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# YEMEN TIMES

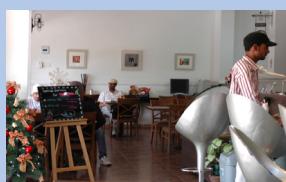
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## Parliamentarians disparity delays minimum age for marriage legislation

By: **Mahmoud Al-Harazi**  
For the Yemen Times

SANA'A, Dec. 27 — Although it has been over seven months since the article defining a minimum age for marriage was voted on in the parliament, not much progress has been made on this front due to political disputes between members of the parliament.

In April this year, the personal status law which included an item on early marriage was discussed in the parliament. Most of this law's articles have been passed, and today, article number 15 which forbids marriages below 17 years of age is still on hold.

"We have reached our conclusions on this controversial article and our report is ready to be submitted to the parliament's presidency. But because the opposition coalition, the Joint Meeting Parties, is boycotting the parliament and its sessions, this project is stalling," explained Judge Abdulmalik Al-Wazeer Chairperson of the Jurisprudence Committee in the Parliament where this article has been withheld for discussion for the last seven months.

According to him, as well as Ali Al-Hababi, general manager of the Jurisprudence Committee, the only issue now standing in the way of this regulation being voted for is that most of the members of the committee who are from the opposition Islah conservative party, are not attending.

"Hopefully with the President's call for national dialogue that is to be held soon, the opposition will yield and we can get things moving and we can vote

on this issue during this parliamentary session," said Al-Wazeer. However, the opposition has already rejected the dialogue initiative so the question remains unanswered.

However, this parliamentary session ends by the end of this month and the next one will commence in February. That means that if the opposition does not reconcile with the ruling party the actions of this committee will remain frozen.

Al-Hababi says that the committee has "verbally" told the parliament's presidency "that they want to push the early marriage legislation forward. "We can't do it formally because we are missing signatures of the committee's members. But we are optimistic that things will start moving."

The sense of optimism, however, was not reflected by many MPs who had been trying to solve the early marriage legislation issue in Yemen. Parliamentarian of the opposition Islah party Shawqi Al-Qadhi stated that if the parliament's presidency was serious about this issue it could have forced the Jurisprudence committee to conclude their recommendations much sooner and scheduled this article for deliberations long ago.

"Yemen is a signatory country to the International Child Rights Convention which defines the age of a child up to 18 years old. We need to make the local laws

in line with the international conventions we ratified. There is no real Islamic barrier against doing so, and those who say that this is un-Islamic are wrong," he said.

According to Al-Qadhi the selection of laws to be put forward for deliberation and voting depends on either the mood of the parliament's presidency or influences from higher authorities.

The parliament's presidency by regulation, gives each of the twenty specialized committees in the parliament a duration of 15 days, which can be renewed only once, to give their specialized say about a

certain issue. Yet, according to Al-Hababi, since their committee is a critical one they usually need more time.

Over 40 percent of Yemeni women get married before 18 years old. According to the Central Statistical Organization's Family Survey 2003, the average marriage age for this group is 15 years old. The issue of early marriage in Yemen has become quite controversial, especially since the story of Nujood, the nine years old Yemeni girl who fought for her own divorce from a 33 year old man, made international headlines since mid 2008.

*Continued on page 2*

### The story of Adnan

"I was only eleven when my father took me aside and asked me if I wanted to get married. I was a young boy from a farming family in Raimah and did not know what it means to be married. My father had been working in Saudi Arabia for as long as I remembered, and when he said that I would get married, I only thought of a party and that everyone would say that I have become a man.

I got married to my cousin, who was only 12 at that time. My uncle owed my father money, so he said I should take his daughter as a wife in return for the money which then would be her dowry.

I remember one day when I was 12 years old I wanted to imitate my father and be a man. I asked my wife to bring me a cup of tea. She took her time so I became angry and beat her up. She complained to my father, crying that I had done so and when he asked me why, I said I wanted to be a man like him.

During my early years of marriage I was very bored and burdened with this marriage. I was not prepared at all, physically or emotionally. My wife and I were classmates in the fifth grade. I continued studying, but she dropped out.

Today I am a father of two girls even though I am only 22 years old. We could have had many children, but at that time we were quite innocent and did not consummate the marriage until many years into our marriage. We had our first daughter after we were already married for eight years.

Even today, I am still dependant on my father for my family's living. I don't even help in the farm as I have just graduated from high school. I only know that I wish I had not married at that young age. We could have avoided many problems that were caused by the rashness of youth. If there is one piece of advice I would give anyone, it is to not get married until they are fully grown, independent adults."

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### Houthis welcome agreement with KSA

## Yemeni forces speak of the coming war's end

By: Mohammed Bin Sallam

SA'ADA, Dec. 27 — The army destroyed a store of ammunition and fuel to the west of Al-Kamb and many Houthi sites in Mount of Anm, Razeh and Al-Mahather Areas, according to Yemeni military sources.

On the Sofian frontline, the same sources said that army forces caught Houthis sneaking into the east of Al-Tathmelah and Al-Majza'h areas in Sa'ada.

With the help of supporting tribes, the Yemeni army progressed to the areas adjacent to Al-Rumaih mountain as well as to areas that were previously under Houthis control such as Al-Hamrah Hill and Al-Sabkhana. There were many casualties among the Houthis, according to the same military sources.

Abdul Malek Al-Houthi, the field leader of the Houthis, is said to have been killed after suffering injuries with some of his supporters from an attack by the Yemeni army.

According to local sources, he was buried near Tallan mountain nearby Al-Malaheeth province. He was buried secretly to keep his supporters' morale high.

From their camps, Houthis denied the news of their leader's death, saying that the government is using psychological warfare in an attempt to

confuse them. They added that the government has spread similar rumors in the past.

Regarding the fighting on the Saudi Arabian side, Yemen Times got a copy of a statement by Houthis saying that the Saudi air force launched 33 air raids on Al-Malaheeth province and all the adjacent villages near the southern borders of the KSA. The Saudi army also pounded Yemeni areas with 177 missiles. The statement added that Saudi forces attacked the Al-Jaberi site relentlessly with missiles and bombs.

Predictably, the air raids led to several deaths, with at least 26 killed after the targeting of Al-Mashaqah on Friday. 15 children, 3 women and 2 elderly men as well as many others perished, local sources in Razeh said.

In other developments, Haraz citizens condemned the random air raids, demanding an immediate stop to them, and called on the government to confront the Houthis face to face.

In Al-Jawf governorate, tribal sources said that on last Wednesday around 80 civilians were killed and 10 were injured by a Yemeni air raid; almost all of the casualties were citizens.

King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz of Saudi Arabia stated in the beginning of this week that he issued clear instructions to the Saudi forces to confine the number of operations to within Saudi's

borders as much as possible.

"Our instructions are clear. We ordered the Saudi forces not to penetrate into the Yemeni land. We are a country that does not want to interfere others' affairs. We ordered the Saudi force to keep away any sneakers and not to step onto Yemeni land," King Abdul Aziz said.

Foreseeing that the hostilities are nearing a conclusion, KSA officials declared that the confrontations are about to end against denials from Houthis supporters.

Human rights organizations call on leaders to stop war

In the wake of mounting civilian casualties, a Yemeni human rights organization called on President Saleh and King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz to cease conducting air raids in their war against Houthis as such operations mostly affect citizens.

SIAG (an organization for protecting children) reported that dozens of Yemeni civilians were killed by two air raids last Tuesday in Razeh province.

The organization revealed that the Saudi air force attacked a house two consecutive times suspecting that Houthis were inside.

The organization added that this came just after the incident in Haraz in which 15 civilians were killed last Wednesday.

## State continues dialogue preparations despite skeptic opposition

By: Yemen Times staff

SANA'A, Dec. 27 — Ninth of January 2010, has become the designated day for the ruling party and the opposition to commence dialogue on national issues. This date is a two week delay from the previous one - 26 Dec. 2009. The delay according to state officials was made to give "enough time for adequate preparations in order to ensure participation of all parties."

However, so far the opposition has not given any indications that it would be a part of this dialogue. The official line for the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) opposition coalition remains skeptic regarding the dialogue.

"We want a dialogue, but that which is serious and not built on the presumption that everything would go back to as it was before. We demand explanations for all the violence against opposition figures and movements and the release of political prisoners. Otherwise there is no point to having a dialogue," said Member of Parliament and head of the Yemeni Socialist Block at the parliament, Aidaroos Al-Naqeeb.

He added that if the state was sincere in its invitation it would have committed to ending the war in Sa'ada not escalating it further.

Zaid Al-Shami a writer and a member of the parliament representing the opposition conservative party, the Islah, argued that the state's call for a

dialogue has no meaning because it excludes many entities. "The JMP called for a dialogue that includes everyone, even those we are at war with. But the response from the ruling party was a negative one. The state is determined to have a dialogue with itself."

Any change has to be based on people's priorities not what the authorities want, commented MP Sakhr Al-Wajeeh, who has been critical of the government although he represents the ruling party, the General People Congress (GPC). "There had been reports written by leading people of the ruling party indicating fifteen names of corrupt officials. The report recommended that President Saleh should bring these corrupt officials to justice and win the trust of people. He chose the corrupt officials over his people's interest because he does not hear the public's suffering."

Political analyst of the GPC Faisal Jalool described the opposition's rejection for a dialogue as a political mistake. He said that opposition has nothing to lose because it could enter the dialogue, hear what is being proposed and then object rather than speculate from far regarding the intentions and the outcomes. "The opposition will prove that it is concerned with the nation's welfare only if it plays a positive role in being part of the country's future, not a passive role in staying away and calling it a bluff."

The latest information from the dialogue preparatory committee in the

Shoura Council [Consultative Council] was the approval of the diplomatic community in Yemen of the initiative. According to the official media, British, French and Spanish ambassadors in their meeting with Dr. Abu Bakr Al-Qirbi, Minister of Foreign Affairs, have commented that the president's call for dialogue is a positive step.

The preparatory committee has been so far working on procedural issues and has formed specialized committees.

### Opposition's demands from the president for a dialogue to happen:

1. The president must meet with the JMP leaders and explain and justify Sa'ada war
2. Creating the best environment for dialogue based on the February agreement that lead to the delay of parliamentary elections until the electoral system is reformed
3. The inclusion of all parties involved in the national issues including civil society and political movements
4. All dialogues and discussions should be carried out in the main assembly and not in side discussions
5. Not to use the terrorism card in coming after political opponents and the release of prisoners detained illegally
6. The Yemeni constitution is the main umbrella under which all reference has to be made

## Young Yemenis discuss the Impact of education expenditures on development

By: Amel Al-Ariqi

SANA'A, Dec. 25 — Yemen's education system has improved over the last two decades, much remains to be done to increase access, and equity, said a report.

The report, which conducted by twenty young Yemenis, said that there is an increase in the budget allocated for education to reach YR 165 billion (US \$850 million), and the annual growth rate of allowances, for education between 2003-2007, increased to 111 percent, but that reality shows that these allowances are not properly channelized.

If we compare between the expenditure and the achievements in education, we will realize that the budget is not used well, said the report, which also gave details on the expenses and the outcomes of education in Yemen, including the higher and vocational education.

Experts and specialists in the field of education discussed the report "Spending on Education and Its Impact on the Development" The discussion

was a part of a symposium organized by Yemeni Youth Development Center at the Social Democratic Forum in co-operation with the German Friedrich Ebert Foundation. The draft report was presented by four young Yemenis, representing the team of twenty Yemeni youth, which had produced the draft, after three months of hard work, to collect the required data and write the report.

"Our 'youth for development' project trained these young people to probe into economic issues related to the project and after the training, these young people identified analysing the budget of education to be their first contribution to the project," said Walid Abdu Alhafidh, director Yemeni Youth Development Center at the Social Democratic Forum, which was one of the organizers of the symposium.

Mohammed Qiah, the director of the Ebert Foundation's office in Yemen, pointed out that the outcomes of education in Yemen do not meet the demands of the local or the international market, which will lead to future difficulties in the development. He

called upon forming a national committee comprising of representatives of the civil society, educational leaders and others concerned with the educational process, to engage in assessing the government's plans and supervise their implementation step-by-step.

Ms. Fawzia Noman the Deputy Minister of Education, expressed her concerns over the ongoing war in northern Yemen, which she said will divert all the international aid to the victims of war, and consequently decrease the support that was given to poor families to encourage sending their kids to schools, and result in many families taking their children out schools.

According to a survey conducted by the Ministry of Education in 2006, Yemen suffers from high illiteracy rate with 30 percent of men and 62 percent of women are illiterate, and nearly half of the children are not enrolled in basic schools.

"We need the Yemeni youth to participate in raising awareness about the importance of education, among their communities," said Ms. Fawzia.

The participants of the symposium stressed the importance of forming provincial committees comprising of university students in the provinces, to visits to all primary and secondary schools, as well as the public and private universities, in their provinces and document the problems and students complaints about education.

Moreover, the participants recommended the need to make basic education compulsory for children of ages between 5 to 14 years throughout the country - in line with the basic education development strategy, abide by the free basic education decision and take effective measures to raise rates of continuing secondary education.

## "Yemen receives million and half tourists in 2015" Ministry of Tourism

By: Ali Saeed

SANA'A, Dec. 27 — Yemen is expected to receive one million and half tourist arrivals in 2015 bringing USD two billions as revenues, according to Omar Babelgheith, Deputy Minister for Tourism Development.

The international tourists are expected to reach nearly 1.6 billion by the year 2020, according to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and every country now prepares itself to receive as much as it can, to bag the tourism industry brings.

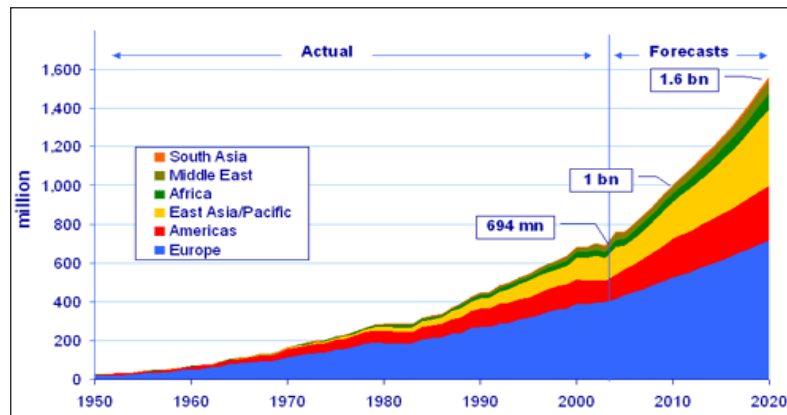
The total tourist arrivals, by region shows that by 2020 the top three receiving regions will be Europe (717 million tourists), East Asia and the Pacific (397 million) and the Americas (282 million), followed by Africa, the Middle East and South Asia.

However, the WTO predicts a high growth rate of over 5% every year for the Middle East, East Asia, and Africa, as compared to the world average of 4.1 percent.

According to the forecast of Yemen's Ministry of Tourism, in 2015 Yemen's share in tourism will be 1.6 billion tourists, but will not exceed more than 2.225 million.

"Although, there are difficulties, the tourism revenues in this year (from January until September 2009), reached around USD 653 million while in the same period last year they had reached only about USD 572 million, recording increase at 19 percent," said Babelgheith.

"The ministry of Tourism will spare no effort in optimizing the climate of tourism and work hard in improving the image of Yemen abroad, through participating in around 12 international



According to the Ministry's forecast for 2015, Yemen's share in tourism will be 1.6 billion but will not exceed more than 2.225 million tourists.

tourism fairs," said Babelgheith. "And for this, the Ministry has contracted specialized public relations companies to promote our country for tourism," he added.

Currently the Ministry has offered around 49 tourist projects to the private sector to invest in, according to the Deputy Minister. These projects include resorts, chalets, rest houses, and the construction of traditional mud and stone villages.

From the 49 tourist projects, five pioneering projects are distributed to five coastal governorates. Two of them are on the Red Sea and located in the Islands of Midi and Duwaymah, while the rest are on Arab Sea and located in Khur(creek) Ameerah in Lahj, in Tabtab beach in Al-shihr, and in Gazolette beach in Al-Mahra.

For Yemen, the oil wealth is threatened by depletion and many economists advise the state to look for other alternatives.

The agriculture sector is also facing difficulties for reasons of water scarcity. "Only three percent of our lands are ar-

able, but there is no water and the country is suffering from a water scarcity," said Ali Al-Wafi, Yemeni economist with 20 years experience in Yemen's economy, in a previous interview with the Yemen Times. "Water experts are suggesting us to reserve the available water to drink in cities that have already started to suffer from drought and in brief, this is not a promising sector, as it shrinks year by year," he said.

Many experts think that Yemen has great cultural and tourist resources that can be an alternative to oil depletion. "The most promising sector is tourism," said Al-Wafi Adding that "We have a very promising cultural economy, as represented by the huge tourist resources in our country."

According to the economist, "Yemen does not need to create beautiful scenes, beaches, history and folklore, because all of that is there. We need to maintain it, develop it, turn it into a marketable product, and then sell it. It is the only thing that you can sell many times. This sector is lucrative and will generate job opportunities."



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## Continued from page 1

### Parliamentarians disparity delays minimum age for marriage legislation

Human rights and gender movements in Yemen lobbied for a change in the current legislation that allows boys and girls to be married at any age. When the legislation finally made it to the parliament for voting, the majority of present Members of Parliament passed the minimum age at 17. The following day this process was refuted by 23 religiously conservative MPs who signed a petition and presented it to the parliament's presidency demanding the Jurisprudence Committee have its say before the article is put for voting again.

These conservative MPs object to

defining a fixed minimum age for marriage. They see this contradicting with the Islamic Sharia [jurisprudence] and as the influence of foreign western culture in the Yemeni Muslim community, according to MP Fuad Dahaba of the Islah conservative party. Although he and many other MPs from this party support defining a minimum age for marriage and have lobbied for this to happen inside and outside the parliament.

Several parliamentarians from the ruling party the General People's Congress, and the opposition Yemeni So-

cialist party also agree that defining a minimum age for marriage is essential and that if it is open for voting they would vote 18 as the minimum age for marriage.

MPs of the ruling party Najji Al-Shiekh and Abd-Albari Dugish could not find a credible reason why this law has not been put forth for discussion. MP Aidaroos Al-Naqeeb of the opposition YSP denies that their presence in the parliament sessions would have made a difference. "The parliament is discussing other laws now isn't it?" he exclaimed. "If the Presidency wanted

to pass it, it would pass. These are just excuses made by the GPC to make us look bad."

Abdelraqueeb Assiqal, Chief Desk Manager, of the Parliament's Presidency explained that the Parliament's Presidency has to operate through a certain protocol whereby the specialized committee are delegated the authority to give their say on issues relating to their specializations. "We agree on the list of regulations to be discussed in the coming sessions at the end of each current session. This list is based on the priorities each committee gives us."

In Brief

**SANA'A**  
**Ministry readies vision for 2010**  
**Islamic Cultural Capital**

Deputy minister of Tourism for the Services and Vital Institutions Mutahar Taqi said on Friday the ministry has finalized its own vision over bringing the event of Tarim as Capital of the Islamic Culture 2010 to success.

Taqi said in a statement the vision includes improving the city's infrastructure and cultural and tourist heritage and having one of the palaces in the city as the venue for showing its rich heritage.

Holding tourist and cultural activities proposed for the event starting March 2010 were included in the vision, he said, adding other activities would be organized, with all aimed to introduce the city heritage to the world.

He also urged to invest the time left to serve the government's vision.

Islamic Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) chose Tarim as the Islamic cultural Capital for 2010 at fourth Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers held in Algiers in December 2004.

**PM confirms hosting Yemen**  
**for 20th Gulf Football**  
**Championship in 2010**

Prime Minister Ali Mujawar re-confirmed on Friday ability of Yemen to host 20th Gulf Football Championship by end of next year in Aden city and Abyan province.

During his meeting with head of the football unions in Gulf countries, Yemen and Iraq, Mujawar pointed out to follow up by President Ali Abdullah Saleh to all aspects of preparation for hosting this key event.

He said that the government has allocated huge possibilities to bring this event into success by building new stadiums, hotels and other facilities to host guests who come to attend and participate in this sport event.

For their part, the heads of the union expressed comfort for confirmation of Yemen to host the championship.

**Parliament likely to**  
**pass 2010 budget next week**

The parliament is likely to pass next week the 2010 budget draft of the state after voting on it in light of the report prepared by a special parliamentary committee, the 26sep.net reported on Thursday.

Parliamentary sources made it clear to the 26sep.net that the voting on the draft comes within the constitutional right, which provides that the draft approval must be before December 31 of each year.

On another hand, the government has announced allocating YR 826.3 billion (YR207=US\$1) within its budget to finance projects in the investment program for 2010, with an increase of 22% (about YR 153 billion) from 2009.

The explanatory memorandum of the investment program pointed out that the allocations were distributed to the state administration with YR 305 billion, economic units with YR 410 billion, independent budgets and funds with YR 47 billion, and local authority with YR 62 billion, while the local authority projects in the various sectors rated 7.5 % of 2010 budget, with YR 62 billion.

The government has pledged in its investment program to continue strengthening the central and local authorities' capacities in light of the available resources, in a way that reflects the local governance strategy, the third socioeconomic development plan and the general program of the government.

**As illegally entering, 2,000 Ethiopians**  
**to be deported**

Yemen is to deport 2,000 Ethiopians, who have illegally entered the country, the 26sep.net has mentioned.

A well-informed source has pointed out that the deportation process comes under the agreement signed between Yemen and Ethiopia and these Ethiopians would be transported by air to their country.

According to the UN statistics, Ethiopians formed majority of those Africans who moved to Yemen in 2009 instead

of Somalis in the previous years despite of the continuation of fights across the Mogadishu capital of Somalia.

It is worth to mention that Yemen suffers from the constant influx of displaced people from the African Horn, who form additional economic burdens on the national economy, which makes it imperative for the international community and organizations to assume their responsibilities to help Yemen to be able to face this large influx of displaced people to the country.

**HCT approves YR 7.3 bln tenders**

Higher Committee for Tenders (HCT) approved on Wednesday tenders for development projects at sum of YR 7.3 billion..

The committee approved a tender of a project to set up a hygiene station in Sana'a capital at amount of \$ 30.1 million.

It also approved a tender of importing medical equipment and generators for 65 health institutions across the country at sum of YR 1.2 billion funded by the government.

The committee also approved tenders of other water and hygiene projects in Shabwa and Ibb provinces.

**Marib security committee reviews**  
**its plan for 2010**

The security committee in Marib province held a meeting on Wednesday to reviews its security plan for 2010.

The plan includes securing economic institutions, roads protection, intensifying the security patrols and the fight against negative phenomena and behaviors that affect the security and stability as well as combating crime and terrorism.

Interior Ministry has ordered its bodies and offices in all provinces to raise security alert and tighten defense procedures at the important facilities and vital interests all over the country.

The precautionary measures came after the anti-terrorism troops launched in the early hours of Thursday air and ground raids against al-Qaeda hideouts and training sites in Abyan in the south

and in Sana'a in the north killing and arresting about 51 al Qaeda suspects.

**PM renews Yemen's support to**  
**Palestinian issue**

Prime Minister Ali Mujawar renewed on Wednesday the supportive positions of Yemeni political leadership and people to the Palestinian people's issue.

During his meeting with the Palestinian newly appointed ambassador in Sana'a Bassem Al-Agha, Mujawar greeted the Palestinian people's struggle to get its rights to establish an independent state, with its capital al-Quds.

The two sides dealt with the Yemeni-Palestinian relations in the political, economic and cultural aspects.

The premier welcomed the Palestinian ambassador, affirming the government's keenness to offer the necessary cooperation and support to him during his tenure in Yemen.

For his part, the Palestinian ambassador expressed the Palestinian appreciation for Yemen's steady positions towards the Palestinian issue, noting the closed relations between the two brotherly peoples.

**AMRAN**

**Amran deputy meets MSF's representatives**

The 1st deputy of Amran governorate Yahya Ghawbar held talks on Wednesday representatives of Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) on health cooperation between the organization and the local authority.

During the meeting, they discussed the organization's medical services for the displaced people of Saada and Harf Sufyan district.

The meeting focused on the requirements that may be provided by the organization in coordination with the Ministry of Public Health and

Population such as the medicines and medical equipment.

Ghawbar talked on the government efforts to relieve the displaced people and to establish a new camp close to the governorate capital.

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**JOB VACANCY**

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) announces for an immediate job opening within its organization:

**"Senior Health Advisor"**

USAID is not seeking a health practitioner. USAID is seeking a health policy or health systems expert.

This position is with USAID's Mission in Sana'a. The primary purpose of this position is to serve as the Mission's senior advisor for technical and policy matters associated with service delivery and strengthening of health systems as they relate to maternal and child health, family planning, and reproductive health. The advisor oversees USAID/Yemen's health activities. The position serves as part of a team of Foreign Service National (FSN) advisors to the Technical Program Office Director, to Mission senior management, to Government of Yemen (GOY) counterparts, and other U.S. Government (USG) agency officials on USAID/Yemen's health programs, which include maternal and child health, family planning, reproductive health, health information systems, humanitarian assistance, and related policy issues. The position is designed to allow the incumbent to be a thought-leader in the aforementioned technical areas. The position requires travel, security permitting, to activity sites to monitor and evaluate progress and to identify and resolve problems.

**Qualifications Required**

**A. Education:**

A minimum of a Master's degree in Public Health, Medicine, Nursing, Health Planning and Management, Public Policy or a related field is required.

**B. Prior Work Experience:**

The incumbent is required to have a minimum of six years of work experience. Technical experience in medicine, nursing, public health and/or population development, with demonstrated increasing responsibility for managing, analyzing, coordinating, and guiding significant analytical and project management efforts is required. Demonstrated ability to develop and manage complex health and population projects/activities is highly sought after.

**C. Language Proficiency:**

Very strong fluency in English (level IV) and native fluency in Arabic (level V), both oral and written, is required.

**D. Job Knowledge:**

Must have a sound, experience-based knowledge of maternal and child health, family planning, reproductive health, health policy, and best practices in health service strengthening and delivery. S/he must possess a thorough knowledge of the political, economic, and development realities of Yemen as they relate to health systems and health service delivery. S/he must have knowledge of host country socio-economic conditions. Knowledge of USAID's and USG's environmental regulations is preferred but not required. S/he must be knowledgeable of technical/project implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and project financial oversight.

**E. Skills and Abilities:**

The incumbent must be organized and have demonstrated success in project management. S/he will have a high degree of technical, analytical, and quantitative skills. Strong interpersonal and team work skills; proven ability to work independently with minimal supervision or guidance is required. Must have operational and management skills; computer skills; multi-tasking skills; and the ability to conceptualize both strategically and programmatically. S/he should have proven ability to communicate quickly, clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing, including preparation of technical reports. Ability to learn and explain USAID's global health objectives.

**Grade/Salary:** \*Ordinarily Resident:

1) Full performance level FSN-12 US \$ 26,918 p.a. (Starting Salary) Plus \$3,000 allowances.

Detailed Position Description is available at <http://yemen.usembassy.gov/yemen/vacancies.html>

**How to apply:**

All interested applicants should complete OF-612 or submit a current C.V. (with awards, recommendation letters, copies of degrees earned). All applications must include a letter which explains the candidates past experience and how it relates to the required qualifications and send it to the Human Resources Office, American Embassy, Dhahr Himyar Street, Sanaa or via Fax No. 303-182 or through e-mail address: hrosanaa@state.gov no later than January 11, 2010.

\* NOTE: ALL ORDINARILY RESIDENT APPLICANTS MUST HAVE THE REQUIRED WORK AND/OR RESIDENCY PERMITS TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR CONSIDERATION.

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- Experience working with an ERP system or any similar financial system.
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- A knowledge of IFRS
- Excellent interpersonal skills and ability to build relationships in a multi discipline and cultural team
- Ability to prioritize multiple tasks and meet deadlines.
- Good character with strong references.
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International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group, promotes sustainable private sector investment in developing countries as a way to reduce poverty and improve people's lives. To complement its growing investment and advisory activities, the IFC invites applications for the following based in Sana'a, Yemen.

Finance Assistant/Analyst

The Finance Assistant/Analyst should be able to work independently on routine issues; work with supervision on complex/new issues; quickly become familiar with IFC/WBG systems, tools and policies; develop working relationships with internal and external clients.

**Specific tasks will include but not be limited to:**

- Preparing budgets for the country office and provide variance analysis.
- Conducting monthly review of Program expenses for accuracy, budget availability and compliance.
- Implementing cost sharing of expenses between various sources of funds.
- Ensuring implementation of and compliance with IFC/WBG policies and procedures.
- Reviewing payment vouchers and supporting documents for completeness and accuracy.
- Preparing monthly imprest accounting compliance reports.
- SAP processing and payment of local staff salaries, staff benefits, travel advances, consultants, vendor invoices, etc.
- Maintaining and regularly reconciling all accounts.
- Monitoring and replenishing petty cash/bank accounts funds.
- Preparing ad-hoc financial reports at the request of management.

**Hiring requirements**

- Proven practical skills and experience in GL, AP, AR, journal entries, and account reconciliations.
- Excellent Arabic and English language, both written and spoken.
- Sound knowledge and understanding of accounting theory, concepts and principles.
- Degree in Accounting with at least 4 years of professional experience.
- Advanced skills in Excel, working knowledge of Microsoft Office, Internet, and Lotus Notes applications.
- Solid understanding of financial accounting reporting, budgeting, and cost allocation.
- Strong analytical and mathematical skills.
- Strong communication skills, with the ability to clearly and concisely convey necessary information, explain reasoning and support conclusions using data and facts.

Interested applicants are requested to send their Curriculum Vitae to [www.ifc.org/careers](http://www.ifc.org/careers) under job # 092290 or via e-mail to [ifcmena-recruit@ifc.org](mailto:ifcmena-recruit@ifc.org). The deadline is January 5, 2010. All applications will be treated in the strictest confidence.



**Ministry of Water and Environment**  
**Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project**  
**"Job Vacancy"**  
**Project Management Unit Director**



The Republic of Yemen has received a Grant from the International Development association (IDA) toward the cost of the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project (RWSSP) and it intends to apply part of the proceeds of this Grant to payments for the services of a Project Management Director in its PMU office in Sana'a.

This notice is to invite interested applicant in joining the project as a Project Management Unit (PMU) Director who will report to an Oversight Committee headed by the Minister of Water and Environment.

**The Director's key responsibilities would include:**

- Ensure project implementation in accordance with project documents.
- Manage PMU and coordinate the various project activities.
- Liaise with relevant Ministerial departments, other local agencies, IDA and other donors.
- Prepare periodic reports, summarizing the status of implementation.
- The PMU Director is expected to implement the project according to project documents, agreed work plan and Grant agreement, particularly with respect to financial covenants.

**The applicants should have the following qualifications and personal skills:**

- A possession of full rights of Yemeni Citizenship.
- Must have a university degree in Engineering, Social Sciences and/or Management discipline.
- Should possess ten years management experience in water supply and sanitation and/or rural development.
- Should be computer literate.
- Good working knowledge of English Language.
- Must accept full-time employment on a contract basis and if he/she is a government employee he/she should have a leave of absence during the period of contract.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills with and ability to work in close collaboration with various stakeholders, including an ability to motivate, monitor and promote team spirit in the Unite.
- A high work rate and demonstrated ability to work independently and effectively with minimum supervision.
- Good organizational skills and the ability to prioritize and deliver tasks on time.

**Interested applicants must have the following conditions:**

- Yemeni Nationality
- Any individual if selected should take leave of absence without pay during the period of the contract in case the applicant is a government employee.
- Interested applicants should submit their applications with CVs and supporting documents in a sealed envelop to the address mentioned below within **14 days** form the date of this announcement
- Applications sent by fax will be ignored.

Ministry of Water and Environment  
Office of the Minister of Water and Environment  
Amran Street near the office of General Authority of Rural Water Supply & Sanitation Projects (GARWSSP)  
Sana'a, Republic of Yemen  
Tel. 335001, 2, 3 - 335071  
Fax 225074

# Khawlan College moves its society towards modernization

By: Sadeq Al-Wesabi  
For the Yemen Times

Before 1997, the establishment of the Faculty of Education in Khawlan was a dream for people in this tribal area, which is located about 30 km eastern south the capital Sana'a.

The college which was established in 1997, contains three sections: Education, Arts and Science. It was first designed to be an academic institute and then became a college. At the beginning, the number of students was small, but it increased gradually, especially in recent years.

About 4,407 students are currently studying in this small college; however many of them do not attend except in the days of examinations. Most students use motorcycles as transportation, many of them have had serious accidents as a result driving in the highway leading to the college. Many students who do not come from Khawlan travel daily from Sana'a to the college by bus, which carries them through the half an hour journey to the college. There are two security check points on the way as happens with many highways between towns.

Because admission to Khalwan College is easier than other colleges around the country, many students with low grades opt to study in Khawlan despite the difficulties. Most of the students are from Khawlan.

Female students compose only ten percent of the students and are fully veiled and avoid interaction with the men in their colleges. Most of the female students come from Sana'a and



Students in the classroom, mostly not wearing any weapons of even Jambyas as the culture is gradually changing.

they usually transfer to better colleges if their family's circumstances allow it after one or two years. Despite the conservative tribal culture in the college the female students do not face any harassment from the men unlike many other colleges in the cities.

Despite the twelve years since its establishment, the tribal culture manifestation still dominates strongly even inside the campus, overwhelming the should-be academic university students' culture. Starting from what the student's wear, ending by their attitude towards their teachers and fellow colleagues most of the students in Khawlan College have made their university culture a replica of the one in the tribe.

"The situation was worse during the last years, students were wearing guns

and rifles, refusing to take them off inside the campus, and others insisted to enter the classes with their guns, now we managed to forbid guns but are still struggling with light arms," said the guard of the collage.

In other educational establishments especially in the main cities, students are forbidden to take inside the campus any arms even the Jambiya, which is a traditional Yemeni dagger.

But in Khalwan College, security guards always have a hard time stopping the students from entering with their arms and usually difficulties when they tried to prevent armed students enter the college.

"I am against carrying of arms, because we are inside university, not the traditional tribal market or a battle ground," said Jalal Al-Adwar, student of English from Khalwan, who was wearing a only Jambya (which is a traditional Yemeni dagger worn by men in a belt around the waist).

"Violence happens always because of fights between armed students and the security is forced to rescue the situation, sometimes they can't. If there were strict decisions by authorities, students will have to eventually listen."

Wearing guns and rifles is part of tribal customs in Yemen. Men and even young children and women are encouraged to learn how to use arms especially in the north part of Yemen. They use them for protection especially if the tribe is threatened due to a revenge killing issue. The threat of revenge killing affects the whole tribe

because if one of their members killed a person from another tribe anyone in the killer's tribe becomes a target. The state's law and authority has no power in many tribal areas in Yemen.

"I prefer students to come in an appropriate dress for university, unfortunately, we find the students attending lectures wearing Jambyas and guns," said Saleh Al-Jawfi, student at the Arabic Language department from also from Khawlan despite the fact that he too was wearing a Jambya. When asked if he would agree to not carry it into campus he said he would do willingly if the management was serious about preventing students from wearing it to classes.

According to students, the violence deters many professors, especially non Yemenis from teaching in Khawlan. Al-Adwar complained from a lack of teachers. The faculty staff consists of 50 professors and assistants around a quarter of which are Iraqis. Most of the local teachers are from Khawlan and the foreigners have local residences in the area. The local teachers are mostly top graduates from Khawlan College itself.

"When two students from conflicting tribes meet on campus they start shooting against each other. It is true that because the college exists, many tribal people have gained a university degree but education has not helped change the tribal culture much, in fact, the tribal culture has become part of the university," said Dr. Mohammed Dhaef Allah, Vice Dean who commutes every day from Sana'a.

In a desperate attempt to induce a different culture within the campus, the collage's management has promised 10 extra grades for each student who commits to the dress code.

But then again, if a student does not like his grades, he usually fights for better grades and threatens the teachers.

"We want to strengthen the desire among the students for learning," said Dhaef Allah. "The college's management has committed to change and applying strict measurements in the beginning of 2010. We will build a higher fence to prevent students from scaling it and entering without supervision. Starting from next year, the students will not be allowed to carry in any arms including Jambyas."

## Challenges

There are several challenges against

making Khalwan College a successful educational establishment. Some difficulties rose since the college's establishment such as students carrying arms and tribal fanaticism.

The students are enthusiastic for change. They have already given up carrying arms in the college and several have said they would easily give up carrying Jambyas if that is what it takes. The tribal culture has helped strengthen the student's community more than in other modern more urban towns. You find the students welcoming guests in a very friendly manner and offer their services to anyone. The students stick

financial situations is very difficult," said Obad Al-Taheri, student in the history department.

According to Jamal Al-Sharif, teaching assistant in the Physics Department from Khawlan, the level of students is weak because there isn't much attention given to the college from the Ministry of Higher Education as well as due to the tribal culture that does not give much importance to education. Most of the faculty work by temporary contracts per hour and receive only 250 Yemeni Riyals (USD 1.25) per teaching hour and they usually don't get to teach more than 30



Students in the classroom, mostly not wearing any weapons of even Jambyas as the culture is gradually changing.

together and help each other in times of need.

According to the college's staff it has managed to overcome many of the problems and moved towards development and openness.

"We have difficulties in making researches because of the lack of books in the library of the college," said Ghader Nashwan, a Khawlani student in the chemistry department. "We suffer from absence of places to take our breaks between lectures so; we usually sit under the sun."

The college has a computer lab, science labs for chemistry and physics, but they lack of materials and new equipment according to the students.

Most students come from poor families, although they are college students they also have a job in agriculture or herding sheep, and most of them are soldiers.

"We appeal to the university president to reduce fees (45,000 YR annual approx. USD 225) because our

hours throughout the academic year.

"Locals are very excited about the college and consider it the modern site of Khawlan," said the Dean Professor Mohamed Al-Qahtani, who is also from Taiz and commutes every day from Sana'a. "The college's management contributes to solving many tribal problems because prominent figures and sheikhs respect what we represent. The college helps in bring people together. Sometimes the college helps enemies become friends. Our role in the community helps the community appreciate education and the existence of the college."

According to Al-Qahtani, the college has achieved some of its goals by expanding the scientific departments and furnishing laboratories. It aims to increase its Yemeni staff by granting scholarships to its distinguished graduates for postgraduate studies abroad. However, currently there are no students on scholarship from Khawlan College studying abroad.



Students on their bike as they come from Sana'a suburbs through the dangerous highway to Khawlan College.

## JUST ANOTHER DAY IN THE CAPITAL (11)

### Pharmacies: no cure, just pay

By Judith Spiegel  
For the Yemen Times

Yemen Felix, Palestine, Al Garash, Al Zubaire, Almasar, Yassin, Life, Alhana'a, Alfalouja, Al Jamhour, Maka, Al Waha, Dar Aldawa, Al Wafa'a, Ibn Hayan, Modern Complementary, Pharmacy World, Al Jomhoria, Ikasia, Mas, Marwah, Alhaia, Almouda, Al Assema, Alghalida, Tadhamon, Princess, Al Farzai, Jenin, Al Arashi, Dar Alhaia, Abu Wael and Health Treasures.

These, and four others who are just called "pharmacy", are the pharmacies of Al Zubayri Street, counted from Bab al Yemen to the Ring Road. Some of them are tiny holes in the wall, others big modern, well lit, superstores. There are around thirty five of them in about five kilometres. That is one pharmacy every 150 metres. Not bad, if you are feeling ill. And even better, you can get whatever you want at these pharmacies, there is no need to see a doctor first. The pharmacies are most of the times manned by men in white robes so they must know what they are doing. Do they indeed?

Tanya (29) felt ill. She had a bad cough, a running nose and was feverish. So she went to the pharmacy around the corner and asked a man in the white robe for advice. He told her straight away that she needed antibiotics. Tanya doubted this but was told that she had something her body could not cure itself. "I then decided to trust the man in the white robe, he even took my



blood pressure so I figured he must know what he was doing and actually, he frightened me a bit by saying I had something which my body could not handle itself".

The pharmacist sold Tanya antibiotics that, according to him, were not very strong so she needed to take a double cure, two in a row. Tanya: "He furthermore said that the antibiotics were not enough, I also needed to take cough syrup, two different kinds of tablets for my throat, vitamin pills and a new kind of paracetamol. Without this, the antibiotics would not work".

Many Yemeni's go to the pharmacy without seeing a doctor first. They want to avoid the doctor's fee and believe that the pharmacist is a qualified man who knows how to cure their diseases. It is true that to start a pharmacy one needs to be a qualified doctor or

pharmacist. However, this does not mean that they actually work in their pharmacies. Often, they do not and just hire whoever needs a job to work in their shops.

Take the handful of pharmacies around Thawra hospital in the Old City. In most of them, young boys are manning the shop while chewing qat and smoking cigarettes. "The doctor maybe comes tomorrow", one of them says. Another one quickly calls his brother, who says he is a pharmacist - and wants to stay anonymous. He explains that one can work in a pharmacy in three ways: by being a qualified doctor, by being a qualified pharmacist, or by experience. Experience? "For example, if you are my daughter and I am your father, you see what I am doing in my pharmacy every day and since you are a human being you will try to imitate

what I am doing". He readily admits that mistakes are thus made sometimes. "But nothing is without mistakes."

By law, most medicines cannot be sold without prescription so the mistakes should be limited to innocent medications. However, in practice the law is not enforced so you can get whatever you want. Strong antibiotics for example? "Yes, yes, you can!" the pharmacist says enthusiastically. He continues cheerfully: "The law is something on paper only, who will apply it?" According to him, it is the "Yemeni culture" to go to the pharmacy and get anything you want. Or do not want, like Tanya.

She left the pharmacy with two boxes full of antibiotics, the throat pills and the vitamin pills. She had negotiated herself out of the syrup and the paracetamol. Much to the discontent of the 'pharmacist' who said that if she skipped the paracetamol she would not get better. Indeed, she did not. In fact, she felt worse and worse after she started with the medication. "And the tablets were burning my throat. I checked it with a flashlight and saw that they were leaving wounds inside it".

Tanya finally saw a doctor, Daniel Bac, a Dutchman who has been working in Sana'a for four years. He confirms that most people go to the pharmacy without seeing a doctor first. "The pharmacist tries to estimate how much money the client has and then puts some boxes on the counter." This is almost always antibiotics and very often also some injections and infusions containing a mixture of water, sugar

and salt, which is for example given to children after they have vomited once. "But a child is not benefiting from this, it is much more important to ensure hygiene, good food and sleep", Bac says.

According to Bac, people think these things are helping them because they hurt and are expensive. There is no sense of medical realism, pharmacists are seen as modern wonder doctors. "The patient's are also to blame, they insist on getting medications". Bac confirms that everything is for sale in the pharmacies, also very strong antibiotics that in his home country are only used in hospitals. The only things that are not freely available are morphine-like substances, because they can be used as drugs.

Sometimes it goes wrong. Doctor Bac gives an example: "One of my Yemeni colleagues went to Hudayda for Eid. There, she - probably - suffered a brain haemorrhage. Her family went to a doctor who said she needed some injections, which were not for sale in Hudayda. One of her sons rushed to Sana'a and bought the injections at the pharmacy of the German-Saudi hospital. There, they did not question anything, it is just business for them." Back in Hudayda, they gave Bac's colleague the injections, and she died. Bac: "Of course, I do not know for sure whether the injections caused her death, but surely they did not help".



Words of Wisdom



Many countries hold elections. Even when these are not rigged, they tend to cement the old patron-clientele relations in a new grab. The reason is that the people in power use their connections (and state funds, media, bureaucracy, etc.) to achieve the election results they want. The result is that they create docile parliaments. Elections thus end up enabling those in power to hold on to it.

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



OUR OPINION

Houthis, secessionists and now Al-Qaeda?!

Our state seems very serious in its recent fight against Al-Qaeda elements in Yemen. In the last two weeks several operations were carried out and tens of men were arrested.

As usual many civilians were killed as happens when such large scale operations take place. In the raid on Abyan earlier this month, many families were killed. They lived in slums near Al-Qaeda camp in a village of Al-Mahfad district in Abyan. When the air force attacked the camp, some missiles hit the civilians around them and caused the death of tens of civilians mostly women and children.

I have two questions here; why would some Yemenis live near Al-Qaeda camp, especially since they are living in simple homes which they can reconstruct elsewhere. The other question is why they were hit despite the fact that they lived between one to two kilometers away from the camp. Doesn't this indicate that our air force aiming skills are not very good?

Yet I have another concern which is why our government decided to start a third battle front while it is still struggling with the first two. As we have the Houthis in the north giving both Yemen and Saudi Arabia a hard time, and the southern movement in the south throwing a fit every now and then and pulling strings locally and internationally.

Was it wise to make a third enemy in such vulnerable times? As it is it must have been common knowledge for the security and local authorities in Abyan that the camp existed. It's not like it was erected overnight. Moreover, I still remember how angry the US government was at Yemen when we released a few Al-Qaeda members from Yemeni security prisons. They were on USA's most wanted list, but President Saleh decided they were harmless and let them out. So now why the frenzy against everything even remotely related to Al-Qaeda? Not that I object, on the contrary this is something that should have been done long ago. But why now?

One reason is that because the Yemeni government is overstretched dealing with internal problems that it decided this is probably not a good time to annoy powerful countries. Perhaps Saleh asked for international support to deal with the local trouble makers and in return he was obliged to change his lenient attitude towards Al-Qaeda in Yemen. The American attention and support given to this recent change of heart shows that this reasoning is probably right.

So what we are seeing is a Yemeni state launching attacks right and left, or rather north and south with the help of neighboring and friendly countries. Although Saudi Arabia is still struggling with the problems at its borders, the American technology seems to be working more efficiently. They still have to make the Yemeni air force's aiming better because we don't want more civilian casualties.

How will Yemen come out of these wars? The Houthi issue today is very serious and no doubt it has reached a "kill or be killed" situation. The southern movement has lost some of its international support whether from Yemeni political asylum seekers in Arab states, or sympathetic foreign countries. Every nation that I know has said they support the Yemeni unity.

And now Al-Qaeda vows revenge and threatens not only foreign interests in the country, but also what they called "American's agents in Yemen."

With all the political and security wars going on in Yemen, today the living conditions have become unbearable. Commodity prices have gone up over night with no reason. The hungry people are getting poorer and we have more displaced Yemenis today than we ever had in history.

Yes we need to fight terrorism and protect our country's security and sovereignty, but at what price? And how will we ever recover from these damages to the infrastructure, state institutions and even social texture? What foreign aid our government will call for then?

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

COMMON SENSE

The illogic of the American intervention in Yemen



By: Hassan Al-Haifi

Has US policy in the Middle East witnessed any significant changes from its stale and fumbling ways, which many said characterized the erratic policies of the Bush Administration? The keen observer would be inclined to suggest that, if anything, the Obama Administration may be under greater pressure to fall into misguidance and ill conceived purposes, since it apparently lacks clearly defined ideological foundations to guide it in the formulation of its foreign policies. In this context then, it was easier to rationalize the policies pursued by the Bush Administration, although their justification is open to great questioning. Furthermore, the Bush Administration never made suggestions that they are pursuing a do good policy that is enamored with ethics and respect for human rights. On the contrary they stubbornly held on to a determination to use any means possible to achieve their objectives, regardless of the consequences of their tactical approaches. So, it was clear that "collateral damage" and the suppression of civil liberties and the untold human suffering that went with pursuing the objectives of the various tightly netted institutions that staunchly stood behind the Bush Administration were of little concern to former President Mr. Bush and his staff.

When Mr. Barack Obama was aggressively campaigning for the highest office in the United States, he sought to portray a forthcoming Administration that would the United States back on to a course that would make its leadership constructive in bringing about world peace and ceasing unnecessary bloodshed, especially for the mostly discontented peoples of the Third World. Realistically speaking, it would be foolish to think that Obama was a miracle maker who could take his wand and point to a map or a chart showing one of the predicaments facing his Administration and move it right or left to remove all the issues pertaining to the location in question or the report under discussion. Moreover, it would not be fair to suggest that Obama was insincere in his campaign pledges or promises or even the image he was seeking to project of himself.

It is for the American people to judge President Obama on his accomplishments at the home front, in terms of delivering on his promises of controlling government spending, rehabilitating the economic and financial environment, reforming the health sector and raising the standard and quality of education in the United States, among other issues of pertinence to the American people.

However, as far as his foreign policy agenda is concerned, the Obama Administration should begin to score itself on the achievements made since taking the oath of the Presidency of the United States and determine if it is on the road to turning his promises of engagement and rapport with the Moslem World into a tangible reality, which the Moslems of the world have yet to see. The progress in the Middle East has yet to be contemplated, let alone realized. The Israelis are not even proceeding with caution as they aggressively carry out their designs for turning the idea of a Palestinian entity beside them into no more than a rapidly fading dream buried by continuing construction of Israeli settlements. The dire situation of the Palestinians in Gaza is reaching tragic proportions, with a severe siege, now even bolstered by neighboring Arab states - with Washington's prodding.

On the anti-terrorism war front, it appears that the forces of terrorism are indeed actually gaining ground as the United States beefs up its efforts in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Needless to say, even if Afghanistan and neighboring Pakistan are both erased from the maps, this would still not bring the end of terrorism as a continuing international phenomenon. That is not where terrorism began, nor from where it obtains its continuing generous funding, which the opium trade alone would not be enough to support. Having said that, one would think that the Obama Administration would first of all seek to be familiar with the background of this mostly theatrical phenomenon of Al-Qaeda and how and where it first developed and how it spread dramatically throughout the world. One thing that is for certain is that it is safe to assume that the hundreds of civilian casualties (around 400 civilian fatalities this last month alone, including 120 Government prisoners of war being held by the Houthis) that are now dying in Sa'ada Governorate, to which some have alluded to US bombardment or rocket/drone attacks, are innocent of any form of terrorism - and especially of the Al-Qaeda genre. In addition, the recent attacks on so called AQ elements have been no more than theatrical works of tragic consequences for the mostly innocent Bedouin civilians that were hit instead of the AQ operatives the Yemeni Government claimed were targeted by the Abyan and Shabwa attacks (some claim to have been carried out with direct US involvement and not just blessing). The so called AQ operatives presumably targeted actually showed up on television the next couple of days promising their revenge on the "Americans, but not the Yemeni forces", as they stated (See also this link: <http://www.latimes.com/news/nation-and-world/la-fg-yemen-awlaki26-2009dec26.0.6789406.story>).

Another disturbing aspect of US policy vis a vis the current situation in Yemen, is that there is some suggestion that the US assistance to the current Yemeni and Saudi drives against the Houthis in Sa'ada is meant to allow the Government a free hand to deal with the AQ, once the Houthis have been subdued once and for all. The observer is baffled by this kind of logic, since the AQ and their like have been having a relatively free hand in Yemen (and of course Saudi Arabia, the original homeland of all extremist Jihadists cultures now thriving all over the world) to grow and multiply with little interference from the Yemeni Government, when both of its hands were for the most part untied for more than thirty years. Surely, this was not without the knowledge of US intelligence then and now. So why the innocent people of Sa'ada should be the victims of a misguided US policy, which was lobbied for, but apparently rejected by the former Bush Administration, is certainly worthy of further study.

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>

Yemen exposed  
Gulf States may need to get involved  
to prevent fighting from spreading

By: Francis Matthew  
Editor-at-Large  
Gulf News

For many decades, the political story of the Gulf states has been one of steady progress towards greater stability and social cohesion. All of these states are relatively new, with their territories only really taking shape in the last half of the 20th Century and their boundaries only being finally defined very recently. It is a mark of the success of the leaderships in the six GCC states that the different tribal and social groups now accept and actively support their nations.

But stability is not just about having secure nations. It is also about social cohesion, and in Saudi Arabia and some other Gulf states there was a lingering minority support from a few of the more conservative and religious sections of society for some of the ideas behind the more violent, radical Islamist groups.

So it was a very important development when Al Qaida bombed several sites in Saudi Arabia in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and killed many Saudi citizens. This in turn led to the long-established official policy against the violent extremists of Al Qaida and their like being unequivocally matched by popular opinion.

Political and social progress has been at the national, social, and individual levels as the millions of Gulf citizens slowly accepted the deep and irrevocable changes. But this progress did not happen by chance, and is due to continual and careful leadership.

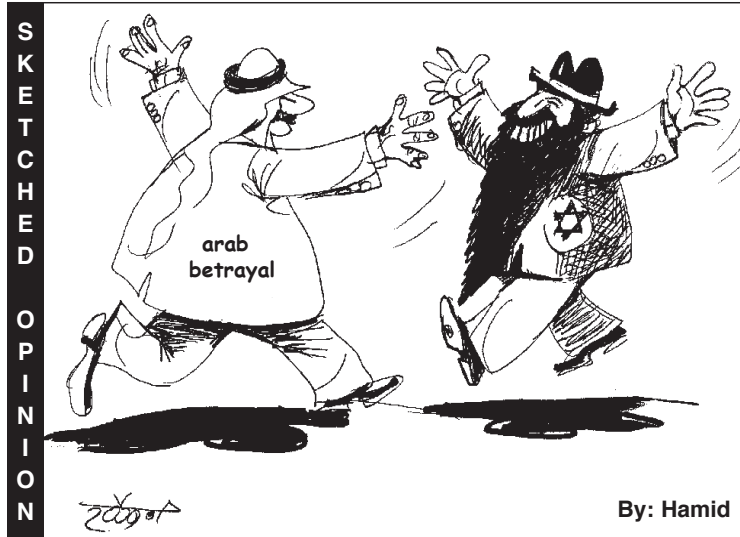
This is why the ongoing fighting in northern Yemen is attracting so

much attention around the Gulf. The Al Houthi tribal federation and their allies are seeking independence from the Yemeni state, which naturally refuses to give it. The issues that have arisen are ones that all Gulf states have had to deal with in the past: tribal loyalty, suspicion of central government, religious conservatism and a fierce independence.

Yemen is very different from the six GCC states as its government has only relatively weak security control over the huge country of 26 million people. North and South Yemen only became one country for the first time in 1990. The former royalist north was ruled by the Zaidi Imams for centuries and endured a brutal civil war in the 1960s as the Egyptian-backed republicans took over. The South was a British colony for most of the 1800s and 1900s until a Marxist revolution forced a British withdrawal in 1967.

So the Yemeni government has to deal with the active revolution in the conservative north by the Al Houthis, the continuing murmurs of succession by some of the disgruntled southern leaders and with Al Qaida setting up bases in the more remote parts of Yemen, where they can operate without much interference. This would be a tough ask for any government, and Yemen needs all the help that it can get to keep the situation under control.

The Iranians are delighted with what is happening. They have been working hard over the past decade to spread their political message through the Arab world and they have been nurturing groups who seek their support. Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas in Palestine and several Shiite parties in Iraq are the more obvious examples.



By: Hamid

Source: Gulf News

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# Yemen Press Review

**National economy issues**

Most media agreed to the fact that the national economy is in trouble, although state run newspapers shed some light on whatever progress is happening in the country's economy.



**Al-Sayasiyah:** SABA news agency's daily paper covered the issue of the

national budget in more than one issue. The Parliament has just reviewed the budget report for 2010 in which it was said that a growth rate of 7.2 percent is expected to take place in the coming year. Moreover, the oil and gas sector is expected to increase its production by 20 percent whereby Yemen increases its gas production to 458 percent compared to only a 4.7 increase in the oil production.

The newspaper indicated that 2010-2012 budget was based on evaluation the national economy between 2006 and 2008. This framework according to the parliament is a good basis to build on and is a positive step by the government that needs further steps to create more holistic budgeting templates tak-

ing into consideration various economic factors and sectors. The parliament agreed with the state's proposal in the oil, tourism, trade and transport sectors and differed on the production and non oil sectors economy predictions.



**Al-Eqtisadi Al-Yamani:** A specialized independent economic/business media

has published a report on Yemeni economy through the findings of international experts. According to them Yemen's economic breakthrough could happen through improving the service industry. And that this would only happen if the marketing and customer relations skills of Yemenis improve. The report confirmed that there are great potential in the Yemeni market and investing in them could help Yemen's economy get out of its deteriorating level.

Another aspect through which the country's economy could be improved is through community responsibilities and society involvement. According to the report the private sector should help the Yemeni government in its work

towards sustainable development. **Terrorist attempt failed in U.S. airlines** Several newspapers reported the news from America describing the details of a failed terrorist attempt on an American airline. The only link to Yemen is the explosives that were to be used in the attack.



**Al-Sahwa Net:** the Islah Party affiliated website gave the details of how passengers on Delta Air Lines managed to stop a Nigerian man believed to be linked to Al-Qaeda from igniting an explosive device on the plane as it approached Detroit. According to a security source the media said it was in the FBI, the explosive materials and instructions were carried over from Yemen.

The suspect's name, Omar Farouk Abdulmutallab, was in a database indicating "a significant terrorist connection" although it did not appear on a "no-fly" list

The 23 Nigerian had come to USA from Lagos in Nigeria after transiting in Amsterdam Holland. He suffered extensive burns before being overpowered by passengers and crew on the Christmas Day flight from Amsterdam. The passengers, two of whom suffered minor injuries, disembarked safely in Detroit.

Dhale Press which is an independent news site based in Al-Dhale gave some narration courtesy of CNN which told how passengers described the brief moments of panic on board, as screams erupted and flight attendants ran for fire extinguishers. Jafry, who was sitting in seat 16G, said the plane was just beginning to descend when passengers heard a pop. "Everybody got a little bit startled," he said. "After a few seconds or so ... there was ... kind of a flamish light and there was fire" and people around the immediate area began to panic.

Now the FBI has custody of the suspect and initial impression is that the suspect was acting alone and did not have any formal connections to organized terrorist groups, said the senior official who is familiar with the investigation.

**Sa'ada citizens' death toll continues to rise** Most of the news on Sa'ada from independent and opposition media described the humanitarian and civilian casualties while the state media described the progress made on the military front.



**Al-Wasat:** The independent media indicated that Saudi Arabia is regaining control over its territory on the Saudi-Yemeni border and has given the Houthis two days to withdraw starting Thursday otherwise it will terminate them. Since Saturday air raids were escalated by the Saudi air force. Quotes from Houthi sources say that around 54 civilians have already been killed because of the strikes in the past two days. They denied the claims of the Saudi spokes person that it was able to regain control of its areas on the border.

Houthi spokes person said, according to the website that the Saudi forces are using banned explosives and internationally forbidden bombs. And has so far succeeded in killing innocent

people. The statements also accused America of aiding the Yemeni government in its attacks from Yemen's side. Houthis accused American air force of taking part of the air strikes and that they have evidence on this and will be willing to present it to any neutral international committee.



**Al-Motamar** Net: The state run news site described the government's

attempts against Houthi arms and how suspicions that Abdulmalik Al-Houthi has been died as a result of injuries. Other news according to the official site the military succeeded in destroying many Houthi hideouts and a number of cars carrying arms were

Moreover there has been news that the state authority has managed to gain control of several areas in both Sa'ada and Amran governorates that were in the hands of Houthis. Also the state called on citizens in Sa'ada to site by the Yemeni government and avoid befriending or even going close to the Houthi hideouts so that they are not subjected to the attacks.

## It matters who tells the story in the Middle East

**'The deliberate or unconscious dehumanization of Arabs is also reflected in the way they are portrayed on television. ... Selective images confirm the stereotype that Arabs are inherently violent.'**

**S**cheherezade Faramarzi is an Associated Press reporter who has covered the major conflicts in the Middle East, Pakistan, Afghanistan and North Africa during the last three decades. Her reporting has focused on revolutions, civil war, suicide bombings, kidnappings, hostage negotiations, guerrilla warfare, and terrorism. A 2009 Nieman Fellow, she has been in Beirut since 2006 covering Hizbullah and Iran's regional influence. She began by talking about competing narratives.

We have covered the Middle East as it has evolved dramatically over the past 30 years that I have been a reporter, gradually in the beginning but at a greater speed in the past decade, especially after 9/11. Nowhere has the transformation been as marked as in the demonization or dehumanization of Middle Eastern people in reporting their suffering and the injustices inflicted on them. In 1982, journalists could walk into a Palestinian refugee camp in Beirut in the aftermath of a massacre and talk to survivors, do our own investigation and write pretty much what we saw and heard. The story would reflect what really happened. This would not be as easy to do today.

Now stories tend to lean more to what authorities want us to believe, and this results, at best, in dismissing deaths of Arabs as collateral damage. Whether on TV or in print, civilians, including children, have taken on a different role in the conflict. When many children were killed in the southern

Lebanese town of Qana as they took refuge in a shelter during the 2006 war, much of the Western media accepted Israeli claims at face value and blamed their deaths on Hizbullah for using them as human shields, never checking if this was actually the case. This proved to be wrong, as documented a year later in a report by Human Rights Watch.

In May 2004 U.S. warplanes bombed a house in the Iraqi desert near the Syrian border. The U.S. military immediately said the target was a suspected safe house for foreign fighters from Syria. The Iraqis said the planes attacked a wedding party killing up to 45 people, mostly women and children. The U.S. military denied that women and children were killed. Over the next few days, we were able to gather evidence, including film footage, from the wedding as well as interviews with survivors that indicated the attack was on a wedding party and the victims were overwhelmingly women and children. The U.S. military eventually admitted that it might have been an attack on a wedding, but still insisted that foreign fighters were killed. At one point a spokesman made the remarkable claim that "Bad guys also have weddings."

In the end, the news media largely abandoned the story and consequently the army got off the hook even though two-year-old Khoolood was no fighter. She survived with severe injuries, but lost her parents and four sisters and brothers in the raid.

The deliberate or unconscious dehumanization of Arabs is also reflected in

the way they are portrayed on television. We're all too familiar with images of angry Arab women, thick black cloth wrapped around their tattooed faces, cursing, crying, wailing, beating their heads when innocent loved ones are killed, massacred. These menacing narrow images, dripping with negative energy, do not provoke sympathy in the Western public.

In contrast we see well-dressed poised mourners grieving the deaths of American soldiers or Israelis. Relatives hold onto one another. The whole ceremony is performed with utmost dignity. In between the chanting and eulogies there is utter silence interspersed by quiet weeping while in Gaza cameras show a wide shot of crowds running in a frenzy through the streets carrying high the wobbling exposed body of the deceased. And they zoom in on wailing mourners shouting revenge, eyes flaming with hatred. These selective images confirm the stereotype that Arabs are inherently violent. And viewers become partial to the trauma of one, but far less of the other.

When American soldiers kill two innocent young Iraqis by mistake not only do they not admit their mistake, apologize or pay compensation, but they go so far as to accuse them of being terrorists. Reporters duly put that in the story without question, sometimes even when they know it's not the case. Why? It's the balance factor. Already we have planted suspicion in the reader's mind: maybe they weren't so innocent after all. Again we dehumanize them. We move away from the real story: the murder of two innocent Iraqi youths. They're no longer seen as victims, but perpetrators and their deaths perhaps unavoidable. It's the good guys/bad guys characterization. It's us and them.

People are so used to the carnage of the Middle East that they have stopped caring. Yet the Middle East has provided Western reporters with the best opportunities to make it big in the industry. Many with stints there, especially in Iraq, return with big promotions and go on to win awards or to write books. But how much do some of these reporters really care about the story or understand the complexity of the region when many don't even speak its language? How can they understand the suffering of a mother who wants to tell them how the death of her son has destroyed her? Or understand the trauma of a child who witnessed the killing of her father and siblings at a Baghdad intersection by American soldiers? Can a translator really do justice?

There's supposed to be a connection between the reporter and the subject. That connection is the magic of being



A girl who returned to her house in the village of Aita Shaab, Lebanon surveyed the damage. Photo by Iason Athanasiadis.

a journalist.

I want to share with you my first experience of what to me was a Western reporter's insensitivity with regard to Arabs. It was in late 1980. An Israeli air strike on a small town south of Beirut had killed scores of civilians including, as always, many children. Their mutilated bodies were scattered in the rubble. "Great story," this journalist said when he returned from the site and quickly went to type his story.

Two and a half decades later on a quiet morning in Baghdad I ran into a fellow journalist and asked him why he was so frazzled. "There's no story to write," he complained. I joked that he shouldn't worry for there was bound to be a bomb soon. When a bomb did explode somewhere in Baghdad, I told the same journalist that he should be happy now since he'd gotten his story. He didn't detect the sarcasm in my voice. "Yeah, but no one died," he grumbled. No death meant no front page.

TV screens don't show the real horrors of war that we journalists witness, at least not so much in Iraq anymore because since 2004 Western reporters hardly ever leave their offices. What we see is sanitized. Viewers are spared gruesome pictures; they don't see what's really going on in Iraq or in Gaza or in Lebanon. If the American people were able to see those pictures, I think they'd have a different view of the war.

Nor are they told in stories from Iraq, which they should be, that somewhere between 250,000 and one mil-

lion Iraqis have been killed since the start of the conflict. We hear mainly about dead American soldiers. We are told their names, even their children's names and how they lived their lives before they volunteered to fight in Iraq. The Iraqi dead—no volunteers for the war—are hardly ever mentioned. Americans have no idea of the extent of civilian suffering in Iraq even though it's their country's war that caused the deaths.

When I was invited to speak at this conference we had to struggle to find a suitable topic for me. Being a Middle Easterner who grew up in Iran, Iraq and Lebanon, trauma is a fact of life. We don't even think about it. I faced the horrors of living under an authoritarian regime in Iran, through several Iraqi coups, and then during the Lebanese civil war, just as others there did. It's our life. I'm not a foreign journalist. I'm not a foreign correspondent.

But what struck me since I've been here as a Nieman Fellow is how the Middle East is a topic of endless roundtable discussions and talks, usually by Westerners. I don't know why but I find boasting about having been in Iraq troubling, even painful, and somewhat arrogant, especially when they pat each other on the back. There's a kind of glorification of war. I just find no glory in covering sufferings.

In the discussion that followed, Bruce Shapiro, executive director of the "http://www.dartcenter.org/" "blank" Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma, began by asking Faramarzi this question:

"If you were writing your own stories in Iraq now, what are some of the guidelines you would draw out? How would you calibrate your nose for news to represent people more accurately in their suffering?"

Faramarzi: I think what I would do—and I have tried to do—is spend much more time than just to get a quote or two. If we're doing a very in-depth story, I spend hours and hours. But in Iraq for instance, there are no therapists. So they use us. I sometimes feel I'm a therapist. If people know I'm staying in a town in Iraq for several months, people get to know me and come and want to talk. They tell me their problems. I really insist on the fact that you really have to be there not to just be over them. This is what I resent, maybe because I'm a Middle Easterner myself. I appreciate very much what Westerners come and do. They do great stuff, most of them do; but I feel sometimes there's this kind of "we're the whites and we're telling your story, and you should be grateful."

I remember the first day I arrived in Iraq, a Canadian TV journalist was so angry because they had given his room to me. He was screaming at the hotel staff that "You should be grateful we're here to cover your story." He went on and on. He was a sort of celebrity journalist in Canada. I think this is very common. Even if they don't know it, there is this unconscious thing that we are here to tell your story. This is our country. This is our part of the world. You can't just become famous because people are dying.



A Shi'ite youth plants the Hizbullah flag and rests the Shi'ite Zulfikar scimitar upon the rubble of the Shi'ite-majority al-Dahieh suburb of Beirut. Photo by Iason Athanasiadis.

## Modern coffee shops, an alternative to qat

By: Khaled Al-Hilaly

Recently, a few western style coffee shops compared to the traditional tea and beverages cafeterias appeared. These are usually run by foreigners to serve the interested population of Sana'a and provide Yemenis with an alternative to chewing qat.

Qat, a mildly narcotic leaf chewed in Yemen, dominates the social life here. In keeping with conservative customs, qat chews are usually segregated by gender. But a change in how Yemenis and foreigners alike spend their free time is slowly taking hold.

Qat and weapons including Jambia (a traditional Yemeni dagger worn by men around the waist) are forbidden. And smoking is allowed only in the open air spaces.

There are at least six modern coffee shops in Sana'a besides those in the big hotels. People prefer the independent coffee shops to the hotels because they are in the city center and thus are easier to access. Moreover, locals may feel suspicious about women visiting hotels regularly.

Many Yemeni women who are regular customers find the coffee shops a place to enjoy good coffee in a free easy going atmosphere and socialize in a mixed environment. For couples, coffee shops are almost the only place to meet away from the security and the conservative culture of Yemen.

For Fatima Al-Dailami, the quietness of the coffee shops attracts her. Since she bought a laptop, she shuns the noisy internet cafes for the calm coffee shops. "Sometimes, I come here daily, the atmosphere is ideal for studying with friends."

Others agree that the new coffee establishments offer many advantages. "The place is very quiet, internet service is available and the staff are friendly," said Saleh Al-Reshan a



The coffee shops allow friends of mixed gender to meet easily and encourage intercultural interaction.



Most of the people go to the coffee shops in Sana'a are non qat chewers.

23 years old university student from Saudi Arabia.

Al-Reshan agrees that modern coffee shops are a good alternative to qat sessions. In Saudi Arabia, segregated coffee shops are the norm, but he likes the mixed Yemeni coffee shops. "It is freedom," he added.

The freedom of the mixed coffee shops is easy to see and hear: Usually veiled, female university students and young professionals' faces are uncovered as they comfortably talk with friends.

Public relations coordinator at Coffee Tree near Sana'a University, Abdu Aziz Al-Kuhali believes that the closed up spaces in some restaurants where supposedly families or couples can sit together without being watched is more suggestive and allows for inappropriate behavior than friends of different genders and couples sitting in the open area of modern coffee shops. "However,

modern coffee shops are either mixed in open space, or they would include an only women section."

Western style in a traditional city People like to visit those coffee shops because they are clean, friendly and you get lots of kinds of hot drinks and snacks. It is a place to socialize, or study with free speedy internet.

The clientele range from businessmen discussing deals, to students doing homework or projects. Some professionals stay for hours doing their work.

The coffee shops attempt to cater to everyone's preferences through offering a choice of indoor or outdoor seating, different lighting and music, friendly waiters and the interior and exterior design.

"I come to the coffee shop every other day and it is nice to have Yemeni coffee," said an American journalist who requested anonymity. "Coffee is

very good alternative to qat, but the prices are high – similar to prices in Europe."

Some complain that high prices stop average Yemenis from going to the modern coffee shops, however, common knowledge in Yemen suggests that an average Yemeni spends around YR 500 for qat every day.

"The Yemeni coffee is the most expensive in the world, however our prices are still the lowest in the Gulf," said Tom Coleman, owner of Coffee Trader on Hadda Street. "Coffee shops are definitely a good alternative to chewing qat," continued Coleman. "Qat destroys the country and people."

Prices are more expensive but the service is good. The high prices limit the type of customer to a certain financial class or education who is interested in this culture. Although the type of customers is gradually changing to becoming more inclusive. The

coffee shop serves everybody including businessmen, government officials, ambassadors and students.

"Most of our customers are university students looking for quiet nice place and internet service" said Al-Kuhali. He strongly believes that the modern coffee shops are very good alternative to chewing qat since it has totally different environment of qat sessions, since it is a more active and productive atmosphere.

According to the owners and staff of many cafes, most of the people who visit modern coffee shops are non qat chewers.

"We serve all kinds of coffee, some sweets and snacks," said Al-Kuhali adding that chewing qat and smoking sheesha or Hooka are not allowed.

Al-Kuhali said that the owner sees that encouraging people to leave qat and sheesha and spend their time in useful discussions, cultural interactions or simply working in solitude

are more important than profit she could have made had he opened a sheesha café or restaurant. He complained that one of the main challenges to opening such modern or western style cafes is that people from Environmental Health and Tax Authority frequently visit asking for money without justification.

"I hope that this kind of coffee shops increase, because the places available for women in Sana'a are still very few," said Lamia Al-Rsaabi, 19, university student.

Al-Rsaabi goes to coffee shop three to four times a week. She doesn't chew qat but she believes that coffee shops help people quit the habit.

In addition to perhaps reducing qat's usage, the coffee shops allow friends of mixed gender to meet easily and encourage intercultural interaction that would otherwise be difficult given Yemen's conservative cultural traditions.



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# Urban agriculture a solution to food insecurity

By: Amel Al-Ariqi

Yemen has suffered greatly during the world food crisis, since early 2008, which increased the number of people in poverty. About two million people are depending on the aids given by the World Food Program in Yemen.

The country imports as much as 75 per cent of its food requirements, and hence is vulnerable to shortages in world stocks. Yemen's poorest households may have no mechanism to cope with astronomical prices, warned international aids agencies in Yemen.

The WFP says that higher prices have already forced six percent of the population of 20 millions according to 2004, below the poverty line.

The rapid increase of population, high price of food, depletion of groundwater, and degradation of soil resources, and the unknown consequences of climate change, all contribute to aggravate the situation of food security in Yemen.

The concept of "Urban agriculture" emerges as a salutation for food security issue in developing countries, including Yemen.

Urban agriculture can reduce poverty, improve nutrition in the capital city, said a report launched last week. The technique consists of growing plants and raising animals within and around cities.

The report, which was conducted by a Yemeni agricultural team, under the supervision of the Resource Centre on Urban Agriculture and Food security Foundation, said that urban agriculture has not just contributed to beautify the urban environment of the city, but it can reduce poverty, promote the food security, ease the demand for waste disposal (through composting) in Sana'a.

According to the Central Establishment for Census, the percentage families who below the minimum poverty line in Sana'a are forming 11 percent of its three million inhabitants' population.

Sana'a, which is situated on a plateau 2,200 meters above sea level, ranked fourth in the national survey of poverty in Yemen, after Taiz, Ibb, and Hudidah.

The team, which conducted the report, argued that the urban agriculture can be integrated into the urban economic and ecological system.

Urban agriculture plays an important role in enhancing urban food security since the costs of supplying and distributing food to urban areas based on rural production and imports continue to increase, and does not satisfy the demand, especially of the poorer sectors of the population.

Urban agriculture also contributes to local economic development, poverty alleviation and social inclusion of the urban poor and women in particular as they formed 27 per cent of urban agricultural permanent workers worker, adds green spaces in the city and facilitates the productive reuse of



The main source of irrigation is ground water (less than 55 per cent), which is used mainly for horticulture and qat production, while forage and grain production is rain-fed. www.traveladventures.org

urban waste.

## Why Sana'a?

The report mentioned that there are about 10,000 of Sana'a citizens still work on some 9,300 hectares of agricultural land in the city. The report, based on a census of 2007, said that on 7,700 hectares more than 37,500 tons of vegetables (leek, coriander, radish, onions and tomatoes), forage (alfalfa, maize, and barley), fruits (grapes, berries, nuts, peaches and apricots) qat and other seasonal grain crops were produced. Around 4,500 cows and 110,000 sheep and goat in addition to camels, donkeys, poultry and bees populate the city as well.

The older part of the historic city, which is now a UNESCO world heritage site, still contains 21 hectares of orchards and vegetable farms (like the Almaqashim or the mosque gardens) which supply the population with part of the local food needs. The size of land holdings range between 0.25 and 7 hectares; most of which are private properties (85%), the rest is public and Waqf (religious community) properties.

The main source of irrigation is ground water (less than 55 per cent), which is used mainly for horticulture and qat production, while forage and grain production is rain-fed. Another water source specific for Sana'a is water from the mosques or ablation water, which is used to irrigate the mosque gardens.

The report indicates that these agricultural activities constitute an essential part of urban livelihoods to supply food for consumption and income. The whole family is involved: women usually keep the animals and work in planting, harvesting and post-harvesting activities as well as marketing. This means that they directly sell their crops from the field or in nearby public markets.

## Challenges should be overcome

Despite these encouraging initiatives, many obstacles remain. The lack of arable land, scarcity of water, periodic droughts, and difficult terrain

hinders efforts to retain and harvest quality crops.

Moreover, qat depletes scarce water resources and replaces essential food crops and agricultural exports, the report claims. However, even though it consumes scarce resources, the narcotic plant does provide employment for one in every seven working Yemeni.

The plant is ubiquitous: Some 72 percent of Yemeni males reported that they chew qat, compared to 33 percent of females. Because of its importance in Yemeni society, the poor willingly forego food in favor of buying qat. Commercial farming of fruits and vegetables provides a level of production to nearly satisfy domestic demand, noted the report.

However, the team is betting that such obstacles can be mastered, and Sana'a won't be the only city where get benefits from the urban agriculture, as these concept can be replicated in many other cities in Yemen.

Since 2008, there have been humble activities carried out by number of agriculture originations which declared a the Multi-Stakeholder Forum to promote Urban Agriculture in Sana'a.

Urban farmers have been encouraged to organize themselves and share their thoughts and experiences, laws and regulations related to urban agriculture have been analyzed and suggestions for change have been made in coordination with the municipal and legislative institutions concerned.

The main recommendation was the preservation of the remaining agriculture land and the need for spatial urban development towards the arid plateaus surrounding the city rather than on prime agricultural lands as it has been the case so far.

The Municipality of Sana'a has provided for a public space, which will be used as a demonstration plot for teachers and school children to learn how to implement small school gardens at their premises and encouraging their parents to grow crops at home.

Moreover, the forum has prepared a Sana'a City Strategic Agenda on Urban Agriculture, which elaborated on issues as water availability and more efficient use of irrigation water; agriculture extension and development services; empowering women agriculture and different institutions; the reformulation of laws and regulations in order to preserve agricultural activities and enhance access to land and more specifically access to land for grazing.

The forum contains representatives from nongovernmental organizations, research institutes, producer organizations and various municipal and ministerial departments including the departments of agriculture, public gardens and public works. The Sana'a Watershed Management Project, funded by the World Bank, the National Council for Urban Planning, individual urban farmers, the Association for the Conservation of Gardens in Old Sana'a, the Agricultural University of Sana'a and the Agriculture Cooperatives Union also contributed to the report's findings.

## 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.

## Let your food be your medicine and your medicine be your food!

Hippocrates, the ancient Greek physician once said, "Let your Food be your Medicine; and Medicine be your Food". It is beyond doubt that food contributes to many diseases. Researchers have started thinking that many of the familial cancers are due to people having food from the same kitchen rather than hereditary predisposition. The incidence of heart problems, cancers and other life style diseases are soaring for the past two decades. We should realize that we can be healthy by eating healthy food and enjoy longer and better quality of life. In short, we are what we eat.

In the past, the Mediterranean diet was followed by Greeks and Romans, inhabitants of the Mediterranean Region and the birthplace of modern civilization. The well known component of Mediterranean diet, olive oil, was used by ancient Greeks as a substitute for animal fat.

The Mediterranean Diet Pyramid The Mediterranean Diet Pyramid was introduced in 1993. Since then, extensive research has proved the healthfulness of this cuisine, which has demonstrated the highest average life expectancy and the lowest rates of chronic diseases among adults. Many have started following Mediterranean Diet. Over the past 15 years, it has captured so much attention that many restaurants, cookery shows and cookbooks promote this type of meal planning.



- Seeds: Beans, and nuts such as almonds, pine nuts, walnuts, pistachios, hazelnuts, peanuts, chickpeas, and lentils, are all important Mediterranean foods and can be eaten as snacks on a daily basis.
- Cereals and grains are widely eaten in a traditional Mediterranean diet. Breads, pastas, and grains are traditionally eaten as whole grains.
- Dairy food such as yogurt and goat milk products such as feta cheese are eaten frequently. Try to select those lower in fat for a more healthy option.
- Eggs and poultry are each consumed once a week only.
- Red wine/Grape juice: Women are allowed 1 glass daily, and men 2 glasses of red wine. For those for whom wine is not allowed on religious or medical reasons, grape juice can replace wine.
- Fresh herbs, spices, and garlic are used extensively in Mediterranean cuisine instead of salt and artificial flavoring.
- Water: 6-8 glasses are consumed daily on the Mediterranean diet.
- Sweets: Though the diet pyramid includes sweets, consume them in moderation.
- Extra Virgin Olive oil contains several vital ingredients for good health. Olive oil contains mono-unsaturated fats which are capable of reducing bad blood cholesterol levels (LDL), and increasing the good cholesterol levels (HDL). Thus it significantly reduces the risk of heart disease, diabetes, and stroke. For maximum heart health benefits unhealthy fats and oils, such as butter and margarine, should be totally replaced with olive oil. It also contains highest levels of polyphenols. Polyphenols are antioxidants known for reducing blood pressure and cholesterol, and improving heart health. Oleic acid present in olive oil can reduce breast cancer risks.
- Oily fish (tuna, salmon, mackerel, and herring) contain rich amounts of omega 3 fatty acids which are immune system boosters. They also improve heart health by reducing the levels of triglycerides.
- Garlic is known to be helpful in reducing high blood pressure (hypertension), lowering cholesterol levels, and is a powerful antioxidant.
- Mediterranean diet contains a spectrum of antioxidants in the form of fresh fruits, vegetables, and olive oil. Natural antioxidants are considered to be warriors fighting against ageing, mopping up free radicals which cause cell damage, and reducing inflammatory states.
- Red wine and red grape juice contain high sources of flavonoids, which are powerful antioxidants that can improve the good blood cholesterol and reduce heart disease. They also reduce platelet clumping and harmful blood clots. Resveratrol an important constituent of red wine is good for optimal health. It is an excellent anti cancer substance for prostate, lung, liver, colo-rectal and breast cancers. Research has proved that it can provide protection against benzopyrene, a major environmental carcinogen involved in the development of lung cancer. It is also good against Age Related Macular Degeneration, which is one of the causes for blindness.
- Nuts are not only a good source of fiber and Vitamin E, but also contain high levels of mono-unsaturated fats and low levels of unhealthy or saturated fats. Consuming a handful of nuts on a daily basis has been shown to decrease heart disease by as much as 60%, decrease cholesterol levels, and reduce the risk for diabetes type 2, stroke, and dementia.
- Fruits and vegetables are a great source of fiber, and vitamins and minerals. A recent study has shown that by just increasing the daily consumption of fruits and vegetables to 5 servings, you can reduce the risk of stroke by an impressive 25%.

When you go grocery shopping, get less of meat and dairy, and load your shopping cart with fresh fruits, vegetables and nuts. In short, reduce the amount of red meat and replace it with fish. Increase the daily serving of fresh fruits and vegetables. Consume whole grain breads and pastas as unrefined and as unprocessed as possible. Substitute butters and Western style fats and oils with extra virgin olive oil. Be sure to drink plenty of water.

The foods of the Mediterranean are not only delicious, but come packed with a bundle of health benefits. Eat and enjoy the benefits of Mediterranean diet.



## Foods in the Mediterranean Diet include:

- Extra Virgin Olive oil: Mediterranean diets use plenty of olive oil. Olive oil is used as a base for salad dressings, pasta sauces, and as a condiment on bread.
- Fish: Oily fish such as tuna, salmon, mackerel, and herring are generally eaten a few times a week.
- Fruits: Grapes, avocados, and olives are traditional Mediterranean foods that are used in plenty. Fruits such as berries including blueberries, raspberries and strawberries often beautify the plate. Other fruits include figs, dates, apples, oranges, lemons, limes, pears, apricots, peaches, and melons. Fresh fruits are often eaten as dessert in the Mediterranean diet.
- Vegetables such as eggplant, spinach, tomatoes, peppers, zucchini, carrots, broccoli, capsicum, onion, turnips, potatoes, and cabbage should occupy 3/4 of your plate. A Mediterranean style diet generally has at least 6-9 servings of fresh vegetables every day.



A fruit and vegetables shop in Sana'a. Many of the products he sells are grown abroad. The country imports as much as 75 per cent of its food requirements, and hence is vulnerable to shortages in world stocks.



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# Cleanliness invites towards faith



By: Layla Asda  
For the Yemen Times

Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) said, Islam urges cleanliness upon us and is a necessity of life- a part of faith. It is a beautiful thing for individuals, society and nations. It has become an element of civilization that informs a civilized society, therefore there is no civilization without cleanliness. In accordance with these ideas, AMIDEAST held a community service activity on the 10th and 17th of December at Dar al-Hajar. The activity, entitled "Dar al-Hajar Cleanup," included about 125 English Access Microscholarship students; the activity also included participation by YES alumni, Access teachers, and student interns. Access students cleaned up and collected litter around the area of Dar Al-Hajar in order to make their country cleaner and more beautiful. Through this particular activity, Access students wanted to deliver a message to the community through which they wanted society to understand the importance of cleanliness in life and religion. The aim of this activity was to raise awareness amongst the Access students about the environment and the history of that Rock Palace, Dar Al-Hajar, and to encourage them to be more responsible and helpful towards their community.

When asked about this activity, Noha Yassin, Access student participant said, "I feel that it is an excellent activity because it serves the community, and cleanliness is something that Islam has asked us to have. Moreover, it teaches other people a lesson about cleanliness and it deepens the students' feelings about it."

Jamil Amen, another Access student, said, "It is a nice feeling, especially since it helps to change the society's view because sometimes it is common that people would look at a person cleaning in a ridiculous way and make fun of him, so we need to change that ridiculous way of thinking. I would like to add that it is a nice activity because we physically benefit from it, and it helps us to refresh our memory and the blood circulation as

well. So, as you can see, it helps the individuals and the society in terms of environment, culture and society as a whole," he concluded.

Najat Ahmed Yahia, another Access student, added, saying, "I definitely like this activity because this is our country, and we are working on improving its image in front of others. Actually it is a wonderful thing to see your country clean and in a better image," she added.

"It is a great activity to participate in because Yemen is a great country with a great history and people. It is our job to focus on doing such activities, for ex-

ample, cleaning the historical city, Old Sana'a, as it is our responsibility to keep it clean. So if we want other people to evaluate us in a positive way and have a better look at us as a whole and a great civilization, we need to improve the historical tourism sites so that they see it clean and it remains a place among the greatest places." Salwa Al Aqwa'a, a teacher at AMIDEAST said, "Moreover, it is a practical religious cause. The more religious you are, the stronger your faith is, and cleanliness is next to godliness. It is a patriotic duty that we have to do because we belong to this place," she



concluded.

Emad Al Saqaf, the IT Manager at AMIDEAST, said, "It is a message that we want to convey because it is important to keep our environment clean. Actually, it is necessary because it is from our religion. I am really happy to see that the students got the courage to do such a job which indicates that they have good values, and I am happier to see that the community had a positive response to the activity when they started to help us as soon as they saw us cleaning."

This was not the only activity that was held by AMIDEAST last Thursday. There were other activities that English Access Microscholarship students were required to participate in, such as Al-Aman Organization for Blind Women Care. Access students took a tour where they visited classrooms and interacted with the girls, some partially blind and some completely blind. After viewing a presentation prepared by the organization, Access students donated educational talking computers to the girls and taught them how to use the games. Many of the Access students were deeply affected by seeing the blind children as they considered the lifelong hardships faced by these young girls. The purpose of this activity was to raise awareness about the blind community and to get Access students interested in assisting the girls by teaching them English in the future.

Another activity was held at Al-Ayman Institute for Cerebral Palsy. Access students visited the various branches within the center (physical therapy, speech therapy, swimming pool, classrooms, etc.), spent time getting to know the students, and played games with the children there who are extremely limited, mentally and physically. There was an explanation given by Al-Ayman Institute about Cerebral Palsy and other disabilities.

Two weeks ago, on December 10th, 2009, 60 Access students, seven YES Alumni and four AMIDEAST teachers went to the Sana'a Orphanage. The day started off with everyone teaming up and playing basketball, volleyball and football with the balls that the English Access Microscholarship Program donated to the children at the orphanage. As planned, Access students and their supervisors, with the assistance of some orphans, split up into their assigned groups to work on specific jobs: painting the basketball court, tennis court, volleyball court, the fence around the courts, cafeteria tables, and finally, planting trees. After two and a half hours of back-bending labor, students joined the tree planting group and talked about what they accomplished that day: helping a different part of society that they may have never considered and the feelings they felt after giving their time to brighten up the home of these children.

Every six weeks at AMIDEAST, 325 English Access Microscholarship students are required to participate in an activity. These students of non-elite economic status are accepted to the program when they are anywhere between 14 and 18 years old and are sponsored by the U.S. Department of State to study English at AMIDEAST for two years. The English Access Microscholarship Program has been running in Yemen for six years now.

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## Yemenia and United Insurance launch passenger insurance service



Yemen Airways and United Insurance Co. have launched its service to all Yemenia passengers from now on who will benefit from the tickets insurance services. This is a travel insurance for all passengers that covers emergency matters only at a cost addition of only one dollar per ticket. Those who have a one way ticket will be covered up to ten days and those with a return ticket will be covered up to 93 days. Travelers on Yemenia to European countries or countries that require health insurance will be exempted from this procedure since they already have their travel insurance covered through this airline, according to Fahd Al-Ariqi

director of Sana'a Area. A celebration to announce this launch took place last week in the presence of Othman Al-Qubati deputy director for commercial affairs and Tarek Abdul Wase' Hael general manager of United Insurance Company as well as Isam Al-Awami director of Gulf Assist Company. Gulf Assist is the middle insurance company between Yemen's local company United Insurance and the International insurance company MAPFRE. Also present was the chairperson of the Yemeni Union of Trade and Commerce Chambers Mohammed Abu Saeed Naam and a number of ambassadors, diplomats, travel and tourism agents.