

# American

## NEWS & VIEWS

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## U.S. Says Yemen's Saleh Should Honor Commitment to Step Down

By Stephen Kaufman  
Staff Writer

Washington — The Obama administration says Yemen's President Ali Abdullah Saleh should live up to commitments he has made and accept a deal brokered by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) that will lead to a democratic transition of power in Yemen.

State Department spokesman Mark Toner said May 31 that after weeks of anti-government protests and street fighting between Yemeni security forces and tribal groups, the GCC proposal offers Yemen a way out of the country's political crisis.

"President Saleh just needs to live up to commitments he's made to accept the GCC's agreement and to move Yemen forward," he said.

According to press reports, the agreement calls for Saleh to hand over power in 30 days in exchange for immunity from prosecution. Members of Yemen's opposition have signed the deal. Saleh has reportedly said that he would also accept it, but instead has refused to do so.

"He's made the commitment to sign this agreement," Toner said, which would allow a "democratic transition" to take place in Yemen.

Toner condemned Yemeni security forces for "indiscriminate attacks" in the southern city of Taiz, the capital Sanaa and elsewhere in the country.

He said U.S. officials have also seen reports that al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) has seized Yemen's third-largest city, Zinjibar.

AQAP remains a serious threat to both Yemen and the United States and is taking advantage of the instability in Yemen, he said.

"It's yet another reason why ... Yemen needs to get on a path through this crisis and towards a political transition," Toner said.

## Statement on Freedom of Assembly in Russia

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
Office of the Spokesman  
May 29, 2011

STATEMENT BY MARK TONER, DEPUTY SPOKESPERSON

Concern about Freedom of Assembly in Russia

We note with concern that in Moscow on Saturday, May 28, a peaceable demonstration of Russians advocating for the rights of gays and lesbians, joined by international supporters, was forcefully disrupted by counter-protesters, and that Russian security forces then detained people from both groups, including American citizens. Some protestors were seriously injured according to media reports.

Freedom of assembly is a fundamental right all members of the OSCE committed to, including in the Moscow declaration and as recently as the Astana summit. As nationwide legislative elections approach, constraints on the ability of Russian citizens peacefully to gather and express their views will be closely watched in evaluating the integrity of the electoral process. We call on Russian authorities to work with municipal officials to find better ways to safeguard these fundamental freedoms.

## Research Key to Ending 30-Year-Old AIDS Epidemic

By Charlene Porter  
Staff Writer

Washington — Research has produced many breakthroughs to prolong the lives of people infected with the virus that causes AIDS, but the work must continue if science is to lead the way toward ending the epidemic, according to an article published May 31 by two U.S. leaders in the medical community.

Carl W. Dieffenbach and Anthony S. Fauci outline goals for future research in an article published in *Annals of Internal Medicine*, published by the American College of Physicians. Their observations appear as the medical community reflects on its first recognition of a mysterious and fatal virus in June 1981. Since then, research has demystified HIV/AIDS to a degree and prolonged the lives of infected people by decades.

The authors, both of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases within the National Institutes of Health, suggest a three-goal research strategy: speed up access to proven HIV treatment and prevention tools, explore new ways of eliminating HIV in infected persons or controlling infection without a lifelong drug regimen, and develop new prevention tools.

A multipronged prevention and treatment strategy is required, the authors write, because of the different ways the virus can move through a given population.

The first drugs that could control the virus appeared in the late 1980s, and now five classes of antiretroviral drugs can prolong a life with a strict, lifelong drug regimen. Significant progress has been made in the last decade in broadening distribution of those medicines – 15 million people need the treatment and 36 percent are getting it, according to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the agency which compiles an annual census on the disease. An estimated 33.3 million people carry the HIV virus, but many do not yet know it.

While this progress has been made, the virus continues to spread with an estimated 2.5 million people newly infected each year. Dieffenbach and Fauci write that lifelong drug treatment for increasing millions and the ever-growing number of infected people is “clearly not sustainable.” Though antiretroviral therapy (ART) is effective, it is not a cure, so research must pursue a cure, with investigation following two paths: a true “sterilizing cure with complete eradication of the virus, and a functional cure which is a permanent suppression of the virus” without ART, according to the article.

One potentially promising line of research, the authors write, involves study of the rare HIV-infected persons whose immune systems control their HIV infections. Researchers do not yet fully understand what causes this self-controlling effect, but attempting to duplicate it in a broad range of patients as opposed to a rare few is a hopeful avenue of investigation.

“The most compelling goal of the HIV research agenda in the coming years is more effective HIV prevention,” Dieffenbach and Fauci say. A number of prevention strategies have proven very effective, but greater efforts must be made to create awareness of and access to these preventive measures.

Research to create a vaccine against the disease has not led to an effective product, but studies are under way on different approaches. The authors say a “modest positive signal” has been produced from a clinical trial in Thailand, and research continues.

Scientific challenges remain as obstacles to identifying either a cure or a vaccine against HIV, but these influential U.S. researchers look to the future with optimism. “We can achieve our shared, long-term goal of ultimately ending the HIV and AIDS epidemic,” write Dieffenbach and Fauci.

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