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TEDxSanaa: During his presentation at TEDxSanaa on Wednesday, Rafat Ali Al-Akhali encouraged Yemenis to re-evaluate the market and to get creative. Instead of selling necklaces made of jasmine for between \$1 and \$15, Yemenis could make jasmine oil and perfume, which could fetch \$50 a bottle abroad, he said. Perfume would also require bottling and packaging, further expanding the economy, Al-Akhali said. TEDxSanaa was held for the second year in a row in Yemen's capital city.

(Photo credit: TEDxSanaa)

AQAP vows retaliation against Houthis for Dammaj war

Unconfirmed recording makes its way around the Internet

Ali Ibrahim Al-Moshki

SANA'A, Nov. 13—An alleged Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) video that circulated online on Wednesday said that the militant group will retaliate against armed Houthis in the North, who are currently locked in a violent conflict with Salafis in the Dammaj district of Sa'ada governorate.

The Dammaj conflict between the Zaidi Shiite Houthis and the

conservative Sunni Salfis has left dozens dead and countless others seriously injured since fighting began in late October.

Sheikh Harith Al-Nadhari, a suspected AQAP leader, appeared in the online video footage, although Yemen Times could not independently verify the validity of the recording. In the video, Al-Nadhari accuses Houthis of committing "gruesome crimes, killing children and women and storming houses and mosques."

"For [the Houthis], nothing is sacred. They are lured by power and the shameful silence of the local and international governments," Al-Nadhari said in the video.

"We declare complete solidarity

with our Sunni brothers in Dammaj and other areas in all governorates," Al-Nadhari continued. "We tell them [Sunni brothers] your injury is ours, your tragedy is our tragedy and your enemy is our enemy. Be confident of the victory and support."

He warned the Houthis that they would soon be punished.

Ali Al-Emad, a member of the Houthis' political office in Sana'a, who also is a representative at the National Dialogue Conference, said, "We have not taken an official stance, but the Houthi leaders have already held talks about necessary procedures and precautions [to protect ourselves]."

Al-Emad says the Al-Qaeda footage is just politics at play, saying

the Dammaj conflict is deeper than religious divides.

A Sana'a-based supporter of Al-Qaeda, who declined to be named, told the Yemen Times that Al-Qaeda's first enemy is America and now the Houthis are their second enemy.

The source said, "There are a number of Salafis coming from southern governorates to support the Salfis in Dammaj. This is not new. Some went to Dammaj in previous wars to fight for Salfis there."

In May of 2012, Ansar Al-Sharia, an offshoot of Al-Qaeda, was believed to be behind suicide attacks in Sa'ada, Al-Jawf and Al-Beidha, killing and injuring dozens of Houthi supporters.

Hadi issues decree to restore 'stolen lands' in Aden

Southern Movement members scoff at seriousness of the order

Rammah Al-Jubari

SANA'A, Nov 13—President Abdu Rabu Mansour Hadi issued a decree on Monday to redistribute land in the South to 365 persons, who had theirs seized in the 1994 civil war.

The land to be returned will be taken from anyone who possesses more than 1,000 meters of property that has not been built on and was seized from the approximately

45,000 Southern Yemenis whose land was taken by Northern forces following the civil war, according to a presidential committee assigned to deal with the case.

President Hadi directed a special committee on Jan. 8 to study individual cases of land seizures, and Monday's decree came after the examination of over 11,000 cases including civilians and military personnel from southern governorates.

Ali Atboosh, the spokesperson of the committee, described loopholes of the decree for people who have already built houses and businesses on the reposited land.

"Anyone who built on the land that exceeds 1,000 meters has to

pay for the extra area. The money will be disbursed for a reparation fund allocated for this issue."

Most persons included in the decree are military commanders and some still hold their positions, according to Atboosh. The list has not been disclosed.

Southern Movement (Hirak) leaders have been critical of the decree, including leading member Qasim Askr.

"We do not pay any attention to such actions. It is just an attempt by the regime in Sana'a to gain the trust of the Southern people, which is difficult to be done," he said.

Factions of the Southern Movement continue to support calls for the South's secession from

the North.

"The aim of the Hiraki members who do not participate in the National Dialogue is just to free the South from the Northern occupation," Askr said.

Representative Khaled Ba Madhaf, who is part of the Southern Movement delegation at the National Dialogue Conference, was skeptical about the decree's authenticity.

"This decree addresses the grievances of Southerners, but so have other decrees that have not been implemented."

"We need a timeline for decrees' implementation to ensure seriousness of the authority in its decisions."



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Eight Yemeni soldiers arrested on suspicion of conspiring with militants

Ali Ibrahim Al-Moshki

SANA’A, Nov. 13—Eight soldiers from the 111 Infantry Brigade were arrested earlier this week for allegedly colluding with believed militants in the area, military sources say.

The soldiers are currently being held at the brigade’s headquarters in Ahwar district as investigations continue, Shakir Al-Ghadeer, an officer in the brigade, told the Yemen Times.

“The brigade had its doubts about these eight soldiers’ [loyalty]. They had been seen accompanying armed men in the city,” Al-Ghadeer said.

The soldiers have been accused of providing information to militants about a military vehicle which was set on fire one month ago.

According to Mohammed Yahiya Mohammed, a local resident in Ahwar, the 111 brigade has a reputation in Ahwar district for having connections to militants in the area, some believed to be Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) affiliates.

“We have been seeing armed men for months, carrying Al-Qaeda banners and signs on their



cars,” Mohammed said. “At the same time, we see the military forces deployed in the area. This confuses us and is concerning [because we don’t know if] they are in league with Al-Qaeda affiliates.”

On Oct. 18, armed men attacked the 111 Infantry Brigade’s headquarters, killing 12 soldiers and wounding nine others including the commander of the brigade, according to a military spokesperson.

“Following the recent attacks on some military sites, the Ministry of Defense received several complaints about the possibility of soldiers and army officers aiding Al-Qaeda in terms of information

leaking, so the ministry launched a campaign,” said Gen. Ali Saeed Obaid, a spokesperson for the Military Committee, which is headed by Yemen’s president.

Abdulrazaq Al-Jamal, a Sana’a-based analyst conducting research on AQAP, said that Al-Qaeda has penetrated Yemen’s military structure and succeeded in attracting several soldiers and officers.

In previous interviews with the Yemen Times, soldiers from the 111 Brigade have said they fear being attacked by militants and do not have the equipment to properly protect themselves against the heavy machinery militant groups in the area are believed to have.

Group of Yemenis turned away at airport in Jordan, case puzzles officials

Nasser Al-Sakkaf

SANA’A, Nov. 13—More than 27 Yemenis were denied entrance to Jordan after being turned away at Queen Alya International Airport in Amman last week.

“They stopped us at the airport on Friday morning [and forced us to stay until] Saturday afternoon, and then made us return to Sana’a without providing any reason,” said Mazin Abdulsalam, who says he was traveling to Jordan for a month-long vacation to visit relatives.

The case has puzzled Yemeni officials, who say they are not sure

why the passengers were sent back to Yemen.

Jordan, Syria, Egypt and Algeria all allows Yemenis to enter their countries without visas, according to Abdulla Al-Zorqa, the director of the Deportation Department at the Migration and Passports Authority.

“The Jordanian authorities haven’t officially replied about the matter, but we informed the Foreign Ministry,” said Khalid Al-Shaif, the director of Sana’a International Airport.

Some of those turned away told Al-Shaif that they were asked for medical documents at the Jorda-

nian airport.

“These things weren’t required in the past,” Al-Shaif said.

Some are speculating that Jordan may be trying to prohibit the entrance of Yemenis looking for work.

“After the deportation of thousands of Yemenis from Saudi Arabia, Yemeni deportees have started looking for an appropriate alternative. They may see Jordan as an [that],” said economic analyst, Mohammed Jubran.

The Yemen Times contacted the Jordanian Embassy in Sana’a, but they said have no information on the incident.

GPC rejects NDC's proposed guidelines for candidates in upcoming elections

Rammah Al-Jubari

SANA’A, Nov. 13—The General People’s Congress (GPC), headed by former president Ali Abdulla Saleh, has refused the National Dialogue Conference’s (NDC) Good Governance Working Group’s decision issued on Monday, which put forth 15 conditions for those who will be eligible to run for political posts when Yemen holds national elections, still slated for early 2014.

The list effectively bans Saleh, his relatives and many of his allies from running for a number of elected positions.

Mohammed Al-Sabri, a member of the Good Governance Working Group, praised the organization’s work, and denied that it was focused its criteria on Saleh and his allies.

“The new law enhances principles of good governance which we need in the upcoming phase. It’s not directed at any political party or

phase, but it’s for the future.”

“Yemen’s regime will be based on justice, transparency and integrity.”

The most controversial item of the proposal was that candidates cannot have been a part of a military or security institution in the last ten years. This eliminates the possibility of many of the former president’s relatives from running for office.

Another article of the proposal states that those who were granted political immunity, most famously Saleh himself, are banned from practicing politics. Those encompassed by the condition also include interim President Abdu Rabu Mansour Hadi, and his military advisor General Ali Mohsen. However, the GPC only formally objected to the condition regarding military and security veterans.

According to the internal regulations of the National Dialogue Conference (NDC), the refusal of one

NDC component does not annul or hinder the proposal. This means the decision can go ahead in spite of the GPC’s objection.

Abdulhafeet Al-Nahari, the deputy head of the information department for the GPC, told the Yemen Times that the GPC is deeply opposed to the proposal.

“The GPC has reservations over this item, disagrees with it and considers it a violation of the rights of a big faction that worked in the military and security institutions.”

Additional items in the list bar politicians from running if they have been accused of human rights’ violations, in accordance with international conventions.

“This decree enhances good governance principles but may not be applicable in Yemen due to the political changes that will come out of the presidential and parliamentary election,” said Majed Seraj, a political researcher for the Saba Strategic Studies Center.

Nine convicted in arms smuggling case

Defendants’ lawyer to appeal verdict

Nasser al-Sakkaf

SANA’A, Nov. 13- The Specialized Criminal Court in Aden on Tuesday convicted nine Yemenis for arms smuggling and sentenced them between one to ten years in prison.

Those convicted were arrested by the Yemeni coastal forces on Jan. 23 on the Jehan 1 ship in the

Arabian Sea’s regional waters. The confiscated ship, which was allegedly carrying Iranian made arms, was taken to Aden governorate.

The lawyer defending the nine men has appealed the verdict. However, the deputy general prosecutor in Aden has asked for a strict punishment for those convicted.

According to the court, the weapons, \$30,000 cash and other items found on the ship have been given to the Defense Ministry.

The ship was carrying 73 ton of diesel and 40 tons of weapons, shells and explosives, according to

Brig. Mohammed Al-Qaeda, the public relations manager at the Interior Ministry. He says the ship was coming from Iran.

Waleed Qazm, the deputy general prosecutor in Aden, has been in charge of investigations since the ship was first seized. He said the nine men confessed to receiving \$30,000 in return for carrying the diesel to Yemen.

“They claimed they did not know the ship was carrying weapons,” Qazm said.

The men’s lawyer could not be reached for comment.

New security chief appointed in Shabwa amid deteriorating security situation

Mohammed Al-Hassani

SANA’A, Nov. 13—Communication in Shabwa governorate, in southern Yemen, has been severely compromised since Monday due to sabotage of infrastructure including Internet wires and cell phone towers, according to local officials. Area tribesmen are believed to be behind the attacks.

The cuts in communication coincide with the appointment of new security chief for the governorate. Prime Minister Mohammed Salem Basendwa’s recently appointed Brig. Awadh Thiban to the position. He is replacing Brig. Ahmed Omair.

Activists launched a campaign via Facebook and other social net working sites in July calling for a replacement of Omair.

Security has been spiraling downwards for a while, said Mubarak Al-

Azlam, Shabwa’s assistant security chief.

“Security forces cannot perform their duties due to a lack of soldiers in the governorate,” he said.

Armed men continue to erect unofficial checkpoints in Ataq city, the capital of Shabwa, Al-Azlam said, without the government being able to control them.

Tribesmen in rural areas are known to attack public interests as a bargaining chip for government services.

“[They] demand public projects [and] job opportunities...” Al-Azlam said.

The proliferation of guns in the governorate is also of concern for officials, which Al-Azlam describes as a vicious cycle. People carry more guns as security deteriorates, but security cannot gain the upper hand in the government as long as

people continue to carry unlicensed arms.

A criticism of Omair’s reign was that he did not enact a ban on weapons’ carrying, something many locals say they would comply with.

Meanwhile, on Wednesday, a man was reportedly killed in Ataq in clashes between two area tribes that had been shooting at each other since the beginning of the week, according to the Shabwa-based journalist Mohammed Abdulalim.

“The military and security forces are totally absent and don’t address people’s issues and sufferings,” Abdulalim said.

Shabwa, home to Yemen’s largest oil fields, was also the site of an attack on military camps in late September. Armed men believed to have been dressed in military uniforms surrounded the camps and set off car bombs, killing 22 soldiers.

German organization resumes preservation work

Neglected Zabid City receives action plan

Nasser Al-Sakkaf

SANA’A, Nov. 13—The German Organization for International Cooperation (GIZ) has outlined a plan to aid in the preservation of Zabid City in Hodeida governorate, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

The plan was announced on Sunday in a ceremony that marked the resumption of GIZ preservation projects, which were suspended in June 2012.

GIZ has not revealed specific details, nor the timeline for its work in Zabid City, which UNESCO threatened in January to put on its list of at-risk sites due to residential construction projects.

Despite a ban under Yemeni law on construction in places designated as historical sites, local building violations continue unabated. The law falls under the jurisdiction of the Public Works Office but is not being

enforced.

Engineer Yahiya Noman, the deputy head of the General Authority for Land Survey and Rural Planning, said that GIZ has provided key assistance in preserving historical Yemeni cities in the past, including another World Heritage site, Shibam in Hadramout.

“In recent times, GIZ has provided much of the financial and technical support for preserving historical cities,” said Noman. “In cooperation with GIZ, we will work to prepare programs to preserve historical sites, whether they are included in the World Heritage list or not.”

The head of the General Authority for Preserving Historical Cities, Naji Thwaba, said GIZ suspended its preservation efforts last year due to a deteriorating security situation in Yemen. GIZ plans to continue its preservation efforts in the Old City of Sana’a, which is also listed as a

World Heritage site.

Mujahid Al-Yatim, the deputy head of the Antiquities, Museums and Historic Cities department at the Ministry of Culture, said that apart from construction, another reason historic cities are under threat is due to a lack of awareness among residents.

“It’s necessary to educate residents living in historic cities about how to deal with ancient buildings,” Al-Yatim said. GIZ’s upcoming efforts include an awareness campaign, highlighting the importance of Yemen’s historical sites.

GIZ has operated in Yemen since 1965. Apart from historical preservation efforts, the organization also supports Yemen technically and financially, including providing training for engineers and sending them abroad for vocational courses.

UNESCO listed Zabid City as a World Heritage site in 1993.



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Honey, ginger and incense

Yemenis prepare for the cold



Vendors say Yemen's honey consumption doubles during the winter months. Many consume the sweet substance to yield off sickness.

Story and photos by
Mohammed Al-Hassani

The cold seemed to creep up on Yemenis this year, with temperatures beginning to drop earlier in October than people remember them dropping last year. Traffic after 10 p.m. is slowing down as city-dwellers huddle indoors to shield themselves from cooling temperatures.

Sana'a is a climate bubble com-

pared to the rest of Yemen. While the city's daytime winter temperatures usually hover around a comfortable 22 degrees Celsius, at night temperatures can drop to 6 degrees Celsius.

In order to deal with the change of the season, Yemenis are enacting some of their age-old tricks to keep them warm and healthy.

For many, that means consuming certain products from nature. In Yemen, honey and winter are often synonymous.

"We defend ourselves against illnesses in winter with honey," said 55-year-old Ahmed Yahya, a honey vendor.

While there are plenty of health experts attesting to the benefits of honey, Yemenis say they don't need science to know what's good for them. Wisdom passed down from one generation to the next has proven the effectiveness of honey in helping them fight colds and infections, they say. Some even use it to heal skin burns.

Yemen is known for its high-quality and large variety of honey produced all year round, but during the winter, vendors say sales double. They often raise their prices due to the high demand.

Yemeni sidr honey is among some of the best and priciest produced in the country. It has been cited in a Canadian study from the University of Ottawa for its strong anti-microbial properties, backing Yemenis' claims that honey has healing powers.

However, elevated prices can keep honey out of reach for many. So instead, those looking for other foods thought to keep people healthy as the seasons change, turn to ginger. On average, a kilo of ginger costs YR550 (around \$2).

It is commonly used in drinks that can be served hot or cold.

"In the winter, we use ginger," said Mohammed Al-Qudmi, a 32-year-old teacher in Sana'a. "It protects the body from colds and keeps it warm."

Known for its strong and spicy flavor, ginger is another food that has earned the praise of health experts world-wide, but Yemenis again say it's just something their parents and grandparents taught them to consume, especially when temperatures drop.

But Yemenis do not rely on food alone to keep them warm as winter drags on. It is also a time when clothing vendors cash in on a need for extra layers.

As levels of poverty remain high in Yemen—over 50 percent live below the poverty line according to the World Bank—many rely on cheap, second-hand clothing to keep them warm.

Abdulrahman Maodah only sets up shop when it starts to get cold.

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The 35-year-old sells jackets on Sana'a's Hadda Street.

"I now have many customers," he said. "I sell about 10 coats per day." They cost anywhere from YR500 (\$2.30) to YR3,000 (about \$14).

A lack of available resources also forces many Yemenis to make do during the winter without heaters. Even those that can afford the YR3000 to 12,000 (\$14-56) that it typically costs for small space heaters, aren't always able to stay warm because of frequent power outages that plague Yemen. To keep them-

selves warm in both a cheaper and more reliable way, people burn incense.

Yemen, which is sometimes referred to as the land of incense, has been known for the trade for centuries. It's cheap and sold ubiquitously in stores.

The fragrant material saves Ramzi Al-Selwi, a 26-year-old student in Physics Department of Sana'a University, a lot of money during the winter. He says he has it burning non-stop, and that is how he gets through winter.

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Trial for Presidential Palace bombers remains stalled as political pressure mounts

Attorneys in case say hidden political agenda at play

Anthony Biswell

For over two years five men have been detained in connection with the bombing of Yemen's Presidential Palace mosque in June 2011, awaiting trial.

With an alleged assassination attempt of former President Ali Abdulla Saleh at the heart of the case, legal proceedings have been subject to heavy scrutiny and proven to be politically divisive. Both the attorney representing the accused men, and the attorney representing those injured and families of those killed in the attack say political pressure has clouded the judicial process, delaying the start of the men's trial.

Seven people died in the explosion at the Nadhain Mosque inside the Presidential Palace and others were seriously injured, including Saleh, who consequently travelled to Saudi Arabia to receive medical treatment. The bombing left him with extensive burns and shrapnel wounds.

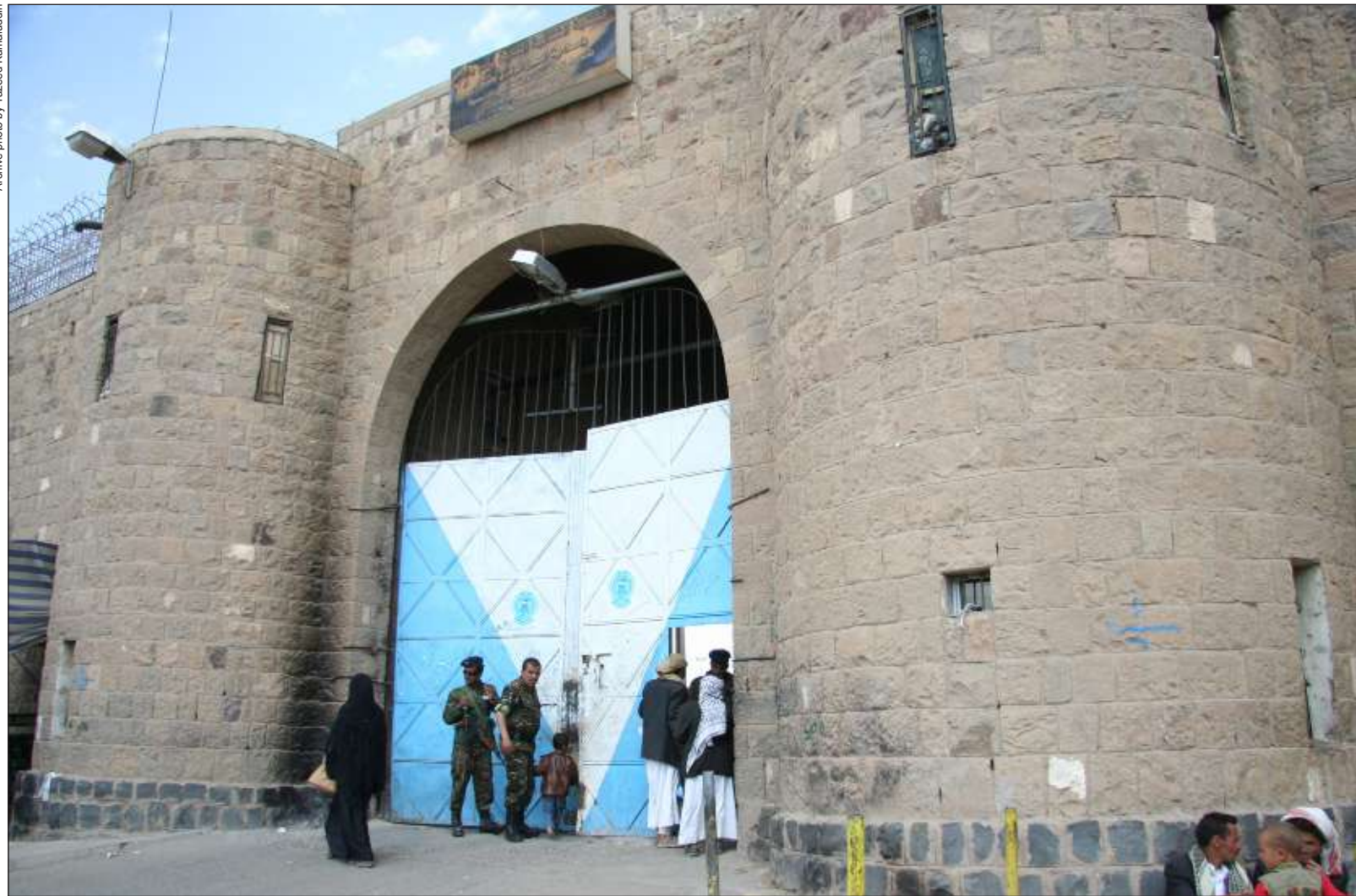
On Aug. 26 of this year, the five prisoners, along with 23 others accused but later released on bail, assembled for a Special Criminal Court (SCC) hearing. The men were charged for "being part of an armed gang intending to attack the president and other state officials, as well as military and other government facilities," according to Human Rights Watch (HRW). Soon after the SCC hearing, the judge initially appointed to oversee the case, Hilal Hamid Ali Mahfal, recused himself, citing unwelcome media attention.

Abdul-Rahman Barman, a lawyer and human rights activist with the National Organization for Defending Rights and Freedoms (HOOD), is the attorney representing the five defendants. Barman says his clients are being held "because of political pressure."

"I assure you the prosecution tried to mislead people concerning the real people who committed this crime. Those who are accused are innocent people, and they have no connection with this crime," Barman said.

"If they were criminals, and if the prosecution did have evidence against them, the case wouldn't have gone on for more than two years," Barman said.

Mohammed Al-Masswari, the secretary general of the Organization House of Law, represents those injured in the bombing and the families of those who were killed.



The five men still imprisoned in connection with the Nadhain Mosque bombing are being held at Sana'a Central Prison. Human Rights Watch has called for the men to either be released or immediately go to trial.

He says there is evidence for a case against the imprisoned men.

"I swear, I swear, I swear—if they had nothing to do with [the bombing] then they wouldn't have been imprisoned. I swear that if [the five remaining prisoners] had nothing to do with the case, I would be the first to object to their detention. But those five who are still in prison, there is evidence against them," he said.

In an extensive interview with the Yemen Times—to be published in the coming issue—Al-Masswari detailed the role each of the five men allegedly played in the attack. He claims that the Islah Party recruited the men through various coordinated efforts including lectures and sponsored holiday trips for the men.

The Islah Party is Yemen's major political opposition to the General People's Congress (GPC), the former ruling party which was and still is headed by Saleh.

Al-Masswari draws a connection

between the Presidential Palace bombing and the attacks carried out on the Friday of Dignity. The Friday of Dignity was one of the bloodiest days during Yemen's 2011 popular uprising. On March 18, 2011 more than 50 protestors were shot dead in Change Square, the epicenter of the anti-Saleh protestors.

Al-Masswari says he has evidence to support the claim that Islah was behind both acts of violence. However, international organizations, including Human Rights Watch, have said that evidence implicating former government officials involvement in the Friday of Dignity violence was ignored as a result of political engineering.

"[The Islah Party] is behind the crime of the Friday of Dignity and also [carried out the bombing of the] presidential palace," Al-Masswari said.

Barman rejects claims that the two cases are connected.

While the lawyers for the case debate the innocence of the accused men, the Yemen and Kuwait researcher for Human Rights Watch, Belkis Wille, takes issue with the delay in the men's trial. She says the time has come for the defendants to either stand trial or be released with immediate effect.

"It has to go to court or they have to be released. There's no third option," she said.

Under domestic law in Yemen there are no clear legal guidelines on how long individuals can be held before being brought to trial, so long as the accused offender(s) are duly charged with having committed a felony within an initial sixth-month period following their arrest.

"That's the situation that all these guys are in. All of them were charged at the six-month mark and none of them have since been brought to trial," Wille said. "Whether or not Yemeni law allows for someone to be held for an extended period of time, under international law it is a violation."

Attorney General Dr. Saleh Ali Ahmed Al-Awash granted the release of 17 prisoners, who were also being held in connection to the Nadhain Mosque bombing on June 6 of this year, following a presidential order granted at the end of May. However, 19 names were on the presidential release order signed by transitional President Abdu Rabu Mansour Hadi. Three of the five prisoners currently being held at Sana'a Central Prison were on that list—Ghalib Al-Ayzeri, Ibrahim Hammoud Al-Hammadi,

and Shuaib Mohammed Al-Bajari. One individual whose name was not on the list was released on bail along with 16 other prisoners.

"One of the prisoners alleges that he was on the list but then he was swapped for someone else who was released, and he wasn't on the presidential order," said Wille. Though HRW was unable to verify the prisoner's claim, Willie says it begs the question "as to why some were deemed to be releasable and some not."

Al-Masswari denies that holding the remaining five men in detention for more than two years after their arrest is illegal and says that the attorney general made a serious error in judgment by releasing 17 prisoners on bail in June.

"It's not permitted to release people who are involved in murder cases or [other] serious crimes. So what [can we conclude] about [detaining] those who are accused of terrorism?"

To date, 23 individuals charged in the case have been released on bail, but they have not stood trial.

President Hadi's intervention followed a coordinated hunger strike conducted by the 22 prisoners that were being held at the time, a campaign which was supported by Hooria Mashhour, Yemen's Human Rights Minister.

Al-Masswari says the combined influence of Hadi and Mashhour was inappropriate. He believes they interfered in the judicial process.

Al-Masswari is critical of the transitional president's role in the case. He said the "political game played by the president" is at the expense of the judiciary.

Barman also believes political forces are trying to influence the trajectory of the case. He believes that figures from the former regime have put pressure on those handling the case, including the attorney general, but also Mahfal, the judge initially assigned to the case.

"He felt uneasy about the media pressure that was exercised against him by media companies, which belonged to Ali Abdulla Saleh, such as Yemen Today channel, the Yemen Today newspaper and the news website belonging to the GPC," Barman said. "These media companies continued to say the judge was brought to this court in order to announce [that] these people were innocent. The judge wanted to send them a message that he is honest and impartial, and did not [take on this case] for this reason," Barman added.

Al-Masswari rejected the claim that these media agencies were to

blame for the judge's resignation. Yet, he admits to running a targeted media campaign against Mahfal's appointment.

"Truly, for six-months we used the media against him because he gave statements before he was [ever] assigned to this case, saying that those who carried out the explosions at the Nadhain Mosque deserved to be given a medal," Masswari said.

The fact that the case has barely progressed in more than two years

has been acknowledged by both attorneys. Al-Masswari, largely pinned the blame on both Mahfal and the attorney general, who he says have neglected to bring in influential figures for questioning.

"[Mahfal] is still holding the file of the case with his hands and teeth. Hilal Mahfal is supposed to send the file of the case to the court of appeals, but he hasn't because we are insisting on putting these senior figures on trial."

"When shall we hear their testimonies, on judgement day?" asked Al-Masswari.

By contrast Barman believes the case has dragged on because of a lack of evidence against the men. He says the prosecution has intentionally perverted the courts via attempts to connect the Nadhain Mosque and the Friday of Dignity cases.

"When I read the file of the case, I am personally convinced that whoever conducted these investigations tried to mislead the people," he said.

Wille says Yemen needs to set a precedent in this case and put the rule of law above and beyond politics in Yemen.

"Dealing with this case in a just way and providing these prisoners with judicial guarantees would set a very good example. Not only so that in the future Yemen takes the justice system seriously, but also that it understands that justice has to be removed from politics," Willie said. "As long as this trial is pending it shows that politics supersedes the judicial process."

Many of the findings contained in this report were based on two separate interviews conducted with Abdul-Rahman Ali Barman, the attorney representing the accused, and Mohammed Al-Masswari, the attorney representing the injured and families of those killed in the Presidential Palace bombing. Extracts from both of these interviews will appear in the next edition of the Yemen Times.

Quick facts about the Nadhain Mosque case

- To date no one has stood trial in connection with the bombing of Nadhain Mosque.
- According to figures provided by Human Rights Watch, in 2011, 32 people were arrested in connection with the Nadhain bomb blast.
- The explosion killed seven people, according to the majority of local media reports, as well as seriously injuring several others, including former President Ali Abdulla Saleh.
- Ten prisoners were released at various intervals prior to May 2013. Four were released without charge.
- In May 2013 transitional President Abdu Rabu Mansour Hadi authorized the immediate release of 19 of the 22 prisoners that were still being held at that time.
- On June 6, 2013, the attorney general, Ali Ahmed Al-Awash, subsequently cleared 17 people for release on bail. Three of the five remaining detainee's names were on the list of those to be released.
- The five remaining detainees are: Abdullah Saed Al-Ta'ami, Mohammed Ahmed Ali Omar, Ghalib Al-Ayzeri, Ibrahim Hammoud Al-Hammadi and Shuaib Mohammed Al-Bajari.
- Al-Ayzeri, Al-Hammadi and Al-Bajari's names were all included in the presidential release order issued in May 2013.
- On Aug. 26, 2013, the five prisoners were assembled along with 23 others—who had been released on bail—for a Special Criminal Court (SCC) to have the charges read against them. According to a Human Rights Watch press release published on Oct. 9, 2013 the charges include: "Being part of an armed gang intending to attack the president and other state officials as well as military and other government facilities."
- Following the SCC hearing, the judge initially appointed to oversee the case, Hilal Hamid Ali Mahfal, recused himself, citing unwelcome media attention. The wait for appointment of a new judge has now entered its third-month.
- In addition to pleading their innocence, the five remaining prisoners have also alleged violent mistreatment during their imprisonment. Human Rights Watch has documented accusations of torture and confessions made under duress.
- Under international law, the national coalition government is duly obliged to investigate claims of torture and accusations that confessions have been made under duress. According to international law, the prisoners are required to be provided with a forensic medical exam, something they say they have been denied, according to Human Rights Watch.
- Article 14 of the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (UNICCPR), to which Yemen is a signatory, stipulates that a trial must commence without undue delay for anyone accused of a crime. General Comment 32 of the UNICCPR, as provided by the Human Rights Committee, also states that: "In cases where the accused are denied bail by the court, they must be tried as expeditiously as possible."

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Prof. Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf,
(1951 - 1999)
Founder of Yemen Times



OUR OPINION

Let's all be TED

No, I am not referring to the nickname for Theodor, and I don't have any personal attachments to the name as such. The TED I am talking about is a global brand short for Technology Entertainment and Design. I was first introduced to TED when I spoke at a global TED conference in Edinburgh in 2011. I was impressed and inspired by the momentum of positive energy our world has within its creative minds.

TED is ideas worth spreading. There is a special spirit in the TED community that positively touches everyone's heart who has been exposed to it. It's like a positive infection that we all need to catch.

My brother Walid is a TED fellow. The two of us have become one of the few sets of brothers and sisters to speak in the TED community. So we decided to bring TED home, to Yemen.

Last year was the first TEDx event here. To call the TEDxSana'a event a hit would be an under statement. We discovered that Yemen has many talented and hardworking men and women with inspiring and heartwarming stories.

The videos from last year's event have been very popular not only in Yemen but around the world. We were encouraged to find out that we can first inspire our own people—especially in these hard nerve-wrecking times—but also contribute to changing Yemen's negative worldwide image into a more positive one.

On Wednesday we held the second TEDxSana'a event, which added to our list of amazing people who have something worth sharing and teaching others about. On Dec. 11 we will hold TEDxAden, which has been organized by an amazing team of locals who want their city to “rise again.”

In April 2014 TEDxTaiz will be held. We are also working on a TEDxMukalla to take place in 2014.

Unfortunately, Yemen comes up short when it comes to cultural events, especially inspiring ones. TEDx events help us close this gap, even if only partially. If we held an event in Yemen's most populous cities once a year, we would have at least six TEDx events annually. Every two months there would be an opportunity to listen to stories from 15 amazing Yemenis, who have made something happen and who can serve as role models for others.

Yemeni youth need role models. They need people from their own society to tell them that they can be something special if they throw themselves whole-heartedly at something. I think we should have more of those events and spread the spirit of wonder, insight and most importantly—ideas.

Let's all be TED.

Nadia Al-Sakkaf

Yemen's quandary in Dammaj

Fatima Abo Alasrar
Mideast.foreignpolicy.com
First Published Nov. 11

After years of intermittent violence in the northern provinces of Yemen, political machinations are outpacing the state countermeasures that are mired in indifference and complacency. While the capital, Sana'a, claims to make headway through the National Dialogue, brutal attacks in Sa'daa governorate between the Salafis and Houthis have left a significant death toll. The Yemeni government has chosen its usual modus operandi response to the protracted conflict through actively playing a part in the acrimonious disputes over territory and sphere of influence.

Sa'daa has been an arena for political gamesmanship and power control since the Houthi rebellion started in 2004. Former President Ali Abdulla Saleh sent the military to fight the Houthis while equipping them with artillery in order to prolong the conflict and weaken the forces of General Ali Mohsen in the Yemeni army. After the Arab Spring, the Houthi movement evolved from a rebellion against the former regime, into a conflict with political parties that are increasingly marred by sectarian divisions, regional meddling, and a complex tribal dimension. The intentions of all factions are clearer now than they have ever been. Political alliances are forming in a way that is increasing the onslaught on the Houthis in order to curb their expanding political influence in Yemen.

While it is not entirely clear who the protagonist was in the recent violent events in the town of Dammaj, Yemeni officials have expediently assigned responsibility for the conflict to the Houthis, prior to launching any investigation. Such conspicuous political bias from the government is escalating the situation, leading to further disastrous reactions in Sa'daa. This government-sponsored scenario of the conflict is purposefully constructed to stir national consciousness in favor of one side, the Salafis. The Dammaj students who were caught in the battle are exalted to martyrdom status, pictures of their dead are published in newspapers and websites, while there is almost nothing reported on the Houthis besides their violent role and support from Iran.

Although the Houthis have been demonized in this process, they are not the benevolent altruistic group either. Houthis claim that the Sa'daa-based Dar al-Hadith institute in the city of Dammaj, which hosts unarmed Salafi scholars from all around the world, is heavily militarized. Furthermore, the institute recently benefitted from the protection of tribes and Islah Party affiliates in the area, which have opted to respond belligerently to limit the Houthi's influence in Sa'daa.

In fact, these were not the first skirmishes around Dammaj. Salafis fighting alongside the government in the former six wars of Sa'daa caught the attention of the Houthis and prompted retaliation. The Houthis sought to trammel the Salafis' influence in Dammaj in 2011 by laying siege to the entire area from October to December 2011 and cutting off food and medical access. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) reported more than 100 people killed in the conflict, including four children who died of starvation and three elderly men of lack of medication.

Sana'a, however, is intimidated by the rising Houthi influence and organized military ability. The Houthis' power in Sa'daa and their independent governance structure have allowed them to negotiate border security agreements with their main adversary, Saudi Arabia. This is all causing further discomfort to the policymakers in Yemen, as they grow aware of the unexpected groundswell that the Houthis generated. The Houthis are now emerging with their own political party, which is becoming increasingly popular among the Yemeni youth.

The Houthi influence need not be underestimated. While ostensibly regressive, Houthis believe that ruling is a privilege for Zaidi sects of Hashemite origin. Zaidism was the order of the day in Yemen for more than a millennia, and the Zaidi imamate rule was removed in the 1962 revolution and is likely to see a resurgence amid the prevailing corrupt political culture in Yemen.

At the heart of the Houthis' allure to the Yemeni youth is the realization that the Arab Spring revolution did not reach its full potential. While the head of the regime is gone, elements of a remaining dysfunctional system threaten a relapse. As such, there are more youth than before who are supporting the Houthis for their unrelenting opposition to the former regime and its allies. Furthermore, the Houthi notion of state sovereignty appears to many to be far better than what is currently offered by the Yemeni state where infringement on Yemen's territory has taken place with the connivance of Yemeni officials.

Meanwhile, the Houthis do not invite international sympathy with their narrow vision, nor do they seek it. Their “death to America” slogan has been a recruiting factor for the radically inclined. But if the relationship between the United States and Iran changes positively, this will have implications on the Houthi movement, which could find itself reinventing its messages to suit the political winds of Iran. It is more likely, however, that the Houthis will remain one of Iran's cards to play in the region. As the Obama administration is tinkering with its Iranian counterparts, Yemeni politicians feel the urgency to stop the Houthi

movement before it transforms into a political power that the current ruling alliances cannot face.

Such conspicuous political bias from the government is escalating the situation, leading to further disastrous reactions in Sa'daa.

Undoubtedly, Dammaj has tested the sincerity and commitment of the Yemeni government in its ability to protect all Yemeni citizens and contain a crisis. As the government falters, the political parties grow more confrontational. All sides of this conflict appear to be deliberately drawing more attention to themselves in a conspicuous effort to garner additional

financing and recruits while the Yemeni government assumes the role of a victim, rather than an interceptor of the violence which has further inflamed the situation in the north.

Furthermore, communities in the south are watching this tragedy with fear that it could repeat itself in their neighborhoods. Southern political parties and media have tilted toward the Houthis in their reporting. The Houthi-Southern alliance, which intensified after the Arab revolution and southerners' call for session, is starting to become a nuisance for the policymakers in the capital who were used to conducting their business the “Saleh” way.

Events in Dammaj have also prompted the Group of Ten Ambassadors of the permanent five members of the U.N. Security Council, the GCC, and the European Union to issue a statement that called upon all sides to stop fighting and defuse the tensions. But most importantly, they called on the Yemeni government to resume its mediation attempts and to take whatever measures are necessary to restore security and the state's presence. The government sent a presidential committee to investigate the

situation on Nov. 6 but this came after the death toll surpassed 200 people. The question for international partners is if they are willing to be creative enough to find complementary ways to support Yemen's near-ending transitional process while helping the government address urgent needs of the community.

The current security threats in the north and the antipathetic responses by the state challenge assurances that the Yemeni government is on the right track. The effort to sustain peace should be long term, as Yemen cannot afford to have the same military conflicts experienced during the Saleh regime. Recognizing that Sa'daa has some degree of autonomy and a unique culture that needs to be preserved peacefully is the first step toward real integration. But most importantly, bearing the responsibility to protect the people in Sa'daa, just as much as the people in Dammaj, is crucial if the state wants to gain respect and influence.

Fatima Abo Alasrar is an independent Middle East policy analyst from Yemen and a former OSI International Policy Fellow. She blogs at www.yementality.com.

وَيْبِ الصَّالِحِينَ

* الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ *

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وكافة آل باشماخ

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والده

سائلين المولى عز وجل أن يتغمد الفقيد بواسع رحمته وأن
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Somali refugees in Yemeni limbo

John James
IRIN
First Published Nov. 7

It is eight years since Esmahan Abdaqadir Ali left the Somali capital Mogadishu for a new life in Saudi Arabia, and things have not quite turned out as planned. For a start, she never reached her destination.

She was granted refugee status automatically upon arriving by boat in Yemen. Then she married, became pregnant and joined the ranks of Yemen's semi-permanent Somali refugee community, estimated to number around 232,000 according to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR).

"We've been through so much—we don't think any longer about tomorrow—we are just thinking of how to live from one day to the next," she told IRIN at a kindergarten in the southern city of Aden.

As the mother of five young children, and now abandoned by her husband, she lives through begging—a common means of survival for Somalis, even those who have spent decades in what is the region's poorest country.

Yemen's largest refugee community faces a dilemma, most Somalis, community leaders in the southern city of Aden say, would return home if given the chance.

"Somali new arrivals have been down—as well as Ethiopians now. The situation in Somalia is getting better, and they know their chances of crossing into Saudi Arabia are much lower," Saleh Hassan from the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) told IRIN.

In fact very few now seem to be making it across the border into Saudi Arabia as the country toughens its stance on illegal immigration, expelling hundreds of thousands of foreign workers, including Yemenis. The Saudis have tightened border controls and earlier this year announced plans to restart construction work on a more secure border fence.

A delegation from the new Somali government visited Yemen in April, where they met UNHCR and discussed the possibilities for refugees to voluntarily return home once conditions in south and central Somalia improve further. At the moment, UNHCR supports some limited returns through a voluntary repatriation program run by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to Puntland and Somaliland in northern Somalia. But there is no comprehensive return package and volunteers need a security clearance from the authorities in the two Somali regions before travelling.

The Arab Spring revolution and resulting instability in Yemen exacerbated the already difficult economic situation. Poverty rates increased from 35 percent in 2004 to 42 percent in 2009, and the 2011 political crisis led to a 12 percent drop in GDP, according to the International Monetary Fund.

Across the Gulf of Aden, in So-



Somali refugee children at a kindergarten run by an NGO in the Basateen district of Aden in southern Yemen.

malia, there have been occasional glimpses of hope that two decades of violence are coming to an end. In September 2012, MPs elected a new president—the first such election since 1967, and a move that helped bring a formal end to the transitional period. The African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) and the Somali National Security Forces (SNSF) have extended their areas of control, and in January the U.S. government recognized the Somali government for the first time since 1991.

As a result of these changes, the numbers of Somalis making the dangerous sea crossing from the Horn of Africa has dropped in recent years from 27,350 in 2011 to 23,086 in 2012, according to UNHCR figures.

In the first nine months of 2013, 9,709 new Somali refugees were registered in Yemen.

Two decades of refuge

UNHCR started working in Yemen in 1987 and built up its work in the South from 1992 onwards as large numbers of Somali refugees started arriving.

"Life is hard here. When people telephone from Somalia we tell them to stay there," Sheik Absher Hassan Youssef, head of the Somali Community Council in Aden, told IRIN.

The council has its offices in the Basateen area of the city. It is a shanty town district that is home to around 20,000 refugees, mainly Somali—one of the largest concentrations of urban refugees in Yemen (along with Sana'a and Mukalla).

"Ten years ago life was easier, but with the economic crisis there's no work here. There are no jobs. We're paying rent. It creates conflict in couples because it's such a struggle to live," Youssef said.

Some prefer life in the refugee camp at Kharaz, in the neighboring governorate of Lahj, where nearly

17,000 mainly Somali refugees are based. There, life can be easier with food, education and shelter provided by UNHCR and their partners.

In towns and cities there are more opportunities for Somalis to find work—cleaning houses, working on urban farms, and selling door-to-door (many Yemeni women spend most of their time indoors, hence the selling opportunity).

But living conditions are often difficult for urban Somalis. Many split the costs of a rented house by sub-dividing homes into separate rooms, which each serve entire families—sometimes up to two parents and nine children, with all the families in the house sharing one bathroom.

In Aden, several aid projects provide basic services for the community, including a center for disabled children and a home for vulnerable children. Two of Esmahan's children attend a kindergarten in Basateen, Aden's poorest district, run by local NGO At-tadhamon. Nearly 350 mainly Somali children are looked after at the center where they get daily meals and weekly outings to play in the park.

"Many families have been there for some 10-15 years, most of them are very poor," said the kindergarten director Sara Mohamed Saeed. "The opportunity for jobs is low, and a lot are dependent on U.N. agencies for handouts. Men chew 'qat,' and the women clean homes or beg."

Born in Yemen

When new arrivals first come to Aden they often gather under a large tree in Basateen where the community provides them with temporary lodging where they can live for 10 days or so.

Somali refugee Khadher Adam Hussein, now in his 30s, fled from just north of Mogadishu in 2003 and earns a few riyals washing

cars for Yemenis.

"When we came we couldn't communicate with the Yemenis, but now I can get by. Things are very difficult and tough for the Somali community," Hussein told IRIN.

"It was very good before when the government was stronger. If the situation stays as it is, I think about going back, but I don't really know what to do there. We only keep in touch with things back home by watching TV. But one day, inshallah, I'll be back there."

Hussein's son was born in Yemen and unlike his parents speaks both fluent Arabic and Somali—a common pattern among the children of Somali refugees, who have never seen their parents' home country,

and have weaker ties to Somali culture.

"When the parents came this was broken. The people who were born in Yemen, they need to know their culture," said Nazeeh Ahmed Alwan, the field coordinator for the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) in Aden.

Maintaining ties to Somali culture will be key if any future mass return is to be a success, say aid workers. ADRA organizes musical events, teaches Somali songs and explains traditional clothes, "because psychologically they need to keep their culture in their minds," says Alwan. "Culture is the way to keep them strong."

Those who fled Somalia as adults

have struggled to move much beyond low level employment, but Yemeni-born Somalis with greater fluency in Arabic have been able to enter higher education and have more of a sense of belonging to Yemen, and far less of an attachment to Somalia.

"There's a big gap between those who came here and want to be buried back there, and those who were born here. We hope God grants us a return," said Sheik Youssef.

Going back

At Sara Mohamed Saeed's kindergarten in Basateen three families in the last year left to return home, though she says she does not know if that is what they ended up doing.

Those long-time resident Somali refugees with the energy to think about the long-term future still talk of returning home.

However, new arrivals still come from Somalia, even if in lower numbers, and they remain keen to try and get into Saudi Arabia.

Somalis seem less vulnerable, aid workers say, to the Yemeni kidnapers, often in league with smugglers, who pick up many of the Ethiopian migrants, considered more passive, shortly after they land in Yemen to extract a ransom through kidnapping and torture.

But increased border controls in Saudi Arabia mean those stuck in border towns like Haradh have frequently had enough as well, and want to return.

Next week the government of Yemen, in cooperation with UNHCR and IOM, is hosting a regional conference to draw up a strategy on how to improve refugee protection and better support Yemen manage the influx of migrants.

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OXFAM

JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

Oxfam, an international NGO working with others to find lasting solutions to poverty and suffering, has been working in Yemen since 1983. Oxfam announces the following vacancy for its programme in Aden.

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- Ensure proper filing system (papers & electronic).
- Responsible of barcode cards archive.
- Support the finance assistant in finance documents filling.
- Support in field payments.
- Support the finance assistant and finance officer on daily cash management, and payment mechanism.
- Perform other tasks requested by the Finance Officer to ensure smooth running of the program.

Skills and Competencies Required for this Role:

- University degree in Finance or any other relevant discipline.
- Knowledge and skills in computer usage and data management
- Ability to manage work pressure, and work to deadlines
- Ability to work with others and as part of the team
- Fluency in Arabic and English and writing skills
- Willingness and fitness to travel for sustained periods of time

To apply

If you believe that you have the qualifications and skills to excel in the above position, please send a copy of your CV and a cover letter, clearly stating the job you are applying for and the location of the job **in the email subject**, to yemenjobs@oxfam.org.uk.

Closing date for applications is **26 November 2013**

Please apply immediately as we will be interviewing suitable candidates before the closing date



Archive photo by Amal Al-Yarisi



TEDx Aden

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Wigdan Al-Guneid

It was sometimes in 912 A.D—during the Abbasid Khaliffet Dynasty—that historians believe the first lime seeds were brought to



Egypt from India and then spread to Oman and Yemen, according to the book, "The Geographical Distribution of Animals and Plants."

No one seems to know exactly how the plant found its way to Yemen, but it surely opened the kitchen door for a new flavor in foods throughout the whole region. Limes traditionally have been canned and preserved to keep the plant in recipes all year long.

Oshaar is a very popular pickled lime-based condiment in Yemen, that hails from the South.

Oshaar is believed to have been derived from Indian cuisine. But the Yemeni version typically does not contain oil and is less spicy. It is usually consumed with rice and meat, but modern tastes are now putting it on sandwiches with mayonnaise.

From its origins in Aden—where many Indians found themselves during southern Yemen's British occupation—this savory dressing has made its way to the rest of the country, now commonly offered in Sana'ani restaurants.

To make your own, you will need:

Ingredients:

- Sea Salt
- Vinegar
- 18 small limes
- 8 thinly sliced garlic cloves
- 7-8 thinly sliced small carrots
- About 5 canning jars
- 4-5 dried red chili peppers
- Black seed-optional
- Cumin-optional



Directions

- Sterilize the canning jars by boiling them in water for at least 20 minutes (Serious illnesses can result if proper hygiene techniques are not followed while canning goods. For instructions on how to safely can foods, check out the University of Georgia's National Center for Home Food Preservation's publication at nchfp.uga.edu)
- Clean the outside of the limes with soap and water
- Cut the limes in a "+" shape in the middle
- Sprinkle the "+" shape with sea salt until it's overflowing
- Place the salted limes in the canning jars until it's about ¾ full
- Place an even amount of carrots and garlic in each jar, filling it almost to the top

Wigdan Al-Guneid blogs about Yemeni food for the website YemenKitchen. Find more recipes at yemenkitchen.wordpress.com

- Fill half the jar with vinegar
- Refer again to the National Center for Home Food Preservation's guidelines on how to safely can the jars at this point using either boiling or pressure canning methods.
- Store the jars for 6-7 weeks in a sunny spot

Making the Oshaar

- Now the limes are pickled and are ready for the second step
- First boil the red chili in a small pot filled half-way with water. Drain the water (saving it) and repeat this step two more times. If you like your Oshaar spicier then you can boil the chili for a third time
- Blend the chili in a food processor with the boiled water and two fresh garlic cloves.
- Add a jar of the pickled limes and blend with the chili mixture.
- Add the optional black seeds and a pinch of cumin
- Your Oshaar is ready!

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