





## Six coming home, while 91 Gitmo detainees hopefully wait for news

By: Ali Saeed

SANA'A, Dec. 20 — The Yemeni Embassy in Washington announced on Saturday that it received six Yemenis who have been detained at Guantanamo Bay, according to Saba news agency, the Yemeni state-run news website. Although the Embassy announced that it officially received the detainees, it has not yet revealed their identities and when they will be sent home.

After the return of those six detainees 91 Yemenis still remain at the infamous detention center — accounting for about 46 percent of the total population. These prisoners complicate President Obama's self imposed deadline of closing the facility by mid-January. Obama has since admitted that that will not happen, and has delayed the closing until sometime next year.

"Guantánamo, we had a specific deadline that was missed," Mr. Obama said in an interview with NBC News in Beijing during his weeklong trip to

Asia this year.

Of the remaining detainees 13 who have been cleared of charges remain indefinitely at the military detention without charges.

According to Human Rights Watch, the Yemeni government demands that the remaining detainees to be repatriated — as well requests the financial means to do so. But according to the watchdog agency, neither Yemen nor the US has presented a viable plan.

Following the US Justice Department plan to transfer of some Yemeni detainees home, many American officials expressed concerns, saying that the men may return to terrorism in their country.

"Stop. These men are dangerous," said Rep. Frank R. Wolf, a critic of the administration policy on Guantanamo when asked about the transfer. "I believe they will be involved in terrorism that will cost American lives," the Washington post reported.

The US also sought assistance from Saudi Arabia to receive the Yemeni

detainees for rehabilitation, as American officials doubt the Yemeni government's ability to do so. However, Yemeni authorities have noted previously that none of the 15 returnees have returned to terrorism.

Saudi Arabia refused to accept the Yemeni transfers, explaining that having familiar relations in Saudi — something that the Yemeni men lack — is crucial to the success of the program.

But the need for such programs perhaps should be scrutinized. In a statement to the Yemen Times, recent Yemeni Guantanamo Bay returnee Ala Bin Ali Ahmed said that the US should stop mistreating those detainees who now have been imprisoned for eight years without trial. He was repatriated at the end of September.

"Most of those who are being kept in the Bay have no links to Al-Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Post 9/11 security of these two countries arrested any suspicious foreigners and handed them over to the American forces," he said

## Workshop on enhancing the parliament role to protect human rights

BY: Mohammad Bin Salam

Sana'a, Dec.20 — "Raising the Parliament's conscience toward Human Rights" workshop was held in Saba'a Hotel in Sana'a last Thursday. The workshop focused also on the parliament's duties toward freedom according to the international conventions of human rights.

The participants discussed aligning of local laws with international conventions. Among the participants were instructors from Sana'a University and Yemeni researchers. They identified commitments the parliament should fulfill toward human rights in accordance with the international conventions.

The participants mentioned the human rights and liberties are eroded by bureaucratic turf wars while kidnappings, blackmailing, and unjust detentions continue unabated.

"The clash of local laws and international conventions and law is not

acceptable. Human rights and corruption fighting are no more the concern of the local responsibilities because they should become the concern of the international society," the participants asserted.

"Wars and internal issues affect the security of the country and thus they accumulated to negatively effect regional and international security. Solutions must be taken so that such problems do not spread beyond our borders," they added.

The participants demanded that independent experts' feedback to be taken into account when forming laws with no prejudice to the journalists and citizens so that their opinions are reflected in the law. They also insisted on parliament's cooperation with the media to make laws transparent and effective.

The participants confirmed the importance of the media in enhancing the history of social protestant movements which aim to change the tyrannical political systems that cripple the media

from doing its role to guard against encroachments on human rights. Arresting political activists and journalists are some examples of these violations.

Legal researcher Basem Alhaj said that under Communist rule, Yemenis supported of freedom of dogmas.

"The political system in Yemen now, which is democratic and a multiparty system, deprives non-Muslims from their civil and political rights and punish those who change their religion from Muslim to non Muslim. Consequently, the Yemeni political system is not serving its citizens. Not allowing people to choose their religion threatens the democratic civilian political system," he explained.

Judge Ahmed Husain, president of the Change Organization for Defending Human Rights, pointed out that workshop which aims to view the discrepancies between the local laws and international agreements and conventions, such as right to freedom, speech and protest.

## Ignorance and religious misconceptions behind violence against women

By: Khaled Al-Hilaly

SANA'A, Dec. 20 — Islam has given women the rights to education, work, political participation, owning property and inheritance, said Imam and Islamic scholar Mohammad Al-Odaini during a recent event on violence against women in Yemen.

"Islamic principles relating to women were replaced by conservative traditions, which were given a religious cover and today many refer to Islam as the reason behind certain practices while in reality they are simply traditions," explained Al-Odaini, who has been researching women's rights in Islam based on the Qur'an and Sunnah [prophet's teachings].

According to Al-Odaini, some scholars use evidence from Muslim's practices across history and that those should not be taken for granted as they vary according to time and place.

According to Lubna Al-Qadasi, a lawyer from Women Journalists With-



out Chains organization violence against women ranges from direct physical assault to deprivation from engaging in public life. Discrimination exists in all countries, but some have attempted to confront it while others have not," she added.

"Violence against women is an international issue," said Raja'a Al-Abbasi, Internews project director in Yemen. "Violence doesn't limit itself to certain ethnicities, religion or geographical location. It grows from individual cases, and slowly affects entire societies."

Efforts have begun to check violence's spread. Hooria Mashhoor, the Deputy Chairperson of the Women National Committee, urges investigation into violence against women and marginalized groups such as refugees or the Akhdam who are subjected to violence and isolation by the society.

Mashhoor said that popular traditions are one of the reasons behind the Violence against Yemeni women. She read a number of examples of popular

sayings incite violence against women or oppression them, such as those that encourage early marriage, or men's dominance over women. Al-Abbasi has documented many forms of harassment including violence at war, domestic violence, rape, honor crimes, forced marriage, polygamy without wife consent or knowledge, circumcision and harassment in the streets and work places.

"Unfortunately, the society holds women to high standards of good manners, ethics and honor", she said. "It does not hold men to these same standards."

Other actors can work to improve female empowerment and social equality. Al-Odaini criticized the weak role of the media and mosques in spreading awareness about injustice against women. He called on women discover more of their rights through the Quran and Sunna.

The symposium was sponsored by The Women Journalists Without Chains in cooperation with Internews office in Yemen.

## Handouts stall learning among university students, says group

By: Mahmoud Al-Harazi

TAIZ, Dec. 19 — Yemeni University students are dependent on handouts sold by the professors as reference materials rather than other learning materials such as books or internet websites, says a recent survey on university education.

According the survey conducted by the Women's Forum for Research and Training (WFRT), this dependency limits the students' ability to learn and they only study a selected number of handouts to pass the exams.

The survey which was published a few days ago, covered three main governorates around the country and featured input from university students, professors and activists.

The survey concluded that universities have promoted the reliance on bound sheets specified by the instructor and sold in the university photocopying centers. The prices of the handouts are supposedly agreed upon between the instructor and the photocopying centers. For students in Yemeni universities, whether public or private, these sheets are the most significant academic learning tool. Books or other references are an exception.

This dependency is now spreading to other educational institutions, says Mundher Ashaq, professor and chairman of the sociology department in Taiz University. He explained that using handouts is cheaper for the students considering the high prices and scarce availability of academic references, especially in English. Using these sheets allows students to focus on certain chapters and on the information the instructors give importance to, and hence helps them pass the exams without having a thorough knowledge of the subjects. Many of the handouts are the



subject's summarization the professors make for the subjects. Some of them are hand written and others include copies of pages from reference books.

The group behind the survey raised concerns over professors supposedly earning an income from these handouts— both at the expense of the students' learning and copyrights.

About 85 percent of the students surveyed admitted to using only the handouts which they buy from the college photocopying centers. Some students have even given up taking notes, as some of the hardworking students learnt to take good notes and then agree with the photocopying centers to promote the handouts to students. The profit is then shared between the center and the authors of the handouts.

In some colleges, the survey discovered that some of the bound sheets cost as much as the reference books. Even then, students would rather buy the handouts instead of the books with hopes of doing better on their exams.

Around 58 percent of those surveyed complained that the handouts are expensive and cost often more than just

the photocopying price. As a result, some students borrow the handouts and photocopy them outside discretely because the subject teacher would become angry with the students. Over half of the students indicated that the instructors are the primary beneficiary of the reliance on handouts and that the instructors would do anything to make sure students refer to them as their main source in studying. It is worth mentioning that many surveyed students declined to comment on that claim.

Since the profit is shared with the photocopying centers, 42 percent of those surveyed students said that the centers' owners are also beneficiaries of this education methodology.

Some university instructors order the students to buy the handouts as they are the main reference material for the subjects. Quizzes and exams are often based on the handouts, claims the survey.

A smaller group of students yet somehow significant, around 30 percent, decided to rely only on their own notes that they take in the lectures because of the increasing prices of handouts.

## Continued from page 1

**Southern Movement uses Abyan attack to lobby for international support**

According to a local source in the area, 82 civilians were killed and more than 213 were injured. Most of them were women and children from the nomad community in the district.

Once the attacks stopped, the locals gathered to assess the casualties and bury the dead. So far 47 bodies have been recognized and buried. The Associated French Press quoted official from the Al-Mahfed on Sunday confirming civilian deaths.

However, in terms of war against terror, this attack was considered by both the Yemeni government and its ally against terrorism the United States of America as a success. Ministry of Defense stated that the Yemeni forces killed no less than 34 Al-Qaeda elements and US president Barack Obama sent a congratulation note to the Yemeni president on this strategic move, according to Yemeni official sources.

The Yemeni ministry also mentioned that it detained 17 Al-Qaeda elements in Sana'a and Arhab (to the north of Sana'a), and four in Aden. The arrests come within Al-Qaeda clamp down operation that was in the making in the past few weeks according to intelligence sources. The ministry also reported that it was able to fail several terrorist attacks targeting foreigners by Al-Qaeda suicide bombers.

Saudi Interior Ministry cooperated with its Yemeni counterpart to find out if any Saudis figuring in the list of 85 wanted terrorists or any other wanted Saudis are among the dead or detained, said Interior Ministry spokesman Maj. Gen. Mansour Al-Turki told Arab News on Saturday

So far, six non-Yemeni Al-Qaeda members were reported killed in the raid. They were two Saudis, two Egyptians and two from Chechnya, according to Yemen Time sources, which also confirmed that most of the civilian casualties were located between one to two kilometers away from the jihadist's camp.

"The air raid resulted in killing men, children and women, including some who were pregnant. In terms of livestock, 200 sheep and large numbers of cows and camels also escaped," a tribal source reported. "Some of the casualties are critically injured and they are in hospitals in Aden and Abyan governorates."

Meanwhile in fear of retaliation, the Yemeni Ministry of Interior directed the security apparatuses in the Capital Secretariat and all Yemeni governorates to intensify security around foreign and government offices.

Already there has been news last week that dozens of Al-Qaeda jihadists and some of their leaders have moved from Pakistan to Yemen and Somalia.

Yemeni anti-terrorism security is being continuously trained to combat terrorism in the country, which has been said by analysts to be Al-Qaeda haven. American officials revealed that the US government is supporting Yemen in its fight against terrorism through training and intelligence matters. The New York Times reported that president Obama agreed to support Yemen according to a request the latter asked in order to get rid of Al-Qaeda sites in its lands.

Officials in the Department of Defense and the Pentagon, refused to give details about the air raid. According to the ABC News, the attack used American missiles, although the Yemeni authority

emphasized that only Yemeni air force was involved directly in the attacks.

**Government allocates 113 billion to electricity, says minister**

Between 40 and 50 percent of the revenues will go to improving service, like buying cables and meters" said Assuqatri.

Next year the minister plans to reduce the power failures to 20 percent and to protect the electricity network against collapse due to the increase pressure. Unplanned urban expansion and the misuse of the electricity by citizens strains Sana'a's system more than other governorates. Ordinary citizens and the Electric General Corporation alike must work together for a solution," Assuqatri appealed.

Assuqatri announced that his ministry will enter the service of prepaid meters during the few forthcoming years. According to him, this service will be applied gradually with 13 meters to enter the service during 2010.

He revealed that during the next two weeks a report on how much the government owes the power generating stations and the loss to integrate all efforts of electricity officials with the government to collect the loss and the debt. He argued on holding employees, who are involved in this issue, accountable.

It is worth to mention that besides the great percentage of power loss, the debt of electricity is estimated at YR 20 billion, one third of the cost of sales estimated at YR 65 billion. Big consumers, government bodies, dignitaries and also ordinary citizens are the debtors.



In Brief

SANA'A

**Workshop on urban agriculture held**  
National and Participatory Workshop concerning the importance of urban and peri-urban agriculture for food security in the Yemeni cities was organized on Thursday in Sana'a province.

The workshop was organized by the Yemeni Association for sustainable agricultural development to discuss the urban agriculture and its key role in field of food security and its importance as a mean to use wasted waters of mosques to irrigate farms which contributes to increase agricultural products Deputy Governor of Sana'a province Ali Sharim affirmed importance of urban agriculture for food security and its role in combating poverty, pointing out to the features which Sana'a province have to develop the urban agriculture. He called for gathering official and popular efforts to preserve waters resources.

For her part, the representative of the World Bank for Middle East and North Africa pointed out to need to develop such agriculture in Yemeni cities to offer the food security.

She added that between 20-25 percent of global food based on the urban agriculture.

The WB official said that the bank was preparing a project to support such kind of agriculture in Yemen.

Some 80 participants from ministry of agriculture and irrigation, ministry of waters and environment, and ministry of endowments and guidance as well as academician and researchers attended the workshop.

ADEN

**4 wounded Qaeda suspects held**

Police in Yemen's business capital arrested on Friday four al Qaeda suspects of those who were hurt in Thursday's raids on terrorist hideouts and training camps in the southern province of Abyan, the Interior Ministry said.

The four survived ground and air attacks by anti-terrorism forces and were taken to hospitals in Aden by their families.

Their were named as Abdullah Salim Ali, Muhammad Ali Salim, and Abdul Rahman Mohammed Qayed, all in their 30s, and Hidera Salim Ali, 27.

On Thursday security authorities said about 51 suspected terrorists were killed and arrested in the raids that took place in Abyan and Sana'a.

34 were killed and 17 others arrested, most in the south, they said.

Police could not identify those killed, except one, Muhammad Saleh al-Kazemi from the district of Mahfad.

However, information suggested their ages were ranging from 20 to 40 years old.

Examination of their bodies is underway.

HODEIDA

**Navy hunting Iranian boat carrying weapons and infected livestock**

Yemeni west-based Coast Guard is hunting an Iranian boat that the Interior ministry said was carrying weapons and sick livestock.

The ministry earlier ordered the Coast Guard in Hodeida province to prevent the boat from entering the country waters.

It posted on its website that the livestock were found infected with anthrax after they were tested by Qatari authorities which earlier prevented the boat from entering the Gulf state.

The hunt also comes amid accusations of Iranian support for the Houthi insurgents including providing them with weapons.

Apart from the topic, a campaign is to start in the next few days that will call for boycotting Iranian products amid accusations the Islamic Republic of Iran supports the Houthi rebels in the far north.

Chairman of the Watan Foundation for Boosting National Loyalty Ibrahim Malik Shuja'a said the campaign comes in protest at asking for external help against the national authorities.

All Iranian goods would be affected, he said, adding there must be no exceptions.

Earlier the foundation urged the government to cut the ties with Iran because Iranian support had already reached the insurgents, who have been fighting the army for almost six years.

HAJJAH

**Health minister pays war refugee camp visits**

Minister of Public Health and Population Abdul Karim Rasa'a inspected on Thursday along with governor of Hajjah Farid Mujawar and, Claire Bourgeois, the UNHCR representative in the country the progress on the construction of the Almezraq III refugee camp in Hajja in north Yemen.

The camp, being built by the UNHCR in association with the Islamic Relief Organization, is designed to accommodate 10,000 refugees from the war in the north as the army continues to battle the Houthi insurgents. Basic services would be provided for the camp refugees, Rasa'a said, appreciating the efforts exerted by relief agencies to help the displaced.

For her part, Bourgeois praised the level of coordination between the government and relief organizations to overcome difficulties to deliver aid for thousands of people affected by the confrontations. Rasa'a also paid visits to the Mezraf I Camp and the Mezraq II Camp, the latter was established by the UAE Red Crescent and the al Saleh Social Development Foundation, and he inspected the conditions of the refugees and education at them.

DHAMAR

**Workshop on early marriage effects kicked off**

A workshop on early marriage phenomenon and its negative effects on the individuals and society was kicked off here on Thursday, organized by the Democratic School in cooperation with the Nation Commission for Women.

The workshop, attended by 30 participants from Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), discussed papers on the early marriage risks and the need to

intensify the awareness amid the local societies on dangers of this phenomenon as well as the media role in this regard. In the workshop onset, Coordinator of Project to combat early marriage at the Democratic School Fatima al-Sultan reviewed the exerted efforts in creating a positive support and a legal objection as well as spreading awareness on this marriage risks which hinder women sector development.

A number of speeches delivered in the workshop confirmed the importance of the social participation across the provinces to activate the current law which bans the early marriage under the age of 17. This workshop comes within the One Million Signature Campaign launched by the Democratic School aiming to reduce the early marriage and persuade the parliament to revise not its decision taken on February 11, 2009 in which it defined the age of marriage at 17.

MUKALLA

**Al-Khanbashi inspects progress in Sheikh Khalifa residential city project**

Hadramout Governor Saleem Khanbashi inspected on Thursday the work progress in the residential project of Sheikh Khalifa bin Zaid Al Nahyan City for flood-affected people in city of Mukalla. The city project, to be implemented by the Red Crescent Society of UAE, consists of 1000 houses with health and education facilities and services located on area of 600,000 square meters, including 800 homes in areas of Hadramout Valley districts at a total cost of UAE dirham 100 million (1 UAE dirham = \$0.272). The governor urged the speedy completion of all works of construction during the next two months so as to contribute to starting the actual building of these housing units with facilities and public services according to the planned timetable of residential units' establishment in March 2010.

The foundation stone was laid last Saturday for building 200 residential units within the Sheikh Khalifa bin Zaid Al Nahyan City project for flood-affected people in Hadramout province. Yemen's Eastern provinces of Had-

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ramout and Mahrah witnessed heavy rains and flooding disaster in October, 2008.

AI MAHRAH

**Compensations for flood affected people in al-Mahrah next Sunday**

Fund of Re-Construction in al-Mahrah province would launch next Sunday payment of compensations for people who their homes damaged totally in the province last year due

to flood, director of the fund said. Mohammed Muhsin told Saba that the fund would pay compensations of YR 101 million for owner of 13 houses; 10 houses in al-Masilah district and three homes in Sihot district. In coming days, the fund would compensate people who their farms affected by the flooding, he added. He made it clear that the fund has paid compensations in different affected flood regions at 97 percent.

Their News

**Japan extends a grant aid of about 7.09 million USD in the area of environment and culture.**

Today at the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation in Sana'a, H.E. Mr. Abdulkarim Ismail Al-Arhabi, Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, Minister of Planning and International Cooperation and Mr. Masakazu Toshikage, Ambassador of Japan to the Republic of Yemen, signed and exchanged Notes for the provision of the 'Japanese Program Aid for Environment and Climate Change' in the amount of 620,000,000 Japanese Yen, approximately equivalent to 6.2 million US dollars, and the Cultural Grant Aid for the Central Laboratory of Sana'a University in the amount of 89,000,000 Japanese Yen, approximately equivalent to 0.89 million US dollars, totaling about 7.09 million US dollars.

The said environmental grant aid will be used to install solar photovoltaic system at Al Wahda Hospital in Aden, as a pilot project, in support of Yemen's efforts to develop alternative energy resources. The solar photovoltaic system is expected to reinforce the general electricity supply to the hospital and will be used as a model of operating a hospital without greenhouse gas emissions. In July 2007, Yemen participated in Japan's 'Cool Earth Partnership' initiative, under which the Japanese Government provides those developing countries willing to cooperate in the reduction of CO2 and other greenhouse gas emissions through development of environment-friendly energy resources.

The cultural grant aid, will be extended to provide Sana'a University with a variety of research equipment to boost its higher education and research on the environment and health. The research equipment will be installed at the Central Laboratory of Sana'a University and widely utilized for the promotion of chemistry and biological education and research. After the exchange of the Notes, H.E. Dr. Saleh Ali Basurrah, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research and Mr. Takeshi Komori, Resident Representative of JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) Yemen Office, signed the Grant agreement for the Cultural Grant.

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**IFC to help Yemen's Saba Islamic Bank develop Organizational and Risk Management Structure, Increase Access to Financial Services**

Sana'a, Yemen, December 16, 2009 - IFC, a member of the World Bank Group, signed an agreement to advise Yemen's Saba Islamic Bank on how to develop Organizational and Risk Management Structure and increase Access to Financial Services, helping to strengthen Yemen's banking system.

The initiative is IFC's first Advisory Services project with a bank in Yemen. It will help Saba Islamic Bank develop its operational and risk management structure, systems, procedures, and processes, helping it attract more investment and expand to provide financial services to smaller businesses and a wider segment of the population. IFC expects the initiative to have a strong demonstration effect on the overall banking sector in Yemen as Saba has the second largest outstanding loan portfolio in the country.

"Saba Islamic Bank is delighted to collaborate with IFC to bring international best practices to Yemen," said Sheikh Hameed Al-Ahmar, Chairman of Saba Islamic Bank. "Strengthening the risk an organizational management systems at Saba Islamic Bank will help install such systems across



the banking sector in Yemen and help develop our national economy."

"IFC strives to build the capacity of banks in Yemen so that they can play a greater role in the economic development of the country. Strengthening risk management is an important component of IFC's efforts to build the capacity of banks," said Lakshmi Shyam-Sunder, IFC's Director of Corporate Risk Management.

IFC has since 2007 provided more than \$7 million dollars in trade finance guarantees to Saba Islamic Bank through its Global Trade Finance program. Saba in 2007 also became the

first bank in Yemen, and the first Islamic bank, to join the trade finance program as an issuing bank, helping support Yemen's trade.

IFC's Advisory Services to Saba will be financed out of a three-year program supported by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development and implemented by the Investment Climate Services of the World Bank Group, in collaboration with Yemen's government and the private sector. The program will help remove the obstacles faced by the private sector of one of the region's most challenging markets.

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Despite thousands of deaths, Somali refugees risk everything to escape

# A crossing made in hell

By: **Abdinasir Mohamed Guled & Abdullah Omar**  
The Media Line Agency

**M**ohamed "Yarisow" Hassan lived in war torn Mogadishu for over 20 years before he attempted to flee to Yemen by boat.

He failed to reach Yemen three times, each time just barely surviving tragedies at sea.

Hassan carries an aged bag with some belongings, ready to board a car to Bossaso, from where he's hoping to catch a boat to Yemen and to a better life. He knows that Bossaso, the harbor where the migrants' journeys start, will be crowded with other determined youths looking to cross the Gulf of Aden in spite of all the difficulties.

"This is a thoroughly unpredictable, deadly journey" Hassan told The Media Line at a bus station in Jowhar town. "I pray to survive all the things you hear in traffickers' heartbreaking stories."

Every day, hundreds of immigrants are crammed into small wooden boats and ordered to sit on their knees as armed smugglers sit on guard at the edge of the boat. They face beatings by traffickers, the threat of sharks that prowl the waters where boats regularly break down, and the lack of water throughout the long journey.

According to survivors' testimonies, thousands drown every year, many of them forced off smugglers' boats often miles from the shore in deep waters.

"On my last attempt, traffickers badly beat a pregnant woman after she asked for a more comfortable position," he says, recalling the distressing journey to Yemen. "They threw her into the sea."

Hassan was beaten with gun-buts when he tried to stand for a breath of fresh air. He is lucky to be alive.

"I can hardly imagine the horror of that time," he said.

But despite the difficulties he is still hopeful he will fulfill his dream: a better life and a job in Saudi Arabia.

"It's a long journey that needs great efforts and patience," he said. "I know that I will undergo difficulties, but I can't bear what is happening in our country. Al-Shabaab may force you into war, and if you refuse they will kill you."

The numbers of immigrants coming into Yemen from Ethiopia, Somalia and Eritrea, are on the rise. Every month, thousands reach the shores of a country that is itself strained with internal fighting between its government and violent insurgents.

A September report by the UN refugee agency UNHCR found there were over 160,000 registered refugees in Yemen, 153,080 of whom were Somalis.

With the unabated chaos in Somalia, swathes of Mogadishu's inhabitants are looking to escape through any means possible. Officials in Puntland, a semi-autonomous region in northern Somalia, are finding it increasingly difficult to cope with the flow of migrants.

More than 15,000 Somalis are living in camps for internally displaced persons, but life in the camps is often so hard it pushes those that have survived to emigrate elsewhere. Most are struggling not only with the effects of long-term poverty and familial turmoil, but the additional traumas that have resulted from their daily exposure to bombings, violence, and the all pervasive fighting that has taken over their lives.

Mohamed Sheikh Ali, a former high school student who fled Mogadishu, said life was only marginally better in the camps. "I can say we have freedom of movement, but not a good life and no help except basic aid," he said. Analysts believe hundreds of children have died as a result of the war in Somalia.

"More than 150 children under 15 died while they were fighting alongside Al-Shabaab" Somali political analyst Nor Shamsudin told The Media Line in Mogadishu. "When you see children fleeing to neighboring countries as immigrants, you realize that the situation is incredibly desperate."

Despite the possibility of robbery, abandonment and coming across wild animals living in the shrub, refugees will travel long distances by foot to get across the border.

"I was beaten and robbed by three men with guns near the Sudanese border on my way to Libya," an anxious young survivor told The Media Line. "I was forcibly repatriated with nothing to do in Mogadishu."

Djibouti has also become a stop for large numbers of refugees on their way

to Yemen.

Fatima Ibrahim, 24, made a deal with human traffickers in Djibouti for a sea voyage to Yemen.

"I am about to leave to Djibouti through Somaliland," she said. "There is a ship there which will take us to Yemen. Being here in Mogadishu is not a life."

Her plans have not been easy on those close to her.

"I have tried to tell my husband and family about my plans but they all rejected it," she told The Media Line. "I can't listen to them, I have to leave soon."

Though the most popular destination is Yemen, where immigrants are mostly able to enter refugee camps, some are less lucky.

"Yemen is a good country, but as increasing numbers of people arrive, they are being jailed," Hassan said.

As his bus blared its horn and the driver pressed him to board, he left for Yemen, waving goodbye with only the small shoulder bag on his back.

## Somali bodies arrive in Yemen

There, on what they call the beaches of death, lay the body and dreams of a young Somali, washed up on the shore.

Two days ago, he left the Horn of Africa through the Somali port of Bossaso along with 124 clandestine passengers on board a crammed little boat.

Every year, thousands attempting to escape from poverty and war, put their lives in smugglers' hands to cross the gulf, where they hope, a better future awaits them. This man's dream ended, on the wrong side of the shore, and like many others, he is now just a body with a number for an epitaph resting in a graveyard overlooking the sandy beach.

Yasseen, an Ethiopian refugee was one of the 'lucky' ones who reached Aden alive. Badly bruised, dehydrated with skin sores and rashes, he set foot on the beach happy to have made it alive.

"I am determined to reach Saudi Arabia," says the 28-year old only a few hours after landing on the shores of Yemen, where he hopes to find someone to smuggle him to Saudi Arabia.

"Conditions on the boat were unimaginable," says Yasseen, who affirmed



Almost 170,000 Somali civilians have fled from Mogadishu since early May. Many cannot hide the strain.

some passengers go insane during the 36-hour trip.

"We were 120 people in a boat that can actually only take 20 people, all piled up over each other. We urinate, throw up and defecate in the same spot the smugglers put us. You go crazy," he said, as he prepared to meet one of the Mediciens Sans Frontiers doctors, stationed on the shores of Aden to provide emergency aid to new arrivals.

Another refugee, who identified himself as Youssef, said he came from the province of Walu in Ethiopia, and hopes to become a "political prisoner".

"When smugglers threw us on the water, they told us this was Saudi Arabia, but we discovered it was Yemen," says Youssef, who will have to cross around 3000km of inhospitable lands on his way to Saudi Arabia.

Passengers have reported being beaten savagely during the trip so as to keep them still. Abrupt movement can cause the boats to capsize and since language is a barrier, metal bars talk.

"For the smugglers, killing a refugee or two is as normal as drinking water," says an old woman, who made it with her young daughter after a similarly tough journey.

Women and children, and men are put into separate groups on the same boat but the treatment is the same for all, with no food and almost no water onboard.

Upon reaching the Gulf, the passengers are thrown overboard whether

they know how to swim or not, said Yasseen. Some are saved by their survival instinct; others swallowed up by the waters and drown.

Despite the dangers, many still choose to leave family behind and undertake the grueling crossing repeatedly until they succeed in entering Saudi Arabia or one of the Somali UNHCR (UN Refugee Agency) camps in Yemen, built to receive the newcomers.

Claire Bourgeois, head of UNHCR in Yemen admits the odds are against Somalis as well as Ethiopian refugees, whose numbers are swelling.

"The war in Somalia is driving tens of thousands to immigrate to Yemen. Ethiopians are also escaping famine," she says.

"We try to provide help when they land. But our funds are limited," she told The Media Line from her office in Sanaa.

Although thousands of refugees flock from the Horn of Africa seeking a new life in a western country, few of them actually make it.

Bourgeois says UNHCR has been given a quota to resettle around 700 refugees from Somalia, Ethiopia, Iraq, Sudan and Eritrea every year.

"Of course, the number is so small, it is nothing, the criteria to resettle is very tight," she admits.

Yasseen has seven days to leave the country, before being whisked away by police and locked up in the smoggy

prison cells of Yemen, where he faces yet another uncertain future.

UNHCR managed to get a seven-day grace period for Ethiopian refugees, before they are threatened with prison and deportation. In that time, many desperately try to join family members or relatives in Saudi Arabia or Yemen often with little idea of where they are.

For those who attempted the crossing to find a better life in Yemen or Saudi Arabia, the situation isn't as good as they hoped it would be. Those in Yemen live in overcrowded refugee camps under difficult circumstances and many of the girls and women often end up working in the sex trade.

The road ahead is still very long and filled with obstacles and hardship, admits Yasseen, with a tired smile on his scorched and emaciated face.

"We don't have a choice. We have to move on," he said with clear determination.

The journey has just started for Yasseen as he is drawn closer to his dreams, that of being a shepherd.

Many start the long walk across the inhospitable desert to Saudi the very next day. Like ghostly figures drifting over the sand with their white t-shirts and sarongs flapping over bony legs, they cross the inhospitable desert to Saudi armed with slippers and a bottle of water.

Despair inhabits those who have no other choice but to leave, wherever the destination, whatever the dangers.

## JUST ANOTHER DAY IN THE CAPITAL (10)

# Lifestyle of the poor and the faceless

By: **Judith Spiegel**  
For the Yemen Times

**T**his article was supposed to be about rich Yemeni's. About who they are, where they hang out and how they became rich. It turned out differently. Not because the rich are hidden, they are not. Just go to the Libyan Centre and meet the mother and daughter waiting for their eyebrows to be done in Yemen's most luxurious perfume shop. Or go to one of the hip coffee hang outs in Haddah and meet a group of graduates who all lived abroad and can afford a cappuccino or two for 500 YR, updating their Facebook accounts on their laptops.

They will all tell you that they consider themselves not rich, merely middle class. All of them have money through hard work, although all of them will tell you that others get rich through bribes, forgery and having family in high positions. They all speak fluent English and know perfectly well how to manage in life. The problem is that so many others do not. And you meet them all, on your way to or from the shopping mall or the coffee hang out. You have seen them before and you will see them again. And it is their image that gets stuck in your head.

Like the one of the mother on the stairs of the tunnel that leads from Bab al Sabah to Tahrir square. She is sitting there with three of her children. One of them is a little boy with a horrible wound on his belly. There is blood, and white and brown liquid. The wound is swollen and it looks as if a

worm is eating the boy's belly from underneath his skin. He is lying there, in front of the entrance of the public men's toilet, being 'exhibited' by his mother, in a desperate attempt to get some money. It is hard to look at the boy, but it is just as hard not to look at



him. The smell of urine is coming out of the public toilets, touching the boy's frail body on the cold concrete stairs.

A bit further down, in Gamal street, an old woman is caressing her husband's chest with one hand. With the other hand she is begging. Her husband is lying on the pavement. His grey bearded face sticks out of the blanket

she covered him with. He seems to be asleep and very ill. Her caressing hand shows a deep love, her begging hand a deep despair.

Not far from there, there is a scabby looking boy selling boiled eggs and potatoes. There is a man coming to his cart, begging for some food. He is wearing rags and holds a wooden walking stick in his hand. His skin is dusty and wrinkled but his face shows that he is not old. The boy gives him half a boiled potato, which the man devours in a wolf-like manner. Children aim their plastic Kalashnikovs at him and make fun of him. He does not notice and slowly stumbles on.

And there is the man without legs, who moves forward on his hands. He wears plastic flip flops on them, to make the dragging easier. There is no look on his face, he is just dragging on and on. From nowhere to nowhere. Or the women in the wheelchair, waiting every day and every night near the ATM, hoping she will get some of the money that just came out of the wall. Or the man with the tumor-like disfiguration of his upper arm, big as a basketball, who is leaning into the stopping debabs. Or the shouting mad man near the post office, living in a dark corner of the street and of his mind. Or the boy with the horrible skin disease near Bab al Jemen.

But then, a new problem arises, because what is this? Is this real, is this the face of the poor, or is this a freak show of urban poverty with very good players? According to many Yemeni, it is the latter. More than once, they tell you: "O no, they are not poor, some of

them are actually richer than you and I". And they tell you that these are people without shame. And not because they are so desperate they've lost their proud along the way, but because they suffer the "disease" of begging.

The real poor, according to these Yemeni, are living behind the closed doors and thick walls of the city. There are thousands and thousands of them who barely can make a living out of their petty jobs, if they have a job at all. "They struggle, but will not beg, never", a Yemeni says. "It is actually against our religion and our tradition to hold up your hand. We help our poor

neighbours silently, not the ones in the streets."

So perhaps the face of the poor is not the woman and her wounded boy, nor the man without legs. Perhaps it is the face of the woman who is endlessly sweeping the streets of the Old City, wearing a threadbare dark blue balto that covers her tiny body. She is working hard, sweeping the dust and the plastic bottles and wraps of chocolate bars that taxi drivers or children have thrown out in the street just minutes ago. She never smiles. Never.

Or perhaps it is the sad face of the old man in the debab who tries to find

his coin of 20 YR in the little plastic bag he holds on his lap. The bag carries the logo of a pharmacy but nothing more than that. The coin is gone. He is poor. As poor as the family opposite him, with the girl in her faded synthetic dress that was once new, and the boys in their worn suits and shoes that are some sizes too big.

Thus, ironically, perhaps part of this story was about the rich after all. Maybe the daughter and her mother who are having their eyebrows done are much closer to the mother and son on the stairs of the tunnel than most of us think. Who knows.

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## Words of Wisdom



In the final analysis, it is in the hands of the people in charge of this country to make our transformation towards democracy real and meaningful. It would be unfortunate if the change in Yemen remains merely a show or something superficial. Our politicians need to believe in preparing for the 21st century. To do that, they have to internalize some new values.

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



## OUR OPINION

## In solidarity with mother earth

Now that Copenhagen is over and the world's leaders have argued, agreed and disagreed on climate issues, it is time to analyze and bring home the conclusions of this summit.

We know that there has been much talk about countries cutting down their carbon emissions. The Kyoto Protocol of 1997 was a hot topic and countries pointed fingers at each other as to who has lived to their promises in decreasing emissions.

However, perhaps what is missing in all this discussion is whether Kyoto is the right approach or not? It is much more expensive to decrease the number of carbon dependent industries than to start new green ones. It is also unrealistic for many countries whose economy is dependent on such industries to throw away over night billions of dollars worth of investments, especially when the negative impact of these industries is usually not local.

The effects of global warming and climate change ironically are more present in poor countries that have not really contributed to making it and have no adequate resources to fight it.

Therefore, it is not fair to leave the issue of handling climate change to the politicians of powerful country's conscience. The environment is everybody's business and we need to involve the businessmen much more than they are involved currently. We also need to increase spending on green research in order to encourage scientists to invent profitable green ways so that the transfer from carbon to alternative is not very painful for the economies, which are already suffering.

Not only do we need to do that, but also equally important we need to make climate change a local issue in every city, town or village in the world. Students need to learn about climate change and how turning off the lights when they are not in the room would make a difference. Housewives need to relate to climate change and reuse water in their homes as much as possible. People need to understand the relation between using cars and global warming and learn to walk more... And so on.

Protecting the environment needs to become everybody's concern and priority.

And most importantly we need to take pride in doing small things that would protect the environment even if it is using less plastic, or electricity or even cutting back on smoking.

We need to do things together for the sake of ourselves and future generations, and to give back to our environment and mother earth that has given us so much.

Nadia Al-Sakkaf

## Gulf leadership confronting the Houthis

By: Abdul Rahman Al-Rashed

It is a coincidence that Kuwait is hosting the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] summit at the same time that the Jabal Dokhan region along the Saudi Arabian border is in flames. The fear of the Iraq-Iran war spreading to the Gulf led to the Gulf States forming the GCC thirty years ago in order to establish a common defence against any external aggression.

Today there is a problem that may not [initially] appear to be dangerous, and that is the Houthi rebellion in Yemen and this movement's infiltration of Saudi territory. Observers of the movement believe this reflects the hidden intentions of Iran.

**What can the GCC do against the Houthis?**

In my opinion, Yemen failing to resolve this battle will send a signal to Iran that it is capable of threatening the safety of the GCC by replaying this rebellion [in other Arab countries] and expanding the scope of the confrontation. I do not wish to exaggerate the military value of the Houthis, but we are facing the threat of the Iranian trend, rather than a battle in a remote area of limited strategic value.

It is natural that the officials in Iran and the GCC do not speak about the

indirect confrontation that is taking place between them, or on or near their borders, but the majority of indications point to this. Iran expanding the scope of the confrontation in the region to include Egypt, the Gulf region, and southern Saudi Arabia - completing the set of chaos - is not a fantasy, which is what is said by those who fail to understand what is taking place and refuse to be convinced that Iran is capable of all this.

The GCC leaders are meeting in Kuwait, and there are many issues on the agenda, controversial and others, yet the Houthi problem remains top of the agenda, because this is the purpose for which the GCC was established thirty years ago; namely to confront the Iranian threat. It is not required that they launch a collective war against the militias in Northern Yemen, but rather that they firstly acknowledge the disturbing situation, and secondly issue a clear declaration of support for Yemen against the rebels, and finally initiate a project that aims to support the Yemenis to confront the Houthis themselves.

Yemen is fighting three wars; the country has been in a state of war against the Houthi rebels in northern Yemen for four years; there is also the southern secessionist campaign, not to mention the fact that many Al Qaeda leaders and

members have swapped the mountains of Afghanistan for the mountains of Yemen. Therefore supporting Yemen and preventing its collapse, whether this is due to external plans or is a coincidence due to three wars taking place simultaneously, will also protect the entire Gulf region, not just Yemen alone. Sanaa cannot face the chaos in Somalia - its maritime neighbour; fight against the Al Qaeda organization, which the US troops failed to defeat; and maintain unity with the South, whilst at the same time fighting a group that is affiliated to Iran ideologically and with regards to its arms.

If the Gulf admits to these realities at the Kuwait summit, then the project to rescue Yemen must be top of the agenda. From here, Yemen can be explicitly aided militarily, politically, and economically. Openness means extending huge military support to Yemen, and this must be done publicly, rather than these countries making statements that they do not wish to interfere in Yemen's internal affairs. This will not be interference as long as it comes from the legitimate authority [Yemen], and in fact it is the duty of these countries to extend their support to protect the legitimacy of a country that is being targeted externally.

Source: Asharq alawsat

## Iran's plans for Yemen are destructive part 1

By: Raghida Dergham

There is striking evidence of regional consensus over forming a Lebanese national unity government after deliberate obstruction that lasted for five months and an international agreement to implicitly accept a Lebanese government that includes Hezbollah with a seat at the UN Security Council. Regional and international messages exchanged through the Lebanese arena are reassuring for the Lebanese and for the region, at least for now. Also reassuring is what the Saad Hariri Government claims by defining itself as "the government of achievements", signifying that it will focus on the economy, reform, job-creation and privatization, considering that consensus and rapprochement, especially between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Syria, provides a good window of opportunity for political stability that would be characterized by giving priority to the economy. All of this represents an opportunity for Hezbollah to position itself locally, regionally and internationally as a Lebanese political party that has its place and its standing, and to shake off its reputation as the third corner in what is referred to as the "Emirate Triangle", the common denominator being the fact that they receive rockets from Iran, as well as its enmity towards the United States and the countries of Arab moderation. Its enmity towards Israel is natural as long as there is no peace between Lebanon and Israel, but rather a state of war, since officially the conflict between the two still stands. Nevertheless, it is not in Hezbollah's interest to be part of a "triangle" or to form what is described as the "South Lebanon Emirate", alongside the "Gaza Emirate" under Hamas's supervision or the "Saada Emirate" under the Houthis in Yemen. The South's inhabitants may want to lend moral and

material support to help the Palestinians get rid of the Israeli occupation, but they most probably do not want to be party to the wars of the Houthis or of Al-Qaeda in Yemen. Such plans are truly destructive and are feared to turn Yemen into another Somalia. The responsibility of the Yemenis themselves is the prime consideration, this including the mistakes made by the Yemeni government and by President Ali Abdullah Saleh in particular. Nevertheless, there are external forces that are tampering with Yemen and there is interference, one which Iran in particular admitted to. The reactions of Saudi Arabia in warding off the spread of the fighting to its own soil are understandable, as are its fears that the internal conflict coupled with the dry nature of Yemen's territory could lead to an unnatural flow of human migration across its borders. Indeed, the geological aspect represents a "time bomb", according to one of the most prominent experts on Saudi-Yemeni relations, a matter which urgently requires a well-planned policy towards it, within Saudi Arabia, regionally and also in the United States, as does the possibility of Yemen turning into Somalia. Yet the aims of the Islamic Republic of Iran are difficult to understand in Yemen - beyond dangerous sectarian polarization - especially as such polarization involves the possibility of turning portions of Yemen's territory into fertile soil for Al-Qaeda. The slogans of enmity towards America and hatred towards the "Great Satan" seem necessary for the relationship of the Islamic Republic of Iran with the United States, even at a time of increased rapprochement between the two and increasing talk of behind-the-scenes agreements, of which allowing Lebanon to finally have its government cabinet is perhaps an indication. This does not negate the reality of the shifts and surprises, as well as the incomplete and bad policies in the region, for which Lebanon has become the testing ground. Today, however, the strongest indicator points to the fact that the correct interpretation of the situation is an American, regional, European, Russian and local necessity to avoid the available opportunity slipping into corridors and nightmares for everyone. In the issue of Lebanon, to begin with, the era of Fouad Siniora heading the Lebanese government in one of its most difficult phases should be bidden farewell to with appreciation, praise and congratulations for the pleasant surprise that was Fouad Siniora himself. Indeed, this capable man has set down an important cementing element for Lebanon, that of emphasizing the importance of state institutions for the future of the country, a legacy which it is necessary for the

current Prime Minister Saad Hariri to uphold and build upon insistently.

Lebanon's membership in the Security Council for the next two years strengthens the possibilities of it playing an exceptional role regionally and internationally, and such a role must strengthen its political and social internal fabric. Thus, instead of a reputation that turns it into an arena for proxy wars, and of sarcasm at its political structure and at its leaderships bound to external powers, the exceptional role played by the only Arab member of the Security Council can bestow on Lebanon a prestige it is in need of. This is if it correctly understands the qualities of such a position as well as its constraints, without exaggeration or excessiveness in giving the seat at the Security Council an importance that exceeds its bounds...

Lebanon's Permanent Representative at the UN Ambassador Nawaf Salam is capable of representing Lebanon in the best way at the Security Council, and with him is an excellent team of diplomats, most of them having experience with the Security Council and two of them having represented Lebanon during one of its most difficult phases as Chargé d'Affaires of its mission, namely: current Deputy Ambassador Caroline Ziadeh and diplomat Ibrahim Assaf. During this period and before it, Majdi Ramadan had also been with them in the Lebanese mission for years, and he has returned to join the team. Thus the performance of Lebanese diplomacy has been characterized by wisdom, flexibility and composure, and that is part of the prestige Lebanon seeks after. And because Nawaf Salam is an expert on international law, he has for example been able to play a fundamental and constructive role in bringing Arab stances closer together, and has participated in formulating an intelligent strategy in the Arabs addressing the report of Judge Richard Goldstone, which stated that Israel and Hamas had committed "war crimes and possibly crimes against humanity" in the Gaza war. This report will remain pivotal for Arab diplomacy at the United Nations and perhaps at the Security Council, especially if the Middle East peace process continues to deteriorate to rock bottom. Indeed, there is talk of the possibility of heading to the Security Council on the issue of the peace process, if the conclusion is reached that US sponsorship of such a process has reached a dead-end. In fact, the Security Council has adopted important resolutions over the peace process, including the resolution of establishing the state of Palestine alongside Israel on the basis of the road map.

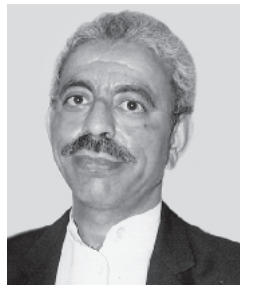
Source: Ya Libnan

## COMMON SENSE

## Civil Service Reform

## Any progress yet?

The War in Saudi Arabia, Sa'ada Province, Amran Governorate, Abyan Governorate and now even Arhab is perhaps



By: Hassan Al-Haifi

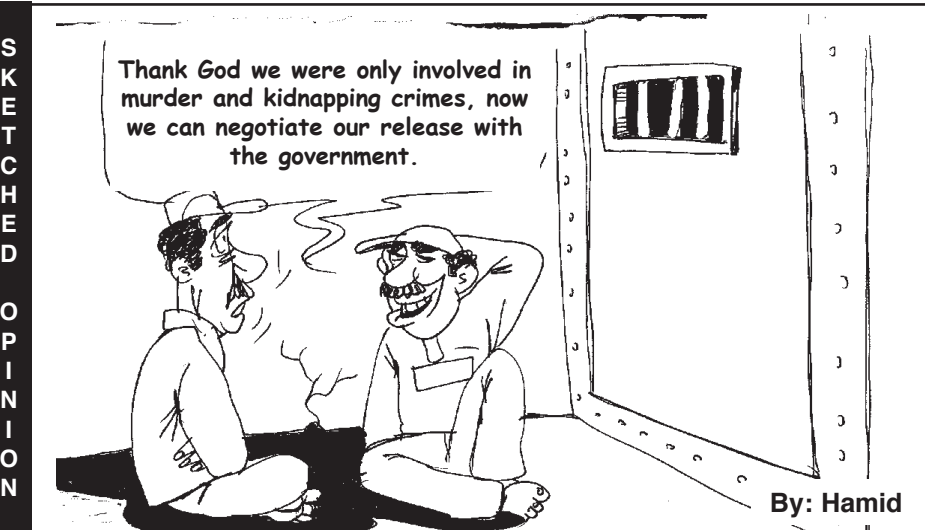
overshadowing every other happening in this most tested of lands. However one is bound to try to look at all the other things happening in this unfortunate country, in the hope of raising a bit of optimism that indeed there is hope. Well, for sure there are some developments worth some applaud and this is really a genuine and sincere observation not meaning to add more bonds to an already working business relationship. In fact, the Civil Service Reform Project has always caught the attention of this observer, because so much has been invested in it and some thanks are indeed due to the donors from the World Bank, to the Trust Fund, to the European Union and to the Yemeni Government for the funding they have provided in loans and grants. More than that the need for reforms in this vital apparatus of Government Administration cannot be overestimated, in order to bring down the horrendous bureaucracy that has opened up avenue of corruption in every corridor public service in Yemen, not to mention all the other symptoms of inefficient management of public affairs that need to be mitigated.

The Civil Service Reform Program started in the Mid 1990s and has entailed several studies, seminars, conferences and tangible measures to try to determine what the areas of reform should be and how can the reform program can bring down the high level of public expenditures on the recurrent budget. With most Government spending being used to cover payroll and other staff remunerations, it is understandable that the Government should strive to reduce this sponge of public funds and seek to reallocate any savings to directly needed investment projects so vital to Yemen's development needs. The most urgent areas for public investments to be channeled to include education, especially primary and intermediate level, as well as technical and vocational education, all of which have been failing in coming out with the output that will fulfill the qualified and efficient human resources development requirements for the Yemeni economy. With 55% of school age children dropped out or not enrolled at all in the school system, there is plenty of room for worry here. On the other hand, the issue of reducing the size of the civil service is not the only difficulty, which the Civil Service Reform has to address. There are several fronts in which the Civil Service Program is simultaneously working on to help bring the Yemeni Civil Service down to a more manageable and fundable size. The major effort in this regard has centered on the Biometrics Program of getting the employees of the Government to have employment cards that bear their photograph and their fingerprints. Notwithstanding the small number that has arisen despite the Biometrics, double dippers have been brought down significantly. However, the importance of the Biometrics effort can be visualized in the sophisticated data processing system in use now at the Civil Service Reform Program headquarters in the Ministry of Civil Service here in Sana'a and in the rush to complete the Biometrics completed for all civil AS WELL AS MILITARY personnel by June 30th 2010. The latter represents a very challenging and heretofore excluded component from the original CSRP plan. With the current difficulties in the Northern Part of the country in Sa'ada and the logistical nightmare of formalizing the military and securities services under one standardized ID system for all government employed personnel, it is indeed a challenging effort. Yet, it is reassuring to find that the CSRP team, also now headquartered in the MOCSAI (Ministry of Civil Service and Insurances) compound is quite confident that they can fulfill the deadline, barring any unforeseen difficulties, beyond the Project Units control. On the other hand, there have been offshoots that have stemmed from the CSRP, such as the Civil Service Fund (to deal with surplus non-working employees) and the CORE Teams that are supposed to implement the Reengineering and Restructuring Component, which is still a vital element of the reform, most of which will be undertaken in the next stage of CSRP.

What prompted this observer to discuss this vital part of the overall Economic, Financial and Administrative Reform Program, being undertaken by the Yemeni Government since 1995, is that there has indeed been a marked improvement in the way the Project Unit overseeing the overall CSRP does its own processing administrative work. This observer had a chance to see the significant improvement in this regard, when for services rendered to the CSRP unit just before the Eid Al-Adha holidays, the processing of the transaction was completed within 24 hours of the arrival of the invoice. For this, the observer was compelled to again say that there is indeed hope that things can be done efficiently and expeditiously by our civil service and the CSRP project unit is making sure that it is a viable example for all to follow accordingly.

This marked improvement should be credited to the Director of the CSRP Unit and Vice Minister, Mr. Nabil Shamsan and his administrators including Omer Al-Beidhani, Project Financial Manager and Ahmed Yousef Project Coordinator, who work until midnight sometimes daily, including weekends, which in itself is revolutionary for the Yemeni civil service.

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



By: Hamid

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Ali Saeed  
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Mahmoud Assamiee  
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Offices

Aden Bureau:  
Ridhwan Alawi Ahmed  
Tel: +967 (2) 347-057, 346596  
Fax: +967 (2) 347056  
Email: [ytden@y.net.ye](mailto:ytden@y.net.ye)

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

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# Yemen Press Review

## Sa'ada displaced persons ordeal continues

This week Sa'ada war took a backseat to the attack in Abyan on Al-Qaeda which hogged the headlines indisputably.



**Al-Thawra:** The official state run newspaper reported that the medical team in Haradh Camps for displaced persons fleeing the war in Sa'ada has expanded and hence more medical provisions are now available to the refugees. Twelve additional medical tents have been added to receive more patients and hasten the health check up process for the thousands of families in the camps. The services provided by the medical teams include two parts: medications and curative healthcare and the second part is epidemic and infectious diseases control.

Similarly, the president in a meeting yesterday with the defense council emphasized that ending the Houthi presence in Sa'ada remains a priority and the state does not regret any decisions it has made in this issue. During the meeting a report on the progress in

Sa'ada was narrated indicating that the government's army is gaining grounds in the conflict areas against the Houthis.



**26 Sept:** Another government source, the army affiliated newspaper also spoke about the progress the government is making in Sa'ada. The newspaper's headline explained that Houthi leader Abdulmalik Al-Houthi fled from Matra area after being chased by the Yemeni army. Another Houthi leader, Hassan Hamoud Ghataya was killed in Maran area by the security forces who are now according to the media are in control of the area. The army has also gained control of Dhahyan area in Sa'ada and destroyed a Houthi hideouts while confiscating the arms and ammunitions in that hideout. The army's progress has included areas in Amran governorate such as Harf Sufian and the road to Al-Jawf governorate. The site went on to say that Houthi rebels are in desperate conditions and have been scattered all over the areas after the lost their concentration areas and many of their leaders.



**Al-Eshtraki Net:** The Yemeni Socialist Party website also reports on Sa'ada but from the Houthi perspective. The news here says that Saudi air force has carried out 41 raids and launched 1011 rockets and missiles on the Yemeni side of the border two days ago. However, the Houthis claim that they have gained control of the previously controlled Saudi area in north Al-Khuba on Friday in the Saudi border. Yet they admitted that there have been more than 120 hostages killed during an attack on a Houthi hideout in the past few days. The identity of those hostages was not revealed, however the houthis statements indicate that they were either army men or tribal people involved in the fight against houthis.

**Presidential national dialogue with opposition**  
Following up on the president's invitation to a roundtable discussion to be carried out on Dec. 26th, much of the news in Yemeni press either talked about preparations to make this meeting a success, or condemnation

termining it as another futile attempt for insincere reconciliation.



**Al-Motamar Net:** Under the leadership of the Shoura Council chair Abdulaziz Abdulghani, the council proceeds with preparatory steps for the meeting to be held next Saturday. According to the website run by the ruling party the General People's Congress, this invitation has met with a lot of support from distinguished personalities and members of the local councils and tribal sheikhs from all over the country. The site emphasized that the Shoura council will be leading this dialogue in order to become a somewhat neutral body to reconcile the differences between opposition and the state on national concerns.



**Al-Wasat:** The independent weekly reported a brief about an interview with Prime Minister Dr. Ali Mujawar to be published in full next week, that opposition parties must submit to dialogue

and acknowledge the invitation they received from the president to solve disputes. He said that for the sake of a nation's best interest the opposition must compromise its "crazy" desires to gain personal interests. Apparently their demands have already been met even if partially and many ministers and authority figures have already been called to court on corruption related investigations. Mujawar also confirmed that southern states have had more investment and development projects than northern areas.

## Will Yemen host Khaliji 20 eventually?

**The regional sports championship which Yemen is to host in November 2010, has also been present in several Yemeni media especially after an interview the president had given to Dubai Sports Channel last week.**



**Al-Motamar Net:** Yemen is ready to host the championship, was the main headline for this news in the state run website. Aden and Abyan were chosen two years ago as the host cities and infrastructure

projects have been ongoing in order to meet the requirements for this regional event. The president emphasized that the situation in Aden and Abyan will be suitable security and infrastructure wise by that time, without going into deals as to how and what will be done regarding the southern movement or Al-Qaeda threat in Abyan.

Al-Sahwa Newspaper of the opposition Islah party contradicts this assurance and throws doubts at Yemen's capability to host this event. Most of the criticism centers around the seriousness of the committee responsible for preparing the cities for this important sports event. A report by the parliamentary committee on sports and youth disagrees with the official statements, as the committee post its field visits to the sites supposed to host the event, issued a report highlighting the short comes and lack of serious progress. The newspaper also repeats what the Kuwaiti Sports Union chief said some time ago to a Bahraini sports magazine that he would not be surprised if Yemen is not able to host the event eventually. He also went on to say that Bahrain should have been the country to host the regional championship rather than Yemen.

## Listen to me!

By: Esther Dyson

Last week, I wrote a 140-character hotel review on Twitter: "Galleria Park Hotel SF rejects noise complaint from ill-trained guest: 'Next time, ask for an interior room, not just a quiet room.'"

I was frustrated because the hotel management was not listening to me when I asked for a quiet room – or later, when I complained. Instead of training their employees to listen, they were telling me that I hadn't made the right request. And the hotel managers probably were not listening to me later via Twitter, either.

Of course, it used to be difficult to listen to customers; as a company, you could not station people everywhere to pick up random comments, and few customers cared enough to write actual letters – positive or negative. Service companies such as airlines could ask employees to collect feedback, but it was overly complicated.

Nowadays, however, customers are commenting everywhere, and all a company has to do is listen – electronically and humanly. Nonetheless, most companies still think of all the new technologies that I write about primarily as message-sending devices – ways to promote their brand, create an image, and sell their product. Companies spend a lot of time watching customers, trying to figure them out, but so little time listening to them.

Indeed, there are lots of depressing statistics about how poorly companies listen. They don't respond effectively to feedback or to questions submitted through their Web sites. Many simply don't reply at all. Others send bland emails – "Thank you for writing to us" – without responding to the particular question or comment.

And then they spend thousands or even millions of dollars trying to figure out what these same customers really want.

What all companies really need to do to improve their performance is to

get better at listening to the conversations that are already out there on the Internet. They can listen for many purposes – from figuring out what products or services to offer and understanding which customer wants what, to repairing the damage done when something goes wrong.

There are two modes of listening. There's the listening you do to learn, which ideally can be somewhat automated. You can use sentiment-sensing tools – everything from tools that measure the prevalence of negative or positive words about your offering on Twitter and Facebook, to customer surveys that produce precise, structured data. You can find out, for example, that last month 56% of your users would recommend your product to a friend, versus 79% the same time last year. Oops! Better do some more listening!

Then there are the more subtle signals to listen to statistically – whether they are feedback direct to your Web site, emails, press mentions, or Twitter

and Facebook feeds. What features – positive or negative – are mentioned most often? Which competitors are highlighted? What other companies or products are most often discussed along with yours? Could they be possible marketing partners?

All of that is important, but then there's the listening you do so that your customers can feel listened to. That's something a computer cannot do. It requires a person.

You can reduce the burden to some extent by creating a community of your customers (and prospects) so that they can listen to one another. Take a site I just visited this morning, for Fitbit, a self-monitoring tool that lets you measure your physical motion, and by implication your exercise, calorie consumption, sleep time, and other factors.

If that's unclear to you, just visit the site and ask questions; other users will answer most of them, and sometimes the staff (identified with a red badge under their names; occasionally it's the

CEO) will chime in with "official" information. Fitbit is not unique; it's one of many start-ups that are using their own customers to help them achieve greater scale in listening. (Yes, the chatter was encouraging enough that I just ordered one!)

But most important is listening well enough to say, "We're sorry" in a convincing way. Not, "We're sorry you didn't appreciate our wonderful service," but, "We're sorry we screwed up and gave you a noisy room." In other words, you need to reply with enough detail to show that you listened.

Refunding a customer's money – or giving them a free complementary breakfast – is easy. But how can you make up for the headache they had all day from lack of sleep? You can't – but showing that you noticed their unhappiness with you counts for a lot. That's the thinking behind one of my favorite customer-care proposals: that lost luggage should get its own air miles – thus making the customer feel

that the airline acknowledges the error and is suffering along with the customer.

In the end, listening carefully is the best way to show respect for anyone, customer or partner, friend or boss. Even though companies do it for business purposes, they have to do it with human sincerity. One of my favorite cartoons – from The New Yorker – shows a retail salesman standing next to a display case labeled "Communication technology." Inside the case? Human ears.

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## Balconies: Mishka Mojabber Mourani's extended self in a Mediterranean memoir

By: Magda Abu-Fadil  
Director of Journalism Training Program at the American University of Beirut  
Huffington Post

"I am sitting on the balcony you loved so well and look at the flowers you tended with such care. I took them for granted until you left us," she wrote longingly. "They are still here, in mummy's care."

Now Mourani grows her own, she adds, and knows the secret that every bloom brings.

"It is a blessing. A message of grace."

"Balconies" was distributed by Lebanon's Dar An-Nahar, which will market it in Europe and promote it during Beirut's International Book Fair next week.

Mourani hopes to have the book published in the U.S. and Canada where large Lebanese and Greek communities live.

"I'd like that for my father and for my uncles," she concluded.

It's a labor of love for Egyptian, Lebanese and Greek balconies, interspersed by wars, displacement, marriage, birth, death, fond family souvenirs, and an experience that is uniquely Mediterranean.

And it could only have been written by someone quintessentially Levantine half-Greek, cosmopolitan, well traveled, multilingual, and, who's felt most at home on balconies in Alexandria, Beirut and Athens, despite an emigration hiccup to Australia, and back, in her late teens.



"I had an 'ah-ha!' moment about the balconies," explained Mishka Mojabber Mourani about going through family pictures she cherished that were all shot on various balconies around the Mediterranean as she sought a framework for the book that had been writing itself for two decades.

What reinforced it was a trip to Dubai two years ago and realizing there were no balconies there.

"Isn't that amazing? There's a functional reason (the oppressive weather). Any balconies they have are purely decorative and they serve no purpose," she said, adding that balconies were very much part of who she was. "You can't live without one."

Mourani (née Marie Christine Mojabber) is the elder of two daughters born to a Lebanese-Syrian Christian father and Greek mother in Egypt's second city, Alexandria, made famous by Lawrence Durrell's quartet.

"The people of the Mediterranean consider their balconies natural extensions of their homes, and their balconies are vital to their personal spaces," she wrote in the preamble to "Balconies: A Mediterranean Memoir."

Levantines -- people from Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine -- use their balconies

as social and breathing spaces, confessionals and a means both to distance themselves from, and become participants in, occurrences marking their lives, she noted.

In Mourani's case, those balconies also witnessed wars, civil and otherwise, exile, and the meaning of identity and plurality.

The last conflict she endured was Israel's onslaught on Lebanon in July 2006 during which she saw Beirut being pounded and the capital's port targeted, a few hundred yards from her sixth-floor balcony.

"My child trembles in my arms. She has not said a word. She looks up to me, and I see her eyes have become those of an adult," Mourani writes of her then 'tween daughter Cara. "She takes me by the shoulders and says, 'Promise you will get me out of here.'"

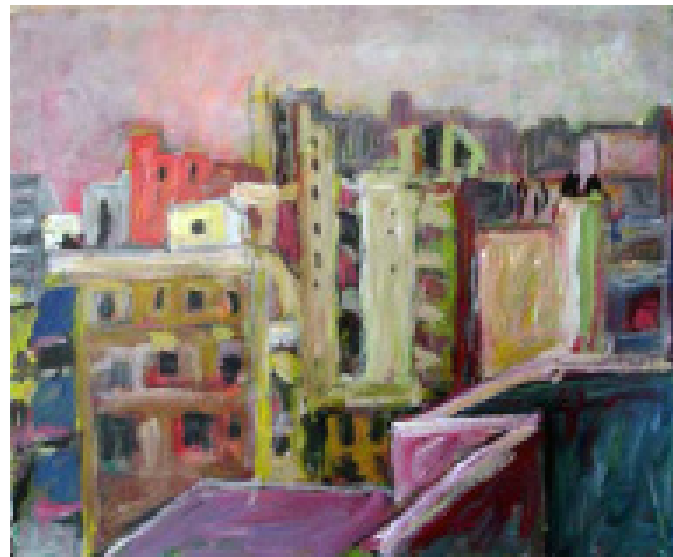
It was gut wrenching for Mourani, who had lived through the Israeli invasion of Beirut in 1982, and seen IDF troops under her balcony.

She took Cara to safety in California, where Mourani's sister lived and had returned after being trapped in Beirut with her husband and two children that summer while on a visit.

Mourani's earlier balcony also had its share of strife.

Militiamen, who broke into her family's home, used its exposed location during Lebanon's 1975-1990 civil war to shoot at their enemies.

But all is not grim. Mourani warmly recalls idyllic summers until she was 15 with her mother Katy's family in the Athens suburb of Nea Zmirni, sitting on balconies listening to family members reminisce about Egypt's



"Balconies" book cover painting by Samir Khaddaj

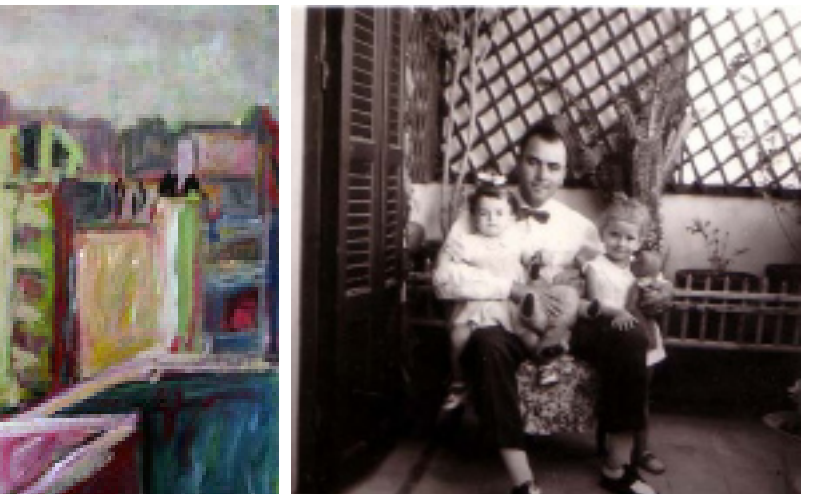
"good old days" where they had grown up.

Mourani and her sister Carrie would go out for treats with older members of their Greek family and be taken to open air cinemas showing movies appropriate for children's viewing.

At the time the sisters were the youngest members of a wide circle of loving people encompassing three generations, Mourani wrote.

"It's very much part of who I was," she told me referring to that side of her family and chuckling about "hand gestures that don't appear on paper."

She recalled her Greek relatives giving endearing diminutive names to people, foods and things and said she looked forward to the day she and Carrie would become "yiyaiathes" (grandmothers) who bestow blessings the way her grandmother, mother and



Mourani, right, with father William Mojabber and sister Carrie on their Alexandria balcony in 1956 (Mourani)

aunt always did and do.

She sent a copy to her aunt Dora in Greece for the latter's 95th birthday.

The petite Mourani is a sensitive poet, a wife, a mother, and a resilient down-to-earth woman with a healthy sense of humor.

She is senior vice president of International College, a leading private school in Lebanon, who helped keep the institution running through the country's various upheavals.

Mourani recounts going straight to her balcony, her sanctuary, to inspect her plants, after a partial mastectomy and radiotherapy in 2001.

"The panorama of our public was cannot be complete without a glimpse of the inscapes from my personal balcony."

She winds down her book with a moving letter to her late father.

"I am sitting on the balcony you loved so well and look at the flowers you tended with such care. I took them for granted until you left us," she wrote longingly. "They are still here, in mummy's care."

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## Fly on the wall

### Chapter 8 - The Mystery is Solved

Written by: Cathy Sewell  
Illustrated by: Blaise Sewell  
Donated by: The Curriculum Closet  
(www.curriculumcloset.com)

After a couple of weeks, the pod in the corner of the newspaper office starts to move.

The entire newspaper team sat and stared at the object in the corner of the office. It had been hanging there motionless since the day Mary disappeared but now it wiggled and shivered. After a few minutes, the swaying turned into a jerking movement.

"I don't know about this..." Rocko whispered. "What if it's some kind of animal... that eats bugs?" And with that, Rocko took off running. He didn't get far before he tripped and started rolling. He rolled right through Ricky and the ant troop like a bowling ball.

"Strike!" Matty said, as the ants went flying in all directions.

"Sorry about that," Rocko said to Ricky, reaching out his hand to help him up. "I didn't mean to bowl through you like that."

"It's cool," Ricky said. "We're warriors. It takes more than a rolling centipede to hurt us. Right men?"

"Right, Sir!" the ants barked back. But Rocko noticed a couple of ants rubbing the top of their heads.

"Hey, look!" Cindy yelled.

The pod was splitting open. And then, right before their eyes, the most beautiful butterfly magically emerged from the torn pod. Everyone was amazed by the display of orange, red and purple. Nobody moved and nobody spoke. They just stood there with their mouths wide open.

"Hey everyone, vacation's over!" the butterfly announced. "Did you miss me?"

And as soon as the butterfly spoke, the mystery was over.

"Mary, is that you?" José asked. "What

happened to you?"

"Well, it's a long story. I suppose I should have told you all before I went into the chrysalis," Mary started. "But it happened rather quickly."

"I'm sorry I almost punched you," Jake confessed. "But I didn't know it was you inside that thing!" And Jake told Mary about the close call.

"Yeah Jake, that could have been bad," Mary said. "Thanks for not punching me," then Mary reached out and jabbed Jake in the arm. Everyone laughed while Jake backed away from Mary, trying to look brave.

"So what have you guys been up to, besides trying to punch me?" Mary asked.

"Oh Mary," José started. "You would not believe everything that has happened. We have already put out two editions of the Fly on the Wall Journal. We've added puzzles and ads and even the bees are involved now!"

"Wow, that's great! I hope there's still a job for me here," she said, a little worried.

"Well, now that you can fly, I think you should be a reporter like me," José suggested.

"Great idea kiddo," Cindy said.

"Thanks grandma," José joked back.

"I... think... that's a good idea..." Queen Sarah joined in, landing near the group. The gang was so excited to see Mary that nobody noticed Sarah's return. "I have a new story idea for you. There's something going on at the lake. Hundreds of humans are gathering around the water," Sarah announced her scoop.

"Well, it sounds like we have our first story to investigate together, partner," José said, hovering over the branch waiting for Mary to join him.

"Sounds good! Let's go!" Mary's colorful, new wings flapped slowly as she took her first flight as a butterfly.

The new reporting duo flew away together, and the Fly on the Wall Journal team was now complete.

## CULTURAL SERIES FACES & TRACES

### M. Rajaa Al-Naqqash

A Pioneer of Contemporary Literary and Intellectual Critique

By: Eyad N. Al-Samman  
alsammanworld@yahoo.ca

Al-Naqqash, Muhammad Rajaa, was an Egyptian journalist, critic, author and intellect. He was born on September 3, 1934, in Minyat Samannud, a village in Daqahliyah Governorate, Egypt. Al-Naqqash studied his primary up to secondary education in his village's schools during the 1940s. In the late 1951, he moved to Cairo and enrolled at the Arabic Section of the Faculty of Arts, Cairo University. During his study, he wrote articles in Lebanese newspaper «Al-Aadaab» and in mid-1953 he worked as a copyreader in «Al-Jumhuriyah» newspaper, the mouthpiece of then Revolutionary Command Council in Egypt. When Al-Naqqash was aggressively laid off from «Al-Jumhuriyah» newspaper in mid-1954, he moved to work as a copyreader with «Al-Etha'ah» weekly magazine. After his graduation in 1956, he started working as a texts' reader in a radio station then he became an editor in «Al-Bolais» magazine. During the late 1950s, Al-Naqqash traveled to Damascus to edit articles in «Al-Jamaheer» Syrian newspaper during the era of the United Arab Republic. He became an editor of «Rose al-Yusuf» magazine and worked there from 1959 to 1961 and then became a literary editor in both «Akhbar Al-Yawm» and «Al-Khbar» newspapers from 1961 to 1964. In the same year, he returned to work as a literary editor in «Al-Jumhuriyah» newspaper up until 1965.

Al-Naqqash then moved to work as the editor-in-chief

of «Al-Hilal» magazine starting from 1965 and up to 1971. He was assigned to be the editor-in-chief and the chairman of the board of «Al-Etha'ah wa Al-Televyoon» magazine from 1971 to 1972. He also worked as a literary editor of «Al-Mosawir» magazine for the 1972-1979 period. Al-Naqqash had to move to Doha, Qatar, for political reasons to work there as the editor-in-chief of daily newspaper «Al-Rayah» for the 1979-1981 period. In Qatar, he also established and headed the cultural magazine «Al-Doha» from 1981 to 1986.

After his return to Egypt, Al-Naqqash became the editor-in-chief of «Al-Mosawir» magazine in 1988, the editor-in-chief of «Al-Kawakib» magazine in the 1990s and afterwards he contributed his weekly articles for «Al-Ahram» newspaper and became a full-time writer in the same magazine.

Al-Naqqash is distinguished with his prolific literary production in various fields related to literature, culture, critique, journalism and art. He authored many books and collections, many other critical articles regarding literature and cinema, biographies and other intellectual studies.

Al-Naqqash's book entitled «Mahmud Darwish: the Poet of Occupied Territories» (1969) shed a light on Palestine's poets of resistance and its poetic heritage. This book tackled also the life and poetry of Mahmud Darwish as a sample of those resistant poets. In the book entitled «Abul-Qasim ash-Shabbi: The Poet of Love and Revolution» (1971), Al-Naqqash tackled different aspects of the life of this poet and included also analects of his po-

*Faces & Traces is a cultural series of concise biographies of local or international famous and obscure personalities in fields such as literature, arts, culture and religion in which these individuals contribute affirmatively. It is a short journey in contemporary history, attempting to tackle numerous effective characters in human civilization.*



etry. In his book «Abbas Al-Aqqad between Rightism and Leftism» (1973), Al-Naqqash presented a complete study regarding the political life of Al-Aqqad and his attitudes from Marxism, Zionism, Nazism, Arabic unity and the Egyptian Revolution of 1952. Al-Naqqash's book entitled «Isolated Writers in Egypt: A Reply dedicated for Luis Awad, Tawfiq El-Hakim and Others» (1981) contained a collection of his articles written as replies to the campaign raised against Egypt's Arabism and Arabic nationalism by three renowned Egyptian writers. His book entitled «Abdul-Aziz Al-Twijiri: the Author, Historian and the Human» (2008) contained a collection of studies regarding this Saudi writer and his diverse writings in literature and history. It also focused on Al-Twijiri's penned book about King Abdulaziz ibn Saud (1880-1953).

In the field of theatrical critique, Al-Naqqash published two books entitled «Fee Adhwa'a Al-Masrah» (In the Theatre's Spotlights) and «A Small Chair in front of the Curtain» which covered editorially different seasons of Egyptian theatre during the 1960s and included valuable articles about the international theatre. He also published a book entitled «The Shakespeare's Ladies» which tackled female characters appeared in Shakespeare's literary dramas.

Three books were published posthumously for Al-Naqqash including «Will Arabic language commit suicide?» in which he tackled the direct attack that Arabic is exposed to in this era. He pointed also to the required steps leading to preserve the Arabic language and its unique identity. The second book entitled «Dying While Wearing the Sleepwear» which comprises a literary collection about poetry, literature and life in Palestine. The last book entitled «Three Women from Egypt» in which Al-Naqqash tackled the life and cultural traces of three significant Egyptian female writers.

Among his other literary books are «Geniuses and Crackpots» (1990), «Talking about Loving Naguib Mahfouz» (1998), «The Mystery of Umm Kulthum» (2004), «Philosophers and Artists» (2005), «Most Interesting Love Stories in the Orient and West», «Writing about the Crisis of Culture in Egypt» and «A Queen looks for a Groom.»

Al-Naqqash received the State's Appreciative Prize in 2000 in Egypt and was conceded the epithet of the man of the year in 2005 in the United Arab Emirates. He also was honored in 2007 by the Egyptian Press Syndicate and received appreciative shields of the Press Syndicate, Al-Hilal House and the Congregation Party in Egypt.

Al-Naqqash passed away in Cairo, Egypt, on February 8, 2008, at age 74. He once said: «Open your eyes to see clearly the life around you. Most likely you see only what you think in and what it dominates your mind and life.» Al-Naqqash was not only a literary critic but also a spiritual critic for life, society and intellect. He discovered many cultural and literary talents and presented them through his articles to consequently be himself dubbed «The Pearls' Hunter.»

#### Reading Comprehension Questions & Activities:

1. What was the mystery object in the corner of the room?
2. Make a list of all of the characters from the story and what role they played in the «Fly on the Wall Journal.»
3. Who was your favorite character and why?
4. Draw a picture of your favorite part of the story.
5. Write chapter nine to the story.
6. Write to the author and illustrator: nie@curriculumcloset.com or The Curriculum Closet, 2609 West Greenleaf Ave, Floor 3,

Chicago, IL 60645 USA

**Insect World:** As a class, discuss how you could raise a caterpillar to a butterfly. Determine the best environment for your project by researching appropriate habitat and nutrition needs for your insect.

**Newspaper Connection:** What does your newspaper contain, that is missing from the Fly on the Wall Journal? (Television Guide, Obituaries, etc.) Create a sample of this page for the Journal.



Meeting today's  
video surveillance challenges



See what you've been missing  
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Infected with diseases, shortage of resources and exploding population,

# Taiz on alert

By: Amel Al- Ariqi

A statement signed by twenty human right activists, doctors, journalists and lawyers, was issued last week to warn about the health situation in Taiz, which is moving towards the worst.

Taiz is suffering from poor sanitary conditions and a spread of diseases, which brings the governorate with a population of two million under the category of an "epidemic area", says the statement.

The statement which was outcome of a workshop that took place, on Monday, at the Women's Forum for Researches and Training, called for "effective rapid measures and procedures."

The statement wasn't the only call for 'alert' coming from the city, which is one of the major cities and the largest industrial base in Yemen. Many campaigns have been launched in facebook to express "solidarity" with "the disaster area", "the city which is doomed by epidemics", "seeking help and relief", and many other titles, which have been given to the Taiz province, in group dissections.

Taiz also occupied the headlines in local newspapers, and columns, with writers demanding the resignation of some ministers and officials on their failure to save the province.

But what is going on in this province?

The province has suffered critical water scarcity since the 70s, and particularly that, the city's population is on a marked increase. The indicators are alarming fortelling a real disaster due to massive water shortage and lack of any attempts to contain the looming crisis.

Though several water projects were conducted in the area, beginning in the end of 1960s, unfortunately, such projects provided only temporary solutions; so, the problem has returned and residents' suffering is hovering again, to the extent that water has been cut for three to four weeks, causing both health and environmental problems, as reported by the Ministry of Environment and Water.

Though, the province is continuously threatened by torrents of rainfall as most areas are situated in mountains (about 1400 above the sea level), rainfall flows annually down the mountain slopes and great quantities of water are lost.

Mahmoud Mohammed Abdulwali, director of Taiz Local Corporation for Water Supply and Sanitation said that the available water resources are insufficient to meet the area's water demands and that they are relying completely on groundwater.

The residents of Taiz tend to dig of



A well in the rural area of Abyan which has been polluted over time due to inadequate use.

wells randomly, put plastic containers on the roofs of their houses, build cement ponds in an attempt to harvest rain water as well as send their children to fetch water from bathrooms of mosques, or valleys, or buy water tankers.

The situation of water shortage leading to health and environmental problems, has aggravated in face of the outbreak of fatal diseases such as kidney failure, malaria, dengue fever and others, in the province. Conflicting statistics from the ministry of health and hospitals in Taiz, confirmed the poor medical monitoring system in the province. For example, regarding the dengue fever which re-hit the city last September, according to Ministry of health there are 914 infected cases and no death cases, while according to the director of Al-Tawan government hospital, there are about 2000 dengue fever cases, and at least 50 death cases.

Yemeni journalists Najeeb AlSharabi, Law University lecturer Ruba Munsor, dr. Zaher Almaqtari, and others were diagnosed with dengue fever as soon as they entered the hospitals and passed away last November. However, the cause of death, as reported by the hospital to their families, was Pneumonia.

"It's not a wrong diagnoses," commented Dr. Sadek Al-Shma'a, who is specialist in internal diseases.

"Dengue fever is transmitted to people via a mosquito bites, which attacks the platelets and weakens the immune system, distorting many systems in a few days, when the patient may get infected by kidney failure, or pneumonia, bleeding and

pass away," explained Al-Shma'a,

Al-Shama'a also confirmed that infected cases must have access to immediate treatment under the supervision of physicians, adding that though there is no specific treatment for dengue, appropriate medical care frequently saves the lives of patients with the more serious dengue fever.

Al-Shama'a noted that the number of infections had increased since October and November, due to the widespread use of uncovered water tanks. "After the monsoon, swamps and open sewers contribute much to the reproduction of the vector, known as Aedes [mosquito] that transmits the fever" he noted.

Dengue fever, which was observed for the first time in Yemen in 94, headlines the Yemeni press currently. Some writers asked the Minister of Health to resign, accusing the whole ministry of corruption, and indifference to the medical state in the city.

The outbreak of dengue fever exposed many issues, including weakness in the medical sector, and critical degradation in environmental status.

In the province of Taiz there are only 4 governmental hospitals, 12 medical centers, and about 25 private hospitals. Only 600 physicians are working in the governorate, according to Shama'a, which means about 33,000 persons per doctor.

"It was a catastrophic situation, hospitals were crowded with patients," Al-Shama'a commented.

The monsoon (started from August until middle of November) has gone by, and people -by experience - know

how to cover and store water in their homes and that helps - sort of - to control the spread of the diseases, according to Ashma'a.

However '82 percent of the population in the province suffered from Dengue Fever', showed a recent survey from a the central medical centre in Taiz. "The team who conducted the survey -last November- tested the blood of many people and covered different areas in the province. The tests showed that many people are now carriers of the virus and even their bodies showed stronger resistance to the disease at present, they are more vulnerable to suffer again, in case of getting bitten by the mosquito again. I'm afraid that the mortality rate among them will increase to 10 percent," Shama'a said.

Dengue fever outbreak discloses the urgent need to correct the medical and the environmental situation in this province, said Shama'a "the dam of Alamria, for example, was built close to sewage system of Tiaz city. About two kilometer surrounding the area we found many Malaria cases, and ten kilometers from that region, we found many cases of dengue fever," he said.

Dr. Mohammed Asdeh, internal physician, emphasised the link between the widespread of diseases and the environmental circumstances.

"Doctors should take into consideration the Environment background of the patients."

Stagnant water and pollution, a most suitable for breeding ground for mosquitoes and insects vector of diseases like Malaria, dengue fever, is commonplace according to Asdeh.

"the responsible ministries including Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Environment, and Ministry of Health should cooperate together to face such outbreaks," noted Asada.

Adding that the main drawback of the Ministry of Health is ignoring to educate the people on appropriately storing water, and raising public awareness on waterborne diseases.

According to Asdeh, the Ministry of Agriculture did not carry out the necessary field visits to fill the potholes and marshes, where insects are breeding and Ministry of Environment hasn't as yet found a solution to the water shortage, or the water pollution in the province.

Environmental specialist Mohammed Al-Ariki, confirmed that rainwater harvesting is a solution to the water shortage in Yemen in general and Taiz in particular, which will help both irrigation and groundwater recharge.

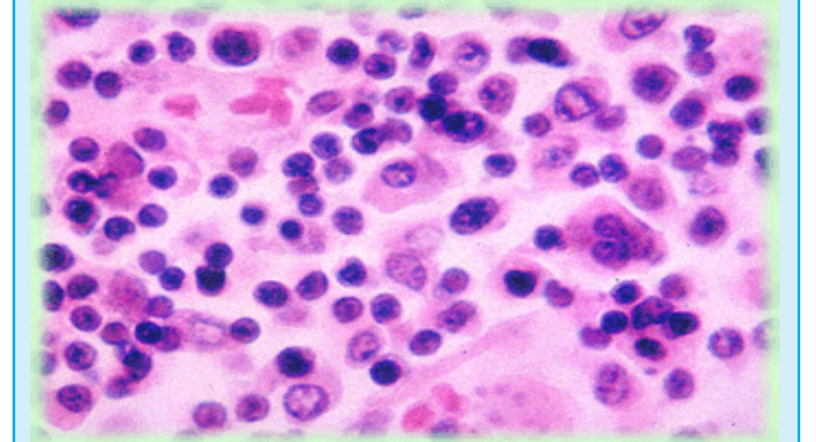
Al- Ariki, who is also author of a book "Water in Yemen: reality and vision" pointed out that though seawater desalination is a costly solution, but it may be inevitable in future.

"Without clean water, Taiz is going to be constantly subjected to diseases and epidemics," concluded Shama'a.

## HEALTHWATCH

This weekly column by Dr.Siva is to disseminate health information to the readers in Yemen and outside. Dr.Siva is currently working at Aden Refinery Company Hospital. Life style diseases and cancer prevention are his special interests. Complementary medicine and Naturopathy are his passions.

### Know about Typhoid and Paratyphoid Fevers



Persons with typhoid fever carry the bacteria in their bloodstream or intestinal tract, and shed S. Typhi in their feces. Oklahoma State Department of Health

**T**yphoid and paratyphoid are infectious feverish diseases. The French used to refer to it as a 'boil of the intestine' since the digestive symptoms occur in the second phase of the illness. Classic typhoid fever is a serious disease. If untreated, it can be life-threatening.

Typhoid and paratyphoid fevers occur wherever sanitation is substandard. It can spread in a community quite easily, say in a slum or a colony of workers. The socio-economic impact of the disease is huge, as sometimes the typhoid survivors take several months to recover and resume work.

Typhoid fever is caused by the bacteria Salmonella typhi and paratyphoid is caused by Salmonella paratyphi-A, B and C. The bacteria enter our body through hands contaminated from feces or urine of an infected person. Salmonella can also cause food poisoning.

Outside the human body, the bacteria can survive in water for 2-7 days, ice cream and ice for over a month and up to 70 days in the soil irrigated with sewage under moist conditions and half of that period in summer. Food being a bad conductor of heat provides shelter to the bacteria which may multiply and survive for some time. The bacteria grow rapidly in milk without altering the taste or the appearance in any way. Vegetables grown in sewage farms or contaminated water are a positive health hazard. These factors are compounded by social factors such as open air defecation and urination, low standards of food and personal hygiene and health ignorance.

The symptoms (first week) are fever which is low grade to start with. Soon the fever picks up and the thermometer often reads a temperature as high as 103 or 104 F (39 or 40C) day by day. Skin rashes consisting of small, flat, rose-colored spots begin to appear on the lower chest or upper abdomen. Headache, weakness and fatigue, sore throat, abdominal pain, diarrhea (in children) or constipation (in adults) are the next to occur.

If not treated, the patient may enter a second stage (second week) during which he may become very ill and develop a sunken look. He will have continuing high fever, 'pea soup' diarrhea, rapid weight loss, distended abdomen with pain (pseudo-appendicitis). In the third week, life-threatening complications like intestinal bleeding, hypotension, cardiac toxicity meningeal irritation, bone infection or septicemia may develop.

The diagnosis is often based on clinical symptoms, (gradual onset of fever with a step ladder pattern, low pulse rate despite increasing fever, blood tests showing low white blood cell count and low platelets) and blood culture showing colonies of the bacteria. Liver function tests may show mildly elevated enzymes. The Widal test is widely used to diagnose it.

The patient should be hospitalized if needed. Antibiotic therapy is the only effective treatment for typhoid fever. He should in addition receive large quantity of fluids e.g., as orange juice, tender coconut, soups, milk, water etc., and vitamins. Bed rest and appropriate drug treatment is mandatory to prevent the recurrence of the disease and complications.

Recovery is slow and takes about four weeks. It is wise to repeat the blood culture to detect the carriers of the bacteria.

#### Prevention:

The weakest link which can be easily broken in the management of typhoid is good sanitation. Practice simple hygienic measures like hand washing after visiting the toilets and before eating. Vaccinating high-risk populations like children and food handlers is the best way to control typhoid fever. Oral typhoid vaccine is considered to be better than the painful injectable vaccines.

If you're traveling to an area where typhoid fever is endemic, consider being vaccinated. But because the vaccine won't provide complete protection, be sure to follow these guidelines as well:

**1. Wash your hands.** Frequent hand washing is the best way to control infection. Wash your hands thoroughly with hot, soapy water, especially before eating or preparing food and after using the toilet. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer when water isn't available.

**2. Avoid drinking untreated water.** Drink only bottled water or canned or bottled carbonated beverages. Wipe the outside of all bottles and cans before you open them. Ask for drinks without ice. Use bottled water to brush your teeth, and try not to swallow water in the shower.

**3. Avoid raw fruits and vegetables.** Avoid fruits and vegetables that you can't peel especially lettuce and cucumber. To be absolutely safe, you may want to avoid raw foods entirely.

**4. Choose hot foods when you go out.** Avoid food that's stored or served at room temperature. Steaming hot foods are best. Avoid food from street vendors; it's more likely to be contaminated. Avoid ice creams and food when you go to 'maals'. Avoid taking food during short flights. Never get your kids ice creams from the restaurants in the 'maals'. Also remember that your favorite restaurant may have a waiter who harbors the bacteria in his gall bladder and supply you intermittently on a plate.

If you're recovering from typhoid, consider measures that can help keep others safe:

**1. Wash your hands often.**

**2. Clean household items daily.** Clean toilets, door handles, telephone receivers and water taps at least once a day with a household cleaner and paper towels or disposable cloths.

**3. Avoid handling food.** Avoid preparing food for others until your doctor says you're no longer contagious. If you work in the food industry or a health care facility, you should not return to work until tests show that you're no longer shedding typhoid bacteria.

**4. Keep personal items separate.** Set aside towels, bed linen and utensils for your own use and wash them frequently in hot, soapy water. Heavily soiled items can be soaked first in disinfectant.



Stagnant water caused by rainfall in rural areas and villages is a primary cause for waterborne diseases.



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## Amna Al-Nasiri: "I yearn to be free"



By: Ashwini Bhanagay For the Yemen Times

I think everyone dreams to fly, to express, to liberate, to break free, as people, as women. Life sometimes destroys and sometimes liberates. I look at the birds, gentle and frail creatures who take flight into the vast sky. They are my favorite symbols of liberty!

However, the sadness is that the youth in Yemen are unable to express themselves, their likes, dislikes, who they are, what they want to do. The sadness is that our education system is leaving literally no space for creativity, expression, imagination! How can they then fly? As beginners, art students are at a loss, but slowly they improve. What is important is that they are interested! These are the words of Amna Al Nasiri, the

celebrated Yemeni artist. Amna Al Ansari, today, held an exhibition of her latest works, on the occasion of the opening of KAWN (Atelier and Foundation), in Sana'a. The studio was filled with people who were enthusiastically appreciating the 'colors', 'uniqueness', 'lines without a beginning or end'. 'I have known Amna for 15 years and she is always experimenting and has something new to offer', says an old friend from Egypt. 'I like the colors, the uniqueness in the work of Ustadha Amna', says a university professor and a student of Amna. 'I like the colors', says a young man.

Born in Rada'a - Yemen, a Ph.D in Aesthetics from Moscow, and an assistant professor of Aesthetics and Philosophy in the Sana'a university, a critic and abstraction artists, talks to Yemen Times, about her work, art and the young Yemeni artists of today.

### Can you tell me about the works which are exhibited today?

This is my new phase, which is 'abstract'. I am experimenting with colors, relationships, humans. The pictures are about my experiences in life and have evolved, even in



terms of techniques, through long experimentation. Through these paintings I am trying to re-live my experiences, moments, associations with my city. The theme of this exhibition is places, the places I visited as a child, the memories associated with these places, the moments of happiness I experiences in these places and the moments of grief. There are so many memories, that the paintings are crowded. And at the same time making a statement that it is time to move ahead, experiment with new things, like the painting with CDs, which says our buildings are rather monotonous, why not use modern materials and see what it feels like?

### How does the society perceive artists?

My experience is good, I am respected in the society, but people do not understand art. What is lacking is a culture of art, people need more exposure. Other reasons are people do not have time for art, they are too busy earning a livelihood, poverty also plays a role. I feel society can be molded, if the system supports creating artists, I am sure more artists will come up. Surprisingly, today, inspite of the limited support from the system, many new artists are emerging in Yemen.

### What are the challenges facing the budding artists of Yemen?

The main challenge is very narrow exposure. Even today, the reference material available in the Sana'a university is very limited. I always make it a point to give my own books for referring to my students, help them and try to widen their horizons through lectures seminars. The young

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emerging artists of Yemen are still caught in landscapes, stills and what they see around them. This is very dangerous for art. An artist needs to express, to imaginatively go beyond what is seen, to depict life in his/her own words. This is what our young artists need to learn. I think KAWN will be a great help to them.

### What do you want to say to the young artists of today?

I want to tell them, art is something that cannot be associated to selling and earning. It is more an expression,

art is like love. There will be difficulties, but what is needed is perseverance. Once you love your work, not having a house, being poor, nothing will matter. Though today, in Yemen, an artist cannot survive only on art, I think if someone loves art, he/she should continue being an artist, support him/herself by taking up a job.

Art has the ability to change people, society. Being famous does not matters, what matters is leaving behind something worthwhile. This is the constant challenge in front of me.

## Beirut: The capital of beauty and openness

By: Ali Saeed

We arrived in Beirut in the afternoon. Before landing I expected the weather to be sunny, as it was still 1:00 pm, but it was cloudy with some rains that stopped for moments and come back for minutes.

The most interesting thing about

Beirut is that although it is overlooking the sea, the weather in winter is cold with rains, which is an opposite to the Arabian peninsula where, in winter it is cold with drought.

Every day, the people in Beirut expect a rainy storm, which somewhat stops their movement and at times causes traffic jams.

In Beirut, one hardly finds a veiled woman, nor women covering the hair, let alone women wearing the long

black dress. Most women there wear t-shirts with jeans, their blond hair uncovered and they are very open to talk to.

Comparing to Yemen, it is easier for journalists to talk to women when reporting about social issues. In Yemen women usually are reluctant to talk to the press.

As a journalist you will not find anybody in Beirut believing in independent journalism.

When I introduced the Yemen Times as an independent English newspaper in Yemen, to a man in the forties, he looked at me surprised. "Really, I do not think that there is something called independent newspaper," he said. "It must be affiliated to some party," he added.

But when you get closer to Lebanese society, you will the reason behind this attitude, which is deep rooted in every Lebanese.

The Lebanese society is full of sectarians and every sect in the world has a group of fans. In Beirut, there are Muslims, Christians, Shiite Muslims, Sunni Muslim, Druze and other sects that you may have never heard about.

I was lucky that my stay in Beirut coincided with the opening of Beirut International Book Fair to have a better understanding on how Lebanese think. Taking a tour of the bookshops



With his friend in a historical landmark, Byblos municipality that was built by Ottomans around three hundred years ago in Beirut.

in the book fair, will immediately tell you that that society can never stop the monologue of the sectarians.

Many bookshops exhibited huge quantities of either new books, or new editions of previous titles. And many of the titles are debating either against Shiites with Shiites, with Salafis, or against Salafis.

There were also many books speak-

ing about other religious beliefs and trying to explain them in more than one language, in Arabic, in English, and in French.

One more thing in the cultural aspect, is the largest book in the world that I saw it in the book fair.

This book entitled "Beirut's memory" comprises of 304 pages, and is 3.85 meters wide and 2.77 meters tall

and weighs around 1060 kilograms.

This genius book by Ayman Tarawi, is a collection of photos that depicts the 'changing of Beirut's faces' between 1991 and 2002.

It presents photos of before and after, before and after what? giving the viewer or the reader an excellent image of the Beirut.

However, this book is also available in small size and anyone can have it.

Another feature of Beirut for me as a person coming from a conservative society is the high openness among the Lebanese.

The waiters in cafés and restaurants are women and salespersons also in clothes shops are women and they very welcoming to customers.

Because, the city of Beirut is a tourist site and many regional UN offices are there, prices are much higher comparing to Yemen.

The income level for individuals also is much better that in Yemen and the average monthly income per employee is around USD 700.

In addition to that, in every meal you eat, Lebanese serve you a salad and olives.

But, for meat I do not advise Yemenis who like meat so much to have a meat dish there, since it is not good compared to the Yemeni dishes such as mandi and other Yemeni brands.



The reporter Ali Saeed on the Mediterranean Sea cornice.