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# YEMEN TIMES

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*"Let's Head for Yemen!"*

# Refugee Problems

Many people come to Yemen for different reasons. Most who now come are economic refugees from the Horn of Africa - Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia and the Sudan. They come in search of better fortunes, or they use Yemen as a stepping stone for other destinations. They remain in Yemen from a few months to a few years.

The older refugees are more political in nature. The oldest are the Mujahideen who fought Communism in Afghanistan, under the American umbrella. Some of the Majahideen are Yemeni, but the majority are Arabs and Muslims. There are also the political refugees who fled Ethiopia in the aftermath of the collapse of the Mengistu regime. There are also Somali, Eritrean and Sudanese political activists who are tolerated by the Yemeni authorities until they go to somewhere else or find any other solution.

But the Yemeni civil registry system has not been up to the task. Although there have been major improvements, the level of control of the authorities is far from complete. This makes Yemen a safe haven, for a while. But if these groups are caught, they are deported. Every now and then, the Ministry of Interior announces the deportation of batches of illegal residents.

There is another problem. Many refugees have been able to get Yemeni identity cards and passports. This has posed a problem for Yemen. Three weeks ago, the Yemeni authorities decided not to renew any such passports.

Today, the number of refugees in Yemen is estimated to be around 130,000 (please see adjacent table). This is a big number for a small and poor country, a country with an unemployment rate of 36%.

More on page 5

## REFUGEES IN YEMEN:

as of June 30th, 1998

Refugees by Country of Origin	Refugees Under UNHCR Umbrella	Refugees Assisted or Ignored by Yemeni Officials
Somalia	58,214	22,615
Ethiopia	1,342	6,112
Eritrea	2,503	5,430
Iraq	2,107	16,008
Algeria	82	n.a.
Sudan	132	12,080
Palestine	2,007	6,009
Other Nationalities	420	826
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>66,807</b>	<b>63,071</b>

**GRAND TOTAL 129,878**

Sources: UNHCR, and the Ministry of Interior;  
Note: Some figures were as on 31/3/1998

## World Bank Chief Plans Yemen Visit

Mr. James D. Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank, said that he was happy with the progress Yemen was making in implementation of the reform program.

Wolfensohn, who was speaking to the Editor of the Yemen Times, Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf, in Morocco, also indicated he was planning a trip to Yemen. "Yemen is a fascinating country and I have long wanted to visit. I now have plans to do so."

The World Bank chief expressed strong commitment for continued support for the Middle East and North Africa

region. "We are going to provide the necessary support for the region's development," he said.

Finally, he expressed appreciation for the Yemen Times reports on relations between the World Bank and Yemen. "I take your criticisms constructively" he said, indicating that he reads the paper every now and then.

More on WB activities in Yemen on Page 8.



## Only 10 Persons On-line At Any Time in Yemen!

It is really pathetic. Yemen Times has taken twenty samples on different days, at different times, to see how many people were hooked on the Internet at any time, through the TeleYemen server. The statistics were collected during the twenty days 17-31 August, 1998. We tried mornings, afternoons, and evenings. The highest number was 14, and the lowest 7. The overall average is about 10 users.

That average for the whole nation is less than the average for one institute or company in the advanced countries. To add insult to injury, 80% of the users were foreigners. The most frequent user was the Yemen Times; the 2nd highest was the US Embassy, and the 3rd was a foreign company.

It is also disturbing that none of the academic institutions of Yemen, including universities, has access to the Internet.

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## OUR VIEWPOINT

### Thieves Do Not Build Nations

The other day, a senior official in government came to see me. He is a well-educated man. He was worried because he felt that his minister was pushing him around, simply because he refuses to play the dirty game of the minister. "You know, it should be the crooks who should look over their shoulders. They are the ones who should seek extra cover and protection. However, in today's Yemen, it is clean people who need the extra protection," he said with grief. Indeed, the system that prevails in the Republic of Yemen today is basically controlled by and directed for the benefit of crooked people. If you want to have any say at all, you have to join the 'League of the Crooked'.

President Ali Abdullah Saleh tolerates the thieves and crooks because he has accepted that it is a price to be paid to appease strong power centers. Some of these power centers are actually his own creation. But at times, the monsters may have grown out of control. As a result, almost all sectors of public life, to one degree or another, are today under the control of crooked people.

The system of government in Yemen today is based on some form of arrangement between the top rulers and the power centers. The arrangement says that the power centers obey almost blindly the dictates of the top rulers, and in return the power centers are free to mis-use and abuse their powers for self-enrichment and to the detriment of the general public, and rival power centers.

Often, one hears people justify the deviant behavior of the crooked people in high office. The other day a Western ambassador of an important donor nation described a minister in the present government like this: "Yes, I know he is a thief. But he works hard." The ambassador can use that kind of lopsided logic only in Yemen. In his country, he would be laughed out of the room. Not that I let him off the hook.

Many foreign diplomats are unfortunately blinded by career considerations, petty privileges and other interests in their assessment of the situation in the country. They should be reminded of the dismal failure of Western diplomacy in properly assessing the realities of Iran before the downfall of the Shah. It is just a simple and basic fact that hard conditions for the majority of the population, like the one prevailing in Yemen today, cannot remain intact forever. Sooner or later, and in Yemen possibly much sooner than many would think, things will have to change.

Gradually, and as poverty begins to bite more savagely, an already tired populace gets out of control. There is already a growing consensus among the people of Yemen that an overhaul is required. However, it is in the hands of President Saleh to avert Yemen falling into chaos and lawlessness and to introduce real and deep changes.

There are some of us who still pray hard so that the President will rise up to the occasion and bring about the required changes, before it is too late. President Ali Abdullah Saleh is a shrewd and intelligent person. He should be able to see the signals and warnings that come from the many flashpoints which now trouble the nation. These are the signs of the times to come.

He must see that thieves and crooks do not build nations. It is individuals with integrity who are the great nation builders.

*The Publisher*  
*SAQAQ*

#### Al-Amal Charitable Society

The Al-Amal social and charitable society, Maaden, Qadas held its meeting on Friday, August 14. Mr. Abdulwahab Othman Hasan was nominated as the chairman of the administrative board and Mr. Yasser Ali Mohammed Al-Hilal as chairman of the supervisory board.

#### Al-Ahd Issued

The first issue of the Al-Ahd magazine was issued in August. Al-Ahd is a fortnightly (monthly temporarily) political, cultural and social Arab magazine. The publisher and editor-in-chief is Mr. Faker Al-Imad. The first issue contained a lot of articles on Yemeni, Arab and world issues.

#### Workshop on Human Rights

Organized by the Human Rights Information & Training Center in cooperation with the United States Information Services, a seminar will be conducted during September 12-13 at the Hadda Hotel in Sanaa. With the participation of 21 Yemeni human rights NGOs, the seminar will focus on establishing civil society and strengthening human rights.

#### \$20 million for Social Fund

The Social Development Fund at the Ministry of Planning and Development has received a grant of \$20 million to help finance small and micro-projects in Yemen. It is part of the efforts to alleviate the burden of economic reform on low-income citizens.

The relevant agreement was signed by the Ministry of Planning and Development and the Arab Fund for Economic Development last June.

#### Measles Workshop

Organized by the Ministry of Public Health, in cooperation with the WHO, an inter-country workshop on controlling measles is being held during September 5-7.

About 20 specialists from countries in the eastern Mediterranean region as well as several international health organizations will take part in the workshop. The event's main aim is to consolidate cooperation among the region's countries to help combat measles.

#### Cumberland Expected

The British frigate HMS Cumberland is scheduled to dock in Maalla, Aden on Thursday, September 24 in a friendly visit to Yemen. This warship is the latest of a series of similar arrivals by US, British, French and other nationality naval ships, attesting to Yemen's growing strategic importance in the region.

#### Embassy of India NOTICE

With effect from September 10, 1998, the Embassy of India will function from Sunday to Thursday. Friday and Saturday will be weekend holidays.

#### UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME UNDP VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

United Nations Development Program (UNDP) is inviting applications for the following post in its office in Sana'a.

#### Laboratory Technician

#### Duties and Responsibilities:

The successful candidate shall perform the following tasks:  
Perform all possible medical test for all UN staff members and their dependents, maintain inventory of all equipment pertaining to the US Dispensary Laboratory, assist in the vaccination of UN staff and their dependents, follow-up and liaise with Ministry of Public Health and Central Laboratory concerning HIV test in respect of UN expatriate staff for residence permit formalities, assist in the procurement of medicines and medical laboratory equipment from WHO, maintain regular supplies of basic materials for the laboratory, and any other duties assigned within the context of the UN Dispensary Laboratory. The successful candidate will be required to work 3 days per week.

#### Qualification/Experience/Skills requirements:

B.Sc. in Bio-Chemistry of Micro-Biology preferably Master Degree with minimum of 5 years of practical experience in the field, very good knowledge of English and Arabic is essential, computer skill is desirable. Interested candidates are requested to send their applications with detailed curriculum vitae to:

Operations Manager, UNDP, P.O. Box No. 551, Sana'a.

Applications should be received **no later than 17 Sep. 1998.**

Applications received after this date will not be considered. Only those candidates who strictly meet the requirements should apply and acknowledgement will only be sent to shortlisted applicants meeting the requirements.

#### The Royal Netherlands Embassy in Sana'a is looking for suitable candidates for the position of:

#### Local Programme Officer Gender and Development

to assist in the implementation of the Netherlands Policy on Gender and Development within the context of the bilateral cooperation between the Republic of Yemen and the Netherlands.

The preferred candidate would have the following qualifications:

- MA or equivalent degree in a development related discipline with proven affinity to gender issues.
- Considering the portfolio of the gender specialist, experience and/or expertise in the fields of NGO's, children and development or basic education would be an advantage.
- Five years of prior professional experience in the development sector, including experience in development programming, planning and monitoring.
- Excellent command of both the English and Arabic language.
- Proven administrative skills, and
- Excellent knowledge of and experience with Windows 3.1 and Wordperfect 5.2.

Interested individuals are encouraged to apply by submitting a recent copy of their curriculum vitae, the names and addresses of two references and a brief statement describing their interest in this position within 10 days after publication of this advertisement. Applications may be sent by mail, fax or e-mail for the attention of:

Mr. J. Buringa, First Secretary Gender and Development  
Royal Netherlands Embassy  
P. O. Box 463, Sana'a

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# "The citizens' trust in the State must be restored through positive action."

Mr. Abdulkarim Hassan Taqi is the chief editor and publisher of the *Sanaa* weekly newspaper and a renowned journalist since the early 1970s. His father was the Imam's correspondence and speech writer. He graduated from the Science Institute at the hands of the first delegation of Egyptian teachers. The first employee to come out of Taiz to work in the presidential office, Taqi, 65, occupied several posts in the army, the judicial system and the foreign ministry. During the early years of the revolution in Yemen, he worked with some of its more illustrious leaders such as Marshal Abdullah Al-Sallal and Ustaz Ahmed Mohammed Noman.

For the best of part of three decades, Taqi worked at the Yemeni Bank for Construction and Development. Upon retirement, he has devoted almost all his time to journalism.

Mohammed Bin Sallam of Yemen Times talked to Mr. Taqi about his work in Yemen's oldest newspaper. He filed the following interview. Excerpts:



**Q: When did you start working in journalism?**

**A:** In the early 1970s, there were only two daily newspapers in the country: Al-Thawra in Sanaa and Al-Jumohoriya in Taiz. Both are state-owned. I felt then that there should be an independent publication to provide a forum for the alternative point of view. So a group of intellectuals, writers and journalists got together, discussed the matter and decided to publish *Sanaa*.

I approached the then Minister of Information, Mr. Ahmed Dahmash, who very much welcomed the idea. He even exempted us from paying fees for a publication permit.

The first issue of *Sanaa* - edited by Mr. Mohsin Al-Aini, former Foreign Minister and Premiere - was met with a lot of approval by its readers. The second issue was edited by the late Mohammed Ali Othman.

**Q: This was not the first time a publication by that name appeared in Yemen. Could you briefly tell us about its predecessor?**

**A:** The beginning was in 1879, during the Ottoman occupation of Yemen. *Sanaa* then consisted of two pages: one in Arabic and the other in Turkish. But its demise came when the Turks left Yemen.

**Q: Can you tell us more about the conditions in journalism and publishing at the time you decided to launch *Sanaa*?**

**A:** At the start, we faced numerous difficulties, which we were able to surmount with a lot of enthusiasm and encouragement by friends and well-wishers.

*Sanaa* was published by Yemeni Company for Printing and Publishing, which also used to print Al-Thawra daily. The printing process was quite primitive then. When the Offset printing press was introduced into Yemen in the mid-1970s, *Sanaa* came to be published by the Al-Thawra Establishment for Printing and Publishing. For the last ten years, however, *Sanaa* has been printed by 26 September printing press.

The line adopted by *Sanaa* was not always compatible with that of the authorities. So the best part of ten years was spent in a tug-of-war game with the government. At one time, *Sanaa's* chief editor was put under house arrest and threatened with imprisonment.

**Q: Were there any other independent newspapers published in *Sanaa*?**

**A:** *Sanaa* was the first one, followed in one year by Al-Ray Al-Aam published by Mr. Ali Al-Olufi and Al-Horiya by Mr. Abdulkarim Sabra. These three remained the only ones until the unification of Yemen. After unity, licenses were granted to more than 170 publications.

**Q: How do you describe the direction adopted by *Sanaa* today?**

**A:** *Sanaa* has the honor of following a wholly balanced and overtly patriotic line of action. Ten years ago, I was offered five million riyals to relinquish *Sanaa*, but I refused categorically.

At one time in the recent past, we had to print *Sanaa* in Syria. It used to be sold on the black market in Yemen for ten times its cover price. This shows how popular it was. *Sanaa* was, still is and ever will be an independent publication. It has determinedly kept independence despite many attempts by various political organizations to engulf it in their party politics. The paper has never stopped during the last 27 years of its existence.

Moreover, although I am a senior member of the ruling People's General Congress, my paper is very much healthily independent.

**Q: Do you receive any financial support of any kind?**

**A:** No, not at all. And that is how we managed to keep it away from any outside influence.

**Q: What is *Sanaa's* circulation?**

**A:** *Sanaa* used to have a circulation of between 10,000 and 15,000. With the onset of the current economic crisis and the rise in the price of paper, we have had to reduce the number of copies printed to 7,000 only.

**Q: How do you estimate the size of its readership?**

**A:** *Sanaa* has quite a following among the general public. Almost no copies are returned.

**Q: Your photograph appeared in Newsweek. How did this come about?**

**A:** This was when the information desk at the Yemen Embassy in Washington was opened for the first time. I was treated as a guest of honor. I met the US Vice President, a number of Congressmen and the director of the International Development Agency.

**Q: Who are the most prominent people who have been interviewed by *Sanaa*?**

**A:** We interviewed Jacques Chirac when he was the mayor of Paris, the assistant to George Bush's running mate during the presidential campaign and Bush's aide for the Middle and Near Eastern affairs. Interviews were also made with the Jordanian army Chief of Staff, King Fahad when he was Crown Prince and with Prince Sultan Bin Abdulaziz.

**Q: How do you evaluate democracy in general and freedom of the press in particular in Yemen today?**

**A:** We cannot really say that there is real freedom of the press,

as recognized by the rest of the world. There is, however, a reasonable margin of freedom available for journalists. But what is really followed is the adage 'let them say what they want, and we'll do what we want.'

Democracy is a complete system of rules and institutions, in addition to a well educated populace that understands what democracy really is. Democracy flourishes in the midst of an educated people, which constantly monitors the state's performance.

During a recent visit to the Central Organization for Control and Audit, President Ali Abdullah Saleh said that the media should uncover and publicly denounce corrupt officials. But I have quite a daring question: can any journalist really denounce a senior government official publicly? The obvious answer is No!

Democracy, freedom of the press, freedom of expression, etc, in a backward country like Yemen are really just slogans. Can any journalist go to an apartment block in an upper middle class area in Sanaa, say, take photos and say that this edifice is owned by so-and-so who embezzled so much from the state coffers? The answer is again No! Nobody dares to do such a thing.

Real democracy is to be able to hold corrupt people accountable for their wrong deeds. Democracy is a whole range of responsibilities that is governed by many rules and regulations.

President Ali Abdullah Saleh is a patriotic person, and is trying to build a modern state. Unfortunately, he has not yet been completely successful. He certainly has achieved many great things: unification, a group of important development projects, agricultural growth, oil and gas exploitation, and many others. We all aim to establish a state of law and order.

**Q: How do you see the reform program going?**

**A:** Financial and administrative reform is a strategic goal. However, I do not understand how a senior public official could give his very expensive government car to his son or his wife to go shopping. All expenses are paid by public money, of course. In the US, for instance, a government car is only used for official business.

**Q: It is often rumored that some senior officials chew qat at a cost equivalent to the salaries of 300 junior public employees per month. How can this happen?**

**A:** Yes, some officials chew qat worth 3,000 riyals every day. Such people must be regarded as saboteurs. Where do they get such money? It certainly is not from their monthly government salary. Bribery and corruption are rife.

People have lost confidence in the State. They see corrupt officials go unpunished, on the contrary, they flourish. The citizens' trust in the State must be restored through positive action.

All sorts of contradictions are present in Yemen, it is frightening. We as intellectuals are bewildered.

**Q: What is your estimation of the number of people who read newspapers and other publications in Yemen?**

**A:** It is not more than 5%. I mean newspapers only circulate in major towns and cities, and are read by a particular segment of educated people and political "amateurs."

**Q: How effective is the opposition in Yemen?**

**A:** There is no real opposition in Yemen. An effective opposition must rely on a wide popular base, through which it can have a say in parliament. Thus, a balance can be struck in parliament with the ruling party. Also, the opposition can then effectively monitor the government's performance

with the aim of rectifying it if necessary. There is no democracy without an effective opposition, which is certainly not just a bunch of newspapers attacking the government.

**Q: Do you see a satisfactory resolution to Yemen's economic crisis?**

**A:** Yemen is not a poor country, but has huge natural resources.


The main malady is that these resources are wasted or stolen. The equation must be: work plus intensive production equals a strong economy. We have totally the opposite in Yemen. The economic crisis will persist, unless real corrective measures are taken. Only true economic reform can restore the people's self-confidence.

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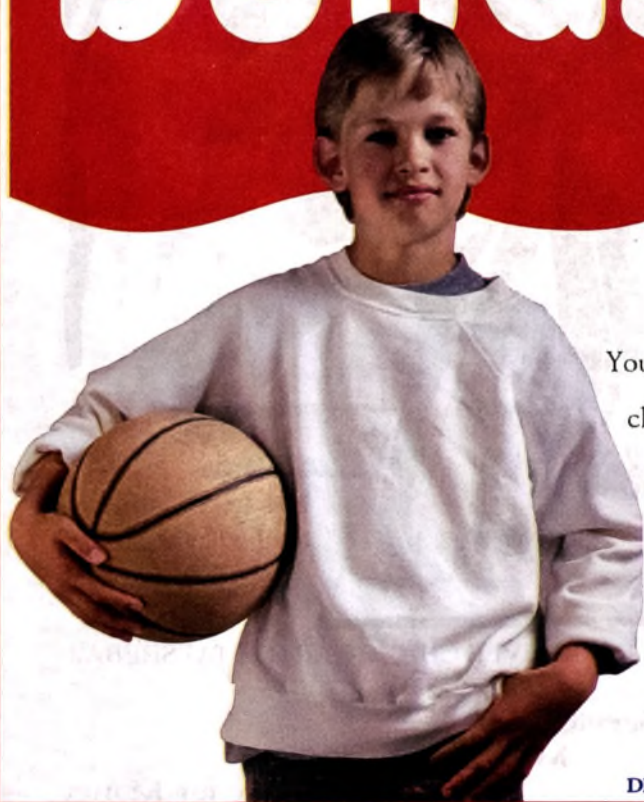
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# Refugees in Yemen: Humanitarian Gesture or Economic Burden?

## UNHCR Viewpoint

continued until March, 1998, with the help of the mass media such as Yemeni radio and the BBC.

**Q: What sort of services does UNHCR provide to refugees?**

**A:** UNHCR wholly assists vulnerable refugees living in Al-Jahin camp and those in urban areas. With the help of a number of implementing partners such as Radda Barnen and the British ICD, a local NGO named PAD, Triangle (French) and COOI, UNHCR provides refugees with health, education and training.

**Q: Are the refugees trained to be integrated within society?**

**A:** Despite the lack of financial resources, the refugee situation in Yemen is better than in many other countries, as attested to by many international visitors. This does not mean, however, that the refugees live in luxury in Yemen. We try our best to provide at least basic services such as health and vocational training.

**Q: What sort of skills are these**

**refugees taught?**

**A:** In the Jahin refugee camp, for example, there is a community center and three income-generation projects where the inmates are taught simple handicrafts such as basket weaving, etc. The German GTZ last year provided, with the financial assistance of the UNHCR, these refugees with 30 scholarships to be mechanical and electrical technicians.

**Q: What do the refugees at the camp get by way of food and other basic needs?**

**A:** According to international regulations, refugees must get regular meals that provide at least 1,940 calories per person per day. Each individual in the Jahin camp gets more than 2,000 cal. a day. They are also provided with bedding and basic household utensils, and other non-food items.

**Q: How much does the UNHCR spend on refugees in Yemen?**

**A:** The UNHCR's annual

program in Yemen costs about \$2.5 million. This is with donations by foreign governments and international organizations.

Six months ago, the Italian government, for instance, donated \$250,000 worth of medicines to refugees in Yemen. Another \$250,000 of medicines is coming in September.

**Q: What are the aid projects implemented by NOGs to help the refugees?**

**A:** For example, Radda Barnen of Sweden is now building a school at the Jahin camp in addition to providing rehabilitation and physiotherapy for disabled children. Food provisions and sanitation in Jahin are managed by Partners for Development of Yemen. The French Triangle is responsible for income generation, social activities and rehabilitation training.

There are several health care projects being implemented in the refugee camp to control TB and other serious diseases. There are also other health-care projects in the

Basateen area in Aden and in Sanaa. All the abovementioned activities are financed by UNHCR.

**Q: Are new refugees screened for AIDS and other contagious diseases?**

**A:** All refugees are screened for common diseases before being admitted into the camp. However, we do not have adequate medical testing facilities for AIDS at the camp. So anyone suspected by the camp's doctor of having a serious medical problem is immediately referred to a public hospital.

**Q: Are refugee students allowed to continue their studies in public schools?**

**A:** In coordination with the Yemeni education authorities, students finishing their studies at the camp are allowed to do higher education at state universities. This process was started about a year ago.

**Q: How are the refugees received when they first arrive?**

**A:** Asylum seekers are referred by the border or by the coast

UNHCR.

**Q: How long does it take for this process to be completed?**

**A:** It takes a few days to decide if the person concerned is eligible for refugee status. Many of the people who have been coming from Ethiopia recently are really economic migrants. So we reject their applications.

**Q: Do you give the registered refugees ID cards?**

**A:** UNHCR issues two types of card. The first is issued to refugees living in urban areas to allow them to travel within Yemen. There is also the "Ration Card" for people at the refugee camp, which does not give them the right to move around. If they wish to visit another governorate, they have to get a special document issued by UNHCR and the Yemeni Immigration office.

**Q: What about refugees from other Arab countries?**

**A:** Since Arab citizens can enter Yemen legally, they become the government's responsibility - from the legal point of view. UNHCR however, is also willing to provide all possible assistance for people coming from Arab countries in coordination with the authorities if the person concerned meets the criteria for refugee status.

**Q: You have started a process of repatriating Somali refugees. How many have been sent home so far?**

**A:** About 650 Somalis were repatriated, and 101 more will go back soon. By December 31, 1998, UNHCR anticipates that about 1,000 refugees will be assisted by UNHCR to return home voluntarily.



Mr. Mazin Abu-Shanab, chief of the UNHCR sub-office in Aden and acting resident representative.

**Q: Could you briefly name the main UNHCR tasks in Yemen?**

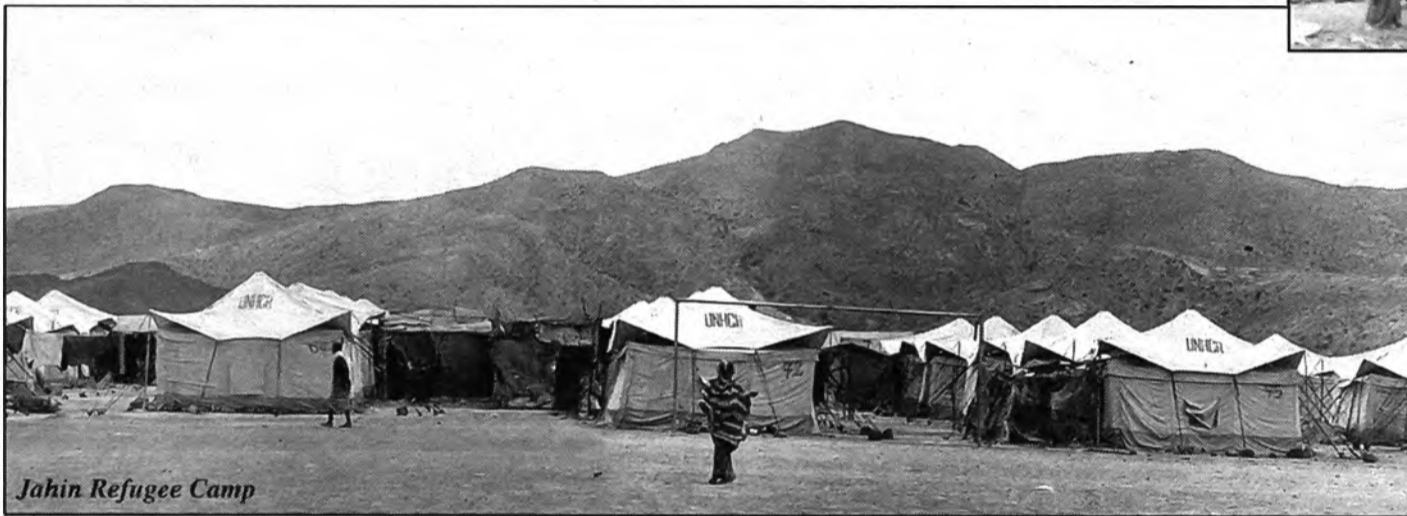
**A:** UNHCR was invited by the Yemeni government when huge numbers of Somali refugees started coming in, escaping the civil war in their country. We came to help the government deal with the refugee problem.

There are some 9,000 refugees in Jahin camp, Abyan, in addition to almost 38,000 other refugees living in various parts of the country. Refugee registration started in November, 1997 and



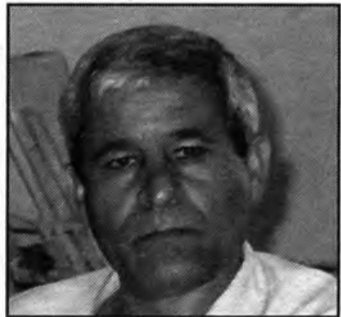
guard authorities to UNHCR.

As soon they are found to be genuine asylum seekers, they become the responsibility of



Jahin Refugee Camp

## Immigration Authority Sometimes Left in Dark



Colonel Mohammed Ali Al-Ozair is the director of the Refugees Bureau at the Passport and Nationality Authority.

**istered or otherwise, are there in Yemen?**

**A:** There are about 36,000 Somali refugees, some are registered with UNHCR but not with us. The total number of refugees, however, exceeds 100,000 from different African countries.

**Q: Isn't there any form of coordination between your office and the UNHCR?**

**A:** Frankly speaking, the coordination is minimal and only in the matters that the UNHCR deems suitable. It is not done in the areas we would like to share with them. The UNHCR is sometimes quite evasive in these matters.

**Q: Is the Jahin refugee camp appropriate as a shelter?**

**A:** No, it is not suitable. It has no running water and there is a public road that passes through it. We recommended a better site at Kharaz for UNHCR. This issue was discussed more than once by Yemeni and UNHCR officials, but no final decision has been reached. The UNHCR does not wish to move the camp to Kharaz. I don't know why.

**Q: What problems do you face in dealing with refugees?**

**A:** Work is limited in our office due to a marked lack of financial resources and facilities. If a representative of the Refugee Bureau wants to visit the refugee camp in

Khawka, for instance, he is often impeded by lack of proper transportation. We have to use public transport.

**Q: How many refugee camps are there in Yemen?**

**A:** There are two such camps - Jahin and Al-Khawka. The latter houses about 2,500 Eritrean refugees who entered Yemen in the 1970s. There used to be a camp for Ethiopian refugees, but was closed by UNHCR.

**Q: Why is the Kharaz site better than Jahin?**

**A:** Kharaz is a fortified area that can be easily guarded and has plenty of water available. The site used to be a military barracks, the buildings just need a little renovation to be ready to house the refugees. The Jahin camp, on the other hand, is a group of tents pitched in a desolate land lacking in water resources. Moreover, Kharaz has a school and a health clinic.

**Q: How many people have applied for political asylum during the first half of this year?**

**A:** I don't know about this issue, but you can ask other government bodies such as the Foreign Ministry or the security.

**Q: Are there any plans to provide better facilities for refugees in the future?**

**A:** Most of the people taking refuge in Yemen come from Somalia, Eritrea and Ethiopia. I hope all the problems that made them flee their homes will be

addressed so that they can be peacefully repatriated. Our bureau doesn't really have specific plans for the future, but other bodies do.

**Q: Does the flow of refugees into Yemen present serious problems for the country and its people?**

**A:** There is no doubt that there are some harmful effects. Yemen is now going through difficult economic circumstances, which will be further complicated by the increasing numbers of refugees. They enter the country through many thinly policed border and coastal gateways. Some of these people are infected with serious and contagious diseases such as AIDS, posing real health risks to society.

**Q: It is often rumored that there are Arab refugees whom the Yemeni government tries to deliberately hide from international organizations and the media because of pressures by certain Yemeni political parties. Is this true?**

**A:** This is the first time I have heard of such an allegation. It is completely false.

**Q: What would you like to say to UNHCR?**

**A:** First, I'd like to thank UNHCR for all their efforts to take care of the refugees. But I hope that they give the government all the important information on the refugee situation in this country. The UNHCR is best equipped to carry out this task.

## Jahin Director Speaks Out



Mr. Ali Saeed Ali, director of the Jahin camp for refugees, is a Sudanese refugee himself. He has been working in the camp for two years.

covers the refugees' basic needs. So the use of resources must be rationalized. Giving them money may make them unwilling to go back home or wish to develop their vocational skills.

When some refugees are given money to help them settle back at home, they tend to spend it in Yemen and remain in this country.

**Q: Why doesn't UNHCR organize some recreational activities to help alleviate the refugees' psychological problems?**

**A:** There are many such services, but not enough. Due to objections raised by some religious groups, we asked the refugees to tone down some of their song and dance activities. However, they can still organize some low-key folklore celebrations.

**Q: What other problems are there in the Jahin camp?**

**A:** There is no electricity supply at the camp, which makes the refugees unable to watch TV or listen to music, for example, to help them wind down.

The camp is also some distant from the sea or any green area, a factor that exacerbates the refugees' emotional problems. I would like to see these refugees returned to the Cod camp, which would enable them to fish, farm, etc.

**Q: Any last comment?**

**A:** Media coverage of the refugees' plight will help solve some of their problems. I call on all international organizations to help refugees graduating from secondary school - 25 this year - obtain university seats.

Women and children form about 35% of the camp's population. There should be more health-care facilities for these people.

**Q: What are the major problems and difficulties experienced by the refugees and the administration of the Jahin camp?**

**A:** The refugees are mostly in bad emotional and psychological states. To properly deal with them, one needs a lot of patience, understanding and perseverance.

**Q: How can the emotional problems be solved?**

**A:** The only solution is to repatriate them to Somalia, when conditions there are peaceful and stable enough. The camp's administration should be given larger powers to be able to fully utilize the available resources.

Unfortunately, some refugees misuse the available resources and facilities. Some of these people consider the camp's resources as a given right, to be squandered at will.

**Q: Why doesn't the UNHCR help the refugees by giving them pocket money?**

**A:** UNHCR relies on aid provided by other countries such as Sweden, Norway, Canada and Italy. This aid usually just about

This is an **OPINION** page.

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## Yemen Violence Threatens Stability In Arabia

By: Dr. Abdu Hamood Sharif\*

The Yemen government's decision to increase the prices of fuel and basic foodstuff by 40% - to comply with terms of an \$80 million International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan - produced a sudden popular and, ultimately, bloody eruption across the country.

The outbreak pointed to a deep malaise after 20 years of rule by President Ali Abdullah Saleh. It began on the 20th of June with a peaceful demonstration in the Yemeni capital, Sanaa, which soon developed into confrontations with security forces. These confrontations have lasted for several weeks, not only in Sanaa, but also in Hajjah, Ibb, Dhamar, Mareb, Mukallah, Hawtah and other cities where crowds vent their anger against state corruption, particularly in President Saleh's ruling General People's Congress.

Demonstrators chanted "no Iryani after today!", referring to the Prime Minister Abdul Karim Al-Iryani, who formed a new cabinet last May following the resignation of his predecessor Faraj Ben Ghanem.

Initially, the government seemed unprepared for this "uprising of the hungry," which began as a reaction to the price hike on basic commodities, but soon evolved into protests against the regime led by Saleh and his family and military clique. In the face of police inability to control the situation, the elite Republican Guard (established on the Iraqi model) and army units finally came in with orders to shoot. As a result, at least 14 civilians in

several cities were shot and killed, and many others injured, and hundreds arrested and imprisoned, according to Yemeni and Arab newspapers.

In the provinces of Al-Jawf and Mareb, site of rich oil fields east of Sanaa, the situation became even worse. Army units clashed with armed tribesmen, resulting in dozens being killed or injured on both sides. A pipe-line run by the American owned Hunt Oil Company was blown up seven times by these tribesmen, resulting in leaks of over 30,000 barrels, according to the independent newspaper the Yemen Times. President Saleh acknowledged on July 21st that 52 soldiers had been killed and more than 200 injured since the fighting broke out last June, while opposition groups spoke of more than a hundred deaths among civilians and military personnel alike.

These most recent developments in this south Arabian country of nearly 16 million followed a series of crises that have rocked the country since the unification of north and south Yemen in May 1990. The 70 day civil war from May to July 1994 resulted in the defeat of separatists led by the south Yemeni leader Ali Salim Al-Biedh by forces loyal to Saleh, but the situation has never really improved since then.

Hopes raised by the unification of both Yemen's were soon replaced

by frustration over the pervasive corruption of the entire political system. Aggravating this was the looting of state land in Aden and other cities in the former People's Democratic Republic of Yemen by the ruling clique in Sanaa and marginalization of southern participation in the political power.

Nor have conditions in the north been any better. The standard of living in the country has declined from nearly \$700 per capita in the 1980s to \$280 presently. The health sector is in shambles. According to Carl Tintman, UNICEF resident representative in Sanaa, approximately 200 Yemeni children die everyday, mainly because of the lack of immunization. The World Bank reported in 1995 that the budget allotted to health in Yemen was 4% of GNP. The military's share is 28 to 35%.

What was once one of Arabia's most promising countries, rich in agricultural resources and blessed with a hard working population, is now suffering nearly 15% inflation and over 40% of unemployment.

US policy has been to encourage democratic reform in the country, with some positive steps taken during 1993 and 1997 parliamentary elections. But no transfers of power have really taken place. The parliament turned out to be a rubber stamp, and the power structure remains firmly authoritarian, controlled by Saleh

and his relatives.

Amnesty International's 1997 report on Yemen stated that the Yemeni regime remains a major violator of human rights, including many cases of disappearances, detention without trial and torture. Many who sympathized with the regime during the 1997 elections subsequently have expressed disappointment with its heavy handed policy towards political dissent, and its inability to live up to its promises with respect to political freedom and human rights.

Moreover, there is an almost complete absence of law and order in the country. Occasional fighting erupts even in Sanaa over ownership of land, as the government seems unable or unwilling to enforce public order. In the south, anti-government warfare is spreading, with southern separatist groups claiming responsibility for a number of explosions and clashes with government forces. And, as in the past, in the eastern region of the country local tribesmen kidnap foreign nationals and tourists as a way to publicize their grievances against the regime.

The response of the government has been, in some cases, to reward those who did the kidnapping. In one of those cases, it is no secret that the individual responsible for the kidnapping of the US Cultural Attaché Haynes Mahoney in 1993 was appointed to the post of deputy director for security affairs in the province of Al-Jawf.

More than a hundred foreigners, including Americans, British, Germans, Italians, Dutch, Japanese and others have been kidnapped since 1992. The latest and most horrible of incidents was the killing of 3 Catholic nuns on July 27th by a Muslim religious fanatic in the port city of Hodeidah, 225 kilometers west of the capital Sanaa. While the US has never paid close attention to the events in Yemen, it attaches great importance to the stability of the oil-rich Arabian peninsula region, and Yemen is a back door into that region. If Yemen becomes

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"another Somalia" under the current regime, as President Saleh himself predicted before opposition leaders on June 25th, it will invite serious trouble to the area, and could jeopardize US forces in the Arab states of the Gulf.

A key to stability in Yemen is the expansion of democratic and economic rights to include all groups and all regions of the country. This means embarking on a program of national reconciliation that would address such problems as the monopoly of economic and political power by the President and his kinsmen and the exclusion of other groups from the political system. It also means ending high level corruption and nepotism.

What Yemenis seem to be trying to express is that they do not mind economic reform as long as its burden is shared equally

between them and their rulers. What they do mind, however, is watching their country slide into violence and instability as a reaction to inept and corrupt leadership.

This article was published in **The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, September 1998.**

Dr. Abdu H. Sharif is a visiting scholar at the American University's Center for Global Peace in Washington DC. He taught political science at Sanaa University until 1995. Dr. Sharif was a Fulbright scholar at George Town University's Center for Contemporary Arab Studies until August, 1996. He has long been active in the field of human rights.

In the *Focus* article of the last issue of Yemen Times (Vol VIII, Issue 35, August 31), a different writer's name was published. "Marriage and Family Problems in Yemen" was actually written by Dr. Salah Haddash (Ph.D. Law), Yemen Times Managing Editor, whose photograph appeared with the article.

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# To Rent or Not To Rent? That is the Dilemma

## Tenants Complain

Nearly a decade ago, renting a house was not so expensive in comparison with a typical public employee salary. There were many houses to let and less people. A house rent did not exceed 2000 rials per month. Five years ago, the best house used to cost not more than YR 5,000 or 6,000.

Year after year, things became more and more difficult. A good house today (4 bedrooms, a kitchen, and a bathroom) will cost you at least YR 12,000. Old houses made of mud bricks and wood cost at least YR 6,000 per month, excluding water and electricity. Houses in upper middle-class neighborhoods like the Diplomatic Quarter in Sanaa cost at least YR 20,000 per month. In more popular areas like Bab Al-Yemen, a house rent is around YR 6,000 to 8,000. But tenants are not only plagued by high rents, but also by many other problems as well. Cutting off water and electricity supplies has become a way by which landlords drive their tenants out.

In order to know more about this problem, Yemen Times interviewed some tenants.

### First person:

"Six years ago, I used to pay YR 2,000 per month as a rent for the house I live in on Al-Adl street, excluding water and electricity. It is true that it is an old house, but it is clean and suitable. Three years later, the landlord asked me to pay 1,000 riyals more. I preferred to stay in the same house because it is near to my daughter's school.

"After 2 years, he asked to increase the rent by a further 1,000 riyals. Again, I agreed to pay YR 4,000 per month for the same reason. When my sister and brother came to live with us, the landlord found it a good excuse to push us to evacuate his property. He asked me this time to pay YR 6,000 a month. I agreed temporarily to pay until I could find another house. He cuts the electricity and water supply and accuses us of wasting water. So, we are trying our best to leave soon."

### Second Person:

"I rented a ground-floor apartment in Baghdad Street. It appeared to be clean but quite small (4 small bedrooms, a bathroom, and a kitchen). I had to pay YR 12,000 a month, excluding water and electricity. The rent contract signed indicated that I must tell him one month in advance if I wanted to leave.

"I discovered later when I was already in the apartment, that the septic tank usually overflowed in front of the building's entrance. Foul smell was pervasive. I couldn't open my windows. Because of that I decided to move out without telling him.

"When he knew about it, he asked me to pay the house rent even if I left because he said I violated the contract's clause indicating that I have to tell him one month before I leave. At the end, I paid the electricity and water bills."

### Third Person:

"I rented a shop to start an internal decorating business. The rent contract indicated that the shop rent will be fixed for one year. After one year, we agreed, I had to pay 10% more. Coming to work one morning, I found my shop padlocked by the landlord.

When I complained, he said that someone else was willing to pay him more for the shop, and that I would have to leave without even taking my work tools, locked inside the shop. The problem grew bigger.

"He refused to give me my tools and equipment back. I went to the police station but to no avail. I filed a law suit. Three years passed without any progress. Now I work in another shop. Imagine that you have your own workshop but you work as an employee for another person!"

### Fourth Person:

"I used to live in a third-floor apartment in Al-Adl street, paying YR 2,000 a month. Since the landlord is my wife's relative, we did not draw up a contract. I lived two years in that apartment. Later, the landlord asked me to pay YR 1,500 more. I stayed two more years there, and when he again asked me to pay more I decided to move out. When I moved to another house every thing seemed to be O.K. Yet the rent was much more.

"But, even though, the man did not let us go without creating problems. He asked me to repaint the place. When I refused, he went to the police and made a charge against me. At the end, I was obliged to paint the house."

By Khairiya Al-Shibibi

violence and gun-firing might be the final choice to finish off such problems and disputes.

In some other cases, tenants accept the rent regardless of how much it is. I have known that the rent of a one-door shop on Hadda street is now \$1000 per a month. Is this possible? The tenant knows how to compensate; he easily raises the prices of his goods and thus gets a good profit. So it is only the poor who suffer.

### Renting criteria

There are many criteria defining the rent of houses. Location is very important in the capital Sanaa. We find that houses located in the political zone and Hadda, which are new and therefore cleaner are very expensive, whereas those in the sub suburbs of the capital, which are older, are thus a lot cheaper.

### Leasing contract

We find that the procedures of renting a shop or a house is mainly conducted at real-estate offices. And the two sides have to abide what is in the contract. It can also be done through a 'go-between' where no contracts are signed. It is because of the latter that most of the renting problems occur. However, even contracts can be violated for the landlord, as I mentioned previously, resorts to force and ignores the contract. So, if the tenant is not courageous enough to withstand the landlord's arrogance, he will find himself out on the street. But is it necessary that we should be always violent and bloody to keep our dignity untarnished? Will the government address the renting problem promptly?

By Mohammed Hatem Al-Qadhi  
Assistant Managing Editor.  
Yemen Times

## Legal Perspective



The law regulating house rental is the civil law. But there must be another law to provide more

details about this matter. Many members of parliament are not in a position to objectively debate such a law, because most of them are real-estate owners. Tenants usually abide by all the commitments whereas the landlords have all the privileges in the rent contracts. This problem must be tackled urgently.

### Commission

Renting houses and shops in Yemen can be done in different ways. It can happen through estate agents, who are responsible for drawing up contracts between the landlord and the tenant. They get a commission in return which can be the equivalent of one month's rent. The tenant might pay the commission if he is supposed to pay the rent of less than 6 months in advance. But if he ought to pay the rent of more than 6 months in advance, the landlord and the tenant should share paying the commission. If the tenant has to pay the rent of more than 6 months, let's say a year, the landlord has to pay the whole commission. This has become a convention and a rule. It might become one day a legal rule documented as a part of the rental law.

It is not obligatory that the letting of houses or shops should be conducted through real-estate agents. Some shops owners in any Yemeni city have a good knowledge of the houses and shops for rent. Therefore, they can be mediators between the landlord and the tenant, and thus get a commission similar to that paid to estate agents. The difference is that they don't pay taxes for they are not registered as estate agents.

### Rent Amount

It is really strange that there is no criteria for the amount of rent in a

given area. It is left to the landlord's fancy to decide that. But there are many factors that play an important role in deciding rent increase such as: is the property a villa or an apartment? The location of the house is another factor. Whether the house is old or new matters a lot.

### Contract Duration

The contract duration for houses and villas is usually one year. But for shops it is 5 years, as stipulated by the law. But the problem is that after one year the landlord's appetite for an increase in the rent gets bigger and bigger even if there is a contract which doesn't mention any rent increase. The problem is to do with the landlord's mentality, who may claim to have all the rights over the tenant. He can even demand to enter the house under the pretext of finding out what changes have taken place. The tenant cannot stop him as he is usually afraid of being kicked out.

The second reason is the fluctuation in the dollar exchange rate against the Yemeni rial. When the landlord hears that the dollar has gone up raising with it the prices of foodstuff and other basic commodities, he soon asks for a higher rent, although this may not be mentioned in the contract.

### Terminating a Valid Contract

Both the landlord and the tenant have the right to terminate the contract before it expires, provided that the party wishing to do so should inform the other side within one or two months. Some landlords use this clause to pressurize the tenants so as to accept a rent increase. In my opinion this clause should be used by the tenant only for the following reasons:

- 1- Changing the tenant's workplace and the need to move to a nearer residence.
- 2- The desire of the tenant in getting a cheaper house according to his salary.

### Handing Back the Property

Rental law states that if the tenant wants to leave the house, he should give it back in as a good

condition as it was when he first moved in. Sometimes the tenant gives the landlord a month's rent towards the repair and renovation of the house. This conventional rule is applied even though it is not mentioned in the contract.

But in case the house is in a bad condition and needs extensive renovation, the tenant has to pay the required money. Thus, usually a problem between landlord and tenant breaks out. This is because the tenant does not usually pay a deposit at the outset towards any eventualities.

### Water

It is well-known that Yemen suffers a lot owing to water shortages. Some zones in the big cities like Sanaa do not have a regular water supply. So people resort to buying water from privately-owned wells. Sometimes tanker cars are used to transport water to households at the rate of 500 riyals per tanker. Having a running water supply is one of the reasons why landlords demanding higher rents, regard such a service as a luxury.

### Lodgers

Sometimes before signing the contract, the landlord asks about the number of the dwellers intending to live in the house. If the number of tenants is large, the landlord might ask for a higher rent forgetting that the Yemeni family is naturally an extended one.

If the landlord lives in the same building with the tenants or near them, he becomes furious upon seeing a lot of visitors coming to the house, because he thinks they are lodgers rather than just visitors.

### Bachelors

Renting for unmarried males (because in Yemen females are not allowed to live alone) is a problem, particularly if the bachelor intends to live alone, without house-mates. Living within a group of men may ensure that a female will not be invited to the house.

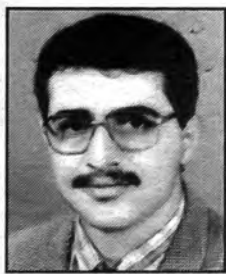
The neighbors become angry and protest if they see any female entering the house of an unmarried male tenant, who has to prove that she his relative, for example. In Yemen, it is believed that if a man and a woman are together in one place it has no purpose but sex.

In spite of the fact that Islam forbids homosexuality, the entering of a man into the house of a male tenant does not arouse the usual suspicion associated with females. Thus, the neighbors become the monitors of the unmarried lodgers living near them. Sometimes they give him a hard time by reporting him to the landlord or even to the police, claiming that they have seen him with a girl in the house in order to get rid of him/them. This means adultery. If proven the couple are punished accordingly. If not, the man and woman involved are accused of being together in a closed place without any legal relationship, a crime in Yemeni law.

In case the landlord accepts one or more unmarried tenants, he gives his conditions that he/they should not invite any females to the house; otherwise, he can kick him/them out. This is actually an interference with one's personal freedom, which is a part of human rights that should be respected and protected by society and law.

By: Dr. Salah Haddash  
Managing Editor  
Yemen Times

## Economic Dimensions



### Rent Increase

There are many reasons behind the increase in house and shop rents.

First of all, the price-hike shocks people are witnessing now and then under the pretext of the economic reform program sponsored by the World Bank is the most important reason. Landlords start asking for a higher rents as soon as price of foodstuff and other materials go up.

Another reason is that due to the constant deterioration of the Yemeni economy and accordingly the fall of the value of the Yemeni rial, a good number of people leave their villages with the hope of getting better job opportunities in the cities. This immigration congests our cities, particularly Sanaa, and thus the rent of houses and shops witness a free ascendance. It is also because Sanaa has become a destination of a good number of foreign and Arab people. There are also many new houses being built.

This is because some businessmen are running after a quick profit investment. One such way is investing money in banks. Thus, the capital of some well-to-do has turned unproductive. This leaves no room for doubt that we are facing a very big housing problem.

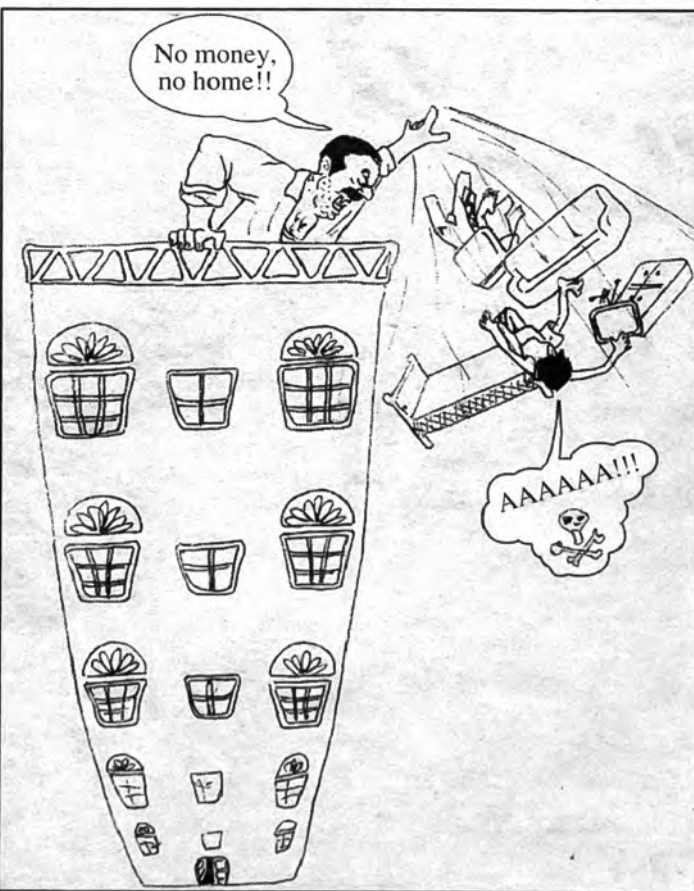
Third part of this plight is very

peculiar. Many people are envious of the rent their neighbor is receiving: "You get such and such money for your house and I should get the same", regardless of size, condition, etc. Also some landlords receive offers for the use of their property for commercial purposes such as language institutes, companies, computer centers, etc. It is a good chance for them to make money, isn't it? So, then the landlord thinks how he can get rid of his existing tenant. It can only be through asking for a higher rent.

### Rent increase ration

In fact, the rent increase has no specific proportion. It is up to the landlord to define it. The rise could reach 50%; it could accelerate upto 100% or even 200%. This really happens especially when leasing shops. And it is because of shops that most of the problems between tenants and landlords take place. A person might rent his shop for one or two years. When the time is over, he asks for a double rent or simply "evacuate my shop in two days time"? The tenant has lost a lot of money in decorating and repairing the shop; he has now made some good steps in business and gained a few customers. So, how can he leave the shop; where to go?

Of course, the tenant refuses to quit. The landlord brings the police to close the shop and the tenant does the same to open it. A case might be filed in court. The more one pays, the easier and quicker he wins. Sometimes the case remains in the court for months or even years. Sometimes



# World Bank Appreciates Yemen's Commitment to Reform

Dr. Gianni Brizzi is the World Bank Resident Representative in Yemen. He has been working at the World Bank for over 24 years, during which time he has occupied many different posts preparing and supervising projects in different sectors. These include urban infrastructure, transport, water supply and sanitation, industry and finance, and tourism development. Dr. Brizzi worked in Sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa, the Middle East, Europe, Latin America and some Caribbean countries such as Jamaica.

During the last 4 years, he was initially project advisor for the Middle East, reviewing the majority of projects implemented there. Then he became senior operations advisor of the entire region of the Middle East and North Africa.

He has recently commenced his duties in Yemen.

Ismail Al-Ghabiry of the Yemen Times talked to Dr. Brizzi and filed the following



interview:

**Q: What are the responsibilities of the World Bank Resident Mission in Yemen?**

**A:** The World Bank Resident Mission has been in the country now for three years, operating

quite effectively with a lot of success. We have established a very strong relationship with the country at all levels. Before opening the Resident Mission, project management and supervision were carried out mainly by World Bank staff coming from Washington. Now this responsibility is being moved entirely to Sana'a. I myself will coordinate these activities. We will still have people coming from Washington to deal with a lot of specialized inputs, but the day-to-day activities will be mainly done by the Resident Mission.

**Q: How familiar are you with the situation in Yemen?**

**A:** I am relatively familiar with what is going on in Yemen since I was Senior Operations Advisor for the entire region. I used to review and analyze all the operations made by my colleagues for Yemen. In addition, I also had the chance of coming to Yemen three years ago, leading what we call a Country Implementation Review. On that occasion I spent two weeks meeting Yemeni officials concerned with World Bank projects. We discussed the issue of implementing the investment program financed by the International Development Association. Obviously there is a lot of work that I have to do to become fully familiar with the country. I intend to accomplish these objectives in the shortest possible time.

**Q: What are the World Bank programs that will be implemented in Yemen during your term here?**

**A:** We have a program which is generally based on a three year rolling plan. The present three-year program involves credits for an amount of approximately \$240-450 million. Right now we are preparing, in association with Government and other national and international stakeholders, a

new Country Assistance Strategy. This new strategy will define the World Bank's basic program for the next three years. This will include technical advice and financial assistance. I hope that we will be able to transfer at least the same amount of money which we transferred during the last three years. Last week, Mr. Inder Sud, the World Bank Middle East Director, had fruitful discussions with the Government on the program that we will have for this coming fiscal year. This program is based very much on the immediate needs of the country, both in terms of budgetary support, required by the declining oil prices, and in terms of creating new job opportunities for the poor. As announced by Mr. Sud in a press conference, the budgetary support will be provided through an operation designed to support the modernization of the public administration. It will help the Government reform the civil service, improve the budgetary and financial management processes and rationalize public investment expenditure.

**Q: What measures will be taken to help the poor cope with the transient burden of reform?**

**A:** We are currently operating through two key instruments - the Social Development Fund and the Public Works Project. The Social Development Fund is doing quite well, and the Public Works Project is moving faster than we expected. We are discussing with the Government the possibility of initiating a new community development operation, in which we will provide basic services to poor people in all parts of the country. These basic services will include the improvement of community infrastructures and the construction of health centers, schools, etc., through labor-intensive construction activities. The jobs created will provide income for the population. We believe this is very important. People are suffering because of the adjustment program and they need to see some positive results.

We need to support this transitional phase until the private sector kicks off and creates jobs. We are also working on a Child Development Project in association with UNICEF. Also this project will help alleviate the difficulties of the poor. Other projects, such as an emergency operation to improve the power supply in Sana'a, has already been negotiated and will be soon implemented.

**Q: Will there be a role for NGOs to play in the economic and social adjustment process?**

**A:** The World Bank wants to have a strong partnerships with Non-Governmental Organizations in the development process. We are providing some assistance for the development of legislation regulating NGO activities. Some of the projects that we are sponsoring, like the Social Development Fund and Public Works projects, require service activities which cannot be provided by conventional contractors or consulting firms. They are better provided by NGOs. So the idea is to work closely with NGOs in order to achieve this common result and also to reinforce the NGO system which exists in the country. We need more time in order to understand exactly what the situation is, and how we can best address the contribution of the World Bank to the rationalization and strengthening of the NGO movement in Yemen.


**Q: What obstacles impede the implementation of the World Bank policies in Yemen?**

**A:** The major challenges that the Government faces now is the development of a public administration; that is service oriented, efficient and responsive to the needs of the citizens. Service orientation is the key to a successful public administration. This is a big challenge.

It is also a challenge to look at how the administration should be organized and structured in order to be efficient in the provision of all these services. The other challenge is strengthening the judicial system to protect the legitimate interests of the citizens. Obviously the World Bank's major interest is to look at the commercial side. It is very important for the country to have a clear and modern commercial law, which must be applied properly. It is also important to make sure that a proper system is set in place to deal with commercial disputes that may arise between domestic and foreign investors. Land ownership is another important issue that needs to be addressed. Without a clear situation concerning land ownership, it is very difficult for the economic sector to function. For example, banks will have difficulty to lend because of lack of collateral. Ultimately, the big challenge is creating entrepreneurship in the country, because only the private sectors will be capable of creating economic prosperity on a sustainable basis.

**Q: Any last comment?**

**A:** I am optimistic. Judging by what I can see and what I hear from different sources, Yemen is a country with rich human resources. I am sure that there are a lot of people who can do a lot for themselves and for others by creating wealth through entrepreneurship and the need to unleash this potential. What is needed is to create an environment which will encourage such entrepreneurship to create jobs for themselves and for others.



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**How to apply:**  
Interested applicants should submit an official form (OF 174) and contact the Embassy Personnel Office, American Embassy, Dhahr Himyar Street, Sanaa. Tel 238-842, no later than September 15, 1998.



# Violence In Yemen

Violence is spreading all over the world. In Yemen this phenomenon is on the rise and its victims are increasing. Therefore, the Consultative Council (CC) organized a seminar during August 26-27 to address this issue. As a matter of fact, it is the first time that this phenomenon has been discussed. The seminar was attended by Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf, chairman of the CC's Human Rights Committee a major organizer and contributor to the seminar. The discussions revealed many aspects of this phenomenon. The participants, most of them academics at Sanaa University, presented valuable papers on the topic. We will try to shed some lights on them.

برعاية الأستاذ/عبد العزيز بن عبد الرحمن آل سقاف رئيس المجلس الاستشاري  
لجنة الحقوق والحريات ومنظمات المجتمع المدني ندوة:  
العنف في اليمن.. الأسباب والحلول المقترحة  
سنا، ٢٦ - ٢٧ أغسطس ١٩٩٨



### Tribal Violence & Customary Rules & Law

This paper was presented by Dr. Salah Hadash, representative of the Ministry of Legal and Parliamentary Affairs at the Supreme National Committee for Human Rights, and lecturer at Sanaa University.

Violence could be a phenomenon in any social group, and the tribe is a social group that still exists in some parts of Yemen. There are many aspects of violence practiced by the tribe like blood vengeance, kidnapping, tribal shoot-outs, the carrying of firearms, etc.

#### 1- Blood Revenge:

Conventional and tribal norms confess or recognize blood revenge as a means of retaliation. It gives the person the right to fire his gun at his enemy using only three bullets. If he is not able to seize this chance, he doesn't have the right to shoot him again. The revenge seeker may not commit this crime in crowded markets, which are assigned as safe areas for people to trade. The punishment is blood money and if it is not accepted, the death punishment is inevitable. The Law of Crimes and Punishment No. 12 of 1994 considers blood revenge a crime deserving capital punishment or blood money, if the relatives of the killed person accept. The number of blood revenge incidents in Yemen reached 1,257 during 1996.

#### 2- Kidnapping:

The total number of kidnapping cases in Yemen between April 1991 and April 1998 was 124. Most of those kidnapped were foreigners, there were 146 men, women and children. Yemeni persons kidnapped were 22.

However, Yemen social conventions respect the safety of travellers and oblige the tribes to protect them. But these conventions don't specify any penalty against kidnapers. But according to the Article 249, the Law of Crimes and Punishments considers kidnapping a crime that has to be punished. The punishment, however, has become very severe according to the Law No. 24 of 1998 issued in August 3, 1998.

#### 3-Inter-Tribal Wars:

The number of inter-tribal wars reached 62 in 1996. Such clashes occur between two or more tribes due to strong blood and family bonds. No conventional rule governs these shoot-outs. But the convention regulates some aspects of these conflicts. In the case of reconciliation between the warring tribes, the two tribes have to provide 44 persons to swear that they have not inflicted any casualties. Then, the penalty could be made in the form of blood money.

#### 4- Arms Carrying:

Tribesmen carry a Jambia or a gun by way of social tradition without any license. Also there is not any conventional norm to organize the carrying of guns. On the contrary, Law No. 40 of 1992 states that a person should have a license to carry a firearm.

#### Recommendations:

- 1- Applying all the laws on all people and in all parts of the country, basing that on a constitutional rule that all people are equal.
- 2- Disarming the people and giving every person the right to carry one gun, only with a license.
- 3- Issuing a legal opinion (fatwa) that forbids blood revenge, instead giving the responsibility to the courts of law.
- 4- Opening more police stations all over the country.
- 5- Making more courts available all over the country.
- 6- Obliging people to register all their property at public land registers.
- 7- Solving all problems related to water rights.
- 8- Persuading the warring tribes to sign peace agreements to end all vengeance disputes.
- 9- Educating the tribesmen on the peaceful and democratic means, like filing court cases, through which they can protect their rights.



- 10- Providing the bedrock regions of blood revenge with education, health and transport services.
- 11-Educating the tribesmen through the different mass media about the concept of citizenship.



### Violence & Youth

The second paper was presented by Dr. Mohammed Awad Ba-Obaid, psychology department, Sanaa University. The paper considered youth the most important group of people effected by violence. From this hypothesis, it focused on the extent of this phenomenon among youth and the reasons that lead them to commit crimes

of violence. Juvenile violent incidents have increased between 1988 and 1991 from 2,343 to 3,136. The paper then recommended some solutions.



### Violence in Yemeni Society

This paper was presented by Dr. Sadiq Shayif Noman. Violence is considered to be a social phenomenon found in almost all societies. But its reasons, factors and conditions might differ. The paper presented some aspects of violence:

- 1-Arms carrying.
- 2-Blood revenge.
- 3-Kidnapping.
- 4-Using all kinds of weapons in tribal disputes and conflicts.
- 5-Turning peaceful demonstrations into riots and violence.
- 6- Armed conflicts among mosque preachers or speakers.

Then, the paper introduced the causes of violence in Yemen:

- 1-The family and its way of bringing up children.
- 2- The milieu (tribe or social surrounding).
- 3- Economic conditions.
- 4- Political conditions.
- 5-Ignorance of religion and its abhorrence of violence.

### Violence Targeting Women: Cause & Effect



The fourth paper was presented by Ms. Eshraq Ahmad Hasan Al-Iryani. It surveyed the causes and effects of violence against women. The main reasons cited by the researcher are:

- 1- Discrimination in raising males and females.
- 2- Spread of illiteracy (76.9% among women).
- 3- Clinging to

out-dated traditions in the family.  
4- Misunderstanding of Islamic rules and norms.

The results of violence against women are:

- 1- It distorts society's structure and values.
- 2- It affects women's physical and psychological well-being, which leaves its indelible mark on the personality of their children.
- 3- It is a violation of human rights.



### Anti-Social Behavior

This paper was presented by Dr. Ali Saeed Al-Tariq, chairman of Psychology Department, Sanaa University. It has introduced five factors behind this anti-social behavior in society:

- 1- The family factor.
- 2- The psychological factor.
- 3- The social factor.
- 4- The economic factor.
- 5- The political & literacy factors.

The paper then presented the definition of the anti-social personality and its traits. Some of these attributes are:

- 1-Inability to benefit from experience.
- 2- Absence of a sense of responsibility.
- 3- Recklessness.
- 4- Inability to be reformed by penalty.
- 5- Inability to feel guilty.

The paper recommended the following:

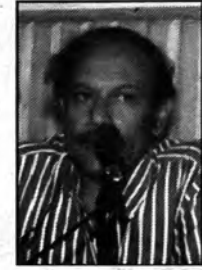
- 1- Establishing a supreme council to combat violence in Yemen to protect the rights of the people.
- 2- The importance of the role of the informative media.
- 3- Increasing the number of judges.
- 4- Activating the religious and political guidance to put a limit on crimes of violence.
- 5- Introducing new codes for organizing the carrying of firearms.
- 6- Increasing the number of courts all over the country for receiving many cases.
- 7- Solving all the political disputes between the political parties.
- 8- Educating and raising our children on the basis of the Islamic rules.

### Fragile Judicial System

The sixth paper was presented by the lawyer Jamal-udeen Al-Adeemy. He introduced many issues related to the judicial system in Yemen. The most important of which is the absence of respect to judges, lawyers and other people working in this institution.

The paper indicates that we can not talk about the independence of this system while harassment and violations are perpetrated against people working in it. The judicial system should be independent and powerful. The paper recorded 28 violent incidents

targeting people working in this system. Then, it recommended the recording of violent incidents against people working in the judicial system and studying the reasons behind such violence, for it might help tackle this problem.



### Violence

The seventh paper was presented by Dr. Abdulmalik Al-Makramy, head of Psychology Department, Sanaa University. He focused on violence in Yemen and its nature. The Yemeni society has witnessed many shocks and adversities during this decade, and it will also witness radical changes in

the political and economic systems. Such adversities include the Gulf war and its aftermath, the 1994 civil war, rapid population growth, difficulties of balancing the political, the social and economic systems, and the launching of the economic reform process.

The paper recommended the following:

- 1-Taking care of the qualified manpower in Yemen.
- 2- Allocating a good amount of money for scientific research.
- 3- Rationalizing the political decision by relating it with scientific research.
- 4- Studying all social phenomena through research which should be conducted by specialists.
- 5- Holding more workshops and seminars on violence in Yemen.



### Violence Against Women in The Media

This paper was presented by Ms. Sabriah Al-Thawr and Ms. Reda Qarhash. It highlighted the unacceptable way in which Yemeni women are portrayed by the media - very weak and controlled by their emotions. They are also incomplete in thought and religion. The paper also criticized the women

newspapers and publications which do not address the essence of the problems facing Yemeni women. The recommendations were as follows:

- 1- Tackling the explicit and implicit abuse of Yemeni women.
- 2- The inevitable role of the mass media in raising public awareness towards women's dormant faculties and abilities.
- 3- Giving women's issues a good space in radio and television programs.
- 4- Choosing good programs to present the favorable aspects of women.

By Mohammed Al-Qadhi,  
Assistant Managing Editor,  
Yemen Times

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مارك للإعلان

## Al-Salimi Never Forgotten

There is no specific information on the life of Ahmed Abdullah Al-Salimi except the information obtained from a radio interview with his brother, Mohammed, in 1968. Al-Salimi, nevertheless, was one of the most famous singers of his time. We could find only three of his songs performed by some old Yemeni singers. One of his famous lyrics was sung by Hussain Abdullah Soori in an Indian musical style. Another song of his, "Mal Mahboobi Nasani" (why has my beloved forgotten me), was performed by Jameel Ghanem, head of the director of the Fine Arts Institute in Aden during the 1970s. It was performed later by the Yemeni Local Band and recorded in the archives of the Aden radio.

Early in his life, Al-Salimi was known as a poet and worked as a trader. He travelled to Ethiopia where he learned singing and to play the lute at the hands of Sheikh Mohammed Dhafer in Harar. "Dhafer is my master. He is one of the Yemeni singers who emigrated to Ethiopia," said Al-Salimi. Al-Salimi travelled between Taiz, Ethiopia, and Mion. He used to go to Otma, his home town, only every three or



singer and a deeply religious man."

Al-Salimi used to sing in wedding ceremonies and at the palaces of the princes of the time. He used to go secretly to sing for Prince Ahmed of Taiz, because singing was forbidden by the Imam. Again Al-Baradoni had full praise for Al-Salimi. "He was very much admired by both Abdullah Al-Wazeer, governor of Odain, and the prince of Taiz. When Prince Ahmed became the ruler of Taiz, he made Al-Salimi one of his special companions."

Al-Salimi learned by heart most of the traditional Yemeni songs. He presented the old lyrics in a different and new style, which was greatly appreciated by his fans. Beside writing poetry, he had a unique talent of composing and a very nice voice, the thing that made him different from other

artists of his time. Infected by T.B, he died more than 50 years ago in Aden. Some of his marvelous poems were collected in a volume by Hussain Bin Ali Al-Waisi.

**Saleh Abdulbaqi,**  
Arts Editor,  
Yemen Times

four years.

In his article published in Al-Hikma journal (issue no. 25, 1975), Al-Baradoni wrote about Al-Salimi: "His moving from one area to another shows how he was spiritually - unsettled. He has to move from one place to another for some reasons like collecting zakah. Al-Salimi was a poet, a

## Children Carve Stones

Due to the hard economic and social situation, Yemen has begun to witness many negative social phenomena such as child labor. This contravenes international child rights conventions and agreements endorsed by Yemen. According to World Bank estimates, the number of poor people in Yemen is about 2.6 million.

Moreover, studies indicate that 41.9% of Yemeni children work to support their families. This is, I consider, a border line between poverty and subsistence.

According to reports by the International Labor Organization (ILO), one of the main reasons behind child labor is the inefficiency of the education system, which leads gradually to unemployment. In 1991, studies showed that 45% of Yemeni illiterate people are unemployed. This number rose to 65% in 1997, including a large number of children.

The widespread poverty and the widening gap between urban and

rural people causes similar problems. The parents make many children leave school and take hazardous jobs to support their families.

For example, in Sa'ada governorate, about 50% of the children in the Shawareq Razih village had already left schools and gone to work in quarries and mines 1,000 to 2,000 meters deep. They go inside mines to search for stones that can be carved and shaped as pots and pans or figurines. This process takes many stages. Moseh, aged 12, explains: "An expert supervises the process of taking out the suitable stones from the mines. Then we, the carvers, begin shaping them into different things.

"Usually, we use an iron hammer to give the stone the basic shape that we want. Then we use the chisel to improve the appearance of the object. Finally, we use sandpaper to make the surface of the object smooth and shining."

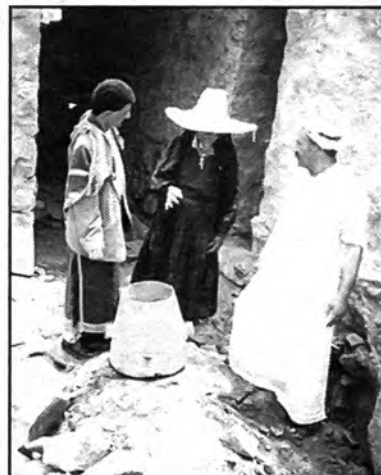
Mrs. Bint Saleh, 85, teaches children the right ways of carving. She says that the pots made of stones are much better than those made of other materials. They, she explains, give a good taste to food and keep it hot for a longer time. "Moreover, they are rust and fire proof," she explained.

Badr Mansoor, 10, says that he left school and works now carving stones because he wants to support his family. He is paid nearly 2,000 to 2,500 riyal every month, according to the amount of work done.

Despite the hot weather and the numerous hazards inside mines, these children work and work. This is a sad story of the horrible loss of the coming generations. What is really saddening is that these children believe that education is of no importance.

Fouad Al-Mashraqi, 11, says: "The government employment doesn't give you much. You will study all your life and finally you will get a measly salary. But if I improve myself in carving, I will earn more money. Employing children has begun to take place in many sectors of society and this is a serious sign of an illiterate new generation.

By Mahyoub Al-Kamali



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## Astonishing BMW Motorbikes in Yemen



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# Presidential Elections: Yes, Democratic Change is Possible

Organized by Al-Wahdawi weekly newspaper, mouthpiece of the People's Nasserite Unionist Organization, a seminar on the upcoming presidential elections in Yemen was held on Sunday, August 31 at Hadda Hotel. Some papers were presented in the seminar by Dr. Mohammed Ali Al-Saqaff, Mr. Mohammed Hussein Al-Farah and Dr. Mohammed Abdulmalik Al-Mutawakil. Later, discussion was open for all. Here we try to give a brief summary of the main papers presented.

## "Republican Imam" According to the Constitutional Power and the Nature of the Yemeni Political System



This paper was presented by Dr. Mohammed Ali Al-Saqaff. He considered the discussion of the October 1999 presidential elections to be a healthy phenomenon. The position of the president as a public office has been introduced with the constitutional amendments of September 1994, following the civil war. At that time the president was elected in parliament.

The same thing happens also in the Supreme Elections Committee. For the president has the right to choose members of the committee from among the 10

opposition. The PGC and the Islah might agree to have a candidate of their party so there is no chance for a candidate from the opposition to get the yes votes of at least 30 representatives. This restricts the MPs and makes them vote for only the candidates of their parties.

Constitutionally speaking, the political regime in Yemen is trying to separate the three authorities: legislative, executive and judiciary. But in reality it is trying to bring them together. This was only done by the Imam in the absence of a constitution, but it is practiced now with the presence of the constitution. This makes it very difficult to classify our system.

According to the constitution, the president is elected for 5 years with wide powers and privileges. Despite the constitution's emphasis of the judicial system's independence, it allows the president to have a certain role in the judiciary authority. Article No. 104 of the constitution states that the chairman of the Supreme Judicial Council is the president himself. He is also to issue the decisions concerning the appointment of judges to the Supreme Court.

The same thing happens also in the Supreme Elections Committee. For the president has the right to choose members of the committee from among the 10

has also to accept the elimination of the powers acting behind the scenes.

2- President Saleh should not run for the coming presidential elections. He should not allow anybody else to use the public budget for his campaign.

3- The regime has also to permit the establishment of local authorities with wide powers so that the people themselves will be their own rulers and thus responsible for any mistakes they commit. In this way, the central authority will be absolved of any wrongdoing.

4- The regime may give no opportunity for the participation of others and depend completely on brute force. Thus, it will fall like its counterparts in Indonesia and Congo.

Dr. Al-Mutawakil thinks the first choice to be the best. But it is very difficult and a heavy burden on the regime according to its understanding of the government and the system. Therefore, the first choice is considered to be ideal.

The fourth choice is the worst of all. But it is clear that it is the vital one to the regime. That was very clear when the regime used violence to break down demonstrations a few months back. That really violated all international human rights conventions. The choice of using force is of an already known end. Unfortunately, it is the choice the regime believes in and clings to. This choice also co-exists with the mind of the regime.

The second and third choices cannot be ruled out too since President Saleh has sometimes earnest and courageous attitudes. However, the third choice is the most plausible one for there is no longer anything to give to the people except local rule.

Then, the paper introduces some defects of the opposition in Yemen:

1- The job of the opposition leaders is devoid of any sense of hard work and sacrifice. Therefore, they have never been models for youths stimulating them to look for a better future. On the contrary, they have been a disheartening factor.

2- The opposition has failed to unite and organize themselves, and to really address the people's problems.

**Opposition Choices**  
The opposition parties are not better than the government. And so they have limited choices:

1- Working hard to enhance the power of the populace so that it can force the government to embark on real reform and changing the ruling people through honest elections. This entails the availability of a good action program relying on democratic and peaceful struggle. The opposition leaders should sacrifice a lot for a good and tangible change. They should also participate in all kinds of elections.

2- Opposition parties joining together in an armed struggle to topple the regime.

3- The opposition should consider the coming local and presidential election as its real battle and should coordinate and work together to win it. They can benefit from the foreign monitoring so as to ensure free and fair elections.

4- The opposition can make a bargain with the PGC ensuring free and fair local elections and in return they support the candidate of the PGC in the presidential

elections.

5- The opposition parties do not participate in the elections, particularly when they are not able to get 10% of the parliament votes needed for anybody to run for the presidential elections.

6- The last choice is that the opposition should look at the presidential elections as a means for mobilizing and educating the people about the government's attitude. It should also seize the opportunity as a means of communication with all the political and social forces in the country.

Dr. Mutawakil believes the choice of cultivating public support is a strategic one and that it should be the first concern of the opposition. The fourth choice is rather realistic and less dangerous to the country. The worst choices are the second and fifth, since the opposition will probably fail in both cases. The result of fighting is the destruction of both the opposition and the country.

Boycotting the elections is very passive and fruitless and not good for the opposition, since it keeps it away from the people. It also makes it unable to show its program and other alternatives to the public. In boycotting the elections, the opposition will not be successful in showing the illegitimacy of the elections neither inside or abroad. So, the second and fifth choices should be ruled out. The success of the opposition in adopting the other choices primarily depend on the ability of the opposition in coordinating their efforts. The possibility of success will be greater if the

opposition is able to convince the Islah party to coordinate and cooperate with them. The opposition parties should also choose an acceptable person as their candidate so as to make the roots of democracy very deep. Even when the opposition cooperates with the PGC, choosing their own candidate is very important, no matter whether they succeed or fail. The most important thing is to take part.

## Horizon of the Coming Presidential Elections



The third paper was presented by Mr. Mohammed Hussein Al-Farah, member of the Nasserite Organization's political

bureau. The paper indicates that Article No. 158 of the amended constitution states that the president is elected by the people. But it also stipulates that the president should be nominated by parliament. Thus, President Saleh was elected in October 1, 1994. He got 253 votes out of 259 (97% of those present and 84% of the total number of MPs), with 42 absentees.

Voting for the coming presidential elections should be conducted at the earliest on September 23, 1999. But many things can be said about the coming elections. The parliament

presidium is not fair and neutral as the supreme election committee is. Another thing is that the possibility of getting the support of at least 10% of MPs for the opposition presidential candidate is very small. This is very clear if we look at the results of the April 1997 elections in which the PGC gained the lion's share followed by the Islah party. The minimum 10% support is therefore guaranteed for the candidate of the PGC and Islah. In this way the coming presidential elections is limited to the two big parties.

The paper adds that the results of the 1993 and 1997 elections can give us some information about the votes each party gained. For example, the Islah received in the 1993 elections 18% of the votes but in 1997 it got only 23%.

Therefore, it is not possible for the candidate of the Islah to get 51% of the votes. But for the PGC which got 28% in 1993 and 43% in 1997, it is possible to get 51% of the votes. But there is something to be remembered. The failure of the PGC in keeping its promises of 1997, the price hikes it makes every time and the disgusting behavior of some of the PGC leaders - all these make the people very unhappy with the proposed candidate of the PGC. But things may become different if President Saleh doesn't stand as a PGC candidate. Then people may elect him on his personal merit.

By Yemen Times Staff



Then, the paper talked about the way in which the president is elected. Paragraph A of Article No. 105 of the Yemeni Constitution states that the president of the republic is the president of the government. Paragraph B states that the president nominates the vice president himself. So the difference is that the president is given legitimacy through elections, but the vice president is appointed or dismissed like any other official in the government. Article No. 106 defines the characteristics that must be available in a presidential candidate. They are similar to those mentioned in the previous constitution. The difference is only in the minimum age of the candidate. In the past it was 35 but now it is 40.

If the results of the April 1997 parliamentary elections are taken into consideration, the paper says, it will be found that the candidate of either the People's General Congress (PGC) or the Islah party, will not find any difficulty in obtaining 10% of the parliament yes votes, around 30 vote out of 301. This is because the PGC got 187 seats and the Islah got 53. But if any other person stands-for president, he would have to get yes votes from the five Nasserite and Baath representatives as well as the 25 independents. This is not enough for even one candidate from the opposition.

But what will happen if we have more than one candidate from the

people nominated by the parliament. This is on the level of laws. On the level of practice, the resignation of Dr. Faraj Bin Ghanem is a clear example. Article 118 gives the president the absolute freedom to choose the prime minister, but the prime minister has the right, according to Article No. 130, to choose his ministers in coordination with the president. Another example is what happened during the demonstration of Al-Dal'i. Some MPs asked for a fact-finding mission to investigate the matter. The response was that the president will do that himself. So, what is their job?!

## Government & Opposition Choices in Upcoming Presidential Elections



**Regime Choices**  
The second paper was presented by Dr. Mohammed Abdulmalik Al-Mutawakil, Sanaa Uni-

versity. He indicates that the regime has reached an impasse and has got only the following choices:

1- Self-reformation and permitting the establishment of the modern and democratic institutions in the country. The regime



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## Yemeni Press in a Week

by: Adel J. Moqbil

### الوحدوي

**AL-WAHDAMI:** Sanaa weekly, 1-9-98. (People's Nasserite Unionist Organization)

#### Main Headlines:

1- The government introduces new amendments to the local authority law, and refers back to parliament for deliberations.  
2- Oil pipeline no. 12 (64km from Safir refinery) is punctured by tribesmen demanding compensation for water wells flooded by Mareb Dam.  
3- Yemeni Minister of the Interior reviews report on Saudi investigation into the death of 14 Yemenis in the Asir area of Saudi Arabia.  
4- Public Funds Prosecutor investigates the sinking of the cement-loaded Syrian ship, Al-Imad, off the Mukallah Port.  
5- Deputy Foreign Minister, Mr. Ghalib Ali Jamil escapes a hail of bullets in a robbery attempt while on his way home with his daughter.

#### Article Summary:

**Local Governance - editorial**  
Dr. Al-Iryani's government has denuded the Local Authority Law of almost all semblance of democracy. It has been amended and referred back to parliament for the third time. The government has even changed its name to the Local Administration Law. It seems that virtually powerless local councils will be created, attesting to the elections "comedy." The excuse often given is that there is not much public awareness at the local level. The authority's persistence in making the people feel hopeless of democracy's ability to achieve anything, will eventually make the latter resort to other means of change.

### الطريق

**AL-TARIQ:** Aden weekly, 1-9-98. (Independent)

#### Main Headlines:

1- Egyptian authorities express astonishment at the frequency

with which silver is smuggled from Yemen and caught at Cairo airport. Lax security at Yemeni airports is blamed.

2- A campaign of arrests is being conducted following two Muallah bomb explosions last Thursday.

3- Chairmen of several German travel and tourism companies are to make a direct flight from Frankfurt to Seion to find out about the regions potential for tourism.

4- A Yemeni citizen beseeches the Minister of the Interior not to deport her Syrian husband. He has been living and working in Yemen for the last 9 years and has 3 children.

5- A member of the ruling PGC secretariat in Hadhramaut forges the signature of his boss to obtain free airplane tickets for 9 of his relatives.

6- Several Lahaj farmers are detained by police to force the hand-over of their lands to a person claiming its ownership.

#### Article Summary:

**Child Rights Violations**  
Participants at an Aden seminar on juvenile delinquency point out serious child right's violations. It was indicated that about 62% of Yemeni children are not registered in the civil registry records. This leads to very serious legal and social consequences. It was also disclosed that youngsters are imprisoned with hardened criminals convicted of murder, sodomy, alcohol drinking, etc. Some juveniles are shackled with iron chains and beaten up. This is a flagrant violation of the Yemeni law, which stipulates allocating special borstals and reform centers.

### الوطنية

**AL-WHADA:** Sanaa weekly, 2-9-98. (Official)

#### Main Headlines:

1- The President visits the Bajil Directorate, Hodeida.

2- General Directorate of Criminal Investigations apprehends a man believed to have essential equipment from a power station, leaving people in the area without electricity for the last 3

years.

3- 17 Hadhramaut MPs enumerate their governorate's needs for health-care facilities.

#### Article Summary:

**False Yemeni Passports**  
By Abdullah Al-Hadhrami

The Yemeni government has not yet received any reply from the Tanzanian government to its request for information on the Yemeni-passport holder accused of the US Embassy bombing. The accused name, Khaled Salim, has not been found on the Passport Authority records.

The Yemeni Embassy in Dar Al-Salaam was broken into in February, 1995, and 94 blank Yemeni passports were stolen. Also, many false Yemeni passports went into circulation following the 1994 war against secession, when passports and official rubber stamps were stolen from passport offices in Aden and other southern governorates.

A number of Arab and African citizens with false Yemeni passports sought asylum in several European countries, under the pretext that they were persecuted in Yemen for converting to Christianity.

A Palestinian man was recently arrested while attempting to get a Yemeni passport using a false Yemeni personal ID card. He tried to bribe a passport authority officials with \$2,000. Similar cases have also been discovered recently.

### التوحيد

**AL-THAWRI:** Sanaa weekly, 3-9-98. (Yemeni Socialist Party - YSP)

#### Main Headlines:

1- The so-called Aden Islamic Army has declared an all-out war on US interests and property in all parts of Yemen in retribution for the "cowardly" US raids on Sudan and Afghanistan.

2- The 3rd bomb in 20 days went off near the Political Security office in Zanzibar, Abyan. Two passers-by were seriously injured, and a teacher in the next-door school was arrested in connection with the incident.

3- 32 young men join the YSP in Abyan.

4- 4 trade unionists - from the Oil and Petrochemical Workers Union - are arrested and 1,000 workers go on strike demanding higher wages and health insurance.

5- 'Journalists Without Borders' condemns the arrest of the journalist Ali Dahmas in Abyan.

6- A special anti-terrorism department will soon be formed in Yemen with US financial and technical assistance.

#### Article Summary:

**The Truth About Terrorism**

Yemen has been mentioned many times recently in connection with the bombing of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. Yemen is considered by Western circles as an important place where terrorists get training and obtain false Yemeni passports. The Yemeni authorities are giving unconvincing justifications in this regard. In a report by the *Daily News*, misleadingly leaked by certain

sources, it was alleged that YSP elements received para-military training at some of Osama Bin Laaden's camps. It was also implied that these YSP people were also involved in the bombing of the two US embassies.

The truth is exactly the opposite. Bin Laaden's men have always targeted the YSP, including recently attempting to assassinate the YSP Secretary General, Moqbil. Some members of terrorist groups linked to Bin Laaden are now members of the ruling People's General Congress. Under the protection of some very influential people in authority, terrorists are receiving training at the Hatat camp in Abyan, for example.

### الرأي العام

**AL-RAY AL-AAM:** Sanaa weekly, 1-9-98. (Independent)

#### Main Headlines:

1- People in Taiz demand compensation for damages to their property when the Sabaa contracting company, building the Taiz-Sabr road, failed to remove debris blocking the course of flood water. The strong current diverted its course towards the peoples' houses.

2- A big mass rally was organized in Sanaa in protest over the US bombing of Sudan and Afghanistan.

3- Workers in the Mukallah Fish Canning Factory strongly reject its intended privatization.

4- Yemeni coast guards have apprehended 3 foreign ships fishing illegally off the coast of Hodeida. The ships' owners are fined a total of \$100,000.

5- Financed by the Chinese gov-

ernment, work on the 'Friendship Fly-over' will resume after the rainy season.

#### Article Summary:

**Sheraton Manager Detained**

The Sanaa Court of Appeal has ordered the Sheraton hotel to pay its former employee - Aziz Tanios - \$32,925 in addition to legal fees as a compensation for his unfair dismissal. If the money is not paid, the court will sell a Mercedes car belonging to the hotel, which was seized for this purpose. If the sale of the car raises insufficient monies the court will seize some of the hotel's assets. The Sheraton's manager, a Swiss national, was detained for several hours in connection with the case.

### الأحقة

**AL-UMMA:** Sanaa weekly, 3-9-98. (Al-Haqq Party)

#### News Review:

1- An armed confrontation between army troops and a group from the Dahm tribe of Al-Jawf leaves one tribesman wounded. The clash followed the apprehension of an army patrol by the tribesmen.

**تهانينا**  
اجمل التهانى والتبريكات نرفها للاخ  
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بمناسبة ارتزاقه  
مولودا جديدا اسماه  
«مسعد»  
المهنؤون  
حمود قطايش، سهول الياس الضلعي،  
حسن عامر، محمد العززي،  
هشام احمد الشامي،  
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2- Successive massive explosions destroy an arms depot belonging to the Political Security apparatus last Tuesday in Dhamar.

3- The government opts for local "administration" instead of local "authority."

4- The director of projects and constructions at the Education Office in Dhamar was safely released from captivity. He was abducted by the Hadaa tribe, which demands the implementation of several public-services projects in their area.

5- Strike by workers at the Yemen Hunt Oil Company reduces oil production by 40%.

6- A public scare was unleashed by the discovery of polluted fish on the Aden shores. The pollution is believed to have been caused by the dumping into the sea of unwanted types of fish and other marine life caught by some fishing trawlers.

7- A man is being questioned by the Hodeida police in connection with the smuggling of women and children into a neighboring country.

8- Blood, medicines and alcohol are smuggled into Yemen through Yemen's Red Sea coastline near Khwakha and Mokha. These large operations are reputed to be protected by some influential people.

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نجل العميد يحيى حسن مشرح المحفدي  
بزفافه الميمون يوم الخميس القادم.  
وبهذه المناسبة الكريمة نرف اجمل واروق  
التهانى القلبية مقرونة بنسيم الورد  
والياسمين للعريس متمنين له حياة زوجية  
سعيدة  
المهنؤون  
حسن مشرح المحفدي  
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## Red Surprise

### Ahli Ties Talaba of Iraq 0-0

The Talaba Iraqi team is one of the strongest Arab football teams. It has won many championships in Asia and the Arab world. Therefore, Talaba was expected to win in its match against Al-Ahli of Yemen in the Asian Cups Champs Championship held in Sanaa last Friday, 5 September. Before the match started, the secretary general of Al-Ahli club announced that he will resign if Al-Ahli was defeated by more than 2 goals. As the first half started, both the teams began attacking. The first corner was for Yemen. Although Al-Ahli attacked a lot, the high physical fitness of the Iraqi players seemed to be much better.

During the second half, Al-Ahli directed the match and intensively attacked the Iraqi square. Ali Al-Noono of Al-Ahli greatly



annoyed the Iraqi defenders and at the 72nd minute of the match he delivered a strong shot to the Iraqi goal which, unfortunately, went just outside the left pillar. In the 84th minute of the match, the

Iraqi player Qahtan Hathaeth sent a shot to inside the Yemeni goal which was offside. Hot attacks continued until the match was over. A press conference was held after the match. The coaches of both the teams showed admiration for the performance of their players. In spite of all the difficulties, Al-

Ahli was able to make a very good showing. An unexpected result was really a big surprise which made some of the fans even cry out of happiness.

## Who is responsible?



The heavy defeats for our youth football team during Asia's football qualifying matches, held in Qatar last August, were expected. This is not strange because the national team has not even found a sports field to receive training and the time spent in the training camp was very limited. Also, the Football Association and the Ministry of Youth and Sports have not paid proper attention to the team and forgot that our team represents Yemen. The deteriorating conditions of Yemeni sport were demonstrated

at the Yemeni team's last match against Qatar in which our team was horribly defeated 8-1. If this happened in another country, the Minister of Youth and Sports would resign immediately. But in Yemen, the Ministry of Youth and Sports takes no responsibility for our heavy defeats and bad performances. The victory achieved by Abdulrahman Abdulaziz last week in the Arab Athletics Championship in Syria, was not enough to make up for the other defeats. Sportsmen are suffering badly as a result of the hard economic circumstances and their enthusiasm for sport is dampened. Many sports clubs have become like a cafe where you just drink coffee and tea and the sports associa-

tions are just names without any meaning. Thus, our teams come out with heavy defeats and bad performances. All of that reflects the aimless sports planning which is reliant on the ambition of the players and good luck! The reforms adopted by the government should not be limited to one field. The Youth and Sports field needs many constructive reforms and modern conceptions to keep abreast of the times and to go into the 21st century with a positive attitude. We urge the Minister of Youth and Sports to ask one player of every club the following questions:

- 1) How and where do you get training?
- 2) What sort of food do you eat?
- 3) What does your sports association provide you with?

Sport Editor

### Al-Wahda was defeated by Al-Refa'a of Bahrain 2-0

The Wahda of Sanaa was defeated, by Al-Refa'a of Bahrain, 2-0 in the match held last Friday in Bahrain within the Asian Championship qualifying matches for the cup winners teams. Al-Wahda gave a good performance and intensified the attacks in the first half, yet Refa'a managed to penetrate the defense lines of Al-Wahda and score its first goal. The second half ended with the final score 2-0. The Wahda of Sanaa came first in the excellent division football tournament of 1997/1998 and Ahli of Sanaa won second position.

international referees. It also sent 5 Yemeni coaches to participate in the international referees course which was held in Kenya, Nairobi, at the beginning of August, 1998.

umpire the matches. The competitions will start on September 9 and will finish on September 12. The conclusion ceremony will be held on September 12 to present certificates, medals and cups to the winners. About 100 Taekwondo players from different clubs are expected to take part in the concluding ceremony. The YTA has organized more than one activity during 1998. During March, the YTA held a course for national referees. In April, it held a course for advanced coaches with an international lecturer. It sent several Yemeni coaches and referees to Seoul, Korea in July to qualify as

## Republic's 4th Taekwondo Championship

The Yemeni Taekwondo Association (YTA) is organizing the Republic's 4th Championship for Taekwondo during September 8-12. Athletes from the sports clubs of Yarmook, Hilal, Ahli of Taiz, Wahda of Aden, Tadamon, Shararah, Shabab al-Baida, and Shabab Amran will all participate in this event. The following weights will be included in the competitions: 50 kg, 54 kg, 58 kg, 62 kg, 67 kg, 72 kg, 78 kg, and 84 kg. The YTA also organizes the

Yemeni Cities Championship for under 17 years old during the same period. Youths from Sanaa, Aden, Hodeida, Taiz, Hadhramaut, and Amran will participate according to the following weights: 22 kg, 24 kg, 26 kg, 29 kg, 32 kg, 35 kg, 39 kg, and 43 kg. All the activities will be held at the hall of the Yemeni High Sport Institute in Al-Thawra Sports City. In addition, a special course for referees will be held. Fifteen referees from all over Yemen will

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# Aden Minaret: Beacon of Light Though Time

Historical evidence indicates that, centuries ago, there used be more mosques in Aden than now. These were not places solely devoted to worship, but also institutes of learning Arabic, jurisprudence, and other topics of religion. Scholars used to come from around the Islamic world to teach and to learn in Aden's mosques. When the British arrived in Aden in 1839, only two historical mosques were still standing. One of these is Al-Jami' Minaret.

## Octagonal Structure

The famous Minaret lies in Crater, Aden, on the western side of the Army Football Stadium - within a small public garden near Aden's General Post Office. This octagonal edifice, 21m high, consists of six stories. A spiral staircase within the Minaret leads to the top where the Muadin calls the faithful to prayer five times a day.

## Debatable Balustrade

Some people say that the stone platform and the square balustrade running around the base of the Minaret was not there in the 1940s. The platform was erected to save the Minaret from keeling over. While others claim that these structures are older than the Minaret itself.

## Beacon

In pre-Islamic times, the Aden Minaret, some historians claim, also served as a light-house directing ships safely into the Seera harbor on many a stormy night. They cite the fact that the space allocated for the Muadin at the top of the Minaret is not large enough for a man to stand fully erect as evidence

that the original purpose of the Minaret was a light beacon.

## Where is the Mosque?!

All historians agree that the large old mosque, of which the Aden Minaret is part, became dilapidated and was demolished ages ago. During the 1960s while excavation work was done in the vicinity of the Minaret, four abacuses with Islamic-style carvings were found - probably the remains of the mosque. Also, an old Muslim cemetery was discovered in the site.

## Portuguese Sketches

Drawings dating back to 1512 AD, made by Portuguese artists and merchants passing through Aden on their way to southern India and South-East Asia, show three different mosques in that area. One of them is, of course, the Jami' Al-Manara (the mosque of the minaret).

## Haroldif Testifies

A book by the British author Haroldif Jacob indicates that when the British first came to Aden, the Jami' Al-Manara was still standing. It was supposedly built by Suleiman Al-Adhm (died 926 AD) during the Ottoman occupation of Yemen.

The exact year in which the mosque was built, however, is still a source of heated debate by historians. Old Yemeni historians show that the Aden Minaret is what remains of a very old mosque erected by the righteous Ummayyad Caliph Omar Bin Abdulaziz. Only Ibn Al-Mojawir, the venerated Yemeni historian, chose to differ. He said that the mosque was built by the Persians.

## Ambergris

Folk tales had it that people in Aden found a large quantity of ambergris washed ashore.

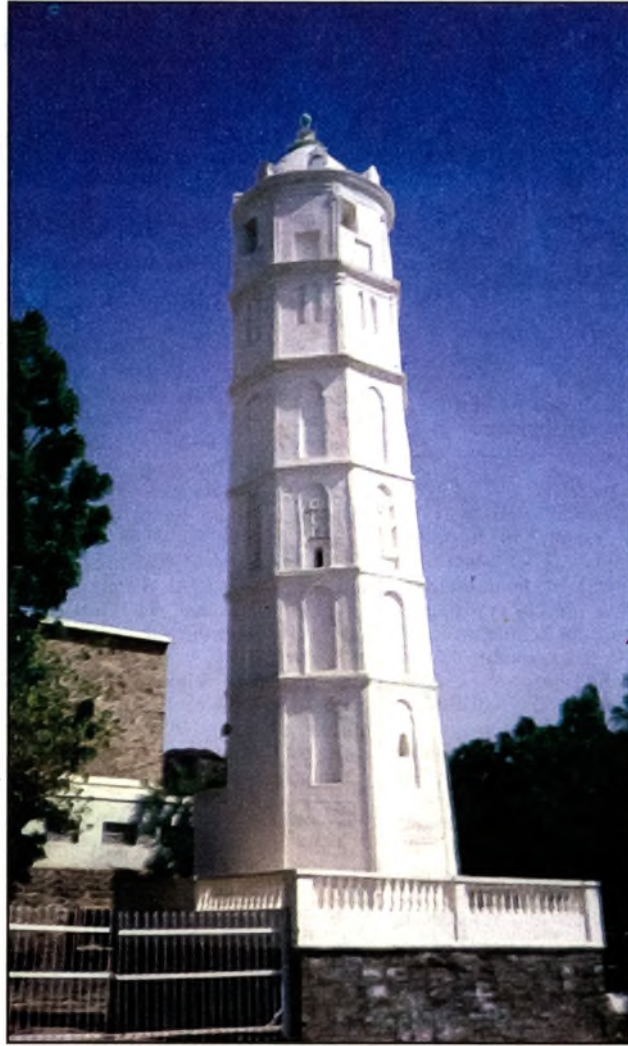
The governor of Aden then sold the ambergris to merchants, and the money used towards building the Jami' Al-Manara. This was actually more than folklore. The Yemeni historian Ba-Makhrum emphasized it as historical fact.

## Large Space for Prayer

Whatever the origin of the Aden Minaret, all historians agree that the mosque to which it is attached was a

very large one. It was a central place where Adenis congregated to pray and to attend seminars conducted by renowned Muslim scholars. The famous historian Al-Maqdisi Al-Bishari (died 990 AD) indicated that he said Tarawih prayers in the Jami' Al-Manara, where Al-Hussain Bin Al-Siddiq Al-Ahdal taught jurisprudence and Arabic grammar. According to many historians, relying on solid historic evidence, the Minaret is a pre-Islamic construction that was used as a light house. Others date the Minaret as only 1,200 years old.

Ridhwan Al-Saqqaf,  
Yemen Times, Aden



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