

South Yemen Update

Dream no small dreams for they do not have the power to move the hearts of men

Newsletter of the Friends of South Yemen

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What can the new United Nations Envoy to Yemen realistically do?

In 20 rules to live by for the new Special UN Envoy to Yemen, Farea Al-Muslimi, Chairman of the Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies, suggested making it a condition for accepting the post that there is a new UN Security Council Resolution to replace 2216. "Without it, you're just wasting everyone's time. Don't ignore the Southern issue or the economic file. **Every one of your predecessors did and all of them failed.** Know that you'll probably fail, but don't let that stop you from trying new things. You have to hope that the future can be brighter even when everyone else says it will only get darker." As the outgoing special envoy Martin Griffiths said: "Hope is the only currency a mediator has."

Yemen's Foreign Minister Ahmed Awad bin Mubarak admitted that Yemen is on the brink of collapse, however, he expressed his belief that the Internationally Recognised Government (IRG) succeeded in securing livelihood in liberated areas, including Shabwa, Hadramawt, Marib, and Mahra, despite challenges. So can the new envoy, Hans Grundberg, realistically achieve anything or is the UN rearranging chairs on the Titanic with its latest appointment?

The Chairman of Friends of South Yemen (FOSY) Dr Abdul Galil Shaif believes that changing the special envoy to resolve the conflict in Yemen is not the answer to the Yemeni crisis. "The UN, must seriously consider changing its policy towards the Yemen conflict, accelerate the diplomatic process and genuinely help this new envoy to succeed. The UN secretary-general must ask the simple question: why did the UN fail to achieve anything with all the other envoys?," Shaif said.



Hans Grundberg is a career diplomat and Sweden's point man on the Gulf Region. During Sweden's EU presidency in 2009, he chaired the Middle East and Gulf working group at the European Council in Brussels. He subsequently headed the Gulf Division in the Swedish Foreign Ministry before becoming the EU Ambassador to Yemen in 2019.

FOSY has raised the issue of UN diplomatic failure in Yemen in many forums and for any envoy to succeed, the UN must be certain about three things:

Firstly a review of the current UN resolution and the practicality of its implementation and the introduction of a new resolution that deals with the realities on the ground; Secondly, the UN should admit that they continue to be part of the problem rather than the solution because of the incompetent way in which they have professionally handled the situation. The UN must be fair, impartial and transparent in all their dealings with all the relevant parties in this conflict; Thirdly and most importantly the country's political elite should face punitive measures for those Yemeni politicians who have clearly hindered the political process for their own narrow political and economic interests.

Shaif went on to say that unless those three steps are taken seriously, any new envoy will fail before beginning the difficult mission of stabilising a genuine peace process. "Two things Yemen does not need: new envoys without a proper mission and more weapons. It needs united international and regional communities speaking with one unified voice, otherwise any envoy is doomed to fail."

What Yemen desperately needs now is a grand bargain, such as the one proposed by FOSY's road map (2021 – 2030) which provides a way forward for the Yemeni parties now in conflict and for the regional powers supporting them. (Click here to see FOSY's roadmap). The envoy will be in a good position to spearhead the grand bargain and prevent the collapse which Bin Mubarak spoke of.

Dealing with Iran will be a major challenge for the envoy. The Houthis do not take orders from their Iranian partner even though the Houthis and Iran largely agree on key strategic issues and there is no serious prospect of driving a

Click here to read **20 rules to live by for the new Special UN Envoy to Yemen**

(Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies)

wedge between them. Engaging Iran in the peace process is unlikely to be a viable channel to pressurize the Houthis to make concessions. But not engaging Iran will provoke Iranian spoiling.

But in a bleak environment Dr Abdel Aziz Aluwaisheg the GCC Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs and Negotiations identified three new elements that should help Grundberg which were not there when his predecessors were appointed: In March the Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan announced a new initiative to end the war. It included a UN supervised ceasefire, the relaunch of political talks, an easing of restrictions on imports through Hodeidah and the reopening of Sanaa airport. Second the US in February through the appointment of Timothy Lenderking as US special envoy to Yemen re-energized the peace process and he has been working closely with the UN, the government of Yemen and regional actors as well as reaching out to the Houthis. Early last month an Omani delegation arrived in Sanaa as part of renewed efforts to mediate. In their June 17th meeting in Riyadh, the Gulf Co-operation Council foreign ministers, fully endorsed Oman's efforts.

Grundberg can also push for the establishment of a UN peace mission in Yemen. Starting with ceasefire observers the mission could extend to peace keeping and peace building. He should also make it very clear that aid may not be used as a tool for political bargaining or self-enrichment.

A new UN resolution is essential. The current resolution names the Houthis who seized Sanaa in 2014 and the Saudi-backed government of President Abdroba Mansur Hadi who they ousted as the conflict's primary belligerents and demands that the Houthis surrender to Hadi whom it affirms as Yemen's legitimate president. Hadi and his backers and the Houthis argue that the resolution restricts the UN's mandate to a two-party negotiation framework but the situation on the ground has changed and the Southern Transitional Council, the political wing of Tariq Saleh's National Resistance Forces and the Tehama Council now have to be included.

The Leader of the Southern Transitional Council Aidaroos Al-Zubaidi announced in a statement that the "restoration" of the Southern state is nearing, adding that the STC "opened all doors in front of the people's cause and the extraction of the

adversaries' recognition of a fully sovereign independent federal state that is based on the pre unity border of 21 May 1990. The STC will refuse any unilateral decisions taken by the Yemeni government."

So without involving the STC and the southerners any deal the UN envoy brokers will come unstuck. Martin Griffiths side-lined the STC but they are now an equal partner in Hadi's Internationally Recognised Government (IRG) control Aden and can no longer be ignored.

Women are also totally absent from the IRG but women have in fact released more prisoners than all the UN envoys combined. It is vital that the new envoy seeks their help, assistance and advice. It is also essential he speaks to Yemenis themselves rather than spending too much time in regional capitals.

The senior analyst on Yemen at the International Crisis Group, Peter Salisbury, pointed out that since 2015 international co-ordination has been spotty at best, leading to infrequent meetings at which diplomats discuss tactics far more than strategy. To be successful the new envoy will need consistent international support in word but critically also in deed. A good way forward would be for key countries, starting with the Security Council's permanent five to form a contact group that works with the envoy to ensure that issues like the economy and women and civil society's inclusion in talks receive proper attention.

But it must never be forgotten that an envoy is only a mediator. He cannot create peace when one or both of the parties themselves do not want it. Over the past three years Martin Griffiths the outgoing envoy emphasised that he seeks common ground for agreements. "That is my job. With the support of the international community we persuade, we facilitate, we encourage dialogue and we try to get past the events of war. There is nothing anybody can do unfortunately to force the warring parties into peace unless they choose to put down the guns and talk to each other and that is their responsibility."

Yemen needs a new vision and a new approach. Without it the next special envoy will produce the same results as the previous three, the war will go on and the country will further fracture into autonomous political zones held by whichever warlord is strongest.

Former United Nations Special Envoys to Yemen



*Jamal Benomar
(2011-2015)*



*Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed
(2015-2018)
Photo: Tasnim News Agency - CC BY 4.0*



*Martin Griffiths
(2018-2021)*

FOSY has a Facebook page which is updated daily with the latest news of relevance to South Yemen.

Please visit: fb.me/fosy2020



American response to Yemen's humanitarian crisis discussed in online briefing

As long as the war continues the humanitarian crisis will continue and worsen. That was the conclusion of the three speakers who addressed a recent zoom conference *Focus on the Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen* organized by the National Council on US-Arab relations.

The United Nations considers Yemen the worst humanitarian crisis facing any country in the world. Twenty million people, two-thirds of the population are in need of assistance, 16 million suffer from acute food insecurity and 2.3million children are malnourished or facing acute malnutrition.

Tim Lenderking, the US Special Envoy to Yemen, said that the only way to begin addressing the root causes of the humanitarian crisis is to reach a political solution to the conflict. The roots of the crisis are deep. There have been years of instability and weak governance in Yemen which have led to the erosion of basic services and a troubled economy. The disruption of the peace process has greatly accelerated this trend. There have been persistent challenges to the free flow of aid, goods and people throughout the conflict for which all parties bear responsibility. The United States therefore continues to urge for a comprehensive nationwide ceasefire and a swift transition to political talks.

Lenderking went on to say that after talking to the Yemeni actors inside and outside of Yemen and talking to the regional governments he believes there is cause for hope and that there is a stronger international consensus to end the conflict than there has been during the past six years of the war. But there has not been a full commitment to engage directly and urgently on the ceasefire as seen by the fighting in Marib. There are a million displaced people already in Marib and the continued fighting is having very negative consequences for an already very stretched humanitarian infrastructure.

On the positive side there is engagement again on the Riyadh Agreement – an effort to bring greater stability in the South. As the implementation of the Riyadh Agreement goes forward it will create more opportunities for the Yemen government to return to Aden and indeed for the provision of basic services and all the basic elements of the infrastructure in the South to go forward.

Lenderking drew attention to the dire humanitarian situation which is exacerbated by the onset of Covid. Not only is the humanitarian response preventing untold suffering it is helping to preserve a basis for Yemen's recovery. So the US continues to welcome efforts by the international community to build on humanitarian assistance with additional efforts to prevent the collapse of institutions.

There are three areas where the international community can do more to bolster these critical efforts. First the international community, particularly regional actors, must increase humanitarian funding including by following

through on \$200m in pledges from the March 1st donors conference. The Yemen humanitarian response is funded at 43 percent. This is not enough for the kind of needs that we are seeing. If there aren't additional contributions in the next few months we will see programmes close down or have to decrease the scope of programmes.

Second the international community must continue to push the Houthis to stop the offensive in Marib and to engage in a comprehensive nationwide ceasefire. The Houthis alone are not the only ones responsible for violence. The Saudi-led coalition has its share of responsibilities as well. But the fact is that the Houthis are not winning in Marib. It is a stalemated conflict and the continued fighting there is putting millions of vulnerable people at increased risk of further displacement.

And finally the Republic of Yemen government, Saudi Arabia and the Houthis must take action to address the fuel shortages in North Yemen. Fuel imports via the port of Hodeidah are only a third of what they were last year during the same period. While commercial and humanitarian food and other commodities continue to flow through Hodeidah increased fuel prices are driving up the cost of goods as well as basic services putting them out of the reach of many Yemenis. The humanitarian and economic crisis in Yemen is staggering but these three steps will significantly mitigate Yemeni suffering and put us on a firmer path towards peace.

Sarah Charles from the US Agency for International Development Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance said that addressing the suffering of the Yemeni people has been central to the Biden administration's policy towards Yemen.

Over the course of this seven-year conflict families have been uprooted over and over again as the conflict lines shift. They are more vulnerable each time they are forced to flee. We are seeing this more acutely now in Marib where the Houthis latest offensive is killing civilians and threatens to displace hundreds of thousands more people.

After years of conflict and growing poverty Yemen is already in a precarious situation. Aid from the international community has so far prevented vulnerable populations from slipping into famine but the recent escalation of violence is increasing humanitarian needs and placing further strains on the already stretched humanitarian operation. With US aid the humanitarian community has provided shelter, health services and safe water, to nearly 14,000 families who have been forced to flee the fighting since January. But Marib remains very dangerous and extremely difficult for aid workers on the ground to work in. We have also received reports of humanitarian workers in Marib being detained by the security forces. This also happens in other areas.

Fuel shortages in Northern Yemen are making the humanitarian crises even worse. In recent months



CHRONOLOGY

Jun 16: Tariq Saleh militia leader and nephew of Yemen's late strongman president acknowledges that his Emirati-backed troops are stationed on Perim island in a crucial maritime chokepoint where a mysterious air base is now under construction.

-There are no Omani employees currently working in the Oman embassy in the Republic of Yemen, the Ministry of Foreign says after a number of citizens were subjected to electronic blackmail.

-The UN envoy to Yemen, Martin Griffiths, admits in his last briefing to the Security Council before his term ends that "the two parties to the conflict have not yet overcome their differences".

Jun 17: Yemen's Al-Masirah news network reports that Saudi coalition fighter jets targeted residential areas in Yemen's Marib, Hajjah and Al-Jawf provinces.

-A Yemeni organization tracking money plundered by Houthi coup militias accuses the Houthis of operating over 910 companies and money exchange facilities in the areas under their control.

Jun 18: The UAE sends 60,000 vaccines to the Socotra Governorate in Yemen.

-A member of the Supreme Political Council in the Houthi-led National Salvation Government says the group is ready to take part in negotiations held by Qatar to help put an end to the six year war in Yemen.

Jun 19: The STC announces that it suspended talks with Yemen's government in a protest against the arrest of its officials.

-As the Houthis continue their assault on Marib, the United Nations' human rights office sounds the alarm over the rebels' attacks on civilian areas in the strategic region.

Jun 20: The United Nations adding the Houthis to its blacklist for groups violating children's rights draws widespread relief among human rights activists and organizations in Yemen, where the Houthis actively recruit and deploy minors to battlefronts.

-Saudi Arabian air defences destroy six armed drones launched by the Houthis towards the kingdom, bringing the total it intercepted during the day to 17.

Jun 21: Renewed battles between government forces and the Houthis over the strategic city of Marib leave 47 dead, including 16 pro-government forces.

-The Yemeni government says the Houthis prevented a United Nations aid ship from unloading its cargo at Hodeidah port.

Jun 22: The International Organisation for Migration publishes data revealing that in a six-month period in 2021, over 37,000 people were forced to flee their homes in Yemen as the country's humanitarian crisis continues.

-US law enforcement seizes control of

restrictions on fuel imports into Hodeidah port have caused delays in the delivery of urgent humanitarian aid across Northern Yemen. We welcome the decision to allow some fuel ships to enter Hodeidah but we must reach a long term solution for regular, uninterrupted fuel deliveries.

We will continue to do everything to reach Yemen's most vulnerable populations with aid. Every month food provided by the United States reaches 8.5 million vulnerable Yemenis. The United States is also helping Yemenis combat COVID 19 by supporting health centres where vaccines provided by US care initiatives are administered.

The US has been one of the largest donors to the humanitarian response. This year the US has already provided £350 million. We prioritize preventing famine and addressing other critical needs. But more funding is required. We continue to urge other donors to fulfill their pledges from the March 1st pledging conference quickly. We also urge those donors who have not yet stepped up to do so.

We recognize that humanitarian assistance cannot solve the root causes of this crisis. There must be a political solution to the conflict to end Yemen's suffering. US Aid is working urgently with our colleagues in the State Department in this regard.

David Gressly, the United Nations Humanitarian Co-ordinator in Yemen, described three crisis caused by the war: the humanitarian crisis, the protection crisis and the economic crisis.

Eighty-two percent of the districts in the country have very limited health services and in general these services are in the process of collapsing. The number of districts on the frontline has risen to 51. Four million people have been displaced, and last month was the worst month in several years for civilian casualties. There are also continued issues of land mines and unexploded ordnance which result in loss of life almost every day.

Yemen is the poorest country in the region and a 30percent reduction in the economy has had devastating consequences: the collapse of incomes, businesses don't function and there is increasing unemployment. Government personnel don't get paid. There is a significant loss of purchasing power and fuel restrictions are causing problems.

When restrictions on fuel were eased a cement factory outside Sanaa was able to restart production and several thousand people were re-employed. This has a knock on effect as several thousand people are involved in distribution and construction. Now 20 – 30,000 people have an income because of the available fuel. If you multiply that by five people in a household you are talking about 150,000 people who are now in a better position from a food security point of view as well as purchasing power.

But the kind of stability and prosperity Yemeni citizens are looking for can only be achieved through a political settlement needed to solve the three crises.

Conference speakers



*Tim Lenderking
US Special Envoy to Yemen*



*Sarah Charles
US Agency for
International Development
Bureau for Humanitarian
Assistance*



*David Gressly
United Nations
Humanitarian Co-
ordinator in Yemen*



FRIENDS OF SOUTH YEMEN (FOSY)
2 Firshell Road, Sheffield S4 7BB, United Kingdom
Tele: +44 7802 763711
Email: info@friendsofsouthyemen.org
Website: www.friendsofsouthyemen.org
Facebook: fb.me/fosy2020

Yemeni artists in the diaspora discuss experiences of exile

Migration in Perpetuity: Yemeni Voices from the Diaspora provided a rare exploration of a war-torn country, through the beautiful work of four vibrant Yemeni contemporary artists, as they navigate their complex relationship to the homeland and the tensions of growing up in exile.

Using archival photography and footage, the artists narrated their experiences and those of their parents and grandparents as they reflected on both involuntary and voluntary relocation as well as the collective feeling of statelessness felt by Yemeni migrants and their descendants.

The discussion, in which the three artists Shaima Al-Tamimi, Thana Farooq, and Yasmine Nasser Diaz spoke about the influence of exile on their work and shared examples of their most recent creations, was organised by the Washington-based Middle East Institute Arts and Culture Center. It was part of Washington's month-long festival *Focus on the Story International Photo Festival* which helps draw attention to critical issues and bridges cultural gaps.

In her latest short film, *Don't Get Too Comfortable*, **Shaima Al-Tamimi** uses archival photos, found footage and sound design to create a multimedia letter to her paternal grandfather, reflecting on the migration and resettlement of her family following his death over fifty years ago. The artists' own experiences echo those of her ancestors, and her work calls attention to the collective feeling of statelessness felt by Yemeni migrants and their descendants.

When Al-Tamimi's paternal grandfather migrated from Yemen to Zanzibar half a century ago to find work, little did he know that migration would continue as a pattern for later generations of his family. Having lived through a deadly revolution in the early 1960s powered by British colonialism, he fled back to Yemen with members of the family, including Shaima's father. Fast forward 55 years and five countries later, Al-Tamimi is a member of a generation of Yemenis who have grown up confused, marginalised and deprived of opportunities to thrive due to the limitations of being a Yemeni passport holder while living outside their homeland. Family photos, archival materials, and self-portraits by the director place the viewer in-between time and space, calling attention to the collective feeling of statelessness and sense of being, felt by Yemeni migrants and their descendants. This introspection attempts to heal intergenerational trauma, creating space for a new and more nuanced narrative of Yemeni migration.

"When a French curator who was interested in my work asked me why I left Yemen I realised that people do not know about the history of Yemen and how migration really runs deep, much beyond the war that started in 2014," Al-Tamimi recalled. "I wanted to correct the narrative and explore it a bit more and find out about why I left Yemen in the first place."



Shaima Al-Tamimi



Scene from
*Don't Get too
Comfortable*

the websites of Al-Masirah TV channel of Yemen's Houthis, statements posted on the websites show.

Jun 23: Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Faisal Bin Farhan says he did not receive a response to the ceasefire initiative proposed by his country from the Houthis.

-The Saudi Project for Landmine Clearance (Masam) dismantles 1,557 mines in Yemen during the third week of June.

Jun 24: Yemen's currency reaches a new low after the Houthis renew their ban on banknotes printed by the Yemeni government and ban people from moving cash from government-controlled areas to their territories.

-Aid programmes in Yemen may soon have to close despite dire humanitarian needs if countries do not fulfil promises to increase funding, the US warns.

Jun 25: The Islamic Development Bank Group agrees to resume financing three strategic and vital projects in South Yemen, in the areas of agriculture, water and sanitation, in addition to rural development.

-US Special Envoy to Yemen, Timothy Lenderking, says the United States recognises the Houthi movement as a legitimate party in Yemen. The Houthis responded that the recognition meant nothing serious to them and the Yemeni government commented that Lenderking's comments were understood out of context.

Jun 26: The United States calls on the international community, especially regional countries, to fulfil their pledges to increase funding for humanitarian assistance to Yemen and warns that aid programmes could otherwise be forced to close.

-The United Nations announces that more than 22,000 Yemenis in Marib have been displaced by the war.

Jun 27: Clashes between rebels and Yemeni government fighters kills at least 111 in Marib in the past three days.

-Yemen's Foreign Minister Ahmed Awad bin Mubarak admits that Yemen is on the brink of collapse, however, he expressed his belief that the legitimacy succeeded in securing livelihood in liberated areas, including Shabwa, Hadramawt, Marib, and Mahra despite challenges.

Jun 28: The Houthis say they carried out ten attacks against targets in Saudi Arabia.

-Yemen's Minister of Water and Environment, Tawfiq al-Sharjabi discusses with his Saudi counterpart, Abdul Rahman al-Fadhli, boosting coordination to confront the repercussions of the looming environmental and humanitarian catastrophe of the eroding *Safer* oil tanker off the coast of Yemen.

Jun 29: The Houthis order local financial institutions to freeze the funds and assets of Tadhamon International Islamic Bank (TIIB) a major private bank in Yemen.

-Yemeni activists launch a counter-offensive to celebrate Yemeni music in defiance of the decision by the Houthis

to ban music and songs at social functions in the areas under their control, based on religious fatwas criminalising popular art in a practice similar to that of Islamic State (ISIS) extremists.

Jun 30: Italian military personnel are given until the end of the week to totally withdraw their deployment at the United Arab Emirates' Al-Minhad air base in retaliation for sanctions against Abu Dhabi and Riyadh for their war in Yemen.

-The Houthis are subjecting a detained Yemeni model to an "unfair trial" and have threatened her with a forced virginity test in a case "marred with irregularities and abuse," Human Rights Watch reports.

July 1: The World Bank will give Yemen \$150 million in grants for health, nutrition and sanitation projects, helping address a funding shortfall facing the war-torn country. -Representatives of the Yemeni government and the Southern Transitional Council meet in the Saudi capital to discuss the implementation of the Riyadh Agreement.

July 2: A partnership between the European Union (EU) and Save the Children helps 30,000 children regain access to quality education in southern Yemen.

-The UAE issues Emirati ID cards for residents of Socotra.

July 3: The Yemeni government and the STC agree on a mechanism to stop escalation between the two sides.

-An Emir of al-Qaeda in Marib province survives an assassination attempt.

July 4: Government troops and local tribesmen liberate several villages and hilly locations in the central province of Al-Bayda during the second day of a military offensive to push the Houthis from the area.

-A missile attack targeting an army camp in Abyan kills two soldiers and injures 20 others.

July 5: The Houthis are ready to exchange all prisoners with the Yemeni government, the head of the Prisoner Affairs Committee says.

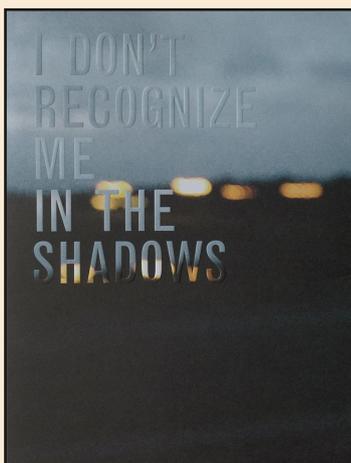
-The Biden administration fails to explain to Congress what forms of military support it continues to offer the Saudi-led coalition fighting in Yemen, issuing a two-page letter that sidesteps the question and provides almost none of the details the lawmakers sought.

July 6: Government forces and allied tribesmen, backed by the Saudi-led coalition, reclaim large swaths of territory in Bayda province, according to Yemen's Information Minister Moammar al-Iryani.

-The United Nations says the future of millions of children in Yemen is under threat as education is one of the "greatest casualties" of the ongoing war.

July 7: Mehr News Agency reports that 80 coalition soldiers were killed in clashes with the Houthis in Al Bayda.

-Saudi Arabia's deputy defence minister the highest-ranking Saudi envoy to visit Washington since Joe Biden became president in January, holds talks with



Cover of *I don't recognise me in the shadows*

Thana Faroq's photo book, *I Don't Recognize Me in the Shadows*, explores her journey leaving war-torn Yemen and experiencing transitions and the unfamiliar, following her relocation to the Netherlands. The book also documents asylum seekers from around the world that she met along her journey, and includes their testimonies and reflections.

This book puts the reader in touch with uncertainty. Escaping from threatening conditions – warfare or dictatorship or economic impossibilities, or all of the above – is an arduous process. The refugees put their faith almost entirely in the hands of others, to take them away from the havoc caused by their previous existence.

This process is mirrored by the design and contents of the photobook. The cover has a wrap-around extension that features bright lights and a sunset, kind of like a safety blanket which provides comfort in overwhelming situations. The situation in refugee camps, moving between them, and brief exposés of fellow asylum-seekers make up the bulk of the book, and that major section is bookended by color images of memories of life in the homeland.

"I was on a mission to create a memory archive of all my emotions, the nostalgia, the sadness and the anger," Faroq explained. I document the silence that was around me, the trip from one refugee camp to another. Creating this work enabled me to confront trauma. I registered the emotions throughout the transition. One way for me to do this was to talk about the physicality of the landscape. It was about where I was, when we moved from one place to another, to four asylum centres in the Netherlands. There are a lot of images taken from my window in the refugee camp." Faroq also felt the need to document the experiences of other refugees through portraits. In 2019 she visited Yemeni refugees in a camp in Djibouti.

"I met people who lost everything in Yemen and they were sharing their memories

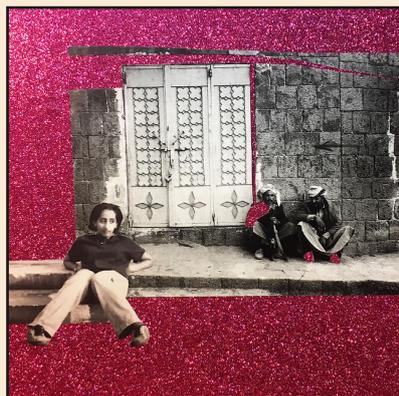


Image from *I don't recognise me in the shadows*

and photos with me. They brought so many photos: weddings, parties everything. It was as if I was in Yemen again and I wanted to document our collective memories and trauma."

Faroq thought that the best way to convey these experiences was through a book. "But now I have a heavy heart. The journey was the easiest part. The huge challenge I face now is what a lot Yemeni women in the diaspora face: how to find out who we really are. I am now in the process of questioning how women in exile cope with their emotions and the process of how they construct their identity." Faroq's work is now evolving to explore this issue. "It is very empowering and liberating to tell your own story to the world," she said.

Faroq was a recipient of the 2018 inaugural Open Society Foundation Fellowship Grant. In 2020 she was selected by the *British Journal of Photography* among the ones to watch.



This is awkward: Collage on wood panel by Yasmine Diaz



Yasmine Diaz installation from **For Your Eyes Only** exhibition

Cultural identity and the tensions around growing up in the US as a female immigrant youth has been a subject that **Yasmine Nasser Diaz** focuses on in her practice, and most recently, through multiple iterations of her bedroom installation series. In her silk-based fiber etchings, Nasser Diaz depicts intimate moments of leisure sourced from her personal photo archives as well as those she has collected from other Yemeni-American women. In these works, Diaz reflects on the moments when these girls and young women—amongst each other and in their own spaces—are able to let their guards down and be themselves.

Diaz described how collages were an ideal medium for her to use. “A child immigrant is someone who experiences third culture identity. A collage is a medium in which you are taking images – materials that come from different places produced by different people from different backgrounds and forcing them to live together on this piece of paper. That is how many of us feel.”

She then moved to installations. “Bringing people physically into a space that is created gives them the opportunity to engage with a work in a way that can’t happen with other work. When you are looking at a painting on a wall you are very much on the outside looking in. When people are invited into a space they are making this journey with me back in time as is the case with installations.

“I wanted to share some experiences that were personal and vulnerable so I created an installation of a bedroom that I shared with my sister when we were teenagers in Chicago. I had a lot of trepidation as a storyteller of a marginalised community. You are already ‘othered’ and it seemed that in sharing work about yourself you were ‘othering’ yourself even more. But people from different backgrounds – non Arabs said they related so much to this installation. There was an empathy that was felt first before people looked a little bit closer at the other details in the room and understood the more complicated nature of my personal background. There are things in the room that are very American and other things that speak to my Yemeni background.”



Yemeni chef Said Akram

American-based chef **Akram Said** used cuisine as a conduit to share aspects of Yemeni traditions unfamiliar to most outside his community. Last year, Said travelled to various cities and regions in Yemen, including Sana’a, Ta’ez, Hodeida and Aden, where he documented his many experiences in riveting photos and videos posted on social media. Sharing the beauty of Yemen through the genuine and compassionate lens of his personal journey, Said’s images and video montage showcase urban encounters related to food as well as landscapes that have rarely been seen.

Said’s work is a tribute to his late mother who encouraged him to attend Le Cordon Bleu culinary school where he was classically trained.

After graduating, Said moved to New York where he spent years cooking at numerous Michelin-starred restaurants refining his craft. Currently, his main focus is sharing Yemeni cuisine to preserve his mother’s memory and to introduce others to the rich traditions emanating from Yemen and its peoples.

senior officials on the Yemen war and threats from Iran.

July 8: The Houthis confiscate and burn hundreds of images of underwear models from lingerie shops and retailers in Sanaa, sparking a furious backlash on social media, including from supporters of the movement.

-British troops are conducting secret operations in Yemen training Saudi forces, according to a report by the investigative website *Declassified*.

July 9: Mass rallies take place in Sanaa protesting against the ban on hajj this year.

-Saudi Arabia contribute \$858 million to WFP’s response in Yemen since 2018, including \$380 million in 2019 that helped WFP scale-up operations to reach 13 million people — pulling the war-hit country back from the brink of famine and saving lives.

July 10: The Houthis confirm 20 of its military leaders had been killed in a battle in Yemen’s al-Bayda.

July 11: Gulf coalition forces thwart a rebel missile attack on their camp in Marib.

-GCC countries are locked in tough negotiations with Russia on a UN draft resolution to impose an arms embargo and sanctions on Yemen.

July 12: The former grand Mufti of Yemen Muhammad bin Ismail Al-Omrani dies aged 99.

-Sultan Haitham of Oman and Saudi Arabia’s King Salman discuss bilateral relations as well as the war in Yemen and Iran’s nuclear program.

July 13: Yemen’s internationally Recognized Government issues a new statement accusing the Southern Transitional Council of stopping the implementation of the Riyadh Agreement.

-The Yemeni riyal reaches record lows, trading 1,003 to the dollar in the black market despite fresh economic measures by the government.

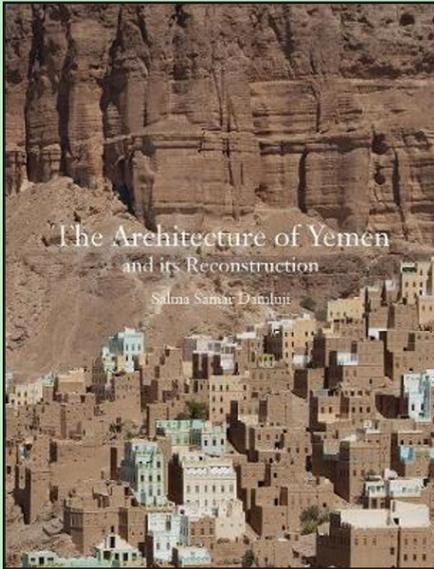
-Britain has exported around three times as much weaponry and military equipment to Saudi Arabia than previously thought, according to a ground breaking new investigation.

July 14: The UN Security Council approves a resolution to renew the mandate of its mission in Yemen, which will be extended until July 15, 2022. In that way, the United Nations Mission in support of the Hodeida Accord (UNMHA) will continue providing assistance in a nation that has been facing a conflict for over six years, according to the document adopted unanimously. In addition, the UN representatives assured the multilateral organization will continue contributing to the implementation of the ceasefire deal in that city and in the ports of Hodeida, Salif and Ras Issa, as established in the Stockholm Agreement, in 2018.

-An advisor to the speaker of the Iranian parliament praises Sweden’s humanitarian efforts to help resolve the crisis in Yemen, stressing that lifting the blockade on Yemen would be a positive step in building confidence.

Salma Samar Damluji's latest book explains the architecture of South Yemen

By Mohit Bucht



The Architecture of Yemen and Its Reconstruction

often arcane grasp of their trade and are rightfully referred to as 'true interpreters of their culture'. The book's conversations tend to give us the clearest explanation of the techniques and demands of Yemeni architecture. By rooting her writing in pragmatism, Damluji unveils a true and distilled form of Arab architecture that carries humility with it, and serves as a reminder that the traditional does not have to be eliminated to make way for the new.

It is through this practical approach that observations are presented with detailed and thorough survey drawings and photographs. In accordance with its title, the book reconstructs each building that it encounters through key dimensions, construction techniques and, where applicable, the socio-political context. Much like a series of case studies, plans and sections complete each building's story by providing a new dimension to understand materiality and climate. They put into perspective the typologies of each region while clarifying core principles of building programme, thermal mass and form. The mere presence

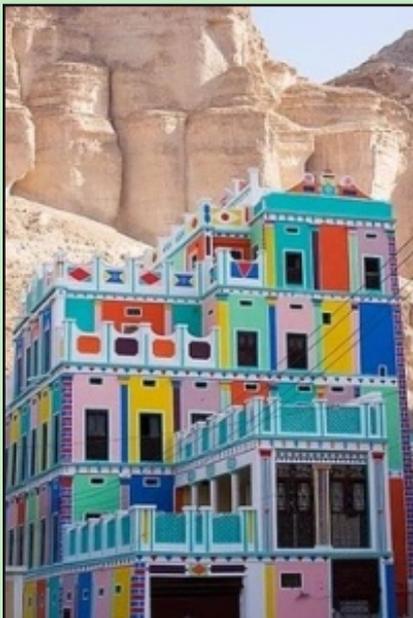
of such historical and technical analysis adds to the credibility and remarkable culmination of decades of research.

The work's true purpose is clear nowhere more than in the studies of attempts to reconstruct damaged buildings. A new chapter for the latest edition, this speaks to the wider tone of the book in a bid to rebuild our own perceptions of what architecture in the Middle East was and still has the potential to draw from. The reconstruction of these structures is used effectively to emphasise a renewed need to appreciate the historic architectural elegance not of just Yemen but of the wider region.

What shines through is not a particular building or a certain conversation. It is instead a distinct desire to increase our accessibility to a cornerstone of Yemeni culture, one that few of us will be able to experience. Today, many such structures are becoming harder to physically reach due to monsoon flash floods and more recently, the tolls of war on key archaeological sites. Damluji does due justice to their memory and ensures the intent and purpose behind their construction is not lost in translation.



Salma Samar Damluji



Traditional architecture

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