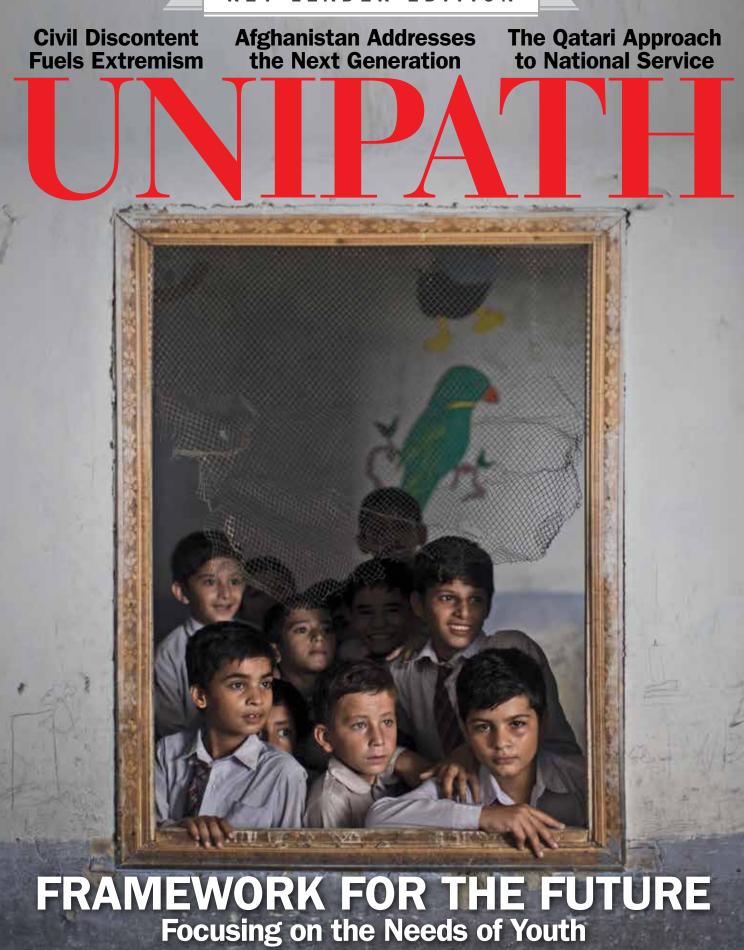
### KEY LEADER EDITION





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Syrian refugee children scrawl on a wall in Beirut, Lebanon. GETTY IMAGES

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Schoolboys in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, watch a ceremony honoring Malala Yousafzai, a girl who survived being shot by the Taliban. Leaders of the region must address the needs of their disproportionately young populations.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Unipath has a new streamlined look. Among the changes are icons added as visual cues to quickly convey the topics discussed in each article. Additionally, the "Around the Region" section includes flags at the top of each page to identify the countries mentioned in the stories. We hope you find these changes useful.



# **KEY LEADER'S MESSAGE**

# UNIPATH

Youth Bulge: Challenges and Opportunities Volume 5, Number 4

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CENTCOM COMMANDER GENERAL

LLOYD J. AUSTIN III U.S. Army



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A country's youth is the cornerstone of any community looking forward to the future. Quite frankly, if we want to prepare our nations to compete with the developed world, we must pay close attention to our youth and establish national strategies that keep pace with the overall national planning. We can start by employing the necessary resources to change a variety of programs that correspond with the ambition of youth. This can be accomplished by widening the knowledge and understanding of

young people and including them in real-life problem solving and planning as a promising force that can participate and execute development projects for the nation.

To meet the above goals, the following should be done:

- 1. Prepare child-care workers and teachers at all levels to raise our children with principles of tolerance and peace and to accept others without discrimination. This will help implant brotherhood and harmony in the community.
- 2. Discover the interests and concerns of youth to establish dynamic programs.
- 3. Offer positive lectures or seminars in sports clubs and colleges, as well as execute plans to preserve and protect the security of each country.
- 4. Act quickly to resolve the problems of employment and poverty among youth to cultivate young people who are responsible and loyal to their nations.

These primary goals must be carefully examined in raising our children to confront unwanted ideologies such as extremism and terrorism. We must educate our youth about the deadly and disastrous consequences of extremism in the world. We must call for all peace-loving nations to give wide democratic space for youth and grant them the freedom to state their opinions. We should respect their viewpoints and discuss them sincerely. This will positively impact their values, principles and personalities. This technique would reduce societal stress and promote youth not only as active and valuable members of society, but as primary elements to build and protect their nations and contribute to the larger goal of global peace.

This edition of *Unipath* features articles on Yemen's efforts to steer youth away from extremism and terrorism and on programs such as Qatar's and the United Arab Emirates' new national military service programs, which require mandatory military service for young men, to strengthen national security and instill discipline and national pride.

The articles in this edition of *Unipath* are meant to stimulate these discussions and share best practices for engaging youth. *Unipath* welcomes comments and contributions from its readers on these and other topics at unipath@centcom.mil.

Staff Brig. Gen. Mohammed Zaid Mahmoud Ibrahem Yemeni Military Attache to the United States





# SPRINGTIME for

IAN GARNER, WILLIAM GOODYEAR, JEFFREY PAYNE, KIP WHITTINGTON, MICHAEL WILLIAMS NEAR EAST SOUTH ASIA CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES

FOUR MAIN FACTORS DROVE YOUTH TO INSTIGATE THE ARAB SPRING

> An Egyptian boy waves his national flag during a rally. AFP/GETTY IMAGES



he Arab Spring challenged many assumptions among analysts and policymakers about the Middle East and North Africa. One crucial set of assumptions concerned the Arab youth population. Before the Arab Spring, youth were either marginalized by policymakers, who considered them to be too disorganized and disinterested to be important players in the political process, or treated as an impending threat, a monolithic bloc destined to be radicalized by extremist movements. Yet, if the Arab Spring demonstrated anything, it is that youth populations are highly unpredictable and extremely difficult to characterize.

Arab youth populations both shaped and were shaped by the Arab Spring. They reacted to their initial victories in a multitude of ways and pulled their countries in widely different directions. Still, there were a few common issues that all Arab youth populations confronted throughout the Arab revolutions. Four key themes either drove or challenged the youth at the revolutionary moment. These themes were democratization, socioeconomics, radicalization and culture.

#### DEMOCRATIZATION

The presence of a large youth cohort affects the progression and stability of democratization. Although youth populations tend to support democratic institutions, their penchant for political change contributes to conflict and instability. In other words, youth can initiate democratic reform but also destroy the progression of democratic institutions.

One possible reason for this is the tendency for ideology to influence large youth populations. This was particularly the case in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. In Egypt, Syria, Tunisia, Libya, Yemen and other countries throughout the region, young activists adopted new and sometimes radical political ideologies. The frustrated desires of this large youth population for participation in the political process aided acceptance of new political methodologies. Their base of operations became the street, their structures populist in orientation and their commitment directed toward altering the status quo. Since the youth in these countries were focused on gaining access to the political process, they expressed a general (though not monolithic) preference for democratic political arrangements.

Unsurprisingly, highly mobilized and ideologically motivated youth populations can pose serious threats to governmental stability. If the regime is not strong or flexible enough to withstand these challenges, it risks political reorganization (as in Tunisia) or even societal breakdown (as in Syria).

The case of Egypt is illustrative. Seventy percent of its population is under 34, and, after wavering back and forth during the Hosni Mubarak era, Egyptian birthrates soared in 2012 to 32 for every 1,000 people, a reversion to the rate reported in 1991.

#### SOCIO-ECONOMICS

Youths are a crucial segment of the labor force, and ensuring they are employed and self-sufficient is critical to ensuring socio-economic stability in a country. The MENA region historically has a poor record of providing for these populations. Highly educated youths graduated from school only to face stagnant economies and shrinking job markets. About 87 percent of Egypt's unemployed are between the ages of 15 and 29. Even oil-rich Gulf countries faced serious youth unemployment crises.

A large youth population with low job prospects and ample free time correlates highly with radicalism and street protest. In the past, conventional wisdom dictated that unemployment and alienation would drive young men, in particular, toward illicit activities and extremism. In the 2006 study, "A Clash of Generations? Youth Bulges and Political Violence," Henrik Urdal explored the alleged correlation, concluding that "relatively large youth cohorts are associated with a significantly increased risk of domestic armed conflict, terrorism, and riots/demonstrations." Additional causes triggering violence include "social advancement, ambition and yearning for respectability," according to social scientist Gunnar Heinsohn.

Yet, the relative lack of violence throughout the Arab Spring — with

# DO YOUTH BULGES TEND TOWARD EXTREMISM? THE ANSWER IS UNCLEAR.

countries of the MENA region have pursued government-subsidized employment to combat these problems. However, this model can no longer sustain the sheer size of current youth populations amid less-than-stellar national economic performance. Energy subsidies in the region are particularly massive, accounting for about half the world's spending of that type. Instead, countries get trapped in vicious cycles in which the government cannot afford to pay for subsidies or employment, but cannot rid itself of such policies for fear of provoking more protests and rioting.

For example, demographics alone cannot explain the instability shaking places such as Egypt. But it is clear that Egypt's demographic distortions, as well as its economic malaise, have been a key factor in the advent of the initial revolt as well as the continued unrest.

#### RADICALIZATION

Do youth bulges tend toward extremism? The answer is unclear. Before the Arab Spring, the major exceptions of Syria and recent events in Egypt — seems to contradict these theories.

Some analysts dismissed the notion of the youth bulge as a "ticking time bomb." Stephanie Schwartz, author of *Youth and Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Agents of Change*, argued that "the way in which these movements emerged was through widespread, decentralized grassroots participation" consisting of a broad mix of young people with "different interests and goals."

The commitment of young Arabs to peaceful demonstration, even in the face of repressive violence, undermined the legitimacy of the extremist claim that political change in the Arab world could only come through violence.

While large youth movements may not result in immediate violence, it is clear that extremists target disaffected, underemployed youth to carry out their bidding. Youths who are underemployed or unemployed continuously fill the ranks of terrorist organizations who offer payment for loyalty.

# YOUTHFUL DISCONTENT FUELS THE SYRIAN CIVIL WAR

IAN GARNER, WILLIAM GOODYEAR, JEFFREY PAYNE, KIP WHITTINGTON, MICHAEL WILLIAMS/NEAR EAST SOUTH ASIA CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES

he revolutions throughout the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) are regularly characterized within the media and government as the result of widespread radicalism throughout the region. Certainly, conducting a revolution is a radical act enacted by those with uncompromising ideas. But one can't forget that each revolution within MENA occurred only after citizens tried, and failed, to achieve moderate reforms. This was the case in Syria.

The first signs of instability appeared in the spring of 2011, when activists, most of them young, took to the streets with calls for greater political freedom and economic opportunities. These demonstrations, grass-roots oriented and decentralized, were received by President Bashar al-Assad's regime with violence. Dominated by the Alawite minority, the regime governed a diverse population that had risen up before.

These moderate protests, partly inspired by the revolutions in North Africa, were viewed as a potential threat to the Assad regime. It moved quickly and with great force to silence them. The government succeeded in stopping the demonstrators, but the violence only served to inspire others to protest the regime. As the regime met further dissent with violence, public opinion turned against the government. Furthermore, the failure of moderate calls for reform dissuaded activists from appealing to the government. Instead, they took the more drastic step of supporting the overthrow of the Assad regime.

The early activists involved in the Syrian uprising were young. As was the case in most of the countries within the MENA region, Syria's youth demographic was disproportionately large. This segment of society was more educated than previous generations, it was most likely to be unemployed, and it was the most willing to seek change, given its financial situation and unfamiliarity with the horrors of earlier uprisings. They were not inherently radical, and their early activities provide evidence for this. But Syrian youth were impatient --impatient about lack of jobs, lack of political outlets and general lack of options. The regime's resort to violence encouraged youth to shift their methods. What the early stages of the uprising reveal is that no single factor started the civil war. It was a volatile combination of ingredients that set off the conflict.

#### **ECONOMICS, POLITICS AND YOUTH**

The effects of the Syrian civil war have spilled into neighboring countries and increased tensions throughout the Levant. Lebanon, already a divided state, has seen violence increase from Syrian refugees, fighters crossing the border and heightened sectarian tensions. Turkey's long border with Syria is used as a conduit for refugees fleeing the war and for equipment intended for the opposition. Until recently, Iraq had not been drawn into the war to any great extent, but that changed in 2013 as refugees, mainly Kurdish, entered Iraq's northern provinces. To the south, Jordan's already large refugee population has swelled with new arrivals from Syria converging on displaced persons camps.

As of late 2013, the civil war had claimed the lives of 100,000 Syrians. Such an outcome could be seen as surprising. Before the conflict, Assad's regime appeared to enjoy general popularity, and there were few visible signs of a desire for political change within Syria. What the past several years suggests is that rulers must pay greater attention to the mixture of economics, politics and demographics.

Syria's civil war is partially the result of political and economic deficiencies. The country's youth had done what was expected of them - they earned an education. Yet, the Syrian economy stood largely apart from the global economy and could not absorb a youth cohort of such an immense size. Young people that could leave did so. Those who stayed tried to influence public policy, specifically seeking to loosen restrictions on political mobilization and to implement programs to boost economic opportunity. The government's violent response effectively blocked the political route to reform. Many of Syria's youth became radicalized and took up arms with rebel groups. The unfortunate result of this saga is that a large segment of a rising generation will likely be lost amid the violence.

With the conflict between the regime and opposition groups raging for more than two years, the Syrian youth movement has undergone a series of transformations. Activists initially hopeful about political reform in Syria have all but disappeared and many



have been pushed into armed conflict. Unfortunately, as the conflict has continued, Syria's youth have become more desperate and more likely to join the most radical armed opposition groups. The moderate, reform-minded youth activists of 2011 have been replaced by extremist, sectarian young fighters.

#### CONCLUSION

The civil war poses a number of important challenges to strategists, chief among them the necessity of drawing the correct lessons from the conflict. One should never assume that the conflict was the result of an inherent tendency among Syrian youth to radicalize. Instead, analysts of the Syrian conflict and strategic thinkers would do well to focus on the ways in which the conflict developed and intensified over time as the opposition reacted and adapted to regime tactics.

It is only in this context that the full tragedy of Syria can be understood. A once promising generation is turning to radicalism and violence, a generation that has already surprised strategic thinkers around the world. Leaders risk surprise and further unrest if they continue to ignore this unpredictable and restless generation.

Authors' note: The views expressed in this article are those of the authors alone and do not represent the official policy or position of the National Defense University, the Department of Defense or the U.S. government.

1 An anti-government protester with the message "We are coming" painted on his chest shouts slogans during a march in solidarity with the people of Svria in the Yemeni capital of Sanaa in 2012.

2 An Egyptian youth sells national flags during a demonstration in Cairo's Tahrir Square.

YOUTH BULGES ARE PRESENT IN OTHER REGIONS, SUCH AS SOUTHEAST ASIA, BUT WHAT MAKES THE BULGE SO PARTICULARLY POWERFUL IN ARAB COUNTRIES IS A LACK OF MARKET OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG ADULTS.



AFP/GETTY IMAGES

#### **CULTURE**

In the MENA region, the youth bulge impacts society culturally on many levels. For young people ages 15 to 29, one primary grievance, according to University of Minnesota professor Ragui Assaad, is their inability to "turn their education into productive jobs." Youth bulges are present in other regions, such as Southeast Asia, but what makes the bulge so particularly powerful in Arab countries is a lack of market opportunities for young adults. In Egypt, unemployment among college graduates is ten times that of noncollege graduates.

According to George Mason University professor Jack Goldstone, a rapid upsurge in higher education before the English and French revolutions led many to question governmental authority when people failed to find employment they deemed appropriate to their status.

This pattern was repeated in the MENA region throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, particularly among women, who outnumber their male counterparts in universities in twothirds of Middle Eastern countries, the United Nations reported. According to Hafez Ghanem of the Brookings Institution, "female labor force participation rates are only around 25 percent." Undoubtedly, this disparity between educational attainment and employment promoted female participation in revolutionary movements.

In a region with a strong cultural tendency toward deference to elders, youth often feel marginalized in a political process dominated by older members of society. At the same time, the cultural premium that Arab societies place on education exacerbated social tensions as this highly educated youth population faced shrinking economic opportunities. This was particularly the case with women, further fracturing societies. A key challenge for the rising youth population in the MENA region will be how to reconcile their ideas, desires and aspirations with the cultural norms of their societies.

#### **CONCLUSION**

As the Arab Spring continues to unfold, the Arab youth population will likely continue to be a major driver of change in the democratization, socio-economics, radicalization and culture of the MENA region. Although the ways in which this population enacts change will vary greatly among countries, these themes appear to be the most relevant to the youth of the region and will most likely be sources of political mobilization and coalescence.

Authors' note: The views expressed in this article do not represent the official policy or position of the National Defense University, the Department of Defense or the U.S. government.

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YEMEN'S MINISTRY OF YOUTH AND SPORTS HELPS STEER Youth From Extremism



MOAMMAR MUTAHAR AL-ERYANI FORMER YEMENI YOUTH AND SPORTS MINISTER

ssuming the role of minister of Yemen's Youth and Sports Ministry in 2012 was not the beginning of my interest in this important segment of society, but I can claim that this turning point in my life was a culmination of many experiences I've had, starting as a boy scout in the Yemen Scouts and Guides Association.

In a society in which 63 percent of the population is younger than 24, Yemen must recognize the importance of youth. This segment of society is the foundation for the future and the driving force for constructive change.

I absolutely believe that sports are vital for youths' psychological and physical development. Such pursuits also keep them busy and away from the clutches of terrorists and extremists who wish to recruit them. Partnership and networking should occur on various related fronts — the media, education, youth, sports, religious platforms, universities, institutions, and youth and sports organizations. I have repeatedly emphasized the role of education in countering violent extremism and terrorism. Since education plays a critical role in helping children realize the dangers of extremist ideologies, I urge schools to address these issues fully in their curriculums. This comprehensive vision to raise awareness of the dangers of extremism and terrorism will combat this phenomenon and provide the security and stability that is sought by all Yemenis.





**Boys attend class** at a primary school in Sanaa, Yemen, in 2013.

2. A Yemeni girl plays outside her home in Sanaa's Old City.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

#### INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

To aid and guide Yemen's young people, I work with my colleagues in the General Union of Yemeni Youth - the first and largest civic society organization dedicated to youth in Yemen. Since the establishment of this civic entity, we have worked together to organize workshops, symposiums, meetings, festivals, camps and youth gatherings. These activities aim to enhance youth skills, highlight creativity, combat extremism and intolerance, and empower youth to resist terrorist groups by promoting a culture of tolerance, love, coexistence and peace.

Perhaps the semi-isolation that some Yemeni youths have experienced, and are still experiencing, continues to be one of the main channels terrorists and extremists try to exploit, in addition to the economic situation and high rates of unemployment. Reports and studies indicate that the most important places for recruitment are poor areas and urban slums that lack sports and youth activities, leaving the young prey to extremist propaganda.

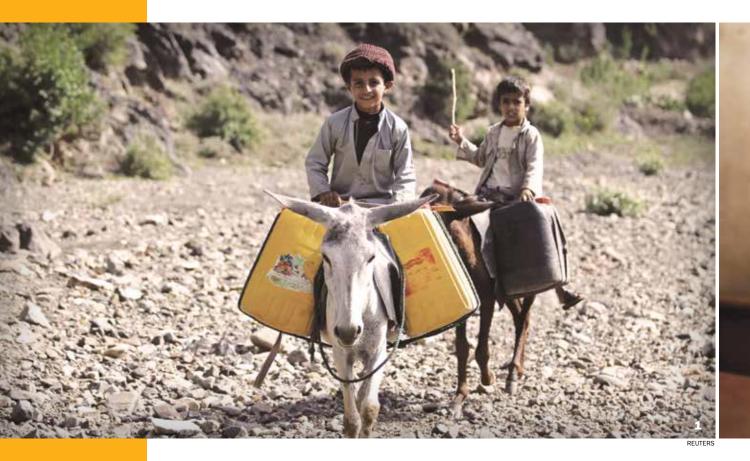
Within our modest capabilities, we work to involve the youth in a number of international gatherings in Europe, Africa and Asia. This helps to integrate Yemeni youths with peers from around the world, change negative perceptions of both parties and promote a culture of dialogue, coexistence, tolerance and integration among nations and civilizations. We have noticed positive change within the leadership of the union after those external participations in which youth leaders cultivated friendships and dissolved barriers.

#### **RADIO BROADCASTING**

The establishment of FM Youth Radio in 2007 was one of the fruits of the youth initiatives. The General Union of Yemeni Youth was honored to adopt and nurture this initiative. It has become one of the most important free media platforms through which youth express their visions and aspirations, completely and without any restrictions, far from prior censorship or political interference, partisanship or social caveats.

I hope that support and care for this wonderful youth initiative continues. Through this radio initiative, the youth showed a willingness to present their message and freely defend causes in order to positively influence fellow young people. According to a recently conducted survey, FM Youth Radio was able to reach more than 150,000 listeners with a message about the dangers of terrorism and extremism.

WE RECOGNIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN, who, being half the society, play an important and integral role in raising awareness of the dangers of terrorism and extremism.



1. Children transport jerry cans filled with water on the road between Sanaa and Hodeidah in 2013.

2. Girls attend a class at their primary school in Sanaa in 2013. FM Youth also adopted many activities and programs that serve society. The radio initiative participates in and promotes community events and volunteer activities, helping to instill the spirit of giving and strengthen the principle of hope in Yemeni youth so they will proclaim to the world: We are here.

#### **REBUILDING THE YOUTH MINISTRY**

I took on the Ministry of Youth and Sports in 2012 during difficult circumstances. Yemen was overcoming the effects of the Arab Spring and its political, social, economic and security repercussions. However, I accepted the task based on a conviction I had held for years: to adopt the causes of youth no matter the circumstances.

Since assuming the ministry's tasks, and within available resources, we exerted ourselves

in rebuilding sports facilities and indoor sports lounges that were destroyed in 2011. We also relaunched sports that had been interrupted by instability and revived the football league after a two-year hiatus.

We recognized the importance of women, who, being half the society, play an important and integral role in raising awareness of the dangers of terrorism and extremism. We involved women and gave them an important role in sports alongside their male colleagues. We also took the necessary steps and decisions to advance women's sports and expanded them to include a greater variety of activities. We tasked the Yemeni Women Sports Federation with organizing local competitions and to encourage Yemeni women to participate in external competitions. The ministry's projects and strategic plans are developed and implemented with the strategic objective of paying attention to the concerns, needs and aspirations of younger generations. Those projects also aim to create the proper atmosphere for them to exercise, participate in various sports competitions and occupy their leisure time to avoid vulnerability and the risk of falling prey to extremism and terrorist groups.



The ministry also aims to provide young people with the appropriate economic and social environments to improve conditions and achieve stability and national cohesion. Some of our initiatives are:

- 1. By 2015, obtaining the necessary financing to complete and equip 100 sports facilities and fields for Yemeni youth based on comprehensive plans we have developed and submitted.
- Organizing sports activities and youth and cultural festivals to occupy young people, develop their potential capabilities and protect them from feelings of emptiness and moral deviation exploited by extremist groups.
- 3. Creating programs and activities that focus on combating terrorism and extremism, and distributing brochures and circulars that raise awareness among youth about the dangers of terrorist organizations and extremist narratives.

- Developing mechanisms that ensure the involvement of youth in the decision-making process through the formation of a youth advisory committee in the Ministry of Youth and Sports.
- 5. In 2013, we implemented the scholastic Olympics to establish a tournaments league at the district level. One of the project's most important objectives is to fill the students' time and to make them aware of the dangers of terrorism and extremism.
- 6. Supporting women's sports in the various fields. We still have ambition and determination to expand the platform of participation in these activities to include all directorates and governorates.
- 7. Providing support to convene a general conference for youth employment, reducing generational gaps in unemployment and creating jobs for young people. We are also involving the private and government sectors, as well as the civic society, to help reduce youth unemployment.

#### INTERNATIONAL AID

Because youth are the cornerstone of change and the focus of development, it is unfortunate that the donors' conference, held in 2012 in Saudi Arabia by countries friendly to Yemen, did not offer any tangible initiative to Yemeni youth, except a youth employment project that has yet to be implemented.

Yemen's young people have helped to initiate positive change and have made many sacrifices. They are still waiting for their dreams to become reality. They are eager for the goals of their revolution to translate into a modern civil state that guarantees equality among citizens and cares for youth, fulfilling their aspirations and involving them in decision-making processes.

No doubt, an important part of those hopes and aspirations has been achieved through the success of the comprehensive National Dialogue Conference that involved the input of youth. The objective is to shape a desired Yemeni future and implement the outcomes of this conference with a focus on youth.

We continue to hope that all these efforts will converge to support activities and sports for youth so as to provide them an outlet to express themselves and an opportunity to fulfill their aspirations and overcome challenges to create a peaceful and prosperous future.

I am confident that President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi has made a strong and honest effort to fight terrorism and extremism and that this effort requires support and assistance from all political parties and groups, civil society organizations and the international community.



# A FRESH START

# Afghanistan's young population has been a force for unity in the country

#### MOHAMMAD SHAFIQ HAMDAM/CHAIRMAN, AFGHAN ANTI-CORRUPTION NETWORK

he Afghanistan of 2001 is not comparable to the Afghanistan of 2013. As a citizen of the country, I have lived my entire life in Afghanistan; I can easily see the rapid development and progress. Many non-Afghans don't see this progress, dwelling instead on those parts of the country that have yet to measure up to outsiders' standards. People such as myself who have seen a devastated Afghanistan appreciate the improvements visible all around. It is an old country, but with a new youthful generation eager to begin making contributions. It is a country that experienced two decades of war, followed by 12 years of international efforts to stem the spread of terrorism and militancy. Some threats still remain, but the 352,000strong Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), backed by United States and NATO forces, offer assurances that Afghanistan will never go back to the dark ages.

In the past 12 years, together with its international partners and coalition forces, Afghanistan has created sufficient political, economic and social forces that will safeguard the country against the return of the miseries of the past. Afghans have taken courageous steps in reasserting their freedom, sovereignty and international status. Established institutions, laws and strategies for the present and future have enabled Afghans to take charge of their own destiny. Examples include the

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ing peace, justice and human rights. He is also a member of the Asia 21 Young

Leaders Initiative and a signatory to the Alliance in Support of the Afghan People.

Afghan Anti-Corruption Network. It is the leading and largest network of civil society

organizations fighting corruption in Afghanistan. Hamdam is a social activist promot-

country's decision to assume responsibility for its security and to hold two presidential and parliamentary elections.

While safeguarding these achievements, Afghans will continue to broaden those accomplishments through the decade of transformation, from 2014 to 2025. This was agreed to at the International Afghanistan Conference in Bonn in December 2011 and supported by the NATO Chicago Summit in May 2012 and Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan in July 2012. Of course, Afghanistan is not a perfect country and will still require the assistance and support of the United States and the international community. But long-term commitments by the U.S., NATO and other countries assure the future stability of this country.

The transfer of security to the ANSF and the end of the International Security Assistance Force mission — an outcome desired by the Afghan government — has created uncertainty among the Afghan people. But reassurance comes in the form of NATO's announcement of a post-2014 mission to train, advise and assist the Afghan National Security Force, a mission called Resolute Support. The majority of Afghans — and those trying to destabilize the country — have learned that the country will not be abandoned by the U.S. and the international community. Progress and development will continue.

An Afghan girl attends class in a school on the outskirts of Mazar-e Sharif in April 2013. APP/GETTY IMAGES





#### **TRIUMPHS OF YOUTH**

Afghans have many reasons to be optimistic and hopeful. Sixty-five percent of the population is under the age of 25, making youth a major force in society. Despite all the responsibilities heaped upon the young people of Afghanistan — most are obliged to help provide for themselves and their families — this segment of the population has made unprecedented strides. Symbolic of the new Afghanistan are all the accomplishments made in the field of sports, both regionally and internationally.

Twenty-one-year-old Ruhullah Nekpa became a national hero after winning Afghanistan's first ever Olympic medal at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, and he managed to bring home a second medal in taekwondo from the 2012 London Olympics. Starting from scratch, Afghanistan's national cricket team defeated Kenya to finish second in the International Cricket Council (ICC) World Cricket League Championship in October 2013. The team qualified to play in the ICC Cricket World Cup 2015 in Australia and New Zealand.

#### Afghanistan is an old country, but with a new youthful generation eager to begin making contributions.

The country's first national football association, the Afghan Premier League, was founded in 2012. Just a year later, it beat India to win the South Asian Football Federation Championship. This was not just a sport's cup: For many Afghans, it was a sign of Afghan unity. For the first time in my life, I witnessed 24-hour, nonstop parties around Afghanistan in which millions of people came together and celebrated the historic football victory. That turned out to be a day of hope, solidarity and peace in Afghanistan.

Coincidentally, that victory occurred on September 11, 2013, exactly 12 years after the al-Qaida attack on the U.S.

That attack was planned by the terrorist group from bases inside Afghanistan. I still remember the day. There was only one radio station, and it was run by the Taliban. Few Afghans were able to listen secretly to other radio stations out of fear of the Taliban. I happened to be listening to the BBC and learned about the 9/11 attack. The Afghan people were shocked by the news. Some Afghans were living in fear, but many in sorrow. I could never imagine that only 12 years later that Afghanistan would no longer be a safe haven for al-Qaida and terrorists, but instead would be celebrating a peaceful sports triumph.

From that single radio station, Afghanistan now possesses 75 TV stations and 180 radio stations. Millions of Afghans watched and listened to these media outlets, without any fear, for the good news of the football

> victory. Most of the 18 million Afghan mobile phone subscribers and nearly 1 million Internet users were busy that day. It was a day that ethnicity, language, faith and culture were not important, and people of all genders and ages were celebrating.

All of this was a tribute to the influence of Afghan youth and the joint sacrifices made by Afghans and their international partners. Just 12 years earlier, the Taliban had banned many Olympic sports and were using the national football stadium to execute men and women.

Considering that such a large percentage of the population consists of children and teenagers, a huge portion of the country has little or no memory of the Taliban



regime. This fact has both positive and negative aspects. While many of this generation would view the Taliban as alien, others might be influenced by a violent movement they never experienced firsthand in the old days. The kids who were in their first years of school during the Taliban era have already graduated from high school, and some are enrolled in the universities.

Afghanistan has more than 10.5 million students engaged in all levels of education. This is one-third of the entire population, and 37 percent of those students are girls. More than 4,500 school buildings were constructed since 2003. Just a decade ago, there were fewer than 1 million students, with almost no female participation. All of this amounts to fundamental change and investment.

I would like to briefly mention three things I believe can contribute to better security, good governance and economy stability for Afghans, young and old alike. To further strengthen and widen these gains, we should focus on the following key issues:

#### **GOOD GOVERNANCE AND FIGHTING CORRUPTION**

Democracy is a new phenomenon in Afghanistan, where it's been practiced for only a decade. Governments and institutions work differently in democratic societies. So it's not only fighting terrorism and extremists, but good governance that is a key priority for Afghanistan. Weak rule of law and the existence of "impunity circles" and safe havens for corrupt individuals and officials in Afghanistan and abroad have contributed to violations of human rights and injustice.

Nearly all of Afghanistan's problems — instability, poppy cultivation, drug trafficking and disillusionment with government — are traceable to corruption.

The Afghan government and its international

partners should not ignore the issue of corruption. The fight against it should be a priority. The Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework, agreed to in 2012 by the Afghan government and its international partners, should be fully implemented. Civil society and the independent media should play a role in monitoring corruption with the support of the Afghan government and international community.

#### SECURITY SECTOR REFORM

The Afghan security sector has come a long way in terms of quantity. It's time to focus on quality and in-depth security sector reform. The focus should be on nurturing educated, professional and well-trained officers and generals. The Afghan constitution has empowered citizens, and they will no longer tolerate unscrupulous and unskilled commanders.

Leadership development, gender mainstreaming and accountability mechanisms in the security ministries should be prioritized. Aside from senior experienced officers and noncommissioned officers, Afghanistan needs to develop the capacity of young Soldiers who will replace the older generation in the ANSF.

It is also time to professionalize the police and draw greater distinctions between the duties of law enforcement and the military.

#### REGIONAL COOPERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Afghanistan has gained a nickname — the Heart of Asia so regional cooperation and dialogue are very important. In the long term, Afghanistan can't rely on the donations and support of the international community. To address these issues, short- and long-term strategies have to be set.

#### AFGHANISTAN

- Afghan cricket fans celebrate their team's victory over Kenya as they watch on a big screen at the International Cricket Stadium in Kabul in October 2013.
- 2 Ruhullah Nekpa of Afghanistan celebrates a win in taekwondo at the London 2012 Olympic Games.
- 3 Afghan female journalists work in the studio of Shahrzad, the second women's radio station to be dedicated to the interests of women in Herat province.



# Afghan Security with a Young Face

STORY AND PHOTO BY ZABIHULLAH NOORI/AFGHAN JOURNALIST

Abdul Sami Qais is 24 years old and the sole breadwinner for his family. He lives with his parents and seven younger siblings in the relatively peaceful city of Mazar-e Sharif in Afghanistan. Since 2011, he has been

working as an interpreter with NATO's International Security Assistance Force in northern Afghanistan.

His family is lucky to have someone with a job at all. Unemployment among young Afghans hovers above 35 percent and is set to rise further as Afghans take the lead in providing security for their country.

NATO has provided direct employment to thousands of Afghans working as translators, surveyors, cooks and cleaners. Many more are employed as laborers and drivers by NATO's construction and logistical contractors.

One company alone — Mission Essential — employs about 7,200 Afghans as linguists and translators. In 2011, Afghans working for international companies and nongovernmental organizations paid 22 percent of the \$120 million income tax paid that year, according to the Afghan Ministry of Finance.

As Afghanistan takes full control of its security, fewer of these jobs will be available for young Afghans such as Qais. However, the young interpreter, who is also an engineering student, remains upbeat and is planning for the future.

"I would like to join the Army right after the completion of my studies. Just as the country needs Army and police alongside the civil sector, the Army also needs educated youth like me who can work in the administration section of the Army," he said.

Qais used to be skeptical of the Army and could not understand why his peers chose to enlist instead of getting an office job and sleeping comfortably at home every night. However, since participating in joint operations with the Afghan National Army (ANA) and NATO forces, he has changed his mind.

"I was wrong. If youth like them don't risk their lives in maintaining the security of fellow citizens, no one will be able to sleep well," he said. He is not alone in his appreciation of the military's efforts to take over the responsibility for the country's security from the international forces. A 2013 survey by The Asia Foundation suggests Afghans maintain high levels of confidence in the ANA and Afghan National Police (ANP). According to the survey, 91 percent of respondents reported that ANA is improving security, while 86 percent said the ANP also is improving security.

Today, Afghan security forces serve on the front line of every operation, be it sweeping operations against terrorists, defending the country's borders or ensuring the security of citizens by detecting and defusing terrorist plots. This has contributed to an increase in the number of young Afghans seeking employment with the national forces.

"There are enormous numbers of youth volunteers who are willing to join the Afghan National Army. We do not need any promotional advertisement to encourage the youth," said Gen. Mohammad Zahir Azimi, spokesman for the Afghan Ministry of Defense.

The numbers prove this: Since March 2011, the Afghan National Security Forces have grown from 284,952 members to 344,108, including 194,466 Soldiers and 149,642 police, according to a report published in 2013.

The military has been less successful in encouraging young women to join. In Afghanistan, some expect women to stay at home with children or work civilian jobs, if they work at all. The Afghan Ministry of Defense produced promotional videos to encourage women to enlist, but the results have been marginal. As of January 2014, women represented only 1,000 Soldiers in an Army of 195,000.

"To increase the number of women in the National Army, we need to build the culture for it, which requires a longer time for people to accept allowing their daughters and wives to join the National Army," Azimi said.

Cpl. Sughra Ebrahimi, a 29-year-old mother of three, is one of the few women working with the Afghan Border Police. For the past three years, she had been accompanying her brothers-in-arms in field operations. She believes the police force needs women in the same way that society needs women doctors, teachers and nurses.

"During important national events like the election days, it is the women police who play crucial role in searching the women at the polling stations and ensuring the security of voters. ... When we come across any suspicious woman, or when any male insurgents take shelter under a burqa, it is women police who enter among other women and catch that insurgent," she said.

Women are also encouraged to find employment in other professions traditionally regarded as male. Out of 30,000 Afghan youth engaged in vocational training established by the Afghan Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled, 40 percent were women and young girls. They are receiving training in electrical equipment repair, auto mechanics, carpentry and tailoring.

Politics is also opening up to women, with 20 percent of the seats in the Afghan National Assembly allocated to them, according to The Asia Foundation. In January 2014, there were a total of 117 women among the 34 provincial councils, three female ministers and one female governor.

Despite these advances, the political and security situation in Afghanistan remains tense. Afghan civilian casualties have increased as terrorist groups have stepped up attacks. As long as peace talks fail to produce significant results, insecurity will continue as the country's biggest concern. Other challenges include unemployment, corruption, inefficient government and administration, and the slow pace of economic recovery and reconstruction. Corruption, in particular, is significant. In Transparency International's 2013 comparative analysis of citizen perceptions of corruption, Afghanistan was tied with North Korea and Somalia for last place out of 177 countries. The annual cost of corruption is estimated at \$3.9 billion, according to The Asia Foundation.

This is the reality young Afghans need to address. To do just that, a hopeful group of young politicians, sportsmen, civil society activists and musicians gathered in Kabul in December 2013 for a series of talks and presentations on Afghanistan youth: their future, attitudes and expectations. One of the speakers was Nesar Ahmad Bahave, Afghan medal-winning taekwondo practitioner and the flag bearer for Afghanistan in the 2012 London Olympics. He wants Afghan youth to have confidence in the face of adversity and maintain high hopes for the future.

"My main goal in participating in any championship games has always been two things: first, to show the world that Afghans are capable of competing with anyone in the world," he said, "Second, to show to our Afghan youth to believe in themselves and to believe that they can be champions." Employment and economic opportunities are some of the best solutions to counter terrorism, and they also aid the state-building process. Revival of the Silk Road as a form of Eurasian inland economic architecture is an important element. Afghanistan is landlocked but is wellpositioned to promote trade and transport links between Asia and Europe. Through its natural geographical location at the crossroads of Eurasia, Afghanistan can be used to boost commerce between East and West.

The country is one of the facilitating locations for the transfer of energy, communications, transportation and trade development in the region. The renewal and promotion of the Silk Road will connect countries of the region with the rest of the globe.

The result will be increased regional and global security. Besides the trade passageways, Afghanistan offers unique opportunities for investment and business development. It has enormous explored and unexploited natural resources, including minerals, gas, oil, hydrocarbons and other materials that are worth trillions of dollars and are crucially needed within the region and across the world.

#### CONCLUSION

A sign of progress is the Alliance in Support of the Afghan People, a bipartisan coalition of U.S. and the Afghan civil society leaders, senior former officials and diplomats. The alliance is dedicated to preserving and protecting the progress made by the Afghan people during the past 12 years. This is yet another clear example of strong Afghan-U.S. relations. Surveys show that millions of Afghan citizens appreciate the contributions of the American people and their government. Such support has resulted in a remarkable change to every aspect of Afghan life and has enabled us to rejoin the world community.

Afghanistan is not perfect, and state building is a long-term process. A deeper focus on good governance, security sector reform and economic development would help ensure that Afghanistan's youthful population will not only thrive in the years ahead but will contribute to regional and international peace and security.

To read more about Afghanistan's youth, go to http://unipath-magazine.com

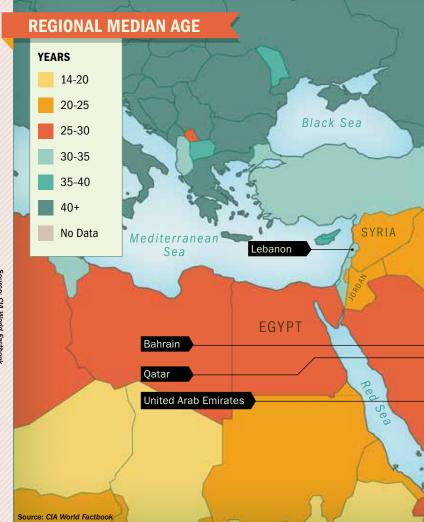
# Youth Bulge at a Glance

#### UNIPATH STAFF

In the past half century, the Middle East and Central and South Asia have experienced a profound demographic shift. About 60 percent of Middle Easterners, two-thirds of Pakistanis and nearly three-quarters of Afghans are younger than 30. This potentially destabilizing "youth bulge" comes at a time when most societies are struggling to find meaningful work for young people. Here are countries with the largest populations under age 25:

#### Percent of population under the age of 25





### A GENERATIONAL BULGE

Algeria: 31%

AGE

100 + 95-99 90-94 85-89 The percentage of

youth seems to be hitting its peak since

fertility has declined

in recent years.

Young people ages 15-29 make up the largest percentage of populations throughout much of the Middle East and Central Asia. Here's a comparative snapshot of several countries.

Saudi Arabia: 31%

about a decade.

Fertility remains higher

than in other countries,

but a conspicuous youth

bulge could vanish within

Yemen: 30%

Persistently high birthrates

have left the country with

great numbers of children

who will constitute a youth

4 6

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bulge within a decade.

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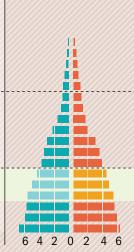
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Male Female

#### Jordan: 29%

The youth bulge is peaking but will be more sustained since birth rates remain high.

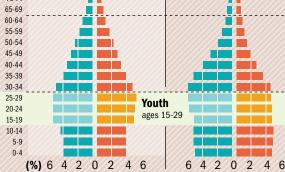


#### United States 21%

The population is more or less uniform by age, showing a slight bulge of middle-age people.



#### 





#### BIRTHRATE

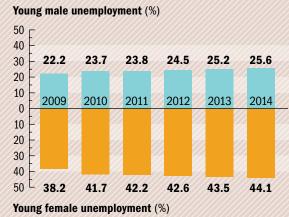
Another way to look at the issue is birthrates, which suggest how durable the youth bulge will be in the coming decades.



#### Birthrate (births/1,000 population)

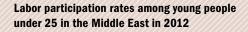
#### UNEMPLOYMENT

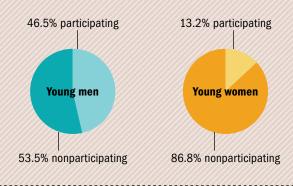
Among regions of the world, the Middle East has the highest youth unemployment rate. More than one in four economically active young people are unemployed. The region's youth unemployment rate for 2012 was an estimated 28.3 percent and could rise to 30 percent by 2018.



Labor participation rates provide another angle from which to view the problem. Almost 70 percent of Qatar's youth participate in the labor force, meaning they are working or actively looking for work. By contrast, Jordan's participation rate is 25 percent, suggesting many educated people in fields such as engineering can't find appropriate employment.

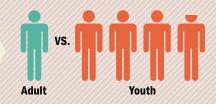
The outlook is worse for young women, of whom 42.6 percent were unemployed in Jordan, even though labor participation rates were lower. Though cultural norms preclude most women from protesting their plight, their frustrations intensify general unease in these countries.





Another source of instability is the ratio of unemployment among people under 25 to unemployment among people 25 and older.

For every adult unemployed in the Middle East, **3.8 youths are unemployed.** 



Source: International Labour Organization (United Nations) KEY LEADER EDITION | UNIPATH



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A well-educated population is one of the best counterterrorism tools

I know it's a big struggle – around the world there are fifty-seven million children who are not in primary school, thirty-two million of them girls. Sadly, my own country, Pakistan, is one of the worst places: 5.1 million children don't even go to primary school even though in our Constitution it says every child has a right. We have almost fifty million illiterate adults, two thirds of whom are women, like my own mother."

- MALALA YOUSAFZAI in her book, I Am Malala

eaders as diverse as a Pakistani prime minister, a United Arab Emirates commanding general and a United Nations secretarygeneral have rallied behind the story of Nobel Peace Prize recipient and terrorism survivor Malala Yousafzai.

The Pakistani teenager was shot in the head by the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan in 2012 and has become an outspoken and well-respected proponent of education as a counterterrorism tool. Military and government leaders in the region and beyond have found a new advocate and message bearer in Malala.

"The attempt on Malala's life was not only an attack on a defenseless child, it was an attack on her and every girl's right to a future unlimited by prejudice and oppression," said His Highness Gen. Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Abu Dhabi crown prince and deputy supreme commander of the UAE Armed Forces. "We must all stand with Malala in promoting tolerance and respect."

In the realm of military and international relations, Malala's advocacy of education is known as a "soft power" tactic — one that avoids the direct use of force to achieve a goal. Using education as a tactic to counter terrorism and promote peace is not a new one, but Malala's inspiring saga has drawn increased interest to the issue. "Education is the only solution. One child, one teacher, one book and one pen can change the world," she proclaimed during a 2013 speech to the United Nations General Assembly.

#### MALALA'S JOURNEY

As a teenager, Malala represents a vital part of Pakistani society in which about 56 percent of the population is younger than 25. She grew up in the Swat valley, in the northern part of Pakistan. Once a major tourist destination and a center of Pashtun culture, Swat became known for violence when the Tehrik-e Taliban, also known as the Pakistani Taliban, occupied the valley from about 2007 to 2009. During that period hundreds of schools were destroyed.

Malala was attacked in 2012 in retaliation for speaking up for girls' education — a passion that she credits to her father, school headmaster Ziauddin Yousafzai.

"At that time, when Swat — the beautiful valley — was suffering from terrorism, he spoke — he spoke out. And he spoke for women's rights, because at that time, more than 400 schools were blasted, girls were flogged, people were slaughtered, markets were closed. There was ban on women to go to market. Girls were not allowed to go to school," Malala explained during a television interview. "And in that hard situation, he inspired me, because he spoke." In 2009, Malala, then 11, began an anonymous blog on the BBC Urdu-language website. She focused on what life was like in Swat under Taliban rule. At the same time, she began attracting an audience by speaking publicly about the importance of education. "Reading a book, having a pen in our hands, studying, sitting in a classroom is something very special for us because once we were deprived of it and because what we have seen in Swat," Malala said in an October 2013 interview with *The News International*.

But extremists living in Swat couldn't tolerate her advocacy for girls' education. Both Malala and her father received death threats from the Taliban.

Although the girl feared for her father's safety, she didn't think her life was in jeopardy because the Taliban had never executed a child in Swat. Her assumption was wrong.

Malala was shot in the head in October 2012 in Mingora when two terrorists boarded a school bus filled with girls. One attacker shot her



A Pakistani girl in Karachi carries a photograph of child activist Malala Yousafzai. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

in the face, the bullet barely missing her brain. The gunman fired three shots in all, injuring two other girls in the attack. The Pakistani Taliban claimed responsibility for the bloodshed.

Malala was rushed to several hospitals before arriving at a military hospital. Pakistan Army neurosurgeon Col. Junaid Khan saved her life by making the critical decision to cut away a portion of her skull to relieve brain swelling. Later, it was decided Malala would greatly benefit from care at a hospital in Birmingham, England.

The UAE's Sheikh Mohamed got involved, and the UAE provided an air ambulance to whisk her to the United Kingdom. By the time Malala awoke from a drug-induced coma, more than 8,000 cards of support and encouragement awaited her.

Speaking for his nation, Pakistani Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif has called Malala the pride of Pakistan and said the government supports her education initiatives. The Pakistani government paid for Malala's medical treatment and housing for the family during her recovery.

#### COUNTERING TERRORISM

In an attempt to silence Malala, the Pakistani Taliban instead amplified her voice. Overnight, a teenage girl mobilized an army of supporters to denounce terrorism and violence.

"What the terrorists are doing is against Islam because Islam is a religion of peace. It tells us about equality, it tells us about brotherhood, it tells us about love and friendship and peace, that we should be nice and kind to each other," Malala said during a radio interview.

She believes that education will help create a tolerant and educated society more capable of rejecting the distorted narratives of extremists and

> terrorists. School also teaches children equality: Classmates are treated as equals, and rewards are based upon diligence in learning lessons.

> As Malala recovers from the attack, she continues her global advocacy. In 2014 she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. The U.N. Youth Assembly declared July 12 — her birthday — as Malala Day. In 2013, she co-wrote the book *I Am*

*Malala* to share her story and message. She also began the Malala Fund to support global education initiatives.

#### REGIONAL EFFORTS

Malala is not alone in advocating education as a tool for societal improvement. Many of Lebanon's teachers have attended training workshops to promote tolerance and peace in their classrooms. This has become more important as turmoil in Syria has spilled into Lebanon. The goal is to pass along conflict-resolution skills to students by teaching techniques such as negotiation and mediation. In November 2013 alone, 70 teachers took part in three-day workshops offered by the Center for Active Citizenship and For Development.

"The training empowered us to assume a peace building role in our schools and communities and provided us with necessary tools to apply key peace building concepts," said Theodora Jaafar, a teacher working in the northern village of Al Qasr. "Sometimes I used to think that we, as teachers, are helpless and that we can't do a thing to stop the



tensions, but after I have attended this training, I know that each teacher can participate in doing so."

Going beyond schools, many countries have developed programs to spread messages of peace throughout communities. In Kuwait, 1,000 imams have been trained, as well as 450 educators who work abroad, to fight religious intolerance at its very roots.

Kuwait's Dr. Adel al-Falah, undersecretary for the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Developments, said the program is credited with helping to ensure extremist ideology does not take hold in the country.

"In the long run, prevention is better than cure," al-Falah said during a visit to share the program's success with Australian officials in 2013. "You need to look at it like a virus — you need to immunize people against the spread of it."

#### SOFT POWER

Malala's views on education have echoed around the world. "The youth are one of the most powerful groups and also have the greatest potential for peaceful transformation for the society," said Anne Wu, special political adviser to the U.N. Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force. "So that's why education is so critical; education can provide a better future for the youth and a better future for the society."

Education plays a pivotal role in countering terrorism by protecting young people who are

vulnerable to terrorist recruiters, Wu added. It was a theme picked up by former British Prime Minister Tony Blair in a 2013 speech to the U.N. Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate. Extremists plant their seeds of hatred in the soil of ignorance, Blair said, and diversity, tolerance and respect should be taught in schools like science, math and language.

"That is why in the 21st century education is a security issue, and not any education, but education specifically that opens young minds to 'the other,' those who are culturally and religiously different, and shows them how the only future that works is one in which people are respected as equals, whatever their faith or culture," Blair said.

Malala has expressed gratitude for all the support she has received and views her recovery as a blessing.

"A Talib fires three shots at point-blank range at three girls in a van and doesn't kill any of them. This seems like an unlikely story, and people say I have made a miraculous recovery ...," Malala wrote in her book. "I know God stopped me from going to the grave. It feels like this is a second life. People prayed to God to spare me, and I was spared for a reason — to use my life for helping people." ◆

Sources: CBC Radio program The Current (October 9, 2013); Emirates News Agency – WAN; Gulf News; I am Malala, by Malala Yousafzai and Christina Lamb; International Peace Institute's Global Observatory; The News International (www.thenews.com.pk); PBS; Pulitzer Center; United Nations; U.N. Development Programme; and The Sydney Morning Herald.

# NATIONAL SERVICE

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#### QATAR'S NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAM STRENGTHENS YOUNGER GENERATIONS AND NATIONAL SECURITY

NAVY STAFF COL. (SEAL) ABDULLAH SHAHEEN AL-DOSARI/QATARI SENIOR NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE TO U.S. CENTRAL COMMAND

#### *Teach your children swimming, horse riding and shooting* — The skills described by influential Muslim ruler Omar ibn Al-Khattab, the second Rashid of the Rashidun Caliphate, were once imperative for young men to defend their country during times of war. Qatar's new national military service program is a modern continuation of this classic proverb.

A Qatar Armed Forces AW139 medium twin helicopter takes off en route to a cargo ship during Eagle Resolve 2013.

STAFF SGT. KENNY HOLSTON/U.S. AIR FORCE



parade during the Qatar National Day celebrations. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

> In 2013, Qatari leaders embarked on the path to create a national military service program for the country's youth. The program makes military service mandatory for young men between the ages of 18 and 35. Those with two- or four-year college degrees will serve three months; those with high school diplomas or less must serve four months.

This program does not simply benefit one party instead both the young men who participate and the country in whole will reap the benefits.

National service programs, also known as compulsory or conscription military service, help to cultivate a spirit of pride in one's country. In Qatar, this was a strategic and wise decision that comes at the right time. As many know, Qataris enjoy stability and security within their borders, insulated from challenges faced by other countries such as high unemployment. However, to maintain this security environment, it is essential to strengthen the country from within. To do this, there must be sacrifice. But with sacrifice, comes great benefits - and in the case of the national service program, Qatar's young men and the nation will reap rewards.

When registration opened for the program in February 2014 about 2,000 young Qataris immediately signed up for the inaugural year of the national service program. At a news conference, His Excellency Staff Maj. Gen. Mubarak bin Mohamed Al-Kumait Al-Khayarin, commander of the Emir Air Forces and chairman of the National Service Committee, indicated that students who join the national service can finish their training in military or security institutions if they desire. "The top students in training will have a greater chance of working in the military and security institutions because these institutions always want to hire the highest caliber who are making the first rank." In Qatar, we have tried to learn from the experience of others to create a program that maximizes value to both the country and young men. The people of Qatar trust and have confidence in their government and Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani.

As a father, I believe in requiring this service of our sons. By teaching our sons, we show them our love and hope for their well-being and prosperous futures.

Some may have the false perception that making this contribution will simply require physical discipline, but national service is much more than that. The new program will help mold and shape the personalities of Qatar's young men, as well as increase their general awareness of the world. This period of their lives provides a prime opportunity to mold and shape their personalities and character. It will teach civic responsibility and the value of hard work.

Young men will learn critical thinking skills and new technology and achieve general awareness, enabling them to build and develop their country. The skills they acquire will make them more valuable to employers and more capable of handling challenges. It will help them appreciate the many luxuries enjoyed by Qataris, as well as develop other positive character traits, such as respect for others and industriousness.

Compulsory military service programs have occurred throughout history. From the time of the Ottoman Empire to the present, leaders in Central Asian countries such as Tajikistan and the Kyrgyz Republic have implemented these types of programs for a variety of reasons. The most important reason: to prepare and train a force to defend the nation. For instance, in 2013 the people of Switzerland rejected a proposal to end the country's military conscription, even though the country has not fought in a war in more than 200 years. Those defending the program said it helped to connect the Swiss people, who do not share a single language or culture. Supporters also said the program aids national security by allowing the military to easily recruit the nation's best doctors, engineers and computer specialists to confront the evolving nature of war.

As for the nation, this program will create generations of young men ready and able to protect and defend the country. These young men will eventually be charged with securing the future of Qatar — protecting the country's culture, history and national advancements.

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Navy Staff Col. (SEAL) Abdullah Shaheen Al-Dosari is Qatar's senior national representative to U.S. Central Command. He has completed advanced military training in Qatar and abroad, including in the United States, France, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and at the Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth, England. He earned a Master of Arts degree in National Security and Strategic Studies from the U.S. Naval War College in 2010.

#### UAE BEGINS MILITARY CONSCRIPTION PROGRAM

#### UNIPATH STAFF

Like Qatar, the United Arab Emirates has created a compulsory military service program.

Signed into law in June 2014, the program mandates that men between the ages of 18 and 30 serve in the United Arab Emirates' Armed Forces. Those without a high school diploma must serve two years; those with a high school diploma or a higher degree must serve for nine months. The program is voluntary for women.

His Highness Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid Al Maktoum, vice president and prime minister, announced military conscription on Twitter in January 2014, saying the program will protect the country's sovereignty and independence.

"Our message to the world is a message of peace; the stronger we are, the stronger our message," he wrote.

Public reaction to the new program has been positive, with many youth saying they are eager to serve their country. The young men and women in the program will receive weapons training and learn skills such as how to respond to disasters.

Emirati political scientist Abdulkhaleq Abdulla said the decision shows the country's commitment to preserving its stability and prosperity. "With this kind of decision today, I think the country is saying, 'We want to continue with the stability and prosperity, but we are also well-equipped for any eventuality,' " Abdulla told Reuters. "We are living in a red zone. ... It's a very difficult zone with a lot of difficult neighbors. You need to be on guard all the time."

UAE Brig. Gen. Abdul Rahman bin Abdulaziz told *The National* that he has received many benefits during his 30 years of military service.

"They gave me everything," he said. "Good facilities, good hospitals, schools." The compulsory service program will teach younger generations the importance of protecting their country, he said. "You need to secure the future for you and your family, and it doesn't come easy so this is an excellent opportunity for them."

Sources: Gulf News, The National, WAM - Emirates News Agency, Reuters



A spectator waves the Emirati flag as troops celebrate the anniversary of the establishment of the United Arab Emirates. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

# THE THREAT OF Juvenile Crime

REGIONAL SECURITY IN CENTRAL ASIA SUFFERS WHEN YOUTH CRIME IS LEFT UNATTENDED

> STORY BY **DR. ERLAN BAKIEV**/GUEST AUTHOR PHOTOS BY REUTERS

fter the Soviet system unraveled in Central Asia about 20 years ago, governments of the region were

busy developing new governance structures. In the midst of these activities, the juvenile justice system was largely forgotten and attempts at reforms left incomplete. Central Asian countries have signed international agreements, joined international organizations and outlined reforms to the juvenile justice system. But despite these efforts, juveniles in this region of Asia continue to commit crimes, use drugs and join organized criminal groups at an increasing rate. That affects security in the region.

The task for these governments is twofold: Society needs protection against juvenile criminals, and juveniles need protection against a justice system that might not always treat them fairly.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the juvenile justice system suffered a similar collapse, but most Central Asian states did not establish even simple policies to handle juvenile cases. The process remains stymied by a shortage of professionalism among social workers and police officers working with young defendants. For instance, some police officers assigned to work with juveniles view the posting as punishment. Consequently, in these important positions, police departments employ uncompromising officers who know little about youth psychology.

This problem is compounded by the fact that the majority of the crimes, both minor and serious, committed by juveniles are less frequently reported by the victims, medical institutions and other related organizations. Therefore, the actual incidence of crimes committed by juveniles has substantially exceeded officially registered cases. In the opinion of one expert who looked closely at the Kyrgyz Republic, actual levels of juvenile crime may be three to four times higher than officially reported in government statistics.

#### REGIONAL VULNERABILITY

Before delving more deeply into the juvenile justice system, it is important to briefly review the history of the Central Asian states. Populated mostly by nomadic Turks with a rich history and culture, Central Asia has served as a crossroads for the movement of people, goods and ideas from Europe, the Middle East, South Asia and East Asia. Geographically, this area is a part of Asia situated in vast landlocked regions with wide steppes convenient for animal husbandry. The first settled region in Central Asia was the Fergana Valley, a vitally important territory where three states converge.

The region's geographic proximity to Afghanistan opens the gate wide to organized crime groups that smuggle drugs to





Russia and Europe. The most important hostages of this process are vulnerable youth who serve disproportionately as drug users and drug smugglers.

The region's system of government plays a big role in defending the administrative integrity of any state against crimes committed on its territory. Chaos and anarchy occur where government lacks authority throughout its national territory, forming vacuums in which vulnerable populations, especially juveniles, suffer.

#### ADDRESSING JUVENILE JUSTICE

Political liberalization and economic development are vital components to the region's long-term success. Because of different choices made in various Central Asian states, political, social and economic development has progressed at different speeds. This influenced the development of their juvenile justice systems, part of overall legal reform in these countries.

Some Central Asian states have amended criminal codes and ratified pacts dealing with juvenile justice. They've increased cooperation with international organizations such as UNESCO, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and the United Nations Development Programme to improve the quality of life of juveniles and address crime prevention policies among juveniles.

As of 2012, two states in Central Asia — Kazakhstan and Tajikistan — had adopted national juvenile justice strategies that comply with international standards.

In Kazakhstan, specialized nationwide juvenile courts were developed, and juvenile legal offices were opened.

A juvenile criminal police force with preventive and investigative functions was adopted. Similar developments were seen in Tajikistan. However, while implementing the National Plan of Action in Tajikistan, about 20 government bodies shared responsibility, raising issues of accountability and interorganizational cooperation.

#### CRIME PREVENTION

Success in the fight against juvenile crime requires strong preventive measures that eliminate the causes of crime. Consequently, the physical, psychological, ethical and legal characteristics of juvenile crimes are critical to developing preventive policies. For instance, one distinguishing feature of juvenile crime is the intensity and depth of its impact on the public. Minor crimes committed by juveniles are mostly excused and often go unreported by the authorities.

Criminal responsibility of minors in most of the post-Soviet states is covered within separate sections of the criminal codes and focuses more on rehabilitation in accordance with the principles of humanism and justice, as reflected in the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child. Some experts argue that successful interventions must deal with the multiple causes of juvenile antisocial behavior — and police, government ministries and social workers must all be attuned to these causes.

For instance, Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic developed new practices for juvenile police. The police officers in these departments are responsible for cooperating with the schools, where they give lectures on the law, supervise drug testing and monitor student conduct. In addition, police and



Left: Children leave school in Tokmok, Kyrgyz Republic. Some Central Asian states have begun training police to focus on crime prevention among juveniles.

Right: Youthful defendants stand trial in Kazakhstan in 2012, accused of rioting in the city of Aktau. The country has strived to comply with international standards in its treatment of young people accused of crimes. other related institutions are mandated to meet with parents to encourage them to fulfill their parental responsibilities.

#### LEGAL REFORM

Despite the substantial humanization of the criminal codes and codes of criminal procedure in Central Asia after the collapse of the Soviet Union, these amendments were drafted by specialists who have little expertise in juvenile justice. And although the new legal codes and subsequent amendments tended to incorporate international standards on due process, they left intact many principles and procedural features of Soviet criminal law.

Nevertheless, legal reforms have benefited juvenile justice, at least indirectly. Juveniles were granted basic rights. The death penalty and life sentences were prohibited. First-time offenders and nonserious offenders are no longer confined automatically to prison. Juveniles have a right to legal assistance from the moment of arrest and can request a lawyer's presence during questioning. Pretrial detention cannot last more than two months, with extensions of up to six months, and juveniles must be housed separately from adults. These humanitarian efforts have yielded positive results. The Kyrgyz Republic, for example, has reduced the number of prison sentences imposed on juveniles from 178 in 2005 to 35 in 2011.

Despite these reforms in the juvenile justice system, crime levels among juveniles are not declining. Between 2005 and 2012, the Kyrgyz Republic's juvenile crime rate increased by 15 percent. Another problem with the juvenile justice system is the latency of crimes committed by juveniles. The police less frequently receive notices from victims, medical institutions and other institutions, even about serious crimes that threaten life and health.

#### CONCLUSION

Central Asian states cannot afford to neglect juveniles. Despite signing several international pacts, ratifying international sanctions and reforming criminal codes, these countries still have major deficiencies in administering juvenile justice, particularly when it comes to prevention.

Most of these relatively recently created states lack appropriate institutions such as nonprofit organizations and social workers that could monitor progress in this field. It's safe to say that the deficiencies of the juvenile justice system in Central Asia occurred as a result of insufficient execution of policies. This insufficiency is illustrated by nonqualified public and nonprofit workers who execute both preventive and post-crime measures in the juvenile justice system.

In the name of national and regional security, leaders in this strategically vital part of the world must do better addressing the problems that afflict youth.  $\blacklozenge$ 

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

A native of the Kyrgyz Republic, Dr. Erlan Bakiev teaches at Zirve University in Turkey, where he is an assistant professor in the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences. Much of his work has focused on the problems of youth in his native region and how law enforcement agencies can address those issues.



# STRATEGIC THREATS TAMING YEMEN'S TURBULENT YOUTH BULGE REQUIRES A MULTINATIONAL COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC

TO EDUCATION AND ECONOMICS



UNIPATH ILLUSTRATION

PROFESSOR MURAD ALAZZANY/SANAA UNIVERSITY AND PROFESSOR ROBERT SHARP/NEAR EAST SOUTH ASIA CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES

emen's Pink Revolution began in 2011 and led to a series of substantial changes. The origins of the revolution consisted mostly of popular economic, political and security grievances. Protesters fed on the spirit of change emanating from Tunisia and rose up to plead for worthwhile jobs, decent housing and the right to grow up in a stable and safe country where they could build a better future for their families after years of repression. Many of the protesters naively believed that their sacrifice would lead to a more settled country where justice and equality would be assured.

Yemen's political progress is impressive, and some offer it as a model for transitioning Arab Spring countries. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) initiated an agreement for Yemen - signed in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on September 12, 2011 - that provided an implementation mechanism for the bloodless leadership transition process in Yemen. It led former President Ali Abdullah Saleh to surrender power to new President Abd-Rabu Mansour Hadi. A National Dialogue Conference concluded in early 2014, followed by the writing of a new Yemeni Constitution, a referendum, and new presidential and parliamentary elections. Recently, the Yemeni government has focused on security because al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) has used the disruptions of the transition to mount unfettered operations from Yemen's ungoverned spaces and has encouraged the Houthis to infiltrate the outskirts of Sanaa to clash with government security forces. The growing power vacuum has pitted Yemenis against Yemenis and created a struggle among political parties.

After three turbulent revolutionary years, the crucial question remains: Have the sacrifices, hopes and dreams of the protesters been fulfilled? While the government understandably concentrates its effort on security reform, it has yet to truly wrestle with a depressingly long series of humanitarian crises, in particular a chronic youth bulge that threatens what is one of the poorest countries in the Arab region.

## GROWTH RATE STRESSES

Almost three-quarters of Yemenis are under 30 years old. Although large numbers of working-age people can be an asset, the youth bulge in Yemen has aggravated pre-existing political and socio-economic stresses. With a growth rate of 2.5 percent annually in Yemen where women have an average of five to six children the population is expected to increase from 24 million to 35 million by 2025, twice the regional average.

So far, the government — dealing with limited resources because oil reserves are running out,





Men wait on a main street in Sanaa to be hired as laborers in November 2013. Yemen's unemployment rate is estimated at 35 percent, with youth joblessness at 60 percent. REUTERS

deteriorating security is preventing oil exploration, and saboteurs are attacking and cutting pipelines has failed to create enough jobs to meet growing demand. Oil and gas revenue represents about a third of

the gross domestic product, almost two-thirds of government revenues and 90 percent of exports.

Yemen's unemployment rate doubled from 14.6 percent in 2010 to 29 percent in 2011. Unemployment has intensified since 1991, when large numbers of Yemeni workers were repatriated from Gulf states following the first Gulf War and former President Saleh's support of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Up to 2 million workers originally from rural areas were forced to return to Yemen, stretching already stressed infrastructure for jobs, schools, health care and other basic social services. The government was unable to absorb them, and some argue that the influx of unexpected and unemployed people triggered an economic downturn that ultimately led to the civil war of 1994.

Today, traditional opportunities for youth migration within the region appear to have declined significantly. This situation is exacerbated by growing annual university enrollment, up from 35,000 in 1991 to nearly 300,000 in 2010 and the follow-on high rates of unemployment among young graduates. Yemeni workers are generally pessimistic, and unconfirmed reports suggest that as many as 60 percent of college graduates are unemployed. As Yemen recovers from its political transition and the economy grows, the public sector, financed by the state, is the preferred option for Yemen's young graduates. Although complete and credible statistics are unavailable, it appears there has been some progress with paying new public sector employees, which is encouraging. Whether the government can cope with the growing demand for these types of jobs is the big question, and the situation is compounded by a similar scarcity of jobs in the private sector.

For the foreseeable future, the youth bulge will continue to pose a direct threat to Yemen's stability and also create problems for local, regional and global security. Many link social unrest to the youth bulge: Disenfranchised, unemployed and discontented youth are a perfect breeding ground for AQAP, radicalization and general lawlessness. This is particularly true because many unemployed youth have nothing better to do than be paid thugs for the highest bidder, irrespective of the paymaster's agenda. They can be drawn into the political arena and recruited as demonstrators for a relatively low price. Providing guns, meals and money as a way to build status among unemployed and disadvantaged youth means AQAP presents an attractive alternative lifestyle. Terrorists can even tempt the uneducated — and the educated living in poverty — into suicide bombing. The gravity of the problem is amplified if other factors preventing Yemen's full development are

MANY LINK SOCIAL UNREST TO THE YOUTH BULGE: DISENFRANCHISED, UNEMPLOYED AND DISCONTENTED YOUTH ARE A PERFECT BREEDING GROUND FOR AQAP, RADICALIZATION AND GENERAL LAWLESSNESS.

taken into account: illiteracy rates of at least 25 percent among 15- to 24-year-olds, a poverty rate of 54 percent, malnutrition among 58 percent of Yemen's children, and an increase in preventable diseases.

## IDEAS FOR A BETTER FUTURE

Yemen clearly needs updated and responsible family planning education and support for government policies. At the national level, whole-of-government coordinated and synchronized actions including participation of the ministries of Health and Education must be developed to curb the forecasted population explosion. We suggest a national campaign, led by a senior female politician or, if so motivated, the wives of the president and/or prime minister. Family planning is vital to ensure progress, and in Yemen it is woefully inadequate. Half of Yemeni women use no form of family planning.

We suggest updating the 2006-2015 Yemeni National Youth and Children Strategy, based on input from the recently concluded National Dialogue Conference, and raise it to the level of a national presidential initiative. Education provides many solutions, but Yemen has only about 30 colleges and universities, despite the increased demand. We suggest the formation of an Emergency Educational Reform Committee chaired by the prime minister to address the educational crisis at the national level for prioritization and resourcing to shape education to prepare youth for achievable jobs. That would include a shift toward critical thinking and analysis and away from more traditional and outmoded forms of learning.

We propose a national campaign to promote the "New Yemen" among youth, using a hand-picked group of credible voices and celebrities to communicate a positive message. If Yemen's youth see an alternative future through hope, education and employment, they can be effectively deterred from a future of radicalization and violence and, more importantly, to recognize the difference through modern educational approaches.

Greater coordination is required between the public and private sectors to better tailor educational programs to labor demands. We suggest a standing ministerial policy level committee on job stimulation co-chaired by the minister of education. The prime minister would select a private sector equivalent co-chair and annually brief the parliament and the president.

Economic growth in Yemen requires international support, and we assume that existing pressure will continue

to be applied to international donors, especially the GCC, to support Yemen. But we recommend that donations and payments be linked directly to reasonable progress on the ground in Yemen as reflected in credible metrics. That would help focus policymakers and reduce donor fatigue. An opportunity exists for jobs through neighboring countries, and in particular, through the GCC. Yemenis have traditionally been a source of low-skilled workers to the GCC, particularly in construction and agriculture. Yemenis should be provided international visas and permits to work in GCC countries. International pressure and support is necessary to encourage the GCC and Yemen's neighbors to outsource jobs to Yemen's youth. The predicted enormous growth of youth must be managed if further destabilizing conditions are to be avoided.

Allowing Yemen to join the GCC as a full or associate member is a logical step and will attract much needed investment. It would benefit Yemen and its youth with jobs and benefit the GCC by filling lesser skilled jobs with a ready supply of qualified Yemenis. We suggest Yemen's president garner support from neighbors and propose actions to secure Yemen's GCC membership.

There may also be some employment options to the south, focusing on East Africa and using the proposed Bridge of the Horns, which would connect Yemen with Djibouti over the Bab al-Mandeb strait. We suggest Yemen's minister of foreign affairs actively examine options for employment of Yemenis in African states.

Yemen's youth bulge is a strategic threat that must be addressed now and through Yemeni whole-of-government actions with the support of international actors. It is not going to be easy, and the problem is not going away by itself. Sensible policies drawn up now and appropriate measures taken today can help shape Yemen's future.  $\blacklozenge$ 

Sources: The Washington Post, The New York Times, BBC, Al Jazeera, Yemen Times, Foreign Policy, World Bank, National Yemen, the United Nations, UNICEF, Frontline, IRIN, Open Democracy, CIA Factbook, Index Mundi, Hiiraan Online

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# **A Focus on Counterterrorism** Iraqi general promotes cooperation in fight against ISIL

UNIPATH STAFF

During tough situations, tough military leaders emerge. They are warriors who prefer the shadows to the limelight. They defend their nations and lead vital fights against enemies far away from the flashes of cameras. They seldom brag about their victories, and they humbly smile when someone recounts their bravery and sacrifices.

One of these rare men is Staff Gen. Talib Sheghati Alkenani, head of the Office of Counter Terrorism in Iraq, who was recently charged with leading a task force to counter the terror group calling itself the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). His military professionalism and loyalty to his nation are evident by his accomplishments. This quiet hero is considered a true expert in his field. His major concern is for national security and the safety of Iraqi citizens. He doesn't just track terrorist groups, but takes on the people who finance and plot terror attacks.

His military resume reveals a legacy of hard work in the field of counterterrorism. He earned the rank of major general before 2003. He served as the director of operations at Iraq's Air Defense headquarters, dean of the Air Defense Institute and later dean of the Air Defense College.

Gen. Alkenani was appointed to chair the Office of Counter Terrorism during a critical time for Baghdad: Innocent civilians were being blown up by al-Qaida car bombs, and sectarian violence was peaking. He was able to build the counterterrorism organization quickly under difficult circumstances. Soon, the force became the pride of Iraqis and the topic of discussions at special forces conferences and exercises.

The Iraq Office of Counter Terrorism is composed of many entities, and national security dictates that its operations and inner workings be kept private yet the successes of Iraq's special operations forces (ISOF) are evident across the country. The forces' victories against terrorists have served as the subject of songs and poems. The ISOF logo became a regular emblem on T-shirts proudly worn by college students, and social media sites used by Iraqis display images of their ISOF heroes.

"Leading the fight against

al-Qaida in Ramadi and Fallujah, the Iraqi Office of Counter Terrorism has proven to be a strategic force that specializes in defeating terrorism and has the capability to win battles rapidly and beyond the call of duty, displaying bravery that is well-respected among Iraqis," the general told *Unipath.* "The name of the organization was dubbed 'Medal of Honor' for all Iraqis, and the name of the ISOF became the favorite rhyme in Iraqi songs."

Alkenani transformed the forces under him into a powerful national asset loyal only to the country, with Soldiers who rise above political and sectarian struggles.

"The punishment for violations of asking about sect or revealing it to someone is dismissal from the institution," he said. This is how Alkenani set his zero-tolerance policy to fight internal sectarianism, a policy that is key to ensuring forces were loyal only to Iraq.

"Our forces carried out many successful operations against terrorist groups. For instance, they freed the hostages of the Lady of Salvations Church in the center of Baghdad in 2010. Al-Qaida in Iraq attacked the church during prayer time and held the people hostage, the majority being women and children. The terrorist objective was to cause a media storm, kill the hostages and destroy the church while the whole world watched. They hoped to further terrorize citizens and to send a message to the world that they were in control," Alkenani told *Unipath*.

"However, our forces disrupted al-Qaida's plan, took control of the church and freed the hostages in a very rapid and surprising move that killed the assailants in a short time and freed the hostages. The stories from the survivors revealed the plans of the terrorists to kill all hostages and destroy the historic church. The ISOF entered the church while the terrorists began executing their plan by randomly shooting and throwing hand grenades on the hostages. The bravery and heroism of our forces shocked the terrorists and defeated their plan."

The general is proud of such accomplishments and many others that help to safeguard Iraqi civilians.

"Our office conducts many missions to free child hostages and many advanced operations that I cannot talk about due to sensitivities and the confidentiality of the ongoing investigations," he added.

As ISIL increased its activities in Syria and northern Iraq in the second half of 2014, Gen. Alkenani was called upon to command the Iraqi task force operating against ISIL. Many Iraqi officials expressed optimism about the new commander. For example, the



"The security challenge that faces the region is tremendous, and it requires teamwork to control and destroy violence and terrorism. This battle required professional forces, loyal men and precise intelligence, as well as winning the trust of the populace."

~ Staff Gen. Talib Sheghati Alkenani

country's new President Fouad Masoum has invited Gen. Alkenani and his team to update him on progress against ISIL.

"We must pay attention to the regions that suffer conflicts and lack of law and order because these areas are considered a haven for terrorist organizations," Gen. Alkenani said. "A good example is what is happening in Syria and how the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant took advantage of the situation to stage attacks in nearby cities and countries. Without the training camps located across the border, ISIL would not be able to attack Iraqi cities and towns and terrorize our citizens.

"However, the Iraqi security forces, and especially the counterterrorism units, were on the front lines to fight and defeat ISIL in western and northern Iraq. And I'd like to commend the role of our brave tribes in honorably backing our security forces and helping liberate their towns and villages."

Achieving long-term stability will require more of that type of cooperation.

"The single effort cannot defeat terrorism because terrorism doesn't stop at international borders. For example, the lack of security in Iraq from 2005 to 2006 crossed the border to Jordan, where al-Qaida attacked three hotels, including a wedding party in Amman attacked using suicide vests. It also reached Saudi Arabia by what has been known as the Abed Alziz Almagran cell, responsible for car bombings, kidnapping and killing civilians. Therefore, we must unify regional efforts, concentrate on training and exercises, and focus on weapon quality and technology as well as participate in exercises with our friends like the United States that help develop the skills and knowledge for our Soldiers and introduce new tactics, technology and weapons that keep the ISOF at the advantage."



# **Gulf Nations Share Boarding Tips to Fight Maritime Crime**

#### COMBINED MARITIME FORCES

How to grapple with criminals engaged in smuggling and piracy was the subject of a Combined Maritime Forces seminar to improve ship-boarding tactics in the Arabian Gulf.

Officers from Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, as well those from Jordan and Pakistan, took part in a three-day event in December 2013 that concluded with a demonstration of participants' skills and knowledge.

Exchanging information was the main goal of the seminar, said Jordanian Navy Lt. Cmdr. Adel Mani, who helped organize the event. "It's a very brief event for such a huge subject, but it was a good opportunity for the participants to share experiences and learn about the boarding techniques used by other GCC nations. The aim is also to make friends. I can say we have achieved that and, most importantly, the participants have enjoyed their stay in Bahrain."

The training was hosted by the U.S. Coast Guard, and the practical assessment took place at Mina Salman Port, Manama, Bahrain. "Participants getting to know each other at this level is what builds coalitions," said Commodore Robert Hendrickson, commander of U.S. Coast Guard Patrol Forces Southwest Asia. "This is the end state

- sharing knowledge and resources for one common goal.

Qatari Navy Lt. Essa Al Tamimi agreed: "It has been a very useful course. The lectures gave us an idea of the challenges faced to detect smuggling and piracy, and there were a few real stories to give a better view of what's going on at sea."

Pakistan Navy Sub Lt. Mohammad Ahmed, a qualified boarding officer, often carries out boarding operations to protect fisheries and stop narcotics and human trafficking. What made the training useful for him was learning from the experiences of his multinational colleagues. "This has been a great exchange of tactics and a chance to share our different practices in a practical environment," he said.

During one of the scenarios, teams boarded a suspicious vessel and searched for hidden narcotics and clues suggesting criminality, such as false or incomplete documentation.

"I've gained a lot from the experience and made a lot of friends," said Jordanian 2nd Lt. Ahmad Algatawneh. "This has helped us all enhance our boarding skills, so we can now transfer that knowledge to our own units."





## BAHRAIN Provides Land for Peninsula Shield Force Headquarters

BAHRAIN NEWS AGENCY



His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa of Bahrain

In recognition of the pivotal role of the Joint Peninsula Shield Force, His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa of Bahrain has allocated 163,300 square meters of land to expand the force's headquarters.

In December 2013, the king, incumbent president of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), officially provided the land to bolster the GCC's collective defense. The initiative marked the official opening of the front-line headquarters of the joint Peninsula Shield Force.

The inaugural ceremony was held under the patronage of His Royal Highness Saudi Crown Prince Deputy Premier and Defense Minister Salman bin

Abdulaziz Al-Saud and other GCC defense ministers.

Peninsula Shield Force Commander Maj. Gen. Mutlaq bin Salim Al Azema'a hailed the new headquarters as a milestone of GCC security. He stressed the pivotal role of the Joint Peninsula Shield Force in answering the call of duty. He also paid tribute to GCC leaders for establishing the joint forces.

GCC defense ministers toured the site and received briefings on mobilization readiness and modern field technologies.

Bahrain's minister of state for defense affairs, Lt.-Gen. Dr. Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, hailed the headquarters and stressed the enthusiasm of the Bahrain Defense Force (BDF) to build bridges and coordinate with GCC member states.

"The front-line headquarters symbolizes unity and joint military work between the armed forces of the GCC member states," he said.

The minister and his GCC counterparts also attended a ceremony during which the foundation stone was laid for the Naval Coordination Center for Maritime Security at the Royal Bahrain Naval Force. Al Khalifa addressed the ceremony, stressing the strategic importance of the new center in unifying concepts, building capabilities and enforcing collective security.

He affirmed the pivotal role of the center in protecting the security and stability of Arabian Gulf territorial waters, defending shipping channels and exchanging data. The ceremony was attended by GCC Secretary-General Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani, BDF Chief of Staff Maj. Gen. Shaikh Daij bin Salman Al Khalifa, senior BDF officers and GCC delegations.

## KAZAKHSTAN CRACKS DOWN ON CORRUPTION

UNIPATH STAFF

proposed anti-corruption law in Kazakhstan will provide harsh financial penalties for government officials violating public trust.

Violators will face lifetime bans from public office, lose their official titles and ranks, and surrender their property for confiscation.

The fight against corruption has become a priority for Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev, who has urged members of governmental bureaucracies to uproot illicit practices, such as bribery. Supreme Court Chairman Kairat Mami is leading a related anti-corruption campaign to address similar complaints against provincial judges.

President Nazarbayev said he recognizes that corruption cannot be tackled without effective judicial reform. He called for measures to protect judges from outside pressures, a practice already banned by the Kazakh constitution. One such measure is the expansion of the number of judges by 25 percent.

## Kazak President Nursultan Nazarbayev stated that combating corruption is a priority for the political leadership.

To encourage transparency, the government has undertaken rigorous scrutiny of lower- and middleranking officials, who are most often in contact with businesses seeking favors. The state Agency for Fighting Economic and Corruption Crimes has adopted a new Strategic Anti-Corruption Plan 2011-2015, aiming to curb corruption at all levels.

A draft of the plan urges a comprehensive reform of law enforcement institutions to create an environment that would motivate public servants to conduct their duties honestly.

Source: The Jamestown Foundation



**PAKISTAN: Media Plays Important Role** in Countering **Extremism** 

### UNIPATH STAFF

The media must continue its important role in the fight against terrorism by denying extremists platforms to spout intolerance, Pakistani President Mamnoon Hussain told journalists during a meeting of the South Asian Free Media Association in December 2013.

"The government is determined to make Pakistan a secure state. We want to establish a durable peace in the region, so that the respective governments may concentrate on welfare of their people."

While upholding the principle of freedom of expression, the president urged journalists, in the name of the Pakistani people, to avoid stories that incite extremist violence.

"Pakistan is a democratic country, and its people believe in rule of law and peaceful struggle for the attainment of set ideals," he said.

Pakistan has suffered tremendously at the hands of extremists and terrorists, with thousands of Soldiers, security personnel and civilians dying as a result, he said. The violence has also damaged the nation's economy. Source: Associated Press of Pakistan

# **Illegal Housing Poses Security Threats**

### UNIPATH STAFF

Illegal construction of unplanned developments in Iraq is consuming the country's resources, such as municipal, social and financial services, as well as creating new security threats. More than 2.4 million people live in 347,881 illegal homes across the country, according to the Iragi Ministry of Planning. Alsabah Aljaded newspaper reported that 4.33 percent of the illegal homes are in Baghdad, and 3.8 percent are in Basra.

This trend spread across the country after 2003, as criminals claimed land and sold pieces to the poor. People began building homes randomly without considering the impact on resources and public planning. As a result, new ugly cities formed within cities. These random developments are not connected to the sewer, and many have illegally tapped into nearby city power and water. Lakes of sewage have formed, posing disease threats.

These illegal homes drain power intended for other uses. For instance, electricity planned for 10 homes instead feeds 100 illegal homes. The homes disrupt electricity for the entire city and can destroy local transformers.

The biggest challenge posed by illegal building is security. Residents of these random cities come from unknown places and unknown backgrounds. Police and authorities have difficulty providing protection because the unauthorized housing does not appear on municipal maps, which makes the developments good hideouts for organized crime and terrorist groups. In Basra, for example, authorities found homes used by a kidnapping network to hold hostages. In Baghdad, authorities captured a gang that robbed wealthy homes by acting as official security forces. A child was murdered in one of the dark narrow alleys of an illegal development in Baghdad.

These "hot" areas are considered preferred locations to construct car bombs and have become temporary transfer facilities for terrorists and weapon caches.

unplanned development east of Baghdad.

This photo shows a structure in an



# Jordan Joins the U.N. Security Council

### UNIPATH STAFF

For the third time, Jordan has accepted a position as a nonpermanent member of the United Nations Security Council.

The award of a Security Council seat "recognizes the role of Jordanian diplomacy worldwide," Jordanian Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh said.

The country served as a nonpermanent member from 1964 to 1965 and again from 1982 to 1983. Jordan joins Chad, Chile, Lithuania and Nigeria for the two-year term that began January 1, 2014. The five permanent Council members are China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States. Other nonpermanent members are: Argentina, Australia, Luxembourg, South Korea and Rwanda. Those five countries will remain on the council until the end of 2014.

A vast majority of U.N. General Assembly states voted in favor of Jordan -178 out of 183 - and Judeh attributed the honor to the general appreciation and respect that member states have for King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein.

Jordan's presence on the council will enable the nation to serve Arab issues and enhance the kingdom's position at the international level, Judeh said. The country has contributed thousands of troops to U.N. peacekeeping operations around the world

Egyptian Ambassador to Jordan Khaled Tharwat said Jordan's election as a nonpermanent member recognizes Jordan's commitment to achieve peace in the region.

"We consider this step as an opportunity to enhance dialogue in the Middle East, and we are sure that Jordan will represent the Arabs at the Security Council and support Arab causes, mainly



Jordanian Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh, right, is congratulated after his country was elected by the U.N. General Assembly as a nonpermanent member of the Security Council.

the Palestinian issue and the Arab viewpoint on the Syrian crisis," Tharwat said.

Jordanian U.N. Ambassador His Royal Highness Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid al-Hussein served as president of the council in January, with meetings focused on conflicts in Syria, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali and Sudan's Western Darfur state. Jordan is scheduled to preside over the council again in April 2015.

Sources: Agence France-Presse, The Jordan Times,  $\ensuremath{\mathsf{PETRA}}$  – Jordan News Agency, Reuters, United Nations

# **DOHA HOSTS STRATEGIC COUNTERTERRORISM MEETING**

### UNITED NATIONS

Gulf nations gathered in Qatar in December 2013 to integrate national counterterrorism strategies under the aegis of the United Nations.

The Qatari National Counter-Terrorism Committee and the U.N.'s Counter-Terrorism Committee of the Security Council held a regional meeting for the Gulf Cooperation Council member states in Doha. Talks focused on ways to develop and implement comprehensive and integrated national counterterrorism strategies in accordance with U.N. Security Council resolution 1963.

During the three-day event, representatives of the Gulf countries, along with international and regional

organizations, examined the relevance of putting in place comprehensive counterterrorism strategies and their development in light of the Bogota Principles developed early in 2013.

The meeting concluded with the adoption of recommendations that reinforced the importance of the U.N. Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and its action plan. That strategy, combined with the Bogota Principles, provides a blueprint for the development of national strategies that integrate the specific needs of concerned member states and respect human rights and the rule of law.



# **Cooperation Helps Combat Gulf Maritime Threats**

#### UNIPATH STAFF

Countering underwater threats from submarines and mines topped the agenda at the second Gulf Naval Commanders Conference in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, in November 2013. The event brought together more than 350 military, government and industry leaders who ultimately promoted cooperation and information sharing among countries to overcome dangers.

"We're in a region where its livelihood depends extremely on sea lanes," said Riad Kahwaji, chief executive of the Institute for Near East and Gulf Military Analysis. "Without secured sea lanes, the region cannot live, and therefore, the priority here is for maritime security, to have strong naval capabilities that will keep them secure and open at all times."

The conference covered a wide range of topics that impact the Arabian Gulf and beyond. Joint multinational naval patrols have recently stemmed the Somali piracy threat, but submarines and mines, being harder to detect, remain a threat.

UAE Naval Cmdr. Rear Adm. Ibrahim Al Musharrakh said the Gulf's shallow waters inhibit the use of sonar in detecting small submarines, known as midgets. "Offshore activities and commercial

traffic generating an important underwater ambient noise make it easier for electrically propelled midgets to operate undetected," Al Musharrakh said, according to The National. "We need to have a fair assessment of the threat they represent for us and have a perfect knowledge of their characteristics, capabilities, missions, activities, area of patrols and weaknesses."

French Rear Adm. Antoine Beaussant, who commands his country's forces in the Indian Ocean, agreed that shallow waters present a challenge. "The best thing to do is to eliminate the submarine threats before they go at sea, so it's best to invest in special forces and air strikes than to invest in huge submarine forces," Beaussant said.

Mines present another problem. "Any mine-laying operation would significantly reduce our ability to deploy safely our naval units at sea," Al Musharrakh said. "We need to be able to work together and concentrate our efforts along designated routes. We also need to get a permanent, up-to-date and realtime surface picture of the whole area to prevent the enemy from conducting any suspicious activities."

Sources: Al Defaiya, Institute for Near East and Gulf Military Analysis, and The National



A midget submarine seized near Costa Rica was being used to traffic drugs. These vessels, which sonar has a hard time detecting, are viewed as a growing threat.

## **Turkmenistan Focuses on Anti-Money Laundering**

#### ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE

Effective mechanisms to prevent and combat money laundering were the focus of an Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)-organized workshop that took place in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, in November 2013.

The workshop brought together officials from the Finance Ministry's Finance Intelligence Unit, the Economy and Development Ministry, Foreign Ministry, the State Tax Service, law-enforcement agencies and banks, as well as experts from Poland, Serbia and the OSCE Secretariat.

"Money laundering poses a threat to the functioning of the economy, as well as to national and international security," said Ambassador Ivo Petrov, head

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of the OSCE center in Ashgabat. "Antimoney-laundering measures are playing an essential role in promoting economic development, private businesses and the rule of law. The efforts of states to

fight money laundering and the financing of terrorism in Turkmenistan.

The workshop was a continuation of a previous workshop on anti-corruption mechanisms held in April 2013 and is

## "Money laundering poses a threat to the functioning of the economy, as well as to national and international security."

~ Ambassador Ivo Petrov, head of the OSCE center in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

combat money laundering should become part of their economic reform measures. and the OSCE stands ready to assist its participating states in developing effective anti-money-laundering mechanisms."

Workshop participants discussed national risk assessment and activities to part of the center's project on reinforcing good governance principles in the country. Other 2013 activities under the project included a study tour to Serbia for officials from Turkmenistan to discuss anti-corruption and anti-money-laundering practices with Serbian counterparts.

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# Kyrgyz Officials Advance in Detecting Forged Travel Documents

ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE

he Kyrgyz Republic State Border Service formally accepted the donation of a renovated training room, computer equipment and study materials from the Organization for Security and Co-operation (OSCE) Centre in Bishkek in December 2013. The ceremony marked the completion of a capacity-building course on travel document security.

The goal is to enhance border security and improve management practices of Kyrgyz border agencies by helping officers acquire knowledge and skills in detecting counterfeit documents and using ID databases.

The project also included exchanges between airport officials from the border services of the Kyrgyz Republic and Russia working in airports in Bishkek, Osh and Moscow.

"Illegal use of travel documents is usually linked to various types of transborder crimes, such as international criminal syndicates' activities, drug smuggling, human trafficking and terrorism," said Ambassador Sergey Kapinos, head of the OSCE Centre in Bishkek. "Timely detection of forged IDs can help tackle these crimes and enhance the national security of Kyrgyzstan." He added that the OSCE Centre in Bishkek would continue and broaden such training activities.

Col. Kalmurat Baitoloev, deputy head of the Kyrgyz State Border Service, said: "With the training and technical materials provided by the OSCE, we will be able to more efficiently combat the illegal use of counterfeit documents.

"These new technologies will allow us not only to counter drug and human trafficking and curb the spread of religious extremism and international terrorism, but also to ensure simpler transit procedures for those who travel legally."



## SAUDI ARABIA AND FRANCE TAKE PART IN JOINT MILITARY EXERCISES

UNIPATH STAFF

ilitaries from Saudi Arabia and France focused on honing their mountain warfare skills during a combined military exercise in November 2013.

The Royal Saudi Land Forces and their French counterparts conducted air and ground drills in and around Saudi Arabia's al-Sirwat mountain range, offering the two militaries a chance to practice offensive tactics on rugged terrain.

His Royal Highness Maj. Gen. Prince Fahad bin Turki Abdulaziz al-Saud, deputy commander of the ground forces, commander of the paratrooper units and special forces, praised the Saudi-French cooperation and promised further drills with Jordanian and U.S. forces.

French officer Christian Vadim was impressed by the skills of the Saudi forces. **"They are talented and know how to use their weaponry. They are also very keen to learn from the French Soldiers,"** Vadim said in a report on Al Arabiya.

Further training will allow Saudi troops to train with the French in the Alps. Source: Al Arabiya

## LEBANON OPENS FIRST CIVIL-MILITARY COOPERATION OFFICES

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME LEBANON

he Lebanese Army inaugurated the Civil-Military Cooperation Offices (CIMIC) in December 2013 as part of the United Nations project Addressing Urban Hot Spots in Lebanon. Army Commander Gen. Jean Kahwaji, U.N. Development Programme Country Director Luca Renda and representatives of the U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon and the Office of the U.N. Special Coordinator for Lebanon attended the ceremony.

During the event, attendees expressed their gratitude for the social and humanitarian initiatives led by the U.N. organizations in collaboration with the Lebanese Army. The U.N. country team supported the development of institutional CIMIC requirements in the Lebanese Army through the Peace Building Fund Programme.

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# YEMENI POLICE TRAIN IN JORDAN

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Ten Yemeni senior police officers leading newly structured departments attended an intensive two-week training course on leadership and strategic planning at Jordan's Royal Police Academy in Amman in November 2013.

The course was organized by the Jordanian Ministry of Interior in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme/Emergency Capacity Development Facility project and the Public Security Directorate of Jordan. The U.S Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotic and Law Enforcement provided financing.

The first week included theory and focus on enhancing the leadership, strategic planning and personal effectiveness skills of the participants. The second week offered practical training in different branches of the police within the Public Security Directorate of Jordan.

In an opening speech, Jordanian Maj. Gen. Dr. Abed Mudi Al Dmour, deputy director of the Public Security Directorate for Criminal Investigation, said that his agency would "spare no efforts to equip the senior officers from the Ministry of Interior in Yemen with



Yemeni police leaders attend a leadership and strategic planning course in Jordan.

adequate knowledge and the skills in leadership and strategic planning which will enable them to serve the needs of their departments."

Yemeni Maj. Gen. Dr. Awad Yaeish, head of rehabilitation and reform department at Yemen's ministry of interior, thanked the Jordanians and U.N. and U.S. officials for their continuous support to the Ministry of Interior.

# Arab League Developing Media Strategy Against Terrorism

#### UNIPATH STAFF

Countering terrorism requires attention to all fronts — that's why the League of Arab States is developing a joint media strategy to confront the issue. A panel of experts is examining the role the media plays in confronting and defeating terrorism, as well as guidelines that promote best practices.

During a December 2013 meeting at the Arab League's headquarters in Cairo, officials discussed the proposal for a

joint Arab media strategy initiated by Saudi Arabia. The country's Naif Arab University for Security Sciences is assisting with the research, which will eventually be submitted to the Arab League's Executive Office and the Council of Arab Information Ministers to review, and if approved, implement.

In the future, workshops will be held for officials and the media regarding strategies for news coverage about terrorist attacks.





## BATTLEFIELD TRAUMA: Afghan National Army Hones Medical Care

CPL. AUSTIN LONG/U.S. MARINE CORPS

When an Afghan National Army Soldier is injured by a roadside bomb, surgeons diligently clean the wound, examine it for shrapnel and bandage the injury to prevent infection.

For the Soldier, triage represents a simple procedure and a few days of rehabilitation at Camp Shorabak's medical clinic, but for the Afghan National Army's (ANA) 215th Corps, triage training represents years of hard work.

#### TAKING THE MEDICAL LEAD

As coalition forces reduce their footprint, responsibility for providing medical care to injured Soldiers belongs to the ANA's medics and surgeons.

Advancements in battlefield care, the construction of surgical and medical treatment facilities, and the addition of transportation resources have helped the 215 Corps' medical unit grow in self-sufficiency and effectiveness.

When a Soldier is injured, the first responder is the unit's field medic, an enlisted Soldier equipped to aid and assess the injury and transfer the patient to a medical facility.

Since 2010, unit medics have received two months of lifesaving training at the Armed Forces Academy of Medical Sciences in Kabul to learn



An Afghan National Army medic injects a Soldier with penicillin at the aid station of the 2nd Brigade, 215th Corps. SGT. BRYAN PETERSON/U.S. MARINE CORPS

hands-on trauma care techniques for stabilizing injuries on the battlefield. The 215th Corps has more than 150 field medics serving throughout Helmand province, and Sgt. Abdul Qadir Momand is one of them. Momand has been an Army medic for five years and has witnessed the evolution of battlefield care. "I feel great knowing I am helping a casualty and getting him to better care when I am out with a unit on the battlefield." Momand said.

#### **PERFORMING SURGERIES**

Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) are common sources of battlefield injuries

that require surgery. Surgeons can administer care ranging from cleaning shrapnel to saving a limb. Most Army surgeons studied at Kabul Medical University and have years of experience. In 2013, the unit built a surgical ward at Camp Shorabak to treat the wounded.

The design of the surgical ward is rudimentary — a small tent placed inside an old warehouse. But inside, the surgeons have state-of-the-art medical equipment and can conduct simple and complex battlefield surgeries from this location.

#### THE SHORABAK CLINIC

After surgery, a Soldier is moved to the 215th Corps' clinic adjacent to the surgical ward at Camp Shorabak. The building is small, but allows medical personnel to treat and monitor approximately 25 patients at a time. The clinic is equipped with an X-ray machine, dental office and pharmacy.

ANA Col. Mohamad Agah, the 215th Corps' lead surgeon, said he believes the future of the 215th Corps is clear.

Said Agah: "If my medics and medical staff continue doing as well as we have been, we will continue to have success with our patients surviving and returning home or to the fight."

## **OMAN INAUGURATES DEFENSE COLLEGE**

#### UNIPATH STAFF

Oman celebrated the opening of a new college to strengthen the sultanate's military forces and integrate strategic defense planning with civilian leaders. In December 2013, officials met at the National Defense College in Muaskar Bait al Falaj.

The Ministry of Defense and the Sultan's Armed Forces hosted the ceremony to mark the occasion under the patronage of Sayyid Shihab bin Tariq Al Said, advisor to His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said. He said the college will be a center for strategic defense and political studies.

Maj. Gen. Salim bin Musallam bin Ali bin Qatan is serving as commander of the college, which has been in the works for several years under the direction of the sultan. It is linked academically with prestigious Sultan Qaboos University and is open to foreign officers as well.

Sources: Oman Tribune, Oman News Agency, Times of Oman



Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said AFP/GETTY IMAGES



# **GCC States Push for Joint Military and Police Action**

UNIPATH STAFF

New measures designed to increase regional security by countering terrorism and tackling cross-border organized crime in Gulf countries will unify military and police commands across most Gulf Cooperation Council countries. During the annual GCC meeting in Kuwait in December 2013, leaders decided to create a joint security command.

"One of our strategic goals is to secure the GCC against all threats, specifically acts such as terrorism and external aggression," GCC Secretary-General Dr. Abdullatif Al Zayani said in a *Gulf Daily News* article.

Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates signed off on the plan. Omani officials said their security forces will not take part; however, the country has the option to participate later.

Part of the plan allows for fugitives wanted for crimes in one Gulf Cooperation Council state to be tried in another GCC state.



Components of the unified military and police command resemble those of Europol, the European Union's criminal intelligence-focused law enforcement agency. Under the new guidelines, a criminal in

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one Gulf country can be arrested and prosecuted in another. However, the country where the crime occurred could ask that the suspect be returned or dispatch its own police to help with the investigation.

The new rules are part of a unified GCC Security Convention.

Jailed GCC citizens are offered the option to serve a sentence in their homeland. Gulf countries can also request information on citizens living in neighboring GCC states.

"No one will be forced to serve their sentences in the prison of any country they don't want to be in, and the convention will give prisoners the choice between serving their term in the country where the crime has been committed or moved to a prison in their homeland," an Interior Ministry official told Bahrain's Shura Council members.

Bahrain's Dr. Sheikh Khaled bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, chairman of the Shura Council's Foreign Affairs, Defense and National Security Committee, said the new plan will make Gulf countries safer.

"Criminals thinking they can go unpunished will be pursued under this convention in all member states. They will be taken for trial in the country they get caught in or could be brought home for trial, depending on where the crime is committed," he said.

The convention will improve information sharing between Gulf police forces and joint training exercises at specialized centers. "There will be exchange between member states in bylaws and disciplinary codes, besides education and training programs. Specialized training centers for security personnel will also be formed to provide training and education on the most advanced technologies used to combat crime," Sheikh Khaled said.

Officials believe that closer cooperation will improve border security through information sharing on high-profile criminals and deportees.

"Any attack on one is an attack on all, and any tension should be resolved through political dialogue and cooperation between GCC leaders and allies. We have already established a GCC Emergency Risk Management Center in Kuwait to help advice leaders on regional or anticipated threats," Al Zayani said.

The center coordinates GCC disaster aid and conducts training programs. Sources: Al Defaiya, Asharq Al-Awsat, Gulf Daily News

> Militaries from Gulf Cooperation Council countries participate in a military exercise off the Kuwaiti coast in 2013. APP/OFTY IMAGES



# **TAJIKS ENHANCE DISASTER READINESS SKILLS**

#### WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

When disaster strikes, most lives are lost or saved in the immediate aftermath of the event, depending on the ability of health systems to provide lifesaving services quickly and efficiently. Large numbers of victims can quickly overwhelm local emergency medical services.

That's why health care professionals in Tajikistan took part in an extensive disaster preparedness project. The 18-month project that ended in November 2013 was coordinated by the World Health Organization (WHO) with support from the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Directorate General (ECHO) and its disaster preparedness program, more commonly known as DIPECHO.

The project aimed to enhance the capacity of the Tajik government to reduce the impact of masscasualty incidents (MCI) by better managing victims. It involved more than 475 medical professionals and rescuers.

The project also procured 20 trauma kits for nine pilot hospitals, and the WHO ordered another 40 medical first responder MCI medical kits for places such as fire stations.

An MCI is defined as an event that generates more patients than locally available resources can manage using routine procedures. It requires exceptional emergency arrangements and additional or extraordinary assistance. A well-planned and practiced mass-casualty management system is based on an all-hazards approach, focusing on the need to provide lifesaving care to the injured.

This system increases disaster readiness, reducing overall risk to the population and health system. This has been accomplished in Tajikistan through an integrated disaster/emergency planning process involving the Ministry of Health, Committee of Emergency Situations and the Ministry of Internal Affairs.



#### UNIPATH STAFF

new center in Kuwait will strengthen the region's ability to overcome threats from natural disasters such as flash floods and sandstorms. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Emergency Management Center will advise member countries about potential security threats, coordinate response efforts and disaster aid, and host training events.

"The GCC Disaster Management Center will work toward strengthening Gulf capacities in [disaster risk reduction]," said Abdel Aziz Hamza, director of the center. "It is important to promote the use and transfer of advanced technologies and knowledge to address disaster risk reduction and emergencies."

The center is also charged with disseminating information to the public before and during a crisis. Hamza has proposed bolstering school curriculums with lessons on reducing the impact of disasters.

Sources: United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, Gulf Daily News, Trade Arabia

## UZBEKISTAN ANTI-MONEY-LAUNDERING **RULES TAKE EFFECT**

UNIPATH STAFF

zbekistan has implemented new regulations to block criminals from laundering money or financing terrorists.

Banks must verify a customer's identity during foreign currency sales worth more than \$4,179 and foreign currency purchases worth more than \$1,044. In the past, amounts needed to be 10 times larger to trigger an identity check.

A further regulation requires banks to verify identities of customers accepting electronic transfers of foreign currency or making such transfers of their own.

Since 2005, Uzbekistan has been a member of the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing.

Sources: Central Asia Online, Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing, UzReport Information Agency

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