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Yemeni photographer Ibi Ibrahim speaks to the Yemen Times

21 killed in confrontations in Abyan

By: Mohammad Bin Sallam

SANA'A, August 22 — Around 14 soldiers and seven others were killed in confrontations between security forces and armed men on Friday in Lawdar, Abyan governorate, according to the security sources.

The armed men are suspected of belonging to Yemen's Al-Qaeda branch.

The sources added that eight of the soldiers were inside an armed car when a rocket launcher targeted them.

The other six were killed in confrontations which lasted for three hours.

The confrontations started four days



The government is says that it is fighting Al-Qaeda in Lawdar.

ago when four soldiers were killed in a local market in Lawdar district.

The head of the ruling party or General People's Congress's (GPC) branch in Lawdar, Mohammad Al-Dahbali, said that a military patrol was attacked while they were chasing people who accused of blocking off the road and stealing. They were about to receive new troops from the Central Security Organization in the camp in Lawdar.

Continued on page 2

Traffic policemen blackmail mini-bus drivers

By: Ali Saeed

SANA'A, August 22 — Mohamed Hassan, 50, quit driving a mini bus one year ago because of extortion by traffic policemen.

Mohamed, who is the breadwinner of his nine-member family, told the Yemen Times that he used to transport passengers on his mini-bus from Bab Al-Yemen to Shumaila, but that traffic policemen so often blackmail him that he decided to give up driving.

"One day I was driving from the Bab to Shumaila," Mohamed told the Yemen Times. "On the way, a traffic officer stopped me, made passengers get out and seized my bus."

"When I and the traffic officer reached the yard of the traffic administration building, he asked me to pay him YR 5,000 because one of my headlights was broken," he explained. "I begged him to reduce the YR 5,000, but he raised it to YR 10,000."

Mohamed said that he told the officer that his way of dealing with citizens



Taxi and mini-bus drivers pay money to traffic policemen on a daily basis without receipts, say mini-bus drivers.

was antiquated, something that they would have done during the imam's rule, as in when a prisoner complained from the pain of chains on his hands and legs, and the imam ordered that he be bound with more chains.

However, the officer became angry and refused to reduce the fine, so Mohamed asked for help from one of his friends who is an officer at the

Ministry of Interior to mediate in the dispute.

After the mediation, the traffic officer reduced the YR 10,000 to YR 3,000 and released the bus after Mohamed paid the YR 3,000 for the broken headlight and the fine for the violation that he was initially stopped for.

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“LNG export project is a big lie” says Yemeni businessman

By: Ali Saeed

SANA'A, August 21 — A renowned Yemeni businessman, Abdussalam Al-Athwary, General Secretary of the Yemeni Businessmen Council, described Yemen's liquified natural gas (LNG) export project in Balhaf as a big lie told by the government to Yemenis.

Al-Athwary criticized the project last Friday in an interview with Al-Dar, a Kuwaiti newspaper. He claimed that Yemenis have lost 300,000 job opportunities through the project, because of bad policies by the state in managing liquified natural gas.

He said that it is not feasible to export the LNG whereas everyday citizens lineup for a cylinders of cooking gas.

“If the gas was consumed locally to generate power and operate plants, it would bring in a lot more revenue and foreign cash than now,” he said.

He accused the government of having no vision for solving economic problems and protecting Yemen's limited resources, saying that the state addresses economic problems with random acts.

Al-Athwary said that foreign investors are running away from investing in Yemen because the state does not provide a good investment climate that attracts investors.



He considered infrastructure in Yemen as ill-equipped for foreign, or even local investment.

“There is chaos in all areas, lack of political stability, lack of economic stability and security, and devaluation of the national currency. All these factors influence investors,” said Al-Athwary.

Speaking on the devaluation of the Yemeni riyal, Al-Athwary said that there are parties inside the Central Bank of Yemen who have interests in currency exchange companies and that they are playing with the exchange rate.

“Yemen is being destroyed by bad people and no one is punishing them or holding them accountable for making chaos and corruption rampant,” he said.

Inspection of Yemeni prisons

By: Abdulkarim Al-Nahari
For the Yemen Times

SANA'A, August 22 — The Ministry of Human Rights launched the second phase of an inspection project of Yemeni prisons this month. The project aims at reviewing the conditions of inmates in all Yemeni prisons including juvenile centers.

The second phase will cover ten governorates starting during the Ramadan month between Aug. 11 and Sept. 9, 2010. The team carrying out this inspection under the supervision of the ministry includes representatives of rights based civil society organizations as well as juvenile and social care authorities.

Team leader, Dr. Lana Al-Sharabi, who is the head of the civil society organizations department at the ministry, explained that this initiative aims at exploring the conditions of prisoners and identifying and reporting any human rights violations found.

“We created a radio program to educate the public about human rights and are involving civil society in our work in order to achieve maximum impact of this inspection project,” she said.

The project includes conducting interviews with ten male prisoners, five juveniles and five women along with five employees of the prisons.

“The interviewees will be selected at random and the results will help us propose recommendations to the prison authorities in order to enhance the situation of prisoners all over the republic,” explained Aref Al-Amiri, a member of the inspection team who is also head of the social care section at the ministry.

The governorates that will be visited

during this project are Dhamar, Al-Mahwit, Aden, Hadramout, Abyan, Al-Baida, Raima, Amran, Lahj and Sana'a. According to Al-Amiri, the team has already visited the other eleven governorates in the first phase of this project earlier this year.

The results of this project will be made available to the public in the coming months after the data is analyzed.

The parliament issued recommendations last month to create a parliamentary committee to review the situation of prisoners of conscience, especially those who are illegally detained. The committee, which will include representatives of the prosecution, will supervise the release of those prisoners mainly in political security prisons or push for a fair trial for them.

During the same session on July 14, the parliament gave the government representative of the Ministry of Interior an ultimatum of two months to reform security instruments, including prisons and detention in police stations.

Moreover, the Shura Consultative Council concluded its sessions on the state of prisons and correctional facilities in June with a number of recommendations. The recommendations, which were also forwarded to the Ministry of Interior, were based on field visit reports to a number of prisons.

The main recommendation was to activate the supreme council for prisons and remove any responsibility overlap with other authorities. It also recommended releasing a strategy for reforming prisons before the end of this year in order to be included in next years budget.

During the first half of 2010 the Ministry of Interior reported arresting 94,654 people involved in 59,633 crimes.

Ruling party and JMP exchange accusations

By: Mohammad Bin Sallam

SANA'A, August 18 — The ruling party has accused the opposition of not taking the national dialogue seriously, as they asked President Saleh on Monday to cancel the committee to review the procedures for the parliamentary elections in 2011.

The elections committee had announced last week its program for the elections.

The ruling party said in a statement that the opposition coalition of the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) was not serious about a national dialogue.

The ruling party accused the head of the JMP Mohammad Abdulrahman Al-Mutawakel of supporting people who support the idea of the Imamate, referring to the Houthis in Sa'ada who have called for the return of the Imamate in the governorate. The ruling party also accused them of being against the country's interests.

They criticized the JMP asking Saleh to cancel the committee and said that the move the move reflected the JMP's carelessness and was not based on any legal or constitutional bases.

“The committee was elected by the Parliament and according to a presidential decree. What the committee has done so far is legal and according to the law,” they added in the statement.

The statement condemned the JMP for delaying the parliamentary elections for a second time. They said that the elections is

people's right- not the parties'.

“According to the article 65 in the constitution, the elections can be delayed only once for two years. The elections have already been delayed from April 2009 to April 2011,” they added.

They said that the best solution is to conduct the national dialogue as fast as possible and the parliamentary elections should be held in April 2011 as the constitution outlines. They added that the ruling party will not allow anyone to delay the elections as they are the people's democratic right.

The JMP criticized the last meeting held by the Supreme Elections Committee on Monday, August 10, in which the committee approved the schedule for negotiations between opposition and ruling parties for 2010.

The JMP said that the money spent on the committee was a waste and people were in need of it as they suffer from dire financial conditions. They said that the committee is illegal and not following the constitution or the parliament.

The ruling party called on people who participated in making deals with the opposition parties to stand by its side.

The ruling party added in the statement that the elections are the only way to a peaceful presidential succession.

They added that elections shall be the first and last demand for all parties, including the opposing parties.

Yemen returns 195 tons of illegally imported pesticides



Photo by Mahmoud Assamiee

A man weighs out chemical fertilizer for qat in a fertilizer and pesticide store in Rada'. This year so far 195 tons of illegal pesticides have been seized and returned to their country of origin.

By: Mahmoud Assamiee

SANA'A, August 20- Yemen returned 195 tons of prohibited and illegally imported pesticides during the first half of this year, according to Abdullah Al-Sayani, director of the General Directorate for Plant Protection at the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation.

Al-Sayani told the Yemen Times that these pesticides had been stopped and accumulated at the border prior to being returned to their countries of origin.

The pesticides came from China, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, he said.

Al-Sayani said that the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation is carrying out campaigns to reduce pesticide imports to the country due to the dangers they pose to human health and the environment.

During the first half of this year, the ministry has carried out 11 campaigns

to inspect stores selling pesticides in Sana'a, Taiz, Ibb, Hodeida, Dhamar and Al-Baida.

These campaigns resulted in the ministry closing down 61 out of 139 stores for having violated the national law on pesticides.

According to Al-Sayani, 4.5 tons of pesticides were confiscated during the campaign and kept in the ministry's stores. After examination, the ministry will use these pesticides to combat plant epidemics.

He made it clear that it is difficult to get rid of these pesticides by burning them as it would cause an environmental catastrophe. At the same time, disposing of them through specialized companies will cost the country “USD 10 per one liter.”

On the other hand, a report recently issued by the ministry used on pesticides in Yemen mentioned that the Ministry of

Agriculture and Irrigation has started to measure the residual level of pesticides on agricultural products.

According to the report, a specialized team with portable appliances has made 24 field visits to vegetable and fruit markets as well as qat markets in a number of governorates to measure residual pesticides on these products.

According to Al-Sayani, the results showed that there are different levels of pesticide traces on these products depending on the product, with qat containing the highest rate of chemicals.

To further study the effects of pesticides on agricultural products, the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation has opened a specialized central laboratory to help the ministry measure traces of pesticides in order to better regulate their usage.

According to Al-Sayani, the General Directorate for Plant Protection has started evaluating pesticides existing

in the country after the opening of the laboratory.

The report revealed that great numbers of empty pesticide bottles had been buried in a safe way.

According to Al-Sayani, Yemen legally imports nearly 360 tons of pesticides every year, a drop from 500 tons in 2006. Yemen is still among the countries that import limited quantities of pesticides for agricultural production. He argued that to improve production, the country still needs between 1,500-2,000 tons extra every year.

However, media reports say that there are 373 types of prohibited pesticides in Yemen and there are 700 kinds of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, both legal and illegal, used in agriculture and namely for the quick production of qat.

According to doctors, these chemicals are of the main reasons behind cancer in Yemen.

Continued from page 1

Traffic policemen blackmail mini-bus drivers

In the Yemeni capital, it is not only Mohamed who is harassed in this way. The Yemen Times visited mini-bus stations and found that every mini-bus driver complained from being frequently blackmailed by traffic policemen.

Everyone had a different story, but all of them agree that traffic policemen take money from drivers without receipts and put it in their pockets.

Saleh Ali is a teacher in a public school in the capital and has also been working as a bus driver for three years. He told the Yemen Times that he is asked to pay between YR 1,000 and YR 3,000 to policemen in the street.

Saleh thinks that rampant corruption in government is behind the blackmailing.

Mohamed Al-Hamzi, who has been working as a mini-bus driver for ten years, said that because mini-bus drivers immediately what they are told to by the traffic policemen, blackmailing the drivers has become a source of income for these policemen.

Traffic policemen are paid YR 25,000 a month

“I take money from drivers, because my salary is not sufficient to live off,” one traffic policeman told the Al-

Saeeda television channel last year.

A source at the Ministry of Interior told the Yemen Times that the Minister of Interior had ordered that the officer who talked to Al-Saeeda be fired.

President Saleh has demanded that the structure of the traffic administration be reformed so as to serve not blackmail society.

21 killed in confrontations in Abyan

Al-Dahbali said that the security forces know the attackers' identity and had a plan to catch them.

According to the News Yemen website, people did not go to the mosque to pray the Taraweeh prayer on Saturday, a prayer performed during Ramadan in the evenings. In addition, most of the shops did not open.

Following security forces shelling houses in which some gunmen were taking shelter, the opposition Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) condemned what they called the shelling of innocents' houses.

“What happened brings sorrow and indicates possible dangers to the whole governorate,” the head of JMP Ali Dahmas told the media.

He said that the security forces could simply arrest those responsible without creating panic or bringing in more soldiers from adjacent

governorates.

Dahmas called on the political and social powers to ease the tension in the whole area.

The GPC's website mentioned that seven members of Al-Qaeda were killed as well as three foreigners on Friday. According to the website, five members of Al-Qaeda submitted themselves to the security forces in Lawdar, and the security forces are looking for the perpetrators.

Assassination in the south

In a related incident, local sources said that the chief of security in Shabwa, brigadier Ahmed Al-Magdishi, escaped an assassination attempt on Saturday evening after unknown armed men set off a grenade in his house.

On the same evening, the deputy governor of Abyan and the general director of Khanfar district were targeted by unknown armed men, which led to the injury of one of their guards.

Local sources in Abyan said that Al-Rahawi, the general director of Khanfar district in Abyan escaped from an armed element that intercepted him on the way to Ja'ar Ba Tais. The unknown armed men ran away after they took over the vehicle of one of his guards.

These operations coincided

with several assassination attempts

against security leaders in southern governorates. The last assassination attempt was against Abdulkhaleq Shayi', the head of the investigation department in Al-Dhale', on Thursday evening in which Shayi' escaped assassination by unknown men who planted a grenade in his car that later blew up and caused him severe injuries to his limbs. He is still receiving medication at the Republican Guards hospital in Sana'a.

Southern soldiers protest

Dozens of suspended soldiers blocked the main road between Sana'a and Aden in Al-Habeelain, the center of Radfan district in Lahj for the second day in a row for two hours making demands on the government to reinstate their jobs.

Hundreds of cars queued up at the road block before soldiers allowed them to start moving again, after local leaders interfered and convinced them to open the road.

The soldiers were among 800 soldiers without jobs from the central security forces. They were in Sa'ada but, when the war broke out, they were replaced with forces from the republican guards. Some of them were redistributed to military units in Hodeida but the rest are still suspended without pay.



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Opportunities

Arab Fund Fellowships Program

The purpose of the Arab Fund Fellowships Program

The Arab Fund Fellowships Program was launched in December 1997, with the purpose of providing Arab Ph.D. holders in different fields of specialization who have excellent academic track records with opportunities to conduct advanced research and/or lecture in the best universities in the world. The program is intended to build bridges and achieve mutual benefits between Arab and foreign universities, and facilitate the transfer of knowledge and technology to the Arab countries. Fellowships are open to Arab nationals who are currently working at a university in any of the member countries of the Arab Fund.

Since its inception, the program has awarded 66 scholarships to Arab researchers from different nationalities and various areas of specialization, 10 of which were awarded in 2010. During the period 1997-2010 the program has received more than 800 applications.

Nature of grants

For selected candidates, the Arab Fund Fellowships Program provides fixed maintenance allowances, round-trip tickets for beneficiaries and eligible members of their families, and limited accident and sickness insurance. The grant is usually awarded for a period of twelve months, while shorter periods may be considered in very special cases.

Although applications are received on a continuous basis, they must be submitted at least one year before the expected starting date of the scholarship, based on a formal invitation from an internationally reputable university or host institution.

Eligibility requirements

- Being a citizen of an Arab country.
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- Currently working at a university in a member country of the Arab Fund.
- Having a distinguished academic career and strong publication record in international academic journals.

- Having a good university teaching experience.
- Being proficient in the language of the host country.
- Being medically fit.

Important application information

Applications must be submitted and completed at least one year prior to the expected starting date of the Fellowship. As applications are evaluated by yearly cycle, any application received after January 1st, will be considered for the next cycle.

All application documents must be in English and submitted electronically (not by regular mail) according to the pre-specified format. Do not send documents in un-specified formats or materials that are not requested.

How to apply

Applications are to be submitted through the following website: www.arabfund.org/zamalat

International Young Interactive Entrepreneur (IYIE) Award 2010

As part of the expansion of the International Young Creative Entrepreneur programme, the British Council is running for the second time the International Young Interactive Entrepreneur (IYIE) Award 2010 – to champion and celebrate the importance of creative entrepreneurs working in the field of the interactive media. IYIE seeks to showcase international business innovation in the field of interactive entertainment and media using the UK as the nexus for cultural, creative and commercial exchange.

The award is running in 10 British Council offices; China, Colombia, Egypt, Georgia, Ghana, India, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia.

What is our definition of the interactive sector?

For the purpose of this award participants can be drawn from any of the following areas in the interactive sector:

- Interactive leisure software publishers, developers and marketing specialists
- Interactive entertainment developers for the Internet, digital

television, radio and mobile phones

- Digital and interactive multimedia
- Internet multimedia and web design
- Interactive marketing
- Multimedia and interactive event production
- Experimental media
- Consultants providing specialist services in this area

What are the eligibility criteria?

- A participant must:
- Be aged between 25 and 35
- Already work in the interactive sector (as defined above)
- Be entrepreneurial and have shown their ability in the promotion of the interactive sector in their country, in either a commercial or public context, or both
- Through their character, drive and abilities demonstrate their potential to be a future leader of the sector in their country
- Have English language skills to IELTS 6 - 'competent user' or above

What will the award involve?

From 13-23 October, 2010, finalists will undertake a tour of the UK national interactive sector. The tour will comprise visits, meetings, seminars and trade events where it will be possible to meet leaders in the field.

It will also include a masterclass with an internationally renowned UK interactive sector entrepreneur during which the finalists will be able to question him/her about the development of his/her highly successful interactive sector business. They will also get the opportunity to participate in the Mini-Bar event on 22 October which is a monthly tech meet up in London. It is an informal, but well attended, gathering of some of the smartest web entrepreneurs, developers, designers, investors and tech innovators and an amazing networking opportunity, so it will be of real benefit to interactive entrepreneurs.

How can you apply?

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A story of a Yemeni worker's struggle

Unemployment in Yemen has reached 35 percent according to 2010 World Bank statistics.

By: Ibrahim Al-Jaadi
For the Yemen Times

There are many reasons behind unemployment. One of those reasons is laziness which means "many people do not want work or even search for jobs, most of them depend on their families," said Mohammed, a university student. "Some youths do not want to work in any job."

On the other hand, there are a few people who refuse to give up and stay home. They don't feel shame at working any job. Ahmed Mohammed Farhan, 34 years old and a father of five children, is an example of struggle and endurance.

Ahmed has had many jobs. Early in his life, he started working at an egg

shop. He then left that job to work as a vegetable seller. He said that he got the idea from a friend who sold vegetables from a wheelbarrow in the street.

As an ambulant vegetable seller, he walked the streets to find buyers almost 12 hours a day. He sometimes returned home with little money because he couldn't find many customers. Other times he had to hide from the municipal authorities who chased him and other street vendors.

One day there was a campaign against street vendors, so he left his wheelbarrow in the street and ran home. He had to stay at home for one month without a job because he did not dare to sell in the street anymore.

"The campaign lasted for several days. It was a thorough campaign. I thought it would last forever."

"Imagine that. Staying at home for one month without a job. I could have died because they were rough days for me and my children."

It was about six years ago that he stopped working as a street vendor and

decided to go to Saudi Arabia to work to find a better opportunity.

"It was so difficult and risky to go to Saudi Arabia. The visa is very expensive so I entered Saudi Arabia illegally."

There are many Yemenis like Ahmed who enter Saudi Arabia illegally. They travel to near the border between Saudi Arabia and Yemen, and there they find smugglers who take them into Saudi Arabia for USD 500 to 800 for each person.

After arriving in Saudi Arabia, Ahmed worked as a builder for about a year before he was caught by the Saudi immigration authorities.

"They caught me and put me in jail for some months and then they deported me back to Yemen. I was treated badly."

When Ahmed arrived back in Yemen, he couldn't find any job so he started selling vegetables in the street again. The municipality chased him again but this time he didn't give up. He worked for two years and saved some money.

After that, he thought of opening his own vegetable shop. With the money he

saved from selling the vegetables and some more borrowed from his friends, he opened a shop.

"I have been working in this shop for more than two years. I'm so happy that I have my own shop."

"Having a shop is a big responsibility. I mean, there are a lot of products, more than in the wheelbarrow, but it's better than walking the streets to find customers."

But a shop is more comfortable, he says. Now nobody will tell him that it's illegal to sell on the street.

He is passionate and enjoys his job. He works everyday from 6 am till noon. He comes to his shop every day at 6 am to arrange his products and doesn't leave before midday.

"I have five children to feed and every month I send a certain amount of money to my parents back in my village. If I stayed at home, who would feed them?"

In the end, Ahmed sent a message to all the unemployed: "I say to all people who couldn't find jobs, do your



Determined to provide for his five children, Ahmed Mohammed Farhan, 34, worked as a vegetable seller in the street until he had enough money saved up to open his own vegetable shop.

best and Allah will help you. Don't be ashamed. Instead of saying that there are no jobs, go and search. Yes, it's true that the government should have found

a solution for all the unemployment, but if the government hasn't found a solution for those who need work, should they stay at home waiting?"

Stories from Real Life Domestic abuse

By: Nawal Zaid
For the Yemen Times

A father rapes his daughter and tries to kill her

Ahmad Al-Sanhani, 40, is married and has ten children, most of them male. He lives in Sana'a city and works as a farmer in Sanhan during the agricultural season. He had a very good and patient wife, but she never felt the beauty of life whilst with her husband.

Her neighbors were always asking about her, visiting her and she was also visiting them. She kept good relations with people and maintained a good reputation as she was a decent woman. She was educating her children well and directing them to the right way.

Her husband was dominating, harsh and merciless. He used to beat her and her children severely. He also drank wine. He was spending his money on buying wine. He was never thought of as a supporter of his family. Neighbors were annoyed by him, even children felt scared when they saw him.

He forced his wife and children out of the house. They sat with their neighbors and got their food from them. Sometimes the wife travelled with her children to her family in the same village her husband was from. When the husband was left alone, he increased his drinking and brought women back to his house to commit adultery with them.

He was not a good Moslem. He did not pray, did not fear Allah and had no values or morals. Time passed and problems increased between him and his wife, and then he divorced her and she returned to her family with nearly all of his children. He forced his elder daughter Fawzia, 20, to live with him and take care of him and the house.

Days after the absence of her mother and brothers, problems started between Fawzia and her father. He controlled her inside the house and banned her from going out. He was beating her, drinking before her, allowing women to come to the house and having sex with them before her eyes.

Fawzia was not able to endure seeing all these things. She tried to run away from the house and go to her mother and brothers in the village. But her father Ahmad was beating her, besieging her and keeping her behind closed doors.

A short time later, he drunk a lot and was calling out "Fawzia". She was scared and closed the door of

her room and did not answer him. He knocked on the door but she did not open it.

He broke down the door and entered the room carrying a revolver and threatened to kill her if she shouted. She tried to run away and tried to kill him with anything she could lay her hands on, but she could not because he was carrying revolver.

He then raped her, and after he finished he wanted to kill her. But she was able to run away because he was very drunk. She hit him on the head with a glass bottle and ran to the neighbors. She reached them exhausted, crying and destroyed. She asked them to give her a shelter.

They kept her for three days and helped her to flee to the village where her mother and brothers lived. One of the neighbors went to the police to inform them about the atrocious crime the father had committed to his daughter.

When the police came to the house to arrest him, they found him red-handed with a woman in the house.

The police then summoned Fawzia and she came with her mother and brothers from the village demanding his death. But instead he served several years of imprisonment. During these years in prison, none asked about him.

When he was released from prison he was left alone and his wife and children decided to forget him. He remained regretful and never thought of going to the village because if he was seen by the tribe of the village he would have been killed.

Later on, he married again, a woman from a remote area. The new wife does not know anything about his past. He started a new life with his wife and does not treat her like he did the former. He had several children with her. But he lives a wasted life, with a bad face and many bad descriptions.

A brother tries to rape his sister

Hiyam Abdullah Al-Afifi, 28, is unmarried and she lives at home doing housework. She has five brothers and three sisters. Her elder brother Marwan lives with his wife in a separate house.

Her father and mother went to Mecca for Hajj rituals and left Hiyam with her brothers and sisters.

One day during Eid Al-Adhha (Eid of Sacrifice) while Hiyam was preparing the house for her parents

return from Hajj, her brothers came to have lunch in their father's house. While they were together, she was quarreling with her elder brother Marwan because he wanted to take her phone from her.

Then he took the phone forcefully from her and started inspecting her friends' numbers and calling them and mocking them rudely. As a senior brother, he always controlled everyone in the house when the father was absent. He was always spotting her, following her and beating her, for reasons or without reasons.

He took the mobile with him to his house to talk to Hiyam's friends, while she was still crying and did not know why he was doing these childish acts. When he came back, she saw him suddenly stop before her. She was sitting in the yard with her neighbors and Ahlam, the daughter of her eldest brother who died a long time before.

Marwan entered the yard saying, "Come Hiyam to agree on the mobile, come with me to your room to talk and then I will give it to you."

At that moment, Hiyam was very scared of him, fearing he would beat her and answered, "I do not want the phone, take it and leave me alone." But Marwan insisted in taking her inside. He pulled on her strongly while she was crying, and threatened to kill her if she was not quiet. He also threatened Ahlam and forced the rest of the girls out of the yard.

The girls did not interfere in matters between a brother and a sister and every one of them left to her own house. He pulled Hiyam up to her room. He closed the door of the third floor while Ahlam was left on the second cleaning the kitchen. Ahlam was also very scared, and could not do anything because she was still only 13 years old.

All Hiyam's brothers had already left the house to chew qat with their friends and her three sisters were married and away in their houses. No one was left in the house to save Hiyam. Marwan started threatening Hiyam inside her room and accusing her that he saw strange things in her mobile just to blackmail her.

The phone was not modern and without a camera, it was an ordinary one that did not include anything special. He started searching for anything to blackmail her, to make her surrender to his desire. He was asking her about everything but she responded to him confidently and strongly.

He started telling her "Consider me like your friend and tell me everything. I am your brother."

"I do not have anything to talk

about, believe me. My phone is in your hands, you can see what is in it. This is my room. What do you want from me?", she said.

"I want you to sit near to me, do not be afraid," he replied. She wondered why because Marwan was never nice to her. She saw in his face a great change as if he was drunk. Then she felt scared and confused, thinking how to get rid of him and run away.

But he started approaching her step-by-step while she was backing away and trying find an escape. Then he grasped her and started touching places on her body like her back and her waist. At that moment, Hiyam shouted calling for her mother, but unfortunately no one heard her.

She become terrified and then an idea came to her mind as to how she could get rid of him. "Wait a minute. I will go to the kitchen to drink water and then come back. I will close the house and make Ahlam leave the house to make the atmosphere free for us," she told him.

He believed her and let her go, then Hiyam opened the door and hurried to the kitchen but he followed her. Hiyam was giving signs to Ahlam to go to neighbors or call one of them, but fear was dominating Ahlam's heart even more than Hiyam's. She did not understand what Hiyam wanted her to do.

Marwan had reached the kitchen now and was sitting waiting to Hiyam. He shouted "Hurry up, come on."

"OK, let's go upstairs. I will go first and then you follow me," she said while she became even more scared. She felt as if she was dying and when she reached upstairs, she turned to Marwan and forcefully slapped him in the face, making him fall on the stairs and roll down them.

"Get out of the house now, otherwise I will call neighbors. I will open the window and shout out. Go impolite one! Is this the care my mother told you to give me before her travels? From now ahead you are not my brother," shouted Hiyam.

At that moment Marwan came back to his senses and fled the house. Hiyam then descended the stairs crying to find Ahlam. The neighbors came asking why she was crying, "Did he beat you? Why you are crying?"

Hiyam wanted to die. She did not understand what was happening, and she never understood that her brother had tried to rape her. She remained crying all day and was afraid that Marwan would come back. She went to the neighbors' house with Ahlam and stayed closed up in their house until all her brothers came back that

evening.

Hiyam did not inform them about what had happened, fearing problems between them and him. The neighbors protected her until her father and mother came back from Hajj.

As for Marwan, she sees him only occasionally. He never can show her his face for the feelings of shame for what he had tried to do.

She married to escape her brother's desires

Afaf Mohammad Qasem, 26, is married and has two daughters and a son. She is a housewife and lives in Sana'a with her husband away from his family. Although Afaf married while she was still a child of 14, no harm had come to her.

Now she is happy with her husband and her children. She accepted to marry the first man coming to ask for her hand just to flee from her family's house. She had endured many attempted molestations from one of her brothers, Nabil.

Nabil has always been trying to catch and rape her. She was afraid of telling her father and other brothers. She wanted to avoid problems. But she did tell her sister Mariam who was seven years older about what Nabil was doing to her.

Mariam was always protecting Afaf from Nabil, and threatening him that she would tell their father. Nabil was very afraid of his father and elder brother, but Afaf was very beautiful and the brother still wanted to molest her.

When the groom came asking for her hand, he was more than twice of her. He was 33 years old while she was still a child of 14. She accepted him to get rid of that ghost who followed her without shame or fear of Allah.

After the wedding, Afaf lived a secured life with her husband and feared no more. She gave him the first female child without health problems. Then she gave him another daughter and then a son.

Time passed and Nabil still thought of molesting his sister. When he saw her, he looked at her strangely and started directing words of love at her. Afaf's fear returned and she was scared that her husband would discover the story of her mean brother.

She ran away whenever see saw him. She rarely went to her family's house in fear of meeting him. No one in her family knew of this except her

sister Mariam. She was trying to avoid her family because of Nabil.

One morning, while Afaf's husband was at work and she was left her with their children as usual, Nabil came knocking on the door. Afaf's daughter hurried to open it.

"Where is your mother? Who is with her?" he asked.

"No one. Only my brother, sister and I," replied the little girl. Nabil entered the house and closed the door behind him. When Afaf saw him, she was surprised he had come. She started directing questions at him, "What do you want? Why do you come here?"

"I came to see you and to see your children," he replied. Fear started dominating Afaf's heart. She could not expel him from the house because she feared quarreling with him and having the neighbors hear. She left him and went to the kitchen to prepare the breakfast.

He followed her and pulled her to the bedroom and, after he closed the door, started attacking her and threatening her to kill her if she shouted. He had shut the children in the other room.

Afaf was terrified. She wanted to shout but she could not. She was fearing that her husband would return at that moment and a catastrophe would happen.

"Go away from here! What you want to do is prohibited. I am your sister. Do not commit a crime and go to hell. Go!" she was telling him. Nabil was completely inspired by Satan and did not understand what he was going to do.

At that moment, Afaf took a knife from the roof of the room and raised it against him. She threatened to kill him and then kill herself if he continued. Her daughter opened the window of the room where she had been put and started calling for her father, thinking that Nabil wanted to kill her mother.

When Nabil heard the little child's cries, he retreated and felt very scared. He started insulting Afaf with rude and blasphemous words. The little child hurried up to her mother once she had got the door open. She was crying and her mother was crying with her.

"Why you are crying mom? Did uncle Nabil want to kill you? When dad comes back, I will tell him," she said to her mother. Then she turned to her uncle Nabil and shouted at him to leave the house. "Do not kill my mother otherwise I will tell my grandpa (Nabil's father). I will tell him what happened today."

Nabil indeed did leave the house and Allah saved Afaf from that evil brother.

Words of Wisdom



In the final analysis, it is in the hands of the people in charge of this country to make our transformation towards democracy real and meaningful. It would be unfortunate if the change in Yemen remains merely a show or something superficial. Our politicians need to believe in preparing for the 21st century. To do that, they have to internalize some new values.

Prof. Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf, (1951 - 1999)
Founder of Yemen Times



OUR OPINION

Ramadan and qat

Every year, like all Muslims around the world, Yemenis observe the religious practice of fasting during for the whole month of Ramadan.

While the fasting is essentially about abstinence and compassion, it so happens that socially in Yemen the month becomes a nightmare of aggression, short temper, and a lot of verbal and many times physical abuse, usually by the men of this country.

The women during Ramadan have the additional burden of preparing delicious feasts every day. They also have to cater to their men's every need and make sure that the men of the house are not disturbed.

It does not matter that the woman is also fasting and has many more chores to do. It only matters that the husband, who, if a government employee, only attends work for a couple of hours and spends most of his day time sleeping, is kept happy.

Maybe it is qat, which is a narcotic leaf chewed on for hours by Yemenis every day. I know a lot of smokers who are short tempered because they can't smoke cigarettes from dawn to dusk and, because of the withdrawal symptoms, they are edgy. Is abstaining from qat chewing doing the same to our men? Is it qat that makes them want to kill anyone who crosses their path?

The most aggressive time for Yemeni men during Ramadan is during the hour just before iftar or fast breaking, which these days is between 5:30 to 6:30 in the evening. Initially I thought it is because their hunger is tested to the limit and they are the hungriest and hence the angriest. A hungry man is an angry man.

But then aren't the women by that time the hungriest and the busiest preparing the last dishes for the exaggerated iftar meal? Why do men get to shout and hit each other with the excuse that they are fasting, while the women are the ones who are really hungry and tired?

This is where I thought of qat. And maybe I am right to think that without men acknowledging it, there are some withdrawal symptoms. Maybe qat is really an addictive substance contrary to what all Yemeni chewers I know say.

Once they have eaten, Yemeni men grab their beloved qat bag and chew until the late hours of the night. If this is not addiction, I don't know what is.

This is also perhaps why life during Ramadan is upside down with night becoming day and day night. Because otherwise how would Yemenis enjoy their five-hour qat chewing sessions?

Ramadan is meant to teach us about compassion with those who go hungry. But it is also an opportunity to review our living styles and understand ourselves and our society better. And for me I realized that men's behavior during this month is yet another proof of how destructive this vicious plan is.

Nadia Al-Sakkaf

Unity against 'destruction'

By: Ahmed Al-Jarallah
Editor-in-Chief
The Arab Times

Four years ago, Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh tried to end the intermittent war waged by the Houthis group, which has been keen on carrying out an external plan to destabilize the country that paid a high price to strengthen national unity. He gave the rebels an opportunity to turn a new leaf through the implementation of six recommendations from the Yemeni government. Houthis have been working on a plan that poses a grave threat not only to Yemen, but the whole region. This plan is aimed at transforming a happy country like Yemen into a Taliban-style nation, while its people are still wearing the 'imama' (Persian head cover), to be linked to illusions of an old-fashioned empire.

Like their Lebanese counterparts who gamble on the blood and destiny of their countrymen, the Houthis have continued to stimulate the Persian spirit. A similar plan has been laid down in Iraq and it has become a 'secret garden' for plotting the so-called Iranian conspiracy. Several years ago, the agency of destruction started taking serious steps to include Yemen in its plan to wreak havoc in the region. This scheme aims at forming a chain, linking Yemen, Iraq, Lebanon and Afghanistan, to instigate conflicts in the whole region. Over the last few years, the Ye-

meni president prioritized development issues, thinking this is the best way to overcome the crises. He focused on building a strong economic foundation to modernize Yemen, so it would live up to its identity as a happy nation.

However, while the president is working on building the nation through his wisdom and innovative vision, the Houthis conspired to implement the external plan, outrightly disregarding the interests of Yemen and its people. From time to time, separatists raised their voices to incite public revolt, as if the historical slogans on the unity of Yemenis have been presented only to serve political purposes. They have neglected the fact that Yemen needs many years to achieve development and overcome its problems, including poverty. Saleh has exerted tremendous efforts to address these problems. He took the necessary steps to cultivate Arab and international relations, hoping to close investment deals to revitalize the Yemeni economy.

If we take a closer look at the current situation in Yemen, we will see a huge difference between the old and modern Yemen. Yemenis are now enjoying freedom of expression, which they have been deprived of over the last decades. Houthis gained power through this freedom, yet they fell into the trap of intrigues and skewed regional plans. They misused this freedom to undermine national unity, incited public revolts, and killed innocent people to achieve the expansion goals of territori-

al powers, which usually lay down their strategies based on an extinct imperial heritage. These authorities might have changed their plans, but they still insist on building an obsolete empire.

Yemen is currently at a crossroads. It has yet to finalize its plan - whether to jump into the bandwagon of violence and bloodshed, similar to what is happening in Iraq, due to tribal differences that have been escalating internal tension or triumph over the difficulties through national unity. When the Yemeni president opened his arms again to welcome the rebels back and put them under the protection of the country, he thought and still thinks that national unity is bigger than any of the illusions of the territorial powers, which provided the rebels with weapons and money to realize their goals without taking into consideration the senseless flow of the sacred Yemeni blood everyday.

The supposedly happy Yemen is gripped with sorrow due to the selfishness of some destructive powers as if the Yemenis came from an unknown land in Afghanistan or black rooms in the factory that produces crises, searching for a shelter. Saleh has been trying his best to steer the Yemeni ship out of the rough sea waters. He has been struggling to face the challenges in favor of Yemen. In spite of the difficulties his country is currently facing, he is still determined to build a happy Yemen amid the conspiracies plotted against it.

The U. S. spreads the misery to Yemen

Another undeclared war that won't make Americans safer is foolishly pursued

By: Dan Simpson
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

It is thanks to a New York Times front-page story Sunday that Americans learned that the United States is now engaged in an undeclared war in Yemen, on its way to joining Iraq and Afghanistan as a third major war in the region, unless Israel or the United States attacks Iran first.

Among our major achievements in the Yemen war we have managed to accidentally kill the deputy governor of Marib Province, Jabir al-Shabwani, in an air strike. That would be the equivalent of some foreign military force killing the lieutenant governor of an American state in an air strike.

Mr. Shabwani happened also to have been a friend of the president of Yemen, Ali Abdullah Saleh, although Mr. Saleh appears so far to have gotten over the U.S. action. Al-Qaida in the Arabia Peninsula, some of whose leaders were the putative targets of the air strike, blew up a pipeline in Yemen in revenge.

In fact, U.S. attacks have had no apparent impact on al-Qaida or on anyone else in Yemen, apart from its civilian population who have taken casualties in badly targeted attacks. Al-Qaida in

the Arabia Peninsula is now putting out an English-language, online magazine called Inspire, playing up the U.S.-caused damage.

The same New York Times article indicated that U.S. operations, partly military «Special Access Programs» by Special Operations Forces and partly CIA, are active in Afghanistan, Algeria, Iran, Kenya, Lebanon, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Tajikistan and Yemen.

Actions in one country -- for example, Somalia -- can lead to targets' retaliation in another country, for example, Uganda, where Somalis killed 36 in a retaliatory attack in Kampala, the capital. U.S. forces are using a range of weapons, including unmanned drone aircraft armed with missiles, commando teams, cruise missiles firing cluster bombs and Harrier fighter jets. Personnel include contractors as well as U.S. armed forces.

None of the mini-wars have been authorized by the U.S. Congress under the War Powers Act, which President Barack Obama has felt as free to ignore as President George W. Bush did, making some of those who voted for Mr. Obama in 2008 wonder what the difference is.

In some cases the United States has host government permission to carry out operations on its territory; in some, not. It is difficult to imagine what responsible government could agree to turning the formidable U.S. killing machine loose on its people. But some do, and there are reasons.

A quick look at what the United States has done to Iraq and Afghanistan should make the point. In Iraq, with the possible exception of being able to say that Nouri Kamal al-Maliki sort of in charge is better than Saddam Hussein, it is hard to see past the death and destruction that have occurred there over the past seven-plus years to see anything positive.

Iraq's economy is wrecked. Its health care and education services don't work. Its parliament doesn't meet. It had elections but Mr. al-Maliki has blocked the choice of a prime minister. There is no agreement on how its oil revenues will be divided. America's vaunted construction/reconstruction projects have mostly fallen through, the money ending up in the hands of American, Iraqi and other profiteers. It is very likely that northern Iraq, the Kurdish part, will peel off as soon as the Americans leave. Its armed forces, which fought a credible eight-year war against Iran, containing that country, now amount to virtually nothing.

What leader of what other nation would want to let the United States involve itself in its fate?

For Yemen's president, Mr. Saleh, there are several angles. First, he is not very popular in his country and throughout his career has been regularly and credibly threatened by his Yemeni enemies. Now, with U.S. access to his country depending on him, the United States has a stake in his preservation, maybe the best safety net he has ever had.

And there is money. His country gets aid: he gets money. That's the way it works in that part of the world. Forces loyal to him get arms -- modern arms -- and training to use them. So the Americans accidentally knock off a few women and children and old people here and there in the interior -- from Mr. Saleh's point of view, so what?

Leaders in that part of the world don't worry about stuff like that. They don't have to. They don't face real elections. They have lots of bodyguards from their own tribe and other security. He has been in power since 1978.

The real question for Americans is what are we doing there?

Why is Mr. Saleh our ally? Why are we killing innocent civilians in the back country of Yemen? Why are we stirring up the kind of trouble that can end up trashing Yemen the way we have trashed Iraq and Afghanistan? Does anyone believe for one minute that we are any safer for all that we are doing in those 12 countries -- probably more -- than we would be if we had normal, mutually respectful, mutually helpful relations with them?

We aren't any better off anywhere in the world -- including in Afghanistan -- now than we were on 9/11. Many, many more people hate us. And why wouldn't they, considering what we do around the world?

Then the question becomes, what is Mr. Obama's personal attitude to these 'terror' programs?

Does he think they make sense for America? If he does, how does he square that view with what he knows of the rest of the world? Or is he just a man of limited talents and strength who wants a second term, held firmly in the grip of the U.S. military, security services and defense industries and contractors?

If that is the case, where do we go from here? As of now the Republicans are showing us nothing; and the tea parties, less than nothing.

COMMON SENSE

Well-deserved acclaim: Qatar, domestically, regionally and internationally

One of the important messages in the Islamic mission of the Prophet Mohammed (Peace of Allah be upon him) is that if God has endowed the believer with a great deal of resources, there comes a very heavy responsibility associated with this blessing from the Lord. It goes without saying then, that any resources endowed by the Lord on a country is doubled. Both the rulers of that country and its people are accountable to the Al-Mighty for the proper utilization of such resources and the support / lack of support that the people of the country give to their leaders for wisely / unwisely channeling their resources as the case may be.

Since 1995, Qatar has risen from a mismanaged despotic state to one of the most enlightened monarchies in the world. Under the leadership of Amir Hamad bin Khalifa Al Al-Thani, and the versatile Prime Minister, Hamad Bin Jassim Bin Jaber Al Al-Thani Qatar has steered a very wise course domestically, regionally and internationally. The small country with an area of 11,500 km2 and a population of 1.7 million souls one of the most influentially active participant in the political and economic arenas of the world. It is with great praise to Allah that Qatar has been bestowed with so much wealth, as if the Lord Al-Mighty knew full well that the leaders of Qatar were worthy of the destiny laid out for the hospitable and cordial people of this proud Arab country. Qatar is one of the richest oil and gas producers of the world and this observer must admit that this wealth is not in the wrong hands at all.

The leaders of Qatar know what is the significance of holding so much resources "in trust", for in Islam, any abundance of wealth is a blessing indeed, but with that blessing must come a compelling sense of responsibility that such wealth must be directed towards fruitful sustainable ventures and enterprises and the enhancement of the Qatari people. Qatar embarked on an ambitious economic development program of maximizing the economic utilization of its resources to meet its domestic needs (refining, electricity generation, petrochemicals and other domestic essentials). Qatar also sought to expand its non-tangible economic base by also providing opportunities for financial institutions and investment companies to help turn Qatar into a potential major international finance and investment conduit. Qatar is also pursuing significant cultural endeavors (Education City) that brings together leading international academic institutions from the West and East to enhance all spheres of human knowledge, especially in science and technology. Qatar's interest in international sports is manifested by its ability to sponsor the Asian Cup in Soccer and its application for hosting the World Cup in 2016. Qatar also sponsors many international forums and conferences that deal with the many pertinent regional and international challenges (economic, social and political) and insures that they are accorded the broadest international participation and coverage.

But Qatar's diplomatic, philanthropic and media initiatives have taken on front page merit in regional and international attention and the leadership of Qatar has been unflinching in pursuing cessation of conflicts between fellow Arabs, between separate Arab states or in domestic conflicts within an Arab state (Lebanon, Yemen, Sudan, etc) and Qatari persistence on instilling such initiatives for peaceful reconciliation, amidst complex and intertwining circumstances that work to foil these efforts is commendable and welcome as such efforts still keep such conflicts "manageable" and prevent them from getting out of hand. For Yemen, the Qatari leadership's continued efforts have been instrumental in preventing a Seventh Round from flaring up in the Sa'ada War up to now and the hope is that the efforts will lead to a lasting peace (the current negotiations in Doha between the Government and the Houthis are for seeking ways to instill a durable peace. Yemen needs peace to enhance the security and political stability of Yemen, and reduce the awesome challenges to development such circumstances have brought on Yemen.

In the media front, the Al-Jazeera satellite television channel in Arabic has proven to be one of the most influential broadcasting pioneers in the region, with an open mandate to operate without any censorship in discussing any political, social or economic issues of regional concern. The English counterpart of the latter has delivered the Arab media message with state of the art finesse technically, ethically and professionally and relies on a highly qualified group of international journalists and management that makes the Al-Jazeera International channel second to none in objective coverage of regional and international events and provides a forum for lively and stimulating discussions. Both the Arabic and English AJ channels also insist on active audience participation in most of their programs and for the regional media sphere that in itself is revolutionary and welcome amidst a large sea of mostly dull highly controlled Arab media channels, especially in the field of covering current events.

In the philanthropic field, Qatar's presence can be detected in almost all the major catastrophes and calamities that the world has faced in the last fifteen years, whether caused by nature or by human design and folly (Lebanon, Yemen, Pakistan, Bosnia etc.).

With Qataris enjoying the highest per capita income (Qatar and Liechtenstein are neck and neck for the No. 1 position in the world) and with the Qataris living in the best of standards of living in the world, which equates with the highest of Western standards, it goes without saying that the leaders of Qatar must be doing something right.

Hassan Al-Haifi has been a Yemeni political economist and journalist for more than 20 years. He may be blogged at: <http://commentfromyem.blogspot.com>



By: Hassan Al-Haifi

SKETCHED OPINION



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Gaza's youngest fisher woman

Madeline Kullab, 16, and her two younger siblings go to sea each morning to make a living for their disabled father and ill mother.

By: Omar Ghraieb
The Media Line

'Gaza' Every morning Gaza wakes at dawn for morning prayers. By 6 a.m. students, both boys and girls of different ages, start flowing out of their houses, making their way to school by foot, bus and cab.

While these children prepare themselves for school, Madeline Kullab, 16, along with her sister Reem, 13 and brother Kayed, 14, wake at 5 a.m. to prepare themselves to go out to sea. It is the start of another long day of fishing for Ms. Kullab and her siblings.

Ms. Kullab is Gaza's first fisherwoman. Each day she and her brother and sister get up hoping that what they catch will be enough to provide a livelihood for their family.

Only two kilometers away from Gaza's shore, in the northern Sudaniya area, the Kullabs start their daily struggle on a small fishing boat that barely fits the three of them.

This particular day it is very hot, but Ms. Kullab just laughs it off. She says she no longer feels the heat or cold; she swims and fishes no matter what the weather conditions.

"Nothing stops me," she says.

"What other choice do I have?" she continues. "My father is semi-paralyzed and barely walks, while my mom is an old sick lady, so fishing is our only resource to live day-to-day," she says adjusting her headscarf, with a big smile.

Ms. Kullab wears jeans and two long T-shirts. She complains about the head covering and layers of clothes.

"I wear the scarf and those heavy clothes just because we live in a closed conservative society and not because I want to or I fear Hamas," she says, adding that if it were up to her she would swim in shorts and a tank top, if not a swimming suit. The scarf and heavy clothing make her work even harder, she explains.

Reem says she opposes her dad's requests to wear the head covering, saying that she is still too young to wear it and that she needs to swim freely to be able to fish well. She complains that tradition is the reason behind her father's request, if

not demand.

Struggling not to fall out of the tiny cramped boat, Ms. Kullab looks with wide eyes at the horizon. When asked what she's thinking about, she says she wonders if she will ever be able to find a job in her field so she can wake up from the nightmare of fishing everyday, although she does love the sea. She has just finished her training in fashion design at Gaza's Union of Churches.

Asked why they don't go any deeper, she explains that she prefers not to risk getting attacked by the Israeli or Egyptian Navy. A few kilometers is enough to fish. She says she has learned this from Gaza's fishermen, which number about 3,000.

Kayed's task is to row the boat till they reach the appropriate depth. Then all three throw out the fishing net as far as they can. Madeline and Reem dive deep into the water to adjust and collect the fishing net, before handing it to Kayed to haul into the boat. They repeat these motions the rest of the day.

Their journey doesn't end there. After fishing all day, they gather their daily bounty and sell it at a nearby tent that their father set up. Ms. Kullab says that they sometimes aren't lucky enough to sell the full load so she takes the leftovers home and cooks them for her family.

Ms. Kullab considers herself an expert swimmer and merchant, estimating their daily catch at about 3 kilograms of fish, bringing her family a profit of 30 NIS (about \$8).

Her brother Reem can't wait to get older so that he can find a good job that would allow his sisters to quit this exhausting work. He says at first he felt ashamed of his sisters and couldn't handle well society mocking them, but then he adjusted to the situation. He says he is very proud of his sisters now, since they aren't doing anything wrong, not breaking any law, or Islamic rule and that fishing has brought them closer together.

Ms. Kullab's father Mohammed Kullab, 52, says he comes from a family that has been working as fishermen for many decades. He says each day he experiences mixed feelings of anger, pain, frustration, depression and inability, when he sees his young children straining themselves just to sustain their family.

He says he had a fishing accident 10 years ago that left him semi-paralyzed. This is what led him to teach his children to swim and fish so they could fend for themselves.

"Education for my children was my foremost plan and priority but life forced

me to direct them towards fishing. I die everyday many times when I see my children go through hell just to help us stay alive," Mr. Kullab continues, with tears rolling down of his face.

The children sometimes work four hours a day and other times from sunrise till sunset. Reem works for a few hours in the early morning before heading to school, insisting on completing her studies. She shows off her high marks, sharing her secret wish of becoming a journalist to shed light on people's lives.

Asked if fishing has a good side, all three shockingly answer that they sometimes save people including children from drowning. "That makes our day," the three say in unison, flashing wide smiles.

The Kullab family is like the 850,000 other refugees in Gaza who depend on the aid of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). Sometimes they share food and aid among all these families and sometimes a small amount of money. Mr. Kullab says that either way it's never enough to support an entire family.

Muzayan Kullab, 50, is Madeline Kullab's mother. She says she wishes she had the chance to finish her education so she could work instead of her little children or that she wasn't too sick to work. Seeing her children work everyday hurts her heart, she explains.

The Kullab home is one floor that is made of bricks with a tiled roof. Inside there is a few mattresses strewn about here and there and a small place they call "kitchen" containing a few cooking utensils.

Hasan Seyam and Mohammed Hajooj are also at the house. They are both in their twenties and close family friends to the Kullabs.

Both men were fishermen at a young age and can relate to Ms. Kullab's troubles. They also suffered from this experience, saying they had to leave school and turn to fishing to provide for their families.

Both Seyam and Hajooj say they are proud of Ms. Kullab and her sister for fishing and helping their family.

"Fishing is a respectable job. It can be exhausting for a girl, but it's very honorable," they say.

Ms. Kullab's mother also works so she can share in the family responsibility, toiling on a very old rusted sewing machine.

"It's very exhausting and brings little money but at least I feel like I am doing something to help this struggling family," she remarks.

Big Ben ain't so big anymore

Saudi Arabia's new clock tower tries to shift time eastwards 'In the Name of Allah'.

By: Benjamin Joffe-Walt
The Media Line

One must feel special living in Greenwich, a district in south London. From the shores of Panama to the heights of Tibet, the world's seven billion inhabitants set their clocks, maps and handheld GPS devices in reference to you.

Greenwich has been the Prime Meridian of the World (Longitude 0°) since 1984. The Greenwich Meridian divides the earth's western and eastern hemispheres, and every place on earth is measured in terms of its distance east or west of the Greenwich Meridian.

For over 125 years, all the world's time zones have been listed in relation to Greenwich Mean Time (GMT), with Hawaii reduced to GMT -10, Los Angeles and Tijuana to GMT -8, Rio GMT -3, Western Europe GMT +1, West Africa and the Gulf GMT +3, China GMT +8, and so on.

The question is why?

GMT was originally set to guide British mariners in the 1800s. Over 125 years after it was officially adopted, couldn't the earth use a bit of a shakeup, or at least a subtle redesign?

At a certain point, one wonders why the 'center of world time' should be some geeky museum in south London?

The Saudis certainly think so. This week, a gaggle of foreign workers and engineers hoisted a gaudy, 151 foot clock with "In the Name of Allah" written on its face onto Mecca's new Abraj al-Bait Tower, also known as the Mecca Royal Clock Hotel Tower, set to be the world's second largest building right beside Mecca's Grand Mosque. At a height of over 2,000 feet, the Mecca clock will be over six times taller than London's famous clock, Big Ben.

Fitted with over two million LED lights and another 21,000 white and green lights at the top, the clock is set to flash five times a day to signal the Islamic call to prayer. Visibility is expected to be 19 miles.

Hardly about to miss a moment, officials in Islam's holiest city used the occasion of installing the world's largest ticking clock to call for the entire world to set time in relation to Arabia Standard Time,



which is three hours ahead of the current Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) standard, seen by some Muslims as a remnant of the colonial era.

Some might call that a long shot, but not according to Mohammed al-Arkubi, manager of the Fairmont hotel, build inside the tower complex.

"Putting Mecca time in the face of Greenwich Mean Time," he told The Telegraph. "This is the goal."

The international telling of time went atomic in the early 1970s, when a collection of atomic clocks all over the world began to be used to tell time.

While the time cannot be changed, switching the international point of reference in theory is possible, but it would require an international agreement.

"The thing about world time is it's a network of time," Sam Gresham, a spokesperson for the National Physical Laboratory, the UK's National Measurement Institute, told The Media Line. "We have two atomic clocks and that's put into a system of

atomic clocks around the world."

Dr. Christian Koch, Director of International Studies at the Gulf Research Center, said the effort to challenge GMT can be seen as one sign of an increasingly ambitious Saudi leadership.

"Saudi Arabia does want to play an important role in the region because it's an important power and the center of Islam," he told The Media Line. "But it's just an idea, nothing more. Whether it's something that will ever be thought about seriously is another story."

Set for completion in the fall of 2011, the Abraj Al-Bait Towers will host the tallest building in Saudi Arabia, the tallest and largest hotel in the world, and the largest floor area of any structure in the world.

Built by the Saudi Binladin Group, the complex will house some 100,000 people and feature a large prayer room capable of holding 10,000 worshippers.

The project is part of Saudi efforts to build facilities capable of hosting over 10 million pilgrims a year.

The road to food security

By: Kanayo F. Nwanze

Recently, I was on a road in the Southern Choma District of Zambia to meet with Rosemary Pisani, a smallholder farmer and mother of eight who struggled to feed her children prior to joining a farmer's cooperative to raise goats. Thanks to the cooperative and support from other farmers, she now has a thriving business and all of her children are in school.

On the way to meet her, I passed women walking through mud to the market with large loads of fruit and vegetables stacked on their heads. I imagined how I might be on my way to a very different rural community if the road we were on was paved and well maintained.

Often in Africa, the few paved roads that do exist are littered with potholes and lead to unpaved ones that are nearly impossible to navigate without a proper vehicle. Closer to farming communities, roads disappear entirely. This leaves rural areas, which have the potential to feed the more than one billion hungry people, cut off and isolated. In sub-Saharan Africa, almost 70 percent of all people living in rural areas live more than a 30-minute walk from the nearest maintained road.

Kofi Annan, Chairperson of the Board of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), has acknowledged this isolation: "The average African smallholder farmer swims alone. She has no insurance against erratic weather patterns, gets no subsidies, and has no access to credit. I say 'she' because the majority of small-scale farmers in Africa are women." Indeed, half of the world's smallholders are women, and we must keep in mind their punishing task of walking long lengths to get their produce to market.

At the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), we believe that farming, regardless of size

or scale, must be seen as a business, and smallholder farmers as small-scale business owners rather than poor people who need handouts. There is growing recognition that these smallholder farmers and their rural communities are a major part of the solution to food insecurity and poverty – but only if they have what they need to do their jobs.

The Green Revolution of the last century had a tremendous impact on agricultural yields and food production, transforming the lives of millions of people. Much of this success stemmed from infrastructure that was already in place. India's road density at the start of its Green Revolution in the 1970's was 388 kilometers per 1,000 square kilometres. This compares with 39 kilometers per 1,000 square kilometers in Ethiopia today and 71 per 1,000 in Senegal.

New roads bring other essential services to rural communities. In Ethiopia, only 2 percent of rural people have access to electricity, and telephone communication

is more or less absent. Researchers believe that this is because only 17 percent of rural communities in the country live within one mile of a paved road.

Together with poor infrastructure, many small farmers in Africa have insufficient access to productive assets, such as land, water, and new technologies. As a result, yields are generally too low to allow the millions of rural households to generate marketable surpluses. Even if smallholders are able to produce a surplus, their lack of access to downstream activities, such as processing and marketing, prevents them from selling it easily.

The cause of these missing, but vital, resources lies in the shameful neglect of agriculture in the past two decades. Both developed and developing countries – caught up in rapid economic expansion and technological development – got distracted. They turned off the tap to agriculture, leaving small farmers to rely on basic farming practices and on

government and donor handouts.

That tap must be turned back on. In IFAD's experience, working simply to double the income of a smallholder farmer who scrapes by on less than a dollar a day is poverty management, because at two dollars a day, he or she still remains poor. But supporting that smallholder in launching a farming business that could generate a five-fold increase in income amounts to poverty eradication.


If smallholder farmers are to be given the opportunity to become viable businesses, it is essential that they be connected to markets. Indeed, support for rural infrastructure – including last-mile roads, electrification, post-harvest facilities, support for agricultural associations and cooperatives, and access to land and irrigation facilities – is a crucial element in the value chain.

Each link in the value chain, from the smallholder to the local trade agents and agro-processors to regional and national markets, needs to be strengthened. We need to link food producers with the people who need their product through viable and well maintained infrastructure. In addition, we need to provide them with research and technology to ensure that they can grow the best-quality produce, and storage capabilities so that they can sell at peak prices.

If smallholder farmers have the basic infrastructure they need to get their goods to market, they will not only be able to feed themselves and their communities, but will contribute to wider food security. We just need to put the pavement down so that farmers like those I saw in Zambia can more easily make their way on the road to food security.

Kanayo F. Nwanze is President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development.

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COUNTERPART
Responsive Governance Project (RGP)
Vacancy Announcement

Counterpart International is looking to hire Yemen national staff for Deputy Chief of Party in Yemen. Expedited Start Date: October 1st.

Founded in 1965, Counterpart International is a diverse, non-profit, international development organization dedicated to helping people in need in the areas of civil society, food security, private enterprise, environmental resource management, humanitarian relief, and healthcare. Counterpart does this by building the capacity of local partner nongovernmental organizations, lenders, businesses, governments and other institutions to solve their own self-defined economic, ecological, political, and social problems in ways that are sustainable, practical, and independent. Counterpart International implementing The Yemen Responsive Governance Project (RGP) which is a USAID-funded three year project that works to strengthen government institutions and improve the delivery of public services while encouraging more citizen participation in the political process.

ROUTES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Program Management and Development:

- Support the CDP and RGP staff in the development and implementation of program strategies and work plans.
- Manage the day-to-day implementation of program activities in coordination with international and local implementing partners.
- Identify program expansion and collaboration opportunities and participate in program development, local recruitment, partner identification and other duties as required.

Capacity Building

- Identify capacity building needs of the RGP program team and develop a capacity building plan.
- Oversee capacity building activities for local civil society organizations and community based organizations in the areas of organizational development, advocacy, policy analysis and negotiation skill-building.

Communications/Reporting

- Ensure quality program reporting to Counterpart HQ and USAID.
- Produce success stories, case studies, web-publications and other relevant materials as needed for reporting and communications.
- Represent Counterpart at external events with stakeholders, including: beneficiaries, partner organizations, donors, and government representatives.
- Document program methodologies, best practices and lessons learned.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Ensure high quality project monitoring and evaluation; work closely with MSE staff to monitor program outputs against the Program Monitoring and Evaluation Plan.
- Oversee the work of Monitoring and Evaluation staff to produce qualitative and quantitative reports for Counterpart's Management Information System.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Minimum of 5 years experience working on one or more of the following: international good governance; institutional capacity building; or advocacy development programs
- A Masters Degree in International Development, Political Science, Public Policy or a similar field.
- Previous USAID-funded program experience, preferably in the Middle East.
- Previous work experience in Yemen and a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities in the country.
- Technical areas of expertise including policy formulation, implementing transparency initiatives, grant making, civil society promotion, and training program design.
- Excellent public speaking and writing skills in English.
- Fluency in Arabic.

TO APPLY: Individuals interested in working with Counterpart International on this project, should send their resumes and salary requirements to RGP@counterpart.org. Deadline for the application is Sept 8th, 2010.

Yemeni photographer Ibi Ibrahim to the Yemen Times: “Love has no religious or political affiliation.”



Photo by Ibi Ibrahim



Photo by Ibi Ibrahim



Photo by Ibi Ibrahim

Ibi Ibrahim, 23, grew up in the Middle East but now works as a photographer in New York. His latest portraits, exhibited last month in the US, provoke a lively debate about identity in the context of the social and religious norms of the Islamic world. The Yemen Times interviewed him about his work, including his latest collection of thought-provoking black and white photographs, and the concepts that they challenge.

**Interviewed by Nadine Ibrahim
For the Yemen Times**

Where did you grow up? How did this influence your work?

I grew up in the Middle East between Yemen, Emirates, Iraq and Libya. It influenced my work tremendously. Experiencing the same Islamic culture from different perspectives and opinions was quite an experience but I only realized so when I became an adult. It made me thankful for the life I lived and for the obstacles I overcame.

What inspired you to be a photographer?

Photography used to be my escape from reality. I was going through difficult times in my life but taking photos made it all better. I loved showing the beauty and the power of the human face; that was the subject of my first exhibit in October of 2009. I wasn't sure if there were artists out there who made similar art to what I am making now but then I discovered Shirin Neshat who became one of my biggest inspirations alongside Henri Cartier-Bresson.

A lot of your photographs seem to be choreographed. To what extent do you plan the setting, costumes and poses in your shoots?

I put tremendous effort into every photo shoot. Prior to the photo shoot date, I research the subject; though for the most part, I use my own insight as a young Arab to project an assimilation of stories and events that young people might encounter. The clothing is carefully selected to ensure generalization in order to make the character relatable. Once research is done, I write down all the details in my notebook and move on to the next step – the photo shoot.

Do you use models in your photos? Are the people you photograph Muslims? If not, what's their religion?

I mostly use models. However, my models must be familiar with Muslim culture and know what I expect of them. If a model is unfamiliar with the story I am trying to tell, I thoroughly explain the emotions I want them to physically portray in each photo.

It would be amazing to have people with real stories to come forward for photography. I would like to encourage anyone out there who wants to be photographed or just share their stories with me to email me at info@ibrahim.com.

Unfortunately I don't release personal information, such as the religious affiliation of my models. A model's religious beliefs do not necessarily enhance my photos.

You previously exposed your work in Yemen. To what extent does the work that you are now showing in the US differ from your previous photographs?

Everything has transformed, including the ideological differences between my background and my life in New York. My current focus comes from being raised in the Middle East but moreover, it comes from living in Yemen again after being abroad for many years. I spent five months in Yemen as a journalist in 2009 before I made the decision to move to the United States. I could no longer handle the oppression and the lack of progressive culture in Yemen. Seeing the condition of the society made me sad, sad for my country and sad for my people.

Why did you choose to exhibit your work in the US and not in Yemen?

As an artist, I wish to exhibit my work all around the world. Would Yemeni

art institutions welcome my work? We shall see.

I will be exhibiting in Yemen under the auspices of the German House in December of 2010. My show in December is a group exhibition put together by the German House and I'm pleased for our second collaboration; this time with my new concept and ideology. I decided to participate after the German House assured there would be no censorship. I will be exhibiting a series inspired by a Yemeni wife; the sacrifices she made every day as a good Muslim wife and the outcome of her efforts.

Have you ever exhibited in other Arab countries besides Yemen?

I have had meetings with some galleries from Lebanon, Syria, UAE and India. Some have welcomed my work tremendously while others found it to be too controversial. Nothing is confirmed at the moment. I am very pleased to even be appreciated and approached by so many prestigious galleries.

On your profile on your website, you say that you are sharing the challenges to growing up in a conservative Muslim household, vis-a-vis sexuality, identity and individuality. In your “Fatima” collection, to what extent is the photo in which it looks like two girls kissing a comment on sexuality? Why?

I create those elements because I want to create open and honest dialogue between adults and young adults on issues like identity and psychological individuality. In the Middle East, those topics are never acknowledged and in my opinion, that is the mistake we are committing. Acknowledging these issues doesn't mean accepting them. Some issues are to be discussed and accepted while some aren't to be accepted – the point here is to open

the dialogue. We sometimes fall into illusions that lead us into a wrong or a difficult path because we had no guidance, no one to speak to, no dialogue to begin with. Ignoring these issues now will produce long-term problems.

When young adults are ignorant of these issues they may make poor decisions. Identity, sexuality and individuality are important concepts and they can cause young people to be emotionally lost in his or her own world.

My purpose here is to share those stories and let the viewer interpret it on their own way. Fatima is not a story about two girls kissing – it's a story about a Muslim wife who served her husband to the extreme yet he abused her emotionally and physically. Fatima is a woman with emotions and feelings who needed to feel loved and appreciated. No matter what kind of love that is, it was better than being abused by her husband.

In your ‘Love only Knows Love’ collection there's a couple that seems in love. The man is wearing a Jewish skull cap and has a tattoo saying ‘Intifada’ on his arm and the girl is wearing black Islamic clothes. Are the subjects really respectively Jewish and Muslim? Are they a real-life couple? If he is Jewish, why is he shown as having a Palestinian tattoo on his forearm and is the tattoo real? What does this say about Jewish-Muslim relations?

The tattoo was real and it was a source of artistic inspiration for me. To me the tattoo is a symbol of love and it serves as a reminder that love has no religious or political affiliation. The models were a couple during the time of the shoot. Again, I can't divulge the religious affiliation of my models. It's their personal information.

It was an absolute shame when the world witnessed Yemeni Jews leaving their own land because they no longer felt safe in their homeland. If one does not feel safe in his own country, what can he call home? The idea here was to forget our political and religious affiliations and love each other. As I said, love has no religious or political affiliation. Love only knows love.

In the same collection you show the girl with bare arms and shoulders holding her tattooed lover without a

t-shirt. Considering that relationships before marriage and tattoos are forbidden in Islam, this could shock conservative Muslims. Is one of your aims to shock? If so, why? What ideas are you challenging?

In the relatively socially conservative Yemeni and Arab society, simple things like getting a tattoo are forbidden. Sometimes my intentions are to shock my audience into reevaluating the social conservatism of Yemen and other parts of the world. I do this in hope of changing traditions that are forbidden and even saving the lives of Muslims who are killed for breaking Islamic taboos. For instance, a high ranking member of the Taliban came to America and enrolled at Yale University. In the past he supervised and participated in shooting women who wore nail polish. Now he is sitting in a classroom taking advantage of one of the most prestigious universities on the planet. When I read about shooting women for that reason, it motivates me more to create dialogue and affect change in the Arab world. The vehicle I use is visual art.

I challenge the state of denial. We need to break the protective shell of isolation - we as a society need to acknowledge that and work on how to create happiness and harmony without oppression and we have to stop running away from facing the difficult situations.

In your collection “Habibi Habibiti,” there's a picture of a man walking away from the praying rug and another that shows the same man with a woman staring at the Quran with doubts. What was the main idea here?

It is always interesting and exciting to me when people share their interpretations of my work. The idea I aimed to convey in that collection was not a man walking away from the praying rug and the woman looking doubtful. I enjoy hearing various interpretations of my work. I create my art so that each interpretation is valid. There is no singular correct interpretation of my work. When I worked on this collection I intended the man and woman to be looking at the Quran with wonders and questions. “Habibi Habibiti” is a story of love mixed with obstacles. For the couple in this collection, religion was one of the obstacles that

challenged their love. How? I leave that up to each person to interpret.

In your opinion, what is a good Muslim?

I am not a sheikh, I am just a visual artist, I capture moments and events and share them to the world. Why should the identity of a good Muslim be described in the first place? Identity is not a uniform. Also, can you really trust a sheikh? One of my inspirations for an upcoming story is a boy who was sexually abused by a sheikh. This sheikh still enjoys a reputation of greatness in the Middle East. Do you really trust a sheikh who once abused a minor? In this case the difference between appearance and reality obscures who is a good Muslim.

Why are all your pictures in black and white? Why not colored?

Ted Grant once said “When you photograph people in color, you photograph their clothes. But when you photograph people in black & white, you photograph their souls.”

What is the main idea that you wish to communicate through your work?

It is my aspiration that Yemeni culture becomes less fearful of change and participates in the global marketplace of ideas. I hope Yemeni youth follow their dreams and cultivate an open exchange of ideas. Visual art is one way for this dialogue to occur.

In the beginning did society accept your art, or did you encounter obstacles?

I feel that there will always be obstacles and challenges especially in the Yemeni society. Considering that New York is the home of my art, I am facing no obstacles or challenges but only competition. New York is an art planet. Talented artists in all mediums come to New York from all over the world to be discovered so the competition here is at its highest but if you know me, you would know how much I love competing. I live for the thrill. I am just getting started.

4U

To see Ibi Ibrahim's photos, visit
www.ibrahim.com

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Hiding illness from others

By: Ismail Sheikh Abdoh
For the Yemen Times

Almost none of the patients of Dr. Abualgaith Alkholani, a urology consultant, admit to their families that they have any kind of sexually transmitted disease, especially not the men. Sexually transmitted diseases are only some of the medical conditions that people keep secret because they are afraid of being judged by society.

For some sexually transmitted diseases, such as AIDS, telling society is particularly difficult. Men and women who are HIV positive fear telling those around them that they are ill because of the strong social stigma attached to the disease and general lack of awareness about it.

Abu Muhannad, 33, has been HIV positive since 2006. Seeing how being HIV positive has changed interactions with those around him, he decided to help others with sexually transmitted diseases, including people who are HIV positive, to survive and continue with their lives.

When his wife was in labor with her first child, he took her to hospital and they admitted her to the maternity section. Doctors were in a rush to help her because she was in pain so he forgot to mention that she was HIV positive. When he did, they threw him and his wife out of the hospital.

His wife was bleeding. Despite being scared of the reaction of the staff in a second hospital, he told them at the last minute that she was HIV positive. They kicked them out of that hospital too.

“My wife was bleeding and they didn’t have any mercy for her situation,” said Muhannad, “Some doctors’ reactions were something I couldn’t even imagine.”

Finally, she gave birth in a third hospital because he didn’t tell the staff of her HIV status.

People who test positive for HIV hide their illness from others to continue leading a normal life, according to Abu Muhannad. As with most sexually transmitted diseases, patients fear that society will judge them. One of the most common beliefs in society is that whoever tests positive for such diseases



This poster reads: “Being HIV positive does not prevent a person from his or her natural rights (job, health care, and education)” Despite campaigns like these, people who are HIV positive in Yemen are still afraid to tell society, including medical staff, that they are ill.

must have done something bad in his or her early life.

Public awareness programs are essential to help society understand how these diseases are transmitted. Abu Muhannad and other activists have held workshops to spread awareness about how to treat people who are HIV positive.

Through these campaigns, he has discovered that some people don’t want to change their way of thinking, no matter how many workshops they attend.

There was an imam who said that all people who are HIV positive must be killed at once, regardless of how old they are and how they caught the disease. That was after a workshop that Muhannad had organized to raise awareness about the issue.

In the case of HIV, the overwhelming fear is that the disease is contagious. But even conditions that are not contagious cause people to be irrationally afraid.

Khalid Qaid, 33, has vitiligo, a skin disorder that causes spots of lighter color

skin on the body. Although there is still no cure, the condition is not contagious as it is occurs when the cells responsible for skin pigmentation cease to function.

Qaid is living with vitiligo and sometimes forgets that he has it.

“I accept having vitiligo, but what I cannot accept is people repeatedly asking questions about it and staring at me,” he said.

Vitiligo involves no physical pain, but comes with deep psychological pain. It is not contagious, but people always think otherwise, according to Qaid. Hiding the spots is the tricky part. Qaid has to shave everyday to be able to cover the spots on his face and neck with a cream.

“I’m living with it, it’s simply who I am,” he told the Yemen Times.

According to Dr. Obad Saleh Abulohom, a consultant dermatologist, people are unaware about what skin diseases mean and so are scared of them.

To avoid being judged by society, men like Qaid and Abu Muhannad hide their diseases from others – either by

not telling them or by covering up the symptoms.

But others hide illness for different reasons. They choose to withhold the truth from their loved ones to protect them, according to Dr. Ahmed A. Shamlan, a consultant oncologist and director of the Al-Amal Specialized Oncology Center in Sana’a.

People feel that they cannot tell their loved ones that they have been diagnosed with cancer, especially if they are elderly, because it will cause worry.

“Fathers lie to their sons and sons lie to their fathers just to keep their spirits up enough to fight it,” Dr. Shamlan said.

When people hear “cancer” they immediately think of death, he explained. A lack of awareness about cancer makes people fear it, and this is fueled by the media that make people too scared to go to the doctor for a simple check up, according to Dr. Shamlan.

If a patient’s spirits are up, then doctors can treat the disease with much more focus and efficiency, he explained.

A healthy mouth for a healthy body

Dr. Radia Ishaq is director of the National Oral Health Program and the focal point for the program at the World Health Organization and the United Nations’ Children’s Fund. She is a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council’s oral health community. Nadine Ibrahim of the Yemen Times interviewed the oral health expert about the importance of regularly brushing one’s teeth, visiting a dentist, and educating the public about oral health.

Interviewed by Nadine Ibrahim
For the Yemen Times

Looking after one’s teeth is important because oral health is linked to the health of the rest of the body, according to Dr. Radia Ishaq.

Oral health is crucial because bacteria and germs can transfer from the mouth directly to other parts of the body. Cardiovascular diseases, rheumatism in the joints, infections in the body, and even psychological well-being are related to oral health.

There are many oral health conditions that can affect general health. For example, bacterial processes can damage hard tooth structures, and this is common in Yemen. Chewing qat, ingesting chewing tobacco and smoking can also lead to gum inflammation.

Gingivitis is caused by bacterial plaque accumulating on the teeth, infecting the gums causing their inflammation, and destroying the tissue that support the teeth. The condition causes bleeding around the gums and sensitivity in the teeth. In the absence of treatment, gingivitis can proceed to periodontitis, which is a severe gum inflammation.

If a patient has gingivitis or periodontitis, it can affect the rest of the body. The blood from bleeding gums descends into the stomach. The bacteria and germs inherent in periodontitis and gingivitis may transfer to the rest of the body causing secondary infections.

The cause of gum infections is poor oral hygiene. The way to avoid them is to brush one’s teeth regularly as well as floss, and to visit the dentist every six

months to remove any bacterial plaque that has turned into calculus, or tartar, between the teeth.

“Do not eat hot spices when you have gingivitis, because it may lead to periodontitis,” she said.

There are many specialized toothpastes on the market according to Dr. Ishaq. Although she would not recommend one in particular, she said that Pronamel from Sensodyne is very good at keeping the outer surfaces of the teeth clean.

“Toothpaste with fluoride is highly recommended for our children, because in our country our water lacks fluoride,” she told the Yemen Times. “I would recommend toothpaste with fluoride for the ages 5 to 15.”

When teeth lack fluoride they become fragile and decay very quickly. Using fluoride toothpaste will prevent tooth decay developing too fast.

“Parents must be aware that using a toothbrush every day, especially before going to bed at night, is a very important rule for their children at home,” she said. “I think parents should teach their children how to use a toothbrush and toothpaste, as well as when to use it.”

Toothbrushes must be chosen as carefully as the toothpaste. If the toothbrush is too hard, it can cause bleeding and problems in the mouth.

After choosing a good toothbrush and toothpaste, it is important to brush one’s teeth in the correct way to avoid problems in the mouth. It is the role of the dentist and the dental assistant in the clinic or hospital to teach children to do this, but parents and school teachers are important here too.

All this information is less easily

disseminated in rural areas where there are no dentists. This is why, Dr. Ishaq told the Yemen Times, the role of education is crucial. The oral health program at the Ministry of Health plays a helpful role in this. Through television and pamphlets, they teach people how to take care of their teeth, how to brush them, and how to choose good toothpaste.

“This is a problem in our country,” she said. “We have a lack of awareness in oral health diseases.”

You require a dentist to remove calculus from your teeth, but if you brush your teeth well from the beginning then you can avoid complications. If there is an information center for oral hygiene in your area, then they can teach you how to take care of your teeth.

“People in our country, please take care of your teeth, go to the dentist every 6 months, use a toothbrush and toothpaste properly, teach your children how to use a toothbrush and toothpaste!” she said.

Dr. Ishaq suggests that you don’t give your children too many sweets, and try to give them a balanced diet to keep their teeth and body healthy. A balanced diet includes eating vegetables, eggs, milk, and fruit rather than sweets. Also avoid soft drinks and any other sweet drinks apart from fresh fruit juice, as they contain a lot of sugar and can lead to holes in your teeth.

The Ministry of Health and the National Oral Health Program have a comprehensive plan to spread information about good oral hygiene in Yemen, she said.

“We began last year in March with



Not brushing one’s teeth can lead to periodontal or gum disease, which can in turn affect the rest of the body.

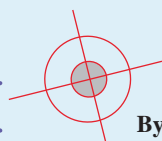
the Gulf people, by making oral health information and education [available] for all the community, especially children in schools, in hospitals, in motherhood and childhood centers - also [for those with] special needs like the blind. We try to reach all the community to give information and education about oral health, so that we reach [by] 2020 a generation free of cavities in their teeth and free from oral diseases.”

The awareness campaign has yielded positive results. Dr. Ishaq said that she and her team noticed that people have responded to the campaign on oral health.

“People are starting in our country to know how to make their teeth healthy,” she said.

Yemeni children have started to know how to stay away from candy and sweets, and mothers have started to look out for their children and to show them how to brush their teeth before they sleep. People with special needs also understand how to keep their teeth healthy.

HEALTH WATCH



By: Dr. Siva



This weekly column is to disseminate health information to the readers in Yemen and outside. Dr. Siva is currently working at Aden Refinery Company Hospital. Life style diseases and cancer prevention are his special interests. Complementary medicine and naturopathy are his passions.

Ramadan and health - II

“The children of Adam fill no vessel worse than their stomach. Sufficient for him is a few morsels to keep his back straight. If he must eat more, then a third should be for his food, a third for his drink, and a third left for air”. (Sunan al-Tirmidhi)

Ramadan has begun. My kind-hearted neighbor requested my wife not to cook anything at night all through Ramadan as she would send us ‘fator’ every evening. Work is light at the hospital as many patients refrain from visiting the hospital. However, my colleagues who do nightshifts complain that they are overburdened with patients having stomach problems.

Food has a great significance in Islam. It is associated with one’s relationship with God. Chapter 20 verse 89 of the Quran states: “eat of the good and wholesome things that We have provided for your sustenance, but indulge in no excess therein.”

The physical body is a gift from God; it is given to humans as an amana (trust) to take care of for a fixed period. How much food is consumed and the choice of food has a direct impact on the physical and spiritual well-being of the person.

The food that you consume affects your behavior and personality. Wholesome, natural and healthy food assists the development of a good personality. Over-eating has long been frowned upon in Islam as it can cause sluggishness, hamper spiritual growth and increase physical ailments.

Islam sees health and ‘well-being’ as much more than just bodily health: well-being or tranquility requires a strong relationship with one’s spirituality, good physical health, mental happiness, a sense of purpose and good character and relationships. Islam makes a strong connection between food and worship and teaches that all forms of worship have a deeper purpose and impact and contribute in some way to individual and social well-being.

Spirituality and food

Fasting during Ramadan can improve a person’s health. However, if the correct diet is not followed – it can do damage to our health! The deciding factor is not the fast itself, but rather what is consumed in the non-fasting hours. To achieve the fullest benefit from fasting, one should spare a great deal of thought to the type and quantity of food they will consume during the blessed month. Overeating not only can harm the body but it can also interfere with a person’s spiritual growth during the month. A diet that has less than a normal amount of food but is sufficiently balanced will keep a person healthy and active during the month of Ramadan.

The diet should be simple and not differ too much from one’s normal everyday diet. It should contain foods which are nutritious and not a variety of items which can be heavy on the stomach.

Complex carbohydrates are foods that will help release energy slowly during the long hours of fasting. Complex carbohydrates are found in grains and seeds, like barley, wheat, oats, millets, semolina, beans, lentils, whole-meal flour, basmati rice, etc. Fiber-rich foods are also digested slowly and include bran, cereals, whole wheat, grains and seeds, potatoes with the skin, vegetables such as green beans and almost all fruit including apricots, prunes, figs, etc.

The following foods are to be avoided during fasting: heavily-processed, fast burning foods that contain refined carbohydrates in the form of sugar, white flour, etc. as well as of course, too much fatty foods (e.g. cakes, biscuits, chocolates and sweets, and halawa). It may also be worth avoiding the caffeine content in drinks such as tea, coffee and cola. (Caffeine is a diuretic and stimulates faster water loss through urination).

Foods to avoid	Healthy/ Alternative foods
Deep fried foods e.g. pakoras, samosas, bagiyas, fried dumplings	Whole grains e.g. chick peas plain, or with potato in yogurt with different Indian spices, samosas baked instead of fried and boiled dumplings
High sugar / high fat foods e.g. basboosa, lokmat-el-khadi & Indian sweets such as ghulab jamun, rasgulla, balushahi, baklava etc	Milk-based sweets and puddings such as labaniya, rasmalai, kunafa, baklava, bent al sahn, barfee etc
High fat cooked foods such as parhattas, oily curries, greasy pastries	Alternate with chapattis made without oil, baked or grilled meat and chicken. Try to make pastry at home and use a single layer
Cooking methods to avoid	Alternative cooking methods
Deep frying	Shallow frying, usually there is very little difference in taste
Frying	Grilling or baking is healthier and helps retain the taste and original flavor of the food, especially chicken and fish
Curries with excessive oil	Try to bring down the oil used gradually day by day to 3-4 table-spoons. Use more onions and tomatoes in the bulk of the curry.

Suhoor, the pre-dawn meal should be a wholesome, moderate meal that is filling and provides enough energy for many hours. It is therefore important to include slowly-digesting foods in the suhoor.

Iftar is the meal which breaks the day’s fast. This meal can include dates. Dates will provide a refreshing burst of much needed energy.

Fruit juices also have a similar, revitalizing effect. The meal should remain a meal and not become a feast!

Try to minimize the rich, special dishes that traditionally celebrate the fast and keep to the advice included in the table above.

Many of the foods which are mentioned and encouraged are in the Holy Quran and the Sunna (the Prophetic traditions) also correspond to modern guidelines on a healthy diet and will help to maintain balanced, healthy meals in Ramadan. The most commonly consumed foods by Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) were milk, dates, lamb/mutton and oats. Healthy foods mentioned in the Holy Quran are fruit and vegetables such as olives, onions, cucumber, figs, dates, grapes as well as pulses such as lentils. The encouragement of fish can be seen in the fact that Islamic Law spares fish from any specific slaughter requirements, making it easy to incorporate fish in a meal.

Courtesy: My Muslim friends & Ramadan Health Guide

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“Don't hide in the corner”



YT photo by Abdullah Bamoshmoosh

By: Abdullah Bamoshmoosh
For the Yemen Times

Gassim Sharaffudin, 17, is a student in his second year of high school at the Yemen Modern School. Computer-lover, excellent English speaker, Gassim has got a great passion: poetry.

When did you start writing poems?

Well, I think I started writing poems when I started using Facebook, because I wanted to share stories, and as you know Facebook does not allow [you] to write more than a specified number of words. So I would try to be mysterious, to minimize the number of words, so that's how it started.

So this is the reason why you write in English instead of in your mother tongue, Arabic? I think the first reason I write in English is because I always want to improve my language skills. The second one is because I had access to more resources like dictionaries, English books, articles etc.

"Don't hide in the corner, get so high and fear no thriller, because once you know life is short and history is even longer, you'll carve your name in the hearts of your people."
—Gassim Sharaffudin

Did anybody, from teachers to relatives, help you develop your talent in poetry?

I think that, in poetry, it was more the events that happened around, like personal experiences, events that touched me, were what pushed me most. But in English itself, yes, I got help from family teachers, school.

What brought you to write such strong poems, like 'Don't hide in the corner'?

I wrote 'Don't hide in the corner' about two years ago. I was thinking about the importance of doing the right thing, without spending too much time worrying about the consequences of doing the right thing, because what matters most in the end is History, which is longer than a human life.

Have you ever entered a competition or been published?

I am working on publishing, and I used to write stories, and I took a creative writing class while I was in the US, and that helped me a lot with structures of stories, character development.

So your trip abroad helped you improve your skills?

It has, it has, and I truly recommend it for anyone to have this type of cultural exchange experience, be-

cause your English language will skyrocket, improving accents, words, speech and writing skills.

When have you been to the US?

I went there last year. It was in a scholarship program called "Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) Program."

How long did you stay?

It was about a ten month period.

Who is your model poet?

I don't know, but I think I have got no models. I have got my own style!

Now one last question. What is your advice to all Yemeni poets and writers who are trying to make their way in poetry or writing?

My advice is: the point is not whether you're a poet or a writer or not. The point is that writing is a skill you have to carry everywhere with you, and it's going to help you understand yourself, understand others and help others understand you as well. And the best way to improve it is not just think it's something set, but it is something you can develop, and once you are into it, it becomes a talent.

Thank you for your time!

It was my pleasure.

Every issue, this Ramadan, the Yemen Times will profile a young Yemeni with talent. If you are talented or know a young Yemeni who is, please send an email to youngtalents.yt@gmail.com

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