

**INSIDE**

Report

**The art of opposing the Houthis: Increasing popularity of satirical songs and poems**

Page 3



Report

**Is Dhamar governorate ignoring violations in Autma?**

Page 4



Report

**The life of a bus driver in Sana'a**

Page 8



# Recharge To Win

**The Biggest Offer In Yemen**

**200 Monthly Prizes**  
with the second Extra Surprises Offer



**Send 80 to 211 free**



**Grand dreams can come true. Win a prize of a lifetime with the second Extra Surprises Offer**

- Recharge your line with one Extra scratch card, 80 units, and enter the draw on Samsung Galaxy Duos Mobile Phones , and Plasma 43" TV Screens.
- Recharge your line with two Extra scratch cards, 80 units, and enter the draw on Samsung Galaxy Note3 and 100g Gold Bars in addition to the previous prizes.
- Recharge you line with three Extra scratch cards or more, 80 units, and enter the monthly draw on a brand new BMW X3 car, and all the above mentioned draws as well.
- This offer targets all prepaid subscribers as well as postpaid subscribers excluding corporate accounts.
- The first draw shall be conducted at the end of April, 2014.
- This offer includes e-voucher of 80 units.

For more information please send ( 80 ) to 211 for free.







**DOUBLE YOUR NET  
WITH  
THE SAME PRICE**

NEW  
DAILY PACKAGE

**50 MB**  
YER 350

~~100 MB~~  
NOW  
**200 MB**  
YER 1,500

~~40 MB~~  
NOW  
**80 MB**  
YER 800

ALSO AVAILABLE  
**1024 MB**  
YER 4,000

~~250 MB~~  
NOW  
**350 MB**  
YER 2,500

~~500 MB~~  
NOW  
**600 MB**  
YER 3,500



SabaFon brings you a host of exciting new GPRS packages for your postpaid and prepaid lines. Now you can stay connected whenever you like, wherever you are, with your SabaFon line.

To subscribe , send the proper keyword to package short code:

Package	Keyword	Short Code
Daily Package 50MB	1	2410
Monthly Package1 (80 MB)	1	4150
Monthly Package2 (200 MB)	2	4200
Monthly Package3 (350 MB)	3	4250
Monthly Package4 (600 MB)	4	4300
Monthly Package5 (1024 MB)	5	4500

Yemen's first and largest mobile operator



Heritage meets communication



# Five IEDs explode in Sana'a

Story and photos by  
**Ali Ibrahim Al-Moshki**

**SANA'A, Dec. 8**—Five improvised explosive devices (IEDs) detonated in several areas in Sana'a on Monday morning, injuring a total of eight people, three of whom remained in critical condition as of Monday night.

The attacks were confirmed the same day in a statement made by security director of the Capital Secretariat, Brigadier Colonel Abdul Raza Al-Muwaid, on the Ministry of Defense's website. Al-Muwaid said that two other IEDs had been deactivated and that ongoing searches were taking place to look for other potential bombs.

Mohammad Hizam, deputy manager of Public Relations for the Ministry of Interior, said that the ministry had not yet confirmed the identity of the perpetrators of the attacks, but that they bore the fingerprints of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). As the Yemen Times went to press Monday evening, AQAP had not yet officially taken responsibility for any of the attacks. Al-Batar Al-Yemeni, who identified himself as a member of AQAP, claimed in an interview with the Yemen Times that the organization was responsible for Monday's attacks. However, the Yemen Times could not independently verify his identity.

Two IEDs exploded in Al-Khairan neighborhood of Sana'a's Sha'ub district, targeting the house of Sheikh Abdul Hamed Dhaif Allah, a local carpenter who openly refers to himself as a Houthi supporter.

The Yemen Times went to the site of the explosions and spoke with Dhaif Allah. "The first IED exploded at 6:00 a.m. and caused damage to the house," he said. "Thankfully, no one was injured," he added. Twenty minutes later, after residents had gathered at the

site of the explosion, another IED attached to the bottom of a car parked in front of Daif Allah's house went off, he said. Eight residents were injured in the second blast and rushed to the General Military Hospital located several hundred meters away from the house. "I'm not a member of Ansar Allah [the Houthis], but I do support them," he said.

The Yemen Times visited the military hospital holding the injured. Hospital staff declined to comment on the injuries.

According to Abdulrahman Mohammad Al-Wajih, a resident in the neighborhood, three people were in critical condition. They included Adel Al-Towqi, Ali Al-Thawr, and Mohammad Al-Jarmouzi, according to Al-Wajih.

Faisal Al-Dhib, an officer within the Capital Secretariat's Criminal Investigation Bureau, refused to comment on the details of the case but confirmed that investigations were underway. "We have no evidence as of now, but it was likely AQAP behind these attacks," he said.

According to Al-Dhib, a third IED exploded in the garden of local Houthi leader Abdullah Al-Sharafi in Sana'a's Hasaba district, several minutes after the explosion in front of Dhaif Allah's home. No one was injured in the attack, he said. This was confirmed by Hossein Al-Bokhaiti, a prominent Houthi member in Sana'a, who also said that no casualties resulted from that attack.

Two further IEDs simultaneously exploded on Monday morning in the Al-Sayah neighborhood of Sana'a's Sha'ub district at the intersection of Sheraton and Marib Streets. No one was injured in the attack.

Mohammad Al-Bukhaiti, a member of the Houthi Political Office, blamed AQAP for the attacks. "AQAP members orchestrated these attacks."



Eight people were injured during Monday's attacks. Three remain in critical condition, according to residents.



# Governor of Hodeida threatens to resign after Houthis storm his office

■ **Mohammad Al-Qalisi**

**SANA'A Dec. 7**—Armed Houthis stormed the offices of Hodeida governor, Sakher Al-Wajih, on Sunday, forcing him to have a closed-door meeting, according to a letter sent by Wajih to Yemen's Parliament and the Office of the Speaker of Parliament, dated Dec. 7, 2014.

The director of the governor's office in Hodeida, Akram Al-Hajari, told the Yemen Times that, "six armed Houthis entered the governor's office and forced the governor to have a closed-door meeting on Sunday." Al-Hajari would not comment further on events, saying "I can't comment on what took place inside because I was not in the meeting."

In the letter Wajih sent to the parliament, he threatened to resign if President Hadi did not personally intervene to get the Houthis to withdraw the demands made during the meeting, which he referred to as "illegal."

Wajih's letter was allegedly preceded by an undated letter sent to him by the so-called chairman of the Houthi's "Revolutionary Council," Ahmed Hassan Al-Jamali and Mohammad Al-Husseini, an official within the council.

According to both letters, which the Yemen Times has reviewed, the Houthis made nine demands during the meeting with the governor. These included that the salaries and living expenses of 3,820 members of Houthi popular committees be transferred to the state payroll, and that the governorate's high office and security forces work with Houthi popular committees in all matters related to security.

The Houthis further demanded that the governor not make any financial or administrative decisions without first consulting with Houthi popular committees, and that popular committees be provided offices throughout the governorate to help maintain security. Another request was that all political appointments within the governorate made after Sept. 21 be annulled.

Mohammad Al-Bukhaiti, a member of the Houthi Political Office in Sana'a, said that he heard about the events in Hodeida, but doubted the accuracy of accounts that have been made public. He said he could not further comment on what happened in Hodeida.

Mahmoud Al-Junaid, another member of the Houthi Political Office, denied the accuracy of the

claims being made by the governor and others, but acknowledged that Houthis had entered the building in which the governor's office is located. "Armed members of the Houthi popular committees entered

the office of the governor in order to monitor his performance and combat corruption—as they have done in other government buildings in Hodeida." Like Al-Bukhaiti, Al-Junaid would not comment on

the letter sent to the governor by members of the Houthi popular committees, or their demands.

Hodeida city has been under Houthi control since Oct. 14. Houthi popular committees have set up

checkpoints inside and around Hodeida city. Sakher Al-Wajih served as minister of finance since Jan. 3, 2012, and was appointed governor of Hodeida on June 11 of this year.

اليمنية القطرية للتأمين  
 Yemeni Qatari Insurance  
 Clear Vision  
  
 www.yqinsurance.com  
 E-mail: info@yqinsurance.com  
 Sana'a: Algeria St., Libyan Trade Center.  
 Tel. 967 1 448 340/1/2, Fax. 967 1 448 339,  
 Hodeidah Br.: Al-Mina St. Al Hamdi Intersection  
 Tel. 967 3 204 400 ext. 225, Fax. 967 3 204 888

أقوى العروض والتخفيضات خلال شهر ديسمبر  
 معارض شركة أرتكس التجارية بشارع الستين والمركز الليبي وعدن فول  
 Sales & special Discounts During December 2014  
  
 شركة أرتكس التجارية المحدودة  
 المركز الرئيسي والمعارض  
 شارع الستين جوار وكالة نوبوتا هاتف: (01) 454980/1  
 صنفية  
 مركز صنعا والتجاري (المركز الليبي) هاتف: (01) 448487  
 عدن: مجمع عدن السياحي التجاري (عدن مول) هاتف: (02) 263110/1



# Political assassination attempt or revenge killing?

## 1 attack, 2 interpretations

### ■ Khalid Al-Karimi

**SANA'A, Dec. 8**—Two people were killed and three were injured during an attack outside Sam Hotel in the Tahrir area of the capital on Sunday.

Injured in the attack was Sheikh Saghir bin Aziz, a member of parliament and the General People's Congress (GPC) who is from Sa'ada governorate and is known for his opposition to the Houthi movement.

Aziz was in town to attend the funeral ceremony of another tribal sheikh from Sa'ada, Qaed Al-Simsimi. A source close to Aziz told the Yemen Times on condition of anonymity that armed men opened fire on Aziz and his bodyguards,

"when leaving the hotel at around 3:30 p.m."

Aziz has been in the intensive care unit at the Yemen-German Hospital since Sunday.

Khalid Ahmad, who works in a shop next to the hotel, told the Yemen Times that he saw the members of Houthi popular committees entering Tahrir area immediately after the shooting. "The popular committees acted as the security authority and took the injured men to the hospital," said Ahmad.

A source at the Ministry of Interior, who declined to be named, confirmed that Aziz was injured during the attack. When asked about current investigations, he said that, "The [Houthi] popular committees are in charge of this case."

Immediately after the incident, local media reports claimed the attack was an assassination attempt

on Sheikh Saghir bin Aziz.

However, according to Hossein Al-Bokhaiti, a prominent Houthi activist, the attack was a revenge killing targeting one of Aziz's bodyguards.

"Ahmad bin Ahmad Abu Dukhuna, a guard of Sheikh Mohammad bin Haidar—who was also present at the funeral—spotted his father's killer, Hadi bin Ahmad Dadan. In an attempt to revenge his father's murder, the guard opened fire, killing Dadan and injuring Aziz," Al-Bokhaiti claimed.

"The popular committees were quick to arrive at the scene," he added.

Al-Bokhaiti confirmed that two were killed in the attack and three were injured.

Mohammad Al-Hatami, the head of the Jamal Jameel police station in Tahrir, emphasized that the popular committees did not act on their own but in coopera-

tion with the police when arresting "those who opened fire." Suspects are currently held in custody, Al-Hatami said, declining to specify in which facility they are being held.

The GPC's General Secretariat held a meeting on Sunday, denouncing what it described as an "assassination attempt" on the party's member, Aziz.

"This assassination attempt is in line with the systematic targeting of leading GPC figures," read a statement by the GPC's General Secretariat that was presented during the meeting. The statement further declared that the GPC holds the state responsible for the country's lax security situation.

On Monday, former President Ali Abdullah Saleh visited Aziz in the Yemen-German Hospital, announcing that Aziz would be sent abroad for treatment and wishing him a speedy recovery.

# Another boat tragedy off Yemeni coast

## Number dead at sea in 2014 exceeds prior two years combined

### ■ Nasser Al-Sakkaf

**SANA'A, Dec. 7**—A boat carrying 70 African migrants capsized in the Red Sea on Saturday off the Mocha coastline of Taiz governorate, according to the Ministry of Interior. The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) says that between 18 and 21 bodies have so far been recovered.

The Ethiopian embassy gave different numbers, claiming 60 migrants on board the boat, which it says contained nationals from Somalia, Djibouti and Ethiopia.

Eighteen drowned, according to Birhane Meskal Kihisen, a member of the Diaspora Engagement Affairs Department at the Ethiopian embassy.

An anonymous local security source in Mocha district told the Ministry of Interior's website on Sunday that a boat with migrants, which came from the Horn of Africa, capsized on Saturday due to bad weather conditions and rough seas.

Zaid Alalaya, a senior public information officer at UNHCR told the Yemen Times that the bodies of the migrants on board were recovered in a joint rescue mission by the UNHCR, Yemeni coast guards, and the Society for Humanitarian Solidarity (SHS). SHS is a local organization that was established

in 1995 in Shabwa governorate to provide charitable and humanitarian work, including refugee relief.

According to Shuja Mahdi, chief of the Coast Guard Operations Department in Mocha, "Coast guards are not responsible for rescuing illegal immigrants, but we perform our humanitarian duty towards them. Whenever we recover their bodies or arrest them we deliver them to the UNHCR."

On its website, the Ministry of Interior identified the owner of the boat as Ahmad Salim Al-Hilali and said that actions are being taken to apprehend him.

A UNHCR report said that 65,000 migrants travelled to Yemen's shores in 2013. On March 9, 2014, 44 African migrants drowned in the Arabian Sea off

the coast of Shabwa governorate. Twelve died in April. In May, 60 migrants drowned off Yemen's coast, in June 62 people died, and 64 drowned in October.

"This year, more than 240 African migrants [have] drowned off the Yemeni coast, which is more than the number of migrants who drowned in 2012 and 2013 combined," said Alalaya.

# Al-Qaeda spreads to Al-Hawta, Lahj

### ■ Ali Ibrahim Al-Moshki

**SANA'A, Dec. 7**—A soldier was killed and another injured in clashes between Special Security Forces, the 201st Mechanized Brigade, and alleged members of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) in Al-Hawta city, the capital of Lahj governorate.

"The clashes began Sunday at 8:00 a.m. and ended at 10:00 a.m. in Al-Hawta city near the governorate's government compound," according to Bassam Al-Zuraiqi, the spokesperson for Lahj governorate, located 337 kilometers south east Sana'a city.

Abdulwali Al-Ghazi, an officer in the Lahj Security Operations Department, added that light and medium weaponry, such as RPGs, Dushkas, and other machine guns, were used. "A soldier was killed and another was injured, while a group of armed men was arrested during the clashes," Al-Ghazi said.

Al-Zuraiqi accuses alleged AQAP fighters, and their attack on government institutions in Al-Hawta city on Saturday night, for having triggered the fighting on Sunday. "Armed Ansar Al-Sharia [AQAP] members are the ones who started the clashes. They fired at state institutions, such as the post office, the government's

security administration, and the government compound." These attacks, Al-Zuraiqi said, triggered the response of the Special Security Forces and the 201st Mechanized Brigade.

Fighting did not only take place around government institutions scattered throughout Al-Hawta city, but also in Duba neighborhood, where alleged Al-Qaeda fighters ambushed and Al-Zuraiqi claims they tried to kill Marzuq Al-Saidi, the commander of the 201st Mechanized Brigade. It was in Al-Duba neighborhood that one soldier was killed and another injured.

After the interrogation of a large number of men present at the scene of the fighting, the number of suspects was reduced to a few men, "one of which was confirmed to be an Ansar Al-Sharia member," said Al-Ghazi. He did not specify how many men were detained.

According to Al-Ghazi, Al-Hawta city is witnessing an increased presence of armed men, whom he accuses of being AQAP members, since Friday. Al-Ghazi and Al-Zuraiqi based their accusations on the appearance of armed men, who they say are bearded and occasionally display the Al-Qaeda flag.

A self-identified AQAP member told the Yemen Times that Al-Qae-

da was involved in the clashes.

"We are heavily deployed in Lahj governorate and the clashes were against pro-Houthi security forces," the source said. The Yemen Times was not able to independently confirm that the source is in fact part of AQAP.

The main streets in Al-Hawta city remained closed by security forces until Sunday afternoon, and many citizens stayed at home that day in fear of renewed fighting, according to Al-Zuraiqi.

Mohammad Yahya Al-Radfani, a resident in Al-Hawta city, said that locals are afraid that fighting might escalate, as it did in Al-Baida, Ibb, and Hodeida governorates.

"We see armed Al-Qaeda members in the early morning and sometimes at night. This presence of Al-Qaeda concerns people who fear clashes between Al-Qaeda and security forces," Al-Radfani said.

Al-Hawta has experienced attacks by alleged AQAP members in the past. On Aug. 9 armed men, suspected of being AQAP fighters, carried out simultaneous attacks on the city's Special Security Forces headquarters, Political Security Bureau, and the government compound. Following the attack, security forces were deployed throughout the city and the situation temporarily calmed.

## IN BRIEF

### Five suspects arrested in case of Adnan Al-Madani

**Sana'a Dec. 8**—Police and members of the Criminal Investigation Bureau within the Ministry of Interior arrested five individuals on Sunday and Monday suspected of involvement in the case of Adnan Al-Madani, media officer within the Ministry of Electricity employees union. On Sept. 7 of this year, unidentified assailants threw acid in Al-Madani's face as he was returning home from work, in the Al-Jarraf neighborhood of Sana'a.

Mohammad Hizam, deputy chairman of Public Relations within the Ministry of Interior, said that the main suspect, along with four individuals considered to be accessories to the crime, were being processed, and that the ministry was still looking for other suspects.

Al-Madani was transferred to Germany to receive treatment in mid October after doctors in Jordan could not treat his "critical condition," according to relatives of Al-Madani. At the time of the attack, Al-Madani was one of the leaders of a popular campaign collecting signatures in protest of repeated blackouts throughout Yemen known as, "The Government is lit up, while the people remain extinguished," established in June 2013.

### Partial Strike held in Aden City

**Sana'a, Dec. 8**—A number of stores and shops in Aden city participated in a partial strike on Monday as part of a civil disobedience campaign called for by Southern Movement leaders in Al-Aroodh Square on Sunday.

The strike lasted between 6:00a.m. and 1:00p.m., and took place mostly in the Adeni districts

of Khour Makasar, Al-Mu'ala and Crater City.

Radfan Al-Dubais, journalist and prominent Southern Movement member, said that the strike was the latest in a series of escalations undertaken by the Southern Movement since Nov. 30, the day its members called for official separation from the north.

### Yemeni cabinet identifies 8 challenges to address during its term in office

**Sana'a, Dec. 8**—Prime Minister Bahah and other members of the Cabinet, held in a meeting in Yemen's Parliament on Monday, discussing eight primary challenges the cabinet would seek to address during its term in office.

These included implementing the NDC outcomes, addressing lawlessness and instability, combating poverty and unemployment, improving the poor performance of the economy, increasing crude oil production, strengthening the government's institutions and institutional infrastructure, and improving the quality of basic facilities and services, most notably education, health, electricity, water and roads. Bahah stated that these challenges were identified based on the criteria put forth by the Gulf Initiative, the NDC outcomes and the Peace and National Partnership Agreement.

During the session, students protesting the policies of the Ministry of Education held a sit-in outside of the Parliament building. The students were valedictorians of Yemeni universities who had not been provided jobs at university upon graduation, in violation of a presidential decree passed by former President Ali Abdullah Saleh in 2007.

## Donor Reporting Officer

Social Fund for Development (SFD) is a national development agency that receives funds from more than 12 donors, and currently manages in its system more than 36 agreements. The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Unit at the SFD is responsible of coordinating the management of these agreements including communicating with the government and with the donors and keeping them informed on the progress made in achieving SFD goals and objectives. Under the direct supervision of the M&E Unit Head, the candidate works within M&E team and closely coordinates with other units within the SFD. The Donor Reporting Officer is responsible for monitoring and reporting results and impacts of projects implemented by SFD and financed by various donors in accordance with the terms of the contributing agreements.

### Primary Duties and Responsibilities

- Formulate progress reports for submission to donors, according to progress indicators agreed with donors, as well as the timely submission of reports. In this process, he/she has to coordinate with relevant implementation units and the M&E's evaluation and communication sections as necessary;
- Develop clear and concise reports, briefings and power-point presentations for meetings;
- Ensure that quarterly reports documenting project progress are regularly compiled and are consistent with the Results Framework;
- Participate in program and project reviews, monitoring and evaluation of projects, review of focus areas, methodologies and strategies, and draft minutes of the meetings;
- Analyze evaluation studies prepared by the evaluation section to incorporate them in the progress reports submitted to donors and draft findings in consultation with the Unit Heads;
- Perform other tasks that are related to funding management as requested from the M&E Unit Head.

### Qualifications

- 1- Have a proven ability to analyse quantitative and qualitative data with strong IT skills including excellent Microsoft Office skills.
- 3- Fluency in both Arabic & English is essential, with excellent writings skills and interpersonal communication.
- 2- Hold a bachelor degree or higher from a recognized university in social science, economic, accounting or related field with outstanding education records.

Acceptable candidates have to pass an English written exam before being shortlisted to the interview.

Interested candidates should mention the post title in the subject line and submit their application by email to: [hr@sfd-yemen.org](mailto:hr@sfd-yemen.org) and [aalbaily@sfd-yemen.org](mailto:aalbaily@sfd-yemen.org) before December 22, 2014. Applications received after the closing date will not be considered. Only short-listed candidates will be contacted for interviews.



# The art of opposing the Houthis: Increasing popularity of satirical songs and poems

■ **Mohammad Al-Khayat**

As the saying goes, the pen is mightier than the sword. During the 2011 uprising, art played a major role in helping to mobilize crowds and inspire protesters. It wasn't uncommon to see singers and poets performing in the squares of Yemen's various cities. As Yemen's political transition enters into its next stage, many artists have begun to produce political poems and songs opposing the Houthi Shia movement. The Houthis, also known as Ansar Allah, took over the capital Sana'a on Sept. 21.

Mujali Al-Qubaisi is one of Yemen's revolutionary singers who became famous locally performing in Sana'a's squares during the 2011 uprising. He has recently begun attacking Houthis openly in his music, which is shared online by his supporters and fans. One such recent song goes as follows:

**Allah is great, said our people  
Death to Al-Houthi and his  
followers  
The people of falsehood, deception and lies  
They are the source of Polytheism, of all its kinds  
They're the cause of the problems, and all the plagues  
Of the loss and devastation of the people**

Al-Qubaisi refused to comment in detail on his poems and songs, which have become viral through-



Yemenis dance the viral "Gangnam Style" dance to a Moroccan song with altered lyrics that poke fun at the Houthis.

out Yemen on YouTube and Facebook.

Social media plays a central role in the spread of artistic forms of anti-Houthi criticism. A recent online campaign, simply titled, "Artists Against Houthis," has both a Facebook page and Youtube Channel which bear the campaign's name. They have collected thousands of likes and subscribers since Sept. 21.

In addition to posting and promoting songs that are virulently an-

ti-Houthi, the websites also act as a general forum for activists to post short skits, videos and clips that discredit Houthis in various ways.

One song posted on the page, which is part of a musical series sponsored by the campaign entitled, "oh ya Sana'a, the betrayed," is called, "false slogan." The song does not shy away from blatant references to Yemeni politics and the Houthis' alleged trickery and maneuvering behind the scenes.

**[They say] "Death to America, Death to Israel,"  
But murder in Sana'a is ongoing and costs them nothing,  
They commit robbery, from house to house,  
Using the 1st Division as an excuse,  
The Houthis and the deposed [Ali Abdullah Saleh]  
Are the ones behind it all...**

Islam Saif, a 19-year-old student at Sana'a University, opposes the Houthis and listens to music condemning them and their recent power grab. "Residents are tired of seeing armed Houthis patrolling the streets," he said. "They justified their spread saying they would fight corruption, but they haven't done anything regarding this matter. Instead they've taken over mosques and killed innocent people, that's why musicians are standing up to them."

One of Saif's favorite anti-Houthi songs, he says, is a recent parody of a Moroccan song performed by Sa'ad Lamjarad called, "What's wrong with my baby?" The anti-Houthi version is called, "What's wrong with the Houthis?" Like many other anti-Houthi songs, its creators remain anonymous. The song's lyrics detail what the song's producers describe as the lies and hypocrisy that surrounded the Houthi takeover of Sana'a and other governorates beginning on Sept. 21.

**What's wrong with the Houthis?  
Did he forget what he said to us?  
That, "I care about my country and its people  
And sympathize with their struggle"  
Today he kills and terrorizes,  
In the streets and burglarizes,  
There's nothing left that they haven't already taken  
but he won't be around for long...**

While many videos of the satirical song can be found on the "Artists Against Houthis" Youtube Channel, one strikes particular attention. Men dancing the internationally known "Gangnam Style" dance to Moroccan music and Yemeni lyrics provide a curious but well-rounded international picture.

### General Fear of Houthis

Those who participate in the production of Houthi-critical art, complain they find themselves under

## SANAA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

**PROVIDING A HIGH QUALITY EDUCATION FOR 35 YEARS**

A TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE

Beautiful purpose-built facilities on a spacious 34 acre site in a countryside setting. Sports facilities include soccer and softball fields, basketball and tennis courts. Large indoor multi-purpose area for volleyball, basketball, badminton, gymnastics, table tennis, musical and dramatic productions. Bus service available.

**Main Campus**

- ❖ Performance-Based curriculum for 5 years of age through secondary school
- ❖ Personalized education/small class sizes run by highly qualified & experienced teachers
- ❖ Over 40 computers available for student use, and computer instruction for all ages
- ❖ Extensive after school activity program involving music, art, craft, drama, & sports
- ❖ Advanced Placement (AP) college level courses available for qualified students
- ❖ Graduates attend American, Canadian, European, and Middle Eastern universities

**SIS Pre-School**

- ❖ Specific age appropriate experiences for 2, 3 and 4 year olds
- ❖ Attractive premises near the French Embassy including a garden and play area
- ❖ Certified experienced British teacher assisted by paraprofessionals
- ❖ School hours are from 7:55 a.m. to 12:00 noon (Saturday through Wednesday)
- ❖ Arabic program from 12:00 noon - 2:30 p.m.

Box 2002, Sanaa, Yemen Phone: 370 191-2 Fax: 370 193  
Email: sanaa@Qsi.org Website: www.qsi.org

**SIS** Accredited by The Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSA)  
Member of Quality Schools International

tight scrutiny from the movement.

"How are artists supposed to express themselves and be critical of society if those they criticize are violent?" said Safwan Al-Salahi, a popular Yemeni singer and manager of a local music studio in Sana'a. Originally a child star who rose to fame along with his brother, Ibrahim Al-Salahi, Safwan is now a member of the locally known ensemble "Art and Belief." The musical group is a known affiliate of the Islah political party, which has long found itself at odds with the Houthi Shia movement. "Since taking the capital, the Houthis have imposed all kinds of restrictions on poets, artists and singers in Yemen," he said. "We as a community are suffering."



When asked for examples, Al-Salahi responds, "Everyone remembers the case of Nabil Al-Amush."

Nabil Al-Amush was a well-known local cover band performer in Amran governorate, who has made several appearances on Yemeni television programs, and was known to perform at weddings, according to Akram Aqabat, a local freelance journalist based in Amran.

Although he was not political, Aqabat said that following the Houthi takeover of the Amran governorate in June 2014, Al-Amush was arrested. Houthi fighters allegedly stormed a wedding at which Al-Amush was performing and arrested him.

"He was held at the Amran Sports Stadium, which the Houthis had been using as a prison, for 17 hours" he said. "He was held there and released only after signing an agreement promising to never perform in Amran again."

The Yemen Times called local Houthi sources in Amran, who would not comment on the issue and instead referred the Ye-

men Times to the organization's national leadership. When asked, Muhammad Al-Bukhaiti, a member of the Houthi national political office, claimed that the incident was not reflective of the policies of the Houthi movement as a whole. Instead, it merely reflected the behavior and actions of a few of the movement's members. "Those who arrested Al-Amush may have been Houthis, but that doesn't mean the arrest order came from the organization's leadership," he said.

"Admittedly, there are Houthis who find music in general to be a violation of Islamic law," he said. "However their numbers are few." In further proving his point, Al-Bukhaiti referred to the Firqa Ansar Allah. "We have our own band, An-

sar Allah, named after the organization, that performs pro-Houthi music. Isn't that evidence enough that we have no problem with music?"

In light of the targeting of artists such as Al-Amush, many artists who produce politically charged music that is critical of the Houthis have chosen to remain anonymous. "Although many anti-Houthi songs have become popular recently, those who write and produce the songs rarely make their names public, for fear that they might be targeted as well," says Al-Salahi. "All political and religious groups should uphold the right to freedom of speech, in accordance with the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference [NDC], which was signed by all of Yemen's political parties," he points out. "The Houthis haven't [upheld] this."

Bukhaiti disclaims Al-Salahi's accusations, saying the movement is open to criticism by all artists and musicians. "We welcome constructive criticism," he said. "We consider it to be a mirror through which we can reflect on ourselves and improve our behavior."

## Funding Management Officer

Social Fund for Development (SFD) is a national development agency that receives financial resources from more than 12 donors and currently manages in its system more than 36 agreements. The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Unit at the SFD is responsible for coordinating the management of these agreements including communicating with the government and with the donors to raise and communicate on SFD's policies and strategies related to its financial sources.

Under the direct supervision of the Unit Head and working in collaboration and consultation with the Funding Management team, this position assists in the management and delivery of the SFD funding management functions, and contributes to the delivery of an efficient and effective SFD funding contribution and utilizations as well as to build smooth working relationship with SFD donors.

### Primary Duties and Responsibilities

- Assist and coordinate the development of the funding proposals and prepare the needed information during the appraisal of the agreements.
- Review and coordinate with the relevant units of Finance and Procurement to ensure that the terms of the agreements are in line with the SFD financial and procurement systems.
- Ensure that the relevant units have reviewed the terms and conditions as stipulated in the agreements and they are aware of the reporting requirements.
- Follow up on completing the legal requirement.
- Record all terms and conditions of the contributing agreements in the SFD Funding Management System including any changes that might happen to these agreements.
- Follow up on opening the bank account of each new contributing agreement.
- Maintain, improve and update the Funding Management System and insure that it is functioning accurately and up to its potentials.
- Periodically prepare disbursement forecast from each contributing agreement, coordinating with relevant units when it is necessary, and for all SFD disbursements for the requirements of withdrawal applications and quarterly and annual reporting.
- Ensure that SFD is meeting all terms and conditions in the withdrawal applications.
- Assign projects to donors according to the terms of each agreement and pursuant to the funding manual.
- Monitor the utilization of each contributing agreement for not to exceed the contribution amount, and in coordination with the IT team develop the necessary electronic tools for proper monitoring.
- Prepare analytical reports on the situation of each agreement, suggesting the necessary action when it is required, and update the M&E Unit Head on a weekly basis.
- Work with the IT team to ensure that the Funding Management system is functioning properly in terms of projects assignment to donors and reports generation as well as to include updates inline with the dynamic donors' environment.
- Prepare periodical and ad-hoc analytical reports on the status of the funds utilization as requested by other SFD units and by the government.
- Prepare the needed reports in the absence of the Donor Reporting Officer.
- Perform funding-management tasks as requested from the M&E Unit Head.

### Qualifications

- Have a proven ability to analyse quantitative and qualitative data and are highly enumerate with strong IT skills to include advanced Microsoft Excel skills.
- Fluent in both Arabic & English is essential, as are excellent writing and interpersonal skills.
- Hold a bachelor degree or higher from a recognized university in social science, economics, accounting or IT with outstanding education records.

Acceptable candidates have to pass an English written exam before being shortlisted to the interview. Interested candidates should mention the post title in the subject line and submit their application by email to: [hr@sfd-yemen.org](mailto:hr@sfd-yemen.org) and [aalbaily@sfd-yemen.org](mailto:aalbaily@sfd-yemen.org) Before December 22, 2014. Applications received after the closing date will not be considered. Only short-listed candidates will be contacted for interviews.



# The blame game: Is Dhamar governorate ignoring violations in Autma?

■ **Mohammad Al-Samawi**

**T**he Autma region, located in Yemen's Dhamar governorate, has long been known for its luscious plant life and historical landmarks. But its natural beauty is under threat, and those responsible for protecting it say they are already stretched too thin.

Home to a number of ancient castles and fortresses, the area has long been a center for eco tourists and hailed as one of the country's most beautiful landscapes.

It is also home to a large number of farmers, whose numbers as of 2004 totaled more than 131,628, according to the natural reserves section of Yemen's Tourism website.

Located just over 150 kilometers south of Sana'a, the Autma region was declared a reserve in 1999. Like the rest of Yemen's natural reserves in Socotra, Hodeida, Aden, and Al-Mahra governorates, Autma is protected by the country's Environmental Protection Law number 275. Passed in 2000, it specifies what type of agricultural and industrial activity is allowed to be undertaken by those living and working in the park. The goal of the law is to protect the reserve from illegal drilling and farming practices that could damage plant and animal life.

However, since Yemen's 2011 uprising, illegal drilling of water wells, the spread of qat cultivation and an accompanying increase of pesticide usage, has threatened to destabilize the park's ecosystem. The reserve's already dwindling water resources have further been drained, threatening a great number of plant species. "Sadly the government hasn't stepped in to protect the reserve, despite these violations," says Abdul Rahman Aqeel, a resident of Autma. "Most of those breaking the law are influential people and local sheikhs...the ones who should be helping to enforce the law in the first place."

Mohammad Al-Ghubari, former secretary general of the Autma reserve, describes the increase in qat cultivation as the single biggest threat to the reserve's stability and preservation. "Many farmers in Autma who used to grow grains and other vegetables have stopped since the uprising and have since begun growing qat," he says. "Unlike other crops, qat is harvested on a daily basis and requires much more water. This leads farmers to start drilling illegal wells."

"Roughly 80 percent of plots [in Autma], formerly used by farmers to grow grains, are now being used to grow qat," said Badi Abu Ali, an advisor at the Ministry of Agriculture. Ali claims that he submitted a report to Autma's local administrative council, tasked with enforcing the articles of Law 275, however has

since received no response.

Ali added that the random drilling of wells could lead to a drought in the near future. "Last month I oversaw the drafting of a report, which concluded that underground water reserves in Autma could dry up within 12 years if steps are not taken to deal with the problem." As for farmers, they've resorted to purchasing grain from local markets, much of which gets imported from abroad, he said.

Mohammad Ali Salah, general manager of the reserve and member of the administrative local council, confirmed that he received Ali's letters, claiming to have forwarded them to Dhamar's governor. In fact, Salah said he has written "a number of letters and reports detailing violations committed by farmers growing qat and drilling illegal wells in the reserve, but none of the relevant authorities have stepped in."

Abdullah Amer, director of Dhamar governorate's Office of Agriculture, told the Yemen Times that he never received a letter or any other form of notification or complaint from the Autma authorities. However, he acknowledged that increases in qat cultivation and the illegal drilling of water wells exist and are in violation of law 275. He would not comment any further.

## Using trees as fire wood

The reserve's plant life is also threatened by the price of fuel, which Ali says has affected the lifestyles of farmers and other residents living in the reserve. "The average price of a propane gas tank in recent years has jumped to YR2,000 (\$9.30)," he says. "This has led many residents start cutting down trees to use as firewood for cooking. We've seen a number of our most cherished tree species start to disappear as a result. The government has failed to provide people with a cheaper, practical alternative."

Khalid Al-Mansub, a local farmer living and working in the Autma reserve, said that he stopped growing grain and switched to qat after the 2011 uprising for a number of reasons. "First, it was more profitable," he said. "However more importantly, government money dried up. We used to receive free pesticide sprayers and other farm machinery from the Ministry of Agriculture, as part of an aid program to local farmers." After the uprising, the free aid stopped coming, he says, and he was forced to purchase equipment himself, which cut into his profit margin, preventing him from being able to meet daily expenses.

Al-Mansub says he has a small



Farmers in Autma have resorted to qat cultivation, where once they used to grow grain. Farmers say that following the uprising, they lost aid from the Ministry of Agriculture which helped fund machinery. Purchasing their own machinery reduced the profitability of growing grain.

well on his farm which provides him with just enough water to grow qat, "which needs constant watering."

While the Yemen Times could not verify the number of farmers receiving aid under the Ministry of Agriculture's former program, Ali, one of the ministry's employees, was able to confirm that such aid had existed for several decades prior to the outbreak of Yemen's 2011 uprising. The ministry was forced to cancel the program, however, due to a lack of available funds and revenue in the ministry's and central government's budget. Salah, general manager of the reserve, blamed the spread of qat cultivation on the fact that it is highly profitable for farmers. He further emphasized that since the uprising, authorities have been increasingly lax in enforcing the law.

Lack of available funds within the reserve's budget has prevented Salah and other officials from creating a domestic monitoring service that could be tasked with enforcing Law 275. "Several years ago we were hoping to build a permanent headquarters for the reserve, and train employees to act as observers to be able to better document cases of violations," Salah said. "However we haven't been provided with enough money from Autma's local administrative council in order to be able to do so."

Fatima Al-Huraibi, manager of the Tourism Promotion Department within the Ministry of Tourism, believes that adherence to the law and the preservation of the Autma reserve could have great po-

tential for Yemen's struggling tourism industry. "We have to tend to and protect our country's tourist destinations," she said. "If we can protect them and improve local

infrastructure, they will be highly profitable for the country."

The Autma reserve is home to a number of ancient antiquities and historical sites, including the well-

known Abzar, Samah, and Bani Assad castles, which date back to the late 17th century, in addition to over 20 other historical fortresses and citadels.



**THE NEW NISSAN SENTRA.  
UPGRADE YOUR JOURNEY.**



DUAL ZONE AUTOMATIC TEMPERATURE CONTROL (ATC)



PUSH START BUTTON



Available in 1.6L engine with next-generation CVT transmission.  
nissansentra-me.com

**The Tehama Trading Co.**

■ Hodeidah - 03-228493 / 733280208 / 777846180 ■ Sana'a - 01-449459 / 01-400269  
 ■ Aden - 02-240688 / 737522387 / 737522388 ■ Taiz - 04-275968 / 737522318  
 ■ Mukalla - 05-325901 / 05-325902  
 E-mail : autosales@tehama.com.ye www.nissan-yemen.com

تهامة  
**Tehama**



# No license, no problem

With government attention elsewhere, potentially dangerous gas stations spread

Story by **Khalid Al-Karimi**  
 Photo by **Ali Ibrahim Al-Moshki**

**A**lthough it is both unsafe and against the law, illegal and unlicensed gas stations have been cropping up in residential neighborhoods throughout the capital city of Sana'a since 2011. Such gas stations pose a threat to the health, well being and safety of residents. Despite that, few actions have been taken by the government to combat their spread. According to Muhammad Hussein Otaf, director of the Capital Secretariat's Gas Management Office, there are roughly 350 stations throughout the city, and their number is increasing.

One such station, owned by local businessman Abdulrahman Murgham, was opened up last August on Khawlan Street in Sana'a's Al-Safi district. "I do not mean to put anyone's lives in danger," said Murgham. "I'm just here trying to provide a service, no one in the neighborhood has complained to me about me being here." Murgham admits that he never obtained a license for his station.

Abdulkarim Meyad, deputy chairman of the Civil Defense Authority—the body within the Ministry of Interior that is charged with preventing natural and man-made disasters—blames the spread of such stations on the fact that the government has been busy dealing with other issues. "The number of unlicensed gas stations operating

in the capital have increased since 2011 because the government has been preoccupied with other issues, chief among them, combating terrorism and working to re-establish stability," he says.

Deputy Minister of Interior Ali Nasser Laksha met with representatives from Yemen's LNG Company on Nov. 11 to re-assess the phenomenon of unlicensed gas stations spreading, and to develop stricter rules regarding the monitoring, establishment, and maintenance of such stations.

As of now, the General Investment Authority, a government body established in 1992 to facilitate and promote investments in Yemen, is responsible for issuing licenses for gas stations. It was decided at the meeting that beginning in 2015, this process would be changed. "Now, those seeking to obtain licenses will seek approval for their requests from the Yemen LNG Gas Company and the Public Works Office within the Ministry of Public Works and Highways," according to Meyad. "If approval is received, they will then be sent to the Civil Defense Authority which will make the final decision."

Murgham claims that he previously attempted to obtain a license from Sana'a's Capital Secretariat, but was turned away. "They wanted me to pay a bribe," he said. "I refused." When asked about the role of the Capital Secretariat in issuing licenses, Otaif laughed. "We're purely a regulatory body, that is not involved in issuing licenses," he said. "To me this sounds like an ex-

cuse by someone who simply didn't want to go through the necessary procedures to open a gas station."

Otaif claimed that opening up gas stations in residential neighborhoods is dangerous, as gas stations are often prone to explosion in the event that clashes occur, or car bombs are set off, a real possibility in a city like Sana'a. This puts citizens at an unnaturally high level of risk.

According to Meyad, safety requirements stipulate that stations must not be opened in residential neighborhoods, that there be an appropriate number of fire extinguishers present at stations, and that fences are established clearly demarcating the territory of the station.

Abdulsalam Mohammadm, 32, a local resident of Sana'a, shares Otaif's concern. "It reflects badly on the government that gas stations have been set up throughout the capital," he said. "Fires and other explosions are a very real possibility. I still remember the fire that occurred last year in a restaurant on Taiz Street," he recalled.

In January of 2013, leaking gas caused the Eiffel Restaurant on Taiz Street to explode when a stove was turned on. While this incident is not directly related to the spread of unlicensed gas stations, it highlights the general dangers of untrained staff operating gas equipment without proper training and without adhering to specific safety regulations.

By the beginning of next year, unlicensed gas stations in residential areas will be shut down, while



Since 2011, the number of unlicensed gas stations in the capital has boomed. Officials say they are preoccupied with more pressing concerns, but residents fear for their safety. Clashes, car bombs and other explosions leave Sana'a in even greater danger of lethal accidents, some have pointed out.

others, in less densely populated areas, will be required to comply with safety standards, according to Meyad.

Murgham called the government's attempted crack-down "merciless." "It's not fair that the

government should prevent us from earning a living," he complained.

Al-Mikhlaifi, a resident who lives near a recently established gas station in Al-Safia neighborhood, sympathizes with Murgham, saying that, "Gas stations just want to eke

out a living." However, he understands that the safety of residents can not be put at risk. As a solution, he suggests that the government simply relocate gas stations, without depriving owners of a means to support themselves.



**Business  
Idea  
Award**

Do you have a business idea?  
**YER 3,000,000 per winner X 10 awards**

**Application deadline: Jan 31st, 2015**

**Apply now  
www.afkaryemen.com**





# Iran deal more than a nuclear issue

**Trita Parsi**  
middleeasteye.net  
First published Dec. 7

The dispute over Iran's nuclear program was never just about centrifuges or breakout capabilities. It has always been a symptom of a larger geopolitical contest between the West (primarily the United States) and Iran, with roots that predate the 1979 Iranian revolution.

But the West and Iran have very different narratives about their conflict, with the Iranians casting it as their quest for independence and self-sufficiency while fending off Western attempts to subjugate the country. Yet the narrative of the conflict is distinct from that of resolving the conflict—and here, the two sides face even greater obstacles.

The latter narrative is a contest over who determined the terms of the solution—who gave in and who came out on top. This is not a mere Iranian obsession. It is equally important to the US and its allies. After all, if the conflict is rooted in Iran's challenge to the US's regional dominance, Washington will reject the narrative of Iran successfully forcing the world's sole superpower to accommodate Tehran.

Consequently, the language US and European Union officials deploy reveals a near infatuation with establishing the West's dominance over Iran. It is a language of Western power and control. The West decides the terms of the conversation, as well as the terms of the outcome.

"The Iranians know what they have to do," is a phrase often aired by Western officials. Or in the words of US State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki, "There are steps they need to take to meet their international obligations and find a peaceful solution to this issue, and the ball is in their court."

The language and attitude trickles into the news media coverage, where reports describe the West debating what Iran will be "permitted" to do and not do, or the extent of a nuclear program it will be "allowed" to maintain. Iran is essentially at the mercy of the West, the narrative suggests.

The language does not depict a negotiation, but rather court proceedings where Iran is the transgressing party and the US and its allies are both the prosecutor and judge.

As such, it is Iran's obligation to prove its innocence. "What Iran needs to do is prove to the international community that it's not building a military nuclear program," EU foreign affairs spokesman Michael Mann said last year at the height of the negotiations. The onus is on Iran, the language signals. It is Iran's responsibility to "act quickly to resolve the international community's deep concerns over their nuclear program," Psaki recently stated.

Moreover, in its role as both prosecutor and judge, the West positions itself as the spokesper-

son for the entire international community. "It is now up to Iran to decide whether they are looking for a way to cooperate with the international community or if they want to remain in isolation," Germany's Foreign Minister Frank Walter Steinmeier commented in July.

This language further accentuates Iran's isolation and the moral strength of the West, backed by the entire international community. Of course, given that the West's negotiators are, with China and Russia, representatives of the UN Security Council plus Germany, there is validity to this interpretation. The Iranians, however, counter by pointing to the support they have received from the non-aligned movement, which constitutes a majority of the states in the international community.

Tehran, in turn, is equally obsessed with a narrative that restores Iran's dignity by displaying its successful defiance against attempts—real or imagined—to dominate it.

The Iranian narrative centers on resistance. When the parties extended the deadline for the negotiations in November, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei defended the decision by casting it as a victory over a Western attempt at forcing Iran to surrender. "In the nuclear issue," he said, "America and colonial European countries got together and did their best to bring the Islamic Republic to its knees, but they could not do so—and they will not be able to do so."

Iran's leaders espouse the idea that the nuclear issue is nothing but a pretext for the West to oppress Iran, subjugate it and prevent it from reaching its full potential. Ayatollah Khamenei often refers to the nuclear issue as an "excuse" to prevent Iranian progress. It is a narrative that builds on long-standing perceptions in Iran about Western intentions based on the country's experience with European colonial powers in the 19th and 20th centuries.

So according to this narrative, Western pressure is not because of Iranian policies or behavior, but because the West desires to dominate Iran. Resisting subjugation, in turn, means restoring Iran's dignity.

The concept of dignity is central in the narrative of the Iranian revolution as a whole. The revolution was about restoring the Iranian people's dignity against a repressive monarchical regime imposed by and supported by the US. Throughout his speeches, Khamenei has repeatedly emphasized that upholding the nation's and the revolution's dignity is paramount.

"Whenever the Islamic Republic backed down against America and Europe, they grew more insolent, and whenever the Islamic Republic insisted on its revolutionary slogans and principles, the dignity of the Islamic Republic was increased," Khamenei said in 2011.

While many world leaders would measure the success of

their country and tenure by focusing on the economy or societal progress, Khamenei habitually offers updates on the state of the Iranian nation's dignity internationally.

Dignity in turn is restored by resisting pressure and standing up to the "bullying of the West." Or as Khamenei would put it, "Our problem is with the US government's bullying and excessive demands."

The negotiations are a victory for Iran in and of themselves because the West has been forced to come to the negotiating table (the George W. Bush administration initially refused to negotiate with Iran).

"European officials are still stuck in the bullying mindset of the colonial 19th century, but they will face many problems in the face of the resistance of the Iranian nation and officials," he said the day after the European Union toughened sanctions against Iran in 2011.

Furthermore, Tehran harps on the idea that Iran seeks a fair agreement without excessive demands from the Western side. The agreement, according to Tehran, has to be balanced and based on logic. "We accept rational words; we accept fair and sensible agreements. But if there are bullying and excessive demands, no we won't accept," Khamenei reiterated after the November round of talks.

The emphasis on logic, fairness and rationality has political significance. A nuclear agreement based on these principles is consequently not based on the power of the negotiating parties. These principles level the playing field for Iran and neutralize the West's superiority in terms of military and economic power.

By rejecting strength as a basis for the solution, Iran believes it will have achieved what no other Middle East player has thus far: Force the West to meet it half-way and deal with it on an equal basis. That's the win Iran is looking for—one that restores its sense of dignity. If you are in Iran, that's the narrative you want coming out of the negotiations.

But contrary to Tehran and Washington's efforts to find a win-win solution, their narratives remain fundamentally win-lose. A narrative celebrating a compromise as a win is yet to emerge on either side. At some point, a compromise on centrifuges and enrichment may be reached. But finding a middle ground between the Iranian and Western narratives on the negotiations may prove a harder nut to crack.

*Trita Parsi is the 2010 recipient of the \$200,000 Grawemeyer Award for Ideas Improving World Order. He is an award-winning author of two books, "Traitorous Alliance—The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran and the US" (Yale University Press, 2007) and "A Single Roll of the Dice - Obama's Diplomacy with Iran" (Yale University Press, 2012).*

# Gaza writers receive death threats from IS

**Hana Salah**  
Al-monitor.org  
First published Dec. 5

Mystery still surrounds the presence of the Islamic State (IS) in Gaza. Statements in the name of the radical group threatening or claiming responsibility for previous bombings in Gaza are not enough to prove the existence of active members in the besieged Gaza Strip, though IS' extremist ideology is easily spread.

Many Gazans underestimated the importance of the statement issued in the name of IS Nov. 30 in Gaza City demanding that women show "chastity" and abide by Sharia rules of dress. They have excluded the possibility of a real IS presence in the Gaza Strip, which is governed by the same Interior Ministry-affiliated security personnel that ruled under Hamas' Islamist government.

IS published another statement on the Internet and social networking sites Dec. 3, further raising suspicions about its presence. In the statement, IS threatened to kill 18 Gaza poets and writers within three days unless they "repent" for having excessively insulted Islam in their writings. The statement also warned that IS, or "Wilayat Gaza," as it called itself, will punish apostasy with death.

Despite this new threat, Iyad Al-Bozom, a spokesman for the Interior Ministry in Gaza, denied in an interview with Al-Monitor that IS has a presence in the Gaza Strip. "There are no extremist organizations, including the so-called IS," he said, adding that the posts on social networks in the name of IS represent the opinions of a few individuals and not a full-fledged organization. Bozom stressed that his ministry will seriously address the threats issued.

"We do not prevent anyone from adopting the line of thought of any organization, but we do not allow these thoughts to threaten security or affect our social customs and traditions," he said.

Satirical writer Akram Al-Surani, whose name appeared in the IS statement, dismissed the threat as "silly." He told Al-Monitor, "It is annoying, since it falls within the scope of restriction of freedoms."

At a protest in front of the public prosecutor's office in Gaza, Surani said, "We demand official protection and want to know which parties are behind this. Regardless of whether the threat was made by IS or not, we have concerns about what might happen in the future."

Although a group of writers managed to meet the public prosecutor, Surani reported, "We only got reassurances that the official authorities have already started their own investigations." He added, "There are talks about security measures, but we are not seeing anything tangible. No one looked into the message I received on my Facebook account. It could be

possible to determine the sender's IP address. The writers who were threatened did not receive any call from the interior ministry."

These are not the first activities carried out by unknown parties in the name of Sharia and IS in the Gaza Strip. IS had claimed responsibility through social media posts—which have yet to be verified—for the bombing of the French Cultural Center on Oct. 6 and a series of explosions targeting the homes of some Fatah leaders on Nov. 7.

Al-Bozom explained that investigations are ongoing in the previous explosion incidents. Early this year, the Church of the Latin Convent was bombed in what the interior ministry considered an individual act unrelated to IS.

Decentralized jihadist organizations such as IS can spread their ideology without being restricted by borders. This is especially true in Gaza, the front line with Israel and under Hamas' control for eight years, during which the Islamist movement was the one to confront radical religious groups and maintain security in the Gaza Strip.

Mukhaimar Abu Saada, a professor of political science at Gaza's Al-Azhar University, told Al-Monitor that he does not rule out the presence of individuals who believe in IS ideology. He said, "Salafist groups with jihadist ideology are present in all the Arab world, but people in Gaza often rule out the presence of IS. Contrary to what they think, this organization is an ideology that does not require the physical spread of persons, and their presence will not be hindered by the Israeli blockade or the tight Egyptian security measures imposed on the Gaza borders."

Abu Saada asserted that the continuous Palestinian political division has contributed to the presence of such movements, saying, "The ongoing division and the lack of control by the consensus government over the security file enabled these events, which may increasingly recur in the future."

Abu Saada stated that some writers and intellectuals accuse Hamas of being behind these incidents and of making up IS for two reasons. The first is to draw the attention of people away from internal problems such as poverty, unemployment, delayed reconstruction, and other pressing issues. Also, as many people believe Hamas is an ideological extremist group, acts carried out under the name of IS may be intended to show that there are worse groups than Hamas. They may be an attempt to thwart a revolution against Hamas.

When asked, a Hamas leader refused to comment on these accusations, simply arguing that despite the individual nature of the threatening posts, there is nothing to prevent IS from existing in the Gaza Strip.

The official, who preferred to remain anonymous, told Al-Monitor, "The Palestinian arena is infiltrated by all intelligence services of the world, and these threats are not the result of division." He accused Israeli parties of orchestrating these activities through their wings in Gaza.

The investigations initiated by Gaza's Interior Ministry into previous attacks have yet to yield results. Whether these attacks were organized and executed by an organized network or by individuals is unknown, but signs of a possible IS cell in Gaza are increasing.

## Job Vacancy Announcement

**Job Title** : Human Resource Manager Senior  
**Division** : HR  
**Reporting to** : COO  
**Location** : Sana'a Head Office

An international company based in Yemen is seeking to hire a highly qualified senior Human Resources Manager. The company employs over 1,000 full time employees and works in the energy, construction, medical, logistics, and travel sectors.

### JOB REQUIREMENTS

**Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:** This position requires a combination of knowledge, skills and abilities as more specifically described below:  
**Knowledge and understanding of:** Labor Law, Social security Law and all other laws related to employment and wages.  
**Skills in:** Personnel administration, administration of labor agreements, grievance processing, payroll administration, wage and hour interpretation, hiring strategies, risk management, safety administration, and conflict and complaint resolution.  
**Ability to:** Multi-task on diverse projects, effectively manage diverse staffs, work cooperatively with various officials and agencies, effectively negotiate various contracts, interpret policy and collective agreements, and communicate effectively both orally and in writing.

### EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

The foregoing knowledge, skills and abilities are typically acquired through a combination of education and experience. At a minimum, all qualified applicants must have a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration/Human Resources or a closely related field and a minimum of five (5) years of progressive experience in the Human Resources field.

### SUBMITTING CVS

Interested applicants should send their resumes (CV) along with copies of qualifications, certificates of work experience within one month from the latest publication of this advertisement to the e-mail address below:

CareersTrek@gmail.com

**YEMEN TIMES**  
www.yementimes.com

First Political English Newspaper in Yemen. Founded in 1991 by Prof. Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf

Tel: +967 (1) 268-661  
 Fax: +967 (1) 268-276  
 P.O. Box 2579, Sana'a, Yemen  
 Letters: yreaders.view@gmail.com

ADVERTISEMENTS:  
 Tel: +967 (1) 510306  
 Email: adsyemen@yahoo.com



BUSINESS FOR PEACE AWARD

Deputy General Manager  
Fouad Al-Baqqal

Deputy Editor-in-chief  
Ahlam Mohsen

Managing Editor  
Judith Kuschnitzki

Managing Editor Assistant  
Nasser Al-Sakkaf

Security Reporter  
Ali Ibrahim Al-Moshki

Senior Reporter  
Mohammed bin Sallam

Head of Design Dept.  
Ramzy Alawi

### Editorial Staff

Ali Mohsen Aboluhom  
Bassam Al-Khamiri

Brett Scott  
Jeremy Hodge

Khalid Al-Karimi

### Offices

**Taiz Bureau:**  
 Imad Ahmed Al-Saqqaf  
 Tel: +967 (4) 217-156,  
 Telefax: +967 (4) 217157  
 P.O.Box: 5086, Taiz  
 Email: yttaz@y.net.ye

### Subscriptions

For subscription rates and related information please contact Majdi Al-Saqqaf, Subscription and Distribution Manager, on 268661/2 ext 204 or mobile: 711998995, email: majdi\_saqqaf@yahoo.com

### Policies:

- All opinion articles that have not been written by Yemen Times staff on the Opinion, Op-Ed and Youth pages do not necessarily represent the newspaper's opinion and hence YT could not be held accountable for their consequences.
- Letters to the Editor must include your name, mailing address, or email address. The editor reserves the right to edit all submissions for clarity, style, and length.
- Submissions will not be returned to the writer under any circumstance.
- For information on advertising, contact the advertising department at any of the Yemen Times' offices



# Talking to the Taliban, again

**IRIN**  
First published Nov. 20

Slowly but surely, NGOs and UN bodies are admitting it publicly—they are dealing with the Taliban again. While such deals have been developing in private for several years, NGOs have been hesitant to discuss their relations with the Afghan Islamist group because of political pressure and counter terrorism legislation.

Yet as foreign military forces prepare to complete their withdrawal from combat operations at the end of the year, and as it becomes increasingly clear that large swathes of territory will remain under Taliban control, aid organizations have felt both compelled and empowered to talk to them. Mark Bowden, the UN secretary-general's deputy special representative for Afghanistan and the humanitarian coordinator for the country, told IRIN that in the past year negotiations with the Taliban have advanced significantly.

For many in the aid industry this shift is indicative of a new found willingness to stand up to Western governments. It represents the empowering of an aid sector that for much of the past 13 years found itself acting as the civilian wing of a foreign occupation, a role that carried grave and far-reaching consequences.

It is a story of how humanitarian principles were eroded by political expediency under pressure, and of the battle to get them back.

## Roots taking hold

The story begins in the late 1990s. Contrary to common perception, the Taliban in its early years was not wholly hostile to foreign aid organizations, as Luca Radaelli, medical coordinator of a Kabul hospital, can testify. "The Taliban gave us this," he said, pointing to the medical facility.

By the late 90s the Islamists had taken over up to 90 percent of Afghanistan after a vicious civil war. With violence ongoing, thousands were being injured as attacks continued but medical care and support for the people were thin on the ground. Emergency, an Italian

NGO, tentatively approached the Taliban about bringing medical support for the beleaguered population.

After extensive discussions about the nature of humanitarian aid, the Taliban offered Emergency a largely barren area to do their work. The area is now home to Kabul's top free hospital for war victims.

Provided the organization acted impartially, Radaelli said, the Taliban allowed much needed humanitarian action—even when it appeared to go against their conservative beliefs. "At that time 40 percent of our [Afghan] employees were women," he said.

David Haines, country director of Mercy Corps, agrees that by the late 1990s, trust was beginning to be built between those organizations working on the ground and the Taliban leadership. Part of this, he said, was a realization by the Taliban that they needed aid.

"Initially they said 'we don't need any NGOs' and were very suspicious about foreigners being in the country. But then when they realized they were getting hammered for not providing public services, they started to realize that foreign NGOs can provide health and education," he said.

Attempts to corral international NGOs into particular areas of Kabul did cause tension and there were occasional security issues, Haines said, but "for the bulk of the time it was a relatively straightforward relationship."

## A blurry bonanza

It was not to last long. Emergency's hospital opened in mid-2001. The 11 September Al Qaeda attacks in the US only a few months later changed everything, leading rapidly to a US-led military coalition invading Afghanistan in "Operation Enduring Freedom."

After a few weeks of chaos, all was calm for several years. The coalition's overwhelming strength succeeded in pushing the Taliban from power across the country. Their leadership was either dead or hidden in the Pakistani mountains. They seemed to be defeated.

Franck Abeille, country director at the French charity Action Against

Hunger (ACF), explained that, briefly, NGOs almost forgot about the Taliban. "In 2001 on the ground there was only one group [the foreign forces]—those that were in power [the Taliban] left," he said. There seemed little reason to talk to the Taliban about access—NGO workers could work freely in all but tiny pockets of the country.

At the same time, lines were being blurred and crossed. The US administration of George W. Bush saw NGOs as part of the war effort, a "force multiplier," and, together with its coalition partners, was more than happy to bankroll the activities of an aid sector that burgeoned as a result of this largesse.

*"[Negotiations with the Taliban] represent the empowering of an aid sector that for much of the past 13 years found itself acting as the civilian wing of a foreign occupation..."*

The "US-led coalition's systematic attempts to co-opt humanitarian aid and use it to win 'hearts and minds' had seriously compromised humanitarian aid workers' image of neutrality and impartiality," according to Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF).

A key pillar of this co-opting strategy was the provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs). Originally formed in 2002 under NATO, the PRTs were military-led bodies to lead the development of various regions. By 2008 there were 26 of them covering the vast majority of Afghanistan.

Aid workers should, in theory, have objected immediately to this blurring of humanitarianism and military actors. There were certainly grumblings: As early as 2004,

a Save the Children report warned that the PRTs "complicate the interface between humanitarian and military actors."

Yet there was little concerted effort by aid agencies to resist, and many even acquiesced. Some international and Afghan agencies accepted funding directly from the PRTs to implement projects, while others took cash from the same nations leading the PRTs—often carrying out projects in the districts where PRTs were operating.

Finance inevitably played a large role, with the huge sums offered by the foreign governments proving tempting. As Haines said: "Wittingly or unwittingly a lot of [international] NGOs were drawn into it. They were offered a lot of money. From their perspective they were thinking 'great, we can do so much good. Instead of one or two provinces we can do 20, with a budget of \$200 million a year.' So the temptation was huge but ultimately all of those programs were designed with the single purpose of winning hearts and minds."

In practice, their efforts sometimes had the opposite effect. By allying themselves with the same warlords that we had long terrorized communities and failing to push through real reform on issues like corruption, the foreign forces were beginning to lose what good will they had.

At the same time, changes in UN policy were contributing to an increasingly negative perception of aid workers. Under a new push to better coordinate between its humanitarian, political, and peace-keeping work in any given country, the UN introduced the concept of "integrated missions," in which all three streams would report to the same management structure. This meant that humanitarian agencies in Afghanistan—meant to be neutral in the conflict—now fell under the leadership of the UN political mission mandated to support the government, one party to the conflict. In 2003 the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) office was closed, with the political mission UNAMA taking on its responsibilities.

Ashley Jackson, co-author of a

Humanitarian Policy Group report on the politicization of aid in Afghanistan, said the cumulative result of these trends was aid workers came to be seen as active participants in the occupation of Afghanistan. "The presence of PRTs and for-profit contractors so profoundly blurred the lines, to the point where it was difficult for the average Taliban fighter to distinguish between who was neutral and who was not."

## Stepping back

For the Taliban these aid organizations were therefore fair game. By 2004, the militants had regrouped. With foreign forces distracted by also fighting in Iraq, they had begun a successful insurgency campaign. In 2006 the group released its first code of conduct on acceptable measures in war, directly threatening aid workers.

*"[Foreign militaries] wanted aid workers to ride on the tanks and leap off the roof and start working."*

"Those NGOs that come to the country under the rule of the infidels must be treated as the government is treated. They have come under the guise of helping people but in fact are part of the regime. Thus we tolerate none of their activities, whether it be building of streets, bridges, clinics, schools, madrasas [schools for Quran study] or other works," it said.

This was perhaps not as blanket a ban as it initially appeared. Thomas Ruttig, senior analyst at the Afghanistan Analysts Network, pointed out that even then the Taliban might have drawn a distinction in their

wording between "those that came with [the foreign troops] and those who were already there who were sometimes allowed [to continue their work]."

Yet it fit a wider trend of large numbers of NGO workers being kidnapped or killed, often deliberately targeted. And while in principle the Taliban drew a distinction for organizations that predated 2001, in reality the attacks seemed to tar all foreign aid workers with the same brush—in 2004 five staff from MSF, generally accepted as one of the most fiercely independent aid organizations with over 20 years experience in the country, were killed.

For the NGOs, the penny started to drop that they had allowed themselves to become targets. But it would be a few years, Haines said, before policies seriously started to be reassessed.

A large factor in eventually forcing the shift was the so-called troop surge. In early 2010 the US committed over 30,000 new troops to the country with the aim of crushing the Taliban ahead of an eventual withdrawal. This coincided with the wider implementation of the US military strategy known as COIN, for Counterinsurgency. There were three parts to taking over new territory—capture, hold, build. The third part was where the aid workers came in.

"Increasingly from 2009 onwards, USAID [US Agency for International Development] particularly would instruct its implementing partners to go into new areas that they had never worked in literally days after 'clear' had taken place and whilst 'hold' was still in process," Haines said.

Information gathered by humanitarian actors was sometimes even fed back to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), legitimizing the Taliban's fears that NGOs were spying. Perhaps never before had the line between military actors and charities been so blurred. As Heather Barr, senior researcher at Human Rights Watch in Asia, put it, the foreign militaries "wanted aid workers to ride on the tanks and leap off the roof and start working."

*Continued on the back page*

# How the Assad regime's policies nurtured sectarianism in Syria

**Brian Whitaker**  
Muftah.org  
First published Dec. 3

Looking at the turmoil in Syria today it is easy to conclude that one of the few virtues of the Baathist dictatorship was its opposition to sectarianism. Since the Syrian conflict began, President Bashar Al-Assad has sought to portray his struggle for survival as an heroic effort to quell religious strife, but this strife is also partly a result of the regime's own religious policies.

Sectarian divisions existed in Syria long before the Baathists came to power. Before the current conflict triggered a mass exodus, about 74 percent of Syria's inhabitants were Sunni Muslims. Shia sects, including Alawites and Ismailis, accounted for 13 percent, various Christian groups ten percent, and the Druze three percent. There were also the remains of a Jewish community, probably numbering no more than a few dozen people.

The Baathists were Arab nationalists and, by inclination, secular. Under their rule, however, Syria never became a secular state with a government that was neutral and uninvolved in matters of religion.

Although Syria—unlike most Arab countries—has no official state religion, its constitution (re-drafted in 2012) says the president must be a Muslim and "Islamic jurisprudence shall be a major source of legislation."

As happened with other Arab regimes, the Baathists in Syria developed and propagated their own brand of religion to suit their political needs. In contrast to the austere Wahhabism of Saudi Arabia, the Syrian regime opted for a sterilized and homogenized version of Islam, which was much more bland. Crucially, it was also one that denied the existence of sectarian divisions. One problem the Baathists had to grapple with, however, was the dominant position members of the minority Alawite sect held within the regime. This was a potential weakness that could be exploited by regime opponents, as the Sunni majority was historically inclined to view the Alawites as heretics.

Hafez Al-Assad responded to this challenge in several ways. The first was to try to control the Sunni majority by channeling them into "acceptable" forms of Islam that posed no threat to his regime or to the Alawites, as Torstein Worren explains in an Oslo University thesis on Syria:

"He realized that in order to sta-

*"Under the Assads, Syria, far from being a model for religious harmony, has remained an example of how sweeping religious differences under the carpet eventually makes things worse."*

bilize the country, he would have to make concessions to the Sunnis. Through his Corrective Movement, he sought to redo the most radical secular reforms of the earlier Baath regimes. In order to limit the clergy's influence in the political

sphere, he co-opted them by giving them increased power in the social realm. Therefore, instead of building a true secular society, the state was secular on the surface, but not in matters of family and personal law."

Another arm of Hafez Al-Assad's religious strategy was to redefine the Alawites as ordinary, mainstream Muslims. Thus, for example, the Alawites were not allowed their own religious courts (despite being generally regarded as Shia Muslims) and were brought under the same sharia rules as the Sunnis.

This effort to "normalize" the Alawites also helps explain why talk of religious diversity had to be suppressed in Syrian schools. Worren continues:

"The Islam presented in the schoolbooks is that of orthodox Sunni Islam, and there is no mention of the Islamic minorities living in Syria or of Shia Islam as a whole, or even of the different schools of thought within Sunni Islam. According to the schoolbooks, there is no diversity within Islam. This means that Alawism is never mentioned in schools in Syria."

Presenting a monolithic view of Islam became even more important for the regime after the Islamist uprising and subsequent massacre of thousands in Hama in 1982.

Denial of religious differences extended far beyond the education system. "Discourses and discussions on sectarianism, regardless of their shape or content, were completely banned on national media and in the public sphere," Mohammad Dibo, a Syrian journalist, poet and novelist, writes—adding that one political dissident, Riad Seif, was arrested merely for saying that "the Syrian people are characterized by their diverse ethnic and religious universe."

Sectarianism also became a convenient charge to use against regime opponents. "According to many witness testimonies," Dibo says, "it became a common strategy from the 1980s onwards, for security forces to deck walls with sectarian slogans such as, 'We want to overthrow the Alawite regime' a night before they stormed a neighborhood to arrest members of the Communist Action Party or other political groups."

To present a façade of religious harmony within the regime, cabinet posts were distributed among the sects. Similar unspoken rules applied to the military—though the sections of the security apparatus most vital to the regime's survival remained firmly in Alawite hands.

Meanwhile, the regime did little to tackle the problem of religious

segregation in towns and neighborhoods, which were informally assigned to one sect or another. One theory is that this suited the regime's needs because it felt better able to control religious groups and the interactions between them.

Over many years, the combined effect of these policies has been to keep Syrians in the dark about the beliefs of their fellow citizens, and the differences between them. "What they know or think they know is based on rumors and stories passed on from friends and relatives," Worren writes.

Basically, by not educating people about the other sects, the regime held everyone hostage to its version and deterred sects from learning about each other," one Syrian (who asked not to be identified) told me recently. "The less you know about someone the harder it is to accept them as peers. The continuing civil war, with increasing sectarianism, is the product of such decades-long policies."

Under the Assads, Syria, far from being a model for religious harmony, has remained an example of how sweeping religious differences under the carpet eventually makes things worse.

*Republished with permission from Muftah.org.*



Extortion on the streets:

# The life of a bus driver in Sana'a

Story and photo by  
**Ali Ibrahim Al-Moshki**

**A**bdul Nasser Al-Qafri, 50, has been working as a microbus driver in Sana'a for the last 15 years. He arrives at the Shumaila Sixty Meter station every day at 5 a.m., hoping each day that he can make a few hundred extra riyals before the other drivers arrive.

"I wait an hour and a half for the bus to fill up with passengers before leaving," he says. "However, before I can leave, I have to make my rounds and pay off my debts," he adds. "The first payment I make is to the commuter caller."

Sana'a, unlike most capital cities around the world, has no government-run public transportation system. Al-Qafri is a privately contracted driver operating a microbus purchased from local vendors at a station built on land owned by a local sheikh. In order for the system to run efficiently, land owners divide up labor for managing the station between a series of administrators, or "representatives", that each take a cut from the money paid out to each driver by passengers. Before drivers can leave in the morning, each representative has to be paid off. The first is the commuter caller.

The commuter caller's job, according to Al-Qafri, is to keep track of each driver's schedule, and inform passengers who are arriving at the station. "This pretty much consists of him yelling out the route each driver takes just before they're about to leave, so those entering the station can hear," he says. "Before I leave, I have to give him YR50 (\$0.23)." The commuter caller does this all day each time a driver enters and leaves the station. The YR50 doesn't go towards the station or anywhere else, he said.

"This is how the commuter-caller earns a living," Al-Qafri says. "He doesn't receive a salary." The commuter-caller receives YR50 each time the microbus passes the station, unlike the others who take a cut and are only paid once in day by each driver, regardless of the number of times that particular bus passes through the station.

Next up is the station representative, who collects money on behalf of the local land-owner. "It's like a tax we pay for the right to use the station," says Al-Qafri. This also costs YR50. Then there's the representative of the local administrative council, carrying a baton and demanding yet another YR50, "or else." Al-Qafri says the local administrative council claims to use the money to help pay for city-wide development, sanitation, and construction projects, although it's never specified how the money is used. At the Shumaila station, it is Sameer Al-Wali who is representing the local administrative council.

Despite being considered an official representative of Sana'a's local administrative council, Al-Wali, says that his work is purely freelance. "To become a council representative, you simply need to be a person of influence," he said. "Lots of local sheikhs and people who command respect in various neighborhoods make propositions to the council, saying that they'll provide them with say, YR10,000 [\$46.5] a day, for example, in order for the right to speak on behalf of the council and have its support," he said. "Collect more than you agree to pay the council, and you can keep it," he says. Al-Wali refused to divulge how much he collects per day.

Country-wide local councils were first introduced within Yemen's major cities in 2006, and are responsible for overseeing all administrative affairs that take place in the city. They file monthly and yearly reports to the offices of their



Bus drivers say gangs wait for them along their routes to also collect a cut. Bus drivers who refuse to pay end up with smashed windows and worse, said one bus driver to the Yemen Times, who learned that lesson the hard way.

respective governorates, and are tasked with acting as a go between for city and governorate level politics throughout the country. Local council members throughout all of Yemen's governorates were chosen in elections in 2006, however new elections have not since been held. The Yemen Times contacted several members of Sana'a's local council. All declined interviews.

Finally, there is the "buses" representative. This man coordinates the routes of all the buses, along with his counterparts at other stations, making sure they don't overlap. He handles any paperwork that must be done, and mediates between drivers and police in the event that there is ever an accident or a traffic violation. He also receives YR50 from each driver. The Yemen Times spoke with Fahd Al-Wajih, the bus representative at the Shumaila Sixty Meter station, who claims that roughly 500 buses pass through his station per day.

Upon arriving, each driver must have at least YR200 [\$0.93] in total ready to be paid out to the various middle-men before he can expect to leave the station and begin his route. It's a fee expected of all drivers who use Sana'a's various microbus stations. Drivers pay middle-men at each station they use, once a day. Commuter-callers get paid during each route.

## Extortions by neighborhood gangs

Nabil Al-Qasmi, another driver who works at the Shumaila Sixty Meter station along with Al-Qafri, claims that oftentimes the mandatory fees don't stop once the drivers have left the station.

"Oftentimes there are bandits and thugs waiting for us along our routes," he says. "They gather together a gang of locals who threaten to break our windows or highjack our buses if we don't pay YR50 or YR100 [\$0.47] a day to pass through their neighborhood. Paying them is what makes things expensive," he added.

Al-Qasmi is ultimately liable for the safety of the bus, which is rent-

ed, he says. He pays YR2,000 [\$9.3] a day to a local businessman who, he says, owns several minibuses and rents them out to drivers like himself. If, at the end of the day, the bus is returned with any damages, drivers must pay for their repairs, Al-Qasmi says.

"Oftentimes along our route when we pull up to stops, the thugs will be there, but they'll claim they deserve the money because they did some small task, like help the passengers get on, or inform them that the bus was coming, or something like that," he says. "They do this every day."

The Yemen Times spoke with Tariq Al-Matari, who belongs to a local gang in Sana'a's Al-Sabaeen neighborhood. He admits that he and others in his cohort extort bus drivers that pass through 24th Street. Al-Matari makes himself out to be no more than a petty crook who has resorted to such tactics to provide for his family. "I joined this gang several years ago because I was unemployed. We know what we do is wrong but we have to because there are so few job opportunities," he said. "Drivers who drive through our neighborhood are forced to pay a fee," he admits. "If they don't, we smash their windows."

According to a number of drivers the Yemen Times spoke with, Al-Matari is a well-known career criminal who pays off police officers in order to continue running his extortion business. One driver, Jobran Al-Abeedi, claims the windows of his bus were broken by Al-Matari eight months ago after he refused to pay the YR100 fee to drive through Al-Rehab.

Al-Abeedi took the case to the police, who claimed that in order to arrest Al-Matari they would need to organize a team of officers to lead a raid on his house, and that in order to do this they would need YR2000. "I paid the money," said Al-Abeedi. "Because I wanted to prove a point and do away with him forever." However the next day, as Al-Abeedi was running his route, Al-Matari was still there, along with his cohorts, demanding the same fee. "The police did nothing, except

steal my money," he said. "Al-Matari's been there ever since and I've reconciled myself to the fact that I have to pay him."

The Yemen Times contacted the Al-Rehab Police Department regarding the case. An officer said the station's staff had been replaced four months ago and that they had no knowledge of the case.

Drivers also have the option of paying YR50 a week to become members of Sana'a's official Microbus Drivers Union, according to Al-Qasmi. "Union representatives show up at the station every Friday morning and ask for YR50 for the right to sign up," he said. "Sometimes I pay if I can afford it." The union can sometimes help drivers pay for repairs in the event that they get in an accident, according to Al-Qasmi, similar to an insurance policy.

For drivers like Al-Qasmi and Al-Qafri, the costs add up. "I collect about YR12,000 [\$55.8] a day from passengers," he said. "Gas for a day costs around YR6,000 [\$27.9], while fees and extortion usually run about YR1,000 [\$4.65]. Of course I also have to set aside YR2,000 [\$9.3] to be able to rent the bus again the next day. Any maintenance fees that arise are of course my responsibility to pay. At the end of the day I barely have anything left." Current gas prices mean that 20 liters of gas cost roughly YR3,000 [\$13.95], with drivers usually having to fill up about twice a day, according to Al-Qasmi. At the end of the day, that leaves Al-Qasmi with YR3000.

Bus drivers who leave from one main station can pull into others along their route in order to try and collect more passengers. However, just as at the Shumaila Sixty Meter station, bus representatives and others must be paid off. "Every day along my route I pull into the Aser, Al-Misbahi and Madhbah roundabouts, which are similar to where I start off at Shumaila," says Al-Qafri. "The bus representative always has about five people working underneath him standing at the station entrances, making sure that new

bus drivers who enter pay a YR50 toll. It's just the way things work."

The Yemen Times spoke with Mohammad Al-Watari, manager of the Administrative Review Office at the Ministry of Transportation's office in Sana'a. He claims that the ministry only has an official relationship with the owners of each station who are required to register with the ministry. "We mostly keep track of what's going on through the bus and station representatives who handle day to day affairs," Al-Watari said, without further commenting on the day to day interactions between representatives and ministry officials.

When questioned about the issue of banditry existing along routes that drivers use, he stated that ministry officials often coordinate with police officers and members of the security services to try to crack down on this phenomenon, claiming however that doing so was difficult due to the country's current political situation, which has taken priority over other issues. "We've arrested some of those who extort bus drivers in the past, however every day a new group emerges in a different neighborhood. It's a game of whack a mole and we can't get them all."

**Hungry Bunny™ WOW Offers!!**

**Bunny Cheese Burger Meal**

**اشتر وجبة تشيز برجر بـ 800 YR**

**واحصل على الوجبة الثانية مجاناً**

Fun City Sana'a Haddah  
www.hungrybunny.com.sa  
ISO 9001:2008 - 22,000:2005 certified

SPECIAL OFFERS  
عروض خاصة



... وعبر مكاتبنا ..  
.. أن تصومكم ..  
وترحب بكم على ركب أسطولها الحديث ورحلاتها  
المنتظمة وعلى بساط الراحة ندعوكم إلى رحابنا  
لنشدد الرحال معا صابحا ومساء إلى جميع المحافظات

فرصكم أمنا وراحتكم مساننا  
فلا تلتفتوا البراق فالبراق ينتظركم

المركز الرئيسي: صنعاء شارع الستين الجنوبي - جولة المرور  
تلفون: 01/247474، 01/247474، 01/247474  
موبايل: 01/247474

**Job Seekers**

771580509, 777228719

- Male, holds master degree in English and ICDL in computer, 6 year experience in teaching, available as a tutor or for any job that requires English. 77758466, 736974711.
- Nashwan Hasan, BA Accountant, 7 years experience, seeks to work in an organization where English is essential.
- OSHA certified, with 20 years Gulf exp. in oil & gas, variety of HSE, safety fields, including fire fighting, health and safety. 2 years Gulf exp. in construction. jmlsalem@yahoo.com
- Teacher of math, physics and chemistry in English seeks work at school. 735694439
- Male, bachelor's degree in English language, diploma in

marketing & computer science, experienced as an operations officer, treasurer and teacher. Looking for any job that requires English. 777004207

- Female, BA in Arabic literature, very good written and spoken French/English, seeks work as a babysitter for a foreign family (Aden or Taiz). 737168816

**Job vacancies**

- Rainbow School is requesting female teachers for Arabic, English and Maths, with no less than 3 years experience, to teach elementary grades. Fluent and non-accented English language is required. Contact: 733811430, 733406194. Email: emma5565@yahoo.com
- Required, experienced housemaid to work in Sana'a. She must be able to speak English. Send an email to ccaruso87@yahoo.com,

**Others**

- A comfortable modern car is available with its English-speaking driver, for touring Sana'a. Call Hashim at 736147911.
- Two male Persian kittens for sale. They are grey and white and two months old, each at 100\$. Serious buyers only. Contact: yteditor@gmail.com

**FIVE STAR LOGISTICS CO LTD**

**INTERNATIONAL FREIGHT FORWARDER**

WEEKLY LCL SERVICES FROM INDIA/CHINA/ EUROPE /JEBEL ALI TO HOODEIDAH AND ADEN PORTS ON VERY COMPETITIVE RATES.

OUR SERVICES: AIR/SEA FREIGHT IMPORT/EXPORT , CUSTOMS CLEARANCE, LAND TRANSPORTATION, INTERNATIONAL DOOR TO DOOR SERVICES, PACKING & WAREHOUSING, PROJECT CARGO HANDLING, DOCUMENTATION, PROCESSING OF EXEMPTION/ EXCLUSIVE IMPORT PERMITS, HANDLING OF CHARTER AIRCRAFT.

Tel:00967-1-450238/239 Fax: 00967-1-450894  
Aden: 00967-2-221994 Fax: 00967-2-221995  
EMAIL: SALES@FSTARLOGISTICS.COM  
INFO@FSTARLOGISTICS.COM  
WEBSITE: WWW.FSTARLOGISTICS.COM

**Coupon for free classified ads**  
**(All personal ads are free of charge)**

For Sale  Job vacancies  
 Buying  Job seekers  
 Housing available  Other  
 Housing wanted

Details: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Contact Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please cut this coupon and send it to  
**Yemen Times**  
Fax: 268276 or P.O. Box 2579 - Sana'a  
For more info. call 268661/2/3

**Coffee Break**

**Sudoku**

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

**Easy**

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

**Intermediate**

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

**Difficult**

**Chess**

White plays and wins in the 3rd move

**Solutions**

**IMPORTANT Numbers**

Electricity problems 177, Emergency Police 199, Fire Brigade 191, Water Problems 171, Telephone enquires 118, Accident (Traffic) 194, Foreign Affairs, 202544/7, Interior Affairs 252701/7, Immigration 250761/3, Inter-City Bus Co. 262111/3, Ministry of Communication 325110/1/2/3, Radio Station 282061, Tourism 254032, TV Station 332001/2, Red Crescent 203131/3, Tel-Yemen 7522202, Y.net 7522227

**AIRLINES**

Continental Airline	278668/283082
Egypt Air	273452/275061
Gulf Air	440922
Qatar Airways Fax:	506038, Tel:506030/5
Royal Jordanian	01 446064/5/8
Ethiopian Airways	01-442725
Fly Dubai	01-446750
Turkish Airlines	01-445970-3

**BANKS**

Yemen Gulf Bank	Tel. 967-1-260823 Fax:260824 02 - 270347 fax 02 - 237824
Shamil Bank of Yemen & Bahrain	Tel. 264775, 264702 Fax. 264703, 503350
Central Bank	274314/1
Yemen Commercial Bank	Tel: 01 277224 Fax: 277291
International Bank of Yemen	01 407030

**COURIERS**

Sana'a	01 440 170
Hodiadh	03 226 975
DHL	01 441096/7/8
Aden	02 245 626
Taiz	04 205 780

**FREIGHT FORWARDERS**

Al-Nada Center for General Services	Tel: 967 1 431339 Fax: 431340 alnada2@yemen.net.ye
M&M Logistics & Aviation Services	01 531221/531231
Al-Nasim Cargo Forwarders	407905
World Link	01 444550/441935
YEMPAC Cargo	01-447126
Mas Fright International	01-429671
Mareb Travel and Tourism - Cargo Division	01-441126
Sas Cargo Services	01-472192/3
World Shipping	01 260746 / 267929
Universal Cargo	01-447299

**HOSPITALS**

Modern German Hospital	600000/602008 Fax. 601889 E-mail:felixpene@hotmail.com
Al-Jumhury Hospital	01 274286/87
Hadda Hospital	01 412981
Al-Thawra Hospital	01 246967/66
Al-Junaid Hospital	01-424765
Al-Ahli Modern Hospital	01-444936
Science and Technology Hospital	01-500000
Al-Kuwait Hospital	01-283283
Sadui-German Hospital	01-313333
Azal Hospital	01-200000
Royal Crown Hotel & Suites	01406661 406681
L'AZURDE suites hotel	01-432020/30/40
Versailles Hotel	01-425970/1/2
Sheraton Hotel	01 237500

**MINISTRIES**

Presidency	01-290200
Prime Minister	01-490 800
Ministry of Public Works and Highways	01-545132
Ministry of Awqaf and Guidance	01-274439
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research	01-535031
Ministry of Fisheries	01-268583
Ministry of Culture	01-274640
Ministry of Civil Service and Insurance	01-294579
Ministry of Defence	01-276404
Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation	01-282963
Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour	01-262809
Ministry of Legal Affairs	01-402213
Ministry of Public Health and Population	01-252211
Ministry of Youth and Sports	01-472913
Ministry of Industry and Trade	01-235462
Ministry of Justice	01-236512
Ministry of Tourism	01-220050
Ministry of Expatriates	01-402254
Ministry of Petroleum and Minerals	01-202309
Ministry of Internal Affairs	01-289577
Ministry of Transport	01-260900
Ministry of Human Rights	01-444831
Ministry of Communications and Information Technology	01-331460
Ministry of Local Administration	01-227242
Ministry of Information	01-274008
Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation	01-250101
Ministry of Education	01-252732
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	01-537914
Ministry of the Interior	01-332701
Ministry of Finance	01-260365
Ministry of Transportation	01-202257
Ministry of Water and Environment	01-418289
Ministry of Electricity	01-326196

**Movenpick Hotel** 01 546666 Fax: 01 546000

**Sheba Hotel** 01 272372

**Relax-Inn Hotel** 01 449871

**Gulf Tourist Hotel and Suits** 01-630494

**Mercure Hotel** 01-212544

**Shammar Hotel** 01-418546

**Universal Hotels** 01-440305/7-14

**Shahrhan Hotel** 01-418320

**INSURANCE COMPANIES**

**UNITED INSURANCE** Tel: 01/555 555 Free Number: 800 55 55  
Aden: 255668  
Al-Watania Insurance (Y.S.C.)  
Sana'a 272713/874 Aden: 243490-242476  
Taiz 250029 Hodeidah: 219941/4/6

**Marib Insurance** Sana'a: 206129/8/13 Aden: 255668 Taiz:240927/34 Hodeidah: 219545/8

**Yemen Islamic Insurance Co.** Sana'a 284193, 5 lines Taiz: 258881, Aden: 244280

**Yemen Insurance company** Sana'a: 272806/ 272962/43, Aden: 247617, Taiz: 250345, Mukalla: 304292, Hodeidah: 261839/17

**Aman Insurance** 01-214093

**Yemeni Qatari Insurance** 01-448340/1/2 Fax: 448339

**RESTAURANTS**

**Al-Shaibani Restaurants Super Deluxe** Tel: 01 505290 01 266375 Fax:01 267619

**Manabu Japanese Chef's Restaurant** 417391

**My Pie** 431999

**SCHOOLS**

**Juniors' Oasis kindergarten** Telfax :01- 440840 - Mobile:734522225  
Sana'a International School Tel: 01 370191/2 Fax 370193

**International Turkish Schools** 01-419330-1, 737999199, Taiz 205593

**Al-Majid Yemen School** Tel: 206159

**Manarat Schools** 01-410011

**SUPERMARKETS**

**Al-Jandul Supermarket.** 01-422610

**Happy Land supermarket** 01-444424

**TRANSLATIONS**

**Urwa Wautqa Int. Auth. Trans.** Arabic-English-French -German-Russian-Italian-Spanish-Polish-Dutch- Iranian-Turkish-Eriterea-Amharic. Tel: 01-240515

**TRAVEL**

**Sky Travel & Tourism** 01-535080/83 02-221270

**Falcon Holidays** 444118

**Falcon Business Center** 446250

**Al-Nasim Travel** 270750

**Universal Business Travel Center** 441158/9/60

**Qadas Fly** 01-280777

**Yemen Travel Agencies** 01-272895/6

**UNIVERSITIES**

**American World University, Rep. by IS academy** Tel. 01 - 535700 - 733061203 Fax: 535702

**University of Applied and Social Science** Sana'a:412442 Fax: 412441, Aden: 234533 / 234960

**Queen rwa University** Tel: 449971/2

**Sana'a University** Tel: 250553/4/5

**Alandalus University** Tel: 675567 Fax: 675885

**MINISTRIES**

01-290200

01-490 800

01-545132

01-274439

01-535031

01-268583

01-274640

01-294579

01-276404

01-282963

01-262809

01-402213

01-252211

01-472913

01-235462

01-236512

01-220050

01-402254

01-202309

01-289577

01-260900

01-444831

01-331460

01-227242

01-274008

01-250101

01-252732

01-537914

01-332701

01-260365

01-202257

01-418289

01-326196



**Haier**  
Inspired living

**هاير**  
رفاهية الحياة

عبدالفتي علي الحروي للإلكترونيات والأجهزة المنزلية  
AGAH ELECTRONICS AND HOME APPLIANCES

**TIMES**

Yemen's first and most widely-read  
English-language newspaper

**جزء لا يتجزأ من مكتبك**  
قرطاسية

ASHIBAMI AGENCIES  
وكالات اشبابا  
صنعاء شارع الزبيري / حدة  
الزبيري: 530000 206713 - حدة: 429555 414503  
e-mail: ashibami@y.net.ye

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

## Talking to the Taliban, again

### New channels

Gradually the NGOs realized they had gone too far and they needed to negotiate.

On the other side they saw an increasingly nuanced and less explicitly hostile opposition, as the Taliban sought to present itself as a legitimate government-in-waiting. In 2009 and 2010 the group again released codes of conduct about the rules of war. Gone was the overt hostility to all foreign NGOs, replaced with more nuanced critiques.

So quietly, without much fanfare, new channels were opened. Long

neglected relationships were rekindled. NGOs that had not spoken to the Taliban for years started to seek access agreements.

At the time, it was too politically awkward for Western NGOs to be seen talking to the Taliban. The official line was clear—the Taliban would be crushed, Western governments told their people. No negotiations were necessary.

While this failed to reflect the reality on the ground as the Taliban continued to grow in many areas, it was backed up by increasingly oppressive anti-terrorism legislation, which often prevented aid agencies from having formal negotiations with the Taliban. As such from 2010, NGOs were often loath to admit to their formal negotiations.

Jackson, who carried out extensive research on NGO relationships with the Taliban over three years, said this led to a duplicitous approach of senior managers denying relationships with the Taliban to board members but knowing that on the ground their staff were doing so.

This "don't ask, don't tell" environment, she said, actually put the responsibility on those field workers with the least experience—often putting them at unnecessarily high risk. "The NGOs were afraid of what their headquarters were going to think and they were afraid of counter-terrorism legislation," she said.

### Back to independence

In the past 18 months, international

NGOs have started to admit to their negotiations on humanitarian access with the Taliban. Part of this is a wider political realization that the Taliban will not be beaten militarily, which makes such deals more acceptable for Western governments—all political sides now accept the inevitability of negotiated settlement.

But the largest factor has been the withdrawal of foreign troops. By the end of this year, foreigners will no longer play a combat role in Afghanistan's war. For aid organizations, it is an opportunity to show their commitment to the country is not tied to military objectives.

"The more the military pull out the more there is an opportunity for humanitarian actors to distinguish themselves," John Butt, access focal point at the Norwegian Refugee Council, said. "Humanitarians have an opportunity to stand up and be counted as humanitarians."

Humanitarian Coordinator Mark Bowden pointed to the decision to stop deploying the PRTs in late 2012 as another crucial moment in sharpening the lines between the military and humanitarians. "The biggest factor was not just the troop withdrawal but actually the closure of the PRTs—they were the most confusing element of this. We have now had almost two years without the PRTs, so it is a different operational environment."

He said that in the past year negotiations on humanitarian access with the Taliban had advanced

star net technology  
authorized agent

ستار نت تكنولوجي  
وكيل معتمد

center almiat 208863/733050607

EPSON EXCEED YOUR VISION  
DELL CERTIFIED PARTNER  
EMC<sup>2</sup>  
Allied Telesis  
R&M

www.starnet-tec.com  
customer service 209581

**"Never again should humanitarians allow themselves to become the civilian wing of an invasion. In Iraq and Syria, aid workers have to make sure they remain neutral and seek access agreements early. In some ways, this is the lesson of Afghanistan."**

and that he was confident of moving towards impartiality. "We give humanitarian assistance in accordance with humanitarian principles—which means it goes on the basis of need to areas across the country. That is not challenged by the government or by the Taliban," he said.

"Here there are now clearer lines of communication than there were before. We have certainly shared the CHAP [Common Humanitarian Action Plan] with the Taliban. They are fully aware of the strategy as we have shared the CHAP with the government on an equal basis."

Thirteen years after the invasion of Afghanistan, it appears that humanitarian organizations are finally opening up to the Taliban. Trust is still developing and the number of organizations that can operate easily in Taliban areas remains relatively few, but at least aid agencies are taking on the challenge. This could help, Ruttig said, foster a wider political understanding.

"There are a lot of humanitarian and development actors who are forced to work with the Taliban in the areas where they work," he said. "This can be good because it is also an interaction, which might contribute to change and improve mutual understanding."

**CONSOLIDATED CONTRACTORS GROUP S.A.L OFFSHORE (CCC)**

CONSTRUCTION OF MECHANICAL AND HEAVY CIVIL PROJECTS

- Petrochemical plants, refineries.
- Heavy, light industrial plants.
- Power and desalination plants.
- Fuel and water storage tanks.
- Oil fields ancillary installations.
- Air purification for industry.
- Marine docks, harbours, deep sea berths & refinery terminals.
- Offshore structures and underwater works.
- Pipelines construction and maintenance.
- Prefabricated accommodation & office facilities.
- Sewage treatment plants & collection networks.
- Airports, roads, highways, bridges & fly-overs.
- High quality buildings & sports complexes.
- Water treatment plants, reservoirs & distribution systems.

Sanaa  
Tel: (967-1) 441638  
Fax: (967-1) 441630  
E-Mail: ccc@cccyemen.com

Aden  
Tel: (967-2) 377328  
Fax: (967-2) 377716  
E-Mail: cccaden@y.net.ye

Aid workers and analysts agree that Afghanistan provides lessons for humanitarians in other conflict zones—particularly ones where the West is an active participant in the battles. Never again should humanitarians allow themselves to become the civilian wing of an invasion. "In

Iraq and Syria, aid workers have to make sure they remain neutral and seek access agreements early," Jackson said. "In some ways, this is the lesson of Afghanistan."

Republished with permission from IRIN.

**hp**

دع صديقك الذكي من اتش بي  
يكون مساعدك الشخصي

natco نتكو  
Technology التقنية

LINK: 777026296

فروعنا منتشرة في كبرى مدن المحافظات الرئيسية (صنعاء - عدن - تعز - الحديدة)  
صنعاء: شارع هائل، ت: 01 211373/2 01 211373/2 فاكس: 01 218123 01 218121  
صنعاء: شارع حده، ت: 01 454473/74 01 454475 فاكس: 01 454475 تعز: ت: 04 285095 04 285097 فاكس:  
عدن: تلفاكس: 02 243482 الحديدة: تلفاكس: 03 205857 المكلا: ت: 05 314977/5 05 314973 فاكس:

الطاقة الحقيقية  
**REAL POWER**

الطاقة الحقيقية  
تقدم باردا  
Serve Chilled

عبوة جديدة نفس المذاق الرائع

www.metcotrading.com