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# Protests continue in Aden

■ Ali Saeed

SANA'A, Oct. 19—Southern Movement (Hirak) protests which began last Tuesday, calling for the secession of the south, are ongoing in Al-Arood Square of Aden.

Since Tuesday, protesters have permanently launched their encampments in Aden. The organizing committee provides free meals to protesters, according to Majed Al-Shuaibi, who works for the camp's media committee.

Businessmen and supporters have been providing financial support for the protest activities, according to Al-Shuaibi.

The Southern Movement protesters in Aden continue to use the same techniques they used during the 2011 uprising, which ousted former President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

"There is a change in the Arabs' and the region's position about the southern cause after the Houthis took control of Sana'a," Al-Shuaibi said.

In their editorials, Saudi newspaper Asharq Al-Awsat and Al-Hayat have been hailing the separation of the south as a solution for Yemen's problems.

"Saudi Arabia may support or oppose separation with no strategy on the future of the region," said Abdulsalam Mohamed, chairman of the Abaad Studies and Research



Protesters hold a sign that reads "The employees of Aden port: Freedom and independence so that Aden port becomes international again."

Center.

In his view, the peaceful separation of south Yemen at the moment is out of reach and the whole country may go for "Somalizing" or become another Iraq or Syria if the south gains independence.

Abdu Al-Maatari, spokesperson for the Southern Movement, told the Yemen Times the group feels there is international and regional support for the independence of south Yemen, particularly

after a delegation of the UN Security Council met the former exiled southern leader Ali Salim Al-Beidh one month ago in Germany.

"This is an open protest until Nov 30. Then the preparatory committee [Southern Movement leaders] will decide what is next," said Al-Shuaibi.

On Oct. 14 the movement issued a statement giving Nov. 30 as a deadline for northern military and civil personnel in the south to

leave their positions and return to the north.

So far, there has been no comment by the Sana'a government on developments in Aden, but the interim president, Abdu Rabu Mansour Hadi, repeatedly stated in his national speeches that "the southern cause is a fair issue." In his opinion, the federal unity of six regions—two in the south and four in the north—will end the grievances of the people in both parts of the country.

The presidential committee, also known as the Region-Defining Committee, formed by President Hadi on Feb. 10, approved the decision to divide Yemen into six federal regions. Some Southern Movement leaders opposed the resolution for a federal government, viewing it as an attempt to divide the south into two regions, Aden and Hadramout.

The security forces in the south under Saleh's rule reacted ruthlessly to the Southern Movement protests between 2007 and 2010. Hundreds of pro-separation supporters were killed and injured while others were arrested or banned from travel.

The Southern Movement has been calling for the separation of south Yemen from the north since 2007, the year the movement began.

# Sana'a's governor resigns

■ Bassam Al-Khameri

SANA'A, Oct. 20—Sana'a Governor Abdulghani Jameel resigned from his post on Sunday after armed men stormed the governorate's headquarters and besieged his house in Sana'a on Saturday.

Jameel told the Khabar News Agency, which is associated with the General People's Congress, that he resigned due to the deteriorating security situation in Sana'a governorate.

"I resigned because I can't bear the responsibility of the current situation in Yemen. There is a serious conspiracy that is plotted against Sana'a governorate by some people who care only for their personal interests and want the country to plunge into an unknown future," he said.

Jameel's resignation came after dozens of armed men besieged his house and stormed the Sana'a governorate's headquarters on Saturday, demanding his resignation.

Abdu Al-Quwati, Sana'a's security chief, told the Yemen Times that Houthi gunmen attacked and took control over the governorate's headquarters.

The Yemen Times contacted Jameel's office but they refused to comment on the event.

Mohammad Al-Bukhaiti, a member of the Houthis' Political Office, told the Yemen Times that the Houthis were not behind the attack.

The Houthi-run Al-Masira TV channel reported that the armed men attacking Jameel's house accused him of being corrupt and of having failed his governorate.

"Those who protested against Jameel are ordinary citizens who demand the elimination of corruption in all state institutions, includ-



ing the Sana'a governorate's headquarters," Al-Bukhaiti said.

He added that it is not only Houthis but instead residents of all governorates who have become more aware of corruption and are demanding its elimination.

Analysts accuse former President Ali Abdullah Saleh of using the Houthis to take revenge on the officials who stood against him during the past three years.

Yaseen Al-Tamimi, an independent political analyst based in Sana'a, told the Yemen Times, "Saleh is using the Houthis to take revenge on his political opponents." In doing so, Al-Tamimi argued, he misuses the legal immunity granted to him after the 2011 uprising.

According to Al-Tamimi, Houthis who storm state institutions and houses under the pretext of combating corruption only aim at increasing their control and power.

Sana'a governorate includes 16 districts, including Arhab, Bani Hushaish, Khawlan, Sanhan and Hamdan.

In March, President Hadi has met with the tribal sheikhs of these districts, encouraging them to protect Sana'a governorate against the Houthis. As of today, no such protection has been given.

# Tehama Movement marches against Houthis

■ Khalid Al-Karimi

SANA'A, Oct. 19—The Tehama Movement launched protests on Saturday and Sunday in Hodeida city calling on the Houthis to withdraw from the governorate.

A festival is planned to take place in Hodeida city on Monday evening, to further express the movement's rejection of the Houthis' presence in the governorate, according to Abdulrahman Mukaram, a Tehama Movement leader.

The Tehama Movement is a popular movement calling for greater regional representation of the Tehama people, based along Yemen's west coast. The Tehama region includes Hodeida city, which the Houthis captured on Oct. 14.

On Saturday, the Tehama Movement issued a 24-hour deadline for the Houthis to withdraw from the governorate.

"Today, the Houthis, or the so-called Ansar Allah, have spread their armed militias in the capital of Tehama region [Hodeida city] without any justification but to impose a new occupying authority. This contradicts the nature of this safe and peaceful governorate," the Tehama Movement announced in a press release Saturday.

Ahmed Hibat Allah, the spokesperson of the Tehama Movement, said "the Tehama Movement organized a march on Saturday, and the Tehama youth were carrying weapons during the march to show we are willing to use force in the face of the Houthi group."

"On Sunday, another march was staged but without weapons, to indicate we will be peaceful if the Houthi group leaves the governorate peacefully," he added.

The 24-hour deadline elapsed and the Houthis remained in the governorate.

Hussein Al-Bukhaiti, a prominent Houthi member and activist, told the Yemen Times that the so-called marches in Hodeida do



Protesters carrying a banner saying "Tehama for the people of Tehama" in Hodeida city.

not stand for all the people in Hodeida.

"Those who staged protests are few in number and belong to the Islah Party and Ali Mohsen Al-Ahmar. The people in Hodeida have grievances themselves, and the reason for their grievances is the Islah Party and Mohsen," said Al-Bukhaiti.

Al-Bukhaiti said the Houthis have no plans to withdraw from Hodeida because they are there to maintain security.

In contrast, Hussein Marghani, a Tehama Movement activist from Hodeida, told the Yemen Times that there is widespread opposition to the Houthis.

"People came from different districts of Hodeida governorate to show their disapproval of the Houthi arrival in the governorate. These people represent different political factions inside Hodeida governorate," Marghani said about the march on Sunday.

Responding to the Houthis' justification for being in Hodeida, Mukaram said, "Houthi militants

have set up their checkpoints in Hodeida city under the pretext that they are maintaining security. Ironically, we have no security problems. We do not need their presence and we are able to protect our governorate by ourselves."

Hibat Allah said the demonstrators marched to the government compound in Hodeida city, where they met the governor. "The governor told us he will inform the supreme authority [the president] of our rejection to the Houthis' presence. He [himself] will do nothing. The governor is not even able to protect himself," said Hibat Allah.

Last week, local media reported Hodeida's governor, Sakhr Al-Wajeh, as saying the Houthi presence "is not legitimate but has become a reality, just like it is happening in Sana'a."

The Yemen Times tried repeatedly to contact the security manager of Hodeida for comment, but received no answer.

**An armed movement?**  
The Tehama Movement is politi-

cal and unaligned to any religious denomination. However, the Tehama region is composed mostly of Sunnis while the Houthis are predominantly Shia, meaning there is a risk of increasing sectarian tension.

The movement has thus far been peaceful, but there are opposing views within the movement on whether to use violence against the Houthis.

"The current regime's relinquishing of power to the Houthi militant group means that the regime is no longer effective to manage the Tehama region. This legitimizes the Tehama locals to fight for rights of controlling the entire Tehama," the press release read.

Jamal Fatini, one of the participants in Sunday's march, said "our options are many. We will protest and stage marches. We could even resort to using weapons to get rid of the Houthi militants. They have to return to Sa'ada where they belong."

Fatini said the protesters are willing to continue protesting and marching until they see their city a free-Houthi place.

"It is legitimate that the Tehama people use weapons to eliminate the Houthi presence from the governorate. They are here to occupy the governorate and the Houthi presence is not wanted," said Marghani.

Spokesperson Hibat Allah told the Yemen Times the group may use other options, including mass marches and civil disobedience.

The Houthis took over Hodeida city and its port on Tuesday, controlling strategic locations and checkpoints. The group's takeover was accompanied by its expansion in Dhamar, Ibb and Al-Baida governorates.

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## Agreement fails between Houthis, tribes in Ibb

■ Ali Ibrahim Al-Moshki

SANA'A, Oct. 19—At least 24 people have been killed since Friday in fighting between tribes and Houthis in Ibb governorate, despite an agreement signed by both parties on Saturday stipulating a stop to the instigation of violence.

The Houthis have been deployed in Ibb governorate since last Wednesday. They set up checkpoints in the governorate's main streets without resistance from the security forces.

Clashes broke out between the Houthis and opposing tribesmen on Thursday night and Friday morning in Ibb city, the capital of the governorate, leaving eight dead. After the clashes an agreement was signed on Friday to end the fighting.

"The agreement was signed in the house of Governor Yahya Al-Eryani with representatives from all parties," Ibrahim Al-Badani, a journalist and local resident in Ibb city, told the Yemen Times.

The agreement stipulated that starting Sunday morning "all armed men are to leave Ibb city under the supervision of the governor. The Special Security Forces, and the local police forces will protect the city instead of the militias."

"Armed men from both sides will exit the city without interceptions, the governor will oversee the implementation of this agreement starting Sunday morning", according to Fawaz Iskandar, the spokesperson for the director of the Criminal Investigation Bureau in Ibb governorate.

The tribesmen come from a number of different tribes, both inside and outside the governorate. The tribes are fighting on a number of fronts against the Houthis, and do not have a cen-



The house of Sheikh Ali Mused Bedir was destroyed in clashes between the Houthis and opposing tribesmen in Yareem district, Ibb governorate.

tral leadership.

Clashes in Ibb's Yareem district, which began on Friday night, escalated Saturday morning. A group of armed Houthis took control over the security headquarters of Yareem and broke into the Islah Party's headquarter in the district.

While Iskandar said that 16 people were killed and 40 others injured, Al-Badani reported the opposite.

"The death toll of Saturday's clashes is 40 and the number of injured is 16, it is not the opposite as the media thinks... The battles were too violent and LAW rockets [light anti-tank weapons] were used in addition to tanks, mortars and RPGs [rocket-propelled grenades], most of the deaths are from pro-Houthi fighters," he said.

According to Iskandar, "after signing the agreement, Houthis demanded the governorate's security chief be changed." Even though their demand was met, he said that they did not withdraw and tried to control the other districts in the governorate. This "led Islah's armed men to fend off Houthi attacks in Yareem, which consequently led

to an amendment to the agreement," he explained.

The amended agreement, which was signed on Saturday, stipulated a stop to the instigation of violence against others and stopping funneling armed men into the district.

The term stipulating the withdrawal of armed men from Ibb city was removed.

On Sunday morning in Yareem, Houthis broke into the house of Sheikh Ali Mused Bedir, who the Houthis accuse of belonging to the Islah Party. Bedir led the fighting against the Houthis the day before, is accused by the Houthis of having killed their field commander in Yareem, Hussein Al-Bukhaiti, along with dozens of his armed men.

According to Al-Badani, Bedir's nephew and two of his sons were killed when the Houthis bombed his house.

Mohammad Al-Bukhaiti, a member of the Houthis' Political Office, said "the situation is now under the control of Houthi popular committees. The agreement does not stipulate that Houthi armed men leave rather than Houthis do not bring in

anyone fighters, that's why the subject of popular committees leaving Ibb governorate is out of the question."

In Al-Badani's view, "Ibb is not under the control of Houthis." Instead, "the armed men in the area are from the General People's Congress (GPC) and the Republican Guards [now called the Strategic Reserve Forces] who are deployed as Houthis."

The Strategic Reserve Forces are commonly thought to have remained loyal to former President Ali Abdullah Saleh and his son Ahmed, who are accused of playing a prominent role in the Houthis' recent expansion.

As a result of the deteriorating security situation, Ibb University President Dr. Abdulazeez Al-Shoaibi suspended classes for this week.

Mused Al-Salimi, a resident in Ibb city, told the Yemen Times that armed Houthis have been deployed near Ibb University since last Wednesday and that the situation is very tense.

### AQAP spreads in Al-Udain

On Monday, Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) militants spread extensively in Al-Udain district and took over the district's government compound and the Finance Ministry's office, according to Taiz Al-Mulaiki, a local resident who lives near the government compound.

According to him, AQAP has spread everywhere in the district and there is no notable Houthi presence. They blew up the houses of prominent Houthi members, including the Houthi leader in the district, Zakaria Al-Musawa.

Al-Mulaiki said that there were no casualties because AQAP warned residents they were planning to blow up his house.

## Ongoing Houthi-AQAP fighting in Rada'a

■ Ali Ibrahim Al-Moshki

SANA'A, Oct. 20—Since Friday heavy fighting has been ongoing in Rada'a district of Al-Baida governorate between the Houthis and Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).

In Rada'a city, "violent battles happened since Friday midnight until Saturday evening between AQAP and armed Houthis," said Mokhtar Al-Naqeeb, a local resident. "Both parties used all kinds of heavy and medium weapons."

Between Friday and Monday, an estimated 80 Houthi militants and numerous AQAP members are said to have been killed in and around Rada'a district, local sources told the Yemen Times.

Ali Al-Qahoom, a member of the Houthis' Political Office in Sana'a, called this number exaggerated. He admitted, however, that the fighting in Rada'a is fierce and that the death toll is high.

"The battles with Al-Qaeda are very violent," he said, "and there are casualties on both sides." Al-Qahoom declined to give specific numbers.

On Friday, the Strategic Reserve Forces stationed in Rada'a and the Houthis are reported to have entered and taken control over Rada'a city. The forces are commonly called by their former name, the Republican Guard, and widely perceived to be loyal to former President Ali Abdullah Saleh. Houthis then set up checkpoints in Rada'a city, local sources told the Yemen Times.

Al-Qahoom confirmed that the Houthis entered and set up check-points in Rada'a city on Friday.

An anonymous source, who claims to actively support AQAP's fight in Rada'a, told the Yemen Times that AQAP's response to the advancements by the Houthis and the military was swift. "We detonated over eight car bombs [six inside and two outside Rada'a city] and over 11 IEDs [improvised explosive devices]," he said.

The Yemen Times could not independently verify this information.

While several Houthis were reported to have temporarily left their checkpoints and

Rada'a city on Saturday evening and Sunday morning, they re-appeared on the city's outskirts on Sunday night, where fighting renewed.

"The army and the Houthis are carrying out a campaign to rid Al-Baida of any Al-Qaeda presence. The ongoing war is being undertaken in a coordinated effort by the Houthis and the army," according to a source in the Ministry of Defense, who refused to be named.

Al-Qahoom confirmed the cooperation between the Houthis and the military, saying that "the popular committees with the help of the army will root out Al-Qaeda [in Al-Baida]."

### Fighting extends to Wadi Thah

Local media has reported widely on fierce battles that broke out on Sunday in Wadi Thah, located between Rada'a city and Ghaifa area in Rada'a district.

Mohammad Al-Madghari, who lives in Al-Manaseh village, close to Wadi Thah, said the battles were violent and tanks, missiles, and RPGs (rocket-propelled grenades) were used in the fighting, causing a great number of casualties.

Mohamed Al-Ansi, a local citizen in Maghrib Ans district of Dhamar governorate, which borders Rada'a district, said that the fighting extended to Maghrib Ans, where the Houthis temporarily fled to on Saturday evening.

### Tribal Alliance of Al-Baida

On Sunday morning the sheikhs of Rada'a district, Qaifa area, and Weld Rabia district met and announced the establishment of the Tribal Alliance of Al-Baida governorate. They released a statement expressing their "rejection of any armed militia from any side that would destabilize the safety and security of the locals, and turn the governorate into a battle field of sectarianism."

The statement also stipulated "rejecting any presence of armed Houthis under whatever pretext they might use to enter the governorate."

The statement demanded the state to "follow up on its religious and national duty to

## Supreme Security Committee to enforce motorcycle ban

■ Khalid Al-Karimi

SANA'A, Oct. 20—The Supreme Security Committee on Sunday announced it would begin enforcing the long-standing motorbike ban in the capital city in a move to maintain security there.

The announcement came at a meeting held by the Supreme Security Committee in Sana'a in the presence of senior state security officials, according to the state-run Saba News Agency.

The government began enforcing a ban on motorbikes in December 2013 in response to a string of assassinations of senior officials carried out in the capital by men on motorbikes.

However, since the Houthis took over the capital on Sept. 21, motorbikes have re-appeared due to the lax security situation. Mohammed Hezam, the deputy head of the Public Relations Department at the Interior Ministry, said "the Supreme Security Committee will soon launch a campaign to ban the use of motorbikes in Sana'a. The committee does not want to see further assassinations in the capital."

Last week, Colonel Ali Al-Dari was assassinated in Sawan area of the capital city, according to Hezam. Unidentified men on a motorbike shot him dead and fled the scene. Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula later claimed responsibility for the assassination.

While the Supreme Security Committee expressed anger about the presence of motorbikes in the capital, it is armed Houthis who are essentially in control of the city's streets. Hezam said the committee and the Houthis will cooperate to launch the campaign.

"The committee and the [Houthis'] popular committees will work side by side to impose a ban on the motorbikes in the capital," he said.

Mohammed Al-Bukhaiti, a member of the Houthis' Political Office, told the Yemen Times that "the popular committees should cooperate with the Supreme Security Committee in order to ban the motorbikes from operating in the capital city."

## Houthis break into state oil company

■ Ali Ibrahim Al-Moshki

SANA'A, Oct. 20—More than twenty armed Houthis broke into the Sana'a office of the state-run Safer Exploration & Production Operations Company on Sunday, a source in the company told the Yemen Times.

The employee chose to remain anonymous for fear of reprisal from the Houthis who have been stationed near the company for over a month. He said Houthis are guarding the gate of the company, searching every employee when they enter or leave the compound.

According to the source, the company's management was in-

terrogated about its income and where the money goes, demanding it to shut down its operations until the new government is formed. Also, the management had to disclose private information about the gas and oil business.

The source continued, "they asked the management to suspend all expenditures except for payrolls, but the manager of the company told them that these are matters pertaining to the ministry because they are under the administrative authority of the Ministry of Oil and Minerals and they can not stop any expenditure."

Muhammad Al-Bukhaiti, a member of the Houthis' Political

Office, told the Yemen Times "everyone knows that the [Houthis'] popular committees are deployed in all the state's institutions to monitor their performance until the new government is formed."

"What the popular committees did in Safer is within the framework of activating the role of monitoring the government's institutions and to help the new government root out corruption," he added.

The government of Yemen announced the establishment of Safer Exploration and Production Operations Company in 2005 as a replacement for the American Hunt Oil Company.

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# Al-Bukhaiti to the Yemen Times: “The Houthis’ takeover can not be called an invasion”

The Yemen Times sat down with Hussein Al-Bukhaiti, a self-described Houthi activist who is familiar with the inner workings of the group. He is confident that the Houthis have done well since entering Sana'a. When security forces disappeared, he said, they filled in their ranks, successfully ensuring the security of Sana'a's residents. They also removed “two major sources of terrorism in the capital,” which to Al-Bukhaiti were Ali Mohsen and the Iman University. Given Yemen's religious composition, Al-Bukhaiti does not think that “the Iranian system” could ever be implemented in the country. Neither do the Houthis have any interest in bringing back the Imamate. Instead, he describes the Zaydi doctrine as “republican” and the Houthi group as “liberal.”



■ Interview by **Khalid Al-Karimi**

**After the Houthi militants took over the capital Sana'a, how do you describe the security situation?**

I think the security situation is better than it was. We do not hear of any further shootings or even problems related to land disputes and revenge issues. However, there are still crimes committed by those who claim they belong to Ansar Allah\*. Such crimes can be expected during revolutions. The security forces suddenly left their positions everywhere in Sana'a—even though battles only took place near the 1st Armored Division and in western areas of the capital. Ansar Allah found it necessary to fill in their spots. Ansar Allah proved a good example of the revolution in Yemen.

**Though you signed the Peace and National Partnership Agreement, some remain doubtful that you are serious about implementing it...**

Those doubters are always part of the former regime [of Ali Abdullah Saleh]. Their only job is to doubt agreements signed by Ansar Allah.

Instead of doubting, why do we not wait and see and start implementing the agreement together? We cannot judge Ansar Allah through doubt. We should judge them through their actual work.

**Your demands to revoke the lifting of fuel subsidies and remove the government have been realized, at least to some extent. Do you have any further demands?**

The prime minister handed in his resignation and the decision of lifting fuel subsidies has been reversed. These two demands have been met. Another demand is the implementation of the NDC outcomes and combating corruption. This is a popular demand, not only the demand of Ansar Allah. If you would ask the leaders of the General People Congress (GPC) or the Islah Party, “are you against corruption?” they would also say yes. These demands will be implemented in accordance with the NDC outcomes and the partnership agreement.

**You call for the implementation of the NDC outcomes. At the same time, Ansar Allah mil-**

**itants spread in the capital city. Don't you think that is a contradiction?**

When the security forces left their positions, Ansar Allah found it obligatory to spread in Sana'a. If any thefts or looting would occur, Ansar Allah would be the first to be blamed. They became responsible for Sana'a. As soon as an efficient government is in place, however, that imposes its presence in all governorates, Ansar Allah will be among the first to hand over its weapons. Once we see the presence of security forces in the capital, Ansar Allah will withdraw.

**In your opinion, why did the security forces withdraw? Did they receive orders from the leadership or did they fear fighting with you?**

I think it was the government and Hadi who ordered them to withdraw. Ansar Allah was surprised by that. They [the government and Hadi] wanted chaos, looting, riot, and killing to surface. They wanted to show the people that Ansar Allah fell short of its proclaimed goal to achieve peace and security in Sa'ada and Amran. You noticed the gulf countries, the European Union,

the United Nations, and the Security Council did not condemn the entering of Ansar Allah to Sana'a—Although they did condemn and mention specific names when Ansar Allah entered Amran. I think it was a scheme. They all agreed to withdraw the security forces from Sana'a to show people that Ansar Allah is not able to maintain security. However, the group has largely succeeded in maintaining security in the capital.

**When will the Houthi militants leave Sana'a and when will the camps be removed?**

Removing the camps is directly related to appointing a new prime minister and forming a new government. Once the government is formed, Ansar Allah will be part of it and the security forces will be for all Yemeni people. Then the camps will be removed. They cannot be removed prior to forming the government.

**Some say that you will never abstain from weapons and resort to elections instead...**

Actually, throughout the history of this group, they have not initiated a single battle. They were attacked and they took action for self-defense. They also launched [pre-emptive] attacks to avoid being attacked. They acted to defend themselves. If Ansar Allah uses weapons to make political gains, they would behave like all other rebellious groups in Africa. When Ansar Allah entered Sana'a, taking it over, they were able to form the government and they were strong enough to overthrow the government. However, they did not do that and continued calling for the same demands. This shows that they do not use weapons to realize particular aims.

**Can you really say “we defend ourselves” in describing your invasion of Sana'a?**

Ansar Allah is like a party. It exists in Sana'a as well. It was attacked in Al-Qabil village by Ali Mohsen's secretary. Ansar Allah took action and took over the village. Ansar Allah supporters were attacked in Shamlan and Thalatheen [30th] Street in Sana'a. Ansar Allah members and supporters are present in every place [including Sana'a] and they have the right to defend themselves. The fighters do not come from Sa'ada. So the Houthis' takeover cannot be called an invasion. If they wanted to invade the capital, battles would take place everywhere in Sana'a.

**Did the Houthis come to take over Sana'a or the now-dissolved 1st Armored Division?**

They entered Sana'a in order stop the shelling coming from the 1st Armored Division. The 1st Armored Division was a thorn in the waist of Yemen. Ansar Allah got rid of it. We do not blame the soldiers. We blame Ali Mohsen. He was the source of problems and extremism in Yemen.

**Some say the Houthis strive to bring back the Imamate. What do you think about that?**

They always say this is the secret agenda of Ansar Allah. Look at the NDC outcomes. Ansar Allah said Yemen is a republic and elections are the way to reach power. They also said women have the right to hold any position even that of president. Their vision was so civil in comparison to other parties. Ansar Allah was liberal and open more than any other party in the NDC. So let us put Ansar Allah on a test. Returning to the

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imam's rule is absolutely unacceptable. We have never talked about this. Even Abdulmalik Al-Houthi himself said the Zaydi doctrine is republican.

**Does Ansar Allah want to imitate the Iranian system and apply it in Yemen? With Abdulmalik Al-Houthi being the supreme guide just like Ali Khamenei in Iran?**

In Iran this kind of ruling has been implemented because the majority of people are Shia. In spite of this, transparent elections are taking place in Iran. However, we cannot apply this system in Yemen because the followers of the Shafi [Sunnii] doctrine are bigger in number than the Zaydis [Shia]. For this reason, repeating an Iran-like system is difficult to materialize in Yemen. I think Abdulmalik will never run for election one day, and if I were him, I would remain the spiritual father and a spiritual reference for his group.

**Did President Hadi cooperate with you and facilitate your coming to Sana'a?**

President Hadi was not controlling Sana'a. He himself was worried about his life in his neighborhood on Al-Siteen [60th] Street. So, he was certainly not controlling Sana'a. Ali Mohsen and the Islah Party were in control of Sana'a. The power of Mohsen and the Islah Party became obvious after the 2011 uprising. That is to say they were the mover and shaker in the capital Sana'a. I think President Hadi feels more comfortable now, because Ali Mohsen was a source of danger for him.

**How would you describe your relation with President Hadi?**

Hadi is the president of Yemen. In Abdulmalik's speeches and in all of the statements of leading Ansar Allah figures, Hadi is being called the president. Ansar Allah knows that Hadi is not part of the conflict. They knew Hadi was under the pressure of Ali Mohsen, who became his military adviser. Our relation to him is like any relation between the people and the president.

**Does Ansar Allah have any connection to former President Ali Abdulla Saleh?**

Some say there is a relation and mutual support between Ansar Allah and former President Saleh. However, Saleh was deposed in 2011. He is not at the helm of the country. His own son had to hand over the Republican Guard with all its weapons and financial assets. Saleh is not ruling any longer and his son is in the Republican Guard no more. Their media does not promote propaganda against Ansar Allah. Therefore, it is in Ansar Allah's nature to open a new page with anyone. Ansar Allah does not want to waste their energy

and attack many parties.

**The Security Council from time to time publishes statements on Yemen denouncing the violence there with reference to the Houthi group. Do such statements discourage or intimidate you?**

We pay no attention to foreign countries. If we relied on foreign players, we could not accomplish such victories and progress. Ansar Allah depends on the people. Unlike the Islah Party we did not hinge on the Security Council and its Chapter VII. Any party that counts on foreign players is doomed to failure. The Islah Party has lost and the people have moved towards Ansar Allah. Ansar Allah is now the unrivaled power in northern Yemen.

**How do you perceive the threats of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)? And do you think Yemen will follow the Iraqi example?**

I think after getting rid of Ali Mohsen and his 1st Armored Division, and after purging Al-Iman University [the situation will improve]. They were the two major sources of terrorism in the capital. Terrorist groups exist in Sana'a and they move inside it. What is intimidating are the [suicide] explosions that kill innocent civilians. As for us, we do not fear clashing with Al-Qaeda. Ansar Allah fighters defeated terrorist groups in Kitaf [in Sa'ada]. Now, I do not think Yemen will be like Iraq, because the heart of terrorism has been eliminated.

**Given the current fighting between AQAP and the Houthis in Al-Baida do you really think that “the heart of terrorism” has been eliminated?**

Ali Mohsen was the most dangerous Yemeni because he was the prime supporter of terrorist acts. He was in Yemen's capital and now [with him gone] it is easier to combat terrorist groups in other governorates. If the main source of terror is annihilated, other subsidiary branches will perish as a result.

**Will you cooperate with the state to combat terrorism?**

For sure, especially once the new government is formed. But first, the security authorities should be purged from terrorist groups that entered the security forces through appointments made by Ali Mohsen. Once this is done, the movements of security forces and counter-terrorism activities will be truly secret. Also, in case Ansar Allah fighters will be conscripted, they will be part of the people and the army in their fight against terrorism.

\* At the beginning of the National Dialogue Conference the Houthis started to call themselves “Ansar Allah,” or “Supporters of God.”

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### Tomorrow's Leaders Scholarship Program

The U.S. Department of State's Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) and AMIDEAST are pleased to announce this year's recruitment for the **Tomorrow's Leaders Scholarship Program**. The Tomorrow's Leaders Scholarship Program is a MEPI initiative for capable and highly motivated high school seniors in the Middle East and North Africa who are from underserved backgrounds. The program will provide four-year university scholarships and internship opportunities at select institutions of higher learning in the Middle East to students who have the potential to become leaders.

Eligible students include men and women who represent the region's cultural, religious, and geographic diversity and are from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, who could otherwise gain admission to, but would be unable to afford, four years of college. Tomorrow's Leaders scholarship recipients should be prepared to begin the program in the Fall 2015 term.

The primary objective of MEPI's Tomorrow's Leaders scholarship program is to build a cadre of university-age leaders who are civic-minded, intellectually able, and professionally skilled, who will become the community, business, and national leaders of the future. The program intends to nurture leadership skills and the spirit of civic engagement and volunteerism among outstanding university-age students at the American University of Beirut, the American University in Cairo, and the Lebanese American University. Selected students will join the 225 Tomorrow's Leaders already studying at these universities.

Scholarship recipients may pursue an eligible undergraduate degree in a selected field at one of the three host institutions. In addition to their studies, recipients will be expected to engage in community service activities and participate in internships. Limited English- language training will be provided for some participants.

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# The Middle East needs a Marshall Plan

**Judith Barnett**  
america.aljazeera.com  
First published Oct. 17

On Oct. 12, representatives from international donor countries meeting in Cairo pledged \$5.4 billion to help reconstruct Gaza after nearly two months of war between Hamas and Israel this summer. Barack Obama's administration pledged to contribute \$212 million, doubling US aid to the Palestinians this year.

But after three wars in six years, pouring yet more money into Gaza without a coordinated, long-term plan will not provide a solution. Nor will spending more in Iraq to solve that country's crisis as it faces disintegration under pressure from the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). And money alone will not rebuild Syria from the devastation of civil war or save the millions of refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Gaza, Syria, and Iraq who lack necessities for survival.

What the whole region needs, rather, is a Marshall Plan like the original, which brought war-torn Europe out of devastation and into peace and prosperity. Named for then-Secretary of State George Marshall, the project was key to rebuilding war-ravaged Europe and essential to the US effort to stop the spread of communism after World War II. It trained Europeans for jobs and trades, rebuilt its devastated economies, helped remove trade barriers and stop the spread of the red scare.

It is critical that the United States and its allies win hearts and minds against radical ideologies, whether

the communism of yesterday or the radical Islamism of today. A Marshall Plan for the Middle East is key to stifling the seeds of extremism and bringing hope to millions of people in the region. The answer to the poverty and hatred and the violence they breed is economic opportunity through careful planning and long-term development.

As with postwar Europe, the US and the rest of the international community have a huge vested interest in stability across the Middle East. US policies in the region, however, have not kept pace with the rise of poverty, anti-American sentiment, and militancy. To be sure, international military coalitions are critical to counter immediate threats. But if the United States and its allies want to stop radicalization, violence, and poverty in the long term in the Middle East, they must work with the people of the region to enable democratic governance, build educational and job-training opportunities, functioning infrastructure, independent judicial systems, and the rule of law.

The Marshall Plan helped European nations develop and implement best practices in building strong institutions to support economic reconstruction. It established an integrated public-private partnership that, in consultation with national governments, reorganized a devastated Europe into healthy peacetime economies. The US shipped fuel, raw materials, and tons of food. American-made machinery was sent to get factories up and rolling. Skilled engineers rebuilt transportation systems and devastated infrastructures. Loans were made, repaid and issued to

**“Gazans would benefit greatly from e-government platforms that could ensure open and transparent elections and from technologies that could deliver e-medicine and education.”**

others. By 1952, each participating European nation's economy had surpassed prewar levels by at least 35 percent.

Economic growth, job creation, and commercial development require enormous and sustained efforts, and they are not headline grabbers. Implementing the Marshall Plan required substantial funds and congressional approval—two difficult subjects in politically divided Washington. Congress approved \$17 billion (approximately \$160 billion in 2014 dollars) for the plan, which operated from 1948 to 1952, after bitter political battles with President Harry Truman. ISIL's advances over the last few months and the rise of radicalism in the Middle East have created con-

sensus for greater US involvement in the region, which can be channeled into support for more productive efforts.

Having traveled to and worked in the region for the past 30 years as a senior official during Bill Clinton's administration and as a trade lawyer, I believe a similar plan could turn fear and desperation into hope in the Middle East. To illustrate the promise of a Marshall Plan for the Middle East, it could first be tried on a smaller scale. Gaza would be a good place to start. Gaza is arguably in the same or worse economic shape today as Europe was after the war. Nearly 70 percent of the population lives below the poverty line, per capita GDP is \$3,460, and unemployment hovers around 45 percent. In contrast, Gaza's neighbors are in another economic dimension. For example, Israel's per capita income is ten times Gaza's per capita GDP, and the United Arab Emirates' is more than 14 times. Qatar's economy is 30 times Gaza's.

To adopt a Marshall Plan for Gaza, experts from the US and other donor nations could team up with infrastructure companies and non-governmental organizations to help build homes, schools, hospitals, roads, and bridges. This would create jobs for thousands of unemployed Gazans. In partnership with local businesses, the United States' largest banks could develop and administer micro-enterprise loans to jump-start hundreds of new companies and manufacturing operations, employing even more people.

The US Department of Agriculture and its counterparts in Europe could join with the best global agricultural companies to send expert teams to

train farmers in agricultural best practices. Tech entrepreneurs from around the world could team up with the people of Gaza to build new technological platforms. For example, Gazans would benefit greatly from e-government platforms that could ensure open and transparent elections and from technologies that could deliver e-medicine and education. Similarly, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, which tracked the Marshall Plan's progress and productivity, could work with international organizations to do the same for a plan in the Middle East. If the Gaza prototype proved successful, a similar plan could then be expanded to Iraq, Syria, and other fragile states in the region.

The most immediate challenge to this proposal is Israel's blockade of Gaza. United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, the UN Human Rights Council and, at times, the US government have all criticized the blockade for hampering the delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza. “You can't reconstruct Gaza without Israeli participation and without Israeli co-operation,” Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman said last week, commenting on the fact that Israel was not invited to the donor summit. “In any case, we will try to be positive about the civil infrastructure and the rehabilitation of civilians.”

Israel's legitimate security concerns must be balanced with the humanitarian needs of the people of Gaza. Israelis and Egyptians, who share borders with Gaza, should develop a confidence-building measure, many of which were successfully tried during the 1990s, when I was an official in the Commerce

Department responsible for the Middle East. We were able to get the Israelis to work directly with the Palestinians, Jordanians, and Egyptians to create several joint commercial ventures. For example, the Qualified Industrial Zone program, which allowed Egypt and Jordan to send duty-free exports to the US in exchange for cooperation with Israel, continues to employ tens of thousands of workers and help strengthen the Jordanian and Egyptian economies. Similarly, Israel should be part of the solution by helping develop and implement the Middle East Marshall Plan. The effort should include a process to escort goods, services and people through military-protected gates, under the auspices of the UN both to provide safe passage and to address Israel's security concerns.

Clinton said it best, in a speech at the University of California at Davis in 2002:

“You have to have a positive strategy to make more partners and fewer terrorists. Harry Truman and George Marshall took a bit of our money to build a world that had more friends and better enemies. Foreign assistance is national security—not charity. The Marshall Plan saw it that way, and we have to do the same today.”

A Middle East Marshall Plan could do just that.

*Judith Barnett is a lawyer and international trade consultant for global companies looking to grow in the Middle East. She is a former senior US government official and a member of the State Department's Advisory Committee on International Economic Policy.*

# How to defeat the Islamic State's war machine

**Metin Turcan**  
al-monitor.com  
First published Oct. 14

Although much has been written to explain the tactical military successes of the Islamic State (IS), there has not yet been a comprehensive assessment of how, since June 2014, IS has managed to rule over terrain larger than Lebanon to include eight million Iraqis and Syrians.

How has it been possible that in a short three months IS has been able to control extensive terrain, with 3,000 IS fighters capturing Mosul, which was guarded by 30,000 Iraqi soldiers, and after seizing Mosul on June 10 engage in battles two days later with Iraqi forces in towns north of Baghdad, 230 miles from Mosul?

Although one can allude to the delayed reaction of the international community, the lack of strong military opposition to IS, the international support IS has acquired, and the support from Sunni tribes and political bodies in areas it captures, none of it defies the reality that—at the tactical level—IS is an extremely lethal and effective war machine. To understand this key determinant of IS gains, one has to understand that reality. This article will attempt to analyze the factors contributing to IS' military efficiency, particularly at the tactical level.

Factors that boost tactical effectiveness of IS can be summarized as fluid and decentralized command and control structure; novel hybrid military tactics blending conventional warfare with terrorist tactics; effective use of armored platforms in offensive operations; dispersion; preservation of momentum at all costs; effective exploitation of topographic and human terrains; simplicity and flexibility in planning; and conducting operations and high levels of initiative and morale.

## Fluid and decentralized command control structure

IS does not have permanent and centralized command and control structure in the traditional sense of warfare. Unlike contemporary armies of the world, IS doesn't make sharp distinctions between strategic, operative and tactical levels. In their traditional warfare, tactical achievements is the way to achieve strategic objectives. For IS, the basic goal is to score tactical successes and expand on them step by step. Deviating from the traditional approach, what IS fields is a bottom-up command structure focused on a fast pace for small military achievements. At the moment, US-led airstrikes have been mostly against IS communication and training facilities. It is extraordinary that there is not a single control facility that has been hit by allied airstrikes.

IS warfare combines and hybridizes terrorist tactics, urban guerrilla

warfare, and conventional warfare.

IS is adept enough to conduct armor attacks at night and is skilled in accurate firing of their main tank guns with thermal cameras, and is capable of planting improvised explosive devices in critical areas and routes. It wages hybridized guerrilla warfare and conventional armored warfare by deploying eight to ten men teams carrying out building-by-building, block-by-block clear and hold operations in urban terrain.

After the recent air attacks, IS has dispersed its forces to the extreme.

**“After the recent air attacks, IS has dispersed its forces to the extreme. It's teams have been minimized to two or three vehicles and eight to ten men.”**

Its teams have been minimized to two or three vehicles and eight to ten men. Their concealment has been highly professional. IS' executive orders are brief, setting out what the mission is in simple terms, leaving how it is to be carried out to field units.

It is imperative to acknowledge that a typical IS militant is endowed with a win-win mindset that assures him that to kill in jihad is a blessing, but if he is martyred he will end up in paradise also. No wonder IS combatants are high-adrenalin fighters who can kill and get killed without hesitation.

A typical IS operation goes like this: An IS armored unit of tanks or a mobile unit of eight to 12 fighters with two to three vehicles are informed by WhatsApp, a message on Facebook or Twitter, or phone text message, and if this mode is not available through their own radio net, to assemble at a certain place at a certain time. This is the first time we are seeing combat units making use of social media in combat operations. Before its operations, IS disseminates propaganda messages via social media to enemy fighters and civilians living in the targeted urban settlements to demoralize and dishearten them. IS operations and logistics units that are thus alerted assemble at a meeting point within two to three hours, and after another one-and-a-half hours of coordination discussions and logistics preparations the operation is un-

derway.

One must remember that a regular IS tank driver is trained to drive his tank at night with a thermal camera, and that the commander of the team has enough tactical military knowledge to best deploy his tanks. Then it is a matter of attacking the enemy's weakest point, preferably after the morning prayers. Vehicles stage the first phase of the attacks, followed by infantry attacks that depend on the nature of the enemy's opposition. In these attacks, IS has been remarkably successful in creating a balance between the phased campaign design and maintaining the tempo of warfare. The high tempo of combat is routine for an IS fighter, but usually too high for opposing soldiers.

## How to defeat IS?

How to first stop IS and then defeat it? The secret is in a concept that has so far been lacking the forces fighting IS in Syria and Iraq: Close air support that can only be provided by intense cooperation between ground troops and air units. Coalition air attacks so far are at least limiting IS advances; close cooperation between ground forces and armed helicopters such as AH-64 or fixed-wing platforms such as A-10 Thunderbolts can enable full integration of each air mission with fire and movement of ground forces, and bring the end to IS.

The question then becomes how the US-led coalition can provide

that level of air support, and who has the substantial technical know-how and military expertise needed on the ground.

We know special forces elements of countries contributing to the coalition are participating in operations to provide precision target guiding with laser pointers. But this has been limited. Then what can be the solution?

Either the local forces fighting against IS will have to learn this technique that requires high military expertise, or special detachments formed by countries contributing to the coalition will be assigned to each combat zone or to major units as a close air support coordinator. It is no surprise then that the hottest topic in ongoing military discussions is who will provide this close air support and how. When tailoring strategies of close air support, one should keep in mind that IS has MANPADS (man-portable air defense systems) that make air units providing close air support highly vulnerable in their low-speed and low-altitude missions.

*Metin Turcan is a doctoral candidate in political science and holds a master's degree in security studies. He has been published extensively in Turkish and foreign academic journals on changing nature of warfare, extremism, counterinsurgency, and military-society relations.*

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**Deadline to receive applications:** October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2014

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Republic of Yemen  
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Grant No. H918-RY  
 Project ID No. P146055

The Government of Yemen has received financing from: the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (a loan in an amount equivalent to US\$65 million); the OPEC Fund for International Development (a loan in the amount of US\$20 million); the Saudi Fund for Development (a grant in the amount of US\$20 million); and the World Bank (a grant in the amount of US\$ 20 million), toward the cost of the Al Mokha 60 MW Wind Farm. The Government of Yemen intends to apply part of the proceeds to payments for goods, works, related services and consulting services to be procured under this project.

The project will include the following components: the design, manufacture, supply, erection, connection to the grid, commissioning and operation of a 60 MW wind farm in Al Mokha, Yemen.

Procurement of contracts financed by the World Bank will be conducted through the procedures as specified in the World Bank's Guidelines: Procurement of Goods, Works and Non-Consulting Services under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants by World Bank Borrowers (current edition), and is open to all eligible bidders as defined in the guidelines. Consulting services will be selected in accordance with the World Bank's Guidelines: Selection and Employment of Consultants under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants by World Bank Borrowers (current edition). Anticipated qualification criteria for contractors are provided as part of this notice.

Specific procurement notices for contracts to be bid under the World Bank's international competitive bidding (ICB) procedures and for contracts for consultancy services will be announced, as they become available, in UN Development Business and dgMarket.

For further information interested parties may contact

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وَبَشِّرِ الصَّالِحِينَ إِذْ أُتُوا بِآيَاتِنَا إِذْ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَأَنَا لِيَوْمِ الْحِسَابِ



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 بوفاة المغفور له بإذن الله تعالى /

**المعلم / سعيد توفيق خوري**

رئيس ومؤسس مجموعة شركة إتحاد المقاولين العالمية

ونحن إذ نشاطرهم أحزانهم نسأل الله العلي القدير أن يتغمد الفقيد بواسع رحمته  
 ويسكنه فسيح جناته وأن يلهمهم وذويهم الصبر والسلوان...

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الأسيفون

مؤسسة يمن تايمز للصحافة والطباعة والنشر





## المعلم / سعيد توفيق خوري .. في رحاب الخلد

بقلوب يعتصرها الألم ومرارة الأسى والحزن تنعي الإدارة العليا لشركة إتحاد المقاولين العالمية في أثينا وكافة الإدارات الفرعية والإدارة الإقليمية بصنعاء وكافة العاملين إلى الأمة العربية وإلى الشعب اليمني الشقيق وفاة المعلم والأستاذ والقامة الإقتصادية العربية الفذة.

### سعيد توفيق خوري

#### رئيس ومؤسس مجموعة شركة إتحاد المقاولين العالمية

الذي وافته المنية فجر الخميس في أثينا ، وسوف يوارى جثمانه الطاهر الثرى في بيروت يوم الاحد الموافق ٢٠١٤/١٠/١٩م بعد حياة حافلة بسجل ذهبي من العطاء الزاخر وعامرة بالعمل الدءوب والنجاح المشرف ، كان خلالها مثالا لرجل الأعمال والإقتصاد المتميز، كما يحفل تاريخه العريق بإسهامات إجتماعية واقتصادية قيمة على المستوى العربي والعالمي والإنساني وحصد عشرات الجوائز والأوسمة الرفيعة من الملوك والرؤساء والمنظمات الدولية نظير إسهاماته.

إن الفجعة تعقد الألسنة والقلوب تدميها الصدمة في هذه الخسارة الأليمة لشركة إتحاد المقاولين العالمية وكافة منتسبيها وهم يودعون قامة عالية ورمزا عربيا وإنسانيا فريدا قل أن يوجد به الزمان نسج بعرقه مع رفيق دربه الراحل المعلم / حسيب صباغ قصة نجاح أسطورية جعلت إتحاد المقاولين أكبر شركة مقاولات في المنطقة العربية والرابعة عشرة على مستوى العالم ويعمل بها قرابة ١٤٠ ألف موظف من مختلف الجنسيات والقارات.

وإننا إذ نعزي أنفسنا وأبناء وأسرة فقيدنا الكبير وأسرته الكبيرة في إتحاد المقاولين ، فإننا نجدد العهد بالسير في طريق سيرته العطرة ومسيرته الضافرة ، ونتذكر بكل فخر وإعتزاز علاقة الفقيد الكبير باليمن وقيادتها وشعبها منذ أكثر من ٦٥ عاما والشراكة التاريخية التي جسدها حبه ووفائه لها في تعزيز التنمية والإسهام في مشاريع النفط والمصافي والبنية التحتية والمياه ، وغيرها والتي ما تزال مستمرة إلى الآن ، داعين الله أن يسكنه فسيح جناته وأن يلهمنا جميعا الصبر والسلوان.

عنهم : هاني شحاده

المدير الإقليمي لإتحاد المقاولين العالمية في اليمن

للتعازي :

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# Abaad Report: The south's separation countdown

■ **Ali Saeed**

According to a report released last week by the Abaad Studies and Research Center, southerners in Yemen feel that after the Houthis seized control over Sana'a their time has come to achieve independence from the north.

The Houthis are an armed group prevalent in the north that effectively took control over Yemen's capital on Sept. 21.

"Yemenis in the south feel now is their chance for self-determination and separation from the north," the report read.

Adnan Al-Sayyed, a Southern Movement member in Aden, told the Yemen Times that the popular movement has recently been asking for international support in achieving its goal of separating from the north. They hope that foreign countries can help in peacefully retrieving the former state of south Yemen, preventing the country from falling into the hands of violent groups.

On Oct. 14, supporters of the Southern Movement celebrated the 1963 revolution anniversary, when southerners revolted against the British occupation and eventually gained independence.

"They believe that their celebration of the Oct. 14, 1963, anniversary... is the start of the countdown for Aden to separate from Sana'a," the report says.

Al-Sayyed, who also represented the Southern Movement at the National Dialogue Conference (NDC), adds that the peacefully achieved independence of south Yemen will contribute to the security and stability of the region.

Rallies in the south that call for its separation from the north regained momentum since Oct. 14 due to the

accelerated developments in Sana'a and other northern governorates.

"The southerners think that the takeover of Sana'a by the Houthis' armed movement on Sept. 21 infuses their separation proposal with new legitimacy," the report read.

It explains that the Houthis have essentially replaced the transitional rule that was launched by the GCC initiative and allowed for Abdu Rabu Mansour Hadi's ascent to power in February 2012.

## UN: Yemen transition at risk of collapsing

Jamal Benomar, the Special Adviser to the UN Secretary General on Yemen, briefed the UN Security Council (UNSC) on Oct. 14, warning "the transition [in Yemen] is at risk of collapsing."

As of today, the Houthis remain largely in charge of the capital's security. They have also expanded their presence in other northern governorates, violating the terms of the power sharing Peace and National Partnership Agreement which they signed on Sept. 21.

"I explained that implementation of the Peace and National Partnership Agreement is the only way forward," Benomar emphasized. "The Agreement is fully based on the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference and constitutes Yemen's best hope to overcome the current crisis."

Both the north and the south were supposed to reshape federally in line with the outcomes of the NDC. On paper, Yemen is still planned to be turned into a fed-



A southern woman holding a passport from the former South Yemen, which unified with North Yemen in 1990.

eral state, with two regions in the south and four in the north. However, since the NDC's completion in January 25, no actions have been taken towards a federalist system. The Houthis and some Southern Movement leaders publicly refused the six-region map.

"The Houthis' control of the civil and military institutions led to an early failure of... federal unity," the report reads.

Until recently, the southern governorates, especially Aden, witnessed a calmness under President Hadi that has been unprecedented since protests first erupted in the south in 2007.

"In contrast to his predecessor, President Hadi succeeded in controlling the situation in the south, but he failed to tackle the situation in the far north. While he moved forward with the HIRAK [Southern

Movement], his rule was ruined by the Houthis after they took control over towns and military camps, most importantly the capital Sana'a," the report reads.

Majed Siraj, a political analyst at the Sheba Strategic Studies Center in Sana'a, said Hadi was only able to partially contain the Southern Movement, which he did by convincing some of its members to take part in the NDC.

"Hadi attracted some old leaders of HIRAK [Southern Movement] to his side and neglected the young men of HIRAK who run the streets in the south," Siraj said.

## Possible scenarios in the south

Abaad's report predicts a number of possible scenarios that could occur in the south amidst Yemen's instability and the president's weakness.

"The first scenario is that southerners achieve a quick and complete separation." That scenario requires "a strong leadership composed of all HIRAK [Southern Movement] entities, leading the southern state during the self-determination period." It also needs "regional and international support, preventing southern-southern fighting," the report reads.

The second possible scenario, the report claims, is that "Hadi's regime contributes in achieving a peaceful and slow separation process, thereby avoiding [its] failure, minimizing [its] threats, and weakening local, regional, and international reactions."

"Such a decision [by Hadi] would require him to remain in power and bear more burdens as well as accusations of failure," it adds.

The report further states that numerous risks surround southerners' hope in retrieving what was once known as the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen.

The first risk is the international fear that the southern separation might turn into a source of radical ideology, possibly leading to the formation of jihadist movements. In case of an internal southern conflict, similar to the one in 1986, these groups may take control of some southern governorates.

In 1986 conflict broke out between leaders of the Yemeni Socialist Party, the former ruling party of South Yemen.

The report raises concerns that in case of rising jihadism in southern governorates, external powers may use the Houthis to target the south under the pretext of fighting terror. "This action will impose a sectarian conflict," the report warns.

Another risk threatening a pos-

sible southern state is civil war. Ideology and regionalism pose the risk of renewing old conflicts, the report points out.

A third risk is that separation fails completely in the south, which would instead slide into disintegration and witness the emergence of several minor states. The south's regional divides would be driven by Gulf interests in Hadramout, British interests in Aden, Iranian interests in the strait of Bab Al-Mandab, and American interests in oil sources located between Shabwa and Hadramout governorates.

The fourth risk, which resembles a time bomb that could go off any minute, is the internal conflict among Southern Movement groups, particularly between its armed faction, and parties that are linked to Iran or Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).

"Some HIRAK [Southern Movement] leaders have former connections with Iran. They visited Beirut and Tehran and joined Ansar Al-Sharia [AQAP] and became effective inside HIRAK. They might try to take the rule once [the south's] separation is completed, using the same methods the Houthis used in the north."

The report expects that developments in Yemen and information on the existence of indirect international support for the Houthis will impact Gulf policies, particularly Saudi Arabia's.

Siraj agrees, arguing that there is "no doubt that Saudi Arabia will take care of the new sensitive situation in Yemen and will reform its strategy towards Yemen after its tribal ally in Yemen diminished and the role of Iran grew."

"However, I strongly believe that Saudi Arabia will continue to effectively influence the Yemeni situation," he concludes.

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# International and local music at Yemeni weddings

■ **Mohammad Al-Khayat**

**W**hen we speak of weddings, it goes without saying that food, decor, and music play a crucial role in keeping guests entertained.

At Yemeni weddings, the story is no different.

Talented artists are not hard to find in this country, where musicians such as Balqees Ahmed Fathi, or Rana Al-Haddad, constitute essential parts of people's social and cultural life.

Dhaif Allah Al-Bada is a 27-year-old singer who performs at weddings in the capital and in other governorates, such as Dhamar, Taiz, and Amran. "All my songs are traditional. I mostly use the lute to compose these tunes, which I feel are true Yemeni art," he said.

"Art is like an identity that must be preserved and cared for so that it's not influenced by other cultural nuances," remarked Al-Bada.

**International influence**

As of late, many wedding attendees not only dance to Yemeni melodies, but also welcome Western and Asian music.

According to Mohammad Al-Anisi, an artist who sings at weddings in the capital, songs he plays include "Hiya hiya," which is originally performed by Cheb Khaled, an Algerian-French artist. He performs this song with his rapper colleague Majdi Al-Zyadi. Other songs include Indian ones like "Milne hai mujhe aayi," from the Bollywood film "Aashiqui 2."

In separate rooms, young men



**Yahya Enaba is a famous Yemeni singer and oud player who regularly performs at Yemeni weddings.**

and women dance to not only English-language songs, but also to Spanish, French, Indian, Chinese, Korean, and several others. Understanding all the lyrics is not always possible, said Mukhtar Allawi, a self-proclaimed music enthusiast. However, "guests still hop to the beats perfectly."

"It is not that Arab music is not appreciated, it's just that international music is new and hip and people react to it enthusiastically," said Mustafa Al-Saiaghi, a groom who played songs like Shakira's "Hips don't lie" and Celine Dion's "Titanic theme" song at his wedding.

In a largely conservative society like Yemen, the image of men dancing to Shakira singing "yeah, she's so sexy, every man's fantasy," might strike some as odd.

Yasmin Qaid, a young journalist in Sana'a, has been at several weddings dancing with her friends to Usher's "Yeah" and Pitbull's "Shut it down."

When asked whether she knows about the sexual lyrics of both songs, she said no, explaining that although she speaks English she does not pay attention to what is said in those songs. The meaning of Usher's chorus, "next thing I knew she was all up on me screaming: Yeah, Yeah,

Yeah!" is likely to go unnoticed by the audience. Most people, Qaid said, do not even understand English.

Al-Saiaghi, who has lived in the US for a while, shows little sympathy for more conservative wedding guests that might dislike the English lyrics, saying "either they like it or they don't." He is not too worried about the songs' content, arguing, like Qaid, that most people do not pay attention or do not understand the lyrics.

"I played music from foreign artists to break away from the routine and introduce something different.

Also, some of my friends only dance to international music," said Al-Saiaghi.

Showing his affinity for artists from both the East and West, Al-Saiaghi believes international artists are creative, have great voices, and produce music that resonates with a wider audience.

But not all Yemenis share his view. Many conservative families prefer to stick with local artists. "Weddings, universally, are a traditional custom, and introducing foreign music obscures its very purpose," said Yousef Al-Salahi, a groom who snubbed the idea of having international music played at his wedding.

Despite his intransigence towards international tunes played at local weddings, Al-Salahi does not entirely dismiss music from abroad. "Many international artists are distinguished for their voices, but that does not make it okay to replace Yemeni music with tunes from abroad," he said.

There is the odd exception, where music—Western or Arab—is not welcomed by the groom at his wedding. Ismael Ibrahim, who is not a keen fan of music, is of the idea that music itself is forbidden. A groom, he argues, should not start the first moments of his wedding with sins.

For Ibrahim, there are various other ways of expressing joy that include playing tambourines or using Islamic chants that are performed by Islamic chanters, with no instruments being used.

Ibrahim said when he got married he brought a chanter and a band without any instruments to celebrate the event, who were praising God and his Prophet Muhammad.

Combining Yemeni and Western tunes

"International artists have unique melodies that are sensational and creative. Their music entices both Arab and Yemeni youth," Al-Anisi said.

At the same time, "the Sana'ani, Hadrami, or Lahji music is beautiful art, one of the best in the Arab world. Yemeni music is one of the most original forms for anyone who is interested in music and art."

Despite the apparent challenges at hand, Al-Anisi finds innovative ways to bridge the Yemeni-international music divide.

"The growing appreciation for international music puts a significant dent on the popularity of Yemeni music. Therefore, I personally try to write Arabic lyrics that are suitable for foreign melodies and sometimes I use poets to do the same thing."

English teacher Mustafa Abdullhakeem, who is 29 years old and works at the American French Institute in Sana'a, likes some songs of Egyptian singer Tamr Hosny. He finds traditional Yemeni music to be outdated. "Yemeni music is obsolete, we have to modernize it. Yemeni music must introduce international artists and use the same style, because that's what attracts young men these days."

"Music by international artists," he added, "brings joy to the weddings and sets the mood for dancing, which is what's missing in Yemeni and Arab music."

"Unlike artists from other Arab countries who mix Arab and international tunes to become a roaring success, Yemeni music is confined to Yemen," Abdullhakeem regrets.

## REPORT

# The return of the two-wheeled taxi

Story by **Nasser Al-Sakkaf**  
Photos by **Brett Scott**

**A**yman Mohammad is ecstatic. Like other motorcycle taxi drivers in the capital, he is now able to zip around Sana'a's crowded streets on his two-wheeler without having to worry about traffic officers ticketing him.

Until the beginning of the month, Mohammad was using a sidecar attached to his motorbike to transport passengers around the city. The sidecar was a necessity for many motorcycle taxi drivers relying on their bike to make ends meet.

An ongoing ban was placed on all civilian motorcycles in Sana'a on Sept. 1, 2013. At the time, the Ministry of Interior explained the ban as a precautionary measure against assassinations. The decision followed the killings of a parliament member, an officer, and a Belarusian expat, by men riding on motorbikes in November.

Now that the Houthis have consolidated their control over Sana'a's bustling streets, Mohammad says he and many other motorcycle taxi

drivers have removed the sidecar, knowing the traffic police are unlikely to punish them.

Mohammad, who describes himself as independent and not all that concerned with politics, said not much has changed since the Houthis took Sana'a—except for one thing: The daily income he makes as a motorbike taxi driver.

While the ministry allowed drivers to use motorbikes provided they added a sidecar, which many did, they complained of a notable decrease in customers due to the sidecar. The additional weight slows down the motorbike and the added size prevents it from passing through narrow spaces—defeating the purpose of taking a motorbike in the capital's crowded streets.

"I added the sidecar in April, it cost me YR60,000 (\$279). I was very hesitant when I decided to remove it, but when many drivers removed their sidecars due to bad income, I did the same," Mohammad explained.

For motorbike taxi drivers using a sidecar, as was the case with Mohammad, the average daily income is around YR2,000 (\$9.31). For

those drivers who have decided to part with their sidecars, this figure is almost double.

### Seized and not returned

According to Abdullah Al-Soraby, representative of the Motorbike Drivers Union in Sana'a, there are about 50,000 bikes in the capital. Of these, more than 35,000 are registered with the Customs Authority and have license plates, meaning if it were not for the ban they would be legal to drive.

Six months after the ban came into effect, by March 2014, a total of 4,414 motorbikes had been seized and were held at the Traffic Police's impound lot, according to the most recent statistics released by the Interior Ministry.

In a previous conversation with the Yemen Times, Brigadier General Mohammad Al-Bahashi, the head of the traffic police, said the ministry had not issued a statement about the seized bikes and it remained unclear whether or not they will be returned.

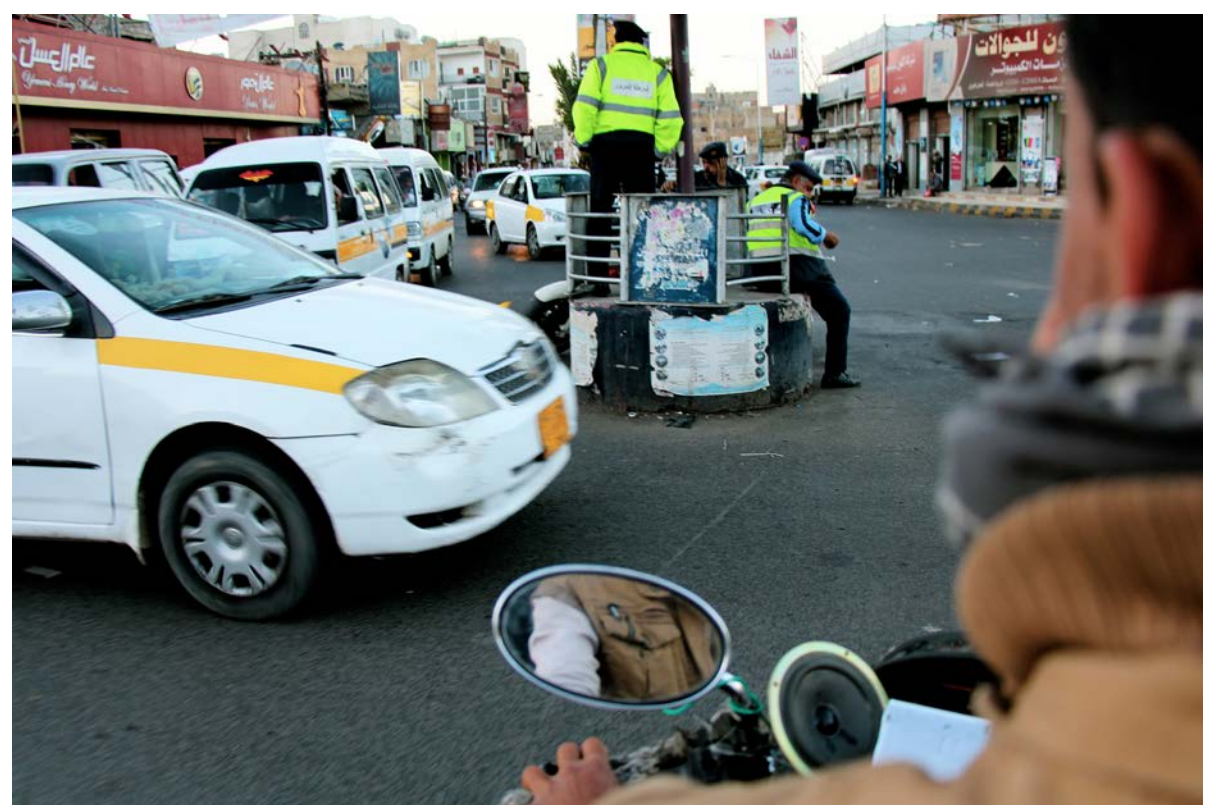
The manager of the Public Relations Department in Sana'a Traffic Police, Abdullah Al-Nuwaira, told the Yemen Times in mid-October the number of seized motorbikes has reached over 7,000.

"We are waiting for orders from the Supreme Security Committee to return the bikes, but it is not up to me to return them," Al-Nuwaira said.

Al-Soraby says that the Traffic Administration in Sana'a is still refusing to return seized motorbikes being held at their lot—which he says number more than ten thousand. He adds that the motorbikes are beginning to erode due to exposure because they have been kept outside since last December.

Mohammad Hezam, the deputy director of the Public Relations Department in the Ministry of Interior, said "currently the security situation in Sana'a is very tense. That is why the security forces are unable to pursue motorbike drivers."

Hezam indicates that currently there is no plan to undertake cam-



**Before the Houthis took Sana'a drivers without sidecars did not dare to drive in the middle of Sana'a. Now they are plentiful and traffic police officers are looking the other way.**

paigns to seize motorbikes, saying the situation does not allow it.

Abdulrazzaq Al-Salehi, a traffic police officer, agrees with Hezam. "We cannot stop motorbikes because the situation is too tense and we do not want to make it worse."

"The exceptional circumstances the country is undergoing is what made some motorbike drivers remove their sidecars, thinking security forces will not come back and chase them again," Al-Soraby said.

Motorbike taxi drivers like Mohammad, who avoided having his bike confiscated by adding the sidecar, still had a bike to use. Many others, who no longer were in possession of a motorbike, tried to solve the problem themselves.

"The drivers whose bikes are seized bought new bikes to work with. They could not wait for their old bikes to be returned," Al-Soraby said.

Because of his fixed income, motorcycle taxi driver Abdulsalam Al-Alawi could not afford to buy a new bike after his was seized in January. He leased a bike from a friend and started to work in the outskirts of Sana'a.

Before the Houthis' took Sana'a, motorbike drivers who did not have sidecars would not dare work in the middle of Sana'a. Nowadays they are plentiful.

"When security forces stopped chasing motorbikes I came to work in the middle of Sana'a, which is much better than working in the outskirts and barely making YR1,000 (\$5), which is the lease fee for the bike," said Al-Alawi, who explains he makes about YR 2,000 (\$10) now.

Another motorcycle taxi driver, Mohammad Al-Anisi, is more cautious about breaking the law. He still uses a sidecar, calling it "the safe bet, despite the low income."

He fears he can not be certain that authorities will not suddenly decide to seize his bike.

"When I added the sidecar to my motorbike I got new jobs, such as driving kids to school. Kids can only ride motorbikes if there are sidecars on them," he explained, noting the sidecar is not all bad.

### Remove the ban, drivers say

There seems to be wide-spread support for the removal of the ban, which many see as pointless and damaging to those who rely on driving motorbikes for their livelihood.

Motorcycles were banned in response to the high number of assassinations which took place last year. However, no proof has been given by the Interior Ministry that the ban has had any effect, and many locals remain unconvinced it serves any purpose.

*Continued on the back page*



**Although police officers are no longer enforcing the law, thousands of seized motorbikes continue to be held by the traffic police.**



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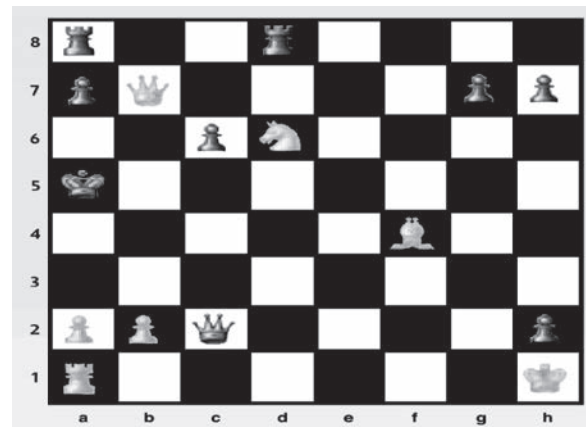
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				9				

**Intermediate**

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

**Difficult**

**Chess**



White plays and wins in the 3rd move

**Solutions**

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



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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

## The return of the two-wheeled taxi

"Hunting and chasing motorbikes is not a solution for the problem and seizing motor bikes is not a solution either, especially when we noticed the continuous occurrence of assassinations after the ban," Al-Soraby said, indicating that the authorities must look for another solution.

Mohammad Al-Bukhaiti, a member of the Houthis' Political Office, adds that the situation is



now more secure after the Houthis' took control of Sana'a on Sept. 21.

Despite the renewed presence of motorbikes in the streets, he says, "when we compare the situation now with how things used to be it is much better and we have not heard about one assassination by [men on a] motorbike."

While the Houthis control the city's streets and allow citizens to ride

motorcycles freely, there is no indication they are actively trying to remove the ban.

"It is not in our hands to bring motorcycles back," Al-Bukhaiti said, explaining that this is the state's responsibility. Motorcycles will be dealt with once the new government is formed and functional.

Driver Al-Anisi is calling for an official resolution allowing drivers to remove their sidecars. Al-Anisi, along with other drivers, met the Houthis' advisor to the president, Saleh Al-Sammad. According to Al-Anisi, the advisor told him and the others to "be patient until the situation calms down."

In Al-Bukhaiti's view, it is wrong to prevent motorbike drivers from working without providing an alternative.

Many motorcycle taxi drivers share this sentiment.

"All I care about is having a government which allows me to make a living," Mohammad said.

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