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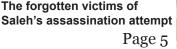


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# Whose revolution?

Tensions mount as both Houthis and independent youth commemorate 2011 uprising

### ■ Ahlam Mohsen

SANA'A, Feb. 11—Four years after the start of Yemen's 2011 uprising, Houthis and the youth movement found themselves demonstrating together once again. If 2011 was a uniting moment for Yemen's disparate groups, the morning protest of Feb. 11, 2015 was frought with tension.

The Houthis came out to the protest, organized by independent youth, to celebrate their "continuation of the revolution." Independent youth denounced their presence as an attempt to "hijack" the demonstration like they "hijacked the revolution."

As of Tuesday evening, independent youth were still unsure where the protests would be held on Wednesday morning. They instead issued a number of possible gathering locations. On Wednesday, youth met at the intersection of Hiyal and Zubairi streets. Their goal, organizers said, was to make it to Siteen Street and eventually, the United Nations compound.

Following the resignation of the president and Cabinet on Jan. 22, the Houthis announced via a "constitutional declaration," on Feb. 6 a new transitional plan that would dissolve Yemen's Parliament and establish instead a 551-member national council. This council, in turn, would appoint a five-member presidential council to rule the country for two years until Yemen holds presidential elections.

UN Secretary General Ban Kimoon said Sunday that the UN did not recognize the legitimacy of the declaration and called for President Hadi to be restored to power. UN Special Envoy to Yemen Jamal Benomar has been mediating between political parties and the Houthis for the establishment of a new government

So why were the protestors heading to the UN compound?

Yagouf Meham, 22, said she was unimpressed with the UN's denouncement of the Houthi take-over.

"The statement was too weak. In that same statement, they encouraged us to cooperate and negotiate with the Houthis. There can be no dialogue with this armed militia. Not until they leave. We reject any dialogue with them," she said.

Among the many chants Wednesday morning was one directed at the UN's Benomar. "Ya Benomar, you're a liar," the youth shouted.

Demonstrators marched from Zubairi to Baghdad, but Houthis in vehicles blasting the national anthem and shouting the Houthi slogan through loud speakers blocked them from entering Siteen Street.

All major roads in Sana'a were blocked by the Houthis.

During the first hour of the march, which began at around 10 a.m., a few dozen Houthis joined the back of the demonstrations, carrying signs. Houthis and indegendent youth started shouting ach other down with chants.

Youth shouted, "Revolution, revolution," while Houthis shouted their slogan, "God is great, Death to America, Death to Israel, Damn the Jews, Victory to Islam."

"This revolution is not against the 2011 uprising, it is a continuation of it," said Houthi supporter Ali Al-Hallani, 65.

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Independent youth who organized the protest starting on Zubairi Street Wednesday morning lock hands, as a Houthi demonstrator holds a sign with the Houthi slogan, "God is great, Death to America, Death to Israel, Damn to the Jews, Victory to Islam." Both groups said they were commemorating the 2011 uprising. Independent youth accused the Houthis of trying to "hijack" their protest and uprising. Houthis say the takeover of the capital is a continuation of the 2011 uprising.

# Embassies evacuated amid heightened security concerns

■ Ali Ibrahim Al-Moshki

**SANA'A, Feb. 11**—The American, British and French embassies suspended operations and evacuated staff on Wednesday, citing security concerns in the capital.

The US embassy was closed on Wednesday and its staff were evacuated early in the morning. Visiting the compound in the capital's Sawan later that morning, the Yemen Times found that the only remaining employees were from Yemen's Special Security Forces, which provide security for the embassy.

A member of the team, speaking on condition of anonymity, said consular staff had vacated at 3 a.m. in a 30-car convoy. "Before leaving they told us the embassy is our responsibility, but we don't know when they'll be back," he said.

Smoke was seen rising from the compound, but security personnel said it was from documents consular staff had been burning over the previous two days. They said Houthis had not attempted to enter the embassy, and that it remained under their control.

Houthis were not seen in the vicin-



Armed Yemeni guards stand outside the US embassy on Feb. 11. The embassy was evacuated that morning around 3 a.m.

ity of the compound. However, Abdulrahman Al-Mekhlafi, who works in the US embassy's Public Relations Department, claims it was surrounded by members of the group on Monday and Tuesday, though he said he was unsure why.

Security personnel said consular staff had given them laptops and other items as gifts before leaving, and that popular committee members accused them of raiding the embassy's

equipment.

Abdulrahim Humran, a member of the Houthi Political Office in Sana'a, denied that any members of his group surrounded the embassy.

Consular staff from the French and British embassies have also left the country.

A source at the British embassy, who wished to remain anonymous, said Ambassador Jane Marriott had left three days earlier, with most

of her staff evacuated by Tuesday morning.

Both the French and British embassies were vacant when the Yemen Times visited them on Wednesday.

Mohammed Al-Bukhaiti, a member of the Houthi Political Office, said members of his group were "surprised" by the evacuations.

"The situation is more stable than it was when we entered the capital in September, or when we besieged the president's house [on Jan. 20] and the government resigned [on Jan. 22]," he said. "Even when we announced the constitutional declaration none of the embassies closed, but right now the situation is calm and they decide to evacuate."

He said the moves were "aimed at creating a state of nervousness and making the situation in Yemen look worse than it is," adding that their closure will have no effect on the country.

A surge of protests in Sana'a and elsewhere in the country have come in response to Friday's constitutional declaration, in which the Houthis dissolved Parliament and announced plans for a new government to be formed.





AWARD

## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

# Whose revolution?

Riyam Al-Kahyfoor, 23, demonstratther. Demonstraed four years ago and came back out again Wednesday. "Nothing has changed," said. "These militas have nothing to do with our revolution."

At least one man was stabbed during the demonstration, and skirmeshes broke out several times during the two-hour march.

Independent youth chanted for a civil state, and denounced the idea of a "Houthi kingdom," a reference to the Zaidi imamate that ruled Yemen until the 1962 republican revo-

After blocking all the major roads, the Houthis forced the demonstrators to march back to Zubairi Street, where they started. The Houthis, now at the beginning of the demonstration, locked hands to prevent demonstrators from going any furtors broke through, running towards the men until their clasped hands gave

Once the demonstrators were back where they started, Houthis shot a few rounds of live fire into the air.

demonstration was held at 3 p.m.

on Wednesday. Men gathered in Change Square, the site of 2011's uprising, and pro-Houthi women marched down Siteen Street.

"I am with Ansar Allah, because [Abdulmalik] Al-Houthi is a righ-





Houthi-organized Pro-Houthi women demonstrated on Siteen Street (left), while male Houthi supporters gathered at Change Square, the sight of the 2011 uprising.

teous person, he came to help us out of the darkness. The 2011 uprising was for everyone. Youth took to the streets to protest injustice. We are doing the same thing now," said Yousef Al-Dera', 19.

"Bahah and Hadi are sellouts.

Their resignation is a betrayal of the Yemeni people," he added.

Ahlam Sharaf Al-Deen marched with the women's contingent down Siteen Street. She told the Yemen Times that she came out in 2011 and felt that it was her duty to come out Wednesday to commemorate the four years since the start of the up-

"The 2011 revolution is ongoing, Ansar Allah has taken on the burden because they love the Yemeni

When asked about the consequences of less foreign aid as a result of the Houthi takeover, Al-Deen said Yemenis "are very patient. No matter what happens, we support [Abdulmalik] and only fear God. Whatever he commands, we will obey."

# Calm in Al-Baida city after Houthi takeover

### ■ Bassam Al-Khameri

SANA'A, Feb. 11—Clashes with tribesmen broke out after the Houthis took control of the capital of Al-Baida governorate on Tues-day. As of Wednesday afternoon the situation was stable and the Houthis had established checkpoints around the city.

Fahd Al-Tawil, a journalist based in Al-Baida city, said the clashes lasted for a few hours Tuesday afternoon and there were no reported casualties.

A senior security source in the governorate's Security Department, speaking to the Yemen Times on condition of anonymity citing security concerns, confirmed that there were no known casualties. According to the source, the Houthis stormed Al-Baida city alongside military units.

Mukhtar Al-Naqib, a local resident in the city, told the Yemen Times that the Houthis entered the city without meeting any resistance, and only after did clashes break out.

It remains unclear if Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) are backing the tribesmen.

The security source described the event as "a military campaign against Al-Qaeda members carried out by the military, in coordination with the Houthis.

Mohammad Al-Bukhaiti, a member of the Houthi Political Office in Sana'a, agreed, saying the group's popular committees and the mili-

tary coordinated to free Al-Baida city of AQAP militants.

"Most of the military units in Al-Baida city were infiltrated by Al-Qaeda and the soldiers weren't able to leave their military brigades in military uniform because they were targeted by Al-Qaeda members and several soldiers were killed," he

However, Ahmed Ali Al-Safri, a tribesman involved in the fighting, said they are fighting the Houthis without help from AQAP.

"We don't want anybody-even Al-Qaeda—to assist us in fighting the Houthis, who are backed by the military and warplanes," he said.

After entering the city, the Houthis stormed a government compound as well as the house of



A photo given to the Yemen Times by Al-Naqib shows a Houthi patrol vehicle in Al-Baida city after the group took it over Tuesday.

Governor Al-Daheri Al-Shadadi. They deployed gunmen at both lo-

Al-Bukhaiti claims the governor of Al-Baida is associated with Al-Qaeda and facilitated their spread in the governorate.

However, according to Al-Naqib, The governor left to India and then to Egypt about a year ago for treatment and has not returned to Al-Baida since then. Deputy Governor Nasser Al-Khader Al-Swadi is running the governorate."

Local journalist Al-Tawil said the Houthis have established checkpoints in the city that are manned by men in military uniform. "Several of those military men and vehicles have Houthi slogans but others don't," he added.

Al-Baida is connected to the southeastern border of Marib governorate, which has been witnessing a buildup of armed tribesmen in recent months in preparation for a potential invasion by the Houthis.

# Parliamentarians sign up for National Council seats

### Story and photo by Ali İbrahim Al-Moshki

SANA'A, Feb. 10-Thursday marks the end of a four-day window for parliamentarians to join the National Transitional Council, a new government body established by the Houthis' constitutional declaration.

The Houthis effectively dissolved Parliament when they announced the creation of a 551-member national council on Friday, and called on former members of parliament to begin registering Monday.

The Yemen Times visited Parliament offices on Al-Bouniya street in Al-Tahrir district of the capital on Tuesday, where registrations are being processed.

ries were members of the General People's Congress (GPC), although a complete list was not made avail-

One Revolutionary Committee member present at the office, Abdulrahim Al-Hamran, told the Yemen Times that all members of parliament were eligible to join the national council. However, he said any applications received after Thursday's deadline would be rejected.

"We want all of parliament's 301 members to join the new govern-



Members of the JMP have vowed not to register, but many GPC members appear to have signed up.

Sign-in sheets at the office in- ment," said Al-Hamran, who is also women." dicated the majority of signato- a member of the Houthi Political Office. He added that applications from non-members will be selected by specially formed committees based at the group's offices in Al-Hasaba, Sana'a city.

There is no deadline for nonmember applicants and the criteria for admittance is imprecise.

New applicants, according to Al-Hamran, "must come from densely populated areas, and should include a significant number of economic and legal experts, religious and legislative scholars, youth and

All applicants selected by the committees will need to be confirmed by the group's Revolutionary Committee, headed by Mohammad Ali Al-Houthi.

As outlined in the group's constitutional declaration, a five-member Presidential Council will be formed from the National Transitional Council, with the approval of the Revolutionary Committee. According to Hashwal, new Cabinet members will then be chosen by the Presidential Council.

Al-Hamran said discussions at

the Movenpick hotel in Sana'a were secondary to the group's constitutional declaration, and that any agreements emanating from the UN-brokered national dialogue can not conflict with Friday's decrees.

The Yemen Times spoke with Ali Nasser Al-Samhi, a leading GPC representative from the Bakil Al-Mair district of Hajja governorate, who was present to register his name for the national council.

"I'm joining the council because it's the new Parliament, it will affect the country and will energize the marginalized members of Parliament," he explained. "I'm here to represent the General People's Congress, and I call for my fellow parliamentarians to join me.'

Members of the opposition Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) have refused to register their names, according to Ameen Al-Garmozi, a member of Parliament's Financial Department.

Speaking with the Yemen Times, Islah member Ali Al-Ansi said he was refusing to register because the National Council is "the result of a coup" and has no legitimacy.

Several members of the Houthis Revolutionary Committee were present at the Parliament office, including Yahya Al-Houthi, brother of leader Abdulmalik Al-Houthi. Other prominent members of the oversight committee included former parliamentarians Abdu Besher and Abdulsalam Hashwal, both prominent GPC members until 2012, and independent Member of Parliament Abdulqudos Al-Anesi.

Parliament's 301 members remained unchanged since elections were last held in 2003. With 238 members the GPC made up the majority, followed by Islah with 46, the Socialist Party with eight, the Nasserists with three, and Al-Bath Party with two, in addition to four inde-

# Tajik national released three months after kidnapping

## ■ Ali Ibrahim Al-Moshki

SANA'A, Feb. 10-Julia Rouf Eva, a doctor from Tajikistan kidnapped on Oct. 29, was released on Tuesday following lengthy negotiations in Marib governorate.

Eva's release was secured through mediation by prominent tribal figures in the area. She was abducted in front of the military hospital in Marib city last October, where she had been working in the gynecology department.

Mohammad Hezam, deputy director of the Public Relations Department at the Ministry of Interior, confirmed her release on Tuesday morning. Tajikistan does not have an embassy in Yemen, but consular staff in Riyadh have been informed of her release, he said.

Ali Al-Manifi, a sheikh from Marib's Murad tribe, said negotiations began in early January and took about six weeks. "The kidnappers first wanted a ransom of YR45 million (\$209,000), but following negotiations they reduced the figure to YR15 million (\$70,000)," he

Al-Manifi said the kidnappers belong to several tribes in Marib, and that Eva was being held in the vast desert frontier between Marib and Al-Jawf governorates, a scarcely populated and notoriously lawless area.

Law enforcement officials in Marib would not respond to re-



Julia Rouf Eva was working at the military hospital in Marib city when she was abducted last October.

quests for information by the Yemen Times, saying their staff are preoccupied with deployments in the area of armed tribesmen from neighboring governorates.

The situation remains tense in Marib as tribesmen prepare for a potential invasion by the Houthis. In response to recent events in the capital, a conference was held in Marib city on Sunday. Tribal leaders discussed the creation of an independent "Sheba" region which would join the governorates of Marib, Al-Baida, and Al-Jawf.

Abdulwahab Nemran, a journalist who was involved in negotiations to secure Eva's release, confirmed that a ransom was paid to the captors but refused to disclose the exact amount or say who paid

Eva's release comes several months after that of Salif Momen, an Uzbek national kidnapped by members of Marib's Taiyman tribe on April 19. In that case, Yemeni authorities agreed to release two of the tribe's members from prison in addition to paying a ransom.





# Second high-profile resignation at Yemen TV

### ■ Khalid Al-Karimi

SANA'A, Feb. 10-The director of programs for the Yemen TV channel, Abdulelah Al-Marwani, resigned Monday citing mismanagement and unpaid salaries.

Al-Marwani sent a letter of resignation to the channel's TV sector head, Jamal Al-Hamadi, complaining of "interference" at the staterun station.

"Since my appointment in mid-October, I have done my utmost to improve programs at the station," he wrote. "Out of respect for myself and the faith my colleagues have in my independence... I can no longer work as general director of programs in order to stand with my colleagues as a free revolutionary, to demand our rights and to take a stand against corruption."

Speaking with the Yemen Times, Al-Marwani said he and his colleagues were facing a number of challenges at the station, including a lack of financial resources and "interference in every depart-

Al-Marwani's is the second highprofile resignation at the station following the departure of its director of news, Tawfik Al-Sharabi.

Al-Sharabi resigned on Jan. 20 amidst allegations of Houthi interference in the station's editorial policy. The group has increased their control over state-run media institutions since seizing control of

the capital last September, including Yemen TV, Saba News Agency, and Al-Iman TV.

"Al-Marwani's resignation is an indication of how messy the situation is at Yemen TV, it was expected," said Al-Sharabi. "He has been a hard-working member of staff... [but] we can't continue working in these conditions."

Houthi representatives continue to deny interfering with editorial policy at stations under their control. Hussein Al-Bukhaiti, a prominent activist for the group, denies the allegations and said Houthi oversight is "a matter of avoiding provocative news and programs."

Director of Yemen TV Ahmed Al-Houthi, a distant relative of leader Abdulmalik Al-Houthi who has worked at the station for 20 years, said Al-Marwani's resignation came as a "surprise."

"It was not because of the interference of our revolutionary committees. He resigned because of management problems at the station," he said.

Unpaid salaries, which have affected staff throughout the media sector since December, were also cited in Al-Marwani's resignation. On Feb. 3, media sector employees protested in front of the Central Bank of Yemen (CBY). The bank's director has refused to release funds for employees' salaries in spite of government directives to



Abdulelah Al-Marwani, the director of programs for Yemen TV station, tendered his resignation in a letter on Monday.

# Officials deny drone strike in Hadramout

## ■ Ali Aboluhom

SANA'A, Feb. 11-Local government officials denied reports that a drone strike took place in Hadramout governorate on Tuesday. A source from the First Military Region said an explosive device targeted military vehicles belonging to his regiment.

The source, who is based in northern Hadramout and requested anonymity citing security concerns, told the Yemen Times AQAP were involved in the plot. that there were no casualties in

On Tuesday local media outlets bility for the attack. reported a drone strike killed four

suspected Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) militants in Wadi Ser, between the districts of Al-Qatan and Shebam near the border with Saudi Arabia.

Staff at the Al-Qatan and Shebam security offices also denied any knowledge of a drone strike in the governorate.

The source from the First Military Region dismissed the reports as "rumors being circulated as news." He suspects members of

As of Wednesday evening, AQAP have not claimed responsi-

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# "The Dead Journey"

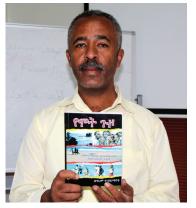
## **■ Yemen Times Staff**

irum Tehalmanot is an Ethiopian journalist and refugee who left Ethiopia nine years ago. On Jan. 9, his first book, "The Dead Journey," was published in Yemen. It was published in Ethiopia a few months prior. The book was written as "a

warning to those thinking of coming to Yemen," Tehalmanot said. It is based on his experience at sea, but also on 53 interviews he has conducted with those who made the journey.

The book is the first to be published in a three-part series about the dangerous conditions migrants and refugees face coming to Yemen.

In the book, Tehalmanot describes watching a woman drown in front him. He also interviews



those who are trafficked once they arrive. Migrants and refugees describe being tortured by traffickers while their families in Ethiopia listen over the phone.

"They call the families of the people they're torturing so that they can hear them scream in agony," he said, leaving the families no choice but to gather enough money to send to the traffickers.





YT vision statement

'To make Yemen a good world citizen."

Prof. Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf, Founder of Yemen Times



# **OUR OPINION**

# **Houthis** must listen, not lecture youth

spent the day running between protests, starting with what was supposed to be an anti-Houthi rally Wednesday morning. There were separate pro-Houthi rallies scheduled for the afternoon, and only a few dozen showed up to the rally organized by independent youth.

There was a large difference in tone between the Houthis that inserted themselves into the anti-Houthi protests, and the Houthis at Change Square. The first set were clearly there to provoke demonstrators, driving through the protests and trying to drown out their chants by blasting music through loud speakers.

Other Houthis seized on the symbolism of being in Change Square four years after the uprising to claim that they were continuing what was started in 2011, not impeding it. This group did not disparage the protestors, but encouraged them to see the Ansar Allah movement as a way forward from the political transition that had done little to change Yemenis' everyday lives.

Independent youth were, more than anything, challenging power. The danger of the old regime is that power was concentrated in the hands of a few elites. The Houthis are missing the point if they think that removing Saleh or the transitional government and placing themselves in the position of authority is the sort of challenge to power that 2011 symbolized.

If the Houthis are serious about moving forward with an inclusive government, they should meet the protestors' demands to withdraw from the capital and other governorates. They won't, but they should.

**Ahlam Mohsen** 

# When will they announce the death of the Arabs?

**Nabeel Khoury Atlantic Council** First published Feb. 9

resident Barack Obama's dilemma is understandable. The man has a serious allergy to the mess that is the Middle East and he made it clear from the beginning of his first term that he has other priorities, both domestic and international, on which to spend time and treasure. He also is unsure of where US interests are at risk in the region. Where he is sure they are, he relies on drone technology to help cut the risk down. After six years of this misguided strategy, it is futile to keep bashing his foreign policy on this score. But what about Arab governments and rulers? What is their excuse for allowing a relatively small group of thugs, a ragtag army led by men with minds stuck in the seventh century, using swords to decapitate and fire to burn their captured prisoners at the stake?

To begin with, Jordan's response—with all due respect and sympathy for the family of the Jordanian pilot and the understandable outrage felt all over the country—has thus far consisted of executing two Islamic State (ISIL) prisoners and increased air raids to show Jordan's strength in the face of terrorism. Other members of the anti-ISIL coalition have delivered the expected condemnations, including President Obama's, "It's just one more indication of the viciousness and barbarity of this organization." So, in addition to air action, we are racking up the indications of this group's barbarism. A Lebanese saying comes to mind: "The one counting the blows is not in the same condition as the one receiving them!"

President Obama is right about one thing, ISIL remains first and foremost an Arab and Muslim problem against which the states in the region should take ownership of the fight-not to mention other extremist groups in their midst. Yet his call for action runs into the crux of the matter: ISIL in particular and religious extremism in general clearly indicates and directly results from the bankruptcy of most Arab regimes. Islamic extremism fills the void left by Arab dictators who crush any secular, liberal, political, or civil society organizations, leaving the political arena open only to those who do not need secular organizations to thrive. The failure of those regimes to meet the growing needs of their people also leaves the young and the frustrated looking for alternatives. Many become galvanized by the slogan, "Islam is the solution," and seek to reconstruct a glorious past in the hope of escaping a depressing and humiliating present.

The chaos produced by the civil war in Syria and Bashar Al-Assad's blind slaughter of his own people made ISIL's rise and growth possible; just as Nouri Al-Maliki's poor governance strategy in Iraq aided and abetted it; just as regime failure in Yemen has led to the Houthis' dominance at the southern tip of the Arabian peninsula. In all cases, the impotence of the Arab regimes to stop the extremists has led them to brazenly blame the failure of US foreign policy—in some cases even accuse the US of deliberately fomenting extremism—in order to divert attention from their own paralysis and total lack of interest in efforts to solve their own problems.

These are revolutionary times in the Middle East. The Arab Uprising of 2011 reflected a deep-seated and genuine desire for change, transcending borders and social classes. This desire resonated most deeply among the secular liberal youth who uniformly asked for reform, democracy, and ultimately a change in the regimes that proved incapable of supporting their demands. The problem with these uprisings is that they had neither the numbers nor the force with which to back up their demands once some of the leaders fell. In Libya, Egypt, Yemen, and Syria, the removal or weakening of the rulers simply unleashed tribal, military, and extremist forces that then vied for power and had the military means with which to do so. Chaos and mayhem were almost inevitable, with the single exception of Tunisia.

Nevertheless, this is how revolutions begin. Regimes that smugly sit on the sidelines feeling superior to the hapless people in Libya, Egypt, Yemen, and Syria, should take heed. Their inability to help their brethren resolve their power struggles make them vulnerable to the same forces of change, thereby risking the turmoil and misery that seem to follow. US policy ought to push more consistently for democratization, something President Obama promised in his famous Cairo speech in 2009. To those rulers, thus far untouched by the uprisings and their turmoil, the message is

Form a joint Arab force to confront and defeat ISIL on the ground in Syria and

Write a new charter for the Arab League and forge a new plan to protect the rights of religious and ethnic minorities in the region. The international community will no longer be silent on abuses of human rights in your countries.

Devise a strategy to tackle the problems of poverty and ignorance in the region.

Commit to a long-term plan to support the development of democracy, human rights, and women's rights throughout the region. Reform from above is possible and urgent: Your own people are demanding it.

Bring in a new generation of leaders capable of understanding how to build mod-

On all of the above, start now.

Syrian poet Nizar Qabbani wrote his famous poem, "When will they announce the death of the Arabs" in 1994. He lamented the apathy, corruption, and lack of creativity and productivity in the region. He asked rhetorically at the end of the poem, "If the Arabs died, where would they bury them and who would weep for them?" Nizar's poetic sarcasm, like that of this writer, reflects deep bitterness and disappointment with a society that inherited a great culture with great potential but, unfortunately, wallows in selfishness and short-sightedness, and continues to be ruled by an elite that is for the most part rotten to the core.

Dr. Nabeel Khoury is a Nonresident Senior Fellow with the Atlantic Council's Rafik Hariri Center for the Middle East and a Visiting Associate Professor for the Program on Middle East and North African Studies at Northwestern University.

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# Why the calm voices of rationality need to prevail

Dr. Burhan Al-Chalabi middleeasteve.net First published Feb. 10

nown to intelligence" is a phrase that has come up all too often following the most recent terrorist attacks on Western capitals. Not long after the terrible Charlie Hebdo massacre in Paris on Jan. 7 this year, the media reported that the French intelligence agencies had been monitoring Said Kouachi and Cherif Kouachi; as well as the attacker at the Jewish supermarket, Amedy Coulibaly.

On Dec. 15 2014, Man Haron Monis held 17 people hostage at the Lindt cafe in Sydney. Tony Abbott, the Australian prime minister, announced to the world the perpetrator of the crime was well known to the Australian intelligence services.

Similarly, when the British solider Lee Rigby was murdered in Woolwich in May 2013, it was revealed in the media that his killers, Michael Adebolajo and Michael Adebowale, were known to British intelli-

These bloody events caused outrage among the people of Western nations and rightly so. Yet, to date, no satisfactory explanation has been offered by the relevant authorities for not apprehending these criminals prior to their barbaric crimes. This question is relevant since in these countries, particularly in the UK, there is sufficient legislation to arrest and charge anyone who incites hatred with intent to cause violence.

## **Double standards**

Before the attack in Paris, there was much public sympathy in France for the plight of the Palestinian people. There was a corresponding feeling of anger directed at Israel for the crimes committed by its forces against innocent civilians in Gaza. French president, Francois Hollande, led the initiative to recognize the creation of a sovereign Palestinian state. Overnight, the Charlie Hebdo massacre diverted French sympathy away from the Palestinian cause. Now there is much widespread French outrage against

It is crucial that Western public opinion does not begin to conflate all Muslims with the crimes committed by a few individuals.

During the invasion of Iraq, US soldiers tortured Iraqi civilians in Abu Ghraib prison. Similarly, in Basra, British soldiers were involved in the torture of Baha Mousa, who later died in custody. There were other atrocities. In no way should the crimes committed by these soldiers taint all British and Americans as criminals.

Anders Brevik is a Christian fundamentalist who murdered 70 innocent teenagers in Norway. His crime was the worst terrorist mass murder of modern times in Europe. Yet there was no widespread media panic determined to generate a fear of all Christians. Such double standards only serve to alienate minorities in Western so-

## A betrayal of morals

It is very important for all governments, particularly in the West, to address radicalization, extremism and terrorism. It is also equally important to address the causes of radicalization, extremism and terrorism.

Since 1991, generations of Iraqis have been born into a climate of war and economic sanctions. Many innocent Iraqis suffer under the continual bombardment of US and UK warplanes. In the West, the murder of innocent Palestinian women and children in Gaza by Israeli warplanes was mainly condemned by humanitarian organizations.

In Britain, the publication of the Sir John Chilcot inquiry, into the invasion of Iraq, has been delayed again. Thus denying the British public the opportunity to hold to account those responsible for the illegal invasion of Iraq; the atrocities committed against Iraqi civilians and the death of British soldiers who were morally betrayed by their superiors.

In the US, President Obama declared waterboarding, sleep deprivation and rendition as a form of torture against US law. These acts of torture also contravene international laws and the Geneva Convention. The US Senate Intelligence committee recently published a report confirming that US personnel committed these forms of torture. However, to date, no legal process has been put in place to hold to account those responsible for carrying out these acts of torture.

Individuals who commit atrocities should be treated in the eyes of the law as criminals regardless of their political dogma or their false interpretations of scripture. During the conflict in Northern Ireland, IRA operatives were referred to by the British authorities as criminals, not Catholic terrorists.

Arab and Muslim governments should play a leading role by always denouncing

and disassociating themselves publicly from the crimes being committed in the name of Islam by any individuals or groups. No matter, if these political, religious and extremist groups were created, aided or supported by the US in pursuit of its wider political agenda to discredit Arabism and divide the Middle East along sectarian

The eyes of the world witnessed how shamelessly this policy was executed by the US in Iraq, with such devastating and catastrophic consequences for the nation of Iraq and her people.

## The implications of scapegoating

Twentieth century history serves as a reminder of the implications of scapegoating, marginalization and discrimination. Also, of only perceiving the wrongs suffered, regardless of wrongs committed. It is a cause of increasing concern in the West that mainstream political parties may be veering in their policies and public statements towards rightwing populist propaganda of Islamophobia and that they appear to be increasingly determined to demonize Islam and associate the faith with terrorism.

The calm voices of rationality need to prevail. This will avoid the tinderbox of discord that could once more engulf the West, leading to a clash of civilizations. Only then can we have a civil, embracing, plural and multicultural society.

Dr. Burhan Al-Chalabi, FRSA (Friend of the Royal Society of Arts), is the former Chairman of the British Iraqi Foundation, and the publisher of The London Maga-

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# Detained without evidence:

BUSINESS

AWARD

# The forgotten victims of Saleh's assassination attempt

Story and photos by **Ali Aboluhom** 

or five-year-old Ghazal Al-Hamadi, Fridays are a special day. Once a week she accompanies her mother to a mysterious building in Sana'a, its entrances guarded by heavily armed men. She has grown fond of the high, long wall and the giant gate—she is told her father Ibrahim is well-protected while he completes his "secret mission."

"Here we are, here we are!" she shouts when she sees the big gate, an image sketched onto her mind by now. "My father is waiting for us," she tells her mother. It's been like this every Friday since the end of 2012. "No one could cling harder to the gate of prison," the mother says. "The gate is hiding the man she loves most."

The building is the Central Prison of Sana'a, where her father is locked in a small and overcrowded cell, accused of perpetrating a crime no evidence has been provided for.

But the mother does not want her only child to grow up believing her father is a criminal. She fears her daughter will be traumatized if she learns he is being held against his will, identified as a criminal by the state.

### Imprisoned without evidence

Al-Hamadi was charged with masterminding the 2011 assassination attempt of then President Ali Abdullah Saleh. On June 11, months into the uprising, a mosque at the Presidential Palace was bombed while Saleh was praying with a number of his aides. The president was severely injured and was forced to travel to Saudi Arabia for medical treatment.

Al-Hamadi was arrested in July 2011 while on a visit to his brother's house with his wife and daughter. "Gunmen stormed the house, grabbed me and beat me up in front of my wife and brother, who were screaming and crying," he told the Yemen Times during an interview at the prison. "They covered my eyes, put me under their feet in a



Al-Hamadi in the Central Prison on Jan. 30, 2015, where he has been held for over two years.

pick-up truck, and drove me to an unknown location where I was kept for months."

No one told him where he was being held, but he soon figured it out for himself. From within his cell, Al-Hamadi heard the call to prayer every day and recognized the mosque—Al-Bukairya Mosque, where he used to pray before being arrested. Knowing he was being held in the Shaoub district of Sana'a, near the Old City, he realized he was at the Political Security Prison.

According to Al-Hamadi's volunteer lawyer, Abdulrahman Barman, a total of 32 people were arrested in the case and placed in the Political Security Prison: 31 men, including two soldiers, an officer, and one woman. They were all arrested between July and August 2011. A woman and her father were freed in January 2012, and two months

after another pair were released.

On Dec. 24, 2012, Al-Hamadi was transferred to the Central Prison of Sana'a along with 27 other suspects. None had been tried at this point, said Barman, who works for the non-governmental National Organization for Defending Rights and Freedoms (HOOD).

Six of the 28 defendants were released in May 2013. A month later, activists held a large demonstration in front of the prison. Hooria Mashhoor, then Minister of Human Rights, was amongst the crowd calling for their release.

In response, President Hadi ordered the release of 19—everyone but the accused soldiers and officer.

However, according to Barman the general prosecutor only released 17, keeping Al-Hamadi and four others behind bars: Shuaib Al-Bajari, at the time a student at Sana'a University, Abdullah Al-Tasami, an officer, and soldiers Mohammad Omar and Ghaleb Al-Aezari.

"There is no rationale behind their detentions," says Abdulkareem Thuail, an activist and head of the Council for Detained Revolutionaries, which he formed in April 2012 to pursue the release of those imprisoned during the 2011 uprising. "They have no evidence proving they are suspects, how can they even be charged with a crime?"

## A politically motivated case

Al-Hamadi is 35 years old and comes from the Bani Hamad village of Al-Moasit district, in Taiz. At the time he was arrested he worked in Sana'a as the manager of a website

for a charitable association belonging to the Islah Party. He preferred not to reveal the charity's name.

Al-Hamadi said he is not—and was not at the time—a member of the Islah Party. According to him, he was hired based on his professional qualifications alone and has no idea why he was targeted by authorities, although he suspects his tenuous link with Islah may be the reason.

In Barman's view, there has been clear interference in the case by Saleh and his cronies. "The former regime wants to make political profits at the expense of their freedom," he said, pointing out that the former president and his aides "have no tangible evidence proving them guilty of the crime."

"The prosecution came under pressure from the former president and his aides," Barman claims. As evidence he points to the fact that, during the past two years, four hearings were held in the Criminalized Penal Court in Sana'a but no verdict was ever reached because the head of the court resigned—as did his replacement.

"The last hearing was held in March 2014, but when Helal Mahfal, the head of the court, resigned, the hearing was put off until further notice," he explained.

Judge Mohammad Al-Burgushi replaced Mahafal but resigned immediately after receiving the details of the case, according to Barman. A third judge, Ali Al-Omaisi, was appointed, but no hearing was ever scheduled.

"During the four previous hearings, about 300 armed men loyal to Saleh packed the court and the yard outside to exert pressure on the judge," according to Barman. "The Judges resigned as they feared for their reputations, as well as their lives. This case is very sensitive and has been highly politicized."

If the judge had ordered their release, "they would be harmed by opponents," says Barman, referring to Saleh and his allies. On the other hand, if the judge were to convict the suspects, "he fears losing his reputation because there is no evidence against them."

Both former heads of court, Mahfal and Al-Burgushi, are not allowed to give any statements to the press, as per Yemeni law.

Mohammad Al-Bakwali, the lawyer representing Saleh and others injured in the assassination attempt, did not respond to calls by the Yemen Times.

Thuail says it is unclear why hearings remain suspended. "The case had been referred from the court to the High Judicial Council to make a ruling, but when we staged protests and questioned the head of the council, he said he wasn't not in charge of the case." That was in mid-2014.

The council, along with some activists and lawyers, organized a protest in late December 2014 in front of the High Judicial Council to exert pressure. Their protests came to nothing, however. "The judges prefer to remain silent when confronted with this case," said Thuail.

He believes the former regime wanted to make a political "swap" by detaining them. "The former regime, which is accused of killing more than 50 and injuring 100 in the so-called Friday of Dignity massacre on March 18, 2011, sought to release those detainees in returning for turning a blind eye to the Dignity Day victims," he said.

Barman agrees, saying the former regime delayed the release of the prisoners—and for those who were eventually released, probably allowed it to happen—in exchange for opponents backing off on accusations regarding the massacre.

"The detainees are victims of a political conflict between several factions in the country since the 2011 uprising up until now, and everyone wants to profit at their expense," he said.

Eleven people, including former President Saleh, were accused of involvement in the so-called Friday of Dignity massacre. One hearing was conducted in September 2012. The suspects—including Saleh—were tried in absentia, however no ruling was made and the hearing was post-poned indefinitely.

For now, there is no indication Al-Hamadi will be released any time soon.

He has become accustomed to prison life: He is in charge of the computer center and teaches the prisoners English. Due to good behavior, he is even allowed to have a cell phone to call home.

He has also become accustomed to his daughter's voice on the phone. That's why every Friday when Al-Hamadi sees Ghazal in person he begs her to sing for him. "As I see my daughter coming with my wife to see me it's as if I'm in paradise for but one hour and a half," he said, tears beginning to fill his eyes. "Then I feel I'm being brought back to hell."



Al-Hamadi said his fingernails still bare the marks of torture from his time in the Political Security Prison, but that he has not been tortured since being transferred to the Central Prison.

## **ANALYSIS**

# Shia militias mixed blessing in Iraq, Syria

**Barbara Slavin** al-monitor.com First published Feb. 9

plethora of new and old Shia militias are dominating battle-fields in Iraq and Syria, US experts say, raising concerns about growing Iranian influence that could exacerbate sectarian divisions and ultimately weaken the fight against the group that calls itself the Islamic State (IS).

The growth of these groups known as popular mobilization units—poses a conundrum for the Obama administration and the coalition of about 60 countries it is leading against IS. For the time being, Iran-backed groups are providing most of the "boots on the ground" that are pushing back IS forces from key areas near Baghdad, including Diyala province. These militias are also preventing IS from overrunning even more territory in Syria. But there are disturbing reports of massacres of Sunni civilian populations by Shia fighters, some of whom have killed Americans in the past.

At his confirmation hearing Feb. 4, Ashton Carter, the nominee to replace Chuck Hagel as defense secretary, went so far as to equate Iran and IS as the biggest threats to US national security, in part because of spreading Iranian in-

fluence in Iraq. "I have concerns about the sectarian nature of Iran's activities in Iraq," Carter explained to the Senate Armed Services Committee.

"The United States must continue to make clear to the Iraqi government that Iran's approach in Iraq undermines the needed political inclusion for all Iraqi communities, which is required to ultimately defeat [IS]," he said.

US room for maneuvering may be limited, however.

Iran-backed militias have played a pivotal role in Iraq since the US invasion overthrew the Sunni regime of Saddam Hussein in 2003. His removal facilitated the return of thousands of Iran-trained Shia fighters. They included members of the Badr Brigades, which was created in Iran during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq War as the military arm of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, one of post-Saddam Iraq's main political parties. The leader of what is now called the Badr Organization, Hadi Al-Ameri, is Iraq's minister of transportation and has been spotted among militiamen in recent battles as has the head of Iran's Quds Force, Qasem Soleimani.

"How can we control Iran's influence in Iraq considering that the parties in control of the Baghdad government are Shia parties?" Alireza Nader, a Middle East analyst at Rand, told Al-Monitor. "The

Iraqi government is so vulnerable at this point that it has little choice but to turn to Iran which, unlike the US, has people on the frontlines [in Iraq] taking casualties."

In the aftermath of Saddam's overthrow, Iran made overtures to the United States for a broad-based dialogue but was spurned. Iran began organizing new militias, known as "special groups," such as Asaib Ahl Al-Haq, the League of the Righteous, which attacked US forces. When the United States ended its combat mission in Iraq in 2009, militia leaders who had been jailed or blacklisted were freed and rehabilitated and some are now prominent in the fight against IS.

Among them is Abu Mahdi Al-Mohandes, leader of the group Kataib Hezbollah, which is on the US State Department's terrorism list.

Even US experts on Iraq who are critical of Iran's role concede that the militias are providing an essential service while efforts continue to reconstitute the Iraqi army and to organize national guard forces that can fight more effectively in Sunni areas, such as Mosul. The Iraqi Cabinet has agreed to the creation of a national guard but the Parliament—dominated by Shias and ethnic Kurds—has yet to approve.

As US forces pound IS from the air, however, concerns are increasingly being expressed in Washington, as well as among Sunni Arab members of the anti-IS coalition, that Iran will be the ultimate beneficiary. For some critics, these concerns are compounded by the prospect of a nuclear deal between the United States and Iran.

"What if we defeat [IS] but lose Iraq in the process?" asked Michael Knights, a leading US expert on the Iraqi military. Referring to what he called "a Hezbollization of the Iraqi security sector," Knights told an audience at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy on Feb. 6 that this was a "Yalta moment" similar to the 1945 conference in Crimea where the United States acquiesced to Soviet control of post-war East-ern Europe.

The United States needs to step up its security cooperation with the Baghdad government and "outperform the Iranians" to prevent Iraq from becoming an Iranian satellite, Knights suggested. That will require "a visionary decade-spanning relationship" with the Iraqi government, he said, that will include a larger US military presence.

Phillip Smyth, an expert on Shia militias, sketched an even bleaker and more complicated picture of the situation in Syria, where scores of new groups have emerged in the past year and a half to fight on the side of the Iran-backed government of President Bashar Al-Assad.

While attention has focused on the high number of foreign fighters flocking to Syria to join IS and other Sunni jihadist groups, "one of the largest foreign fighters' contingents is Shia," Smyth said. Most of the fighters are members of Lebanon's Hezbollah or of Iraqi militias but he said there are also recruits coming from as far as India, Afghanistan and Africa—many of them answering ads on social media. Smyth said these foreign Shia fighters numbered in the "tens of thousands" and that more than a thousand may have already died in the war.

US officials contacted by Al-Monitor said they had no figures for Shia foreign fighters in Syria. Foreigners estimated to have joined the Sunni side are about 20,000, larger than the number that joined the anti-Soviet jihad in Afghanistan in the 1980s.

Many of the Shia groups in Syria associate themselves with the defense of the Damascus shrine of Sayyida Zeinab, a granddaughter of the Prophet Muhammad and sister of Hussein, whose martyrdom in the seventh century was a defining event in the schism between the Sunni and Shia branches of Islam. However, Smyth said the defense of the shrine was a cover for more extensive activities in Syria.

"They have secured the rule of Bashar Al-Assad and constructed a new Golan front" on the border between Syria and Israel, Smyth said. Last month, Israel bombed and killed a contingent of Hezbollah fighters in Syria that included an Iranian general and Hezbollah retaliated with a missile strike that killed two Israeli soldiers in a disputed area on the border of Israel, Syria and Lebanon.

Some analysts say that fears of a new "Shia crescent" running from Tehran through Baghdad and Damascus to Beirut (with a side trip to Sana'a in Yemen where Iranbacked Houthi rebels have recently seized control) are exaggerated.

Iran has significant internal economic problems, and popular support for what is viewed as "Arab" causes is minimal, while many of the foreign Shia groups have their own agendas and grievances, which they would pursue even without Iranian help.

Still there is no doubt that IS and other Sunni jihadist groups—which reject Shias as apostates—have stirred up pan-Shia feeling in countries with substantial Shia populations, just as the US replacement of Saddam by a Shia-dominated government in Baghdad fueled the rise of IS' precursor, Al-Qaeda in Iraq.

"It's not new and we've seen it in Lebanon and Syria before," said P.J. Dermer, a former US Army colonel with long service in Iraq and elsewhere in the Middle East. Given Iran's proximity to the battlefields and long ties with Arab Shia populations, "we're going to have a tough time" trying to reduce its influence, Dermer said.



# Anti-Houthi protests: For or Against?

have stepped down. Cabinet has been reshuffled, dissolved then reformed and-like Parliament-no longer exists. A rebel group took over the capital on Sept. 21, 2014, and has since expanded its control over much of the north of the country. While the Houthis extended their reach—often at Houthis—who they stood shoulder to shoulder with four or not.

of Yemen's 2011 uprising. Since that day, two presidents sions were held between rival factions, facilitated by the

To mark the fourth anniversary, independent youth took to the streets in protest again. Not to protest Ali Abdullah Saleh like they did in 2011, but to demonstrate against the

Feb. 11 marked the four year anniversary of the beginning the barrel of a gun—agreements were signed and discus-years ago. Houthi supporters also showed up, claiming they are finishing off the revolution. While talks between political groups take place in a 5-star hotel and rival factions jostle in the streets, what do ordinary Sana'anis think of it all? The Yemen Times asked locals who were not attending the protests whether they are supportive of them

■ Nasser Al-Sakkaf



Abdullah Al-Samei, 22 years old, journalist

Protests are one of the ways for us to express our opinions. Preventing protests oppresses freedom, and this is not acceptable at all. Our revolution in 2011 created a good environment for freedom. and we were surprised that our partners in the 2011 revolution [referring to the Houthis] tried to prevent protests. This act is not in accordance with the revolution and its goals.



Ahmed Al-Silwi, 25 years old, pharmacist

I prefer dialogue more than protests because the political leaders control the protests, and if they want to find a solution they can do it through dialogue. I'm not supportive of violently cracking down on the demonstrations, but I'm supportive of stopping the demonstrations in order to calm down the situation.



Hanan Shamhan, 4th year student in the Media College at Sana'a University

I'm against protests, because these protests lead to grudges and conflicts among people, and it is not the only way to express our opinions. We can express our opinions by other means, such as by using dialogue. I'm not against the Houthis. They are our brothers regardless of their opinions, because every group has its own ideologies and we can not say that everything they do is right or wrong, so I'm against protests.



Al-Izi Mahdi Qasem, 42 years old, accountant

I'm against protests under any umbrella group and for any reason because they disobey the guardian [leader of the country] and this is forbidden in Islamic law. When there is a political problem, the wise people who can exert influence on the decision makers should have a talk with the decision makers, but should not go to the streets, because these protesters can not create solutions. I've been against the protesters since 2011 and I did not participate in any protests because I did not believe in them. The protests did not solve problems, rather they created new ones.



Ali Faidhi, 35 years old, sound engineer

I'm not supportive of the protests at all. I prefer that all people care about their work and forget protests. When the political environment starts to calm down, new crises are created by new protests. While I think that these protests came after political dispute, we [Sana'anis] have not seen that these protests make solutions to any problems. I prefer to keep myself away from protests, and I advise others to do the same.

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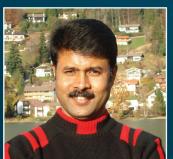
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# Drones for good?

**Louise Redvers** 

First published Feb. 9

ost commonly associated with spying and military missions, the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs)—or drones—for humanitarian purposes is the subject of both hype and caution.

Skeptics are wary of the ethical and practical implications, worried about human rights and security aspects and unconvinced by their capabilities and relevance.

But experts argue they could play an important role in disaster relief as well as having other useful civilian applications.

A two-day event hosted in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) this weekend presented some potentially positive uses for UAVs in civilian and humanitarian settings offering big money prizes to the best ideas.

"Drones don't have a great reputation," admitted Patrick Meier, the director of social innovation at Qatar Computing Research Institute (QCRI), and a leading advocate for

Gimball, a UAV created by Flyability in Switzerland, is collision-proof due to its outer protective frame.

It can be used in buildings and fires and contains an HD camera. It won the top prize of \$1 million at

Dubai's Drones for Good event in February 2015.

UAVs in the humanitarian sector, who helped judge the Dubai competition.

"Don't forget in the past we used to associate satellites with the Cold War and the military, but that has now changed, thanks to the democratization of imagery.

### **Changing reputation**

"Hopefully as the public see more examples of drones doing good, of stopping animal poaching, of saving lives in search-and-rescue efforts or delivering medicines to remote parts of Africa, then perceptions will change," said Meier, also the co-founder of the Digital Humanitarian Network (DHN), a membership platform for digital disaster response.

The "Drones for Good" event drone to "improve peoples' lives."

Alongside commercial concepts to regulate parking and monitor traffic, there were a number of prototypes that could be used for search-and-rescue, re-forestation, medical delivery, landmine detec-

The top prize of \$1million went to Swiss team, Flyability, for its collision-proof drone "Gimball" that can enter collapsed or burning buildings and beam back footage

Unlike regular drones which are ceilings.

"Our drone can be sent anywhere and can be operated by non-experts because it's easy to pilot," co-creator Adrien Briod told IRIN. "It could be used in many situations, in a collapsed building, in a forest,

"For now, we are targeting in-

### **Local communities**

Another finalist was BioCarbon Engineering, a UK-based team that has developed an UAV to deliver rapid re-forestation in hardto-reach areas by mapping and then firing planting pellets into

mosaic reforestation that is hard to reach, say a patch in the middle of a forest, and it could be aphumans can't access," explained team-member and forestry expert Irina Fedorenko.

"In the future we would defibon credit schemes."

a recharge.

It has been designed to assist park rangers with the collection of data from camera traps, but Meier said, "There is huge potential for this sort of technology to be adapted to a crisis situation. It could be very a useful way to collect data and images from disaster areas when cell and 4G

And he added, "There was another very interesting design which proposed to carry organs

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from inside.

fragile and prone to crashing, the Gimball is suspended in a protective frame and can bounce off hard surfaces and roll along floors and

in a search and rescue mission.

dustrial inspection but search-andrescue is definitely a potential use and I think it will come, but only once we have perfected the technology because when it's people's lives involved, you have to be sure the technology is 100 percent reliable."

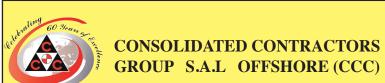
targeted zones.

"Our technology is ideal for plied to contaminated land that

nitely like to work with NGOs and local communities and to promote sustainable forestry and there could be scope for communities who take part in re-forestation to profit from car-

The winner of the national competition-and AED1 million (\$272,000)—was a group of students from New York University (NYU) Abu Dhabi. Their Wadi Drone, which weighed 2.2 kg, can fly for up to 40 km without

networks go down."



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for transplantation. This could easily be adapted to cold-chain delivery of blood supplies or even vaccines and would be ideal for places like Liberia where even short distances can be inaccessible by road due to heavy rains."

### Two-way conversation

José Luis Angoso, director of innovation and alliances at Spanish technology firm Indra, told IRIN, "I am totally convinced that drones have a humanitarian application, there is huge potential.

"But this needs to be a two-way conversation, humanitarians need to engage with the drone creators to outline what they want and need, rather than dismiss technology be-

cause it does not fit their purpose."

In August last year the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) launched its first policy paper on the humanitarian application of UAVs, and in November hosted a strategy session at the UN Secretariat in New York to discuss the paper and potential humanitarian uses for drones.

Other non-military uses of drones to date have included 3D modeling of river valleys for hydrological analysis and flood protection in Haiti, and disaster mapping following Typhoon Haiyan in the Philip-

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Sanad is an octocopter—or eight-rotored drone—created by an engineer at Dubai Police. It can fly up to 1 km and lift about 40-50 kg of weight using one of its life-rings.



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