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## Protestors force state to release detainees



The main road from Aden to Sana was blocked by members of the southern movement in Al-Dhale' for around four days.

By: Fuad Mused  
For the Yemen Times

Al-DHALE', FEB. 7 — The blocking of a main road leading from Dhale to the capital city Sana'a for four days succeeded in pressurizing state security into

releasing the final three members of southern movement detainees. These three were among the most active protesters from Al-Dhale' who had participated in previous demonstrations against the state among another 70 protestors or so who were detained in the past two months in Aden political security prison. Aden political security apparatus had received instructions to release all the detained protestors, yet it did in intervals across the past two months, leaving those three to the very last.

"The three detainees were released

from the political security only to be detained immediately again by the general security of Aden. Hence the demonstrations and blocking of the roads in Al-Dhale'," said a local source to the Yemen Times.

The three detainees were released on Wednesday and welcomed by the Dhale branch of the southern movement in a

symbolic procession in Al-Dhale' on Thursday.

Despite this relative success, tension remains in Al-Dhale' city especially during night time as locals witness regular fire exchange between the state security and armed veiled men.

"We do not know whether our shops and merchandize will be safe or not. Every day we expect something to happen and we are not sure whether to open or close our shops," a local shop keeper told Yemen Times.

The state of tension is caused by the regular protests in Al-Dhale' against the state. The southern movement carries a protest every Thursday morning all

around the governorate. Protests include hundreds of angry demonstrators, but usually end peacefully.

The recent protest last week which blocked the road was different as it caused a disturbance to traffic and daily life.

The protestors started to fire tires and piled up stones on the road, since Monday morning. Dozens of vehicles and containers were seen, lined up in a queue, all along the road between Al-Habilain district in Lahj and Al-Dhale', as the protestors refused to let any vehicle to pass. However, some taxis were at times allowed to pass, as an exception, at night.

Some unknown armed men were observed on Tuesday evening, at the entrance of Al-Habilain district, setting up their own checkpoints.

Identities of passengers were checked to see whether they belonged to the south or to the north of Yemen.

Also, on Monday, the security in Al-Dhale' city clashed with unknown armed men. Witnesses said that these armed men were opening random fires on the security checkpoints, at the city's entrance.

The security at the checkpoints fired back at the sites of these unknown armed men. No human casualties were reported from both sides.

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## Al-Eryani accuses opposition of ruining the national dialogue

By: Mohammad Bin Salam

SANA'A, FEB. 7 – In a press conference, held last Saturday at Al-Mithaq Institute in Sana'a, Abdulkareem Al-Eryani, the political advisor of President Saleh, said that the JMP rejected implementation of the February Agreement, signed between it and the ruling party. The agreement, which was signed last year, stated that the parliamentary elections will be held in April 2011.

Al-Eryani said that the JMP rejected all suggestions presented by the ruling party to reach a technicality to implement the articles of the agreement. The agreement also included amending the electoral system and an extended agenda of the Parliament.

Saying that the JMP had newly established a National Consultative Committee to represent it in the national dialogue, Al Eryani said that however, "the JMP has stated that it will not participate in the national dialogue unless the ruling party gives a signed

approval for the committee".

This newly established committee consists of 90 members comprising of formal officials, ministers and former members of the ruling party.

Al Eryani said that the ruling party, on its part, has presented a document proposing to hold the national dialogue, either Saturday or Sunday, next week.

The document suggests forming a 'mutual committee', to prepare for the national comprehensive dialogue. It also suggests equal participation, in terms of number of members of the JMP and the ruling party, in the national dialogue.

The General Secretary of the ruling party, Sultan Al-Barakani, said that the party is doing its best to hold the dialogue following democratic and constitutional methods.

For his part, the deputy of the High Security Council, Qasem Sallam, said that the cooperation between the ruling party and the democratic parties is not confined to a specific time.

**The Houthi issue**

The Houthi issue was also discussed in the conference. Al-Eryani said that mediators had proposed a timetable to implement the six conditions put forth by the state for a cease-fire.

He said that the document consisted of a term to form five committees, comprising of members of the parliament and Al-Shoura Council (the Consultative Council) as well as representatives of Saudi Arabia, to implement the six conditions.

He stated, during the conference, that representatives of the Houthis have received a specific technicality to stop the operations in Harf Sufian and Al-Malaheeth in Sa'ada governorates as well as to open the roads in the area.

"In case Houthis accept the document and follow the specific technicalities to implement the six conditions of the government, military operations by the Yemeni army would immediately stop", he said.

## Yemeni editor wins Swedish Democracy Prize

OREBRO, Feb. 7 — Walid Al-Saqaf former editor in chief of Yemen Times and currently a university scholar and software developer has been awarded the Democracy Prize for 2010 by Örebro University in its Annual Academy celebration held today in Örebro, Sweden.

Al-Saqaf, is pursuing his higher studies at Örebro University in media and communications was chosen based on his research work that was 'grounded in the true democratic ideals and ambitions' according to the nominating committee. Al-Saqaf developed YemenPortal.net, which was the first country-specific aggregator in the Arab world, and is specialized in collecting news, forum, opinion, blog and video content from dozens of online sources. Since it was launched in 2007, the engine indexed around 1.8 million items ranging from news and opinion articles to video clips, most which are related to Yemen.

However, in January 2008, the Yemeni government blocked access to yemenportal.net from within Yemen at a time the website witnessed rapid growth in readership and popularity.



Walid Al-Saqaf

Al-Saqaf noted in a press conference held on Friday at the university that the action by the government may have been because he had insisted on not succumbing to pressure to filter out critical articles. He added that the Yemeni regime appears to opposed the presence of uncensored Internet news portal about Yemen

Since the ban took place, Al-Saqaf proceeded in developing anti-censorship solutions that are used by hun-

dreds of users across the world. The most notable project is the development of alkasir, an online censorship tracking and circumvention software developed with the assistance of the MidEast Youth network.

In a press conference for the Swedish local and national media, Al-Saqaf thanked the university and the Swedish people for their support for him during the ordeal following the ban of his website and expressed his desire to pursue a PhD degree to analyze the phenomenon of censorship in the Arab world using alkasir and its upcoming browser, which he said, will be the world's first browser that attempts to be exclusively used for bypassing censorship across the world. He also indicated the escalating violations against press freedom in Yemen, particularly in the last few months.

It is worth noting that alkasir Browser is to be introduced in version 1.2 of alkasir, which is to undergo testing by alkasir.com members in February 2010 and to be released to the public as a freeware product later this year. Membership with alkasir.com is free.

## Journalists doubt government's sincerity in adhering to their needs

By: Mahmoud Assamiee

SANA'A, FEB. 5 — After more than a week of red signs on their shoulders, indicating partial strike, journalists working in public media institutions have been calmed by promises of Noa'man Al-Suhaibi, Minister of Finance, to give them their bonuses from the next half of 2010.

The council of Yemeni Journalists Syndicate (YJS) and heads of the syndicates' committees in government media institutions, held a discussion meeting, two weeks ago, with Al-Suhaibi regarding implementation of the first part of the cabinet's decision No. 76 for 2009 concerning the Work Nature Allowances, following which, in a press release the YJS called on journalists to take out the red signs and suspend the partial strike, starting from January 25, according to Saba. The Journalists had already had carried out the strike for a day, .

The syndicate confirmed that it will

nevertheless insist on implementing the second part of the decision, which includes Job Description - a project presented by YJS to cabinet last year on regulating salaries of journalists, but refused by government. The YJS called on all state media to finish any requirements needed to implement the project.

The Yemeni Journalists Syndicate held elections, last November, to choose committees from public media institutions to be in contact with the syndicate on issues of journalists in these institutions.

Head of the YJS's Committee in Yemen News Agency-Saba, Mansour Al-Jaradi said the idea of Journalist Cadre, similar to the Job Description project, started in early 1990s. The government did not approve the project and replaced it with Work Nature Allowances.

The project of Job Description gives the journalists better allowances than the project of the Work Nature

Allowances, which is why the project was refused by the government.

Despite journalists acceptance of the Work Nature Allowances project, which shrinks their rights, the government tried to play with its decision and did not include bonuses in 2010 public budget and "this was a great setback to all," said Al-Jaradi.

Disappointed by the governments' not considering their demands, journalists went from red signs to a partial strike for two hours. As a result, Nasr Mustaha, the Chairman of the Board of Yemen News Agency met the Minister of Finance and an agreement was reached on including the bonuses.

"Journalists will not abandon their complete rights of the Work Nature Allowances and of the Job Description, which will improve the living standards of the journalists, which are bad despite the fact that these journalists are working for the state media," said al-Jaradi.

In 2006, the government approved the Work Nature Allowances to its employees in the three sectors of, education, health and media. The teachers got their allowances in 2008 after long strikes leading to schools in the Capital Sana'a and the rest country governorates being closed for a period. However, doctors are still threatening of go in strike if the government does not respond to their demands of increasing salaries. They got a portion of their allowances last year after repeated strikes carried out in public hospitals, across the country.

Journalists have still not received any part of their allowances. "Even the agreement we reached with Minister of Finance is still uncertain because it is conditioned with money supply," said Al-Jaradi

## Tortured detained journalist denied fair trial

By: Shatha Al-Harazi  
For the Yemen Times

SANA'A, FEB. 7 — Yesterday, Sunday Feb. 7, 2010, was the first session at the Specialized Criminal Court against journalist Muhammad al-Maqalih, former editor of the socialist news site Al-Eshtraki.net, who had been detained without charges for over four months in the political security prison.

The session took place under vague circumstances. To start with, the session was scheduled for ten a.m. and without prior notice to either the detainee's lawyer or the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate, took place two hours ahead of schedule at eight a.m.

"This is yet another example of the bias and discrimination against the journalist. The session was conducted without any legal representation of Al-Maqalih and we fear that he would not get the opportunity for a fair trial," said Marwan Dammaj general secretary of the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate who until recently was the only one from the media and civil society community who had been allowed to visit Al-Maqalih during his detention.

Until the time of writing this news, there is no information on what actually happened in the court session. The only information available was leaked from a source at the court that Al-Maqalih had refused to accept the judge sitting on his case and demanded his change claiming that the later carries a personal grudge against the journalist who almost a year ago had laughed during this judge's verdict against another journalist. At that time, Al-Maqalih received a 20 day disciplinary sentence after being charged with contempt of the court.

"We had lobbied a great number of journalists and advocates to be present outside the court during the session. When we all came we were surprised to be told that the session was already over. We fear that the state has done



Muhammad al-Maqalih

this because it does not want us to see Al-Maqalih, who is probably in very bad health and has been severely tortured," exclaimed Nabeel Subai' journalist head of the training department at the YJS.

Even Al-Maqalih's lawyer, Hael Sallam who was appointed by the prosecution complained that he was not informed of the case details or of the change in the session's timing. "I don't even know who raised the case against Al-Maqalih and what are the charges, and I don't even have a copy of his file."

**Relative breakthrough**

Despite the complexities and bias in the court procedures against Al-Maqalih, having his issue in the judiciary system is actually a breakthrough considering that he was abducted for around five months on a street in Sana'a on September 17, 2009 by men believed to be from the security forces.

Eyewitnesses said that he was taken by a group of plain-clothed men who arrived in a white minibus which had its license plates obscured. Since the abduction no one really knew where he was or how he was especially that government officials denied that the state is involved in his disappearance. However, it was only last Tuesday that his existence was made public as his issue was transferred to prosecution to be tried on charges of "sympathizing with Houthis".

## Yemeni-Saudi strikes against Houthis continue

By: Mohammad Bin Salam

SANA'A, FEB. 7 — Despite the Houthis' acceptance of government conditions and announcing a cease-fire, armed conflict continue in Sa'ada and Amran governorates towards the north of Yemen.

Around 23 Yemeni soldiers were killed during military operations in Sa'ada on Friday, February, 5, according to Houthis and tribal sources.

Tribal leaders said that 15 of the Yemeni soldiers were killed in an ambush that was set up by Houthis on the road between Sa'ada and Al-Jawf.

The same sources added that the strike that took place on Friday afternoon in the area of Wadi Al Abu Jabara that follows Waela tribe in the north east of Sa'ada by Houthis targeted two military containers loaded with food stuff.

The other eight Yemeni soldiers among them one official were killed in confrontations with Houthis in one of the old city neighbourhoods in Sa'ada in an attempt by the governmental forces to attack the old city.

But, Houthis did not reveal their loss during those confrontations.

In the same context, Houthis said in their website that in their confrontations Saudi forces shelled 25 air raids on wide areas of the northern Yemen.

They said that the raids centred in the areas of Muthalth shda, the district of Ghimr, Al-Nawa'a, Al-Dhahir, Al-Mahather, Al-Shaef, Al-Malahidh, Al-Hisama, and the area of Al-Farha in which many houses were destroyed and many people were killed.

In a relative incident with Sa'ada crisis and weapons smugglers, Hasan Mana'a, the elected governor of Sa'ada was resigned by republican decree and the colonel Taha Hajr was appointed instead of him, according to the defence ministry website, 26 September.

This comes after few days since Fares Mana'a, the governor's brother and the head of the mediation committee between Houthis and the government was arrested with other weapons smugglers.

The governor defended the arrest of his brother under the accusation of weapon smuggling in an interview with Al-Shark Al-Awsat newspaper. He considered his brother as struggler and does not have any relation with Houthis.

Mana'a' arrest came after the government published the black list of the weapons smugglers including his name at the end of 2009.

On the other hand, five civilians were killed due to missiles shelling by Houthis on the house of one parliamentarian who is an important tribal leader in Sa'ada, Othman Majali, according to the local authority in the governorate.

The parliamentarian's son, Hammid is one of the victims, according to the same source.

The same source added that Majali is an influential tribal leader who joined the Yemeni government in its war against Houthis.

A statement by Abdul Malek Al-Houthi, the leader of the Houthis, said that if operations against them were stopped, they would cease fire. He also pointed out that they would accept an exchange of prisoners between the Houthis and Saudi Arabia and added that they want to stop this bloodshed.

Earlier, last Sunday, the National Defence Council stipulated that the Houthis need to follow the six conditions set by the government. The council also announced that the government found no objections to stopping the war but only on the conditions that would leave no chance of the Houthis resuming the war and exchanging the Yemeni and Saudi prisoners with no further delay.

Many doubt the state's acceptance of this Houthi submission, saying that the state just wants to prove its superiority by continuing the war in order to accomplish a complete triumph.

Yemeni political analysts said that both parties, the Yemeni government and the Houthis, have become so tired of the war that they want to end it with the least damage.

The Yemeni government stipulated that the Houthis must stop penetrating

However during the interrogations, according to Dammaj who met with Al-Maqalih last week, the later refused the charges against him and demanded an investigation into his abduction.

"He was very thin and looked very ill. He told me that he had been tortured and went on a food strike for 16 days during his detention. He said that he had been beaten, starved as they gave him one terrible meal every three days, and did not allow him a change of clothes. He had been wearing the same blood stained clothes since his abduction," explained Dammaj of what Al-Maqalih told him. "He said that they threatened twice to execute him and had been living under the gun point for 20 days consecutively during his four months detention."

Dammaj demanded transferring Al-Maqalih to a hospital and releasing him on bail. Apparently, only two weeks ago was Al-Maqalih allowed to change his clothes as he was transferred from the political security prison to the national security prison.

Since his detention, Muhammad al-Maqalih's family has staged a number of sit-in protests outside government offices, which have been attended by journalists and the general public.

Muhammad al-Maqalih is a member of the Yemeni Socialist Party and the former editor of its website. He is thought to have been detained for his comments on the government's conduct in its conflict with followers of the late Zaidi Shi'a cleric Hussein al-Huthi in the northern governorate of Sa'ada. Human rights activists in Yemen suspect his detention is linked, in particular, to his criticism of the army's killing of civilians in Sa'ada, which was published on the Socialist Party's website.

Amnesty International believes that he is likely to be a prisoner of conscience, imprisoned solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression. If so, the organization demands that he be released immediately and unconditionally.

into Saudi land.

Abdul Malek Al-Houthi said earlier on T.V that this is the fourth time they have announced a ceasefire. He added that they hope the government understands that the Houthis have a great desire to stop this conflict.

Mohammad Abdul Majeed Al-Kubati, the Director of External Relationships in the Ruling Party, said that the government rejected the initiative by the Houthis because they had not promised to stop attacks against Saudi Arabia and demanded that the government implement their ceasefire first

The Supreme Security Committee gave its conditions last August. These were, namely, the ceasefire, the opening of roads, the returning what has been plundered, the releasing of prisoners, the withdrawal from all governorates, not interfering in state affairs and, finally, stopping all aggression towards Saudi Arabia.

Last Sunday witnessed further conflict between the Houthis and the Yemeni army.

Tribal sources said that these confrontations happened on the Sa'ada frontlines near Harf Sufian and Al-Malaheeth in which the army destroyed an area used by the Houthis.

The same sources confirmed that many Houthis were killed and injured during more confrontations in Bani Mo'ath, in Sa'ada.

They added that Abu Malek, a Houthi leader and trainer, was killed.

From their side, Houthis said in a statement that the Saudi air force had launched 9 air raids on Al-Malaheeth and Al-Hasama areas in Sa'ada.

On Monday, the Yemeni army tried to penetrate into Dhahr Al-Himar and the fighting between them continued until the afternoon.

A statement by the Houthis denied such confrontations with the Yemeni or the Saudi armies, saying that they do not have any snipers working with them.

Worth mentioning is that Salem Al-Whoshi, was badly injured during an ambush in Sa'ada and some sources say that he was shot in the neck.



Journalists at state run media wearing red badges as a sign of protest early last year. Their strike ended when they were promised adequate salaries and allowances. One year later the promises remain unfulfilled so they are organizing strikes again.



## Their News

### British Council Online Photography Competition builds collective picture of the cultural heritage of the Middle East by the people who live there

The British Council is calling on amateur and professional photographers in the Middle East to capture what the region's cultural heritage means to them - its past, present and future - by submitting entries to its 'My Father's House' online photography competition before 31 March 2010.

Winning entries will be displayed later this year online and at an exhibition at the British Council in London, UK. This exhibition will provide a collective representation of how people living in the Middle East today view their cultural heritage, as a way to help build awareness and understanding about the region in the UK. Winners will also receive top of the range digital cameras provided by Olympus UK as prizes.

This free online photography competition [www.britishcouncil.org/myfathershouse](http://www.britishcouncil.org/myfathershouse) forms part of the British Council's major regional arts project: 'My Father's House: the architecture of cultural heritage'. The competition is open to anyone over the age of 13 years who is resident in the Middle East countries of Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Yemen. Entrants can submit up to three photographs which express their response, one for each of the following three themes:

- Past - A Place in Time
- Present - A sense of home
- Future - Nostalgia for the Future.

'My Father's House: the architecture of cultural heritage' uses architecture to stimulate debate about the role and value of cultural heritage in defining cultural identity in a rapidly changing region. It encourages us all to take

a fresh look at our surroundings and address the question: How do we see where we live? At its centre is a touring lens-based exhibition by 8 artists from the Middle East and the UK.

Entries to the online photography competition will be split into two age categories: 13-24 years and 25 years and above. The judges will look for photographs that make a positive impact on them by the way they portray the emotion of their subject. Entries should be submitted to the competition website [www.britishcouncil.org/myfathershouse](http://www.britishcouncil.org/myfathershouse) before the closing date of 18:00 GMT, Wednesday 31 March 2010.

Hannah Henderson, British Council Regional Projects Manager Creativity said:

"People and the way they interact with their environment shape a culture. All of us who live in the region therefore play a role in the evolving cultural heritage of the Middle East.

"Our online photography competition is a fantastic opportunity for everyone in the region - amateur and professional photographers alike - to reflect on what the world immediately around us actually means to us and to then share that view with a much wider audience. It is an excellent opportunity to raise awareness and understanding about the breadth and diversity of the rich cultural heritage of this very dynamic part of the world and help to dispel myths about the Middle East in the UK.

"I look forward to seeing all the entries, discovering new photographic talent and building up a portfolio of images that collectively tell the world what the cultural heritage of the Middle East today means to the people living in it today."

For further information, contact:

Rowaida Al Khulaidi, Arts & Science Projects Manager, 01 448 356 ext. 16, [rowaida.khulaidi@ye.britishcouncil.org](mailto:rowaida.khulaidi@ye.britishcouncil.org)

### UNESCO International Leadership Training Programme

The UNESCO Chair & Institute of Comparative Human Rights at the University of Connecticut invites applications for the sixth annual International Leadership Programme: A Global Intergenerational Forum.

The Forum seeks to empower young leaders by involving them in finding solutions to emerging human rights problems, and nurturing individuals to be effective leaders in the field of human rights. To this end, the Forum will:

- Introduce participants to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- Build a network of solidarity among human rights leaders
- Expand the knowledge relevant to human rights practice
- Provide tools and a platform for open debates
- Provide programmes, activities and processes necessary for human rights leadership
- Promote the sharing of experiences and understanding
- Showcase speakers on such topics as: health and human rights, education, the environment, the plight of child soldiers, the use of media, fundraising, conflict resolution and transformation; litigation and advocacy

Readmore: <http://cambodiajobs.blogspot.com/2010/02/unesco-international-leadership.html>

### Toyota remains peoples' popular choice in Yemen

Automatic and Machinery Trading Center announced that the Yemeni market has not been affected by the recall of some Toyota cars due to some flaws in the fuel compressor by Toyoto Motor Corporation.

The center confirmed that none of those defected cars were found in Yemen, and that the car model in which this defect could be present in, are Toyota Sokoya and Toyota Evalon 2009

and 2010, according to Mr. Aidroos Ba-Zarah the General Manager of the center.

He emphasized that the center has already started checking the cars and contacted its clients and paid them visits for a maintenance check on the cars and confirmed that this defect was not found in Yemen or even in the Middle East.

"We will continue to communicate

with our clients and replace the defected parts if needed," he said.

He ruled out the possibility of this problem happening in Yemen, since it is related to the cars found in the United States where they were affected by the extreme cold weather.

"The safety and comfort of our clients is our most important priority and we would go to great lengths to ensure it," he confirmed.

### Training course on Malaria organized by CSSW

The Charitable Society for Social Welfare launched recently a training course in national policies for treating malaria. Twenty doctors working in the primary health care sector in Sana'a and other governorates participated in the training which aims at enhancing the doctors' capacities in dealing with this disease. Early diagnostic and persistent medical treatment for all cases will eventually help fighting the spread of this disease and make Yemen a malaria free country. This course is among a series of awareness and educational training sessions carried out by CSSW in the joint program with the national center for combating malaria.

The launching ceremony attended by Dr. Adel Al-Jassari director of the

national program to for combating malaria, Dr. Qais Al-Saedi training manager at the program and Dr. Mohammed Al-Jahafi emergency unit director and one of the trainers at the course.

Dr. Abdulmajid Farhan general secretary of CSSW welcomed the guests and trainees from all governorates and commended the cooperation with the combating malaria program saying that it has yielded good results in the past.

Dr. Al-Jassari also praised the cooperation that gave good results especially in Socotra Island. He emphasized the need to include everyone in implementing medical and health policies of the programs.

The trainers are among the highly

qualified doctors in Yemen such as Dr. Fathi Al-Qadasi director of the curative policy at the program, Dr. Mohammed Al-Hanami and Dr. Mustafa Al-Silwi also from the program, Dr. Mohammed Al-Alaai a trainer in malaria disease and Basheer Al-Fahdli coordinator of the training course.

Dr. Saeed Al-Kamel head of the health sector at CSSW and the general supervisor of the course hoped that with complete cooperation from everyone Yemen will soon become a malaria free country. The charity will also carry out a similar training for 20 laboratory technicians from around the republic and will also create awareness teams for field awareness activities through its vast network of volunteers.

## In Brief

### DHAMAR

#### JICA's 2nd phase BRIDGE program launched

Minister of Education Abdul-Salam al-Jawfi inaugurated here on Wednesday the second phase of JICA's Broadening Regional Initiative for Developing Girls' Education (BRIDGE) program.

During the inauguration, al-Jawfi affirmed the importance of benefiting from the BRIDGE in the field of educational cadres capacity building in the Ministry, hailing the JICA's efforts in carrying out the programs first phase in Taiz province and the second in Dhamar province.

The Minister also emphasized taking the advantages of the first phase in order to avoid the negative aspects and difficulties in the second one.

He also noted the significance of coordination and cooperation with the Local Council in the province for facilitating JICA's tasks to ensure the program success.

For his part, the JICA Resident Representative in Yemen Office Takeshi Komori praised the existed cooperation between the Ministry and the Local Council with the JICA to help the project succeed with its two phases.

The JICA official noted that the support which is provided by the Japanese government aims at developing community capacity building by encouraging the enrolment of girls in education.

He also gave a brief explanation on the JICA's project, reviewing its main goals and components.

At the session work, strategies related to the first and second components of the project "Public Education" and the strategy of the third component "Girls Education" were discussed.

### SANA'A

#### Workshop on HIV/AIDS organized

Some 21 participants from different organizations and programs of childhood and motherhood care in a workshop over development of training programs of the World Health

Organization of protection from transporting HIV/AIDS from mother to child. The workshop was organized by the national program of combating HIV/AIDS in cooperation with WHO and The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Officials of the national program said that the workshop aims at coming out with training programs, which contribute to protect mother and child from AIDS virus.

#### Carnegie Endowment suggests Yemen imports qat

The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace has called on the U.S. to increase its developmental aid to Yemen instead of focusing on fighting al-Qaeda in the country, international

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reports have said.

Christopher Boucek of the endowment said in a written testimony it is in the interest of Washington to have association with Yemen in different fields to indirectly contribute to improving the country's internal security.

The U.S. should help Yemen to apply more strict lawful system to prevent further consumption of water on qat plant amid dwindling groundwater resources in an alarming way.

To achieve this, Yemen must be encouraged to import qat from eastern Africa.

Large areas of land in Yemen are planted with qat, with the country now importing all food, the endowment said, urging national farmers to shift into crops production.

#### Symposium on local, foreign media coverage of Houthi rebellion

A symposium on the local and foreign media means' coverage of the rebellion caused by Houthis in Saada governorate was held on Sunday in Sana'a.

The symposium is organized by the Yemeni Women Journalists Without Chains (WJWC) with the participation of a constellation of media people and opinion leaders to come out with a clear and specific vision on how the

local and foreign media dealt with the Houthi rebellion issue and to what extent credibility preserved in reporting the issue.

Chairwoman of the WJWC Arwa Atif told Saba that the symposium will discuss a number of hubs over the phenomenon of Houthis and reasons and philosophy of dealing with it, in addition to how the events were covered.

She noted that this symposium comes to evaluate media means performance with regards to the most important issues in the local arena, specially the Houthi rebellion in Saada.

#### Yemen tightens security procedures in airports

More precautions and security actions have been taken at all Yemeni airports in accordance with what has been taken in this field many countries, the state-run 26sep has learned.

The security procedures included using modern and advanced inspection systems.

It is worth to mention that Yemen has recently been awarded the ECO Certification of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) which affirmed that the procedures taken in the Yemeni airports are in conformity to the international procedures of avia-

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# Preacher Nabil Al-Ansi to the Yemen Times: “Our traditions control us more than our religion.”

Nabil Al-Ansi refuses to be called sheikh or imam, although his community shows him the kind of respect and obedience which is normally only reserved for religious scholars in Yemen. The reason is simple: he is a preacher.

About 1,500 individuals attend his sermon every Friday. This number of course does not make him an eminent preacher or an outstanding figure throughout Yemen. He has not attracted the media's attention as he is not a radical.

But Al-Ansi is an example of thousands of modern preachers in Yemen. Wearing his casual clothes and speaking in modern-standard Arabic while sometimes using different dialects, Al-Ansi answered Amel Al-Ariqi's questions.

## How did you become a preacher?

I became a preacher by chance. When the preacher of the mosque in my neighborhood became sick, and couldn't deliver the Friday speech, people were looking for someone to replace him the same day. People came to my house that morning, as I had studied at the Iman University for four years and received some religious education there. Neighbors asked me to deliver the sermon.

It wasn't easy to pick up the topic as I wasn't prepared. So I decided to praise the founder of the mosque, and admire the role of the mosques in the society as mosques are not just a place for prayer. They are like universities for Muslims, which provide knowledge and awareness. I was afraid, shaking at the pulpit. After I finished the speech and the prayer, I was surprised to find out about a letter signed by those who had attended the sermon asking the local council for me to become the mosque's preacher. Since that time, I have been the preacher, which means ten years in this position.

## So you haven't been hired by the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs?

I did not know the measures I should follow to be hired as a preacher. However, some people from the neighborhood went to the minister to register my name. After a year of being a preacher, I received a memo from the Ministry as well as some papers that I had to fill out in order to be considered as an official preacher.

I consulted with the founder of the mosque. He advised me not to sign the paper to become an official preacher. The first reason, according to the mosque's founder, is that I already have a job, so I would struggle with two jobs which is not allowed under the law, and I would be asked to choose one of them. The second reason, and here I am quoting the owner of the mosque, is that, "I want this mosque to be free, and not under the control of the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs."

## So you are not registered as a preacher at the Ministry because of the mosque's founder?

No, I have been registered but not hired. There are two types of preachers in Yemen: those who are hired by the Ministry and who are paid official salaries, and freelance preachers who receive YR 3,000 monthly.

## What are the qualities of a preacher? What are the differences between a preacher and an imam?

Preachers and imams are different. These names are given by the religious scholars to distinguish their tasks. The preacher is not a mufti, while the imam is. The imam is more knowledgeable than a preacher. Not all preachers are imams, but the imam should be a preacher.

Religious scholars in Yemen -and maybe in many Islamic regions- are classified into two categories. The first include the intellectual, highly knowledgeable scholars who cannot communicate with the public and cannot relate the knowledge they have as they lack preaching skills. The other type include the effective, clever preachers who lack the knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence, which makes them vulnerable to satire and criticism. When this set gain more knowledge, they strengthen their preaching skills.

When I attended some sermons, I was impressed, not because of the powerful words of the preacher, but because of his vast knowledge. Such

a preacher supports his speech with evidence from the Quran, quotes from the prophets, and historical stories. Preaching is not an inherent skill; it is acquired knowledge. The preacher should take part in an ongoing learning process.

The preacher is not a talking machine. If he were, we could use a recorder in the mosque. He is also not just a person who conducts research on a book such as students at school. The preacher is like a general practitioner. He receives and diagnoses all sorts of patients who suffer from different illnesses. In a mosque, people come with spiritual issues like children's disobedience to their parents, weakness of faith, and doubts. If the preacher cannot address and treat these issues, he will lose his audience.

The preacher is the only person in the Islamic world to whom people listen without invitation. They attend the Friday sermon as part of their religious beliefs. Islam gives preachers many merits, such as people's respect and attention. If the preacher weren't good, their attendance and attention would be a waste of time.

Many preachers believe that they are eloquent, but it is not only about eloquence, it is also about the preacher's ability to address people's spiritual problems, and shed light onto the darkness of their paths.

People believe in preachers, but as human beings we also commit mistakes. We can be overwhelmed with people's feelings, so it's a great responsibility. I have been a preacher for ten years but I still tremble on the pulpit as if it were my first sermon. I used to write down the points that I had discussed in my sermon, and recall the moments when I committed errors or was more effective.

## As preachers have such influence on people, do you think some Muslim preachers contribute to encouraging extremism?

The preacher should not give his opinion. He is controlled by certain rules. Thank God, we Muslims are proud of being a "moderate nation" - as God says in the Quran, "Thus We have set you up as a moderate nation." Our religion promotes moderation and tolerance, and the preacher should follow this fundamental Islamic rule.

However, throughout history, imams, preachers and even leaders have reacted with extremism. For example, the disagreement between the two Islamic figures Ali Bin Abu Taleb and Muawiyya Bin Abi Sufian divided the Islamic nation at that time into two parties. Muawiyya reacted to this friction by ordering his followers to curse Ali in every Friday sermon and that created a dispute among Muslims until now.

Let's give a current example. When an Al-Azhar sheikh gave a fatwa to ban the face veil in universities, it was in reaction to a school girl refusing to remove her face veil inside the class. In my opinion, any decision based on a reaction can be wrong.

The preacher should not impose his own opinion, but he should clarify the Islamic rule on any matter. Whether this rule is welcomed or not is another issue, but the preacher's role is not to reveal his own anger or to condemn a certain issue. His role is to show the Islamic rule.

## How do you view relations between the media and religious scholars in Yemen?

Unfortunately, some newspapers insult scholars.

Let me give you an example. Yemeni



Nabil Al-Ansi

religious scholars several weeks ago held a meeting and made statements to the press about the current situation in Yemen, including the security situation and foreign interference in Yemen.

After the meeting, over five newspapers immediately launched an aggressive campaign against these scholars, accusing them of terrorism, extremism, and many other accusations that may lead readers to think that these scholars are enemies of the country or Houthi rebels. These newspapers and these writers should be considered traitors.

The scholars called for unity and these newspapers attacked them. If these journalists are against unity, then who is to be blamed? Fortunately, the state stands with the scholars. Some writers should be put on trial.

## Recently, preachers have helped to raise awareness and convey social messages, such as the importance of vaccinating children or tackling water problems. Have you received any kind of training to address such issues?

Unfortunately, no. The Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs has not invited me and many others to receive any training. The ministry only calls the preachers to attend occasional meetings when they want them to convey a certain message to the people. Preachers are only wanted in times of crisis. Training is given only to certain preachers.

When the Ministry wants us to deliver a speech calling for people to vaccinate their children for example, the Ministry just sends us a memo telling us that there is a vaccination campaign. Many preachers who stand up on the platform have no idea what they are talking about or calling for. At least, the Ministry could send us documents or files containing information to help us to persuade the people.

During the vaccination campaign against polio for example, some preachers out of lack of knowledge criticized the campaign, and attacked the Ministry, particularly when some children showed slight side effects.

## What traditions do you come up against as a preacher?

In Yemen, the problem lies in the fact that people cannot reconcile between traditions and Islamic rules. Our traditions control us more than our religion.

The preacher's task is to distinguish between the Islamic rules and traditions and to highlight the good traditions as Islam does not struggle against good traditions.

I was really shocked that people believe that girls do not need education and that it is enough for them to be able to read and write. Early marriage is another shocking concept.

There are some preachers who attack traditions stridently and counter the society. In my opinion, this is not the right way. It's difficult to force people

to give a child are important. I welcome new technology such as television channels and the internet, as we need such technology, but we also need family supervision.

## Do use the internet?

I'm not very good at using the internet, although I have followed many courses in using the internet, the English language, and communication skills. I really like such courses, and they have helped me as a preacher. Unfortunately, I have not been able to learn properly how to use the internet as I could not find the proper teacher.

But my son helps me to download many interesting papers on Islam.

## Is there any censorship in the mosque you work in?

There are two types of mosques in our country: mosques attended by influential figures in society that are more effective in making changes in society, and those attended by normal people that are less effective.

The first type is under the control and censorship of the government. However good the preacher, he will not bring about change if his words do not reach these decision makers. My mosque is attended by normal people. However during a political crisis, there is censorship in many mosques.

## Do you handle political issues in your speeches?

Very much so.

## Why?

Because religious scholars should contribute in these matters.

## Did you receive any instructions preventing you from talking about politics?

On the contrary, the Ministry summons preachers asking them to interfere and to direct people against the Houthis or

the unrest in the southern governorates. They ask us to raise awareness among people about the importance of unity, and to criticize the Houthis and the Southern movement.

## Can you criticize something you don't know? You have no access to the Houthis for example. How come can you criticize them?

You are right. When they asked us to do that, I told them to watch out. I said, "You are asking the preachers to give a fatwa. You want the preachers to call to fight these people."

They said, "Yes, we want people to be united against them."

I replied, "Then you want the preacher to be a judge and give a fatwa, and you know in Islam the judge or the imam cannot give fatwa or judgment unless he hears a story from the two sides. So far, we have only received information from the government, and the situation is still vague for us, so if you don't help us to access information, then leave us alone."

## So you have not delivered a sermon on the political situation in Sa'ada?

In fact, I did. I delivered a sermon in which I criticized both sides: the rebels and the state.

## How did you criticize them?

I criticized the state for paying little attention to many extremists who have consolidated their beliefs and established themselves as a power. The state first supervised this sect fighting the Salafis. I criticized the state for creating a conflict out of another that they created in the past.

I asked those who attended the Friday sermon to sign a statement I wrote, in which they vow to stand up against any sabotage, and to inform state security of any vandals or those who call for ideas against the unity of Muslims.

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- To be involved in budgeting processes.

### Requirement:

1. 3 to 5 years post-graduate experience with an accounting firm and working experience in the financial sector (preferably in an Islamic FI).
2. Fluency in spoken and written both Arabic and English
3. Having an analytical and problem solving skills. Fluency in English will be an advantage.
4. Having a good skills in using of MS Excel.

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## Expression of Interest

Ministry of Education Basic Education Development Project (BEDP) Project  
Administration Unit

Technical Assistance for Institutional Development of the Ministry of  
Education (MoE) Coordination and Follow-up Department (CFD)

The Education Development Project Administration Unit (EDPAU) is interested in hiring a management consultant to assist the MoE Technical Office (TO) to improve its systems for coordinating with its development partners (DPs). The consultant will formulate a detailed institutional set-up of the CFD within its prescribed functions, articulate a human resource plan to develop skills of staff members for each of the positions of the CFD, and develop a key set of initial mechanisms, tools, and standards needed for the CFD to carry out its mandate. The consultant is expected to work closely with key staff of the TO, especially the coordinator of the current coordination and follow up unit, under the overall guidance of the TO Head. The TO Head will review and approve all design decisions.

**Period of Assignment:** The assignment duration is 45 days, full time commitment.

**Assignment Commencement:** March 1, 2010. Expected Completion Date: May 2, 2010.

**Assignment:** A single consultant will be hired for this assignment. The consultant will work out of the MoE TO premises and, working with a TO team, carry out the following tasks:

1. Analyze the current situation of MoE donor coordination, and effectiveness of the current institutional setup in light of Joint Annual Review (JAR) recommendations, MoE policy, and the Paris Declaration, drawing upon the already existing analysis contained in this TOR.
2. Articulate a list of specific development partner (DP) related information, coordination and protocol needs of the MoE leadership, especially the TO, as well as DPs.
3. Further elaborate a set of tasks and outputs for the CFD, within the overall three prescribed functions of the CFD, by building on the draft set of tasks developed for the CFD, and the consultant's own analysis.
4. Develop an appropriate and realistic organogram of the CFD based on the above exercises and analyses, enumerating number and type of staff required, and designing TOR for each staff member.
5. Analyze the distribution of DP related tasks throughout the Ministry. Suggest linkages, protocols, coordination mechanisms, streamlining and other solutions in order that there be no duplication of the three CFD roles of (i.) documentation, (ii) protocols and (iii) coordination in relation to DPs in other departments of the Ministry.
6. Identify the CFD's human resource, technical and administrative needs on the basis of its staffing and task related needs. Develop a training plan for CFD staff.
7. Assist the CFD to develop an initial set of key protocols, systems, mechanisms and reporting formats, based on the set of tasks developed in no. 3, above. These will include at a minimum of 10 pre-determined tools and systems

**Qualifications:** The successful candidate shall possess a Bachelor or higher degree in organizational management or public sector management, with a minimum of 5 years experience in management which must include public sector management. Fluency in Arabic and competency in English is required. Experience shall include design of systems, job descriptions, data collection and management tools. Experience working on Donor projects is an advantage.

The EDPAU invites eligible consultants to submit their applications with their CVs by **February 23, 2010** at the address given below.

The Project Director  
Basic Education Development Project  
60 m Southern Rd-Bait Meyad  
TEL: 00967-01-619163/4, FAX:00967-01-619219 or to  
Email: PAU Director: a.al-arashi@edpau.org

## Expression of Interest

Ministry of Education Basic Education Development Project (BEDP) Project  
Administration Unit

Technical Assistance for updating and revising the EDPAU Financial Unit  
Financial and Accounting Systems, and Financial Management Manuals

The Education Development Project Administration Unit (EDPAU) is interested in hiring a financial management specialist to (i) analyze, update and complete the EDPAU's financial and accounting system, and to (ii) update, revise and unify the Financial Manual(s) of the EDPAU Financial Unit in accordance with this analysis and with international standards, reflecting global best practice in this field. The consultant is expected to work closely with key staff within the project under the overall guidance of the Head of the Finance Unit.

**Period of Assignment** The assignment duration is 45 days, full time commitment.

**Assignment Commencement** March 1, 2010. Expected Completion Date: May 2, 2010.

**Assignment** A single consultant or single consultancy firm will be hired for this assignment. The consultant will work out of the EDPAU premises, and carry out the following tasks:

1. Analyze the EDPAU accounting and financial system in the context of the project tasks it manages.
2. Make clear, specific, and detailed recommendations for actions needed to ensure a well functioning and efficient accounting and financial management system, based on the requirements of the projects the EDPAU administers, EDPAU regulations, Yemen law, and international best practice standards.
3. Revise the current system, and develop simple, clear and transparent internal financial and accounting policies and procedures to govern financial management and accounting for projects.
4. Review the current internal control system for EDPAU and prepare recommendations for improving the design – design must include the virtues of simplicity and appropriateness to the EDPAU.
5. Review and advise on 3 key aspects of documentation of financial management which are especially important for the EDPAU internal control system: (i) Insertion of financial unit data base in the EDPAU MIS, (ii) Soft and hard copy archiving, and (iii) Inclusion of staff regulations in the EDPAU MIS.
6. Revise the existing Project Financial Management Manuals into one integrated Financial Management Manual based on the ISO format, and which includes comprehensive and detailed descriptions of the financial management system.
7. Train the EDPAU's financial staff on using the Manual, and prepare guidelines for Financial Unit staff for periodic revision and updating of contents of Operational Manual based on ISO standards.

**Qualifications** The successful candidate will be a qualified financial management expert or an ISO certified accounting/auditing firm. The consultant will have a master or higher degree in financial management/ accounting, a minimum of 10 years experience in accounting and financial management related to international projects, and additional experience with projects that support government institutions. The experience shall include expertise in computerized accounting systems, adequate knowledge of information technology, the writing of financial manuals, and training. Moreover, the consultant is expected to be fluent in English, with Arabic fluency a strong advantage. A firm may propose between 1 and 3 experts to carry out this consultancy jointly, in order that all necessary aspects of the TOR are covered. Each expert will be approved separately based on their demonstrated competency for the different tasks of this Consultancy.

The EDPAU invites eligible consultants to submit their applications with their CVs by **February 23, 2010** at the address given below.

The Project Director  
Basic Education Development Project  
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## Words of Wisdom



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

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



## OUR OPINION

## Feminizing illiteracy

Until recently I thought this term is an exaggeration of the situation of women in Yemen. However, with recent reports and activities created by the Women National Committee I changed my mind.

I realized that one third of Yemeni girls have never been to schools. We are not talking about old women; I am talking about 35 % of Yemeni girls between 6 and 14 years old who are not covered by education services.

Not only that, but also enrollment rate for girls in basic education has declined according to the latest statistics from 2007/2008 academic year, in which only 65% of girls who should be in schools at the basic education level have actually enrolled.

However, getting girls to enroll in schools is only half of the problem, it is also equally important to retain them in schools as there is a high dropout rate of Yemeni girls' in basic education especially those in rural areas. There is a dropout rate of 14% for girls in rural areas. Girls' dropping out from schools usually happens just after the completion of the fourth grade. With time, most of those girls eventually forget how to read and write especially that they do not have much access to educational materials and don't have much time for it.

Considering that around half of the Yemeni population are women and have of them are 15 years and below, then the statistics regarding girls' education would carry even higher significance.

The national strategy for education development aims at reducing the dropout rates for girls to less than 1% across the country by the end of 2015. In less than five years from today, it is very unlikely that this ambition is met. The strategy's indicators aim at improving girls' enrollment to 70% between 2006 and 2010. It is not possible to meet this during the current academic year 2009/2010 especially that we already know that enrollment rate for the academic year 2007/2008 was at 65% which is a 1.4 points decline from the year before 2006/2007 which was at 66.1%.

One of the main conclusions by researchers is that the girls' basic education problem in Yemen is a problem of insufficient number of female teachers in rural areas. With the current enrollment numbers, we need 17,614 more female teachers to cover the shortage in rural areas.

In the situation when girls' enrollment is raised to 90% which is the aspired ambition by 2015 according to the national basic education development strategy, there will be even more girl students and hence need for even more teachers.

With an enrollment of 90% the total number of female pupils would reach 2,436,878 girls and the number of female teachers needed for this age group would be required to increase from 39,694 in 2007/2008 to 69,625 by the end of 2015.

This is a significant increase of 29,931 female teachers.

These teachers need salaries, training and logistical allocations especially that for many they would actually need to be brought from other districts or other cities.

Despite proved facts that increasing the number of female teachers in rural areas would help develop girls education, this solution is not adopted and is likely not to be a priority of the decision makers working in the educational sector recruitment. Currently female teachers comprise less than one fourth of the total educational workforce. And mostly are placed in the cities.

We have the numbers and we have the recommendations to help little Yemeni girls have a better future, we could get the funding but what we really lack is a strong political will that commits to this cause and understands that for a better future of Yemen, we have to take care of our little girls.

**Nadia Al-Sakkaf**

## Al-Qaeda's influence in Yemen

**By: Jeremy Bowen**  
Middle East editor  
BBC News, Yemen

To get an idea of the state of mind of the men here in Yemen who run al-Qaeda in the Arabia peninsula, just take a look at what they said about the failed attack on the US airliner on Christmas Day.

In a swaggering and ambitious statement, they claimed that they sent the Nigerian student onto the plane, and that he only failed because of a technical fault with the bomb.

For them, getting that close counts as the next best thing to a successful mission.

And take just one look at the terrain of this country to understand why al-Qaeda is feeling so comfortable here, relaxed enough for one of its leaders reportedly to have moved his wife and family down from Saudi Arabia.

Yemen's mountains are rugged, hard to reach, and best of all from a jihadi point of view, they are not controlled by the central government.

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian peninsula established itself in Yemen after it was forced out of Saudi Arabia, taking advantage of the fact that large swathes of Yemeni territory are controlled by powerful, well-armed tribes, not by a government that is getting closer to the US and its counter-terrorism advisers than ever.

Already there are claims and counter-claims of a kind that are familiar from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq.

On 17 and 24 December al-Qaeda sites in Yemen were attacked. Reports based on American sources suggested that 60 "militants" had been killed.

## Children killed?

It has been reported in the United States that American military forces carried out the attacks.

But local journalists here who say they have visited the sites in question tell a different story.

Abdulelah Hider Shaea, who has

close connections with al-Qaeda, told me that people at the places that were attacked insist that dozens of women and children were among the dead.

It is the belief of at least one person there, he said, that the Yemeni government and US President Barack Obama were congratulating each other on killing their children.

Making deals with tribes that have lost large numbers of women and children in government attacks will be very difficult.

Mr Shaea said that al-Qaeda in Yemen believes that American actions will bring it recruits.

And he compared Yemen with Pakistan's tribal areas.

"The United States wants to fight al-Qaeda here. It won't work, they'll make this a new Waziristan, exporting fighters all over the world."

A diverse range of observers, in Yemen and abroad, agree that a heavy-handed counter-terrorism strategy will create more problems than it will solve. But alternatives to military action move slowly and do not guarantee success either.

In Washington, President Obama is under pressure to take action. The Christmas Day attempted attack over Detroit may have failed, but it brought back instant memories of 9/11. Military action will continue.

## Numerous problems

Al-Qaeda is not Yemen's only problem.

Saudi Arabia has intervened in the long-running tribal war in the north. A separatist movement in the south wants Yemen to be divided back into two countries.

The poor are getting poorer. Levels of illiteracy are high. The birth rate is the highest in the Middle East.

Its main export, oil, will run out within the next 10 years and new gas fields do not appear to be lucrative enough to replace it.

Yemen's water supply is also running dry, not least because of the amount that is used to irrigate the fields

of khat.

Chewing khat leaves, which are a mild stimulant, is the national pastime.

Yemen's President Ali Abdallah Saleh surrounds himself with members of his own clan and adroitly juggles all the other forces in Yemen to stay in power.

It is a strategy that has worked for 30 years. But his government is accused of being not just ineffective, but also riddled with corruption.

So the US, Britain and Saudi Arabia, are looking even more nervous about Yemen and its list of challenges.

They will have a chance to talk about what to do next in a meeting in London at the end of the month.

When I asked Dr Abdullah al-Faqih, professor of political science at Sanaa University about Yemen's position, he was succinct.

"The country's going to hell. The crises are converging with each other."

The risk, he said, was that Yemen would go the same way as Somalia, its neighbour across the Gulf of Aden, which descended into violent and bloody confusion a generation ago and has never emerged.

Yemen is not Somalia, nor Afghanistan. At least not yet. It is not a failed state, but it is failing.

## Holding back chaos

It will be very hard to stabilise matters here, but it is not impossible.

Many Yemenis are devout, but that does not make them jihadis. The tribes are powerful and traditionally are open to making deals.

One strategy for al-Qaeda's enemies could be to pay them to ban al-Qaeda from their territory.

The Saudis and the Americans have plenty of money for that. They don't necessarily have the necessary time, luck and judgement that has to go along with cash.

Action is needed, because all the indications suggest that if matters are left as they are, Yemen will slide steadily into chaos.

## New Yemen strategy

The United States recognizes the growing threat emanating from Yemen and has been ramping up levels of both security and development assistance. The approach, said U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Jeffrey Feltman, "is a more holistic Yemen policy that not only seeks to address security and counter terrorism concerns, but also the profound political, economic, and social challenges that help al-Qaida and related affiliates to operate and flourish."

The presence of al-Qaida-related extremists poses a grave threat to the security and stability of the government of Yemen. For the last 5 years, these terrorists have carried out multiple attacks against Yemenis, Americans, and citizens of other countries.

The government of Yemen has increased the pressure on al-Qaida, carrying out airstrikes and ground operations against senior al-Qaida targets.

The U.S. commends Yemen on these successful operations and is committed to continuing to support Yemen's counter-terrorism efforts. The U.S. Departments of State and Defense provide training and assistance to Yemen's key counterterrorism units. Through Diplomatic Security Antiterrorism Assistance programs, the U.S. provides training to security forces in the Ministry of Interior, including the Yemeni coast Guard and the Central Security Forces Counterterrorism Unit.

Yemen also faces threats from the Houthi rebellion in the north of the country and an increasingly militant protest movement in the south that has taken on secessionist overtones. The continued fighting in the north against Houthi rebels has dire humanitarian consequences, with thousands killed and over 200,000 displaced in some-

times appalling conditions. The U.S. continues to call for a ceasefire and to encourage both parties to return to negotiations. To assist those displaced by the conflict, the U.S. Agency for International Development's Office of Food for Peace has donated \$7.5 million in emergency food aid. The Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance has contributed \$3 million to relief efforts.

"The overarching goal of U.S. development and security assistance to Yemen," said Assistant Secretary Feltman, "is to improve stability and security by improving governance and helping to meet pressing socio-economic challenges."

*This is an editorial reflecting the Views of the United States Government, published on Jan. 28, 2010 by the News.com Voice of America site on US Policy.*

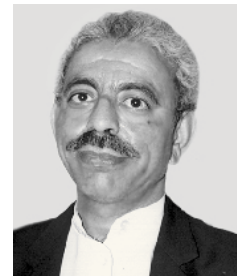


**By: Hamid**

## COMMON SENSE

The senseless carnage must be stopped!

## When Moslems are no longer Moslems



**By: Hassan Al-Haifi**

Many Moslems are quick to acknowledge that the religion of Islam left no stone unturned when giving the appropriate regulatory rules of conduct that governs the relations of not only Moslems and non-Moslems, but Moslems amongst themselves as well. Most Moslems are ready to also confess that the appalling spate of murders and bloodshed that have characterized many areas of the Moslem World recently are indefensible and inexcusable, when put to the test against Islamic belief and jurisdictional rules. Even those who erroneously call themselves Moslems and are known to be in one way or another behind such gruesome displays of sadistic behavior would never allow being associated with such indiscriminate killings of defenseless Moslems and non-Moslems. Even these deviates recognize that such morbid behavior is indeed anathema to Islamic teachings. In fact most truly devout Moslems are at a loss in finding anything in Islamic teachings that justify these indisputably horrendous violations of clearly set out rules of Moslem conduct. There is no question in the observer's mind that such deviates of fundamental Islamic teachings are deliberately seeking to distort proper Islamic conduct. This is more than just a result of a gross misunderstanding of Islamic dogma and jurisdictional teachings. Such would not be enough to explain the unusually strong institutional organization, political support and considerable financial resources that are clearly giving such degenerate so called Moslems relative ease to carry out their heinous crimes on an international scale.

The fact must be clearly pointed that all these gory displays of undeservedly torn bodies in worship houses or in markets or in hospitals have no legitimacy jurisdictionally or behaviorally. To put it simply, there is no pretext in Islamic legal text that would ever suggest that this is part and parcel of Islamic teachings. On the contrary, the Holy Qur'an, the sayings and examples attributed to the Prophet Mohammed (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon his soul) and his devout disciples and early followers (the real "good" Salafis) all render such unholy crimes as anathema to Islam and would strongly suggest that their perpetrators would undoubtedly be damned to hell! These are what may be considered as indisputable Moslem doctrine. Any so called Moslems who fail to uphold the sanctity of innocent human lives has deservedly cast themselves outside the fold of proper believing Moslems and faithful Moslems should be the first to reject such madness as being in line with any Islamic beliefs or statutes.

On the other hand, any true believing Moslem would not be oblivious to the fact that there is no meaningful purpose whatsoever from any "Islamic" viewpoint that can be used to make such behavior justifiable. Such behavior has done more harm to Islam than all the Crusades and wars that have been waged against Islam since the emergence of Islam as a "mercy to mankind" as portrayed by the greatest social reformer of all times, the Prophet Mohammed (PBAUH). Moreover, how can one find any service to Islam being fulfilled by such gory sadism, when for the most part its victims are actually innocent Moslems in worship or meditation? Sectarian differences have never been cause for bloodshed amongst Moslems until these deviates were allowed to implant their satanic corruptions of Islamic teachings amongst a vast following of misguided so called "Islamic" youth scientifically reared to carry out such heinous crimes. This only arose in the last couple of centuries when so called Wahhabi or incorrectly labeled Salafi dogma was given a chance to be propagated amongst misbred Moslems, who have lost all sense of themselves and of understanding of the true teachings of their faith. There is no way that Islam could ever sanction that a Moslem pack explosives all around his body and cause himself and those explosives to kill and maim hundreds of unarmed innocent human beings of any faith, let alone followers of Islam. There is no precedence to this in any behavior of our faithful predecessors who worked diligently and earnestly to insure that Islam is indeed always shown as a mercy to mankind. It was only because of this display of proper Moslem conduct that Islam was able to spread throughout the world, without ever having to be imposed on any population.

Therefore, it is imperative that Moslems be the first to make it clear that all this bloody madness one is now seeing in Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, Algeria, etc, and which has also been seen in many non-Moslem countries before (New York, Spain, India, etc) is not the work of "Moslem extremists". The people behind such gross blood-letting are no more than murderers and corruptors of genuine Islamic doctrine. Islam is completely innocent of them. They are clearly a part of an obvious systematic and well organized deliberate effort to distort Islamic teachings. It would be misleading to lob the adjective "Moslem" on them. The time has come for all truly faithful Moslems of both Sunni and Shia affiliation to work arduously to defame and declare its sponsors, perpetrators and organizers as the real enemies of Islam. They are the hypocrites, of which the Qur'an clearly states, speaking to the Prophet Mohammed (PBAUH), and hence his followers: "They are the ENEMY! So be cautious of them!" [The Holy Quran, Al-Munafiqun (the Hypocrites)]

*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>*

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# Germany's Current Debate on Islam: The New Cold War

By: Stefan Weidner

Germany's debates on Islam are becoming ever more caustic and confusing. Islamic Studies expert Stefan Weidner explains the background to the debates, to help neutral observers to find their way around

Sometimes it helps to think back. For example to 1983. The frontlines of West German opinion had been entrenched for decades. How to deal with Socialist countries, how abominable Communism was – these were non-negotiable matters of faith. Disassociation seemed more important than conciliation, nuances were easily overheard.

The discussions on German opinion pages and internet forums over the past few weeks are fatally reminiscent of this situation. The subject of the new op-ed cold war is Islam. And now the troops are settling in: the time for finding the truth and preparing arguments appears to be over, the time has come to dig the trenches for the coming media warfare.

## Censorship or racism?

The Swiss referendum banning new minarets and the attempted assassination of the artist of the Mohammed caricatures have fanned the flames of the debate smouldering since 9/11. On one side are those who openly regard Islam as an enemy and a fundamental threat. On the other side not so much the Muslims themselves but their native German advocates.

Islam critics such as Henryk Broder accuse the latter of nothing less than censorship, cringing servility and betrayal of the ideals of the Enlightenment and Western civilisation. The defenders of Islam parry by denouncing the Islam critics for racist or religious prejudice and overly simplified arguments. A prime example is the journalist Claudius Seidl, who attacked Broder in the Frankfurter Sonntagszeitung newspaper.

And the Muslims themselves? They



**Is a Muslim criticizing Islam more credible than a non-Muslim doing the same thing? Stefan Weidner takes a look at Germany's current Islam debate**

too are in two camps. Across from the large majority of practising or lapsed Muslims is a small but very active group of secularised (ex) Muslims unreservedly devoted to the ideals of the West, who regard it as their mission to warn the German-speaking world against Islam. Their most prominent current exponent is probably Necla Kelek.

Their statements are in popular demand and their life stories appear to vouch for the authenticity of their judgement. When a German says Islam is a bad thing, the suspicion of prejudice is close at hand. A Muslim warning against Islam appears far more credible. But these warnings should also be taken with caution – even those who have renounced Islam with much ceremony are ultimately pleading their own cause: that of renunciation.

## The role of secularised Muslims

These secularised Muslims have come under critical fire in recent months. Ultimately, claimed the psychologist Birgit Rommelspacher in Berlin's TAZ newspaper, they use just as sweeping arguments as the prejudice-laden

European Islam critics and are just as much advocates of Western cultural hegemony as their European colleagues. They blame Islam for problems related less to religion than to certain social milieus or local traditions, she went on.

The (ex) Muslim objects of Rommelspacher's criticism in turn took this as an affront, an attempt at censorship and a subtle form of racism.

The debate is confusing, with any observers seeking objectivity no doubt struggling to find a position with which to identify. And yet the question of what, in truth, Islam is (if in fact we can ever define it as such) has not even been touched upon. With good reason – the debate is not primarily about Islam as such. What it actually revolves around is the type of society in which we want to live. This is all about Germany and Europe.

The public debate over Islam is ultimately, one suspects, fuelled by fear of no longer being able to influence the transformation processes within the country to an adequate extent. However, it is also clear that Islam itself is equally a victim of global transformation processes. The rise of fundamentalism, as so often in such cases, is a reaction to this circumstance, with the hardly edifying picture that Islam presents today its lamentable result.

There is no need to justify critique of many forms of Islam; that right goes without saying. In actual fact, Islam is currently subject to criticism from all kinds of fronts, including by Muslims, including in the Islamic world. Criticism of Islam – rather than addressing problems in our own political and economic sector, for example – is the cheapest form of criticism going begging on today's opinion market. Germany's non-Muslims attacking Islam are valiant little tailors straight out of the Brothers Grimm, but by no means champions of freedom of opinion.

## Self-criticism or ingratiation?

The situation appears different when Muslims attack Islam, in other words exercising self-criticism, always a sign

of courage. Yet in cases where this self-criticism is carried out not in Turkish for instance by Necla Kelek, but in the German media, the result is an ambiguity that fuels the debates even further. As the target audience consists of both Germans and Muslims (and German Muslims), there is a high risk of malicious interpretations.

Firmly convinced Muslims might well arrive at the view that these Muslim critics are not intent on the matter at hand but on a kind of revenge, reckoning or ingratiation towards the Germans.

When it comes to the non-Muslim audience, there are grounds to suspect abuse of the debate by those who already harbour anti-Islamic sentiments. This interpretation is all the more apt when the Muslims attacking Islam also appear to hold resentments against their faith. Psychologically, this is very understandable, as these individuals have often suffered under their cultural circumstances and thereby under Islam, similarly to the many Christians who have turned vehemently against Christianity.

It would be a mistake, however, to attempt a psychological analysis of Muslim Islam critics' motives. What drives them is not important, nor is the issue of whom they speak to in what language, as wise as it is to gain an insight into the overall context. To say it in the spirit of the Enlightenment to which so many commentators are currently referring: What matters is the clarity, objectivity and discernment of the arguments. When these criteria are met, the power of the thought itself will outshine all other considerations.

## Lack of dissociation from extremists

And this is precisely what is lacking on both sides of the current debates. Instead of clarity we find grand rhetoric, instead of objectivity wild polemics, instead of discernment hair-raising sweeping judgements. The discussions are, in a word, mediocre. We learn nothing from them, yet they compel us to blindly back one or other of the parties.

The even more problematic aspect is this: Neither side disassociates itself sufficiently from its extreme fringes. The Islam critics have not yet learned to distance themselves from a very much existent anti-Islamic resentment with alarming parallels to classic anti-Semitism.

Their opponents, on the other hand, must take a much clearer stand against the equally existing reactionary tendencies among Muslims. Only then is there a chance for the trench warfare to give way to dialogue again. Capitalism, and we along with it, may have won the

Cold War – but neither side will come out on top in this new cold war, for the simple reason that Muslims, whether we like it or not, are now part of us.

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Stefan Weidner is the author of the book "Manual für den Kampf der Kulturen. Warum der Islam eine Herausforderung ist" ("Manual for the Clash of Civilizations – On the Reasons Why Islam Poses a Challenge") Verlag der Weltreligionen, Frankfurt 2009.

Translated from the German by Katy Derbyshire



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# JUST ANOTHER DAY IN THE CAPITAL (17)

## Fazea's life: from bitter to sweet and sour

By: Judith Spiegel  
For the Yemen Times

The gates of the Al Amal Delinquency Juvenile Home remain closed today for Fazea's twelve year old daughter. Raped by her father when she was ten years old, she was brought to this 'home' over a year ago. Today, maybe, she can finally go home. But after weeks of bureaucratic obstacles, Fazea is faced with another one today: a missing stamp.

We are talking about the same Fazea who was the subject of a previous article in this newspaper. More than three months ago we wrote about this illiterate but brave woman who lived with her children in a dark hole in the wall in a poor outskirt of Sana'a (Yemen Times, 2 November 2009). She had to flee from her husband, who raped her - then - ten year old daughter and molested Fazea and her other children. Her family rejected her and so did the neighbourhood where she hoped to find shelter. Basically, Fazea's life was hell.

Today, fortunately a less bitter conclusion can be drawn because Fazea is doing better. For one, she no longer

lives in the hostile neighbourhood she used to live. She now lives in a quiet area not far from Zubairy street. Her new house is no villa, but it is clean, has two small rooms, a tiny kitchen, a television set and some daylight coming in. Her little baby girl, born in the dark days, is looking healthier now that she is no longer threatened by starvation. Her neighbours let Fazea live in peace and her children can go to school. Her husband is in jail and maybe, maybe, her raped daughter is coming home one of these days.

Fazea did not win the lottery. Nor did her family eventually come to her rescue. Fazea's life was saved by the never ending efforts of human rights activist and film maker Mogib Hassan. He made sure people heard about her story. His short film about Fazea's life was broadcasted on Dutch television. This resulted in financial help from viewers, women associations and close friends of Mogib. Furthermore, her practical affairs - such as paying the rent - are now managed by the Yemeni Education & Relief Organisation (YERO). This help was offered by people who just took Fazea's fate to their hearts. Without knowing her,

and without prejudice to religion or tradition.

Having said this, Fazea's life can hardly be considered to be back on track. Sure, she got help, from strangers living in countries Fazea has never heard of. And she is very grateful for that. But what is still lacking is something women like Fazea, or children like Fazea's raped daughter, would need the most, and that is help from their own people, their own government, their own judiciary system.

Take the 'release' of Fazea's daughter. First of all, it is interesting - to put it mildly - that in order to be released the judge either wants her to marry or to live in a safe place. For a twelve year old, marriage is apparently considered the equivalent of a safe place. For a girl who has been raped and has lost both her physical and mental virginity this seems quite an optimistic assumption.

Fortunately, Fazea's daughter can be released on the other condition; she now has a safe place to live and the judge was convinced of this as well. Good news, or so thought Fazea. Having obtained the written statement of the judge, she went to the director of the juvenile centre. Who rejected the statement for there was some legal formula missing in the document. Fazea had to go back to the court and arrange for an amended statement. It took weeks, but then she got it. And went back to the juvenile centre. Maybe finally, she could take her daughter home.

No. For this time, according to the director of the juvenile centre, a stamp was missing. No problem, just a matter of calling the judge and have things fixed. Or so Fazea thought. And indeed, the judge told her that she could come by any time and have the statement certified with the required stamp. So there Fazea goes again, to the Primary Court of Juvenile in Hasabah. Maybe

finally, today, all goes according to plan and she can take her daughter home. Alas, the judge is not there and the clerk who is supposed to give the stamp cannot find the keys of the drawer where the stamp is. Or so he tells Fazea.

Having spent the whole morning chasing after a stamp, Fazea, accompanied by Mogib, decides to go to the juvenile centre anyway and give it a try without stamp. Fazea is let in to see the director, Mogib is not. The director does not want to speak to anyone except to Fazea. And tells her something along the lines of 'no stamp, no daughter'. She does get a bag of wheat, but no daughter. So there Fazea goes again, back to her humble home. After this, three more attempts were undertaken to get the stamp. Again, there were always excuses, usually something about the lost keys of the drawer.

Finally, this battle was won by Fazea and her persevering friends. Last week, finally her daughter was released. Mogib brought her home in his car. "She seemed very bothered, shattered, she could not focus and was very insecure" One thing she was sure about though, was her father. She told Mogib that she never wanted to see him again, for the rest of her life.

It remains to be seen whether indeed she will never see her father again because a new problem has shown up. And a challenging one too. Fazea thought she was properly divorced (he divorced her three times at three different occasions), but now her husband denies this. Fazea now faces the impossible task to prove the three divorces. Meanwhile, the divorce judge has told Fazea that she must be a good wife and return to her husband, the husband who raped her daughter and beat her up. The bizarre legal machinery never stops. Nor does Fazea's struggle for a better life.



Mogib Hassan, together with Fazea and 3 of her children.

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# YR 16 billion needed to cover basic education female teachers annually

By: Sadeq Al-Wasabi  
For the Yemen Times

There are 35% of Yemeni girls between the ages 6 and 14 outside schools. Out of the ones who do enroll in schools around 11 percent drop out just after completing the fourth grade. One of the main reasons why this is so, is the lack of female teachers especially in rural areas, where there is a current shortage of at least 17 thousand teachers yet to be recruited.

Girl school dropouts is one of the critical problems faced by Yemen in context of the country's development. This makes it necessary to study the problem carefully and identify the reasons behind the prevalence of this phenomenon.

A recent study, conducted by the academic researcher, Qaid Aqlan, in this regard, highlighted 'inadequacy of female teachers' as one of the most crucial factors responsible for the phenomenon. The study was supervised by the Women National Committee through funding from Oxfam-GB Yemen's Good Governance Program.

The study, which is considered as one of the most important studies in this field, said that "this is a real problem which needs be tackled before it expands further." The study, a factual milestone in understanding the phenomenon of girl school dropouts, provides valuable recommendations in terms of policies and programs to tackle this problem.

Saying that though economical, cultural and social factors contribute to a large extent to the challenges faced by girl education in Yemen, the most challenging difficulty which keeps girls away from schools is inadequacy of female teachers, especially in the rural areas.

The total percentage of the female (out of total number of teachers) teachers in the rural areas and countryside together, for the academic year 2007-2008, was no more than 24%, which means that the female teachers constitute less than even a quarter of the total teachers. In addition, the study showed that female teachers in the urban areas are more than female teachers in rural areas.

The study revealed that, in Yemen, where it is culturally unacceptable for girl students, especially fourth grade onwards, to study under male teachers, girls are not enrolled in schools which do not have female teachers.

The study also proved that as the number of the female teachers in schools increases, there is a marked increase in enrolment of girls in schools as well.

The Women National Committee (WNC, is a quasi governmental body with the mandate to mainstream gen-

der in all works and structures of the government), recently undertook the above study with support from Oxfam (a vibrant global movement dedicated to fighting poverty, active in Yemen for the past 27 years). The study, focusing on the correlation between the number of female teachers and the rate of girl dropouts in primary schools, was a part of Oxfam's 'Good Governance in the Implementation and Monitoring of the 3rd FYP' project, in which the WNC is a partner.

The study identifies the various factors related to enrollment and dropout of girls as well as boys, comparing them. It also identifies the gap between the number of the female and male teachers in the primary schools in addition to defining the needed number of the female teachers.

The study showed that the education of girls in Yemen, is neither improving nor is it helping socio-economic improvement.

It said that when girls' education is recessing and female illiteracy increasing, unfortunately, the education system in Yemen, is denying girls from many basic educational services and catering only to the needs of their male counterparts.

The study indicated that the people in charge, have to remember that male teachers teaching girls, especially fourth grade onwards, is unacceptable to the Yemeni society at large.

Other important obstacles hindering girl education in Yemen, as identified by the study are: a lack of means of transportation to schools, the conservative Yemeni culture restricting females from travelling to places far away from their homes, poor infrastructure of rural areas forming a disincentive for female teachers to accept jobs in rural areas.

## Important numbers

At present, the total number of female teachers is 39694 and additional 17,614 numbers of female teachers are needed to meet the demand.

According to the study, the annual budget required to employ the 17,614 number shortage of female teachers is estimated at more than a half billion Yemeni Riyals (YR 9,511,560,000) whereas the annual budget to employ 29,931 female teachers at 45,000 YR per month which is the minimum



Poster promoting girls' education in Yemen: 'I have the right to learn!'

monthly salary for one teacher, is estimated at more than 16 billion Yemeni Riyals (YR 16.162.740.000)

Where the girl dropout rate in rural areas is 14%, it is only 5% in the urban areas. On the other hand, the boy dropout rate in rural areas is 2% and 11% in the urban areas. The 'National Strategy for Development of Primary School Education' aims to reduce the dropout rates to less than 1%, by 2015 end.

The strategy also aims at raising the girl enrolment rate to 90% by 2015, estimating that by 2015, the number of the girls enrolled in schools will reach 2436878. This means that the current number of female teachers, which is 39694 will have to reach 69625 by the end of 2015.

In urban areas with more than 11,885 female teachers, however a surplus is observed.

## Salient recommendations of the study

The study strongly recommended teacher positions for the rural areas and countryside, in order to increase enrollment of girls in these areas.

It also recommended the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Civil Service and the Ministry of Planning, to work collaboratively to tackle this problem and ensure recruitment of female teachers in rural areas. It recommended that there should be a general balance of positions and that the distribution of positions should be

based on the actual needs of areas for female teachers.

The study also recommended allocation of new teaching positions to the rural areas in all the governorates, where demand is greater.

The study recommended giving preference to the educated girls from the same rural areas of the placement, for recruitment and offering cash and kind incentives such as public services like telephone lines, transportation and electricity, to encourage more females from applying for rural jobs.

Hana'a Howaydi, the General Manager of Women Development, WNC, said that the committee has been doing its best to provide female teachers to schools and increase girl enrollment.

"Can you imagine that 68-70% women all over the country are illiterate, out of which, 80-90% are from villages and rural areas. Girls are allowed to study only till the third grade because of a lack of female teachers" said Howaydi.

Howaydi emphasized tackling the problem of inadequacy of female teachers in rural areas by recruiting local educated females.

Asma'a Mohsen, a sociologist, said that the phenomenon of girl school dropouts is one of the most serious problems faced by the country and must be tackled by defining and outlining suitable solutions.

"The Yemeni society does not allow males to teach females due to its con-

servative nature. Some of the girls, however do not have the motivation to continue studying. For this reason, the schools should give the girls a glimmer of hope and motivation by conducting activities in the school that can captivate their interest in studying," said Mohsen.

"We must not forget that 'big families' is an important factor forming a barrier against girl education. Parents find themselves unable to afford school fees and force the daughters to drop out," Mohsen explained further, calling on all women organizations to offer solutions to this phenomenon.

The Deputy Minister of Girls Education Sector in Ministry of Education, Lotfia Hamza, attributed the phenomenon of girl school dropouts to many reasons, one of which is parents forcing their daughters into early marriages. She also said that parents usually do not allow their daughters to go to schools that far from their house.

Hamza confirmed what Mohsen said about the conservative nature of the Yemeni society. "The small number of female teachers, for example, especially at the level of high schools, makes parents think a thousand times before enrolling their daughter," she said.

Hamza added that scattered settlements is another important factor that keeps girls away from schools and families are reluctant to send their daughters to schools, which are placed far away from their settlements.

However, she pointed out that the state has made several efforts to reduce the number of girls dropping out from schools. "The Primary Education Development project provided incentives for girls as well as exempted girls from paying school fees," said

Hamza.

Fawzya No'man, a member of the Yemeni Women Union (YWU), said that poor status of girls education in Yemen, is a combined effect of unfavorable social and traditional factors. "The state is trying its best to reduce the number of girls dropping out of schools," No'man said.

No'man pointed out that if girls in rural areas keep dropping out from schools, it would eventually result into less number of girls from rural areas graduating, and consequently, rural areas will miss on the opportunity of such graduates returning to teach in their native areas.

She suggested giving preference to females graduates, from areas neighboring the placement area, for recruitment. She said that such a policy will make the female teachers feel comfortable and parents will be at peace in sending their daughters to schools having female teachers.

Faiza Al-Showafy, a sociologist at Arwa school, said that sociologists play a key role in solving the problems of students, especially those related to girl school dropouts.

"Sometimes, girls have their reasons to drop out. Social and economical factors keep girls away from schools. We, in the school, finance girls who are in need, providing them with school uniforms, books and all that is needed during the academic year," said Al-Showafy.

She said that as a result of this program and in coordination with the schools' parents council, 3,000 girls are enrolled and receive financial support from the school. She explained that, the school, sells books and dishes and the revenue collected, goes to the fund of the school program.

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- Advise potential grantees on technical project preparation issues, and Report to PM and Natural Steering Committee on project development activities, as required;
- Review and process payment requests from grantees and vendors through obtaining necessary clearances and authorizations and ensuring payments are effected promptly;
- Maintain financial integrity of the programme within UNDP Country Office and externally, implement and monitor accounting system and databases of SGP country operational budget.
- Prepare background information and documentation, update data relevant to the programme areas and compile background material for the PM and NSC;

### Qualification:

- University degree, preferably in Business Administration or an environmental science field.
- At least 3-5 years of relevant experience in office management, including financial reporting.
- Previous working experience with a UN agency an asset.
- Excellent knowledge of MS Office, database and Internet use.
- Fluency in English and Arabic.
- Good communications and interpersonal skills essential.
- Excellent drafting and analytical skills required.
- Good knowledge of budget control and financial management.

### Only Online Applications will be accepted.

- For further details of the job description and online application, please visit our website at <http://jobs.undp.org/>
- Response will only be made to short listed candidates.
- The deadline for receiving applications is Tuesday, 16 February 2010.
- Note: The monthly Salary for this post is approximately \$1000



## Vacancy Announcement

An international company based in Sana'a is seeking to recruit a Medical Receptionist

Position Title: **Receptionist**

Location: **Sana'a**

Deadline Date: **28th February 2010**

### Key Responsibilities

- Answering the telephone
- Arranging patients' appointments
- Taking messages for medical staff
- Supervise patient flow to ensure prompt service
- Keeping patients' medical files up to date
- Liaise with external providers

### Essential Criteria

- Should be Female Yemeni National
- Fluency in written and spoken English
- Good presentation and ability to convey positive image and build positive relationships with others
- Ability to communicate professionally and tactfully with staff, patients and the public
- Have good organisational skills, and be able to prioritise workload in a busy environment
- Minimum 2 years experience in similar position or in customer service position
- Computer literate and proficient with Microsoft Office applications

Interested candidates are requested to submit a detailed CV together with an introduction letter and be sent by email to: [receptionist.sanaa@gmail.com](mailto:receptionist.sanaa@gmail.com)  
Responses will only be made to short listed candidates

## Expression of Interest

**Ministry of Education (MoE) Basic Education Development Project (BEDP) Project Administration Unit**

**Technical Assistance for Development of Gendered Tools, Guidelines and Processes for MoE**

The Education Development Project Administration Unit (EDPAU) is interested in hiring a national gender expert to provide gender training and to gender selected aspects of the MoE's tools, processes and policies, thereby improving girls' education outcomes, with a special focus on BEDP related activities. The consultant is expected to work closely with key staff within the Ministry and the PAU, especially with the Girls' Education Sector of the MoE. The national expert will work in collaboration with, and under the overall direction of the international expert.

**Period of Assignment** The assignment duration is 25 days, full time commitment.  
**Assignment Commencement** March 13, 2010. Expected Completion Date: April 21, 2010.

**Assignment** Two consultants will be hired for this assignment; a national and an international gender expert. The position advertised in this notice is for the national expert. In collaboration with the international expert, the national expert will carry out the following tasks:

1. Analyze the gendered status of present tools, systems, standards, guidelines, processes and indicators selected by the MoE and PAU for this exercise.
2. Provide gender training to relevant sectors and units of the MoE and EDPAU in coordination with Girls' Education Sector.
3. In coordination with the relevant sectors and units, design specific agreed upon gendered systems, tools, and indicators within a workshop methodology.
4. Write-up of tools and indicators, and insertion of tools in the Girls' Education Best Practice Manual of the MoE.
5. Lead workshop to communicate and distribute gendered processes to MoE and to BEDP stakeholders.
6. Train the EDPAU's financial staff on using the Manual, and prepare guidelines for Financial Unit staff for periodic revision and updating of contents of Operational Manual based on ISO standards.

**Qualifications** The successful candidate will possess a Bachelor or higher degree in gender studies. The expert will have at least five years of experience in gender related work in Yemen, and experience in developing gender tools and processes in organizations. Experience in training will be five or more years. Moreover, the consultant is expected to be fluent in speaking, reading and writing in Arabic, and able to read and communicate effectively in English.

The EDPAU invites eligible consultants to submit their applications with their CVs by **February 23, 2010** at the address given below.

The Project Director  
Basic Education Development Project  
60 m Southern Rd-Bait Meayd  
TEL: 00967-01-619163/4, FAX: 00967-01-619219 or to  
Email: PAU Director: a.al-arashi@edpau.org



Landmines Monitor Report 2009

Landmines in Yemen: A humanitarian crisis

Report summarized for the Yemen Times by: Ashwini Bhanagay

Yemen is contaminated with mines and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW), primarily as a result of armed conflicts since 1962. Limited funding and the presence of mines in shifting sands as well as their depth (some may lie up to six meters below the surface of sand dunes) led Yemen to request a six-year extension to its deadline for clearance of mined areas from April 2009 to March 2015. In granting Yemen's extension request, the Ninth Meeting of States Parties noted that while the extension "seemed workable," success in implementation would be "very much tied to securing donor support."

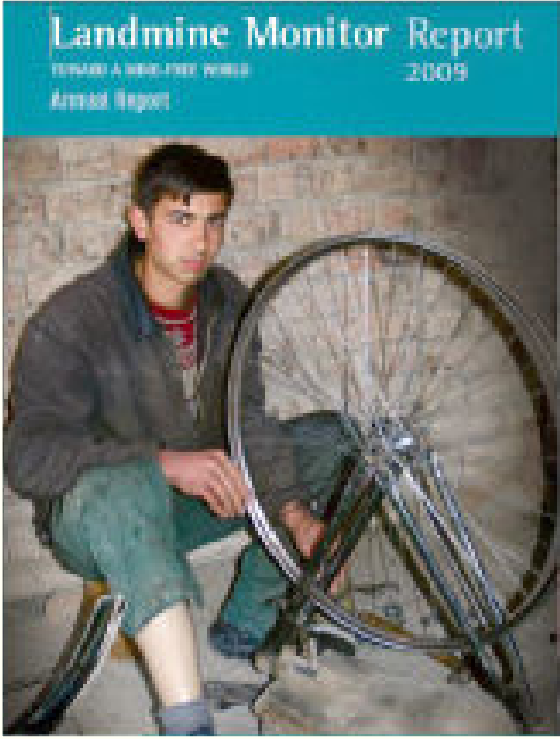
Yemen destroyed the last of its known stockpile of 74,000 to 78,000 antipersonnel mines in April 2002. An additional 30,000 mines were found in November 2006 and destroyed in December 2007. Yemen initially retained 4,000 mines for training purposes, of which it has 3,760 left. In May 2007, antipersonnel and anti-vehicle mines were purchased from the public in various parts of the country as part of a government arms reduction and arms collection program.

The major obstacles to demining in 2008 and 2009 were said to be shortfalls in funding and security concerns in some affected areas.

A Landmine Impact Survey (LIS) completed in July 2000 identified 592 mine-affected villages across 18 of Yemen's 21 governorates. Of those, 14 communities were deemed high-impact. As of the end of 2008, 10 of these communities had been cleared of contamination.

The LIS estimated that Suspect Hazardous Areas (SHA) covered 922 square kms, and subsequent demining identified a further 10 mined areas estimated to cover a total of some 600,000 square meters. As of April 2009, Aden and Hodeida governorates had been cleared and handed over, with operations completed in Dhamar, Hajja, Raima, and Sana'a governorates, but land was still to be handed over. In Abyan, Hadramout, and Lahj governorates there are only four mined areas, but these include mines buried up to six meters deep in sand dunes over a total estimated area of 41.4 square kms.

Yemen reported that its total remaining SHA was more than 520 square kms as of the end of 2008, and out of which 12 square kms would require full clearance;



the rest would be cancelled or reduced by technical survey.

Casualties

There were some 5,000 mine/ERW casualties in Yemen. In all years except 2005, children made up a significant percentage of the casualties, and women were a significant proportion. Many contaminated areas are not marked, as marking is only conducted along with clearance. The rainy season is the most dangerous because flooding can shift mines. Economic reasons are the primary cause of ERW incidents such as scrap metal trade and entering contaminated areas to tend animals.

In 2008, Landmine Monitor & YEMAC identified at least 20 new mine/ERW casualties in Yemen, including seven people killed and 13 injured. Fifteen of the casualties in 2008 were civilians, one was a deminer, and the status of the remaining four was unknown. At least 13 of the casualties were children (10 boys and three girls), and nine of these occurred while tending animals. Two casualties were women. Seven casualties were caused by ERW, five by antipersonnel mines, two by anti-vehicle mines, and six by unspecified mines.

Landmine Monitor media analysis confirmed that a significant number of casualties in Sa'ada and neighboring Amran governorate were caused by remote-deto-

nated Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) or deliberate ambushes of security forces and identified additional at least 11 military casualties due to remote-detonated devices in 2008. The government and the Houthis have traded accusations of new use of antipersonnel mines, but Landmine Monitor has not been able to confirm such use.

The National Mine Action Plan

The vision of National Mine Action Strategic Plan (2005-2014) is to "put an end to the suffering of the people and the casualties caused by antipersonnel mines in mine affected areas." The strategic plan includes

Risk Education (RE) as well as Victims Assistance (VA).

Mine/ERW risk education (RE) has been conducted since 1999 by YEMAC and the NGO Yemen Mine Awareness Association (YMAA), working together to conduct community liaison, deliver community based RE, train community leaders and teachers, and give direct presentations.

As per the recommendations of the 2005 UNDP evaluation support to the Yemeni mine action program, a socio-economic assessment of the use of released land was carried out, based on which, YEMAC planned to establish a department to promote socio-economic development of cleared areas. This had not occurred as of August 2009

Risk Education (RE)

By March 2009, a total of 1,094,879 beneficiaries were reported to have received RE.

YEMAC's Risk Education (RE) department is responsible for planning and implementing RE, monitoring against national standards, and integrating RE into mine action. However, a lack of coordination has resulted in poor RE progress in 2008.

The only organization which had an RE program in 2008 was YEMAC, which consists entirely of military staff, and is funded by the government. YMAA did not have a program due to lack of funding, but YMAA members delivered emergency RE in response to incidents. YEMAC delivered RE using child-to-child and woman-to-woman methods in homes, through direct presentations to men at social gatherings, and through plays, films, and posters. Survivors also participated in delivering RE messages. YEMAC conducted RE and community liaison. YMAA trained community leaders to pass RE on to their communities and to report contamination to the demining unit, produced RE materials and conducted child-to-child training.

Victim Assistance (VA) –

Over 50% of program funds go for in-kind contribution staff benefits.

The total number of mine/ERW survivors in Yemen is unknown, but is at least 2,458. From 2008–2009, VA was severely hampered by financial difficulties. Yemen set objectives for victim assistance (VA) from 2005–2009 but did not reach its tar-

get of assisting 2,000 survivors.

In May 2009, YEMAC's director noted that "there were no funds to carry out VA activities as planned," and that he "could hardly manage to keep the YEMAC VA department open."

The activities implemented ignored many needs of survivors and survivors had to wait for their turn, even if they needed urgent support. The program's coverage is limited. Survivors were not included in planning or implementation of VA activities. Most survivors had not heard of the YEMAC program and lived without appropriate medical and socio-economic support.

Yemen is one of the VA26 group, composed of 26 States Parties with significant numbers of mine survivors and "the greatest responsibility to act, but also the greatest needs and expectations for assistance" in providing adequate services for the care, rehabilitation, and reintegration of survivors.

YEMAC operates a four-step program for VA including identification of survivors, medical examination, medical and rehabilitation treatment, and socio-economic reintegration. Socioeconomic reintegration was added in 2004, but the remainder of the program is unchanged since it started in 2001. Psychological support and social reintegration are not included in the program because there was no funding for these components. Additionally, YEMAC did not find psychosocial support a priority issue, as it thought this was provided by the family network, even though an evaluation in 2006 showed that mental health care was needed.

YEMAC coordinates and implements VA activities under NMAC's supervision. Coordination between YEMAC and relevant government organizations or civil society is limited to referral of people to services and some limited information exchange with ministries. YEMAC services were only available to mine survivors and not for other persons with disabilities.

YEMAC's VA program operates entirely under national management, since 2007. In 2008, the national budget allocation to YEMAC was cut due to the economic crisis, directly affecting RE and VA activities, as the government reportedly noted that funding provided was prioritized for clearance.

Support

Yemen estimated USD 31,216,667 for completing mine clearance during 2009–2014 not including costs required to fulfill RE and VA obligations. Yemen's contribution to mine clearance during the extension period is projected to approximate USD 18.8 million, while international assistance is expected to be an estimated USD 10.5 million and funds from other sources to total roughly USD 1.9 million.

As of November 2008, Yemen reported national funding to mine action in 2008 to be USD 3.6 million. It received USD 1,331,000 in funding in 2008, including USD 1,031,000 from the European Commission (EC) and USD 300,000 from UNDP.

Shortages in funding have occasionally caused the delay or suspension of mine action activities in Yemen and YMAA suspended all activities during 2008 due to a lack of funding.

In February 2009, Croatia signed a cooperative agreement with Yemen, to provide equipment to support clearance operations in Yemen.

Landmines: A General View

Antipersonnel and anti-vehicle mines are munitions designed to explode from the presence, proximity, or contact of a person and vehicles respectively and whoever triggers the mine, whether a child or a soldier, becomes its victim.

Cluster munitions consist of containers and sub munitions which put civilians at risk both during attacks due to their wide area effect and after attacks due to unexploded ordnance. Explosive remnants of war (ERW) refer to unused or abandoned (AXO) and unexploded (UXO) explosive ordnance left behind after a conflict.

Landmines and ERW pose a serious and ongoing threat to civilians. Mines emplaced during a conflict against enemy forces can still kill or injure civilian's decades later.

These weapons can be found on roads, footpaths, farmers' fields, forests, deserts, along borders, in and surrounding houses and schools, and in other places where people are carrying out their daily activities. They deny access to food, water, and other basic needs, and inhibit freedom of movement. They prevent the repatriation of refugees and internally displaced people, and hamper the delivery of humanitarian aid. These weapons instill fear in communities, whose citizens often know they are walking in mined areas, but have no possibility to farm other land, or take another route to school.

The 1997 Mine Ban Treaty, the 2008 Convention

on Cluster Munitions and the Protocol V covering the ERW provide frameworks for governments to alleviate the suffering of civilians living in areas affected.

One hundred and fifty-six states—more than three-quarters of the world's states are party to the Mine Ban Treaty. A total of 39 countries, including China, India, Pakistan, Russia, and the United States, have still to join. Two of these are signatories: the Marshall Islands and Poland.

Total international support for mine action for 1992–2008 was USD 4.27 billion. Government use of antipersonnel mines has greatly decreased over the last decade. Since 1999 to 2009, at least 1,100 square kms of mined areas and a further 2,100 square kms of battle areas, an area twice the size of London, have been cleared in more than 90 states and other areas. Operations have resulted in the destruction of more than 2.2 million emplaced antipersonnel mines, 250,000 anti-vehicle mines, and 17 million explosive remnants of war (ERW). As of August 2009, more than 70 states were believed to be mine-affected.

Landmine Monitor has identified at least 73,576 casualties of landmines, ERW, and victim-activated improvised explosive devices in 119 states and areas in the past 10 years.

Landmine Monitor is the ICBL's research and monitoring program and a functioning arm of the CMC. Landmine Monitor is not a technical verification system or a formal inspection regime. It is an attempt by civil society to hold governments accountable to the

obligations they have taken on with respect to antipersonnel mines and cluster munitions, through extensive data collection, analysis, and distribution of publicly available information.

The International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), a coalition of more than 1,000 organizations in over 70 countries and Cluster Munitions Coalition (CMC), an international coalition of around 300 civil society organizations from more than 80 countries work to protect civilians. Sustained and coordinated action by the ICBL made the Mine Ban Treaty a reality.

Republic of Yemen (RoY)

The RoY became a State Party to the Mine Ban Treaty on 1 March 1999. It enacted national implementation legislation in 2005. Yemen is not party to the Convention on Conventional Weapons and has not signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions

The National Mine Action Committee (NMAC), was established in June 1998 to formulate policy, allocate resources, and develop a national mine action strategy. Yemen Executive Mine Action Center (YEMAC) was established in Sana'a in January 1999 as NMAC's implementing body responsible for coordination of all mine action activities in the country. Regional Executive Mine Action Branches (REMAB), Aden and Hadramout, are responsible for field implementation of the national mine action plan and a National Training Center was set up in Aden.

HEALTH  
WATCH



By: Dr. Siva



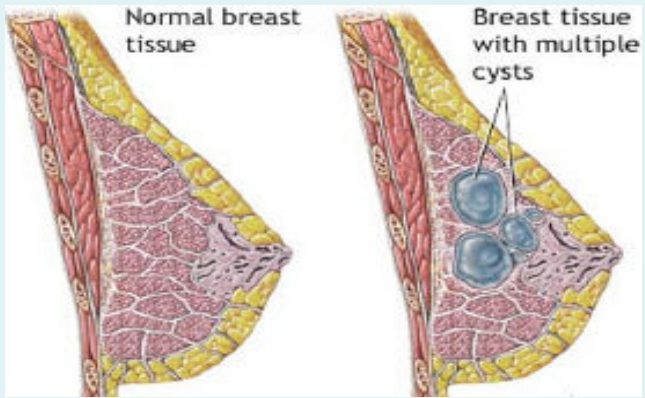
This weekly column is to disseminate health information to the readers in Yemen and outside. Dr. Siva is currently working at Aden Refinery Company Hospital. Life style diseases and cancer prevention are his special interests. Complementary medicine and Naturopathy are his passions.

Fibrocystic breast changes

Mariam is thirty years old and is working as a teacher in a private school. Since Ramadan, she has a problem in her left breast. She is able to feel some soft tender lumps inside her left breast. In addition, the breast is painful at times. During every monthly period she has pain and discomfort in her left breast. During such times, she used to excuse herself from participating in any sports activities with her students because of pain. She knew from her friends that any mass in the breast is a red flag.

Mariam and her mother consulted me a week ago. I examined her and found small, soft masses inside the left breast which were mobile. She did not have any swellings elsewhere in her body, like arm pits etc. An ultrasound of her breasts showed some small bags filled with fluid. I reassured her that the soft masses were benign and not malignant. I prescribed some analgesics and Vitamins and asked her to see me if the swelling increased.

Mariam has Fibrocystic breast disease. It is a very common, non-cancerous (benign) breast condition. It has been observed in 60% of young women and tends to disappear after menopause. Women with fibrocystic breast disease



have lumpy, painful breasts. Although once considered a disease, most experts now prefer to call them "fibrocystic breast changes." Fibrocystic breast changes are caused by fibroadenoma (which occurs in a much younger age) and fibroadenosis which usually occurs after 35 years.

The female breast is a complex gland that is made up of several different types of tissue. Each breast contains milk glands and milk ducts which can increase or decrease in both size and number, as and when they are needed.

The breast is also made up of fibrous connective tissue, fatty tissue, nerves, blood vessels and lymph nodes. Each type of tissue and structure within the breast reacts differently to changes in a woman's body chemistry, and this can affect both sensitivity and texture.

The cause of fibrocystic breast changes isn't completely understood. But the condition is thought to be associated with fluctuations of hormone levels during a woman's menstrual cycle.

Signs and symptoms of fibrocystic breast changes

- ❖ Dense and lumpy breast
- ❖ Feeling of fullness in the breasts
- ❖ Pain and tenderness that tends to be generalized and may radiate to the underarm
- ❖ Rarely a nipple discharge that's often greenish-brown in color
- ❖ Breast cysts that are identified on breast ultrasound

Fibrocystic disease is more common in fatty women. Observations reveal that there is an increased incidence of fibrocystic breast changes in women who indulge in coffee, tea, colas, chocolates meat, fried food and other forms of fatty food.

Women should be aware of what their breasts normally look and feel like so that they can quickly pick up any changes which may occur. Monthly Breast Self Examination (BSE) is very important for all women. They should learn how to do it from their doctors and periodically review their technique(s) with their doctors to ensure that they're doing the exam correctly. It is better to schedule breast self-exams for a week after the period ends — when hormonal fluctuations decrease and breast tissue feels less lumpy and tender. People with sensitive breast tissue may experience difficulty in detecting abnormal lumps. However, it is important for women to get to know their breasts well so that they can easily track changes if any. Indeed, most of the lumps in breasts are picked up by women themselves rather than by their doctors.

There's no specific treatment for fibrocystic breast changes. Vitamins A, B and E, and selenium supplements may be useful in reducing the severity of symptoms. If the cysts are big and painful, they can be aspirated under ultrasonographic guidance. If there are multiple big cysts, they can be surgically removed.

Some simple measures, such as wearing a supportive bra with the correct fit, may provide relief from the pain and discomfort associated with fibrocystic breast changes. Food changes are also important. Avoiding fatty and fried food, red meat and reducing or limiting caffeine in the diet may help. Signs and symptoms of fibrocystic breast changes often go away completely after menopause.

A woman should consult a doctor if

- ❖ She has severe or persistent breast pain or pain that is concentrated in one area of the breast.
- ❖ She finds a new change or lump in her breast that persists for two menstrual cycles.

Some natural remedies with rewarding results

1. Capsules of Star Flower oil (Borage oil) 500mg twice daily after food and Vitamin E 400mg once daily for a few months. Star Flower oil is nature's richest source of 'gamma linoleic acid' (GLA), an omega-6 essential fatty acid which is an excellent natural remedy for Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS), Menopausal problems, Eczema, Psoriasis and High Cholesterol. However, star flower oil should not be used in pregnant mothers, epileptics and cardiac patients.
2. Application of Chamomile oil and crushed leaves of cabbage on the breasts overnight held in position by a bra (to be changed twice if possible) offers good relief. Chamomile oil has excellent anti-inflammatory, anti-fungal and anti-bacterial properties that prevent infection and soothe and reduce pain and discomfort — acting as a natural pain reliever.



Women can be assured that fibrocystic disease of the breast is a purely benign condition and there is no risk of developing malignancy.





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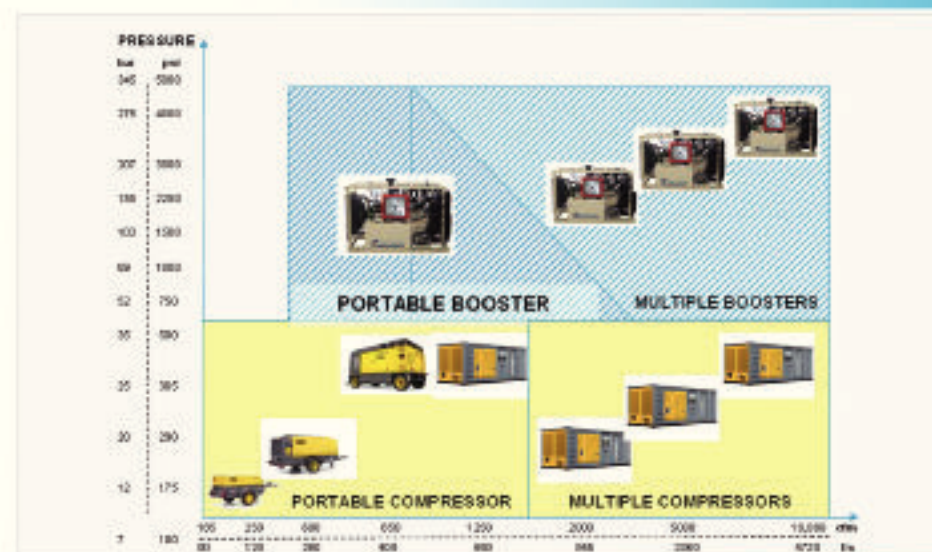
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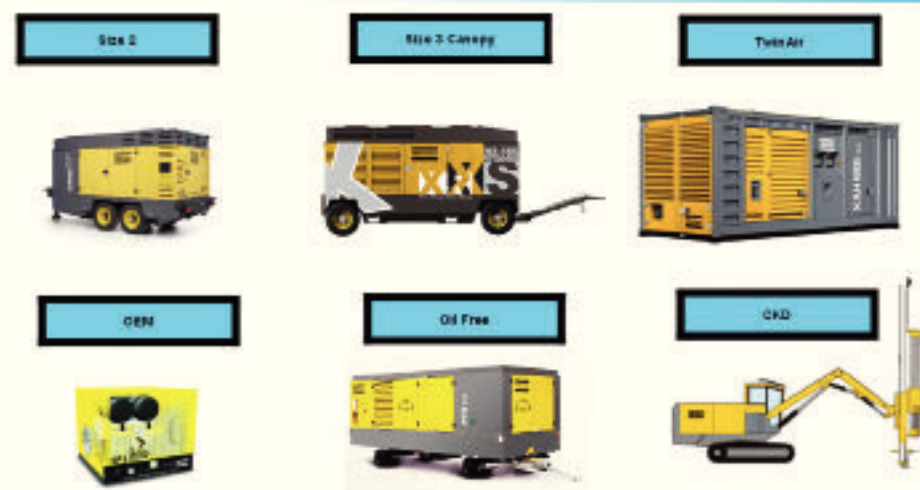
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# Theater to improve human rights' awareness

By: Yemen Times staff

“Sudden chaos in a city in Yemen. Women blame men and vice versa as to who is the cause for the damage in the city. Then silence and darkness on stage. Three girls appear as the sole survivors of the disaster. They wade through dozens of bodies. The dead represent religious people, traditional people, tribal people, and the authority of family represented by the father, the brother, the beloved, and the husband.”

This is one of the scenes created through the trainees' discussions in a three-month course entitled “Theatre for Human Rights,” organized by the Partners for Future Partners for Development in Sana'a.

The course aims at building a human being that is able to express himself and communicate with his environment according to Qasim Abbas, an Iraqi playwright and theater producer who has lived in Yemen since 2000, and who is the trainer for the course.

“We want to form an associated group of youth that have scientific knowledge and skills on how to take advantage of theater to defend human rights with appropriate

awareness and with true humanity,” said Abbas.

The 20 participants were selected from different backgrounds and levels of education, but share in common the fact that they have never acted in a play before.

“Theater is a work based on creativity, so first I had to work on freeing their imagination from their traditional and customary way of thinking,” said Abbas.

He explained that the students' initial way of thinking was due to the typical educational system in Arab countries that is based on memorization and which discourages creativity.

Once creativity had been encouraged, the trainer continued by challenging some of the conservative ideas held by the students.

“My effort was to get the participants' responses on very sensitive issues - at least for them,” said the trainer. “They went from thinking alone to discussions in groups.”

Participants discussed the most important values common to human beings regardless of race, gender, color, or nationality, and each individual's responsibility to defend these values, according to Abbas.

The trainees then started to write scenes which will be enacted as a result of these

discussions.

“This was the third part when they were introduced to the basic principles of theater and acting,” he explained. “They practiced how to analyze the sections of the play and how to act them out on the stage.”

The course focused on two themes: the consequences of war and common practices that violate women's rights. The specific topics addressed included homelessness, poverty, early marriage for girls, and the rights of females to an education.

Fledgling actors

Participants in the theater workshops were full of enthusiasm.

“I learned how to analyze any play I see, instead of watching it passively,” said Ahmed Al-Jebzi, a French student at Sana'a University. “This training taught me how to understand the ideas behind the words and sentences.”

“I learned how to develop my imagination to represent a character on the stage through actions and words,” said Saba Al-Awadi, a young poet and a secondary school student.

“I understood many practical things about acting and theater,” said Mohammed Mashoor, a secondary school graduate.

“I developed my editing skills, and

learned about sound effects and team work,” said Ahmed Aseery, a student at the Faculty of Medicine, Sana'a University.

“My acting was enriched through practice and through understanding how to clearly represent an idea to the audience with the most understated action,” said Khalid Al-Yosofi, a graduate in mass media and a student in public relations.

“Team work was really emphasized and we discovered our hidden talents,” said Manal Al-Molaiki, a media student. “The most important advantage I gained was an increased love and respect for my fellow human beings as we are trying to present issues that focus on human rights.”

Inspired advocates

Participants were bursting with ideas about how to use their imagination to promote human rights in Yemen after the course.

“I should deal with other people's ideologies in a diplomatic way in order to convince them that my way of thinking has some merits,” said Al-Jebzi. “Personal freedom and awareness must be enriched in the community as a means of valuing the individual's personality.”

“As a poet, I'll transmit the ideas I receive



Actors play jihadists in the film “A Losing Bet,” which was financed by the government of Yemen.

through my poems,” said Al-Awadi.

“I will try to arrange for workshops to spread social awareness on different issues,” said Aseery.

“We can create groups on Facebook to enhance human rights issues,” said Al-Yosofi. “But there must also be practical steps taken to activate the role of theater in Yemen.”

“I will try to address the ideas of those who surround me to convince them to change some practices,” said Al-Molaiki. “I might join one of the civil society organizations and organize campaigns to promote human rights.”

The course was funded by the cultural department at the US Embassy in Sana'a.

## Views of Yemeni youth on their country

By: Layla Asda  
For the Yemen Times

Yemen is like any other country in that it has negative and positive aspects to it and like any society, young people constitute the major category in the community. Therefore, this is the category working on the development and improvement of Yemen, and that's why their opinions and points of view are important and need to be taken seriously!

Youth holds a large responsibility towards its country. So giving and expressing opinions is part of this responsibility, in order to improve the country. When taking the female side, Maryam, 23 years old said “A women used to live and die in the dark, with no education, or rights but these days all this has come to an end, because she is able to get an education that will help her in life”.

When asked, Maher Mohammed Sonbel, a 26 years employee on a help desk said, “Frankly all aspects of the situation are bad in our community, but we are better here than in other countries. Moreover, there are mistakes and corruption everywhere you go in the world and we tend to blame these mistakes on the government whereas, in my opinion, we share the responsibility for

change with the government. So if everyone shared this responsibility and did what he or she should do, everything could be changed for the better”.

Waleed Mohammed, a 23 years CCA employee at a Telecom company, partially agreed with Maher saying that “In reality we have a good civilization that we feel proud of and in Yemen we have many rights to do whatever we want and express our opinions, whereas in other societies it is difficult to share your opinions. It is true that there are some negatives as well, such as education and economic development but education is not only the government's fault, but families must share the blame”. (Yemen ranked 144 out of 176 in the education index in 2008.)

However Sara, an honest 20 year old university student at a faculty of languages, didn't completely agree with Waleed's opinion about education, saying that “Education in our country is very low and is depressing for many reasons so let's start with the basics, one of which is a Curriculum that is very difficult and complicated. This is more frustrating than useful for students. As a result, the final competencies are not that good either because most of the graduates from faculties of education are not well qualified; you'll find graduates with a grade of 70 or

lower and they have been hired directly into private schools. So in these private schools a student's level is very low and yet he passes, so it's just a matter of money. Moreover, another important thing is that at university, a student doesn't have much of an option to choose different majors because they haven't changed since the opening of the university. ....nothing new!”, “as for positives, I believe that the spirit of development does exist but with limitations, so in order to improve Yemen we first need to get rid of Qat and more importantly be sincere in our wishes to improve Education.”

When comparing Yemen in the past and in the current time, a 25 female employee in an international organization said, “In the past Yemen was uncivilized and suffered from a lack of education, health, and many other aspects of a civilized nation. However Yemeni people did have a safe life and lived with peace of mind. Nowadays Yemen has schools, hospitals, ministries, public organizations, companies etc., but we have all these just in name only. What I mean is that we have schools but no education and we have hospitals but no health and so on. Moreover the most essential thing for a nation to build itself is to be safe and that we don't have at this time”

Nada Al Badha, a trainee at the Interna-

tional Travel Agency said” transportation has improved million times more than it was in the past.”

Adnan Al Emad, a 39 year old, lawyer said “I think living in Yemen is as if we are living in chaos; if you have the power, you do whatever you want. I can't deny that we have good people but they have changed through the recent years because of the overwhelming corruption. They have now become odd and rude with horrible morals”. (Yemen ranks 151st out of 177 countries on the human development index in 2008.)

Safa M.Noaman, a 22 year old college student, shared almost the same opinions as Adnan saying, “corruption has led to so many problems such as unemployment and the increase in poverty.”, and when discussing the terrorism problem she said “Terrorists acts, such as the kidnapping of foreigners, affects tourism and our investment projects. If there is anything positive happening in Yemen, it will be only for the rich resulting in the neglect of the poor and needy people”. (Yemen ranks 141st out of 179 countries in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index for 2008.)

Hani Ali, a 33 year old employee at the Ministry of electricity and Water, replied that Yemen is a rich country with many nat-

ural resources, whether minerals or oil, gas to fish, not to mention its strategic location which gives the country the right to control the roads of exporting and importing from the coast. Also we can't forget the wonderful weather which attracts tourists. So as you can see, Yemen will always remain a good country, distinguished by its good-natured people of high chivalry and generosity. There is a large segment of education and development that is significant and tangible, but we still suffer from low per capita income in spite of all these resources. So what we really need is the minds of young people and their new ideas to improve the situation.” (There has been improvement in literacy rate from 37.1 percent in 1994 to 58.9 percent in 2007.)

Sabri, from VES (Value Edit Services) said, “Yemen is a country which has a lot of good things. Young people are the ones who will improve the economy, however they need support and we need to give them the chance to build their investments. For example, there is a project helping youth build their investments in Saudi Arabia which is called Abdu Al-Latif Al-Jamil Fund, so what we need here is a project like this one but with real funds to help and support young people in their projects and their dreams. This will help to increase our economy

as well, so it works this way; work more, give more, improve economy.” (Yemen dropped 10 places from last year and 30 places from 2006 in Transparency International's (TI) new Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) issued last month at the organization's headquarters in Berlin.)

As for traditions, Reem Sultan, a 20 year old French Student, said about Yemen, “Yemen is a good country with a great culture and old history, but people in Yemen have problems thinking about their traditions and what people will say about them. I'm sure that if we live freely, everything will be perfect and then we will be able to create wonderful things that will make our country better.”

A lot of young people such as Waleed, Nawal and Hani didn't totally agree with Reem in the matter of traditions, and Sabri replied saying that, “Yemen is still one of the best countries in terms of keeping our traditions, morals and religion, and that's very helpful for us in our life in terms of drugs, for example”.

After all, in order to have a well developed country you need to give space to its young people to express their opinions, as well as supporting them because they are the ones who are really capable of making a change for the better!

## Qat: The cursed plant in Yemen

By: Yusuf Al-Shirai

The qat for all

One of the most renowned recent cultural divans of Al-Maqial in Sana'a was the one headed by the Yemeni eminent and superior poet, Abdullah Al-Baraddoni. Although he was blind, may Allah will mercy him; he had an encyclopaedic culture and comprehended all old and new famous literary books. He was also a narrator, artist, critic, and satirist and for many times he told his friends and interviewers most wonderful anecdotes and tales of Abbasid era. He maybe also narrated his reminiscences with the dynasty of Hamid Ed-Din imams who ruled Yemen for around 150 years in an absolute isolation to the extent that Yemeni people had never heard about World War I and II! However, the superior divan of Al-Maqial in Sana'a now is the one who is led by Dr. Abdul-Aziz Al-Maqalih, former dean of Sana'a University and now the president of the Yemeni Studies Center, who is a great poet, a shining personality, and a friendly man. This divan is similar to a literary school and a political daily symposium and I think that it is indispensable for persons who visit Yemen to understand its situations



and interests in all levels and in knowing Yemen's promising stars in poetry, story writing, singing, and music. Sometimes, a Yemeni divan of Al-Maqial hosts a singer or a vocalist or a musician and you get wondered when two men stand up and agilely join a dancing public circle with an area of no more than 2 square meters. You may also get more wondered when you know that singing and dancing are basic elements in the joys of the gentle sex's divans. The role of these divans also is important for mothers in choosing their sons' prospective wives

among the female chewers. Also women in the divans of Al-Maqial show the demier cri of fashion, public aromatic incenses, French perfumes, and silver, golden, and diamond jewellery. The chance is also presented for selling and buying in such luxuries in such divans!

Rumours are stay as the best told thing in the Sana'ian divans of Al-Maqial in which Yemenis practice their sharp smartness and sarcasm of life. It is an ancient habit which was mentioned by the great historian, Abu Al-Hasan Al-Hamdani, in his books which

were written before nearly 1000 years when he said: “I have not seen a people like the one of Sana'a who spread false rumours on themselves!” I remember that spreading false rumours was more dangerous and more impacting on the security of Egyptian forces in Yemen. This was done by the deposed Imam Muhammad Al-Badr's secret agents, the Arab reactionary agents, and the agents of the British colonization in Aden. Those agents were deployed in the divans of Al-Maqial to circulate different forms of hatreds and distortions against the noble Egyptian role in Yemen. The then Egyptian leadership in Yemen acted similarly to those agents and waged a psychological warfare against the Yemeni revolution's enemies by spreading plotted rumours in similar divans of Al-Maqial.

Due to the fact that there are times for chewing the qat, the opening scene for the Sana'ian divans of Al-Maqial ends when the qat's chewers reach the acme of chewing and milking. At that time, the second scene starts when the Suns' lights disappear, are reflected inside the divan, and at the same time adding romantic touches on the divan and chewers themselves through the coloured windows with a stunning spec-

trum. This scene announces the beginning of “Al-Sa'ah Al-Suliymaniya” (The Solomon's Hour) in which the guest gets his or her ultimate rapture, pleasure, and ease. This hour is a traditional myth claimed that prophet Suleiman (Solomon) (PBUH) was a chewer of the qat. After that, lamps are turned on and the chewer quits chewing and starts emptying his or her mouth of the qat's remains. Before the chewer gets lazy and slackening, he or she drinks a concentrate cup of tea or coffee to annul the relationship with the qat's stimulant effect. In this way, the qat's chewer returns home slothfully after nearly 5 hours spent in buying and chewing the qat. Consequently, instead of making fun with his wife and watching his children's situations and scholastic acquisitions, he goes to bed directly and thinks about the qat's absurd cycle in the next day!

The problem according to the scientists, physicians, and intellectuals who do not chew the qat needs to an unconventional treatment and new originaive solutions especially with the failure of law, exemplar, threat of rooting up the qat's plant, and deploying bollworms in the qat's farms. Some people suggest changing the working hours

in the government's authorities to include the chewing qat's times. Others find the solution in creating substitutions for entertainment by increasing sporting clubs, theatres, cinemas, parks, public libraries, or even not promoting employees who chew the qat. In all cases, Yemeni people undoubtedly stay aware of its situations and more capable of getting a rational and secure solution for the problem. We consider that the dispersal of illusions and happy fibs which popularize the qat and its benefits and advantages are the rightful beginning. One of the leading of these fibs is the rumour that everyone refuses chewing the qat gets infected with a psychological illusory disease called “Al-Razim” (The Oppressor). Consequently, Yemeni people reach to the degree of believing that putting “Jambia” (traditional Yemeni dagger worn around the male's waist) or shoes under a pillow during the sleep leads to exorcising annoying nightmares and recovering gradually from the disease of Al-Razim!

Source: Weghat Nazar Magazine,  
February 2004, Volume No.: 38  
Translated by: Eyad N. Al-Samman  
alsammanworld@yahoo.ca

### Continued from page 16

#### Incredible India

A combination of holistic healthcare destinations, a tradition of cure with care and the only country ensuring post operative care, India also promises to become the best 'medical tourism' destination for the Yemenis. “We issue all types of visas, and particularly medical visas the same day, not only for the patient, but for the family as well,” said Mr. Mahinder Khurana, First Secretary (Commercial) and Head of Chancery, Embassy of India, Yemen.

“India offers personal attention to patients, and while the patient is being treated, the family can experience India. And all this, plus first class treatment, together will cost say one-fourth of that in other countries. Just imagine! Heart Surgery which costs USD 30,000 in the US will cost only USD 6000 in India. We

want to get a team of operatives to Yemen,” said Mr. Gangadhar.

#### A quick glance at Indian tourism figures

The total travel market in India is expected to reach USD 26.1 billion by 2010 and it is expected that the tourist arrivals from the UAE and neighboring Gulf countries will contribute significantly to the growth. Efforts to boost tourism in the Gulf and West Asian region include road shows, seminars, exhibitions and workshops as well as Arab Health Events.

In 2008, India had 5.37 million Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs), 562.92 million domestic tourists visited all states and union territories and the country earned USD 11.75 billion from its tourism industry. India ranks 41 in the World Tourist Arrivals and 11<sup>th</sup> in International Tourist Arrivals in Asia and Pacific Region.

In light of the global economic

slowdown with its effects on tourism, world over, India has taken major initiatives to boost its tourism and in the past decade, tourism has become one of India's fastest growing markets, contributing to millions of service industry jobs. Medical tourism industries alone are expected to create 40,000 jobs for professionals

#### How did this Happen?

A powerful marketing campaign, bold initiatives taken at a time when global economy was dwindling, policy amendments to facilitate, and commitment; this is the secret of the growth of tourism in India. The Ministry of Tourism had even set milestones for itself, to be accomplished within the first 100 days of the new government.

One important milestone was promoting 'wellness tourism' for which the ministry amended the Marketing Development Assistance Scheme for medical tourists to include accredited wellness centers in its purview for pro-

motion of medical tourism. Also, the Indian government issues a medical visa for those who come in for medical treatment. Up to two family members or attendants can also be granted a visa, to accompany the patient. The visa is valid for a year or the period of treatment, depending on whichever is less and can be extended for another year. It also enables a tourist to travel to India three times in a year. India's National Health Policy clearly states that “the treatment of foreign patients is legally an export and eligible for all fiscal incentives extended to export earnings.”

Another important milestone was relaxing tax burdens on the Indian citizens to promote domestic tourism as people have more savings for vacations. The Ministry of Tourism also introduced the 'Visa on Arrival' scheme, for select 5 countries, on a pilot basis for a period of one year.

“Visit India 2009”, another prestigious initiative of the government of India, offered various incentives for tourists as

well as the tourism industry including: common entry tickets for visitors to India's World Heritage sites, a specially designed entry ticket for the Taj Mahal; as well as others such as: one complimentary air ticket, one day complimentary stay at hotels, one complimentary sightseeing tour in the city of your choice and one complementary rural eco-holiday. Tube

#### ‘They call it incredible they call it unique’

What makes India different from any other destination is the myriad of experiences that it offers. At once traditional, contemporary and human, India offers diversity is at every turn. At every 100 kilometers, languages, food habits, dress codes and topography changes.

The majestic snow covered mountains of the Himalayas, where the sky, cloud and mountain seem to merge seamlessly into each other, in the north. To the south are the back waters of Kerala - Gods own country, offering cruises in house-

boats (ketuvellams) equipped with five star facilities, the golden beaches of Goa, Karnataka - a land as fragrant as its sandalwood trees, and Tamilnadu, known for its temple architecture, natural beauty and cultural heritage.

To the west is the colorful Gujarat, with its rich food and traditions, wonderful craftsmanship, a land of art, textiles and a rare combination of traditional and modern architecture. In the middle is Maharashtra and the pulsating capital city of the state - Mumbai; the land of Bollywood and the commercial capital of India.

Really! As the Incredible India campaign boasts, “a lifetime is too short to see a country as vast as India, one nation with countless destinations”

India, the world's largest democracy is this year celebrating 60 complete years as an independent state, established by the Constitution of India on January 26 1950. More information at: [www.incredibleindia.org](http://www.incredibleindia.org)





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## Incredible India

# 'Come together, Welcome to Incredible India'

By: Ashwini Bhanagay  
For the Yemen Times

“India welcomes all with open arms to experience the splendor and world class facilities second to none, at affordable costs. We invite you all and assure you that we will take good care of you, as taking care of guests is highly valued in our culture,” said India Tourism during the 31 Jan ‘Incredible India’ event in Yemen.

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Adventure opportunities in the land of mountains and snow full of thrilling experiences of ice climbing, whitewater rafting in the Ganges, water skiing; exotic places like nowhere on the earth; eco-tourism in a country where man and nature have been living in harmony for ages; wild life like never before in national parks of the Gir, Preiyar, Corbett, Kaziranga – where you can sit on an elephant having



Dignitaries at the event. By Faisal Al-Qirbi'.

breakfast and enjoy the wild life; the might of the Moguls glimpsed in Fatehpur Sikri and Agra – the royal city of one of the seven wonders of the world - the Taj Mahal and intricate architecture and perfect craftsmanship of Jaipur, the ‘Pink City’ in Rajasthan.

Flavor this with the mouth watering and diverse Indian cuisine, which can offer a different dish three times a day for all the 365 days of the year, adorn it with the exquisite jewelry and beau-

tiful fabrics of the unique fashion industry, celebrate it with the numerous festivals and vibrant colors. This is India! Seen through the eyes of the ‘Incredible India’ campaign.

Add to all this, modern India with IT cities, MICE - Meetings, Incentives, Conferences & Exhibitions facilities offering splendid venues for international conferences and conventions; developed infrastructure, a wide range of tourism services from the modest to the most exquisite ones such as heritage hotels, palace hotels, luxury trains.

To top all this, sports! The forthcoming 2010 Commonwealth Games, will be held in New Delhi, India between 3rd and 14th October 2010.

And no wonder! For couples, elders, children, families seeking medical care, business, alike; India is an ideal destination for all.

### Incredible India Campaign

An initiative of the Ministry of Tourism, ‘Incredible India Campaign’ was launched in 2002 to promote India as a premier vacation spot and

boost the tourism Industry of India. The marketing effort included print, radio and television ads, as well as road shows, planned for the UK, Canada, Singapore, Malaysia, Russia, Australia, Middle East and New Zealand.

‘Incredible India’ represented a major force at the 2009 World Travel Mart (WTM), London, one of the premier global travel trade events, providing effective platform for showcasing new travel products and services and having 83 participants as co-exhibitors.

Kumari Selja, Minister of Tourism, received many prestigious awards including the World Travel Award for the ‘Best Destination Marketing Campaign’- London and the ‘Asian Guild Award’- House of Lords, in recognition of the contribution made by ‘Incredible India Campaign’ in spreading awareness about India among Asians living in UK. The ‘Incredible India’ film won the 21<sup>st</sup> CIFFT Award initiated to provide an international platform to encourage global tourism through audio-visual media.

### 'Incredible India' in Yemen

On Sunday, Jan 31, the Indian Embassy in Yemen and India Tourism Dubai, had organized the ‘Incredible India’ event at the Taj Sheba, Sana'a, attended by the Ambassador of India to Yemen – H.E. Shri Praveen Varma, Deputy Minister of Tourism Development, Yemen, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yemen, other dignitaries, members of travel trade and the media.

The event which solemnly began with the customary ‘lamp lighting ceremony’ transformed into a breathtaking audio-visual presentation by Mr.

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Gangadhar, Assistant Director (West Asia) - India Tourism.

This was followed by a vibrant blend of traditional dance forms - the mesmerizing winter dance drama Kalyakshyagana of Karnataka, the peacock dance and dances from Bollywood based on Bhangra – the popular dance of Punjab and Dandiyas a dance from Gujarat using sticks as props.

And later, the evening mellowed with a delightful Indian traditional cuisine combined with an atmosphere of warmth and hospitality, as the hosts - the Indian Embassy and India Tourism Dubai, made their guests feel ‘at home’.

In his inaugural speech, H.E. Shri Praveen Varma, ambassador of India to Yemen, said “We want to promote the relation between two friendly countries, India and Yemen. In Sana'a, we are experiencing a growth in visas. 7000 visas are issued annually to India, and the number is on a constant rise.

Yemenis are visiting India not only for education, but also for tourism as well as for medical reasons. We simply want to get people who travel west, travel east”

He also said that, “people from Yemen and all over the world are coming to India for ‘medical tourism’, for reasons of ‘best value for money’. We are soon going to arrange a ‘familiarization-trip’ for a group of media, diplomatic colleagues and tourist companies from Yemen to India to see the facilities available for specialized medical care, as well as the packages”.

India, with its location on the Middle East and Asian belt, food habits similar to Yemen, shorter travel time and competitive prices, is considered to have more accessibility to the Yemenis and great potential to become a choice destination for the Yemenis for tourism.

Continued on culture page14

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