after being formed, the committees continue to fulfill a range of duties in place of the government

■ Nasser Al-Sakkaf

In the wake of increasing attacks on military forces and government headquarters by Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) in 2011, popular committees mobilized in governorates like Shabwa and Abyan to end AQAP's predominance there.

In fact, it was with the help of popular committees that the military could expel AQAP from the governorates in 2012.

While the emergence and continued existence of popular committees is widely known, little has been said about their build up and working mechanisms.

In Abyan, as in other governorates, the exact number of popular committees is difficult to determine. They are usually responsible for ensuring security in designated areas, ranging from only a few villages to vast areas of land. Although popular committees are often headed by tribal leaders they are not equivalent to tribes, as they often cut across tribal divides and have non-tribal volunteer members.

In general, the structure of popular committees is very local. In Abyan each district has its own popular committee. Each district committee commands over a number of sub-committees.

In Abyan's Zinjibar district alone approximately ten sub-committees exist with about one thousand members, according to Hussein Al-Wohaishi, one of the leaders of the Zinjibar district committee. Overall, popular committees in Abyan comprise about 6,000 members.

The chain of command between Abyan's numerous popular committees is of a hierarchical nature. Accordingly, decisions as important as adding new members, while made by each committee's commander, need to be approved by the head of popular committees in Abyan, Abdulateef Al-Sayed.

Sub-committees report to the district committees, which again report to Al-Sayed, explains his spokesperson Ali Aeeda. Al-Sayed, in turn, communicates with the Ministry of Defense.

Meetings among the leaders of the district committee in Zinjibar take place whenever there is an attack in a specific area or if important investigative information has been reported by one of the committee's members, according to Al-Wohaishi.

Popular committees as a quasi-police force

The most prominent task of popular committees is the provision of security services: fighting crime, arresting suspected criminals, and securing and monitoring roads.

Committee members are divided into specialized teams that all have different functions.

The security team is responsible for capturing suspects. In areas like Al-Mahfad, where official security institutions are largely absent, they also solve problems between civilians, acting as a quasi-police force.

The observation team is tasked with setting up checkpoints and observing roads, recording AQAP movement, and providing the security teams with information on AQAP suspects.

Over the past three months, Aeeda says he has received several orders by the government to set up new checkpoints at Abyan's borders.

"We established new checkpoints in the last three months and were able to arrest many suspects who we suspected were AQAP affiliates," he said.

Aeeda explains that upon the arrest of suspected AQAP members, popular committees interrogate them and, depending on whether or not they are found guilty, forward them to the nearest security department in the governorate.

"When we arrested four armed men in suspicious cars four months



Without sufficient support and oversight from the government, popular committees in Abyan, which act as quasi-police forces, often go unchecked.

ago, we took them to our prison in a house in Zinjibar. We asked them about their work in Abyan and where they are from. We found out that one of them was Saudi and that the others weren't from Abyan, so we suspected them to be Al-Qaeda and took them to Abyan security," Aeeda said.

Alkhaider Haidan, a member of one of the popular committees in Lawdar district in Abyan, adds "we are working all year, but when there is an increase in AQAP activities we have to respond to it and be on alert all day, and this is what is happening nowadays."

While some committee members might be motivated by a genuine sense of responsibility, others, like Haidan, are at least partially driven by monetary incentives.

Haidan used to work as a farmer but the 2011 war destroyed his farm, leading him to join the popular committee in his area to get money and protect his governorate from AQAP.

Popular committees and lacking state control

The relationship between the popular committees and the Defense Ministry is tense. In February, the popular committees demanded the government and the military to officially conscript and train their members and to supply them with adequate weapons to confront AQAP militants.

Until today, their demands remain unfulfilled.

In addition to lacking supplies, it is the delay in salary payments that constitutes persistent complaints among popular committee members.

According to Aeeda, the Defense Ministry pays each committee member in Abyan a salary of YR30,000 (\$140).

Yet, members like Hussam Al-Dalee, who joined a popular committee in Zinjibar city in 2011, say they do not receive their full salary. While Al-Dalee used to be paid the full YR30,000 in 2011 and 2012, the amount he has been getting lately is only YR23,000 (\$106).

According to Al-Wohaishi, such salary cuts are caused by the district committee's decision in 2012 to gradually increase the number of popular committee members by 2000, without the ministry's approval.

In light of sparse government presence, maintaining peace in the district necessitated the increase in the number of committee members, explains Al-Wohaishi.

"There are almost 2000 [new] members in the committees who have not been given their salaries from the Ministry of Defense. We deduct a part of the salary of each registered committee member to give to those who have not been approved by the Ministry of Defense," he adds.

Although the governorate needed

additional security services, he says, no members were added to the committees since the end of 2012.

Al-Wohaishi explains that in recruiting "we focused on the poorest families in the governorate and included their members to the popular committees because of their financial status."

Jamal Al-Geez, the head of the security department in the Defense Ministry, explains that popular committees were free to decide their membership and their payment, but that the government does not support any additional members, instead relying on its military.

Al-Geez distances the Yemeni government even further from popular committees by emphasizing that none of their members, even registered and paid ones, count as official government employees.

While Aeeda says that an agreement exists between the Defense Ministry and the head of the popular committees in Abyan, laying out ground rules, such as payment and tasks, the terms of the agreement are not accessible to the public.

Al-Geez confirms that the right to review the agreement between the popular committees and the Ministry of Defense is exclusive to the two contracting parties. He hinted that it

included the number of the popular committee members and the range of authority they have.

Not only is the public left in the dark concerning the regulative framework within which popular committees are operating, but members themselves do not seem to have a clear understanding of it.

They simply follow the commands of their leaders and it is almost impossible for leading figures on the district and governorate level to control whether or not they are doing their work, according to Aeeda.

The only specific rule mentioned by Aeeda is that popular committees can only use violence in self-defense. "Our work is to defend the people when there is an attack, these directions were given to us since 2011 from our leader," he says.

Without sufficient support and oversight from the government, however, popular committees remain pretty much unchecked and abuses of power go unpunished.

In 2013 Al-Masdar Online reported that members of popular committees in Abyan used excessive force and executed individuals outside the framework of the law, especially those who were suspected of being involved in attacks by AQAP against the popular committees.

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Popular Committees and AQAP

There have been allegations that some popular committee members in Abyan were working with AQAP. Knowing both the territory they operate in as well as a familiarity with AQAP makes them ideal fighters in the eyes of the Defense Ministry, according to Haidan.

Abdulateef Al-Sayed, the head of the popular committees in Abyan, is alleged to have once been a member of AQAP. He left the group in 2011 to join the popular committees, Haidan says.

According to him, Al-Sayed rejected AQAP when he learned that their aim is to fight the government with the goal of building their own emirate—a goal that he deemed to be unrealistic.

Aeeda and several local newspapers confirmed that Al-Sayed used to be a member of AQAP.

Haidan is not the only one raising problematic links between AQAP and popular committees. Mohsen Khosroof, a retired colonel who used to work with the Defense Ministry, claims that AQAP members are infiltrating popular committees. In his eyes, this problem is caused by the fact that tribal leaders, who at times are working with AQAP, are responsible for choosing the committees' members.

"The unemployed youth should be members of these committees, this would solve the problem of young men joining AQAP," Khosroof asserts.

Links between AQAP and popular committee members reflect how interwoven AQAP members and locals are in Abyan. In fact, AQAP's integration into local social networks contributes to the ongoing importance of popular committees.

"After the 2011 war in Abyan people became afraid of the military's presence in the area, thinking that it will create tension with the armed groups [suspected AQAP]," says Al-Wohaishi.

He explained that after military offensives against AQAP in the region in 2011, many residents came to oppose the army. A number of those who were viewed as AQAP members by the military were seen as friends, neighbors, or relatives by locals.

Al-Geez from the Defense Ministry confirms Al-Wohaishi's assessment, arguing that popular committees were of particular importance in areas where citizens rejected the army.

Shaker Al-Ghadier, a soldier from the 11th Infantry Brigade in Abyan agrees, explaining that many residents in Abyan feel sympathy with AQAP members.

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Yemenis seek energy and transport alternatives

Creative ways of mitigating rising fuel costs

■ Bassam Al-Khameri

With the difficult economic situation plaguing Yemen, including a debt of more than six billion dollars, Yemenis are trying to find transport and energy alternatives in order to save money.

On June 30 the government substantially cut fuel subsidies on gas and diesel, calling it a necessary measure to correct imbalances in the state treasury and provide funds for vital development projects.

Accordingly, prices of gas and diesel increased from YR2,500 (\$11.6) and YR2,000 (\$9.3) per 20 liters, respectively, to YR4,000 (\$18.6).

However, the government maintained the subsidy on propane, which is currently sold at YR1,500 (\$7) per 20 liters.

This price difference led several car owners to change their cars' fuel system from gas to propane.

Bashir Sharaf Mohammed, a taxi-driver in Sana'a, explains, "the price of gas was good in the past but now I can't afford paying YR4,000 (\$18.6) per day for 20 liters. So, I changed the fuel system to propane gas which is cheaper."

Mohammed adds "I save YR2,500 (\$11.6) per day and this means I can collect the YR50,000 (\$233) I paid to change the fuel system of my car within only 20 days."

Abdulaziz Saleh Nasser, a 40-year-old resident of Sana'a who owns a Toyota car, said that he decided to change his car's fuel system because as a six cylinder vehicle it consumes a lot of gas.

Once he arrived at the Petroleum Gas Technology Company in Sana'a, Nasser realized he had to wait for about a month for his requested



In reaction to fuel subsidy cuts and increased transportation costs an increasing number of young Yemeni men use bicycles.

changes to be implemented, "because many people want to change the fuel systems of their cars."

Alternative energy

The fuel price hike has also had a significant impact on residents who use gas and diesel-operated generators in an attempt to deal with the constant power cuts.

Ahmed Taha Noman, a 40-year-old resident in Sana'a, says that he stopped using his gas-operated generator at home after the government lifted the fuel subsidies.

"I used to consume about 10 liters of gas per day for YR1,250 (\$5.8) but I can't afford paying YR2,000 (\$9.3). Now I'm using solar panels to generate power," says Noman.

According to him, although solar panels are expensive, he is saving about YR2,000 (\$9.3) per day—

not to mention he does not have to listen to the sound of the generator anymore.

Emad Al-Saqqaf, the director of Sehab Tech for Green Technology, a Yemeni company that supplies and installs solar energy systems, says the demand for solar panels has increased markedly following the recent fuel subsidy cuts.

"Only individuals used to install solar energy systems, but after the government cut the fuel subsidies, large companies and institutions began to install solar systems because they spend high amounts of money on gas to generate electricity," added Al-Saqqaf. The government announced on July 9 that it started studying the exemption of solar power system inputs from customs fees. However, Al-Saqqaf asserted that nothing has happened

yet and that the government would need a long time to reform Yemen's customs fees.

"We have to pay more transportation fees now to transport the solar panels and batteries from harbors in Aden to Sana'a because of gas price hikes, so it would be nice if they were to be exempted from customs fees," said Al-Saqqaf.

Some Yemenis also resorted to using uninterruptible power supply (UPS) devices, which provide backup power when the main source is shut off, instead of using gas-operated generators.

Ahmed Al-Anesi, who works as a finance assistant with a private pharmaceutical company, said he bought a UPS device to generate power at home during power cuts.

"I bought a UPS device for about \$400 (YR85,962) because power outages last for a long time. It's better than a generator because I don't have to pay for gas at \$200 (YR42,981) per liter," added Al-Anesi.

Alternative transport

Another unforeseen consequence of rising fuel prices is the increasing use of bicycles in Yemen. Many young men, who wish to avoid increased transportation fees, began to rely on the environmentally friendly two-wheeler.

Abdulnasser Jubari, a student at Sana'a University's Media College, said he bought a bicycle following the gas price hike.

"Some bus drivers demanded YR80 (\$0.37) per passenger and some others charged people YR100 (\$0.47), so I bought a bicycle and started using it to go to different places in the capital," explains Jubari.

Mutahar Al-Saeedi, an economist

in Sana'a, explains that the fuel subsidy cuts are not the only reason that made people resort to using alternative energy and transport in an effort to save money. Unemployment, bad economic policies, and low wages also contributed to these choices, he says.

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الموديل	الجائزة	رقم الكوبون	اسم الفائز
ROYAL-LCD32	تلفزيون رويال إل سي دي 32 بوصة متعدد الانظمة	059191	أزوي مفضل النهاري
ROYAL-CH250	فريزر رويال باب واحد 250 لتر	058111	صهيب طارق عبد الرؤف العريفي
ROYAL-26LCD60	تلفزيون رويال إل سي دي 26 بوصة متعدد الانظمة	011100	جميل سيف قائد
ROYAL-RD14DR4HC	ثلاجة رويال بابين ثلج 108 لتر لون أبيض	058973	بلال شايف سيف احمد
ROYAL-WT1500	غسالة رويال ذات الحوضين 15 كيلو ROYAL- WT1500	036932	محمد حسن عبد الله حسان
ROYAL-GC504/G	طباخة رويال الإيطالية 50*50 أربع شعل	014161	وليد علي قحطان
WF1300E	كناسة ديونجي كنس وشطف ماء 1300 وات	000373	ماهر محمد سنان
AKAI-AKR125F	ثلاجة أكاي - لون أبيض - سعة 125 لتر	002852	بشيرة علي سيف احمد
ROYAL-WT1200N	غسالة رويال ذات الحوضين 12 كيلو ROYAL- WT1200N	030581	جميلة حفظ الله القيسي
THOMSON-TT80ATT	غسالة طومسون آلة حوض الغسيل 8 كيلو جرام	034461	مأمون مهيوب
ROYAL-DVD8805TUC	مسجلة رويال مع شاشة عرض تلفزيون LCD و DVD	010365	نورمير عبد التواب سعيد
ROYAL-SMW981BG	عجانة رويال بالقاعدة 700 وات مع مطحنة البن وقص الخلط	023979	توفيق حسن عبد الغني
AKAI-MD520MW	مايكرويف الإلكتروني أكاي - 20 لتر - اللون أبيض	041671	حسين محمد عبد الله صالح
AKAI-HK700FPB	محضرة طعام أكاي 25 وظيفية - 700 وات	012987	حلمي فؤاد علي حسان
ROYAL-VC3667SB	كناسة رويال برميل 1800 وات ماليزي لون فضي ستيل - أزرق	044861	منى فضل ساهر الدبجي
AKAI-HK1200FPB	محضرة طعام أكاي (16 وظيفة) - الخلاط - 1000 وات	009629	رغد محمد عبد الله عبد الواحد
BAB2073E	ممسح شعر بابيليس برو للاستعمال على الشعر الجاف أو الرطب	027493	ماجد محمود صالح
F34441	خلاط كرويس 600 وات XL16	030470	سهار علي ناصر لطف الله
LM2070BD	خلاط مولينكس سوبر بلندر ديو 500 وات مع مطحنة بن ومبرشة	040141	عمر طه سعيد العززي
ROYAL-GS32B	كاوية رويال العمودية البخارية 1260-1260 وات - اللون أزرق	015158	وسيم توفيق علي العيسى
FDK251	صانعة بان كيك كرويس FDK251	034158	محمد عبد الباري علي محمد الحربي
AKAI-HK350CBK	خلاط أكاي (خفاقة غاطسة) - 350 وات مع الفرامية	041790	هاني يوسف عبد العزيز
AT717127	فراطة مولينكس ملتي مولينيت 400 وات مع وعاء إضافي	032963	نبيل محمد العريفي
ROYAL-JBL208	عصارة جزر وفواكه رويال 1*3 مع خلاط زجاج ومطحنة بن	027115	انس عبد الرحمن قائد
BAB6444E	مجفف شعر باسيليس برو 1400 وات	000568	إيهاب عبد القوي قائد سعيد
LM2221BA	خلاط مولينكس أونو قوة 350 وات مع مطحنة البن ومبرشة	051687	حنان احمد علي المطري
IM1215M0	كاوية بخار مولينكس انيسيو قوة 1800 وات - 50 جر	000573	إلياس عبد القوي قائد سعيد
ROYAL-NMS650	صانعة اللوزية رويال	018620	محمد عادل محمد احمد
ROYAL-SF16059	مروحة رويال عمودية	036945	صلاح حسن
KS407	عصارة برتقال ديونجي KS407	005210	ساهر حامد احمد علي المحضار
ROYAL-SMS650	صانعة الساندويش رويال	025389	زيدة صلاح علوان

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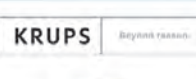
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National Bank Of Yemen



البنك الأهلي اليمني

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2013 AND INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

- b. The recording of provision for general risks calculated on performing loans under "loans provision" and not under equity.
- c. The recording of provision for contingent liabilities under "other provisions" and not under equity.

The effect of these deviations is immaterial on the financial statements of the Bank as at December 31, 2013.

- The financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on May 25, 2014.

2.2 Basis of measurements

The financial statements have been prepared on the historical cost basis except for non-trading investments classified as available-for-sale investment and also land and buildings which are stated in property and equipment are measured at fair value.

2.3 Functional and presentation currency

The financial statements are presented in Yemeni Rials, which is the functional currency of the Bank, and all values are rounded to the nearest one thousand Yemeni Rial except when otherwise indicated.

2.4 Significant accounting judgments and estimates

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with IFRS requires management to make judgments, estimates and assumptions that affect the application of accounting policies and the reported amounts of assets, liabilities, income and expenses. Actual result may differ from these estimates.

Estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognized in the period in which the estimates are revised and in any future periods affected.

Information about significant areas of estimation uncertainty and critical judgments in applying accounting policies that have the most significant effect on the amounts recognized in the financial statements are described in notes 5, 11, 15, 16, 19 and 20.

The judgments, estimates and assumptions applied by the Bank are presented in these financial statements as follows:

a. Provision for impairment of assets

The Bank exercises judgment in the estimation of provision for impairment of assets. The methodology for the estimation of the provision is provided in the impairment of financial assets and non-financial assets (if any) which is shown in the significant accounting policies below.

b. Provision for impairment of available-for-sale investments

The Bank exercises judgment to consider impairment on available-for-sale investments. This includes determination of significant or prolonged decline in the fair value below its cost. In making this judgment, the Bank evaluates among other factors, the normal volatility in share price. In addition, the Bank considers the impairment were appropriate when there is objective evidence of deterioration in the financial health of the investee, industry and sector performance, changes in technology, and operating and financing cash flows.

c. Useful lives of property and equipment

The Bank uses estimates of useful lives of property and equipment for depreciating these assets.

3. SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The accounting policies set out below have been applied consistently to all periods presented in these financial statements.

3.1 Foreign currencies transaction

- The Bank maintains its book of account in Yemeni Rial, which is the Bank's functional currency. Transactions in other currencies are translated to the respective functional currency during the financial year at the prevailing exchange rates at the date of transaction. Balances of monetary assets and liabilities in other currencies at the end of the financial year are translated at the prevailing exchange rates at that date. Gains or losses resulting from translation are taken to the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income.

The foreign currency gain or loss on monetary items is the difference between amortized cost in the functional currency at the beginning of the year, adjusted for effective interest and payments during the year, and the amortized cost in the foreign currency translated at the exchange rate at the end of the year. Foreign currency differences arising on retranslation are recognized in the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income.

Non-monetary items in a foreign currency that are measured in terms of historical cost are translated using the exchange rate at the date of the transaction. Foreign currency differences arising on retranslation of available-for-sale investments are recognized in other comprehensive income.

- The Bank does not deal in forward contracts to cover its needs for foreign currencies or foreign exchange contracts to cover the risks of settling its future liabilities in foreign currencies.

3.2 Financial assets and financial liabilities

a. Recognition and Initial Measurement

The Bank initially recognizes loan and advances to customers, due from or to banks, customers' deposits and other borrowings on the date at which they are originated. Also, other financial assets and liabilities are recognized in the statement of financial position when the Bank becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument with other party.

b. Classification

Financial assets

At inception financial assets are classified in one of the following categories:

1. Loans and receivables

Loans and receivables are non-derivative financial assets with fixed or determinable payments that are not quoted in an active market. Such assets are recognized initially at fair value plus any directly attributable transaction costs. Subsequent to initial recognition, loans and receivables are measured at amortized cost using the effective interest method, less any impairment losses.

2. Held-to-maturity financial assets

Held-to-maturity financial assets are non-derivative assets with fixed or determinable payments and fixed maturity that the Bank has the positive intent and ability to hold to maturity. Treasury bills held to maturity are considered part of these investments and are recorded at face value and the balance of unearned discount is recorded under credit balances and other liabilities. Treasury bills are presented in the statement of financial position net of the balance of unearned discount outstanding at the financial statements date according to the instructions of the Central Bank of Yemen.

Held-to-maturity financial assets are recognized initially at fair value plus any directly attributable transaction costs. Subsequent to initial recognition, held-to-maturity financial assets are measured at amortized cost using the effective interest method, less any impairment losses.

3. Available-for-sale investments

Available-for-sale investments are non-derivative investments that are designated as available-for-sale or are not classified as another category of financial assets. Unquoted equity securities are carried at cost less impairment, and all other available-for-sale investments are carried at fair value.

Interest income is recognized in the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income using the effective interest method. Dividend income is recognized in the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income when the bank becomes entitled to the dividend. Foreign exchange gains or losses on available-for-sale debt security investments are recognized in other comprehensive income.

Other fair value changes are recognized in other comprehensive income until the investment is sold or impaired, whereupon the cumulative gains and losses previously recognized in other comprehensive income are reclassified to the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income as a reclassification adjustment.

- Financial liabilities

The Bank has classified and measured its financial liabilities at amortized cost.

c. Derecognition

- Financial assets are derecognized when the contractual rights related to the financial instruments have expired which ordinarily coincide with the sale or transfer of the contractual right to receive cash flows related to the asset to an independent party.

- Financial liabilities are derecognized when they extinguished, that is when the contractual obligation is discharged, canceled or expired.

d. Offsetting financial assets and liabilities

Financial assets and liabilities are offset and the net amount reported in the statement of financial position only when there is a legally enforceable right to offset the recognized amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis, or to realize the asset and settle the liability simultaneously. Income and expense is not offset in the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income unless required or permitted by any accounting standard or interpretation.

e. Measurement principles

Financial assets are measured by amortized cost or fair value

- Amortized cost measurement

The amortized cost of a financial asset or liability is the amount at which the financial asset or liability is measured at initial recognition, minus principal repayments, plus or minus the cumulative amortization using the effective interest method of any difference between the initial amount recognized and the maturity amount, minus any reduction for impairment loss. The calculation of effective interest rate includes all fees and points paid or received that are an integral part of the effective interest rate.

- Fair value measurement

Fair value is the price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date in the principal, or in its absence, the most advantageous market to which the Bank has access at the date. The fair value of a liability reflects its non-performance risk.

The Bank measures the fair value of listed investments at the market closing price for the investment. For unlisted investments, the Bank recognizes any increase in the fair value, when they have reliable indicators to support such an increase. These reliable indicators are limited to the most recent transactions for the specific investment or similar investments made in the market on a commercial basis between desirous and informed parties who do not have any reactions which might affect the price.

In the absence of a reliable measure of fair value, the investment is carried at cost.

f. Identification and measurement of impairment

At each reporting date the Bank assesses whether there is objective evidence that financial assets not carried at fair value through profit or loss are impaired. A financial asset or a group of financial assets is impaired when objective evidence demonstrates that a loss event has occurred after the initial recognition of the asset(s), and that the loss event has a negative impact on the future cash flows of the asset(s) that can be estimated reliably.

Objective evidence that financial assets are impaired can include significant financial difficulty of the borrower or issuer, default or delinquency by a borrower, restructuring of a loan or advance by the Bank on terms that the Bank would not otherwise consider, indications that a borrower or issuer will enter bankruptcy, the disappearance of an active market for a security, or other observable data relating to a group of assets such as adverse changes in the payment status of the Bank's borrowers or issuers, or economic conditions that correlate with defaults in the Bank.

The Bank consider evidence of impairment loss for loans and advances to customers and held-to-maturity investment securities at both a specific asset and collective level. All individually significant loans and advances to customers and held-to-maturity investment securities are assessed for specific impairment. All individually significant loans and advances to customers and held-to-maturity investment securities found not to be specifically impaired are then collectively assessed for any impairment that has been incurred but not yet identified. Loans and advances to customers and held-to-maturity investment securities that are not individually significant are collectively assessed for impairment by grouping together loans and advances to customers and held-to-maturity investment securities with similar risk characteristics.

Impairment losses on assets carried at amortized costs are measured as the difference between the carrying amount of the financial asset and the present value of estimated future cash flows discounted at the asset's original effective interest rate. Impairment losses are recognized in statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income and reflected in an allowance account against loans and advances to customers.

For listed investments, a decline in the market value by 20% from cost or more, or for a continuous period of 9 months or more, are considered to be indicators of impairment.

Impairment losses on available-for-sale investment securities are recognized by transferring the cumulative loss that has been recognized in other comprehensive income as a reclassification adjustment. The cumulative loss that is reclassified from other comprehensive income is the difference between the acquisition cost, net of any principal repayment and amortization, and the current fair value, less any impairment loss previously recognized in the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income. Changes in impairment provisions attributable to time value are reflected as a component of interest income.

In subsequent periods, the appreciation of fair value of an impaired available-for-sale investment securities is recorded in fair value reserves.

3.3 Revenue recognition

Interest income and expenses for all interest bearing financial instruments are recognized in the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income using the effective interest rate method except for interest on non-performing credit facilities, in order to comply with the requirements of CBY circular No. 6 of 1996, the Bank does not accrue interest on non-performing loans and advances. When an account is treated as non-performing loan, all uncollected interest relating to the three months prior to categorizing the loan as non-performing is reversed from income and transferred to other credit balances as suspense interest.

The effective interest rate is the rate that exactly discounts the estimated future cash payments and receipts through the expected life of the financial asset or liability (or, where appropriate, a shorter period) to the carrying amount of the financial asset or liability. When calculating the effective interest rate, the Bank estimates future cash flows considering all contractual terms of the financial instrument, but not future credit losses.

The calculation of the effective interest rate includes all transaction costs and fees and points paid or received that are an integral part of the effective interest rate.

The effective interest rate is a method of calculating the amortized costs of financial assets and financial liabilities and of allocating the interest income and expenses over the relevant period.

Income from held to maturity investment securities is recognized based on the effective interest rate method.

Dividends income is recognized when the right to receive income is established.

In accordance with CBY instructions, the reversed provisions, no longer required provisions, are recorded in the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income under "other operating income".

Fee and commissions income are recognized when the related services are performed.

3.4 Provision of loans, advances and contingent liabilities

In order to comply with CBY circular No. 6 of 1996 and No. 5 of 1998 relating to classification of assets and liabilities, provision is provided for specific loans, advances and contingent liabilities, in addition to a percentage for general risks calculated on the total of other loans, advances and contingent liabilities after deducting balances secured by deposits and banks' guarantees issued by foreign worthy banks. The provision is determined based on periodical comprehensive reviews of the credit portfolio and contingent liabilities. Accordingly, the provision is provided in accordance with the following minimum rates:



Being played

Pay down 70 percent from last year, Yemeni actors say

Story and photo by
Ali Abulohoom

Unlike previous years, Yemeni actors and actresses on state-run TV channels were asked to go to a protected compound, called "Tourist City" in Sawan district, east of Sana'a, to receive their wages for their acting in drama series which aired during Ramadan.

Actors and actresses say the wages were far below what they had been expecting, and that having them head to the compound to receive their salaries was in an effort to better manage the expected backlash. The compound is fortified by security forces, according to Jalal Al-Badai, a Yemeni actor who appeared in *Droob Shaeka*, or "Barbed Routes," in addition to two other series.

Usually, the wages are disbursed in public place like cafes. However, this time the location of payment was changed to minimize the impact of any attempt by the actors to express their anger publically.

Many state-run and privately-produced dramas only film during the season preceding Ramadan, causing many actors and actresses to work an intense amount for a short period of time, and have the rest of the year off. This custom was adopted from Egypt. In both countries, a number of citizens are able to take the entire month of Ramadan off, meaning more TV time. Even for those working during the holy month, gathering around the TV for a Ramadan drama with the family is tradition.

Abdulaziz Al-Harazi, head of the Yemeni Actors Union, harshly criticizes the practice of producing series for only one month of the year, leaving actors and actresses unemployed for the rest of the year. For those without second or third jobs, that means no income for 11 out of 12 months.

While in Egypt dramas and movies are now year-round, in Yemen they are still only filmed once a year. This, combined with the fact that Egyptian dramas are broadcast throughout the Arab world while Yemeni dramas are largely produced for Yemeni audiences, means that actors and actresses in Egypt are faring better than their colleagues in Yemen.

Other actors and actresses say their grievances go far beyond the dearth of production, but extend to the treatment they receive from producers.

Actors complain that unlike previous years, they were not provided with contracts before filming began. Producers said they would supply them with their contracts after the first episode, and then after the second episode, and then the third, but the contracts never came. Not having signed any contracts, actors are unable to take their grievances to court, despite being paid about one-tenth of what they were paid last year.

The wages were an "insult to our dignity," Al-Badai exclaimed.

After collecting their wages and realizing what had happened, Al-Badai says that "many actors looked so grieved you would think they had lost a loved one. Some could barely walk, overcome with grief and sob-

bing. I was in such shock I had to lie down on a bench. Some screamed and refused to accept the wages. It was all in vain, everyone was forced by circumstance to accept the meager wages."

Sara Jaber, an actress with the Yemen TV channel, said she repeatedly asked producers for a contract during shooting, and that they kept brushing her off until the whole series had been filmed.

Abdulahman Dalaq, the production manager at the state-run Yemen TV channel, calls the actors' complaints "groundless." Although actors have received their contracts before filming every year, Dalaq claims the actors "never asked" for the contracts this year.

Dalaq did, however, confirm that actors and actresses were not provided contracts. He blamed this on the Ministry of Finance, who he said delayed dispersing the funds this year.

Dalaq admits that the funds were dispersed two weeks before filming, which would not account for why the actors and actresses would not receive their contracts prior to shooting.

He deemed it unnecessary to inform actors about their lower wages this year, as salaries are usually not discussed and "telling actors ahead is useless."

Dalaq believes actors and actresses should take into consideration that they are working for a state-run channel, "dedicated to serving society and improving it through its commentary on social values." He discouraged actors from focusing on "profiting." Dalaq declined to divulge his wage, so it is unclear



Actors and actresses claim the location they were sent to receive their wages was changed to a guarded compound in an effort to dissuade any backlash against the unexpectedly low pay.

whether, as a state employee, he is also sacrificing "profit" for the "improvement" of society.

"Every year we are the victims of the producers' greed, but this year the situation reached the pinnacle of injustice when we received what amounts to one-tenth of our salaries compared to last year," Al-Badai said.

The actual amount was between 20 and 30 percent of last year's salaries, according to the numbers given to the Yemen Times by Al-Badai. Dalaq declined to reveal the amount paid out to actors this year, saying the information was private.

According to Al-Badai and Jaber, the wages they received were determined based on the role the actor or actress played in the series, with three ranking positions: starring roles, second support, and third support.

Last year, those acting in starring roles were paid YR30,000 (about \$150) per episode. Those acting in

secondary supporting roles were paid YR25,000 (about \$120) per episode, and those in third supporting roles were paid YR20,000 (about \$100) per episode.

Al-Badai told the Yemen Times that starring actors and actresses received only YR6,000 (\$30) for each episode, the secondary roles got paid YR5,000 (\$25) whilst the third role received YR4,000 (\$20). Dalaq declined to comment on these figures.

Al-Badai and the rest of the series staff protested the pay, but without contracts, they had nothing to stand on and were forced to accept the rates.

"What choice did we have? Especially so close to the Eid holiday, when our children were expecting new clothes," Al-Badai asked.

Ahmed Yahya, a 60-year-old actor, explains, "you can imagine my shock when I received YR60,000 (\$280) for my work. I need at least YR300,000 (\$1,400) to get my wife

treatment for her blood clot."

Al-Harazi said he and the union warned the actors. "I held several meetings with the actors and actresses, advising them not to work without contracts."

Ahmed Al-Mamari, a Yemeni actor, refused to act in any government-funded series this year.

"I only worked in the private sector because the rights of actors and actresses are more secured than in public sector. We signed the contracts [before starting work] and our allowances were disbursed through weekly installments until the end of the series," said Al-Mamari.

Al-Mamari, along with several Yemeni actors and actresses, acted in "Al-Madina Route," a series produced by the private TV channel, Yaman Shabab.

Al-Badai says he has learned his lesson. "For me, I learned from this lesson and I will never participate in any drama unless I sign a contract ahead."



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Introducing Internet governance to Yemen

■ Ali Saeed

For a long time, the citizens of Yemen have battled with a lack of accessible communications. Last Thursday saw an unprecedented step forward, with the Internet Society of Yemen (ISOC Yemen) holding a meeting on Internet governance in Sana'a. It was the first time the concept was discussed in Yemen, since its first presentation at the World Summit on the Information Society in 2003.

The mission of ISOC's Yemeni branch, which was registered as an NGO in 2013, "is the same as that of the global Internet Society (ISOC), whose goal is to promote an open development, evolution and beneficial use of the Internet," said Walid Al-Saqaf, head of ISOC Yemen.

In spite of its young age, ISOC Yemen has actively participated in global events organized by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), the Réseaux IP Européens (RIPE), and the Internet Governance Forum (IGF). Its members have won several grants and fellowships, allowing them to attend global training events and launch various projects, including a series of e-commerce workshops, according to Al-Saqaf.

Membership of ISOC Yemen spans across a variety of demographics and locations, including women and representatives from several Yemeni governorates.

"While we focus on Yemen... we also aim at contributing to the Internet's open development and beneficial use on the global level," Al-Saqaf explained.

"[ISOC Yemen] can bring domestic stakeholders and international actors together to discuss and brainstorm in order to identify problems and come up with solu-



Ahmed Ubaid Bin Daghr, minister of telecommunications and information technology, in a meeting with the Internet Society-Yemen and a delegation from ICANN and RIPE.

tions. Thereafter, the society can help monitor and evaluate progress in implementing those solutions," he said.

On Thursday, ISOC Yemen brought Internet stakeholders together to educate them about Internet governance in an attempt to develop solutions and standards for more efficient, open, and fair Internet usage in the country.

Internet governance is a broad term that was defined in 2005 at an international UN meeting as "the development and application by governments, the private sector, and civil society, in their respective roles, of shared principles, norms, rules, decision-making procedures, and programs that shape the evolution and use of the Internet."

Expanding Internet services throughout the country constituted one of the key issues raised during the meeting of ISOC Yemen. A large part of Yemen's population lives in rural areas that continue to lack internet access.

"The Internet service and access is extremely poor even when com-

pared to countries that are unstable like Syria and Somalia," said Al-Saqaf.

"The telecommunication infrastructure that the Internet relies on and the Internet installations and services need massive and drastic improvements on multiple levels... this can't happen unless a multi-stakeholder approach is adopted and the monopoly of the Internet sector is put to an end," added Al-Saqaf.

Sadeq Muslih, the general manager of the state-run Public Telecommunications Corporation (PTC), which is the only Internet provider in Yemen, announced in a speech held during the meeting on Thursday that the PTC works to engage both the government and the private sector in the provision of internet, the state-run Saba News Agency reported.

In addition, the Ministry of Telecommunication is currently preparing a document outlining a two-year transition from Internet Protocol Version 4 (IPv4) to Internet Protocol Version 6 (IPv6). Those changes,

according to Muslih, will increase Internet capacity and speed in Yemen and adapt to latest technological advances in the IT sector, with many new computers using IPV6.

The internet speed provided by the existing infrastructure in Yemen is 32 GB. To increase internet speed, Yemen and 16 other countries signed a contract with a Chinese company in February, agreeing on the construction of a new submarine internet line to connect Asia, Europe and Africa.

Over the next two years, Yemen aims to connect to this new Internet line in Aden, which links the country to the submarine cable in the Arabian Sea.

The new speed of the planned Internet infrastructure is two terabytes—equivalent to 2048 GB—according to Ali Al-Mawri, head of the Internet Department at the PTC.

In an attempt to increase Internet access nationwide, the government established a project last year called the "one million-landline phones and ADSL project."

In implementing that project, the PTC has so far installed 100,000 new landline phones in areas with existing landline phone services nationwide, according to Al-Mawri.

Another 292,000 new phone lines will be established in service-providing areas, he adds.

Breaking the government's Internet monopoly

One of the main challenges in terms of internet service and access in Yemen is Internet monopoly.

"We can encourage decision makers to end the monopoly. We do this by showcasing examples of other countries, which serve as convincing evidence that using tactics of the past cannot work in the future. We are urging the government to open up [Internet services] as it is only then that the country will be

وظائف شاغرة

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able to improve the Internet sector," Al-Saqaf said.

The censorship of online content used to be very strict under former President Ali Abdullah Saleh. While it has decreased dramatically in the course of Yemen's political transition, the possibility and risk of re-establishing online censorship remains.

Al-Saqaf believes that "allowing the establishment of multiple internet service providers and implementing clear guidelines as to when and how websites violate the law will be needed to prevent the return

of online censorship."

"The government already appears convinced that it has to improve internet access in remote areas. But perhaps it needs guidance and help in understanding how to go about it," Al-Saqaf explained.

"That's where we need to push for a change in mindsets on the governmental level to abandon the monopoly and rigid control of the past and embrace a multi-stakeholder approach," he said.

"Only then can we provide robust and affordable Internet to all citizens across Yemen."

20 عاماً من الريادة

إخترت

جامعة العلوم والتكنولوجيا

كن من النخبة

20 عاماً من الريادة

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برنامج الدكتوراه، إدارة أعمال، محاسبة، دراسات إسلامية، حوسبة.

الماجستير

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Iraq's forgotten displaced

IRIN
First published Aug. 22

In recent weeks the world's attention has fixed on the plight of the Christians and Yazidis of northern Iraq as hundreds of thousands have fled advancing Islamic militants to the semi-autonomous Kurdistan. Yet across the country the same number again of Iraqis have fled their homes since January to other regions, receiving far less attention and support. While the UN and NGOs are trying to reach them with aid, many feel forgotten and complain of preferential treatment.

Following the start of a northward surge in late June by the jihadist group calling themselves the Islamic State (IS), the international community has rushed to the support of Kurdistan.

Semi-autonomous Kurdistan—with a population of just over five million and an existing caseload of 220,000 Syrian refugees—has been the base of the relief effort. The region certainly needs support—it

is now hosting what is believed to be more than 700,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs), many of whom endured grueling journeys to reach safety.

The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) has mounted what it is calling its "largest single aid push in a decade," with a plan to send in more than 2,000 tons of tents and other items, and governments from around the world, who in recent years had wound down their assistance for Iraq, are also flying in large quantities of aid and military equipment.

Yet Kurdistan is not the only part of Iraq where people require help. Away from the glare of the international media being shone on the tented camps of Yazidis in Dohuk, another 700,000 people are currently homeless.

Among them are some 70,000 sheltering in the holy Shia cities of Karbala and Najaf. They are being supported mainly by mosques and local associations, who have made available accommodation usually used by religious pilgrims, the Iraqi

Red Crescent, and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

There have also been small contributions from UN agencies, such as the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), who have provided water and other supplies, but people there told IRIN their needs were desperate.

Abdul Ghafour Ahmed, a member of Iraq's long-persecuted Turkoman ethnic group, told how he and his family of nine fled their home in Tal Afar, west of the city of Mosul, in early June, but were blocked, he said, from entering the majority Sunni Kurdistan, so he headed south to Najaf by road.

"After ISIL swept through our village, we tried to go to Kurdistan, but they didn't receive us for being from the Shia sect," the 67-year-old said. While IRIN was not able to verify his story, there have been growing allegations that the Kurdish government has turned away some of those fleeing. "They were receiving only Kurds and Sunnis. We spent four days at the main border entrance to Kurdistan, but got nothing."



A displaced family from Mosul in Najaf province sits in the August sun. Hundreds of thousands of Iraqis have fled their homes in recent months.

Egyptians tolerating cuts in subsidies—for now

Mohannad Sabry
al-monitor.com
First published Aug. 18

On one smoldering July weekend that also happened to be during the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, Egypt's regime, led by military strongman Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, announced that it was reducing fuel subsidies. The decision sent waves of anger through the poor—and poorer classes of the country—still suffering through the political and security turmoil the nation has been undergoing since the January 2011 revolution.

When the subsidies were reduced, middle-class workers screamed, taxi drivers frowned, and memories of Anwar Sadat's 1977 bread riots were discussed at tea shops that already had raised the prices of their top selling products: tea, coffee, and water-pipe tobacco. But the next day, lines at every gas station across the country seemed as normal as ever, except for some loud drivers who also slipped back into fearful silence after noticing that their screams—unlike those made during the three-and-a-half years before Sisi's presidency—had ceased to echo in the ears of others.

"It's not surprising, the regime seems to have strategized how to secure and pass its decision before it even finalized drafting it," a state-owned gas station manager told Al-Monitor on condition of anonymity.

"Those two gates were manned by police vehicles and their armed personnel," he added, pointing to the massive entrances of the station opening on a main Cairo artery. "The police convoy arrived a couple of hours before the decision was put into effect. The officer told me not to worry, no one will dare to protest. And no one did."

Besides manning gas stations, the police department deployed formations of riot police around main arteries, in addition to forces that have been deployed to other areas since June 2013, while brand-new Jeep Wranglers carrying masked special forces continued to patrol the capital, Cairo, and main cities around the clock. But the sudden and more effective change was the policing of public transport stations across the country and mobilizing military buses at lowered prices to fight inflation.

"People thought they would pay 100 percent more on transportation, but the firm policing allowed an inflation of 25-35 percent at most, except for a few incidents in more distant areas. As for private vehicles, they continue to consume, but in a different pattern."

This different consumption pattern was in itself a sign of acceptance and coping with whatever the

regime decided. The gas station's records of July 2014 show a decrease in consumption of expensive fuel, but in cheaper kinds.

"The sales of 92 unleaded gasoline [a private vehicle's optimal option] dropped from 20,000 liters per day to 16,000; the difference shifted to 80 gasoline [the cheaper leaded gasoline] and natural gas."

The only cars around the gas station during Al-Monitor's interview were new mid- and top-range vehicles that cost between 100,000 Egyptian pounds (\$14,500) and 300,000 Egyptian pounds (\$43,000). Many said protesting the government's decision would be more expensive than heeding it, while others from higher economic classes consider the inflation to be normal, which is exactly the case for them: The subsidies lifted off the more expensive kinds of fuel consumed by the richer and richest were less than those removed from the middle and poorer classes' fuel.

Meanwhile, Mahmoud Hafez, an owner of a multimillion-pound construction business, said "the rich class continues to drive the economy despite the ongoing inflation."

"They have more options and more financial capabilities than the classes that might protest, their lives are backed by bank loans and jobs at private businesses and they will continue to generate revenue," said Hafez, who told Al-Monitor that his business has not suffered any losses since January 2011. "Revenue might have slowed at the time of security unrest, but it continued to increase."

He went on, "if demand continues, a 20,000 pound [\$3,000] inflation per apartment is nothing for someone who has a job and wants to get married, and it will be covered by the revenues increasing with the general inflation."

"Whoever invested \$100,000 in real estate knows exactly what they are doing," Hafez said, "and no matter what happens, they will generate revenues, as opposed to someone who invested \$5,000 and has two years of installments they cannot afford," Hafez said. "Between those two poles of the Egyptian market, the six-, seven- and eight-digit investors are always driving the market and forcing it to accept inflation."

But the military didn't only rely on the acceptance of these basic economic patterns. Over the six months before the fuel subsidy reduction was declared, the military opened three main state-of-the-art traffic intersections; it had taken over the reconstruction duties for the intersections in 2013. All three points relieved massive traffic jams the eastern part of Cairo has suffered for years; in addition, the military continues to build new roads and highways across the country.

Besides increasing the value of real estate in what became districts with good road infrastructure, it also had positive effects for public transportation and taxi services.

"There is a slight drop in customers who decided to buy relatively cheap cars or have been forced to use public transport instead of taxis at least for a portion of their trips," said Ahmed Ali, a taxi driver who believes he won't be able to make a living if another drop in customers or another wave of inflation kicks in.

"But not having to take massive detours around protest areas and traffic jams definitely increased my income, and despite the inflation, it remains better than when protests paralyzed the city for months on end."

That being said, Ali has no chance to "make up for three-and-a-half years of losses since 2011."

In fact, a recent report published by the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights (ECESR) indicated that the months since Sisi's rise to presidency have witnessed the least number of protests since 2011. The drop in protests and a return of relative stability, at least in the capital's central areas, has had a positive effect on tourism. Some ten international hotels situated around Tahrir Square have seen a rise in the numbers of their favorite and top-paying customers coming from the Arabian Gulf countries, while hotels being built have significantly increased their pace of construction, which had come to a halt due to the unrest.

Hatem Zayed, an economic researcher and program manager at ECESR, told Al-Monitor that there are two reasons for the public's acceptance of the recent economic decisions. "Fear comes first; the public decided to accept those decisions after seeing the massive crackdowns on opposition protesters since [President Mohammed] Morsi's ouster in July 2013. The second reason is that inflation is happening gradually, while Sisi continues to promise mitigation policies. The combination convinced people to be patient," said Zayed.

But if the contractors, including drivers and construction businesses, have broken even, "the consumer was left paying more despite receiving the same income. And this is what the government has to worry about," he said.

"Sisi has not improved or saved the economy, he is just maneuvering around it while people are dreaming of the national projects and prosperity the regime continues to promise," said Zayed, who agrees that the regime is just extending the period before the economy crashes.

"It's only a matter of time before people start protesting the economic distress; it is inevitable."

Muhsin Al-Timimi, the head of the human rights committee at Najaf Provincial Council, also told IRIN that not enough aid had come to his part of Iraq. "We demand international organizations to stand equally with IDPs all over Iraq. They are giving more to those in Kurdistan and no one cares about us," he said.

Under siege

But Najaf and Karbala are at least safe. Large swathes of the governorates of Nineveh, Anbar, Saleheddin, and Diyala are overrun by armed groups with front lines moving on a daily basis. As battles rage between militants and government forces, civilians are being killed, injured, and cut off from humanitarian supplies.

The situation is particularly acute in a small Shia Turkomen town of Amirli in the Tuz District of Saleheddin governorate, located midway between Baghdad and Kurdistan's capital Erbil, under siege from IS.

Between 15,000 and 20,000 people have been surrounded and trapped, and all roads in and out blocked. The population has formed a local army and is defending itself against the militants, with some support from the Iraqi security forces, but as the weeks go on, their resolve is weakening and they are running low on food, water, fuel, and medical supplies. During the sweltering Iraqi summer, where temperatures reach 50 degrees, families sleep on the roofs of their homes to keep cool, but with constant rocket at-

tacks they must stay inside.

"People are dying because of the lack of clean water, while diarrhea and vomiting are common," Dr. Vasser Mahmoud, who is volunteering in the area, told IRIN by phone from Amirli.

"The children are malnourished. There isn't enough milk for the babies. Sometimes I can only make a mix of sugar water to nourish them and give them energy," he said.

A few people have been airlifted out of the town by the Iraqi Air Force, but a recent negotiated attempt to move a group of children, women, and elderly people towards Sulaymaniah went wrong and as many as 30 people are reported to have been killed trying to escape.

Continued on the back page

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

Iraq's forgotten displaced

"All the people are hungry, my family tell me they are only eating a little bit because we need to save food for the other days," said Muhammed Essmat Ibrahim, a board member of the Iraqi Red Crescent, who is based in Baghdad but whose relatives are in Amirli.

According to the UN, which says it has been seeking a way to get food to Amirli for several weeks, the Iraqi Air Force has been providing limited humanitarian assistance through air-drops and the Iraqi Red Crescent, though the last delivery was over a month ago.

"The Iraqi government has been

trying to assist them. It's not like no one is trying to assist them," explained Kieran Dwyer, chief of communications for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), but he said the UN was unable to get physical access to the town due to security.

Preferential treatment?

Those in towns such as Karbala and Amirli increasingly accuse the international community of preferential treatment. Zaid Al-Ali, an Iraqi lawyer and the author of *The Struggle for Iraq's Future*, agreed that people did

not see the response as equal.

"There is a complaint that Kurdistan is getting preferential treatment compared to Baghdad, no question. That's from among officials and from among the general population," he said.

Al-Ali added that a number of other places had also been, and were still under, IS control, but he said the international media and to a large extent governments had "mostly ignored" them and focused on Sinjar and Kurdistan.

NGOs, too, are increasingly aware that their coverage is not seen to be equal. "I think the humanitarian community as a whole is not doing enough to access the areas where the most vulnerable persons are," said Juan Gabriel Wells, deputy country director for Jordan and Kurdistan for French NGO Action Against Hunger (ACF).

"These are areas where people are affected by fighting, like Anbar, Salehaddin, Kirkuk, and Diyala... [and] I think that a lot of these areas have been neglected not just now, but for far too long."

International NGOs, often perceived to be more at risk, are increasingly seeking to work with local partners to improve coverage across the country. Saleh Dabbakeh, ICRC spokesman in Baghdad, told IRIN that ICRC teams—including international staff—were working in 12 out of Iraq's 19 governorates, though he admitted that Amirli was too dangerous to reach due to the siege.

However, he said they had managed to negotiate some access to deliver medical and other supplies into Anbar, the province where IS (ISIL at the time) began its advance in January and from where 600,000 people have been displaced, and into other

areas under control of armed groups.

"We continue to talk to all parties involved in this fighting and armed conflict in order to be able to access areas," he said. "But if we can't reach an area, we do the next best thing and supply to places where people are being displaced."

Dabbakeh welcomed the significant international response for the displaced in Kurdistan, which has included a lump-sum donation of \$500 million from Saudi Arabia, but added: "Yes the minorities from the Nineveh plain have been victimized, but we should not forget that there are all kinds of other people that have also been victims and also been displaced."

Defending the UN's lack of aid operations outside Kurdistan, OCHA's Dwyer said "we are getting everywhere we can within our security limitations. This is Iraq, the security limitations are not arbitrarily or unnecessarily applied; it's a dangerous place."

Call for corridors

In the past week there have been several calls for negotiated humanitarian corridors to allow aid workers access to people in militant-

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