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Southern Parliamentary Bloc established

■ Khalid Al-Karimi

SANA'A, Oct. 28—Thirty-three parliament members from the south met on Monday in Aden to announce the establishment of the Southern Parliamentary Bloc and show their support for the Southern Movement.

All 33 parliamentarians are from governorates in the south and are members of various political parties. The announcement comes amid growing pro-secessionist sentiments in the south and continuing demonstrations in Aden.

"The move by the members of parliament confirms that the southern issue is a fair one. It is a good idea that these members join the southern people's demands," said Khalid Bamadhaf, a member of the Southern Movement, which was established in 2007.

Bamadhaf expressed his hope that the formation of the Southern Parliamentary Bloc would help in uniting the southern leadership.

"The purpose of the meeting [on Monday] aims at finding a fair solution for the southern issue to unite all the southern factions under one



Southern parliamentarians met in Aden on Monday to announce the establishment of the Southern Parliamentary Bloc.

leadership," the Southern Parliamentary Bloc announced at the meeting.

Fuad Wakib, the spokesperson of the Southern Parliamentary Bloc, called the formation of the bloc a positive step towards a united southern leadership.

"We thought about establishing this bloc in 2006, but it was aborted by the former regime. The former regime feared such an action would be a step for secession," Wakib told

the Yemen Times.

He called for the implementation of the National Dialogue Conference (NDC) outcomes, adding that the outcomes guarantee the right of self-determination for the southern people.

Zaid Al-Shami, a northern member of parliament working in Sana'a, told the Yemen Times the move by the southern members is to ensure co-ordination between the people in the south and their elected members

of parliament. Al-Shami said parliament in Sana'a is calling for the implementation of the NDC outcomes and the Southern Parliamentary Bloc will not impact the function of the parliament in Sana'a.

Zaid Al-Jariri, a Southern Movement activist in Aden, told the Yemen Times the establishment of the Southern Parliamentary Bloc is an important step which supports unified leadership for the southern people.

"It is fundamental for our success that we have one leadership to represent the issue of the southern people. Divisions will not help us realize our goal," Al-Jariri said.

However, he said the re-instatement of the former South Yemen does not depend on particular individuals. Instead it relies on all people, both ordinary citizens and senior officials.

At the same time, Al-Jariri expressed worry that some people claiming to support the Southern Movement are really attempting to weaken the movement. "It is important that anyone who supports the Southern Movement should be serious," said Al-Jariri.



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Houthis take Al-Radhma district of Ibb

■ Nasser Al-Sakkaf

SANA'A, Oct. 29—The Houthis gained control of Al-Radhma district in Ibb governorate on Wednesday, after killing Sheikh Nabeel Al-Daam, a tribesman who was fighting against the Houthis in Al-Radhma.

The clashes between the Houthis and tribesmen in the district started on Tuesday after Houthis captured three army locations. Later, on Tuesday, a tribal mediation committee was formed by tribal leaders in Al-Radhma.

"The mediation committee could stop the fighting, but they could not expel the Houthis' armed men from

the district," said Ahmed Al-Shalali, a citizen in Al-Radhma.

Al-Shalali said that armed Houthi men spread throughout the district and he noticed many people fleeing.

The house of Abdu Al-Waheed Al-Daam was attacked on Tuesday at noon. Abdu Al-Waheed is leading the prominent Al-Daam family in fighting against the Houthis in Al-Radhma. A retired brigadier, he is also a leading figure in the General People's Congress.

Abdu Al-Waheed's son Nabil was inside the house when it was attacked and was killed in the ensuing clashes. The number of other casualties remains unclear.

Speaking to the Yemen Times, Nabil's brother Khalid said "Houthis attacked my father's house by using different kinds of weapons, while I was supposed to be negotiating with Houthi leading figures in Sana'a." However, he said, "I did not go because Houthis started the war."

Khalid explained that the Houthis stationed their men in a few different places in the district three days ago but tribal leaders did not resist them in order to avoid confrontation.

The Houthis sent additional support to Al-Radhma from outside the district, according to Khalid.

Khalid said military forces helped

the Houthis in their fight against the tribes in Al-Radhma, but the government has yet to comment on the situation.

The Yemen Times tried to contact security sources in Ibb governorate but received no reply.

Ali Al-Qahoom, a member of the Houthis' Political Office, admits that the Houthis killed Nabeel Al-Daam. However, he accused armed men from the tribes of shooting the Houthis' first and said that clashes broke out as a result.

The Houthis have controlled Ibb city, the capital of the governorate, since the middle of this October. Their checkpoints are spread in the entrances of the city.

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Juvenile death sentences prevalent

Story and photo by
■ Ali Ibrahim Al-Moshki

SANA'A, Oct. 29—The Yemeni NGOs Coalition for the Rights of the Child announced on Wednesday that 31 Yemeni juveniles have been sentenced to death between 2010 and 2013.

The coalition presented these numbers during Yemen's first National Convention to Combat Child Executions. The conference took place on Wednesday and Thursday and was organized with support from the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the EU.

The conference aims at improving the Yemeni justice system with regard to juveniles, creating and including laws for juveniles in the new Yemeni constitution, and bringing together organizations to advocate for juveniles' rights.

"This conference took place after four months of preparations," said Abdu Salah Al-Harazi, the general coordinator for the Yemeni NGOs Coalition for the Rights of the Child.

Ibb, Taiz, Sana'a, Dhamar, Hodeida, and Al-Mahweet governorates, as well as Mukalla city in Hadramout, are listed as the places in Yemen where juveniles were sentenced to death between 2010 and 2013.

"These statistics came after several committees made field visits to all the prisons in all the governorates and met and counted the



At the Convention to Combat Child Executions in Sana'a, children held a performance condemning juvenile death sentences.

juvenile prisoners in them," said Al-Harazi.

The Yemeni NGOs Coalition for the Rights of the Child was founded in 1995. It is made up of 43 organizations and associations in 12 Yemeni governorates that are working in the field of children's rights and human development.

"Sentencing juveniles who are 18 years or younger to death is a crime against humanity," said a representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights who attended the conference. "Death penalties should

be replaced by fines," the representative added, saying that "governments around the world stopped sentencing juveniles to death except for four governments, including Yemen's."

Yemeni law defines anyone who is younger than 16 years old as a juvenile, meaning 16-year-olds are legally considered adults.

The country's Juveniles' Law stipulates that if "a juvenile is 14 or 15 years of age and committed a crime punishable by death s/he will be imprisoned for no less than ten years." Anyone between 16 and

18, however, is sentenced to death, which goes against the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The biggest problem facing Yemeni judges is determining the age of juveniles, as some of them do not have any certificates indicating their age.

"So far no juveniles under the age of 15 years were executed," according to Ali Al-Asemi, a member of the Yemeni Lawyers Union.

The National Dialogue Conference, which ended on Jan. 25, 2014, set the age of a juvenile at below 18 years old.

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Houthis control AQAP stronghold in Al-Baida

■ Ali Ibrahim Al-Moshki

SANA'A, Oct. 29—On Tuesday morning Houthis took control over Al-Manaseh village and Asbil mountain in Qaifa area of Al-Baida governorate.

Both locations are known to be strongholds of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).

The Houthis' advance followed violent battles which lefts hundreds dead, according to local and security sources.

Nasser Al-Sane, who reports for the state-run Saba News Agency, said

the Houthis, backed by the army, are spread all over Al-Manaseh. Al-Sane, who lives in Rada'a district, which Qaifa is part of, said that AQAP withdrew to Al-Manaseh's mountains and the neighboring villages. AQAP is currently focusing on carrying out night operations against Houthi targets, he said.

On Monday alone, AQAP burned six military vehicles, three BMP-1 infantry fighting vehicles, and two Houthi vehicles, according to Al-Sane.

"There are no statistics indicating the number of human losses," Al-

Sane said, adding that the number of casualties "are very severe."

Although Al-Sane estimated the casualties from Sunday and Monday to exceed 100, he called rumors of over 250 deaths unfounded.

Al-Arabiya, Al-Jazeera, and other news websites published earlier that over 250 were killed, without specifying sources.

According to Al-Sane it was not only AQAP fighters but also residents of Al-Manaseh who fled to the mountains. "This is a potential human crisis," he said.

A source from AQAP, who has pre-

viously fought with the group and lives in Qaifa, said "the tribes and Ansar Al-Sharia [AQAP] withdrew to the mountains of Qaifa after they took armored vehicles and military hardware which they had acquired during previous fights." The source calls AQAP's withdrawal a "tactical" move, aimed at attacking and killing Houthis.

"Victory is not gained by controlling cities but by killing a large number of enemies," the source said. "We withdrew to save the local residents from the US and Yemeni warplanes, who are striking heavily and causing

many civilians deaths."

As for the number of casualties, the source claimed that more than 250 Houthi fighters were killed, compared to less than 20 AQAP members.

"Ansar Al-Sharia [AQAP] are costing the Houthis many losses and the gains Houthis made are because of the help of the Yemeni air force and US drones," said Mused Al-Salimi, who writes for the state-run October 14 newspaper and specializes in AQAP affairs.

However, according to Faed Al-Harazy from the 7th Military Com-

mand's Operations Department, "the army forces are expanding daily in Qaifa area and other villages in Rada'a district."

The 7th Military Command's Operations Department oversees all army camps and military units in Al-Baida governorate.

"The army is making big gains and our forces and the army are spreading in Qaifa area," confirmed Waleed Al-Dailami, one of the Houthis' commanders in Qaifa.

The Yemen Times contacted local security forces in Qaifa area, but they refused to comment.

Dhamar calm under Houthi control

■ Ali Ibrahim Al-Moshki

SANA'A Oct. 28—Despite opposition against the Houthis in several governorates, the group has not faced any notable opposition in Dhamar governorate since taking control over it on Oct. 14.

In spite of the Houthis' heavy presence, the situation has remained calm, according to local and security sources in Dhamar.

Mohammad Ali Al-Jahmali, a resident in Dhamar city, reported that Houthi checkpoints are spread throughout Dhamar city, and that over ten checkpoints are currently guarding the city's entrance points.

"The streets are crowded with armed men and Houthi signs are all over the streets, roundabouts, and rooftops. Houthi patrol cars are stationed in front of every government headquarter; the city is safe and there are no security problems," Al-Jahmali said.

"There were no clashes between Houthis and security forces because Houthis spread in the city's streets after coordinating with the governorate's security leaders," Abdullah Al-Saedy, the deputy security chief of Dhamar, confirmed.

He added, "[the Houthis] did not try to take control over any public institution, facility, or headquarter. However, a number of them set up security checkpoints."

In Al-Saedy's view, the reason for the ongoing peace in Dhamar is



Local sources believe that the high number of Houthi supporters and GPC members in the governorate explain its current stability.

that most armed Houthis are locals. About 70 percent of the population in Dhamar, he estimated, are Houthi members or supporters. Moreover, most residents in the governorate are members of the General People's Congress (GPC), which Al-Saedy claimed is currently allied with the Houthis.

Yahya Mujahid Al-Ansi, a leader in the GPC and a member in the governorate's local council, agreed that

the widespread GPC support inside the governorate explains its prevailing security. GPC leaders co-ordinated with Houthi leaders to deploy their armed men and not to trigger any fights in the governorate.

Referring to Ali Abdullah Saleh, the leader of the GPC and Yemen's former president, Al-Ansi added that orders to hand over the governorate came from the GPC in Sana'a. "We were told to maintain security inside the governorate and to avoid any conflicts," he said.

"We are co-operating with the Houthis and the security forces in the governorate to maintain peace and security here and to prevent what happened in Al-Baida and Ibb from happening here," Al-Ansi said.

Saleh Mahdi Al-Mahalli, an Islah Party member living in Dhamar governorate, said that Islah is not getting into confrontations with the

Houthis because the party does not want to be dragged into a war.

Contrary to other governorates, Al-Mahalli added, the Houthis did not break into any Islah Party headquarters in Dhamar.

"We are a political party, we have no problems with the Houthis, and things are very normal here," he summed things up.

No incidences of resistance from Salafis have been reported in Dhamar, who previously have engaged in fighting with the Houthis.

An agreement of "co-existence and brotherhood" was signed between the Houthis and Salafis in Dhamar on June 26. The agreement urges peaceful co-existence between the two groups and seeks to maintain peace and security. It urges Salafis and Houthis not to attack each other and respect each other's opinions and religious believes.

Houthis evacuate outskirts of Sana'a

■ Khalid Al-Karimi

SANA'A, Oct. 29—On Tuesday the Houthis evacuated their encampments in Hezyaz, Subaha, and Al-Azraqin neighborhoods on the outskirts of the capital Sana'a.

The state-run Saba News Agency quoted a statement from the Houthis' Organizing Committee as saying, "to implement the Peace and National Partnership Agreement, the Organizing Committee declared on Tuesday the evacuation of all the remaining camps on the outskirts of the capital of Sana'a."

The Peace and National Partnership Agreement was signed by the Houthis, the government, and a number of political actors on Sept. 21 in an attempt to put an end to days of fighting in the capital.

"The removal of the camps is a sign to show the revolutionaries [the Houthis] are keen to spread optimism among the Yemenis who aspire for a better future under a sovereign state," read the statement.

The Houthis' announcement followed a speech by President Abdu Rabu Mansour Hadi on Sunday, calling on the Houthis to withdraw their militants from the cities they took over.

Hussein Al-Bukhaiti, a prominent Houthi member and activist, told the Yemen Times that the removal of the camps indicates the Houthis' goodwill and their seriousness to implement the partnership agreement.

A week earlier, the Houthis packed up their camps on Airport Road.

Ibrahim Al-Moayad, a Sana'a resident who identifies himself as a Houthi supporter, said removing the camps is a positive step.

"The prime minister was appointed and the allocation of ministries has been agreed upon. Thus, there is no use in maintaining the camps. In case the government reneges on its promises, we will return to pitching the camps," said Al-Moayad.

Mohammed Al-Hezyazi, a resident in Hezyaz, confirmed the camps were removed on orders from the Houthis' leadership and the situation has returned to normal.

Mustafa Rajeh, a Sana'a-based political analyst and columnist for the state-run Al-Gomhuria newspaper, said the move to evacuate the protest squares comes at a time when the Houthi group has usurped prominent state institutions in Sana'a.

"If the group is serious about implementing the agreement, they should leave Sana'a and return the public institutions to government control," said Rajeh.

The Houthis pitched tents at the entrances of Sana'a in early August, calling for three demands: The reversal of fuel subsidies, the ousting of the government, and the implementation of the National Dialogue Conference outcomes. So far, the first two demands have been realized.

Houthis to officially join police

■ Bassam Al-Khameri

SANA'A, Oct. 29—Sana'a's police announced on Tuesday that members of the Houthis will officially be made a part of the security apparatus within the upcoming days.

Colonel Abdulrazaq Al-Moayed, the security chief of Sana'a, told Azal TV Channel on Tuesday that Houthi members in Sana'a will receive security training before they start working with the police.

"Those members will be given the formal uniform of the security apparatus too," he added.

The Yemen Times tried to contact the Police Department in Sana'a to get more details about the number of the members to be recruited, but received no response.

A source from the Ministry of Interior previously told the Yemen Times that a decision was made by the Supreme Security Committee to make 20,000 Houthis part of the military, though the details of the plan have yet to be made public.

Mohammed Al-Bukhaiti, a member of the Houthis' Political Office, told the Yemen Times that it is "normal" to recruit Houthis into the military and the police as they "fought on the side of the state."

"After each internal conflict and the signing of a partnership agreement... the state recruits those who stood by its side," he said.

Al-Bukhaiti added that the

Houthis have been marginalized in the past, even after the 2011 revolution. "The situation would have never reached this stage if we were included in state institutions, like members of other parties," he said.

Al-Moayed's announcement coincided with a march staged by human rights activists and hundreds of residents on Tuesday, demanding the evacuation of Houthi gunmen from Sana'a.

A statement released by the protesters called on the security apparatus to resume its work and maintain security in the capital and other governorates.

On her Facebook page, Tawakkol Karman, Yemen's Nobel Peace Prize winner, called the participation of Houthi gunmen in the police an unprecedented form of "corruption."

"In order to withdraw his militias and evacuate the sit-in tents in Sana'a, Abdulmalik Al-Houthi conditioned the recruitment of these militias in the military and security apparatus. This is corruption that requires a thousand revolutions," she wrote.

Ever since the Houthis took control over Sana'a's streets on Sept. 21, they erected numerous unofficial checkpoints throughout the capital. The Houthis claimed that these checkpoints are aimed at maintaining security in the capital.

Al-Moayed was assigned as the capital's security chief by the interior minister on Oct. 10, following the suicide attack in Tahrir Square.

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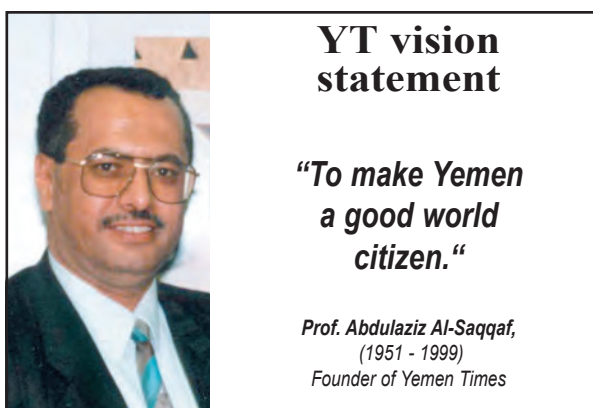


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**YT vision statement****"To make Yemen a good world citizen."**Prof. Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf,
(1951 - 1999)
Founder of Yemen Times**OUR OPINION****What's missing?
Transitional justice**

Looking back at the past three years of Yemen's transition, since the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Initiative in November 2011, there are three major mistakes that I believe have led us to the chaos we are experiencing today:

We should have issued a transitional justice law immediately after or simultaneous to the immunity law.

It was agreed during the GCC Initiative negotiations to pardon former President Saleh and all those who worked with him, including the opposition parties, in return for handing over power. Saleh did resign from his position as president, but still controlled half of the government through his post as head of the General People's Congress (GPC). The consensus government of 2012 should have issued the transitional justice law to close any chapters of the past—to reveal the truth, compensate the victims, and put an end to any injustices caused by the former regime. I am sure that had we done this, the issue of Saleh presiding over the GPC would have been raised and based on this law, he would have been asked to recuse himself from leading the GPC.

We should have created and helped facilitate an independent committee responsible for investigating the 2011 uprising.

This committee was mentioned in both the GCC Initiative and also in the UN Security Council Resolution 2014 (2011), which was based on the UN Human Rights Council resolution on Yemen (A/HRC/RES/18/19). There is no excuse whatsoever as to why President Hadi did not create that committee and facilitate its work.

We should not have included a working group on transitional justice in the National Dialogue Conference (NDC).

The third mistake was to engage an entire working group of 80 people in debates about issues that should have already been resolved by the executive authority. The working group was debating Saleh's immunity and the jurisdiction of transitional justice without really understanding that justice in this context does not mean court cases. This was one of the main reasons, if not the main reason, why the GPC gave us a hard time during the NDC and caused the prolonging of the conference from six to ten months. We wasted so much time on these issues and did not focus on building the new Yemen.

Today, we pay for this in the Constitution Drafting Committee and the National Authority for Monitoring the Implementation of NDC Outcomes. This is because there are so many details of the federal system and state structure that were left unclear in the final NDC document and are now left to speculation and negotiation by the political parties and their representatives in both bodies.

With the new government, we face a new turning point in Yemen's history. However, without closing the troubling chapters of the past, Prime Minister Bahah will never be able to run the country and create stability in an already fragile nation. He needs to focus on transitional justice the right way if he wants to succeed in his mission.

Nadia Al-Sakkaf

Saudi Arabia: As executions rise, allies must focus more closely on warring anti-IS forcesPatrick Cockburn
Independent.co.uk
First published Oct. 26

A Specialized Criminal Court in Saudi Arabia has sentenced a prominent Shia clergyman, Sheikh Nimr Baqir Al-Nimr, to death on vague charges of "breaking allegiance to the ruler" and "encouraging, leading, and participating in demonstrations."

It is a sentence that is creating rage among Saudi Arabia's two-million-strong Shia minority that has long claimed to be persecuted and discriminated against.

The Saudi authorities are nervous about how the verdict handed down on Oct. 15 will be received; the court arrested Sheikh Nimr's brother, Mohammed Nimr Al-Nimr, after he announced the outcome of the trial on Twitter. Local activists believe this was to prevent him speaking to the media after sentencing. Harsh though the sentence is, it is less than the prosecution's demand for execution by "crucifixion," a punishment that in Saudi Arabia involves beheading.

Sheikh Nimr had been under arrest since 2012 when he was shot four times in the leg by police, who claimed that he resisted them with a weapon when they were trying to arrest him. His family dispute this, saying that he did not own a weapon and accusing the Saudi authorities of not providing adequate medical treatment for his wounds. Sheikh Nimr had earlier said in an interview with the BBC that he looked to "the roar of the word against the Saudi authorities rather than weapons... the weapon of the word is stronger than bullets, because authorities will profit from a battle of weapons." At the time of his arrest there were riots in Eastern Province, the site of much of Saudi Arabia's oil wealth, in

which three people were killed.

News of Sheikh Nimr's death sentence received limited coverage in the foreign media, which was focused more on the outcome of the Islamic State's siege of Kobani in northern Syria. It was a more obviously significant development and was, moreover, taking place in full view of television cameras just across the border in Turkey. But these two events in Saudi Arabia and Syria are linked because they are both part of the greatest crisis in the Middle East since the fall of the Ottoman Empire a century ago.

Sheikh Nimr's sentence is important because of its negative impact on the Shia in Saudi Arabia and their fraught relationship with the Saudi royal family. But it has a wider significance because it helps deepen hostility between Shia and Sunni Muslims and escalates the struggle between them everywhere in the world. Syria and Iraq are the main arena for this battle, but it now encompasses all 1.6 billion Muslims, a quarter of the world's population.

It is a persistent error by the United States, Britain, and their allies in the West to underestimate the extent to which the Sunni-Shia confrontation determines what happens in the Middle East. This is particularly so in those countries in which the Shia, or sects demonized by Sunni governments as Shia, form a significant part of the population. The blindness of the western powers is to a degree self-serving and intentional: It makes it easier for them to ally themselves with the theocratic absolute monarchies of the Gulf without having to admit they have thereby plugged into a bigoted and sectarian agenda.

The Sunni-Shia battle is growing by the day involving communities like the Alawites of Syria, the Alevi of Turkey, and the Houthis of Yemen, whose Shia credentials might have been doubted a few decades ago by the Shia of Iran,

Iraq, and Lebanon. But people's national and religious identities are defined as much by the perceptions and actions of their enemies as by their own beliefs. Denunciations of the Houthis of Yemen, who have recently captured the capital Sana'a, by Saudis as Shia and pawns of Iran tend to be self-fulfilling. When I asked some Alevi in Istanbul last year if they saw themselves as part of the wider Shia world, they said that their problem was that many Sunni saw them as such.

The same is true of Syria. Whatever the popular origins of the revolt against President Bashar Al-Assad and his government in 2011, it swiftly took a sectarian form. This happened because sectarian divisions were always very real and because Sunni states like Saudi Arabia and Turkey channeled their support towards jihadis, thus preparing the ground for the dominance of the rebel movement by Islamic State (IS) and Jabhat Al-Nusra, Al-Qaeda's affiliate in Syria.

It has been politically convenient for the US, Britain, and their allies to pretend that there is a "moderate" non-jihadi rebel movement capable of fighting both IS and the Assad government. In reality, the civil war in Syria is all too real and sectarian killers are not all confined to IS. Earlier this year I was on the outskirts of Adra, a town north of Damascus, part of which had been captured by rebels from Douma who had killed many non-Sunni. One highly secular Alawite family had blown themselves up with grenades, children as well as parents, because they believed they would all be tortured to death by the rebels.

In Syria the western powers blithely pretend that the rebels, especially the famous "moderates" are less sectarian than they are. In Baghdad they do the exact opposite and pretend that the Shia-dominated government and its armed forces do not have a sectarian agenda. The reality is that the most ef-

fective military force on the government side is the Shia militias who murder and kidnap Sunni with impunity as shown by a recent Amnesty International report. If the United States and others back the government with embedded advisers calling in air strikes, it will be supporting the Shia in a war against the 5 or 6 million Sunni in Iraq. Anti-Sunni sectarian cleansing has already started in Diyala, Hilla and other provinces around Baghdad. It is self-deceiving to believe the recapture of Mosul or other Sunni cities by the government will be welcomed by the terrified local inhabitants.

These sectarian wars cannot really be won by either side. The most positive thing that outside powers can do in Syria is to arrange a ceasefire between anti-IS forces, both government and rebel. Hatred is too great for a political solution in Syria, but a truce is feasible if backed by outside powers such as the US, Russia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey.

When it comes to the broader Sunni-Shia confrontation, the US, Britain, and their allies need to end their blindness, calculated though it is, towards the Sunni sectarianism of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf monarchies. Speaking of Sheikh Nimr, Yusuf Al-Khoei, a prominent campaigner for Shia-Sunni dialogue, says "it makes a mockery of Saudi claims to be fighting extremism when they threaten to kill a prominent member of the Shia community in their country. It makes it impossible to have a dialogue with them."

In many respects the situation in Saudi Arabia is getting worse rather than better with a surge in the number of executions, as if the government feels it must compete with the IS by demonstrating the rigor with which it implements Islamic law (Sharia) and deals with Shia, Christians, and others who do not follow its own brand of Islam.

Foreign fighters: Foreign to whom?Afzal Ashraf
aljazeera.com
First published Oct. 27

Until a few months ago, the term "foreign fighters" was foreign to all but practitioners of counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism. With politicians and the media using the term on a daily basis, many ordinary people are left wondering what it means and why there is so much fuss around the topic.

The foreign fighters label came to prominence in Iraq about ten years ago when coalition officers believed, incorrectly, that the "Sunni insurgency" in that country was being dominated by fighters from outside. The concept of foreign fighters—individuals who travel to a foreign country to fight for a cause is, however, much older. From the Crusades through to the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s, young men have been mobilized to fight for an ideological cause in foreign countries. Contemporary foreign fighters have a significant difference from their historical counterparts. For some, the ideological cause they went to fight for abroad continues as a war at home upon their return.

This difference came following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. Western governments encouraged the declaration of a jihad in Afghanistan so that young Muslim men from the Middle East and elsewhere could fight the proxy Cold War between the two superpowers. The USSR's withdrawal from Afghanistan less than ten years later left a pro-

found effect on the emerging jihadist ideology. This was the belief, articulated by Osama Bin Laden and others, that with only simple weapons, the "brave jihadist" fighters defeated the world's greatest superpower. That interpretation of history ignores the role played by US-supplied stinger missiles, economic and political depression in Russia, and the revolt in Eastern Europe against communism. Bin Laden's propaganda gave credit for the fall of the USSR to the jihadist ideology.

Wrongs of western hegemony

Many young men returning from the "Afghan jihad" believed that they had both the ability and duty to right the wrongs of western hegemony and fight to protect Muslims. It was around this concept that some foreign fighters who had managed to get political asylum in the West began to radicalize and then mobilize young men to engage in violent action. Initially, the focus was on direct attacks on what Bin Laden called the far enemy, the West, but when Al-Qaeda's ability to sustain attacks was curtailed by the "war on terror" after 9/11, the emphasis shifted to action at home.

However, most serious terrorist attacks in western countries, such as the London 7/7 bombings, were carried out by individuals who were almost exclusively radicalized within their own countries without the experience of foreign fighting.

That fact does not stop western governments from worrying about potential violence from returning foreign fighters. The impact of terrorism on western society is such that even one attack involv-

ing just a few casualties is considered too great a risk for any government to accept.

A failure to manage the aftermath of the Madrid bombings in 2003 led to the downfall of the Spanish government a few weeks later. Consequently, governments fear public opinion turning against them. Fear of being considered inadequate pushes them to emphasize the potential threat of foreign fighters and a wish to appear tough in dealing with it. Hence, there has been considerable debate about taking away passports of foreign fighters to prevent a return to their home countries and placing restrictions on those individuals who manage to return.

Legally problematic

Most of these measures are legally problematic and many critics, some within government, question the effectiveness of bringing in new legislation. Others question the mere definition of a foreign fighter when many have dual identities if not dual nationalities.

For example, is a British Syrian who goes from the UK to fight in Syria a foreign fighter? To get around that, the Australian government proposed linking the crime to location rather than identity by making it an offence to be in a "designated" area without good reason.

That definition may also address the problem of punishing the small but highly mediagenic group of females who have gone to Iraq and Syria primarily to become wives of foreign fighters. They may not have engaged in fighting and so they can only be prosecuted for being some-

where their governments do not want them to be.

All of this is based on the assumption that many foreign fighters will want to come back and they will wish to carry out attacks in their homelands, will have the capability to do so in terms of planning and obtaining weapons, and also that they will have the opportunity to do so. The reality is that the majority of those returning are likely to be disillusioned by a painful realization that the idealistic movement they went to fight for is actually a bloodthirsty gang of thugs driven by power and sexual lust rather than spiritual and social purity.

While those individuals need not be welcomed with hugs, they at least should be given the chance to rehabilitate if they are genuinely remorseful, their potential for adding to the woefully inadequate intelligence on ISIL should be exploited and their credible first-hand accounts of the brutal reality of ISIL should be exposed to dissuade other impressionable youngsters from joining ISIL.

If any of them still believe ISIL is a force for good then there are sufficient laws in most countries to put them away for a long time to contemplate their warped view of the world—better they languish in jails at home than run amok with guns abroad.

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Oman's uncertain future

Giorgio Cafiero
al-monitor.com
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Even as many Arab states have succumbed to sectarian violence and political tumult, the Sultanate of Oman has stood out as a beacon of tranquility and tolerance. Oman's stability is largely attributed to the popularity of its leader, Sultan Qaboos Bin Said Al-Said.

When Qaboos seized power in 1970, Oman was an isolated and impoverished state beset by a Marxist insurgency. Yet, over the course of his 44-year reign, Qaboos has been credited with using Oman's oil wealth to transform his nation into

a rich country with a vibrant tourism industry and a high standard of living. Under Qaboos' stewardship, Oman has also conducted an independent foreign policy that serves a unique role in the region.

However, sustaining such stability after Qaboos' reign inevitably ends may prove challenging. Qaboos has no male siblings or children, and he is the world's only absolute monarch without an officially designated heir to the throne. Therefore, much uncertainty surrounds Oman's future.

For years, experts have warned of a potential succession crisis should Qaboos die. A power vacuum in Muscat could fuel an internecine struggle among members of the royal family, the military, various

tribes, and the economic elite if no consensus is reached about who will inherit the throne. As nearly all political authority in Oman rests in Qaboos' hands, the lack of a strong No. 2 man in Oman's government fuels speculation that any potential successor will lack the legitimacy to fill Qaboos' shoes.

Now that Qaboos, 73, has been undergoing medical tests in Germany since July 10, concerns that he may be terminally ill are rising. Oman's government claims that the sultan is in "good health," despite a diplomatic source in Muscat saying that Qaboos has colon cancer. In August, a Lebanese daily reported that the cancer had spread, leaving Qaboos unable to independently move his body for a span of seven

months. When Qaboos missed the Eid holiday in early October, suspicions were further stoked that the sultan's health condition was indeed serious.

Qaboos, the GCC, and Iran

Under Qaboos' rule, Oman has frequently aligned with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) on a host of regional issues, ranging from Bahrain to Yemen. However, Oman's warm relationship with Iran is truly unique within the council. Oman, which of all the GCC states is least critical of Tehran, has a cooperative relationship with Iran. In August 2010, the two governments signed a security pact and have recently developed the Hengham oil field in the Persian Gulf with an estimated value of \$450 million.

Over the years, Muscat's independent approach to dealing with Iran has effectively diminished Riyadh's leverage over the smaller GCC monarchies and undermined Western efforts to isolate Iran internationally. It has also ensured Oman's geopolitical independence from its dominant neighbor Saudi Arabia—a key pillar of Muscat's foreign policy.

Part of the reason is sectarian. The majority of Omanis practice Ibadi Islam, a strain of the faith distinct from both the Sunni and Shia sects. Many in the sultanate fear Saudi Arabia's quest for dominance in the council given the Saudi religious establishment's intolerant views of Ibadis, who are often described as "heretics" by hard-line Wahhabi clerics in the conservative Sunni kingdom. Whereas Sunni-led GCC states have, to various degrees, backed Sunni militants fighting Shia governments and nonstate actors in Syria's civil war and beyond, Oman has largely eschewed such a sectarian agenda.

Energy demands also shape Oman's relationship with Iran. With substantially less resource wealth than some of its neighbors, Oman's natural energy resources

are expected to deplete before those of other GCC states. So, nearby Iran—and by extension gas-rich Central Asian states—will likely play an increasingly important role in Oman's energy landscape. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani's first trip to the GCC was to Oman, where the Omani and Iranian governments signed a \$1 billion deal to construct a natural gas pipeline to connect Iran's Hormuzgan province with Sohar, Oman earlier this year. Iranian gas is expected to begin flowing into Oman by 2017, according to Omani officials.

As the GCC state situated closest to Iran, Muscat has a strong incentive to defuse tensions between Iran, the West and Western GCC allies. As Oman and Iran jointly share ownership of the Strait of Hormuz—through which one-fifth of global crude oil passes—Oman's government views the prospects of a military confrontation between the United States and Iran as a major geopolitical and economic risk.

To diminish this risk, Qaboos' government has sought to position Oman as a diplomatic bridge between Tehran and the Western-GCC alliance. This was most recently underscored by Qaboos' mediation of the talks between American and Iranian diplomats that led to the nuclear interim agreement between Iran and the five permanent UN Security Council members and Germany (P5+1) in November 2013.

While some critics in the GCC have accused Qaboos of undermining the Gulf Arab states' unity against Iran (the primary reason the council was established in 1981), it does not appear that Muscat's partnership with Tehran has actually undermined Oman's good standing in the GCC. To this end, Oman's security cooperation with the Saudis against extremist forces in Yemen has helped Oman maintain good relations with Riyadh despite Muscat's outreach to Tehran.

Former US Ambassador to Oman Gary Grappo maintains that Oman's

"cautious but successful diplomatic outreach to Iran" has created a merely "nettlesome internal dynamic" within the GCC, rather than constituting a major source of tension. Indeed, when Iran and the P5+1 reached the interim nuclear deal in 2013, most GCC states officially welcomed the development.

The future

Under the leadership of Qaboos, Oman has established itself as a longtime US and UK ally, a member of the GCC in good standing, and Iran's closest partner in a council dominated by its rival. At the same time, like the other GCC members, Oman has drastically deepened its economic relations with Asian powers, including China, Pakistan.

This foreign policy of maintaining friendly ties with virtually all influential actors in the region—and skillfully balancing their conflicting interests against one another—has served Oman's interests well. Given that these interests will outlive Qaboos, there is little reason to expect Oman's next ruler to drastically re-align Omani foreign policy—whatever internal tumult may otherwise ensue.

Nonetheless, if a succession crisis fuels instability across Oman, the government will likely have to channel more resources into addressing domestic unrest and rein in its active role on the international stage. Such circumstances could exacerbate a number of geo-political risks in the region. The Saudis in particular are concerned that Oman could become—like Yemen—another haven for extremist forces along their southern border.

Rather than seeking to influence the outcome of Oman's succession process, most outside actors will have to accept that Oman's political future will be largely out of their control. Nonetheless, with such high stakes for Oman's unique internal stability and international role, much depends on what follows the inevitable end of Qaboos' reign.

The struggle for female political participation in Tunisia

Afraa Fdhil
atlanticcouncil.org
First published Oct. 28

Considering that Tunisia has long been on the frontlines in gender politics, electoral lists for the parliamentary elections that took place on Oct. 26 have proved a disappointment; female candidates led 11 percent of electoral lists. Given that women made up 50.5 percent of registered voters (up from 45 percent in October 2011), the low percentage of female candidates sparked outrage among female activists who had a leading role during the Tunisian revolution in 2011 and who, over the last three years, have stood steadfastly against trends that threatened to derail the democratic movement. Despite their increasing political participation and the constitutional and legislative protection for women's political and civil rights (such as Article 24 of the Tunisian Electoral Law ensuring parity in electoral lists), Tunisian women find themselves almost excluded from "real" political opportunities.

Female human rights activists and members of civil society generally agree that this exclusion demonstrates what is called "duplication of political discourse" and the marginalization of women's political representation. They argue that political parties are unconvinced by the principle of parity and that they nominated women just to "fill in the blanks" in their electoral lists or to clean up their image in the eyes of national and international observers. Nominating three women at the head of Ennahda's electoral lists in foreign countries while nominating only one figure, Deputy President of Tunisia's National Constituent Assembly (NCA) Mehrezia Labidi, to lead only one of its local electoral lists, is a disingenuous attempt to showcase the Islamic political movement's "betting on the leadership abilities of women," intending to "deliver the image that the West wants to see from a "modern" Islamic party."

Equally important, statistics show that female political participation is remarkably lower in the

interior regions than the coastal ones—particularly surprising given that voter registration among women in the interior governorates is higher than for men. The exclusionary stance is particularly clear, for example, in the Tataouine governorate located in southern Tunisia, where female candidates led no electoral lists, despite the fact that vertical parity and alternation was guaranteed by the Fundamental Law 16/2014 on Elections and Referenda, enacted in May 2014. Although gender parity and alternation of nominees was respected, political parties abused the alternation rule by having a man at the head of every nine-member-list, effectively ensuring a larger number of male nominees (89 percent of all lists contained five men versus four women).

Unfortunately, the absence of "real" political representation of Tunisian women was not restricted to electoral lists. Men also dominated the media exposure discussing the 2014 elections. According to The Independent High Authority for Elections (ISIE), every candidate had three minutes on a national channel to deliver his/her electoral program. However, even those TV sessions provided for candidates to briefly present their electoral programs were male-dominated programs, obstructing women's opportunity to demonstrate their political leadership skills. "Unless [there is an] impediment, only the head of list can present its political program on national media," said ISIE. Accordingly, women only enjoyed 11 percent or less of national media time.

What's the alternative?

Some Tunisian women, specifically those who experienced politics from within as members of the NCA, assert that the prevailing mindset of Tunisian society explains the suppression of women leaders. In research conducted by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) on female political participation in Tunisia after the revolution, Feb. 17-28, 2012, "the overwhelming majority of male respondents, regardless of age or region, said they are more comfortable having a

man for a boss because they could not accept taking orders from a woman." Moreover, "in describing their households, participants only tended to acknowledge divisions of labor with women mainly involving child rearing, cooking, and cleaning, while men provided financial support and made decisions at the family level." Unfortunately, "this division of roles was not necessarily regarded as negative; many women expressed pride in fulfilling traditional duties." For this reason above all, women only reluctantly engage in politics and run for office. They doubt their ability to equally fulfill private and public roles and, more importantly, fear the political smear campaigns that most politicians and public figures face. Hence, women opt for civic engagement in Tunisia because of its charitable and voluntary characteristic as a means of refuting extremist attempts to isolate them from public life.

For the last three years, female activists and their proponents have led waves of protests against reactionary trends to defend their hard-won gains guaranteed by the Tunisian Code of Personal Status and the 1956 Constitution. Since 1956, Tunisian women have had the right to suffrage, divorce, and access to abortion, before other Arab—and even some European countries. Tunisian laws guarantee gender equality, prevent polygamy, and repudiation of wives by their husbands, set compulsory education for children of both genders from the age of six to 15, permit family planning, and legalize contraception.

In fact, some of this year's male presidential candidates are relying on the most motivated and influential women of their entourage to plan and co-lead their electoral campaigns, employing their powerful management skills and strong personalities. The Republican Party's honorary president, Ahmed Najib Chebbi, for instance, relies on Maya Jribi, the party's president and the head of the list of the Ben Arous governorate, to strengthen his position as a presidential candidate.

Continued on the back page



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Hezyaz: A neighborhood up in arms

■ **Mohammad Al-Khayat**

Walking through Sana'a's Hezyaz neighborhood these days resembles the passage through a war zone: Armed men are everywhere one looks. While some identify themselves as Houthis, others say they are ordinary citizens protecting their houses, stores, and families.

While all the armed men say they have the same goal—offering safety and maintaining security—they differ in motivation, focus, and political affiliations.

"I am here to protect our home," says Aref Al-Rumeil, cheeks filled with qat and stationed behind a barricade. "There are some property problems between us and some other people," he explains, adding that he is afraid his house might be attacked. His opponents, he says, "might take advantage of the fact that Ansar Allah [the Houthis] are in the area."

Recent events in Hezyaz make it necessary in the eyes of Al-Rumeil to carry a weapon and take security into one's own hands.

On Sept. 18, fighting erupted in the neighborhood between the Houthis and local opponents. Over a period of four days, gunfire disrupted the night's silence, keeping residents in Hezyaz awake and scared.

Since Sept. 21 the fighting has largely stopped, with Houthis beginning to mark their control over the area by manning checkpoints around and inside Hezyaz.

"It is our duty to protect ourselves and our properties in the midst of this security breakdown," says Al-Rumeil. "We have coordinated this with Ansar Allah's [the Houthis'] armed men and spoke to them about the sensitive nature of the situation," he explained. The Houthis encouraged residents to

protect their properties, as it "lightened the burden on them."

Opposite Al-Rumeil's house stands Ali Al-Amari, a self-identified Houthi member, who works at a checkpoint. "There are no problems between us and the armed men who are protecting their homes and shops," he said, confirming that the Houthis have encouraged residents in the neighborhood to show some self-initiative, as "it is difficult for us to secure the entire area."

Al-Amari explains that the neighborhood's frontlines are running between the Houthis and "Takfiri elements"—a term used by the Houthis to describe members of the Islah Party and Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. The Houthis' opponents, Al-Amari says, began to assume the identity of Houthis' security personnel in Hezyaz and "started attacking and burglarizing some shops to defame Ansar Allah and instigate people against us."

Allowing men in the neighborhood to arm and defend themselves made it difficult for Houthi impersonators to commit any crimes, he explains.

Ismail Al-Harazi, a young radio journalist who lives in Hezyaz, describes the situation in his neighborhood as "scary." "When you enter Hezyaz you see weapons everywhere," he says.

Al-Harazi finds it provocative to be stopped, searched, and questioned by Houthis when entering his own neighborhood.

Mohammad Al-Muqadam, an armed Houthi who works at one of the checkpoints in Hezyaz, explains that the Houthis only stop "suspicious" people. He admits, however,



Recent events in Hezyaz have led many men to carry arms, with locals and Houthis alike claiming they are trying to maintain security.

that "there are no specific signs that indicate suspiciousness or guilt." "Sometimes," he says, "it's just a feeling."

"When we suspect someone we stop him and ask for his ID card," he added. "We also ask him about his name and what he is doing in the area. And if he says he is here to visit someone in particular, we let him go. Although, most of the time we do not recognize the person he is here to see, we just go by his reaction to our question," Al-Muqadam explains.

He emphasizes that Houthis recently began stopping cars much less frequently at the entrance points to Hezyaz. Whether this change of policy came as a reaction to local complaints is difficult to assess.

Mohammed Nasser, for his part, has had negative experiences trying to advise the Houthis. Whenever someone tries to make suggestions, the Houthis shift the blame to alleged impersonators, he complains. The owner of a small store in Hezyaz,

Al-Amari, who counts himself as part of the Houthis, denies Mohammad Nasser's accusations.

"It is impossible for any Ansar Allah members to search a woman or even speak to her. We are Yemenis, this is considered a shame for us before it is a shame for anyone else," he argued passionately.

"In case the Houthis suspected a male perpetrator of being hidden under women's clothes," he added, they would not talk to him. "It is shameful enough that he is wearing women's clothes."

Dhekra Omar, a student and youth activist who lives in Hezyaz area, sides with Al-Amari, saying that "my [female] friends and I always walk in the area and we were never stopped or searched by Ansar Allah for any reason."

"I hear about such incidents," she says, "but I have never met a girl in the neighborhood who was subjected to this behavior. The rumors could be true or false, I cannot decide on that."

Omar indicates that "unlike some other armed men, who are always verbally bothering girls" many "open minded girls in the area were not subject to any behavior that would restrict their freedom by Ansar Allah."

In general, she reports, cases of harassment have decreased. "After Ansar Allah took control over the area youth groups [who used to harass girls] are not as common as before."

Improved Security in Hezyaz? Houthis generally legitimize their presence in the capital and elsewhere by claiming to maintain security. In Hezyaz, opinions vary on

whether the Houthis are sincere and successful in implementing this goal.

According to Al-Harazi, the situation in Hezyaz is safer now than it was before the Houthis' arrival. "The Houthis are watching the streets, they even have night patrols," he says, explaining that the number of robberies and crimes in the neighborhood has decreased since the Houthis took control. Hezyaz was never one of Yemen's "better" neighborhoods, he explains, and the area struggled with crime and gangs. However, "since the Houthis appeared the situation in Hezyaz became much better and safer."

While Al-Harazi commends the Houthis' security work, he admits that the increased number of weapons seen in Hezyaz comes with a higher risk of gunfire. "It is known that many fights occur in Hezyaz area, and usually these fights lead to the use of daggers and Jambiyas [a traditional and widely-worn Yemeni dagger]," he says. Nowadays, however, fights involve firearms and "that's what scares most of the residents in the area."

Anwr Ibrahim, another resident in Hezyaz, agrees that the situation became frightening "due to the armed men's presence in the area." Hezyaz is no longer as safe as before, he says. "Residents are now afraid of clashes between Houthis and Al-Qaeda members more than anything."

Omar is also worried about the presence of armed men and feels less safe.

Nasser even describes it as "disgusting" that "these armed men play the role of the protectors of the area without any official capacities."

Almost everyone the Yemen Time has spoken to in Hezyaz indicated his or her rejection of the Houthis' presence and attempt to protect them, saying that it is the government's job.



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- Mr. Khalid Mohammed Ali
- Mr. Abdullah Ali Ba-Aboud
- Mr. Saleh Ali Albakri
- Mr. Abdu-Salam A. Al-Amoudi
- Mr. Abuzaid H. Aldhari
- Mr. Mubarak Saleh Alhaddad
- Mr. Mohammed Saeed Al-Maari
- Mr. Mohammed Alsayed Yehia

- Mr. A.Rahman Ali Bazara
- Mr. Naseer Hameed Ali
- Mr. Abdullah Mohammed Ba-Abbad
- Mr. Shafiqawadh Al-Masjedi
- Mr. Saleh Taleb Mohsen
- Mr. Ali Abdulaziz Beshr
- Mr. Nabil Ahmed Al-Eryani
- Mr. Mansour R. Al-Nashady
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Taiz's ancient structures under threat

Story and photo by
Mohammad Al-Khayat

Laying within the old quarters of Taiz are beautifully designed houses with brown bricks and impeccable white mosques. Once hailed as the culture capital of Yemen during the Rasulid dynasty (1229–1454), Taiz is currently struggling to maintain its architectural heritage.

Located in the Yemeni highlands, Taiz remained a walled city until 1948, after which Imam Ahmed made it the second capital of Yemen and allowed for its expansion beyond its historical core.

Sana'a-based historian Nebras Anam recounts, "old Taiz city had two gates, Al-Bab Al-Kabir [the Great Gate] and Bab Musa [Moses' Gate]. The city started and ended between those two gates. As night descended its gates closed and no one could enter anymore."

Over the past decades, Taiz has spread far beyond its two ancient gates. New houses were built, while old ones increasingly degenerated.

While unprecedented urbanization processes led to the mushrooming of new buildings in Taiz, the city center has maintained some of its cultural trademarks. Next to a small number of ancient houses, the city prides itself on some renowned mosques, including Al-Ashrafiyya and Al-Mudhafar mosques, as well as the Qubat Al-Husainiyya (Al-Husainiyya dome, which is a shrine).

Comparing the old center of Taiz with the ancient buildings in Sana'a, Anam points out that the buildings in Taiz are not as well preserved. Many houses have collapsed, forcing the occupants to demolish what was left and build modern houses in their place. What many find regrettable is that these new buildings lack the distinctive architectural design of traditional Taizi houses.

For many families, their homes are reminiscent of shared memories and much more than a functional shelter. While many residents do not want to leave or replace their old homes, they struggle to maintain the traditional houses they live in. "This house has been passed down from generation to generation," said Mohammad Al-Aghwani, a resident

in Taiz's old city center. However, "it was built of clay, which risks falling down during rainy periods."

"I had to renovate this house so that I could live in it with my kids," Al-Aghwani explained, adding that he replaced the clay with cement and bricks to keep the costs low.

Al-Aghwani is not the only resident in old Taiz who has rebuilt and renovated his home by using cement bricks. In fact, architect Marco Livadiotti, who lives and works in Sana'a, said only around 50 old houses remain in Taiz's old city to this day.

While people's choice of material is driven by their wish to save money, Livadiotti denies any notable price difference between cement and clay. "If you compare the prices between earth and cement, there isn't much of a difference. In fact, the use of clay makes the house aesthetically appealing, and unlike houses built with cement and concrete they last longer."

Comparing basic restoration costs of a three-story house with eight rooms in clay and cement, he explained that "the former will cost \$15,000 to 20,000, while the latter would cost \$30,000."

Another advantage of clay, Livadiotti said, is the durability of a clay house, which can last up to 1,000 years if maintained regularly, unlike cement and concrete which lasts only about 100 years.

"Unfortunately, people are not aware of these differences," Livadiotti regrets.

Mustafa Al-Hamadi, a contractor who demolishes old houses for a living, contradicts Livadiotti, calling "a modern style" renovation more affordable. Most people who are using cement and bricks, he says, are from a relatively poor background and own nothing other than their homes. "They rush to rebuild them, using affordable material," Al-Hamadi says.

He explained that the reason building or restoring an old house with traditional clay is that few people know how to properly construct clay houses and thus the cost of labor is much higher than modern brick houses.

Rather than keeping and restoring old houses and their unique architectural characteristics, Al-



Al-Mudhafar Mosque, one of the few distinctive old architectural structures in Taiz, has not been well maintained by the government.

Hamadi says, it is only "logical for people to tear down those homes and rebuild new ones before any untoward events occur. Or do you want the owners of ancient houses to wait until the house falls down on their heads?"

Lacking restoration programs
Disappointed with the government's attitude towards restoration of old buildings, Mohammad Al-Rufai, a resident in Taiz's old center, recounted the collapse of the city's architectural heritage.

"We thought the country would take care of these buildings," he says. "We were ready to sell them to the government so that it could turn them into museums or at least renovate them to preserve the his-

tory of this city which could become a tourist attraction like old Sana'a."

"However when we discovered the government's negligence towards preserving ancient buildings, including Al-Mudhafar Mosque and Qubat Al-Husainiyya, we realized the state is not interested in preserving landmarks and we became frustrated," he added.

Livadiotti agrees, saying that contrary to Sana'a, there are no protection laws implemented in Taiz.

The General Organization for the Protection of the Historical Cities of Yemen (GOPHCY) never concentrated on Taiz, he said, because there is very little left to protect. "So they do not care. In Taiz they only care about the mosques," he explained.

GOPHCY is a governmental body which belongs to the Ministry of Culture and is responsible for developing and enforcing regulations regarding the protection of historical buildings in Yemen.

According to Al-Rufai, the disappearance of old Taiz began slowly and went unnoticed for a long time. Even Qubat Al-Husainiyya, a shrine dating back to AD 1581, was neglected, he complained. Since 2011 it is serving as a storage area, used to stockpile wheat sacks.

Ali Al-Qumairy, who is the one using Qubat Al-Husainiyya as a storage space, finds what he is doing "better than leaving the place abandoned."

Despite the fact he occupies it now, Al-Qumairy assured that if the

government wanted to renovate the shrine and use it as a museum or anything similar, he would be more than willing to help [preserve Taiz's old city], but they have no support. The state and all its institutions have completely ignored Taiz."

Sheikh Abdallah Ameer, the under-secretary of Taiz's governor, admits "there is a major lack in efforts to restore ancient landmarks in Taiz. This lack of effort needs to be attributed to the budget deficit."

"While old Sana'a is a UN world heritage, old Taiz is not. Hence old Sana'a has benefitted from the budgets given to maintain the city's historical appearance," Ameer added.

REPORT

Sixty-six Egyptian fishermen held in Hodeida

■ **Nasser Al-Sakkaf**

Following months of close co-ordination between the Tehama Movement and the Yemeni coastguard, Yemeni fishermen arrested 66 Egyptian on Oct. 12, while they were allegedly fishing illegally in Yemeni territorial waters in the Red Sea.

Yemeni fishermen took the Egyptians, their equipment, along with their three ships to Hodeida's Seaport Prison. As of Oct. 29 the fishermen remained imprisoned by the Yemeni coastguards.

The Yemeni fishermen who made the arrest are members of the Tehama Movement. They were given permission from the group's leadership, who say they are trying to stop the problem of illegal fishing in Yemen's territorial waters.

According to the Tehama Movement's spokesperson, Ahmed Hibat Allah, "Egyptian fishermen often enter Yemeni territorial waters, but this is the first time we arrested such a high number of them. Once, in March 2013, we tried to arrest an Egyptian ship but the coastguard prevented the Yemeni fishermen and killed a Yemeni fisherman in consequent clashes."

"All of these ships practice illegal fishing without any permission; they use the method of bombing, which kills the fish and destroy their breeding habitat... This method affects Yemeni fishermen as they can't fish in their traditional method by using the fishing nets." Hibat Allah told the Yemen Times.

On Oct. 19, Egyptian authorities accused the Houthis of detaining the fishermen. "The Houthis detained 66 fishermen and we couldn't contact them for six days," said Ahmed Nasser, the head of the Fisherman's Union in Kafar Al-Sheikh governorate in Egypt.

According to him, "the Egyptian fishermen did not enter Yemeni territorial waters, they were fishing near Yemeni waters, but because of the unrest in Yemen the Houthis arrested them."

The Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs gave yet another account of events, saying that Yemeni authorities co-ordinated with Yemeni fishermen to arrest the Egyptian fishermen, and that the Houthis were not involved.

Mohammed Al-Bukhaiti, a member of the Houthis' Political Office, said the Houthis played no part in the arrest or imprisonment of the Egyptian fishermen. He also said the Houthis only control the main gate of Hodeida port and are not in control of security operations like the one detaining the fishermen.

According to Shuja Mahdi, the manager of the coastguard's operations in Yemen, the Houthis do control Hodeida city and port but they were not involved in this case. "They are under investigation by the Public Prosecution Bureau in



Co-ordinating with the coast guard, fishermen from the Tehama Movement arrested the Egyptians, who they claim were fishing illegally in Yemen's territorial waters.

Hodeida," Mahdi said.

According to him, the territorial waters of Yemen are full of fish and it is not uncommon for Egyptian fishermen to enter Yemen's waters. Yemen has 2,500 km of coastline overlooking the Red Sea.

"Egyptian fishermen took advantage of the security deterioration to try to fish illegally, but the coastguards and the Yemeni fishermen were able to prove that even if there is a deterioration of security in Yemen we can guard our territorial waters," Mahdi said.

The General Authority for Fish Resources Development, which is

part of Yemen's Ministry of Fisheries, posted on their website that "many countries like Japan, China, Malaysia, Indonesia, Egypt, and Jordan invest [get legal permission to fish] in Yemeni Waters and import fish from Yemen. But there are also some fishermen who fish illegally by using bad methods that harm the marine wealth such as bombing, without regard to the location of coral reefs and fish breeding season."

"There are foreign ships, which are fishing in Yemeni territorial waters, but they have permission from the Ministry of Fisheries. But these

three ships had no permission," Mahdi said.

The permission which the ministry grants to foreign fishermen is temporary. However, some fishermen try to use their old permission to fish even if it was expired, he explained.

Akram Ahmed, a fisherman in Hodeida, wishes that all the fishermen operating illegally be punished in order to discourage them from working in Yemeni waters.

Sometimes, he explained, Yemeni fishermen enter the territorial waters of Eritrea to fish there because the spread of big ships and fishermen using destructive fishing methods make it difficult to fish along Yemen's coastline.

Hundreds of Yemeni fishermen have been arrested by Eritrean authorities in recent years, allegedly for fishing illegally in their territorial waters, with many staying imprisoned in Eritrea for multiple years. Most recently, on June 25, 2014, 62 Yemeni fishermen who were arrested in Eritrea arrived back in Yemen.

Ahmed said Eritrean authorities arrested his brother and held him for one year because he went to fish near Eritrean territorial waters. "If Yemeni authorities release the Egyptian ships without hard punishment, that will be taken as permission for the foreigners to fish in

our water," he said.

"The ships had fish on them, which means they were fishing, and there should be a fine," adds Ahmed, who is afraid that the fishermen will return to Egypt without punishment.

In November 2011, Yemeni coastguards arrested 20 Egyptian fishermen from one ship in Al-Mahra governorate after they entered Yemeni territorial waters and started fishing illegally. Later the same year all the fishermen were released, along with their ship, after paying a \$50,000 fine.

Yemen's Marine Law, clause (422), states that if non-Yemeni ships are found to be fishing in Yemen's territorial waters without permission, "the punishment will be to go to prison for six months as a maximum period or to pay a fine not exceeding YR100,000 (\$465).

The Egyptian fishermen arrested on Oct. 12, are to be tried under the supervision of the Ministry of Fisheries in Hodeida's Public Prosecution Bureau, Mahdi said.

On Oct. 22, Nasser said that there were successful diplomatic efforts ongoing with the Yemeni government to release the fishermen, who are from Kafar Al-Sheikh, and Damiat governorates in Egypt. However, as of Oct. 29 there is little progress to show for and no court date has been set.

"The investigation is ongoing, and the ships will not be released until the Public Prosecution Bureau determines the size of the fine," said Abdullah Basunbol, the under-secretary of the Ministry of Fisheries.



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Translating, Learners' Biggest Challenge

By RABAB AYASH

Some would think that learning English is a matter of having an Arabic to English dictionary and starting translating what they want to say into English by using the so called "the magical weapon of English learning" namely, Arabic into English dictionary by many learners. At the early stages of our English learning, many learners wrongly conceive the method of translation as word by word process and start translating English texts accordingly. The texts they usually come up with after the word by word translation are usually a mere rubbish of English words that are wrongly combined and have no sense then.

Translation then is not a matter of word by word process, it is a complicated process that requires



wide range of knowledge in the different fields of the language. Having the ability to translate English texts into Arabic and vice versa properly and precisely is the target of all English learners. We need to own specific abilities before translating any text. Abilities such as

fully understanding what is meant to be translated is very significant. We need to comprehend the surface and deep meaning of a text before translating it in order not to have a irrelevant or incorrect meaning after translating.

We need to have the ability of

texts summarizing as well so that we do not go back to the original texts while translating. Going back to the original texts is not recommended for it is said that while translating we should keep thinking in English and going back to the text may force us to think in Arabic for a while.

To mark an end for this topic, I will give you some simple tips that may help you in overcoming this problem. Start learning about English language different fields, structures, grammar, vocabs and etc. Avoid word by word translation. Try to join groups on social medias that are specialized in translating and ask them about the expressions that you have difficulty in. Read as much as you can. Write full sentences and try to memorize them. Finally, keep thinking in English and keep thinking in English...!! GOOD LUCK ..!

What To Say? Wishing and Congratulating Giving Birth Mom

By SHAIMA'A ANKAMAH

After a long time "nine months" of waiting to the new member of the family to arrive and bearing it in her womb, a new mom need to hear a lot of supporting and happy words. People usually receive the new soul with a lot of joy and happiness. Sharing a new mother and father their happiness and worries is an important thing to do in order to help them in a way or another to feel confident that the new habitant will be a bless to the family but not a discomfort source. You as a member in the society must know how to do your role in helping and supporting a new mother and father as you will be supported by others. There are a lot of expressions that you can use to congratulate a new mother and father, these are a sample of them:

- May Allah grant you a healthy, obedient and blessed child.
- You must be so happy! Wishing you happy moments with your little angel.
- How wonderful to hear of your new arrival ..!
- Congratulations and welcome to the world of parenthood! May little one be blessed with



every happiness.

- Congratulations! Those nine long months have finally ended and the result is your beautiful baby girl/boy.
- Wishing all the happiness to the new mom and dad! May life be especially sweet for you and your little baby!
- I'm really excited that your little baby has arrived safe and sound! Congratulations on this lovely news.
- Congratulations on the birth of your precious new arrival.
- A bouquet of love especially for you on the birth on your new child. Best wishes for the future.
- Congratulations! We were happy to hear of your family's newest addition.

Selected Stories with life lessons

Unconditional Love

Rishi was a 10 year old boy. Just like any other boy of his age, he had the usual tantrums with his mother. Sometimes he obeyed what she said and what his father said, and sometimes he would completely ignore them. Since this was very common in kids, Rishi's mom did not worry a lot.

It was an unexpected holiday announced by the school of Rishi and he had 5 holidays. He spent a good time with his mother. She took him for outings, they went to beach and amusement parks, had delicious dining, she cooked his favorite foods and played with him. Three days were left and Rishi's mother wanted to clean the house and she wanted to involve Rishi in cleaning.

She asked him to help her and as a surprise, he also accepted.

Everything was done to perfection. Rishi's mummy was surprised with his act. While she was cooking the dinner meal, Rishi gave her a piece of paper, written by him. Since his mom was busy cooking, she asked him to place the paper on the dining table.

After cooking the meals, she took the paper left by his son and was shocked to see what he wrote!

The piece of paper contained this



list:

- For cutting grass in the garden – Rs. 300
- For Cleaning my Room – Rs. 250
- For helping you in the kitchen – Rs. 200
- For buying milk and fruits for you – Rs. 50
- For taking care of my sister when you were shopping – Rs. 250
- For removing the garbage – Rs. 100
- Total you owe - Rs. 1150 /-

She was literally shocked! She didn't speak a word and wrote in a paper and gave it to her son. She wrote:

- For carrying you nine months – No Charge
- For getting severely sick when you were growing inside me – No Charge
- For sleepless nights taking care of you for several months – No Charge
- Mother and Son For soothing you without getting annoyed whenever you troubled – No Charge
- For heartfelt prayers and passing through those dreadful days when you met with an accident when you were 3 years – No Charge
- Innumerable days spent without calmness and peace of mind thinking about your present and

future – No Charge

- For taking care of you like a precious gift I never had in my life – No Charge
- You Owe:

The boy was in tears and rushed to his mom and gave a tight hug that he had never done before.

Rishi, unable to look at her, told, 'Mom I love you! I'm sorry for everything.

She kissed on his forehead. Rishi crushed the paper he wrote and threw into dustbin.

We don't understand the love of a mother, the unconditional love..

Source: kidsworldfun.com

Study Idioms

Deliver the goods
Meaning - Do what is expected or promised.

Examples

- I have given my car to a new mechanic for repair, hope he delivers the goods.
- I have assign some noisy students to clean the class, hope they deliver the goods.
- I have asked the contract to the secretary to modify it, hope she delivers the goods.

Fast track something

Meaning - Rating something higher on your priority list to achieve the desired result.

Example

- In view of the seriousness of the crime, the civil society is pressing up on a fast track decision from the court.

GRAMMAR POINT

As

By KATIE CUMA

As (reason)

As "sometimes means 'because':"

- As it was a public holiday, all shops were shut. (= because it was a public holiday)
 - As they live near us, we see them quite often.
- We watched television all evening as we had nothing better to do.

As (time)

You can use "as" when two things happen at the same time:

- I watched her as she opened the letter ('I watched' and 'she opened') at the same time.
- As they walked along the street, they looked in the shop windows.
- Can you turn off the light as you go out (= on your way out of the room)

Learn through Hadith

Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him) said :
The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

"By the One in Whose Hand my soul is! If you do not commit sins, Allah would replace you with a people who would commit sins and seek forgiveness from Allah; and Allah will certainly forgive them."

May Allah forgive our sins and yours and grant us the best in this world and the world hereafter...!!

Laugh and learn

(1)

- A: Why are all those people running?
B: They are running a race to get a cup.
A: Who will get the cup?
B: The person who wins.
A: Then why are all the others running?



(2)

- Teacher: What are some products of the West Indies?
Student: I don't know.
Teacher: Of course, you do. Where do you get sugar from?
Student: We borrow it from our neighbor.

الشركة البراق

وعبر مكاتبا ..
.. أن تصوكم

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٠١/٥٥٥٥٥٥ ٠١/٢٧٢٩٢٤	المتحدة للتأمين الوطنية للتأمين الشركة اليمنية الإسلامية للتأمين وأعادة التأمين شركة أمان
٠١/٦٠٨٢٧٢ ٠١/٢١٤٠٩٣ ٠١/٤٣٨٨٠٩ ٠١/٤٣٨٥٨٩ ٠١/٢٨٢٠٩١	شركة أمان الجزيرة للتأمين وإعادة التأمين الشركة اليمنية القطرية للتأمين
٠١/٤٤٠٨٤٠ ٧٣٤٥٥٦٤٥ ٠١/٤٤٤٤٣٣ ٠١/٣٧٠١٩١/٢ ٠١/٣٧٠١٩٣ ٠١/٤٤٣٥٨٩ ٠١/٢٨٢٠٩١	روضة واحة الأطفال مدرسة رينبو مدارس صنعاء الدولية مدرسة التركيبة الدولية مدرسة مغارات
٠١/٢٨٠٧٧٧ ٠١/٥٣٥٠٨٠ ٢/٢٣٢٢٧٠ ٤٤٤١١٨ ٤٤٦٣٥٠ ٠١-٤٤١١٥٨/٥٩/٦٠ ٠١/٢٧٢٨٩٥٠٦	قدس فلاي سكاي للسفر والسياحة عجلات الصقر مركز أعمال الصقر العالمية للسفر والسياحة وكالات سفريات اليمن
٤١٧٣٩١ ٤٣١٩٩٩	مطعم ومخازنة الشيباني (باسم محمد عبده الشيباني) تلفون: ٠١٠٥٧٣٦٦٦ - ١٠٠٩٢٥٠٥ - فاكس: ٩١٦٦٦٢ مطعم منابو الياباني قطريتي

بنك كاك الاسلامي
بنك اليمن والكويت للتجارة والانشاءات

زاوية (Budget)
يورب كار
هيرتز لتأجير السيارات

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NIIT لتعليم الكمبيوتر

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شحن وتوصيل
مركز الندى للخدمات العامة

مستشفيات

الوزارات

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وزارة الصناعة والتجارة
وزارة العدل
وزارة السياحة
وزارة المغتربين
وزارة النفط والمعادن
وزارة شؤون الداخلية
وزارة النقل
وزارة حقوق الانسان
وزارة الاتصالات وتقنية المعلومات
وزارة الادارة المحلية
وزارة الاعلام
وزارة التخطيط والتعاون الدولي
وزارة التربية والتعليم
وزارة الخارجية
وزارة الداخلية
وزارة المالية
وزارة المواصلات
وزارة المياه والبيئة
وزارة الكهرباء

رئاسة الجمهورية
رئاسة الوزراء
وزارة الاشغال العامة والطرق
وزارة الاوقاف والارشاد
وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي
وزارة الثروة السمكية
وزارة الثقافة
وزارة الخدمة المدنية والتأمينات
وزارة الدفاع
وزارة الزراعة والري
وزارة الشؤون الاجتماعية والعمل
وزارة الشؤون القانونية
وزارة الصحة العامة والسكان

كلمات متقاطعة

15 14 13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

عمودي:
1- يملك الكلمات المتقاطعة جهاز إلكتروني
2- أغاني مصري- شتم- لماذا بالانجليزي
3- يدعم- يتعلق بالظلم
4- فرغت- اغنية ل فريد الأطرش (م)
5- رقد- جميع- يتسبب الى دولة بين الافريقية
6- من الوات الخبز (م)- مقياس ارضي
7- مثال (م)- ممثلة مصرية
8- نعم بالروسي (م)- افات (م)- يظفون (م)
9- هم وهم- الدهون (م)- تكرر الشيء (م)
10- للتكبير- تالافتنا- علم مذكر
11- علم مؤنث- ذاب (م)- وافق عليه
12- متشابهان- ذاهبون الى (م)- متشابهة
13- تموي (م)- التكاليف
14- في الفم- عملة اسبوية- خلف
15- احد ابنا- نوح- الاسئلة (م)

افقي:
1- يملك الكلمات المتقاطعة- جهاز إلكتروني
2- أغاني مصري- شتم- لماذا بالانجليزي
3- يدعم- يتعلق بالظلم
4- فرغت- اغنية ل فريد الأطرش (م)
5- رقد- جميع- يتسبب الى دولة بين الافريقية
6- من الوات الخبز (م)- مقياس ارضي
7- مثال (م)- ممثلة مصرية
8- نعم بالروسي (م)- افات (م)- يظفون (م)
9- هم وهم- الدهون (م)- تكرر الشيء (م)
10- للتكبير- تالافتنا- علم مذكر
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13- تموي (م)- التكاليف
14- في الفم- عملة اسبوية- خلف
15- احد ابنا- نوح- الاسئلة (م)

الكلمة المفقودة

5 3

يونس شلبي
باريو
شمنبر
علي الأغلب
مصطفى شهني
توقيت عالمي
اصحاب الحقوق
الحمل والذئب
المجهود
انواع الاجهزة
حتى غروب الشمس

3
صيف
ماس
وعد
4
بيروق
حليم
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مذاق
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أول الحزم المشورة

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هل تعلم
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الحلول بالمطلوب

١- اينا من الحرف القريب من الرقم (1) في الدائرة الكبيرة متجاها مع السهم مستخدما بادنى الكلمات المناسبة من كلمات القائمة.
٢- تبدا الكلمة الثانية بأخر حرف من الكلمة السابقة.
٣- يتم بيع الحروف الخمسة الموجودة في الدوائر الخمس الكبيرة على اطراف النجمة وربطها بالمتسلسل الرقمي القريب من تلك الدائرة لتشكل على ما هو مطلوب، مثل النجمة.

جفن - حفر
خلال - حلال
رفح - رفح

١- اينا من الحرف القريب من الرقم (1) في الدائرة الكبيرة متجاها مع السهم مستخدما بادنى الكلمات المناسبة من كلمات القائمة.
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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

The struggle for female political participation in Tunisia

Also, Nouredine Hached, an independent syndicalist, candidate for presidency, announced (during the celebration of National

Women's Day, Aug. 13, 2014) that a panel of highly professional women are working hard to prepare his political program at the

Farhat Hached Institute and that these women, among others such as Anissa El Materi (his wife) and Emna Hached (known as Um Al-Kheyr Hached, his mother) have impressed and inspired him to become a leader.

Bearing in mind that leaders are made, not born, and believing in their ability to have impact, Tunisian women and girls have decided to bring about change through social and civic engagement. From the south to the north, civil society in Tunisia—a burgeoning landscape of non-governmental organizations, associations, and prominent female business leaders—has successfully created change in relation to women's rights and liberties as it played an essential role in constitutionalizing gender equality and parity principles. The Association of Democratic Women affirms that it has played a crucial role in institutionalizing women's rights over at least two phases. First, in 2012 it organized an NCA model, which proposed potential articles on women's rights, distributed to all NCA members. Second, it cooperated with the Women's Alli-

ance to push the NCA to adopt the proposed articles and to disclaim the "complementarily principle" between men and women—a separate but equal stance—promoted by reactionary trends to women's political participation.

Undoubtedly, the leading role played by Tunisian women and girls in civil society will shape the future of female political engagement in Tunisia. It will open up the space for more direct political participation through shaping women's characters and equipping them to become decision makers. However, this will require that Tunisian society not only truly believes in female political leadership, but that it invests in it.

Afraa Fdhil is a research student at the Faculty of Legal, Political, and Social Sciences of Tunis in Carthage. She can be reached at afraafdhil@gmail.com. Follow her on Twitter @AfraFdhil. First published on Atlantic Council's MENASource Blog. Republished with permission from Atlantic Council.

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