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EDUCATION
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Government and Houthi delegations return to Sana’a

By: Mohammad Bin Sallam

SANA’A, Sept. 1 — The government and the Houthi delegations arrived in Sana’a on a Qatari airplane on Tuesday after having signed the Second Doha agreement that consisted of 22 articles.

The Qatari News Agency reported the new agreement on Sunday. The agreement is based on the six point plan of the First Doha agreement in 2008.

According to sources, President Saleh received them in the presidential palace where he discussed with them the details of the agreement with the Houthis.

The Houthis delegation went to Sa’ada in the company of the Qatari Exterior Minister, Saif Bin Mokaddam Al-Bo’een, on a special helicopter.

Saudi Arabia threatens to withdraw financial support from Yemeni tribes

The Hadeeth Al-Madana newspaper reported that the Saudi crown prince, Sultan Bin Abdulaziz, threatened to stop money that flows from Saudi Ara-

bia to Yemeni tribes for security. The newspaper said that the threat may mean that the prince is alluding that Saudi Arabia may be inclined to redirect the money to the Houthis as they are currently the stronger.

Last week, tribal men from the Osaimat tribes in Amran attacked Hashimite people in the Hawt area. The Hashimites are believed to be descendants of the Prophet Mohammad. The newspaper said that the attack may be interpreted as meaning the tribal men hope that the Qatari mediation fails.

The Houthis information office denied the accusation by the Ministry of Interior that the Houthis killed Sheikh Ma’een Al-Awgari last month.

The Houthis said that the sheikh was killed in an area controlled by Yemeni security forces and that he may have been killed due to disputes between him and other tribes in the same area. They said that it is known that the Al-Safra area, where the sheikh was killed, is known for revenge attacks and disputes throughout the past years in which many people have been killed.

Member of the Yemeni parliament,

Faez Al-Awgari, accused the Houthis of killing his brother and promised revenge against them, according to a statement on the News Yemen website. Al-Awgari said that Houthis gunmen ambushed his brother Ma’een, 30, when he was on his way to his house.

Deputy of Political Security kidnapped

The Deputy of Political Security was kidnapped last Thursday in Sa’ada by unknown gunmen when he was on his way to perform prayers at the mosque.

According to media outlets, a jeep driven by gunmen stopped and sprayed something on his face to render him unconscious and drove him to an unknown location. According to sources, the car’s number plate was covered.

The General Secretary of the Local Council in Sa’ada, Mohammad Al-Imad, said that Al-Qaeda might be behind the kidnapping.

According to the News Yemen website, the kidnappers demanded that two detainees who were arrested two months ago be released in exchange for releasing the deputy.

Continued on page 2



Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh speaks in Sana’a on July 31, 2010 when he renewed his call for peace to the rebels, calling on them to comply with the Feb. 11 ceasefire deal and stressing that the state’s choice is peace.

“Bone ache” and depression - the lot of child brides

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‘Sixth of Ramadan Alliance’ to support detained journalists

By: Khaled Al-Hilaly

SANA’A, Sept. 1 — Dozens of human rights activists and journalists from 11 Yemeni non-governmental organizations announced on Monday an alliance to defend the arbitrarily detained journalist Abdulalah Haidar Shayi’ and cartoonist Kamal Sharaf.

The alliance has called itself the “6th of Ramadan Alliance” because Shayi’ was detained on this date.

The alliance slogan is “Freedom for Shayi’ and Sharaf.” It was announced on the occasion of the International Day of the Disappeared on August 30.

Dozens of human rights activists and journalists from the alliance met at the headquarters of the Yemeni Journalist Syndicate and went together to hold a sit-in on Tuesday in front of the National security headquarters in Sana’a. They protested against the continued arbitrary detention of Shayi’ and Sharaf by the National Security and the delay to refer the detainees to the Specialized Criminal Court (SCC) upon its request.

The protesters expressed their concern over the possibility of both detainees being tortured, adding that the delay in allowing their visit may only add time for any evidence of torture on detainees’ bodies to disappear.

Protesters were harassed by the police and prevented from coming closer

to the National Security gate in old Sana’a city, according to a press release from the 6th Ramadan Alliance.

Rahma Hujira, head of Media Women Forum, and journalist Abdulkareem Al-Khiwanithe were allowed to meet the National Security’s deputy manager for financial and administrative affairs, Abdul Malik Muthahar on behalf of the protesters.

“Muthahar’s response was like the previous replies-not satisfactory or convincing,” stated the alliance in a press release. “It reflexes the National Security’s carelessness toward human rights, civic action and peaceful protest. It contributes directly to discredit Yemen’s reputation abroad.”

The families of Shayi’ and Sharaf and a number of civil society organizations requested to know where they were being held and to be allowed to visit them. On August 23, the SCC announced that it had been responsible for ordering the arrest of Shayi’ and Sharaf. It also declared that National Security had detained them, without explaining the reasons behind their detention.

The Arabic Network for Human Rights Information (ANHRI) called on the Yemeni government to immediately release Shayi’ and Sharaf.

ANHRI said in press release last week that the Yemeni government should stop the abuses of the National

Security against human rights, including the right to freedom of expression.

If the government is really keen on the safety of the country, they should take positive steps to end the tension between all factions of Yemeni society, according ANHRI.

Human rights activists and journalists denounced the government’s abduction of Shayi’ early last month and its linking him with Al-Qaeda because of his interviews with some of its members and his appearance on Al-Jazeera, where he spoke about Islamist groups.

Reporter and cartoonist Kamal Sharaf was detained in Sana’a only one day after Shayi’ was detained. He is a close friend of Shayi’ and was the only eye-witness present during the July kidnapping of Shayi’ by intelligence.

The alliance included the 11 organizations: the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate, the National Organization for Defending Rights and Freedoms (HOOD), the Arab Sisters Forum for Human Rights, the Media Women Forum, Yemeni Organization for Defending Rights and Freedoms, Women Journalists Without Chains, the Hewar Foundation for Democratic Development, the Prisoner Organization, the Yemen Center for Human Rights, the Women Organization for Defending Detainees and Binibserkom Anti-Corruption Initiative.

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Gun culture takes its toll on boys

DHAMAR, August 29 (IRIN) — Many Yemeni children who accidentally killed their loved ones while playing with guns kept at home, flee immediately after the incident fearing punishment from their fathers. They become separated from their families and drop out of school.

Aref Qied, 15, from Zubaid Uzla vil-lage in Ans District, in the central gov-ernorate of Dhamar, has not returned home since he shot dead his mother in mid-November 2009 while playing with his family’s AK-47 assault rifle. “If I re-turn, my father will kill me,” Aref told IRIN.

Working in a `qat` farm in the eastern part of Dhamar, some 80km from his family home, Aref said he still grieves over the incident with his mother. “I can tolerate separation, but not returning home. How can I meet my father and relatives after the death of my Mum,” he said.

His father Qied, 55, however, wants him to come home. “What happened to his mother is a matter of destiny. I want Aref to return home to complete his education. He was attending classes in grade eight,” Aref’s father told IRIN.

“I will not beat him. I am partially to blame for the incident as I always allow my children to carry guns,” he said. Misuse of firearms is a commonplace

phenomenon in Yemen where many citi-zens keep weapons at home, particularly in rural areas, and gun culture is deeply rooted in Yemeni society.

According to Abdul-Rahman al-Marwani, chairman of Dar Al-Salam Organization, a local NGO tackling the culture of violence, at least 1,200 indi-viduals annually become victims of gun misuse - both deaths and injuries.

Mohammed Hamoud, a public re-lations officer with the Modern Ahli Hospital in the capital Sanaa, said the hospital receives at least one gunshot victim every month. “Victims taken to the hospital usually come from rural ar-eas around Sanaa,” he said.

Taking the life of a brother, sister or a friend – or just witnessing the incident – can be deeply traumatizing.

“In some of the cases, both the victim and the perpetrator are admitted to the hospital for treatment. The latter usually comes in a state of unconsciousness. Many perpetrators develop complicated psychological disorders up to the extent of being incurable,” Hamoud said.

According to Derek Miller, author of a small arms survey in Yemen in May 2003, in contemporary Yemen small arms are regularly carried by males from the age of 15.

“This means that young men often

own or carry fully automatic assault rifles, though some prefer [single-shot rifles] for various reasons including price, range, accuracy, and symbolic value,” he said.

No rehabilitation programmes for minors

Asmaa al-Masri, a sociologist at Dhamar University, told IRIN that Yemen lacks programmes for the rehabilitation and reintegration of hundreds of teenagers who separate from their families after shooting incidents. “They join the la-bour market in order to earn a living after being separated,” he said. “Many drop out of school at an early age.”

“These kind of programmes are nec-essary for the reintegration of separated kids. They should include local and regional experts who need to work on eliminating the impact of arms misuse in our armed society,” she said.

“Awareness programmes are needed to educate families on how to deal with their separated kids and convince them to return home,” she said. “Families possessing arms need to be educated on the risks of making guns accessible to their children or allowing them to bear guns.”

A survey carried out in 2009 by Ab-dussalam al-Hakimi, assistant profes-



A 2003 small arms survey in Yemen indicated that in contemporary Yemen small arms are regularly carried by males from the age of 15.

sor of sociology at Taiz University, concluded there were 9.9 million small arms in Yemen, including 1.5 million in the hands of government security and military forces, and 30,000 available

in arms shops. The rest were owned by individuals, with 60 percent of families surveyed saying they had weapons in the home. The government has taken several

steps to eliminate the arms trade and control the use of personal weapons in big cities - beginning with the 1992-dat-ed Arms Bearing and Organization Law in 2007 - but the trade still exists.

Ruling party claims credit for educational progress in Yemen

By: Nadia Al-Sakkaf

TAIZ, Sept. 1 — The political party that has been ruling Yemen since its es-tablishment 28 years ago, the General People’s Congress, celebrated its anni-versary in Taiz on Tuesday August 30 with a seminar on education.

“The political structure of this party was formally created 28 years ago with a focus on education. This is why we decided it was more apt to celebrate this by reviewing our success in the educa-tion sector in Taiz, which is the origin of culture in our country,” said Sheikh Jaber Abdullah Ghaleb, head of the GPC in Taiz.

In his opening statement he said that the GPC’s institutional structure places importance on education as a basis for development and on building the Yeme-ni character and cultural heritage.

The seminar focused on three sub-jects: mainstream education, vocational and technical education and higher edu-cation. Presenters on the topics were members of the GPC and based their papers on comparing statistics from the 80s to those of today.

“The number of schools in Taiz alone has increased to 7,191, receiv-ing 1,653,962 students being taught by 50,004 teachers,” said Prof. Moham-

med Tareh in his paper on mainstream education.

On vocational education Mansour Raweh, head of trainers at the Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational Training, said that in Taiz governorate there had been an increase in the num-ber of students in this area to 6,395 pu-pils in 31 disciplines, an achievement which he credited to the GPC.

Nationwide, technical education and training institutes had witnessed an in-crease in their number to reach 67 insti-tutes containing 25,098 students.

Prof Sultan Al-Mikhlafti talked about progress in higher education, praising the deliberate actions taken by the rul-ing party to improve higher education in Yemen in terms of the number of uni-versities and the quality of higher educa-tion. Today there are 14 public universi-ties, six of them still under construction. The number of private universities and colleges has reached 32, of which 17 are under implementation, with a total capacity of 253,816 students.

The seminar ended by awarding dis-tinguished educators in all three fields from Taiz governorate, and the GPC congratulating itself on its accomplish-ments in this sector.

A different reality

However, despite the pat on the back the GPC gave itself, the reality of education in Yemen according to statistics is not so positive. According to a 2007 UN report only 43 percent of girls and 67 percent of boys were enrolled in primary, second-ary or tertiary education in the country. In addition, only 35 percent of girls were literate, compared to 73 percent of boys.

Just one day before the seminar cel-ebrating education the Supreme Council for Education Planning issued a report indicating that attaining a basic educa-tion in the country is far from success-ful. The report indicated that about 1.4 million Yemeni children do not attend school and live under the threat of il-literacy, and that around 80 percent of children between the ages of 6 and 14 drop out of school. Almost 75 percent of those who remain at school must repeat classes.

Yet according to the GPC website almotamar.net, Yemen has raised its ex-penditure on education over all levels to YR 279 billion, which represents 19 percent of the state’s public expenditure. Public education represented YR 202 billion of that total, while higher educa-tion and scientific research obtained only YR 55 billion and technical education just over YR 22 billion.

The study explains how very young brides are often overcome by marital life and new responsibilities such as looking after their husband’s needs, housework and living with in-laws whilst deprived of parental affection.

“Broken women”

Husnia al-Kadri, head of the GDRSC, said many of the symptoms that women complain of are psychological.

“Many suffer from low energy and have phantom pains. This is particularly an issue when women hit the men-o-pause. The women feel that they have spent their lives serving the family and when they can’t have more children they feel that they no longer have a role to play,” al-Kadri said.

“They have no education, they are il-literate, and they cannot express them-selves,” she said. “They can’t even go to the hospital by themselves, which places another burden on the family.”

She explained that if they do go, no basic services or counselling is avail-able. “Instead of help, these women are often given sedatives.”

Elrabee puts it simply. “The women when they are older are broken wom-en.”

Badria glances at her daughter. “My daughter is different from me. She has her future dreams; she is studying and working. She is independent and can marry when she wants.”

“For me everything was enforced - I was never given any choices.”

“If I had had an education I could have had a job - even a career. Instead I just work and sit at home and watch TV.”

How dangerous is Al-Qaeda’s Yemeni arm?

By: Matthew Rusling

WASHINGTON, Aug. 30 (Xinhua) — U.S. intelligence organizations are honing in on Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) as one of the most dangerous terror threats to date, raising questions of just how deadly the group is.

The Yemeni-based terror organi-zation has come under increasing U.S. scrutiny since it claimed responsibility for an attempt to bomb a U.S. jetliner bound for Detroit last Christmas Day.

One of the AQAP’s most prominent figures is U.S.-born Anwar al-Awlaki, who has been tied to the shootings in Fort Hood, Texas in which a U.S. Army psychiatrist was charged with the mur-ders of 13 U.S. soldiers in November last year.

The organization is unlikely to con-duct large-scale operations similar to the 9/11 attacks, in which militants took down the massive Twin Towers and de-stroyed a chunk of the Pentagon.

Rather, it is focusing on the use of small arms attacks and knives and clubs, as well as tapping the Internet to recruit foot soldiers to carry out smaller-scale operations, experts said.

Aaron Colvin, tactical analyst at global intelligence company Stratfor, said the real threat is that the organiza-tion’s ability to think outside the box and circumvent U.S. security mea-sures, as exemplified in the attack last Christmas Day in which a Nigerian man, Umar Farouk Abdul Mutallab, smuggled an explosive device through airport security.

It was only when the device mal-functioned and set his pants on fire that the bomber was apprehended by fellow passengers.

Last year’s Fort Hood incident also demonstrated the type of attack the group could launch in the future.

Such operations are easier to plan and execute than the Sept. 11 attacks on New York and Washington and can be used effectively to spread the group’s propaganda.

“A pistol or simple attack on a shopping mall would be a PR win for AQAP because it would engender the type of fear among the Western public they want,” Colvin said. “At least in their minds, it demonstrates the organi-zation’s...ability to strike in the heart of America.”

It would also help their recruiting efforts, as many impressionable in-dividuals in both the Muslim and Western world could find such violence appeal-ing, he added.

Such an attack could eventually translate to a greater U.S. military foot-print in Yemen.

Indeed, one of Osama bin Laden’s motivations for striking the United States on 9/11 was to goad the nation into a fight in Afghanistan in order to be able to directly strike American targets, Colvin said.

And the more the United States is drawn into military operations in the Middle East, the more it feeds the narra-tive common among radicals that Chris-tianity is on a crusade against Islam.

Because they are easier to carry out, small scale attacks could become more

frequent, he said.

A prime example of the type of op-eration the group could conduct is the April 2007 attack at Virginia Tech, in which a lone gunman killed 32 indi-viduals simply using handguns in closed areas, he said.

Groups like the AQAP have learned that despite the PR value of large scale attacks, they carry more operational risks that could lead to failures, he said.

Purchasing ingredients for making some of the more devastating explo-sives, such as ammonium nitrate, could raise suspicions, and high yield explo-sive devices are difficult to assemble and increase the chances of a failed detonation, he said.

Another danger is group’s English language capabilities -- it just put out its first English language magazine -- which could broaden its influence to the West.

An estimated 300 Americans -- fluent in English and holding U.S. pass-ports -- are believed to have traveled to Yemen to offer their services to the group.

Reuters reported that the Unit-ed States will likely increase strikes against the extremist organization, put-ting the same amount of pressure on the Yemeni branch as it is with Al-Qaeda in Pakistan.

While the United States is consid-ering just how to do that, officials said no decision has been made, although Washington has in the past lobbed a number of cruise missiles at extremist targets in Yemen.

Eritrean pirates hijack 6 Yemeni boats in Red Sea: ministry

SANAA, Aug. 30 (Xinhua) — Eri-trean pirates on Saturday hijacked six Yemeni fishing boats with 60 people aboard in the Red Sea, the Yemeni In-terior Ministry said in a statement on Monday.

The statement that posted on the ministry’s website quoted Yemeni coast-guards as saying that the hijack took place on Saturday and the boats and fishermen were taken to Eritrean port city of Maswa.

It added that the pirates on Sunday released the 60 fishermen and deported them on one of the six boats while the rest five were confiscated.

According to the statement, the 60 fishermen arrived in Yemen’s Red Sea port city of al-Hodeida on Monday and filed a report on the hijack to Yemeni coast-guards.

Piracy is flourishing in the world commercial sea-lanes in the Gulf of Aden and Red Sea where as many as 25,000 ships pass every year through the canal west and south off Yemeni seashores.

Yemen tightens security in Aden Gulf amid fears of Somali al-Qaida in-

filtration

Moreover, Police Coast Guard has raised alert level and tightened security along the country’s coastline and the Gulf of Aden for fears of possible infil-tration of Somali al-Qaida militants to Yemen, state media said on Sunday.

The move followed the reports of recently escalating battles between the Somali government troops and Somali-based al-Qaida affiliated group Harakat al-Shabab al-Mujahideen (Movement of Warrior Youth) that killed over 100 people and forced thousands to flee the war-torn country, the ruling party web-site alomotamar.net said.

The Coast Guard raised the alert level and increased its patrol boats de-ployed along the Yemeni coastline and the Gulf of Aden to prevent any infil-tration by the Somali militants into the Yemeni territories, the portal cited an unnamed official of the coast guard as saying.

The official said the coastguard forces have seized up to 500 Somali refu-gees during the past two days when the latter illegally attempted to snake into the Yemeni coasts through the Red Sea

and the Gulf of Aden.

The refugees have been transported to refugee camps specially set up for Somalis in southern Yemen, said the official.

The coastguard patrols also imposed a tightened security and inspection measures for all ships passing through Yemeni territorial waters to make sure their identities, he added.

In February, Yemen said it has closed off main waterways leading to its sea-coasts at the Gulf of Aden and Red Sea to prevent “African infiltrators” from entering its soil, according to its Interior Ministry.

It said the step came after the al-Qaida wing Harakat al-Shabab al-Mujahideen announced its intention to support the Yemeni-based branch of al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).

Yemen hosts 78,000 Somali refugees by the end of 2009 out of 171,000 total registered refugees, according to statis-tics of the U.N. refugee agency. Interior Ministry’s officials say many more So-malis are still unregistered and thought to head for neighboring oil richer Gulf countries.

Continued from page 1

Government and Houthi delegations return to Sana’a

In a related context, unknown gunmen kidnapped three soldiers in Harf Sufian, Amran on Monday. According to sour-c-es, the soldiers were from the army’s fourth squad. They were taken from the Dalat Al-Shagra area to an unknown lo-cation.

Dozens of the soldiers, who were injured in the Sa’ada war, protested on Sunday in front of the gate of the first squad’s headquarters near Sana’a Uni-versity demanding money for medical treatment. The protesters were fired upon by the guards. According to eye witnesses, one protestor was killed and two were injured. The media has reported that about 5,000 people still await treatment after they were injured during their working hours as soldiers.

“Bone ache” and depression - the lot of child brides

Medical complications

Elrabee sees around 100 patients a day. Her waiting rooms are full of black clad women wearing the `niqab` (veil) com-mon in Yemen. Many sit on the floor waiting patiently for their turn. “I have worked with women for 25 years,” she said. “I see the effects of early marriages every day.”

According to the 2008 International Women’s Health Coalition report Child Marriage: Girls 14 and Younger At Risk, young girls run a higher risk of

complications in pregnancy and child-birth than older adolescents because their bodies (bone structure, pelvis, reproduc-tive organs) are not yet fully developed.

Many experience prolonged and ob-structed labour which can lead to hae-morrhage, severe infection and death. Other complications commonly include eclampsia and obstetric fistula, and vagi-nal and anal ruptures.

Numerous pregnancies from an early age and strenuous work take their toll. “Many women simply become handi-capped by early marriages,” said Elra-bee.

Just under half of Yemeni girls - 48 percent - are married before they turn 18, according to the Washington DC-based International Centre for Research on Women. This is classified as “underage”, according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Depression

Apart from the long-term physical ef-fects, Elrabee said the biggest issue among women over the age of 40, who were married early, is depression.

“These are women that had to face a lot of responsibility from a very young age,” she said. “They feel depressed, un-satisfied, and many say they have never enjoyed life.”

According to a report entitled Early Marriage in Yemen: A Baseline Study to Combat Early Marriage in Hadhramaut and Hodeidah Governorates, by Sanaa University’s Gender-Development Re-search & Studies Centre (GDRSC), the often forced early marriages lead to an “unstable family life marred by conflicts and lack of attraction between spouses”.

Opportunities

Soaps and Society - Making Broadcast Drama for Development

Course dates: September 12th – December 2nd, 2011 (12 weeks)
Media: Radio and Television
Type of Diploma: Certificate
RNTC application deadline: 1st December 2010
Embassy and NFP application deadline: 1st February 2011
Deadline for non-fellowship applicants: July 1st, 2011

Course Aim

To strengthen the capacity of broadcast drama writers and programme-makers and of the organisations they work for to design, write and produce broadcast drama serials which can help to raise public awareness and change attitudes on issues to do with the development of their societies.

Harnessing the power of popular drama

Some of the problems facing societies around the world today require a change of attitude, and ultimately of behaviour, in people within those societies if they are to be surmounted. Issues to do with health and the environment are cases in point. Domestic violence is another. Worldwide the rising incidence of violence in the home and the number of deaths from unsafe water, from alcohol, drugs, smoking and AIDS are evidence of how prevailing attitudes and patterns of behaviour are an obstacle to attempts by experts and educators to persuade people to change.

Raising awareness by giving clear and accurate information about the risks and consequences of certain behaviours is a start but is not, in itself enough. The reasons and the underlying emotions which determine why and how people act as they do have to be addressed as well. And this is notoriously difficult to do. Attitudes are deep-seated. Well-established habits die hard.

Used effectively – often in collaboration with specialists and educators – broadcast media can make a contribution to the development of societies by raising awareness and changing attitudes. And there is perhaps no more effective means for them to do so than the long-running serial drama such as the ‘soap’. It is a form of drama with a proven ability to attract and retain a wide audience; it enables viewers and lis-

teners to identify with characters and situations taken from daily life; and it speaks to them more directly than informative programming because it addresses the underlying motives and emotions that universally determine human attitudes and behaviour. In many parts of the world the ‘soap’ has shown that it can be a powerful means not only to attract and entertain large audiences but also to educate and to engage them on issues of importance to the development of their societies.

For more information see: <http://sites.mw.nl/mtc/courses/SandS2011.php>

Press fellowship

What is the fellowship?

The Joan Shorenstein Center offers a one-semester fellowship at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government. Fellows are domestic or international journalists, scholars and/or policymakers who are interested in the influence of the press on public policy and politics.

The fellowships offers a unique opportunity for scholars and practitioners to share their knowledge and expertise in a collegial and intellectually stimulating environment. Fellows participate in weekly seminars with scholars, a luncheon speakers series with invited journalists or policy-makers and in other organized programs of the Shorenstein Center and Harvard University. The Fellowship Program is not a degree or journalism training program.

Objective

The purpose of the Fellowship Program is to advance existing research in press/politics and to provide an opportunity for distinguished experts to reflect on their discipline. Our goal is to foster a collegial and intellectual environment that will enrich and complement one’s knowledge of the field. The primary focus for a fellow in residence is a paper (approximately 15 pages in length) on a topic examining and analyzing the influence of the press on politics and public policy in the domestic or international arena.

Guidelines

- Applicants must be fluent in reading, writing and speaking English.
- Applicants must be journalists, schol-

ars or policymakers active in the field of press, politics and public policy.

- Fellows are required to live in residence for one semester (fall semester runs approximately September through December; spring semester runs approximately February through May).
- Domestic and international applicants are eligible.
- Stipend: USD 30,000 disbursed in four installments over the semester. Travel and living expenses are not covered by the Center.
- Office space, computer, printer and telephone are provided.
- All application materials must be received on or before FEBRUARY 1, 2011.

How to apply

Applicants may submit materials either as printed hard copies OR electronic files. Download a PDF of the fellowship application form.

Originals of the following documents must be received on or before February 1, 2011. PLEASE DO NOT STAPLE.

- A cover letter from the applicant stating interest in the fellowship.
- Completed fellowship application form.
- A three- to five-page research project proposal.
- A curriculum vitae/résumé.
- Three letters of recommendation from people familiar with the work of the applicant.

Please mail materials to:

Fellowship Program Director
Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press,
Politics and Public Policy
Kennedy School of Government
79 JFK Street, Cambridge, MA 02138
OR email files to Edith Holway: edith_holway@harvard.edu

For more information contact Edith Holway: edith_holway@harvard.edu

PLURAL+Youth Audience Award

New York, NY (August 27, 2010) – The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

(UNAOC) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) are calling on youth from all over the world to vote before November 1, 2010 for their favorite video from the PLURAL+ 2010 Youth Video Festival finalist entries. The invitation for this new PLURAL + Youth Audience Award was announced by the UNAOC and IOM on the occasion of the United Nations International Year of Youth on Dialogue and Mutual Understanding launched last August 12th by the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, in the General Assembly Hall at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

Youth from around the world are invited to visit PLURAL+ website (<http://www.unaoc.org/pluralplus>) for further information on how to watch the videos and vote for the Youth Audience Award.

The participating videos express young people’s thoughts, experiences, questions and suggestions on migration, diversity, integration, identity and social inclusion, highlighting their realities as well as ideas on developing a peaceful coexistence in diverse cultural and religious contexts.

The aim of PLURAL+ is to ensure youth engagement in these important issues both at local and global levels by mainstreaming their voices through a variety of media platforms and distribution networks (broadcast, video festivals, conferences, events, Internet, DVD) around the world.

“PLURAL+ participation demonstrates how young people across the world are willing to creatively engage in complex social issues such as migration and cultural inclusiveness”, said Marc Scheuer, Director of the UN Alliance of Civilizations.

The winner of the PLURAL+ Youth Audience Award will be announced on November 12, 2010 at the Paley Center for Media in New York. In addition, all youth participants selecting their favorite video will automatically enter in a drawing with the opportunity of winning a Flip camera. For details and information please visit PLURAL + website at www.unaoc.org/pluralplus

For additional information, please contact:
Jordi Torrent, UNAOC,
plural@unaoc.org
Elif Zeybel, IOM New York,
ezeybel@iom.int

Career training for aviation mechanics

You can boost your career opportunities by training at a Federal Aviation Administration- (FAA) certified school. About 170 trade schools have this distinction. You can earn an associate or bachelor’s degree in avionics , aviation technology, or aviation maintenance management. The FAA requires mechanics to have at least 1,900 class hours. Along with courses on specific aircraft systems, you can expect to study math, physics, computer science, mechanical drawing, electronics , and even

chemistry. You also have to pass an exam to receive an FAA certificate.

- Expected job growth over the next decade: 10 percent
- Best job opportunities:
 - * Commuter and regional airlines
 - * General aviation
 - * FAA repair stations
- Most jobs found: In the field of air transportation
- Highest salaries: At major airlines
- Median earnings as of 2006: USD 22.95 per hour

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

PADZEY project
TOLUUT 0861 04040 220046
E-mail: padzey@yolinux.com

The PADZEY project is a project resulting from the cooperation between the French Government (French Development Agency-AFD) and the Yemeni Government (the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation). The project aims at supporting rural development in animal production areas in order to alleviate poverty in pilot rural areas of Yemen (Taiz and Wadi Moutfehama).

PADZEY announces the following position:

Title: Project Manager
Duty station: Headquarters, Sana'a

Required Qualifications:

- Master degree in veterinary medicine or any other related field from a recognized university.
- Minimum 7-10 years of experience in such field with an international organization /externally-funded project.
- Ability to work with international experts
- Staff management experience.
- Trained and skilled in management and project implementation.
- Experience in team management.
- Ability to travel to the field regularly according to the project needs.
- A demonstrable capability in planning, organizing, and implementation of field activities.
- A good knowledge of field activity and relationships with farmers.
- Fluency in oral and written English.
- Ability to travel according to project needs.
- Computer knowledge with good experience.
- Good communication skills.

Interested applicants should send their CVs and a covering letter within fifteen days of the date of this advertisement.

Only short listed candidates will be contacted for an interview.

Graduation Out of Poverty project
Announcement: Field Supervisor –Lahj governorate

Background:

The Social Fund for Development (SFD), the Social Welfare Fund (SWF) and CGAP have jointly initiated a pilot project to test out a new model for graduating people out of extreme poverty. The model targets the poorest and involves linking safety net programs with access to financial services, training and basic messaging on health and social issues. Carefully sequenced project inputs and close monitoring of beneficiaries over a 24 month cycle is expected to create a ladder so that beneficiaries end up leading sustainable livelihoods.

The Project requires field supervisors to manage daily activities, identify problems, provide solutions, and ensure effective implementation.

The Field Supervisors will report directly to the Project Manager.

Location: Lahj

Specific responsibilities:

The Field Supervisors will be responsible for the following:

- Determine the safety net package that best meets the requirements of the target group and specify the technical, training and funding requirements for the beneficiaries.
- Make regular field visits to ensure proper project implementation, identifying potential problems, report such problems to the project management, and assist in developing solutions.
- Help the project manager allocate resources necessary to support the development of the project.
- Be responsible for executing the project’s plan.
- Be responsible for managing the safety net package that will ensure basic consumption needs are met and productive assets are created and transferred.
- Direct five field workers to plan, execute and facilitate the transfer of assets and monetary grants to the target group in an efficient and productive manner.
- Revise the daily and weekly reports of the field officers and ensuring the data collected and information provided is accurate.
- Help in facilitating and conducting Workshops/Training sessions for the beneficiaries in collaboration with different parties.
- Help in small Preparing and keeping accurate financial records and budgeting information of the projects different accounts.
- Following up and monitor the progress made by the target group and carry out regular evaluations to determine the impact of the safety net package provided for the target group.
- Work with the project manager to solve any obstacles and challenges that may arise during the project and find means to overcome any challenges in an efficient manner.
- Perform other duties as directed by the project management.

Qualifications

The Field supervisor needs to have:

- A degree in Business Administration social sciences, agro economics development or related University Degree.
- Three years of experience in a supervising position.
- Proven ability to nurture a smooth working relationship with a variety of stakeholders (MFIs, banks, technical assistance providers, international donors, research agencies...etc).
- Proficiency in written and spoken Arabic.
- Ability to communicate in English.
- Sound knowledge of microfinance products and delivery mechanisms is a definite asset.

Remuneration and period of contract:

The period of contract will be for 24 months including three (3) months probationary period. An attractive remuneration package will be provided.

Reporting:

The Field Supervisor will report directly to the project Manger

Submission guideline:

The application should comprise of a one-page cover letter explaining the applicants’ interest and suitability for the position, indicating earliest joining date if selected, in addition to a detailed CV. Interested candidates should submit their application by email to: nbaktayan@gmail.com before September 16th, 2010. Applications received after the closing date will not be considered. Only short- listed candidates will be contacted for interviews.

COUNTERPART
Responsive Governance Project (RGP)
Vacancy Announcement

Counterpart International is looking to hire Yemeni national staff for the following positions:
POSITION TITLE: Deputy Chief of Party
DIVISION: Civil Society
LOCATION: Yemen
EXPECTED START DATE: October 15th, 2010
RESPONSIBLE TO: Responsive Governance Program Chief of Party (RGP-COP)

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, local security, private enterprise, environmental resource management, humanitarian relief, and livelihoods. Counterpart does this by building the capacity of local partner nongovernmental organizations, leaders, 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 will be implementing the Yemen Responsive Governance Project (RGP) which is a USAID-funded three year project that seeks to strengthen government institutions and improve the delivery of public services while encouraging more citizen participation in the political process.

DAUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:
Program Management and Development

- Support the COP 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.

Communication/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 M&E 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.

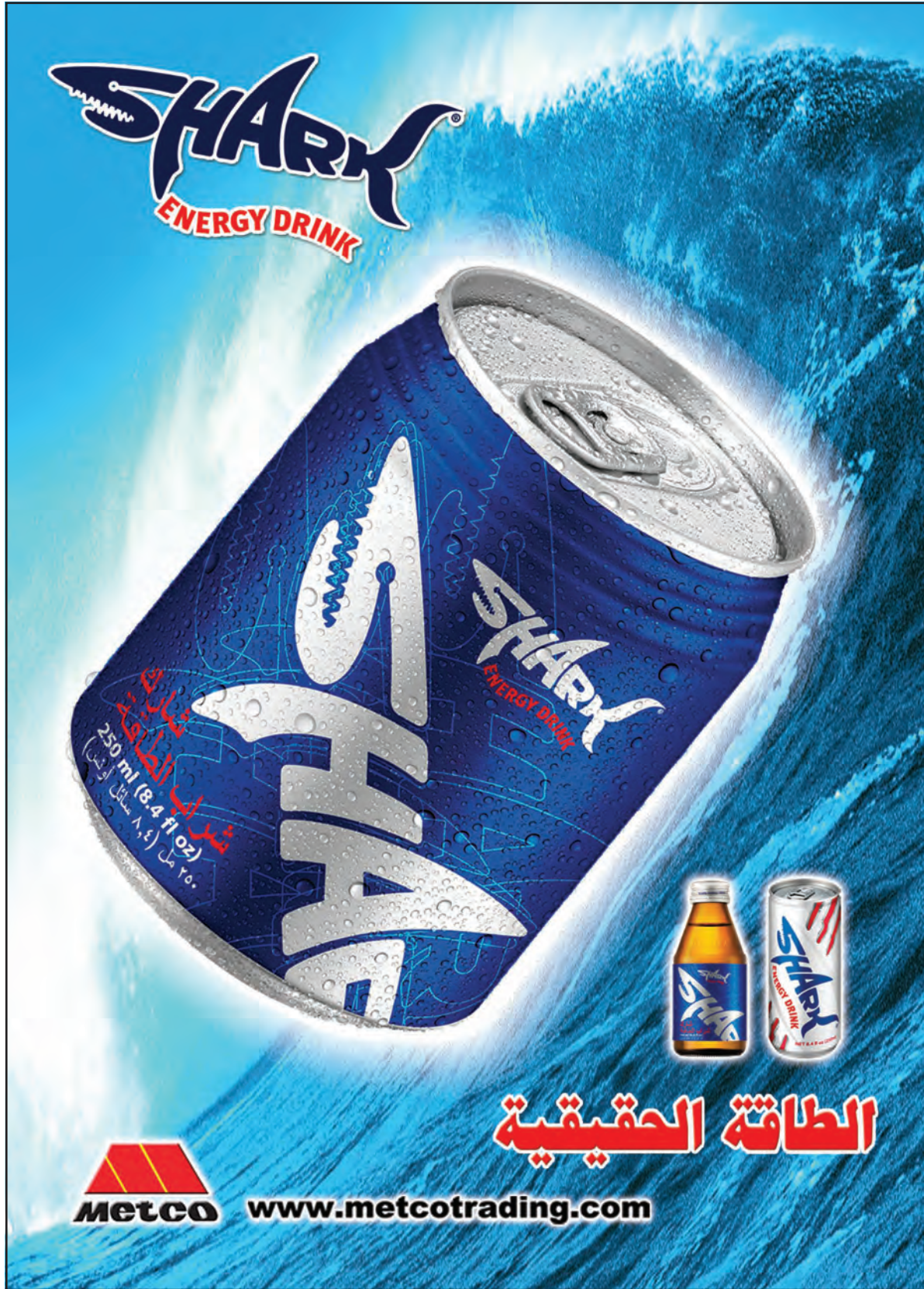
Finance and Administration

- Work in close coordination with the COP/ty.
- Monitor budgets to ensure adequate oversight of program spending.
- Ensure thorough review of financial reports submitted by sub-grantees.
- Ensure quality submission of financial reporting to Counterpart HQ.
- Work with the COP and program staff to determine staffing needs.
- Assist the COP in the coordination of activities between office Counterpart HQ and the field office.
- Other duties as required.

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 Master Degree in International Development, Political Science, Public Policy or a similar field.
- Previous USAID-funded program experience, preferably in the Middle East.
- Minimum of 5 years of work experience in the Middle East.
- Previous work experience in Yemen and a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities in the country.
- Technical view 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.
- Fluency in at least one local Yemeni dialect.
- Yemeni nationals are strongly encouraged to apply.

“Counterpart International strongly believes in equal opportunity for all, without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, citizenship, sex, veteran’s status, age, marital status, sexual preference, disability or any other protected personal characteristics.”
TO AFFLIX 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 September 15, 2010.



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Stories from Real Life

Sheikh Hassan's treatment for incurable diseases

By: Nawal Zaid
For the Yemen Times

Samar and Sheikh Hassan

Samar Ali is 35, married, and has a son and a daughter. She is a housewife. She lived a miserable life after her father's death when she was young, but got married and had her first baby girl.

Five years later her husband Ahmed died. This event deeply affected her and caused her health to go downhill. She suffered from being a single mom and troubles within her family.

She counted on herself until she became very sick. She consulted many doctors but all they could do was to tell her that the illness was serious, and that they had to change her blood every six months.

Later, she got married again, and her new husband, Hani, loved kids. Even though Samar was actually too

weak to have a new baby, she tried to please him by becoming pregnant.

When she was in the fifth month of pregnancy, she lost the baby, and this happened to her more than five times. She went to gynecologists and other doctors, but in vain. They could not do anything for her and after she had continued treatments for seven years, the doctors told her not to become pregnant.

Some time later, one of her friends introduced her to Sheikh Hassan, and he started treating her for a year. Then she got pregnant again and she was really scared of losing her baby as she used to.

Months later, she delivered the baby and named him Mohammed. Although the baby's health was fine, she still felt afraid. But she was very happy about the baby, and her health and psychological state were stable.

Today, she does not have to have blood transfusions anymore and lives

a happy life with her kids and husband.

Thirty years of semi-madness cured by Sheikh Hassan

Amina, 35, is a married housewife with a daughter and two sons. When she was five years old, her mother struck her on the head, which caused her severe pain and led to mental problems.

Her father took her to many doctors and psychiatrists, but they couldn't help.

Years passed and Amina was becoming a beautiful young lady, but her illness deprived her from having an education and making friends.

Many men proposed to marry her, but her father refused all of them be-

cause of her mental status. Then, one of her relatives insisted that she be married, thinking that marriage might help in curing her.

Although she didn't get better, she was happy with her husband and she had two children. Afterwards, the husband started to think about getting another wife with good health and an education.

So he told Amina about it, and she felt satisfied with his choice because he was very kind to her. However, despite her satisfaction with having a co-wife, her father was angry and forced the husband to divorce her.

Amina's father returned her to his house and tried again to cure her, but all his efforts failed for years. Then, they heard of Sheikh Hassan and decided to consult and trust him to cure her.

Her treatment lasted a long time, but in the end she recovered and her mental status became normal, just like other women. She got married again and had

a baby who changed her life and filled it with happiness.

Destroyed woman saved by Sheikh Hassan

Riham Abdullah is a 33-year-old single woman who works in the private sector and lives with her family. She suffered for fifteen years from a physical and psychological disease.

The doctors that she visited gave her different types of medicine, but they were useless. Her family problems affected her health negatively. She always complained of headaches and breathing difficulties. She tired easily and was afraid of dying.

When she went outside of the house, she was fine and had no health prob-

lems. The cause of her trouble was her family inside the house. Nobody could understand her case.

Riham remained in this state for a long time until she heard of Sheikh Hassan and decided to go to him.

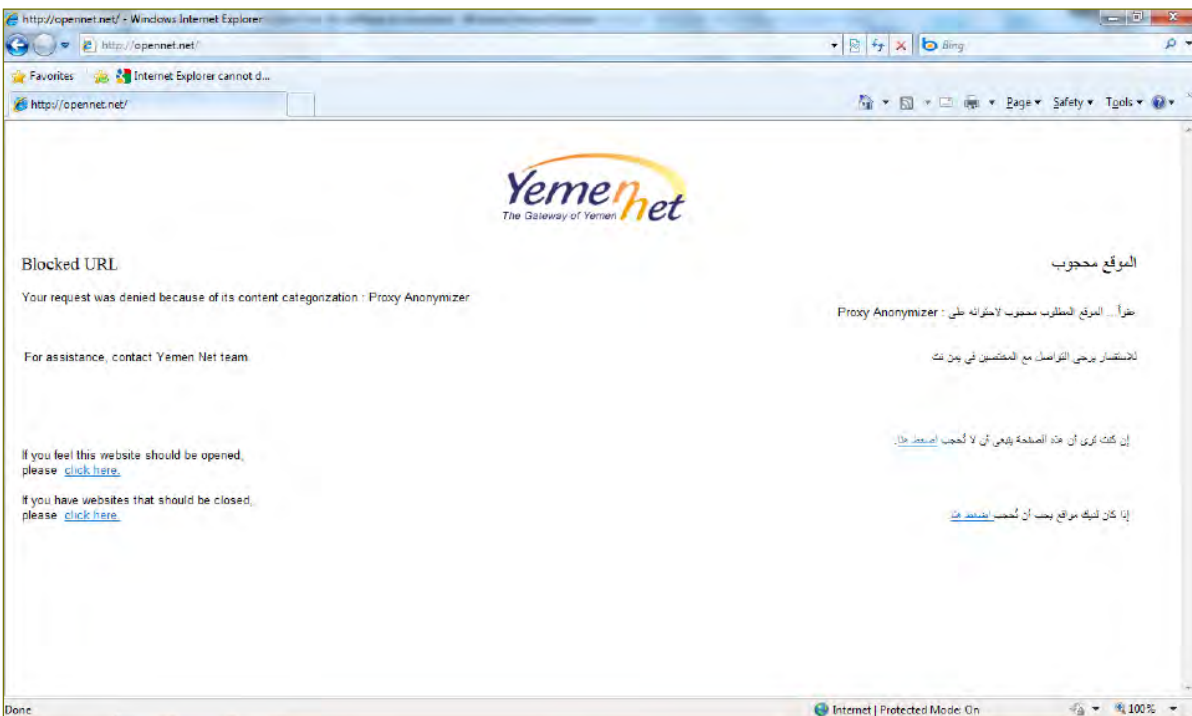
Riham started to have treatment sessions with him. First, he read the Holy Quran over her. Then he described some natural herbal remedies that she could get from the spice dealer, and he told her how to prepare and drink them.

Only two months later, she was getting better and she noticed a huge positive change in her life. She is now calm and in a good mood. Her pain disappeared and she is smiling again.

Sheikh Hassan told her that she had been under a spell and that this was why all the medical examinations showed nothing. Riham feels that she owes Sheikh Hassan her life and because he cured her after a long fight with the disease. She thanks God for the intervention of this sheikh.

Put out of action by the filters

Internet censorship in Yemen



The Yemen Times tried to access the Open Net Initiative's website and was greeted with this page.

By: Ibrahim Aljaadi
For the Yemen Times

Amr, a 19-year-old IT student at Sana'a University, supervises a website for users to discuss computer programming and other topics related to their degree. He and fellow students decided to set up the website for students to deepen their knowledge in their field of study.

But Amr says that, despite his website not containing "bad content" or political views, the Yemeni Internet service provider Yemen Net sometimes blocks parts of the website. He says that it is embarrassing for him and his friends.

"Do you know what happens with Yemen Net? They block all websites at once and then they start filtration. This way really bothers me because when people visit my website, they cannot access it some of the time," Amr said.

"Also there are some links on my website that are blocked. Once there was a visitor to my website who opened a link then that page was blocked. She asked me why it's written on that page that it contains pornography. It's really embarrassing. My website deals only with technology, but they post on some pages that they 'contain pornography.' They just have this expression for most blocked websites."

There are about 500,000 subscribers

to the Internet in Yemen – about 2 percent of the population. Even for this small percentage of the population, content is censored.

According to a 2009 report issued by the Open Net Initiative, an organization that monitors filtering and surveillance of the Internet, Yemen Net temporarily blocks access to opposition's websites and permanently blocks websites that include gambling, adult content and sex education.

In a post on Facebook, the Yemen Times asked Internet users in Yemen about their opinion of Internet blocking and how it affects them.

"I'm with blocking websites with pornography but there are many other websites which shouldn't have been blocked," said Salwa, an Internet user.

Another Internet user called Marwan said, "It's our right to get information from wherever we want... It's against human rights to block websites."

Blocking websites has brought attention to Yemen and its freedom of expression. In many reports issued by international organizations defending freedom of speech and information over the past four years, Yemen and many other Arab countries have been at the top of countries that block websites for political reasons.

Internet censorship can prevent Yemenis from sharing ideas in order to prevent unified cross-cutting opposition to the regime, Jane Novak, an American journalist specializing in Yemeni internal affairs, wrote in

2008.

According to the Yemen Journalist Syndicate, there have been 11 cases of blocking news websites in the last few years. Some of the websites blocked were Aden News, Aden Press, Hadramout News, and the Aden Gulf News Network.

In 2007, Walid Al-Saqaf, a Yemeni journalist, established a website called Yemen Portal that gathers news about Yemen from sources of all political views both in Arabic and English. A few months after establishing the website, the government decided to block access to the news portal without any justification. After that Al-Saqaf created an alternative address to circumvent government censorship.

In February 2009, Yemen Portal editor Walid Al-Saqaf's car was vandalized. Al-Saqaf told the Yemen Times at the time that he was convinced that it was "done by the authorities following the creation of the alternative address to circumvent government censorship."

But websites are not only blocked for cultural and political reasons in Yemen. Sometimes the reason is simply money. In 2010, the government banned Skype after the state telecommunications company Tele Yemen, the national telecommunications company that runs Yemen Net, started to make a loss financially because people used Skype to make international calls.

Yemen Times tried to contact officials at Yemen Net to ask them what

the standards used for blocking websites are and who defines them, but there was no response from the company.

Internet usage in Yemen began in 1996 through the Internet service provider Tele Yemen. The company pro-

vided internet access through a dial-up service. In 2003, Yemen Net, a company run by Tele Yemen, started providing ADSL and ISDN services.

The cost of subscription to Yemen Net's unlimited downloads ADSL service, called Super Yemen Net, is

from YR 25,000 to 45,000 a month. The price varies depending on the speed of connection which goes from 256 kb/s up to 1024 kb/s. For limited download ADSL services, it costs from YR 2,000 for 5G up to YR 7,500 for 11G.



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Yemen may foster new generation of Bashirs

By: Philip Eliason
The Sydney Morning Herald

Just before the start of Ramadan, the spiritual leader of Indonesia's Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), Abu Bakar Bashir, was jailed again in Indonesia for allegedly supporting and sponsoring terrorist activity. For Australia and its neighbours such as the Philippines, JI and its spin-off groups remain a danger, just as JI remains a danger to Indonesian authorities, Indonesian Christians, foreign businesses and tourists as well as to ordinary Indonesians who nearly universally harbour a deep rejection of terrorism.

Bashir is an Indonesian of Yemeni heritage. From his family origins in the religious Hadramout region of Yemen where he would be called Ba 'Ashar, to Indonesia he reflects the continuing channel of Yemeni-based religious thought into Indonesia. Bashir's counterpart in Yemen, Abdul Majid al-Zindani holds great following and draws support from extremists to the extent that the US has listed him as a terrorist

and asked Yemen to arrest him. Both have substantial oratorical skills and can issue influential messages to the public about the use of violence.

Rather than its historically tolerant Sufi doctrine, religious trends in the Hadramout have changed to be more Wahhabi, increasingly conservative and unabiding of other schools of thought. It sometimes is hostile to Western culture, our moral perspectives and our political doctrines such as the importance of democratic forms of debate.

There are more than 2000 Indonesian students in Yemen studying Islam with some students from the Philippines reportedly receiving JI 'scholarships'. Indonesians are there despite official Indonesian government attempts to suppress travel to Yemen, according to Sidney Jones, a longstanding observer of radical Islam in Indonesia.

Yemen suffers an increasing level of violence towards its government and has large areas that are that are in blunt terms, very loosely governed by Sanaa. Yemen's economy is faltering badly. The IMF recently contributed

more than \$US300 million to prop up the Yemeni rial now nearly 20 per cent weaker than at last year's Ramadan period. Its foreign reserves will reportedly be exhausted by the end of 2011. A weak rial means higher prices for staple foods such as flour and rice. This creates grave tensions with the already hungry public, which according to many, may be facing famine. It will force the government to divert cash from payments to its usual recipients, weakening their allegiance to the central government and causing greater insecurity and instability.

Last week it emerged that the Yemeni government's Council of Ministers has been considering stopping granting Somalis automatic refugee status on arrival in Yemen, a position driven by Washington, according to Yemen watchers. Essam al-Mahbashi, a member of the government's National Committee for Refugee Affairs (NCRA) said extremist groups in Somalia such as al-Shabab have caused concern in Yemen. The government sees Somalis as aiding al-Qaeda and so is stopping its 20-year Somali refugee

status policy. NCRA is a partner of the UN High Commission for Refugees, which assists Somalis in Yemen.

The UNHCR is concerned about Yemen's approach and while it accepts the need for screening it wants Yemen to continue to protect refugees but cannot deliver on its undertakings to support the Yemeni budget to do so. Yemen wants to return them by aircraft to Somalia from which many have fled frightful conditions. The al-Shabab movement recently banned for religious proselytising, three international NGOs including World Vision, which provided aid in its territory in Somalia. Clearly the human cost of intolerance is acceptable to al-Shabab leaders.

This development may have damaging results. It will raise tensions between the Yemeni government and its very large Somali refugee community and divert attention away from other issues seriously affecting the country. It will also impel greater support from motivated Somalis for al-Qaeda, which has the Yemeni government firmly established as one of its tar-

gets for attack. Militants are likely to be able to find safe haven in Yemen's tribally governed spaces unless the central government keeps up military pressure in these areas, which ignites vengeance slayings or can convince tribal leaders holding neutral sentiment towards the capital to reject or eject militants. This usually takes cash or kind, now in shorter supply.

Should radicalism be advanced by Yemen's refugee policy then Australia can expect some strengthening of the conservative indoctrination of religious students in the country. Australia, the US, where 17 Somalis were arrested two weeks ago, Canada and Britain all have had concerns about home grown radicalisation among its Somali communities and more tension in Yemen will add to this concern as its government is seen by militants as pro-Western.

Indonesians should also hold some cause for concern as newly radicalised students newly radicalised from their study abroad and who may accept politically motivated violence will provide the next generation of

Bashirs, thoughtful, carefully articulate supporters of jihadism within our neighbours' community. Their possible exposure to religious extremism and political activism in Yemen also is a seed of fear that more terrorism will occur in Indonesia.

Yemenis do not wish their country to suffer but the scale of problems is well out of their own capacity to control. Over the past several months the US, UK, Japan and World Bank have promised significant aid contributions to Yemen. But these need to be implemented. Doing so will require not only realistic efforts in the face of local difficulties but an increase in contribution along with a parallel attention to the Horn of Africa. Australia should not risk overlooking developments in this region as it does influence our own sphere of immediate interest and the safety of Australians abroad, a priority for any new government.

Philip Eliason is a Canberra policy consultant and former diplomat recently returned from Yemen.

The secret war in Yemen

By: Rafael K.
Paths to Utopia

On December 17, 2009, an American cruise missile fired from a Navy ship struck an alleged Al Qaeda training camp in southern Yemen. The missile was loaded with cluster bombs, the use of which has been condemned by Amnesty International and other human rights groups for their ability to maximize civilian casualties. The initial strike killed 41 people living near the Qaeda camp, with 3 more killed and 12 more wounded when they stepped on unexploded munitions left on the area from the strike. A week later, another American strike in a remote area 400 miles south of Sana, the Yemeni capital, was made. This time the targets were Nasser al-Wuhayshi, the leader of Al-Qaeda in Yemen, and his Saudi deputy Said Ali al-Shihri. Both were initially reported dead, along with dozens of others. Witness accounts later clarified that only 5 low-level Qaeda soldiers were killed. The next strike on March 14 of this year, killed a Qaeda operative named Jamil

al-Anbari. On May 25, Jabir Al-Shabwani, the deputy governor of Marib Province, was killed in another strike, leaving Yemen's president Ali Abdullah Saleh furious. On June 19, Al-Qaeda retaliated to the targeted strikes with an attack on a government security compound in Aden, killing 11.

Such has been the nature of the Obama administration's covert war in Yemen. Rather than strain public opinion further after increased skepticism about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the administration has turned to the C.I.A. to secretly conduct targeted killings and other operations:

"The administration's demands have accelerated a transformation of the C.I.A. into a paramilitary organization as much as a spying agency, which some critics worry could lower the threshold for future quasi-military operations...For its part, the Pentagon is becoming more like the C.I.A. Across the Middle East and elsewhere, Special Operations troops under secret "Execute Orders" have conducted spying missions that were once the preserve of civilian intelligence agencies. With code names like Eager Pawn and Indigo Spade, such

programs typically operate with even less transparency and Congressional oversight than traditional covert actions by the C.I.A."

At the moment, the Yemen campaign has not been officially acknowledged by Washington. Instead, the strikes have been deemed a Special Access Program, meaning that there is no requirement that they either be authorized by the president or that Congressional intelligence committees be notified about them. There is debate going on within the White House whether these C.I.A. operations should be deemed an official "covert action," which would allow them to be carried out without the Yemenis' approval.

The expansion of C.I.A. paramilitary activity into Yemen is another sign that the American 'War on Terror' has been far from limited to just Iraq and Afghanistan. The concerns of many about the unaccountability of executive power and security contractors are being verified with every new reporting about unacknowledged clandestine intelligence activities — not just in Yemen, but also in Saudi Arabia, Somalia, and Tajikistan.

Yemen on the brink

By: Antonia Dimou
Worldpress

Al Qaeda on the Arabian Peninsula seriously continues to threaten Yemen's stability, regional security and Western interests. Western security concerns focused on the impoverished Arab country, which is a neighbour of top oil exporter Saudi Arabia, after al Qaeda's Yemen-based regional wing claimed responsibility for a failed suicide bombing of a U.S.-bound plane in December 2009. Since then, al Qaeda's Yemen arm has intensified its attacks against state infrastructure in various Yemeni provinces. The attack in the southern Shabwa province on July 25 was among five raids on state targets since June, which have been attributed to the resurgent militant group.

That is why Yemen's pressing short-term and long-term problems need to be addressed immediately and comprehensively. The root causes of terrorism, appropriate methods of de-radicalizing or countering religious radicalism, and the potential for Yemen's troubles to infect its neighbors demand proper policy responses. It is evident, however, that security and economic development are mutually dependent, and meaningful political reform is necessary to sustain both.

In fact, there is an urgent need for a process of dialogue to address the critical issue of national reconciliation as well as broader political reforms. Yemen's government needs to adopt more constructive and inclusive attitudes, and decentralization of political power could alleviate many of the local grievances spawning confrontation. Personal status and business disputes are being increasingly resolved under tribal law, and not state law, and thus the restoration of the rule of law and of a strong, independent judiciary is urgent.

An outside facilitator is needed to provide a neutral forum for discussion and promote accountability. Regional and international support is absolutely critical to achieving success, and Oman or Qatar could possibly be suitable interlocutors. The dialogue process should be broad, including the ruling party, the Joint Meeting Parties, the Southern Movement, the Houthis and other relevant actors.

At the same time, Yemen's oil reserves are being depleted. Approximately 70 per cent of the government's revenue comes from oil, making economic diversity an urgent and critical issue if Yemen is to avoid devastating consequences, while immediate attention needs to be paid to Yemen's emerging water and energy crises. Both crises, if not managed well, have the potential to threaten Yemen's national security.

With this reality on the ground, the framework established at the London Summit of 2010 by the representatives of countries and international organizations has become a meaningful basis to address Yemen's prob-

lems. The summit reiterated commitment to support Yemen in fighting extremism, corruption, poverty, maritime piracy and African displacement, as Yemen currently hosts more than 2 million refugees from the Horn of Africa, in addition to a large number of internally displaced persons.

A follow-up meeting of donor countries in Riyadh in February was a major extension of the London Conference. The Riyadh Donor Conference was designed to gather donors to find transparent ways to disburse aid and establish mechanisms that will monitor the reform of economic institutions and practices, the improvement of the investment climate and the rapid replacement of dwindling water and energy resources.

Nine agreements were signed by the Saudi Fund for Development on the sidelines of the Donors Conference for financing several projects in Yemen at a cost of \$642 million. Saudi Arabia also agreed to extend funding for the implementation of six projects, in partial fulfillment of its pledge initially made at the first London Donors Conference of 2006 to offer \$1 billion to Yemen. Additionally, the World Bank revealed that it would offer Yemen an amount of \$480 million to finance development projects as part of the strategy of country assistance to Yemen for the years 2010-2013.

Both the London and the Riyadh Donors conferences aimed to address issues like the tackling of unemployment, water and energy, the role of the IMF, international aid delivery and the role of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Yemen's high unemployment rate is critical for its stability. Given the dearth of job opportunities inside the country, the greatest obstacle towards building up Yemen's economy lies in the unwillingness of its neighbors to allow Yemenis to work in their countries. Neighboring countries such as Saudi Arabia and other GCC states could gradually open their labor markets to Yemeni citizens.

Yemen's lack of water is also critical as San'a may well be the first capital to lack sufficient water for its population. This water crisis could lead to massive population shifts in the region as well as serious health implications and internal instability with unpredictable security ramifications. The construction of desalination plants in key population centers along the coast and intensive aid to the government of Yemen for a national effort to manage and conserve water are important.

Additionally, neighboring countries could support Yemen in the power sector, for example, connecting Yemen to the regional power grid and assisting construction of Yemen's power infrastructure, while the further development of the Aden Free Zone as an industrial zone that would have a separate administrative authority and appropriate regulations is critical. A special status permitting duty and quota-free shipments to the European Union, the United States and other countries would stimulate

investment. This zone could also host projects such as desalination and power production plants, both of which would have an evident impact on the daily lives of the Yemeni people.

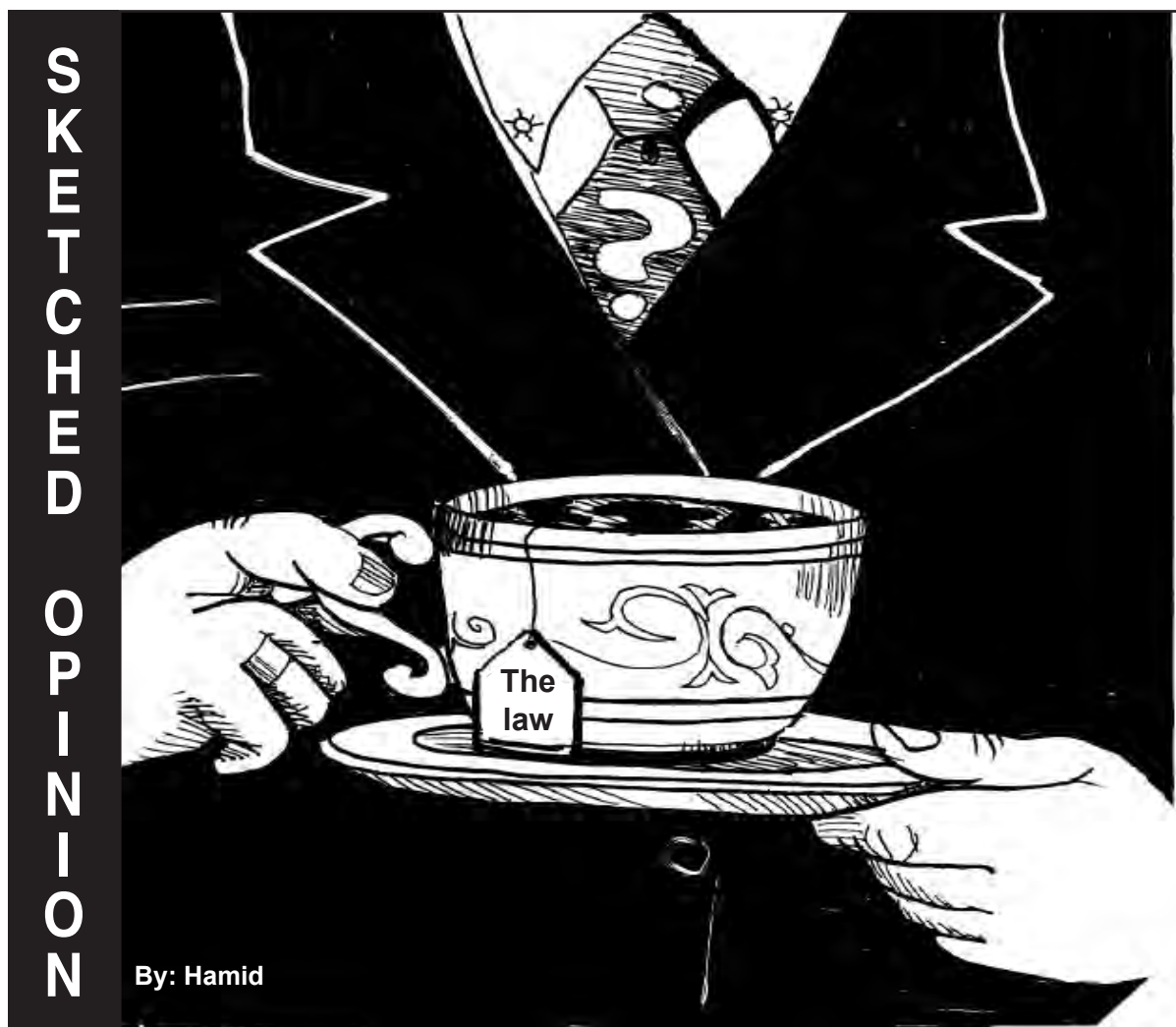
It is also important to note the vital role the IMF can play in the implementation of critically needed financial and budget reforms, both of which are fundamental to progress toward a sustainable economy and thus improving the security status. The IMF could assist the Yemeni government in tax reform, which could recover billions of dollars lost through tax evasion, energy subsidies such as reducing subsidies on diesel fuel, and water reform such as increased tariffs for high water usage.

Additionally, international development aid needs to maximize coverage to a wide variety of actors and regions without favoring the government at the expense of opposition groups that have legitimate grievances. Aid should flow through the central government and local institutions. The Social Fund for Development provides a model for aid distribution. In all cases, the flow of aid must be carefully monitored in light of Yemen's pervasive corruption. Approved international government agencies and NGOs could manage foreign aid with transparency and accountability.

Last but not least, the GCC can play a significant role in addressing Yemen's problems, especially in the economic realm. But the GCC as an organization and its individual states are unwilling to open their doors to Yemeni expatriate laborers. They still mistrust the Yemeni government for backing Saddam's 1990 invasion and occupation of Kuwait, and they suspect that the Yemenis will bring with them the infections of Islamic extremism. Given that some GCC countries remain reluctant to give Yemen full membership in the Council, perhaps the GCC might consider granting Yemen "associate status" that would allow freer movement of labor and capital between Yemen and GCC countries. Such a designation would be a vote of confidence and encouragement, and could serve as a basis for reinvigorating the process of economic reform in Yemen.

As it is evident, there is no panacea or silver bullet solution for Yemen. Prerequisite for Yemen's success is the development of a comprehensive plan to address chronic poverty, reform economic institutions and practices, improve the investment climate, introduce national dialogue, restore order and the rule of law, and establish security. Failure to act on these issues will undermine any effort to deal with the threat from al Qaeda or Yemen's internal misery and thus will prolong regional turmoil and violence.

Antonia Dimou is an associate at the Centre for Strategic Studies of the University of Jordan and head of the Middle East and Persian Gulf Unit at the Centre for Security and Defence Analyses based in Athens.



By: Hamid

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 30 -- Young people try guillotine during the 2010 Maryland Renaissance Festival in Crownsville, Maryland, the United States, on Aug. 29, 2010. The annual festival, set in the 16th century glory, has become one of the region's premier outdoor attractions, featuring a cornucopia of entertainments, feasting and high-quality crafts for all ages. (Xinhua/Zhang Jun)



BAZHOU, Aug. 25 -- Photo taken on Aug. 12, 2010 shows a couple taking a try on a special bike in the China Bicycle Museum in Bazhou, north China's Hebei province. Opened in Oct. 2008, the museum now has over 500 bicycles from countries around the globe. (Xinhua/Li Xiaoguo)



GUIYANG, Aug. 29 -- Photo taken on Aug. 29, 2010 shows the feet of a stunt performer walking on spearheads to show unique fork culture of Miao ethnic group in Guiyang, capital of southwest China's Guizhou Province, Aug. 29, 2010. (Xinhua/Ou Dongqu)



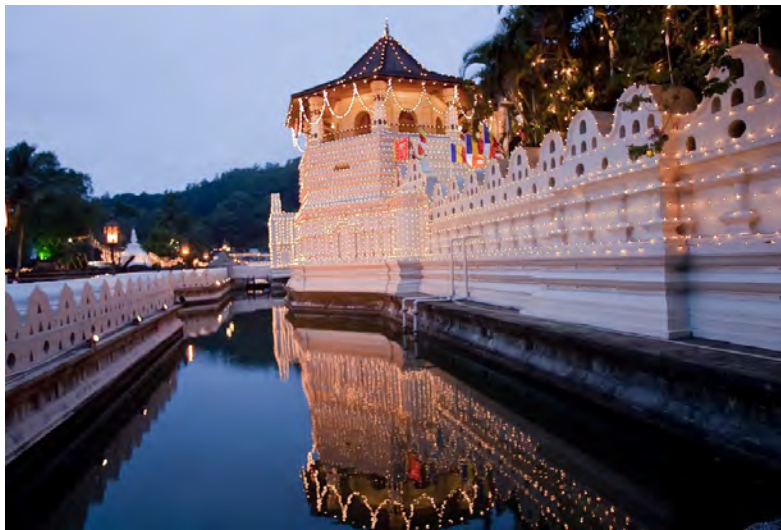
BUCHAREST, Aug. 29 -- Fans gather in a large commercial center to commemorate the 52nd birthday of the late US pop superstar Michael Jackson in Bucharest, Romania, Aug. 29, 2010. (Xinhua/Gabriel Petrescu)



THATTA (PAKISTAN), Aug. 30 -- Six-year-old Pakistani boy Arshad lies in bed with his father sitting next to him after a surgery at a mobile hospital set up by a Chinese rescue and relief team in Thatta, one of the worst-hit regions in Pakistan, on Aug. 30, 2010. The Chinese team performed on Monday a successful surgery on the boy's swollen hand that would have had to be amputated if not treated in time. (Xinhua/Yuan Man)



ANKARA, Aug. 30 -- Kostas Tsartsaris (C) of Greece holds the ball against Peter Ramos of Puerto Rico during the preliminary round Group C match between Greece and Puerto Rico at the FIBA World Men's Basketball Championships 2010 in Ankara, Turkey, on Aug. 29, 2010. Greece beat Puerto Rico 83-80.



KANDY (SRI LANKA), Aug. 25 -- Photo taken on Aug. 24, 2010 shows the night view of Sri Lanka's Temple of the Tooth (Dalada Maligawa) on the night of Maha Pereha (Great Parade) in Kandy, about 110 km north-east of Colombo, Sri Lanka. The Esala Maha Perahera (Great Parade) was held on Tuesday night at the ancient capital of Kandy. As one of the biggest Buddhist celebrations in Sri Lanka, the annual Esala Perahera during which elephants, drummers, dancers and acrobats parade along the streets of Kandy, is held for ten days in the months of July or August. (Xinhua/Liu Yongqiu)



KABUL, Aug. 30 -- An Afghan policeman shows illicit drugs to be burned on the outskirts of Kabul, capital of Afghanistan, Aug. 30, 2010. As part of the battle against poppy cultivation and drug, Afghan authorities set on fire over 8.5 tons of illicit drugs in Kabul on Monday. (Xinhua/Wang Yan)



SINGAPORE, Aug. 24 -- Players of the US celebrate during the Girls Volleyball Semifinal match between the US and Japan at the Singapore 2010 Youth Olympic Games in Singapore, August 24, 2010. The US won 3-0. (Xinhua/Zhang Chuanqi)



WASHINGTON D.C., Aug. 10 -- Osas Ighodaro (C) from Connecticut is crowned during the 2010 Miss Black US Pageant in Washington D.C., capital of the United States, Aug. 9, 2010. Thirty-three contestants from across the United States joined the annual beauty contest on Monday. (Xinhua/Zhang Jun)



BEIJING, Aug. 28 -- Photo taken on Aug. 28, 2010 shows the performance of "Somali Pirates" at the Haidian Theater in Beijing, capital city of China. "Somali Pirates," one of the "Happy Dough Twist" comedy series, drew to an end on Aug. 29 after over 100 performances since the end of 2009. The tickets for almost every performance were sold out, making it the most popular play in the series. The play, packaging up a lot of social events, triggered off so many laughs that a large number of the audiences chose to come back and watch it again. (Xinhua/Chen Jianli)



TAIPEI, Aug. 29 -- Professional dancers perform ballet during the break of the Taiwan ballet competition in Taipei, southeast China's Taiwan, Aug. 29, 2010. The Taiwan ballet competition started here on Sunday. (Xinhua/Fei Maohua)



SALZBURG, Aug. 29 -- Models present traditional costumes during a fashion show of the Tracht & Country Fall 2010 alpine lifestyle fair in Salzburg, Austria, Aug. 29, 2010. (Xinhua/Xu Liang)

A window of hope for sustainable development

By: Ali Saeed

Hooriya has a talent for drawing on glass, but she did not have sufficient money to buy the materials to produce and sell decorated glass to generate income for her poor family. She had no source of income except for YR 6,000 she received every three months from the Social Welfare Fund as social security.

When she heard about the Amal Microfinance Bank, she quickly ran to the bank to obtain credit and start up her small business for drawing on glass. Hooriya was in need for YR 150,000 (about USD 628), but the bank offered her and her sister credit of YR 30,000 (about USD 125).

"After we got the credit, we started drawing at home and now we are making money," Hooriya told the Yemen Times.

Hooriya and her sister paid back the credit to the bank in installments over

12 months. They were paying back YR 10,200 every three months as agreed with the bank. Although they wish to improve marketing for their products, Hooriya and her sister now are making money from their small business.

Amal means 'hope' in Arabic, and the Amal Microfinance Bank is a window for youth and women empowerment. Since 2009, it has been trying to achieve change through bank services for the poor, such as individual credit for micro-entrepreneurs from USD 50 to USD 250.

Providing micro credit to micro-entrepreneurs will not only reduce poverty among Yemenis, but also generate jobs for sustainable development, according to Nabil Al-Shihari, head of the research and development department at the bank.

In a country of around 24 million people, 42 percent of the population is unemployed and 35 percent live under the poverty line. The microfinance bank offers poor Yemenis banking services that

they cannot afford elsewhere, including credit and savings accounts.

The bank now has 23,000 clients, 10,000 of whom are borrowers and 13,000 who are depositors, according to Al-Shihari.

Al-Shihari said that what makes this service better than other banks is the cost. Poor Yemenis cannot open their own accounts at commercial banks as it is too expensive and the poor cannot meet the conditions laid out by commercial banks.

Micro-credits



With the micro credit from the Amal Bank, Hooriya has been able to generate an income from painting on glass.

from the bank can save small businesses from collapsing.

Ismail Al-Tayb, one of the bank's clients told the Yemen Times that he has a small grocery and it was about to go bankrupt, so he took credit from the bank and that saved his source of income.

The Amal bank currently has ten branches in Sana'a, Taiz, Aden and Ibb. The bank aims to have 40 branches in total over all the governorates by 2013, according to Al-Shihari. For the moment, the bank is working mainly in urban areas, but it has a strategy to expand its activities to include rural areas.

The bank is playing an important role in empowering women. Sixty percent of the bank's 10,000 borrowers are women and the rest are young males.

Another banking service for women is called collective solidarity credit. This kind of credit is offered to a group of five to eight women who know each other

very well, live in the same area, and have their own small businesses.

With this kind of credit, each woman in the group acts as a guarantor for the others, whereas in individual credit the borrower brings a guarantor from his neighbors. This kind of credit is making progress among women who have small projects.

Um Mohamed, 31, told the Yemen Times that she and her four friends borrowed YR 120,000 from the bank to buy more clothes for their clothes shop.

Al-Shihari said that the bank works with the Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational Training, the Social Fund for Development and other relevant organizations that work in family and youth empowerment.

He said that families and youth are in need of life skills and vocational training courses that will lead them to think of micro-projects and help them start up



The bank has ten branches in Sana'a, Aden, Ibb and Taiz, and plans to open 40 new branches by 2013 to expand its operations for limited income Yemenis to cover more areas.

their businesses.

"Next October, local organizations with the Ministry of Vocational Training will train youth and women on small business development and, at the same time, promote the bank's services to finance their small projects," he explained.

"If the family or the youth's proposal is eligible, the bank will assist them in financing it," said Al-Shihari.

Al-Shihari said that the bank is making amazing progress in its operations, and has encountered no challenges except that of attracting depositors.

At the moment, financial sources for the bank are loans from international funding organizations such as the World Bank's International Finance Cooperation, according to Al-Shihari.

"The bank attempts to attract deposits to have its own financial channels rather than having to depend on donors and funding organizations," he said.

However, despite the bank's proven ability to support small entrepreneurs, some say that the loans that it offers are too small to start up a new business from scratch.

Khaleel Saif, 21, a secondary school graduate and one of the bank's clients, told the Yemen Times that an individual loan of USD 50 to 250 is not sufficient to start a small business.

"What can I do with USD 50 or even USD 300?" Saif asked.

It seems that some of this bank's clients do not take credit for their small businesses, but as personal loans to buy some of their living needs.

"Five months ago, I took credit of YR 60,000 to buy furniture for my home," Saif said.

Saif thinks that the microcredits that the bank provides can only strengthen already existing projects, but not create new projects.



Nabil Al-Shihari, head of the research and development department at the Amal Bank, says that the bank hopes to generate jobs for sustainable development.

Renting pavements to earn a living

By: Malak Shaher

Filled with hope, street vendors call out for people to buy from them above the street's car horns.

During a Ramadan night on Jamal Street, a popular shopping street in central Sana'a, street vendors display their goods and clutter the already busy sidewalk. They know that they cause a lot of trouble, but they have no other way to earn a living.

To support their families, street vendors sell whatever they can put in a wheel barrow, including vegetables, fruit, quilts, cosmetics, flashlights, books, home appliances, and toys.

But selling on the streets is against the law according to the municipality, so there is always a possibility that its employees will confiscate their goods and detain them for a day or two before fining them YR 2,000 or more to release them.

"It is their only way to earn a living, there is no article in the law that allows them to sell in the sidewalks of the street," said Ameen Jum'an, the deputy of General Secretary of Sana'a. "We try as hard as we can to give them the chance to sell during seasons like Ramadan and Eid without confiscating their goods or taking fines."

The deputy added that since 2006, the municipality has not taken "rent" from the street vendors as it used to do in the past. But they do fine them if they are brought to the municipality. In this case, they are given a receipt.

However, Mohammad Abdulmalek, who has no other option for earning a living other than selling girls' hair decorations on Jamal Street had another story to tell.

"Besides the money I pay, which is YR 1,500 as rent for the one meter you see, the municipality employees sometimes take fines from us, they wait for us to give them more money or else they may arrest us and confiscate our goods," he added.

"I pay YR 3,000 for each meter I occupy. This is my place, and the police do take fines from me as I pay an extra symbolic amount of money for the municipality employees," said Jameel Muthana, a quilt vender on Hael Street.

Apparently, street vendors realize that they have to pay a bribe to the municipality employees in exchange for the latter not reporting them to the Municipality. But they complain that the municipality employees sometimes come with no prior notice and confiscate their goods before they are given the chance to pay money.

Not only found on Jamal Street and

Hael Street, street vendors all over Yemen still have to pay fines without receipts, according to Fateh-Arahman Al-Jassaf, Director of General Union for Peddlers and Market. He said that just in Sana'a, there are no less than 17,000 street vendors, 1,200 of which are registered in the union.

When employees from the municipality confiscate their goods, vendors lose their perishable goods, such as fruits and vegetables, according to Al-Jassaf.

The General Peddlers Union and Markets was established in May 2008 and joined the Yemeni Labor's Union in December 2009, with the aim to protect street vendors all over Yemen from the attacks of municipality officers.

The head of the union said that vendors only pay fees for the place they oc-



A street vender stands in the yard of the General Peddlers Union and Markets, a safe place for his wheel barrow. In the yard, the 1,200 vendors registered with the union store their wheel barrows or vegetable boxes at night. They collect them again in the morning and set off to earn an uncertain living.

cupy on the sidewalk during peak seasons like Eid and Ramadan.

According to Al-Jassaf, the employees of the municipality approach the street vendors randomly, and come in a police car without permission from the municipality to take money from vendors.

"Sometimes, some municipality employees go to the street where there are a lot of vendors and take YR 100 or 200 from each one so to allow them to stay without reporting them. If someone does not pay, he reports him to the municipality, as it is illegal to sell things in the street."

Adel Al-Sana'ani, the Director of the Tahreer district, a popular sales point for street vendors, said the municipality has no knowledge of the bribes the street vendors pay to the municipality employees.

"Taking money from street vendors is illegal as they take no receipts for the money they pay. If the vendors report the employees that take money from them,

the employees will be tried," he said.

Al-Sana'ani said that four years ago, the municipality used to take fines from the vendors during Ramadan and Eid in their offices and give them receipts in return. This was because they are not allowed to sell in the street, because there is an article in the law that prohibits anyone from disturbing the movement of cars or pedestrians.

"Some municipality employees are said to take money from the vendors in the street, which is illegal," Al-Sana'ani explained. "We face a real problem, as some of the shop owners also 'rent' the space in front of their shop."

But street vendors cannot complain because selling in the street is against the law. Reporting the bribes they pay to the municipality officers would only serve to make them pay more fines for breaking the law.

Street vendors are not only men selling to support their families, but also women and little children supporting themselves for different reasons.

On another night during Ramadan, a ten-year-old boy, who took up a small space on the sidewalk on Jamal Street selling toys, looked around hoping a child would see him and insist that his parents buy him a toy.

Unlike street vendors who sometimes pay YR 3,000 for each meter they occupy on the sidewalk, the boy said he pays YR 500 per meter.

"The goods we sell determine the amount of money we have to pay," he explained. "The more expensive the goods, the more money that is taken."

Of the 17,000 street vendors, there are around 3,000 children working as street vendors.

"Last year, 30 street vendors were arrested and their goods were thrown in a garbage container in Asser, Sana'a," head of the union Al-Jassaf told the Yemen Times.

"The place they were detained lacked basic facilities. There is no water and there is no door for the bathroom. These prisons were one day demanded to be

closed by Former General Secretary of Sana'a Ali Al-Shu'aibi," said Ahmad Mohammad, a street vender on Al-Daeri Street, Sana'a.

"They are against the law and create a crowd in the streets," said Muttahar Al-Haimi, the General Secretary of the municipality at Al-Wahda district. "Each time they do not pay the rent fees, we arrest them for two or three days but release them after they pay a fine of YR 2,000 maximum."

The peddler's union is working on helping street vendors to find shops instead to sell from. It aims at least to find them a market in which to sell their goods.

Nevertheless, Al-Jassaf said that in spite of the fact the street vendors create a mess in the street. The municipality has found no real solution until now to solve their problem.

He accused them of procrastinating in finding a solution for them so that they can collect money from the vendors who will pay in order not to be arrested.



Dr. Naif Al-Mutawa talks to the Yemen Times about an innovative project to promote understanding and dialogue

Muslim superheroes emerge in THE 99

Dr. Naif Al-Mutawa was the first speaker to receive a standing ovation at the TED Global conference held in Oxford in mid-July this year. He was applauded for creating THE 99, first group of Muslim superheroes intended to reflect the values of tolerance and peace in Islam, particularly among children. Among the superheroes is a Yemeni woman named Batina with the power of invisibility. THE 99 has been mentioned in media around the world and Dr. Al-Mutawa was recently singled out and praised by American President Obama for contributing to the promotion of dialogue between Muslim communities and the United States.

Walid Al-Saqaf carried out the following interview with Dr. Al-Mutawa to know more about THE 99 and the idea behind it.



How did you come up with this idea of THE 99 and what do you hope to achieve with it?

The Gestaltists say that the whole is more than the sum of its parts. The sum of my parts include an upbringing in Kuwait during the school year, but summer camp in New Hampshire for 10 summers. They

include a lot of reading and writing, a college degree in English Literature, History and Psychology, three Master's degrees (in Business Administration, Organizational Psychology and Clinical Psychology) and a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology. The result? THE 99 [see <http://the99.org>]. THE 99 is based on history, is literature and in-

volves a lot of psychology. And, at the end of the day it is a business venture! The actual idea literally came out of thin air. My sister was pushing me to go back to writing for children. I resisted. And in that 15 minute cab ride from Edgware Road to Harrods in London, fate conspired. My education, my background, my worry about my children's role models and my sister's nagging came together into what would become THE 99.

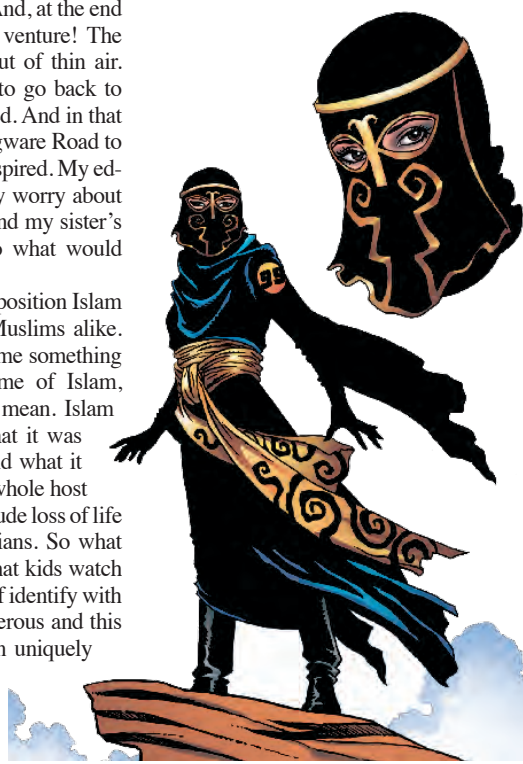
With THE 99 I hope to reposition Islam to both Muslims and non-Muslims alike. The problem is that every time something terrible happens in the name of Islam, there is a regression to the mean. Islam becomes the average of what it was and what it has become. And what it has become has included a whole host of indefensible acts that include loss of life and blood of innocent civilians. So what the media reports on and what kids watch in the news, they begin to self identify with the extremism. This is dangerous and this is exactly what THE 99 can uniquely tackle.

Your TED talk in Oxford was admired and received a standing ovation. What has changed for you since the talk?

The TED talk was fun! The support was amazing and I have received a LOT of support from all over the world from people who watched it either in person or live via the Internet. I guess the only tangible change is that I have received less sleep because of it!

How well was the idea received in the West? What were the difficulties or challenges you faced?

The West embraced THE 99 when it first came out in 2006. In fact we have been covered by 10,000 newspapers and magazines and have been supported by World leaders. Awards from the UN and the World Economic Forum have been bestowed on THE 99 as well as Forbes calling us one of the top 20 trends sweeping the globe and even a special shout out from President Obama. In fact, on October 27th, Batman, Superman and Wonder Woman will be teaming up with THE 99 in a special global series!



Among THE 99's superheroes, Yemeni character Batina can use her powers of invisibility to hide THE 99 when needed.

The challenges I faced were numerous. This has been a seven year commitment so far. Extremists of all sides have tried to put down the project, from East and West. It was challenging to get world class writers and illustrators from the West to work on Islam inspired heroes in a post 9/11 world. But perhaps the biggest challenge was myself. I resisted the idea initially because I knew that if I tried to get funding for it and failed I'd be known as the crazy guy that tried. And that is one demon that it took a while to chase away.

Have any prominent Muslim scholars spoken for or against the project? How was it perceived publicly in the Muslim world?

We are an Islamic company and 30 percent owned by an Islamic bank with scholars

who have endorsed the projects. We received numerous other endorsements including one from the Grand Mufti of Bosnia. There are criticisms of the project that are online. But I can tell you this. 99.99 percent of criticisms have come from people who have not read the comics. If it's any indication, our comics are throughout the Gulf, in Indonesia, India and Turkey. Four geographies with various interpretations of Islam and all of them carry THE 99.

In particular, what inspired you to create the Yemeni superhero burka-wearing Batina? Could you tell us more about her?

My wife is Saudi but of Hadrami origins. One of the 99 attributes of Allah is Al-Batin, or the Hidden. So Batina, not only hides in her burqa but she is able to use her powers of invisibility to hide THE 99 when that is what is needed.

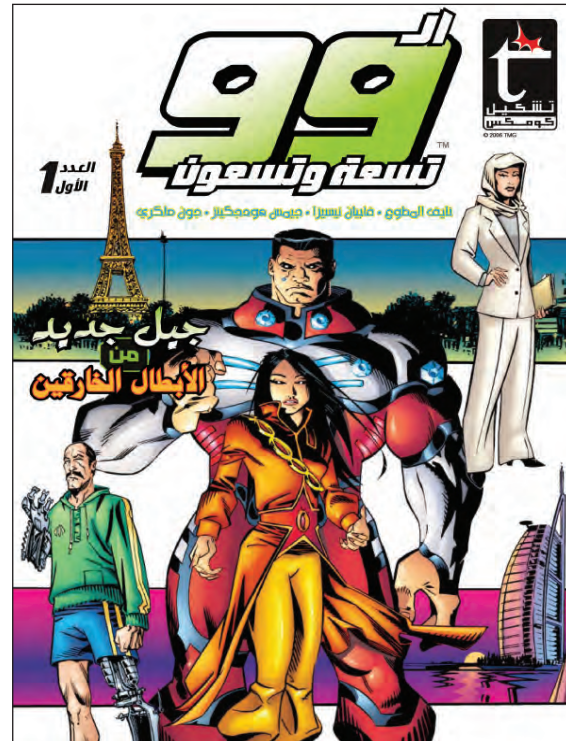
Any of Arab superheroes you would like to mention?

We have Jabbar from Saudi, Aleem from Qatar, Mukit from Bahrain, the Mubdiyan twins from Kuwait, Baeth from Jordan, Baqi from Egypt, Samda from Libya and Noora from the UAE. THE 99 have 99 heroes from 99 countries.

Have you started your distribution of the comic books and TV episodes in the Arab world?

The comic books have been out for four years. The TV episodes will be out by January.

Have you been to Yemen since the launch of the project?



THE 99 are a new generation of Muslim superheroes.

I have never been to Yemen! I hear it is beautiful and is certainly part of my children's heritage and I would love to visit!

On the advent of Ramadan and as a concluding remark, what message would you like to convey to Yemen Times readers in Yemen and around the world?

The Catcher in the Rye is a novel that has sold over 60 million copies since it came out 50 years ago. It is used in curriculums in the US and since libraries also carry it, it would be safe to say that at least 200 million people have read that novel. But only two people I know of have tried to kill in the name of that book. In December 1980, Mark David Chapman shot and killed John Lennon with a copy of that book in his hands and told the police that the book drove him to kill. A year later John Hinckley tried to kill President Reagan and also referred to the same book. So I ask your readers, whose fault it that? Is it the book or the reader?

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Is the Ground-Zero Mosque about faith, or fitna?

By: Irfan Husain

Imagine, for a moment, that a group of Christians asked for approval to build a church close to the site of an iconic building in Pakistan some of their fellow-believers had destroyed, killing thousands. How would we have responded? Actually, this scenario is so implausible so as to be practically meaningless. The sad reality is that non-Muslims in Pakistan live on sufferance, and it would be unthinkable for them to even dream of expanding their places of worship, let alone constructing new ones.

A few years ago, I recall writing about the trials and tribulations of Christians trying to build a church in Islamabad despite having received official permission. They were bullied by a local mullah, and found no support from the city administration. Since then, things have got worse for the minorities. The ongoing furore over what is being called the 'Ground Zero Mosque' is another reminder of how civilised societies treat those citizens who do not subscribe to the majority faith.

Much to his credit, New York's Mayor Bloomberg (a Jew, by the way) approved the project, despite opposition from right-wing groups. It is President Barack Obama who has been a disappointment to liberals with his equivocation over the issue: after endorsing it at an iftar event for Muslim ambassadors, he backtracked swiftly in the face of shrill and expected criticism from the right.

In a controversial article that appeared recently in the Ottawa Citizen (Mischief in Manhattan; 7 August), Raheel Raza and Tarek Fatah, two Muslims who live in Canada, argued that proceeding with the project is tantamount to fitna, or mischief-making, an act prohibited in Islam. The authors have been attacked for their stance on the Internet, with readers accusing them of taking a reactionary line.

The truth is that the issue has become a highly divisive one, with 70 percent of Americans opposing the project. Before readers think this reflects poorly on secular attitudes in the country,

Raza and Fatah remind us that there are presently some 30 mosques in the New York area. The point the authors make is that the location of the proposed Muslim community centre gives offence to many Americans as it is a couple of blocks from where the Twin Towers stood before 9/11: "Let's not forget that a mosque is an exclusive place of worship for Muslims and not an inviting community centre. Most Americans are wary of mosques due to the hard-core rhetoric that is used in pulpits.

And rightly so. As Muslims we are dismayed that our co-religionists have such little consideration for their fellow citizens and wish to rub salt in their wounds and pretend they are applying a balm to sooth the pain." For weeks now, this controversy has been in the news with talking heads on TV from across the political spectrum reviling or defending the project, initially dubbed the Cordoba Initiative. Critics have attacked the name of the centre for serving as a reminder of Muslim conquests in Europe.

In response, the developer has said the name has been changed. In such an emotionally charged debate, it's hard to be rational. Logically, the location should be immaterial: after all, there is already a mosque in the area, not far from Ground Zero. So why should another make any difference?

The truth is that the 9/11 attacks continue to resonate deeply in America, so what's the point in insisting on a project that is like a red flag to a bull? The project is expected to cost around \$100 million, and many think the bulk of the money will come from Saudi Arabia, even though the source of the funds has not been made public yet. If this is indeed so, Raza and Fatah consider this would be a slap in the face of Americans as "nine of the jihadis in the Twin Towers calamity were Saudis."

More to the point for me is that the Saudis have been funding mosques and madrasas around the world, in addition to paying for chairs for Islamic studies at major universities. All these have been used to project the country's official Wahabi version of Islam that has fuelled the rising tide of extremism and

jihadi fervour. Against this backdrop, the question to ask is whether we need yet another such mosque.

Another question has been posed by Raza and Fatah: why can't the \$100 million be put to use to help people in Darfur and Pakistan? This is especially relevant in the context of the floods that are devastating much of Pakistan today. The third question is about reciprocity: if the Saudis can aggressively spread their ideology abroad, why can't other beliefs build their places of worship in Saudi Arabia?

Currently, it is illegal to build a church, synagogue or temple in the country. Even importing copies of the Bible or the Torah is forbidden. Granted, Saudi Arabia is not an example of tolerance and freedom of worship. In fact, it is one of the most benighted societies on the planet where the royal family rules with an iron hand in partnership with the clergy. Nevertheless, every time the government or individual members of the ruling House of Saud wish to fund a religious centre abroad, they should be asked to open up their country to other faiths.

Liberal Americans will respond – to their everlasting credit – that their constitutional guarantee of freedom of worship should not be hostage to medieval attitudes in Saudi Arabia or elsewhere. Ironically, given the choice between living in a theocracy or in a secular country like America, Muslims have voted with their feet in the hundreds of thousands. Most of them are happier in their adopted home, and are free to worship as they please.

This is America's major strength, and it would be a pity if the events of 9/11 were to erode it. Despite the strong religious strand in American society, it welcomes all faiths. All the more reason, then, for everybody in this melting pot to be respectful of others. As Raza and Fatah remind their co-religionists, "The Koran commands Muslims to 'Be considerate when you debate with People of the Book'... Building a mosque at a place where Muslims killed thousands of New Yorkers is not being considerate or sensitive; it is undoubtedly an act of fitna."

Through The Mind's Eye

By: Maged Thabet Alkholidy
maged_thabet@hotmail.com



The ups and downs of foreign exchange rates:

Who pays the price?

This year, 2010, is distinguished for its economic changes that have been disturbing the stability of the country as a whole. One of the main factors in the economic stability of the country has been the ups and downs of the exchange rates of foreign currencies. These ups and downs have been taking place not within eight years, but within only eight months in 2010. These changes make me want to shine the spotlight on the victims who pay the price of these economic ups and downs. In this article, I am going to trace the changes in foreign currencies, particularly the US dollar, over these eight months and highlight who are the real victims of these changes.

In January 2010, the exchange rate of the US dollar was YR 205. It was stable during this month with some minor changes. But in February, the price of one US dollar started growing from YR 205 to 210 in a short period of time. As a corrective procedure by the Central Bank of Yemen (CBY), the interest rates on deposits in commercial banks was increased from 10 percent to 13 percent as a means of encouraging people to save Yemeni currency instead of exchanging it USD. The situation grew worse and worse in February and March as the exchange rate grew to YR 230 to the dollar. The CBY took another corrective procedure by increasing the interest rate on deposits in commercial banks to 15 percent, and then to 20 percent. This together with other factors contributed to fixing the price of one USD to YR 224. This rate remained stable for about three months (April, May and June). But all of a sudden, the rate increased to YR 260 within only two weeks in July and the CBY intervened again to fix it at YR 240. The shocking surprise was in August when the rate gradually went down from YR 240 to 215.

Actually, I am really wondering, as many others do, about who are the victims who pay the price of all these ups and downs. Of course, the increase in the exchange rate of foreign currencies led to price hikes in almost all consumables because 99 percent of them are imported. This was really felt by the common people who are loyal

in using the local currency and gain no benefit from the increase in foreign currency rates. They realized how their local currency became of less value.

Though the exchange rates passed through ups and downs in these eight months, the price of consumables only passed through ups. What is astonishing is that the price of consumables are increased immediately with the increase in the foreign currency rate. But when the prices of the foreign currencies went down, the price of all other materials remained the same. The merchants justified this by saying that they had already bought such products with foreign currency before the exchange rates went down. They also justified the practice by saying that such a decrease is not fixed and the rates will surely increase again in the near future. Here, the common people can do nothing, especially when there is no controlling authority to observe and monitor the price of products.

Really it's a joke when we see the exchange rates of foreign currencies go down and the price of the products do not, though product prices go up immediately when the exchange rates of foreign currencies are increased. In fact, people feel happy when the prices of foreign currencies are decreased, but they are surprised when they find the price of products are not decreased. The problem is exacerbated when the decreased exchange rates are increased again, leading to further increases in the price of products though they were never decreased. That means the people will pay the costs of such ups and downs twice. Here, we realize how the common people are always losers in such ups and downs and rarely benefit from the decrease in exchange rates.

To conclude, fixing the exchange rates is really a large problem that can be tackled by authorities with the availability of some interrelated factors. This is not my topic in this article, but the topic here is who is responsible for controlling the price of the consumable products so that the common people can at least benefit from the decrease in the exchange rates of foreign currencies. By this, the common people will not be only victims in both the ups and downs of foreign exchange rates.

Maged Thabet Al-Kholidy is a contributing opinion writer from Taiz. He holds an MA in English, and is the former editor of Taiz University's English-language magazine.



TRIANGLE G.H. INVITATION TO TENDER

Supply and delivery of livestock food inputs and veterinary medicines for a TRIANGLE GENERATION HUMANITAIRE (TGH) project

Al Mazraq area - Hajjah governorate – Yemen

- Publication reference**
Y33 Sup 01/2010
- Procedure**
Open Tender with Local Publication
- Programme**
Project Reference: TGH/YEM/EC/2010/001
- Financing**
European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office – ECHO
- Contracting authority**
Triangle Génération Humanitaire, Haradh, Yemen
- Contract description**
Supply and delivery of livestock food inputs and veterinary medicines for an emergency project aimed at the conflict affected population of the North of Yemen.
- Indicative number and titles of Lots**
Lot 1: Livestock food inputs
Lot 2: Veterinary medicines
- Intended timing of publication**
The entire tender document can be obtained by contacting: Mrs. Nadia DHIFALLAH via haradh.yemen@trianglegh.org. All tenders will have to be submitted no later than the 20th of September 2010 to the following address:

Triangle Génération Humanitaire – YEMEN
Hodeidah Land
HODEIDAH
Tel : 736 56 56 82
Email: haradh.yemen@trianglegh.org

For information concerning exclusion, selection and award criteria, please consult the administrative stipulations of the tender document.

The tender will be selected taking in account:

- The price of the tender
- The quality of the materials
- The delivery delay

9. Additional information

Any demand for additional information should be addressed to Mrs. Nadia DHIFALLAH.

10. Legal basis

Council Regulation 1257/96 for humanitarian aid



TRIANGLE G.H. INVITATION TO TENDER

Supply and delivery of construction material for a TRIANGLE GENERATION HUMANITAIRE (TGH) project

Al Mazraq area - Hajjah governorate – Yemen

- Publication reference**
Y33 Sup 02/2010
- Procedure**
Open Tender with Local Publication
- Programme**
Project Reference: TGH/YEM/EC/2010/002
- Financing**
European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office – ECHO
- Contracting authority**
Triangle Génération Humanitaire, Haradh, Yemen
- Contract description**
Supply and delivery of construction material for an emergency project aimed at the conflict affected population of the North of Yemen.
- Indicative number and titles of Lots**
Lot 1: Wells construction material
Lot 2: Shelter construction material
- Intended timing of publication**
The entire tender document can be obtained by contacting: Mrs. Nadia DHIFALLAH via haradh.yemen@trianglegh.org. All tenders will have to be submitted no later than the 20th of September 2010 to the following address:

Triangle Génération Humanitaire – YEMEN
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“It is not necessary to be an artist to feel the beauty of life”



By: Malak Shaher

Nabil Al-Qanes, 24, is a young Yemeni cartoonist, promising poet, and short story writer.

Nabil, when did you discover your passion for drawing?
I started before I enrolled in school. My father used to draw simple drawings, although he was not a professional. I was so attracted to drawing that I kept everything he drew. I used to focus on every single line and draw it again. However, my talent was polished by the passage of time.

Tribal men: We swear by God you won't touch them! They are our hostages until the state releases our sheikh...



Extremists: Let's kill these infidels!

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You said you like cartoons more than drawing. Why?

I like it more because it is a sarcastic art, treating a major issue with a simple sketch, and it has a great effect on people.

I have participated in four cartoon exhibitions at Sana'a University and one at the Culture House in Sana'a. I got three awards from Sana'a University, as one of the best participants in two of the exhibitions and the best participant in the last exhibition in 2008.

In 2008, I took a course in cartooning at the Yemeni Association for Developing

Arts and Culture.

You told me that you also write short stories.

Yes. I write short stories and I got third place in a short story competition held at Sana'a University.

I was nominated to leave for Saudi Arabia to participate in a cultural scientific event for Yemeni universities at the King Fahd Bin Abdulaziz University, Jeddah.

I also write poems am now working to publish two collections of poems.

DOCUMENT EXAMINATION TRAINING (DET)

At the request of Yemenia (Yemen Airways) the International Organization for Migration (IOM) provided Expert Training in Travel Document Examination at the Yemenia Training Centre on 12th and 13th July 2010 which was attended by over 16 participants. The trainees invited for this course were not only from Yemenia and Yemen Ground Handling Turkish Airlines, Saudi Arabian Airlines and Gulf Air.

The participants greatly appreciated the training as it provided them with detailed, up-to-date and useful information relating to travel document security and abuse. The IOM training forms a part of the implementation of a European Union funded project entitled "Empowering Government and Civil Society in Yemen to Address Mixed Migration".

The Opening and Closing sessions were attended by Mr. Fawzi Al-Zioud the acting chief of IOM Yemen and Mohammed Y. Aljadabi Director Training along with Mr. Ali Jaffer Director Customer Service and Ground Operations.

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