

Central Bank of Yemen employees strike

Amira Nasser

SANA'A, Jan. 9 — Employees at the Central Bank of Yemen initiated a partial strike this week, calling for a restructuring of their wage package. As a partial strike, employees refuse to work for a set number hours a day.

According to sources, the strike will continue until next week and if the Bank's administration refuses to respond to their demands, it will become a full-blown strike, with employees refusing to work at all.

Rasheed Al-Barakani, the Deputy of the Central Bank of Yemen Syndicate, said employees have attempted repeatedly to engage in negotiations with the administration. He said employees participated in a strike last May and followed up with another one in August.

The Minister of Defense mediated



the August strike.

"We talked about our demands before and we considered the circumstances the country the bank went through, but now it's time to fix things," Al-Barakani said.

The administration of the bank formed a committee to reform the employees' wages last September.

"Now the management says that they want an undefined period of

time to study the findings of the committee," Al-Barakani said.

He noted employees had provided the bank's management with a month to implement the results, but they failed to adhere to a regulated time frame.

Attempts were made to reach the bank's administration, but they are currently not officially commenting on the situation.

Yemen's communication sector restricted by current legislation

Samar Qaed

Yemen ranked last among 142 countries for its use of communication and information technology to improve service operations from 2011 to 2012, according to the Economic International Forum. Service operations are defined as the speed and quality of the Internet and the ability of mobile phone operators to keep up with fourth and fifth generation smart phones, in line with global standards.

Recently, a communication and information technology conference was held in Sana'a. It was the first event dedicated to this sector since the private cellular network provider, Sabafon, was established in Yemen in 2001.

The conference highlighted problems and obstacles facing the communication and information technology sector, including state policies that private companies say inhibit their growth.

Hashim Adlat, a legislative researcher, spoke about the absence of laws in Yemen that regulate the development of the communication and information technology sector.

Yemen's income law taxes companies 50 percent of their commercial profits. Many experts consider this one of the highest rates in the world and say it leads to companies lying about their profits.

"It is better if the percentage of taxation imposed on companies is no more than 35 percent. This is a reasonable percentage in countries across the world. This percentage guarantees the full payment of

taxes, without fraud or companies presenting documents claiming losses," Adlat said.

In a new communication law that was passed in February of 2012, lawmakers agreed to tax communication companies an additional seven percent this year.

"This is considered double taxation no matter what it is called," Adlat said, adding that it forces companies to exhaust their capital and hinders them from making future investments.

Many believe that the communication sector's revenue should not be distributed to the state.

"Mobile phone companies are forced to contribute to state affairs. For example, Article 32 of the Communication Law stipulates that one percent of total operational costs will be taken annually for the future establishment of Universities and Institutes," said Nasser Al-Sanabani, the head of the Communication Committee in the General Union of the Commercial and Industrial Chambers.

"We don't even know if it will be established or not," he said, referring to the proposed Universities and Institutes Fund.

Another piece of the legislation that private phone companies take issue with is a stipulation that requires them to provide services under the condition that "costs are reasonable" regardless of the geographical and profitable factors.

The government obligates companies to provide services in areas that do not up the companies' revenue.

"It is illogical that the communication companies shoulder this responsibility," said Al-Sanabani.

"It means sharing the investors' revenues and capital. The orientation of the communication law goes against the policies of a market economy."

The status of the communication and information technology sector in Yemen

Although Yemen now has four mobile phone companies in operation, they have largely failed to keep up with technology.

Abdulsalam Al-Khulaidi, a professor at the Engineering College at Sana'a University, said operators have been too slow to advance.

"Yemen is the only country in the region that still uses second generation technology," he said, referring to a lack of Internet access on smart phones.

Some blame the monopoly of Internet services by the state-owned Yemen Net Company. They say a lack of competition has stifled development.

Mustfa Nassr, the Head of the Studies and Economic Media Center, said people will have access to a better service and cheaper prices if the government changes current laws that stipulates government ownership.

However, the Minister of Communication and Information Technology, Ahmed bin Daghr, said the ministry is working to provide quality Internet and communication services to people nationwide.

He says the communication sector sustained a loss of YR 2.5 billion over the past two years due to destabilized security as Internet lines are often sabotaged by disgruntled tribesmen.

Investigations underway to locate abducted foreigners

Amal Al-Yarisi

Authorities continue to search for three Europeans who were kidnapped last month, according to Mohammed Al-Maweri, a spokesman for the Ministry of Interior, but the Ministry refused to provide any further details.

Media outlets had originally reported the Bani Dhabian tribe of Khawlan, located to the southeast of Sana'a, had claimed responsibility for the abduction of the Finnish couple and Austrian man. But, Sheikh Ab-

dulrahman Al-Marwani, Head of the Dar Al-Salam Organization, a group working on the case, said this is not true.

He said committees had been sent to the tribe, but they determined the victims were not with them.

Despite media speculation, Al-Marwani says they have reason to believe Al-Qaeda is not involved and that investigations have led authorities to believe the victims are still in Sana'a. But, he also said they are still waiting on more conclusive evidence.

Abdulfatah Al-Maqrami, Head of the Center for Arabic Language and Eastern Studies (CALES), where two of the victims were taking classes, said they have been in touch with appropriate embassies, but no new information is available.

The victims were abducted while in the Abu Murad Watch Store on Al-Qasr Street in the Al-Tahrir area.

The kidnapping of foreigners occur sporadically in Yemen.

The location of a Swiss woman who was kidnapped in Hodeida in March 2012 is still unknown.

Campaign launched in Sana'a to eliminate unlicensed cars, motorbikes and weapons

Ashraf Al-Muraqab

The two-day security campaign in the capital city registered 429 unregistered motorbikes and 94 unregistered cars as well as 60 hand-held weapons, according to the Interior Ministry.

Following a series of hit-and-run assassinations, security forces stationed themselves on entrances and exits to the capital city and on the main streets in an attempt to eliminate arms.

Locals have displayed surpris-

ing support for the campaign. Mohammed Al-Mansour, a taxi driver, hoped that the government continues until Sana'a is devoid of weapons. He said bearing weapons in the capital city has become an increasing and worrying phenomenon.

Muad Al-Khalidi, a participant soldier in the campaign, said he expects it to be a success. Many unlicensed motorbikes have been captured, indicating that the local showed solidarity with them.

The majority of what the cam-

paigned controlled were unlicensed motorbikes, said Al-Khalidi.

In 2012, motorbikes carried out 66 assassination attempts as well as killing forty security and military figures and four civilians.

Motorbikes are also considered a major factor behind the increase in traffic accidents, which claim approximately 20 lives a day, according to security authorities. With over 200 thousand motorbikes nationwide, and only 80 thousand registered, the government have taken on a mammoth task.

Continued from page 1

Leader of National Security offers media employees unprecedented olive branch

"The national security should be a source of information for journalists. By holding meetings like this, will help gain the trust of journalists and other activists," he added.

The National Security Bureau was established in 2002 in the wake of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, and

has been strongly supported by the United States.

Sami Noman, a journalist and political analyst described the meeting as positive, indicating that the Bureau aims to enter a period of reconciliation with Yemeni journalists. "But I don't think that reconciliation would be achieved from holding only one meeting."

"We need the aims of this meeting to

be translated on the ground," he said. "We need time to test the serious intention of the national security in cooperating with the journalists and providing them with need information."

In 2011, the National Security was accused of kidnapping and detaining protesters participating in the revolution. The Bureau has also been accused of detaining protesters in secret prisons.



Danish Refugee Council, Yemen Job Announcement

Title: Capacity Building Project Manager
Location: Sana'a, with frequent travel to the field
Starting date: As soon as possible
Duration: 5 months, with possible extension

The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) has been implementing humanitarian activities in Yemen since 2008. Under a new proposed initiative, DRC recently began implementing a capacity building project, in collaboration with other members on the International NGO Forum in Yemen, in support of local civil society organisations. The project focuses on training in humanitarian ethics and their application in the delivery of humanitarian assistance services and services in emergency and post-emergency situations.

The CB Project Manager (CBPM) will supervise training and associated activities for an estimated 60 local NGOs in up to 5 different locations in Yemen: Aden, Sana'a, Taiz, Hodeida and Haradh.

Responsibilities

- Lead the development and adaptation of training messages, curricula, methodologies and tools to the Yemeni context;
- Assist in the identification and selection of trainers, both local and international;
- Assist in the selection of training participants, in consultation with other stakeholders
- Supervise logistical arrangements for training: venue selection; transportation, meals and accommodation;
- Ensure that training participants are visited at least twice over six months to assess usefulness and effectiveness of training;
- Approve and monitor project expenses in accordance with agreed budget and donor and DRC guidelines;
- Prepare progress reports and presentations, as needed;

Qualifications

- Relevant university degree, preferably masters level
- Demonstrated knowledge of standard humanitarian accountability tools and practices and personal commitment to humanitarian principles
- At least 5 years of professional training experience in a relevant context
- Demonstrated skills in adult learning and the use of participatory methods
- Experience in project administration and budget management
- Willingness/ability to travel within Yemen at least 50% of the time
- Fluent Arabic and English

How to apply:

Interested and qualified candidates should send their application letter along with a detailed CV to jobs@drcyemen.org

Please note:

- You must clearly mention "CB Project Manager" in the "Subject" line of the email, otherwise your application will not be considered.
- Your application letter should clearly describe your key relevant qualifications and your motivation for applying to this position.
- Any attached documents must include your name.
- The deadline for applications is **17 January 2013**.
- Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted for interviews.
- Female candidates are strongly encouraged to apply.







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Yemeni Jews Threatened with Extinction

Abdulrahman Shamlan and Maaad Al-Maqtari
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Adwindling, tiny Jewish community in the northwestern Yemeni province of Ammran is threatened with extinction amid continued immigration of its members due to increasing harassment and persecution against them and a lack of security.

Of the hundreds of families who used to live in the town of Raida in Ammran province, some 37 miles northwest of the Yemeni capital Sana'a, only four families remain. While some members of these families are already living outside the country, mainly in the United States or Israel, many of those who remain are considering immigration.

The total number of Jews in Raida, Yemen's largest Jewish community, is not more than 100 people, according to Jewish community leader Rabbi Suleiman Yahya. Nevertheless, President Hadi is reportedly designating a number of seats for the Jewish community on the National Dialogue Conference that is tasked with drafting a new constitution.

The only other Jewish group in the poverty-stricken country is housed in a protected residential area in Sana'a since they were forced in 2007 to leave their homes by the Tehran-backed Houthi Movement. Its members don't exceed 56 people, according to the group's leader, Rabbi Yahya Yusif Mosa. The two Jewish groups are not strongly connected except for some visits during special occasions such as weddings.

Yemeni Jews trace their origin

to the time of King Solomon. The majority of what was Yemen's 50,000-strong Jewish community immigrated to Israel upon the declaration of the Jewish state in 1948.

Yahya, wearing traditional Yemeni clothes including a thawb (long white robe), coat and a shawl around his head, can only be identified as a Jew by his curly earlocks. Yahya's two-floor house, where his 80-years-old father - who was a blacksmith - also lives, is surrounded by his brothers' houses.

His laptop is Yahya's main means of keeping in touch with five of his nine children and other family members living outside of Yemen. It seemed incongruous that in such a remote area of the country, someone has a laptop connected to the Internet.

"I have three sons studying outside Yemen. One is studying in New York, the second in Michigan," he told The Media Line. "The third is studying in... in... in New York," he said, stopping short of saying Israel, likely due to fears it could lead to trouble with his neighbors who see it as an occupying state. "Also, two of my daughters immigrated to the U.S. after they got married," he said.

Although he stressed that none of his children lives in Israel, he admitted that many Yemeni Jews, including family members, moved there, where, he said, living conditions are far better. There are virtually no Jews between the ages of sixteen and thirty because young people left Yemen to study abroad.

Recently, most of Yemen's Jews have been living in isolation due to increasing harassment and aggression from the tribal society around them.

"After my house was robbed earlier this year, I stopped socializing with people. I stopped going to their houses for khat sessions and I don't receive them at mine," Rabbi Yahya said. "While I was not in Raida, someone broke into my house late at night and stole 32 million Yemeni riyals (almost \$150,000). According to him, the stolen money is composed of gold and cash, half of which was for the families which have already left Yemen.

However, Al-Madhabi says he believes the reasons for the Jews' isolation go far beyond robbery.

"The killing of a Jew in Ammran by a pilot in 2008 led dozens of families to immigrate and leave Yemen for good and prompted many others to isolate themselves as they felt they were no longer safe," Al-Madhabi said.

"Also, the Jewish girl who ran away with a Muslim guy before converting to Islam and marrying him played a major part in their isolation," he added.

"Yemeni Jews share the tribal traditions and customs according to which it's very scandalous and shameful when a girl escapes from her parents' house with a guy," he explained. "Like any other tribe or family in their shoes, they felt that she brought shame on all Jews."

At the Jewish school in Raida where Rabbi Yahya teaches, the pupils are only taught Hebrew, religious studies and mathematics. There are no English language courses or any other subjects included in their curriculum, according to Yahya, who pointed out that Yemeni Jews can speak the standard Hebrew but they don't understand modern Hebrew words, such as names for devices.

"The Jewish pupils study without any grades. For example, there is no first grade, second grade...etc. Almost all students go abroad after the age of 14 and 15 to finish their education," he said.

The children start learning Hebrew and religious studies at an early stage, sometimes as young as four, depending on the child's acumen. Some children for whom learning is more difficult begin studying the language only when they are seven or eight, Yahya explained.

When asked how the Yemeni Jews could be accepted in American or Israeli schools given the traditional education they receive, Yahya replied: "They are only accepted in Jewish schools."

Until recently, Jewish girls were not studying at all. But Yahya says they have recently started going to school.

"I set myself as an example for Jews when I taught my daughter. She was the first girl in the Jewish community to study. After she became good at Hebrew and religious studies she became a teacher for Jewish girls," he said.

Yemeni Jews share the same tribal traditions and customs as their Muslim neighbors. For instance, Yemeni women - Jewish and Muslim - do not appear before male strangers. Jewish girls as young as ten-years of age are covered in black from head to toe, including a veil on their faces.

Even at school, only female teachers can teach the girls in segregated classrooms, according to Yahya.

"According to Judaism, it's forbidden for women and men to mingle. Not only are they not allowed to shake each others' hands, but it's also forbidden for them to deal with each other," he

pointed out.

Yemeni Jews complain of widespread discrimination and increasing harassment and aggression from the tribal society surrounding them.

"Whenever you go, they call you 'Jew,' or 'Zionist.' Sometimes children throw stones at our houses and adults harass our women," he said, attributing some of the harassment to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"In the past, they would harass Jews when there was a war, and when the war ended the harassment ended with it. But recently, even when there is no war, we are still subjected to different kinds of harassment," Yahya explained. "We have nothing to do with Israeli Zionism. And we even hear of Muslims living in harmony with Jews in Israel."

To avert problems, the Jews only allow their children to play with the children of neighbors they know would not cause trouble if a fight erupts between the children, he said.

According to Yahya, sometimes Jews go to tribal chiefs to complain or seek arbitration.

"We are living in a tribal area where the tribe is stronger than the government. That's why we sometimes resort to seeking justice from the tribal sheikhs," he said. "Mujahid Abu Shawarb, a late tribal chief, was very kind to us. He always stood by our side and made sure that nobody wronged us. But now neither the current tribal chiefs nor the government can do anything to stop the injustice against us."

Last week, a thief carrying a machine gun attempted to rob the house of Dawd Yahya, a 52-year-old Jew, but Dawd, who himself has a machine gun, foiled the robbery attempt.

Yahya suggested The Media Line reporter talk to him about what happened, but when the reporter visited Dawd, a policeman in civilian clothes was there to speak for him.

The policeman took pains to stress that the police carried out its duty to protect the Jews. Dawd could not say anything as the policeman kept stressing that police took all measures to protect him, asking Dawd to approve what he said.

Dawd kept silent, nodding his head every time the officer asked for his approval, but despite his silence, his face told a different story.

"Living here has become unbearable," Yahya said, adding that, "most of the remaining Jews are only waiting to sell their properties before leaving Yemen for good."

"Despite my love for my country, the only thing that makes me stay here is my house -- which is already offered for sale," he said. "Once it's sold I will leave Yemen along with my family."

Rabbi Yahya said he expects that in a few years, there will be no Jews remaining in Yemen. "Five families left Yemen in the past 20 months," Yahya concluded. Reflecting the fear under which they live, he then asked The Media Line reporters to stick to what he said and not add anything, saying that doing so might increase the harassment against Jews.

4U

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OUR
OPINIONMedia and National
Security, from foes
to friends?

For the first time ever, National Security reached out to media without grabbing them by the neck and shipping them to "Neverland".

The National Security Bureau was created after the events of 9/11 in an attempt to combat terrorism, espionage and ensure the nation's security through intelligence.

The new head of the National Security Bureau, Ali Al-Ahmadi, who was appointed in September of last year, is not a military man. He has a Ph.D. from Bulgaria in international economics and was Governor of Al-Baidha, Hajja and Shabwa. He was also the Minister of Fishery, a member of the Shoura Council and Yemen's Ambassador to Kuwait.

He has even published a book on economics and several research papers on local administration and fish wealth.

Personally, I found this shocking. We are not used to a CV like this. In Yemen, security personnel are usually rough and tough bullies, who often lack education. They are taught to attack first, and then ask questions.

This new boss recently gathered about 200 journalists for what he called a "friendly introductory meeting" on Tuesday. He even provided lunch.

He spoke about how important media is, and he said he recognizes that the relation between the National Security Bureau and media is currently bad. He blames National Security for this. Now he is trying to start a clean slate and extend a friendly hand to journalists.

The journalists, on the other hand, took this initiative with a grain of salt. Although many appreciate the gesture, they do not believe it is genuine.

The questions directed at the head of one of the worst security apparatuses in Yemen were ruthless. Most of them were left unanswered, but in general, it was a start.

We are yet to find out if Al-Ahmadi will repeat this event or even take it a step further. The journalists at the event demanded the creation of a media office or spokesperson that is designated to deal with the press. Al-Ahmadi said he would consider that.

There is a very clear gap between intelligence institutions and media. They think we spoil their efforts to catch the bad guys, and we think they are the bad guys. Let's hope that under Al-Ahmadi's leadership, this relation improves, and we work together for the sake of our country.

Nadia Al-Sakkaf



Syria powerfully demonstrates how a fight against a dictator can soon turn into a sectarian struggle.

Arab states of uncertainty

SHLOMO BEN-AMI
Theaustralian.com/au
First published Jan. 9

The revolutions that swept the Arab world during the last two years have exposed the extraordinary fragility of key Arab states. With the exception of historical countries such as Egypt or Morocco, most Arab states are artificial constructs of European colonialism, which combined disparate tribes and ethnicities into unitary states that could be held together only by authoritarian rule and a common enemy Zionism and its Western patrons.

Today's turmoil, however, is no longer driven by anger at foreign forces; instead, it marks a second phase of the de-colonization process: the assertion of the right of self-determination by peoples and tribes united only by a dictator's yoke. Indeed, it is not entirely far-fetched to anticipate the emergence of new Arab states from the debris of the old, artificial ones. The American invasion of Iraq set the pattern, for it broke the central government's power and empowered ethnic and religious enclaves.

What happened in Yugoslavia, an ill-conceived product of Wilsonian diplomacy, could happen in the more cynical imperial creations in the Middle East. What Sigmund Freud defined as "the narcissism of minor differences" caused Yugoslavia to split into seven small states (including Kosovo), following the bloodiest fighting in Europe since World War II. Can the Arab states avoid a similar fate?

Democratization in the Arab world is not only about toppling dictators; it is also about redressing the politico-ethnic map of the region, which has kept too many minority groups dissatisfied. Consider the Kurds, who were split among Iraq, Turkey, Syria, and Iran.

But the Kurds are hardly alone. Libya was created out of three former Italian colonies, Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, and Fezzan, each essentially comprising different tribal confederations (the Sa'adi in Cyrenaica, the Saff al-Bahar in Tripolitania, and the Tuareg in Fezzan). The fall of Muammar Gaddafi opened a Pandora's box of old rivalries, with Cyrenaica developing into a semi-autonomous region known as Barqa.

Likewise, long-standing tensions between Bahrain's ruling Sunni minority and Shia majority have worsened since the country's Shia-led pro-democracy movement was crushed in 2011. As for Jordan, the precarious balance between the Palestinian majority and the Bedouin minority was difficult enough to maintain in stable times; it is a far more precarious undertaking now.

Other states in the region have been teetering on the brink of failure from the outset. Yemen emerged in 1990 from the reunification of South Yemen and North Yemen, which fought bitter wars in 1972 and 1979. But its leaders have never been able to integrate the tribes, the primary units of Yemen's social structure, into the political system in a manner that generates their unequivocal acceptance of the sovereign state.

Syria powerfully demonstrates how a fight against a dictator can

soon turn into a sectarian struggle for survival or mastery. Notwithstanding the worldwide legitimacy now enjoyed by the National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces, a disorderly collapse of the regime might yet lead to the country's division into autonomous ethnic enclaves. The rebels, mostly Sunnis assisted by jihadi groups such as the Nusra Front, an offshoot of al-Qa'ida in Iraq, have never truly attempted to reach out to the country's minorities Christians, Shia, Druze, and Kurds which have repudiated the National Coalition as being "obedient to Turkey and Qatar."

The Kurds, under the yoke of Arabs, Turks, and Iranians, saw in the demise of Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq and now see in the dismemberment of other Arab autocracies an opportunity to join the new Great Middle Eastern Game. That means realising the dream of uniting their dispersed nation in an independent Kurdish state.

The Kurdish militias in northern Syria, which sought to stay out of the civil war while preparing their own autonomous enclave should Bashar al-Assad's regime be toppled, are now being drawn into the fighting; the Iraqi Kurds, who have been training their Syrian kin, may

well follow. Turkey inevitably views Kurdish activism in northern Syria led by the Democratic Union party, an offshoot of the insurgent Kurdistan Workers Party in Turkey as a direct threat to its stability, and will do its utmost to prevent it from sparking rebellion among Turkey's own restive Kurdish minority.

Lebanon is yet another ethnic tapestry that cannot be immune to events in Syria. Already, signs of spillover effects can be seen in clashes between Sunni and Alawite militias. However hegemonic Hezbollah may now seem, its power in Lebanon depends heavily on the support of the Assad regime. Should Assad fall, and the Sunnified opposition rise to power, the ensuing balance of power in Syria is bound to reshape the balance of power in Lebanon.

Might South Sudan, the mostly Christian state that seceded in 2011 from the Muslim Arab North after a long civil war, become the new paradigm for non-historical Arab states riven by ethnic and tribal rivalries? As former Prime Minister of China Zhou Enlai supposedly said of the impact of the French Revolution, "It is too early to tell." But there can be no doubt that the post-colonial status quo in the Middle East is crumbling. A

multifaceted region has yet to crystallise into more definitive political constructions.



Indeed, it is not entirely far-fetched to anticipate the emergence of new Arab states from the debris of old, artificial ones.

Shlomo Ben-Ami, a former Israeli foreign minister and the vice president of the Toledo International Center for Peace, is the author of *Scars of War, Wounds of Peace: The Israeli-Arab Tragedy*.



OXFAM

JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

Oxfam, an international NGO, works with others to find lasting solutions to poverty and injustice. Oxfam has been working in Yemen since 1983. Oxfam announces the following vacancy for its Programme.

Head of Human Resources and Organizational Development – (1 position)

Location: Sana'a

Contract Duration: two years

The role

Oxfam GB has scaled up its activities in Yemen. Having tripled the size of the team to 190 staff the programme is now looking for a Head of Human Resources and Organizational Development. This post-holder will be responsible for leading an established HR function. He/she will work closely with the Country Director to pro-actively anticipate and meet the needs arising from rapid programme growth. Capacity building will be a critical component of this role as will be risk management.

What we're looking for

We are looking for someone who has NGO specific experience of leading an HR function in country. It is important that this experience has been gained internationally and includes at least one humanitarian scale-up, preferably in an insecure operating environment. You will need to have prior experience of writing an HR Strategy and delivering this through a team of local HR staff. Experience of designing and implementing capacity building initiatives are also essential and expertise in facilitation and/or coaching would be a significant advantage. You need to be fluent in English and Arabic is an advantage but not required.

To apply

If you believe that you have the qualifications and skills to excel in this position, please send your CV and a cover letter, clearly stating the job and the location of the job you are applying for in the email subject, to yemenjobs@oxfam.org.uk.

Closing date for applications is 22nd January 2013

Please apply immediately as we will be interviewing suitable candidates before the closing date

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Letters: yreaders.view@gmail.com

ADVERTISEMENTS:

Tel: +967 (1) 510306

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Publisher & Editor-in-Chief
Nadia Abdulaziz Al-Sakkaf

Senior Reporter
Mohammed bin Sallam

Editorial Staff

Ahmed Ali Dawood
daod2009@gmail.com

Amal Al-Yarisi
amal.mansoor12@gmail.com

Amira Nasser
amira.nasser2010@gmail.com

CEO
Khair Aldin Al Nsour

Managing Editor Assistant
Sadeq Al-Wesabi
sadeqalwesabi@hotmail.com

Ashraf Al-Muraqab
aagh007@yahoo.com

Bassam Al-Khamiri
bassam.alkhameri@gmail.com

Khalid Al-Karimi
khalidmohamada@yahoo.com

Head of Design Dept.
Ramzy Alawi Al-Saqqaf

Mohammed Al-Samei
alsamei77@gmail.com

Nadia Haddash
n.haddash@gmail.com

Samar Qaed
samar.qaed@hotmail.com

Offices

Taiz Bureau:
Imad Ahmed Al-Saqqaf
Tel: +967 (4) 217-156,
Telefax: +967 (4) 217157
P.O.Box: 5086, Taiz
Email: yttaz@y.net.ye

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The Labor Series (4)

A five part sequence

Every Thursday the Yemen Times takes a look at the construction sector to discuss problems, obstacles and solutions.

Rural areas in need of construction sector support

Samar Qaed

Contractors are facing problems. Unlike the issues previously addressed in the Labor Series, including the government's failure to pay contractors, the fourth part of this series explores problems encountered by contractors in rural areas. From extortion to weak state control, construction in these areas presents a unique set of challenges.

Fragile security

The Al-Wadhae area of Abyan has suffered from a turbulent situation in the past due to clashes between Al-Qaeda affiliates and the military.

With increasing instability, the conflict in Al-Wadhae halted a major road project that had been 80 percent completed by the Bahakm Company for Trade and Construction.

Awad Bahakam, the owner of the company, said the road is a vital project.

He says locals of the area have suffered from unpaved and unsafe roads for years. With the nearest hospital over 70 km. away, some patients even died and some women have miscarried while en route.

These are not the only disadvantages of this difficult road. With schools often far away and the majority of local tribes residing in mountainous terrain, Bahakam said the inability to use



Roads in rural areas have long been in need of repairs and paving. People have to spend days traveling short distances due to their inefficiency. However, the process to improve them has been painful as locals often sabotage the projects due to a lack of security in the area.

the road affects people's access to education.

The bloody wars between the army and Al-Qaeda resulted in most of the construction workers abandoning the work.

Without anyone to protect the construction site, contractors' equipment was stolen.

Bahakam confirmed his willingness to finish the project, but says the state needs to deploy security personnel throughout the governorate to ensure construction site security and guarantee Al-Qaeda will not return.

Low awareness

The Amran-Al-Sawad-Al-Ahnoom road covers nine districts. Work on this \$31 million project started in 2009.

Rajeh Al-Jaberi, the Deputy Manager of Al-Ryan Company for Trade and Construction, said increasing insecurity and trouble in the governorate of Amran has resulted in a \$10 million rise in project costs.

"The project was supposed to be completed in 2011, but the political crisis caused us to stop. We withdrew 70 percent of our equip-

ment, only leaving the heavy machinery," he said.

"Many people with government grievances, obstructed our work and attacked us during this period," Al-Jaberi said, adding that they resumed the work on this project about six months ago.

He says four construction companies have worked on this project previously but quit due to the difficult environment and a lack of support from locals in the area.

"The government should make people in the area aware of the importance of these projects pri-

or to the implementation. When we talk to people, they question the benefits of this project even though it's clear," he said. This road allows them to reach other districts in an hour and a half as opposed to a day like it used to be."

He says locals have put forth many obstacles for the construction company. They have blocked roads with barrels to prevent the staff from reaching the project site.

Al-Jaberi says they have informed the local authority about

saboteurs, but it resulted in more attacks that night.

Al-Jaberi says they were shot at they told by the attackers, "We are stronger than the police." After this, the company stopped informing the police.

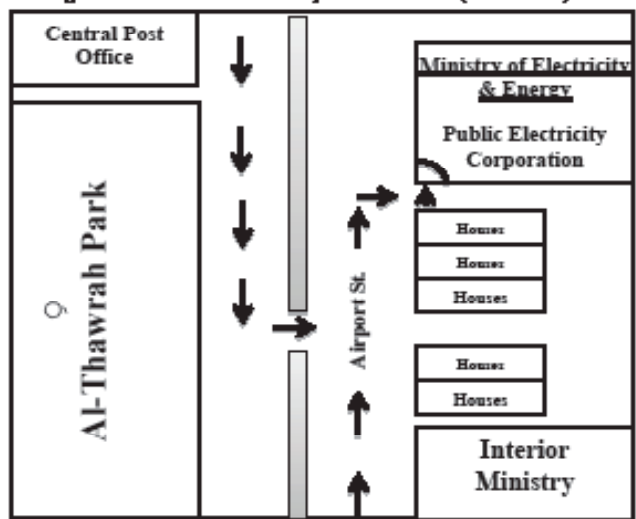
Despite setbacks, the project is now 97 percent complete and is expected to conclude by the end of 2013, provided a stable situation.

Once the project is completed, the company says they will demand the government compensate them for the losses they sustained in the area.

Republic of Yemen
Ministry of Electricity and Energy
Public Electricity Corporation
Power Sector Project
Project ID (P086865)

SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF THREE PHASE CT/VT ELECTRONIC METERS AND CURRENT TRANSFORMERES
ICB No.: YEM 08 G12/PEC

- This invitation for bids follows the General Procurement Notice for this Project that was published in the dg Market on May 24, 2012 (updated on August 2, 2012) and in the United Nations Development Business (UNDB) Issue No. 656, dated June 16, 2012 (updated on August 4, 2012 - on line and print version Issue No. 658, dated August 31, 2012).
- The Republic of Yemen has received a Credit (No. 4172-YEM) from the International Development Association (IDA) toward the cost of the Power Sector Project, and it intends to apply part of the IDA proceeds towards the cost of the Contract for SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF THREE PHASE CT/VT ELECTRONIC METERS AND CURRENT TRANSFORMERES.
- The Public Electricity Corporation now invites sealed bids from eligible and qualified bidders for the Supply and Delivery of Three Phase CT/VT Electronic meters and Current Transformers.
- Bidding will be conducted through the International Competitive Bidding (ICB) under International Development Association (IDA) procedures, and open to all bidders from Eligible Source Countries as specified in the IDA Guidelines.
- Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from and inspect documents at the address below during official working hours (08:30 hrs - 15:30 hrs) on any working day between Saturdays through Wednesday.
- A complete set of Bidding Document in English may be purchased by interested bidders on the submission of a written application to the project address and upon payment of a non-refundable bidding fee of 1000\$ (One Thousand USD only). Upon request the documents could be sent by courier to prospective bidders after transferring the stated amount to the Project Account No. (1100-12168) SWIFT Code CHYVYYSAXXX at Central Bank of Yemen.
- The amount of the Bid Security as follows:-
= US\$58,000 (Fifty Thousand USD)
- Project address:-
Ministry of Electricity and Energy
Public Electricity Corporation (PEC)
Power Sector Project (PSP)
P.O. Box No. 178
Airport Road
Ministry Building - Harem
Sana'a, Republic of Yemen.
To: PEC - Managing Director
Attn: project director, Project Management Unit
Telephone: 00967 1 326 208
E-Mail: yem_gov_psp2012@pec.com.ye
Web Site: www.pec.com.ye
- The deadline for selling BIDs will be on 24.02.2013.
- Bids must be submitted in sealed envelope, delivered to the below address at or before 11:00 a.m. hours on 03.02.2013 (closing date) and be clearly marked with the Bid Number and Bid Title. Late bids will be rejected.
- Bids must be valid for (120) days and accompanied by a bid security of the amount mentioned in the bidding document with validity period of (150) days.
- Bids will be opened on the closing date shown above in the presence of the bidders or their representatives who choose to attend in person at the address below at 11:00 a.m. hours on 03.02.2013.
- The address referred to under paragraphs 10 and 12 above is:



الجمهورية اليمنية
وزارة الكهرباء والطاقة
المؤسسة العامة للكهرباء
مشروع قطاع الكهرباء
رقم المشروع (P086865)

إعلان مناقصة توريد عدادات إلكترونية ومحولات تيار
مناقصة رقم: YEM08G12/PEC

- يأتي هذا الإعلان تنقيحاً على الدعوة العامة لمشروع قطاع الكهرباء المتطورة في صعدة Market رقم بتاريخ 2805/05/12 في تنقيحها في 086865/08/12 رقم صحيفة الأمم المتحدة لأعمال التنمية العدد رقم 656 بتاريخ 2805/06/12 في تنقيحها في 2806/08/12 العدد رقم 658 بتاريخ 086865/08/12.
- حصلت حكومة الجمهورية اليمنية على قرض تقوي رقم (4172-YEM) من هيئة التنمية الدولية (IDA) كجزء من التمويل الخاص لمشروع قطاع الكهرباء ويتولى إيفاء جزء من حصة القرض المتكامل من هيئة التنمية الدولية لتغطية النفقات المتوقعة طبقاً لجدول عدادات إلكترونية ومحولات تيار.
- تدعو المؤسسة العامة للكهرباء وشركات المنطقة شراعية لتقديم بطاقتهم والتخلي عن توريد عدادات إلكترونية ومحولات تيار.
- يتم تكويم العروض بواسطة الشروط المحددة في اللوائح التنقيحية الدولية طبقاً لتوافق وشركات هيئة التنمية الدولية التي تتكلم للمناقصة متوجهاً لكل من شركات المنطقة من الدول التي تنفتح عليها الشروط المحددة في وثائق هيئة التنمية الدولية بشأن التوريفات.
- الحصول على مزيد من المعلومات عن وثيقة المناقصة من الضمان أثناء فترة اليوم الرسمي (15:00-08:30) من السبت إلى الأربعاء.
- يتم إعداد العروض باللغة الإنجليزية وعلى المتكلمين الراغبين شراء وثيقة المناقصة تكفي طلب خطاب رسمي إلى عنوان المشروع مع دفع رسوم المناقصة 1000\$ (مئة دولار). وفي حالة طلب رسمي يمكن إرسال وثيقة المناقصة بطريق يد دفع الرسوم المشار إليها إلى حساب المشروع رقم (12168-1100) سويتس CHYVYYSAXXX لدى البنك المركزي اليمني.
- تتمة الضمان الائتماني المطلوب تكفيته على النحو التالي:-
= (50,000) خمسون ألف دولار
- عنوان المشروع:-
وزارة الكهرباء والطاقة
المؤسسة العامة للكهرباء
مشروع قطاع الكهرباء
ص. ب. رقم 178
شارع المطار
مدينة الوزارة - طريق الأندلس
محافظة الجمهورية اليمنية
الآنح: مدير عام المؤسسة العامة للكهرباء
عناية - مدير عام المشروع وحدة الكهرباء
تيليفون: 00967 1 326 208
البريد الإلكتروني: yem_gov_psp2012@pec.com.ye
الموقع الإلكتروني: www.pec.com.ye
- آخر موعد إيفاء الوثائق هو تاريخ 24/02/2013م.
- تسلم اللوائح مطبقة وبخطم وتسلم إلى الضمان أثناء فترة قضاة الساعة 11:00 صباحاً بتاريخ 03/02/2013 (الموعد النهائي) موضحاً اسم ورقم المناقصة وأن يتنقل في أي مكان يعمل متفقاً.
- يجب أن تكون اللوائح صالحة لفترة (120) يوماً وتكون مطبقة تأمين لطاقم صالحي لمدة (150) يوماً هو موضع في وثيقة المناقصة.
- يجب فتح اللوائح في تاريخ تسليم اللوائح المتكتم أو قبله بحضور أصحاب الشركات أو من يتوجب عليهم على الضمان الذي في تمام الساعة 11:00 صباحاً بتاريخ 03/02/2013م.
- الضمان المشار إليه في الفترة 10 و 12 هو:-

Women feel equal in Hamams' steam

Amira Nasser

Hana Al-Yariemi has worked in a Hamam in Sana'a for three years. She sees different faces from a variety of places and regions every day. Everyone has a different story to tell, she says as she prepares hot water and incense for her female customers in search of a relaxing experience.

In addition to the lure of the ritual cleaning, Al-Yariemi says hamams are attracting women by offering a space that promotes a culture free of class divides and an atmosphere to make friends.

"Ministers' wives, educated women, workers wives and unemployed

women all sit together in Hamams equally," she says.

Hamams are spaces where both women and men, although they are separated, have gathered for centuries to socialize and cleanse their bodies in bathes of steam.

"Everyone pays, washes, relaxes and coexists without difference," said Um Fatema, a hamam owner.

Hamams are numerous in Sana'a and usually charge between YR 500-800 for a visit, a fee that most say is affordable and contributes to bringing many people together from various economic backgrounds.

Luna Al-Rada'ei, a law student at Sana'a University, who goes to a hamam about once a month, says she has sat next to women from all different backgrounds, including

a street sweeper and a potato vendor's wife.

“

Hamams are attracting women by offering a space that promotes a culture free of class divides

"Each time I come here, I come with a group of friends and family, and I leave with a new group of

friends that I meet in the hamam" she says.

Another hamam frequenter, Somalia Sultan, says she looks forward to her time at the bath house as the judgments of social class seem to disappear.

"I meet women, talk with them and exchange different stories without knowing what they study or where they work."

One 22-year-old's time spent at a hamam even led to an engagement. After sitting with her now mother-in-law in the bathes and discovering they are from the same village, Laila Saeed was eventually introduced to her future husband.

"It is very rare to find a place to get to know each other without knowing backgrounds," Saeed said.



Vacancies

Ministry of Education (MoE)
Project Administration Unit (PAU)
(IDA Credit and Grant & Multi-Donors Trust Funds)

The Project Administration Unit (PAU) of the Ministry of Education (MoE) administers activities to support the implementation of MoE strategies through multi donors financed projects. It supports the implementation of the Basic Education Development Strategy (BEDS) through the Second Basic Education Development Project (BEDP II) and supports the implementation of the National General Secondary Education Strategy (NGSES) through the Secondary Education Development and Girls Access Program (SEDGAP). PAU is now seeking applicants for the following positions:

1 - Internal Audit Manager. The main tasks would be:

- Prepare an internal audit work plan with milestones for the projects, which will be approved by the PAU Director.
- Ensure that the related procedures, laws, regulations are implemented;
- Check the validity of project payments and ensure that tasks claimed have been completed;
- Assist PAU in the financial and administration management services;
- Coordinate with external auditors to ensure various comprehensive coverage of the audit process either through internal or external audit;
- Suggest amendments and effect to procedures and Operations Manual to ensure that it reflects the systems and procedures developed by the internal Auditor and approved by the IMSC sub-committee;
- Monitor the compliance of PAU, MoE and GEOs to the Financial procedures given in the Operations Manuals;
- Prepare quarterly reports to PAU Director outlining major internal control issues, deviations from the established systems, which will result in more effective compliance and greater efficiency in the implementation;
- Produce working papers to act as evidential support to audit work carried out;
- Investigating independently or jointly with management reported irregularities and other issues as considered necessary;
- Consult with internal and external stakeholders to determine the extent, scope and risks associated with activities to be reviewed and to ensure proper audit coverage avoiding duplication of effort.
- Provide Consultation on related areas of fraud control, governance, risk management, safety and security and other areas of focus.
- Review the quarterly Financial Monitoring Reports (FMRs) and ensures all payments and reports are submitted in the appropriate time;
- Perform any other activities as directed by the Project's Director.

Qualifications

- University degree in financial accounting and preferable qualifications (or a major of study) in internal auditing;
- Minimum of 5 years experience as an internal or external auditor;
- Member of an acceptable professional accounting or auditing association would be a plus; with knowledge of IPSAS, IFRS, ISA, Sarbanes-Oxley Section (SOX-404) Compliance by using the most widely recognized framework, that meets this definition is the framework designed by the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations (COSO) framework.
- Good working knowledge of English and Arabic.
- Experience in the World Bank IDA's financed projects would be an added advantage.
- Have command of MS Office and specifically (Word, Excel and PowerPoint), internet and other computer skills.

2 - Procurement Manger. Main tasks would be:

- Prepare an annual work plan with milestones for the projects functions for the Procurement Department;
- Prepare and revise Procurement Plans (PP) which will be reviewed by PAU Director and then obtain IDA's approval;
- Prepare and/or organize and supervise the preparation of bidding documents and requests for proposals as required;
- Prepare and ensure the publication of Specific and General Procurement Notices for goods, and requests for expressions of interest for consulting services;
- Ensure that documents have received appropriate approvals in accordance with the Financing Agreements;
- Assist on all the preparations of the bids, evaluation, evaluation reports and contracts award, in accordance with IDA guidelines;
- Prepare contracts and ensure they are approved in timely manner, in accordance with the procedures described in the Projects Operations Manuals (POMs) and Procurement Manual;
- Arrange for the safe custody, inspect, receive goods and ensure proper delivery and that they are in compliance with specifications and quantities with purchase orders and contracts ;
- Act as a focal point for any dialogue on procurement management matters relating to the Projects;
- Systematically report and update the Projects Management on the status of procurement activities and issues, and follow-up with MoE and other related Ministries and Institutions on procurement and other projects issues as may be required by the Projects Management;

- Contribute to quarterly Projects Management Reports;
- Ensure that procurement procedures provided in the Financing Agreements are respected at all stages; and
- Perform any other project related duties as directed by PAU Director.

Qualifications:

- A minimum of Bachelor degree in Business Administration, Commerce, Economics, Engineering, Education, or any other related field;
- A minimum of five years of professional experience in procurement management;
- Familiarity with the government and IDA's procurement guidelines and procedures;
- Strong interpersonal skills and ability to lead and mobilize staff;
- Strong oral and written capabilities in both Arabic and English; and
- Have a good command of MS Office applications, specifically (Word, Excel and PowerPoint), internet and other computer skills.

3 - Basic Education Coordinator. Main tasks would be:

- Work closely with all staff of PAU, MoE sectors and departments, various Governorate Offices and District Offices of MOE;
- Liaise with the MoE Basic Education Coordinator, and specifically familiarize himself/ herself with the salient aspects of the MOE education planning strategy and the short, medium and long term action plans;
- coordinate with the Project Steering Committee and other agencies regarding the Project/Program activities as;
- coordinate, monitor and supervise all implementation aspects of various project plans and components;
- report and seek guidance from the PD on any unusual deviation from the agreed project plans;
- coordinate MOE, PAU and DPs comments on draft reports coming out of the TAs and make sure that there is adequate follow up of this TAs;
- coordinate the project work closely with the Project implementation teams in the field at the district and Governorate levels;
- be responsible for working with all the concerned units at the PAU and MOE for compiling and/or drafting appropriate reports for submission to the DPs;
- be responsible for preparations for receiving and coordinating with the Supervision Mission of the Donors;
- be responsible for providing guidance/training to the concerned local staff to improve their professional skills, develop team work and focus on completing the tasks assigned; and
- perform any other project related duties as directed by the Project Director.

Qualifications:

- Formal academic qualifications (a minimum of a Bachelor Degree) preferably in education;
- Minimum of 10 years of relevant experience with a minimum of 2 years experience in coordination;
- Understanding of policy development and ability to undertake policy discussion with senior government officials, IDA and donors staff;
- Ability for effective interaction and communication with stakeholders, management and staff, as well as with local and international consultants;
- Familiarity with IDA-financed projects will be an advantage;
- Familiarity with the BEDP II will be an advantage;
- Strong oral and written capabilities in both Arabic and English and capability to use computers and software applications.

4 - Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist. Main tasks would be:

- Liaise closely with concerned PAU staff, M&E officers/ specialists, various sectors of the Ministry of Education (MoE) and concerned M&E staff working in various Governorates Education Offices (GEOs) and Districts Education Offices (DEOs) involved in the projects;
- Be responsible for preparing regular timely reports (weekly, monthly, quarterly, bi-annually) as needed on M&E issues and submit these reports for review to the PAU M&E Manager;
- Use all regular progress reports received from all implementing MoE agencies at central and governorates levels to prepare both Arabic and English timely BEDP II and SEDGAP projects progress reports. The reports should contain narrative, tables and graphs with explanatory notes as needed;
- Undertake site visits to cross check M&E reports coming from field

- and from sectors;
- Follow-up on indicator progress and report on Outcome and Output indicators;
- Collect data and verify data for indicator reporting;
- Establish and maintain a database on MoE statistics relevant for indicator reporting;
- Assist in generating indicators as needed with relevant MoE and IDA specialists and review these with the PAU M&E Manager;
- Contribute effectively in all projects' review workshops;
- Contribute in the preparation and implementation of workshops; and
- Be responsible to take any additional responsibilities assigned to him by the PAU M&E Manager and the PAU Director.

Qualifications

- A minimum of a Bachelor's degree in English, Economics, Social Studies, Statistics or other related fields;
- A minimum of five years of professional experience in preparing projects monthly, bi-annually and annual progress reports;
- Working effectively in a team environment;
- Good inter personal and excellent communication skills in both Arabic and English;
- Good Proactive personality highly desired;
- Ability for effective interaction and communication with management, staff, as well as with local and international consultants and other international agencies;
- Have a good command of MS Office and specifically (Word, Excel and PowerPoint), internet and other computer skills; and
- Excellent oral and written capabilities in Arabic and English.

5 - Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) Coordinator for Lehaj Govt. Main tasks would be:

- Developing a strong operational and working relationship on behalf of the GES with the Post Office responsible for transferring the funds to the beneficiaries.
- Check that the payments to households are being processed and sent on time.
- Verify the information concerning who has and has not met their conditionalities is being provided on time by the school system.
- Solve any problems associated with information on conditionalities.
- Develop a survey of drop out (to be approved by the CCT technical team) by gathering information of the reasons and the social issues of the drop out and to monitor the compliance of conditionalities.
- Solve any problems regarding households (in coordination with the Sana'a based supervisor).
- Work with the GES, the Sana'a based CCT office and any other relevant agency to solve any implementation issues.
- Ensure that any mismanagement of funds is reported to the MoE and the BEDP project team.
- Help provide the database manager and data entry operators with relevant and up to date information on the distribution of funds including how much has been transferred, when and how, by liaising directly with the Lahej governorate Education office and the schools where beneficiaries are enrolled.
- Participate in surprise visits to the beneficiary schools to verify that the data and information of the children transmitted to the team and GES by the schools. During these visits also talk to the beneficiaries to verify the transmission of funds.
- Perform any other project related duties.

Qualifications:

- At least a bachelor's degree or higher in financial, public management, Business Administration, Public Administration or any Social Sciences (masters degree is preferred but bachelors with good work experience will be considered).
- At least 3 years work experience in a relevant position. It will be beneficial to have experience in managing payment systems. In addition,
- The person should be dynamic and creative in figuring out new ways to design mechanisms.

All applications along with a detailed resume and supporting documents should be submitted by Saturday January 26, 2013 to the following address:

Education Development Project Administration Unit
60M Southern Road, Bait Meyad
Tel: 01-619163/4 Fax 01-619219
Email: Bilqis6@hotmail.com

Cartoonist Mazin Shuja'a to the Yemen Times

"We were deprived of comics as children so I don't want to deprive my children of my comics"

Interview by Sadeq Al-Wesabi

Cartoons are life for Maizin Shuja'a Al-Din, a well-known Yemeni cartoonist, who started drawing in his childhood.

As a child, Al-Din spent his days drawing his teachers' various emotions.

"Those teachers were bursting with laughter when they saw my cartoons," he said. "Caricature art runs in my blood. It's my job, hobby and my favorite work."

With the aim of entertaining and educating children, Shuja'a Al-Din publishes comics that discuss different issues including child labor,

early marriage and education.

"We didn't used to have comics like this. I don't want to deprive others of this art that amuses and educates at the same time," he said.

"Our society is not aware of children's needs. The parents are busy with their daily lives and don't realize the importance of mediums like comics to raise awareness for children."

Lack of appreciation

Newspaper publishers do not appreciate cartoonists in Yemen, Shuja'a Al-Din says. However, the lack of appreciation makes him "more determined to continue his work."

"I don't care much for the finan-



cial returns of my cartoons. I care more about the feedback of the audience."

In comparison to other Arab cartoonists, Yemenis cartoonists lack significant training opportunities in caricature art.

"In Arab countries, there are several schools and institutes that specialize in cartoons, where many cartoonists meet and exchange their experiences."

Shuja'a Al-Din doesn't like to discuss political issues in his cartoons.

"Drawing political cartoon forces me to be affiliated with specific political groups and ideologies even though I'm independent," he said.

Recently, he published his second book, "Mazin...the Satirical Pencil 2." It focuses on broad themes like marriage, poverty and inequality.

Shuja'a Al-Din says caricature is very important at a time when Yemen is confronting difficult security, economic and political concerns.

"Unfortunately, caricature art is often neglected by the government itself," he said.

"Some of my critical cartoons have maddened several Yemeni officials."

Shuja'a Al-Din has participated in different artistic exhibitions in Yemen, Egypt, Sudan, Algeria and Morocco. He was also selected as a member of the jury for the second International Algeria Festival for Comics.

Recently, Shuja'a Al-Din and other cartoonists have started displaying their work on social networking sites.

"Facebook gives cartoonists a broader audience and a chance to show their cartoons. Newspaper haven't given them the same chance," he said.

However, Shuja'a Al-Din is not satisfied with the "small number" of cartoonists in Yemen.

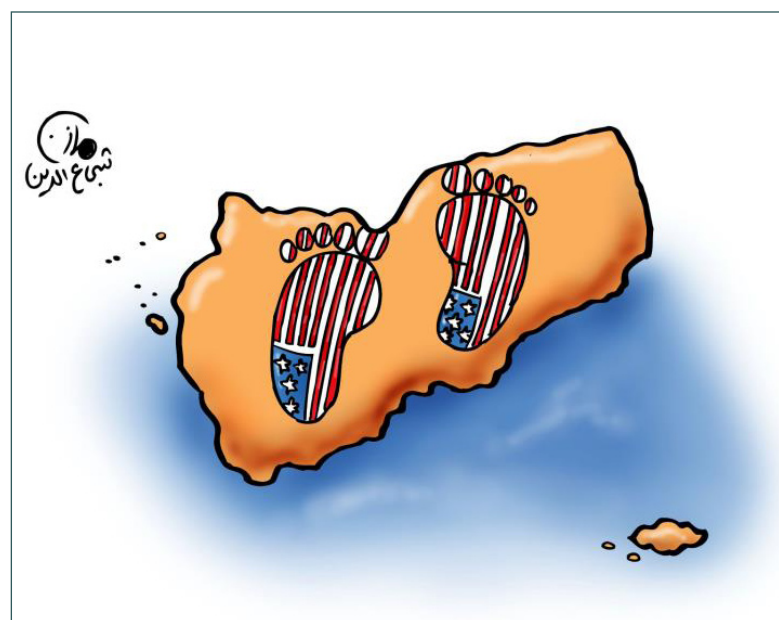
"The increase in cartoonists makes the competition between us stronger and contributes to promoting Yemeni caricature art in other countries."

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Two pieces of Maizin Shuja'a Al-Din's work.

SHARP

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