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# Secret files reveal Yemen and US military links

By: Iona Craig

SANA'A Dec. 1 — President Ali Abdullah Saleh lied about American bombings in Yemen, revealed classified US embassy cables from around the world.

The secret documents were released on the WikiLeaks website earlier this week. It detailed a conversation between President Saleh, US General Petraeus and Yemen's Deputy Prime Minister Rashad Al-Alimi.

The leaked cable marked 'secret' summarized a 90-minute conversation between the US commander of Centcom and President Saleh on January 4 earlier this year.

The cable quotes the president saying, "we'll continue saying the bombs are ours, not yours." He referred to the bombings in Abyan governorate on December 17 and 24 last year which killed 14 women and 21 children.

The document continued: "Prompting Deputy Prime Minister Alimi to joke that he had just 'lied' by telling Parliament that the bombs in Arhab, Abyan, and Shebwa were American-made but deployed by the Republic of Yemen Government."

The leaked cable corroborates images, released earlier this year, showing that the US military carried out the missile strike on an alleged Al Qaeda training camp at Al-Majalah in Abyan on December 2009. Amnesty International confirmed that this missile strike killed 41 local residents.

"The cable appears to confirm Amnesty International's finding that the Abyan strike was carried out by the US military, not Yemeni government forces," said Philip Luther, Amnesty International's Deputy Director for the Middle East and North Africa, in a statement yesterday.

The human rights lobby group said it had yet to receive a response for a

request for information, put to the Pentagon in June, about the involvement of US forces in the Al-Majalah attack. A press report a day after the images were released stated that the US declined to comment on the strike.

The Yemen government has so far failed to respond to the leaked information. Mohammed Al-Qaedi, spokesman for the interior ministry, refused to comment when the Yemen Times contacted him. This newspaper attempted multiple times to contact deputy and senior ministers at the interior ministry and the ministry of foreign affairs, but was unable to get a response.

MP Mansour Aziz Al-Zindani for the Islah opposition party pressed the government to respond.

"It is the responsibility of Yemen's ministry of foreign affairs to provide an explanation to the Yemeni people regarding the Wikileaks revelations... The silence by the government raises doubts," he said.

"In Yemen there is only silence. If it is proved the deputy minister for security and defense affairs, Rashad Al-Alimi, who was mentioned in the WikiLeaks document lied, he should apologize to parliament and resign."

Similarly, the US embassy in Sana'a did not wish to comment when the Yemen Times contacted it and instead referred to the official response released in Washington on Monday.

In the cable, released in the first batch of 251,287 documents to be disclosed by the WikiLeaks site over the next seven days, President Saleh joked about whiskey smuggled into Yemen.

"Tell (Djiboutian President) Ismail Guelleh that I don't care if he smuggles whiskey into Yemen — provided it's good whiskey — but not drugs or weapons," the document quotes the president.

The cable detailing the confidential conversation between the US military

commander and Yemen's leader is just one recorded conversation in the largest set of confidential documents ever to be released into the public domain. The non-profit media organization, WikiLeaks, was launched in 2006 and is led by former computer hacker Julian Assange from Australia. The publisher, which specializes in releasing anonymous sourced data, has previously been responsible for leaking thousands of documents involving US military actions in both the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The WikiLeaks website began publishing this current leak of US embassy cables last Sunday, giving people around the world an insight into US foreign activity from 1966 to February this year.

The cables contain confidential communications between 274 embassies in countries throughout the world and the State Department in Washington DC. At least 15,652 of the cables are classified 'Secret'. It's believed that Bradley Manning, 22-year-old US intelligence analyst, leaked the data to the website. Manning was arrested and charged with the unauthorized use and disclosure of U.S. classified information in May.

The first 'data dump' on Sunday by WikiLeaks involved mainly Middle Eastern countries. Other information revealed in the cables indicated the threat of Iran felt by leaders across the region.

King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia pressed the US to attack Iran. In February last year, the UAE asked the US for five Patriot missile batteries to shoot down incoming Iranian missiles because of an "increasingly likely preemptive Israeli attack" on Iran's nuclear facilities.

According to the leaked documents the UAE believes Yemen's Houthi rebel movement is supported by Iran and Syrian authorities continue to give weapons to Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Iran's President Ahmadinejad sought to dismiss the leaked diplomatic cables. In a live TV press briefing, he called them US "mischief" aimed to destabilise an already volatile region.

The Yemen Times understands further Yemen-related cables would be released by the WikiLeaks site this week, possibly on Saturday.

Additional reporting from Ali Saeed.

# Elections to take place next April regardless of opposition

By: Nadia Al-Sakkaf

SANA'A Dec. 1 — In his key note on the occasion of the 30th Nov. anniversary, marking the British evacuation from Aden in 1967, President Ali Abdullah Saleh promised that the controversial parliamentary elections due next April will take place no matter what.

"Whoever wants to participate can, whoever wants to boycott can and in all ways we will go ahead with this democratic process," said the president.

But the president's assertions, which are not new, have not been received well by the opposition parties who have "had enough of the ruling party's stalling" as stated by Mohamed Al-Sabri, spokesman of the dialogue committee on behalf of the opposition Nasserite party.

"We agreed to amend the constitution and then work on the electoral system. But so far the president and his party keep delaying this," he said about the electoral amendments.

However, the president said that the lack of consensus between the ruling party and opposition coalition, the Joint Meeting Parties, should not prevent the elections from taking place.

Saleh provided the opposition with a compromise whereby he announced that the electoral committee at the Supreme Commission for Elections and Referendum (SCER) will be comprised of judges and not representatives of political parties as was previously the case.

"If political affiliation is the problem then we should do without it. After all we were all born free human beings and not politicians," he said in Aden.

The amended elections law has been proposed to the parliament for discussion.

Although having a committee comprised of judges may seem neutral, lawyer Khaled Al-Ansi and human rights activist says this decision is more of an unstudied reaction than a real solution because it needs a constitutional amendment to be valid.

"We risk politicizing our judges. We have been trying to reform the judicial system but involving it in elections would be repeating the mistake made in Egypt," he said.

He said that the judicial system should remain as a reference body for disputes concerning elections.

Prior to this new decree, the SCER was made of 9 members - four from the ruling party, four independent and one from the Nasserite party.

Its structure was a point of disagreement between the ruling party and opposition among other issues.

On these grounds, the JMP had threatened to boycott the parliamentary elections when it was due two years



President Saleh speaking at the 43th anniversary of the 30th Nov. independence day celebration in Aden on Tuesday.

ago in 2009, which lead to postponing them until next year.

The demanded reforms in the electoral system have not been made until now, the opposition is threatening to

boycott the elections again.

It is yet to be seen whether the change in the SCER structure would soften the opposition's stance towards the coming elections or not.

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## Yemen, India rural project launches

By: Yazeed Kamaldien

SANA'A, Dec 2 – A cross-border partnership between researchers in Yemen and India aims to improve the lives of these country's rural women via educational interventions and self-help groups.

Academics focusing on women's issues met at Sana'a University earlier this week for the launch of the 'Alternative Curriculum for Rural Women School Drop-Outs' project. Its founder and co-ordinator Professor RK Jayaraman said that they aim to conduct their research and program development initiative within the next three years.

Jayaraman is chairman of Sana'a University's English language department and developed the project framework over an eight-month period. The project has secured funding from the British Council, the Department for International Development and the UK government's office in Sana'a.

"We are going to do an extensive survey in ten villages in Al-Mahweet governorate. We will focus in and around the Shibam district in Al-Mahweet. We want to know why young girls are dropping out of school. We want to research whether there has been an increase or decrease in school drop-outs among young women," said Jayaraman.

"People in rural areas give us well-known causes for this, such as early marriage or not having schools exclusively for women and poverty. But every village is different and we would like to interview 100 families in each village for our research."



Professor RK Jayaraman is leading a project that aims to improve the lives of rural women in Yemen.

Jayaraman said that their project goals were aligned with the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (UN MDGs). He said they would use these as guidelines for their interventions.

"Poverty reduction, women's empowerment, waste management and clean energy are all part of the MDGs. We are planning to turn forest waste into energy and introduce solar energy. We will talk to schools, parents and young women about these goals," said Jayaraman.

He said their goal was to ensure that rural women who have dropped out of school have access to self-help groups. He said that the "illiteracy rate

for women in villages is 70% and more men than women can read".

"We want to create for women drop-outs a curriculum of things to do. We will assist them to take up projects. We have spoken to sponsors for some of these groups. We are also approaching micro-financing banks in Yemen. The idea is that the bank makes a loan available to a group who has a viable idea," said Jayaraman.

"We are concentrating on non-formal curriculum components. It would focus on the needs of young women. Girls normally leave schools when they come of age. We will introduce non-formal schools where girls will learn how to run small-scale economic projects."

He said that this would "not interfere with the cultural and religious fabric of rural Yemen".

"The successful integration of Yemen into the international community depends on the growth of its rural areas. We want to empower families. If you educate a woman you educate a family," said Jayaraman.

Dr Chandrakant Puri is director of the Centre for Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy which is the project's Indian counterpart based in Mumbai. He said that the two countries could share lessons on the common issues they faced.

"We have similar poverty, environment, sanitation and education issues. We have the same problem of girls dropping out of schools," said Puri.

He said that the two partners would conduct the same research in ten villages in each country. They also hoped to learn from each other's "best practice" and create improved programs, said Puri.

"We have implemented women's and self-help groups in India. Rural women's lives have improved. One woman was illiterate and she started working and earned money to take care of her children. We can share these experiences with Yemen," said Puri.

"We are visiting Yemen's villages as well and we want to learn about what they do. They are doing well with water sanitation and there have been improvements with education. We would like to take these lessons back to India and improve our programs."

### What are the UN Millennium Development Goals?

The UN MDGs are derived from the Millennium Declaration signed by 189 countries in September 2000. It vigorously promotes human development as the key sustaining social and economic progress in all countries and recognizes the importance of creating global partnerships for development. The goals have been commonly accepted as a framework for measuring development progress.

There are eight goals comprising 21 targets and 60 indicators which are to be achieved by 2015. The goals include eradicating extreme poverty and hunger; achieving universal primary education; promote gender equality and women empowerment; reduce child mortality; improve maternal health; combat HIV/Aids, malaria and other diseases; ensure environmental sustainability and develop global partnerships for development.

Source: United Nations

## Al-Qaeda targeting Muslim civilians

By: Shatha Al-Harazi

SANA'A, Dec. 2 – Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) has declared that its new plan is to target civilians in Yemen, with last week's two suicide operations in the north launching it.

A suicide bombing in Al-Jawf governorate last Wednesday killed 23 people at a procession of supporters of Shiite rebels. Another suicide car bomb killed at least two Houthis and wounded many others two days later.

AQAP issued a press release last Friday declaring its aim to target Shiite civilians instead of the state. It warned Sunni Muslims not to attend any Shiite Muslim gatherings.

"This press release is a huge turning point for Al-Qaeda in Yemen. This strategy was found in Iraq and Pakistan in other periods, but never in Yemen. This will put the whole country in danger," said political analyst Ahmad Al-Zurqa.

AQAP said: "The targets of our project for now are the Houthis, therefore we warn Sunnis to avoid their gatherings and processions. We ask those supporting the deceitful to leave the Houthis before it is too late. We have prepared men who will not rest until they clean the earth of their [Houthis] crimes against Sunnis."

AQAP claimed to have formed special units to eradicate what it described as the "malicious plant" that Iran's Shiites have planted in Sa'ada and adjacent areas, led by the Houthis.

This new strategy of targeting civilians is a result of the failure of "apostasy governments" in Sana'a and Riyadh – despite their great ability to fight – to deal with the Houthis, according to the press release.

"We call Sunnis to enroll in the Defense Brigades in the Prophet's (Muhammad) honor. The Shiite danger is coming, and if not rectified, the Shiites will do to them what they have done to Sunnis in Iraq and Afghanistan. Keep in

mind that the Saudi and Yemeni armies are not representative of the Sunni people," said AQAP in its press release.

Al-Zurqa replied: "The strange thing in this press release is the timing. Al-Qaeda has always fought the state, not civilians".

About the benefits to the Yemeni state from a war between the Houthis and Al-Qaeda, Al-Zurqa said: "We can consider this change in Al-Qaeda policy as an unannounced agreement between some people in the regime and Al-Qaeda. But of course, no government plans to be involved in such troubles.

"Saudi Arabia will be the biggest beneficiary from a war between Al-Qaeda and the Houthis.

"Saudi Arabia will hit two birds with one stone, as they are both dangers to Saudi security. Whether Al-Qaeda defeat the Houthis or vice versa [it is good for Saudi Arabia]."

### Preachers' Syndicate condemns attacks

"We condemn AQAP for these attacks and the way they adopted it. We are against conflicts between creeds. After all, we are all Yemenis in the same ship, regardless of affiliation or creed. This is not a one-creed country," said Mohammed Al-Ghaili, a member of the Preachers' Syndicate.

"What happened in Jawf is a first of its kind. The killing of civilians. And we remind people that killing people or assaulting them in the streets is generally not allowed in Islam," said Al-Ghaili.

The Preachers' Syndicate concedes that not all preachers talked about the explosions during their Friday sermons. Al-Ghaili explained that some preachers do not include content about the latest political problems but that others do raise awareness of the Islamic point of view about these conflicts.

### Saudi doctor kidnapped

A Saudi doctor was kidnapped by gunmen on Sunday near the border with Saudi Arabia while on his way back into Yemen.

Kidnappers drove the hostage to Wadi Al-Ghabara, 70 km north of Sa'ada, a local official who asked not to be identified told AFP.

Dr. Dhafer Al-Shihri, the 48-year-old acting head of Al-Salam Hospital in Sa'ada City, is the first Arab national to be kidnapped in the area. The doctor was released after only one day and traveled back to Saudi Arabia, a hospital official told the Yemen Times.

The kidnappers released the doctor the next morning after the state reached an agreement with them, said Hanbosh Houssien, head of the health office in Sa'ada governorate.

"I received him myself, and I ensure you that he is in good health," said Houssien.

Yemeni media reported widely that Al-Shihri was kidnapped by members of Al-Qaeda, who demanded the release of nine jailed members of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).

Yemen Times contacted the head of security in Sa'ada, Abd Al-Hakeem Al-Mawri, to find out how Al-Shihri was released. He refused to comment saying that he was not allowed to reveal any information.

Political analyst Ahmad Al-Zurqa said that Al-Shihri was "released through tribal mediation, and mostly it was related to gun dealers".

"It has nothing to do with Al-Qaeda, as they don't have a history of kidnapping [in Yemen] and it's not their policy. Even in other countries, if Al-Qaeda kidnap, they kidnap a lot of people, not one only. And they don't release them, they usually execute them," he said.

The Shiite Zaidi rebels, also known as the Houthis, have observed an uneasy truce with the Sana'a government since February 2010.

## Government fails to deliver 2011 financial budget

By: Ali Saeed

SANA'A, Dec 2 – The Yemen government has failed to unveil its 2011 budget as required by the country's constitution which compels it to do so two months before the start of the new fiscal year.

The Yemen Times has confirmed this with economist Ali Al-Wafi who is the former chairman of the parliamentary financial committee. And while the 2011 budget should already have been finalized, the government last Saturday requested an extra YR285.385-billion (USD1.333-billion) for this year's financial budget.

Yemen's parliament last Monday asked the country's minister of finance, Noa'man Al-Suhaibi, to justify the additional funds request. Al-Suhaibi told the parliament that the government had overspent its 2010 budget by the end of September.

He said that most of the budget had been spent on oil derivatives such as diesel and petrol. This totaled YR167.371-billion (USD782-million). The government also spent YR41.773-

billion (USD195-million) on internal debts and interest on internal debts.

Al-Wafi said that the government had overspent its budget in recent years. He warned that any logical budget increase should not exceed 5 percent of the annual budget.

He accused the government of asking for annual budget increases so that corrupt politicians could benefit financially.

"Spending is calculated in the budget but this figure is always exceeded when it comes to implementation," said Al-Wafi.

He criticized the government for not finalizing the 2011 budget and said that this would lead to "chaos".

"When there is no budget there will be chaos and chances of corruption will increase... The budget defines expenditures and revenues and without such a reference spending will be based on how officials feel. It will be far from the social and economic objectives of resource allocation," said Al-Wafi.

"It is a constitutional obligation that the government finalizes the budget and the parliament must hold the gov-

ernment responsible for this," he said.

He said that if the parliament does not do this then it has failed in one of its essential functions.

Shawki Al-Qadi, a member of parliament from the Islah opposition party, told the Yemen Times that the parliament was weak and fully controlled by the ruling party.

"The government this year has requested an additional fund at a time when it was supposed to submit a new budget for the coming year," he said.

He said that the parliament was "weak" in its response to the government's request for extra funds.

"The parliament is weak and can't do anything. The opposition is also weak as it has been following tribal strategies and has no representatives who have specialized in anything specific," said Al-Qadi.

"During elections, the opposition introduces tribal leaders or imams of mosques instead of qualified and specialized candidates as representatives."

The ministry of electricity and energy could not be reached for comment at the time of publication yesterday.

## SMS service to ease aid distribution

SA'ADA, Dec. 2 – Internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Sa'ada can now receive text messages from relief agencies with the details of the next food distribution, as well as instructions for attendance and pick-up.

This service is part of a new initiative by the World Food Program (WFP) to reach thousands of beneficiaries with instantaneous reliability.

The WFP has assisted IDPs in northern Yemen since June 2007. Nearly all beneficiaries carry mobile telephones and can receive text messages.

"Using the SMS-method is clearly most cost effective due to the better organization and implementation of distributions," said WFP deputy country director, Adham Musallam.

WFP works with agency partners Islamic Relief, ADRA and IOM. The current Sa'adah operation targets 300,000 IDPs and provides 2,000 metric tons of food assistance per month. Despite insufficient funding the impact of ongoing operations has been positive, contributing to maintain food consumption and nutritional status. However, as many beneficiaries under this operation are migratory, communicating the logistical details of monthly food distributions presents a challenge. Beneficiaries may

receive the necessary information incomplete or late.

This new medium of communication was piloted in one distribution center in September 2010. The response from beneficiaries was overwhelmingly positive.

Proving that SMS enables WFP to better coordinate and communicate with beneficiaries, the distribution center reported a dramatic increase in beneficiary attendance. Beneficiaries happily showed WFP staff the SMS messages they had received and encouraged the agency to expand this method of information sharing.

Responding to the positive feedback from beneficiaries, WFP is collecting contact information to expand SMS communications into a hotline available to all beneficiaries under the Sa'adah operation.

WFP continues to investigate further applications for the SMS-method, including conducting quick surveys to gather feedback about distributions (including any information in cases of misappropriation), food quality/quantity, and other information to improve WFP ground activities. This survey methodology will enable faster receipt of feedback, reduce time consuming

data entry, and facilitate cleaner and more cost effective analyses.

WFP Country Director, Gian Carlo Cirri, pointed out "this approach will facilitate our ability to ensure that the right food is reaching the right people in a situation of severe food-insecurity."

It is worth mentioning that during last month The WFP in coordination with the Ministry of Education distributed food items to nearly 110,000 severely food insecure Yemeni families (800,000 individuals) through 1,070 distribution centers.

This Emergency Food Safety Net operation covers five of the most food insecure governorates - Raima, Ibb, Hajja, Amran and Al-Dhala – with targeted food assistance to help the most food insecure families close the hunger gap and meet basic daily nutrition requirements.

For these 110,000 families just buying bread requires them to spend 35 percent of their already meager incomes. Due to poor and limited diet, beneficiaries suffer from an alarming 500 kilocalorie gap in nutritional needs. During this distribution of two-month rations, WFP provided each family with 50kg bags of wheat flour.

## In Brief

### SANA'A President orders to organize football championship at the level of Horn of Africa

Minister of Youth and Sports Hamoud Ubad revealed on Tuesday that President Ali Abdullah Saleh ordered to organize a championship at the level of the Horn of Africa and Sana'a Forum to be hosted by Aden. Ubad said such a championship would test Yemeni football and continue its development.

Asked about the possibility to enroll Yemen with other sports bodies, the minister said that Yemen handed a letter to the secretary-general of the Gulf Cooperation Council AbdulRahman al-Attiyah in which he demanded to enroll Yemen to the different unions of sports in the Gulf states before one year passes, indicating that al-Attiyah will study the Yemeni request.

The minister said until now Yemen did not receive a reply but received confirmation of this letter and that the study will be responded to.

Despite losing the Gulf 20, there are many Yemeni football fans who do not despair, said the minister.

The youth minister described the Yemeni football as "sharp shocking" and affirming that the government provided what it can provide for this team and built it in a good form but its result came disappointing to the Yemeni fans.

The ministry will take into consideration these results and will report of what have been achieved in order to take the right study of this championship.

### Conference of academic accreditation, medical education concluded

The first conference to accredit the Medical Education Development for Eastern Mediterranean called on Tuesday to establish a regional authority to accredit the medical colleges in the Mediterranean.

The conference which was concluded Tuesday also called on the regional Office of the World Health Organization (WTO), the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME) and Scientific Society for Arab Faculties of Medicine to support the national systems for accreditation. The participants, which represent Yemen, Arab States, Malaysia, Iran and Turkey, in their final report called the relevant national bodies in the Mediterranean to accelerate in putting the vocational and national systems for accreditation and activating the regional committee of the Mediterranean in its meeting in the Egyptian capital, Cairo in 2003, in order to put such systems.

In the four days, the participants in the conference which was organized by the University of Science and Technology in collaboration with WTO and WFME urged medical and health faculties in the member states to activate their activities in the field of acceleration and develop curriculum in order to cope with the modern development in the medical education.

The participants accented to take the necessary action to approve a magazine of medical faculties issued by Scientific Society for Arab Faculties of Medicine in order to accredit research publications for the purposes of moving up academy for

the professor staff. They also advised the regional office to address the concerned authorities by this recommendations as well as continuing its implementation according to their specializations and provide procedural report of what have been achieved in every recommendation in the next conference which might be held at the Jordan University next year.

The recommendation also called on holding a regional meeting on accreditation to continue the current various experiences in the Mediterranean and building institutional capacities in the medical faculties.

### ADEN UNODC ready to support Yemen coastguard – coordinator

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has expressed readiness to provide technical and scientific assistance to the Yemeni coastguard, especially in the field of training and qualification.

On his visit to the Aden-based coastguard, the UNODC's technical coordinator Alan Cool praised the role the coastguard plays in providing services for distress cases, fighting piracy and safeguarding waterways as well as its coordination with international anti-piracy missions off Yemen.

He was briefed on services provided to serve international navigation and on technical training of coastguards in rescue and fighting pirates.

The readiness level of the forces is very good, he said. On his trip, Cool paid a visit to the central workshop of the coastguard and was briefed on its operations.

# Rape on the rise, women and girls still at risk

By: Safiya Aljabry

SANA'A, Dec. 2 — Fear and shame still prevents women and their families from reporting rape to authorities, said a local non-governmental organization in an interview with the Yemen Times this week.

Houria Mashhoor, acting head of the Women National Committee, also said that rape was slowly on the rise in Yemen. The Sisters Arab Forum confirmed that 28 rape cases were reported in Yemen over the last six months. This was an increase of one rape per month recorded in 2009.

The forum's latest statistics released last month indicated that most of the rape victims were women and children. Shatha Naser, an independent lawyer in Sana'a, said that in most

cases the attackers are not brought to justice because of lack of evidence or witnesses. She said that rape survivors sometimes abandon legal proceedings before conclusion.

"The law clearly states that violently attacking someone deserves a sentencing of at least five years in jail," said Naser. "However, if the crime is attempted rape, the acting judge can decide what the sentencing should be."

"But the sentencing on rape also depends on other things like the victim's age or gender. It also depends on the rapist. Sentencing will vary if the rapist is a family member rather than a complete stranger."

According to Yemeni law, the punishment for rape is imprisonment for up to 15 years. The accused must confess or the defense needs to provide

four female or two male witnesses to the crime. The government has also stated in 2008 that it wants to introduce DNA technology as part rape investigations.

Mashhoor said that in most rape cases, women and girls who are raped, or harassed, are held responsible for the crime.

"They are usually told that it's the way that they dress, walk or the time that they go out that led to their attacks. Sometimes they are even accused of purposely wearing perfume to allure men," she said.

"In a culture like ours, these women and girls feel that hiding their painful secret is better than being the gossip of everyone who knows the," said the lawyer. "Instead of being treated as the victims, they are made to feel as

if rape is their fault. That's why some of the victims are scared to report incidents of rape and harassment."

She said that some Yemeni families end up killing rape victims to cover up the perceived disgrace.

"The Yemeni government is not thorough enough when it comes to following up death certificates, so covering up murders for the sake of honor is pretty easy," she said.

Ahlam Baqtian from the Sister Arab Forum told the Yemen Times that most of the rape cases reported in the last six months occurred in Ibb governorate.

"We are planning to start a campaign against rape," said Baqtian.

**Survivor of attempted rape speaks out**

Fathiya Abdo, a 32-year-old Ethiopian house maid, clearly remembers the details of her attack with an aching heart. It was on a normal working day, just a little after dusk, when Abdo left her employer's house to go home after a long and tiring day.

Abdo walked to the bus station and boarded a bus a distance from the main station. There were no other passengers inside the bus. Abdo felt scared but comforted herself with the thought that others would soon board the bus.

Abdo started worrying when she saw the driver taking another route that wasn't her normal one.

"He drove towards a quieter place, got down and came towards me. He attacked me like a wild animal and tried to rape me. I was shocked, scared and trembling at the same time. I be-

lieve Allah gave me the power to fight back," she said, as tears ran down her cheeks. She said that while she was struggling to free herself from the bus driver, another bus driver passed by, heard her screams and got off his bus to help her.

Abdo was lucky to escape her attacker safely but had a bruised heart that will never fully recover from the incident. Her story is one that is known while there are many that remain untold.

Abdo said that the bus driver who rescued her called out to other passersby. They took her and the attacker to the nearest traffic officer where they reported the incident. Abdo said her attacker was jailed for only six days and that she doesn't have enough money or resources to follow the case.

# Police arrest human rights activist in Amran

By: Malak Shaher

SANA'A, Dec.1 — Human rights activist Mohammad Al-Moayad was detained by police in Amran yesterday when he went to the police station to enquire why Zaidis were arrested last Friday.

Police arrested at least 25 Zaidis on Friday when they commemorated Al-Ghadeer day, a Shiite religious ceremony. Al-Moayad is a member of the Yemeni Democratic Organization for Defending Human Rights that had obtained permission from the Supreme Court to investigate police charges against the Zaidis.

Ali Al-Dailami, head of the human rights organization, told the Yemen Times yesterday that they "went to Amran security office to find out why Zaidis were arrested when they were celebrating Al-Ghadeer day."

"We were astonished when the head of the security office came out angrily and threw stones at us. After

that Al-Moayad and two of the detainees relatives were arrested," said Al-Dailami.

He said that although those arrested on Friday shared the same Islamic affiliation to the Zaidi sect, this did not necessarily mean that they had any connection with the Houthis.

Abdulsalam Al-Makhethi, 31, said that his 60-year-old father and brother were also arrested. He said that his brother was taken into custody when he went to the police station to ask about their father.

"They have nothing to do with the Houthis. They were arrested without committing any crime. My father is a Zaidi imam and was dancing on the celebration day," said Al-Makhethi.

The Yemen Times contacted the head of the state prosecution but he said that he was not allowed to reveal any information on the incident.

The Yemeni Democratic Organization for Defending Human Rights this week condemned the arrest of un-

armed people who were participating in religious events.

Ali Al-Assi, a lawyer with the human rights organization, said that the government's reaction to the Houthis was not solving the conflict.

"Unfortunately, the more the government exaggerates its security precautions and arrests people just to be 'safe', the more these people eventually turn out to help Houthis in their war against the government," said Al-Assi.


The Yemeni government has been at war with Houthis since 2004 when the rebel group declared they wanted an independent state in Sa'ada.

Al-Dailami said that the Houthis were a minority of only 200 persons in 2004 but more people were joining their cause.

Violence in Sa'ada has escalated since Nov. 15 when clashes between pro-government tribes and Houthis erupted. At least 26 people were killed and another 12 were injured.



Government soldiers arrested two family members and a human rights activist in Sa'ada on Wednesday in connection with the arrest of 25 Zaidis on Nov.26




## World AIDS Day 2010

Uniting the World Against AIDS for:  
**Zero new HIV infections, Zero stigma and discrimination, Zero AIDS-related deaths**

The individuals and the organizations gathered on the World AIDS Day celebrated on 1st December 2010 and acknowledged the struggle against HIV/AIDS. On this occasion Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, United Nations Secretary General and Mr. Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS, during their respective speeches, expressed their satisfaction regarding reduction in HIV cases and its stabilization across the globe.

### The Secretary-General Message For World AIDS Day



**Ban Ki-Moon**

1 December 2010 — Next year will mark the 30th anniversary of the AIDS epidemic. This milestone offers a moment to reflect -- and to renew our resolve.

Over the past three decades, AIDS has caused untold suffering and death. But another story has unfolded through the years, one of the global community uniting with passion to take action and save lives. These efforts are making a real difference around the world.

Fewer people are becoming infected with HIV. Millions of people have gained access to HIV treatment. More women are now able to prevent their babies from becoming infected with HIV. Travel restrictions for people living with HIV are being lifted by many countries, as stigma gives way -- still too slowly -- to compassion and recognition of human rights.


With commitment and solidarity, this movement is helping the world turn the corner on the AIDS epidemic. We have finally reached the first part of Millennium Development Goal 6 -- by halting and beginning to reverse the spread of HIV. We must continue to chart a new and bold path ahead.

Our common goal is clear: universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. We must also work to make the AIDS response sustainable.

Three decades into this crisis, let us set our sights on achieving the "three zeros" -- zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths. On this World AIDS Day, let us pledge to work together to realize this vision for all of the world's people.

### 2010 WORLD AIDS DAY MESSAGE

**Zero new HIV infections. Zero discrimination. Zero AIDS-related deaths.**



**Michel Sidibé**  
Executive Director of UN-AIDS and Under Secretary-General of the United Nations

1 December 2010 — On this World AIDS Day we can be proud.

Globally we have reduced the number of new HIV infections and deaths by nearly 20%. This means less people are becoming infected with HIV and less people are dying from AIDS.

56 countries have either stabilized or significantly reduced the rate of new HIV infections.

For the first time, we have broken the trajectory of the AIDS epidemic and reached the first part of the Millennium Development Goal for HIV.

We have achieved this amazing milestone because families, communities, governments-- and UNAIDS have united the world in an unprecedented movement.

We are prevailing...with political commitment, leadership from all sectors including leaders of faith...with science, with evidence, with human rights, and passion.

### Global summary of the AIDS epidemic - 2009

Number of people living with HIV		People newly infected with HIV in 2009		AIDS deaths in 2009	
<b>Total</b>	<b>33.3 million [31.4 million–35.3 million]</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>2.6 million [2.3 million–2.8 million]</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1.8 million [1.6 million–2.1 million]</b>
<b>Adult</b>	<b>30.8 million [29.2 million–32.6 million]</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>2.2 million [2.0 million–2.4 million]</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>1.6 million [1.4 million–1.8 million]</b>
<b>Women</b>	<b>15.9 million [14.8 million–17.2 million]</b>	<b>Children (&lt;15 years)</b>	<b>370 000 [230 000–510 000]</b>	<b>Children (&lt;15 years)</b>	<b>260 000 [150 000–360 000]</b>
<b>Children (&lt;15 years)</b>	<b>2.5 million [1.6 –3.4 million]</b>				

**Global Estimates for adults and children - 2009**  
 People living with HIV 33.3 million [31.4 million – 35.3 million]  
 New HIV infections in 2009 2.6 million [2.3 million – 2.8 million]  
 Deaths due to AIDS in 2009 1.8 million [1.6 million – 2.1 million]

**2009 global HIV and AIDS estimates Children (<15 years)**  
 Children living with HIV 2.5 million [1.6 million – 3.4 million]  
 New HIV infections in 2009 370 000 [230 000 – 510 000]  
 Deaths due to AIDS in 2009 260 000 [150 000 – 360 000]

**Over 7000 new HIV infections a day in 2009**  
 About 97% are in low and middle income countries  
 About 1000 are in children under 15 years of age  
 About 6000 are in adults aged 15 years and older, of whom:  
 \* almost 51% are among women  
 \* about 41% are among young people (15-24)



Taiz governor: This is not an ordinary wedding; it is in fact an accomplishment to be added to the list of this pioneer and loyal group's achievements towards its nation and its employees

## Mass wedding for 100 bride and groom of Ahmed Abdullah Al-Shaibani Companies Group



Taiz governor key note



Abdubakr Al-Shaibani presents the grooms gold jewelry sets and other gifts



Side of the audience



During the lunch feast

The premier industrial group with the first industry establishment in Yemen presents the Patron of Investment President Saleh with the First Golden Industry Shield

Businessman Abubakr Ahmed Al-Shaibani deputy chair of Ahmed Abdullah Al-Shaibani group of companies celebrated the wedding of his son Fares over two months ago. In the happy event, we saw how the father was beaming with happiness at his son's happy occasion and his transformation from the son to a father to be. His delight was visible through his warm smile and proud looks whenever he welcomed guests as he glanced at his son. He again enjoyed the same feelings when he invited guests to another wedding, not of any of his children but that of 100 brides and groom of his employees.

The Mass wedding which took place on 24 November 2010, was also marking the 40th anniversary since the group of company's establishment.

The Mass wedding organized on the group's expenses was a response to the directives of Ahmed Abdullah Al-Shaibani chair of the group's board of directors.

This is yet again another indicator of the kindness and generosity of founder of the group and was clearly visible the details of organization and the happiness of Abubakr Al-Shaibani as if the 100 brides and grooms were his own children. In the key note on the event Abdubakr he mentioned how he wanted to call the wedding "Al-Shaibani family's celebrations" because he felt that all the employees belong to his own family, but then changed his mind in order to respect



Founder of the group Ahmed Abdullah Al-Shaibani chair of the board of directors of Ahmed Abdullah AL-Shaibani business group

the individuality of each of the newly married couples. This festive event displayed once again the humane relation between Al-Shaibani management and its staff and how the founder Ahmed Abdullah Al-Shaibani set down an example of philanthropy through the privileges he provided his staff.

Taiz governor Hamoud Khaled Al-Sofi attended the wedding and delivered a speech in which he praised the event and that such mass weddings convey the beautiful traditions

of our Yemeni society. "There are many business groups and enterprises that support such mass weddings, but many forget to provide the youth with job opportunities. This is how Al-Shaibani group is special as it provides job opportunities in order to ensure that the newly married will have a comfortable stable life," said Al-Sofi.

This gesture again confirms the strong principles the business group is based on and its mission to contribute to the nation's development not only economically but also socially and from a humane perspective.

Taiz governor also presented the compliments and congratulations of president Saleh to the grooms and brides.

During the event which included a lunch feast, each new couple received a gold jewelry set and other in-kind gifts to help them with their new lives. Concluding the event, Abubakr Al-Shaibani thanked all the people behind the success of this event mainly Aref Al-Shaibani head of the organizing committee of the mass wedding and the person behind the details that made the event a great success.

The mass wedding was attended by deputy governor Abdullah Amir and deputy chief security general Abdhaleem Noman and a number of officials. Also attending the event representatives of the civil society, media and families and friends of the newly married couples.



Deputy chair of Al-Shaibani Group board of directors giving his key note on behalf of the group



Abdubakr Al-Shaibani hands over the Gold Industry Shield Award to Taiz governor to be delivered to the president



Founder of the group Ahmed Abdullah Al-Shaibani welcomes his guests



Taiz governor (center) along with members of AL-Shaibani group managers as well as Aref Al-Shaibani (far right) head of the event's organizing committee

# Gulf 20 leaves Yemeni fans frustrated

By: Ali Saeed

Yemeni football fans, at home and abroad, have been disappointed by the team's performance during the 20th Gulf Cup.

The tournament, hosted by Yemen for the first time since its inception in 1970 and held in the southern governorates of Aden and Abyan, includes six Gulf nations plus Iraq.

The Yemeni team played their first match on the opening day of the tournament losing 4-0 to Saudi Arabia. In their second game they managed to score their one and only goal of the tournament against Qatar, a match they went on to lose by 2-1 last Thursday at Al-Wahda Stadium in Abyan.

Some Yemeni employees, who adjusted their working hours to be able to watch the games, are now very upset by the team's losses and humiliation in their homeland.

Lutfi Al-Ahmd, an employee at Sabafon mobile phone company, expressed his regret after shifting his working hours from the evening to the morning to be able to watch the matches.

"I and some of my colleagues shifted our working time to watch our national team making progress and win the cup, as the team was playing on its land and among its fans," Al-Ahmd said.

watch for the national team," Al-Sulih said. "I was scared that the electricity would be cut off while the match was on, so I found an alternative place to watch the match."

When Yemen failed to score against Saudi Arabia in their first match at the 22 May Stadium in Aden, Al-Sulih thought that Yemen may have lost to the Saudi team due to the inequality between the two teams, and that Yemen would have better results in following matches.

So again he prepared himself to watch Yemen play Qatar on Thursday Nov. 25. Yemen scored its goal early in the match against Qatar. Al-Sulih, with millions of other Yemenis at home and abroad clapped their hands and celebrated, with Yemen's first victory on its own soil within sight. But within a few minutes Qatar had equalized, and then followed up with two more goals, literally kicking the host nation out of the competition.

"Yemen's team in both matches, with Saudi Arabia and Qatar, played a low level of football compared to other Gulf country teams," Al-Sulih said.

"Players on our national team were chosen according to tribal allegiance and not according to the players' experience and skills," he said.

Al-Ahmd said that football clubs in Yemen are not supported and that has weakened the team's skills, and con-

infrastructure issues and opposition from participating countries over security concerns. But the preparation and infrastructure rehabilitation of stadiums, hotels and roads has cost Yemen YR 120 billion (USD 560 million).

Dr. Mohammad Jubran, professor of economics at the University of Sana'a told the Yemen Times that football can be a good investment for countries, but for Yemen the national team had been producing bad performances.

"The Yemeni players in the team were selected badly by the Yemeni Football Federation, whose administration is controlled by some businessmen who have no sports background," the professor said.

Jubran said that Yemen failed in its team preparation and that the government had concentrated on the hosting of the championships, and its success in Aden and Abyan, without taking care of the team.

He said that Yemen's current Croatian coach, Srecko Juricic, whose salary is the second highest among the Gulf States at EUR 1.2 million a year, according to Saba news agency, did not have any input in selecting the team and was presented with a pre-picked team.

"The coach is supposed to go himself to football clubs around the country to select footballers," Jubran said.

Many preachers' sermons in the capital Sana'a focused on the 20th Gulf Cup. Preachers criticized the timing of the opening ceremony in Aden which clashed with the Al-Maghreb prayer at around 5:30 pm.

They also said that Yemen's hosting of the game was not appropriate as it cost the country billions of riyals. They said that the money should have been spent on education, health development projects and other more pressing needs in Yemen.

Mohammad Al-Hazmi, an Islamist parliamentarian and preacher at a mosque in the capital Sana'a, told newsyemen.net that a group of Yemeni Islamic scholars had secretly sent a letter to the President asking him to check that girls were not allowed to dance and no alcohol was consumed in Aden. Two days before the launch of the Gulf Cup championship, the state-run newspapers Al-Thawra and Saba News agency denied these reports as rumors.

At the first match between Yemen and Saudi Arabia, more than 30,000 Yemenis turned up at the 22 May Stadium in Aden to support the national team, but Yemen lost 4-0. Al-Sulih suggested that the football federation in Yemen should resign and officials in this post should be selected according to their experience and capabilities, and not by money.

"If the football administration in the country is qualified, sufficient and honest, Yemen's team will be able to perform at a better level and the nation will no longer be disappointed."

# Yemen's women in pursuit of sport

By: Shatha Al-Harazi

The 52 year-old mother sat eagerly in front of her television set.

"They are our children and we are all proud of them, that's why I'm watching," she said, before shouting "Gooooooool!" as Qatar scored their first goal against Yemen, unaware that she was cheering for the wrong team.

Yemen is currently living with a new spirit of sport mania during the ongoing Gulf Cup, as football fever spreads across the country. One scene that hasn't been witnessed before is women waiting for football matches to start. Women's sessions have become increasingly more about sport talk than the usual conversations about fashion or cooking.

There are many girls who know the rules of football and enjoy watching it.

Sara Ahmed, a university student, thinks that girls have learned a lot more about football. "I used to fight with my brother when he changed the channel to watch football, and now we all watch the match at home," Sara said. "So when people start a conversation about it we know what they are talking about."

"Usually women in Yemen already have a physically active life, especially women in the mountains and villages," said 23 year-old Riham Al-Maswari. "All the hard work they do keeps them fit and in good shape, so they don't really need the usual sports that people in other countries do."

Women's sports officially started in Yemen in 2000 in Aden, when women were encouraged to participate in Chess and Judo. Yemeni Judo athletes from Aden have won regional contests.

A report on the world's tournaments that Yemen participated in 2009-2010, mentioned eight tournaments Yemeni women had participated in out of 163. From those events, 15 women were honored by the Ministry of Youth and Sports for their efforts. Sports that women have participated in at international level include chess, weightlifting, Judo and other contact sports.

The women's sports movement in Yemen has a long history dating back to before the foreign occupation, according to Naseem Ahmad Al-Milaiki, head of the Woman and Sports Group at the Yemeni Olympic Committee. Yemeni women from the southern cities have reached advanced positions at the Arab and regional levels in different sports. After a suspension of women's sports, which lasted for a few years, women's sport activities restarted in 2005, and involved a large number from



all around the country. The most popular games currently played by woman are chess, table tennis, volleyball, handball, basketball, judo, and gymnastics.

Unfortunately, few women are able to take their passion for sports to a higher level due to social stigma, or limited opportunities. In 2001, the first Asian Conference on Women and Sport was held, and led to the establishment of the Asian Working Group on Women and Sport (AWG). The "Yemen Challenge", adopted at the third Asian Conference in Yemen in 2005, emphasized the importance of continued promotion and development of women in sport. Figures from a report by the AWG in 2006 showed that just 10 percent of females were involved in sports in Yemen.

Yemeni has a conservative society where women wear a black 'balto' in public and are often fully veiled.

"Yemeni society is traditional. Women face obstacles when it comes to performing in public places. That's one reason that keeps them away from sports," said Judo coach Nabil Ibrahim. "The society doesn't accept mixed activities when it comes to sport."

Recently, women-only gyms have been established encouraging women to participate in sports and exercise. Most women who go to the gym are aiming to lose weight.

In May this year, 28 Yemeni Islamic scholars, including Abd Al-Majid Al-Raymi, released a statement against the establishment of gyms for women. The scholars believe gyms keep Muslim women away from their religious duties, remove the shyness of women, and corrupt Muslim women's ethics causing their husbands to lose pride in their women. The statement

published on the Yemen Islamic website, Member Al-Yemen, said those involved in the establishment of women's gyms should repent.

However, contrary to the beliefs of some Islamic scholars, this attitude doesn't reflect the Islamic point of view of women's participation in sport. The Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) in one hadith (saying or tradition), ran a race with his wife, Aisha, and lost. Some years later they had a rematch when she had gained weight, and the Prophet Mohammad won.

Some conservative Muslim leaders still support women's participation in sports. Faezeh Hashemi, daughter of former Iranian president Hashemi Rafsanjani, is a strong advocate of women's sports in Iran. As a result, the first Islamic Women's Olympics was launched in 1993 and has been held regularly in Iran ever since.

Yemeni women, although limited in their opportunities to take part in sports are more fortunate than women in other Gulf states. Saudi Arabia is one of only two countries that bans women's participation in the Olympic Games. In 2005, the Saudi Ministry of Education rejected proposals to introduce physical education for girls in the school system. Women cannot join gyms unless they cater specifically to women, which are few and far between. Women are also banned from sports stadiums to cheer on their favorite teams.

Interest in sport begins in childhood, but sport as a subject, is not included in the curricula in schools. If there are sports classes, students are usually left to wander in the school yard doing nothing, according to Al-Milaiki. Again, Islam urges Muslims to train children in sports, as the Prophet (PBUH) said, "train your children in archery, swimming, and horse riding."



The Yemen flag waves high but the country's soccer stars did not.

But the results came as a disappointment for Lutfi and millions of other Yemenis who dreamt of the team winning the cup for their country.

Rashad Al-Sulih, a nurse working at the Al-Thawra Public Hospital, told the Yemen Times that he waited in eager anticipation for the tournament to begin but he was shocked by the team's weak performance against its Gulf counterparts.

"I was counting the seconds and minutes for this championship to start, and I prepared everything to be ready to

sequently Yemen's performance in the 20th Gulf Cup.

"Football clubs in Yemen are not highly supported compared to Arab Gulf countries, where clubs are strongly supported by their governments and businessmen," said Al-Ahmd. "In Yemen, even the media does not support the local football championships and that has had a negative impact on the performance and skill of Yemen's team during the first phase of the Gulf Cup."

The Yemeni government struggled to host the tournament because of in-



## Stories from Real Life

By: Nawal Zaid  
For the Yemen Times

### The effects of marrying the younger daughter before the others

#### She was selected before her elder sisters because she was attractive

Anwar Ahmad, 20, is married and a university student. She lives in Sana'a and has two sisters and two brothers. She is the youngest. When Anwar was at primary school, a suitor from Sana'a engaged her.

The suitor's mother first saw Anwar at a wedding. Seeing her beauty, she admired her greatly. Anwar was tall with blue eyes and white skin. The mother, Amina, decided to take Anwar as a wife for her son Abdul-Ghani. Both the families were very rich.

Anwar's sisters were also beautiful, but she was the brightest. When Abdul-Ghani and his mother went to the house of Anwar's family to ask for her hand, Anwar refused because she wanted to complete her education. Her father and mother suggested that they get engaged and after Anwar had finished her studies, they could get married.

However, Abdul-Ghani and his family insisted on getting married quickly and told Anwar's parents that they would treat her as their daughter and allow her to complete her education. When they made this commitment, Anwar and her family agreed on the marriage.

Anwar's mother, Iman, told Amina that Anwar could not cook or take care of the house because she was the youngest girl. Furthermore, they had a maid who already did the chores of the house for them.

Amina answered that this was not important. "We also have a maid doing the housework. I chose Anwar for her beauty and politeness, not for cooking, cleaning and washing. I also chose her because she is still young and I loved her so much," said Amina.

Abdul-Ghani and Anwar were married a short time later, and Anwar went to live at her husband's house. As they had agreed earlier, she was allowed to continue studying, and is attending university with her husband. They decided not to have children until after she has finished her university studies.

Anwar's two sisters are now in their

30s. They have both got degrees from university and are now working.

#### Her three younger beautiful sisters married before her

Iman Mohammad is 38 and unmarried. She lives with her family doing housework because she did not complete her studies. Iman has five sisters and two brothers. She spent her life taking care of the family.

Iman's beauty began to fade. When her three sisters grew up, suitors started asking for their hands because of their beauty, but ignored Iman. The three sisters were married early. They did not know anything about marital life, and knew nothing about how to take care of their houses and husbands.

While every husband loves his wife for her young age, she suffers in dealing with his young wife in their daily life. As for Iman, her psychology was deeply affected by society's view of her as a spinster, and that nobody had asked her for her hand.

She continues to suffer from this

burden. As she works hard in her family's house, her health has deteriorated badly. As a result, she has been exposed to many diseases, both psychological and physical.

Society sees Iman as a woman not suitable for marriage for several reasons. First she is sick and quite old. Second, even if she marries, she can not give birth.

Her case is like many of her age and condition. Suitors who are old and those who are already married want to marry these women out of sympathy or mercy. Some immoral youth marry them by exploiting their condition, knowing that they will accept anyone who proposes to escape spinsterhood and loneliness.

All these things happen because families treat their daughters badly. Any woman who hasn't a certificate or good education may develop a weak personality. She will be weak before everybody, before herself, as well as before the person who marries her.

Women who are not beautiful, uneducated or older are avoided by young men. They will seek a younger and brighter girl.

#### Married at 15 because of her beauty, her eldest sisters were left spinsters

Sumia Mohammad is 32, married and has three daughters and two sons. She is housewife and lives in Sana'a. At 15 years of old, she was chosen by a suitor's family because she was the most beautiful among her sisters.

At first her father objected to marrying the youngest girl before the older sisters. He offered the suitor's family one of the older sisters, Fatima or Samah. Fatima was then 22 years old and Samah 20. But the suitor's family insisted on taking Sumia.

The marriage took place quickly. Sumia had two baby girls in quick succession, Haifa'a and Manal. When they grew up and reached 16 and 17 respectively, two suitors came asking for their hands because they were both beautiful. They were both married at the same time.

Sumia's two older sisters were both

now close to 40 and still unmarried. Nobody came asking for their hand in marriage. They finished their university studies and remained at home waiting for their chance to marry.

They say: "We will accept anyone who comes to engage us, whether they are already married or old." Sumia feels sorry for her sisters and does not know what she can do to help them.

Society looks at Sumia's sisters as spinsters and as not beautiful. The young men always prefer to marry younger girls. Despite the problems that result from marrying younger girls, society still insists on such marriages and as a result the elder girls are the victims.

Some women have developed psychological problems from being passed over in marriage, and allow envy of their younger sisters to grow inside them.

4U

Do you like this feature? Would you like it to continue? Send your comments to [yteditor@gmail.com](mailto:yteditor@gmail.com)

## SKETCHED OPINION

By: Hamid



## Yemen: A complicated puzzle

By: Meredith Birkett

As Yemen is thrust into the American consciousness following last month's package bomb scares, we've been trying to put context around this physically and culturally distant country.

Photographer Karim Ben Khelifa helps shed some light with images from his time living in and visiting Yemen over the past decade.

Khelifa feels like the perception of the country is very different from the situation on the ground and that motivates him. "What is interesting as a photojournalist is to go behind what is assumed by the Western world," Khelifa says.

It's certainly not the easiest or safest

place to work. He points out that like the United States, it's one of the most armed countries in the world. Cultural differences and a suspicion of Westerners also make it difficult to move freely in some areas. But Khelifa's background is an asset. He grew up in both Belgium and Tunisia, so he speaks Arabic. Khelifa also grows a beard to help him blend into the society physically.

His other method of immersing himself in the country has been to "get a car, travel around, get stuck and see the country." And it's been getting stuck on the side of the road in his old 1977 Toyota Land Cruiser, time and time again, that has shown him the softer side of Yemen. The locals have never allowed him to stay broken down for long. If they can't fix the car, they invite Khalifa

into their homes and shower him with hospitality, he says.

Khelifa calls Yemen "a very complicated puzzle." There is a widening disparity between rich and poor. Poverty makes people an easy target for al-Qaeda recruiters. Water is growing ever scarcer, and there is pressure from being at the crossroads of the Arab world and Africa since the country lies just across the Gulf of Aden from Somalia. Yet it's also what he considers one of the "purest" forms of Arab culture, from the architecture to religious customs.

His goal in continuing to work in Yemen is to try to help people notice the commonalities between East and West. He sees a danger in "people focusing on what puts people apart than what puts people together."

## Yemen tensions 'a threat to Gulf'

By TOM HANRATTY  
Gulf Daily News

RISING tension in Yemen threatens to destabilise the entire Gulf, according to a Bahrain-based international think tank.

The country's political and economic situation should be of immediate concern to neighbouring countries, said International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) consulting senior fellow for Middle East and south Asia Michael Crawford.

He was speaking during the inaugural one-day IISS Global Perspective Series forum at the organisation's office in the Bahrain Financial Harbour yesterday.

"It may be a long way away, but I think Yemen has the capacity to destabilise the whole Arabian Peninsula," he said.

"It should be of immediate concern, especially to GCC governments and to those further afield, like the US, the UK and many others."

"Yemen, in some ways, seems very distant to us here in Bahrain."

"If you look out the window, the view of Bahrain bears little resemblance to that across the city of Sanaa or any others in Yemen."

However, Mr Crawford warned that since assuming power of what was the Yemen Arab Republic in 1978, Yemeni president Ali Abdullah Saleh had showed a propensity for ruthlessness and manipulation.

"He has made sure that there are no alternative leaders in the wings or contenders for power and has drawn leverage from his critics' acknowledgement that dissension around the leadership would benefit only those who favour an even weaker centre of power."

"All the time however, the state itself is coming under increasing pressure and is at risk of crumbling."

"Diminish-ing natural resources, especially oil and water, a deteriorating economy and high levels of malnutrition and unemployment would present daunting challenges for any government, let alone one with such limited capacity in a state with a weak centre and tough geography."

"But the attention of Saleh and his regime is, as ever, fixed resolutely on tactical fire-fighting, and in particular, against the resurgence of Al Qaeda."

Mr Crawford pointed to the amalgamation of Saudi and Yemeni terrorists to form an Al Qaeda network in the Arabian Peninsula, which became evident early last year.

"In February 2009, the Yemeni government released 176 Al Qaeda suspects on condition of good behaviour, suggesting continuing regime ambivalence towards the organisation and a readiness to reach tactical accommodations with it," he said.

"It is this Al Qaeda threat that Saleh's regime is currently using to obtain military and counter-terrorist assistance and also development aid from the US, Europe and Saudi Ara-

bia. "The problem from the international community's point of view, however, is the mistrust between it and the Saleh regime, which is seen to prioritise the threat from Al Huthi rebels in the north and the so-called Southern Movement."

Mr Crawford went on to predict that this mistrust between the Yemeni government and the international community would also affect the country's dire social and economic outlook.

Using statistics from widely available publications, the former Bahrain resident revealed that the population of Yemen, located around 800 miles from Manama, now stands at 23 million, but is expected to double in the next 25 years.

Almost half its citizens are under the age of 15, while seven million of them are living on the breadline.

Estimated unemployment and illiteracy rates of 40-50 per cent go alongside an inflation rate of around 27pc.

Perhaps most worrying figures, however, are that sales of oil, which currently count for 75pc of government revenue, will drop to zero pc by 2017, with Sanaa also expected to become the world's first capital city to run out of water.

"The threat of the state of Yemen collapsing is a very real one and there is a responsibility on the Gulf states to make sure it doesn't happen," said Mr Crawford. "In terms of how best to do this however, there is still no sign of any solutions."

## Dazzling new weapons require new rules for war

By David Ignatius

A new arsenal of drones and satellite-guided weapons is changing the nature of warfare. America and its NATO allies possess these high-tech weapons, but smaller countries want them, too. Here's an inside glimpse of how the process of technology transfer works:

A year ago, Saudi Arabia was fighting a nasty border war against the Houthis rebels across its frontier with Yemen. The Saudis began bombing Houthi targets inside Yemen on Nov. 5, 2009, but the airstrikes were inaccurate, and there were reports of civilian casualties.

The Saudis appealed to America for imagery from U.S. surveillance satellites in space, so they could target more precisely. Gen. David Petraeus, who was Centcom commander at the time, is said to have backed the Saudi request, but it was opposed by the State Department and others. They warned that intervening in this border conflict, even if only by providing targeting information, could violate the laws of war.

So the Saudis turned elsewhere for help - to France, which has its own reconnaissance satellites. The French, who were worried that imprecise Saudi bombing was creating too many civilian casualties in Yemen, agreed to help. The necessary details were arranged within days.

When French President Nicolas Sarkozy visited Riyadh on Nov. 17, he was ready to open the new intelligence liaison channel. A Saudi official recalls that by the first night of Sarkozy's visit, detailed pictures of the Yemeni battle

space began to move electronically to the Saudis.

Using this precise satellite intelligence, the Saudis were able to monitor the Houthis' hideouts, equipment dumps and training sites. Saudi warplanes then attacked with devastating effectiveness. Within a few weeks, the Houthis were requesting a truce, and by February this chapter of the border war was over.

For the Saudis, this was an important military success. "The French were extremely helpful" and their assistance "was a key reason we were able to force the Houthis to capitulate," says a Saudi official.

But the Saudi incident raises larger questions about the transfer of technologies that have demonstrated their deadly effectiveness during the past decade in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan's tribal areas. These weapons are seductively attractive; they offer the promise of destroying an enemy from a safe distance of 10,000 or 20,000 feet in the air.

The lid on Pandora's box is coming open: The Saudis, understandably, now want their own satellite capability, and they will soon request bids from Western companies for such a system. Riyadh also wants drones that can see and attack enemy targets in remote places. Washington has been weighing whether to include versions of its Predator drones in an arms sale to the kingdom. Such weapons would boost Saudi ability to deter Iran, but they could also threaten Israel.

Consider the case of Turkey: For years, Ankara has sought U.S. technology to fight what it sees as an insurgen-

cy by Kurdish rebel groups, especially the "PKK" that hides in northern Iraq. Now, that high-tech help has arrived.

The United States has quietly created a joint "centralized command center" with Turkey for surveillance drones flying over northern Iraq. Turkish officers look over the shoulders of their U.S. counterparts at the imagery and are free to target suspicious activity when they see it. The United States doesn't pull the triggers; it just shows the pictures.

The fight against al-Qaeda in Yemen illustrates the complicated legal issues that intersect the use of technology. A year ago, U.S. Special Forces held back from using advanced technology to locate Anwar al-Aulaqi in Yemen; that's because he wasn't yet on a formal "capture or kill" list of terrorists who threatened the United States. He is now, so the Obama administration has decided to bring its Predator drones into the hunt over Yemen, with quiet endorsement from the Yemeni government.

These weapons are so good that they can become addictive. They make possible precise acts of war that, in another time, would be called "assassination." Other countries want to protect themselves from terrorist rebels just as much as the United States does. This means the demand for such weapons will grow.

The "laws of war" may sound like an antiquated concept in this age of robo-weapons. But, in truth, a clear international legal regime has never been more needed: It is a fact of modern life that people in conflict zones live in the perpetual cross hairs of deadly weapons. Rules are needed for targets and targeters alike.

## Behind drones in Yemen, a struggle to control covert ops

By: Gareth Porter  
Khaleej Times

The drone war that has been anticipated in Yemen for the last few months has been delayed by the failure of US Special Operations Forces (SOF) to generate usable intelligence on Al Qaeda there.

That failure has given the CIA a new argument for wresting control of the drone war in Yemen from the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC), which now controls the drone assets in the country. But some key administration officials are resisting a CIA takeover of the war in Yemen, as reported by the Washington Post.

The struggle between the CIA's operations directorate and SOF officials over management of a drone war in Yemen has been a driving force in pushing the war against Al Qaeda and affiliated organisations into many more countries - along with President Barack Obama's eagerness to show that he is doing more than his predecessor on terrorism. Both the CIA covert operations directorate and SOF brass regard the outcome in Yemen as the key to the larger struggle over control of a series of covert wars that the Obama administration approved in principle last year.

The CIA directorate and the two major figures in the Iraq-Afghanistan wars, Gen. David Petraeus and Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal, lobbied Obama in 2009 to expand covert operations against Al Qaeda to a dozen countries in the Middle East, the Horn of Africa and Central Asia. In spring 2009, McChrystal, then director of operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, persuaded the White House to give US combatant commanders wider latitude to carry out covert military operations against Al

Qaeda or other organisations deemed to be terrorists, according to a May 25 report by Marc Ambinder of The Atlantic. Based on the Obama decision, on September 30, 2009, Petraeus issued an order creating a Joint Unconventional Warfare Task Force to plan and execute covert intelligence gathering in support of later covert military operations throughout the CENTCOM area.

The Petraeus order was followed within weeks by an influx of surveillance equipment and as many as 100 SOF trainers, as well as additional CIA personnel in Yemen, according to the Washington Post report.

With the support of McChrystal and Petraeus, who was then still CENTCOM chief, JSOC was given control of the covert operation in Yemen.

But JSOC stumbled badly and failed to generate usable intelligence on Al Qaeda targets.

On December 17, less than three months after the Petraeus order, a cruise missile was launched against what was supposed to have been an Al Qaeda training camp in Abyan province in south Yemen.

But the strike, which was supposed to have been attributed to Yemen's tiny air force, was based on faulty intelligence. The Yemeni parliament found that it had killed 41 members of two families, including 17 women and 23 children. It was known almost immediately to have been a US strike. By all accounts, it was major political gift to AQAP, which has its sights set on toppling the government of President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

Al Qaeda has also been able to justify targeting the United States as revenge for the Dec 17 attack. That may have been a reference to the two parcels from Yemen to an address in Chicago intercepted Oct 29, one of which was

discovered to have "explosive material". After that strike, the CIA went on the offensive to get the administration to take control of the drones away from the SOF. A series of articles in the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal and the Associated Press in mid- to late August cited unnamed officials referring to the possibility of CIA drone operations in Yemen.

Col. Pat Lang, a former Defense Intelligence Officer for the Middle East with operational experience in Yemen, told IPS the CIA had benefited from JSOC stumbling. "The agency has taken advantage of every criticism of the performance of the SOF as an argument to regain control over cover operations," said Lang. The report suggests that key officials now realise that neither JSOC nor the CIA is going to be able to obtain actionable intelligence on Al Qaeda under present circumstances.

Former DIA intelligence officer Lang agrees. He believes the Yemeni Intelligence Service, which is a "very effective secret police force" with "considerable penetration capability", is not fully sharing the intelligence it has on Al Qaeda with US officials.

For the time being, it appears the drone war in Yemen is abeyance. But powerful bureaucratic forces will be continuing to make the case that they can justify the beginning of drone strikes there.

AQAP leaders are hoping to see the US use more military force in Yemen, according to Johnsen. "They would like nothing better than for the US to invade Yemen," Johnsen told IPS. "The more they can show active US intervention, the better it is for them."

Gareth Porter is an investigative historian and journalist specialising in US national security policy

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WASHINGTON D.C., Nov. 30 – U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton hosts a press briefing on the recent classified cables released by Wikileaks at the Department of State in Washington D.C. this week. See page one of this edition for a Yemen Times story about Wikileaks.



GAZA, Nov. 29 – A Palestinian folk troupe performs during a celebration marking the Day of Solidarity in Gaza City.



CHANGCHUN, Nov. 29 – An actor and actress perform the melodrama ‘Jasmine’ in Changchun, capital of north-east China’s Jilin Province, this week. The melodrama was based on the life story of famous Erhu (the Chinese two-string fiddle) musician ‘A Bing’, showcasing the beauty and goodness in humanity. The play will be performed until December 3.



LONDON, Nov. 29 – The empty entrance at a tube station in London, Britain. Passengers on the London Underground network endured disruption of their journeys as thousands of members of the Transport Salaried Staffs Association (TSSA) and the Rail, Maritime and Transport Union (RMT) staged a 24-hour strike this week to protest against planned job cuts. It was the fourth 24-hour strike on the London tube system since August.



TORONTO, Nov. 30 – A woman and child play in front of a Christmas decorated show window in downtown Toronto, Canada, as the festive season goes in full swing this week.



SEOUL, Nov. 29 – Candles lit this week were an expression for peace during a rally against the joint military exercise of South Korea and the United States in Seoul, capital of South Korea.



PHNOM PENH, Nov. 29 – Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister and chairman of the Diamond Island Casualties Settlement Committee, Sok An, speaks at a press conference in Phnom Penh, capital of Cambodia, this week. Sok An announced that the stampede tragedy at Diamond Island Bridge was not caused by terrorism nor was it a criminal act, but an incident of congestion. The tragedy occurred on November 22 and killed 351 people and injured 395 others.



SRINAGAR, Nov. 29 – Indian paramilitary soldiers rush towards the shootout site in Srinagar, summer capital of Indian-controlled Kashmir, on Monday. Three militants and a policeman were killed on Monday in a shootout in Indian-controlled Kashmir, police said.



QUETTA, Nov. 30 – Pakistani policemen participate in a training session in Quetta, Pakistan, this week. The Pakistani army has started anti-terrorism training with police personnel in Balochistan Province in an effort to ensure that they are skilled in dealing with terrorism in the province and other parts of the country.



VIENNA, Nov. 29 – Joggers at the snow-covered Schoenbrunn Palace garden in Vienna, Austria, this week.



TEHRAN, Nov. 29 – Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad at a press conference in Tehran, capital of Iran, this week. Ahmadinejad said on Monday that “Western countries and the Israeli regime are behind the terror attack on two Iranian university professors.”

# Electricity ministry must be honest with new project

By: Mahmood Matari

Yemenis reacted with mixed views to the ministry of electricity and energy's plans to spend millions on a new initiative to generate more power.

Saba state news agency reported this week that the ministry will spend USD392.7-million on an electricity project to meet the annual growing demands in the country. The supreme tender committee agreed last Wednesday to build a new power station.

The Yemen Times spoke to business owners about this initiative to find out how it would affect trade. Jamal Aqlan Mathkoo, the owner of Golden Moon electrical shop in Sana'a, said that the new project would improve business.

"The most important thing is that this project should aim to make things better. The government should be frank about its decisions," said Mathkoo.

"The project will decrease the sale of generators but sales of other goods will increase. I do not agree that the government should make electricity the highest priority. They should not ignore other sectors."

Mathkoo also said that the government has "bought electricity generators

that are not of a high quality".

"The generators work for short period and then stop. This costs a huge amount of money. The government is supposed to have a warrantee for the generators so that it works for at least 30 years."

Mathkoo said that the electricity and energy ministry should publish its project's plan in newspapers, divide the project into stages, set specific deadlines for each stage and update the citizens via newspapers after every stage has been completed.

"They must be honest in their work and keep promises," said Mathkoo.

Saleh Al-Gadi, a sales manager at Eshak stores in Sana'a, said that the electricity project would not affect his business.

"This project doesn't affect our sales because generators are part of our sales but not the only thing that we sell," said Al-Gadi.

He said that the project should be "based on honesty". He said that the ministry should also privatize the project because "there is corruption in the government and playing with tenders".

"The government really failed in managing many projects before," said Al-Gadi.

Mohammad Ahmed Al-Mashriki is unemployed and said that he did not



Sales manager Saleh Al-Gadi wants honesty in spending plans, which he believes can only come from the private sector.

believe that the electricity project was "real".

"It's not real. But if there is a project like this we hope that there is a minister of electricity that does what he says. He must keep his promises," said Al-Mashriki.

He also complained that electricity regularly cuts out and as a result his TV,

refrigerator and iron has broken.

Saba reported this week that the electricity demand in Yemen has been rising by nine percent annually. It reported that the minister for electricity and energy, Awadh Al-Socotri, said that this would require boosting electricity generation.

The minister told Saba that the sec-



Electrical shop owner, Jamal Aqlan Mathkoo, supports the electricity project.

ond stage of the Marib Gas-Fired Power Station would commence early next year. It would include importing, installing and experimentation at the station, said Al-Socotri.

"The government is giving priority to the electricity sector through allocating suitable external funds to develop it due to its significant role in the process of

development and investment," said Al-Socotri.

Earlier this year, numerous governors in Yemen witnessed power cuts that have lasted five to eight hours. Reports indicated that maintenance work on the Marib power station, also known as Marib 1, caused black-outs in most of the country.

# Dutch grant for business and social development

By: Ali Saeed

The Yemeni government signed four new grant agreements worth USD 17 million with the Netherlands last Thursday for social development and social protection, according to the Dutch Embassy in Sana'a.

USD 2.6 million out of the total grant will be channeled towards computerizing business registration to improve the investment environment in the country.

The objective of the announced grants is to improve business development in Yemen, with a special focus on small enterprises that will create new job opportunities according to a statement by the Dutch Embassy.

"Yemen's problem is basically an economic one, and instead of directing financial aid to combating terrorism, they should be channeled towards business development to create job opportunities," Dr. Taha Al-Fosail, deputy minister of the Ministry of Industry and Trade, told the Yemen Times.

He said that by improving the business environment and creating jobs, all other political problems including Al-Qaeda will disappear.

The Dutch grant will enable more Yemeni enterprises to register and expand their businesses in a short time through an online system that will link offices of the Ministry of Industry and Trade in governorates with the headquarters in

Sana'a. The system will also link ministry offices in governorates with the General Investment Authority, in a 'one-stop-shop' system to ease the procedures involved in doing business, according to the deputy minister.

Dr. Al-Fosail explained that this coincides with an effort by the ministry, along with several donors, to simplify business registration procedures, not only in the capital, but in all ministry offices around the country.

In addition, the computerized system will enable businessmen and agencies to renew their business registrations from their own locations instead of traveling hundreds of miles to Sana'a. The system will also protect business names as there will be database for registration.

Nabeela Al-Haidari, a small enterprise owner in Sana'a who recently opened a small media training center for women and youth, told the Yemen Times that she struggled to start-up her project because of a lack of finance, license requirements and being unable to find qualified employees.

"When I started my project there were many challenges such as finding money, getting a license for the project, and I could not find qualified people to hire for the project," she said.

But through utilizing this grant for small enterprises from the Netherlands, Al-Haidari is now eager to expand her project to reach other governorates.

Mohammad Baydr, director of the Do-

ing Business Project at the International Finance Corporation (IFC), told the Yemen Times that this step is just one of a more comprehensive and expanded strategy to reform the business environment in Yemen.

In the latest Doing Business Report, which is released annually by the IFC and measures the ease of doing business in more than 180 world economies, Yemen ranked a lowly 105, signifying local difficulties within the business environment.

Most business formalities in Yemen are still done manually, taking a lot of time, some taking more than three months to process, according to Baydr.

"By moving forward on simplifying business procedures in the country, Yemen will score a good rank in the Doing Business Report. That will attract investors to come to Yemen," he said.

To strengthen microfinance institutions in Yemen and to provide poor families with microcredits, USD 2.4 million out of the Dutch grant will be allocated for the Social Fund Development's small enterprise program, according to the Dutch Embassy. This grant-funded program will allow 10,000 small enterprises to access small loans.

The beneficiaries of 60 percent of the microfinance in the country are women, according to Al-Amal Microfinance Bank. This new grant for small enterprises from the Netherlands will target both men and women, according to the



Sixty percent of microfinance in Yemen goes to women. The objective of the Dutch grant is to improve business development, with a special focus on small enterprises.

embassy.

To empower both women and young entrepreneurs to utilize and access the improved services offered, the program will train 12,000 small enterprises and young people, according to the statement.

More than a third of the USD 17 million will be channeled into a Labor Intensive Work Program, providing around 15,000 people with 45 days of work each,

and making extra cash available to thousands of families. The extra labor will be used in local communities on infrastructure projects such as water harvesting schemes.

**Government projects need support**  
Al-Fosail told the Yemen Times that the Ministry of Industry and Trade still has many projects that lack financial sup-

port as the government does not have the funds to support them.

"We at ministry lack qualified human resources. Attracting such qualified people requires a greater financial capacity," he said.

He added that now the ministry is working on many strategies in the industrial sector and workers' training courses, but all of them lack adequate financing.

## REQUIREMENT OF WAREHOUSE IN SANA'A

The Office of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) based in Sana'a, Republic of Yemen, requires warehouse space of about 1,500 square meters (one thousand five hundred square meters) in surface area in Sana'a, for the purpose of storing its emergency supplies such as hygiene kits, water filters, tents, nutritional items, etc.

UNICEF intends to enter into lease agreement with the owner for an initial period of 12 months with the possibility of extension for an additional period of 12 months.

In addition, UNICEF invites sealed offers from eligible companies with performance experience for the Operation and Management of such a warehouse in Sana'a.

Sealed offers must be received by UNICEF Office Sana'a at the following address on or before 15th December 2010, latest at 16:00 hours.

The Supply Manager  
UNICEF Sana'a  
Street no. 5, Asir Area (Behind Plaza Suite Hotel)  
Tel: 967-1-211400 (Extn: 185)  
Mobile: 967-711760008  
Fax: 206092

Offers received after the deadline will be rejected.



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In recognition of Outstanding Efforts In The Resettlement of Labor For the Development of The Insurance Industry In The Cooperation Council For The GCC



## Oxfam

### JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

Oxfam, an international NGO working with others to find lasting solutions to poverty and suffering, has been working in Yemen since 1983. Oxfam announces the following vacancies for its programme:

**Livelihood / Food Security Programme Officer – Based in Sayoun**  
Starting gross salary per annum pro rata: \$20,274 USD  
Contract ends: 31st March 2011 with possible extension

**The role**  
In this key role you will have proven experience in livelihoods / food security programmes and proven understanding of disaster risk reduction (DRR). You will need to demonstrate strong project and people management skills, and will be able to network and link widely with CSOs and government bodies working on livelihoods/food security resilience. You will be capable of managing all elements of the project, from planning, monitoring, evaluation, including learning. You will oversee budget preparation and project monitoring, and will assist in fundraising and proposal writing for new initiatives.

**What we're looking for**  
We are looking for someone with at least 4 years of demonstrable progressive experience in livelihoods / food security. You will be able to demonstrate outstanding analysis skills and will show excellent organisational skills. You will be able to translate strategies into actions that make a difference on the ground. Equally important will be your creative approach to problem solving and your influential communication skills in both Arabic and English, and your ability to gain the confidence, trust, and respect of everyone around you.

**Livelihood / Food Security Project Officer – Based in Sayoun**  
Starting gross salary per annum pro rata: \$16,116 USD  
Contract ends: 31st March 2011 with possible extension

**The role**  
You will have a proven track record of contributing to overall project management including monitoring and evaluation. You will be able to provide intensive needs-based technical support to project partners, as well as an ability to monitor project activities on livelihood /food security, both technically and financially. You will undertake project budget preparation and monitoring, and will assist in fundraising and proposal writing for new initiatives.

**What we're looking for**  
We are looking for someone with at least 2 years of experience working in livelihoods / food security programmes and proven understanding of disaster risk reduction (DRR) and local socio-economic development issues, institutions and communities. You will show sensitivity to gender and equity issues. The ideal candidate will have demonstrated communication skills and the ability to work well with others and as part of a team. You will have excellent oral and written communication skills in both English and Arabic, and will possess good computer skills.

**To apply**  
If you believe that you have the qualifications and skills to excel in either of these positions, please send a copy of your CV and a cover letter, clearly stating the job you are applying for, to [yemenjobs@oxfam.org.uk](mailto:yemenjobs@oxfam.org.uk) or send a fax to 01 450170.

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Creative expression is alive and everywhere in Yemen. This Yemeni woman enjoys painting. Photo by Amira Al-Sharif

## Learning lessons from our mistakes

By: Mubeen Esam

What's the next step? We all recognize that Yemen has succeeded in organizing the 20th Arabian Gulf Championship, through which it has proved its capability to host such big sporting events. But the national football team failed in winning the cup. So, are the reasons for such failure being seriously taken into consideration?

I'd like to say that the concerned authorities have to learn some lessons from the mistakes made by the national team in this championship and correct them. In the following lines, I try to set forth a simple proposal on preparing a good team. I suggest the setting up of a simple academy, with branches in all governorates as an initial experiment, in order to create a really strong soccer team.

This academy should be independent, and not governed by the Ministry of Youth and Sport. It should be funded with a special annual budget. It can be supervised by a team consisting of a number of football experts from different continents and Arab countries, besides a number of local and foreign former players. In addition, it should contain a group of educators, psychiatrists, doctors, specialists in nutrition, and Yemeni and Arab coaches. The team must be chaired by a foreign veteran soccer coach. I'm sure that this proposal seems strange and impossible

to most people, but would not be hard to enact and would certainly be beneficial in the future.

After collecting all the academy members, its authority should be in the command of a committee consisted of these members that will lay down its agenda, tasks, and goals. The first purpose of such academy would be to develop the sports' periods in schools for almost 2-3 years. Afterwards, it can start to look for talented football players from the streets and schools, and prepare them perfectly for 3 hours a day, 3 times per the week. In the academy or its branches they could acquire beneficial and basic lessons and skills besides modern football techniques.

After some years of training in this academy some of the players should have become confident and skillful. They could then be dispensed to some sports clubs, but with continued observation and sports development until the age of 25 years, whilst also carrying on their education in schools. Then we would find it easy to choose good trusted players for the national team and the local football teams, and move away from selecting players for the national team in accordance with non-sporting criteria.

It's worth noting that establishing such an academy will help the coaches of local teams choose players for their teams, instead of searching for foreign players or players from other governorates. In the end our national team would buzz with skilled young players.

## The Caged Bird

By: Dr. Shafiq Anwar Fakir  
shaf\_106@hotmail.com

Two weeks more...Zeinab thought as she sat down before the laid-out dinner on the dining table. Two weeks, and she will be tied to a man she could hardly bring herself to think of as a life partner.

Most of the formalities had been discussed and arranged between her father and uncle—Zeinab is for her cousin Ahmed—and this would be announced officially in an engagement within two weeks. The wedding would take place within a year. Zeinab was informed rather than asked. Arranged marriage they called it. She never knew what Ahmed thought about the whole thing but to her such a proposal was far from appealing. What was worse, that after marriage, she was to settle down in the country where Ahmed worked as a teacher. Giving up city life, family, friends, and relatives was another issue worth consideration. She had just graduated with a degree in History and was looking forward to pursue higher studies and...

"A penny for your thoughts!" said her sister Huda as she sat next to her. Huda was two years younger than Zeinab, and a student at the English Department. The two sisters resembled each other a great deal. Without her thick-rimmed glasses, Huda was always mistaken for Zeinab. While their youngest sister, Salwa, still at high school, was quite different both in looks and manner. She had a chubby face and Zeinab loved the dimples that appeared whenever she smiled. Salwa, the favorite chatterbox of the family, was with their mother in the kitchen receiving some formal training in household matters. In a few minutes, they came out drenched in perspiration, and Salwa proudly laid down a plate full of fried fish—their father's favorite dish. She joined the two sisters while their mother went to knock at the bedroom door, "Dinner is ready," the mother said softly.

Their father walked into the living room and sat down at the table. Then their mother sat down. They started eating. Since talk about her

marriage had started, Zeinab had lost all appetite. She sat there forcing food down with water. There was an obvious uneasiness in her manner that her mother and sisters noticed, but which escaped her father.

He sat swallowing the fish with an exceptional appetite. And, Zeinab kept struggling with the feeling of blurting out the words that surged within her—no matter what I would not marry my cousin. She must do that tonight—now! If her father left for the café, he would not be back until midnight and then head straight for bed. And, she would lose another chance. Normally, her father went to the café—a place mainly for men—where over a cup of tea or coffee and a game of dominoes he sat for hours with his friends talking about important matters such as politics, inflation, football, and God knew what else. Zeinab must catch him before he left for the café. The mere thought of such a confrontation sent a shiver through her spine.

She looked up at her mother who avoided her eyes. Zeinab had tried, in vain, to make her mother talk to her father, but she had been as passive as a wall to her appeals. She loathed her mother's submissive and passive nature before her father. In her twenty-five years, Zeinab could not remember a day when her mother had raised her voice or argued with him. When Zeinab had said to her that she would rather die than marry a man she had no feelings for, the not unexpected response was, "Ahmed is a nice man...He is a teacher with a good salary and a house of his own. What else would a girl want?"

What else would a girl want? The words echoed within Zeinab. It would be utterly useless to explain to her mother—what else would a girl want!?

"Pass that plate, Zeinab!" Her father's voice cut into her thoughts. Her hand trembled as it reached out for the plate, but Salwa was faster and handed it over.

Having done with his dinner, he got up, leaving his empty plate behind. Zeinab's eyes followed him as he washed his hands, wiped them on the towel and retired to the bedroom. She got up and made sure to avoid her mother's eyes. There always dwelled that plea, "Don't Zeinab. Please, don't stir up...prob-

lems!" But, this was her life and she would not allow any meddling. She dried her hands and walked towards the bedroom.

She stood before the thick closed door selecting her words and arranging her thoughts—I'll not marry Ahmed. I'm sorry father. It was very simple language. And, before hesitation would overtake her, she tapped on the door, turned the knob and entered. Her father was fastening his wristwatch and a strong scent of cologne wafted through the air. He always cared about appearance.

"Father. Can I talk to you for a while?" Her voice wavered as he lifted his bushy eyebrows and fixed his gaze upon her.

"Hmm!"  
"I..." She looked away at her feet and felt the words stuck in her throat, "I'll...I'm...invited at my friend Samira's party tomorrow and wish to go." Courage failed her, once again.

"As long as you're home by 7:00 and go with one of your sisters, I don't mind."

Defeated, Zeinab walked out of the room. She met the inquiring eyes in the living room, but without a word flung herself on the sofa. Nothing would stop this marriage. She felt like a bird trapped in a net and however hard she struggled she would never escape. She shot her mother a reproachful look and then hid her face in her sleeves. Her mother looked away. Her father left in haste and without a word. Obviously, he was getting late.

As he slammed the door behind him, a disconcerting stillness settled upon the house. Zeinab heard the door shut and with it the hope to escape this marriage was blocked. For a while, she stared in the direction of the closed door in utter disbelief. Finally, she gave vent to the emotions of wrath and indignation surging within her. Tears gushed out of her eyes. Salwa and Huda exchanged a concerned look, but remained quiet. No one spoke. They seemed to have run out of words. Silently, they got off their seats and cleared the table. Except for their father's plate, the others were still full. The two sisters disappeared into the kitchen to do the dishes making as little noise as possible. It was very unusual for them to go about in such a somber

silence. It was probably due to the tense atmosphere these days within the house. The melancholy had penetrated deeply into Zeinab. She shuddered under its pressure and gave her mother the same reproachful look.

Her mother's face was etched with deep lines and her eyes held a distant look. She took a deep sigh and with some effort lifted herself off the chair. Household responsibilities and daily chores had weakened her before time. Her life, since marriage, had been devoted to her home and children. The world beyond her household walls was a strange domain. Now, she took out a pile of clothes from a basket and quietly sat down on a chair folding them.

Zeinab wiped her eyes on her sleeves and advanced towards the window. She threw it open. The fresh breeze that greeted her was a relief. She took a deep breath and looked up. There was an eerie washed-out moon in the sky. She stood at the window looking up when angry clouds raced across the face of the moon and obscured it. This only fuelled her frustration. Should she accept her destiny? After all, Ahmed was her cousin and maybe when she got to know him better she would see in him the Mr. Right of her dreams. But, what if she didn't...

"You better close that window or else put a scarf on your head," she heard her mother say.

"There's no one watching." Replied Zeinab, indifferently.

"You never know whose eyes are watching you."

The eyes of a dark uncertain destiny, thought Zeinab, with a contemptuous smile. Her eyes swept over the semi-illuminated street and rested upon a house in the far corner. She could see that Tareq's window was lit. He must be home. Tareq and Zeinab had been playmates and recently he had got a very good job in a company. He had even given her a gift of a beautiful watch when he had received his first salary.

"Mother!" Zeinab spoke without turning from the window, "What did you tell Tareq's mother when she had expressed her desire to have me as a daughter-in-law?"

"Nothing! That you are officially to be engaged to your cousin on the

20th of this month."

"You know very well how I feel towards Ahmed. I've always considered him as a brother and never a husband," turning around she faced her mother, "And you know my feelings towards Tareq. I have never hidden anything from you."

Her mother kept quiet. Zeinab resented her mother's expressionless eyes and sealed lips. Before she could give outlet to her resentment, which would have hurt her mother, her sisters entered the room. Huda turned on the TV and the star of the East, Umm Kulthum, flashed through the screen, her melodious voice penetrated the gloomy atmosphere:

... if a day passes without seeing you, I feel...

For a few moments, the Diva of the Arabic song managed to cheer up the gloomy souls. But, this bliss was splintered by a fumbling heard at the outside door. It was only twenty minutes since their father had left. He could not be back that early, thought Zeinab looking earnestly in the direction of the door. Her mother and sisters' gazes, too, turned towards the opening door. The door opened slowly with a creaking sound. Her father appeared in the doorway and slammed the door shut. At his sight, a voice screamed within Zeinab—I'll not marry Ahmed. I'll not marry him—and it grew louder and louder but never too loud to be heard.

"Damn! I left my wallet behind." He stormed and went towards the bedroom. Drawers were yanked open. After a while, "Where's my wallet?" He snapped.

The mother threw away the pile of clothes on her lap and rushed towards the room. This was not an uncommon scene...sometimes it was a sock, a handkerchief or a missing button. Today, it was the wallet.

In the background Umm Kulthum's voice could still be heard. She had switched to another song:

...Give me my freedom and unshackle my hands...

Zeinab felt as though being mocked. She got up and was about to leave the living room when she heard her father's fuming voice, "What do you mean she doesn't want to marry Ahmed!"

For a moment, Zeinab remained

stunned—nailed to the ground—not knowing whether she really heard those words. She could not hear what her mother was saying for her voice was drowned by her father's loud angry voice.

"Zeinab...Zeinab!" He growled.

Zeinab looked at her sisters and exchanged a frightened look. Then, she hurried towards the bedroom and entered. Her mother was seated at the edge of the bed. Zeinab hated to have put her mother in this situation, but she couldn't help it.

"Ye...yes, father." She tried hard to control the tremor in her voice.

"What's this that your mother is saying?"

Her mother cut him short and softly said, "My daughter will not marry Ahmed. She has just been proposed by our neighbor Tareq and she doesn't mind."

Zeinab could see her father heaving with bewilderment and disbelief as he gazed sharply at his wife. Turning towards Zeinab, he asked, "Is that true?"

"Y...e...s, father."

"What do you people take me for?" He yelled out. "I will not allow this...I'll not back out on my word."

"I've given Tareq a word, too." Her mother lied. "And, I'll not back out, either."

"I'm the man here..."

"You are a God fearing man. You know well enough that a bride's consent is a must for a marriage to be complete and legal before God and the world."

She got him. Zeinab could see that her father's voice was lower this time.

"Why didn't you speak up before?" "You never gave us the chance. You never give anybody any chance. Did you ask our opinion? Did..." Her mother went on.

Zeinab was filled with astonishment and admiration as she quietly tiptoed out of the room. Was this her mother? A childish picture crept up before her of a bird sitting protectively over her nest not allowing anyone, whosoever, to get near. Zeinab felt a desire to bend over and kiss her mother's hands and apologize. Maybe later, she would.



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# Woman are driving change in Yemen

Story and photos by : Noha Yazeed

**N**adera Mohammad Al-Amri is an instructor with Al-Salama Driving School in Sana'a. Al-Salama Driving School was established in 2005 and today has 24 branches around the republic.

Al-Amri is the second female instructor to join the school and has been working there for over three years. She chose this career because she wanted to empower as many Yemeni women as she can through enabling them to drive.

"When I realized how being able to drive benefits me, I decided to teach it to other women, so they can depend upon themselves," she said.

Since Yemen has a conservative society, families of girls would rather have a woman teaching their daughters to drive than a man. This is why having a female driving instructor allowed more girls to learn.

In 2010, around 67 girls came for lessons and about 80 percent of them obtained a driving license. Since 2007, more than 2000 women have obtained their driving licenses through the school, and the interest in learning is growing. More than 30 percent of students are currently women, most of whom are educated and working.



Nadera Mohammad Al-Amri is a rare female driving teacher.

Most of the female students want to drive their own cars because of the bad experiences they have had in using public transport. According to Al-Amri, the women have had enough, and those who can afford to buy a car or use the family's car have decided to learn to drive.

"Others need to learn driving because their father or brothers don't have time

to take drive them around," said Al-Amri.

She admits that being a female driving instructor has its challenges, especially when teaching men.

"Many Yemeni- men do not have the morality to respect female instructors. Yemen is still struggling with its men approving and respecting working women, unlike in developed countries," she said.

However, she was enthusiastic about women driving and said that women drivers adhere to the laws and traffic regulations much more than men do.

"Woman in general like to do things in a perfect way. Which means if they learn anything they like to give it 100 percent, as part of a woman's nature," she said.

She objected to the notion that female drivers are worse than men. "It's a male dominated culture, and that is why they say that."

Driving a car is both an art and a discipline, reflects Al-Amri. She hoped that traffic and drivers in Yemen will one day be disciplined enough to reflect this, instead of the chaotic driving that is dominant in Yemen now.



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