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- إمكانية الإتصال حتى بدون رصيد بالنسبة للمتصل، لكن يشترط توفر رصيد كاف لدى الطرف الآخر حتى تتم المكالمة.
- **إستقبال المكالمات :** عند ورود المكالمات سيظهر رقم المتصل على شاشة الموبايل وعند الرد سيستمع المتلقي إلى رسالة صوتية تطلب منه قبول المكالمات على حسابه بالضغط على الرقم 1 أو رفضها بالضغط على الرقم 2 وفي حال كانت المكالمات من رقم موجود في قائمة السماح، سيظهر رقم المتصل على شاشة الموبايل وعند الرد سيتم إستقبال المكالمات مباشرة دون إنتظار موافقة الطرف الآخر.
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# Over 30 killed and 40 injured in attack at police academy



Dozens of high school and university graduates who were queuing in front of the police academy in hope for a job were killed and injured when a car bomb went off in front of the academy on Wednesday morning.

Story and photo by  
**Ali Aboluhom**

**SANA'A, Jan. 7**—Over 30 were killed and 40 injured when a car bomb exploded in front of a police academy in Sana'a Wednesday morning.

High school and university graduates were queuing in front of the academy on Police Street when the bomb went off just before 7 a.m.

Jamal Al-Basari, an officer within the Ministry of Interior's Investigation Department who arrived at the scene, said the academy had begun accepting applications from candi-

dates beginning on Sunday, as part of a recruitment drive meant to last until Thursday. However according to Al-Basari, registration has stopped but will resume next week. Abdul Razaq Al-Marwani, a Special Forces commander whose team was the first to arrive at the scene, speculated that Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) members were responsible for the blast.

"AQAP has always tried to exploit loopholes in our security," he said. "We didn't take the necessary precautions when organizing the event. We should have intensified

security."

The victims were admitted to the Al-Thwara, Al-Jumhuria and Al-Kuwait state-run hospitals.

Abdul Qader Al-Mutawakel, an investigations officer whom the Yemen Times spoke with at the Al-Jumhuria hospital, said the hospital had received five of the dead and 13 injured. The rest were sent to the other hospitals.

A source from the Ministry of Health told the state-run Saba News Agency that the death toll had reached 30, but said the figure was likely to rise given the number of injuries.

Hussein Al-Radie, 20, a high school student who was queuing at the academy at the time of the explosion, was lucky to survive unscathed.

"We heard the blast at around 6:55a.m.," he said. "It shook the ground under our feet. We rushed towards the gate of the academy where we saw the bodies of students scattered everywhere. I burst into tears. Thank God I wasn't one of them," he said.

Nonetheless, Al-Radie intends on returning next week to complete his registration at the academy. "Hopefully security will be

strengthened next week," he said.

Minister of Health, Ryadh Yasin made an announcement on the state-run Saba News Agency immediately following the attack asking for individuals to donate blood to the Ministry of Health to help those with critical injuries.

As of Wednesday evening, no group has claimed responsibility for the attack.

This is the second time the police academy has been targeted. In July 2012 AQAP claimed responsibility for an attack outside the academy that resulted in eight deaths and over 20 injuries.

Members of AQAP released a message in late Dec. 25 2014 announcing the group's intention to carry out 100 attacks against Houthis throughout Yemen.



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## GPC member assassinated in Al-Baida, four others killed

■ **Ali Ibrahim Al-Moshki**

**SANA'A, Jan. 6**—A member of the General People's Congress's (GPC) standing committee and four others were killed in an ambush launched by armed assailants in the Al-Zaher district of Yemen's Al-Baida governorate on Tuesday. Three others were injured in the attack.

Ahmad Al-Hamdi, managing director of the state-run Saba News Agency's branch in Al-Baida governorate, claimed that GPC Standing Committee member Mohammad Abdul Qader Al-Sayed, two of his sons, GPC member Abdul Qader Hadar Al-Humaiqani, and a personal guard were all killed while driving through the Dhi Amaksab neighborhood of Al-Ghalima village in Al-Zaher district.

Armed assailants hiding behind several large rocks along the side of the road stopped the sheikhs' car and fired on those inside. Three other armed guards riding in the same vehicle were injured.

Abdul Salam Al-Salam Al-Yemeni, an officer in the Ministry of Interior's Security Administration Office in Al-Zaher district, told the Yemen Times that as of Wednesday afternoon the perpetrators had not been identified. As the Yemen Times was going to press, no person or group had yet claimed responsibility for the attack.

Abu Muqbel Al-Qaifi, a fighter with Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) based in Rada'a district, claimed that AQAP targeted Al-Sayed and those with him because of the former's alleged connection with the Houthis, also known as

Ansar Allah.

Mohammad Ali Al-Tahri, a resident of Al-Ghailama village, claimed that Al-Sayed is known locally as having pro-Houthi sympathies but is not a member of the organization.

Walid Al-Dailami, a prominent Houthi leader in Rada'a district, denied the two killed GPC members had any connection to Ansar Allah, adding that such attacks were launched simply to spread chaos throughout the region. "We're working to purge AQAP members from all of Al-Baida just as we did in Rada'a," he added.

The attack took place just several hours after five Houthis were killed in two separate IED attacks launched in different villages in Rada'a district within hours of each other. The first attack occurred

Tuesday morning in the Hummat Bani Sarar village when a Houthi military convoy drove over an IED, killing three people.

The second attack occurred around noon in the village of Al-Zub when another military convoy was struck by an IED, killing two. In both attacks, eyewitnesses told the Yemen Times that armed assailants fired on the targeted vehicles with RPGs after the initial IEDs had detonated. AQAP claimed responsibility for both attacks Tuesday evening.

The Rada'a district of Al-Baida governorate has seen numerous bloody clashes between Houthis and AQAP and allied tribesmen since the Houthis began to expand their presence in the area in mid-October, eventually taking control of Rada'a city.

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# Islah MP condemns meeting between Houthi and government representatives

■ Ali Ibrahim Al-Moshki

SANA'A, Jan. 6—Islah Party MP Ali Al-Ansi, speaking with the Yemen Times on Tuesday, denounced a meeting held the previous day in Sa'ada city between Houthi leader Abd Al-Malik Al-Houthi and a delegation of presidential advisors.

He said the delegates failed to reach a substantive agreement with Al-Houthi on the issues that were discussed, and that the delegation traveling to Sa'ada was a testament to the weakness of the presidency.

According to the state-run Saba News Agency, Houthi representatives and presidential delegates agreed to form a joint committee to implement and 'interpret' the Peace and National Partnership Agreement, including article 15, and its security annex, particularly articles 2 and 3.

Article 15 requires that unofficial checkpoints in and around Sana'a shall be dismantled, while articles 2 and 3 of the security annex stipulate all armed groups, including the Houthis, disarm themselves, return weapons seized from government military bases, and allow the army to secure and protect the country's governorates.

The presidential delegation included a number of prominent leaders from Yemen's various political factions, including Abdul Karim Al-Eryani and Rashad Al-Alimi from the General People's



Observers have been critical of a presidential delegation that recently traveled to Sa'ada, viewing it as a sign of the government's weakness.

Congress (GPC), Sultan Al-Atwani from the Nasserist Unionist People's Organization, Yahya Mansur Abu Esba from the Socialist party, Abdul Wahab Al-Ansi from the Islah Party, and Saleh Al-Sammad from the Houthi movement, also known as Ansar Allah. These delegates attended the meeting as presidential advisors, and not as representatives of their respective parties.

"The two sides agreed to implement the Peace and National Partnership Agreement, which has 17 articles and a security annex," according to Ali Al-Ansi. "They specifically discussed applying Article 16, which obligates all signatories

to form a joint committee monitored by the United Nations and aimed at resolving 'disputes' through dialogue," he said.

Al-Ansi was skeptical that the meeting would yield results, pointing to the fact that no written agreement was produced. "They didn't announce any deadline for the establishment of the committee, and I doubt they ever will," he said. "The state can't impose its will on Abdul Malik Al-Houthi, it's not strong enough," he said.

According to Ali Al-Qahoom, a member of the Houthi Political



Document produced by Yemen's Constitutional Committee, to authorize the passing of a new draft of the constitution. The committee is made up of various representatives from Yemen's political parties. Abdul Rahman Ahmed Hussein Mukhtar, the Houthi representative in the committee, was the only one not to sign.

Office in Sana'a, issues related to the drafting of Yemen's new constitution were also discussed at the meeting.

On Monday, Yemen's Constitutional Drafting Committee presented a draft of the constitution including articles that would split Yemen into six federal regions, as agreed at the National Dialogue Conference (NDC). All of Yemen's political party representatives serving in the committee approved the draft constitution, except the

Houthis, who have publicly come out against the six-region plan, and instead support splitting Yemen into two federal regions.

"We have consistently rejected the idea of splitting Yemen into six federal regions, and won't sign the constitution until this issue is re-considered," said Al-Qahoom.

"These divisions don't make sense in terms of population and resource distribution. Some governorates will benefit much more from this division than others," he added.

He confirmed that article 16 of the Peace and National Partnership Agreement had been discussed at the meeting, but conceded that no deadline had been established for when the joint committee would be formed.

"We won't agree to establish the committee until after the six federal region issue is addressed," he said. He would not specify further.

Abdul Malik Al-Fuhaidi, editor-in-chief of Al-Motamar Net, the political mouthpiece of the GPC, described the meeting as a positive step towards implementing the Peace and National Partnership Agreement.

"I hope the articles of the agreement are properly implemented in order for Yemen to come out of its current crisis," he said. "However it's true, sending delegates to Sa'ada, as opposed to having them come to Sana'a, shows how weak the government truly is."

## IN BRIEF

### Ministry of Information condemns "forced" resignation of Al-Thawra editor-in-chief

SANA'A, Jan. 7—The Ministry of Information on Tuesday condemned the storming of the home of Al-Thawra newspaper's editor-in-chief, and called his resignation "forced."

Faisal Mukaram is both the head of the board of directors and the editor-in-chief of the state-run newspaper.

"The Ministry of Information strongly condemns [the Houthis'] storming of the house of Faisal Mukaram and his forced resignation," read a statement released by the ministry on Tuesday.

The ministry said Mukaram wrote a resignation letter addressed to the Minister of Information under threats from the popular committees.

However, Dhaif Allah Al-Shami, a member of the Houthi Political Office, denied the allegations and said popular committees did not storm Mukaram's house.

"Mukaram resigned willingly following the demands of his resignation by Al-Thawra staff," Al-Shami said.

The Houthis stormed Al-Thawra newspaper on Dec. 16 under the pretext of combating corruption. They remain in control of the newspaper.

### Reconstruction efforts in Sada'a entering final phase

SANA'A, Jan. 7—The Sada'a Reconstruction Fund (SRF) began on Tuesday to provide the final cash payments for 473 beneficiaries in Sa'ada governorate.

The beneficiaries are owners of houses and farms that were destroyed during a series of wars in Sa'ada between 2004 and 2010.

"The beneficiaries are in 11 districts of the governorate and received YR138 million (\$642,000)," the Defense Ministry's website quoted Mohammed Abdulla Thabit, executive director of the SRF, as saying.

Thabit said the fund's budget in 2014 was YR2 billion (\$9.3 million), but that it received only YR250 million (\$1.1 million) in September.

"Prime Minister Khalid Bahah shows more urgency toward the fund," he said. "More beneficiaries will receive money once we receive funding from the government."

### Drugs confiscated at Hodeida checkpoint

SANA'A, Jan. 7— Police in the Bajil district of Hodeida governorate on Tuesday confiscated 61 kilogram of hashish.

Abdulkhakim Al-Malahi, director of the Bajil Police Department, was quoted on the interior ministry's website as saying the drugs were confiscated at a check point and were being transported in a Toyota Hilux car. He said the driver fled and is still being pursued.

The incident comes following a statement by the Drugs Control Department of the Ministry of Interior declaring that three tons of drugs will be destroyed within the next few days.

# Southerners wary of Baha's decentralization plan

■ Khalid Al-Karimi

SANA'A, Jan. 6—Protestors and Southern Movement members in Aden are skeptical of claims by Prime Minister Khalid Bahah that Aden city will become a financial and administrative center for the region.

Bahah outlined the government's vision while speaking with the state-run Saba News Agency on Monday. As part of the six-region federal system planned for Yemen, which was a key outcome of the National Dialogue Conference (NDC), Aden is to provide a financial and administrative center for the future Aden federal region, comprising the current governorates of Lahj, Abyan and Al-Dhale.

"Reforms targeting finance and government administration in the south are part of a 90-day plan devised by the ministries of finance and civil service," Bahah told Saba.

The prime minister said the move is critical as the country prepares for federalism, and hopes the initiative will smooth over the effects of decentralization in the southern

governorates. It came in response to concerns that the effects of decentralization could be disruptive if the framework is adopted in all regions at once.

Abdullah Rashid, a prominent member of the Southern Movement based in Aden, said the plan was unrealistic given the limited resources available to Aden.

"I don't expect this plan to work when the governorate [of Aden] doesn't have the infrastructure required for it. One simple example is the lack of stable provisions of electricity. The prime minister's real objective is to placate people in the southern governorates," he said.

Rashid also expressed doubts about the ability of the government to enforce the plan, and questioned the feasibility of the six-region federal system over a longer term. "If the government has not been able to control a centralized state, how would it be capable of managing a federal state," he asked.

Zaid Al-Shami, a member of parliament and leading figure in the Islah Party, said making Aden the financial and administrative center

requires a great deal of planning. "The purpose behind Bahah's statement is to restore the economic status of Aden governorate, but he is also trying to assure the southern people that the government will implement the NDC outcomes," he said.

According to Sami Khairan, a protestor in Aden city's Al-Arood Square, Baha's proposal is not enough to convince people in the south that he controls government in Yemen. "The Houthis [Ansar Allah] are holding control of the northern areas, and this means Bahah and his government are in no position to implement the NDC outcomes. Sectarian conflict in the north has undermined the NDC outcomes," he said.

Southern protestors have camped out in Al-Arood square since Oct. 14, the date marking South Yemen's independence from the British.

Emad Mohammad, the general manager of the Ministry of Human Rights office in Aden is less cynical. He believes the prime minister's intentions are genuine, although he has doubts about the plan under



Pointing to continued instability and a lack of resources, many in the south are skeptical of the Prime Minister's 90-day plan to create an Aden federal region.

current circumstances.

"The Southern Movement is very active and the state is weak. Baha's plan is ambitious, it will require more security and stability in the region if it is to work," he said.

The Southern Movement was es-

established in 2007. It is composed of protest groups calling for various degrees of autonomy from the central government. The south includes the governorates of Aden, Hadramout, Lahj, Abyan, Al-Dhale, Al-Mahra, and Shabwa.

# Fate of eight arrested sheikhs in Arhab unknown

■ Ali Ibrahim Al-Moshki

SANA'A, Jan. 5—Houthis stationed in Sana'a governorate's Arhab district arrested eight tribal sheikhs in the Bait Marran village on Monday. As of Wednesday, their fate remains unknown.

Abdullah Ali Al-Marani, a resident of Bait Marran, told the Yemen Times that those arrested included prominent tribal sheikhs with links to the Islah party.

"Sheikh Ahmad Al-Marani, a local Islah party leader, was one of those arrested," he said. "[The Houthis] have been conducting raids and looking for him for several weeks."

The Houthis, also known as Ansar Allah, took control of Arhab district on Dec. 13 after tribal meditations between Ansar Allah and the tribes of Arhab resulted in the district being handed over without any resistance.

Arhab district had been known as an Islah Party stronghold prior to Ansar Allah's takeover of the area, and in the days following the agreement sporadic clashes took place in the district between Houthis and Islah supporters.

Houthis began a large campaign of arrests in the area on Dec. 27. It came after Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) took responsibility for an ambush on Houthi members stationed near the village of Bani Jarmuz and the Al-Sama Republican Guard military base that led to the deaths of 20 Houthi members.

Jamil Al-Jandabi, a prominent tribal sheikh in Bait Marran, claimed the number of those arrested was 30. "They're being held by the Houthis in unknown locations throughout the district," he said. "We've tried finding them but they're not registered at any police stations in the area."

Ali Al-Qahoom, a member of the Houthi Political Office in Sana'a, confirmed that Ansar Allah arrested eight men on Monday, adding that they had been turned over to security forces stationed in the district. He accused those detained of having ties to AQAP.

"We don't arrest anyone unless we have evidence that they were involved in attacks against Ansar Allah, or are planning attacks in the future," he said. "AQAP has sleeper cells in Arhab, we're combing the area to find them."

Al-Jandabi said that armed AQAP supporters existed in the area, however he claimed that many of those arrested were not members of the organization. He would not comment as to whether or not AQAP and Islah Party members were coordinating in Arhab.

Abdul Majid Jahzer, an officer within the Arhab district's Security



Previously an Islah Party stronghold, Houthis began a campaign of arrests following their takeover of Arhab district on Dec. 13.

Operations Department, said that one man who had been involved in orchestrating a bombing several weeks prior was being held in custody by local security forces.

"The man is being interrogated by Houthi popular committee members who cooperate with security forces," he said. "We've got word that there

are around eight other men also being held by the Houthis, but we don't know where they are currently," he added.

The Yemen Times contacted several Islah Party leaders regarding the arrest campaign being carried out in Arhab district. All officials contacted declined to comment.

# Green or white?

## Mosques' colors signal religious-political affiliation

Story and photos by  
**Bassam Al-Khameri**

Each year, Muslims throughout the world gather to celebrate the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad on the 12th day of the Islamic month Rabia Al-Awwal, albeit in different ways. Within Yemen, a country that has long been fractured along regional, sectarian and tribal lines, different communities have adopted different traditions when celebrating the holiday. This year, following the Houthi takeover of Sana'a on Sept. 21, two of those traditions have clashed head on, with the Houthis' extravagant celebrations conflicting at times with those of other Yemenis.

The Houthis, who are mostly adherents to the Zaydi sect of Shia Islam, have taken to painting the tops of many local mosques green in the weeks leading up to the celebration of the Prophet's birthday. Houthis believe green to be the color of the Prophet Muhammad's grave and the turban he wore when he was alive.

Traditionally, mosques in Sana'a and many other parts of Yemen and the Muslim world are painted white. Long considered a traditional part of Islamic heritage, in Yemen the color bore little to no political significance until recently. However now, many residents have come to associate white mosques with the Salafi movement and the Islah political party.

Already before the Prophet's birthday on Jan. 3, many mosques in Sana'a have been painted green. Among them is the Badr Mosque in the city's Al-Safia neighborhood—a known center of Houthi activity in the city. It is there that Zayid Al-Muhawari, a prominent and well-known Houthi preacher, has regularly held sermons and established a personal office after Sept. 21. Other mosques, not directly affiliated

ample of how such polarization has affected the city and its residents. A resident of Sana'a, Mohammed has spent decades working in local a tailor shop in Tahrir Square, and has long attended prayers and sermons at the Qubat Al-Mutawakel mosque. However recently, he has made a conscious effort to stop going.

"After they painted Qubat Al-Mutawakel green I started attending prayers at other mosques in the area," he said. "I'm not a Houthi and don't know what prompted them to paint it green, but I don't go in anymore. Mosques are worshipping spaces and shouldn't be turned into a theatre for politics," he explained. "This mosque was built during the era of Imam Qasim bin Al-Hussein almost 400 years ago, it's not their right to change it."

Mohammad Al-Madhuri is the warden of the Qubat Al-Mutawakel Mosque, appointed by Yemen's Ministry of Endowments. Responsible for maintaining the grounds of the mosque, he told the Yemen Times that Houthis had arrived in the week leading up to the celebration and painted the mosque's dome green.

"They promised to repaint it white after the celebrations were over, however this hasn't happened as of yet," he said. "The preachers in the mosque aren't Houthis and there's no way this could be considered a 'Houthi' mosque," he added. "They came on their own accord and decided to do this."

Houthi preparations for the holiday haven't been limited to just mosques. Walking through Sana'a four days after the Prophet's birthday, one can still find cars, motorcycles and sidewalks painted green. Quranic verses remain written in green on walls and green flags and billboards hung throughout the city. On the eve of the holiday, many Houthis launched fireworks and fired live ammunition into the air to express their happiness and



Many Yemenis feel places of worship should remain separate from politics and have been angered by a Houthi campaign to paint mosques green in celebration of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday.

Houthi celebratory preparations including the painting of mosques, and tagging of religious inscriptions on walls have even extended into Sana'a's old city, which was deemed a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1986. Many residents view the new additions as blatant violations of Yemen's commitment to preserving the old city. Abdullah Al-Yamani, a local resident of the city, objects to actions whose effects remain permanent. "I don't mind

people hanging up flags or posters, but painting mosques and writing inscriptions on the old city walls permanently distorts the site and shouldn't be allowed," he said.

The Yemen Times spoke with Naji Thawaba, Chairman of the General Organization of the Preservation of Historical Cities (GOPHC), within the Ministry of Culture, which has been tasked since 1996 with preserving Yemen's various

historical sites. "A delegation from the GOPHC contacted the Houthi leadership last week and asked them to cease their activities in the old city," he said. "We've been in contact with UNESCO in recent months, which has expressed its concern with the state of old Sana'a in general. If the historical nature of the city is further compromised it could be removed from the World Heritage List," he added. The Yemen Times made repeated calls to UNESCO however was not able to receive a comment from the organization.

Paintings and street art produced by various artists have also been targeted or removed as a

result of the campaign. In the wake of Yemen's uprising in 2011, Murad Subay, a young artist, participated in a number of street art campaigns throughout the country, including "The Walls Remember their Faces," in which the faces of martyrs who had died in the events following the uprising were tagged in graffiti on walls throughout Ibb, Sana'a, and other cities. Another, non-politicized campaign, included "Paint the walls of your Street" campaign, in which Subay and others painted murals throughout the streets of Sana'a of uplifting imagery in an attempt to beautify the city.

In recent weeks, many of Subay's paintings had been removed, covered or replaced with murals containing Houthi slogans and Quranic verses. "The campaign [The Walls Remember their Faces] was supposed to be a commemoration of those who died in the uprising, to preserve their memory forever," Subay said. "Now their faces are gone." Subay admitted that he thought about making a complaint with the Houthi leadership, but ultimately decided against it. "There's no point," he said. "They didn't care about my paintings when they painted over them, there's no reason to think they'd care now."

Many Houthi leaders, when asked about the recent campaign to paint mosques green and inscribe Houthi slogans on city walls, have denied the organization is involved in encouraging such behavior. Muhammad Al-Bukhaiti, a member of the Houthi Political Office in Sana'a, told the Yemen Times that those responsible for changes in the city's landscape are individuals. "We in the Political Office, and within Ansar Allah's national leadership, have never given orders to our members or supporters to take part in any such campaign," he said. "Some of our members may have participated in painting various facilities green, or plastering our slogans on walls, however in the end they are ultimately the ones responsible."

Other members of the Political Office have gone so far as to denounce the campaign. Whether this represents a further attempt by the Houthis to distance themselves from actions being taken, or

an example of rare self-criticism, is unclear.

In a post on his personal Facebook page on Dec. 30, Ali Al-Bukhaiti criticized the practice of painting mosques green and engaging in any activity that could be seen as harmful to the sanctity of old Sana'a.

"Some people are taking part in campaigns that are distorting the nature of a number of historical areas and buildings," he wrote. "This needs to be stopped. People can use banners and posters rather than painting mosques or permanently inscribing text on city walls."

Furthermore, Ali Al-Bukhaiti warned of the potential of such actions to further polarize Yemen's political environment. "[These practices] could make it so that people

will only attend mosques with those who have the same political orientation as themselves," he said. "In such circumstances, mosques will turn into headquarters for political parties and not centers for religion."

Ali Al-Bukhaiti went so far as to claim that Subay should receive an apology for having his paintings removed. Despite this call, and others like it, it appears that the Houthi Political Office in Sana'a does not intend to take responsibility for the actions of its members. "Any gripes citizens have should be directed to those specific individuals, whether members of Ansar Allah or not, who took part in these specific acts," Muhammad Al-Bukhaiti reiterated. "This is not the responsibility of the Houthi leadership."



An example of a former "Paint the Walls of Your Street" mural in Sana'a's Hadda neighborhood, painted over with Quranic inscriptions in preparation the celebration of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday.

with the Houthi movement, such as the Qubat Al-Mutawakel mosque in Tahrir square, have been painted green more recently in the lead up to the celebration.

The choice of color, although rooted in culture and tradition, has polarized the city along political party lines, with Houthi supporters flocking to green mosques and those opposing them or remaining neutral attending mosques painted white. The act of not painting one's mosque green is seen by some as taking an active stance against the Houthis, and a statement of support for their traditional opponents, the Islah party.

Abdul Salam Mohammad is an ex-

enthusiasm for the Prophet.

This is a far cry from the more modest celebrations practiced by many Sunnis and local residents of Sana'a, which often consist of attending sermons in mosques about the life and times of the Prophet Muhammad, usually between the Maghreb and Asha prayer sessions. Surur Al-Wadei, spokesman for the Salafi Rashad party, told the Yemen Times that for Salafis and some Sunnis the day of the Prophet's birthday is a day for mourning as well as celebration. "The prophet died on the 12th of Rabia Al-Awwal, the same day as his birth," he said. "It's sacrilegious to engage in overly joyous behavior."

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## OUR OPINION

### How the youth movement was pacified by a transitional process

The Houthis and Al-Qaeda dominate many headlines concerning Yemen—including the headlines of the Yemen Times. What is noticeably absent in Yemen coverage is news regarding independent youth—the movement behind the country's 2011 uprising.

Four years after its Arab Spring, the country is faring worse than it did before the protests. Unemployment, one of the driving factors of the protests, hovers around 60 percent, and many youth who enthusiastically came out to push for change are tired and disillusioned.

There are different explanations behind their current silence. Many say it is a result of marginalization, and that the youth movement has taken a back-seat to the dramas taking place between the Houthis, Islah, Al-Qaeda and the Ali Abdullah Saleh camp. Others think their strategy has been one of "wait-and-see".

After the takeover of the capital by Houthis, many youth feared that coming out against the group might leave them vulnerable to becoming pawns in a tug-of-war between the Houthis and Islah.

Since their takeover, the Houthis have promised to clear the country of corruption and to open up the political space for other actors to push for change. Their actions have hardly matched their rhetoric, but a resetting of the country's power dynamics—something the National Dialogue and transitional process did not accomplish—was a promise worth hoping for.

The coalition government established by the GCC initiative gave half the government seats to the former ruling party and the other half to the Joint Meetings Party, a coalition of opposition groups. The youth cleared out of Change Square and agreed to peace talks, and pacification ensued.

If the youth movement wants to compete for a shot in shaping the country, they need to reorganize—and quickly. The movement needs to set out its priorities and its next few steps, and it needs to take a series of actions.

If there's one lesson the movement should have learned by now, it's that their power is a result of a mass social movement. They're not powerful political actors, they don't get funds from regional countries engaged in a proxy war and they're not any sort of existential threat that needs to be reckoned with.

They can't afford to just sit at a table and wait to see what they are offered. The movement can participate in the transitional process while still mobilizing its members in protests and actions. Otherwise, they risk being pacified by endless meetings and a shallow inclusion.

Ahlam Mohsen  
Deputy editor-in-chief

# Why the GCC's hands are tied over Yemen

## The Gulf states are reluctant spectators in their own backyard.

Sharif Nashashibi  
Aljazeera.com  
First published Jan. 6

In recent months, the Gulf Cooperation Council has watched with increasing concern as events in Yemen spiral out of control. Two developments in the first few days of 2015 alone highlight the urgency of the situation.

According to a report by a Yemeni think-tank, the Abaad Centre for Strategic Studies, Shia Houthi rebels control some 70 percent of the army's capabilities, and the political transition following the ouster of President Ali Abdullah Saleh has failed. Furthermore, the Houthis are threatening to capture the oil-rich Marib province.

Following sweeping military advances last year, they control Yemen's capital and swathes of the country, including parts of the Sunni heartland. After long-held grievances over their community's marginalisation, the Houthis have achieved unprecedented political sway as kingmakers in the present government. Capturing Marib would greatly bolster their economic influence.

### Scenarios and consequences

The GCC faces several scenarios, all unpleasant. The Houthis could further extend their control over Yemen. A country long regarded as the GCC's sphere of influence could become a satellite state of regional arch-rival Iran, which has been increasingly vocal about its support for the Houthis.

Another scenario is that Yemen cements its status as a failed state as it descends into all-out civil war, with various parties - the Houthis, Sunni tribes, al-Qaeda and government forces - fighting each other. The country could break apart, as Houthi advances galvanise a southern secessionist movement, and the warring parties try to maintain their respective areas of control.

The GCC could face direct consequences from any of the aforementioned scenarios. Violence could spill over into neighbouring Saudi Arabia, which shares a long and porous border, and has previously fought the Houthis.

Shia control, if not greater influence, in Yemen could also inflame sectarian tensions within GCC states as Shia communities press their rights, particularly in Bahrain, eastern Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) has been galvanised by Houthi advances, with Yemenis joining its ranks, and Sunni tribes that once fought against it now joining forces against a common enemy.

As AQAP targets Yemeni authorities as well as the Houthis, a jihadist resurgence poses a regional security headache. This is particularly true for Riyadh, which has waged a years-long domestic campaign against al-Qaeda, and is trying to stop its citizens going abroad to join jihadist groups.

The turmoil in Yemen could lead to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) establishing a foothold there. Like al-Qaeda, ISIL portrays itself as a bulwark

against Shia expansionism, so Yemen could provide fertile ground. Furthermore, the US-led campaign in Iraq and Syria - of which Gulf states are a part - has led the two organisations to bury their differences and threaten coalition members.

### Limited options

The GCC has issued joint and individual statements condemning Houthi and Iranian influence in Yemen. A joint statement of interior ministers said their countries would not "stand idly" in the face of foreign intervention, and "Yemeni and GCC security is indivisible". However, the Council's options are limited and risky.

There are recent reports that GCC states have suspended economic aid, which is a lifeline for poverty-stricken Yemen. Military aid has also reportedly been halted. The rationale behind this may be twofold: to avoid money and weapons falling into Houthi hands as they increasingly control state institutions; and to ward off state and public cooperation with the rebels.

However, suspending aid considerably weakens the state, thereby empowering the Houthis as well as al-Qaeda. It also does nothing to limit Iranian support for the Houthis, which may increase to fill the gap, giving Tehran even greater leverage. In addition, the loss of Gulf aid may anger the Yemeni public if it views this as collective punishment rather than a targeted measure against a minority group.

A military response is not a credible option. The situation in Yemen is far different and much more complex than in Bah-

rain, which GCC troops entered in 2011 at the monarchy's request.

There are no calls within Yemen for foreign military intervention. Bahrain is a GCC member, so the perceived collective need, or duty, to respond is greater than with non-member Yemen. Bahrain is more geographically central to the other Council states, 690 times smaller in land mass and 18 times smaller in population.

Manama's authority was still largely intact prior to its neighbours' entry, unlike Sana'a's, and the success of the GCC's intervention was assured because Bahraini opposition was unarmed. In Yemen, however, the warring parties are well-supplied and battle-hardened. Gulf troops would end up fighting not just the Houthis and al-Qaeda, but tribes and other forces opposed to foreign intervention.

In addition to the multi-layered divisions in the country, this means that any foreign military involvement would result either in outright failure or in a long-term quagmire that would be costly, domestically unpopular, and likely to result in "blowback". The relatively stable Gulf monarchies would be keen to avoid these risks.

The GCC is aware of its limited options, as are the Houthis and Iran. As such, we are likely to see continued condemnatory statements, as well as punitive economic measures whose effectiveness is questionable. The Gulf states are reluctant spectators in their own backyard. The best they can aim for, given current circumstances, is to limit spill-over rather than directly influence events in Yemen.

# Syria: The Gutman Report

Frederic C. Hof  
Atlantic Council  
First published Jan. 5

Turkey-based, Pulitzer Prize winning reporter Roy Gutman of McClatchy closed out 2014 with a dispatch that would be shocking if only there were still capacity for shock when it comes to Washington's Syria policy. Gutman reported being told by Syrian opposition leaders of being ignored by the Obama administration last April when they warned of a major ISIL (Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant) offensive brewing. The alleged warning centered on Deir Ezzor in eastern Syria rather than on Iraq; still, nationalist opposition requests for more material to fight ISIL were reportedly ignored. According to Gutman, "Moderate rebels, despite their battlefield setbacks, have unique assets, such as ground-level intelligence about the locations and movements of the Islamic State, a grasp of local politics and the drive to expel foreign-led forces from their country. But they've failed to gain traction with the Obama administration for their plans to fight the terror groups, and recently they've had trouble even getting a hearing."

These are, of course, serious accusations: Easily deniable, whether true or not. Yet the Department of State and the US Central Command both declined to comment. "No comment" admits nothing. Yet if the report that the administration ignored the warning of major ISIL offensive percolating two months before it happened is false, it would have been easy enough for the media-savvy Obama team to warn a Pulitzer Prize winner away from pursuing a false lead and give him a flat denial for the record. It did not do so.

Roy Gutman is neither an enemy of the Obama administration nor a purveyor of gossip. These facts do not necessarily confirm the accuracy of the story he is reporting. The leaders of the Syrian National Co-

alition—recognized in December 2012 by the United States and others as the legitimate representative of the Syrian people—is totally at sea in its relationship with the Obama administration: an administration claiming to be at war with ISIL and authorized by the Congress to train and equip non-jihadist Syrian rebels. Without necessarily assuming that opposition exiles in Istanbul and nationalist units inside Syria have something decisive or even useful to offer, is it not a proposition worth testing?

Sadly, the Gutman story will likely only increase the alienation of Washington from the nationalist opposition. The White House has learned to live with the mass murder survival strategy of the Assad regime: it does not wish to cross Iran on this matter. The mainstream Syrian opposition, on the other hand, has been rendered largely dysfunctional and divided by Saudis, Turks, Qataris, and the rest: regional actors pursuing narrow interests and never brought to heel by Washington. It is easy for this administration to ridicule, belittle, blame, and ignore the Syrian opposition. It is an easy target; a target that can be engaged—leaving aside a possible missed clue about ISIL—with impunity. The president of the Syrian National Coalition is not, after all, someone whose reservations about American policy can translate into a beating for the United States. He is not Iran's Supreme Leader. He is not Bashar al-Assad.

It is not inconceivable that the Syrian National Coalition President at the time, Hadi al-Bahra, chose to mislead Gutman about the nature of the April 17, 2014 warning about ISIL. Neither is it beyond belief that Syrian opposition characterization of a senior American official as a passive, one-way "complaint box" is unfair and inaccurate. Whether manufactured or not, the consequences of the allegations will not be positive. Administration contempt for Syrian nationalists will increase, whether the claims are true or not. And, to the extent Roy Gutman is read inside

Syria, the Syrian National Coalition has advertised to the constituents it seeks its ineffectiveness with respect to the Obama administration. Perhaps the nationalist opposition calculates that Congress will oblige the administration to act as if the war against ISIL in Syria is a serious undertaking. This too would be a mistake. There are indeed members of Congress—Democrats and Republicans, senators and representatives—who believe with conviction that the administration's Syria policy has been wrong in ways far transcending Syria. They are far outnumbered by those for whom mass murder in Syria and the sacrifice of American credibility brought about by speaking loudly with no stick are regrettable, but neither fatal nor fixable. And the president seems unmoved and unmovable. Does he see his approach to Syria as a function of the "strategic patience" with which he credits himself?

President Obama's flirtation with military strikes in the wake of the Assad regime's August 2013 chemical atrocity inspired Russia to intervene diplomatically with extraordinary skill and dexterity. By convincing his client to give up his chemical weapons, Moscow blunted the threat of American strikes while freeing Assad to ramp up his war crimes and crimes against humanity in a non-chemical manner: leaving aside, of course, chlorine bombs. Now, faced with rumors that the Obama administration would recognize the obvious—that Assad is the primary cause and principal sustainer of the ISIL phenomenon in Syria—Russian diplomacy is again in full swing. Fearful that the Obama administration might actually consider excluding regime aircraft from a Syrian protected zone, and worried that the train and equip program for Syrian nationalists might be real, Russia has called for peace negotiations later this month in Moscow. As long as Washington is frozen long enough for Assad and ISIL to rout nationalists from Aleppo, it costs Moscow nothing to convince its client to

send a delegation to chat.

This too is problematic for the American-designated legitimate representatives of the Syrian people. The Syrian National Coalition played the administration's losing Geneva game in early 2014; it did so with dignity and competence in the face of regime defiance. It has every right to ignore the Russian gambit and simply suggest that the P5 let it know when the Assad regime is prepared to implement the terms of the June 2012 Geneva Final Communiqué. Indeed, the only Syria-related peace conference that would make any sense at present would be one in which Tehran and Moscow convince their client to be bound by the Final Communiqué. This seems not to be what they have in mind.

Still, the Syrian opposition seems to be on its own, a condition not likely to be rectified by its conversations with Roy Gutman. One might say that opposition leaders have, unlike Bashar al-Assad, been unlucky with their "friends." For Syria and its people, however, bad luck has had the most horrific of consequences. It is not too late for American policy to change fundamentally, especially given the requirement that ISIL be beaten in Syria—not just Iraq. But the administration seems single-minded in its pursuit of a nuclear agreement with Iran—a worthy goal to be sure. Is the goal made more achievable by bowing to Tehran and its client in Damascus? And if it is, who will want to confront the bill—particularly the itemization of children slaughtered and innocent lives brought to ruin? Perhaps this too can be blamed on those who had the temerity to risk all for civilized governance in Syria.

Frederic C. Hof is a resident senior fellow with the Atlantic Council's Rafik Hari Center for the Middle East.

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# Assassinations targeting security and military personnel in 2014

## ■ Bassam Al-Khameri

A recent study released by the Sana'a-based Abaad Studies and Research Centre noted that over 7,700 Yemenis were killed in armed clashes in 2014. According to the study these figures represent a threefold increase from the toll of 2011.

While numerous military and security personnel were killed in fighting throughout the country, many were also victims of targeted assassinations. Most of these assassinations were carried out by anonymous

gunmen, commonly described by security sources and government officials as terrorists or affiliates of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).

The Yemen Times has created a timeline of assassinations to provide a comprehensive account of all military and security personnel targeted and killed over the previous year. The majority of attacks took place in the governorates of Sana'a, Aden, Hadramout, Lahj, Taiz, Ibb and Al-Baida and were most commonly directed at military officials of high rank, particularly those working with the Political Security Bureau.

## January

- Jan. 2:** Marwan Ahmed Saeed Al-Moqbli, a colonel with the Political Security Bureau, was assassinated by gunmen in a Nissan-brand car in the Al-Qaloah area of Al-Tawahi district, Aden governorate.
- Jan. 7:** Saleh Al-Qadi, a colonel with the Political Security Bureau in Aden, and his driver sustained serious injuries when their car exploded in the Sirah district of Aden.
- Jan. 7:** Colonel Mohammed Lashram was killed and Colonel Mohammed Hussein wounded by gunmen in the Sheikh Othman district of Aden. Both victims worked in the Military Supply Department of the Third Military Command in Marib governorate.
- Jan. 14:** Colonel Abdulghani Al-Maqaleh, director of the Yemen Economic Corporation (YECO) branch in Sayoun city, was assassinated by two gunmen on a motorbike in Sayoun, Hadramout.
- Jan. 16:** Colonel Mohammed Al-Qodaimi, head of the Political Security Bureau in Aden, was assassinated by gunmen driving a car in the Al-Buraiqa district of Aden governorate.
- Jan. 18:** Major Basil Mohammed Muthana, an officer of the Political Security Bureau in Lahj, was assassinated by two gunmen on a motorbike in Al-Hawta city, Lahj governorate.
- Jan. 18:** An Iranian diplomat was assassinated by gunmen on a pick-up truck in Sana'a.
- Jan. 19:** Colonel Abdulghani Al-Turjomi, chief of the 30 November Police Station in Taiz city, sustained serious injuries when two gunmen on a motorbike shot him near Al-Thawra Hospital in Taiz city. He died from his injuries five days later.
- Jan. 21:** Prof. Ahmed Sharaf Al-Deen, a Houthi representative at the National Dialogue Conference (NDC), was assassinated by gunmen on a Toyota-brand Hilux car on Al-Qahera Street, Sana'a city.
- Jan. 21:** Mahmoud Abdulla Rajeh, Public Works Affairs' advisor to the Lahj governor, was assassinated when a bomb planted in his car exploded in Lahj.
- Jan. 26:** Sergeant Ahmed Omaid, director of the Criminal Investigations Department in Wadi, Hadramout, was assassinated by gunmen on a Toyota-brand Hilux car in the Main Street of Sayoun city, Hadramout.
- Jan. 26:** Lieutenant Colonel Hussein Al-Areef, Security Chief of Marib governorate, was killed along with one of his escorts during clashes with the 10th Military Brigade in Hodeida city.

## February

- Feb. 2:** Colonel Ali Halif, operational head of the Special Security Forces, was injured when a bomb fastened to his car exploded in the Khor Maktar district of Aden governorate.
- Feb. 5:** Captain Fadi Al-Jabali, commander of the second battalion of the Special Security Forces, was assassinated by gunmen in Sheikh Othman district, Aden.
- Feb. 9:** Mohammed Fadhel Saeed Hussein, a colonel with

the Political Security Bureau, was killed and one of his escorts wounded when a bomb fastened to his car exploded in Al-Zubairi Street, Sana'a city.

- Feb. 16:** Brigadier Taha Ali Qasim, director of the Administrative Base in the First Military Command, escaped an assassination attempt by gunmen on a motorbike in Sayoun city, Hadramout.
- Feb. 19:** Yaqub Yusuf Darwish, a soldier in the Public Security Department at the Interior Ministry, was assassinated by two gunmen on a motorbike in Marib governorate.
- Feb. 21:** Mansour Ali Al-Jabali, a non-commissioned officer of the Special Security Forces, was assassinated by gunmen in the Al-Makhader district of Ibb governorate.
- Feb. 22:** Colonel Ahmed Hashim, the office director of the head of the Political Security Bureau in Shabwa, was assassinated by gunmen in Shabwa.
- Feb. 24:** Non-Commissioned Officer Hussein Mohammed Al-Jahri, director of the Criminal Investigations Department in Al-Shehr district, Hadramout governorate, escaped an assassination attempt by two gunmen on a motorbike after he left his office.
- Feb. 28:** Colonel Mazin Al-Ban, deputy security chief of Tuban district, Lahj governorate, was assassinated by gunmen in the district.

## March

- March 2:** Colonel Sadeq Al-Hadad, security chief of Al-Sharia district, Al-Baida governorate, was assassinated by gunmen in Rada'a city, Al-Baida.
- March 2:** Colonel Nassr Al-Raday, director of the Criminal Investigations Department in Al-Sharia district, was also assassinated by gunmen in Rada'a city.
- March 4:** Brigadier Qasim Labozah, commander of the Second Infantry Brigade in Shabwa, escaped an ambush in Maifa'a district, Shabwa. Two of his escorts were killed.
- March 6:** Abdulmalik Hameed Al-Othari, a colonel with the Political Security Bureau, was assassinated by two gunmen on a motorbike on the Airport Street of Sana'a city.
- March 10:** Mohammed Zuhra, a colonel within Military Intelligence, escaped an assassination attempt by gunmen on a motorbike in Hadda district, Sana'a.
- March 14:** Tariq Sharaf, an officer with the Political Security Bureau, was killed in Khor Maktar district of Aden in a shootout with gunmen who attempted to kidnap Judge Mohammed Al-Shaghdari, head of the Taiz Commercial Court.
- March 16:** Tariq Al-Hakami, an officer with the Political Security Bureau, was assassinated by gunmen in Aden.
- March 21:** Non-Commissioned Officer Jameel Ali Saleh, working for the Investigations Department in Al-Mansura Police Station, was assassinated by gunmen in Al-Mansura district, Aden.
- March 23:** Colonel Abdulla Mufadhhal, head of the Insurance Section in the Officers' Affairs Department at the Defense Ministry, together with his son sustained

injuries when gunmen shot at them in the Al-Hassaba area of Sana'a.

- March 25:** Sheikh Ali Saleh Abu Suraimah, director of Sabah district, Al-Baida governorate, escaped an assassination attempt by two gunmen on a motorbike in Rada'a city.
- March 26:** Colonel Sanad Al-Ja'bi, Protection Officer in the Armed Forces Lands Section in the Fourth Military Command, was assassinated when his car exploded in Al-Mansura district of Aden.
- March 28:** Major Hani Hamdan and Non-Commissioned Officer Salah Ali Al-Faqeeh, working in the Special Tasks Department in Al-Dhale governorate, were killed by gunmen in Damt city, Al-Dhale.
- March 31:** Abdulqawi Al-Amri, a soldier in the Special Security Forces, was assassinated by gunmen in Al-Dhale governorate.

## April

- April 4:** Five soldiers were killed and two others wounded in an attack by gunmen on a military checkpoint in the Al-Qatan district of Hadramout governorate.
- April 8:** Brigadier Hussein Mohammed Daian, deputy governor of Al-Baida governorate, was assassinated by gunmen in Al-Baida city.
- April 11:** Officer Hemiar Al-Husam, of the Bani Huwat Police Station in Sana'a, was assassinated by two gunmen on a motorbike on Airport Street, Sana'a city.
- April 12:** Saleh Bahlool, a soldier in Tarim city, Hadramout, was killed in an attack by gunmen on two military vehicles in the Al-Swairi area of Tarim.
- April 13:** Mohammed Saleh Naji, a non-commissioned officer in the Criminal Investigations Department in Lahj governorate, was assassinated by gunmen in the Main Street of Al-Hawta city, Lahj.
- April 16:** A soldier was killed and another wounded in an attack by gunmen on a military barricade in Al-Shehr city, Hadramout.
- April 17:** Lieutenant Colonel Khalid Al-Ghafari was assassinated by gunmen in a Toyota-brand Hilux car in Sayoun city, Hadramout.
- April 21:** Fares Huwaida, the personal bodyguard of the director of Sana'a Airport, was assassinated by two gunmen on a motorcycle on Airport Street, Sana'a city.
- April 21:** Colonel Ahmed Abdulla Al-Najdi, an officer with the Political Security Bureau, was assassinated by anonymous gunmen. Colonel Mohammed Mahdi Al-Oraji, also a member of the Political Security Bureau, sustained serious injuries in the attack and died one day later.
- April 22:** Colonel Abdulrazaq Mohammed Al-Jabali, director of the Military Police Training Section, was assassinated by two gunmen on a motorbike in the Bani Al-Harith area of Sana'a.
- April 22:** Captain Abdulrahman Salah, director of Internal Security in the Harib district of Marib governorate, was assassinated by anonymous gunmen in the district.
- April 26:** Officer Ali Nasher, commander of the Special Guards

of General Ali Mohsen Al-Ahmar, was assassinated by gunmen in Sana'a.

## May

- May 2:** Sanad Al-Maisary, a major in the dissolved Republican Guards, was assassinated by gunmen in Aden city.
- May 5:** Officer Mohammed Qawza, a security officer with the Military Language Institute, was assassinated by two gunmen on a motorbike on Tunisia Street, Sana'a city.
- May 5:** Colonel Saif Al-Murshedi, working with the Fourth Military Command in Al-Tawahi district, Aden governorate, was assassinated by gunmen at his office.
- May 7:** Two soldiers were killed in an attack by gunmen on a security checkpoint in Al-Hawta city, Lahj.
- May 9:** Three soldiers were killed in an attack by gunmen in a Hilux car on the Al-Mesbahi roundabout of Hadda district in Sana'a.
- May 11:** Fawaz Abdulla, an officer with the Political Security Bureau, was assassinated by gunmen in Al-Hawta city, Lahj.
- May 14:** Saleh bin Thabit Al-Nahdi, a colonel with the Political Security Bureau, was assassinated by gunmen in Mukalla city, Hadramout.
- May 25:** Naji Hussein Khairan, a colonel with the National Security Bureau, was assassinated by gunmen in the Arhab district of Sana'a city.
- May 29:** Salmeen Al-Athobani, a colonel in the Hadramout Investigations Department, was assassinated by two gunmen on a motorbike in the Al-Ghalila area of Hadramout.
- May 31:** Hameed Al-Esawi, a colonel with the Political Security Bureau, was assassinated by two gunmen on a motorbike in Tuban district, Lahj governorate.

## June

- June 15:** Brigadier Ali Hassan Saif, the executive director of the Mines Action Center in Hadramout governorate, was assassinated by two gunmen on a motorbike in Mukalla city, Hadramout.
- June 18:** Ali Al-Sharafi, a colonel with the Political Security Bureau, sustained injuries in an assassination attempt in Sana'a city.
- June 21:** Brigadier Abdulla Hussein Al-Mehdar, a member of the Military Restructuring Team, was assassinated by two gunmen on a motorbike on Al-Ribat Street, Sana'a city.
- June 22:** Colonel Ahmed Radman, director of the Political Security Bureau in Mukalla city, was assassinated by two gunmen on a motorbike in Mukalla, Hadramout.
- June 22:** Yasser Al-Jafani, a Non-Commissioned Officer in the Criminal Investigations Department in Lahj, was assassinated in Al-Hawta city, Lahj.
- June 25:** Khaled Al-Khawlani, a colonel with the Political Security Bureau, was assassinated by two gunmen on a motorbike on Al-Huria Street, Sana'a city.

## July

- July 2:** Colonel Ahmed Hanash, deputy head of the Security and Discipline Section in Taiz's Security Department, was assassinated by two gunmen on a motorbike in front of Taiz Post Office.
- July 4:** Mohsen Al-Anesi, a brigadier in the Air Forces, was assassinated in Taiz city. The security apparatus announced that the assassin was arrested on the same day.
- July 4:** Ibrahim Amer, a colonel

in the Air Forces, was assassinated by gunmen in front of the Taiz Stadium in Taiz city.

- July 5:** Non-commissioned officer Nadeem Ghanam, working for the Investigations Section in the Lahj Security Department, was assassinated by two gunmen on a motorbike in Al-Hawta city, Lahj.
- July 8:** Colonel Ahmed Mohammed Al-Suhaili, commander of the Al-Khashah Military Camp in Hadramout, was assassinated by two gunmen on a motorbike in the Mankhar area of Al-Qatan district, Hadramout.
- July 11:** Colonel Abdulla Baras, director of the Civil Defense Department in Al-Shehr city, Hadramout, was assassinated by two gunmen on a motorbike.
- July 24:** Bilal Karw, a major in the military, was assassinated by two gunmen on a motorbike in Al-Hawta city, Lahj.
- July 25:** Soldier Dhia Saleh Al-Zukaimi was kidnapped and killed by gunmen in Sayoun city, Hadramout.
- July 26:** Soldier Mohammed Al-Hamadi was assassinated by gunmen in Ataq city, Shabwa governorate.
- July 25:** Major Abdulqader Aqeel Karw, deputy head of the Intelligence Department in Al-Anad Air Base, was assassinated by gunmen in Lahj governorate.
- July 27:** General Hameed Antar, former assistant director of Ibb governorate, was assassinated by two gunmen on a motorbike in Ibb city.

## August

- August 15:** Brigadier Mohammed Saleh Al-Tawari, a member of the Reserve Forces' operations, together with his nephew were assassinated in the Mawia area of Taiz governorate.
- August 20:** Sergeant Essam Al-Sufiani and Corporal Abdulla Ali Ahmed, members of the Infantry Brigade 117, were assassinated by gunmen in the Mukairas district of Al-Baida governorate.
- Aug. 23:** Brigadier Ahmed Mohammed Al-Amri, director of the Supply and Logistics Department in the Third Military Command, was killed when a bomb planted in his car exploded in the Al-Mansura district of Aden.
- Aug. 26:** Lieutenant Colonel Faze Al-Baethi, director of the Relations and Morale Guidance Department in Dhamar governorate, was assassinated by two gunmen on a motorbike in Dhamar city.
- Aug. 30:** Brigadier Saleh Abdulla Shehab, former director of Tuban Security Department, was assassinated by two gunmen on a motorbike in Al-Hawta city, Lahj.

## September

- September 7:** Colonel Amer Ahmed Amer, former director of the Traffic Police in Al-Baida governorate, and Major Mukhtar Loqman were assassinated by two gunmen on a motorbike near Al-Ameri Mosque in Al-Baida city.
- Sep. 11:** Ali Abdulqader Al-Qalisi, an officer with the Political Security Bureau, was injured in an assassination attempt by gunmen in Shaoob district, Sana'a.
- Sep. 13:** Colonel Abdulmalik Al-Hemiari, commander of the Air Police in Shabwa governorate, was assassinated on Al-Khamseen Street in Hodeida governorate. He was stabbed in the back.
- Sep. 17:** Non-commissioned officer Ammar Al-mekhlafi, an escort of the Political Security Bureau's director in Al-Baida governorate, was injured in an assassination attempt by gunmen in Al-Baida city.
- Sep. 18:** Mustafa Al-Qadasi, a Sergeant in the Military Intelligence Department in Taiz, was assassinated by two gunmen on

a motorbike near Al-Jomhori Hospital in Taiz city.

- Sep. 23:** Colonel Mohammed Hussein Al-Qahm, a security officer working in the PetroMawila Company in Hadramout, was assassinated by gunmen in the Ghail Bin Yameen area of Hadramout.
- Sep. 30:** Abdulfatah Al-Duais, a colonel in the Passports Authority in Ibb governorate, was assassinated by gunmen in Ibb city.

## October

- Oct. 11:** Abdu Khamees Abdulmawla, a colonel with the Political Security Bureau in Hadramout, was assassinated by gunmen in Al-Shehr city, Hadramout.
- Oct. 16:** Colonel Zaid Ali Al-Thari, head of the Supply Section in the Military Engineering Department, was assassinated by two gunmen on a motorbike in the Sawan neighborhood of Sana'a.
- Oct. 31:** Captain Fadhil Abdulla Al-Majedi, head of investigations in the Criminal Investigations Department in Lahj governorate, was assassinated by two gunmen on a motorbike in Al-Hawta city, Lahj.

## November

- Nov. 2:** Prof. Mohammed Abdulmalik Al-Mutawakel, assistant secretary general of the liberal Union of Popular Forces Party, was assassinated by two gunmen on a motorbike on Al-Zira'a Street, Sana'a city.
- Nov. 3:** Soldier Mohammed Al-Thaibani was assassinated by gunmen in Al-Mahweet governorate.
- Nov. 18:** Sadeq Mansour Al-Haidari, the Assistant Security General of the Islah Party, was assassinated when his car exploded in Taiz city.
- Nov. 26:** Soldier Ahmed Mohammed Al-Awlaqi was assassinated by gunmen in the Kilo 16 area of Hodeida governorate.
- Nov. 29:** Abdulla Abdurabu Al-Zaidi, a soldier in the Military Fourth Command, was assassinated by gunmen in Aden city.
- Nov. 30:** Abdulrahman Ayash Shubail, a colonel with the Political Security Bureau, was seriously injured in an assassination attempt in Hodeida governorate.

## December

- Dec. 3:** Non-commissioned officer Fekri Ahmed Al-Barawi, head of the Computer Department in the Civil Status Authority in Taiz, was assassinated by two gunmen on a motorbike in Taiz city.
- Dec. 8:** Non-commissioned Officer Nasser Awadh Al-Ameer was assassinated by gunmen in a Toyota-brand Hilux car in Marib city.
- Dec. 10:** Major Ali Masoud, commander of a military checkpoint located between the Safer and Al-Obar districts of Hadramout, was assassinated by gunmen in Hadramout governorate.
- Dec. 14:** Colonel Abdulbasit Haidara Al-Ban was assassinated by gunmen in Al-Hawta city, Lahj.
- Dec. 19:** Jamal Abdulla Al-Asadi, an officer in the Third Military Command, was assassinated by gunmen in the Al-Matar area of Marib governorate.
- Dec. 20:** Colonel Ali Hamoud Al-Hakami, head of the Investigations Section in the Ibb Investigations Department, was assassinated by gunmen in Ibb city.
- Dec. 22:** Abdulla Al-Ghorbani, a soldier in the Special Security Forces, was assassinated by gunmen in Taiz governorate.



# Residents avoid sending children to school after deadly bombing in Ra'ada city

■ Ali Aboluhom

**F**atima and Marwa refuse to go back to class at the Al-Khansa Elementary School for girls. For the two young girls, 12 and 14 years old, a twin car bombing in December in the city of Rada'a hit too close to home.

"My sisters want to drop out because of the panic they felt that day," said the girls' 23-year-old brother, Nasser Al-Samawi.

On Dec. 16, 28 people were killed and 34 injured after two car bombs exploded at a checkpoint manned by the Houthis in the downtown area of Rada'a city. Among the dead were 16 school girls that were riding a bus that was passing through the checkpoint at the time of the explosion.

Fatima and Marwa were walking home from school when the cars detonated. They were close enough to see the aftermath of the attack.

Fighting between members of the predominantly Zaydi (Shia) Houthi movement and supporters of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) first broke out in Oc-

tober in and around Rada'a city of Al-Baida governorate. However AQAP, the prime suspects in the Dec. 16 bombings, have not officially claimed responsibility for the attack.

Rada'a is not the only conflict zone in Yemen where children are threatened. UNICEF has announced that over 138 children were killed or maimed by fighting in Yemen during 2014.

Al-Samawi wants to encourage his sisters to go back to school, trying to talk them into taking alternative routes so as not to jog memories of the horrific day, but their trauma appears to run deep. And they aren't the only ones. Parents and children all over Yemen feel increasingly insecure sending their children to school as targeted bombings, mostly directed at Houthi gatherings, go off in both in rural districts and major cities like Sana'a. Civilians, like the 16 school girls, are often caught in the crossfire.

Yemen's weak central government has done little to curb the violence, leading many parents to do what they can to protect their children. Mohammad Salah, 46, an accountant in Sana'a, now drives

his four children to school instead of allowing them to walk. He does so in spite of the fact that the education facility is only a few meters from their home.

Although he acknowledges his car would do little to protect them, it brings him comfort to have the children by his side.

"I have nothing to lose," he said.

While the Houthis have claimed to have filled a security void by erecting and manning checkpoints, they bring little comfort to Hasan Sharhan, a 56-year-old father in Sana'a who works as an army officer. He simply sees them as the next potential target for an attack. Sharhan now goes out of his way to take his daughter to school, avoiding their old route that passed through numerous Houthi checkpoints.

"I think terrorists will always attack their enemies regardless of the fact that innocent people often get killed by mistake," Sharhan said.

A local psychiatrist with a private practice in Sana'a, Samih Al-Sumhi, says it's completely understandable given the current security situation that parents worry for their child's well-being. He also says it is par-



Funeral procession for female students killed in a terrorist attack in Rada'a city on Dec. 16.

ticularly worrying for children like Marwa and Fatima to be exposed to such violence.

If not dealt with properly, Al-Sumhi said, childhood trauma can lead to aggression and feeling withdrawn later in life. Children between eight and 18 are most susceptible to trauma caused by various forms of lethal and emotional

violence.

Mahdi Al-Quidi, deputy director of awareness and activities in the Ministry of Education, says the ministry is working on a nationwide campaign that would provide training courses and information sessions to begin in early 2015 that would help parents support their children if they are exposed to a

traumatic event.

In the meantime, some say life must go on.

Osama Al-Jufi, 35, a qat vendor in Sana'a said he is encouraging his three children to go about their daily routines without interruption.

"[It's pointless] to get worked up and anxious," he said. "It's out of our control."

## YEMEN TIMES Radio

### التأسيس

"راديو يمن تايمز" هو أول إذاعة مجتمعية في صنعاء، حيث بدأ العمل في هذا المشروع في بداية 2012، والذي كان تأسيسه من أهم رؤى مؤسس يمن تايمز الراحل، البروفيسور عبد العزيز السقاف. ولذلك سعت الأستاذة / نادية السقاف رئيس تحرير صحيفة يمن تايمز إلى تحقيق فكرة المؤسس الراحل، من خلال تأسيس راديو يمن تايمز بمشاركة الكثير من المتطوعين والداعمين ومن آمن بأهمية الإعلام المستقل ودور الإذاعات المجتمعية.

وتعد إذاعة يمن تايمز جزء من مشروع أصواتنا، وهو برنامج دولي يدعم تأسيس الإذاعات المجتمعية في دول الربيع العربي. حيث يتمحور هذا البرنامج حول العرب الذين سعوا لأن تكون أصواتهم المستقلة مسموعة، بعيداً عن الاحتكارات الحكومية، أو التجارية، بحيث تكون نقطة انطلاق جديدة لكل من يريد الخوض في تجربة الإذاعات المجتمعية المستقلة.

### أهدافنا

يعمل "راديو يمن تايمز" على طرح وجهات نظر جديدة وموضوعات هامة للجمهور اليمني ويعايش قضايا المواطنين الذين يجيدون اللغة الانجليزية والعربية والأميين بشكل مباشر.

ويسعى أيضا لإيجاد فضاءات جديدة لحرية الرأي والتعبير في اليمن عامة وفي العاصمة صنعاء خاصة ليكون راديو يمن تايمز «صوت من لا صوت لهم» وليعزز مفاهيم الديمقراطية وحرية الرأي والتعبير من خلال دوراته البرمجية المتنوعة التي تعالج قضايا المرأة والطفل وحقوق الإنسان وتدافع عن الحريات بواسطة إعلامها الهادف وبرامجها المتعددة والتي تخاطب بشفافية وموضوعية كل مستمعيها وتتسم بروح شبابية وإيجابية واضحة لكل من يتابعها سواء سكان صنعاء أو اليمن.

### رؤيتنا

للإعلام دور كبير ومهم في الدعوة للتغيير السلمي فهو ركيزة من ركائز التغيير نحو الأفضل، ولكن الصراعات السياسية اعتادت أن تفرض أجنداتاً على المؤسسات الإعلامية مما يخلق أثراً سلبياً واضحاً على طابع استقلال الإعلام وأثر بشكل مباشر على معايير أساسية مثل الحيادية والموضوعية.

وهنا تسعى "إذاعة يمن تايمز" لتعزيز من دور مؤسساتها الإعلامية المستقلة لتصل إلى كل من لا تصل إليه عبر صحيفتها لتكون من الإذاعات الرائدة في اليمن التي جعلت من الحياء والاستقلال سياسة خاصة لها مواصلة بذلك سمعتها الحسنة التي استطاعت أن تفرضها من خلال سياسة الصحيفة على الرغم من عدم وجود قوانين منظمة لعمل الإذاعات الخاصة في اليمن.

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# The economics at the heart of Israeli settlements

**IRIN**

First published Jan. 5

Of all the hurdles to peace negotiations between Israeli and Palestinian leaders, perhaps the largest is the 150 or so Israeli settlements in the West Bank. These communities, considered illegal by the UN, are fracturing Israel's relationship even with its allies: The pro-Israeli head of the UK parliament's foreign affairs committee this year declared that a decision to develop a new settlement "outraged me more than anything else in my political life."

Despite an unofficial freeze on settlement planning, in late December the Jerusalem Planning and Budget Committee set the stage for approving building permits for some 400 homes on Palestinian land in Jerusalem, and approved a plan for 1,850 more homes in a neighborhood that sits on the border.

While they are often thought of as the result of a religious quest by Jews to claim new territory, in fact for most settlers the reasons for moving are economic—encouraged through government-planned incentive schemes to relocate. But for some, the process of living in a settlement may have a radicalizing effect.

## "Quality of life"

It's a weekday in the West Bank town of Ariel. Students share a cigarette break on the university campus. Two women walking their dogs chatter in Russian-accented Hebrew. Nothing suggests this is anything other than an ordinary Israeli town.

But while it is not known for a strong ideological bent or violent attacks on its Palestinian neighbors, jutting out some 16km east of the Green Line that divides Israel from the Occupied West Bank, this town of 19,000 is very much a settlement.

In Ariel, many residents live the Israeli commuter lifestyle. There is a direct motorway to Tel Aviv, less than 40km away, with buses running frequently to the capital and less often to Jerusalem, 50km

away.

"People come here looking for different things," said Avi Zimmerman, head of Ariel's Development Fund and the de facto spokesperson for its municipality. As an observant Jew, he came eight years ago looking for a heterogeneous community.

"You'll find people who came for the quality of life, even for the relief from the humidity of Tel Aviv."

But the financial benefits are top for many. House prices in Israel have risen rapidly for the last seven years, with the high cost of living and food prices sparking mass protests in the summer of 2011. The average apartment in Ariel costs 1,098,774 NIS (US\$280,537), a far cry from the Tel Aviv average of 2,363,268 NIS (\$603,386).

Cheap rent made Noa and her boyfriend temporary settlers in 2009 when they started looking for a place near her Jerusalem university. "We were both students and we needed a cheap place to live," explains Noa, a dance teacher in her late twenties. They couldn't find anything in their price range in Jerusalem, but in Anatot, a community of 1,000, 7km over the Green Line, the price was right.

Amit, a 34-year-old mother of one, sees her settlement—although she doesn't call it by that name—5km over the Green Line as just another suburb of Jerusalem. She and her husband had lived in the city, but when they went looking for a home she wanted "a house, a garden and a parking lot... and the green parks and closeness to Jerusalem were a big thing." She commutes to Jerusalem for work, and her husband to Tel Aviv: "I don't see this as contested land," she emphasizes, but "for me it's a suburb of a big city and I come back at night."

## Government incentives

According to the Yesha Council, an organization that represents and campaigns for West Bank settlements, at last count in June 2014 there were 382,031 Jewish settlers in the West Bank, not including East Jerusalem, which Israel does not consider occupied. This draw across the Green Line has been encouraged by consecutive Israeli

governments.

Much of the state's help comes through the definition of roughly three-quarters of settlements as "national priority areas," along with other areas that are deemed to need a boost—communities close to the borders with Lebanon or Gaza, or otherwise peripheral and underdeveloped.

National priority areas receive discounts on land and grants for mortgages, and those areas recognized by the Construction Ministry as national priority areas receive state investment in apartment infrastructure. In areas designated as the highest level of priority, there are discounts on land costs and development expenses.

Investment in settlement infrastructure such as roads is also key, and teachers who live in settlements receive generous assistance, including what the Israeli NGO B'tselem reports as 15-20 percent salary boost and government coverage for 75 percent of travel and 80 percent of home rental expenses. As national priority areas, the settlements also receive extra investment in education, including increased school hours and more funding.

Direct benefits to individuals have mostly been eliminated, with an income tax break lifted in 2003, allowing many in the settlement community to argue that that the settlements should be considered like any other Israeli city.

Avi Zimmerman, head of Ariel's Development Fund and the de facto spokesperson for its municipality, disputes the idea of unfair economic incentives drawing people onto Palestinian land. "People talk and talk about incentivization because of the past." Now, "there are no direct incentives—you don't get a bank loan, [for example]."

Natan Sachs, a fellow at the Brookings Institution's Center for Middle East Policy and an expert on Israeli politics, agrees that there are "no direct incentives in the sense that there aren't grants."

But "there are lot of ways" to encourage settlement, "in particular the cost of land and permits... There is no overt incentivizing but there is still dramatic incentivizing in real terms."



Construction workers in the West Bank settlement of Ariel. Declared illegal by the UN, such Israeli settlements have expanded in recent years.

## Radicalization

The increase in "quality of life" settlers is a major shift from the settler movement's origins in the late 1960s, when after its victory in the 1967 war with Egypt, Jordan and Syria, Israel began moving its citizens into what it refers to as Judea and Samaria, the biblical names for the occupied West Bank.

Many early settlers hoped to reclaim what they saw as biblical Israel, as Elie Pierpz, director of external affairs for the Yesha Council, explains.

"Religious consideration was a major driver of growth in the 70s and 80s. There is an ideological capacity—this is the last Zionist frontier; 100 years ago it was Tel Aviv, 60 years ago it was the Negev [desert in the south of Israel] and the ... [northern part of the country], and for the last 47 years it has been Judea and Samaria."

The phenomenon of the economic settler is a mixed bag. Ariel, for example, is a blend of immigrants

from the former Soviet Union—secular and religiously observant but non ultra-Orthodox Jews.

Dror Etkes, an expert on settlements, argues that the difference in terminology between economic or quality of life settlers and their more ideological counterparts can't really be justified—all are part of the larger occupation project, whether they like it or not.

"When ideology meets economy it's always nicer, and the ideology eventually comes to align with self-interest. People tell themselves stories ... it's very easy to be a settler. Whatever you don't want to see, you don't have to see."

Yet settlements, even those dominated by economic migrants, can shift beliefs towards the right.

Etkes notes that several recent violent attacks on Palestinians have come from these so-called "non-ideological" settlements. Last month, a bilingual Hebrew-Arabic school in Jerusalem was set ablaze. Two of the three suspects, who have

confessed to the crime, hail from Beitar Illit, not previously known for its far right wing beliefs.

And even as economic settlers may see themselves as nonpolitical or even left wing - Noa says she's "centre left, sometimes left"—by moving to the settlements, settlers' voting patterns may change out of self-interest.

Ultraorthodox settlers are the paradigm of this change—largely poor, in the past 15 years many have moved to areas like Beitar Illit or Modi'in Ilit for cheap housing and a homogenous atmosphere, with plenty of space for their high birth rate. Historically, they were not interested in settlement or Zionist activism.

Neve Gordon, professor of politics and government at Ben-Gurion University and the author of Israel's Occupation, points out that the parties who represent this sector have shifted its policies.

*Continued on the back page*


**Yamaan**

## Tender Notice for purchasing a four wheel driver (4WD) car.

Safe Motherhood and Family planning Voucher Programme - Yamaan Foundation for Health & Social Development

Ref: Reproductive Health Programme III, Voucher Management Agency, BMZ ID 2007 65230

Financing: KfW, German Development Bank

Project: Yemen Reproductive Health Voucher Programme

Yamaan Foundation for Health and Social Development requests applications from an agencies/companies to submit price quotation for a four wheel driver (4WD) car, 5 doors, 5 riders, 4 pistons and customized.

Issuance of this Invitation to Applications does not commit to an award. No payment or reimbursement will be made for costs incurred in bid preparation and submission.

The deadline for submission of price quotation is Tuesday 20th January 2015. The price quotations must be submitted in a sealed envelopes during office hours (8am - 4pm, Sunday to Thursday) to the address below.

Yamaan Foundation for Health and Social Development  
Attention: Dr. Eman Alkubati, Programme Director, Safe motherhood & Family planning Voucher Programme  
Hadda Al-Surmai Street, in front of Al-Dewan restaurant Sana'a, Yemen  
Tel: (+967) 01-428738  
Fax: (+967) 01-413638  
E-mail: [Eman.Alkubati@yamaan.org](mailto:Eman.Alkubati@yamaan.org)

Applications submitted after the deadline will not be accepted or opened. Further information concerning this Tender may be obtained upon request submitted in writing via email to [mohammed.alzurqa@yamaan.org](mailto:mohammed.alzurqa@yamaan.org) and copied to E-mail: [Eman.Alkubati@yamaan.org](mailto:Eman.Alkubati@yamaan.org)

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## Embassy of India Sana'a

Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), Government of India, has offered 35 scholarships under various schemes for Yemeni nationals. Candidates with good academic record who wish to pursue their studies (Bachelors/Masters/Research) in India may apply for the scholarship. Candidates must be proficient in English language.

Applications forms together with guidelines can be downloaded from the Embassy website: <http://eoisanaa.org/iccr-scholarships-3/>. Filled in application forms should reach the Embassy before **15 January, 2015**.

A written English Language Proficiency Test (ELPT) will be conducted on Saturday 17 January, 2015 at 1400 hrs. at the following venues:

1. Indian Embassy School, Al-Safia, Sana'a
2. Mahatma Gandhi International School, Crater, Aden.



## Sana'a's Old City:

## Prospects grim for cultural preservation



Story and photos by  
**Ali Aboluhom**

Walking through the streets of the Gezali neighborhood within Sana'a's historic old city, Lutf Al-Mahdi, a local resident and reporter, stopped in front of a home and looked at it with a mixture of perplexity and annoyance. Built in a noticeably more modern style than those around it, it stood out like a sore thumb. Its neatly plastered walls built using dark bricks were an unwelcome change to the traditional, lighter-colored bricks used to construct the buildings next door.

"I don't know why no one's done anything about this," Al-Mahdi said. "The old city is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the government shouldn't allow structures

A rapidly growing population, combined with an economy in shambles, means families adding annexes to their homes—often resorting to using cheaper construction materials.

With so many conflicts plaguing the country, preserving traditions has taken a backseat to practicality and affordability. "We've gone through crisis after crisis," Al-Mahdi said. "People are apathetic."

According to the General Organization for the Preservation of Historic Cities of Yemen (GOPHCY)—an office within Yemen's Ministry of Culture that is tasked with preserving the architectural style of the old city and other areas throughout Yemen—the use of certain materials in the construction or renovation of buildings is regarded as a major violation.

Naji Thawabeh, the chairman of GOPHCY, says that violations range

15 percent are moderate and the remaining five percent are considered major.

Saeed Al-Shami, the head of the GOPHCY inspection department, told the Yemen Times that all registered cases are referred to the old city's Local Administrative Council. "The inspection department visits sites that we've received tips about from locals. We then write up reports that we forward to the council," he said.

Mohammad Hizam, the public relations officer for old Sana'a's Local Administrative Council, claims the council sends its own inspection team to the site after receiving a report from GOPHCY, and gives violators deadlines to correct the violations. Otherwise, the case goes to court. But most cases, he says, go unnoticed.

"We do the best we can with the reports given to us by GOPHCY, however citizens don't cooperate the way they used to," Hizam said. "Neither we nor the organization have enough man power to detect new cases on our own."

Thawabeh told the Yemen Times that GOPHCY has tried to work with citizens who would like to make renovations to their homes, by offering to oversee and pay for part of the costs, as a means of bringing the practice out from out of the shadows, and allowing it to be done by trained professionals.

"This way, professionals affiliated with GOPHCY can undertake the renovations, in a way that won't damage the building," he said.

Livadiotti Marco, an Italian architect who has lived and worked in Sana'a for the last 30 years, has spent much of his life chronicling, studying and helping to preserve the old city, along with other historical sites in Yemen. He says that GOPHCY is doing too little too late.

"We don't need money to preserve our history, we need legislation," he said. "What is happening is tragic."

According to the UNESCO, the protection of old Sana'a is mandated by the Antiquities Law of 1997 and the Building Law of 2002.

GOPHCY and the Local Administrative Council, working hand in hand with the public prosecutor, have the authority to issue warnings for those who commit violations based on GOPHCY's standards.

However according to Al-Shami, "If someone had gone as far as to commit a major violation—building an entirely new building that violated our regulations, there was nothing we could do," he said.

"We couldn't tear such buildings down, because of collateral damage that could be caused to surrounding buildings. We ended up punishing small time violators while letting the big fish get away."

In 2013, GOPHCY proposed legislation that would grant the prosecutor the power to issue court orders to have buildings that violated GOPHCY regulations torn down. According to Al-Shami, it would provide the organization with a larger budget that would enable it to reconstruct buildings, as well as repair surrounding buildings that

are damaged in the process.

The law has been before the Parliament since 2013. Al-Shami speculates that it will be passed in 2015.

Marco is skeptical that the law could have much effect—if it is even passed.

"There's no political will regarding this issue, and the government is not treating this as a priority," he said. "In 2004, the government forced all old city residents to paint their doors white, in line with traditional Sana'ani style architecture, and it was done, because there was an incentive."

In 2004, Sana'a was declared the cultural capital of the Arab World by the United Nations, and the Yemeni government undertook a massive renovation and beautification program of the old city.

"Furthermore, the unchecked

expansion of the 'souk' must be stopped," Marco said, in reference to the outdoor market that stretches throughout old Sana'a.

Although a part of the old city's heritage, construction of new shops often results in a spillover of shops into residential areas, damaging buildings and infrastructure in the process. The problem gets compounded with time as unchecked construction soon becomes the norm.

"The more the souk spreads, the more people feel comfortable flouting the law, and building annexes to their own homes, which they use to open up small businesses," said Marco.

Mohammad Hizam agrees. "We do our best to stop the spread of the souk," he said. "Since 2011,

however, we've barely had enough resources. People set up shops in places without proper authorization. However it happens so often, we can't possibly stop them all."

Saleh Matari, 35, owns a cart to sell various goods, including candy, cigarettes and soda. He mostly operates in the old city's Al-Abhar neighborhood, and often faces harassment from the authorities.

"I started working here two years ago," he said. "I don't have a permit to operate the cart, and sometimes the police harass me and try to run me out of the neighborhood. But I always come back."

For Matari, the reason is simple. "Everybody knows the souk, this is where customers come. I can make three times more here than I can anywhere else. In the end, it's still worth it."



Home in Sana'a's Old City built in violation of the neighborhood's traditional architectural style.



The bricks used to construct the first story on each of these buildings violate the traditional Old City style architecture.

like this to be built." UNESCO first named Sana'a's old city a world heritage site in 1986, two years after it launched a campaign to spread awareness worldwide about the need to safeguard the site.

Al-Mahdi says things were different when he was a child. "People used to work hard to preserve this area," he said. "Locals wouldn't have allowed anyone to damage or alter buildings, or build additions and new structures that didn't match the style of the old city."

from the minor to the major.

"Minor violations would be if someone altered a window or a door, while moderate violations would be an addition to a building constructed out of modern materials," he said. "Major violations include the construction of entirely new building in any style other than that of traditional old Sana'a. These [major violations] are rare."

According to Thawabeh, roughly 80 percent of infringements registered by the organization are minor,

24 January 2015

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٤٣١٣٤٠	فاكس: ٤٣١٣٤٠
alnada2@yemen.net.ye	
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## The economics at the heart of Israeli settlements

"In the early 1990s the Orthodox parties were in favor of a land compromise—today, much less so, because a large percent of their constituency lives in the occupied territories: space changes consciousness."

### Obstacle to peace

The "quality of life" settler came into public consciousness after the 1993

Oslo agreement between Israeli and Palestinian leaders, when there was serious talk of territory swaps. It has long been assumed that large settlement blocs, either those close to Jerusalem such as Ma'ale Adumim, Beitar Ilit, Modi'in Ilit, or those too big to move, and strategic places like Ariel, would be included in any future two-state solution.

But continuous surveys have sug-

gested that a large percentage of non-ideological settlers would be prepared to leave their homes and move inside the Green Line, for a price.

At the moment though, said Sachs, "there's a perverse disincentive to leave." The Israeli public largely sees its government as having bungled the 2005 disengagement from Gaza, with some former settlers who were

dragged from their homes on TV complaining about poor compensation and the government's inability to properly relocate them.

This makes those who might be willing to move from the West Bank, Sachs says, understandably wary. One group founded by a former Shin Bet director, Blue Light Future, advocates a unilateral and voluntary evacuation of settlers by payment.

Amit purchased her house right around the time of the Gaza pullout, and said the possibility of an eventual evacuation "was something that we did think about." Her area was often mentioned as one that was close enough to Jerusalem to eventually be included in Israel-proper, and that was a selling point.

"If there was some compensation [as part of a peace deal] I don't see us saying 'we're staying under a Palestinian government.'"

But large settlement blocs like Ariel are also unlikely to go anywhere, even in the event of an eventual peace settlement with the Palestinians. In some ways, they are simply too big to move.

To Zimmerman, who has been in Ariel for eight years, the concept of a payoff is irrelevant, as he doesn't see the Israeli government even attempting an evacuation of Ariel. "That's going to be handled by the elected government...they're going to make the policy on that and the consensus in Israeli politics is that Ariel is part of Israel, period."

It's perhaps this certainty that has led to house prices in Ariel shooting up: In the six years up to 2013, prices



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Construction in the Israeli settlement of Ariel. The United Nations considers such settlements illegal, but they have continued to grow in recent years with support from the Israeli government.

es of new and secondhand homes increased by 104 percent. Other settlements saw increases, including Beitar Ilit (80 percent) largely secular Efrat (77 percent), and Oranit (65 percent). While house prices in Israel proper have still outpaced those in the settlements, rising prices increase the pressure to find new settlements.

Pierpz is enthusiastic about the future of the settler project. "The extremely tight-knit communities (where hitchhiking is a way of life, doors often remain unlocked, young kids are safe on streets unsuper-

vised late at night), are some of the reasons why people want to stay and raise multiple generations here."

Palestinian officials have said they will take into account the motivations of settlers in negotiating the boundaries of a future Palestinian state. In the end, they see all settlements as encroaching on Palestinian land, whether the settlers have come for the fresh air and cheap accommodation or because of religious fervor.

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# What Comes After the Islamic State Is Defeated?

**Gopal Ratnam**  
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When American troops were about to invade Iraq in 2003 to dislodge Saddam Hussein from power, then-Maj. Gen. David Petraeus told a reporter: "Tell me how this ends." Eleven years and hundreds of billions of dollars later, thousands of US troops are once again in Iraq fighting a different foe. But the same question still resonates.

President Barack Obama's withdrawal of American forces in 2011 after failing to win a security agreement with Iraq has already been undone by Obama ordering as many as 3,100 troops to help train the Iraqi military to take on the Islamic State, also known as ISIS. But even if US and Iraqi forces defeat the militant group, preventing a disintegration of Iraq along sectarian and religious lines may require a long-term presence of US forces, former American officials and defense analysts say.

"You cannot get the goal you want of a stable Iraq and a permanently defeated" Islamic State, "or a son of ISIS," without a long-term American presence, said James Jeffrey, who served as US ambassador to Iraq from 2010 to 2012. "Even if they're promised the moon, only if

we have a presence will the Kurds and Sunnis buy into a Baghdad that's dominated by the Shiites and indirectly by Iran."

Jeffrey said that moves to establish a peacekeeping or monitoring force should be led by the UN but backed by US military power. That means a modest American force should plan on remaining in Iraq and eventually in Syria once the Islamic State is defeated, he said.

More than 2,000 American troops are helping retrain the Iraqi military to fight back against the Islamic State on the ground, even as U.S. drones and jet fighters have carried out hundreds of airstrikes, yielding some early successes by halting the militant group's advances.

A major ground offensive against the militant group won't be launched for several months. But experts say that in order to avoid a repeat of the American withdrawal in 2011, which allowed Iran to become a dominant power, thus marginalizing Sunnis and leading to the birth of the Islamic State, it's time to plan for what comes after the militant group is defeated or sufficiently contained. One option gaining currency is an international force that can keep the region's Kurds, Sunnis, and Shiites at peace and prevent the breakup of Iraq along ethnic and religious lines.

For starters, Obama may have to allow American troops a deeper role

in fighting the Islamic State along with Kurdish Peshmerga forces and Sunni tribes, as well as giving both those groups "some guarantee that we'd be there for the long term," said Jeffrey, now a fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

Even if the Kurds and Sunni tribes fully commit to taking on the Islamic State, once the fight against the militants is over, "the Kurds and Sunnis will be open to the same temptation as before: Kurds would want to go independent and the Sunnis may make common cause with the next jihadi group," Jeffrey said.

The United States has 2,140 troops in Iraq out of the 3,100 that Obama has authorized, according to Army Col. Steve Warren, a Pentagon spokesman. The remainder of the troops will head to Iraq in the coming weeks.

About 800 of the troops are there to protect the American Embassy in Baghdad and other U.S. personnel, while the rest are training Iraqi military forces, Warren said. A small group of 20 Marines are at Al-Asad air base in Iraq's Anbar province—a stronghold of the Islamic State—and are drawing almost daily fire from the militant group, Warren told reporters Jan. 5.

Many of the Sunni tribes the United States is trying to woo now to take on the Islamic State were once critical to the so-called Anbar

Awakening that helped the United States defeat al Qaeda in Iraq back in 2006. The tribes later turned on the government of Iraq's then-Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki—a Shia—who refused to pay the fighters or fold them into the standing Iraqi military after the violence subsided, setting the stage for the emergence of the Islamic State.

While Iraq's current prime minister, Haider Al-Abadi—a Shia with close ties to Iran—has, unlike his predecessor Maliki, publicly committed to running an inclusive government, in private meetings with officials he has voiced skepticism about trusting Sunni tribal leaders, according to US and European officials.

Even if the militant group were defeated or just degraded, the impact of such an outcome will be limited "unless the US can also work with the key factions in Iraq, and its allies, to create a stable structure for cooperation between Shia Arab, Sunni Arab, and Kurds," Anthony Cordesman, a national security scholar at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said in an email. "It is far from clear that this is possible."

But such political accommodation between the different groups is essential to prevent the "next millennial Islamist movement from gaining a new foothold," Jeffrey wrote in an article published in late December on the Washington Insti-

tute's website.

Although Iraq has allowed some autonomy to Kurds in the north, letting the country's Sunnis enjoy similar freedoms in the Sunni Arab areas of the country "will require internal cultural change, international guarantees, and an outside monitoring force," Jeffrey wrote.

US military and State Department officials said there are currently no discussions about such a peacekeeping or monitoring force.

The Obama administration has said that as many as 60 countries are involved in the coalition against the Islamic State, including several Arab nations, such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait.

Although Arab countries in the coalition see the predominantly Sunni Islamic State as a threat to their own well-being, they also "still deeply distrust the Shia-dominated Iraqi Central Government and this tends to push it into the hands of Iran," the Shia power in the region, Cordesman said.

A UN-backed international peacekeeping force has precedent. The international body has led such an effort in the past, with the U.N. Mission in Kosovo in 1999. The U.N. Security Council in June 1999 authorized NATO to station 50,000 troops after the end of the war to stop Serbian human rights violations and clashes between the Kosovo Liberation Army and Yu-

goslav forces. About 4,500 NATO troops from 30 countries currently remain in Kosovo to keep the peace.

Unlike in the Balkans in the late 1990s, the long-term presence of American troops in Iraq may produce its own backlash, said Nicholas Heras, a researcher at the Center for a New American Security.

A US role "in such a peacekeeping force would likely be highly controversial, considering the baggage that the U.S. has in the Middle East region and the anger in the region toward the U.S. occupation of Iraq from the last decade," Heras said.

Such a stabilizing force may make more sense in Syria, serving "as a guarantor of security in a post-Assad transitional period," he said, referring to Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad. There, a multinational force could oversee the "disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of militias, and prevent the return of ISIS in eastern and northern Syria, once ISIS is removed from those areas of the country," he said.

But the Obama administration's policy toward Syria remains so incoherent that moderate rebel forces have been weakened and extremist ones have gained the upper hand. No credible peacekeeping force is likely to control the conflicting pressures, and there's "no clear way that anyone can as yet predict whether, much less how, these various conflicts will end," Cordesman said.

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