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YEMEN TIMES

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 A sweeter Ramadan for refugees in Yemen



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 Aden to embrace upcoming Investment and Economic Conference

Dear readers,
 Kindly note that, due to the Eid holiday, the Yemen Times issue no. 1198 will be available in bookshops on Tuesday Sept. 29 instead of Monday Sept. 28.

Landmine survivors call on governments to live up to their Mine Ban Treaty promises

More than 5,000 mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) casualties have been reported in Yemen since 1962. A rule of thumb on such matters is that for each reported case, there are ten others. There is no real number of the mine/ERW survivors, but those who did survive lack attention or care to help them cope with the injury and get on with their lives. "Voices from the Ground," a new report by Handicap International, shows that governments around the world are not living up to their promises to treat and reintegrate landmine survivors into society.

Compiled from the report by **Nadia Al-Sakkaf**

SANA'A, Sept. 16 — Ten years after the Mine Ban Treaty (MBT) entered into force, 67 percent of survivors feel that their needs have not been taken into account by national victim assistance plans, according to a newly published report on victims of mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW).

The report, "Voices from the Ground - Landmine and Explosive Remnants of War Survivors Speak out on Victim Assistance," was released by Handicap International and other members of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines around the world.

It is the first-ever report surveying survivors' opinions on assistance. The survey was completed in July 2009, and includes questionnaires and data from 1,645 survivors in 25 affected countries.

In July 2009, volunteers from the Yemen Mine Awareness Association based in Aden and the Yemen Landmine Survivors Association based in Sana'a interviewed 55 survivors on assistance to landmine victims in Yemen since 2005.

The sample included 32 men, 18 women, three boys and two girls. Respondents came from mine-affected areas in Al-Dhale'e, Ibb, Abyan, Lahj and Al-Baydha, but also from Aden, Taiz and Sana'a.

Most people lived in villages with limited services (30 or 55 percent), five lived in remote areas without services and 19 lived in a large city or the capital. One woman did not have a fixed residence and had to move between different family members.

Most incidents occurred in remote areas, often to young people. Women and children form a significant proportion of casualties as they are tradition-

ally in charge of tending animals or collecting wood and food, and girls are at particular risk.

According to the report, the Victims Assistance department of the Yemen Executive Mine Action Center (YEMAC) coordinates victim assistance without any systematic connection to other relevant bodies. All services are centralized in the main cities of Sana'a, Aden and Taiz, whereas survivors almost always live in remote, rural areas. They have to travel long distances and spend time away from home. This is especially problematic for women, who often need a male caretaker to accompany them.

Yahya Abdu Muhammad was tending his herd in the mountains when he set off a landmine that led to the amputation of one of his legs.

"I received initial medical care only, no follow-up," he said. "Ten years later, I made the eight-hour journey to Sana'a to get a prosthetic leg which cost YR 50,000 [USD250]. I would like to have a service like this closer to home and free of charge."

Victims' assistance in Yemen
 According to YEMAC, 2,033 files had been opened up to March 2009, and 81 percent of these had received services. There are fewer than 2,500 recorded survivors in Yemen.

However, these results correspond to reports from government and survivors that not all of those identified in the Landmine Impact Survey of 2000 had been visited or assisted and that it was challenging to receive follow-up care after the first treatment.

It might also mean that respondents have been visited prior to 2005 but not since.



In July 2009, volunteers from the Yemen Mine Awareness Association and the Yemen Landmine Survivors Association interviewed 55 survivors on assistance to landmine victims in Yemen since 2005.

The only service provider for mine survivors is the YEMAC victim assistance program, which has to group people together for transport to one of the main cities, provide them with board and lodging, and cover the cost of their treatment.

These results also confirm a 2006 Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) evaluation finding that, "most [survivors] had not heard of the Yemeni Landmine Victim Assistance Program and are managing the best they can without adequate medical...support."

Emergency and basic care is free in principle, but many survivors report having to pay. YEMAC has tried to provide emergency evacuation but most survivors did not see progress in this area, either because of problems with the terrain and a lack of more general improvements by the government, or simply because they did not need this type of assistance.

Yemen has remained substantially below achieving its target to assist 500 people per year (and 2,000 in 2005-2009) in the first three phases, assisting 1,638 people since 2001.

Fewer than 500 survivors have received economic reintegration support. The responses of 26 survivors also seem to indicate that the centralized, largely medically-oriented program does not fulfill their more varied needs.

Basic healthcare is free of charge,

but ongoing medical care and medication are not. Hospitals in major towns are not well equipped or staffed, but can perform the necessary procedures.

Physical rehabilitation centers are dependent on international support, which has decreased significantly since 2005, compelling the ICRC to expand its support in 2007.

"Since my injury while herding sheep in 1982, I have suffered from headaches and vision difficulties," said Saleha Bint Muhammad, a 72-year-old widow. "As a woman, I do not get the support I need. I feel men get more opportunities."

A Ministry of Public Health and Population evaluation of the health infrastructure and subsequent improvements scheduled for 2006 has not yet been undertaken, said the report.

Economic opportunities for persons with disabilities and survivors were limited throughout the period, pensions were insufficient, and discrimination remained prevalent.

The disability sector in Yemen is relatively well-developed and coordinated, but lacks financial and human resources. Again, most services are urban based, while community-based rehabilitation is "virtually non-existent," resulting in only 1.5 percent of persons with disabilities having access to services and women with disabilities having even less access.

Mine survivors were almost never integrated into or aware of broader disability programs. There also have been reports of survivors being seen as "special cases" already receiving assistance elsewhere.

Ahmed Naji lost his both legs in an antipersonnel mine incident while in the army. He lives in a very mountainous area in Al-Dhale'e.

"I have been given a wheelchair, but I cannot use it in this area," he said. "I feel weak, as I am unable to move and services are inaccessible."

Mine Ban Treaty
 The call on governments to implement the Mine Ban Treaty and report release coincide with the start of the Second Preparatory Meeting in Geneva Sept 3-4, when around 150 countries meet to

map out the global mine ban action plan for the next five years.

"It is not enough for countries to destroy stockpiles and clear the land, they must also help the people who survived the explosions and now live in the lands and include them in the decision making process," said Marc Joolen, director-general of Handicap International (HI) in Belgium. "People living in rural areas need affordable help near their homes and survivors everywhere clearly want the opportunity to get a job and rebuild their lives."

The Mine Ban Treaty is the first international disarmament accord requiring the international community to provide "victim assistance". Although all States Parties are "in a position" to provide assistance to survivors, the report finds that less than a quarter of survivors have seen any progress in their day to day situation.

"The challenges are daunting and long-term, and survivors are very aware that they are just one of their countries' many competing priorities, but they also clearly indicate states have not provided what is important to them," adds Katleen Maes, research coordinator at Handicap International in Belgium.

4U
 To view photos of survivors taken in the framework of the exhibition Fatal Footprint, check out: <http://www.fatalfootprint.be/eng/>
 The full report and related materials can be found online on: http://en.handicapinternational.be/Voices-from-the-Ground_a616.html

Yemen Executive Mine Action Center

Between 2005 and 2009, VA was implemented by YEMAC in much the same way it has been since 2001. The YEMAC program consists of four phases: visiting mine/ERW survivors, medical examination of their needs, medical and physical rehabilitation assistance, and socio-economic reintegration.

The socio-economic reintegration component, delegated to a non-governmental organization and started in September 2004, has been defunct since 2005 due to a lack of funding and capacity.

Psychosocial support is not provided as it was not considered a priority, nor is there funding for it. In essence, YEMAC covers the cost of treatment, transport and accommodation of mine/ERW survivors who receive services through the regular health and rehabilitation networks. It also provides emergency evacuation.

Between 2005 and 2009, Yemen continued the victim assistance program it has been running since 2001. The victim assistance program is run exclusively by the victim assistance department of the mine action center YEMAC, and is not integrated with any other disability, health or development initiatives in the country. In May 2009, the YEMAC director said the victim assistance program was barely functional due to a severe funding problem.

Yemen's main reason for becoming part of the 26 countries with the greatest numbers of survivors and, therefore, the greatest responsibility to act, but also the greatest needs and expectations for assistance was to increase its receipt of international financial support.

However, in May 2009, YEMAC said it had not gotten anything out of the Victim Assistance 26 process.

Throughout 2005-2009, YEMAC's victim assistance program operated on

decreasing international funding and limited national funding. The funding allocated constituted a minimal part of the center's entire mine action budget. No international funding has been allocated to the program since 2007.

In 2008-2009, the government funding to YEMAC was cut by 50 percent due to the economic slowdown, and the reduced budget was earmarked for mine clearance, according to YEMAC. Yemen has been increasingly active on disability issues because of the increased capacity of the Social Fund for Development (SFD) and because of a World Bank support project to develop the disability sector.

The SFD is considered to be one of the most effective poverty alleviation networks in the region and the only public institution that supports both policy reform and service delivery for disability.

There also are other disability coordination mechanisms, such as the Rehabilitation Fund and Care of Handicapped Persons (Disability Fund), a disability union, and several disabled people's organizations, most of which are well-coordinated. However, they lack government support and human resources.

YEMAC said in 2009 that it had tried to approach the World Bank and SFD for more cooperation, but that there are no clear prospects for the near future. It added that SFD and the Disability Fund only assist those registered with them and that very few survivors are registered.

Several NGOs have expressed interest to YEMAC in integrating mine/ERW survivors into their activities more, particularly social and economic activities. In 2008, YEMAC reported it aimed to close its victim assistance program by 2014, but it is unclear if any transition mechanisms are in place.

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Twelve-year-old dies in labor

By: Amel Al-Ariqi

SANA'A, Sep.16 — Fauzia Abdulla Yusef Al-Amudi, 12, from Al-Zahra in Hodeida, last Friday died while giving birth to her first child.

The girl, whose life ended abruptly at the Saudi Hospital in Hajja, northern Yemen, was married to a man 13 years her senior when she was 11 years old.

Although a law to set the minimum age for marriage at 17 was passed in the Yemeni Parliament earlier this year, it cannot be implemented because it has not yet been approved by the president.

"Fauzia suffered birth complications, and had been in labor for two days before her poor parents took her to the nearest hospital 100 km from her home," said Ahmed Al-Quraishi, founder of SEYAJ, a Yemeni organization that defends children's rights.

"The doctors were unable to help her and her baby died in her womb," he said.

In Yemen, 365 out of 100,000 women die each year in childbirth, often because their bodies are too young and immature to endure labor, according to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

The girl's husband, 25-year-old Yusef Jirad, who can read and write, returned from Saudi Arabia, where he works as a farmer, to attend his wife's funeral. He had left his wife when she was two months pregnant, said Al-Quraishi.

Marrying off girls as young as 11 and 12 is common in the area, he explained,

and Fauzia is not the first child mother to die in labor there.

"Unfortunately, there are no statistics to show the increasing number of fatalities among young mothers there," he said.

"They live and die in silence, while this area struggles on with no hospitals, no schools for girls, and high rates of illiteracy, poverty, child and maternal mortality," commented Al-Quraishi.

Fauzia's family was one of the poorest families in the area, he said. Her father, who suffers from kidney failure, forced her to leave school in fourth grade to marry Yusef.

"Many parents misunderstand education in that area," said Al-Quraishi.

"They believe that schools only teach their daughters to read and write love letters to exchange with boys," he said, explaining that the area only has mixed schools with very poor facilities.

Early motherhood and child mortality rates for children under the age of five, says the Yemeni government.

Children born to mothers under 20 years of age—as is often the case—are 25 percent more likely to die before their fifth birthday, according to the Maternal and Child Health Department at the Ministry of Public Health and Population.

Early pregnancy is dangerous because women's bodies are still developing until

the age of 20, added a 2005 UNICEF report on early marriage.

In early pregnancy, the mother's body competes with the child's for needed nutrients, ultimately depriving both, explained the UNICEF.

"Further, when a girl gives birth before her body has fully developed, she often has difficulty passing the child, increasing the likelihood of miscarriage or other maternal complications, such as hemorrhaging or obstetric fistula (a debilitating condition where a mother's digestive organs are damaged during child birth)," said the report.

Maternity-related deaths represent the largest cause of death for women of childbearing age in Yemen, accounting for 42 percent of all deaths of women between the ages of 15 and 49, according to UNICEF.

Still no law to end early marriage
"According to a 2006 estimate by UNICEF, 60 million marriages occurred worldwide before the age of 18," said Naseem Al-Rahman, chief of communications and advocacy for UNICEF in Yemen.

"In the Middle East, which includes Yemen, there were 3.3 million marriages before the age of 18," he said.

Last year, the story of 13-year-old Nujoud Ali, the first divorced girl in Yemen, triggered a national debate about the marriage law in Yemen, which at the time contained no article to define a minimum age for marriage.

Earlier this year, the parliament approved a law to set the minimum age to 17 years old, but this law still hasn't been implemented because the Yemeni president has not approved it, said Al-Quraishi.

"The judge in Al-Zahra is very respectable man, but he cannot do anything as he does not have a law to implement," he said.

"Many girls like Fawzia will continue to die without the law," said Al-Quraishi.

UN seeks emergency aid, Yemen crisis deepens

By: Heather Murdock

SANA'A, Sep.16 — The United Nations has asked the international community for USD 23.7 million to help relieve the crisis in Yemen, while residents of the isolated and war-torn Sa'ada governorate continue to flee their homes by the thousands.

Displaced people that can find help often take refuge in camps that suffer shortages of food, water, sanitation, electricity and medicine.

"This humanitarian emergency has been neglected by the entire international community outside of Yemen, and also by the media," said Rashid Khalikov, the director of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, in a press release.

"Widespread deep poverty and previous fighting have stretched people's coping mechanisms to the limit," he added.

The emergency aid request has been pending since Sept. 2, and potential donors are now showing interest, said Khalikov, who toured Yemen this week to better understand the crisis.

He said relief organizations are operating on reserve budgets, or with resources intended for other projects, and that displaced people are in urgent need of supplies.

"[The aid] will have a significant impact in alleviating the suffering of innocent civilians," he said. "We are trying to find a way to reach people outside of the camps."

As many as 150,000 people are displaced, and the numbers are growing as people abandon violent areas, moving sometime two or three times, according to a UN High Commissioner for Refugees report released earlier this week. Most of the adults are women, and many are pregnant or carrying children.

Because much of the fighting is taking place on roads and at checkpoints, many are closed and aid workers are unable to



Families flee war zones in northern Yemen, sometimes taking their animals with them. "To be displaced and to be in a camp is already a big blow for any human being," said UN official Rashid Khalikov during his recent visit to Yemen.

reach the hardest hit areas.

"[Displaced people] have spent three to five days walking in the desert, taking mountainous roads on foot due to the blockage of main roads," reads the report. "They arrived traumatized and exhausted."

Last week, Human Rights Watch sent a letter to both the government and the Houthi opposition, urging them to open the roads to humanitarian groups.

"Government restrictions on aid agencies, the media and human rights groups are putting civilians at extra risk of unlawful attacks by both sides," said Joe Stork, deputy director of Human Rights Watch's Middle East division in a press release.

But after a month of war and isolation, the crisis is deepening, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Flash floods, heavy rains and dropping temperatures compounds the suffering of people living in tents, and the weather is expected to get worse in the coming weeks.

"If aid cannot reach the displaced people, it is not clear how they will cope with

winter," reads an ICRC report released last week.

Clean water is now dangerously scarce. Yemen is one of the driest countries in the world, according to the ICRC, and when parched areas are hit with a large influx of displaced people, there is not enough water to go around.

Food and fuel prices have also tripled and quadrupled.

Communication to and from Sa'ada town is limited, with phone service only a few hours a day, the war zones are completely cut off. Vital supplies, aid workers, and journalists cannot get in, and there is almost no communication coming out.

"Thousands of people in need of help are stranded with no security and no means of escape," reads the ICRC report. And while the organization has been able to ship supplies and station workers in parts of Sa'ada, they can't get to many areas.

Regional spokesperson, Hicham Hassan said that if aid organizations do not get better access to victims, the suffering will get worse.

"If this persists, the situation will become more critical," he said.

Sa'ada war continues, no end in sight

By: Mohammed Bin Sallam

SANA'A, Sep.16 — The sixth war in Sa'ada and Harf Sufian between the government and the Houthis has entered its second month, and many worry continued fighting will kill or injure thousands more civilians, and soldiers from both sides.

Information from Sa'ada and Amran governorates confirms that battles between the government army and the Houthis are fierce and that the army has launched air strikes on Houthi strongholds. Tribal sources say the attacks have bombarded markets, mosques and vehicles.

A statement issued by Abdul Malek Al-Houthi's office last Saturday said that fighter planes intensified attacks, and struck 20 villages on Sept. 13 in Sa'ada and Harf Sufian, damaging dozens of houses and mosques.

In addition, the raids killed civilians, including women and children. Some victims are still under debris in Majz and Jum'at Ben Fadhel, according to Al-

Houthi's office.

"The army targeted civilians in air raids in Sa'ada, Harf Sufian and Dammaj from early morning until the evening," reads the statement.

"At 4 o'clock on Monday morning, fighter planes bombarded Al-Talh, Dhahyan, Aal Humaidan, Aal Mazru', Aal Saeed, Takhia and Majz areas," it says. "The air raid targeted citizens' houses and killed innocents who are still under debris. The number and names of the victims are still unknown."

Last Sunday, fighter planes launched an air raid on Dhahyan and Majz. The raid left 12 houses destroyed in Dhahyan and others six partially destroyed. In addition, fighter planes struck Aal Saeed village near Dhahyan city, destroyed a mosque and seriously wounded an old man who was sleeping inside the mosque.

In Harf Sufian district in Amran, the air force launched raids last Saturday on Shabareq, Al-Shaqra, Tareq, Ayyan and Al-Surra villages as well as Harf Sufian

city.

The Houthis said the intensified air attacks on villages and cities demonstrate the army's failure on the ground.

Observers believe that the air raids indicate that the government is trying to weaken the Houthis forces before launching a wide attack. They pointed out that the government is mobilizing the army in Harf Sufian and Al-Malahidh.

A military source said that fighter planes are still striking villages in Harf Sufian and Sa'ada, whose residents are believed to support the Houthis.

"The air force launched effective strikes against rebellion and terrorism in the Dhahyan, Naqa'a, Matara, Shabareq, Anqan and Thuwaib areas during the past hours," reads a statement on the Yemeni military Web site.

Raids are targeting Houthi strongholds and many have been killed, said the statement. It said Houthi areas had been destroyed in Dammaj, Aseela, Al-Mahather, Al-Anad, Sunbul Thuwaib, Al-

Malahidh and R'ad site as well as Dhahr Al-Hemar area in Sa'ada.

The International Committee of the Red Cross said that conditions of the internally displaced persons in Amran and Sa'ada are serious, although some organizations were able to deliver aid to some camps. The ICRC was able to deliver medical aid to Sa'ada, according to a statement issued last Friday.

The aid included 10 tons of medical supplies, which took five days to deliver due to fierce confrontations along the roads. The supplies are intended to cover the needs of health centers belonging to the ICRC and Yemeni Red Crescent in Sa'ada for the upcoming three months, according to the statement.

The crisis has escalated because of the increasing number of people leaving their homes for camps located away from the battlefield. With the advent of winter, conditions may deteriorate, because the camps already suffer from shortages of food, water, medication and shelter.



VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT
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- ✦ Monitor the Delegation's financial and contractual obligations

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Please do **NOT** send your CV at this stage; your application should **NOT** be send to this address but to the address provided with the full job description.



VACANCY: Senior Registration Assistant

The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) is a private, independent, non-government organisation working with refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants. DRC Yemen operates within a broader regional context including the Horn of Africa.

Duty Stations: Primarily in Ahwar, with travel to other duty stations if there is need.

1 year depending on availability of found.


Overall Objectives:

1. Lead the registration team by coach and mentoring them on group and individual interviews, identification of vulnerable people and data collection;
2. Ensure that registration and data collection is error free of high quality and undertaken in accordance to pre-determined standardized guidelines and templates;
3. Ensure optimum reach out to beneficiaries and timely response to emergencies;
4. Effective and timely analysis of the data to support the work of the Registration Officer;

Qualifications:

- ✦ University degree
- ✦ At least five years of professional experience.
- ✦ Good command of Arabic and English (written, read, and spoken). Somali, Oromo and Ahmara a will be an asset.
- ✦ Drafting skills in English.
- ✦ Advanced computer skills, MS Word , MS Excel and MS Access;
- ✦ Sound interpersonal and communication skills, especially with people from different cultural backgrounds.
- ✦ Able to work under pressure;
- ✦ Ability to lead and motivate a team.
- ✦ Excellent interpersonal skills and demonstrated ability to establish effective and working relations with local and international staff and other stakeholders;
- ✦ Initiative, sound judgment and dedication.
- ✦ Experience and willingness to work in the field;
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Please forward your cover letter and CV via e-mail to drcjobsyemen@gmail.com or via fax: (02) 349 320, the deadline for receiving CVs and cover letter is **26th September 2008**



Vacancy:Registration Assistant

The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) is a private, independent, non-government organisation working with refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants. DRC Yemen operates within a broader regional context including the Horn of Africa.

Duty Stations: Ahwar, Kharaz, Mayfa'a.

1 year depending on availability of found.

Overall Objectives:

1. Register new arrivals in Yemen in accordance to pre-determined guidelines and templates;
2. Ensure that vulnerable people are identified and referred to the appropriate services;
3. Ensure the timely collection of relevant data.

Qualifications:

- ✦ Completed secondary education
- ✦ At least one year of professional experience.
- ✦ Good command of Arabic and English (written, read, and spoken),good command in Somali, Oromo and Ahmara a will be an asset.
- ✦ Willing to live hard condition in the field.
- ✦ Experience in conducting interviews.
- ✦ Computer skills (Typing, Windows XP, MS Office Word)
- ✦ Sound interpersonal and communication skills, especially with people from different cultural backgrounds.
- ✦ Ability to work individually and as part of a team.
- ✦ Initiative, sound judgment and dedication.

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VACANCIES ADVERTISEMENT

InterSOS is an independent non-profit humanitarian organization committed to assist the victims of natural disasters and armed conflicts and to provide an effective response to crisis situation in the poorest region of the world. In Yemen InterSOS is the partner of UNHCR for the implementation of projects aimed at supporting the refugees in Basateen urban area and Kharaz camp.

InterSOS is seeking candidates for the position of **Legal counselors** (Arabic and English speaker) and a **Civilian Engineer** (Arabic and English speaker)

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VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT



The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) invites Yemeni Nationals to apply for the following positions with its Project Economic Diversification Support Programme (EDSP)

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Duty Station: Sana'a

Responsibilities:

- ✘ Collect data on performance of non-oil sectors and support the production of an annual bulletin on non-oil sectors.
- ✘ Play a central role in the gathering of data for the formulation of a Development strategy for non-oil sectors in Yemen as well as for the update of the UNDP and MoPIC report on macroeconomic policies for poverty reduction in Yemen.

Qualification:

- ✘ Advanced University degree in economics with emphasis on quantitative approaches and statistics.
- ✘ At least 3 years of practical experience in compilation of social and economic statistics in Yemen, preferably at the CSO.
- ✘ Proven ability to work as part of multi-disciplinary teams.
- ✘ Strong analytical ability.
- ✘ Ability to communicate clearly and concisely.
- ✘ Good command of the English language.

2- Post Title: Communication Officer

Duration: one year renewable

Duty Station: Sana'a

Responsibilities:

- ✘ Develop and monitor a communications and public information strategy/plan for the Programme.
- ✘ Provide support to advocacy and awareness raising activities.
- ✘ Write press releases and articles about Programme activities for the national and international media.
- ✘ Edit Speeches, Produce and regularly update promotional materials including reports, brochures, folders, etc.
- ✘ Provide a final edit of all major annual publications.
- ✘ Assist with planning, publicizing, and carrying out special events, participate in and facilitate training and workshops as appropriate.
- ✘ Undertakes efficient contact management.
- ✘ Act as Communication Focal Point for Programme including management of press and other media inquiries.
- ✘ Development and maintenance of relations with counterparts and stakeholders, including media, civil society, donors etc.
- ✘ Networking with UNDP and other partners Communications Officers.
- ✘ Transfer skills to counterparts in planned and systematic fashion
- ✘ Perform other duties as required

Qualification:

- ✘ Masters Degree in Journalism, Public Relations, Social Sciences or related field.
- ✘ At least 3 years of relevant experience in public relations, advocacy and media relations.
- ✘ Demonstrated experience in writing articles and text for professional publications
- ✘ Experience working in a multi-cultural environment
- ✘ Fluency in English and Arabic languages.
- ✘ Experience with development issues would be an asset.

3- Post Title: National Agricultural Project Manager

Duration: one year renewable

Duty Station: Sana'a

Responsibilities:

- ✘ Provide leadership and strategic thinking to ensure proper implementation of project activities;
- ✘ Overall management and planning of the implementation of the project's activities;
- ✘ Provide substantive inputs to the project activities;
- ✘ Assist in the projects resource mobilization initiatives
- ✘ Assist in recruitment of consultants to carry out the project activities;
- ✘ Manage and administer the day-to-day operations to ensure the effective implementation of the activities of the Agriculture component;
- ✘ Coordinate with the other components of the EDSP project;
- ✘ Coordination with relevant ministries, national organizations, private sector companies and civil society initiatives as required by the project objectives and activities;
- ✘ Undertake all necessary financial arrangements, processes, request for authorizations, payments and ensure financial accountability;
- ✘ Prepare annual and quarterly work plans, annual and quarterly progress reports and Terminal Report;
- ✘ Supervise all staff assignment and consulting agreements;
- ✘ Participate and contribute to the capacity development activities undertaken under the project;
- ✘ Assist the ATL in assessing the capabilities of Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (MAI) staff to conduct agricultural policy and food security analysis and in designing a training program to further develop the capacity of MAI to conduct such studies.
- ✘ Assist the ATL in identifying national experts to participate in the food security related policy studies, as well as a sectoral development strategy for agriculture.
- ✘ Provide general guidance support to the international consultants and national experts who are selected to conduct the policy studies.
- ✘ Work with the ATL and MAI to advocate for and support the adoption of the policies and other measures that are recommended by the policy studies.
- ✘ Undertake any other related tasks at the request of the ATL.

Qualification:

- ✘ A Master degree, preferably in agricultural economics or a closely related field.
- ✘ At least 7 years of relevant experience working with national administration, international organizations or CSOs;
- ✘ 2 years experience in agricultural economic analysis and/or a closely related field in Yemen
- ✘ Significant experience in project management gained with international organizations or in the public or private sectors.
- ✘ Excellent communication skills.
- ✘ Understanding of the role of gender in agricultural development
- ✘ Strong oral and written communication skills
- ✘ Proficiency in Arabic and English languages.

4- Post Title: National Fisheries Project Manager

Duration: one year renewable

Duty Station: Sana'a

Responsibilities:

- ✘ Assist the FTL in assessing the capabilities of Ministry of Fish Wealth (MFW) staff to conduct fisheries studies and in designing a training program to further develop the capacity of MFW to conduct such studies.
- ✘ Assist the FTL in identifying national experts to participate in the fisheries policy studies.
- ✘ Provide general guidance and support to the international consultants and national experts who are selected to conduct the studies.
- ✘ Work with the FTL and MFW to advocate for and support the adoption of the policies and other measures that are recommended by the policy studies.
- ✘ Provide leadership and strategic thinking to ensure proper implementation of project activities.
- ✘ Overall management and planning of the implementation of the project's activities; Provide substantive inputs to the project activities; Assist in the projects resource mobilization initiatives.
- ✘ Manage and administer the day-to-day operations to ensure the effective implementation of the project component.
- ✘ Coordinate with the other components of the EDSP project; Coordination with relevant ministries, national organizations, private sector companies and civil society initiatives as required by the project objectives and activities.
- ✘ Prepare annual and quarterly work plans, annual and quarterly progress reports and Terminal Report
- ✘ Supervise all staff assignment and consulting agreements.
- ✘ Participate and contribute to the capacity development activities undertaken under the project;
- ✘ Undertake any other related tasks at the request of Fisheries Team Leader.

Qualification:

- ✘ A Master degree in fishery/marine sciences or a closely related field.
- ✘ At least 5-7 years of relevant working experience in Yemen working with national administration, international organizations or CSOs
- ✘ Relevant experience in fisheries economic analysis, fishing policy and administrative management, fishery development, fishery education/training, fishery research and services, with working experience in development planning and experience from development projects.
- ✘ Significant experience in project management gained with international organizations or in the public or private sectors.
- ✘ Full working knowledge of Arabic and English,
- ✘ Excellent computer skills, including full working knowledge of standard word processing, spreadsheet and presentation packages; knowledge of fisheries statistical & scientific software.

5- Post Title: National Industry and Trade Project Manager

Duration: one year renewable

Duty Station: Sana'a

Responsibilities:

- ✘ Provide leadership and strategic thinking to ensure proper implementation of project activities;
- ✘ Overall management and planning of the implementation of the project's activities;
- ✘ Provide substantive inputs to the project activities;
- ✘ Assist in the projects resource mobilization initiatives
- ✘ Assist in recruit consultants to carry out the project activities; Manage and administer the day-to-day operations to ensure the effective implementation of the activities of the Industry and Trade Policy Unit;
- ✘ Coordinate with the other components of the EDSP project;
- ✘ Coordination with relevant ministries, national organizations, private sector companies and civil society initiatives as required by the project objectives and activities;
- ✘ Undertake all necessary financial arrangements, processes, request for authorizations, payments and ensure financial accountability;
- ✘ Prepare annual and quarterly work plans, annual and quarterly progress reports and Terminal Report;
- ✘ Supervise all staff assignment and consulting agreements;
- ✘ Participate and contribute to the capacity development activities undertaken under the project;
- ✘ Undertake any other related tasks at the request of the Industry and Trade Policy Advisor.

Qualification:

- ✘ A Master degree, preferably in Economics, or other areas relevant to the assignment.
- ✘ At least 5-7 years working experience working with national administration, international organizations or CSOs;
- ✘ Significant experience in project management gained with international organizations or in the public or private sectors.
- ✘ Proficiency in English and Arabic, oral and written.
- ✘ Excellent oral and written communication skills.
- ✘ Resourcefulness and strong networking skills.

6- Post Title: National Tourism Project Manager

Duration: one year renewable

Duty Station: Sana'a

Responsibilities:

- ✘ Provide leadership and strategic thinking to ensure proper implementation of project activities
- ✘ Overall management and planning of the implementation of the project's outputs and activities
- ✘ Provide substantive inputs to the project activities;
- ✘ Assist in the projects resource mobilization initiatives
- ✘ Manage and administer the day-by-day operations to ensure the effective implementation of the activities of above mentioned project
- ✘ Initiate coordination with relevant national organizations, private sector companies and civil society initiatives where necessary
- ✘ Undertake all necessary financial arrangements, processes, request for authorizations, payments and ensure financial accountability
- ✘ Collaborate with the Programme Support Coordinator to prepare and arrange for Project Board Meetings.
- ✘ Coordinate with the other components of the EDSP project;
- ✘ Prepare annual and quarterly work plans, annual and quarterly

progress reports and Terminal Report.

- ✘ Participate and contribute to the capacity development activities undertaken under the project;
- ✘ Supervise all staff assignment and consulting agreements.

Qualification:

- ✘ At least 5-7 years working experience preferably in the field of tourism in Yemen
- ✘ 5 years experience in project management in the public or private sectors.
- ✘ Advanced university degree in economics or international development
- ✘ Proficiency in English and Arabic Languages spoken and written.
- ✘ Excellent communication skills.
- ✘ Computer literate.
- ✘ Resourcefulness and strong networking skills.

7- Post Title: Administrative and Finance Assistant (Five Positions)

Duration: one year renewable

Duty Station: Sana'a

Responsibilities:

- ✘ Implement day-to-day financial and administrative activities of the programme including managing and organizing everyday office work, travel arrangement, information dissemination, correspondence and translation;
- ✘ Control the expenditure and ensure accuracy of computation and completeness of supporting documentation; keep adequate and systematic records and accounts (hard and electronic forms) in respect of activities implemented;
- ✘ Oversee and prepare quarterly financial reports, financial transactions, payments, request for contacts and procurement of goods and purchase orders, in accordance with the approved work plan;
- ✘ Assist in preparing budget revisions.
- ✘ Act as petty cash custodian;
- ✘ Maintain all project files and records and update project inventory records;
- ✘ Advise management on project financial and administrative issues;
- ✘ Schedule appointments and coordinate for meetings. As well as recoding meetings by taking notes, preparing minutes and recording decision points generated;
- ✘ Arrange for typing of all major (bulk) documents in Arabic & English and reports;
- ✘ Organize meetings for the programme management and participate in organizing in-country workshop and other related training activities (including study tours and workshops abroad).
- ✘ Perform other duties as required.

Qualification:

- ✘ University Degree in Finance/Accounting or related field
- ✘ Minimum of five years experience in finance and accounting field; full proficiency in computerized accounting systems;
- ✘ Good knowledge of internal accounting procedures and reporting systems;
- ✘ Comprehensive knowledge of MS Office (Word and Excel) and Internet use. ;
- ✘ Proficiency in English and Arabic Languages spoken and written.
- ✘ Excellent communication skills.

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1- Post Title: Administrative Assistant

Duration: one year renewable

Duty Station: Sana'a

Responsibilities:

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- ✘ Provides support to office maintenance and assets management
- ✘ Support knowledge building and knowledge sharing in the CO

Qualification:

- ✘ Secondary school. University degree in Business or Public Administration or any other related field is desirable
- ✘ 5 years of relevant progressively responsible administrative experience is required at the national or international level.
- ✘ Experience in the usage of computers and office software packages (MS Word, Excel, etc.) and in handling of web-based management systems
- ✘ Fluency in Arabic and English

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A sweeter Ramadan for refugees in Yemen



By: Rocco Nuri
UNHCR-Aden

Ramadan kareem (generous, in Arabic) echoed many times in the dusty and dry air of UNHCR-run Kharaz refugee camp, some 150 km west of Aden, as refugees received pasta, sugar and dates by the Red Crescent Society of the United Arab Emirates yesterday morning. UNHCR and the Society for Humanitarian Solidarity, a partner agency, knocked at the door of 2,800 refugee households and another 800 families from the villages surrounding Kharaz camp to distribute the food goods donated by the UAE

Red Crescent. "Every year we long for Ramadan to come" said 30-years-old Fatima as she tried to keep sight of her skinny 6-years-old child running after the food truck with tens of restless children in full excitement for the food distribution. "Alike children who sense the feast atmosphere when relatives visit the family bringing along gifts, we feel that Ramadan has started as soon as the Red Crescent truck stops by our door". In the last five years, the United Arab Emirates Red Crescent has donated food to the refugees in Kharaz camp in a number of Islamic feasts as well as premises to UNHCR's partners to run education and medical services

in Basateen, a slum-like area for urban refugees in the outskirts of Aden. "As human beings and Muslims we are committed to solidarity" said Manaf Yassin, Head of the UAE Red Crescent in Aden, his eyes up to the sky as if asking Allah to be witness of his belief. Islam has a strong humanitarian foundation, with a tradition of offering asylum and protection to the displaced and persecuted preceding the 1951 Refugee Convention. "We are grateful to the Red Crescent and the Khalifa Bin Zaid Foundation for this food donation and welcome the increasing interest of the UAE in the plight of refugees in Yemen" said Leila Nassif, Head of the UNHCR's office in Aden. "It is an umpteenth prove of the

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extreme generosity of Muslims and Muslim countries towards people in need".

Yemen is one of the poorest Muslim countries in the region, with scarce resources and limited job opportunities. Yet, it is hosting some 140,000 refugees and granting a prima facie refugee status to all Somalis entering Yemen. Some 11,000 refugees live in Kharaz camp, located in a remote and desolated area in Yemen's Lahaj region. Among them are the most vulnerable refugees, those who hardly manage to provide for themselves and their families.

UNHCR and its partners are running a number of projects to meet their basic needs as well as to provide essential services, including food, shelter, medical care, water and sanitation, and education. School feeding programme and supplementary feeding programme for lactating women and malnourished children are implemented in partnership with WFP. Nevertheless, despite all efforts from the Government of Yemen as well as donors such as Netherlands, EU, and

US, more resources are needed to address a protracted refugee situation like in Kharaz camp, with refugees being almost totally dependent on humanitarian assistance.

"Additional funds would allow us to expand income-generation activities in the camp, invest in small-scale agricultural projects and offer more opportunities for self reliance" said Nassif while adding: "However, the involvement of the international

community as a whole is required to effectively address such situation of prolonged displacement".

An international response which provides for financial and in-kind assistance as well as offers of resettlement to third countries would enhance the capacity of refugee to become self-reliant as well as ensure the sustainability of future durable solutions while reducing the burden of refugee-hosting countries.



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Community management in Yemen

By: Saif Al-Asali

I believe that people who want to work towards development in Yemen should pay attention to the concept of community management. This concept is better than the local governance, which is currently applied throughout the country. It is also better than the local governance by broad powers.

Yemen is a relatively small country. It doesn't include a large religious, doctrinal or even sectarian variety. Consequently, a federation system doesn't suit the country. Further, Yemen doesn't have enough experience in management and, therefore, local governance with broad powers may not succeed in it. However, community management may be suitable for the country as it takes into consideration all its economic, social and political characteristics.

Yemen is a country of low income. The economy of Yemen depends on oil exportation, expatriates and foreign aid. Its tax system is incompetent and international criteria are absent with regards to method of collection and management. The average individual income and poverty rates in Yemen vary from one area to another, as there is no relationship between natural resources and population density.

Most of the rural population in Yemen lives in the mountainous line that extends from Sa'ada to Bab Al-Mandab Strait. Therefore, these people suffer from lack of connection with each other and with the foreign world due to the difficult mountainous topography of their areas. Building and asphalted roads in these areas is very costly. Even people in the central,

desert and coastal areas suffer from this problem.

Most Yemenis live in rural areas. They are scattered in over 130 population groups. Every one of these groups consists of approximately 2,000 people. Yemeni villages suffer from isolation because most of them are far from each other.

Illiteracy still afflicts about a large percent of the population. Yemenis don't like to change their residence or move from one place to another. Instead, they tend towards temporary immigration, domestically or abroad.

Coming to the political characteristics, the management partitioning in Yemen is based on the village, an area called Izlah, the district, the governorate and then the state. Sheikhs and social dignitaries run villages and areas. State's representatives can include a judge, a zakah collector and a supervisor of endowments. Nowadays, there is no management in most Yemeni villages and the presence of state representatives in districts is in the past.

The situation is the same in big and small cities. Neighborhood leaders are extremely limited.

Although Yemen began what has come to be called local governance around ten years ago, this experience is still fragile, particularly with regards to its effects on the life of local communities.

Nowadays, the members of local councils in a number of areas are elected. At the same time, representatives of districts are elected to form council in the governorate. Recently, governors in the districts and the governorate were elected. But it is clear that effect of these elections on local management in the districts and governorates is still

extremely limited.

As reforming local governance is a priority in the agenda of the political elites, all of them should offer all options to be discussed thoroughly. This issue can also represent the most important point in the dialogue between the ruling parties and the opposition represented by the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP). This is necessary to narrow the discrepancy in viewpoints between the political powers, particularly given that this discrepancy is not restricted to the difference between the terms, local "governance" or local "authority." Rather, it encompasses many details.

The concept of community management is based on giving the powers and tools of the central state to local institutions in a way that suits their capabilities. Sovereignty remains the same and the country is undividable.

There also might be a difference in the powers given by the central state to local authorities, according to nature of each governorate. What distinguishes this method of governing is that central authorities remain responsible when they give their powers to local management. This motivates them to monitor performance of the local management and prevents negligence.

This system will enable local institutions to manage powers in untraditional ways, which encourages innovation and continuous development, reduces cost and increases competency. In particular, it also enables local institutions to use ideas that have been applied to managing successful business institutions. This will no doubt help them apply useful standards of monitoring and assessment.

I believe that the concept of commu-

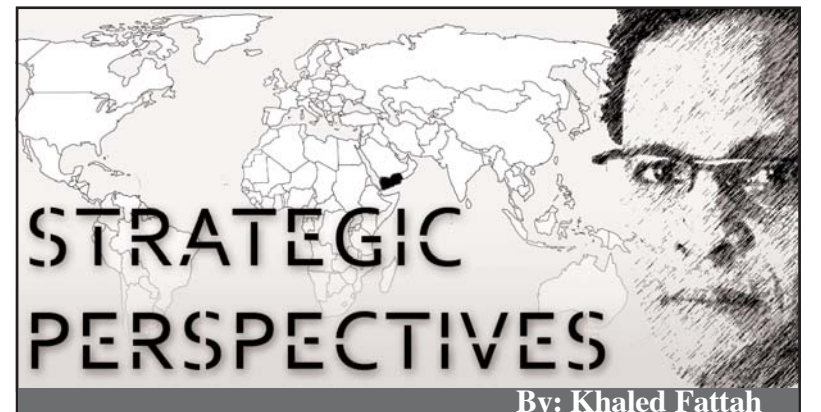
nity management will help current local governments better than changes suggested by the current government or the federation system that some opposition parties suggest. Many indicators say these ideas don't suit Yemen.

Local governance is often known as the municipalities. That is, residents in certain geographic areas can undertake the management of services by themselves, instead of depending on the institutions of the bureaucratic state. In these cases, a municipal council and a mayor are elected. And while, this method might be useful in big cities, it does not suit large villages, or even small villages because the powers of the municipality can overlap with the administrative apparatuses of the state.

The community management system suits Yemen because it uses the best of all ideas. It is partially similar to a federation system in terms of the independence of local institutions in managing duties imposed upon them. At the same time, the central state and local entities will share sovereignty, similar to federation system. This will enable Yemen to succeed under difficult economic, social and political conditions.

The experience of local community management will be able to solve disputes between local and central institutions and also between local institutions. More importantly, community management suits the current economic conditions, which cannot bear the cost of establishing infrastructure.

The success of the community management system will no doubt protect national unity. It will improve the competency of local management and increase political participation without dividing the state and weakening national unity.



Yemen's Climate of Insurgency

Insurgency is armed resistance carried out by groups who direct their activities towards changing either a particular government's policies or the structure of governance, or even the leadership and personnel of the central authority. In addition to the use of instruments of violence and a propaganda machine, these groups often attempt to pursue external players to extend financial, logistical and military assistance.

The phenomenon of insurgency is not confined to a particular world region, and it is not a feature of the modern world. Insurgency is as old as the history of establishing central political administrations. For analytical purposes, military strategists identify six major forms of insurgency: non-violent resistance, coup, guerrilla warfare, terrorism, revolution and civil war. According to these strategists, each one of these forms has its own distinctive features. However, each one can evolve and change into another form.

Political scientists highlight foreign occupation, differences in ideology and faith, underdevelopment and poverty, and social dissatisfaction as the main causes that have given rise to recent insurgencies in the developing world.

With this in mind, when seeking to understand the insurgency that is taking place in Yemen's northern mountains, the first consideration should be the operating environment of the Houthi rebels, and that of the Yemeni state.

The latter is operating within a national context that is constructed on the basis of a fragile entity, which has been exposed to decades-long turbulent political and security climates. Within the regional context, on the other hand, the Yemeni state is operating within the restrictions and opportunities that are provided by its powerful wealthy neighbors. As for the international context, the counter-insurgency measures of the Yemeni state are taking place within the hysterical post September 11 period that accepts, and even supports, the use of massive coercion against rebellious non-state actors operating in the zones of 'the war on terror.'

The operating environment of the Houthi insurgency, on the other hand, is characterized by being a sectarian Zaydi armed resistance based along the borders of the most influential actor in the Sunni Muslim world. Also, the insurgency is taking place in a harsh geographical pocket known for its long history of strong autonomy and stubborn resistance to state control. In such places, Yemen's central authority has been perceived as a foreign intruder.

Observing the climate of insurgency in Sa'ada reflects how the legacy of state weakness is at the heart of the crisis. No matter how effective the ongoing military campaign in reducing the number of insurgents in Sa'ada, future insurgent groups will continue to operate in the northern mountains of Yemen.

The eradication of insurgency will only be attained by employing a holistic approach constructed on the basis of an interconnecting system of political and socio-economic actions. Economic and human development, and the creation of space for legitimate political voice are far much effective than warplanes in removing the Houthis' raison d'être.

Khaled Fattah is an academic researcher and political analyst. He can be reached at KF62@st-andrews.ac.uk

Individuals working to achieve this project, we can build a better future for the countries and their people alike.

The problem is not the experiences of the "totalitarian" regimes alone, but also the divisions that split the required solutions for a nation previously divided by foreign occupiers a century ago and

whose successors are now dividing the divided!

The opposition to totalitarian regimes requires Arab totalitarian ideas and solutions.

Chairman of the Arab Dialogue Center, Washington

Democracy alone is not the answer

By: Sobhi Ghandour *

Liberalism has been wronged in the Arab region and so have the other ideological and political names. Many people now active in the Arab world and who go by the name of "liberals" embody, in reality, the method and policies of those known in the United States as neo-conservatives, instead of those of American liberals.

The current liberal movement in America -one of its symbols was the late Edward Kennedy- resists the US policies of hegemony and interference in other countries internal affairs as well as former administrations' wars in the world. It also opposes the US military existence in Iraq and Afghanistan. And it rejects discrimination against people on the grounds of religion, race or color.

It is a movement that calls for social justice, fair treatment of the poor and new immigrants, as well as preserving the civil rights of individuals and groups that make up society. Some figures of this movement oppose the Israeli occupation.

It is true that the rise of liberalism was associated with capitalism, the free market economy, European colonialism, the call for breaking away from restrictions imposed by governments and religious institutions on the movement, faith and actions, but this movement has developed and changed to keep up with developments of the world and the societies as well as with changes of faiths that were facing liberalism.

I do not wish for this article with its limited words, to deal with liberal thought in general, its positive and negative aspects or the criticisms it is subjected to by its political and religious opponents. However, I would like to point to a model of the Arab school of liberalism who is Sa'aduddin Ibrahim, professor of sociology and founder of the Ibn Khaldoun Center in Cairo. He recently visited the Arab Dialogue Center in Washington to talk about "democracy and totalitarian regimes".

What was noticeable was that Prof. Ibrahim's lecture dealt with democracy only in countries that had witnessed military coups with considerable focus on the Nasserite experience in 1952. He spoke as if it were the beginning of the fall for both Egypt and the Arab nation, and as if the case applied until now, although 40 years have passed since Jamal Abdul Nasser died and despite the radical change in Egyptian politics during Sadat's reign and continued after that.

Professor Ibrahim did not mention during the lecture the Egyptian-Israeli treaty and its negative effects on Egypt's internal state, its foreign policy and its Arab role. I criticized this at the forum and expressed my wish that, in addition to his efforts for democracy, he show the risks of the above treaty because internal democracy is not separate from the national liberation required for every Arab country and highlight Egypt's absent role from the Arab nation because of that treaty.

The problem with "democracy only" propagandists in the Arab world is that they separate this important slogan from the issues of national liberation and national identity, and thus this "democracy only" call becomes an excuse for foreign intervention and country defilement as was the US military experience in Iraq.

What is strange is Ibrahim's description of the pre-nineteen-fifties as the enlightenment period without indicating how Egypt and other Arab countries were under the British and French dominance and that of governments, the most of which were puppets of the colonial era with their utter political and social corruption, feudalism and utilization.

The Bush new conservatives used to assert democracy in the Arab world while occupying Iraq and support the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands and express solidarity of Israeli offensives against Lebanon.

The non-liberal Bush administration back up democracy in Iraq, Palestine, but it opposed resistance movements in those countries.

There is also the matter of these countries' Arab identity, for the democracy approach is separated from the concept of Arab identity. The latter sometimes competes with other sectarian or ethnic identities. This not only weakens Arab identity, but also national identity, as was the case in the Iraqi and Lebanese models.

At the time of the Bush administration, we saw no difference in practices and slogans of Arab democrats considered to be liberals and the overly proud neo-conservatives in Washington.

It is true that democracy is an urgent necessity to remedy the many ailments plaguing the Arab world, but it is not an isolated issue from others lived by the Arab countries relating to national liberation, social justice, national unity and Arab identity.

Dealing with democracy in the Arab region should not be separated from the challenges posed by the Israeli occupation and the covetous security, political and economic ambitions of major foreign forces not possible to be realized without

igniting fires inside and between Arab countries.

Democracy and social justice are the foundation for all societies, when they are free from external control. But when a nation is occupied or under the control of a foreign power, the concepts and means of implementing democracy or social justice will fit only the occupier's interests, and will not be the means of liberating the people from such occupier and its evils.

The Arab nation has a complex mixture of crises that needs a combination of solutions. Establishing democracy and fair elections alone does not ensure political and social justice, preserve social unity, prevent foreign intervention or set free occupied countries, as in the cases of Iraq, Mauritania, Lebanon, Palestine, Yemen, Sudan and Somalia.

The Arab nation needs an integrated revival and intellectual project based on the correlation of the slogans of democracy, national liberation, Arabism and social justice. With institutions and indi-

Both sides wrong

By: Naji Gazali

I wrote an article called, "Don't fight in my name" recently. I was bombarded with emails, and comments disparaging and questioning my Yemeni identity, and calling me Shia, Houthi and other things.

This is what we are going through right now in Yemen. One group claims to be protecting the state and support the war on the Houthis. Another group are against both the Houthis and the government for resorting to war as a mean of solving their differences.

It is true the Houthis have stepped up their deviance against the government, but who knows what is happening behind doors that lead them to take such a position? I would like to remind

you of the interview of Shiek Hameed Al-Ahmer, who is an enemy of the Houthis and the government. On Al-Jazeera, he said that it was the government who broke the peace agreement between the government and the Houthis, simply because of money.

We do not know really if the Houthis are seeking to expand their control or if they are just playing a bad guys or tough guys, or the government is wasting our sons' lives for no clear cause.

This is not a war at all that I can be proud to stand behind. It is clumsy and unclear and it will remain that way. As I said, the Houthis have violated the rules by taking arms against the government, but this government has used its might to put down the rebellion and refused to solve it peacefully.

But the government has not succeeded in solving it by force, when it can do so. It is wasting precious lives and resources and failing to bring an end to this dilemma. Now the government is doing it best to root out the Houthis, after it has let them grow so big and powerful that trying to eliminate them is a recipe for more destructions and more loss of innocent lives caught in between.

In fact, I consider these past years as an empowerment period for the Houthis, who are now popular with Iran, Hizbollah, and Al-Sader movement in Iraq. These are big players in the region, and would be more than happy to offer logistic, material or even moral support to the Houthis.

Therefore, Al-Houthies must be

absorbed into the peaceful opposition that is standing against this corrupted government, and must be a partner of peace and progress instead of becoming an arm to foreign powers. This is especially important because Iran and Saudi Arabia are supporting opposite sides.

Yemen can't live in peace if we continue to let this nonsense war continue to takes lives, resources and make us hate one another because of religious backgrounds or tribes. We just need to look to our brothers in Iraq, and how people have been killed because of their names or sects.

I am not sorry to say it again and again to those who oppose my first article. I am not for this war and I will condemn it to the last of my breath. So, Saleh, please do not fight in my name.

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إعلان عن وظائف شاغرة

منظمة المعونات الطبية الدولية (AMI)، منظمة فرنسية غير حكومية إنسانية غير سياسية ولا ربحية. تمارس أعمالها في 9 دول، و لأكثر من 25 عاماً. تقوم المنظمة بتقديم الخدمات الطبية للسكان المتضررين والمحرومين من كافة أنظمة الرعاية الصحية. تعمل المنظمة حالياً في الجمهورية اليمنية منذ بداية عام 2007م، وتقوم بدعم خدمات الرعاية الصحية الأولية في محافظة الحديدة وتنفيذ نشاطاتها بالتعاون مع وزارة الصحة العامة والسكان، وتركز بشكل رئيسي على رفع مستوى القدرات التنظيمية والتقنية للمرافق الصحية في مديرتي الحالي والمرافعة وذلك لتمكينهم من تقديم أفضل الخدمات الصحية المناسبة وذات الكفاءة. يعلن مقر المكتب التنفيذي للمنظمة عن فرص عمل في المجال التالي لمسئول إداري

ملخص الوظيفة: المسئول الإداري مدير وموظف يعمل تحت إشراف رئيس البعثة. وسيكون مسؤولاً عن صندوق النقد؛ و دفتر النقد والحسابات ويقوم بالتدقيق لجميع الوثائق وفقاً لإجراءات AMI المالية. ويكون مسؤولاً عن العديد من المهام الإدارية مثل (متابعة العقود، والبريد، الموارد البشرية، والعلاقة مع الإدارات المحلية ومقدمي الخدمات). ويتوجب عليه أن يقوم بمتابعه الترجمة لجميع الأوراق المطلوبة. وأخيراً، عليه أيضاً أن يشرف على فريق من المترجمين، والطباخ وعامل نظافة.

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Vacancy Announcement

AMI is a humanitarian, apolitical and non-profit French non-governmental organization created in 1979. Now present in 9 countries, for over 25 years AMI has brought medical cares to those most vulnerable populations excluded from all health care systems. AMI is established in Yemen since 2007, in Hodeidah governorate. AMI health projects are implemented in closed collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health and Population. The country representative office based in Hodeidah is seeking for:

An Administrator Officer

Job Summary:
The Administrator Officer works under the supervision of the Head of Mission. He/she is responsible for the cash-box; he/she keeps the cash-books and checks all accountancy documents in accordance with AMI financial procedures. He/she is in charge of several administrative duties (follow-up of contracts, mails, human-resources, relation with local administrations and service providers). He/she provides appropriate translations on request. Finally, he/she supervises the team of translators, cook and cleaner.

Qualifications & Requirements:

- University degree or practical experience in financial, accounting and administration management, preferably with INGO, or public department or private sector;
- Languages: English (compulsory working language, spoken, read and written); fluent in Arabic (reading and writing);
- Good computer operating skills (Word and EXCELLENT command of Excel);
- Knowledge of SAGA is a plus;
- Knowledge of Donors' procedures;
- To be rigorous, well organised, trustworthy and to work in a full-openness.

Contract:

- One year contract with possibility of extension;
- Full time based in Hodeidah;
- Salary according to AMI salary scale.

Candidates should submit their application in English (C.V. and a covering letter detailing their relevant experience and their motivation) at one of the following address:

- AMI office, Al Haye Al Tejari Quarter, In front of Central Inspection Institution, PO Box 3940, Hodeidah, Republic of Yemen
- yemen@amifrance.org

Deadline for application: Thursday, September 30th 2009 at 4.00 pm.
Applications that do not meet the minimum requirements listed above will not be considered.

Only short listed candidates will be contacted for interview.

VACANCY

Project Accountant

Higher Education Development Project II

I. General Functional Areas of the Project Accountant
Under the supervision of the project's Financial Management Officer, the accountant will be in charge of recording of all financial transactions, keeping the supporting documents, preparing the financial reports of the project as required by the government regulations and the IDA credit, preparing annual and interim project's financial statements to reflect the financial positions of the project for auditing purposes. The accountant is hired as an assistant to the financial manager to support both the PHRD and PPF once on board, and if determined to be a good candidate, s/he can be proposed for the HEDP II.

The Project Accountant's basic functions will be as follows:

1. Collect and file all supporting documentation on all financial transactions of the project under the Higher Education Project (HEDP) management.
2. Record on a daily basis all financial transactions after ensuring that they have been properly authorized and in accordance with the budget and the HEDP procedures of internal control.
3. Prepare bank reconciliation between the bank's account and the Special Account (SA) withdrawals, on a monthly basis, to reflect the monthly receipts and disbursements from the SA.
4. Prepare quarterly project financial statements under the HEDP direct management, and liaise with the procurement officer, to include procurement quarterly results and the project's physical progress of activities as measured by the project's indicators. Based on the above, prepare the Project Financial Management Report (FMR) to be submitted to the SC and then to the Bank.
5. Prepare the credit withdrawal applications with supporting documentation and submit it to the HEDP manager for approval and then submission to IDA for replenishment of funds as needed.
6. Assist the external auditors in performing their annual audit of the project by providing necessary documentation, written procedures, and annual financial statements.
7. Any other tasks as required by the project Financial Management Officer.

II. Qualifications

- ¥ A minimum of five years of private sector accounting experience preferably with an auditing of accounting firm.
- ¥ A minimum of a Bachelor's degree in accounting or auditing.
- ¥ A good knowledge and use of the generally accepted principles.
- ¥ The ability to operate accounting software, keep updated accounting records and books of accounts, and generate project's financial statements and other reports as needed by the project management.
- ¥ Proficiency in both Arabic and English
- ¥ Familiarity with computers, accounting and other software applications.

All applications along with a detailed resume should be submitted before October 7, 2009 to the following address:

Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research
Higher Education Development Project II
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Aden to embrace upcoming Investment and Economic Conference

Abdullah Al-Rammah, the vice chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Aden, said that basic services like electricity, roads and infrastructure in the governorate are pathetic, and that these and other issues should be remedied for the city to attract local and foreign investors, to take part in the upcoming Investment and Economic Conference. The conference is called "Aden: Yemen's Gate on the World," and will be held in the city on November 11 and 12.

By: Ghamdan Al-Duqaimi
For the Yemen Times

What is the objective of the conference? How was the idea developed? What is new about it?

The conference aims to highlight the most important challenges and obstacles facing investment in Aden and the free zone and ways to benefit from successful international experiences in managing port cities and free zones. It also aims to invigorate investment in Yemen in general, and in Aden in particular.

The idea stemmed out of a Hadramout conference. The credit of this conference belongs to Mr. Bade ben Salama, chairman of the Experience House for Studies and Consultations, and the conference general supervisor, who presented the idea to commerce chamber. The chamber, along with other organizing parties-Aden local authority, Aden Free Zone Authority and the House of Experience-did not hesitate to approve.

As for what is new, the conference general supervisor recently spoke about his meeting with the Public Investment Authority Chairman, Mr. Salah Al-Attar. He said that the latter had expressed his willingness to pave the way for investments in Aden as well as for the conference, which is a very good initiative.

In the meantime, we decided to hold a workshop dedicated to this matter on September 30. During the workshop, we will communicate with the PIA and other departments and parties concerned with the issue of investment promotion and prepare for the conference. We will also meet with businessmen and investors in order to familiarize ourselves with their problems before the conference.

But do you think that the rest of the time before the conference is enough to deal with investment issues?

Of course it is not. Yet we are doing our best. We have already postponed the event from May to November because of time.

Can you describe the situation in the governorate now, and your preparations for the conference?

The organizers are making every effort to communicate with all concerned parties and finalize the preparations for the conference. Everyone is keen to make the function a success, whatever it takes.

As for the situation in Aden. This is not good. Basic services like power, roads and infrastructure in general are pathetic. The Khour Maksar District, for instance, that used to be called the Mother of Towns, has very bad roads and broken pavement in addition to other problems. However, we should not deny that some positive developments have been seen in Aden recently.

This means the governorate suffers from problems?

Of course. This is agreed by all. Aden is badly in need of more expansive road networks to match the growth in construction and in population because the city has over a million residents now. The city is not what it used to be, and this development should be taken into account.

What are the obstacles to investment in Aden?

There are many hindrances that block



Abdullah Al-Rammah

investment in the governorate, such as land problems and infrastructure (power, roads, etc.). Permissions and slow procedures also repel investors and there is also a lack in positive response to many investors.

Therefore, we hope the conference will remove obstacles standing in investors' way and that there is a good turnout of Yemeni, Arab and foreign investors who want to invest in Aden, particularly in the Free Zone that is not active enough and is dependent on the government.

We, as a private sector, have proposed the conference to the government as a means to enhance partnership and remedy irregularities, because before they wonder about laws and investment developments in Aden, potential investors come to the chamber of commerce and ask those questions.

I should indicate that Aden is not large enough in terms of lands, but there is a good opportunity for the government in the "industrial triangle" (Aden, Lahj and Abyan) to build infrastructure because a vast amount of the lands are owned by the state. The area could provide lands for over ten million investors for free. Unfortunately, no one from the public or private sectors has shown interest in the area.

Hasn't the government done anything about this area?

To be honest, we have already held a conference on this matter. The event was attended by the government, which brought Egyptian experts to survey the area, which they did. That was about a year ago and a forum was also held, but nothing new happened since then.

What are the main points of the conference?

There six of them. The first focuses on the development strategy to advance Aden and retrieve its glory. It aims to diversify economic activities and develop investment environment, management and human resources. The second is based on the concept and role of free zones, their economies and future developments in view of globalization and the World Trade Organizations (WTO) agreements, as well as the role played by free zones in developing local and national economies and expanding the local industrial sector.

The third point is concerned with the reality of the Free Zone and its position among regional free zones, and objectives and strategies to develop it. The fourth point is about the development plan for the Free Zone, which includes a container port, an industrial area, a shipping village, and an administration.

Investment opportunities in Aden and in the Free Zone are the subjects of the fifth point. The last point sheds light on international successful experiences in managing free zones in countries like United Arab Emirates, Oman, Egypt, Malaysia, Jordan, Singapore and China.

The conference will include an exhibition of Aden and the Free Zone within the context of the above fields. Major Arab and foreign companies will participate in the exhibition, and present their finance and investment services.

Can you tell us about the investment advantages of Aden and the Free Zone in particular, and Yemen in general?

Aden has its unique advantage through its strategic location. Its chamber of commerce is 113 years old, which makes the oldest in the Middle East. There is also its people's civilization, tolerance and welcoming attitude towards investment and investors.

There are several advantages of investing in the Free Zone because Aden is known as the promising gate to the world of trade and investment. It is also situated at the crossroads of East Africa and the Middle East, a pioneering business hub in Yemen and it has grand port that is naturally protected. It is distinguished for its trade traditions that date back many centuries.

And let us not forget that is located at the heart of trade lanes that connect Europe, East Asia and the Far East. One more advantage of investment in Yemen is its favorable weather during the four seasons that is not available in other neighboring countries.

Our problem, however, is frequent kidnappings of tourists and other foreigners and the killing of some tourists in some parts of Yemen. Had not been for which, tourism would have become Yemen's first resource.

Has the government presented its vision of the conference yet?

You have to ask the government this question. We put forward the conference proposal and the government should have extended support to us. Nevertheless, the statements of the Minister of Information and many of those we communicated with in the government, including PIA, showed considerable interest in the conference topics.

What is it you want to ask the government as a means to overcome obstacles facing investors?

We will send our message to the government through the PIA chairman, because he is the connection between us and the government.

In your opinion, what is the role to be played by the government, private sector and the society to settle issues that obstructs development of Aden Free Zone allowing it to compete with other regional free zones?

The Free Zone is run by Dubai Ports World, and the zone has only seven cranes that do not solve the present problem. It means this is not a free zone

because an ordinary port has seven cranes, thus the problem should be tackled and more cranes and equipment should be added. The Aden Free Zone needs to be developed, otherwise we won't be capable of competing. Neighboring countries like Djibouti have gotten ahead of us, although we have been in the market longer time.

What should the press do concerning the conference, especially because investment is a national concern?

So far, the press has done a good job. All local media were contacted and

invited to cover the conference positively and discuss all the issues that hinder investors. The media's part was excellent thanks to Mr. Imad Al-Dini, the conference press committee, as well as to Mr. Bader Salama.

We intend to expand our media coverage by contacting foreign media. We emphasize here the importance of the media role because the matter concerns Yemen as a whole, not only a certain category.

Who will participate in the conference? Did you feel response from foreign bodies?

Distinguished figures such as businessmen, economists, officials and CEOs of prominent companies in Yemen and outside will participate in the conference, in addition to concerned governmental authorities. There is also positive response from most of Arab chambers of commerce. So far, three foreign companies are planning to attend from Holland, Italy and Spain and there is considerable participation from US businessmen because of the significance of Aden Port, the Free Zone and the weight of the conference.

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By: Mubeen Esam
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We can buy many things but we absolutely can't buy life. Even the richest man can't possess it. I always say that life is like gold if I don't invest it right, it will lose its value.

Muslims view this life as an important project, and a placement test for the hereafter day. Either Muslims pass it, and do the right things so that they get to paradise, or they fail by committing sins and go hell. Also, Jewish people and Christians view this life as a fruitful tree. They must use every thing in and on it, because they think if they use it really in a good way, they will go to heaven.

No one possesses this life alone. I don't think there's a thing more precious than life, and we all wish to live forever. We are scared sometimes of talking about death, so we should learn how we can invest this prosperous life and how to best spend each day. This life isn't without value and all the creatures are created with a purpose.

Life is really more beautiful that what we perceive and we should enjoy each moment happily, even if there are necessarily problems and dilemmas.

To live easily, you have goals. Don't do aimless actions, live up to your potential and possibilities. These goals must be clear, not ambiguous, and they must be positive, not negative. And you must formulate an accurate plan to carry out the goals.

Do you think an Arab's life is precious? Events in Palestine and Iraq signify that the Arabs' lives are worth less than others' lives. If a European, an American, an Italian, a Spanish person, a German, or an Israeli is killed by an Arab by chance, how will they retaliate? So what makes the Arabs' lives cheaper? And who makes them dark? And for what reason?

I appeal to concerned people responsible, whether they are merchants, officials, dealers, parents, ministers or even the president to prepare a happy world for the next generation, and let us live our lives peacefully and smoothly. We all know that what happens in our lifetimes is in God's hands, but changing our lives for the better requires that we first change ourselves for the better.

Actually, I think the key to spreading happiness in the Arab world, and protecting elderly people and beloved children is to annul relationships with western nations, and begin new shining relationships with nations in the east. Arabs often associate their happiness

with American and European happiness. Some people think, if they're happy, we'll be happy too. As a result, many Arabs also think that if western nations are not happy, we should undoubtedly be frightened.

But America thinks it has the master key of the happiness in this world, and it can make people happy by eradicating Arabs.

Why can't we make our happiness by ourselves? Why do we bank on the others to draw our life? I can't account. Killing is never the way to establish a comfortable life. A happy life is made by understanding relationships, by love and respect one another, but not by investing the helpful people badly. No one can live alone.

However, America and Europe let the stronger continue living while the weaker has no right live. The US thinks Americans have the right to live but Arabs have no right at all. So how much does America pay to buy this life? Are killing and massacring the only ways to make happiness? Not at all. Life is dependent on helping and not on fighting.

Last but not least, don't let the difficulties and problems defeat you, but they should be repressed. In my opinion, life is a laugh, smile, cry, tear, food, drink, accommodation, meeting, quest, love, respect, fun, worship, education,

help, emotion, sympathy, and work. Whatever I say about the life, I can't express a complete definition for it.

At the end, I feel like proposing a debatable idea to the concerned authorities to make lovely lives. I propose to design new courses that should be taught carefully in high schools and colleges. For instance, courses specialize in teaching students how to deal practically with elderly people and little ones, how to choose good friends and distinguish between the good and the bad friends, how to influence others, how to be content and modest, how to make good decisions, how to make conversations, how to solve problems, how to overcome distress and frustration, how to think right, how to invest available money, how to enhance our skills and enrich our minds, how to raise children, how to obey parents, how to love our nation and serve it, and so on.

All the above-mentioned subjects are the key to why America is the most developed country in the world. As a result, if we teach these subjects, I think we can escape from this dark present time after many years.

When a human dies, their life does not end. But life can't be continuous without humans and humans can't survive on earth if there is no life for other creatures.

Through The Mind's Eye

By: Maged Thabet Al-kholidy
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On the occasion of Eid

On the occasion of Eid, I congratulate all of you, dear readers. Eid comes every year after the holy month of Ramadan, the month of fasting. It is celebrated by Muslims as a matter of religious duty, as they stop fasting. But this does not mean that we should stop all typical Ramadan religious duties because the month is over. We should also perform the religious duties usually practiced during the days of Eid.

The end of Ramadan should not equal the end of worship and moral behavior. It is, instead, the best chance to prove the sincerity of our faith. Here, I want all of us to keep in mind that "God is the god of all the months, not only of Ramadan."

To prove our dedication, we should do our best to keep the promises we made at the beginning of the month. Everything good can be done in other months too, if we want to. We can pray on time at the mosque, and perform all the other religious duties. We can behave morally with others and help the poor, for example. The only thing we need is strong determination to keep our good faith, otherwise it will fail.

Help the poor

We should help others, and not forget the poor. We may not be able to help all of them, but we can do this at least for those around us. Of course, everywhere there are poor families. Thinking about their lives could transform happiness into sadness on Eid, but not if we help. A poor father might commit suicide seeing all children around him celebrating the occasion with new clothes, sweets and toys, while his children lack all of these. He, sometimes, cannot provide them with even basic food.

It is not his fault that he is poor, and it is not the fault of his children that they cannot enjoy the most basic of presents on such an occasion. We also cannot blame society. But we should blame ourselves if we ignore them. We should imagine ourselves in their place to realize how bitterly they suffer. We can offer them simple things that will surely mean a lot to them. If every one of us helped only the ones around us, like neighbors, relatives, or friends, there would be not be any poor people. Some people cannot offer their families even a single thing to celebrate this occasion. Their children may stay at home because they do not have new clothes like others, for example. In spite of this, most do not complain or ask others for help.

Helping others on such a holy occasion is really appreciated.

Visit friends and relatives

Visiting relatives and friends is another important point that everyone should not forget. Throughout the rest of the year, we claim that we are too busy to visit them. But now we have holidays, which is specifically for this. It is a religious and social duty to visit relatives and friends. This is to heal any misunderstandings between them, and to deepen intimacy, respect and love. It is not necessary to bring gifts, as some say. It really depends on one's ability to do so. If one cannot afford gifts, one should go empty-handed, rather than not go at all.

There are some other duties that we should do like visit sick people at the hospital, and take out the family, especially children, to places of entertainment. If we do not do this now, we may not do it any other time. Although these things seem to be done for others, we also gain a lot: happiness, comfort and, most importantly, religious rewards.

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

Many happy returns, ya Ramadan

By: Ali Abdullah Al-Shar'aby
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Unlike other months, the days in Ramadan pass quickly. They pass so fast that one thinks they are shorter than those of any other month.

In Ramadan, Muslims are of two kinds.

There are those who seize the opportunity to help their brothers and alleviate their suffering. In addition to performing their religious duties such as fasting, praying at mosques, and visit-

ing their relatives, they increase their charitable actions. They willingly offer their help to the poor, the elderly and to the disabled in return for nothing but God's mercy. Such people will miss Ramadan and wish it never had to end.

On the other hand, some Muslim people reluctantly receive the advent of the holy month. They consider it to be a month that's boring and undesirable. These people prefer to enjoy the worldly desires that Muslims have to give up during the fast. They may perform Ramadan's common features such as fasting and praying at the mosque, but they waste most of their time gossiping,

playing games, and watching indecent movies. Such people are so driven by their lust that they wish Ramadan never came.

For me, Ramadan is the month that has a spiritual sense in which I rightly satisfy my desires and needs as well. In the holy month, I perform my duties, visit my relatives, and help people in need. I also stay up late at night with my friends chatting and watching football matches and the world news. During the month of mercy, I feel I lead a more spiritual and useful life. I really love this month so much that I wish it lasted forever.

These days, as a result of its close departure, I feel like one of my relatives is going to die. I quietly tell myself that life has to go on, that this is the nature of life, and that I have nothing to do but to faithfully accept God's will.

Like other months, Ramadan comes and goes. As Muslims, we have to be more humble, generous, and aware of our duties. We must keep our Ramadan practices for the entire year.

I know that you are sad because of the holy month's close departure and you must be. At the same time you must welcome Eid Al-Fitr and cheerfully say "Many happy returns, ya Ramadan."



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The Sultan of Eleven Months in Istanbul

By: Fatima P. Salcido
For the Yemen Times

Istanbul has always been a mesmerizing city, and under the lights of Ramadan this former Turkish capital brings to life the glory of the Ottomans. Life seems to carry on at an unchanged rhythm in the daytime, since fasting does not affect working hours nor does it decrease the number of people on the streets. In fact, two societies are seen side by side: those who fast and those who do not. While in some Muslim countries eating in public during Ramadan can incur public outrage with physical aggressions from the population, fines or even jail time, Turkish secularism allows for the peaceful cohabitation between fast-observers and non-fasters to such an extent that in restaurants open during the day, it is not surprising to find that those preparing and serving the food to non-observers are themselves fasting.

Yet a different course unfolds at sunset. Iftar, the moment when fasting is broken while the call to prayer summons Muslims, is the symbolic departure point. Under the Ottoman Empire, the pachas and other high-ranking government officials opened their homes to host the fast-breaking meal throughout the month of Ramadan; thus those living in the near quarters or in need could come and replenish themselves after a long-day of fasting. After the fall of the Empire and its power structure, this custom disappeared. Only until recently, did these former state-served iftars return as municipality-sponsored iftars.

In the evening as the sun begins to set, and the Maghreb (or *Akşam* in Turkish) approaches, the sight of crowds standing in line in front of tents put up by the municipal authorities at different points in the city is commonplace. People from all ages and social backgrounds can be seen patiently waiting to receive either an "ifbar box" or to take a seat inside the tents to share this meal. In other parts of the city such as Kanlica, on the Asian side of the Bosphorus, fasting families arrive early and sit at long tables in preparation for the serving of iftar, with the blue waters from the strait as backdrop and a large screen



impressive, while the festive environment and the fellowship are reminiscent of village gatherings.

One very colorful iftar tradition takes place on the European side around Eyup Sultan Mosque. Named after the Prophet's companion, Abu Ayyub Al-Ansari, who died during the Muslim conquest in the 7th century and whose tomb was later discovered here, Eyup's mosque and mausoleum are considered sacred grounds. Mehmed II the Conqueror ordered its construction, which was destroyed by an earthquake and then rebuilt in 1800. Sultans succeeding him would conclude their coronation and sword-bearing festivities with a visit to the Eyup Sultan Mausoleum. Today, thousands of visitors and pilgrims continue to preserve the sacredness of Eyup, and on weekends most especially, many families fill the mosque for the early morning prayer.

During Ramadan, families and friends

neighbors is a spirited display of the humility of this holy month. As soon as the Maghreb echoes, the lively feast commences, and food and tea vendors dash through the crowds among children playing with toy lights thrown into the sky. Following iftar, the lights adorning the mosque and the faithful arriving for prayer overflow in its courtyard, and further enhance Eyup's spiritual atmosphere.

Not too far from Eyup, on the well-known quarters of Sultanahmet, the most elaborate Ramadan feast gets underway alongside the two emblems of the city: Hagia Sophia and the Blue Mosque. Also known as the Sultan Ahmed Mosque, after Sultan Ahmed I who ordered its construction in the early 1600s, this mosque features an architectural harmony of six minarets and an array of domes which make it one of the most spectacular monuments in the country and in the Muslim world. During Ramadan, its courtyard turns into a large book fair where dozens of booths sell a vast selection of books, from religious works to historical titles available in Turkish and many other languages. Knowledge under the patronage of the Blue Mosque is indeed a powerful message that attracts hundreds.

Several steps from the courtyard, the rich program unfolding on the mosque's grounds further attracts thousands every night. Sufi music, performances by military bands, story telling, jugglers and Ottoman music concerts, are but part of the diverse cultural offering. A traditional bazaar lines the streets with dozens of stalls displaying Turkish specialties, myriads of tempting sweets and handicrafts. As sunset approaches, many gather sitting at tables from the numerous restaurants set on the garden and serving iftar, or bring their own meal and sit on the wooden picnic tables as they wait for the call to prayer to resonate from the Blue Mosque. After Tarawih prayer, recitations from the Quran and Sufi music with whirling dervishes fill the air, as the crowds begin to arrive in larger numbers. Some take their place in the open-air amphitheater where *mehter* military music performances in colorful costume captivate the public. Believed to date to the end of the 13th century, this music accompanied the Ottoman armies into battle while instilling bravery and pride among them as the powerful sound of the drums reverberated. The military bands had been subsequently dissolved centuries later, and today this music remains a folkloric tradition which continues to be a source of national pride for the Turkish public.

Another Ramadan tradition seen throughout the city that cannot escape the careful observer is the decorative use of lights hanging between minarets with messages of goodwill and welcome for the holy month. Called *mahyas*, these lights have been illuminating the nights of Ramadan since the 17th century. Initially, they were made of oil lamp strung to create an image on a rope which was then hung between a mosque's minarets. This tradition may have begun when a prayer caller from the Mehmed the Conqueror Mosque created a calligraphy design and presented it to Sultan Ahmed I. So pleased was the sultan, that he then ordered that such mahyas adorn minarets during Ramadan. The newly completed

Sultanahmet Mosque was the first to carry a mahya, and in 1723 it was ordered to install mahyas in all imperial mosques during the holy month. These bright writings express messages of gratitude to God, salutations for the arrival of Ramadan, religious and other joyful ideas such as: *Greetings Oh Month of Ramadan, Fast and be Healthy, Welcome oh Month of Ramadan, Sultan of the Eleven Months, Intercede Oh Prophet of God, There is no God but Allah, Farewell Oh Month of Ramadan, Alms Enhance Wealth*. Other messages of social or political nature may also be seen accompanying the religious ones, along with images of stars, crescents, flowers and mosques. Although the oil lamps have disappeared, the shining lights still remain. And so does the splendor of Ramadan in Istanbul.

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In Eyup, the families await the Maghreb call to prayer to break the fast. In the background, a mahya –the string of lights- adorns the entrance to Eyup Mosque.

on the opposite side, on which films are shown to the public at night. This is all part of the Ramadan activities prepared by the authorities. The efficient and thorough organization of these public iftars is

in great numbers gather on the square around the mosque in the form of a large communal picnic, sitting on blankets or newspapers, and awaiting the moment to break the fast. Samanyolu Television,

one of the most widely-viewed stations, airs live the calls to prayer at iftar and sohour. Watching everyone excitedly set their generous iftar - typically beginning with soup, dates, olives, cheese, a smoked meat called pastirma, the soft phyllo dough stuffed pastry known as borek, and the circular-flat bread especially prepared for Ramadan called *pide* - and prepare tea, while sharing and exchanging food with

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