

Media and Tourism Development in the Age of War in Yemen 2015 – 2017Hesham Mohammed Ghaleb Saeed^{1*}, Dr. Gurusiddaiah C²¹Ph.D. Candidate at University of Mysore, Department of West Asian Studies, University of Mysore, Karnataka, India²Assistant Professor, Department of West Asian Studies, University of Mysore, Karnataka, India***Corresponding author**Hesham Mohammed Ghaleb
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Abstract: Yemen is one of the most copious countries in the Arab world, rich in natural and human resources, and the most lost with political and economic instability. Although Yemen is one of the wealthiest countries in the region with oil, minerals, and liquefied natural gas, it has long been used to serve the ruling family without paying attention to the economy of the country and the quality of life of Yemenis. Since the beginning of the war which was imposed by the armed militias (Houthis) on Yemen on 21 September, 2015 Yemeni media has become, in all their forms, one of the tools used in the war means for demolition not only of the buildings but development in various dimensions. The absence of the press freedom and the inability of the Yemeni media to give the facts has resulted in the absence of neutrality and professionalism. Media nowadays is used as an instrument to assert influence by militias and the legitimate government at the same time. The tourism activity has declined which has resulted in substantial financial losses to the economies of Yemen during the first year of the war together with the widespread phenomenon of unemployment among the workers in the tourism sector. Conflicts continue on the political, media and partisan levels, and Yemen's losses multiply day by day.

Keywords: Democracy, Tourism development, Media, Economic stability, Tribalism, Yemen.

INTRODUCTION

The richness of the society is not measured by the magnitude of things it possesses, but by the wealth of ideas. The community may go through painful conditions such as floods and wars; however if at the same time, the society has lost control of the world of ideas, the destruction would be a tragedy. However, if he can save his thoughts, he has saved everything, because he can rebuild the world of things [1].

Yemen is one of the most abundant countries in the Arab world, rich in natural and human resources, and the most loss of political and economic instability due to the following reasons:

- Conflicts of political parties to seize power which has been exploited by some regional parties to pass its objectives such as the seizure of the Strait of Bab al-Mandab and the port of Aden rather than the disruption of the production movement, especially oil production in Yemen. With the extension of the time of war and the siege imposed on Yemen by the Arab alliance countries, it resulted in the cessation of the movement of tourism activity entirely. In addition to the destruction and damage to a number of tourist attractions such as archaeological sites (castles, historic fortresses, bridges, natural pools, public parks, sports and cultural clubs and other infrastructure)

- Yemen has lived for three decades under the control of the ruler's mentality with the slogan of democracy, and multi-party but has not achieved any renaissance compared to the possessions and wealth it has. Yemen has been lagging behind due to government policies which imposed by the power of the political party led by the President of the country in one way or another.
- During the Arab spring revolution in 2011, Yemen was one of the countries whose youth, women, elders, and children went out to sit in the public squares demanding a change of the regime in the country. These sit-ins accompanied by full media coverage at the international and regional levels, since then, Yemen has witnessed wars, partisan, civil and sectarian conflicts that have eroded the economy of the homeland and destroyed its gains. The media were no more than instruments of war, not a means of peace and development.

OBJECTIVES

This paper aims to reveal the following:

- To describe the role played by Yemeni Media in the development of tourism during the war 2015/2017;
- To clarify the relationship between tribalism, media, war, and tourism development in Yemen during 2015-2017;

- To analyze the effect of war on media and tourism development in Yemen; and
- To propose strategies to increase media freedom and encourage tourism development in Yemen.

The Framework of Media, War and Tourism Development [2]



Source: The Author

METHODOLOGY

This article is written entirely from secondary sources that include reviews of books, journals, media proceedings and other secondary materials.

Tourism in Yemen

Jimmy Carter, The President of the United States of America, during his visit to Yemen in 1993, said: "Yemen is a valuable tourist treasure, which can bring more income than oil or any other economic resources " [3]. There is no doubt that the American President's statement based on actual living facts, which he saw and lived during his visit to Yemen. Natural resources represented by mountains, rivers, seas, waterfalls, and sulfur baths, so on, in addition to the architecture such as historical cities, palaces, temples, water dams, handicrafts, famous markets and the Yemeni cultural heritage with stunning details.

The tourism services and facilities constitute the other part of the tourist product; this is what the American president meant. He only pointed out that Yemen has a treasure that is the raw materials that have not yet exploited. Here comes the role of the Yemeni government in providing tourism services of different dimensions, To achieve optimal utilization of resources, hence we can talk about the tourism industry in Yemen. Rather than political and security stability, which is the cornerstone and basis of all plans and strategies aimed

at achieving development in general, and tourism development in particular.

Media in Yemen during 2015/2017

The Yemeni media has witnessed its worst stage in two decades with declining media freedom, the decline in the number of media and media outlets, the destruction of infrastructure and the decline in professionalism. Furthermore the state of division and fragmentation that has become prevalent in the Yemeni media today. During the years 2015-2017, the Yemeni media faced the most violent repression. More than 26 journalists have been killed by the civil war in Yemen in early 2015. Hundreds of journalists were wounded, and dozens of them still held in prisons or unknown places. They do not enjoy the simplest rights of prisoners [4].

For the first time in Yemen, the death sentence of a journalist, while the number of journalists faces campaigns of incitement daily, hundreds of them flee the repression to neighboring countries such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan and Turkey, dozens of independent (non-partisan) electronic media sites are blocked. There are no press releases in the capital Sana'a that has a different press orientation from the coup authority (the Houthi militias and former President Ali Abdullah Saleh).

Table-1: Details of Yemeni Media before and after the Coup

Press releases and publications before the coup in 2013		Press releases and publications after the coup in September 2014
Number of issues	Details	Ten (10) press releases
17	Daily Issue	
155	Weekly Issue	
26	Bi-monthly Issue	
81	Monthly Issue	
16	Quarterly Issue	
295	Yemeni Issuance and publications	

Source: Yemeni media before and after the storming of the Yemeni capital by the armed militias in paper represented on 21 September 2014 [5]

It is clear from the table that the number of press publications reached 265, especially after the fall of President Ali Abdullah Saleh's regime 2012-2013, which many consider the beginning of the golden age of the media [6]. However, with only ten publications working for the coup militias and supporting their illegitimate view in 2014. (Nabil Al-Usaidi, Member of the Yemeni Journalists Association) " This period is the worst for the Yemeni press and Media. Some journalists were killed, and a large number of them were kidnapped" [7] He revealed there was "layoffs of more than 300 journalists and workers in Sana'a Radio and that all previous media leaders were changed to be replaced by other leaders belonging to the militias in all official media occupied by them. Since the coup of the militias on the Yemeni government elected on 21 September 2014 until today The Yemeni press is subjected to some violations, which are countless, multiplied day after day. Insiders mention some of these violations [8]:

- 19 journalists killed
- The abduction of 115 journalists for various periods, including those released with guarantees not to continue to transfer facts, and also deprive some of the practice of journalism. Some are still in the prisons of the militias, as the arrests are continuing
- 37 cases of beating (physical abuse)
- 12 cases of storming houses of journalists and the looting of their property
- 11 torture cases
- 51 threat, harassment, and defamation
- 36 cases of suspension of newspapers
- 130 cases of blocking electronic press sites, Yemeni and Arab news sites
- 630 journalists have lost their jobs since the coup [9]

Radio

The number of local radio channels has increased in the last period to reach 12 local radio stations in 2013 rather than official radio stations. Sana'a, Aden, and Taiz, where local channels are working to broadcast their programs at the level of the governorate and neighboring areas. The private sector

has also established a number of radio stations, Radio Yemen Times, Radio Hayat FM, Radio Yemen FM, Voice of Yemen, Nass FM, in addition to a number of local FM channels that have recently spread to the capital Sana'a and other governorates [10].

The radio stations after the coup, are under the control of the militias in the cities that were stormed, such as Radio Sana'a, Radio Ibb, Radio Hodeidah and others. While other radio stations in liberated cities, such as Radio Aden, Mukalla are still at the disposal of the legitimate government, which has been taken from the city of Aden as a temporary capital until the liberation of Sanaa, the capital of Yemen. During the war, the Yemeni arena did not develop on the official level as much as the media war is the mouthpiece of existing radio stations and every radio trying to attract the masses to serve the goals of the dominant.

By the beginning of 2014, the media in Yemen is witnessing an increase in the establishment of private FM radio stations. Despite the fact that there is no law regulating the work of these radio stations, which is seen by specialists as a natural result of the secretions of change that the country has undergone since 2011. Breaking the state monopoly of media ownership, especially channels and radio stations. The most recent of these was the (Sawt of Yemen), preceded by Hayat FM, Radio Yemen Times and Yemen FM. In late May, (Sawt Al-Nas) radio joined the list. Since the Yemeni law prohibits the establishment of radio stations except for the state and the political parties, some individuals have worked to import the necessary equipment for this type of radio stations through secret methods (smuggling) [11]. It is noted that the coup militias resorted to the closure of eight official local radio stations belonging to the Yemeni government [12].

Visual Media

For three consecutive decades, Yemeni media was one of the supporting pillars of the regime, Ali Abdullah Saleh, leader of the individual, his achievements, and donations. After the revolution of 2011, the Yemeni media witnessed a boom regarding the number of satellite channels. However, these channels did not make a difference in the level of their

professional work or the advancement of their rhetoric. They continued in the closed circle confined to mobilizing political supporters, against the national interest. The Yemeni media discourse was and still is a political speech with distinction, but the sectarian dimension of the Yemeni media did not crystallize as it was today only after the control of the Houthi group and Ali Abdullah Saleh on government institutions in September 2015. With the beginning of civil strife and the launching of military operations of the Arab coalition forces led by Saudi Arabia, the sectarian discourse of the Yemeni media has increased. For the same reasons, the media aligned themselves with the Huthis and Saleh (the militias) with the legitimate authority represented by President Abdu-Rabbo Mansour Hadi. Both are fighting their war, along with the insurgents [13].

During the storming of Sanaa by the militias of the coup backed by the power of former President Ali Abdullah Saleh and the confiscation of satellite channels, found themselves forced to work from outside Yemen. According to Malak Thobhani, writer, journalist, Yemen has seen in two years 2012-2013 a significant shift in visual media. The number of satellite channels remarkably increased by the revolution of the Arab Spring February 11, 2011, of political differences. The number of Yemeni channels reached 14 including four official channels, and ten private channels which belong to people in business, tribal groups, political parties, and mostly broadcasted from outside Yemen, such as Beirut and Cairo [14].

In this context, the researchers (Azaazei and Rashidi) indicate: that the period followed the youth revolution in 2011 was a golden stage for the media in Yemen, which led to a significant opening up of media freedom. Partisan and independent satellite channels. For the first time in the history of Yemen, dozens of independent newspapers issued in addition to dozens of news websites. The researcher concluded that the worst period experienced by the Yemeni media was after the coup of the 21st of September of 2014. This stage recorded a frightening end of violations compared to the previous stages of the popular youth revolution in 2011 [15].

Among the violations recorded by the militias against the media in Yemen is the closure of 10 satellite channels [16]. Wadah al-Galil points out that the number reached 36 cases of closing the television channel offices. TV channel workers were also laid off from their work, as was the case with Yemeni television which had 400 employees [17].

The War in Yemen 2015-2017

The conflicts between the political parties in Yemen are escalating day after day, especially after the failure of the partnership between the two ruling parties (Almutamar Alshabi Alaam and Altajamu Al Yemeni

lileslah). The latter decided to withdraw from power and join the opposition parties. However, all the political parties, including the opposition parties, stood united in fighting what they call (Huthis rebellion) which was leading by Hussein Badr Al-Din Al-Houthi As the leader of a sectarian religious group believes he has the divine right to the presidency of the country. Hence, The Yemeni army fought six successive wars for ten years since 18th July 2004, which resulted in the deaths of many soldiers, civilians, children, women, and elders. With the revolution of the Tunisian people in 2011, which succeeded in toppling the regime of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. Moreover, swept back echoed the countries of the Arab region, especially the countries most affected by the power of rulers such as Egypt, Libya, Syria, and Yemen.

In Yemen, the peaceful People's Revolution in 2011 did not succeed in achieving its goals. The political opposition parties went to a reconciliation and settlement agreement with the leader of the existing political system Saleh under the Gulf initiative led by Saudi Arabia. Thus, the revolution has been aborted, so the government and power will be participatory under the name of the national reconciliation government headed by Abdu Rabdo Mansour, who was the Vice President of Yemen. It was not long before the former leader plotted a conspiracy, where he allied with Huthi's sectarian militias, and gave them military support that enabled them to storm the capital Sana'a. Later to find President Hadi as a refugee in Saudi Arabia which declared war on the militias that took power in Yemen following an invitation from the president of Yemen Abdu Rabo Mansour Hadi.

Saudi Arabia and its allies, 10 Arab countries began to attack the Huthis under the name of "Hazm Storm" with US logistics support in the beginning, and began air strikes targeting military and essential positions from 2 am on Thursday, 26th March 2015. From this day on, the economy of Yemen began to decline towards the worst. The war increases the suffering of Yemeni citizens, the cries of war and hatred and the media does not justify them.

Yemen's Tourism Development during the War

The tourism sector in Yemen has been facing some challenges, which are doubling day by day. The most prominent of these is the political unrest and the declared war on the internal and external levels. During the pre-coup period in 2014, the so-called Al-Qaeda attacks in some areas have made Yemen an unstable country regarding politics, security. The tourism revenues do not account for more than 3% of GDP, according to data from the Central Bureau of Statistics. A meager percentage compared to Yemen's tourism assets.

It is also worth noting the obstacles to tourism development, namely the absence of the role of the state

and the absence of law in addition to the involvement of authoritarian hands in the sabotage and trafficking of national interests, We can talk here about kidnappings of foreign tourists that emerged in the early nineties. The kidnappers were demanding the government to provide them with services and benefits for the release of the abductees. Between 1992 and 2013, several reports have identified the kidnapping of more than 350 foreigners, most of them tourists. In 2013, 19 Arabs and foreigners kidnapped in Yemen by armed groups [18].

Given the trends of tourism development strategy in Yemen, there is no doubt that Yemen has a sound theoretical vision, which extends from 2010 to 2025 [19], but this vision despite its limitations, the optimistic vision did not resonate on the ground because of the situation in Yemen since 2011. The Minister of Tourism, Mohammed Al-Qubati, said in a statement that tourism in Yemen suffers significantly because of the marketing of the former regime of Yemen as a place of terrorism. He pointed out that there is a current trend for the reconstruction of all facilities destroyed during the war with the Houthis [20]. Contrary to what he says, the war and its consequences continue without any signs of promising the reconstruction process, to exempt Yemen and its people from the consequences of the war and the siege. Since the war is the current option, and the way to take all the concerns of politicians and economists in Yemen, there are no definite indicators of development projects in general, and tourism development in particular, as the situation goes from bad to worse. War is an option, a means of destruction, and a retreat that is not accompanied by development plans and construction projects.

Although Yemen is one of the wealthiest countries in the region with oil, minerals, natural and human resources, it has long been used to serve the ruling family without paying attention to the economy of the country and the quality of life of Yemenis. In addition to the ambitions of neighboring countries, which fears that the extraction of Yemeni oil at the border area. Based on this Saudi Arabia has controlled oil fields in Yemen's border areas such (Alwadiah, (Sharurah) as well as parts of the western coastline of the Red Sea. All of this was not far from the agreement of Yemen's former president under an agreement known as the Boundary Agreement, which was held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, 12 June 2000.

The Impact of the War on Yemeni Tourism

Since the outbreak of war in Yemen at the internal level (the war between the factions of the Popular Resistance and the militias of the coup). Moreover, the external level represented by the war between the Arab alliance led by Saudi Arabia and the militias of the coup in Yemen targeted some tourist sites such as historic cities, castles, tourist resorts, airports and other tourist destinations. They are targeted by air raids because of the sanctification of militias in it,

and sometimes by the militias of the coup because of the control of the popular resistance on these sites.

The (UNESCO) deprecate the aerial bombardment of June 12, 2015, on the Old City of the Yemeni capital Sana'a, saying "this heritage bears the soul of the Yemeni people, it is a symbol of a millennia history of knowledge, and it belongs to all humankind. It was not only loss of human lives, destruction of houses and historic buildings but the damage also inflicted on one of the world's oldest jewels of Islamic urban landscape. The magnificent many-storeyed tower-houses and serene gardens were reduced to rubble thereby urging the authorities to join hands to overcome such irreparable destruction and to be extra vigilant that such incidences never recur in future [21]. To give another example for impacts of the war, Cairo Castle is the historical, tourist and cultural interface of Tazi city, was exposed to more than one air strike on 11th of May 2015, which destroyed all its buildings, as well as parts of the wall that surrounds it. This castle which represents a significant historical landmark in the city and one of the places that can be invested in the field of tourist attractions but was devastated by the war.

In a report issued by the Yemeni Ministry of Tourism, the losses of the tourism sector in Yemen is a result of the war of 9 months, and the blockade amounted to 12 billion dollars until August 2015, indicating that about a quarter of a million workers lost their jobs in various sectors of tourism [22]. The Yemeni news agency Saba, which is controlled by the Huthis report that the tourism sector in Yemen has witnessed enormous challenges as a result of what he called (aggression and siege) imposed on Yemen. The destruction of historical tourist sites and many national Arab and international tourist investments in the field of tourism, targeting the necessary infrastructure and services in the country, and the cessation of tourist activity in Yemen. In this context, the Yemeni Minister of Tourism points out to more than 200 hotel establishments destroyed by the coup militias entirely [23]. The war has also resulted in the cessation of work in more than 15,000 large, medium and small tourist establishments such as food, drink, accommodation, travel, and entertainment, in all Yemen as well as the migration of some tourist experts out of the country.

Analysis

In the wake of the war in Yemen and the cities of armed confrontations between the legitimate government led by Abdu Rabo Mansour Hadi, and the militias of the coup led by former President Ali Abdullah Saleh (before he was killed by the hands of the militias themselves in December 2017), the leader of the Houthis Abdulmalik al-Houthi. The conflict is reflected at all levels, including the media. Each party uses the available media to promote his victories and goals that aspires to achieve. Each party seeks to

sharpen the resolve of the masses that are seen and listened to, to gain their loyalty and support, away from the interest of the supreme nation and the Yemeni citizen. Yemeni media has become, in all their forms, one of the tools used in the war means for demolition, not only of buildings but development in various dimensions. All call for war and all seek to capture the masses, and the mobilization of fighters against the other party at the internal and external levels of Yemen consequently affecting the people of Yemen.

On the other hand, the countries of the Arab alliance, which declared their solidarity with the legitimate government and began its declared war on Yemen under the pretext of purging them of the coup and restoring the legitimacy of President Abderbo Mansour Hadi. More than two years have not changed the balance of the equation, except for the liberation of the southern part of Yemen, which has become a semi-colony of the UAE, including the ports in (the Arabian Sea, the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea), such as Bab al-Mandab. In addition to the number of islands, which is most important is Socotra, being one of the wealthiest islands in the world with rare things. While large areas of Yemen remain under the control of the coup militias, including the capital Sana'a, and Al Hodeidah governorate on the Red Sea, which has an important port, is the mainstay of supplies received by the coup militias.

The Arab Alliance countries have made promises of relief to those affected by the war and siege, but these supplies and reliefs are nothing compared to the losses and damage suffered by Yemen and the citizens of Yemen since the war and the siege imposed by the Arab coalition countries for the third consecutive year. There is nothing tangible about the reconstruction plan for Yemen. On the contrary, the war is still ongoing. Yemen and its capabilities remain a target for the coalition's airstrikes, and under the range of tanks, guns, and militia missiles. The political situation in Yemen makes it very difficult to talk about the development of all dimensions. The available media, whether disseminated inside the country or outside of Yemen, does not amount to more than a call to war and the expansion and spread of partisan, and sectarianism conflicts. During the war, the so-called "war media" appeared at a time when Yemen was in desperate need of development and enlightenment media for the sake of the people and the country.

RESULTS

Yemeni media is going through the worst in history, where the armed militias closed the number of the press, and the number of offices of Yemeni and foreign satellite channels was forced to broadcast from outside of Yemen.

- The absence of press freedom, and the inability of the Yemeni media to give their opinion as dictated by the facts, where neutrality and professionalism

are absent from the arena of Yemeni media. No choice for the media rather than to be a tool for the militias in their areas of control or instrument of the legitimate government in areas of its influence, away from professionalism and positive neutrality

- The absence of the role of the media in national development in all dimensions, political, economic, social, cultural and tourism in particular
- The available media play an inflammatory role by spreading hatred and establishing a culture of fighting away from offering solutions and peaceful alternatives
- warriors destroyed many Yemeni tourist destinations
- A large proportion of the infrastructure and superstructure destroyed (total or partial), such as airports, hospitals, roads, bridges, hotels, and restaurants, as well as electricity and internet services
- The tourism activity has stopped almost entirely, especially international tourism activity, which resulted in the recording of massive financial losses to the economies of Yemen. Estimated at 12 billion dollars during the first year of the war, in addition to the widespread phenomenon of unemployment among the workers in the tourism sector with some 250,000 workers losing their jobs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Republic of Yemen needs to create an atmosphere for a free professional media that can practice independence away from partisan and sectarian affiliation
- Yemeni media needs rehabilitation, especially those with narrow affiliations who only take into account their individual and factional interests away from media professionalism and the public interest
- We must work to consolidate the neutrality of the official media and ensure its bias to the public interest away from subordination to the ruler
- Political parties should make use of the media in such a way as to ensure convergence of views and stimulate competition to serve the nation and the people in general, away from partisan mobilization aimed at overthrowing the other
- There must be reconciliation between the armed militias and the popular factions opposed to them, on the one hand, and with the Arab coalition countries on the other, guaranteeing the right of each party to exercise its democratic right within the constitutional frameworks without infringements
- No development is hoped with the continuation of the war and the absence of political and economic stability, and the parties to the conflict must quickly exit the equation and a political settlement to ensure stability to start the construction and reconstruction plan

- To harness the official and non-official media to serve the community and take care of the interests of the people as a whole, and renounce intolerance and spread the values of love and peace among the components of Yemeni society

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