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## About the book...

Aljazeera has always been present wherever attempts to bring about change were made. It has always been there whenever nations tried to break free from the bonds of the past to arrive at the future.

This book explains how Aljazeera interacted with the revolutions of the Arabic Spring in Libya, Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, and Syria, being the only channel that the Arab public trusted to be the voice of their aspiration for freedom.

The book takes you on a tour through the main events that changed the face of the world, and shows the role Aljazeera played in changing the lives and mindsets of many of its viewers.

**1996**  
**Aljazeera is launched transmitting 6 hours a day.**

**1999**  
 Aljazeera expands its transmission to **24 hours a day.**

**2001**  
 Aljazeera is the **only major news network** to cover the war in Afghanistan from its bureau in Kabul.

**2004**  
 Aljazeera is recognized by **Interbrand.com** as the 5th most popular brand in global news.

The Aljazeera **Training and Development Center** is founded.

Aljazeera **International Documentary Film Festival** is launched.



**1998**  
 Aljazeera provides exclusive coverage of **Operation Desert Fox** from inside Iraq.

**2000**  
**Aljazeera.net** Arabic is launched.

**2003**  
**Aljazeera Sports Channel** is launched.

Aljazeera provides extensive **coverage of the war in Iraq.**

**Aljazeera.net English**, and **Aljazeera Mobile** services are launched.

**2005**  
 Aljazeera is **the first channel to break** the news of famine in Niger.

**Aljazeera Mubasher (Live)** is launched.

**2006**  
**Aljazeera is inaugurated as the Aljazeera Network.**

**Aljazeera English Channel** is launched.

Distinguished coverage of the **Israeli war on Lebanon.**

Aljazeera **Studies Center** is founded.

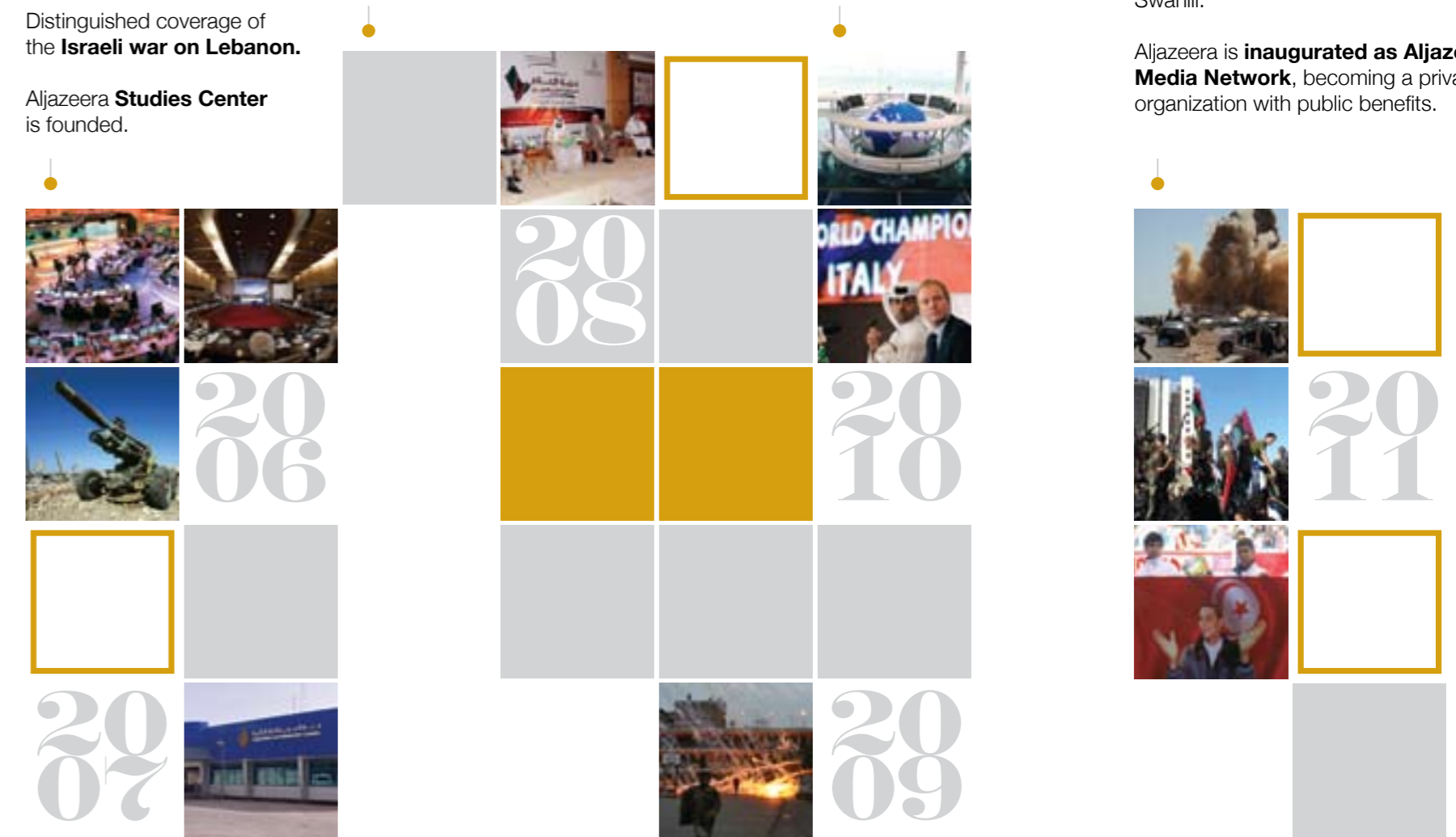
**2008**  
 Launch of **Aljazeera's Public Liberties** and Human rights desk.

**2010**  
 Aljazeera gets **exclusive broadcasting rights** for the Football World Cup in South Africa in 2010 and Brazil in 2014.

**2011**  
**Aljazeera achieves record viewership for excellent coverage of the Arab Revolutions.**

Aljazeera **prepares to launch** Aljazeera Turk, Aljazeera Balkans, and Aljazeera Swahili.

Aljazeera is **inaugurated as Aljazeera Media Network**, becoming a private organization with public benefits.



**2007**  
**Aljazeera Documentary Channel** is launched.

**2009**  
 Aljazeera provides in-depth coverage of the **Israeli war on Gaza** to English speaking viewers around the world.

**Aljazeera English wins** the Concrete Award and two nominations at the Emmy's.

**Aljazeera Sports strikes** the biggest deal in the history of sports media by acquiring the ART sports channels.



## MEMOIRS OF A JOURNEY

■ *Sheikh Hamad bin Thamer Al-Thani*

Aljazeera's 15th anniversary celebration this year coincides with many historic changes brought about by the revolutions of the Arabic Spring. The winds of change have blown, and Arab nations have moved to regain their dignity and build a better future for their countries.

Not once during the coverage of these events did Aljazeera waver from its consistent editorial policy of conveying the opinion as well as the 'other' opinion, and

supporting the people in their quest for freedom.

Our fifteen-year long journey was full of achievements and challenges. We started with one Arabic channel transmitting six hours a day, and today we've become an international media network that serves millions of viewers all around the globe. Our services have expanded to include news, documentaries and sports, and our facilities have grown to include a study center, a

training center and a new media department.

Aljazeera Sports has become one of the most prestigious sports news providers in the world covering international championships and sports events. There is no doubt that as Qatar will be hosting the Football World Cup in 2022, Aljazeera Sports will grow even bigger and better.

Aljazeera English succeeded in breaking the dominance of

international media over news sources, and managed, in a very short time, to compete with European and American news channels. It has acquired a reputation of professionalism and objectivity in covering international and regional news.

Aljazeera Documentary managed to attract a huge number of Arab audiences interested in documentary films, but never had a channel that celebrated their identity and traditions.



■ *Chairman of the Board*



## SHOOTING FOR THE STARS

■ Abdelfattah Fayed

The day Zein Al-Abdeen bin Ali fled his country following the success of the Tunisian revolution, a feeling of anticipation prevailed in Egypt. The Egyptians knew that they were no less courageous or patriotic than the Tunisians, and they were aware they had more reason to revolt.

The first spark of the Egyptian revolt was ignited on the 25th, but it wasn't until the 28th of the month that events really began to take shape. That day was called "The Friday of Anger,"

and as expected, Aljazeera team was present in the midst of the unfolding events.

### The Nation's Revolution

It was truly a memorable day! It seemed that the oppressed were trying to avenge three decades of fear and exploitation.

They marched head-long into the heavily armed troops of the Central Security Forces that had been sent to arrest and kill them. This was followed by an outpour of anger and no troops,

armor or threats were ever going to stop the Egyptians whose determination had helped them gain considerable ground.

The fires in their hearts ignited the premises of the former National Party and police stations. The army was forced to act to try and control the situation.

### Intimidation and Siege

On the "Friday of Anger," Aljazeera Cairo office was cut off from the rest of the world by the authorities for two days.

Soon afterwards, the whole country was cut off from the rest of the world. This illustrates the malicious campaign launched by the regime against the Network, accusing it of promoting vandalism and chaos, because it broadcasted images of the demonstrations. The regime was as worried by Aljazeera as it was by the Egyptians.

We had to use mobile phones to report what was happening in the field. The fact that our office was in a central Cairo square, named



■ Aljazeera



Abdel-Monem Riyadh, helped us film scenes of the confrontations which took place between the protestors and the police. We were harassed by the thugs of the regime who were everywhere. We had to go without food or drink for the entire day while inhaling the suffocating fumes of tear gas bombs that were being thrown at people in the square.

Dozens of people fainted because of the bombs and no one was able to help them.

The police, desperate now, started using live bullets to disperse protestors. Snipers were placed at vantage points on rooftops. I will never forget the sight of a young woman shot to death on the sidewalk while I was giving a live report. Aljazeera

captured the scene on camera, and I captured it in my heart and soul forever.

We were the first news network to report that the number of the dead at the confrontations was in the hundreds and that of the injured was in the thousands. The official Egyptian media still insisted that only two people had been killed in Suez, and one policeman was killed in Cairo.

Fearful of repercussions, one of the production companies working with Aljazeera in Cairo had to post a sign on the door of its office which said "Aljazeera is not here, we do not deal with them."

The former Egyptian Minister of Information, Anas Al-Fiki,

It was the people in Tahrir who protected the Aljazeera crew from the thugs of the National Party



called me, thundering about our coverage of the Egyptian uprising. When he threatened to close down our office, I sarcastically said "It's already closed. We don't have phones, internet or satellite connection." Further enraged by the sarcasm, he screamed "then how are you transmitting these images?"

I called Mr. Wadah Khanfar, the then Director General of the Network and informed him of the Minister's threats. He didn't flinch as he said to me "just do your job, do not heed these empty threats, let the authorities please themselves."

His words were a clear message that Aljazeera would stay its course, come what may.

### The Secret of Coverage

As Aljazeera continued to report the Tahrir demonstrations despite the threats and harassment, protestors erected a huge stage in the middle of Tahrir with a giant TV screen tuned to Aljazeera 24 hours a day. It remained their only source of news until the day Mubarak stepped down.

It was the people in Tahrir who protected Aljazeera crew from the thugs of the National Party who stalked us for days, hoping to destroy our cameras and our spirits. Although I was arrested and taken, handcuffed and blindfolded, to what they called "The Fridge," our transmission continued and our cameras kept rolling until the fall of the regime on February 11, 2011.

All those who followed Aljazeera's coverage of the Egyptian Revolution with admiration and intrigue, kept asking us: "How did Aljazeera manage to maintain its transmission of the events live on air, when the bureau was closed and the equipment was destroyed?"

I'm afraid this has to remain one of Aljazeera's many well-kept secrets.





## SMILES IN THE FLOOD

■ Sohail Rahman

The Pakistan floods of July and August, 2011 are still affecting the reconstruction and daily working lives of millions of people. They were described as a slow tsunami by the United Nations.

Pakistanis felt badly let down by their own elected government. Any, if not most of the help that arrived came from the international community.

I was the only international reporter deployed to the area as the story unfolded. Affecting nearly twenty million people nationwide and killing nearly 1700, this is one of many stories Aljazeera English told the world.

### Anger And Pain

It's August 2011 and I was returning from a remote isolated

area cut off from the outside world in the northern Swat Valley.

Communities up and down this country continued to look for help even criticizing the media with statements like 'What does the media really do for us; they get their story and leave us to die just like the government!'

What is our role? To tell the story? Honestly, fairly, accurately and

with impartiality? When should a journalist get involved in the cause and is it right to do so or does it depend on the cause?

### Generating Life

Travelling back to our base camp we came across a small community.

They were re-building small stone buildings along the banks of the



■ Aljazeera



river, too small for a family to live in. We stopped and enquired; the small structures housed hydroelectric generators, turbines that run by water and generated electricity in small amounts for the isolated mountain community.

The loss of five generators and the power needed by this community of two and a half thousand would be devastating as the harsh winter approached.

These villagers are pitifully poor. We filmed their efforts, people never asking for help but just doing it themselves.

Showing the world what these forgotten mountain people would have to endure if help didn't arrive soon was imperative. A generator can cost as little as \$750 and would be the difference between life and death.

### Flooding Donations

What happened next was what I call the miracle of Aljazeera and the power and honesty of our reporting. Money started to arrive at our Headquarters in Doha and to my home in the UK from around the world. I was a local and national news reporter before joining Aljazeera English.

Returning home to Chester for a rest, ordinary people from all religions and walks of life knocked on my door or anonymously post money through my letter box for the village.

Envelopes with a simple message written on the front 'For the Flood Victims.'

The hydroelectric generators were the talk of everyone I met. Schools in Manchester wanted

Showing the world what these people would have to endure if help didn't arrive soon was imperative



me to tell them about the village in Shangla. Even a taxi driver from Columbus, Ohio gave me cash.

I never asked for the money and Aljazeera made no appeal. Why then give us the money? I asked this when the opportunity arose. I was told the same thing time and again. Firstly, the Pakistani government couldn't be trusted to make sure the money got to where it was needed, and the viewers trusted me and the reputation of Aljazeera as a network to tell an honest story and get the funds to the victims.

The perception of the Pakistani Government was embarrassing to hear as a South Asian by heritage. Their reputation for the past 63 years has been tarnished by lavish spending and

corruption, failing to serve its people in their time of need.

The international community doubting the very government elected by the Pakistani people for the Pakistani people...

\$1700 was raised, every penny spent on two generators and supplies. Four weeks after the initial report Aljazeera returned to a grateful village.

We unloaded the 'Power for the People...that came from the People'. The village had some power before winter set in. I know Aljazeera English were proud we could help and with our viewers, save lives.





## THE YEMEN REVOLUTION THE ROOTS & THE HARVEST

■ *Tawakel Karman*

The suffering of the people of Jaashn- an area in the governorate of Ibb central Yemen- reveals a human tragedy almost impossible to envision in modern times. The victims are simple farmers confronting the Sheikh of Jaashn, a dictator who takes his orders from other dictators in Sana'a. He owns the land, the trees, the rocks and even the people of Jaashn whom he throws into his private prisons and bullies by his own armed militias.

The support and complicity of the regime enabled the tyrant of Jaashn to enslave people and exploit them to serve him and his accomplices. He imposed royalties, forced people to tend to his cattle and sheep and to till his lands and give him every penny they earned. Most of the returns of Yemeni labor working abroad went into his pockets. The travelers had to stop by his house to pay homage before they were allowed to set foot in their own houses. Half of what

they brought home was offered to him; those who defied his rule were severely punished or beaten to death in his prisons.

### From Jaashn to Sana'a

In January 2010, a year before the youth revolution broke out, fifty families from Jaashn were forced to leave their homes and take refuge in tents erected to house them by the side roads in front Sana'a University. The displaced people were being punished by the Sheikh for

refusing to pay the outrageous royalties he imposed.

Many civilian activists and journalists supported the cause of the Jaashn people. They shared their pain and felt it was their duty to provide legal and humanitarian support for them and to shine a light into their dark lives. They didn't heed the threats of the tyrant who was the president's closest friend and most favorite poet. Al-Hurryya square witnessed numerous weekly marches and



■ *A Yemeni activist and a Nobel prize winner*



sit-ins demanding the trial of the Sheikh and his militias and the return of the displaced people of Jaashn to their homes.

The demands and calls of the demonstrators fell on deaf ears, and for an entire year their cries were heard by all except the Yemeni authorities. Throughout their long struggle in the streets, Aljazeera was the first and foremost media presence in the scene.

Aljazeera believed in the justice of the cause of the Jaashn people, it documented all the facts in detail and made them a matter of international attention.

Thanks to Aljazeera the faces of Yemeni activists became familiar to audiences all over the world. The inexperienced politicians learned to voice their grievances

and express their opposition to the Sheikh and the regime that protected him in a way that earned them international respect and sympathy.

The long campaign against the tyrant partially paid off; he was publically reprimanded and socially isolated that he was unable to attend the Advisory Council sessions. But the people of Jaashn remained on the streets.

#### The Revolution Begins

Conquering the dominance of the sheikh was the first step in the downfall of the network of patronage and favoritism upon which the regime depended for survival. As Ahmad Al-Shalafi, Aljazeera correspondent, so eloquently put it "Jaashn is a revolutionary story that needs an ending."

The chapters of the story were quickly taking shape. A year after the forceful immigration of the people of Jaashn, exactly in mid January 2011, thousands of university students started a march to celebrate the downfall of the Bin Ali regime and to congratulate the Tunisians on the success of their revolution. They expressed their desire for the same to happen in their country. The signs they held said "leave before we force you to leave."

On February 11, in conjunction with the ouster of Mubarak, tens of thousands of students started a march from the University of Sana'a to Tahrir square, where the Egyptian embassy was. Rebels in Taaz started a sit-in in Alhurrya square and later on they were followed by many others

in many squares in most of the governorates demanding the ouster of the familial regime.

#### An Island of Hope

Aljazeera played an active part in conveying the struggle of the Yemeni rebels and the anguish they suffered at the hands of the regime thugs. All the young leaders of the revolution acknowledge Aljazeera's role in mobilizing the masses and escalating the momentum of the revolution.

On a personal level, I have plenty to recount regarding Aljazeera's support to the revolution. On January 22, when the security forces arrested me after my participation in a week-long march demanding the ouster of Saleh and his familial regime,

Aljazeera was quick to publish the details and causes of the arrest. It also dedicated long hours of transmission to the marches that demanded my release. Furthermore, Aljazeera managed to sneak its cameras into the prison cell where I was detained and filmed an interview with me. Hours later I was released in response to public pressure and marches in many provinces.

Aljazeera was the first station I met and spoke to after my release, I told my interviewer then that our peaceful revolution will continue till the regime falls and till Yemen becomes the best country in the region.

Jaashn was the start point and it will be the end point. Between the beginning and the end Yemen

has undergone a magnificent revolution that took the world by storm. Throughout the long journey Aljazeera was present; recording the events and making them at the same time. Aljazeera shared the dreams of the people of Jaashn and the rebels in Tahrir and Taghier squares, and we are all still pinning more hope on this island of hope.

