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Yemen's Cabinet approves H1N1 plan

By: Salma Ismail

SANA'A, Aug 2 — The Cabinet has approved a plan that includes funds to purchase enough medicine to treat one million cases of H1N1, in preparation for a potential spread of the virus in Yemen.

This comes after the country announced its 11th case of the virus, also known as swine flu, on Sunday. The previous 10 patients have recovered, following the use of the medicine, a pill called Tamiflu, according to Dr. Abdul-Hakeem Al-Kuhlani, Director of Combating Diseases and Epidemic Observation.

"After the World Health Organization (WHO) announced a pandemic and raised its alert to level six [in June], we updated our plan according to the situation, and we submitted it to the Cabinet," said Al-Kuhlani.

The plan, presented by the Ministry of

Public Health and Population, includes infra-red cameras and laboratory equipment to diagnose the disease.

Yemen currently has enough Tamiflu for 76,000 people. The government purchased enough for 56,000 adults, and Saudi Arabia donated enough for 20,000 children.

Last week, before the cabinet approved the funding for additional medicine, assistant to the Yemeni National Communication Flu Coordinator, Dr. Mohammed Jahaf said the number of pills currently in Yemen is less than 1 percent of the whole population based on a 2004 government census.

"The WHO recommends that we should have 10 percent of the population. Or, at least enough for 5 percent should be available," Jahaf said.

When the plan is implemented, enough medication should be available for 5 percent of the population.

No pills are administered as a preventative measure in Yemen, according to Mohamed Osama Mere, the WHO's acting representative in Yemen. Tamiflu is not available at pharmacies, and the government is exercising complete control of the prescriptions.

"We do not want Tamiflu to be used as a preventative measure, because we do not want a chance for the virus to become resistant to the medication."

Tamiflu, (the brand name for oseltamivir), is a pill taken twice a day for five days and it was originally invented to treat the seasonal flu. But it has also successfully treated the H1N1 virus.

The funds will come out of the national budget, and should be ready within a month.

Tamiflu stirs controversy

Tamiflu is stirring up controversy among authorities who question its high cost, and point out research about harmful side-effects and even resistance to the virus.

"There is resistance but this doesn't

mean that we forsake the drug altogether," Mere said. "It is the only known cure."

While early administration of the Tamiflu may have played a role in containing the spread of the disease in Yemen, research recently published in the medical journal, Eurosurveillance, points to side effects experienced by children that were given the drug.

However, in Yemen all patients reported no side effects, and have been cured with the help of the drug.

"On the contrary, seven of the patients reported feeling better on the second day while the other three reported feeling much better on the third day of administering the drug," Al-Kuhlani said.

"Ethically, we have to give the medication," Al-Kuhlani added.

Another study, also published by Eurosurveillance, found that more than half of 85 children in three London schools experienced side-effects when given Tamiflu as a preventative measure after a classmate was diagnosed.

The research was carried out in April and May — before the United Kingdom government decided to stop using Tamiflu preventatively.

"There are tenders and there are companies that plan to supply the medication, discussions are ongoing," Mere said. "WHO is trying to secure enough dona-

tions of Tamiflu."

"Not even in most countries is the medication available to everybody," he added.

"Until now we didn't consider H1N1 to be resistant to the only available medication. And it's the only medication to be used," he said. "We are trying to prepare for the worst scenario. We do not know how it will be in winter, with the increasing number of cases."

The origins of the virus are also in question. A study by an Australian virologist and researcher, Adrian Gibbs, 75, said that the swine flu virus circling the globe may have been created as a result of human error, according to ABC News. The WHO received the study in May and is reviewing it.

Adrian Gibbs also collaborated on the research that led to the development of Roche Holding AG's Tamiflu drug.

Race to produce vaccine

The WHO said that the spread of the virus is unstoppable, and vaccines will be needed in all countries. According to the WHO, vaccines will not be available for all potential patients this fall.

The WHO said vaccines are complicated to produce, involve risks for patients and will not be available in Yemen this season.

"The medication is easier to manufacture than the vaccine, and Yemen has yet



The availability of Tamiflu, the drug used to treat the H1N1 virus, will jump from covering only 1 percent of Yemen's population to 5 percent.

to have the capability to manufacture even that [medication]," Mere said.

Yemen, however, is prepared in terms of plans and hospital preparedness, according to the WHO.

In the past, drug companies have raced to test vaccines, sometimes with questionable results.

In 1976, more than 500 Americans

ended up with a rare neurodegenerative condition called Guillain-Barre syndrome during a mass vaccination campaign for the swine flu. Twenty-five people died.

However, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about one person in 100,000 develops Guillain-Barre syndrome for unknown reasons.

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To guard youth from extremism, Ministry of Endowments inspects religious centers

For centuries, private and government religious centers have been popular among Yemenis, who have sought them out to improve their religious knowledge and strengthen their faith. The Ministry of Endowments, who says that these centers could train future extremists, has created various mechanisms to control what is being taught in them - sometimes at the expense of religious freedom.

By: Nadia Al-Sakkaf

SANA'A, Aug. 2 — Many Yemeni children, young adults, and women enroll at Quran and religious preaching centers supervised by the Ministry of Endowment during the summer vacation. The centers are either high-standard model centers, general centers for religious studies, or private centers set up by associations and local communities.

In Sana'a city alone, there are 728 centers accommodating up to 102,351 male and female students. Around the country, there are more than 3,000 centers registered with the ministry accommodating more than 300,000 students.

"The purpose of these centers is to endorse patriotism among our people and promote moderation in faith through constructive activities of interest to students in a useful manner," said Judge Hamoud Al-Hitar, Minister of Endowments.

The targeted age group for model centers is between 16 and 24 years old. Younger and older students can enroll in general religious centers run by the Ministry of Endowment or centers affiliated with community-based organizations.

Activities include learning the Quran and reciting techniques, Islamic doctrine, Arabic language and linguistics, and the biography of the Prophet. Students can also study non-religious topics such as debating and research, poetry and media, and the history of Yemen. Some centers organize cultural and scientific competitions.

Students at model centers also engage in social activities such as cleaning the neighborhood, organizing awareness events on basic health or environmental issues, field visits to various institutions to learn how they work, as well as develop their skills and talents.

Students, mostly men, can take part in sports such as football, tennis, table tennis and basket ball.

"The students will learn about their own community and will feel that they are part of it through their exposure," said Yahya Mohammed Miftah, deputy director of the supervising committee of summer religious centers. "They will visit hospitals and console the sick, they will visit orphanages and play with young orphans, and so on."

Government control and religious freedom

The creation of model religious centers has been an initiative under the patronage of the president since 2006, in an attempt to clamp down on extremism by controlling one of the places where it is bred.

Ministerial decree number 39 was issued in June 2009 to define conditions and regulations for religious centers, especially those run by non-governmental associations or various religious groups. Special concern is paid to licensing, teacher selection, and activities.

The Ministry of Endowments has a team dedicated to supervising these centers to ensure that what is being taught agrees with the country's general policies. Field committees have been formed to evaluate existing centers' compliance with the decree and regulations set forth.

Earlier this year in March, teenager Abdul Rahman Mahdi Al-Ojairi carried out a suicide bombing in Shibam, Hadramout, killing four South Koreans. His mother explained that two years ago he told her that he wanted to learn the Holy Quran. Like any traditional Yemeni mother, she was happy that he had chosen this devoted path. Little did she know that his attending certain religious centers would eventually lead him becoming a suicide bomber.

"He never stopped talking about



Students at a religious session at the Badr Center, whose director says he does not need to follow the government syllabus because he is versed enough in religious sciences.

jihad. I appeased him and told him that if the Yemeni government allowed mujahedeen to fight in jihad in Palestine, he would be the first to go... After a few days, he called me and said that he was heading to attain martyrdom and only my prayer would benefit him... that was the last communication I had with him until I saw his picture in the news associated with the suicide bomb in Shibam," narrated the grieving mother. She appealed to authorities and anyone concerned to monitor religious sheikhs who teach Yemeni youth in mosques.

So far since the beginning of the summer, according to the Sana'a governorate Office for Endowments, 50 centers have been closed down because of either teaching unauthorized curricula or refusing to allow the ministry's inspectors to visit the centers.

The field committees include women inspectors who visit women centers or women sections in summer centers. Member of the committee Abdullah Mohammed Al-Faqih said that man-

agers of a center affiliated to an association in Hodeida recently refused to allow the inspectors to review the center's activities and teachings. The inspectors reported this to the ministry, which in turn sent a letter to the governor of Hodeida with instructions to either close down the center or enforce supervision.

"At some of the centers we found some Houthi-related subjects advocating for the Twelver Shiite sect preaching and placing some unfounded sayings of the Prophet (PBUH)," explained Al-Faqih. "We even saw some materials narrating some imaginary religious historical stories to brainwash the students. I am versed in Islamic studies and I know what is real and what is fiction."

The inspectors request copies of taught materials and review them page by page, before writing a report on what they observed at the centers complete with examples and evidence. The committee is yet to visit a center in Manakha district before it presents its

final report to the minister.

Yet some centers claim that the control of what is being taught at religious centers is in essence a violation of the constitution, which ensures religious freedom, and of the many international human rights declarations Yemen has ratified.

"There is nothing in the constitution that dictates that all Yemenis should be Sunni or Shiite or following this sect or that," said Dr. Al-Mortada Binzaid Al-Mahatwary, director and founder of the Badr Center for Islamic Studies, which was raided several times in the last few years for allegedly promoting Twelver Shiite concepts.

"There isn't even a clause that they should be Muslims," he continued. "Why then should we be prevented from teaching our own faith to our children?"

He added that the problem with the current handling of religious issues in Yemen is wrong, because it is not inclusive. He encouraged leaders at the Ministry of Endowment to create cur-

ricula in which Muslims of different sects feel justified so that their religious convictions are included and not rejected.

"What we need is for all scholars of the different sects to come together and create a national syllabus in which the Shafi'ee, Zaidi and other sects feel their identity is not oppressed," said Al-Mahatwary.

Other than being prevented from doing their job, members of the summer religious centers supervision committee complained of the inaccessibility to some of the remote centers in rural areas. With this year's budget for the Ministry of Endowments being cut as a part of the decrease in the national budget, it has become difficult to reach and supervise centers across the country without wasting time.

The ministry's involvement, although seen by some private centers as interference, was welcomed by others who were waiting for the ministry to facilitate especially that it provides the syllabus and reference books.

Improved coordination between NGOs and Ministry of Health

By: Khaled Al-Hilaly

SANA'A, Aug. 2 — The Ministry of Public Health and Population met with international NGOs working in Yemen's health sector last week to introduce them to the new terms and conditions aimed to accelerate the achievement of Yemen's Millennium Development Goals.

The Ministry's Department of General Development of Technical and International Cooperation is working towards improving its operations with international NGOs working in the health sector by improving communication and following up on plans.

To achieve this, the ministry wants NGOs to work under its vision and strategies and submit periodic reports

to its central office or health offices in their relevant governorates.

At the gathering attended by representatives of 24 international NGOs, specialists from the health and planning ministries introduced participants to the new terms and conditions for international NGO work in Yemen. They also discussed the priorities of the ministry as per the health sector's review and strategy plans.

"The goal is to strengthen communication and cooperation between the Ministry of Public Health and Population, health offices and international NGOs working in the health sector," said the ministry.

The ministry confirmed the importance of submitting periodic progress reports and continuous communication

with the ministry to facilitate activities.

The new terms aim to establish an updated database for international NGOs operating in the health sector that would identify all data, activities and locations of organizations.

There are 48 international NGOs in Yemen, according to the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation.

"There are some organizations concentrate on certain governorates and it is preferable that these organizations join their efforts on certain activities. For example, there some organizations that works in Socotra and others in Sa'da. If they work in one field and in one project, the outputs and tangible results would be felt by the people," said a representative from the Ministry

of Planning and International Cooperation.

There are organizations which have no agreements and are not registered at the Ministry of Planning or the Ministry of Health, he added. Even though these NGOs do excellent work, the ministry only knows of their activities through the media.

"I wanted to emphasize the fact that the international NGOs are very diverse and have a very different structure and way of operating.

These new rules will restrict some NGOs that are operating in Yemen and will prevent them from being too independent," ...

Participants welcomed monitoring but some were concerned about the government suggestion that NGOs

allocate five to seven percent of their budget for government staff to do monitoring and evaluation.

"The Ministry of Health sets the standardization and criteria for the country. Unfortunately, a lot of training has been done at the governorate and district levels, and we don't know what criteria is being used," said Jamila Al-Ra'abi, Deputy Minister of Public Health and Population.

"Nobody asked, for example, for the criteria and this is very important in updating our information, our curricula used in training and in providing services," she added.

The Deputy Minister of Public Health and Population Planning Sector, Dr. Jamal Nasher, referred to the medical equipment distributed by interna-

tional NGOs for hospitals and clinics in Yemen. Some of this equipment is not in tandem with the standards of the Ministry of Health.

"The agreements between international NGOs and the government could be based on discussions between both parties, not just on new conditions and asking NGOs to apply them," argued Dr. Yassin Al-Qubati, Yemen Representative of the German Leprosy Relief Association (GLRA).

"We are partners," he said, referring to the Yemeni government and the NGOs. He also encouraged NGOs to submit an annual balance sheet.

"The meeting with ministry leaders enhances communication and can lead to avoiding annoying routines for both parties," he added.

Officials, judges call for new drug laws

By: Mohammed Bin Sallam

SANA'A, Aug. 1 — Researchers and judges called for a reconsideration of the drug laws, citing an increase in use among Yemeni young people, particularly in rural areas, at a workshop last Thursday.

The workshop was organized by Al-Safwa Initiative Foundation in cooperation with Madar Law Foundation.

It was supported by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and was attended by representatives from the Anti-Drugs General Administration, Supreme Drug Authority, and members of the parliament and the judiciary.

Mus'ab Al-Soufi, the vice-director of the Anti-Drugs General Administration, said it was important to discuss the drug laws, because they have not been updated since they were issued in 1993.

He said the major problem with the drug laws is that they do not deal with young people who take drugs. He said that drugs have become an increasingly difficult problem.

Dr. Taher Al-Maqaleh, general direc-

tor of drug administration in the Supreme Drug Authority, which is part of the Ministry of Health and Population, said that there is sometimes the improper use of medicine, which may also lead to addiction.

Judge Mohammed Al-Hakimi, Head of the Criminal Specialized Unit, said that the drug laws don't cover all kinds of drugs in Yemen, particularly the new kinds. In some cases, judges have no choice but to clear the accused because the drug in question is not included in the current law.

He said that the law makes judges sentence convicted drug dealers to the death penalty or 25 years in prison, and pointed out that they have no other options.

Ali Abu Hulaiqa, chairman of Legal and Constitutional Committee in the parliament, said, "Drugs law should be restudied and developed."

Yemeni anti-drug laws also require capital punishment for people convicted of importing drugs into the country, exporting them, growing them or manufacturing them, and 15-25 years impris-

onment for people caught possessing or promoting drugs.

Al-Soufi added that over three tons of hashish and 11 million pills have been confiscated since the beginning of 2009.

He added that most of these drugs came from foreign countries, particularly from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran. "Drug-dealing inside Yemen is done by organized criminal gangs," said Al-Soufi. "These gangs include Yemeni and non-Yemeni people. They have become more active since the beginning of the 1990s."

An investigative report by the state-run Saba News Agency this April also pointed out the increase of drug use in Yemen.

"Yemen was a transit region for drugs, but has become a consumptive region," the report revealed that cases of addiction to some medicines sold in pharmacies have increased, although law deals with it and drugs equally. It included statistics which a Yemeni judge described as "horrible" and said that "drugs represent a comprehensive war on Yemen."

According to statistics of Anti-Drugs General Administration, the amount of drug related cases grew by 170 percent between 2004 and 2008.

There were 42 cases related to drugs in 2004, and 75, people including three non-Yemenis were involved. In 2008, the number of cases related to drugs increased to 113. Up to 252 people, including 72 non-Yemenis, were involved.

In 2008, Yemen officials confiscated 13.5 million pills. Between 2006 and 2007, one million pills were confiscated. In 2006, six tons of hashish was confiscated, and in 2004, 1,500 hashish seedlings were spoiled, according to statistics.

In 2008, about 27 tons of hashish was confiscated but only three hashish seedlings, indicating that the amount of drugs being imported has increased, according to the investigative report.

Yemen lacks medical centers that specialize in treating addiction, particularly given that a person addicted to drugs can need a period of six months for treatment, which costs over UDD 15,000.

Continued from page 1

Yemen's Cabinet approves H1N1 plan

Producers of the H1N1 vaccine in the US and involved government officials will be immune from any lawsuits arising from the vaccine. The US government recently signed a document guaranteeing that neither the government nor industry will take responsibility for any damage or death caused by the vaccines.

The fatality of H1N1

"Fortunately till now the virus is not very fatal," said Mere. "Although WHO has declared it a phase 6 pandemic, we can say that it is only of moderate severity. It is spreading in an unprecedented manner in comparison to the 1918 virus pandemic where 40 million

people died, as it is moving very rapidly."

The H1N1 flu was first detected in Mexico in April 2009, and it quickly spread to the US and many other parts of the world. Yemen began preparing for the disease by filling in the gaps in its plan that was in place for the bird flu pandemic in 2005, which never took place in Yemen.

Countries experiencing widespread transmission of the virus have reported an increased risk for pregnant women, particularly during the second and third trimesters.

Worldwide, the majority of patients infected with the virus continue to experience mild symptoms and recover fully within a week, even in the absence of any medical treatment, reported the WHO.

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Chinese massage centers... not brothels

By: Khaled Al-Hilaly

Massage centers all over Sana'a have been allaying the pains of desperate Yemenis for years, but the government's recent crackdown and allegations of prostitution have affected their businesses. Now owners of the 20 massage centers in the capital Sana'a are wondering who will allay their pains.

A Chinese masseuse in her 20s said many men in Yemen misunderstand the purpose of massage and sometimes grab her and try to make her perform other acts.

She and her colleagues always make them ashamed and forcefully kick them out with the help of Yemeni guards and friends, she added, but Yemeni men are sometimes reluctant to leave.

Chinese massage centers and masseuses maintain that they only perform massages for their clients, but some local councils is convinced that much more is being performed. In July eight centers came under fire for allegedly providing more services, not just massage and cupping therapy.

"We don't allow prostitution and we don't accept that people just say whatever they want harming the girls' names," said a Chinese massage center owner in his 40s who wished not to be named.

"I couldn't move my neck because of pain," said Najeb Al-Dubais, an 18 year-old Yemeni "Yemenis only know of cracking the neck to do away with pain."

Al-Dubais is a qat farmer who came to the massage center with his brother after persistent complains from sore neck muscles. In the massage center, a young Chinese masseuse gives him a half hour-long neck massage for a mere YR 3,000, about USD 15.

Al-Dubais heard from his friends that Chinese massage does away with the pain.

Business is slow

At a massage therapy center in a neighborhood near Hadda, five Chinese women in their twenties casually dressed sit side by side with eyes glued to the Chinese soap opera playing on television.



Chinese massage centers and masseuses maintain that they only perform massages for their clients, but some local councils is convinced that much more is being performed.

A customer arrives and a girl quickly stands to offer him a massage menu which includes a full body massage, face massage and foot massage in addition to Chinese cupping.

"Local councils just cut off people's livelihoods," said Al-Dubais. "It is silly, sometimes people are narrow-minded." "If there was prostitution here I wouldn't come," he added.

Owners of massage centers also complain of a delay of issuing licenses. They claimed that they provided the labor office with all the necessary documents and fees such as masseuses' certificates, valid residency to certify that they are not HIV positive, as required by all foreign residents in Yemen.

According to the owners, nowadays they are losing customers and income, as the average daily number of customers is seven to 20.

"We pay all the local taxes and we have come to Yemen to invest and make money," he said.

An age-old therapy

Based on principles from traditional Chinese medicine, two types of traditional Chinese massage exist. Tui Na which focuses on pushing, stretching and kneading the muscle, and Zhi Ya which focuses on pinching and pressing at acupressure points.

In a typical setting, a massage is performed on a table in a room separated by half-drawn curtains from the rest of the center. Some owners said that the curtains are there instead of closing a door at the local council's request.

Another customer said that he suffers from a slipped disc and said that, whenever the pain increases, he goes for a massage.

"Women giving massage to men is not accepted [in Yemen]," said one of the girls doing massage.

"Only few people know what Chinese massage is," said one of the massage center owners. "Those with misconceptions about Chinese massage are headed by Imams."

"Massage is a kind of treatment dated back to more than 5,000 years," he explained. "There is nothing in Islam that refers to it as forbidden."

Policemen and political security officers come to these massage centers in plain clothes and certainly know that there is no prostitution, he said.

"Chinese cupping therapy differs from Arabic cupping," he said. "It is without blood"

"Women perform massages for men all around the world," he added. "People just don't know what massage is, and treat the girls as prostitutes."

He recalled when doctors at hospital,

where a Yemeni sheikh was receiving treatment were surprised at his recovery after several Chinese massage sittings.

Sex not for sale

According to the massage center owners, many people repeatedly ask for sex and they are kicked out by security. Sometimes the masseuses call Yemenis to come and help to inform people that their centers are not brothels.

They believe that the source of the rumor that massage centers are centers for prostitution is those people who ask for sex and are kicked out.

They invite people and the police to come and see for themselves, and hope the Yemeni government and people will help them.

"If one of the girls does it, just close the center," one of the owners urges.

One of the owners recalled the last time that girls called him from his home because a man refused to leave after his massage was over, because he was waiting for sex.

"I went to the center and asked him to take his money and just leave," he said. Masseuses believe that many Yemenis are in dire need of massage because they sleep on the floor and walk with bare feet.

Government cries prostitution

Member of Parliament Mohamed Al-Hazmi was last month presented with a petition from 62 members asking for prohibition of "the moral corruption that has spread in the country." Chinese massage centers were on the list.

Al-Hazmi said that his responsibility is to deliver people's concerns to the government whose responsibility it is to investigate to be sure.

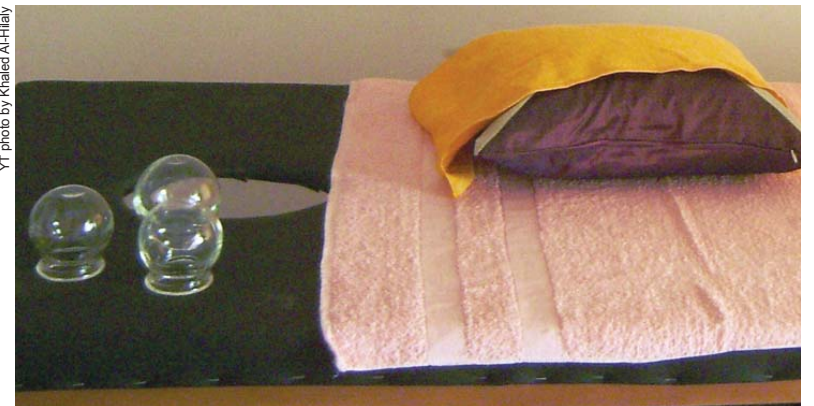
"We called for closing down places that spread AIDS, lack of modesty and forbidden," he said.

"Who permits a semi-naked woman to give a massage to a man?" he asked.

"Are these men angels?" he continued, explaining that men have sexual urges.

He referred to a man and a woman being alone in partitioned off rooms during a massage.

"I have visited China and we know that massage therapy centers are brothels



where a Yemeni sheikh was receiving treatment were surprised at his recovery after several Chinese massage sittings.

of Social Affairs and Labor. "People complain that these places are suspicious."

He wondered about the profits some massage centers make as rent of each one of them reaches USD 3,000.

He added his objection is not on the massage itself but on the way it is practiced in Yemen's conservative society.

Mohammed Al-Sadiq secretary general of Al-Saba'een district in Sana'a, where over eight massage centers were closed down earlier this month, said the massage centers are illegal because they are not licensed.

Unacceptable practices

"We closed down the massage centers after we received complaints from local residents about the suspicious behavior of workers in the neighborhood," he said "We don't say prostitution but unacceptable practices for our society."

"Women massage men all around the world," he said when asked whether it is allowed for women to massage for men.

"The local council has drawn up a list of conditions for massage centers must meet to receive a work license," he said.

He called all centers to go to local council office to pick up the list of conditions and commit to it, so as to be granted a license.

In a memo sent by national security to the mayor of Sana'a, the former write that massage centers practiced what looked like prostitution.

"We don't know which authority is in charge of supervising massage centers," said Mohammed Al-Baseli, deputy manager at the Sana'a office for the Ministry

of Social Affairs and Labor.

"From our field visits, we have registered more 20 massage centers in the capital," he said. "Our role is to observe the foreign work force in these centers, and make sure that they are legal residents," he added.

Legitimate treatment

"Massage is known around the world but in Yemen there is a misunderstanding because of Yemeni conservative traditions," said Dr. Ghassan Haidar, manager of health office at Al-Wahda district in capital, now the supervising authority for massage therapy centers in the district.

"It is not fair to judge these people and listen to people talk about prostitution without proof," he added. "I myself sent a person to make sure that massage centers are not offering sex, and he found them do nothing of what people say."

He said that a massage by women for men is like any other treatment.

"For example, a dentist can be a woman," he said. "We have to look beyond this and I think the new conditions will not allow this to happen."

In Al-Wahda district, masseuses have to wear a medical robe, have qualifications to give massages, have a certificate to their good health and work permit.

Center has to be on a main street, ensure that massage rooms are separate from bedrooms, have no more than one entrance, use curtains instead of wooden doors, not use any medicine, and close before 10 pm.

If centers comply with these rules, then they are granted a license.

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AAAYSP: Five years of service, growth and leadership

By: Shaker Lashuel
For the Yemen Times

While many Yemenis have realized the value of education in Yemen and elsewhere, Yemeni Americans still prefer establishing small businesses. Against this background, the American Association of Yemeni Scientists and Professionals (AAAYSP) was formed in 2004 to promote the pursuit of quality higher education.

It was about 9:30 p.m. California time when my phone rang and I picked up to hear Mohamed Alazzany. His voice announced that the chapter officers had scheduled a meeting at a café in Berkeley in about two hours. My body was still in the New York time zone, but I felt that I could not do anything else but meet their dedication with a willingness to meet anywhere, anytime.

Midnight Meeting

I drove to the designated location at about 11:30 p.m. and found Ibrahim Obaid, Hafith Alsaedi, Mohamed Alazzany, Mukhtar Albaraty. We had to wait for Ahmed Alkholaidi,

was in place, and Saturday came and their first conference was a success by all accounts. The event was attended by the Yemeni Consul in San Francisco and more than 120 community members came to listen to one presentation after another about education and the Yemeni community.

Programs

The academic presentations were followed by poetry and then creative skits that members created to help their audience receive their message through a different medium. The group's success in their first conference led them to organize another successful event a month later, which was the first graduation ceremony to honor 46 Yemeni graduates in the California Bay area. It was one of the most inspiring events organized by the community in the US. The speeches by the honored graduates and the images that can be found on aaysp.com bring tears of joy to one's eyes as one witnesses the transition from a community that neglected education to a community that respects it and embraces educational success in its midst.

The group's activities also include the mentoring of more than 30 Yemeni students in two high schools in Oakland

both behaviorally and academically. It had been only about eight months since the establishment of the AAAYSP-Michigan group, but their pace, programs, and accomplishments have been outstanding.

A Networking Portal

Despite many challenges, the Michigan group has managed to use AAAYSP.com, a networking portal, to their advantage in galvanizing support from other members and in organizing their own activities. AAAYSP.com is similar to social networking sites, but members of the organization have been using it to develop their activities, share information and communicate ideas to help serve their communities. The chapter in Michigan posts minutes of their meetings, calls for help from other members, and posts pictures and videos from their events and programs. Members from other chapters are able to follow their progress and learn from the experiences and reflections of the Michigan members.

The Chicago Chapter

Not too far away from Michigan, in Chicago, Illinois, Wafa and Nahlah Yafai, Wafa Saleh, Aneesa Saleh and Rima Muthan work to organize community events to increase awareness of the value of education. The group's most remarkable success has been the establishment of a tutoring program that has been serving 35 Yemeni students in a local library in Chicago four days a week for the past year. The program recently received a national award recognizing the group's effort in promoting reading among young students.

The Washington DC Group

More than 1,000 miles away and near the White House, AAAYSP chapter officers Hassan Alharthy, Shehab Alhajiri, Manal Alaswadi, Redhwan Almaswari, Mamoon Obeid, and Rasha Abulohoom meet online using Skype, an online communication tool, to lead the organization's effort to develop research and data gathering tools. The District of Columbia (DC) chapter was the first chapter established when Angham Alshami, a college student, realized five years ago the value such an organization can bring to the community in the DC area. Her efforts and those of other members resulted in forming a talented and resourceful group that was able to organize and hold the first two national conferences to promote education among Yemenis in 2007 and 2008. The work of the DC chapter has shifted lately to support the work of the national board and to help develop and promote policies and programs to sustain the organization's expansion and growth.

National Web Team

The organization's web presence is supported by members who sit ready to perform work ranging from securing the site to adding content and improving layout. Mohamed Wasel in Washington examines and works on improving content and layout, while Adnan Alrowmaim sits in New York and keeps watchful eyes to make sure that the sites are secure. In Dearborn, Michigan, Ali Algalham works on the new layout of the AAAYSP.com portal. To help us tackle difficult issues, we reach out to Shehab Alhajiri in Washington and to Amad Almasoudi in Seattle to provide more programming expertise.

Internet Meetings

The organization has no physical headquarters but has used the internet effectively to organize its work and programs. The National board currently meets online at least once a month using Skype, and in spite of the thousands of miles that separate the members they still manage to get things done. On the first Sunday of every Month, Dr. Abdulkarim Nasher connects from Yemen, while Dr. Hilal Lashuel connects from Switzerland. They wait for Dr. Nasser Zawia who connects from Rhode Island and Abdulkader Saleh from California. At about 11:00 a.m. eastern US time, Hanna Omar connects from New York and Moghitha Alkibsi from Washington follows. The meeting lasts up to one hour, during which tasks are assigned and views discussed to promote education and to support local chapter leadership and programs.

Partnerships

The organization counts its success in establishing partnerships and collaborations with many different entities as one of its main accomplishments. Western Union has singled the organization as a



honoring 46 graduates California

partner in supporting the Yemeni-American community in the US. AAAYSP's partnership with Western Union has allowed the organization to sponsor and organize many educational events and to provide other organizations with mini computer labs as well as online tutoring centers in Buffalo and New York City. Western Union has also cosponsored the first set of scholarships awarded in Michigan.

In Michigan, the organization values the support it receives from the local organizations, most notably the Yemeni American Cultural center and the Yemeni American News. Collaboration also exists with the National Yemeni American Association and the Yemeni American Benevolent Association. Much of the chapter's work would not get done without the support they receive from existing Arab-American organizations and public school officials who usually appreciate the services they receive from our members.

Five Years of Growth

The organization has grown from a board of five to a leadership base of about 25 individuals who are leading, organizing and making education the top priority for Yemenis in America. From a membership of 200, AAAYSP has grown to a membership of more than 500 in 26 countries and 30 US States from all different Yemeni backgrounds and regions. They are united by their interest to promote the value of quality education among Yemenis.

Five Years of Service

The AAAYSP is an organization that has managed to change the agenda of the Yemeni-American community in the US by placing education as the top priority replacing all other issues. For five years, the organization has organized more than 40 lectures, forums, two national conferences, one leadership conference in the US and two forums and several lectures in Yemen to pro-

vide the pursuit of higher education and quality research.

AAAYSP Yemen Efforts

After providing two shipments of books worth more than USD 460,000 combined, the organization has scaled down on its efforts in Yemen in face of the challenges it met in dealing with universities' bureaucracies and leadership.

United around Education

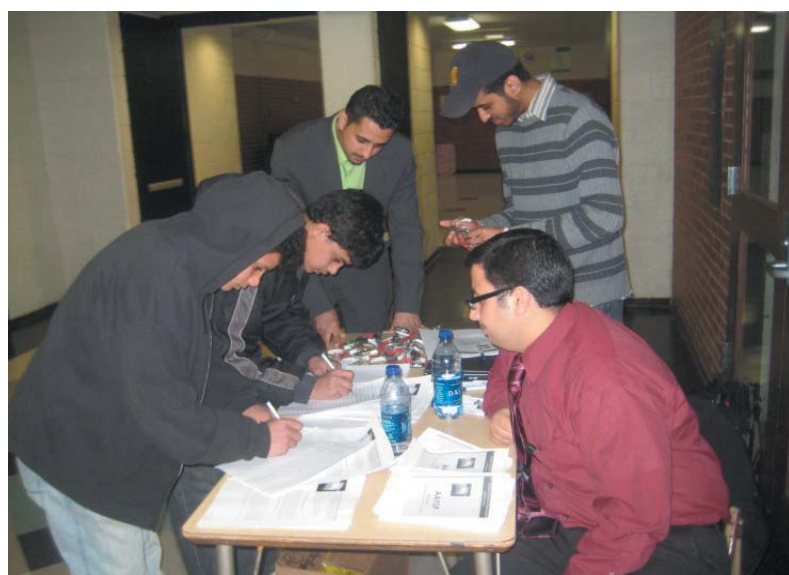
The organization is an example of what can happen when Yemenis unite and put their minds and efforts together. It remains an organization that lacks many resources, yet it is undoubtedly rich with the talent, education and resourcefulness of its members. The AAAYSP is an independent, not for profit organization established in the US and has no political affiliations and/or allegiances, as it operates independently of any US or Yemeni governmental influences.



forum in Sana'a

Mohamed Almahbashi and Ahmed Albishary who were coming from San Francisco after finishing their work shifts. It usually takes between 30 to 40 minutes to get to Berkeley from San Francisco. When everyone gathered, Ibrahim Obaid began the meeting and

and Berkeley. New members are determined to establish another Yemeni youth club for mentoring in one of the high schools in San Francisco, and summer plans are underway for more events.



Reaching out to high school students in Michigan

everyone participated actively and respectfully. The only agenda on the table was to make their first conference a success not only in appearance, but also in delivering the message about education to the community. The group gathered was all males because in California the community is still very traditional and female members prefer to help from the sidelines.

Dedication and Organization

As I sat across from this dedicated group, I marveled at their selflessness and willingness to make countless sacrifices to share their educational wealth and experiences with a community that needs to realize the value of education. Each one of them spoke and it was obvious how meticulous and thoughtful they were about their planning and vision for this event. Everyone took a role willingly and it did not matter how small or how big. They began to list the names of the other volunteers who were going to make this event a success. The event was still two days away, but they were not going to wait till the last minute.

Their mode of operation is similar to that of the other chapters. Everything

The Michigan Group

Thousands of miles away, a group of young Yemenis comprising the AAAYSP-Michigan chapter gathered to examine the applications of 20 Yemeni high school students who applied for four AAAYSP scholarships. Adel Mozib, Mona Namer, Maen Maweri, Fattum Mutaheer, Sagger Maweri, and Adeb Mozib reviewed the applications and were impressed by all the applicants, but knew they had to make the difficult decision of selecting only four.

The group had been involved in a major campaign to reach high school students in the city of Dearborn, where about 30 percent of the students are of Yemeni origin. The goals of the outreach had been to introduce the services of the organization to school officials, offer students mentoring services and to share stories of challenges and success with struggling students.

Members of the Michigan group overextended themselves by committing weekly visits to the Salina Intermediate School where more than 95 percent of the students are Yemenis. During their visits, the members played basketball and sat and talked with the students to encourage them to do better

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M.B.B.S, FCPS in Ophthalmology Join as Consultant Ophthalmology Department



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Dr. Isfi Parveen

M.B.B.S, FCPS in Obs & Gynecology Join as Consultant Obs. & Gynecology Department



Sees cases of:

S. Section, Leptotamies both elective & Ovarian Pathology, Abdominal Hysterectomies, Ovarian drilling, Infertility treatment.

Dr. Muhammad Zaheer

M.B.B.S, M.C.P.S, FCPS in Surgery Join as Consultant General Surgery Department



Sees cases of:

Thyroid, Parotid, Breast, GIT tumors, Traumatic & Elective Vascular Injuries, Hepato Biliary & Colorectal surgery, Special interest in Laparoscopic surgery.

Dr. Muhammad Irshad Hussain

M.B.B.S, M.C.P.S, MRCS (Glasgow) , FCPS (Pak) Join as Consultant General Surgery Department



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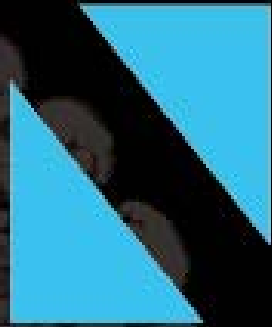
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Tarik: Guys, can't wait for our picnic tomorrow, we are going to have fun like we did today. Nawaf, can you check online to see what the weather will be like? Omar, if you are not sure of the way, then check on Nokia maps and bring your Nokia so we can download all the pictures on facebook.

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Words of Wisdom



Gentlemen, Yemen does not need more money! It needs a system. Yemen need accountable officials...

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

OUR OPINION

Interest in our own welfare

A new gymnastics club for children and teenagers opened last month just in time for the beginning of the summer. It is run by a group of three Yemeni champions...

I asked some of the children there whether they had told their friends and relatives about the club, and whether there was interest in joining...

Yet to my disappointment, these children told me that some of the parents would not let their sons and daughters go there...

An average Yemeni man chews at least three times a week. Each time he spends around YR 500, if not more. If this father thought of his son or daughter...

An average Yemeni man spends at least four hours a day sitting chewing qat, either chatting to his friends, or contemplating his future plans and building castles in the sky...

A smart 13 year-old girl playing at the club said she was worried that soon her family would prevent her from coming to the gym when she comes of age...

"I would go for anything as long as it means moving and getting trained by professionals, but in our society it is very difficult for a girl to do any of this..." she said.

Half of Yemeni girls are married before they turn 18. One third of Yemeni girls are married by 15. When I was recently invited to the wedding of a 17 year-old boy and 15 year-old girl, I refused to attend...

If only these parents realized that their children's best interest lies in living life to the full, not bearing its weight on their shoulders. If only they realized the burden of an early marriage...

These young people need our help and direction as adults. How can parents be this selfish? How can they deny their children a nurturing environment just because they can't be bothered...

As dozens of Yemenis, especially young men, are being killed in ongoing conflicts in almost every governorate in the country, it is even more urgent to give the ones living in so-called peace a chance to thrive.

Maybe these will be the ones to lead Yemen to safety when all else is left in ruins.

Nadia Al-Sakkaf

Yemen: The next failed state?

Beset by rebels, poverty, crime and corruption, Yemen increasingly looks less like a fragile state than a failed one

By: Brian Whitaker

Last week Yemen's interior ministry issued a self-congratulatory report awarding itself a 90% score for crime control during the first half of this year.

This is a picture that most Yemenis would find hard to recognize. Last week, for example, 10 people died in a two-day battle between Sunnis and Shias for control of a mosque. On Tuesday, an army colonel and his two bodyguards were killed in a roadside ambush.

On Saturday, more rioting was reported in the south; armed men set up a roadside checkpoint; a grocer was shot dead in his shop (apparently for having been born in the wrong part of the country).

Yemen has long been regarded as a "fragile" state - its government has never had much control outside the cities and there are millions of weapons in private hands - but now it is rapidly taking on the characteristics of a full-blown failed state.

A perfect storm of state failure is now brewing there: disappearing oil

and water reserves; a mob of migrants, some allegedly with al-Qaida ties, flooding in from Somalia, the failed state next door; and a weak government increasingly unable to keep things running.

For the last five years the government has been fighting a Zaidi Shia rebellion in the far north, close to the Saudi border. It has officially ended several times - the first occasion being when security forces killed its original leader, Hussein al-Houthi - but it keeps springing back to life again.

Now, though, the Zaidi uprising in the north has been joined by a second insurrection in the south. Its leader, Tariq al-Fadhli, hails from an old and aristocratic family who were dispossessed of their lands by the Marxist regime that took over southern Yemen in 1967.

There were reports at the weekend that he is once again surrounded by security forces but arresting or killing him - as happened with Houthi in the north - is unlikely to solve the problem.

Yemen, surprising as it may seem, is also the Arabian peninsula's oldest multi-party democracy. Its first free elections - with women participating as well as men - were held in 1993.

hegemony through co-option and cronyism.

The result is what Khaled Fattah, a researcher at St Andrews university, describes as a "self-cancelling" state. The state, far from "being an agency for providing law, order, security and welfare for the masses", has become "an elitist fountain for providing privilege, wealth and power for a small group of people".

The response, by those who feel excluded or marginalised, is to simply ignore the state and go their own way - as Fattah puts it, "to create an alternative system to the central authority and to replace formal and legitimate channels of state-society communication with their own system".

The Yemeni government views this primarily as a security issue - and was encouraged to treat it as such by the Bush administration. But it's actually far more than that: the causes of Yemen's insecurity are basically social and political.

Saleh, who has been in power since 1978, spent several days in hospital last week, allegedly being treated for bruises sustained while "practising his favourite sport". If he's wise, and wants to avoid more bruising, he'll step aside now.

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Parliamentarians and arms law

By: Abdul Malek Al-Fahaidi

The parliament delayed the approval of a law that would organize the bearing and possession of arms. This constitutes a sign that both political and personal interests intervene to hinder approving legislation that deal with issues of the countrywide issues.

The arms law that was transferred to the parliament many years ago has been neglected due to political disputes and unreasonable pretexts. Last year, members of the parliament resumed the discussion about the law in preparation for endorsing it.

However, they reached an impasse due to a single article which resulted in suspending the discussion since June of last year.

Oddly enough, members of the parliament demand that an article related to forbidding licensed arms-bearers from entering public places be deleted. This means that arms will remain existent by all means, and consequently, disasters will continue.

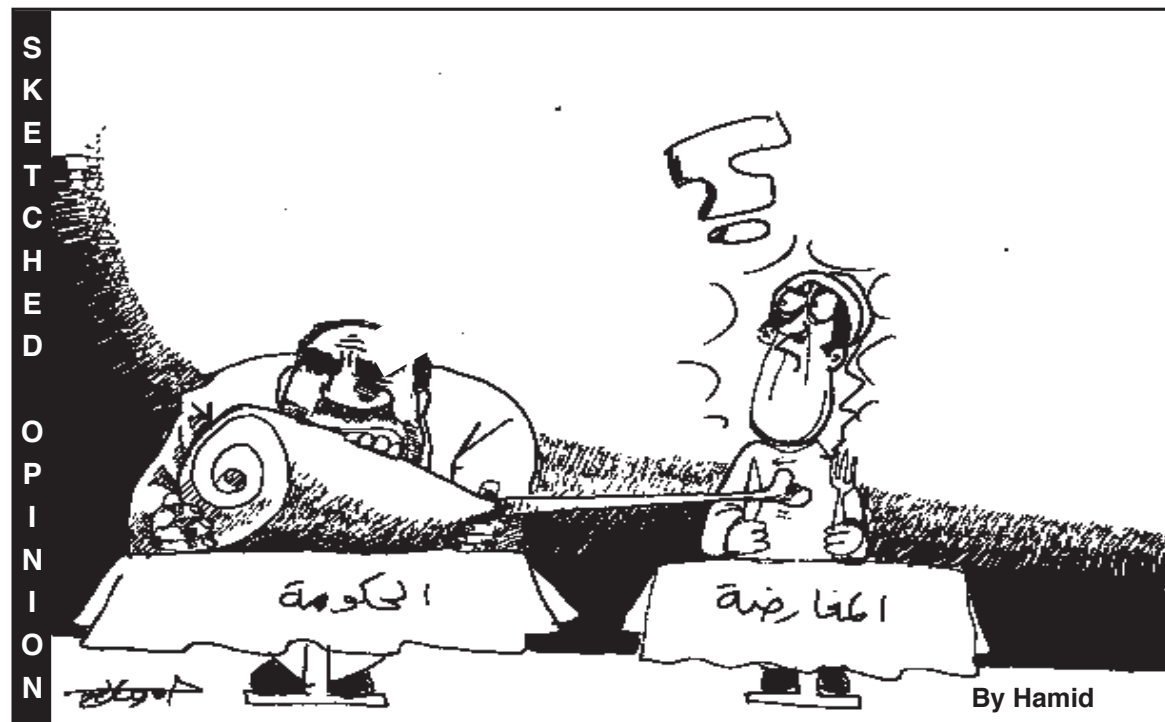
Imagine how the situation would be if the law was approved and the government strictly applied it! Would members of the parliament or anyone else need to take arsenals of weapons with them, carried by their escorts, in order to protect themselves? Would

anyone be obliged to bear arms if all people abided by the law that bans arms-bearing?

Attitudes of parliament members toward this law and many other laws such as determining a minimum age of marriage, combating terrorism and money laundering are an indicator that they contribute to the continuation of dangerous phenomena in the country.

When arms disappear, then we can ensure our security. Unless the government is held accountable for any negligence concerning arms-bearing, crime will remain and murderers will remain, as usual, anonymous.

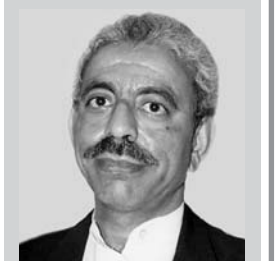
Source: Al-Sahwa Weekly



By Hamid

COMMON SENSE

Palestine and World Peace Where terror has reigned for a century



By: Hassan Al-Haifi

It is no mystery to the observer that the stability of the world and the hopes for international peace hinge on the achievement of a JUST AND LASTING PEACE in the Holy Land. This would mean dispelling the notion that Israel is a bastion of peace, harmony and regional cohesion.

The recent situation in the Holy Land bespeaks a nation vent on seeking the complete annihilation of what remains of the indigenous inhabitants of the Land of Galilee and surely is further proof that Israelis, whether as politicians or Kibbutz settlers are in no mood for the establishment of a permanent peace for the Middle East.

Israeli extremists of the likes of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his even more "militant" Deputy PM and Foreign Minister, Avigdor (alias Evet) Lieberman are in no mood for any idea that President Barack Obama and his Secretary in the State Department might have of trying to establish a lasting removal of a major chronic headache for the budget that the American taxpayers are already overtaxed to continue resourcing.

The funny irony that one is now unable to ignore is how Israel is crying wolf to an imaginary nuclear Iran, whereas to this day Israel is a persistent rejecter of any efforts to make it become a party to any international convention on nuclear armaments or even nuclear power and has been a strong backer of Indian nuclear attainment.

As a further testimony to the fallacy of the "civilized" goodness of the Israeli cancer, which has disrupted the peace of the region for nearly a century now, one cannot remain oblivious to the ongoing desecration of any religious landmarks of non-Jewish persuasions, such as the ongoing violations of the Holy Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque, in Jerusalem, not to mention the recurrent violations of the sanctity of Christian Churches that have been present for some two millennia in some cases.

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

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Yemen Press Review



Al-Sahwa.net, affiliated with the Islah Party
Thursday, July 30, 2009

Top Story

- Protestors demand human rights organizations to overturn death sentence against opposition activists

Hundreds of citizens protested on Monday before the parliament, condemning a death sentence against opposition politicians, the website reported.

Opposition leaders in Haja governorate, Khalid Nahshal, Mabkhoot Nahshal and Abdu Nahshal, who worked as agents for the opposition candidate of the presidential elections Faisal Bin Shamlan in Haja's poll centers in 2006 were sentenced to death last June on charges of killing an officer and a soldier in crossfire during the then presidential election.

The Sana'a-based Prisoner Organization threatened to rally before the United Nations office in Sana'a if the political prisoners' just demands were ignored, emphasizing that the procedures of the trial were illegal, pressures were practiced on judiciary

and the trial was politically-motivated. It further called on all local and international human rights organizations to express solitary with what it described "innocent politicians", appealing the Supreme Court to correct the big mistakes of the primary and appeal courts.

In a statement, the Joint Meeting Parties said that the sentence was a settlement of political accounts, political pressures were practiced on justice and there were several violations of judiciary.

The court had held its last hearing in the jail, not in the court in order to prevent supporters of the defendants from attending the trial.

"The declaration of the sentence inside the jail, not in the court, was apparent evidence of legal violations" JMP said in the statement.

On a side note, the website reported that the JMP Higher Council denounced what it said the killing of 20 citizens in Abyan province on Thursday.

In a statement, JMP said that Abyan incidents carry risky implications due to use of force and violence in encountering protests, holding the authorities responsible for provocations. It also condemned the suppression of peaceful marches in Adhala'a province in which 2 citizens were killed and several were captured.

As for Saada, JMP warned that a sixth war may break out, condemning

the way the authority restores to civil wars in dealing with internal conflicts.

JMP called on all parties to follow up peaceful approaches as means to address troubles, calling all Yemenis to step up the spirit of love and renounce haltered. It asked authorities to respect law, order, human rights and freedoms.

The former Yemeni president Ali Nasser Mohammad and premier Haidar al-Atas have denounced what they called "bloody incidents" in Zinjubar of Abyan governorate last Thursday.

In a statement, they labeled "the use of weapons against demonstrators as contradicting what the Yemeni regime recently claims that it opened a new page of conciliation and tolerance."

They also demanded the government to withdraw armed forces from south villages, abandon militarizing civil life and release all political prisoners without conditions.

Nine people were killed and 20 others were injured in clashes between security forces and the followers of Sheikh Tariq Al-Fadhli in Zinjbar of Abyan province, local sources affirmed.



Almotamar.net, affiliated with General People Congress (ruling party)
Thursday, July 30, 2009

Top Story

- Outlaws in southern governorates attack policemen, violate law

Local sources in Um Ayn area, Luder district of Abyan governorate mentioned Tuesday that outlaws and sabotage elements opened fire early Tuesday on policemen stationed in Um Ayn on the road leading to Luder-Modea-Abyan, killing four police soldiers and wounding another, the website reported.

The sheikh Al-Khidr Al-Barshaa of Um Ayn area told almotamar.net that 10-member armed sabotage cell set up an ambush to police soldiers present in the area and opened fire on them, causing the martyrdom of 4 of them and wounding another.

Sheikh Al-Barshaa also expressed his condemnation and denunciation of the criminal incident that contradicts the religion and habits and traditions of the sons of the region, stressing that the four victims were highly disciplined. He called on the inhabitants of the area to condemn those conducts that harm security and stability of the area.

On a side note, the website reported that Yemen expressed concern over the increasing influx of Somali refugees to its coasts as a result worsening security situations in Somalia. The Yemeni interior ministry said Sunday the

collapse of security situations in Somalia in the past period forced tens of escapees from the hell of war to run away in search for safe haven in Yemen.

The ministry pointed out that Thubab coast in Taiz governorate received since the current month more than 100 Somali refugees among them many women and children who were reaching there daily.

In a statement by the ministry's Security Information Centre, the ministry reiterated Yemen's demand on the international community to shoulder its responsibility regarding the problem of the Somali refugees present in Yemen; their number is approximately 800 thousands.

Yemeni interior ministry also said that Yemen, with its limited capacity, cannot alone face this problem that leaves negative impacts on Yemen's economy and security and affects Yemeni society that is groaning under the burden of poverty and lack of job opportunities as well as other problems.

President Ali Abdullah Saleh renewed on Sunday his call for the United States and the international community to support the transitional government of Somalia for achieving peace and stability in the region and ending the piracy acts.

During his meeting with the U.S. Commander of Central Military Command General David Petraeus,

Saleh affirmed Yemen's ongoing keenness on strengthening cooperation with the U.S. in all fields for serving the common interests of the two friendly countries, valuing the U.S. support to Yemen in economic field and combating terrorism.

Saleh and Petraeus discussed the bilateral relations and cooperation aspects between the two countries and ways of boosting them in various areas, among them the military field, especially in training sector, coastguard, and the fight against terrorism.

They also reviewed the latest regional and international developments of the common concerns, including the current situations in Iraq, Somalia and Horn of Africa as well as efforts of combating piracy in the Gulf of Aden.

The U.S. official confirmed his country's obligation and willingness to continue its cooperation and support for Yemen in the various fields, including the military field and combating terrorism to enhance the security and stability not only in Yemen but also in the whole region.

The US official said that his country strongly supports Yemen's unity and its security and stability.

Petraeus also praised the good level of relations and cooperation between Yemen and his country as well as Yemen's efforts in combating terrorism.

Israel continues its drive to erase history - removes references to 'Nakba'

With Israel's government asserting an increasingly right wing political agenda since its February elections, the Israeli Knesset has been making moves to expunge all references to the Palestinian Nakba – or “catastrophe” – the event by which over 700,000 Palestinians were exiled, displaced or killed during the creation of the state of Israel (1948). The latest move for the increasingly nationalist Israeli government is expunging the word “Nakba” from Israel’s school textbooks.

By JACKSON ALLERS

Israeli Education Minister Gideon Star reversed a 2007 decision to allow the word “Nakba” to be included in Israeli state-school textbooks.

He told the Israeli Knesset last week, "The education system is not supposed to contribute to processes of delegitimizing the state, which heighten the processes of extremism in the Arab sector. In particular, there are no reasons to legitimize this concept for teaching eight-year olds."

The move was plainly seen as a way to further isolate the more than 1.2 million Arabs holding Israeli citizenship in pre-1948 territories.

Ahmed Tibi, a member of the Arab party Ta'al and a deputy speaker of the Knesset, said Palestinians consider the 1948 creation of the Israeli state a catastrophe by "any measure."

"Many families were crushed, were forced to leave their homes, had their houses demolished and many thousands of people were killed," Tibi said.

According the Australian daily The Age, Palestinian Knesset member Afu Aghbaria, of the left-wing Hadash party said, "These attempts [to remove the Nakba from teaching] attest to the

behavior patterns of criminals, who try to destroy evidence and erase all memory of the crimes."

Racist campaign continues

The Israeli Transport Authority's Minister Yisrael Katz began a directed effort this month to Hebraize the road signs from their Arab equivalents so that all of the historical Arab names for cities and towns would now be Hebrew.

It follows the recent trends of the Netanyahu coalition government and his right-wing foreign minister Avigdor Lieberman's ultra-nationalist political party Yisrael Beiteinu (Israel our home) that has questioned the loyalty of the Arabs living in the '48 territories.

Indeed, earlier this year, Lieberman tried to pass three separate bills that were all tied into this concept. As MENASSAT had earlier reported, one bill prohibited any types of mourning for the creation of Israel (the Nakba), another bill was designed to prohibit citizens from denying the existence of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state, and the third required Israeli citizens "to sign oaths of loyalty to the state, its flag and national anthem, and to perform military or civil service."

Although the loyalty law was reject-



ed and the Nakba Law has been watered down, the new law prohibits any government funds from being used for nearly any form of public recognition of the Nakba.

Tibi wrote in the UK-based Asharq Alawsat on July 29, "The battle is not over some road signs or over the status of the Arabic language or over the school curricula for grade three or four; it is a battle over raising awareness and historical accounts."

He continued, "The battle is not over a decision to change signs related to arts or technology; the battle is over an attempt to "Zionize" the account and to deny the Arab essence of the towns. The victims, or rather the symbols of this battle are the sons of the growing generation who are being brought up on Natrat not An Nasira [Nazareth], Yerushalim not Al Quds [Jerusalem], Gush Khalav not Al Jish [Jish], Kom Miut not Nakba. They are being raised on the Zionist version of the story and

not the real one."

Israeli voices have their say

In a July 23 Ynet opinion piece on the issue of the expunging of Nakba from Israeli textbooks, famed Israeli writer Yoram Kaniuk writes, "In the fortified building that is Israel's Knesset, officials are redrafting history, as well as the future. The future we looked forward to once upon a time, when the hill was still empty. Via the Nakba Law and the education minister's plan to remove the term from the curriculum, it appears that the future will be all about erasing everything that exists."

Kaniuk compares the Nakba textbook move to similar moves made by some to teach German history without the Holocaust. "Our education minister did not invent this idea. Stalin made sure to write a new Russian history, yet the past reclaimed it. A narrative that turns into a myth constitutes more history than any education minister can

create; even if Arab children here learn Bialik's songs and are forced to hoist Israel's flag over their homes every morning and sing our national anthem every evening, at night, in hiding, they will read Arabic poetry. Because Arabic poetry is them. There's nothing we can do about it."

There has been vocal opposition from within Israel's government concerning the anti-Nakba attempts by Yisrael Beineinu, namely from ministers Michael Eitan (Likud) and Isaac Herzog (Labor), despite repeated calls from those instigating the anti-Nakba legislation that the laws are not intended "to harm the right of expression of Israel's Arabs."

National anthem and lesser education

Adding insult to injury, some 8,000 schools are being sent "national anthem kits" in time for the start of the new academic year in September – these kits which contain lyrics for the anthem – "Ha-Tikva" (The Hope) – are also being distributed to the separate Arab educational schools, drawing the swift condemnation of Arab-Israeli's.

The anthem – based on a 120-year old poem – has by most accounts been a longstanding point of dispute between Israel's Arab and Jewish populations because of what Israeli-Arabs perceive as "heavily Zionist lyrics."

Prominent Arabs like Ghaleb Majadele have long refused to sing the anthem in public. Majadele, a Labor party member and the first Arab-Israeli to be appointed to the Israel cabinet (2007), told Israeli radio, "Where is it written that a person appointed to be a cabinet minister in Israel must stop being an Arab, and turn into a member

of a different religion and ethnicity?" Meanwhile, Israel's Arab minority political body, the Higher Follow-Up Committee, has staunchly opposed all forms of anti-Nakba legislation. These initiatives, according the HFUC, would only drive a deeper wedge of alienation between Arab teachers and students.

An Israeli educational ministry report confirmed recently that Arab-Israeli students are far less successful at matriculation exams – with a more than 18 percent drop from 51 percent matriculation in 2006 to 32 percent in 2008.

The Abu-Dhabi based paper The National reported Disarat, a Nazareth-based organization monitoring education issues, blamed the poor results on growing cultural bias in the Israeli education system as well as severe budgetary discrimination.

According to the organization's head Yousef Jabareen, "Increasing weight placed on Jewish heritage and Judaism lessons put Arab pupils at a severe disadvantage, and that further alienation was caused by the state's refusal to allow the Arab education system any autonomy in selecting its own curriculum."

What is clear in this entire Nakba controversy is that it is not one that is going away soon as it lies at the heart of the conflict between the Zionist settlers that founded the Israeli state and the Palestinians, both displaced and still living in the pre-1948 territories.

For the record, Yuli Edelstein, former Israeli education minister, authorized the publication of the word Nakba in Israeli textbooks in 2007, signifying the shift in attitudes over the last two years in what is an increasingly intractable conflict

Critical Issue

By Hussein Shobokshi

The issue of human rights is a controversial one that many nations are facing today. It is an issue that is prevalent in developed and developing countries without exception, though the differences lie in the details and the criteria followed in order to come up with a vision [to tackle the issue] and in the final results.

Regarding this thorny subject, there are two international organizations that have specialized in addressing human rights issues and presenting specialized

reports that reveal its naked reality and highlighted the points of danger and the required recommendations to tackle them, and in the process playing a significant hypothetical and influential role. These two organizations are Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

Over time, notable differences in the way the two groups operate became obvious. Human Rights Watch had come to earn the world's respect and appreciation for its balanced, rational and documented approach. It surprised the world by firmly condemning the acts carried out by the Israeli army dur-

ing its frenzied campaign on the Gaza Strip, revealing a significant number of transgressions and violations, including the use of illegal weapons such as white phosphorus by Israel on civilians.

Recently, Amnesty International released a report that was critical of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The report stated that the Kingdom had committed human rights violations against a number of arrested terror-related suspects. (Amnesty International submitted figures that could not be checked or verified but it seems they were added to give the report more of a complete picture.)

The war on terror and the violations that might have been committed is new territory for all nations. This territory was previously unexplored; therefore gaining experience was inevitable through a process of trial and error.

Nevertheless, it is important to be impartial and say that the report tackled the positive developments in Saudi Arabia's methods of dealing with terrorism as well, including the success of its rehabilitation program, and the establishment of a specialized court for handling such cases. Though this domain is fairly new to Saudi Arabia, the Kingdom has managed to achieve

considerable success according to the testimonies of many people.

Today, the human rights file in Saudi Arabia is by no means balanced. There are many goals that need to be achieved and a plethora of errors that should be rectified.

However addressing the issue in a dramatic and provocative way does not destroy the credibility of the report, but it does raise pressing and legitimate questions about Amnesty International's methodology.

The war on terror is a thorny and complicated issue that involves a lot of administrative and executive challenges

for many countries. Nevertheless, the experience itself remains important and observing it with objectivity and impartiality continues to be crucial.

The final ruling is yet to be issued, but it is essential to view the entire matter from a more comprehensive perspective in order to achieve lasting benefits. In order for the human rights issue to be handled successfully, it has to be tackled with rationality, wisdom, honesty and interaction because it is a sensitive issue that cannot be subjected to exploitation and profiteering.



بنك التسليف التعاوني والزراعي
Cooperative & Agricultural Credit Bank

البنك الأول لعام 2008 م

The 2008 First Bank

According to the CBY Report



Increase of Assets

Most national banks achieved remarkable extension in their banking business during 2008. The total assets at national banks increased to become 1132.9 billion Yemeni Riyals at the end of December 2008 versus 940.8 billion Yemeni Riyals at the end of 2007. The increase is 192.1 billion Yemeni Riyals and the average growth is 20.4%. The national bank's contribution to the size of the uniform budget is 75.0% at the end of December 2008 versus 74% at the end of December 2007. Most national banks achieved a big increase in total assets.

The CAC Bank achieved the biggest increase in its total assets. They increased to 56.4 billion Yemeni Riyals at the end of December 2008. It also achieved the highest average growth among the national banks altogether, and it was 45%.

Source: CBY Report

زيادة الأصول

حققت معظم البنوك الوطنية توسعا ملحوظا في نشاطها المصرفي خلال عام 2008 م وارتفع إجمالي الأصول لدى البنوك الوطنية إلى 1132,9 مليار ريال في نهاية ديسمبر 2008 مقابل 940,8 مليار ريال في نهاية ديسمبر عام 2007 بزيادة قدرها 192,1 مليار ريال ومعدل نمو قدره 20,4% وبلغت نسبة مساهمة البنوك الوطنية في حجم الميزانية الموحدة 75,0% في نهاية ديسمبر 2008 مقابل 74% في نهاية ديسمبر 2007.. وحققت أغلب البنوك الوطنية زيادة كبيرة في إجمالي الأصول..

وحقق بنك التسليف الزراعي أكبر زيادة في مجموع أصوله بلغت 56,4 مليار ريال في نهاية ديسمبر 2008 وحقق أعلى معدل نمو بين البنوك مجتمعة بنسبة 45%.

المصدر: تقرير البنك المركزي اليمني



Growth of Deposits

Balances of deposits in Riyal increased to become 747.7 billion Yemeni Riyals at the end of December 2008 versus 587.1 billion Yemeni Riyals at the end of December 2007. The increase was 160.5 billions Yemeni Riyals and the average growth was 27.3%. Increase in balances of deposits in Riyal varied from one bank to another.

The CAC Bank achieved the biggest increase in Riyal. Its increase was 31.9 billion with 39.9% as an average growth. Deposits in foreign currencies increased from 466.2 billion Yemeni Riyals at the end of December 2007 (equivalent to 2336.8 million US dollars) to 488.4 billion Yemeni Riyals at the end of December 2008 (equivalent to 2441 million US dollars). The increase was 22.1 million Yemeni Riyals with 4.7% as an average growth. The CAC Bank achieved the biggest increase of deposits in foreign currencies; equivalent to 21.5 billion Yemeni Riyal and 58.0% average growth.

Source: CBY Report

نمو الودائع

أرصدة الودائع بالريال ارتفعت إلى 747,7 مليار ريال في نهاية ديسمبر 2008 م مقابل 587,1 مليار ريال في نهاية ديسمبر 2007 بزيادة قدرها 160,5 مليار ريال وبمعدل نمو 27,3% وتفاوتت الزيادة في أرصدة الودائع بالريال من بنك لآخر

وحقق بنك التسليف الزراعي أكبر زيادة بالريال بمبلغ 31,9 مليار وبمعدل نمو 39,9% وارتفعت الودائع بالعملة الأجنبية من 466,2 مليار ريال في نهاية ديسمبر 2007 ما يعادل 2336,8 مليون دولار) إلى 488,4 مليار ريال في نهاية ديسمبر 2008 (ما يعادل 2441 مليون دولار) بزيادة قدرها 22,1 مليون ريال وبمعدل نمو 4,7% وحقق بنك التسليف الزراعي أكبر زيادة لودائع العملات الأجنبية بما يعادل مبلغ 21,5 مليار ريال وبمعدل نمو 58,0%.

المصدر: تقرير البنك المركزي اليمني



Development of Credits & Finances

Balances of credits, advances and finances offered by banks to different economic sectors increased to become 418.4 billion Yemeni Riyals at the end of December 2007 versus 359.7 billion Yemeni Riyals at the end of December 2007. The increase was 58.7 billion Yemeni Riyals and the average growth was 16.3%.

The CAC Bank achieved the biggest increase in offering credits and finances. Its increase was 20.9 billions with 46.5% as an average growth.

Source: CBY Report

تطور أرصدة القروض والتمويلات

ارتفعت أرصدة القروض والسلفيات والتمويلات المقدمة من البنوك العاملة للقطاعات الاقتصادية المختلفة إلى 418,4 مليار ريال نهاية ديسمبر 2008 مقابل 359,7 مليار ريال في نهاية ديسمبر 2007 بزيادة قدرها 58,7 مليار ريال ومعدل نمو قدره 16,3%

وحقق بنك التسليف الزراعي أكبر زيادة في عملية الإقراض والتمويلات بمقدار 20,9 مليار ومعدل نمو قدره 46,5%.

المصدر: تقرير البنك المركزي اليمني

الشركة اليمنية للغاز الطبيعي المسال
Yemen LNG Company



Job Vacancy

The Yemen LNG project involves the construction and operation of a gas pipeline, a harbour and a liquefied natural gas processing plant at Balhaf on the Gulf of Aden which will export 6.7 million tons of LNG per annum. The project offices are based in Sana'a and the project has an anticipated lifespan of over 20 years. Yemen LNG Company is now recruiting the temporary and permanent staff who will construct and manage the project.

All candidates must be Yemeni nationals

Job Title: Customs & Transportation Supervisor – Ref. No. 272
Department: Contracts and Procurement
Work Location: Sana'a Office

Duties & Responsibilities:

- Ensures that all YLNG equipment and goods are imported in Yemen promptly and effectively in accordance with the Gas Development Agreement (GDA).
- Develops and maintains a good relationship with Customs Authorities, ensuring that the company complies with Yemeni Customs laws and regulations.
- Prepares and updates the YLNG Customs procedure covering Importation and Exportation Principles.
- Ensures that Contractors abide by customs clearance laws and regulations (including temporary importations, re-exportations and transfers) and meet deadlines.
- Records all imports and exports initiated by YLNG and its contractors.
- Updates YLNG customs clearance database, proposes modifications to database if and when necessary.
- Prepares and maintains files for all Customs related documentation.
- Follow-ups bank guarantees requested for importation requirements and provides necessary document for release of bank guarantees.
- Monitors Customs clearance costs and reports these to management.
- Ensures that all staff are aware of Safety and Security issues.

Qualifications Required:

- At least 10 years' experience in Customs clearance operations within an Oil and Gas International environment.
- Fluent in written and spoken English and Arabic.
- Excellent knowledge of essential computer software programs (Word, Excel, e-mail etc.). Knowledge of SAP advantageous.
- Well organized, rigorous and meticulous, and able to work autonomously.

Job Title: Customs Officer– Ref. No. 273
Department: Contracts and Procurement
Work Location: Sana'a Office

Duties & Responsibilities:

- Reviews shipping documents and ensure they are complete and compliant with government requirements.
- Ensures that all customs documents are complete and accurate for both YLNG & its subcontractors.
- Enters and updates all customs duties exemption information in the YLNG data base.
- Prepares reports for YLNG's shipments arriving in Yemen (by all modes of transportation), and proceeds with all necessary steps to expedite their clearance.
- Ensures that all documentation and records related to Customs transactions are retained or forwarded to the relevant Company Departments in accordance with Company Internal procedures.
- Monitors and reports to YLNG's hierarchy all pending exemptions for contractors' and subcontractors' equipment. Ensures that all necessary steps are taken to meet legal liabilities.
- Prepares and updates lists of incomplete Customs files for Contractors and passes these lists to hierarchy for further actions.
- Follows up outstanding exemptions, re-exports and databases of equipment transferred.
- Performs various administrative tasks such as preparing formal letters to YGC, Customs authority, subcontractors.
- Performs any other Customs related tasks as may be requested by his hierarchy from time to time.

Qualifications Required:

- At least 3 years' experience in Customs clearance operations within an Oil and Gas International environment.
- Fluent in written and spoken English and Arabic.
- Good interpersonal skills
- Excellent knowledge of essential computer software programs (Word, Excel, e-mail etc.). Knowledge of SAP a plus.
- Well organized, methodical and meticulous

Job Title: Competence Assurance Officer– Ref. No. 274
Department: HR & Administration (Training)
Work Location: Sana'a
Duration: 2-year Fixed Term Contract

Duties & Responsibilities:

- This post exists to ensure that staff meet the company's requirements for competence in their assigned posts and to guide staff and supervision in the achievement of these competencies.
- Produce competence workbooks from the templates developed for the Company's support staff.
- Carry out baseline and ongoing periodic assessments of support staff progress in accordance with the competence assurance framework.
- Liaise constantly with participating staff and their supervisors to coach and assist in the ongoing development of staff.
- Update the competence assurance workbooks on an ongoing basis.
- Monitor progress by referencing the workbooks, the annual appraisal goals and regular interfacing with the staff.
- Ensure staff produce and file credible and ongoing records of evidence of progress against the identified competencies, to satisfy the programme verification criteria.
- Give regular feedback to supervisors and managers on progress, required training / development gaps and any developing behavioral issues.
- Update the competence assurance database and produce progress reports.
- Coach staff according to their needs.

Qualifications Required:

- University Degree in a relevant technical discipline. As an alternative, a degree in a non-technical discipline, plus hands-on experience in formal training, coaching and competence assessment & verification may be considered acceptable.
- A1 / V1 certification (Competence Assurance qualifications) would be an advantage.
- Fluent in written and spoken English and Arabic.
- Well organized, methodical and meticulous, with excellent interpersonal, report-writing, presentational and motivational skills.
- Excellent knowledge of essential computer software programs (Word, Excel, e-mail etc.).

Job Title: Industrial Transport / Handling Officer– Ref. No. 275
Department: Operations
Work Location: Balhaf

Duties & Responsibilities:

- Reporting to the Transport / Handling Supervisor, the job holder will be responsible for ensuring the safe movement of a wide variety of potentially hazardous materials by a range of methods, including from and to cargo vessels or aircraft.
- Ensures that staff and contracted personnel execute materials / goods movements safely and with reference to the nature of the materials being moved / stored / used.
- Participates in the analysis of near misses and carries out professional risk assessments, safety audits and incident & accidents reports for supervision.
- Always observes company transportation and logistics policy, and recommends improvements where appropriate.
- Provides advice and technical assistance on all aspects of transportation management to colleagues and contractor personnel within Logistics and other departments as requested.
- Assists with Transportation control activities including periodic physical check activities, particularly on Fuels and fleet management activities.
- Optimises the cost effective use of fleet vehicles and garaging / storage arrangements in accordance with accepted industry principles.

Qualifications Required:

- Bachelor degree, preferably in an engineering discipline or strong evidence of relevant experience gained in an oil or gas environment
- 5+ years' experience in industrial transport and materials movements activities (aviation, marine and road transportation), including heavy loads handling and lifting expertise.
- Strong safety awareness interpersonal and advisory / coaching skills
- Excellent knowledge of spoken and written English
- Excellent knowledge of essential computer software programs (Word, Excel, e-mail etc.).

APPLICATION PROCESS

- 1) Visit Yemen LNG's website at (WWW.YEMENLNG.COM).
- 2) Go to Careers, then to Vacancies to enter our Web Application System.
- 3) Register your personal and professional data in order to log in and apply, mentioning the title and the reference number of the position you are applying for.
- 4) Do not make duplicate applications by fax, etc.
- 5) Yemen LNG Company will contact the selected candidates for interview and further assessment.
- 6) Applicants who are not contacted have not been successful but can still apply for future positions.

Closing Date: 12th August 2009

WWW.YEMENLNG.COM

Dr. Abdul-Karim Qasem Zaid Deputy General Manager of Al-Kuwait University to the Yemen Times:

“Seventy percent of people around the world have Irritable Bowel Syndrome”

Dr. Abdul-Karim Qasem Zaid is the Deputy General Manager of Al-Kuwait University Hospital, a consultant physician, a Gastroenterologist and Endoscopist. He is also the head of the Endoscopy Department. Born in 1967 in the Sa'ada governorate, he received his bachelor's degree from Sana'a University in 1990.

In December 2001, he got the first part of the Arabic Board in internal medicine from the Arab Board of Medical Specialization in Syria. In May 2007, he received an Arab Board Degree in internal medicine from the Arab League, the Council of Arab Health Ministers, the Arab Board of Medical Specialization and the General Secretariat in Syria.

In September 2007, he received professional doctorate (equation certificate) from the Ministry of Higher Education in Sana'a.

Mahmoud Assamee of the Yemen Times met with Dr. Abdul-Karim Zaid to seek clarification on some of the issues related to Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS).

Irritable bowel syndrome is a chronic disorder of the large intestine also called the colon or bowel. IBS is not a disease but a condition in which the bowel does not always work normally. The disorder is characterized by chronic abdominal pain, discomfort, bloating, and alteration of bowel habits in the absence of any organic cause.



Dr. Abdul-Karim Qasem Zaid



Abdominal pain is a defining symptom of irritable bowel syndrome. Although there is no cure for it, there are treatments which attempt to relieve symptoms, including dietary adjustments, medication and psychological interventions.

Before we discuss colon diseases, what is the colon?

The colon is the large intestine, which includes the sigmoid colon, spastic colon and transverse colon.

What are colon diseases?

Colon diseases are not traditional diseases, but the dysfunction in the large intestine. In the past, we doubted patients who had colon problems were suffering from abdominal disease because test results showed there was no organic disease. We were treating them as a people who suffered from psychological disturbances under the illusion that they had abdominal disease.

However, after science improved and new diagnostic equipment was invented, we discovered that the patients were not imagining the pain, and people commonly suffer from this abdominal affliction. The colon shrinks or contracts in the upper and lower areas, causing pains and unrest. We call this sickness a dysfunction of the intestine. Colon patients have sensitive intestines. So we call this

condition Irritable Bowel Syndrome, or IBS.

What are the symptoms of IBS?

The symptoms of IBS are two kinds, primary and diagnostic. The primary symptoms affect the digestive system. Patients experience a loss of appetite, disgust, vomiting, indigestion and pains. While the pains end with defecation, flatulence and gases, patients also experience changing of stool shape, diarrhea and constipation, increasing time of defecation and mucus with stool. If all these symptoms are found, the person has IBS. The colon of person who has IBS is more constricted than the ordinary person. God created man, and made his intestine with continuous contractions day and night to help man get rid of every bite he swallows.

Why do IBS patients' colons have more contractions than an ordinary ones?

This process is directly linked with psychological afflictions, which is

why this condition is called IBS. When I say a person has IBS, this means the person has sensitive intestines that are affected by the kinds of foods they eat, nerves or by other psychological disturbances.

What are the complications of IBS?

IBS, like we said it is not a disease but a condition. It is not "curable" and can last for a long time, and might be associated with the patient's age. Its effects range from a flaming sensation in the digestive system, to a pain in the chest. The IBS patient feels distressed, and he feels fearful.

What are the causes of the condition?

Change in modern civilization and a new life-style of little motion, changes of living conditions and economic conditions. Because of these difficulties in the world, colon diseases have emerged.

In the past, people did not know of these sicknesses. They are found in cities more than villages and in young people more than in old because young people worry more about their lives. Old people do not fear. Fear increases effects of IBS. An old man or woman who has IBS also does not feel the condition because they often ignore pains, and see doctors only in extreme situations.

Is it increased by specific food?

Yes, it is. It is intensified by greens, oil and some vegetables like watercress and garlic. It is also affected by some kinds of fruit like apples, or by anger. But all these cases are not causes of IBS.

Do you believe that IBS is prevalent in Yemen?

The condition is everywhere in world, not only in Yemen. There are that studies indicate that 70 percent of people around the world have IBS.

What about colon bacteria. Some said there are bacteria in ladyfingers (okra), irrigated by dirty water, causes colon disease. Is this true?

There is no bacterial cause to IBS. On the contrary, the side effects of antibiotic reduces useful bacteria, so that sometimes we administrate medicine that includes this bacteria to IBS patient.

Is there any relation between pesticides used for qat and vegetables and IBS?

Possibly. Pesticides are dangerous and farmers use them a lot. But let me tell you something, if pesticides caused IBS, then it would not be found in the rest of the world.

Who are more affected of IBS, men

or women?

Women are more affected by the condition because they are more sensitive than men and because of their life-style.

Can children be affected by IBS?

It is possible. We do not rule out IBS for children.

Because IBS is not a regular condition, how do you cure patients? What are the medications administered?

First of all, the patient has to be educated on his condition. He must know his case and how to deal with the condition. This condition makes patients

fearful and this fear increases the intensity of the condition. After educating the patient, medication plays a role. But before medicines, patients should avoid agitators like anxiety or certain types of food that could have worms.

The drugs often do not directly medicate the problem but act as a calmer. Part of the condition is psychological, and the other part is organic. We give anti-contraction medication for colon disturbances and sedative to treat psychological disturbances or depression. The condition is not absolutely cured because it is not real. The different forms of medication given to IBS patients are

anulcsics, antispasmodics, anxiolytics, antidepressants, combinations of these and others.

Some IBS patients say they do not benefit from the medications, why?

That is because patients do not understand the sickness. Many patients lose all their money seeking treatment. IBS patient are not satisfied with one physician. They go to the first doctor and after taking the medicine he prescribes, they say the doctor is no good. Then they see another who prescribes different treatment. I know IBS patients who have traveled to many countries and wasted all their money in search of treatment.



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International specialist on Islamic and gender studies Margot Badran to the Yemen Times: “Yemen’s creation of its own customized version of modernity was disrupted by the agenda of political Islam.”

Margot Badran is an American historian of the Middle East and Islamic societies and a specialist in gender studies. She is a fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and a senior fellow at the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University. Previously Badran was Edith Kreeger Wolf Distinguished Visiting Professor in the Department of Religion and Preceptor at the Institute for the Study of Islamic Thought in Africa at Northwestern University. She has lectured widely all over the United States, as well as in Europe, the Middle East and South Asia. Her latest books include: *Feminism in Islam, Secular and Religious Convergences (2009)* and *Feminism beyond East and West: New Gender Talk and Practice in Global Islam (2006)*. She also writes on feminism and gender for the *Al-Ahram Weekly* in Cairo. She divides her time between Washington and Cairo. Nadia Al-Sakkaf interviewed Badran on her experience in Yemen.



Margot Badran was one of the first scholars to help establish the curricula of the Gender-Development Research and Studies Center at the University of Sana'a in 1998.

At first a visiting lecturer in women and gender-related studies, she then went on to become fulltime lecturer in four core subjects of education, development, law and media for two years. During her stay, she witnessed troubling times when gender as a word and a concept was considered by many Yemenis to be blasphemy or a social taboo.

The Gender Research and Studies Center

Margot Badran came to Yemen for the first time in 1980 as a member of a UNFPA team when she designed a project for the Women's Bureau in the Ministry of Labor, Youth, and Social Affairs. She recalls that she had to fight with members of her own international team to protect the project she designed which they contended Yemen was not ready for and how Yemenis answered back saving the women's project. In December 1997 she returned on a short research trip supported by the American Institute for Yemeni Studies. She extended her stay to give some lectures at Sana'a University's Empirical Research and Women's Studies Center, today known as the Gender-Development Research and Studies Center.

Dr. Badran again returned for the

academic year 1998-99 as a Fulbright lecturer at the Empirical Research and Women's Studies Center at Sanaa University and was extended for another year. "The Center was funded by the Netherlands government and was in its finalization stages before the curricula and other academic issues were fully in place," explained Badran. "The Center was headed by Dr. Raufa Hassan." Badran helped in finalizing the creation of the core curriculum of the Center as it developed into a fully-fledged center for postgraduate women studies awarding postgraduate diplomas and M.A. degrees. There were also two PhD candidates at the Center.

Badran co-taught the Basic Introduction to Women Studies with Dr. Raufa Hassan in which they introduced the construct of "gender" and a basic tool of analysis. This provided them with a new lens through which to view and analyze their own society and cul-

Teaching at the women's studies center in Yemen was one of the most rewarding and exciting experiences of my life.

ture. Students at the Women's Studies Center received a monthly stipend and in addition to attending courses at the Center where required to study English.

"The students were incredibly eager and very motivated although the topics were extremely challenging. They realized that they were receiving special attention from their lecturers. It was a specialized center with a small number of students and dedicated teachers. We

put a lot of energy into the teaching process and the student enjoyed being part of the program. I could see their understanding enlarging. "Teaching at the Women's Studies Center in Yemen was one of the most rewarding and exciting experiences of my life."

Gender a tool, not a foreign concept

Badran felt that because Yemen did not experience "classic" colonization (the experience in the South was mainly administrative) that people were more open to accepting new gender ideas and not as quick to brand them as "Western." They did not have the same heavy baggage of the "us" against "them" found in the formerly colonized countries where "gender" was deemed to be a foreign concept or another form of occupation through infiltrating local culture.

In the courses at The Women's Studies Center students learned that gender was an analytical term and a prism through which to view ideas about males and females, women's and men's practices and institutions impacting on their lives. Using the concept of gender students examined such matters as how men and women use space, how they interact or do not, and what opportunities are available to both sexes and why. "The students who were eased into understanding their own culture through the use of this new tool these tools started rediscovering their own environments. They learnt how to combine the different analytical prism and do a kind of sociological analysis to unpack society, keeping in mind that society includes women and men.

"In teaching this kind of analysis we started with Yemen and with students' own personal experience and moved to broader local experience. While the main focus was on Yemen we also examined other countries in the region for the sake of comparison."

A specialist on the Egyptian feminist movement, Badran drew upon Egypt's feminist history in defining and enacting a feminism of its own, in introducing the students to the ideas and practices of feminism. Through this concrete historical approach student could readily see how feminism evolves from within and is not some foreign or western imposition upon Muslim and Arab cultures and societies.

Some twenty students graduated from the Women's Studies Center, not only with a master's degree in Women's Studies, but also with a new way of looking at their own lives. Today these students are gender experts who use their understanding and fluent English to promote their careers and Yemen's development.

Badran said, "I could see the change in the way of thinking of the students. Males and female were both far more understanding about what it is like in reality for a woman to live their lives."

Religio-political crisis closes center

In 1999, a religious trend was gaining in strength. The conservative Islam party was influential on campus, both in the students union and other assemblies. Badran remembers how politicized the academic environment was and how Islam party supporters or Islamists felt that they were losing the allegiance of students as many gravitated towards the new learning the Women's Studies Center provided.

"There was a certain buzz around the Center. We organized lectures by visiting scholars and dignitaries as well as social events for the students. I had heard that there were some students who did not like what we were doing. We had dinners in the courtyard of the Center which male and female students attended interacting with each other while at the same time bring a bit segregated. The Center was showing a new way of interacting while respecting the basic cultural norms and challenging the views the Islahi promoted on gender issues or women," explained Badran.

This different approach to life appealed to many students. It was created in their own terms and from their own experiences. The issue of this fresh thinking being foreign ideas never arose as far as Badran recalls, although increasingly she witnessed a claim fed by the Islam party students that the new concepts were un-Islamic.

There were several attempts to jeopardize the center and all were handled with minimum damage until Sept. 9, 1999, when Dr. Raufa Hassan organized a six-day long international conference under the slogan "Challenges for Women Studies in the 21st century" and with the patronage of President Saleh. The conference, held just three weeks before the national presidential elections, drew a huge crowd and President Ali Saleh was invited as an honoree.

On the last day of the conference, a guest sociologist from Morocco made

For example, Mohammad Al-Khamisi wrote in Al-Sahwa, the Islam Party newspaper, on Oct. 14, 1999:

"Philosophers of gender (falsifat al-jandar) are spreading immorality, and harm to the family... they advocate for deviant sexual behavior: adultery, homosexuality, and lesbianism. They want to destroy the legal marriage contract between woman and man, which includes rights, duties and responsibilities. How can this term be spread in academic centers in the name of knowledge in a country of faith and wisdom?"

some comments on sexuality, his field of specialization. Some members of the audience became upset and signs of unrest started to show. This happened on the final day of the conference which then was brought to an abrupt close.

The Islamist Islam party, then the weak partner in a coalition with the ruling Mutamar party seized the opportunity to attack the conference, thereby also striking out at its organizer, the Center including its head and professors, and its sponsor, the president of Yemen.

The Islamists used this to deal a blow to the ruling party in the run-up to the national elections, in an effort to show that they controlled the street and to make a show of concern about national culture and morality, which they took it upon themselves to defend.

The war cry in this high-stakes game of national politics was the word "gender," which was attacked as a way to spread alarm in society and, in the process, to smear the ruling party and discredit the center.

The Moroccan sociologist received a death threat and was deported. A fatwa [religious statement] was issued against Dr. Raufa Hassan and four other Arab women as well as Dr. Margot Badran were accused of acting against Islam.

"I was at the international conference in Cairo commemorating the centenary of the publication of Qasim Amin's book *Tahrir al-Mar'a* (The Liberation of the Woman) when a delegate from Yemen told me about what had happened in the aftermath of the conference in Sanaa and that I had been among the five women accused of "working against Islam," the other four were from other Arab countries while I was identified as an American Jew, code for being a Zionist. I didn't take it all seriously until I saw Raufa at the Cairo conference and saw what the newspapers had reported. The accusations against Raufa, the Center, and the rest us were broadcast in the mosques first in Sanaa and then in other parts of the country. Cassettes were also being circulated. The situation was very dangerous.

The Women's Studies Center was shut down. Although the government had said that they would investigate the matter the issue dragged for an extended time."

Meanwhile, lurid articles kept appearing in the press. Mohammad Al-Khamisi wrote in *Al-Sahwa*, the Islam Party newspaper, on Oct. 14, 1999:

"Philosophers of gender (falsifat al-jandar) are spreading immorality, and harm to the family... they advocate for deviant sexual behavior: adultery, homosexuality, and lesbianism. They

want to destroy the legal marriage contract between woman and man, which includes rights, duties and responsibilities. How can this term be spread in academic centers in the name of knowledge in a country of faith and wisdom?"

Students who were depending on their stipends from the Center—many of whom were supporting families—were stranded when payments stopped after the Center closed down. One of the Center's students, Abdulhakim Hamdani, who was also a student in the Faculty of Law went to court to file claim for payment of the monthly stipend to the students who depended on them. With Hamdani, as with many others, they could neither go back to his normal job nor return to studying. The students were the first casualties in the upheaval.

Margot Badran returned to Yemen After matters had more or less calmed down and she has received assurances it was safe Margot Badran returned to Yemen in January 2000. The Center had re-opened on a limited basis and the word "gender" was purged from the approved lexicon. Although it was said she could return to teaching at the university some of her students went to her house advising against this. So Dr. Badran held classes for some of the students at her home. On the two brief occasions when she went to the university to collect some reference books and papers, she was protectively surrounded by her students.

For one whole semester from January to June 2000, Badran taught women's to her students. Before she left Yemen at the end of June she made here one and only public appearance when she gave a talk at the American Institute for Yemeni Studies. Her talk was titled, "Gender" with the subtitle, "Meanings, Uses, and Discourses in Post-Unification Yemen."

"I wanted to set the record straight, some people were insulting me and I wanted to have the chance to clarify to the public exactly what I was working on in Yemen and what women's studies and gender were really about. There was heavy security at the event which was packed out but it all went very well."

What is very interesting for me - and I live in Egypt which is a country that has been colonized for centuries- is how intact Yemen is. It is more itself. Even the British in the south did not override the local identity.

No place like Yemen

"Being in Yemen was an exhilarating time for me. I saw Yemenis as very straight-forward and possessing an intact culture. When I think of my students I believe it was this very strength and the solid footing in their own culture that made it possible for them to confidently and critically explore it and to work from their own base in directing meaningful change in their lives and the lives of their country."

Badran reflected that political Islam posed the greatest threat to gender advancement in the 1990s and into the 21st century. On another front she also noticed the contradiction between the government's acceptance of funds for gender projects from international donors and the interdiction of the word gender from the academic lexicon in the university.

She cannot comment on the situation today because she has not been back to Yemen since 2000. She remembers well that although social customs were hard to deal with but they could change with progressive education. Political Islam, however, is a far greater challenging.

Had the Women's Studies Center not had the obstacle of political Islam in 2000 to deal with but and only inheritance of old ways, Yemen could have moved faster towards a kind of indigenous modernity, she reflected. Political Islam got in the way of Yemen creating its own customized version of modernity.

EDC

Vacancy announcement

Position: Project Director

Education Development Center, a US-based international nongovernmental organization, is seeking an experienced professional to direct the USAID-funded Youth Center Support Program in Marib, Yemen. The Support Program is an 18-month program designed to develop the program and train staff for the Al-Saleh Youth Development and Training Center, located Marib and serving youth, ages 15-24, in Marib, Al-Jawf, and Shabwa. The position is based in Marib, Yemen.

Requirements and qualifications: Prior experience in directing international development projects and supervising staff; experience in developing and implementing organizational and individual staff capacity development programs; demonstrated competence in managing documents and information systems, budgets, and timelines; experience in developing and implementing strategic plans and establishing monitoring and evaluation systems; demonstrated capacity to work effectively with appropriate government officials, USAID, and other key stakeholders; knowledge and experience in youth development, livelihoods development, vocational training, and organizational capacity development; at least 10 years of progressively responsible management experience, including at least five years in a developing country context; strong knowledge and experience in Yemen; fluency in written and spoken Arabic and English; at least a Masters' degree in education or a related field.

Submission of Application: Qualified candidates should email their applications complete with CV and reference contact details to Ameen Al-Kaderi at aalkaderi@edc.org and Abdenour Boukamhi at aboukamhi@edc.org or mail to: EDC Yemen, Hada Street, next to Tower Hotel, 4th Floor Sanaa, Yemen no later than August 10th, 2009.

EDC is an equal opportunity employer. Salary and benefits are commensurate with experience. Yemeni nationals are strongly encouraged to apply.

Ministry of Education (MoE)
Project Administration Unit (PAU)
Secondary Education Development and Girls Access Project (SEDGAP)
Credit No. 4401-Yem & Grant No. TF-94223 & KFW 2007 65 404

Request for Expressions of Interest Technical Assistance (TA): Assessment of Student learning and Changes in Teaching Effectiveness in Mathematics

This request for Expressions of interest follows the General procurement Notice for this project that appeared in the Development Business and Dg Market dated of April 13, 2009. The Ministry of Education (MOE), Republic of Yemen has received a credit from the International Development Association (IDA), Multi Donor Grant and Kfw Grant; intend to apply part of the proceeds of this to payments under the contract for the above consulting service.

The Project Administration Unit now invites eligible consulting Firms to indicate their interest in providing the above mentioned consultancy. Interested consulting Firms must provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform the service profiles, description of similar assignments and experience in similar assignment.

The main objective of the TA are to (i) Develop and implement a technically adequate system for assessing student achievement levels of grade 12 students in mathematics for Science stream students; (ii) Develop and implement a technically adequate system to assess the changes in teaching style and performance in subject areas; (iii) Develop technical capacity in educational measurement and evaluation of MoE and CoME staff as CoME becomes operational.

The selection of the Consulting Firms and training institutes will be made in accordance with the procedure set out in the World Bank's Guidelines "Selection and Employment of Consultants by World Bank Borrowers, May 2004 and revised in October 2006". Interested consultants may obtain further information during working days Sat. —Wed. From 08:30 AM to 3:00 PM at the address below to which the expression of interest must be delivered by September 24, 2009.

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UK offers its support to Yemen to restore stability, says FS to Yemeni Community in Cardiff

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Rt Hon David Miliband MP, met members of the Yemeni community in Cardiff, Wales on 21 July. Mr Miliband answered questions and concerns from the group, including on the challenges Yemen faces and how the UK can support the

Government of Yemen in development and security. The Secretary of State said that he shared the hopes of the Yemeni people for a stable, unified and prosperous Yemen, noting:

"The people of Yemen face many challenges - instability, harsh economic conditions and threats from groups such as al Qaeda who

wish to spread terror and instability in Yemen and beyond. Yemenis have been part of UK history for hundreds of years. They have made a great contribution, building the UK's first Mosque in Cardiff 1860. Some have made their home here. I would like to see a Yemen where all people can enjoy the security, prosperity and freedoms enjoyed by their brothers



and sisters in the UK. The UK Government offers its support to the Government of Yemen in the achievement of these goals and restoring stability to Yemen."

Worth noting that the UK government open to bid for small projects (up to £30,000) in Yemen which meet the following objectives:

- To promote regional stability and reduce threats to domestic, and international security.
- To address the causes of instability and insecurity in Yemen to build a more prosperous and stable state.

Conflict Prevention

One of the UK key priorities is to support the Government of Yemen and others in their efforts to prevent conflict in Yemen. There is funding available to support projects from April 2008-2011 which address the following issues:

- Disputes over water
 - Land disputes
 - Availability of small arms
 - Tribal conflict
 - Refugee related conflict
 - Other available funds
- This year, there is also limited funding available in relation to preparations for the forthcoming parliamentary elections in 2009

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