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Islah leaders kidnapped, accused by Houthis of Al-Qaeda ties

■ Ali Ibrahim Al-Moshki

SANA'A, March 2—The Islah Party accused the Houthis on Sunday evening of kidnapping four of its leaders earlier that day. The Houthis claim the men were Al-Qaeda operatives.

"We hold Ansar Allah [the Houthis] responsible for everything that happens against the party's leaders," Adnan Al-Odaini, deputy head of Islah's Media Department, told the Yemen Times. "We condemn in the strongest terms the allegations that the four men who were arrested are connected to Al-Qaeda."

Islah said the leaders were kidnapped from the party's Student Department in Sana'a, located on Rabat Street. The four men are Ali Al-Hadma, Mohammad Al-Sabri, youth activist Anwar Al-Himyari, and Habib Al-Ariqi.

The Student Department published a statement on Al-Sahwah Net, the official website of the Islah Party, on Sunday evening.

"The department demands the immediate release of all abducted Islah Party members by armed Houthis and it holds the group responsible for any harm they may incur. The department also warns against these extrajudicial acts which threaten the social peace and



A leading figure in the Student Department of the Islah Party | Head of the Elections Departments of the Islah Party | Head of the Students Department of the Islah Party | A leading figure in the Student Department of the Islah Party

security of the entire country," the statement read.

Shortly following the statement's release, the state-run Saba News Agency, now under Houthi control, published an article which claimed that, "security forces belonging to the Capital Secretariat arrested an armed cell linked to Al-Qaeda, which comprises of a group of field activists who are linked with Al-Qaeda and they are headed by a man named Habib Al-Ariqi."

Saba did not mention that the men were Islah Party members.

"The Houthis want to escape their international isolation by saying they are fighting Al-Qaeda, the security forces and media outlets are under the control of the Houthis, so we are of course not surprised by those fabricated allegations," Al-Odaini told the Yemen Times.

Mohammad Al-Imad, a leading figure in the Islah Party, said that at least three vehicles filled with Houthis wearing security forces uniforms besieged the Student Department and took the men.

"They took them to secret prisons," he said. "We asked most of the police stations in the Capital Secretariat and we could not locate any of them. We are sure that they have been disappeared."

The Yemen Times made repeated calls to the Sana'a Security Administration. Requests for comment were not returned. Capital Secretariat security chief Abdulrazzaq Al-Moayad and his deputy Abdulaziz Al-Qadasi also failed to return calls. The Security Operations Department declined to answer any questions regarding the kidnappings.

Salah Al-Ezzi, head of the

Houthis' Media Department, based in Sa'ada, told the Yemen Times that popular committees, "are co-operating with security forces to maintain security, there is nothing inappropriate about these arrests."

He refused to say where the men are being held but confirmed that the men are being "interrogated" and that if they "are in fact co-operating with Al-Qaeda, they will be imprisoned and tried, otherwise they will be released."

Arrests in Ibb governorate

Two of the five men arrested during anti-Houthi demonstrations in Ibb on Saturday were released by the Houthis on Sunday.

The group released journalist Aziz Al-Samei and Dr. Faris Fuad Al-Banna, who were kidnapped along with three others in Ibb city at Al-Suhool checkpoint during a demonstration on Saturday at noon. Ammar Al-Hamati, Hesham Al-Faqih, and Mohammad Al-Dhubiani are still being held.

A source from the Ibb Security Operations Department said the men were taken to and being held at the operations department. He would only add that, "the arrested men will be released following an investigation."

Continued on page 2

Three years after kidnapping, AQAP releases Saudi official



A source from AQAP told the Yemen Times Al-Khalidi was released in exchange for a ransom, and that the group backed down on earlier demands for their "brothers" to be freed in Saudi Arabia.

■ Ali Ibrahim Al-Moshki

SANA'A, March 3—Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) released the former Saudi deputy counsel Wednesday morning after three years of captivity.

Abdullah Al-Khalidi, was kidnapped in front of his home in Aden on March 28, 2012.

According to a statement from the Saudi interior ministry released on Wednesday morning, Al-Khalidi, who was the Saudi deputy counsel in Aden at the time of his kidnapping, was released, "as a result of the intensified efforts exerted by the head of General Intelligence."

"[Al-Khalidi] was on his way to his office on the morning of March 28, 2012... [and was] later released in a deal with the misguided elements which detained him against his will," the statement continued.

The statement added that the Saudi interior ministry would spare no efforts to protect their citizens, wherever they are.

During Al-Khalidi's confinement, several videos surfaced in which the Saudi diplomat was

shown pleading for his government to meet the kidnappers' demands. Al-Khalidi pleaded for the Saudi government to release Al-Qaeda members and to pay an unspecified ransom.

Amjad Khushafa, a journalist specialized in Al-Qaeda's affairs, said the Ministry of Interior said that he was released and did not say he was freed, meaning that Al-Qaeda released him in exchange for a ransom.

An AQAP member who goes by the name Abu Al-Hasna'a Al-Abyani, told the Yemen Times that Saudi Arabia paid a ransom in exchange for Al-Khalidi's release.

"We demanded that Saudi Arabia release some of our brothers, but we settled for the ransom." He would not divulge the amount of the ransom.

Mohammad Hezam, deputy head of the Public Relations Department at the Ministry of Interior, told the Yemen Times Monday evening that the ministry played no role in negotiating Al-Khalidi's release, and claimed he learned of the release from news reports.

Houthis, GPC: No talks outside Sana'a

■ Ali Ibrahim Al-Moshki

SANA'A, March 1—On Sunday the Houthis denied reports in local media that they had agreed to political talks outside Sana'a. The group said the move would be a waste of time.

Mohammad Al-Bukhaiti, a member of the Houthi Political Office, said that moving the political dialogue to another governorate is waste of time and a method to stall the talks. He said the Houthis rejected the three conditions Hadi stipulated before he would resume dialogue with the Houthis.

Hadi's three conditions for returning to talks, made Saturday, were: Firstly, for the Houthis to relinquish their weapons. Second, to become a political party. And third, to end their occupation of all state institutions.

These three conditions follow a condition stipulated by Hadi on Thursday, that the talks be moved out of Sana'a to a governorate not under Houthi control, preferably Aden or Taiz.

Al-Bukhaiti said the dialogue began in Sana'a and will end in Sana'a.

"Those who say there is an alliance between the Houthis and the General People's Congress (GPC) are liars. We coincidentally both happen to agree that there is no need to move the talks. That does not mean there is an alliance."

The GPC rejected calls to move the talks outside of Sana'a on Saturday. In a statement published on the party's official website, Al-Motamar Net, the party said that it rejected the calls because, "the GPC is keen to include all political groups in the talks and moving it outside of Sana'a will result in the absence of some groups, which would use the change of location as an excuse."

Abdulmalik Al-Fuhaidi, editor-in-chief of Al-Motamar Net, told the Yemen Times that the move would "deepen the current crisis," and repeated Al-Bukhaiti's claim that political groups would use the change of location as an excuse not to participate.

He also denied that there was an alliance between the GPC and the Houthis.

In a statement posted on his Facebook page, UN Envoy to Yemen Jamal Benomar clarified the

status of the talks.

A number of parties, including the Nasserists, the Socialist Party and Islah, have agreed to move negotiations to Aden or Taiz. Benomar said the leadership of the three parties have confirmed their commitment to dialogue and emphasized that Yemen must find a safe, peaceful way out of the current situation and that the political process was the way to do that.

Benomar has been in Aden since Thursday in an effort to convince Hadi to return to talks. The Socialist Party and Islah announced their withdrawal from talks on Feb. 24 in protest of the kidnapping of several political party leaders.

Mohammad Al-Sabri, a Nasserist Party leader, said that dialogue is the best way out of the current situation, but that it must be held outside Sana'a. "The dialogue would essentially be at gunpoint in Sana'a. We refuse to hold it in an occupied capital," he said.

The dialogue between various political parties and the Houthis began at the Movenpick hotel on Jan. 23, following Hadi resignation over the besieging of the Presidential

Palace and his personal residence.

Adnan Al-Ubaidi, a leading figure in the Islah Party, said the party will move forward with dialogue provided that it is hosted outside of Sana'a.

Hirak, or the Southern Movement, withdrew from the negotiations at the Movenpick hotel on Saturday evening.

Radfan Al-Dubais, a leader and spokesperson in the Southern Movement, told the Yemen Times that, "it is better to move the dialogue out of Yemen in order to free participants from any pressures they might be subjected to." He said Hirak would return to negotiations when they were relocated outside of Sana'a.

The latest developments coincide with the resumption of diplomatic ties with a number of Gulf countries. Bahrain, UAE, Qatar and Saudi Arabia reopened embassies or consulates in Aden on Friday and Saturday, in a move of solidarity with Hadi.

Prime Minister Khaled Bahah remains under house arrest along with several members of his Cabinet.

Shabwa drone strike kills 7 AQAP suspects, injures civilians

■ Ali Aboluhom

SANA'A, March 2—Seven members of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) were killed when a drone strike hit a vehicle in Shabwa governorate late Sunday evening, according to AQAP.

An AQAP source told the Yemen Times that the vehicle was carrying ten individuals. The seven men killed were all from the Al-Dayani family. The three other individuals in the vehicle were injured in the strike. The AQAP source provided the names of all the individuals in the vehicle.

A security source from Shabwa, speaking to the Yemen Times on

condition of anonymity, claimed three AQAP affiliates were killed in the vehicle, which was loaded with weapons intended for AQAP members in Al-Baida governorate. According to the source, the strike occurred in Khawra village of Markha district, which lies on the border of Al-Baida, where the group is involved in ongoing clashes with the Houthis.

Four local residents were also injured, according to the source.

Alawi Qasim Mohammed, a resident of Khawra village, supported the source's claim that four civilians were injured in a nearby house from debris from the blast. Two of the villagers were seriously injured, he

told the Yemen Times.

Salem Al-Sael, the manager of the governorate's local office of the Ministry of Information, confirmed the claims of the security source and local resident to the Yemen Times.

Drone strikes have intensified in Shabwa since the beginning of 2015. Al-Sael attributes the higher number of strikes to increased activity by AQAP operatives since the beginning of the year, as they capitalize on the rifts between the government and the Houthis.

As an example of AQAP operations in Shabwa, the security source pointed to the group's takeover on Feb. 5 of the 19th Infantry Brigade in Shabwa, where weapons were

looted. Four drone strikes have hit Shabwa governorate in little over one month.

On Feb. 27, a drone strike targeted a vehicle carrying three suspected AQAP militants in Baihan district. The source said the three bodies were completely charred and unidentifiable.

On Feb. 21, a drone strike targeted a car, also carrying three suspected AQAP militants, in Azan district. The three were killed instantly and several civilians nearby were injured, but the source was unable to give further details.

As of Monday afternoon AQAP had yet to acknowledge the two most recent strikes.

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In aftermath of embassy closures, ordinary Yemenis suffer the consequences



The closure of the Saudi embassy (pictured) has made it difficult for Yemenis to get visas for the wealthy Gulf country, affecting those planning to go for pilgrimage or work, among other things.

■ Bassam Al-Khameri

While the country continues to calculate the political costs of the mass embassy exodus in Sana'a, ordinary Yemenis are already feeling the pain.

Manal Al-Ashwal is the head of the Al-Saeeda Association for Deaf girls. Al-Ashwal, a resident of Taiz, came to Sana'a in February to secure a visa to Austria. The association helps girls pursue education and supports them with cultural and sports activities. Because Austria has no embassy in the country, Yemenis can request a visa through the French embassy.

"I came from Taiz to get a visa so I could attend a conference for people with disabilities," Al-Ashwal said. She was invited to the conference by the Zero Project in Austria, a project that focuses on the rights of persons with disabilities. The project provides a platform for people with disabilities to find the most innovative solutions for the problems they face, according to its site.

"Unfortunately, the French embassy in Sana'a shut down and I was unable to go."

"I came from Taiz to Sana'a twice and stayed in a hotel for two weeks, which cost me about YR100,000 (about \$500). One day, the French embassy called and suddenly asked

me to come retrieve my passport because the embassy will close down," she added.

In addition to travel and hotel expenses, Al-Ashwal paid 120 Euro (\$155) to get the visa and did not get it back. "Money paid for the visa isn't returned always but in my case they should at least have returned the money because the embassy closed down," she added.

Al-Ashwal says she was to be the sole representative from not only Yemen, but the Arab world, and was eager to tell her story of success, despite being a hearing-impaired person in a country that has few accommodations for people with disabilities.

Following the resignation of President Abdu Rabu Mansour Hadi in late January, several embassies began shutting down. The first closure was the American embassy, whose staff left the country on Feb. 10.

Other Western embassies, including the French and British, followed suit shortly thereafter. Saudi Arabia soon became the first Arab country to follow the American's lead. Many of the embassies cited security concerns, but critics say the move was to isolate the Houthis and to put pressure on them to reach a settlement with political parties.

While the closings have had far-reaching consequences for Yemenis,

Abdulmalik Al-Houthi, the leader of the Houthi movement, dismissed the closings during a televised speech he delivered on Feb. 26.

"If any embassy does not wish to operate in Sana'a and thinks it can put pressure on Yemenis by closing down, it can go ahead and shut down. This is not a problem," he said.

Yemen's president resigned on Jan. 22 following the months-long power struggle between his administration and the Houthis. The Houthis took control of the capital on Sept. 21, and Hadi's resignation came after the Houthis took the Presidential Palace and surrounded his personal residence.

The prime minister and many of his Cabinet members remain under house arrest in Sana'a. Hadi made his way to Aden on Feb. 21.

In a briefing to the UN Security Council, Benomar said that, "Today Yemen is at a crossroads. Either the country will descend into civil war and disintegration, or the country will find a way to put the transition back on track."

Al-Ashwal is just one of many Yemenis facing the consequences of these closures.

The closing of the Saudi embassy has had a profound effect on Yemenis, many of whom travel to Saudi to work and for Umrah, a religious pilgrimage.

Mansoor Al-Sorori, 26, lives with his seven family members in Sana'a. He was a waiter at a local restaurant until the volatile economy forced his restaurant to downsize.

"Our boss said he couldn't afford us anymore because the restaurant just wasn't receiving as many customers as in the past," he said.

Unable to find work in Sana'a, he contacted friends in Saudi Arabia. Luckily, there was a job available at a Yemeni restaurant in Saudi Arabia. Due to proximity and better employment prospects, Saudi Arabia is a popular destination for Yemenis seeking work, and there about 1.5 million Yemenis in the country, according to the Ministry of Labor.

"They told me I had to be there by Feb. 25 or I would lose the job because the employer would hire someone else. I took the money I had saved and sold some of my mother's jewelry in order to start the paperwork necessary to get a visa," Al-Sorori said. He says he paid YR400,000 (nearly 1,900\$).

He is still waiting for the visa, but has now missed out on the job following the embassy's closure.

"I'm disappointed because I spent everything we have. I will look for another job there but it could take a while," he added.

Travel agencies

The consequences are being faced not only by individuals, but Yemeni travel agencies as well.

Much of the business for these travel agencies revolves around religious pilgrimages such as Umrah or Hajj, according to Homran Abdullah Homran, the director of the Umrah Department at the Ministry of Endowment.

The agencies were already

facing financial pressures. With a precarious economy, more and more Yemenis are putting off the religious trips. With the closing of the Saudi embassy, these financial woes have only grown.

"These agencies have booked hotels in Saudi Arabia, and now that the embassy has closed, its customers will not receive their visas in time," Homran said.

In 2014, 104,000 Yemenis went to Saudi Arabia to perform Umrah, according to Homran, and 27,400 have gone in 2015.

Mahdi Al-Mekhalfi, the director of Injaz Travel Agency in Sana'a, said that his agency was also affected by the closure.

"We mainly depend on taking

people to Saudi Arabia for Umrah, but many people have now canceled because of a delay in receiving visas."

Al-Mekhalfi said that the agencies have lost a lot of money because they have booked hotels and restaurants in Mecca as they wait to receive visas from Aden, following Saudi's opening of a consulate there.

"The Saudi consulate is open in Aden but it's taking a long time; the number of employees there is low. We have also had to hire an employee located in Aden to follow up on the process of finalizing visas and this adds to our financial losses," Al-Mekhalfi.

Moving embassies to Aden

Since Hadi's great escape to Aden, anti-Houthi protesters in several

governorates, including Sana'a, Taiz and Ibb, have been calling on Hadi to replace Sana'a with Aden as the capital.

Abdulaziz Bin Habtoor, the governor of Aden, told numerous newspapers that several ambassadors who left Sana'a called President Hadi and said they want to come back to Yemen and resume operating from Aden.

"Aden is the economic capital of Yemen and it's logical that President Hadi runs the country from there," he said.

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Secretary General Abdullatif Al-Zayani arrived in the port city on Feb. 25 to meet with President Hadi and discuss the situation in Yemen.



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



Maternal and Child Health Integrated Program

Issuance Date: February 26, 2015

Deadline for Questions: March 03, 2015 at 12 PM EST / 8 PM AST

Closing Date: March 17, 2015 at 12 PM EST / 8 PM AST

Subject: Maternal and Child Health Integrated Program (MCHIP) –

Solicitation No. 001

John Snow Inc. (JSI) is seeking applications for a 4-month Assistance Award, from qualified organizations with the capacity and expertise in conducting research studies to submit applications to support a knowledge, practices and coverage (KPC) household cluster survey that will guide the implementation of maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH) interventions in Yemen. This project will be conducted under the Maternal and Child Health Integrated Program (MCHIP) which awarded a five-year Associate Award (AA) in Yemen funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). MCHIP-Yemen is led operationally by JSI in partnership with Jhpiego, Save the Children, PATH, and ICF/Macro. MCHIP-Yemen's goal is to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality and morbidity as well as rates of childhood illness and malnutrition, particularly stunting and anemia, across five governorates over five years.

Place of performance is Yemen.

For the purposes of this program, this Request for Applications (RFA) is being issued and consists of this cover letter and the following:

- Section A – General Description of Funding Opportunity
- Section B – Application Instructions
- Section C – Eligibility requirements and Selection Criteria
- Section D – Award Administration

- Attachment 1 – Summary Budget Template
- Attachment 2 – Budget notes
- Attachment 3 – Institutional Capability and Past Performance Table
- Attachment 4 – Pre-award Assessment Questionnaire
- Attachment 5 – Certifications Assurances and Other Statements of the Recipient
- Attachment 6 – Mandatory Standard Provisions for Non-US. Nongovernmental Organizations

JSI anticipates awarding one (1) sub-award as a result of this solicitation to a responsible application that offers the greatest value to MCHIP, a program funded by U.S. Government.

Subject to funds availability JSI intends to provide up to \$90,000 for this award, to be allocated over the whole period of performance.

Applications will be reviewed by a technical committee that will evaluate the Applications according to criteria provided within. The committee will determine which organization(s) will be funded based on the submitted Applications. MCHIP will use the conclusions and recommendations of the technical evaluation together with an evaluation of the costs to negotiate with the Applicant an Award. Detailed instructions for applications can be found under Section B - Application and Submission Instructions.

Applicants must be local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) registered in Yemen where the proposed project will be implemented. Detailed eligibility requirements can be found in section C2 of this RFA.

The preferred method of distribution of this RFA information is via the internet. This RFA and any future amendments can be downloaded from - http://www.jsi.com/JSIInternet/IntlHealth/contract/contract_rfp.cfm#RFA-001-MCHIP.

Applications as well as questions regarding this RFA must be received by the respective closing dates and time indicated at the top of this cover letter at the place designated below for receipt of applications. No late applications will be accepted.

Applications must be submitted via email and requested in 2 separate parts (a) technical and (b) cost or business application. Applications shall be submitted with the name and address of the applicant and RFA # (referenced above) inscribed thereon, to:

To: Victoria Rossi
Email: yemen_info@jsi.com

Issuance of this solicitation, or the submission of an Application, does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the United States Government (USG) and/or JSI, nor does it commit the USG and/or JSI to pay for costs incurred in the preparation or submission of an Application. The USG reserves the right not to fund any of the Applications received.

Thank you for your consideration of this initiative. We look forward to your organization's participation.

Sincerely,

/s/

Victoria Rossi
Senior Program Officer, MCHIP

John Snow, Inc.

وظائف شاغرة

هل ترغب في الانضمام إلى شركة تجارية تعمل في مجال الأجهزة المنزلية والإلكترونية

التدريب المستمر الترقية والمكافآت الراتب الممقتر الوظيفة المرموقة

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يفضل من لديه خبرة مناسبة في مجال البيع والتسويق.
أن تكون لديه قدرات تنظيمية جيدة.
يفضل من لديه معرفة باللغة الإنجليزية واستخدام الحاسب الآلي.
رخصة قيادة سارية المفعول.
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أو على البريد الإلكتروني: hryemen@gmail.com



World Food Programme

Programme Alimentaire Mondial

Programa Mundial de Alimentos

برنامج الأغذية العالمي

Fighting Hunger Worldwide

Business Announcement

Subject: Invitation for Expression of Interest for the Provision of Assessment and Monitoring Services for WFP programmes in Yemen

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) in Yemen seeks Expressions of Interest (EOI) from established companies for the provision of assessment and monitoring services of its programmes.

Founded in 1963, the WFP is the United Nations frontline agency in the fight against hunger currently in 74 countries. The WFP pursues a vision of the world in which every woman, man and child has access at all times to the food needed for an active and healthy life. The mandate of the WFP is to provide emergency and development assistance to eradicate hunger and poverty amongst the poorest and most food-insecure countries and populations.

The WFP has been running programmes in Yemen with its country office in Sana'a and offices in other governorates since 1967. The WFP's current two year project has various programmes reaching 6 million beneficiaries in Yemen covering relief assistance to IDPs, migrants, refugees and malnourished children, pregnant and lactating women, as well as resilience-building activities for the Yemeni population through protective and productive safety nets programmes (unconditional and conditional food/cash transfers with asset-creation activities), stunting-prevention nutrition interventions, and school feeding programmes.

The WFP desires to engage qualified and experienced companies to provide assessment and monitoring services in Yemen for its programmes.

The scope of outsourced works consists of assessment and monitoring activities, but is not limited to the execution of the following services. The WFP is therefore interested in organizations with the capacity to:

Access:

- Have a demonstrated ability to negotiate access at the community level throughout the different governorates and districts where support is required;
- Undertake field missions to all Final Distribution Points (FDPs) as provided by WFP to establish contacts and allow monitoring to take place

Assessment:

- Undertake emergency food needs assessment in areas inaccessible to WFP staff in collaboration with government and/or WFP partners;
- Undertake food security monitoring, as required;
- Conduct any other relevant assessment and studies as required;

Monitoring:

- Prepare a monthly monitoring plan in line with WFP requirements, and adapt the monitoring plan to WFP programme needs and priorities on a regular basis with close consultation with WFP Sub-Offices and Country Office;
- Undertake distribution monitoring/site visits as per monthly monitoring plan, following WFP's monitoring guidelines, procedures, and forms, to regularly assess the physical progress of WFP activities in relation to original plans and identify progress and

constraints in implementation and make recommendations for improvement;

- Undertake post-distribution monitoring of WFP activities as per the WFP guidelines and provide contextual feedback on the effectiveness of WFP food or cash assistance to target populations;
- Undertake data collection exercises for other WFP outcome measurements, evaluations and special surveys;
- Establish and maintain a database containing all FDPs, distribution monitoring and post-distribution monitoring information;

Reporting:

- Produce a distribution monitoring report on programme implementation and challenges encountered for each distribution monitoring/site visit;
- Produce a consolidated monitoring report at the end of each month, quarter, and year; and
- Perform other related activities as required and requested.

Organizations or firms who have the capacity to provide part and not all of the outline services below are still encouraged to send expressions of interest indicating areas of their strength.

This announcement encourages national and international non-governmental organizations as well as private firms based in and outside Yemen who would be interested in the upcoming tender for outsourcing assessment and monitoring services for the above mentioned WFP programmes in Yemen. Following the deadline for submission of the EOI, WFP may, based on the responses to the Capacity Questionnaire of your organization submitted and at its absolute discretion, shortlist organizations who will then be invited to bid for the assessment and monitoring services to the locations identified inside Yemen.

Interested companies are encouraged to access the United Nations Global Market (UNGM) www.ungm.org or In-Tend (WFP electronic tendering) <https://ungm.in-tend.co.uk/wfp/aspx/Home> to download **Capacity Questionnaire** along with **Supplier's Registration Form** or request for the same by sending the e-mail to the following address: yemen.procurement@wfp.org. The completed Capacity Questionnaire and Supplier's Registration Form including all supporting documentation should be returned to WFP by **[13th March, 2015], at [14:00] hrs** via the links above.

Completed Supplier Registration Form & Capacity Questionnaire with supporting documentation may also be returned in a sealed envelopes addressed as follows:

EOI#YEM15NF016-002
Attn.: Procurement Unit
United Nations World Food Programme
Nowakshot St.
P.O. Box: 7181
Sana'a, Yemen

Any enquiries regarding this EOI must be addressed to:
yemen.procurement@wfp.org

إعلان تجاري

الموضوع: دعوة لإبداء الرغبة لتوفير خدمات التقييم والرصد لبرنامج الأغذية العالمي في اليمن

والإجراءات والصيغ، والتقييم بانتظام لعملية التقدم الفعلي لأنشطة البرنامج فيما يتعلق بالخطط الأصلية وتحديد مستوى التقدم والمعوقات في عملية التنفيذ وتقديم التوصيات من أجل تحسينها. إجراء الرصد لعملية ما بعد التوزيع لأنشطة البرنامج وفقاً للمبادئ الإرشادية للبرنامج وتوفير النتائج النصية على مدى فعالية البرنامج الغذائية أو المساعدات النقدية لاستهداف السكان. إجراء عمليات جمع البيانات القياسية للبرنامج الأخرى والنتائج والتقييمات والدراسات الاستقصائية الخاصة؛ إنشاء والحفاظ على قاعدة بيانات تحتوي على جميع المعلومات نقاط التوزيع الغذائية ورصد معلومات التوزيع وما بعد التوزيع؛

التقارير:

- إعداد تقرير مراقبة التوزيع على مستوى تنفيذ البرنامج والتحديات التي تواجهها في كل زيارة من أجل رقابة التوزيع والموقع؛
- إعداد تقرير الرصد الموحد في نهاية كل شهر، وربع السنة، والسنة؛ و
- تنفيذ الأنشطة الأخرى ذات الصلة على النحو المطلوب.

ومن خلال هذا الاعلان التجاري يشجع برنامج الأغذية العالمي في اليمن المنظمات المحلية والدولية والشركات الخاصة في اليمن وخارجها التي لديها الرغبة بالمشاركة في العطاء القادم في مجال خدمات التقييم والرصد والمراقبة الخاصة بالبرنامج المذكورة أعلاه. وبعد الموعد النهائي لتقديم EOI لبرنامج الأغذية العالمي في اليمن واستناداً إلى الردود على الاستبيان عن قدرات مؤسستكم المقدمة ووفقاً لتقديرها المطلق والمنظمات المختارة، والتي سيتم بعد ذلك دعوتها لتقديم العطاء في تقديم خدمات التقييم والرصد والمراقبة إلى المواقع التي تم تحديدها داخل اليمن.

كما يشجع البرنامج الشركات المهتمة للدخول إلى الموقع الإلكتروني الخاص بالسوق العالمي للأمم المتحدة (UNGM) www.ungm.org أو عبر المناقصة الإلكترونية <https://ungm.in-tend.co.uk/wfp/aspx/Home> لتنزيل نموذج استبيان مع استمارة تسجيل المورد أو إرسال الطلب لذلك عن طريق الإرسال عبر البريد الإلكتروني إلى العنوان التالي:

yemen.procurement@wfp.org
 كما يجب أن يعاد إرسال هذا الاستبيان بعد الانتهاء منه مع استمارة تسجيل المورد بما في ذلك جميع الوثائق الداعمة لبرنامج الأغذية العالمي حتى موعد اقضاه (13 مارس 2015)، الوقت (14:00) وذلك عبر الروابط المذكورة أعلاه.

يمكن إعادة نموذج التسجيل والاستبيان المكتمل مع الوثائق الداعمة في ظرف مغلق ومختم على العنوان التالي:

EOI#YEM15NF016-002

عناية: وحدة المشتريات
برنامج الأغذية العالمي للأمم المتحدة
شارع نواكشوط
صندوق بريد: 7181
صنعاء، اليمن

أي استفسارات بهذا الخصوص يجب أن تكون موجهة إلى البريد الإلكتروني:
yemen.procurement@wfp.org

يشجع برنامج الأغذية العالمي للأمم المتحدة في اليمن الشركات المهتمة من خلال هذه الدعوة وذلك عن طريق إبداء الرغبة من الشركات التي تم تأسيسها للتقديم في مجال خدمات التقييم والمراقبة لبرامجها (EOI).

برنامج الأغذية العالمي هو أكبر منظمة للإغاثة الإنسانية تُعنى بمكافحة الجوع في جميع أنحاء العالم. منذ نشأته في عام 1963، يبنى البرنامج رؤية تجارة العالم يتمكن من خلالها كل رجل وامرأة وطفل في كل وقت من الحصول على الغذاء اللازم لحياة نشطة وصحية. ونحن نعمل على تحقيق هذه الرؤية مع وكالات الأمم المتحدة الأخرى. وعلى الصعيد العالمي يعمل برنامج الأغذية العالمي في 74 بلداً. كما يقوم برنامج الأغذية العالمي بتقديم المساعدة في حالات الطوارئ والتنمية للقضاء على الجوع والفقر بين أكثر الدول فقراً وانعداماً للأمن الغذائي والسكان.

وقد بدأ البرنامج العمل في اليمن من خلال المكتب الإقليمي في صنعاء والمحافظات الأخرى منذ عام 1967. ويقوم البرنامج من خلال مشروعه الحالي القائم لمدة سنتان في عدة برامج مختلفة بلغت حوالي 6 ملايين مستفيد في اليمن والتي تغطي مساعدات الإغاثة إلى النازحين والمهاجرين واللاجئين الذين يعانون من سوء التغذية مثل الأطفال والنساء الحوامل والمرضعات، وكذلك أنشطة بناء القدرة على التكيف لسكان اليمن من خلال برامج شبكات الأمان الواقية ذات الإنتاجية (التحويلات الغذائية / النقدية الغير المشروطة والمشروطة مع أنشطة الاستفاد)، تدخلات التغذية الوقائية من التقدم، وبرنامج التغذية المدرسية.

يرغب برنامج الأغذية العالمي في إشراك الشركات المؤهلة وذوي الخبرة لتقديم خدمات التقييم والرصد والمراقبة في اليمن لبرامجها.

يتكون نطاق الأعمال من أنشطة التقييم والرصد والمراقبة، ولكن لا يقتصر على تنفيذ الخدمات التالية. ولذلك يرغب برنامج الأغذية العالمي في المنظمات التي لديها القدرة على:

الوصول:

- القدرة على التفاوض والوصول على مستوى المجتمع المحلي في جميع أنحاء المحافظات والمناطق المختلفة التي تتطلب الدعم؛
- إنزال البعثات الميدانية لجميع نقاط التوزيع الغذائية (FDPs)، والتي يتم تزويدها من قبل البرنامج من أجل إقامة قنوات تواصل التي من شأنها المساهمة في عملية الرصد.

تقييم:

- تولي عملية التقييم للاحتياجات الغذائية الطارئة في المناطق التي يتعذر الوصول إليها لموظفي برنامج الأغذية العالمي بالتعاون مع الحكومة و/أو شركاء البرنامج؛
- إجراء رصد الأمن الغذائي، حسب الاقتضاء؛
- إجراء أي تقييم ودراسات أخرى ذات الصلة على النحو المطلوب.

رصد:

- إعداد خطة الرصد الشهرية وفقاً لمتطلبات برنامج الأغذية العالمي، وتهيئة خطة الرصد بحسب احتياجات البرنامج والأولويات على أسس منتظمة بالتشاور الوثيق مع برنامج الأغذية العالمي ومكاتبه الفرعية والقطرية.
- القيام بزيارات رصد التوزيع والمواقع وفقاً لخطة الرصد الشهرية، وذلك باتباع المبادئ الإرشادية

Abyan declared 'culturally afflicted'

■ Ali Aboluhom

In December 2014, Yemen's then Minister of Culture Arwa Othman released a press statement in which she referred to Yemen's Abyan governorate as being culturally "afflicted." The statement was released shortly after Othman completed a tour of the governorate and surveyed its cultural institutes. As a result of continued clashes between the Yemeni army and militants from Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), many such institutes have been damaged and turned into makeshift homes and camps for the region's internally displaced persons (IDPs).

"Preserving cultural institutions isn't as important to many Yemenis as other things, such as fleeing war and destruction and being able to find enough food for one's family," said Yaseen Al-Mekhlafi, a theater director and professor at Hodeida University. "But I think the minister's statement was important. She wanted to draw attention to the role of culture in spreading tolerance and compassion in a country that has been wracked by instability and violence since 2011."

The early warning signs of such instability began at least as early as the USS Cole bombing on Oct. 12, 2000, that killed 17 American sailors and injured another 39. AQAP claimed responsibility for the attack. The group's presence expanded in the ensuing years, as did a covert drone campaign waged by the United States. In 2011, Yemen was plunged into further chaos and discord following the country's uprising that ousted long-time President Ali Abdullah Saleh. AQAP was able to capitalize on the power vacuum and consolidate control over a number of districts in Abyan, declaring them independent "emirates" in May of that year.

The army's campaign in 2011 and 2012 to retake lost territory in Abyan destroyed many homes and

created hundreds of thousands of new IDPs. It also nearly eradicated many of the governorate's cultural institutions, such as schools, theater halls and museums, according to Saeed Asbahi, an analyst at the Political and Social Studies Center in Sana'a, who is himself from Abyan. "Schools, theaters and museums have either been destroyed or rendered inoperable," he said. "Those that are still intact are being used as shelter for IDPs, many of whom are former employees of those institutions," he added.

Since touring and surveying the governorate, Othman vowed to take efforts to rebuild and revitalize Abyan's cultural institutions, asking for assistance from both the Yemeni government and multilateral organizations to help do so. However, with the resignation of Yemen's government on Jan. 22, Othman stepped down, and it remains unclear if the ministry will continue to pursue her program to rebuild the governorate.

The two-story Zinjibar Museum, named after the capital of Abyan—and one of the seven "emirates" previously declared by AQAP—used to be a symbol of Yemen's ancient and rich cultural history. It was home to a number of statues of sultans from southern Yemen, ancient manuscripts, weapons, and photos from 1963 of Yemeni soldiers fighting against the British occupation.

The museum was looted in March and July 2012, following the conflict between AQAP and the army in Abyan, and left nearly empty. As one of the few remaining structures in the area left standing, it is now filled instead with IDPs who have taken refuge in the museum.

Mohammed Fadaq, a soldier with the Abyan security office, told the Yemen Times that since the looting, little to none of what was in the museum remains. Attempts to track down the thieves have proved nearly impossible. "We can't make any allegations against any individuals or particular persons, due to



Plans to renovate damaged museums and other cultural sites have been put on hold following the resignation of the government.

a lack of information and the chaos that followed after the conflict, and the current state of Abyan and the south in general," he said.

On Feb. 21, almost a month after resigning as president, Abdu Rabu Mansour Hadi fled his home in Sana'a where he had been held under house arrest by the Houthis. He has since declared the capital Sana'a a city occupied by the Houthis, effectively severing the Houthi-controlled north of Yemen from a number of southern governorates that have rejected their expansion. Many in the south continue to push for formal secession from the north, and in large swathes of territory in the south the government has little real power. Preserving security in Abyan amidst these circumstances has proven difficult, according to Fadaq.

Despite this, he said, "At the end of the day, all those party to the conflict are responsible, including AQAP and even us in the security office. It was our job to secure these locations and we didn't. We should have." He added that investigations into the location of the looted materials and who stole them were un-

derway, but that due to the security situation in the country it was difficult to find this information.

Mohammad Qasi Saeed, a Zinjibar local, reminisces about the times he used to visit the museum with his children. "The museum used to be a representation of our culture. The antiques, handicrafts and drawings reflect the willingness and determination of our ancestors to live a life of comfort despite the basic resources they had available," the 55-year-old said. "That place used to inspire my children, and taught them how to be creative."

The Yemen Times spoke with the director of the Zinjibar Museum, who said the facility currently houses three families, each consisting of about twenty members, many of whom are former actors and employees that used to work at the theater.

Ahmed Sadan, 42, fled with his family from Ja'ar village of Abyan more than two years ago and has been living as an IDP in the museum ever since. Ja'ar has long been a pivotal center of the conflict in Abyan, beginning in May 2011 when AQAP forces first took over the vil-

lage and seized control of a large weapons cache belonging to the army. Since then, it has often been the sight of clashes between AQAP and the army.

"The museum has 15 rooms, each one holds anywhere from four to eight people depending on the size," Sadan said. "I live with my family and five children. All of us share a bathroom on the second floor with six other families. Sometimes we get food assistance from the UN and local organizations, but it's rarely enough. We oftentimes have to rely on ourselves and locals to make up the difference."

The Hal Al-Wahda Theater in Zinjibar is another example of a ruined facility, devastated beyond repair except for the small renovations made by IDPs and locals to turn the building into a shelter. Saleh Dokhan, 35, is one of those living in the theater. He and his family also fled from Ja'ar in January of 2013, when clashes between militants and the army reached their pinnacle. "There was nowhere else to go," he said. "It wasn't an ideal living space but we had no other option."

Dokhan used to farm the land he owned in his home district of Ja'ar, but his home was destroyed and his source of income disappeared. "I work in a local restaurant while my father earns a daily wage farming in a nearby field," he said. "However, this isn't enough to afford rent for a new apartment here. We're left here in the theater until our homes are rebuilt."

The NDC outcomes passed in January 2014 obligate the government to undergo massive reconstruction campaigns in the governorates of Hajja, Sa'ada and Abyan, which all experienced considerable violence over the past several years. Article 3 of the findings of the NDC's Transitional Justice Working Group states, "The government should promptly take proper actions to rebuild the damaged public and private buildings caused by the armed conflict in Sa'ada, Abyan and

Hajja governorates in addition to paying reparations to victims."

Dokhan is hopeful that despite Yemen's fragile political situation, the powers that be will live up to these promises and rebuild his home.

However so far, he and his family's relationship with government authorities has been less than encouraging. "Local authorities are constantly trying to evict us from the theater, but there's too many of us, and we always end up staying."

Nasser Hussein, the deputy director of Abyan's Cultural Affairs Office, the ministry's branch in the governorate, claimed the minister visited the Zinjibar Museum in December 2014, during which time he claimed that the ministry, in collaboration with the ministries of defense and interior, laid out a timeline for the renovation of these facilities to take place. However, with the resignation of the Cabinet in January, in particular Minister of Culture Arwa Othman, the plan has been put on hold, he said. The Yemen Times contacted Yahya Saleh, Chairman of the Theater Department in Yemen's Ministry of Culture, who claimed that the plan would be reactivated once a new government is formed.

According to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), 334,000 IDPs from Abyan were reported to have fled to neighboring governorates such as Aden and Lahj between 2012 and 2013 as a result of the fighting between AQAP and the army.

Maher Taha, a history teacher at the Al-Salam primary school in Zinjibar, said he acknowledges that Abyan's cultural legacy has been partially lost as a result of the fighting. However, the 33-year-old said he does not let it affect him. "Hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced and need food, shelter and health care," he said. "Our number one concern should be providing that. Rebuilding the museum will have to wait."

شفروليه تاهو 2015

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CHEVROLET

Part I

What does the Houthis' rise mean for women?

This is part one of a two-part series on the Houthis and women's rights. Part one looks at how women in Sana'a have been affected since the Houthis' takeover of the capital on Sept. 21. Part two, which will be published on March 5, will examine the difference between the movement's professed values regarding women and how women are actually being treated, as well as the situation for women in other governorates under Houthi control, such as Sa'ada and Amran.

■ Fared Al-Homaid

While participating in one of the many anti-Houthi protests to take place outside Sana'a University in recent months, Howida Al-Mathhagi, a youth activist, was assaulted by Houthi supporters.

"They insulted me by calling me vulgar words and one of them tried to take off my Hijab," she recalled.

The men had Houthi slogans plastered on their guns and they were carrying Houthi posters, she said. She previously saw them chanting the group's "Death to America" slogan in an attempt to muffle the voices of protesters calling for the militants to leave their city.

Al-Mathhagi resisted attempts by the man to take off her hijab, but she was forced into a car along with two other youth activists.

Once in the car, Al-Mathhagi claims the men told her that they would kill her and nobody would miss her or look for her. They accused her of being a member of "Daesh," referring to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, and told her not to leave home alone.

"They warned me not to leave my house without a mahram [a male relative]. They told me that a woman's proper place is at home and threatened to attack me if I go out without a mahram again."

Al-Mathhagi was released a short time after being kidnapped, shoved out of the car in a neighborhood near Al-Ribat Street, she said. One

didn't exclude women. They physically attacked women and insulted them," he said.

"I asked them politely not to beat or insult women who were with us in the protest but they said that they would not exclude anyone participating in anti-Ansar Allah [Houthi] demonstrations, regardless of their sex," Al-Imad told the Yemen Times.

There is no evidence yet that the group's leadership is ordering its supporters to violently clamp down on peaceful demonstrators. However, the Houthis—who have positioned themselves in charge of security in the capital—have made no efforts to protect the protesters.

In previous statements to the Yemen Times, spokespeople for the group have claimed that "there are parties who seek to attack protesters under Houthi cover" and that "the security apparatus is responsible for protecting the protesters."

However, this is something Mohammad Hizam, deputy head of the Public Relations Department at the Ministry of Interior, previously told the Yemen Times is impossible as "the current situation of the country doesn't allow the interior ministry to intervene."

For Al-Imad, the Houthis' refusal to take responsibility for protecting peaceful protesters—including women—and the numerous assaults on women by Houthi supporters, is a clear indication of things to come: "Women's rights are in danger in the cities that are controlled by the Houthis," Al-Imad claims.

Repeated harassment

Protests are not the only place women have been harassed by Houthi supporters. Multiple women have reported that Houthis positioned in Sana'a University have threatened them and ordered them to change the way they dress.

Rasha Abdulkafi, a 20-year-old student in the Faculty of Information at Sana'a University, shared her story with the Yemen Times. She regularly wears a long jacket rather than an abaya, a long black dress worn by the large majority of Yemeni women. One day while on her way to class she was stopped by Houthis at the entrance to the university and asked to show her ID.

"As I showed them my university ID, they said that it was shameful for me to dress like that," Abdulkafi said. "I told them that it was my personal freedom and my family allows me to go out from home dressed like that."

It did not stop there, however. "A week later, while I was walking next to the student dorm inside the university, three armed Houthis followed me and started saying vulgar words to me and they said that if I come to the university without putting on an abaya they would undress me. I was really shocked and sad to hear that. I haven't heard such a horrible and mean threat before."

Following the incident, Abdulkafi was afraid to come forward. Her friends convinced her to tell her story to local media, but she did so anonymously. "Two weeks after, the Houthis did the same thing to Hiba Al-Dubhani. When they did so I decided not to remain silent against these barbaric and mean practices."

While on her way to class one day, Sana'a University student Hiba Al-Dubhani was also ordered by Houthi militants stationed at the entrance of the campus to put on an abaya. At the time she was wearing a long jacket and jeans—uncommon, but by no means against the law or university dress code.

"Three gunmen stopped me at the university because of the way I dress. I told them it's none of their business. And because they were armed they told me they would take off my pants, threatening to undress

me," Al-Dubhani told Al-Arabya TV channel in December. "After that they sent one of the students from the Faculty of Information to me to tell me that I will not be allowed to get into the university unless I put on an abaya."

Following the incident, Parliament member and activist Ahmed Saif Hashid wrote on his Facebook page: "Cover up or we will undress you: the language of the barbaric militias that occupy Sana'a University!"

The Houthis denied responsibility. The Student Revolutionary Committee (SRC), an armed group inside the university which claims to be a student-led, is loyal to the Houthis. The group released a statement on the incident at the beginning of December.

"Referring to the story of our classmate Hiba Al-Dubhani, who claimed that one of the students named Mohammad Al-Sheikh asked her to cover up and insulted her, the SRC looked into the matter and found that no one from the SRC is called Mohammed Al-Sheikh," the statement reads.

In another incident which took place on Dec. 2, it was widely reported by Sana'a University students that Houthis took a male student away simply for talking to a female colleague. The male student in question, Ali Al-Jaradi, recently spoke to the Yemen Times about the incident.

"I was talking to one of my female classmates when two armed Houthis came to us and told us not to speak again, saying that it is against Islamic teachings," said Al-Jaradi, who studies in the Faculty of Information. "The two armed Houthis tried to arrest the girl but our classmates refused and argued with the Houthis, and they were unable to detain her."

"After ten minutes, four armed Houthis came to arrest us. My female classmate went to the ladies' cafeteria inside the campus to avoid arrest. Two of the Houthis arrested me. They took me to a small room next to the Faculty of Computer Science. They kept telling me that it's not acceptable to talk to women and that my classmate and I have violated the Islamic teachings by talking to each other privately." Al-Jaradi said he was released an hour later. The Houthis, via the SRC, denied responsibility for this incident in the same statement.

"As for our classmate Ali Al-Jaradi, we confirm that he came to us saying that there was a fight and that he wanted us to help control the situation. As a result, two of the

SRC members accompanied him in order to find out what was going on. While they were walking together, a photo was taken by someone in a clever way to portray the SRC members as arresting Al-Jaradi. The photo was used by some newspapers and websites to support the story they made up," the statement read.

The Yemen Times obtained a copy of the photo from Al-Jaradi, who confirmed its authenticity. However, he claims the SRC is lying about the context. "One of the students took a photo of me being arrested by two armed Houthis," he said.

Houthi militants officially withdrew from the university on Dec. 10 after two months of continuous protests against them by students and professors from the university. Since that time, the Houthis were replaced by men in police uniform. However, many students claim the police are simply Houthis in disguise. Al-Jaradi even said he has identified one of the men dressed in police uniform as being the same person who detained him previously.

Fears for the future

Abdulkafi says she has faced repeated threats and insults from Houthis. "On the commemoration of Feb. 11 [beginning of the 2011 uprising] that took place this year, I participated in a protest against the Houthis in front of the UN's building on Al-Zubairi Street in the capital. Houthi militias who tried to disperse the demonstration insulted me publicly. They said to the people who were participating in the protest that it was shameful for them to be led by such a girl, who doesn't dress in an abaya. They accused me of being a spy for the West and a member of Daesh at the same time—simply for choosing not to wear an abaya."

Abdulkafi says that Yemeni women's limited freedoms are in jeopardy. However, she says women will resist oppression by the group. "Houthi practices are an effort to control women and prevent them from having their most basic rights. I am quite sure that these practices will make open minded people in general and women in particular resist the Houthis and as a result the Houthis' days will come to an end very soon."

However, other women have been scared into changing the way they dress and how often they leave home without a mahram—if at all. Another student from Sana'a University, speaking to the Yemen



Rasha Abdulkafi told the Yemen Times she was repeatedly harassed at Sana'a University by armed Houthis who ordered her to wear an abaya and threatened to sexually assault her.

Times on condition of anonymity, said she was bothered by the Houthis just for putting on a stylish colored hijab and a stylish short jacket over top of her Abaya to protect her from the cold. She too was told by armed Houthis at the university to cover up.

"I just remained silent and got really scared. They asked me to dress more conservatively. The next day I put on a veil and took off my jacket, which I really like and want to have on," she said. "I decided to put on a veil... not because I wanted to do so but because I am afraid Houthis will keep bothering me."

As long as the Houthis control Sana'a, she says, she will continue to wear a veil to avoid any problems.

For Howida Al-Mathhagi, the youth protester kidnapped by the Houthis earlier this year, there is no doubt women's freedoms in the capital are in danger.

"Women in the capital will have more difficulties living freely in the days to come. Houthis are a group of people who consider women as inferior creatures. They pretend to be civilized in their official political stance toward women but what we experience in the areas under their control is totally different."



Ali Al-Jaradi (blue striped shirt) claims he was detained on campus by two armed Houthis, who accused him of violating "Islamic teachings" simply for talking to a female colleague.



Hiba Al-Dubhani claims she was told by Houthis to cover up or she would not be allowed into Sana'a University.

of the other activists forced into the car with her, Fouad Al-Hamdani, was not let out. He was taken to an unknown location and tortured, she said.

This happened on Jan. 31. According to Al-Mathhagi, hundreds of men and dozens of women participated in the demonstration. The protesters were attacked and dispersed at City Mart roundabout, near Sana'a University, by dozens of men whom she identified as Houthis, some with guns and others with knives or batons.

This was neither the first nor last violent crackdown by supporters of the Houthis.

Days earlier, on Jan. 25, another protest against the Houthis took place at Sana'a University. Asaad Al-Imad, a local journalist who participated in the demonstration, estimated the number of female participants to be about 15. According to Al-Imad, a number of Houthis showed up, armed with knives and batons. "Houthis attacked us, they

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OPINION

Dispatch: ISIL recruitment tactics stumble

Mona Alami
Atlantic Council
First published Feb. 26

As the pressure on the Islamic State (ISIS or ISIL) mounts against the backdrop of coalition attacks and a Kurdish offensive in Syria's Raqqa region, militant recruitment has become a pressing matter for the radical organization, which has lost many fighters in clashes around Iraq and Syria. According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), out of 1,800 people killed during the Kobani battles, 70 percent belonged to ISIL. On Feb. 14, 132 fighters died across Syria, including forty-four ISIL militants. Given mounting losses, ISIL expansion has relied on a two-pronged recruitment approach: Targeting foreigners looking to join the new caliphate and enlisting members of the local population. While the foreign recruitment strategy appears successful, local recruitment faces growing obstacles in Syria and Iraq. ISIL has relied on a powerful branding strategy, diffusing violent images on social media, YouTube, and Twitter. The organization has released several documentaries boasting its military exploits such as the Flames of War featuring heroic jihadists and gruesome footage of bombings and executions. This systematic glamorization of violence has allowed the terror group to attract foreign recruits. In January, a new study by International Center for the Study of Radicalization and Political Violence estimated that the number of foreign fighters in Iraq and Syria had reached about 20,000.

ISIL's local recruitment approach has been described in *Idarat Al Tawahosh*, (The Management of Savagery), a book written by Abu

Bakr Naji in 2004, which ISIL has adopted. Naji argues that the first step for recruitment is "the creation of organizations to improve the management of the areas under our control." ISIL applied this technique initially following its surge in June. The groups managed everything from bakeries and banks to schools, courts, and mosques in Raqqa. One activist admitted at that time that the organization had been doing "massive institutional work."

A second recruitment tool imagined by Naji was the manipulation of tribal antagonism in favor of the organization. ISIL attempted to mobilize Arab crowds ahead of the battle of Tel Hamis in Syria last year using flagrant anti-Kurdish discourse. In accordance with Naji's recommendation to use money or power as incentives, activists in Raqqa report that ISIL offered cash and sabaya (female slaves) to local tribal leaders to encourage them to swear allegiance. Indoctrinating local populations and its youth was another cornerstone to Naji's manifesto. Since its inception, ISIL has imposed religious and military training on children in the Raqqa province. The same activists report that the group uses two training camps—Sharea Ashbal and Maahad Ashbal al-Khilafa—to indoctrinate and train children. According to a Syrian Human Rights Committee report in August, at least 800 children under 18 had been recruited by ISIL. Other reports highlight the more than thirty kids fighting with ISIL in Kobani. An ISIL defector said that militants targeted the young to break down traditional authority structures: Alliance to the family and to the tribe.

While these strategies succeeded initially, they appear more difficult to maintain in the wake of the continuous coalition, Kurdish, and Shia militia attacks on ISIL. The

counter-offensives have killed many militants and disrupted the transfer of goods between regions under the organization's control. Naji's governance tool appears to be faltering as residents in ISIL-controlled areas increasingly complain of rising food and fuel prices and declining services. The price of staples such as bread has also risen significantly and basic products have become scarce. ISIL has since resorted to aggressive means for youth recruitment, triggering resentment in some areas. One Iraqi activist notes that the organization often recruits children without the knowledge or approval of their families, leading to a drop in school attendance. A wave of conscription among youth in Mosul, Hawija, and Kirkuk in Iraq has in some cases led to kidnappings to coerce families to provide them with fighters (although reports could not be independently confirmed). ISIL militants also arrested 40 ex-fighters in the Nusra Front and rebel factions from the village of Abriha and town of Al-Sahil and trained them in sharia camps before sending them to battlefronts. Syrian activists said that ISIL also began forcing male members of foreign families that had come to live in the Islamic State, but did not want to fight, to participate in battles. As a result, ISIL has suffered increased defections in Syria, particularly after the fall of Kobani. Militants have tried to return home or join other groups. ISIL executed 100 jihadists who attempted to defect. Defections have left the organization possibly facing a shortage of willing martyrs. Other reports point to ISIL police arresting 400 fighters in Raqqa for not reporting for duty. The same Iraqi activist reported that the organization banned truck drivers from transporting ISIL fighters to limit desertion. In both Raqqa and Mosul, the transit of residents in and out of the city has been close-

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ly monitored. Decreasing human resources may account for ISIL repositioning across areas under its control. ISIL had to transfer in late December 800 Chechens, Afghans, and Syrians with their families to the city of Tel Affar (50km west of Mosul), which was scene of heavy fighting. The number of Islamic State checkpoints and patrols also dwindled in the Syrian border town of Al-Bokamal in January with troops possibly funnelled into Iraq.

ISIL relies heavily on the loyalty of both its muhajireen (foreign fighters) base and ansar (local supporters). While the organization's successes bolstered its appeal among foreign fighters, warlords, and tribes whether in Syria or Iraq, new losses may be starting to chip away at its aura of power. The rate of recruitment has dropped by more than half in February (only 54 recruited) compared to January 2015. Compare this figure to June 2014, when nearly 6000 fighters had joined ISIS. Growing defections, rising tensions, and declining local recruitment puts added pressure on ISIL and provides the US-led coalition and the Bagdad government with a window of opportunity to degrade the organization. But in Iraq, other social, political, and economic reasons account for local support of ISIL. Naji's tactic using tribal antagonism to breed organizational loyalty may not have had enough time to sink in, but for many Sunnis—particularly in

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Iraq—no credible alternative to ISIL has emerged. The Iraqi government will need to take concerted steps to diffuse sectarian tensions and present itself as that alternative. ISIL also benefits from the use of both Syrian and Iraqi territory according to its military needs. The anti-ISIL coalition will need a more comprehensive approach in Syria if it hopes to win the day.

Mona Alami is a Nonresident Fellow with the Atlantic Council's Rafik Hariri Center currently reporting from Iraq. She is a French-Lebanese journalist and based in Beirut. Follow her on Twitter @monaalami. Republished with permission from Atlantic Council. This article originally appeared on Atlantic Council's MENASource Blog.

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