

# Yemen Official: U.S. Drones Kill 12 In 3 Airstrikes

BY AHMED AL-HAJ AND MAGGIE MICHAEL

Associated Press

SANAA, Yemen — The U.S. has sharply escalated its drone war in Yemen, with military officials in the Arab country reporting 34 suspected al-Qaida militants killed in less than two weeks, including three strikes on Thursday alone in which a dozen died.

The action against al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, as the Yemen branch is known, comes amid a global terror alert issued by Washington. One Mideast official says the uptick is due to its leaders leaving themselves more vulnerable by moving from their normal hideouts toward areas where they could carry out attacks.

The U.S. and Britain evacuated diplomatic staff from the capital of Sanaa this week after learning of a

threatened attack that prompted Washington to close temporarily 19 diplomatic posts in the Middle East and Africa.

Thursday's first reported drone attack hit a car carrying suspected militants in the district of Wadi Ubaidah, about 175 kilometers (109 miles) east of Sanaa, and killed six, a security official said.

Badly burned bodies lay beside their vehicle, according to the official. Five of the dead were Yemenis, while the sixth was believed to be of another Arab nationality, he said.

The second drone attack killed three alleged militants in the al-Ayoon area of Hadramawt province in the south, the official said. The third, also in Hadramawt province, killed three more suspected militants in the al-Qutn area, he added.

All the airstrikes targeted cars, added the official,

who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the media.

The drone strikes have become a near-daily routine since they began July 27. So far, they have been concentrated in remote, mountainous areas where al-Qaida's top five leaders are believed to have taken refuge.

But drones also have been seen and heard buzzing for hours over Sanaa, worrying residents who fear getting caught in the crossfire.

While the United States acknowledges its drone program in Yemen, it does not talk about individual strikes or release information on how many are carried out. The program is run by the Pentagon's Joint Special Operations Command and the CIA, with the military flying its drones out of Djibouti, and the CIA out of a base in Saudi Arabia.



## Jobless Claims Lower, But Hiring Lags

BY PAUL WISEMAN  
AND MARTIN CRUTSINGER

AP Economics Writers

WASHINGTON — Americans who have a job may take comfort in knowing that companies are laying off fewer people than at any time since before the Great Recession.

Applications for U.S. unemployment benefits over the past four weeks dropped to a seasonally adjusted 335,500, the Labor Department said Thursday. That's the lowest level since November 2007, which was one month before the recession began.

But while most companies have stopped cutting jobs, many remain reluctant to hire. That's bad news for the roughly 11.5 million Americans who are unemployed and a major reason the unemployment rate is still so high four years after the recession officially ended.

"We have seen a disconnect between the level of hiring and firing," said Bricklin Dwyer, an economist at BNP Paribas.

Unemployment applications are a proxy for layoffs. At the depths of the recession, in March 2009, weekly claims

**"We have seen a disconnect between the level of hiring and firing."**

BRICKLIN DWYER

surged to 670,000. They have fallen steadily ever since and are now half that level.

The number of first-time applications did rise slightly last week, to a seasonally adjusted 330,000. But that's just 5,000 higher than the 5 1/2-year low reached two weeks ago.

Most economists say small shifts like that are normal and applications are essentially at a point where they may not fall much further.

"Readings below 300K are rare and rarely sustained," Jonathan Basile, director of U.S. economics at Credit Suisse, wrote in a note to clients.

The drop in layoffs helps explain why job growth has increased this year to an average of 192,000 net jobs a month, even while overall economic growth has stayed sluggish.

Net job gains show the number of people hired minus those who lose or quit their jobs. And when companies

cut fewer jobs, it doesn't take many new hires to create a high net gain.

The Labor Department says layoffs have averaged 1.6 million a month through June, fewer than a monthly average of nearly 1.8 million in the pre-recession year 2006.

Hiring hasn't bounced back as fast. Employers hired an average 4.3 million people a month this year through June, well below the 2006 monthly average of 5.3 million.

Despite the drop in unemployment applications, net job growth slowed in July. Employers created just 162,000 net jobs, the fewest in four months.

The unemployment rate dropped to a 4 1/2-year low of 7.4 percent last month, down from 7.6 percent in June. That is still well above the 5 percent to 6 percent associated with a normal economy.

So what will it take for more companies to begin adding new workers to their payrolls?

"Really not a mysterious question," says Gerard McLean, CEO of Rivershark Inc., a developer of web applications in Englewood, Ohio. "We're sitting here waiting for the promise of customers. With money. Really that simple."

## Mixed Messages Hurting U.S. In Egypt

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Obama administration's efforts to promote democracy in Egypt are being complicated by what many Egyptians see as mixed and confusing messages coming from Washington, exacerbating already high anti-American sentiment and threatening broader U.S. goals in the region.

Any administration might find it difficult to safely navigate the intricacies of Egypt's current political tumult, but some U.S. officials concede they have been unable to communicate a coherent policy. Officials also complain that their task has been made more challenging by the delicate line they must toe and by members of Congress who have inserted themselves into the high-wire diplomacy with one of America's most important Arab allies.

Egypt has been a cornerstone of Mideast stability for decades, notably because of its peace deal with Israel and its protection of the vital Suez Canal. The administration has been eager to remain engaged and influential there, but it is straddling a fine line, trying to balance its support for representative government with U.S. national interests.

In Egypt's crisis, the two do not meld well and staying involved has required what some see as a compromise in democratic principles.

Several officials lamented that the White House's nuanced policy is not easily explained to Egypt's volatile public and wary leaders. And, they expressed frustration that the message has been muddled by the comments of lawmakers who have offered strident personal opinions on the situation that do not hew to the administration's line. The officials spoke only on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly about internal deliberations and differences the administration has with legislators.

## Voter Suppression Alleged In Fla. Town

SOPCHOPPY, Fla. (AP) — A small Florida Panhandle town best known for its annual Worm Grunting Festival is at the center of an investigation into charges the white city clerk suppressed the black vote in an election where the black mayor lost by a single vote and a black city commissioner was also ousted.

Both losing candidates and three black voters have filed complaints, now being investigated by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, that City Clerk Jackie Lawhon made it more difficult for blacks to cast ballots by questioning their residency.

The candidates also allege Lawhon abandoned her duty to remain neutral and actively campaigned for the three whites on the ballot.

"If the allegations that we have are 100 percent accurate, then this election was literally stolen from us and I really feel like there should be another election," said Anginita Rosier, who lost her seat on the commission by 26 votes.

Lawhon, who has served in her position since being appointed more than three decades ago, referred calls to city attorney Dan Cox. He would not comment on the specifics of the complaints but said, "I don't think that anything was done that was out of line."

## Syrian Rebels Shell Area Near Assad

DAMASCUS, Syria (AP) — Rockets and mortar shells hit an upscale Damascus neighborhood Thursday where Syrian President Bashar Assad was visiting a nearby mosque, laying bare the ability of rebels to strike one of the most secure areas of the capital despite an ongoing government offensive.

At least two rebel brigades claimed to have hit Assad's motorcade on its way to the mosque, but this appeared to be untrue. Two opposition figures said the route was hit but not the convoy itself. The regime also denied the reports, and state TV broadcast images of Assad praying at the mosque.

There were no reports of casualties or damage in the shelling of the Malki district, a largely pro-regime neighborhood where Assad used to live before the uprising began more than two years ago. Nevertheless, the attack terrified residents and exposed the regime's vulnerability as it tries to maintain momentum against rebels with increasingly sophisticated weaponry. It may also shake its confidence.

"What happened today is highly indicative," said Khaled Saleh, a spokesman for Syria's main Western-backed opposition group. "It shows that the regime is unable to control the situation even in the most secure areas of Damascus and despite suffocating security measures."

At least two Syrian rebel brigades claimed they hit Assad's motorcade as it carried him to the Anas bin Malik mosque in Malki, an affluent district sealed off by military checkpoints that had been largely spared from rebel mortar shells that frequently hit other areas of the capital. It was not clear if Assad has stayed in Malki in recent months or where he lives now.

## Southern Calif. Wildfire Grows Extensively

BY JULIE WATSON

Associated Press

BEAUMONT, Calif. — A growing wildfire chewed through a rugged Southern California mountain range on Thursday, damaging buildings, threatening as many as 600 homes and forcing some 1,500 people to flee.

A thousand firefighters, 13 helicopters and six air tankers battled the flames as they pushed eastward along the San Jacinto Mountains 90 miles east of Los Angeles, said Daniel Berlant, a spokesman for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

The fire was estimated at 15 1/2 square miles early Thursday, growing roughly 6 square miles overnight, with 10 percent containment. "Unfortunately the size of this fire continues to take away any progress that we're making," he said.

Fire officials estimated 15 structures burned, but could not say how many of them were houses. A civilian with what was described as body burns was flown to a hospital, he said. Four firefighters suffered unspecified injuries.

Residents told of fast-moving flames that left little time to get out after the fire erupted at midafternoon Wednesday.

Lili Arroyo, 83, said she was rushing to pack belongings when firefighters arrived at her home, which was rebuilt



GINA FERAZZI/LOS ANGELES TIMES/MCT

The Silver Fire rages near ranch properties off Longhorn Road in Banning, California, on Thursday.

after being destroyed in a 2006 wildfire. She left with only her pet cockatiel, Tootsie, in its cage and a bag of important papers.

"The smoke was so bad you couldn't see," she said. "There were embers and ash coming down all over the sky. The smoke was really thick. I was starting not to be able to breathe."

Evacuation orders covered the an RV resort called the Silent Valley Club, the rural communities of Poppet Flats, Twin Pines, Edna Valley and

Vista Grande, portions of the city of Cabazon along Interstate 10 and a camping area known as Black Mountain.

A veteran of many evacuations, Dana Wright, 43, wiped away a tear as she entered a shelter at a Beaumont school and went with her family to watch TV news. She had no idea whether her Poppet Flats home of 11 years had survived. Friends said a nearby home had not.

"This is the closest I've ever heard the fire being near our home," she said.

She and her husband hoped to find a way back up into the mountains. "I just want to look to see if we have a house," she said.

Most of Southern California's severe wildfires are associated with Santa Ana winds caused by high pressure over the West that sends a clockwise flow of air rushing down into the region.

This week's fire, however, was being fanned by a counter-clockwise flow around a low pressure area over northwest California.

## OBITUARIES

### Sharon Holy

Sharon Lee (Sharp) Holy, age 70, of Yankton, SD passed away unexpectedly at home early Tuesday, August 06, 2013. Funeral services will be at 2:30 p.m., Saturday, August 10, 2013 at the Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Chapel, Yankton, SD with Rev. Velma Larson officiating. Burial will be in the Yankton Cemetery. Visitations will be from 4-7 p.m., Friday, August 9, 2013 at the Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home and Crematory, Yankton, SD with the family present. Visitations will resume one hour prior to the service at the funeral home. Pallbear-



Holy

Sharon was born on November 10, 1942 in Gillette, WY to Sidney Edward and Vivian (LaRue) Sharp. She was raised in Recluse, WY and graduated from Campbell County High School in the Class of 1961. She continued her education at St. John's School of Nursing at Rapid City, SD. In

ers will be Gatlin Jensen, Zane Jensen, Michael Darcy, Joe Martian, Bill Bounds, Gary Rittel, and Derek Emery.

December 1963, she was united in marriage to James Holy and together they had three children: Karla, Karen, and Joe. They lived in Tyn-dall, SD until 1967 when they moved to Yankton, SD. Sharon was employed by Gurney's Seed and Nursery as a data entry clerk, the original Casey's General Store and was the Switch-board Operator at the South Dakota Human Services Center until she retired.

Sharon loved spending quality time with her family and friends, playing pinocle and Bingo a few times a week. She enjoyed attending her grandchildren's sporting events and

academic activities.

Those who will cherish her memory are her husband, James Holy of Yankton, SD; her children: Karla (Holy) and Leland Jensen of Hoskins, NE, Karen Holy of Yankton, SD, and Joe Holy of Sioux City, IA; grandchildren: Michael Darcy and Patricia Darcy of Yankton, SD, Gatlin Jensen and Zane Jensen of Hoskins, NE, and Joey Holy of Yankton, SD; great granddaughter, Emalee Darcy of Yankton, SD; sister, Betty Jean Ward of Rio Rancho, NM, and brother, Sidney "Rusty" Sharp of Gillette, WY.

She was preceded in death by her parents and

brother, John Sharp, Sr.

"Her warm, caring smile and heart felt laughter will be truly missed by those blessed to have met her. God has called a strong, loving, compassionate, genuine angel home to guide and protect those left behind. Much love to you, Wife, Mother, Sister, Granny, and Mi-ma."

Yankton Press & Dakotan  
August 9, 2013

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FUNERAL HOME & CREMATORY INC.  
Online condolences at:  
www.opsahl-kostelfuneralhome.com

### JoAnn Nicholls

JoAnn (Jo) V. Nicholls, age 77, of Yankton, SD passed away unexpectedly Tuesday, August 6, 2013 at her home in Yankton.

Memorial services will be 9 a.m., Monday, August 12, 2013 at the United Church of Christ (Congregational), Yankton with Rev. Rick Jensen officiating. Military rites will be by the Ernest-Bowyer VFW Post #791, Yankton and the SDARNG, Sioux Falls. Immediately following the service, JoAnn's family invites everyone to a time of refreshments and fellowship at the church.

Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home and Crematory, Yankton is in care of the arrangements.

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