

Press Release

In the Absence of an Economic Project by the Houthis

Contract Farming: A Looming Threat Crushing Farmers, Strengthening FAO's Control, and Failing to Achieve Self-Sufficiency in Grains in Yemen

(Translated)

On Monday, August 26, 2024, the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Water Resources, Dr. Ridwan Al-Rubai, held a consultative meeting with representatives of agricultural cooperative societies and specialized experts to discuss the vital role that contract farming plays as an effective and advanced method for marketing agricultural products.

This was how the Minister of Agriculture inaugurated the change and development program in his ministry. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Ahmed Ghalib Al-Rahwi celebrated the harvest of cash crops - pomegranates, apples, grapes, and dates - on Saturday, August 24, 2024, in the absence of strategic crops. We are now in the first month of the Ministry of Change and Development!

Contract farming is a term introduced by the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), which defines it as "agricultural production carried out according to an agreement between the buyer and farmers, whereby the conditions for the production and marketing of one or more agricultural products are determined. The products must meet the quality standards specified by the buyer and be delivered at the time set by the buyer. In return, the buyer commits to purchasing the product, and in some cases, supporting production by providing agricultural inputs, preparing the land, and offering technical advice." Who are the specialized experts participating in the meeting? Are they not representatives of FAO, which grips Yemen's agriculture by implementing its projects and directing its agricultural policy through employing Ministry of Agriculture managers?

Contract farming does not achieve self-sufficiency, as some may think, but rather entrenches external control through FAO and transnational financial institutions. FAO's control comes in the form of providing agricultural inputs - genetically modified seeds from outside Yemen - and offering technical advice, then directing agricultural crops by dividing the agricultural season for a crop into three phases: early, main, and late, under the pretext of providing fresh agricultural products to the markets!

This practice is contrary to Islamic law (Shariah) in several ways. Firstly, it involves a contract between three parties, where the work is focused on one party, while the second party buys the crops from the first, and the third provides usurious (riba) loans. Secondly, it involves selling what one does not own, as it sells its agricultural crop to businesses before it is even planted. Thirdly, it engages in short-term usurious loans provided by banks to farmers.

Four years have passed since the beginning of contract farming in Yemen, and our dependence on imported food from abroad persists. Self-sufficiency has not and will not be achieved through it, as this can only be accomplished by rejecting usury and expelling the colonizers who come from beyond the borders with their harmful and futile ideas, such as seeds that are detrimental to the land, humans, and animals. This can only be achieved by implementing the systems of Islam through the establishment of the second Khilafah Rashidah (rightly-guided Caliphate) on the method of the Prophethood, which will satisfy both the inhabitants of the earth and the heavens. Then, the heavens will not withhold their rain, and the earth will not withhold its bounties.

Allah (swt) said: ﴿وَابْتَغِ فِيمَا آتَاكَ اللَّهُ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ وَلَا تَنْسَ نَصِيبَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَأَحْسِنْ كَمَا أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ وَلَا تَبْغِ الْفُسَادَ فِي الْأَرْضِ﴾
“But seek, through that which Allah has given you, the home of the Hereafter; and [yet], do not forget your share of the world. And do good as Allah has done good to you. And desire not corruption in the land. Indeed, Allah does not like corrupters.” [Surat Al-Qasas:77].

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