From “Oil-for-Food” to “Cash-for-Nutrition”: The Disbelievers’ Tool for Engineering Systemic Poverty in Yemen

(Translated)

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Afrah Al-Zouba, Minister of Planning and International Cooperation and Yemen’s Governor to the World Bank Group, stated officially that the World Bank has approved funding for the “Cash-for-Nutrition and Livelihoods” project in Yemen. The package includes a $100 million grant, plus an additional $1.8 million allocated to support the country’s resilience and foster recovery and reconstruction (Russia Today).

Behind these polished diplomatic phrases and so-called financial grants lies a reality starkly different from the official narrative. The announcement of this project is not a humanitarian gesture to alleviate suffering. Instead, it is the latest chapter in a strategy to cement dependency and tighten the colonial grip on the resources of nations ravaged by conflict and war. Yemen is no exception to this malicious policy—a policy mastered by the World Bank, which acts as an obedient tool in the hands of major capitalist powers, led by the United States. The US controls international monetary policies, using them as a “soft power” weapon to bring states to their knees and subjugate the political decision-making of developing countries. All this occurs behind a façade of glittering slogans promising development and reconstruction, while the actual objective is the engineering of poverty and the perpetuation of economic dependency.

Indeed, the “Cash-for-Nutrition and Livelihoods” project cannot be viewed in isolation from the long colonialist legacy of international institutions. This concept immediately brings to mind the infamous “Oil-for-Food” program imposed on Iraq in the 1990s; the core idea remains the same, even if the methods and names differ. The primary objective is to transform free peoples and resource-rich states into dependent, consumerist societies that rely on the crumbs of aid for day-to-day survival, rather than empowering them to build a genuine, independent economy that commands its own sovereignty and production decisions.

In short, the concept of “cash-for-nutrition” ties a person’s livelihood and survival to the flow of funds from the West via the World Bank and its affiliated institutions. This devious approach neither builds an economy nor fosters resilience—as is often claimed—but rather entrenches structural dependency. It turns hunger into a political weapon held over people's heads to force through political agendas and sovereignty-eroding concessions that populations would never accept were they economically and politically healthy.

Beneath the details of this concept and its systematic relief mechanisms, the humanitarian mask becomes clearly visible; the program is ostensibly marketed as a flexible alternative to traditional in-kind aid, aiming to curb food insecurity and malnutrition by providing direct cash assistance. This allows beneficiaries to purchase fresh food suited to their needs from local markets. The approach targets specific groups—such as pregnant and nursing mothers to ensure proper nutrition, and children under two to prevent stunting and malnutrition during this critical developmental window—as well as female-headed households, which face greater challenges in securing adequate food. Its support mechanisms rely on conditional cash transfers—providing funds to mothers in exchange for their attendance at health and nutrition awareness sessions or medical check-ups—or on food vouchers that can be redeemed for basic foodstuffs at stores contracted by humanitarian organizations. Yet, beneath this technical detail lies a political strategy: a form of “soft engineering” designed to manage hunger rather than eradicate it, and a means of tethering the community's daily life to the dictates of donors.

The World Bank: An Instrument of Economic Plunder and Destruction

The primary purpose for which the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) were established after World War II was never the development of developing nations or the rescue of the poor; rather, their role has always been to engineer an international system that serves the interests of major powers. The World Bank’s strategy focuses on a systematic plan to dismantle national economic infrastructures through so-called “structural adjustment programs” and conditional grants. These impose destructive mandates that eliminate any possibility of self-reliance.

The destructive activities of these international financial institutions can be summarized in a few key points, clearly evident in their dealings with nations across the globe:

* Trade liberalization and currency exchange deregulation: This entails lifting all import restrictions, leading to the flooding of local markets with foreign goods. Consequently, local industries and products lose their competitiveness and rapidly face bankruptcy, while state treasuries are depleted of foreign currency reserves and gold.

* Devaluation of the local currency: This systematic measure benefits only major industrial nations—which purchase the developing country's wealth and raw materials at rock-bottom prices—while domestically causing a collapse in purchasing power and plunging the state into a terrifying inflationary spiral driven by excessive money printing unsupported by real productive output.

* Strict austerity programs and wage freezes: These include restricting domestic lending, raising interest rates, slashing government spending on essential services, increasing taxes and fees for communal utilities—such as electricity, healthcare, and education—freezing public sector wages, and eliminating subsidies on consumer goods. Such measures drive economic recession and fuel internal unrest.

* Falling into a systematic riba debt trap: Industrialized nations entice Third World countries to borrow, with funds often used to finance consumer imports or channeled into non-productive, frivolous, or illusory projects. When repayment falls due and the state defaults, the IMF and the World Bank intervene to impose debt rescheduling terms that increase financial burdens and compound interest. Ultimately, the debt becomes a pretext for directly seizing the country's independent assets, selling off its holdings, and entrenching national bankruptcy.

This developmental failure is not accidental. Instead, it is an intended outcome of the capitalist international order. A 1991 World Bank study covering fifty developing nations yielded a shocking result: countries that did not adopt IMF and World Bank programs achieved economic growth, whereas none of the countries that adopted them did so. This confirms that these programs are merely prescriptions poised to engineer destruction and poverty.

Yemen in the Eye of a Systematic Storm

In the case of Yemen, this $101.8 million project serves merely to pull the wool over people's eyes—an attempt to pacify a stricken population. A country possessing immense wealth and a unique strategic location could achieve complete self-sufficiency if governed by the correct principles of statecraft; yet, the aim today is to keep it held captive by the meager crumbs tossed to it by the disbelieving, colonialist West.

The World Bank does not move to rescue the humanitarian situation out of moral concern, but rather to ensure Yemen remains under the umbrella of the capitalist international order and to prevent any genuine move toward economic liberation from Western hegemony. Tying recovery and reconstruction to the oversight and management of these international institutions effectively mortgages the country's future for years to come. It makes reconstruction conditional upon accepting colonialist political solutions and keeping the nation in a state of perpetual weakness, allowing major international powers to carve up the spoils and benefits—much like the fox distributing the prey in the famous Arabic fable of the lion, the wolf, and the fox, where the weak gain nothing but loss.

In conclusion, the Shariah obligation upon the young men and women of the Ummah is to expose these critical truths, unmask the malicious colonialist policies—disguised as capitalist humanitarian aid—sever the hand of the disbelieving colonizer and its instruments, and establish the Second Khilafah Rashidah (Rightly-Guided Caliphate). They must realize that the "Cash-for-Nutrition and Livelihoods" project is nothing more than a tool to entrench poverty and dependency, and to indirectly plunder the will of the people and the future of generations. We reiterate that true and final salvation never comes through the toxic grants and loans of the World Bank. Instead, it is achieved by severing the hand of foreign interference—in all its political and economic forms—restoring the Ummah's full independence and decision-making authority, and implementing the Islamic system—the just, divinely ordained order. This system guarantees the genuine care of human affairs, ensures the equitable distribution of wealth, and puts an end to long decades of dependency and the humiliation inflicted by brutal, colonialist capitalism.