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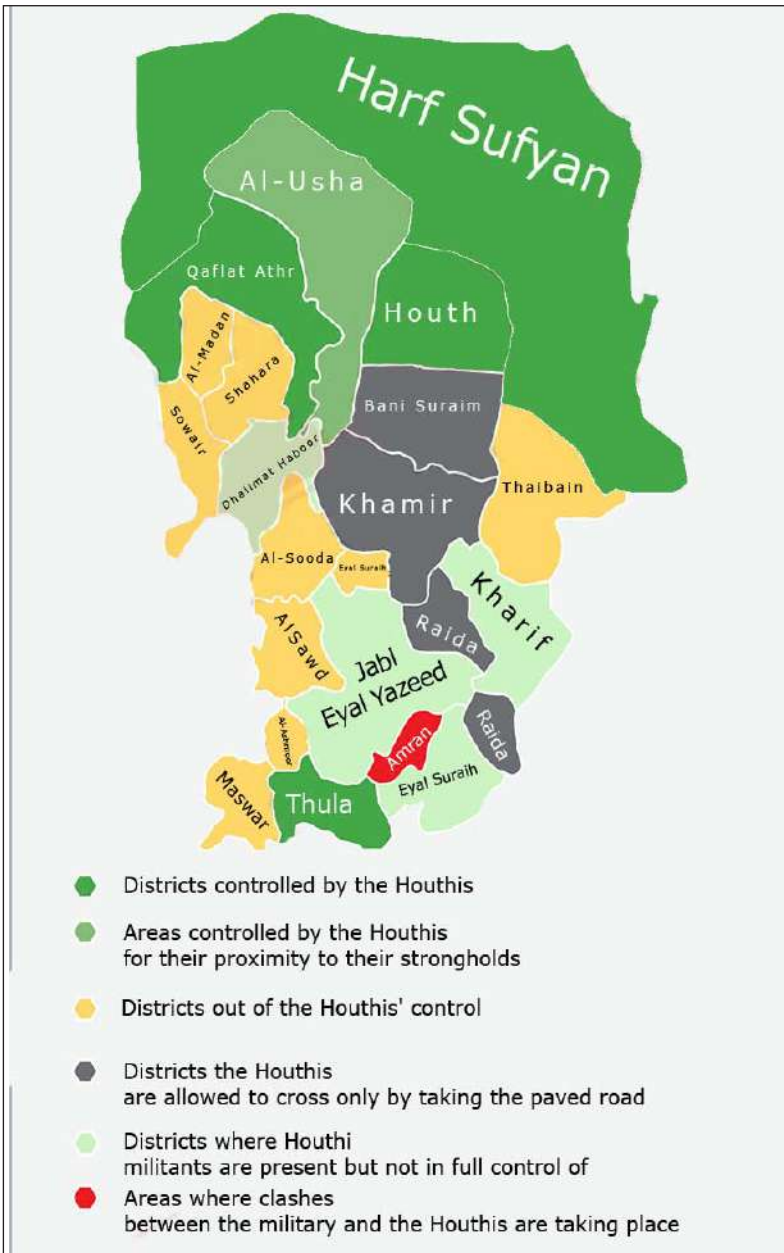
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## Dozens killed as fierce clashes engulf Amran



### Amal Al-Yarisi

**SANA'A, July 6** – Amran governorate witnessed a momentary cessation of hostilities on Sunday following fierce fighting between Houthi rebels and an alliance of the 310th Armored Brigade and Sunni tribesmen.

A military official who spoke to the Yemen Times on condition of anonymity said that the latest spate of violence broke out on July 4, after the Houthis attacked a security checkpoint of the 310th Armored Brigade located in the Al-Arbaeen area of Amran.

The official added that this most recent violence has been the fiercest so far, reaching strategically important locations in Amran, including hotels, a government compound, a college and state-run factories, and leaving dozens killed and injured.

The Yemen Times received local reports claiming that the road to Sana'a has intermittently been closed since July 4. Some citizens of Amran city are reportedly waiting to flee the fighting once the road re-opens.

The commander of the Reserve Forces, General Ali Al-Jayfi, sent five battalions to Amran to back the 310th Armored Brigade on Sunday evening, according to Hussein Barman, a senior state official in Amran's local government.

The reinforcements were deployed to various military positions within Amran, according to Barman.

In a televised speech on Thursday, Houthi leader Abdulmalek Bader Al-Deen Al-Houthi, accused the Islah Party of obstructing a ceasefire agreement proposed by the Defense Ministry on June 23. He compared members of Islah with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

On Sunday the Islah party's website, Islah.net, released a statement by Saeed Shamsan, head of the Islah Political Department, calling on the Houthis to cease fighting the government.

"The continuous bloodshed re-

sulting from Houthis' fight against the soldiers, residents and state institutions of several areas in Yemen causes the government, the Yemeni people and also the international community to oppose them...", he added.

Amer Al-Marani, a negotiator for the Houthis, blamed Brigadier Hameed Al-Qushaibi, commander of the 310th Armored Brigade, for the collapse of the latest ceasefire agreement.

"The agreement would have succeeded if Al-Qushaibi agreed to hand over the locations under his control," he explained.

Since March 2014 the Houthis have demanded that the state replace leading government officials in Amran.

President Hadi partly conceded to the Houthis' demands by appointing Mohammed Saleh Shamlan as the new governor of Amran on June 8.

However, Brigadier Al-Qushaibi, who the Houthis allege is acting in the interests of Islah, has so far remained in power.

"The [310th Brigade] has turned into a brigade that isn't associated with the Defense Ministry. The state should replace the brigade's current leadership with an independent brigadier," said Al-Marani.

The presidential committee that proposed the ineffective ceasefire agreement on June 23 held an emergency meeting on the morning of Sunday, July 6, to discuss the situation in Amran and other fighting fronts near Sana'a, according to the state-run Saba News Agency.

Representatives of the Houthis and the senior adviser to the UN Special Envoy to Yemen attended the meeting, according to Saba News.

"The committee calls on all parties to stop worsening the security situation and to stop attacks on state institutions and innocent residents in Amran. It deems any attack against the city and its residents a red line that cannot be crossed," the committee explained.

## Armed men besiege house of legal affairs minister

### Ali Saeed

**SANA'A, July 6**—Security forces dispersed dozens of armed men on Saturday evening after they besieged the house of Legal Affairs Minister Mohammed Al-Mikhlafi, the administrator of the minister's office, Moneer Al-Saqqaf, told the Yemen Times.

The siege took place after the cabinet failed to pass the Transitional Justice Law last Wednesday, a controversial draft law that aims to bring those who violated human rights under the regime of Ali Abdullah Saleh to justice and to compensate the victims.

Al-Saqqaf accused Saleh's party, the General People's Congress (GPC), of having planned the siege in an attempt to obstruct the passing of the law. According to Al-Saqqaf, a GPC cabinet member threatened Al-Mikhlafi, warning him not to proceed with passing the law.

The Yemen Times attempted to contact prominent members of the GPC but received no response.

The Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP), of which the legal affairs minister is a member, declared on



Shortly before the attack Al-Mikhlafi allegedly received threats warning him not to proceed with the passing of the Transitional Justice Law.

its website that it "holds the GPC and its leaders accountable for the siege of Al-Mikhlafi's house."

On Saturday, the GPC stated on its website, almotamar.net, that

the siege was initiated by people of the Sunaina neighborhood after "two guards of the minister broke into a family's house nearby and attempted to rape a woman."

## Southern Movement faction celebrates seventh anniversary in Sana'a



The Peaceful Southern Movement is a faction within the broader Southern Movement led by controversial figure Nasser Al-Noba

### Nasser Al-Sakkaf

**SANA'A, July 7**—Supporters of the Peaceful Southern Movement, a division within the Southern Movement, or Hirak, led by controversial Brigadier Nasser Al-Noba, celebrated the seventh anniversary of the formation of the Southern Movement in Sana'a on Sunday night.

Southerners usually commemorate the anniversary of the Southern Movement, which was established in 2007, in Al-Oroth Square of Aden. This year, no major event took place in the south. However, members of the Peaceful Southern Movement marked the occasion in Sana'a.

The decision to hold the commemoration in Sana'a, along with Al-Noba's involvement, has angered other Southern Movement figures. Many voiced complaints about Al-Noba's divisive role in the movement's leadership.

Mohammed Al-Maslami, a leading figure in the Southern Move-

ment, said: "the ones who represent the southerners are those who stand by them and raise their demands. Those who celebrated the southern anniversary in Sana'a do not represent the southerners."

Al-Noba is one of the Southern Movement's founders. In 2007, he led protests by southern military and security personnel who were sacked by the regime of former President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

The protests gave birth to the Southern Movement, which later expanded to all southern governorates.

Al-Noba commended the National Dialogue Conference (NDC) outcomes and expressed his regret that Peaceful Southern Movement leaders were not part of the NDC.

Al-Noba called on southerners in Yemen and abroad to engage in a comprehensive dialogue with other national powers based on Security Council Resolution 2140 (2014), according to the state-run September 26 news website.

"Southerners don't want cele-

brations but instead they want the southern leaders, either Al-Noba or any others, to meet their demands," said Ali Hassan Ali, a representative of the Southern Movement in the NDC.

During the event, Al-Noba announced the establishment of the Peaceful Southern Movement Forces Coalition to support President Abdu Rabu Mansour Hadi and implement the NDC outcomes.

Al-Noba began to lose influence in the Southern Movement in 2009 to other factions, including that of former President of South Yemen Ali Salem Al-Beidh.

According to Al-Maslami, since 2009 Al-Noba has no longer had any effective role in the Southern Movement's leadership.

Political analyst Fadhil Al-Rabei, head of Madar Studies and Research Center, said: "holding the celebration in Sana'a by Al-Noba comes within the attempts of President Hadi to attract vital southern leaders to Sana'a to participate in the political process."

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## Seven soldiers killed in two attacks in Abyan, Hadramout



AQAP is active in Hadramout and Abyan but is not the only armed group in those areas

### ■ Ali Ibrahim Al-Moshki

**SANA'A, July 7**—Seven soldiers were killed and four injured in two separate attacks on Sunday in Abyan and Hadramout governorates in southern Yemen, according to local military sources.

One soldier was killed and four others injured when gunmen attacked a security compound in Hajr district of Hadramout on Sunday, according to the state-run Saba News Agency.

Mohammed Shamlol, a local journalist in Hadramout, said the explosions and attacks are likely the work of Al-Qaeda in the Ara-

bian Peninsula (AQAP), which has been active in Hadramout recently.

Also on Sunday, in Abyan a group of soldiers ambushed a military vehicle of the 39th Armored Division at the entrance of the Dhaiqa valley of Al-Mahfad district, killing the six soldiers on board, according to Fahd Ahmed, a soldier from the Fourth Military Command in Abyan. "I cannot confirm the gunmen belong to Al-Qaeda because the investigations are still ongoing. The information about who did the attack is still incomplete," said Ahmed. He continued, "the 39th Armored Division has been in Al-Mahfad since the beginning of

the military campaign that began on April 29 in Abyan and Shabwa, pursuing Al-Qaeda militants. The soldiers were on a reconnaissance mission in the Dhaiqa valley."

Al-Mahfad was one of AQAP's main strongholds after its militants took over Abyan in the middle of 2011. The army expelled the militants in mid-2012.

Although the alleged AQAP militants maintain a presence in Al-Mahfad, the Ministry of Defense said the military campaign has purged the area of AQAP. Dozens of soldiers have been reported dead since the beginning of the campaign. Abdu Al-Salam Al-Saribi, a

former resident of Al-Mahfad who moved to Lawder, claimed AQAP militants still live in the mountains and valleys of Al-Mahfad.

The Yemeni government has yet to assign blame for either of the incidents. In addition to Al-Qaeda militants, other armed groups are active in the area, including those linked to the Southern Movement.

On June 13, one soldier was killed and nine others injured when a bomb-laden car exploded at a military location at the entrance of Al-Mahfad.

## Yemen confirms extradition of Ethiopian opposition leader



### ■ Ali Saeed

**SANA'A, July 7**—Deputy Foreign Minister Hamid Al-Awadi told the Yemen Times on Monday that Yemen extradited Andargachew Tsege, secretary-general of the banned Ethiopian opposition movement Ginbot 7, to Addis Ababa in accordance with an agreement on the exchange of wanted individuals signed between the two countries in 1999.

News reports of Tsege's arrest by Yemeni authorities began to circulate in early July, but according to Al-Awadi he had already been extradited in late June.

Tsege is a dual national who also holds British citizenship, according to the Ginbot 7 website.

"This person [Andargachew] is on the security wanted list and he was extradited in accordance with the agreement," said Al-Awadi.

Tsege was detained while transiting at Sana'a International Airport on his way from the United Arab Emirates to Eritrea, Ginbot 7 spokesperson Ephrem Madebo told the BBC's Focus on Africa ra-

dio program on July 4.

Following his detention on June 23, the movement sent emails to journalists stating that it was unclear if the decision to arrest Tsege was made by local security members or if the order came from high-level officials.

"The illegal abduction of Andargachew Tsege and his extradition by Yemeni security forces to the brutal totalitarian regime in Ethiopia violates international law," Ginbot 7 said in a statement on Sunday.

The movement called on the UK government to urgently intervene in determining the whereabouts of Tsege.

In a press conference with the UK-based Guardian newspaper, Madebo accused Britain of failing to prevent the extradition the Ethiopian opposition leader.

"The British knew he was being held in Yemen for almost a week but they did nothing," the Guardian quoted Madebo as saying.

The Yemen Times made repeated attempts to contact the UK Embassy in Sana'a but received no response.

## Border crossing in Hadramout attacked by militants

### ■ Madiha Al-Junaid

**SANA'A, July 7**—Unidentified militants carried out a suicide attack on July 4 at Hadramout's Al-Wadia border crossing linking Yemen and Saudi Arabia.

The militants detonated a car bomb and used heavy weaponry, leaving several dead and injured.

A security operations officer in Seyoun who spoke on condition of anonymity as he is not authorized to make public statements, said that the attack resulted in the death of one soldier and injury of a civilian on the Yemeni side.

The state-run Saba News Agency reported that a second security of-

ficer was also wounded.

The Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported on its website a total of four dead security officers including a Saudi commander on border patrol. It added that nine security officers were injured.

"Five of the criminals were killed and six were injured and arrested," the SPA claimed.

The Seyoun security source said that the militants began their attack by firing on the border post.

"After that, a bomb-laden car entered the border post and exploded, causing confusion among security forces," he added.

The state-run Saba News Agency stated that two of the attackers' ve-

hicles drove towards Sharoorah governorate in Saudi Arabia following the assault.

The Wadia border crossing was reopened on July 5.

Maintaining the security of the 1,800 kilometers long Yemeni-Saudi border has long presented a challenge for both countries. The most prominent security threats include human and drugs trafficking. Since 2003, Saudi Arabia has been trying to complete a fence running along its border with Yemen but has faced obstacles from farmers who oppose the project. They argue that it will prevent them from accessing pastures for their livestock.

## Locust swarms in several governorates

### ■ Ali Ibrahim Al-Moshki

**SANA'A, July 7**—Swarms of locusts have invaded parts of Sa'ada, Jawf, Hadramout, Amran, Sana'a, Raima, and Dhamar governorates, raising concerns of widespread crop devastation.

Mohammed Al-Ghashm, the deputy minister of agriculture and irrigation, told the Yemen Times that locust swarms are expected to spread dramatically.

"It is worrying that the locusts will inhabit and reproduce in humid areas such as Hadramout, Jawf, Marib and Shabwa," said Al-Ghashm. "The locusts do not raise danger in the mountainous areas

considering these places are not a fertile ground for locusts."

On Saturday, the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation formed teams to conduct field visits and prepare surveys, according to Al-Ghashm. He said the ministry has not yet received any field reports.

Al-Ghashm said that authorities are unable to control the locusts because the pesticides used to kill them are hazardous to humans, animals, and plants and can be used only in the desert.

He explained that the locusts came from Saudi Arabia to Sa'ada and Al-Jawf and then moved to Hadramout, Dhamar, Amran, Al-Hada, Raima and Khawlan.

Residents fear the spread of locusts at this time because, as Yahya Al-Salami, a farmer in Dhamar governorate, says, "we are in the season of growing crops and we fear the locusts will destroy them."

Farmers have especially good reason to fear locust swarms. In December 2013, in the north of Tehama on the border with Hajja governorate, swarms of locusts destroyed about 90 percent of grains, sesame, and mangoes.

"We have been suffering from fuel shortages and a lack of water and now the locusts, but the government has done nothing to help us so far," Al-Salami added.



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# Small businesses score big during World Cup



Sana'a's authorities say they do not want to obstruct street vendors' businesses during the World Cup on Tahrir Square.

## ■ Ali Abulohoom

Around a colorful minivan parked in Tahrir Square in the heart of Sana'a, a crowd swarms to buy a variety of items on offer. "I think there is no place better than Tahrir to sell goods at this time," said Abu Ameen, the owner of the van.

Ameen sells Rubik's Cubes—the 3D puzzles invented in 1974 and popularized in the 1980s.

He parks his van in different spots across the capital as he tries to turn a profit. For now, Ameen has settled on Tahrir square, where

large crowds gather most evenings to watch public screenings of World Cup football matches on the big screen.

"After the end of the first half, people flock to my location to see and purchase puzzles," he says. Business is good, Ameen adds—this has been his most profitable spot in Sana'a.

Prior to the World Cup, the square was home to far fewer peddlers and vendors. However, it has turned into a public market of sorts since the tournament began and vendors came from all corners of Sana'a to sell their goods.

The Mayor's Office has not im-

posed any fees or taxes on Ameen or the other vendors in the square. Yahya Mohammed, the assistant municipality manager at the Mayor's Office, said the mayor is encouraging people to capitalize on the popularity of the World Cup at Tahrir square and make money—provided they keep the place clean.

For up to six hours each day soccer fans stay in Tahrir Square to watch the World Cup and rush out after the first half of the matches to purchase goods from vendors.

Mohammed Sinan, a 20-year-old who used to sell bottles of water on Hadda Street, is one of the square's

many vendors. He used to carry the bottles by hand through the busy streets of the capital, but after only four days of selling to thirsty football fans in Tahrir, Sinan says, "I earned a lot of money in Al-Tahrir and decided to buy a small cart to make it easier for me to carry water bottles in the square."

Sinan wishes the tournament would last forever. However, he has plans for after the event ends—he expects to have made enough money to enable him to open a small shop beside his house.

The public marquee in Tahrir Square that was set up for the World Cup screenings has not only

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been lucrative for vendors, but also for shop owners located around the square.

Al-Hubaishi Sports Center is one such shop. Night after night, when the big screen is turned off and fans leave the tent, the store sees a surge of shoppers buying sport T-shirts and boots.

Tamim Mosleh is a 26-year-old university student who came to Tahrir from Shamaila district, north of Sana'a, to watch the World Cup. "I have been waiting for the World Cup to come for four years and the best place to go is Tahrir where I can watch it with hundreds of fans."

Mosleh, a supporter of Argentina, was one of many who headed to Al-Hubaishi Sports Center around the time of the games. "I bought a T-shirt for YR1,200 (\$6) to show my support for my favorite team, Argentina," Mosleh said proudly.

Ahmed Essa, a 35-year-old employee at the shop, said exaggerat-

edly that Tahrir during the World Cup has practically become like Sao Paulo in Brazil, where the World Cup is being held.

He confirmed that sales are going through the roof and that for almost five hours a day clients pour through the doors of the sports center.

The sentiments expressed by shop owners and vendors appear to go both ways—Rami Al-Bakri, a 15-year-old student who came to Tahrir from Al-Hasaba district south of Sana'a, says "I enjoy buying potato sandwiches from peddlers around the square and having them while I am watching the matches."

There are more than 20 vendors who sell potatoes around the square. One such vendor, Saleh Saad, says "my customers increase every day. Here, I come back home with YR10,000 (\$50) in my pocket every day while I used to earn only a quarter of this amount when I was at Hail street."

# The World Cup ahead of the semifinals

## ■ Ali Abulohoom

This year's World Cup has not been without some big surprises. Die-hard fans of favored teams have been left weeping, while a number of top European teams, including 2010 champion Spain, as well as

Italy and Portugal, were kicked out early. But this has given the chance for lesser known teams, such as Costa Rica and Belgium, to shine.

The Netherlands versus Costa Rica quarterfinal game ended in a penalty shoot-out that brought victory to the Netherlands after coach Van Gaal decided to use the bench and made the first goal keeper sub-

stitution of the tournament. Two fabulous saves qualified the Netherlands for the semifinal against Argentina on Tuesday.

The Netherlands has shattered Costa Rica's dream of playing against Argentina in a semifinal for the first time, foreclosing a potential tournament surprise.

The success of Belgium, whose

## Semifinal confrontations

Brazil vs Germany Tuesday 8/7/2014  
Argentina vs Netherlands Wednesday 9/7/2014

### Statistics ahead of the semifinals:

After 60 matches of the World Cup in Brazil 2014.

- 159 goals scored so far, 14 of which were scored by players of the German team Bayern Munich, which is the most represented club in the World Cup.
- 62 goals were scored by right foot, 59 by left, 30 by head, while 3 goals were scored by the player's body and 5 were own goals.
- Colombian forward James Rodriguez is the top attacker in the tournament thus far with six goals and two crucial passes, followed by Germany's Thomas Muller with four goals and two crucial passes, Argentina's Messi with four goals and one crucial pass, and Brazil's Neymar with four goals and one crucial pass.
- Lionel Messi is the only player in the tournament to receive the "Man of the Match" in four consecutive games.
- There have only two players with hatrick goals—

Germany's Muller against Portugal and the Switzerland's Shakiri against Honduras.

- 12 penalties have been confirmed, 11 of them converted to goals.
- The fastest goal was that scored by the America's Dempsey within 30 seconds from kickoff against Ghana.
- The best attacking teams are Netherlands and Colombia, with 12 goals each.
- The worst attacking teams are Cameroon, Honduras and Iran, with a goal for each.
- The best defending team is Costa Rica with two goals in their net.
- The worst defending teams are Australia and Cameroon with 9 goals against them.
- The most goalful match was France vs Switzerland, 5-2.
- The matches with bigger result are Netherlands vs Spain (5-1), Germany vs Portugal (4-0), and Croatia vs Cameroon (4-0).
- The biggest winner so far is Argentina, with 5 wins without loss or draw.
- The team which received the most cards is Costa Rica, with a total of 12.
- Portugal received the fewest cards, only two.



qualification to the quarterfinals came as another surprise, was checked by Argentina's ace players, including Messi, Di Maria and Higuain. Colombia, the third team to unexpectedly reach the quarterfinals, lost its match to Brazil.

Next up, Brazil will face Germany and the Netherlands will face Argentina on Tuesday and Wednesday respectively.

Meanwhile, Brazil has received

a major blow after doctors confirmed that Neymar will be out for the tournament due to a back injury sustained during the match against Colombia.

In another setback for the World Cup hosts, Thiago Da Silva, the Brazilian captain, has been ruled out from the match against Germany in the semifinal after receiving two yellow cards. As for Argentina, their left wing Di Maria will also

be ruled out in a match against the Netherlands due to an injury he suffered during the match against Belgium. This will no doubt make the team's task harder, however Messi, Argentina's captain, has on the face of it seemed untroubled, promising fans a third world cup victory. But, "if Argentina has Messi, we have Robben," was the response from the Netherlands coach.



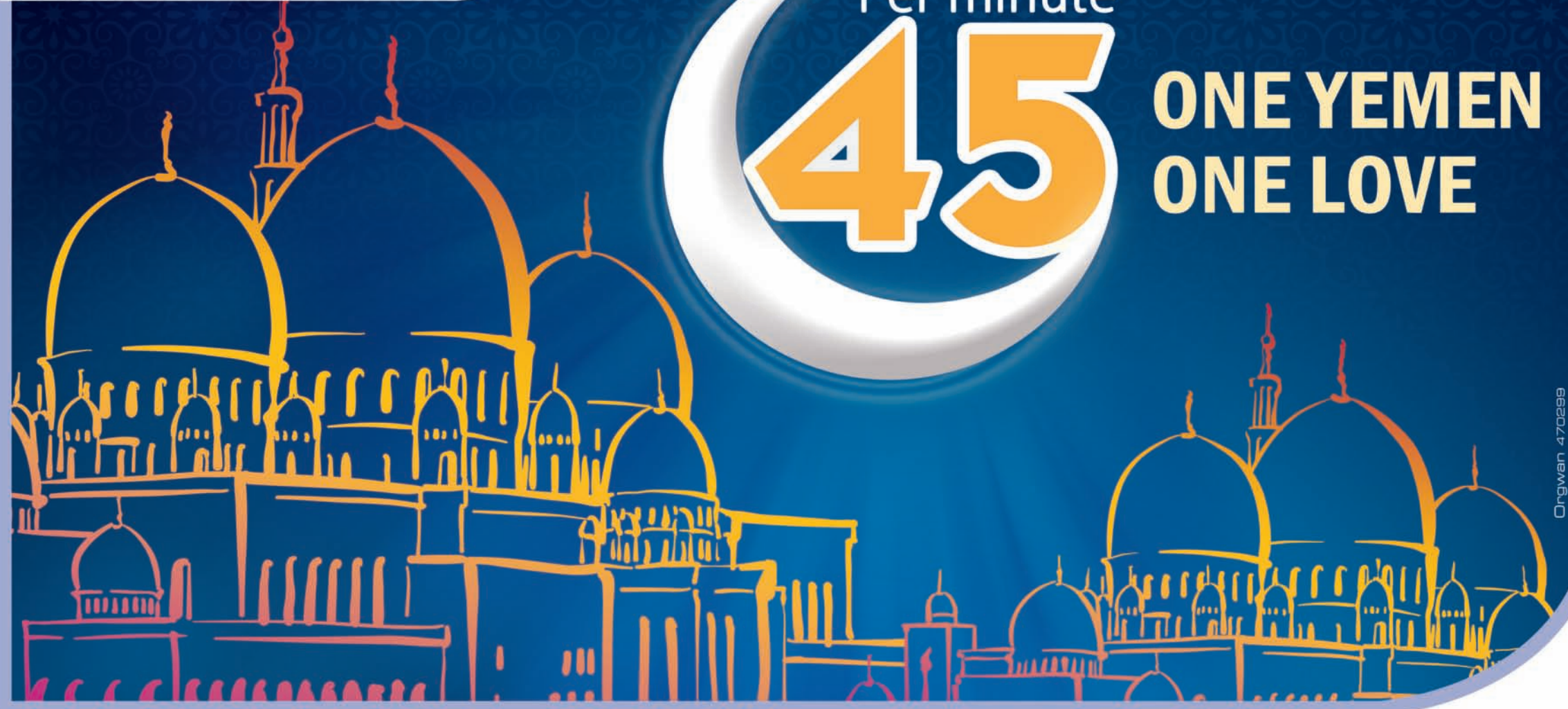


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# The Islamic State: Why mainstream media didn't see it coming

**Crispian Cuss**  
aljazeera.com  
First published July 2

By announcing the foundation of a caliphate, Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, leader of the Islamic State (the group formerly known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, or ISIS), gave a clear indication of his group's motives and scale of ambition. More than just a name change, announcing the Islamic State confirms an intent to consolidate recent victories while looking beyond the borders of Iraq and the Levant. It also rejects colonial imposed frontiers as clearly as the recent symbolic leveling of the Iraqi-Syrian border.

The emergence of the caliphate is the inevitable product of the Islamic State's recent successes. To ensure there could be no doubt about their aspirations, they even named this phase of the campaign, "Breaking the Borders." With their customary eye for presentation it harked back to their first phase, "Breaking the Walls," which started in July 2012 when the Islamic State, then still an Al-Qaeda affiliate, launched

a number of prison breaks to swell its ranks. This included an attack on Baghdad's notorious Abu Ghraib where reportedly more than 500 former convicts were freed.

Given that the Islamic State is so transparent about its objectives, and uncompromising about its atrocities, it is perhaps remarkable that recent events caused such a surprise. Regardless, until they stormed into Mosul on June 12, the Islamic State had escaped any serious media or political attention.

### Lack of media coverage

The lack of media coverage is perhaps understandable. A sense of fatigue, following years of violence, has surrounded much of the reporting that comes from Iraq and Syria. Similarly, the dangers inherent in reporting within such an organization has meant that few commentators have ever really been close to the Islamic State and its operations. This has been a gap the Islamic State has been quick to exploit. Their social media output is a relentless drumbeat of proclamations, while recent advances in technology have given their propaganda videos a professional veneer previous jih-

## The Islamic State has been quick to exploit the gap in mainstream media reporting on the violence in Iraq

dist offerings lacked.

The lack of serious reporting has been particularly evident in recent days when establishing the ground truth of events in Baiji or Tikrit has been all but impossible. Onlookers have been reduced to choosing between the Islamic State's Twitter feed or the equally unreliable Iraqi Ministry of Defense.

While mainstream journalism may have missed the gathering storm, intelligence services and think tanks have been relentless in warning that this day might come. Yet it was a message without an audience. Western governments con-founded by the regional complexities, and representing electorates tired of overseas military ventures, had no wish to face its implications. It was a reticence they may soon regret.

National security, like nature, abhors a vacuum, and the West's inaction, both in Iraq and Syria, pro-

vided the conditions that allowed the Islamic State to thrive. When, in the run up to a presidential election, the US withdrew their troops from Iraq—despite the praise lavished on the Iraqi security forces—they left swathes of country, particularly on Syria's border, vulnerable to the re-emergence of Al-Qaeda.

This error was then compounded during the early phases of Syria's civil war when that Western inaction allowed the jihadists to make significant gains at the expense of the moderates.

For the US, the emergence of the Islamic State is irrefutable evidence that their Middle East policy to date has failed. It was damned when they chose to intervene in Iraq, and it was damned further when they withdrew. Now with the perverse specter of the Islamic State mocking their pre-war claims about the need to eliminate violent Islamic extremists, they have little choice but to re-

engage. Failure to do so would only allow for wider regional instability while pushing the Iraqi government further into the arms of their regional competitors, Iran and Russia.

### Iran and Russia

Iran's ambitions for Iraq are complex, and while recent dialogue with the US is to be welcomed, it is impossible to imagine that short of stopping the Islamic State, either country has similar aspirations for the region. Similarly, Iran is too close to Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki to escape blame for his handling of the current crisis. Yet their antipathy for the US is nothing compared to that for the Islamic State—and therein lies the grounds for some form of rapprochement.

Never shy to take advantage of US discomfort, Moscow has also sought advantage from the crisis. Their recent delivery of five second-hand Sukhoi Su-25 ground attack jets stands in contrast to the delayed US F-16 fighter programme. Similarly, Russia's long-standing support of Syria can only strengthen their credentials as an ally in the fight against the Islamic State.

Yet Russia's motives for support-

ing the fight against the Islamic State extends beyond commercial gain or regional influence. Some of the Islamic State's most ruthless leaders have come from the Commonwealth of Independent States and Russia has bitter experience of battling Islamist militants at home. It is a yet another distant echo of one of the supporting arguments used in 2003.

Faced with these conflicting pressures, the US once more has a military presence in Iraq. Yet what is perhaps more significant than the 300 advisers in Baghdad is the recent talk of funding for rebel groups in Syria.

Identifying the least-worst candidate as an ally and then backing them with weapons and money is an age-old policy. It takes the US back to the dark arts of the Cold War practiced before the heady ideals of liberal interventionism. It's a tactic many wish they had never abandoned.

*Crispian Cuss is a former British Army officer who has worked and lived in the Middle East. He currently acts as a defense and security consultant.*

# DKNY's Ramadan collection shows that Muslim dress means more than the burqa

**independent.co.uk**  
Bina Shah  
First published July 2

Muslim women's clothes are once again in the spotlight, in a week where the European Court of Human Rights has upheld France's ban on burqa and niqab. But there's another controversy taking place around how Muslim women dress themselves, and this time, it's DKNY's Ramadan Summer 2014 collection, styled by two Middle Eastern women: Yada Golsharifi, fashion editor of Styles Magazine; and Tamara Al-Gabbani, a fashion designer in Dubai.

The collection includes long, flowing dresses, skirts, and jumpsuits; long-sleeved shirts, coats, and even a three-quarters-length leather jacket. The result: outfits that are effortlessly chic, fresh, elegant, and inspirational for Muslim women looking for ways to be glam and modest at the same time.

The fact that this collection has been styled by Muslim women who are professionals in the fashion industry is a brilliant move on the part of DKNY: these women aren't just experts in their field, but they know the context and requirements of the women the collections are aimed for. No fashion faux pas here: everything in the collection is beautiful—and halal. Arms and legs are covered, necklines refrain from plunging to JLo levels, silhouettes are draped with slips so limbs don't show in the light. The fabrics drape around

the body, encasing the curves that nature gave Middle Eastern women without making them obvious, or attempting to disguise them in bag-like abayas. They walk the fine line between cosmopolitan and conservative, luxurious and ostentatious.

But wait. There must be something wrong with wanting to spend huge amounts of money on designer clothes during Ramadan—after all, this is the month of prayer and reflection, of fasting and charity, of austerity. Isn't it crassly materialistic to drop a thousand dollars or more on this kind of clothing, in this, the holiest of months?

Well, Ramadan may be dedicated to spiritual practice, but Muslims are raised to celebrate it, and to bring a joyous spirit to the entire month, enjoying its blessings and benefits. Yes, we're encouraged to spend our money on feeding the poor, on donating to charities, and to concentrate on God, rather than our wardrobes. But in Muslim countries, many people buy the entire year's clothes for themselves and for their loved ones; even this act can accrue blessings because it occurs in such a holy month.

In fact, come to the end of Ramadan, as Eid approaches, and one of the greatest pleasures to help pass the difficult hours of the last few fasts is to go out at night, after the fast is broken, and buy new clothes for Eid. And on Eid Day, it's a custom to wear those new clothes as we celebrate the end of Ramadan.

For Muslims who worry about this aspect, it's important to remember that Islam urges balance in all things:

## No fashion faux pas here: everything in the collection is beautiful—and halal

as long as one is fulfilling one's religious obligations in Ramadan, there is no harm in buying a beautiful outfit in celebration of the month.

But isn't it a cynical marketing gesture on the part of DKNY to use Ramadan as a way of selling clothes? If you think that, you've clearly never been to Pakistan, where I live. Entire clothing lines, such as the wildly popular Junaid Jamshed men's stores, are based on meeting Islamic guidelines and use Muslim terminology and phrases to motivate people to buy the clothes. And it isn't just restricted to clothes: everything is sold using religion as a motivator. There is Al-Falah (Good Works) Industries, which takes its name from the line in the Muslim call to prayer urging people to "come to good works." There's even a brand of household soaps and cooking oils called Sufi—after the mystical branch of Islam.

The only thing DKNY did wrong was to include a well-known hadith (saying of the Prophet Mohammed, peace be upon him) on the Web site: "Ramadan is the month whose beginning is mercy, whose middle is forgiveness and whose end is freedom from fire." They edited the saying to remove the words "from fire"—which refer to hell—and did not attribute it to the Prophet. This can be corrected immediately, either

by removing the quote completely or using the quote in totality and telling us who said it. If you're going to appeal to Muslims, half-measures like these won't work; authenticity is the key element in making concepts like these a success.

But what I like best about the DKNY Ramadan Web site is the Q&A with the two stylists that appears next to their looks. The women are asked what they like best about Ramadan ("Volunteering to aid the needy," says Al-Gabbani), what their favorite place is to eat the pre-dawn meal or break the fast in the evening ("The majlis at Mina Salam"), and what their favorite Ramadan experience is ("Being around my family at Futoor time," says Golsharifi). What a lovely way to bring Muslim customs to mainstream attention, and

to show that Muslim women can be actively involved with both career and family, blending both together in a style that belongs uniquely and distinctively to the modern Muslim woman. Now that's a look that everyone should aspire to.

*Bina Shah is a writer living in Karachi, Pakistan. The author of several novels and collections of short stories, she holds degrees from Wellesley College and the Harvard Graduate School of Education.*

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# Syrian refugees overcome challenges of a new life in Yemen

Photo and story by  
**Ali Abulohoom**

**O**n Feb. 14, 2013, 15-year-old Ahmed arrived in Yemen from Syria along with his five younger siblings and his mother. After his father died in Syria's bloody civil war, his mother single-handedly shoulders the responsibility of caring for her children. Ahmed thought that seeking refuge in Yemen would give him access to sorely needed humanitarian aid. Once he arrived, however, his optimism quickly evaporated.

"I am ready to work and feed my family. The aid we are being given is very small," he explained.

Ahmed's story conveys the suffering of many Syrian refugees in Yemen. In spite of several charities having been established to deal with the influx of Syrian refugees, many still face great difficulty adapting in Yemen.

According to the latest statistics released by the UNHCR in late 2013, there are about 900 Syrian refugees in Yemen registered with the UN, the bulk of whom arrived last year and settled in the capital Sana'a. However, as Ahmed Omar claims, these statistics can be misleading.

Omar, who heads Awan Al-Adala (Justice Supporters), a local NGO working with refugees and homeless people, claims that his organization conducted a field survey in January 2014 and found that there were over 15,000 unregistered Syrian refugees in Yemen.

The study also highlighted some of the difficulties Syrian refugees face in Yemen. The study concluded that about 30 percent of refugees have no stable source of income, Omar said.

In Yemen, where over 40 percent of the population lives below the poverty line, the influx of Syrian refugees poses a potential challenge to the economy.

Zaid Al-Alay'a, the public information assistant at UNHCR, said that almost 2,000 Syrian refugees who fled the war in Syria have recently sought asylum in Yemen. He considers this number to be trivial when compared to the growing number of Syrians entering Yemen



While the UNHCR says that only 900 Syrians have registered with them in Yemen, a local NGO claims there are over 15,000 unregistered Syrians in the country.

without going through the formal channels of seeking asylum, adding that the UNHCR can only provide medical attention in the process of granting asylum.

He also explained that the UNHCR has suggested that the Yemeni government grant Syrian asylum seekers "temporary protection" status. This would mean that they would officially be treated as refugees, giving the UNHCR the governmental mandate necessary to provide them with services, such

as health care, education, and basic necessities.

As for legal status, Jamal Al-Jubai, an associate protection officer at UNHCR, said that Syrian asylum seekers do not require a visa to enter Yemen, as Syria is part of the Arabian Cooperation Council, which signed a pact in the early 1990s allowing citizens of member states to cross borders without visa restrictions.

Given the influx of Syrian families, a group of Syrian nationals in

Yemen established the Syrian Relief Committee headed by Abdulla Tahan.

The committee offers some support to those fleeing the war, providing shelter and aid. Humanitarian relief is offered indiscriminately, regardless of the arrivals' political leanings. However, Tahan admits that the committee is unable to cover the needs of all the Syrian refugees in Yemen.

Syrian refugees in Yemen struggle with numerous problems that char-

ities and relief organizations are simply unable to solve, and many are forced to turn to begging.

Twenty-five-year-old Yahia Refat was a commerce student in Syria. He claims that he went to the UNHCR and other organizations in Yemen in search of assistance for education and housing, but feels let down. He explains that he received little support as he does not have official refugee status. This left him with few alternatives but to sell prayer beads with his brother on Hadda Street. "I am the eldest son and we have no career to eke out, especially after my father was killed in the civil war in Aleppo two years ago," he said.

## Beating the odds

While the majority of Syrian refugees arriving in Yemen are in dire need of help, others are relatively well-off and have the capital to establish their own businesses. Some have opened restaurants, cafes, ice cream and sweet shops in Sana'a and elsewhere.

Fleeing the three-year civil war in Syria, Abu Khaled, 37, left his home and headed to Jordan with his family. The costs of living in Jordan were too high, so they soon found their way to Yemen. When Khaled arrived in Sana'a two years ago, he was shocked to see Syrian refugees begging on the streets of Yemen's capital.

"I do not want my family members sleeping in the streets, holding out their hands for money. I launched my own business, which I had in Syria before I came to Yemen," said Khaled.

Khaled ran a small restaurant in Syria, where he sold popular local food. It took him two months to find a shop he could afford to rent in Yemen; with no income he was worried he would use all his life savings on the venture.

Today, Khaled owns a busy restaurant in Sana'a, selling much of the same Syrian food he once sold back home. He has also helped oth-

er refugees get off the streets by offering them work at his restaurant.

Thirty-year-old Mohammed Ayash, another Syrian refugee who came to Yemen via Jordan, never really planned on moving to Sana'a. "Yemen was my last choice because it's located far away from my home. But my friend told me how cheap and easy life was in Yemen and how friendly people were, prompting me to move here," he explained.

Ayash was a barber in Syria. However, once he arrived in Sana'a, a little over a year ago, he struggled to find work and initially did not have enough money to launch his own business.

"I arrived in Sana'a along with my wife. Yemeni people are friendly but life was hard for me as I had nothing to do here," he said. "Therefore, I resorted to selling my wife's jewelry to set up my own business."

Ayash eventually opened a barber shop on Hadda Street, which he says has earned him enough money to comfortably support himself and his wife. "I kept looking for Syrian refugees who are barbers and are unemployed and I eventually found two of them. Now we are working together," Ayash said.

According to Omar, the study conducted by the Awan Al-Adala NGO showed that most of the 70 percent of Syrian refugees who are employed work in professions that are in line with their previous work in Syria.

Somaia Dawood, 45, is a Syrian refugee who has three sons and daughters and used to work as a hairdresser in Syria. "The civil war destroyed my shop and forced us out of Syria and into Yemen. I started wandering the streets pleading with people to give me money. I then met a benefactor who gave me enough money to launch my own shop in Yemen."

Dawood is now earning enough to send her children to school, enabling them to resume their studies.



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# Media freedom and development goals

IRIN  
First published on July 4

In the debate over the inclusion of media freedom and access to information in the post-2015 development agenda, it is perhaps fitting that it all comes down to language.

A growing international coalition has come together in the belief that sustainable development cannot be achieved “without public access to reliable information about health, education, the environment, and other critical development areas—and that requires independent monitoring of that data by media and civil society,” as William Orme, UN representative for the Brussels-based Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD), characterized the stakes to IRIN. But will this notion be enshrined in the Sustainable Development Goals, currently under discussion in a series of Open Working Group meetings? And if so, what will the precise wording be?

The matter is controversial, noted James Deane, director of policy and learning at BBC Media Action, speaking during a panel discussion on June 5.

“Any discussion of having some kind of goal around governance is already contentious,” he said. “Having a discussion that mentions the word media, especially if it’s associated with anything called freedom, immediately creates a dynamic in the development discussion where a lot of developing countries—and I think particularly the Chinas of this world—become increasingly uncomfortable, feeling that this is a Western agenda, an excuse to compose a conditionality on developing countries, their values, that it will be interpreted in ways that

are damaging to their interests and it just immediately becomes—it takes the discussion out of a development context into a much more politically charged set of arguments and discussions.”

“This is not a North vs. South debate, as some have wrongly portrayed it,” said Orme of GFMD. “Many African, Asian and Latin American countries have strongly backed the inclusion of ‘A2I’ [Access to Information] targets in the continuing UN discussions about the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In contrast to the Millennium Development Goals, the new SDGs are intended to apply to all countries, to the North as well as the South. And there is no country where the public availability of independently evaluated development information cannot be improved.”

Last year, the Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons, co-chaired by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia, and UK Prime Minister David Cameron, suggested five ways “to ensure good governance and effective institutions” in the post-2015 framework. One was to “ensure people enjoy freedom of speech, association, peaceful protest, and access to independent media and information.” Another sought to “guarantee the public’s right to information and access to government data.”

At the same time, the Open Working Group (OWG), which is made up of representatives of 69 member countries, began meeting to develop its own recommendations for the SDGs. In April 2014, the OWG released the Focus Area Document, which asked nations to “improve access to information on



A growing international coalition is pressing for media freedom to be given a prominent place in the post-2015 development agenda

public finance management, public procurement and on the implementation of national development plans.” It also advocated removing “unnecessary restrictions of freedom of media, association and speech.” Many media-freedom advocates regarded the document as a regression from the high-level panel’s work.

#### Stronger wording

But aided by the advocacy of more than 200 organizations led by GFMD and Article 19 (an NGO dedicated to press freedoms), OWG released a Zero Draft on June 2 that contained much stronger wording than the Focus Area Document. It proposed that SDG No. 16 to “achieve peaceful and inclusive societies, rule of law, effective and capable institutions” include subgoals to “improve public access to information and government data” and “promote freedom of media, association, and speech.”

Jan Lublinski, a project manager for the German international media development agency DW Akademie, said he was “delighted” that the first version of the Zero Draft included passages on media freedom and access to information.

“More and more people are becoming aware that these issues need to be included in the future framework of SDGs,” he told IRIN. “So I am quite optimistic that we

will see these important elements in the final document.”

#### New twist

But then, on July 2, OWG released a new version of the Zero Draft. It now proposed that SDG No. 16 to “achieve peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice for all, and effective and capable institutions” include a subgoal to “promote free and easy access to information, freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly.” Any mention of media freedom and public access to information had been stricken.

Orme lamented that the Zero Draft had been “watered down” and pledged that GFMD would work to strengthen it.

The Open Working Group will be meeting informally during the week of July 7 and will begin its final session, the thirteenth, on July 14. A final version of the Zero Draft will be formalized and submitted to the General Assembly for consider-

ation in August.

“The process is far from over, but UNESCO continues to champion the aspect of media freedom as an integral part of governance,” said Packson Banda, who teaches at Rhodes University in South Africa and works on freedom of expression and media development issues with UNESCO.

“We understand that, in its attempts at economy and simplicity, the OWG may lose sight of some cardinal elements which were previously part of the proposed goals and targets,” he said. “We continue to believe that the issue of media freedom is a concern of many Member States and that it will, as in the report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons, be pushed back on to the governance agenda of the post-2015 development consultations.”

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

**Easy**

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

**Intermediate**

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

**Difficult**

**Chess**

Black plays and wins in the 4th move

**Solutions**

Chess Rxg3+

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

**IMPORTANT Numbers**

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

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## Recipe of Ramadan

### Southern Scotch Eggs

■ Najma Ali and Farzana Ahmed

#### Ingredients:

- 3 large eggs
- 4 medium sized potatoes
- 1 cup of plain flour
- 1 tea spoon salt
- 1/2 tea spoon of saffron



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#### Method

- 1) Peel the potatoes and boil them in salted water for approximately 45 minutes, until soft.
- 2) Meanwhile, hard boil the eggs. Once boiled, place the eggs under cold water and peel the shells.
- 3) Now make the batter by mixing one cup of plain flour, a teaspoon of salt, half a teaspoon of saffron and half a cup of water into a bowl. Stir until the mixture is smooth and without lumps.
- 4) Once the eggs have cooled down cut them into halves.
- 5) Take the potatoes off the stove and drain the water. Use a potato

masher to mash the potatoes until you get a smooth consistency.

- 6) Divide the potato mixture into six clumps, place the clumps on a clean surface and flatten each one out into 1/2 inch thick ovals shapes.
- 7) Place each piece of egg onto a potato oval and wrap the mixture around the egg, making sure the coating totally covers the egg.
- 8) Dip each covered egg into the batter mixture.
- 9) Heat the oil in a deep frying pan and fry the six oval balls until golden brown.
- 10) Serve with sahwik

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