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Campaign to prevent juveniles from being executed

As an Islamic country, the penalty of premeditated murder is death. However, the law applies to only those of 18 years and above as, by this age, they are said to be fully legally accountable. The problem is that less than one third of the Yemeni population have birth certificates and because of both this and the ever present corruption, some underage Yemenis find themselves walking 'The Green Mile'.

By: Nadia Al-Sakkaf

SANA'A, April 21 — He could not stand the harassment his sister was facing in the street by a gang of rough, irresponsible young men. Their leader was living in his neighborhood and often harassed his sister on her way home from school. One day he decided that he had had enough and confronted the gang. They had a fight and that same day, the bully was found dead. In no time, the police knew their target.

Walid Hussein Haykal was arrested and taken for interrogation. He admitted to the murder, and was sent to trial, which lasted five years. In 2005, he was sentenced to death. The problem is that he was only 16 when he committed the crime and therefore, he had an unfair trial.

The Yemeni judiciary system is faced with the problem of proving the age

of offenders, in order to decide a legally defined punishment.

In Yemen, only 39.7 percent of births were registered in 2007, according to civil registration authorities. In April-June 2008, there were 3,287 registered births, but in 2009 there were only 2,588 registered births, according to civil registration centers.

Lawyer Khaled Mohammed Al-Akwa remembers an incident in court, which he personally attended. The prosecution lawyer had brought a birth certificate indicating that the accused was older than 18. In the next session, the defense lawyer brought a birth certificate to show that culprit was only 12 years old.

"It was an ironically funny incident. We were all amused with the defense lawyer but we all got the message, including the judge. In Yemen, you can get a birth certificate showing that you

are any age you want to be," said Al-Akwa.

Although this could be ideal for those who want to defy time by changing their age, it poses as a problem when it comes to a life and death situation, such as the capital punishment of a minor. In 1994 Yemen abolished the death penalty for people under 18 at the time of the crime. Article 31 of the penal code states:

"Minors who are more than seven years old, yet have not reached 15 years of age, are to be tried using juvenile law. Those who have exceeded 15 but have not yet reached 18 years of age should not be penalized with more than half of the adult sentence for the same crime and no more than three years prison time. In all cases, the imprisonment should be done in confinement separate to adults and within certain circumstances suitable to the age of the accused..."

However, due to the problems related to age verification, the implementation of these regulations remains incomplete.

"There are forensic tests and evidence that could easily tell you the age of a person. It's just that not all prosecutions make it a point to verify age, especially if they have a confession from the ac-

cused or his family that he is 18 years or more," said Ahmed Al-Qurashi, Director of the Siyaj Foundation to Defend Children.

According to forensic science, as teeth develop in a precise sequence and at relatively specific ages, it is possible to estimate an individual's age from the state of their dental development.

The Seyaj Foundation has launched a campaign to stop the execution of an underaged accused. The family of these minors can report the case of their member to the foundation, which will appoint a lawyer to represent the accused and fight on his or her behalf.

Siyaj has made an agreement with the Yemeni Lawyers Syndicate, whereby the syndicate mobilizes its members around the country to defend juveniles who are sentenced to death on murder charges. The lawyers will demand forensic tests from the general prosecution, or through a private institute, to prove the age of the accused.

Walid's case had reached Siyaj by end of 2008, through a referral from another human rights based organization, HOOD. The father did not know how to prove that his son was 16 when he committed the crime.

"No one believed me, and the police

tortured him during interrogation and forced him to admit that he was 18," said Hussein Haykal, the father.

He was desperate because his son's life was hanging on a thread, the president's signature.

"Before a death sentence is executed, the president must sign an endorsement or a go-ahead. He does this in his capacity as the president of the executive authority," explained Al-Qurashi.

Walid's death sentence was sitting on the president's desk, waiting to be signed, when Siyaj sent an urgent plea to the president's office to prevent this tragic mistake from happening. The president referred the case to the prosecution, who passed it on to the North Secretariat Court.

A breakthrough happened in the case when Siyaj, found out that Walid was born in a hospital in Al-Tayef in Saudi Arabia and the likelihood of verifying his age grew significantly. After much research and correspondence with the Yemeni Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Yemeni consulate in Al-Tayef, who showed great support, evidence was obtained that indeed Walid was born in 1984, which meant that he was only 16 at the time of the crime.

Continued on page 2



Walid Hussein Haykal in 2000 when he was arrested.

4U

If you know of a Yemeni who is/was sentenced to death while being under 18 at the time of committing the crime, contact the Siyaj Organization to send the case details.

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Controversial religious scholar Mohammed Al-Hazmi:

"It is absolutely unacceptable to marry-off girls prematurely."

His name appears in any conversation regarding early marriage as one of the strong opposers of the law. He had been depicted in the media as a traditionalist, who has no problem with marrying off young girls. Apparently he has been misunderstood.

By: Nadia Al-Sakkaf

SANA'A, April 21 — He sat in the reception room of his home with two of his young children running about. Member of Parliament, Mohammed Al-Hazmi, is one of the main objectors against legislating a minimum age for marriage in Yemen. Yet he is also against marrying off young girls. However, when asked the details of his objection, it turns out that he is completely against marrying off girls as young as 12 years old.

"It is inhumane to marry off a girl, or a boy for that matter, when they are not



MP Mohammed Al-Hazmi, with his son and daughter: "I would never accept my daughter marrying before she is absolutely ready. I love my children and this is what we should focus on parent's love for their children and educating parents, rather than criminalizing them."

physically or mentally prepared. It would actually ruin their lives and their families' lives," he said.

However, he has strong objections to bringing in a law that would define a specific age for when a boy or girl could be

legally married.

"There are some other factors that should be taken into consideration when tying the knot. In our culture marriage has often been used for political, social, economic and even strategic reasons. It becomes

a contract like any other contract. This is why we should have space to accept these factors and not forbid them with an age limit," he explained.

Al-Hazmi highlighted the two main differences that are generally misunderstood in the issue of early marriage in Yemen, which are differences between young and premature and the differences between a marriage agreement and a wedding.

If a young woman is fit to be married, according to Al-Hazmi, then she should. There are conditions that must be fulfilled, such as puberty, health and stamina, as well as mental maturity, that would allow the girl to handle the responsibility of marriage. These conditions must be ensured by the parents before they marry their daughters off and if violated, there must be a penalty.

"If a young woman at 17, for example, is healthy physically and is mature enough mentally to handle a marriage, then why not? Let me remind you that statistics show that 56 percent of Yemeni girls marry below the age of 18.

Continued on page 2

Family of deceased bride: Help us make things right!

By: Shada Nasser
 For the Yemen Times

HAJJA, April 21 — It took us over three hours to drive to the village where 13 year old Ilham died earlier this month, as a direct result of being forced into sexual intercourse by her husband. The journey was very tiring and the roads twisted and turned so much, I felt my stomach churn.

When we finally arrived, we had to walk until we reached the village. There

are only 100 people living there, all of whom are illiterate.

"We don't even have food to eat, so how can we spend money on education or health care?" cried Ilham's mother.

They obviously didn't know any better, and married their daughter to a 23 year old man from a neighbouring village. "We needed the money and thought, with her married off, we'd have one less mouth to feed. How could we have known this is so dangerous and that she would die?" asked Ilham's brother, with tears in his eyes.

I walked around the village, visited three houses made of mud, containing no furniture. The locals sleep on iron beds with no mattresses and there were no signs of modern life. They had no TVs, no refrigerators or washing machines, not even a radio. A few people had mobile phones but they would need to move to a certain location to get coverage.

There have been arguments about the age of Ilham and whether she was really 13 years old. With the level of malnutrition and lack of health care, most of the villagers are stunted and underweight, although the tired lines on their faces told of their suffering.

The police are now investigating whether the groom actually drugged Ilham in order to get his way with her, after she resisted him on their wedding night. Ilham's body remains at the hospital's



Shada Nasser (center) with Ilham's mother (second right), grandmother (far right) and Ilham's sisters.

morgue in Hajja. There is a plan to carry out an autopsy to verify both her age and cause of death.

Her mother looks around her small, shabby house and reaches out to grab my hand tightly. "Do you think I wanted this to happen to her? She was my daughter. They are all my children!" she says as

she waves her hand around the room, pointing at the little children sitting sadly with gloomy faces.

Ilham's death was tragic and premature, but it will be repeated unless something, or someone, helps this small village, yet to be brought into the 21st century.

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Long haul for Sa'ada farmers

SANA'A, April 20 (IRIN) - Farmers in Yemen's northern governorate of Sa'ada have been hit hard by recent fighting between Yemeni government forces and Houthi-led Shia rebels, according to farmers and officials.

About 60 percent of Sa'ada farmland was abandoned, looted or damaged during fighting in 2008, according to Mohamed Al-Emad, head of Saada local council, "but during the 2009 clashes, which were fiercer and more widespread and continued for a longer time, the figure may be even higher," he said.

He said over 140,000 people in Sa'ada depend on pomegranate and peach cultivation. "Their livelihoods are in jeopardy as they couldn't make money during the last harvest, which coincided with the clashes."

Many who fled had a nasty surprise when they came back to check up on their land.

"We fled our home in mid-August [2009] - two months before our maize crop was ready for harvest. When my father visited the farm in early March



Over 140,000 people in Saada earn their livelihoods from pomegranate and peach production and marketing.

[2010], he found that it is good only for animal fodder," Yahya Ali Al-Qadhi, 27, from Razih District in the south of the

governorate, told IRIN.

Yahya and seven members of his family have been living in a tent in the

Khaiwan area of neighbouring Amran Governorate.

"The farm had been our main source of livelihood for years. It used to give us three tons of maize a year. We used to eat half a ton... and sell the rest to cover other needs," Yahya said.

Yahya's family is intending to return home but they are worried about how they will cope. "If we return... we need an income until the next harvest," he said.

Rotting fruit

Khalid Abdullah al-Jabri, head of the Agriculture and Irrigation Office in Saada, told IRIN all Saada farmers had been affected by the fighting.

"Tens of thousands of farmers fled, leaving behind half-matured crops. Those who stayed... couldn't get their produce to market," he said.

Pomegranates, grapes and apples were on the point of rotting, he said, adding that many had no option but to bring them to the Sa'ada camps for internally displaced persons.

Al-Jabri said 70 percent of Sa'ada's population (estimated at 795,000 by the government's Central Statistical Organization) relied on farming for a living.

Fuel, water shortages

Furthermore, those who stayed, particularly in the southern and western parts of Sa'ada, found it difficult to water their crops because of the high price of diesel needed to operate pumps from artesian wells.

"The price of diesel jumped from YR35 [17 US cents] to YR150 [73 cents] per litre, resulting in much higher prices for pumped water," Saad Al-Sayyaghi, a pomegranate farmer from Sa'ada's Sehara District, told IRIN.

"Pomegranate farmers stopped watering their crops after the price of pumped water per hour rose from YR1,500 [\$7.34] to YR4,000 [\$20]," he said. Many petrol stations closed and trucks could not enter the governorate during the clashes (August 2009 to February 2010).

Farmers need help

Displaced farmers need all the help they can get, according to Ismail Moharram, head of the Agricultural Research and Guidance Authority, based in Dhamar Province, central Yemen.

"If they have some food to eat and some money to cover the cost of farming until the harvest, displaced farmers will think about coming home and cultivating their land," he said.

According to Muharram, the government is planning to give Saada farmers tractors at half price, and favourable loans so they can purchase them gradually by installments.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization said in a December 2009 report that farmers needed critical emergency seed support.

It said that an estimated two million people, including conflict-affected communities, refugees, and other vulnerable persons are likely to face increased food insecurity and will require targeted food assistance, estimated at about 100,000 tons during 2010.

Making health care accessible for refugees in south

ADEN, 17 April (IRIN) - Volunteers at some hospitals in Aden, southern Yemen, have started a new initiative to help African refugees, mainly Somalis, access health care.

Omar Abdu, a Somali refugee living in Aden's Basateen area, is one of those who received help from the Health for All Association (HAA) NGO. He has successfully undergone an operation in the government-run Ibn Khaldoun Hospital to remove multiple stones in his bladder.

"You need a lot of money to receive [this] treatment in a private hospital..., a minimum of YR 60,000 [US\$270], in addition to thousands of riyals for drugs, which is impossible for me to afford," Abdu said.

HAA was set up in February 2010 with the aim of helping African refugees in Aden and Lahj governorates access health care, and has over 200 volunteer

medical staff from three public hospitals in Aden - Ibn Khaldoun, Al-Jumhuri, and 22 May.

According to Amin Qasim, one of the HAA volunteers, more than 200 vulnerable cases with serious health problems had been identified as the most eligible for prompt hospitalization after a screening process in the Basateen area in recent weeks.

"We are waiting for the camp management to bring them for necessary medical interventions," he said.

Tim Morris, a researcher on displacement and refugee issues, said in an article in the February 2010 issue of the Forced Migration Review that as Yemen's public health-care system collapses, it has become harder for even Yemenis to be seen by health professionals.

"Government health-care institutions no longer provide free medication to Yemenis, and Somalis report being ignored

when they report to government hospitals," Morris said.

However, refugees should receive the same access to health care at public hospitals where they operate, Khalid Abdulbari Qasim, head of HAA, told IRIN.

The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) welcomes the HAA initiative to extend their programme to refugees as a good example of solidarity and responsibility sharing, Rocco Nuri, a UNHCR external relations officer based in Aden, told IRIN.

"The project can potentially reach a population of some 34,000 refugees [17,000 in Kharaz Camp and 17,000 in Basateen]," he said.

According to a 9 April statement by UNHCR, Yemen now hosts more than 170,000 Somali refugees.

Stigma, discrimination

Many African refugees, including So-

malis, also face stigma, according to officials.

"African refugees are feared for allegedly being a source of sexually transmitted diseases [STD], which is why medical staff refuse to admit them to hospitals for treatment," Qasim said.

Hussein Faqera, coordinator of the National AIDS Control Programme, told IRIN that, following police reports of Africans being engaged in "illicit sex", many ordinary people feared all Africans had STD "and therefore practised discrimination against them".

"Too many [refugees] are ailing in their shelters, but dare not come to any of the three public hospitals as they feel they are discriminated against by whoever they meet there," HAA's Khalid said.

Yahya, a Somali refugee, said he could not understand "why many Yemeni citizens blame us for HIV in society. This



Healthcare discrimination has prevented some Somali refugees from seeking treatment in public hospitals.

made us stop going to public hospitals to seek treatment."

"Health-care discrimination against refugees doesn't only exist in Yemeni society. It is a worldwide phenomenon.

It is difficult for one to fight such social stigma," Fuad al-Sabri, HIV/AIDS project management officer for the UN Development Programme (UNDP) in Yemen, told IRIN.

Possible talks between the state and the Southern Movement

By: Mohammad Bin Sallam

SANA'A, April 21 - President Saleh has made the first steps towards organizing a meeting with Southern Movement leaders to discuss the unrest in the south of Yemen, according to Egyptian diplomats quoted in Qatari newspaper Al-Arab.

The news of a possible meeting between the two sides comes after months of protests in the country's southern governorates, where protesters have been demanding secession from the north of the country. Despite a truce between the Southern Movement and the government signed on March 1, protests have continued.

The diplomats told the newspaper that, during a recent visit to Egypt, Saleh had attempted to convince Egypt to sponsor a meeting between the Yemeni government and leaders of the Southern Movement, in either Egypt or Saudi Arabia.

The Qatari Al-Arab newspaper reported that Saleh arranged to meet Abubakr Al-Attas, a moderate leader of the Southern Movement and former prime minister of Yemen currently living in Saudi Arabia, in Egypt.

Local sources have told the Yemen Times that political leaders in government have been contacting moderate Southern Movement leaders living abroad to be mediators in the planned

talks. Arab countries have played a significant role in convincing them to attend, they said.

According to the same sources, the government aims to calm the situation in southern governorates such as Lahj and Al-Dhale' to ensure the peaceful celebration of the twentieth anniversary of Yemen's unification this May 22.

To contain unrest in the south, Saleh has also inaugurated development projects in Hadramout, they said.

The sources also pointed out that attempts to control unrest in the area may also be linked to the approach of the twentieth football Gulf Cup to be held in Aden, Abyan and Lahj at the end of

the year. Last week, Sheik Tareq Al-Fadhli, a Southern Movement leader since April 2009, told a German news agency that the Sa'ada war had been transferred to the south, as people there were being arrested and killed more brutally than in the time of socialism.

Responding to allegations that he has been working with Al-Qaeda, he said that he had known Osama Bin Laden in the eighties and that the latter had supported them in 1994 when they were fighting to end socialism in the south. He however denied any current link with Al-Qaeda.

Al-Fadhli said that he had accepted to

sign the March 1 truce with the government so that he would not be attacked by the security forces, but that the truce was of no benefit because the security forces had since killed Southern Movement members.

"Now prisoners are tortured and killed," Al-Fadhli said. "Houses are destroyed and districts are denied means of telecommunication, such as with the suspension of mobile phone coverage. In addition, newspapers and websites have been closed down."

Earlier this month, security forces surrounded Al-Fadhli's house and tried to arrest him, but were stopped from doing so by his supporters.

"I brought the secessionism flags and victims' photos down, but the people would not stop asking for their rights until they had achieved what they wanted," he said. Thirty members of the Southern Movement imprisoned in Hadramout have been on hunger strike since the beginning of the week, according to local sources in the governorate. They are protesting at still being incarcerated despite President Saleh's order for their release last week when he visited the governorate. Representatives of the opposition Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) in Hadramout have said that the local authority would be responsible for any consequences of the hunger strike.

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Continued from page 1

Campaign to prevent juveniles from being executed

"The court refused to admit this new evidence and said that they wanted the original documents. The problem is that the consulate only had a copy of his father's passport, where Walid's birth details were registered. But we could obtain a bonafide copy of the birth certificate from the hospital records. We are still battling for Walid's life and we hope we will manage to save him," said Al-Qurashi.

The medical report, issued in 2001, one year after the crime, included in the accused's file a statement indicating that Walid had not yet reached 16 years of age. However, he was still not granted forensic tests through x-rays to verify his age.

Siyaj also sent a letter to Amnesty International lobbying them to support the case. Amnesty sent a letter to the president and all other concerned authorities.

In its periodic review on Yemen, published in November 2008, Amnesty International states: The government continues to use the death penalty extensively and in defiance both of the international trend and its own laws.

It continues to use the death penalty against children and the mentally

disabled, and often after unfair trials. In November 2008, for example, Ismail Luteif Huraish and his cousin Ali Mussara' a Muhammad Huraish were put to death after their conviction for murder had exhausted all appeal stages and their death sentences had been ratified by the President.

Yet, Ismail Luteif Huraish, who was deaf and illiterate, was not given access to sign-language interpretation during his interrogation and trial, with the result that he was not able to give his own account of events or respond to the charges against him. According to his lawyer, he was convicted solely on the basis of statements which Ali Mussara' a Muhammad Huraish made during police interrogation and at the trial, which allegedly implicated both men in the murder. This is a violation not only of international standards, but also Yemen's own laws.

The exact number of people on death row is not known to Amnesty International, but it is believed to run into hundreds. They include children such as Walid Haykal, who was convicted of a murder committed when he was reported to have been 16. According to Article 31 of the PC, he should not have been sentenced to death while he was below the age of 18. His fate is now in the hands of President Ali Abdullah

Saleh, before whom the case is pending ratification. Other children have also been sentenced to death and executed in Yemen.

Controversial religious scholar Mohammed Al-Hazmi

So, if you make a law to criminalize marriage under 18, you would automatically be criminalizing 65 percent of these brides and this is neither logical nor acceptable," he stresses his point.

He says that changes, with regards to early marriage, should happen through education and awareness. "Talk to the parents," he says. "Educate them about the importance of preparing their daughters and waiting for them to be ready, before they marry them off. But don't expect, if you made a law, it would be possible to apply it in this society or even have it respected. We already have many other laws that are not implemented in this country."

"It is not about laws, it is about cultural change and this needs time," he insisted.

In his opinion, there is a difference between having a marriage agreement and the wedding. "It is absolutely unacceptable to marry-off young girls prematurely. But it is possible to have

a marriage agreement, as long as the wedding does not take place until, and unless, the girl is ready and consenting," explains Al-Hazmi.

As for the well known stories of girls who have been wed prematurely, he regretted that this has happened and blamed it on uneducated parents, who don't have faith or moral guidance. "If you search the background of those families, you will realize that they are either uneducated or not religiously committed. If you have God in your heart you will make better decisions in your life and make sure that what you do does not harm others," he concluded.

Wedding checklist

According to Al-Hazmi, the Jurisprudence Committee of the Parliament has prepared a set of conditions that should be fulfilled before a marriage is consummated. This list is a part of the amendments to the marriage article of the personal status code soon to be presented to the parliament. It also includes punishments for those who do not fulfil these conditions, which include:

- Puberty
- Good health / physical ability
- Consent
- Mental maturity
- To be married to a suitable man

In brief

SANA'A
Yemen, Oman discuss cooperation in transport areas

Yemen and Sultanate of Oman discussed here on Sunday cooperation relations in areas of transport and ways of boosting them to contribute to raise the level of trade exchanging between the two countries.

This came during the meeting of Minister of Transport Khalid al-Wazir with the Omani ambassador in Sana'a Abdullah al-Badif.

The two sides dealt with the preparations for the Yemeni-Omani joint committee's 10th session to be held in the capital Sana'a during April 21-22 and co-chaired by the two Ministers of Transport in the two countries.

In the meeting, the two sides praised the level of the bilateral relations, which witness development in the various fields.

Yemen delegation heads for Indonesia over oil cooperation

A Yemeni delegation from the Parliament and Ministry of Oil and Minerals headed on Saturday to the Indonesian capital, Jakarta, for a few days official visit.

Upon departure, head of the Parliamentary Development and Oil Committee Abdul-Jalil Thabit told Saba that the visit aims at getting acquaintance with the Indonesian experience in the field of oil industries and promoting sectors by

law and competition in order to benefit from such experience.

The delegation will also promote for oil and gas investment in Yemen by Indonesia companies, Thabit said.

He noted that the delegation will meet the Indonesian SP and concerned officials to discuss means to further boost cooperation between the two countries in the parliamentary and economic areas, in addition to oil and gas.

Gulf Cup 20 committee reviews event opening cultural portrait

The Higher Supervisory Committee for Gulf Cup 20 reviewed on Sunday draft of the cultural portrait for the opening ceremony of the Gulf Cup 20 which is presented by the Minister of Culture.

The committee meeting was chaired by Deputy Prime Minister for Defense and Security Affairs, Minister of Local Administration, Rashad al-Alimi.

The portrait shows a set of pictures expressive of the importance of the sport event of Gulf Cup 20 and projects the cultural and human heritage of the Yemeni people and the common identity and heritage of the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf.

Yemen discusses accessing to WTO with Japan, EU

Yemen, Japan, European Union (EU) held talks on Monday on the current arrangements to complete the requirements of Yemeni accession to World

Trade Organization (WTO).

In two separate meetings, Minister of Industry and Trade Yahya al-Mutawakel discussed with Japanese ambassador to Yemen Mitsunori Namba and EU's ambassador to Yemen Michele Cervone D'urso the especial preparations for the visit of Yemeni negotiation team to Geneva next month to complete the mutual negotiations.

While the two ambassadors renewed their support to complete the Yemen's accessing to WTO, al-Mutawakel pinned hope to reach a bilateral agreement with Japan in the field of market access.

He voiced appreciation of the EU and Japanese support to Yemen accession to WTO.

Civil society warns of alliances with unity's enemies

Yemeni civil society has warned of the alliance of the Joint Meeting Parties JMP, an opposition coalition, with outlaws including the Houthi group in the far north and the separatists in the south, almotamar.net has reported.

Civil society organizations topped by Tasadi expressed regret over negative practices of the JMP over the last few years, saying the parties should hold a clear and brave position over those behind rebellion, civil disobedience and destructive acts.

The silence over all these implies consent to disturbing the public security

and stability and turmoil, they said in a statement. Those who sign alliances with the enemies of the unity are losers, the statement said, noting that all organizations are ready to face conspirers who are seeking to destroy homeland.

Deputy FM meets Russian counterpart

Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Muthana met here on Monday with the Russian First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrey Denisov.

The two officials' focused on the bilateral cooperation relations between the two friendly countries and aspects of enhancing them in all fields.

They also discussed regional and international issues concerning the two countries.

DHAMAR
Training health workshop launched

Anis District of Dhamar governorate launched on Monday a training workshop on the establishment of a network community to strengthen health services implemented by the Reproductive Health Services Improvement Project which is funded by the European Union and the Local Authority.

The workshop is aiming to provide 20 participants from schools and medical centers with an overview on skills to deliver health messages awareness on reproductive health, family planning,

disease prevention, communicative ways for dealing with the community, the importance of good communication and community education.

In a statement to Saba, Director of Reproductive Health Services Improvement Project Abdu al-Jomai said that they will establish a communication network with the community to promote health efforts to contribute to raising the level of health awareness.

He pointed out that the project was implemented last month in field activities in the area of capacity building and awareness-raising activities including distribution of leaflets and publications aimed at spreading health awareness in the community.

TAIZ
Over 130 Somalis infiltrate into Yemen coasts

About 138 would-be-refugees of Somalia, including 50 women, have sneaked to Taiz and Hadramout coasts in separated batches.

Interior Ministry reported on Monday that an unknown smuggling boat had gotten down 83 Somalis, including 31 women, on Taiz coast, adding that they were collected and sent to a refugees camp in Kharaz, Lahj province.

In Hadramout province, east Yemen, security authorities have handed over 55 Somalis, including 19 women and two children, to a representative of the

UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Shabwa province.

ADEN
France grants €119,000 to social societies

French Fund for Social Development has granted €119,000 to People of Special Needs Society, Relief Social House and Organization of Small Credits in Aden province.

The agreement of grant was signed by French ambassador to Sana'a Joseph Silv and representatives of three societies.

The grant aims at enhancing services presented by the societies.

MARIB
Marib governor meets IOM delegation

Marib Governor Naji al-Zaidi held talks on Monday with the delegation of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) over implementation of a development projects in the province funded by the USAID at one million dollar.

The delegation said that these projects are in fields of education, health, youths, roads, agriculture, transport, industry, women and media.

The governor valued the American support for the development process in Yemen in general and Marib in particular.

Their News

UNICEF-Volvic launch 1 litre for 10 litres

UNICEF and Volvic announced yesterday the launch of a new partnership to support water and sanitation programmes in Sudan.

More than 1 million children die each year in Sudan before their fifth birthday and 2 out of 3 Sudanese children do not have access to safe drinking water.

UNICEF's partnership with Volvic through the '1 litre for 10 litres' campaign will run in most of the countries in the Middle East. For every litre of water sold

between April 2010 and April 2011 Volvic has committed to supply 10 litres of fresh water in Sudan.

"This partnership will help fulfill one of our priorities in Sudan, which is reducing child mortality and improving maternal health through the provision of safe water", said Abdel-Rahman Ghandour, UNICEF Regional Chief of Communication for Middle East and North Africa. We are pleased to collaborate with Volvic on this important campaign and commend them on this initiative. This is an excellent example of partnership with the private

sector for the benefit of vulnerable populations".

Enrique Hormigo, Volvic spokesperson for this campaign, shared the enthusiasm in the partnership with UNICEF. "Volvic is a natural mineral water that comes from the French volcanic region of the Auvergne" he said at Dihad Exhibition in Dubai World Trade Centre. "Our customers are particularly concerned about sustainable development. They appreciate how they are giving back to the developing world through every litre of Volvic mineral water they consume".

"At Volvic, we are extremely proud of the work we have been doing with UNICEF since 2005, not only to make sure thousands more children have access to drinking water, but also to make sure more of them receive a full education", he added.

This is the first time UNICEF partners with Volvic on projects in the Middle East and North Africa after many successful joint projects in other regions.

UNICEF estimates that as many as 4000 children under five years die each day as a result of water-borne diseases, such as diar-

rea. Almost a billion children worldwide have no access to improved sanitation.

Husami wins Al-Saeed Prize for the Second Time

Dr. Abdul-Hameed Al-Husami, an associate professor of literature and criticism at Ibb University (currently a professor of Literature and Criticism at the Department of Arabic Language, King Khaled University, Abha, KSA) won Al-Sa'eed Annual Prize in its twelfth version, the literary creativity section, for his book Po-

litical Criticism in the Yemeni Proverbs: a study in cultural criticism. The prize was announced in Sana'a on 12 April 2010 in a press conference held for the purpose by Al-Sa'eed Foundation for Sciences and Culture.

The prize is an academically prestigious and refereed one and is the biggest of its kind in Yemen, open to competition from all over the Arab World. Dr. Al-Husami already won the same prize in its tenth round three years ago for his book "Social Transformation in Yemen as Depicted in the Fictional Art."

Yemenia explains travel insurance program to agents

Yemenia Airlines has conducted its fourth annual meeting with United Insurance Company and other travel agencies to explain the benefits of travel insurances service from Yemeni covered by United Insurance and run by the global Spanish partner Mapfre Asistencia.

In his key note on behalf of Yemenia Muneer Jahoush deputy director of commercial affairs said that Yemenis will distribute information packages on the services on the agents to be distributed to the clients and passengers. "Yemenia aims to give the passengers the most comfort and satisfaction. We aim to be distinguished in our services and aspirations to give our clients the best experiences, he said.

Adding that insuring passengers in the airports and during travel will give the passengers an additional reason why they should travel with us



because their insurance starts at the very beginning of the travel process which is processes at the airport in both starting point and destination.

Tareq Abdulwase general manager of United Insurance Company said that insurance is quite necessary in today's world as there are many risks the travelers go through and would fluster his time and budget. Some countries

oblige visitors to obtain travel insurance documents and are necessary to obtain the visa.

General Manager of Gulf Asset the Bahraini company affiliated to Mapfre Asistencia, Esam Al-Awami narrated the services provided through this insurance program and how it includes health assistance, medication, first aid in the air and inland.

Felix Airways Launches Flights to Abha of Saudi Arabia; Soon to Egypt



By Mohammed Al-Haj For the Yemen Times

Felix Airways launched on Wednesday, April 14, its first airline flights to the city of Abha in Saudi Arabia, which comes as part of the company's plan of the territorial expansion; after the completion of the internal flights network to link regular trips to some Arab countries.

Sources at Felix Airways told the Yemen Post that it is expected that the Felix Airways will launch soon new regular flights to Sharm Al-Sheikh

or Alexandria of Egypt. However, in the next few weeks, the Company is looking forward to receive the first large aircraft specialized in remote flights.

For his part, Mr. Mohammed bin Saleh Al-Awaji, Chairman of Felix Airways said during launching Abha trip that the company will provide full support for the continuity of the flights between Yemen and other Arab countries. He pointed out that this trip reaffirms the deep economic ties that bind Yemen and Saudi Arabia from a depth of intimate relationships.

Al-Awaji said that the launch of this new route will open a big market for the Company due to the increasing number of passengers, who travel between Yemen and Saudi Arabia. It also would contribute in strengthening the relationship between both countries, which is witnessing remarkable development in all fields.

He stated that the company will work in opening new routes within the framework of its regional plan for this year, which will contribute in attracting more tourists and business visitors to the cities of Yemen.



Vacancy Advertisement

The World Bank Middle East and North Africa (MNA) Region intends to hire an experienced **Procurement Specialist**, who will be located in the World Bank Sana'a Office to work on projects in Yemen. He/she will also work on procurement system improvements. The work implies frequent interaction with Managers and Technical Specialists in the work unit and staff from other agencies, donors, consultants and borrowers. More specifically, under the direction of the Country Manager in Sana'a, the Country Procurement Coordinator based in Cairo, and the Regional Procurement Manager (RPM) based in Washington, the incumbent will:

- Work independently on procurement matters across sectors in the performance of the Bank's fiduciary and service functions, seeking guidance on complex projects/issues from senior procurement staff;
- Review and handle the technical, commercial and legal aspects of procurement (in consultation with Legal and Policy departments as necessary) at all stages of the project cycle;
- Provide operational advice to clients and Bank staff on concepts, policies and procedures for international and local procurement;
- Participate in missions as procurement expert on projects; assess procurement implications of project design, evaluate institutional capacity of borrowers and develop suitable procurement plans; conduct prior and post reviews of Bank-financed contracts;
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- Good knowledge of all concepts and principles of and approaches to international procurement, and of public procurement systems;
- Knowledge and understanding of technical, commercial and legal aspects of procurement at all phases of Bank lending operations;
- Demonstrated analytical clarity, problem-solving skills and negotiating skills with ability to balance project objectives and procurement requirements with client needs;
- Task/ Project management skills;
- Strong communication skills in presenting, discussing and resolving difficult issues, both orally and in writing, and excellent listening skills;
- Ability to deal sensitively with a multi-cultural environment and build effective business relationships with clients and colleagues;
- Ability to function effectively in multi-disciplinary teams with a matrix management environment;
- High integrity, competent with humility and committed to the clients and the MNA Region;
- Understanding of Bank business objectives, policies and practices related to project/sector and critical links to procurement is desirable.
- English and Arabic languages mandatory; and French highly desirable.

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A New Supplier of World Energy

With the first cargo leaving the Balhaf terminal on 7 November 2009, Yemen LNG has placed the country on the international map of producers and exporters of LNG. Yemeni liquefied natural gas will be exported to Asian and Atlantic markets for the next 20 years which contributes significantly to the economic and social development of the people of Yemen.



رافد جديد للطاقة في العالم

بمغادرة أول شحنة من الغاز الطبيعي المسال لمرافأ بلحاف على خليج عدن في ٧ نوفمبر ٢٠٠٩، وضعت الشركة اليمنية للغاز الطبيعي المسال إسم اليمن على خارطة الدول المنتجة والمصدرة للغاز الطبيعي المسال. وسيتم تصدير الغاز الطبيعي المسال اليمني إلى أسواق آسيا والأطلسي على مدى ٢٠ سنة القادمة الأمر الذي من شأنه الإسهام بمردود كبير على التنمية الاقتصادية والاجتماعية للمواطن اليمني.

Weapons galore in Yemen

Weapons outnumber the population in Yemen three to one, raising concerns a power vacuum in the unstable state may unleash unbridled violence

By: **Rachelle Klinger**
The Media Line

A man driving a tank stops at a military checkpoint in Yemen. "Do you have any weapons on you?" the soldier at the crossing asks him. "No," the tank driver replies. "Okay," the soldier says. "Go right ahead."

Nothing could illustrate the Yemeni weapons problem better than this post-civil war joke.

Yemen is swarming with arms

An alarming figure recently published in the London-based A-Sharq Al-Awsat suggests there are around three weapons to every Yemeni citizen, amounting to some 60 million units. The proliferation of unlicensed weapons in Yemen has become one of the chief problems in a country currently engaged in conflicts on three fronts.

"There are no statistics about the number of weapons and types of weapons, whether licensed or unlicensed," Sheikh Abdul Rahman Yahya Al-Marwani, director of the Dar A-Salaam Cultural

and Social Organization for Combating Revenge and Violence, told The Media Line.

Al-Marwani, also known as the Peacemaker, is a recognized figure in Yemen for his efforts to defuse tribal conflicts, and has become an informal bridge between the government and the tribes.

"Weapons are associated with masculinity in Yemen and all the country's revenues are dedicated to purchasing weapons instead of being spent on development," he said. "This is the problem of the Middle East."

The knock-on effect, Al-Marwani explained, was that it is turning Yemen into a violent society.

"It undermines security and stability and spreads violence among the tribes," he said. "No one can really estimate the scope of damage that these weapons have caused in terms of physical health, mental health and material loss. In the current atmosphere there is a rise in extremism, violence and terrorism, all of which are exploiting the economic conditions."

"Weapons come into Yemen via several weapons-manufacturing countries through well-known dealers in the coun-



It is estimated by security sources that there are 40-50 million arms in Yemen. Yemeni government aims to close down all gun shops.

try," Al-Marwani said. "We're talking about huge quantities and all different types can be found in the markets. The current war between the government and the so called Houthi rebels is fueling this, and it's making the government think about solutions and restraining the problem wisely by using dialogue."

The Yemeni government recently began a campaign to clamp down on illegal weapons dealers. Under the campaign, the government arrested at least four people on its list of weapons traders. One was arrested in the capital Sana'a and three others were arrested in the northern Sa'ada region, where the army is trying to quash a Houthi rebellion.

The government has been pressuring parliament to issue a law that will regulate the possession of weapons but this bill is facing opposition from religious leaders and tribal representatives.

"The government must take the lead in controlling the weapons, by addressing the reasons that are prompting tribes to carry them," Al-Marwani said. "They should bolster security and recruit the official state media for awareness campaigns, as well as help people find employment by encouraging investment and promoting tourism."

"This campaign will help to control weapons to some extent but the demand

for weapons will generate more sources," he said. "This requires that the matter be tackled by changing the mentality of the people and creating conditions that will make Yemeni tribal members turn in their weapons."

The government prohibited the carrying of guns in cities and closed some of the gun markets in 2007. Despite several government clampdowns on unlicensed weapons, observers say these sweeps were largely ineffective as they focused on big cities, when most of the armed population lives in rural areas.

Khaled Al-Anasi, Executive Director of the Yemeni Organization for Defending Rights and Freedoms, said a lot of people possess guns because they do not feel safe and it gives them a means to protect themselves.

"The problem is there is no equality in society, so people resort to tribal laws to protect themselves," Al-Anasi told The Media Line. "If they try to pursue a legal process, they find it's difficult to get their rights because they need to bribe officials, so people say 'I will not be safe, so I have to protect myself.'"

"In my opinion, the problem is not with the people who are trying to protect themselves," he argued. "The problem is the people who collect guns for extremist ideas, and who wish to control the coun-

try when the regime falls. People don't feel safe when there is no one to protect them. They are afraid to leave the city without guns so they're preparing for a future conflict."

If the government collapses, it will not take much for armed groups to take advantage of a power vacuum, Al-Anasi said.

"The Yemeni government is so weak and it could collapse at any time," he said. "This will give a chance for the people who want more power, to use it easily. They will try to get power and control the country by using these guns and we will face a conflict."

The Yemeni army is presently stretched across three separate fronts.

Five years ago a conflict broke out costing hundreds of lives in northern Yemen between the Yemeni army and a group of rebels known as the Houthis. The militant group belongs to an offshoot of Shia Islam and wishes to restore a Zaidi imam to Yemen after it was overthrown in a 1962 coup. They accuse the Yemenite government of being too closely allied with the United States.

The second conflict involves Yemen's alliance with the U.S. in its fight against terrorism, specifically Al-Qaeda, which Western governments fear is exploiting Yemen's unstable political climate to establish a base from which to launch attacks against foreign interests. The would-be bomber of Detroit-bound Northwest Airlines Flight 253 last December reportedly said that he trained in Yemen and that a senior Al-Qaeda member in Yemen provided him with the bomb.

The third front is a separatist movement in the south protesting against government discrimination.

Beyond these conflicts, there are numerous local wars that break out among different tribes, who pay little heed to state law.

Several socio-political analysts have suggested that the possession of weapons in Yemen is an integral part of Yemeni identity and heritage, linked to a history of tribal feuds.

Carrying weapons from an early age is a widely accepted part of Yemeni tradition. Many Yemenis have disputed that the possession of arms is a violation

of the law and claim it is within their legitimate rights. Almost every male Yemeni over the age of 14 carries a dagger on his abdomen, known as a janbiya. Though the dagger is a sign of maturity and coming-of-age, and rarely used in combat situations, it is often viewed by Western eyes, insensitive to its wider cultural significance, as a sign of heightened militarism.

In the past, Al-Anasi said, the government armed certain tribes to buy their allegiance during times of war, and is now paying the price.

Internal wars, such as the civil war between north and south in 1994, made Yemen a breeding ground for weapon acquisitions. Arms that were looted are still making the rounds among the population.

"After the war, they can't take them back," he said. "If they take them back these people will become enemies."

The fact that Yemen has long, permeable and largely uncontrolled borders only makes the problem worse.

Many neighboring countries as well as the United States have expressed anxiety concerning the proliferation of weapons in Yemen.

Analysts say the prevalence of weapons in Yemen is making it a magnet for terrorist organizations, which are obtaining the readily available arms and smuggling them into neighboring countries such as Saudi Arabia.

Yemeni government forces recently caught a shipping container loaded with weapons at the Al-Hudeida port on the Red Sea coast, originating from China. The container, it later transpired, reached Yemen with forged Defense Ministry documents.

When gunmen attacked the American Consulate in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, in December 2004, the serial numbers on the attackers' weapons were traced back to the Yemeni Defense Ministry.

After the strike, the Yemeni government tried to buy weapons from tribal leaders, rather than take them by force. The tactic failed and pushed the price of weapons up by as much as 100 percent on the black market, where goods on offer range from Kalashnikovs and rocket propelled grenades (RPG) to mobile rockets.



Protestors in Sanaa carry banners demanding a law to control firearms.

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للأستاذ/ عيدروس بازرعه
الرئيس التنفيذي للمركز التجاري للسيارات
بمناسبة حصول المركز على
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American Jihadis: Blame violence-prone boys, not Islam

American Jihadis are not a product of Islam. Their emergence is connected to issues of gender and a growing acceptance of violence in America.

By Alia Malek
The Christian Science Monitor

The recent arrest in Yemen of Somali-American Sharif Mobley, accused of being a member of an Al Qaeda affiliated group, raises the question: Why are young American men abandoning this country's promise and opportunities to pursue jihad in foreign countries with groups rooted in anti-Americanism?

From concerned citizens to journalists to think tank panels to Capitol Hill, everyone seems to think that the key to understanding "why" these men have turned against America lies in the pathology of Islam. But they're missing something big.

Reporters offer blow-by-blow accounts of these men's religious observance, dwelling on which mosques they attended, which imams they heeded, what clothing they wore, and which

verses of the Koran they cited.

Security experts tend to see only a threat of Islamicization and the incompatibility of Islam with American values.

Even Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan, who killed his fellow soldiers at a time when violent crime and suicide in the military are both on the rise, is cited regularly as an example of home-grown terror with little to no mention of other contributing factors.

By focusing on religion, the discussion about the radicalization of Muslim American youth ignores the more salient factors: gender and an American acceptance of violence.

The literature on masculinity, boys, and violence is well developed, yet seemingly disregarded in examinations of these Muslim Americans. What if we were to invite such experts into this conversation?

Dr. Rhea Almeida, founder of the Institute for Family Services and who

works with Muslim American boys, explains that this radicalization is rooted in the same sorts of dynamics that can lead other boys to other kinds of violence from gangs to school shootings — essentially, the need to find status and assert masculinity in a society where they are marginalized and thereby emasculated, whether for their race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, disability, or religion.

Of course, being marginalized within the greater American society is not the only factor. The diverse, toxic cocktail that can lead an individual to choose violence (and it is a choice) includes mental-health issues and problems in his family, school, personal, and community lives as well. These combined factors need to be examined if we want to understand why individuals turn to radicalization — not just the sura of the Koran.

The alienation that can lead Muslim American youth, already sensitive and on the defense for being a misunderstood minority in America, to radicalization is further compounded by the fact that there are few spaces in which disaffected young Americans can express their legitimate dissent, frustra-

tion, and anger with certain government policies.

In the absence of places where legitimate concerns about both domestic and foreign policy can be explored in the flesh, among a multitude of voices (including women), and in a real-time give-and-take, youth go "underground" or to the Internet. There, the conversation is controlled, one-dimensional, and unchallenged. Anonymity means participants can't be held accountable for ideas that, if they were uttered in front of peers or families or elders, might be disputed and raise early red flags; and there, recruiters from groups like Al Qaeda with their absurd Islamic interpretations are waiting to fill the vacuum and prey upon the most vulnerable.

Religious centers could be natural spaces for these sorts of discussions. But having come under heightened scrutiny from government, private individuals, and the media, many religious centers have attempted understandably to be apolitical.

Yet consider what happened during the struggle for equal civil rights: Organizing often did happen in places of worship and youth were an included,

integral, mentored part of the movement.

By looking only at Islam to account for these actions, Americans are distracted from the fact that our greater American (and increasingly global) society is quite comfortable with violence and has legitimized it as a means to accomplish a wide variety of ends. That acceptance touches all Americans, not just Muslim Americans.

Consider the Pentagon shooter John Patrick Bedell or the IRS kamikaze Joe Stack or any of the school shootings, rapes, assaults, and murders reported daily. While there are exceptions like Alabama professor Amy Bishop or "Jihad Jane," these acts are more often than not committed by men because of the role violence plays in what we understand and celebrate to be masculine.

By focusing on the religion and elevating crimes committed by Muslims to a status more deviant than crimes committed by others, we exculpate our shared society while perpetuating the vilifying of a particular religion and its adherents, further emasculating them specifically.

The United States has historically

been relatively successful at integrating many different peoples. However, that very American achievement is threatened by the tone of the current conversation, which looks for sensational explanations that further differentiate "us" from "them."

Americans must expand the dialogue, to recognize all parts of American society as "our" society — interconnected — and to invite more than just terror and "Islamicization" experts into the conversation. Understanding that there is a gender component and a general acceptance of violence at play here is necessary to move us toward understanding what is happening to young Muslim Americans and how to change it.

Such an understanding will prepare the US for the next step: turning our collective efforts to supporting families who need help and using public spaces like schools, places of worship, and even pop culture to teach all boys how to be men who don't turn to violence.

Alia Malek is the author of "A Country Called Amreeka: Arab Roots, American Stories."

The problems of partnering with Yemen

By: Peter Bouckaert
and Christoph Wilcke

Foreign Policy In Focus

The March capture in Sana'a of a New Jersey man with alleged ties to al-Qaeda has renewed public concern over potential threats of terrorism from Yemen. On March 14 and 15, Yemen's air force again carried out airstrikes against what the government said were terrorist hideouts in Abyan province, in the south of the country. But as in other countries where terrorist organizations coexist with corrupt and repressive central governments and home-grown insurgencies, the fight against terrorism in Yemen is fraught with the pitfalls that come with a rampant disregard for human rights.

A year ago, the Saudi and Yemeni al-Qaeda branches merged into al-Qaeda

in the Arabian Peninsula. This group has carried out several spectacular attacks, at home and abroad, over the past nine months. Last August, it wounded Saudi Arabia's chief counterterrorism official in an assassination attempt, and in November it killed several top Yemeni security officials. Then the group claimed responsibility for the failed plot to blow up a U.S. airliner over Detroit on Christmas Day.

The United States and other countries trying to combat this group should tread carefully when relying on Yemen's government to do the heavy lifting. An exclusively military counterterrorism focus using airstrikes may alienate local allies, as in Afghanistan. One lesson in counterterrorism from Afghanistan and Pakistan is that armed militant groups thrive when the government does not enjoy the support of

its people.

Problematic Partnership

President Barack Obama's pledge to "strengthen our partnership with the Yemeni government" shouldn't lead to a Western embrace of President Ali Abdullah Saleh's government. The United States and other outside powers also need to address Saleh's terrible human rights abuses, which help fuel al-Qaeda recruitment. In southern Yemen, for instance, the government has responded to massive and largely peaceful protests in favor of secession with unprovoked deadly gunfire on numerous occasions.

Al-Qaeda has openly tried to capitalize on southerners' growing anger by declaring its support for their struggle against the "infidel" government. Mounting civilian casualties in the fight against al-Qaeda, along with excessive use of force in the south and indiscriminate attacks against armed rebels in the north, are grist for al-Qaeda's publicity mill.

To date, the international community seems to be giving Yemen a free hand to deal with internal opposition under the cover of combating terrorism. The hastily convened Yemen meeting in London in January declared a "commitment to non-interference in Yemen's internal affairs." In a March 3 visit to Yemen, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Jeffrey Feltman said that Washington "considers" what is happening in the southern provinces to be an internal affair, for Yemen alone, and we do not believe that any outside party should intervene." That same day, Yemeni Deputy Prime Minister Rashad al-Alimi admitted to parliament that a U.S.-assisted airstrike in December 2009 against al-Qaeda, also in the southern Abyan province, killed 42 civilians.

Mounting Repression

Repression and lawlessness partly account for Yemen's worsening instability and for al-Qaeda's rise. The government has made Yemen a dangerous place for journalists. On January 4 — less than 48 hours after Obama pledged his support — Saleh's security forces opened fire on protesters demanding the re-opening of Yemen's largest independent newspaper, Al-Ayyam, which was shut in May 2008 for "inciteful" reports on government abuses against southern protesters. On March 11, government forces entered the offices of two large regional satellite television channels, Al Jazeera and al-Arabiyya, and confiscated their broadcasting equipment in response to their coverage of southern unrest that the government said "encouraged sabotage and

separatism."

A professor at Aden University, Husain Aqil, was sentenced to three years in prison on March 28 for his opinion articles in newspapers lamenting corruption at the highest levels of government. Similarly, Yemen's state security court on March 28 handed a former south Yemeni ambassador, Muhammad Askar Jubran, five years in prison for undermining Yemen's unity in his writings and speeches.

Yemeni authorities are equally harsh with critics of its civil war in the north with the Huthi rebels. Days after the London meeting, Yemeni officials presented in a state security court Muhammad al-Maqalili, an opposition journalist abducted by security agents in September on the streets of the capital, because he had leveled accusations of war crimes against the military in its war against the Huthi rebels. He was held incommunicado until his release on health and humanitarian grounds on March 24.

A Human Rights Watch investigation into the fighting in the north uncovered credible allegations of serious violations of the laws of war by both sides. The government has sealed off the conflict area, preventing humanitarian workers and journalists from going there.

Making Matters Worse

Countless insurgencies in recent years have taught that governments fighting extremism with repression or guns almost invariably make matters worse. If the West wants Yemenis to support a campaign against al-Qaeda elements in their midst, it needs to address their legitimate grievances and aspirations, and prepare to take effective measures to avoid civilian casualties.

The Yemeni government has exploited Western support for counterterrorism to suppress peaceful domestic opposition and combat armed rebels. Western leaders should publicly distance themselves from such behavior and make clear to Saleh that his government needs to turn a sharp corner in terms of its human rights practices. Only with a more credible Yemeni government that earns the support and respect of its people can the West achieve results against al-Qaeda's franchise on the Arabian Peninsula.

Peter Bouckaert is emergencies director for Human Rights Watch. Christoph Wilcke is senior researcher for Middle East and North Africa at Human Rights Watch. Human Rights Watch just released its new report "All Quiet on the Northern Front?" on laws of war violations in Yemen's civil war.

It's all about schools

By: Thomas L. Friedman
The New York Times

I took part in a "qat chew" the other day at the home of a Yemeni official. Never done that before. Qat is the mildly hallucinogenic leaf drug that Yemeni men stuff in their cheek after work — and sometimes during. My hosts insisted that qat actually makes your senses sharper and that you could chew and chisel the top of a mosque minaret at the same time. I quit after 15 minutes, but the Yemeni officials, lawmakers and businessmen I was with chewed on for three hours — and they made a lot of sense along the way.

Most had been educated in America or had kids studying there, and they were all bemoaning how the decline of the Yemeni education system, the proliferation of exclusively religious schools here and the falloff in scholarships for Yemeni kids to study in America were producing a very different Yemeni generation than their own. They spoke fondly of U.S. schools that were based on merit, taught them to think freely and prepared them with the skills to thrive.

So here is my new rule of thumb: For every Predator missile we fire at an Al Qaeda target here, we should help Yemen build 50 new modern schools that teach science and math and critical thinking — to boys and girls.

If we stick to something close to that ratio of targeted killings to targeted kindergartens, we have a chance to prevent Yemen from becoming an Al Qaeda breeding ground. Because right now there are some 300,000 college-educated Yemenis out of work — partly because of poor training and partly because there are no jobs — 15,000 schoolchildren not attending any classes, 65 percent of teachers with only high school degrees and thousands of kids learning little more than religious doctrines.

And no wonder. Beginning in the 1970s, the trend in Yemen, Morocco, Egypt and the Persian Gulf "was to Islamicize education as a way to fight the left and pro-communists — with the blessing of the U.S.," explained Lahcen Haddad, a professor at the University of Rabat in Morocco and an expert on governance with Management Systems International, a U.S. development contractor. Then, in 1979, after the Saudi ruling family was shaken by an attack in Mecca from its own Wahabi fundamentalists, the Saudi regime, to fend off the anger of its Wahabis, "gave them free rein to Islamicize education and social life in Saudi Arabia and neighboring states."

"Missions — cultural and religious, semi-official and private — roamed Islamic countries to spread the word," said Haddad. "Cheap books followed, and students were brought to Saudi to learn from Wahabi preachers and teachers in

the different religious universities that mushroomed in the '80s."

Small, economically deprived Yemen was an easy target. Uncritically accepting of the "truths" of Wahabism became the core curriculum in many Yemeni schools, Haddad added, and "it destroyed the opportunity to build the basic skills necessary to train the right labor force — skills like problem-solving, communication, critical thinking, debate, organization and teamwork."

America's last great ideological foe, Soviet Marxism, produced its share of violent radicals, but it also produced Andrei Sakharov and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn — because it believed in science, physics, math and the classics of literature. Islamism is not producing any Sakharovs.

May Yamani, the author and daughter of the former Saudi oil minister Ahmad Zaki Yamani, minced no words, writing in The Beirut Daily Star: "Saudi Arabia exported both its Wahabism and Al Qaeda to Yemen by funding thousands of madrassas, where fanaticism is taught."

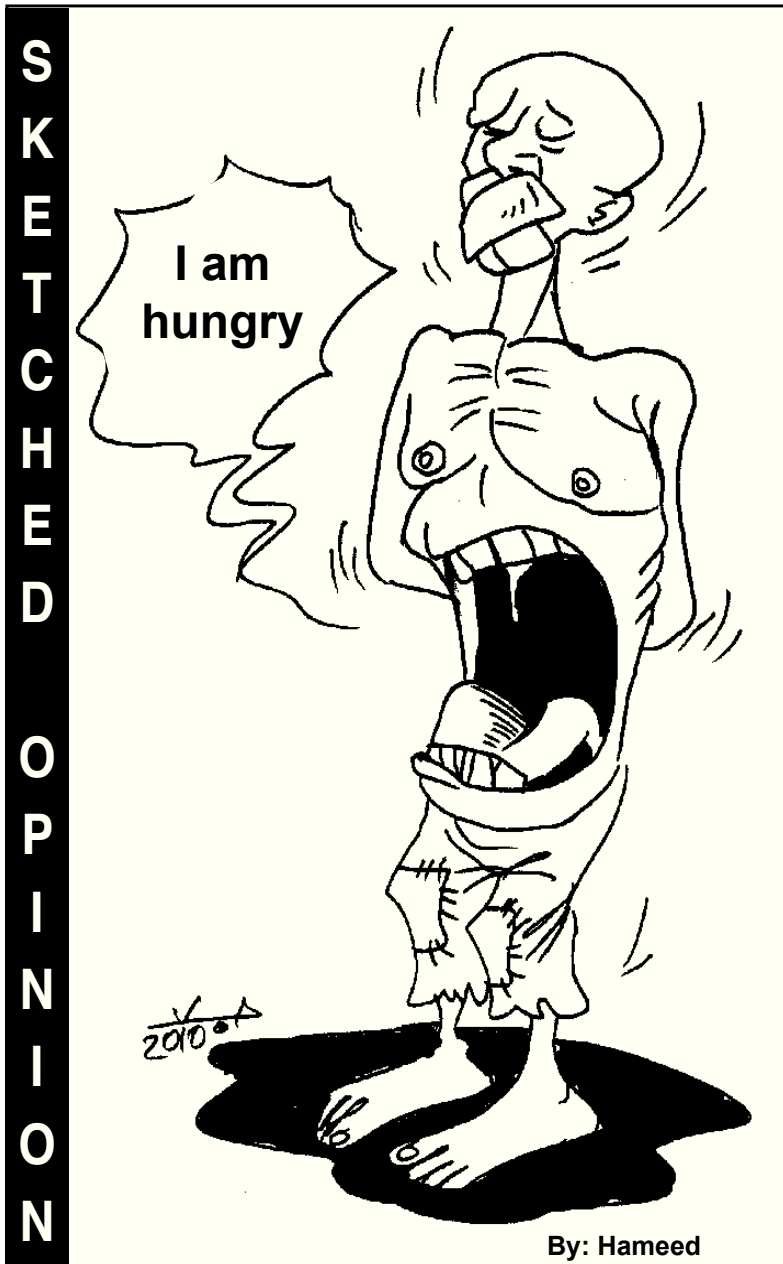
Ahmed Sofan, a Yemeni parliamentarian, told me that back in the 1970s if you visited a village in his rural constituency, most of the women would be unveiled and working alongside the men. No more, he said, "because we now have this Wahabi sense of religious conservatism where women are supposed to be inside and be veiled."

Added Abdul Karim al-Iryani, a former prime minister: Growing up, "we studied Darwinism in my high school without challenge." Not anymore. "The East Asian miracle," he added, "wasn't possible without women. In the Arab world, if half our society is excluded, how will we ever catch up with those new tigers?"

The Yemeni journalist Mohammed al-Qadhi reported in The National newspaper that there may be 10,000 religious-based schools educating Yemeni youth today. He quoted a top Yemeni education official as saying, "We are now obliging these schools to teach moderation to protect our students against extremism."

In other words, we are now fighting for the Middle East of the 2020s and 2030s. Huge chunks of this generation are lost. When I went to see Yemen's president, Ali Abdullah Saleh, at his Sana palace, he was in a reflective mood: "I would wish that this arms race could end and instead we could have a race for development."

It is the only way Yemen will have a future. So, yes, fire those Predators where we must, but help build schools and fund scholarships to America wherever we can. And please, please, let's end our addiction to oil, which is what gives the Saudi religious ministry and charities the money to spread anti-modernist thinking across this region.



By: Hameed

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Iraqi gay pleads to UK: Give me asylum

Supporters of an Iraqi gay activist are pressing the UK government to grant him asylum papers so he can continue to promote rights of the Iraqi LGBT community

By: **Rachelle Kliger**
The Media Line

Gay rights supporters have launched a campaign pressuring the UK government to grant asylum to a prominent Iraqi gay rights activist who has fled to Britain.

Ali Hili, director of Iraqi LGBT, an organization that promotes the rights of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender population in Iraq, fled Iraq to Europe in 2000 for personal reasons. He has been in the UK since 2002.

Although Hili, 37, applied for asylum status three years ago, his request is still pending. As a consequence, Hili, who is considered one of the few brave visible leaders of the Iraqi gay community, cannot leave the UK. He said this hampers his efforts to convey to the world the plight of gays in Iraq.

"There's a general atmosphere of hostility and ignorance by the UK immigration authority," Hili told The Media Line from his current residence in England. "I urgently need to travel and publicly

travel and promote the objectives of his organization. "My work with Iraqi LGBT has been delayed and everything is on hold. We're unable to move, speak or to present our group to the world. We're stuck here, while we get invitations from Europe, the U.S. and other countries who want to know more about the LGBT community in Iraq so it's disrupting everything for us and throwing the group's work down the drain," he said.

The UK Border Agency told The Media Line that the case is being dealt with by Case Resolution Directorate. "The reason it hasn't been prioritised is because it doesn't fall into one of the priority categories listed on our website," a representative of the organization said. Campaigners are gathering signatures for a petition at this link: <http://www.gopetition.com/petitions/iraqi-lgbt-need-your-help/sign.html>

Michael Luongo, a freelance journalist and editor of Gay Travels in the Muslim World, said he believes Hili is right to ask for preferential treatment in his asylum application.

"Not only is he a gay Iraqi, he is one heading an organization, so the fact that he has not received asylum yet is baffling," he told The Media Line. "What is the British government thinking?"

In addition, Luongo pointed out that

the results of the recent parliamentary elections in Iraq indicate that hard-line political forces - who may well have been behind the murders of gays in Iraq - are now gaining political strength. This poses an increased threat to the gay community in Iraq.

Hili, who will not reveal his real name for reasons of personal safety, said that life for gays has actually better under Saddam Hussein and has severely deteriorated since 2003. "I never suffered from the law on account of my sexual inclinations. I enjoyed tolerance and even respect by the people, society, friends, relatives and work colleagues," Hili said.

Under Saddam, he added, the law imposed between six months and three years in jail for homosexual acts but these punishments were rarely enforced. "We never experienced any killings or executions by the authorities," he said.

Now, witnesses have testified of extreme violence in Iraq against sexual minorities. Officials have denied this, but Hili said they have proof it is occurring.

"We have clear evidence that the Iraqi police are participating in killings, and we can prove this with videos and documents," he said. "We've also heard of lots of religious fundamental leaders urging their followers to track down homosexu-

als and beat and kill them. It's far worse than we ever experienced in the past."

As to the legislative situation today, Hili said the current Iraqi constitution made no reference to the gay community whatsoever. "The new constitution doesn't have criminal courts or regulations. We don't even exist in the constitution. We believe that by not mentioning anything, this is evidence that we do not exist in the eye of the Iraqi constitution or the Iraqi state. We need to set that right."

Interestingly, Luongo said that even though gays were better off under Saddam's regime, the 2003 invasion also brought about changes that opened up the Iraqi gay community to the world. "The invasion allowed for increased interaction between the Western gay world and the gay world of Iraq," he explained, "either through employees at NGO's, gay soldiers, and other gay Westerners who came to work in occupied Iraq."

Luongo, who has traveled to Iraq twice since 2003 and is familiar with the issue, said the "scene" in Iraq was nothing like a scene in the Western sense. "I visited a cafe in Western Baghdad that had maybe 100 men in it, a cafe that has a gay reputation. There are a few such places in the city. However, the places like this which existed in Sadr

City, a very conservative religious area, were firebombed and men who went were hunted down. To give some indication of the size of the gay community in exile, when I visited Damascus in Syria and interviewed gay men there, they told me that there were 9,000 gay Iraqi men in the city - half of whom came to flee the anti-gay violence of Baghdad on their own, and half of whom came along with their families, fleeing the general violence."

Mirroring Hili's comments Luongo said gays in Iraq are not at all tolerated in the current climate. "I interviewed a woman from the government who was very liberal, and her view was that gays had to be more discreet in order to save themselves," he said.

"What I found within Iraqi society is everything from deep hatred of gays to mild amusement to people who had friends they figured were gay but just never talked about it. You might think of it like the USA or the UK in the 1960s but with an exceedingly more violent tendency towards gays."

Ironically, Luongo said the Arabic version of his book, which discusses gays in the Muslim world, was available for sale in a bookseller's bazaar in Baghdad, reflecting the contrasting tendencies in the city.

Lebanon's chief banker calls for single currency for Arab world

Governor of the Bank of Lebanon says unified currency would boost intra regional trade

By: **Adam Gonn**
The Media Line

Lebanon's top banker has called for a single unified Arab currency in use across the Middle East to help boost regional economy and development.

Riad Salameh, the Governor of the

Bank of Lebanon, said the new currency should replace the US dollar or euro. Speaking at a conference in Beirut, Salameh was quoted as saying the currency should replace the foreign reserves currently held in national banks across the Middle East as this would free up liquidity and increase potential for economic growth.

"This is a very long term project,"

Professor Louis G. Hobeika at Notre Dame University in Lebanon, told The Media Line, "It's more like wishful thinking. ...Realistically we would have to go through many steps and it may take a hundred years."

Hobeika, who supports the idea of a common currency, argued that Salameh's statements should best be seen as a political slogan than a viable plan. A major political decision would be required by all countries to get the process moving, he said.

Only 9 percent of all trade in the Middle East is intra regional and backers of

the idea believe it could help increase this. According to the Bank of Lebanon, in 2008 the Gross Domestic Product in Arab countries was \$1.9 trillion. However, this represents only 3 percent of the global Gross Domestic Product that year.

Saudi Arabia for example, which has the largest proven oil reserves in the world and produces some 10 million barrels a day, has a relatively low GDP with just \$379,500 million, far behind smaller countries like Turkey and Belgium.

The idea of a common regional cur-

rency, although on a more micro scale, has been underway for nearly a decade in the Gulf States. The six member nations of the Gulf Cooperation Council, including Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman and the United Arab Emirates, are examining launching a common currency.

However, despite years of negotiations and great similarities in the countries economies, all having oil and gas reserves generating budget surpluses, the 2012 launch date will not be met.

Yadullah Ijehadi, Managing Editor ABQ Zawya, explained that the region

was not prepared for such an independent currency move.

"Gulf Central Banks don't have the infrastructure and structures in place to abandon the dollar just yet," Ijehadi told The Media Line. "Money markets are nascent and the Gulf countries have stalled their monetary union, which could have been a way for them to slowly wean themselves away from the American dollar."

"Oil is the biggest Gulf export and is priced in dollars. Until that changes, it is difficult to expect Gulf States to shift," Ijehadi said.



Programme Manager - Yemen

As one of the world's developing countries, our ongoing humanitarian and development programmes are designed to helping the people of Yemen to improve their living conditions. We have been working hard to promote gender equality in a Yemen. At Oxfam, we're addressing the underlying issues, by raising women's awareness of their rights, providing legal aid and counselling, helping to fund education for girls and providing loans that enable women set up small businesses. This role will be key to taking that work forward.

The role

In short, you'll head up and manage our entire Gender Equity and Good Governance programme in Yemen. As well as designing and developing a comprehensive portfolio of individual initiatives, you'll help to secure the funding that makes them possible and ensure they're aligned with Oxfam's broader objectives in the country. You'll evaluate our existing programmes and work with the Country Director to integrate gender equity and good governance into everything we do. And as well as providing colleagues across the country with specialist advice on all gender equity and good governance matters, you'll have a big part to play in how we engage with existing and potential donors, and take an active role in local fundraising.

What we're looking for

A background in gender equity and good governance would clearly be an advantage. But more important is extensive experience of managing and developing programmes. It's also essential that you can make the link between programme development and our advocacy and campaigning work. You'll have a proven ability to provide strategic leadership together with strong representation skills. Coupled with that, you'll be self-aware and culturally sensitive. From a practical standpoint, fluency in Arabic as well as English would also be an advantage.

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Job Vacancy

The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands invites qualified candidates to apply for the following position:

Policy Advisor Governance (full-time)

Position summary: the policy advisor will:

- provide policy advice on governance issues to the international staff
- assist in the preparation of analytical papers on social, political, economic and gender issues
- translate/prepare English-language overviews from Arab media/debate
- acts as interpreter in meetings if required.

Working environment

The Netherlands Embassy has more than 30 years of diplomatic relation and development cooperation with the Government of Yemen. The Embassy employs 35 people of which 14 expatriate staff.

Primary Responsibilities:

- Follow the Arab media and public debate on a daily basis and pro-actively identify issues of interest for the embassy's work in the areas of governance and development cooperation
- Assess and comment on relevant reports; prepare internal reports
- Translate Arab texts into English and sometimes act as interpreter in meetings
- Build a network in the media, academic circles, civil society and political community
- Participate in policy staff meetings
- Close cooperation with international policy advisors and the management of the Embassy.

Qualifications:

- Masters degree in social/political/economic science or journalism
- Minimum of 5 years of relevant experience in policy analysis or journalism
- Broad knowledge of political, social and economic trends in Yemen
- Mastery of the English language at academic level (speaking, reading, writing).

Skills and Abilities:

- Professional judgment in pro-actively identifying issues of interest
- Strong analytical skills
- Proven ability to write at academic level in both English and Arabic
- Excellent communication and networking skills
- Computer skills (Microsoft Office) and other applications.
- Ability to plan and prioritise own work.

The ideal candidate has a pleasant and balanced personality. He/she acts comfortably and with self-confidence in a national/international environment. The candidate is a good team-player, but also able to work independently and demonstrate initiative.

Salary indication

The position is for one year initially and might be extended. Salary depends on qualification and relevant working experience.

Candidates should submit their applications in writing in the English language (motivation letter, CV and references) by 2nd of May 2010 to the Netherlands Embassy, thereby clearly indicating on the envelop "Application Policy Advisor Governance".

Reviving the past for a better future

Many Yemeni craftsmen are finding it increasingly difficult to sell their original products. But last February, a cabinet decree prohibited the import and sale of imitation Yemeni handicrafts, such as the Chinese version of the Yemeni jambiyya or dagger. A new plan to revive Yemeni handicrafts aims at seeing this decision through.

By: Nadia Al-Sakkaf

Old Ahmed Ajlan sits in his usual place, in the local market of Kawkaban district on the outskirts of Sana'a, making iron and silver scissors and locks. He hammers for hours and welds the metal into asymmetrical shapes hoping that today someone will be interested in his locks.

"We only sell them to tourists, and even those are not always interested and they don't come around here that much anymore. People don't care about traditional Yemeni handicrafts and I am sad that I can't earn a living through the skills that have been in my family for generations. Also none of my sons are interested either and it saddens me to know that soon a time will come when this craft will be extinct," he said, while he hammered on his keys.

But now, there are some intentional efforts aimed at reviving Yemeni handicrafts. The General Secretary of Sana'a district announced last week that he will take measures to ensure the

implementation of the Minister of Trade's decree prohibiting the import of 'Yemeni' handicrafts made outside the country.

"We have to save the Yemeni amber, agate, silver and wood crafts. We have to preserve metal based handicrafts and traditional wear like jambiyyas. There are some coming in from China and we will stop them, in order to make sure the locals do not lose their businesses," he said.

Mohammed Salah, Deputy Chair of the Capital Secretariat Chamber of Commerce, said that coordination with the International Finance Corporation is developing a plan to encourage the local handicrafts industry. The chamber has distributed forms to local craftsmen, requesting that they specify the raw materials needed to create their items, as well as how much money they would need to sustain their business and buy the equipment they need.

"There are five thousand craftsmen, registered with the National Center for Handicrafts, who do not have the technical or financial means needed to continue their work. We have enrolled

them in training to develop their skills. This includes 2,800 women working in embroidery and knitting. But what we really need is marketing and promotion for their products, especially wall-mats, traditional Yemeni dresses and other traditional costumes made locally," said Salah.

He added that he feels optimistic about the new cooperation scheme with the IFC and hopes that the new plan will protect Yemeni handicrafts and their local producers.

In a February meeting, the Yemeni cabinet issued a one-year decree prohibiting the import of products which imitate traditional Yemeni handicrafts, such as agate and silver jewellery, cotton duvets, bamboo baskets and dyed traditional Yemeni women's head gear and covers (maqarim and sitara), among other similar products. The decree states that any goods in this list, arriving at Yemeni ports, will either be destroyed or sent back. Another list was created for traditional handicrafts. These are allowed to be imported but a 25 percent additional import tax is to be imposed on them. These products include woodwork, woven and iron based items, such as locks, as well as animal skin handicrafts.

The committee is yet to carry out a similar survey and report on the usefulness of these edicts or lack of them, by the end of this year, before the current one year ban is made permanent.

These decrees came as a direct result of a report produced by a ministerial committee lead by the Minister of Tourism, earlier this year. The committee surveyed the industry of Yemeni traditional handicrafts and suggested means to support these fading skills.

"This jambiyya is not genuine or even made according to tradition, but it is only YR 3,000. To you, I will sell it for YR 2,500," cry out the jambiyya sellers perched outside the Bab Al-Yemen. Next to him sits his friend and rival. "No, no, buy from me. These jambiyyas are more expensive but they



are genuine. Look at the handle. I can show you the difference."

A genuine jambiyya's handle is usually made of cow horn. The modern kind is made of hard plastic, although it looks almost the same.

"An association can be established to support and protect the profession," said Mohammad Abdullah, from the old city of Sana'a, in a previous report on plastic jambiyyas in the Yemen Times. He has been working as a jambiyya craftsman for 10 years.

"The jambiyya business has started to collapse. There should be action taken to stop this because it is damaging our livelihood," he said, referring to negative impact of importing cheap replicas from China, instead of them being made in the local market.

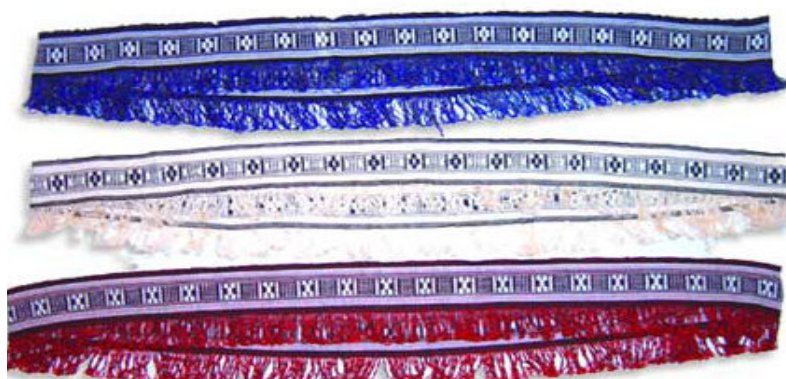
He gave an example. The tools he uses to make jambiyyas used to be manufactured by blacksmiths in their nearby souk, but imports of replicas caused many to become unemployed

and many shops closed.

Abdullah also expressed his disapproval of the one-piece jambiyyas for children, imported from China and flooding the market.

The plastic jambiyya handle doesn't take a lot of work, unlike the one made of cow horn. The money made from producing them is the same, according to Abdullah, who complained about the recession in the market and the lack of materials, especially during Eid seasons.

"Jambiyyas ready for sale stay in the shop a week or more before they are sold," Abdullah said, pointing to three rows of 15 jambiyyas hanging on his shop wall."



4U

If you are interested in knowing more about or supporting Yemeni traditional handicrafts go to: www.yemen-handicraft.com



Yemeni Handicrafts

Yemen was famous for different mineral deposits like gold, silver, iron, copper, marble, and precious stones which have been exploited throughout history. Yemen was also famous for growing cotton and others fibres. All these form a basis for the development of different handicrafts.

We are indebted to the scholar Al Hamadani for the detailed information about the mining of gold, silver and iron, mentioned in his work, especially the books "Al Jawharatayn Al Ategatain" (Two Great Jewels) and "Sefat Jazerat Al Arab" (The Character of the Arabian Peninsula). For example, he mentioned the silver mine in Al Radradh "Nehm" which today is called "Al Jabali". Modern archaeological surveys revealed a system of mines consisting of thirty

tunnels. The results of radioactive carbon dating indicated that silver was mined here between the 6th and 9th centuries.

It is also worth mentioning that the iron mine in Roghafah, close to Sada'a, which Al Hamadani wrote about, remained in use until the 19th century. Due to the availability of all these different types of raw materials, it is not strange that there is a lot of evidence for the existence of handicrafts made at a high level of perfection. The old antiques - which trace back to the pre-Islamic era - reflect great architectural engineering and fine works of engraving. There is much evidence in old Arabic poetry about other handicrafts, like fabrics and Yemeni swords, which gained a great reputation during that era.

Among the well-known Yemeni architectural work, we should mention, in particular, the skills that trace back to the Rasooli and Taheri eras. The same can be said about spinning and weaving crafts, mineral, glass and pottery skills.

The rise and fall of Yemeni handicrafts relied always on the dominant international commercial status, during each period of history. This is also indicated by the rise and fall of the spinning and weaving industry, the decline of the famous pottery industry close to Zabid, as well as the glass industry in Aden.

Handicrafts in Yemen can be divided into two types, considering location, so we distinguish between rural and urban handicrafts. In urban centres, these are concentrated in the

productive areas of markets (or souks) and they have a variety based on specialization. There are, for example, different branches of welders, Sukkak (who make metal parts for doors and windows), Abbal (who specialize in making farm tools "and sharpening or renewing used tools", and blade-makers (who make the blades for jambiyyas). Specialization amongst carpenters is less clear, as we find makers of the Jambiyya's sheath "Aseeb", wooden-lock-makers "wooden lockers" and carpenters who make wooden combs or bird houses.

In rural areas we refer to:

Firstly, production centres whose products supply a wide demand. These centres are eye-catching in making many different items that constitute the material heritage of the country. Some examples of this category worth mentioning are the spinning and weaving industry in Bait Al Faqeeh, the pottery centers in Sorab in the Ser Valley and Maswar "Khawlan" or Azzan close to

Taweilah, or the production of stone vessels in the Razeh Mountains.

Secondly, the distinction among handicrafts in tribal areas shows a co-existence of two categories: farm craftsmen, members of the tribe who specialized, in addition to farming, in certain handicrafts such as carpentry, building and welding but they do not employ high skills, and the handicrafts which are practiced by non-members of the tribe who yet still live within the tribe. The latter are called "Mazaynah" and their people are pottery makers, tanners, and weavers.

There are still a few Jewish people in the north of the country, who work in silver, welding and carpentry.

There are also some other rural handicrafts worth mentioning. They are home handicrafts, like basket-making and embroidery, which are produced solely by women.

We can notice, in general, a similarity between areas, concerning the social hierarchy connected with handicrafts or 'acceptable and 'unacceptable' jobs, although this can

be different according to the region. For example, building is considered a decent job in mountainous areas, whereas in Hadramout, it is the job of socially marginalized people - the poor and vulnerable.

We can also notice different artistic styles for each handicraft. The best example is the pottery makers in the Tihama. They use the wheel, whereas in other areas, they use a mesfahah (Plural is 'masafeh') on a conic base 'menta'a', or on rotating round plates of stones or argil. The tools also differ. For example, weavers use different weaving tools "Anwal" and welders in Yemen use a type of "accordion" bellows to heat the iron by blowing air and it is probable that there is some Turkish influence in this regard. In eastern areas, however, the air blowing is done through a leather air blower "menfakh". In urban areas each team of carpenters is headed by a chief "Akhel", who is elected by individuals or members of the team.

Source: www.yemen-handicraft.com

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Parties' dialogues and agreements Why no resolution to the political crises?

By: Majed Ahmed Al-kotamy
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In contradiction to what happens in most countries around the world, Yemeni dialogues and agreements, endorsed by political parties (either those in power or opposition) do not lead to any rational solutions for the current political crises. Elections also fail to find suitable political outlets or provide a relevant democratic atmosphere. On the contrary, it creates further problems and worsens an already bad situation.

These situations are attributed to the governments' unsuitable policies implemented in their managing of Yemen. It can only bring about two courses of action, either a headlong flight towards more crises or a delay of the same ones. These are circumstances that have thrust Yemen, for more than twenty years now, into a long sequence of crises, dangerously impacting on both Yemen's regional relations and ones with their international neighbours.

When these political crises escalated in 1993, three years after the unity, a dialogue committee, formed under the presidential decree, discussed the thorny points causing discord and possible solutions. The committee tried to contain the situation with an agreement known as the "promising document". This agreement was signed by all political factions, but after three months it failed, due to the lingering in implementing the agreement's terms. Whereupon the summer '94 war broke out, drawing Yemen into an endless stretch of squeezes and further political crises.

In June 2006, the Opposition, represented by the joining meeting parties coalition (JMPs), signed the "principles' agreements" with the ruling General People's Congress (GPC) as a step towards implementing impartially transparent elections. The

agreement stipulated that it was necessary to amend a bundle of regulations related to the electoral system, such as reforming the Supreme Committee for Elections and re-correcting the voters-book. The agreement stressed that it should be put into effect just after the elections finished.

Later that same year, the sides met again and signed a new agreement with added recommendations by the European Union Mission (EUM) to bear witness and co-sponsor the executive process of this agreement.

Instead of boosting efforts to carry out the agreement's terms, the situation went astray. The 14th war with Houthi rebels burst anew in Sa'ada, and the southern movement's activities increased in Lahj and Al-Dhale, pushing Yemen into confrontations on two fronts, north and south. This initiated the more complicated period of modern Yemen. As a consequence, the principle agreements, added by the EUM recommendations, were lost in the sequence of events following the elections.

Conversely, the Opposition did not stay passive, but pursued its peaceful way of dialogue, paying no attention to those in power and were subjected, for two years, to scathing comments. This was their experience with the ruling party, crowned ultimately by the celebrated "February agreement."

Both sides agreed on postponing parliamentary elections for two years until 2011, on the condition that each side embark on a programme of constitutional and electoral reform. After parliament remained for two years more, the current government and the Opposition did not meet but stayed apart from each other and a new crisis came with the 6th Sa'ada war - a war that exhausted the time, effort and resources of Yemen. As usual, the agreement froze and those in power blatantly showed enjoyment of its convenient majority in the parliament, in order to pass or impede

regulations and plans with no efficient resistance.

At that time, the Yemeni nation was hanging its whole heart on the electoral process in order to dismantle the escalating conditions. It wanted to bring relief via political adjustment through a comprehensive national dialogue and an election. The Yemeni experience of elections, up until now, only resulted in a huge bank of accumulating problems. It did not develop its legislative skeleton so it couldn't pacify these latest developments. On the contrary, it gave excuses for not putting agreements into effect, staying with the status quo, singlehandedly performing the GPC in ruling Yemen and vetoing any amendments and adjustments. It tricked both Yemenis and the whole world. Power impeded any projects for amendment and did its best to oppose any course of dialogue or agreement with the Opposition. It cleverly mastered the art of creating issues to disavow all its promises and agreements. Through this policy of creating problems, national issues were put to one side and portrayed the Opposition as the fundamental motive behind the surfacing crises in Yemen.

After that, those in power could easily mislead the foreign world and convince all their partners that the solution to all those problems lay in the continuation of their power to reign. Despite huge corruption, it seemed the best choice, compared to the other suggestions to solve Yemeni crises, introduced to the world in the shape of merely sportive solutions. Unfortunately, the distorted image depicted the Opposition in a poor light, and played a key role in the power's arrogance, egoism, potency and indifference to any agreements signed with Opposition.

The Government's obduracy also plays a role in continuing the crises, through blind inflexibility of power and the non acceptance of any seri-

ous amendments. It wishes to keep all crises' files open, in order to exploit them to blackmail the world and any opposition. It understands well that any actual amendments would restrict its authority and limit its ability to pass regulations that chiefly serve its own interests. So it resorts to hindering the progress of the Opposition's course towards any justifiable demands. Through their actions, the crises will linger and self seeking agreements can be implemented, and the Opposition will not be able to question the situation due to its lack of the "pressure papers", i.e. its pathetic wish to not aggravate the current conditions. Those in power are well aware of this and understand the opposition's mentality. So, it will always reject the Opposition's demands and refuse them, even if the demands agree with the law and the Yemeni constitution.

Nowadays, the Government, after quenching the conflict in Sa'ada, once more seeks to create new crises in the south through politicizing the riots and dissatisfaction in some southern governorates. According to some political analysts', who are in touch with Yemeni issues and in close acquaintance with internal affairs, several attempts are being made 'behind the curtain' to involve our international partners into the south's quagmire, just like the involvement of our Saudi neighbours in the 6th Sa'ada war.

To sum up, the Opposition's agreements with those in power will stay as mere ink on paper and will not help solve the escalating situation or result in any basic political amendments, unless both the Opposition and honest Yemenis take possession of the tools of change and use them bravely and rapidly. Time is a crucial factor in solving most issues all over the world. Indeed, Yemenis, hopefully, have become very conscious of the fact that who wins at the end, is not the stronger but the faster.

Through The Mind's Eye

By: Maged Thabet Alkholidy
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The nightmare of the water crisis!

Just imagine, dear readers, a life without water. This nightmare threatens almost all Yemenis. Historically speaking, this problem first appeared as a problem in some cities. Gradually, it spread to cover the villages as well. Nobody knows what the situation will be in the future and nobody has found a practical solution, though a lot of money is being spent on seminars and research in order to solve it.

Currently, it is the beginning of summer season. Rains fall heavily almost every day. Water runs in the streets, finally reaching the drains or running into the sea. Meanwhile, the authorities, people, and local and international organizations cry out for water.

In the rainy season, people enjoy standing by windows to see the view, saying "Masha'a Allah" for the water that runs through streets and down the roads. They say "Masha'a Allah" as a religious duty. Eventually, they start cursing the authorities or the people concerned, like the Ministry of Sanctions and Water, because there is a still a shortage of water for daily use. They sometimes shout abuse, but finally surrender and go to buy water, or bring it from other sources.

This happens many times, each time it rains. But the situation remains the same. The people don't take it as something vital for their lives, nor does the government try to find any other permanent solutions, or at least ask people to save the rainwater for home use.

The government is wrong and it knows it because it includes a group of people who also are aware of the water shortage. It is true that some of them do not care because they have their own sources of water for daily use, but they can do nothing for our children and the generations to come, who may not have any water in the future.

Everyone should be thinking about a solution for tomorrow and the days to come. We, as individuals, can not construct water supply stations. However, we can do many things to help ourselves with this crisis.

Exploiting the rainwater can help us a lot. It will not prevent us from still having our beautiful scenery, as people may think. It can, on the other hand, offer us sufficient water for our daily use.

In the villages, dams can be built to save water. The summer rains can fill these, which will provide water not only for the summer, but also for the whole year.

The dams could also be used as a means to feed wells. The rain, as it is, can do nothing because it runs into unusable places. So, dams can provide water for daily use and as feeder source for wells in general.

Some people may laugh at this idea claiming that the cost of building dams is higher than the cost of buying water from the available sources. They are right, I confess. Dams cost a lot to be built but they would ensure a better tomorrow for people's lives.

People can not build dams in cities. They can, however, exploit the rainwater by building specialized tanks, into which pipes can be connected from their roofs. Keeping their roof clean will make the rain fall into these tanks and it can be used, if not for drinking, for many other daily uses.

Through such dams and tanks, people will save a lot of water. They will not need to buy any more. They will, moreover, not need to worry about this problem which threatens the whole country with drought.

A more practical solution is also to economize water use. Our prophet Mohammed (PBUH) says to us: "don't overuse water even if you are on banks of a current river". Saving water, therefore, is a religious duty that all of us should respect in every way.

Keeping these points in mind will widen our awareness to think more about useful and practical solutions. The only thing required from people, as well as the responsible authorities, is to take the matter seriously in a way that promises a better tomorrow for us and our generations to come.

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Be strong to face the world each day

By: Faris Mohammed Al-Shoaebi.
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Be strong to face the world each day, be a leader to those who have lost the path, love those who love you!

These words were uttered to me by my youngest brother Hamzah when I was desperate in life, to give me strength to reach my goals and be an effective person in my community. I would like to shed light on some obstacles, hindrances and challenges facing everyone in society in particular and in life in general.

There is no doubt that everyone has his own affairs and strives to give his best to achieve the ideal results for a bright future.

For instance, university students throughout the country study so as to get a degree but if they want to attain an excellent grade in addition to their hard work, they must be in acquaintance with the professor and must communicate with them during the whole period. And unless this happens, they will not be taken into account and will not be considered to get an excellent grade. Those teachers who deal with their students in these devious ways do not have any regard for the quality of one's answers and do not treat the students on an equal

basis.

This treatment makes an intelligent student disappointed to attain the deserved standard. Hence the majority of students get poor marks and end up as victims of this agonizing system. The result being that dull students get high marks in certain courses, depending on the extent of their intimacy with their teachers while in others they fail as some teachers do not follow this path.

Therefore, my dear students, whatever the difficulties, under all circumstances face the challenges with strong will and determination, and do not let it hinder you to reach your goal. You must be in connection with the teachers according to your abilities as your goal is more important and because the proven command/ communication skills cannot be avoided in the world of today in all walks of life.

But if you cannot, you must be concerned with acquiring knowledge which is far more important than scores in the exam.

What I've mentioned above is an example of familiarity present in some fields of life. Even for getting a job after graduation or those who haven't a degree it is difficult unless one has many acquaintances or mediation or bribery, but with respect to those who are poor or lack the means it is much more difficult to find a suitable job. Finally, af-

ter all their hopeless attempts they tend to work in a simple job unrelated from their specialized fields.

Isaac Newton said, "In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity." Others said, "The pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity, but the optimist sees opportunity in every difficulty," and "This time, you have to be an optimist to open your eyes in the morning."

From these sayings, we conclude the range of their experience in life and their success, because their belief that everything is beautiful including what is ugly helped them to achieve their goals without desperation.

What about us Muslims? The best of the Almighty's creation the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) taught us about the development of humanity, about optimism in our life and in all communications with others. He taught us that one's smile to his brother is like giving alms.

To have good faith in Allah and all that He commanded for the good of this world and the next. By treading on the path shown by our Prophet we will get all success in life.

Ultimately, everyone has to learn to communicate with others and improve their relationship with people because one cannot be successful in our world without emotional intelligence to attract people, especially now when humanity is in need of development.

My classmates

By: Abdulkareem alsharhee
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My classmates are the people I love more than I can express. They were everything to me and I will never forget them, even for a minute. They were my true friends and it is through them that I came to know the world and the real meaning of love. They made me grow into a complete man and I cannot imagine my life without them.

I feel very sad because we have now finished studying together and I wish this

semester had lasted more than one year. This is my sincere feeling towards them and it is our friendship that has given me a chance to say what is in my heart and mind. I am so sad because after the end of this year I will not be with them anymore. I won't have them to spend time with, talk to and go places with. Who could replace them?

Believe me, my friends, my heart loves you very much, as much as drinking water and eating food. Thousands of words are not enough to describe you. Wherever I go and whatever I want, I will imagine you. Your faces and uniform are still memorable, even though

you are not around now. My colleagues, you are so precious to me, you are like my brothers.

Whatever I needed was supplied by you all and whenever I was nervous you alone calmed me down. In fact, I felt very safe with you. I mean all my friends that were boys and I loved my faculty because of them. They meant the world to me and life without them is not life at all and that is what has made my life beautiful.

Women remain mothers, sisters and wives.

So, my classmates, please never forget me. I will remember you for all my life.

MY country

Nasim Jamil Al-saidi
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You are the memories
Which is full of melodies
About yesterday, and tomorrow
Which will never be borrow.
You will be unforgettable.
And no one will be capable.
To cross you off.
Or to do such stuff.
You make my dreams come true.
And you always give me the clue.
You make me finds my goal.
And never turn them to a coal.
You are the main source of culture.
And you always bring that picture.
Which is drown by freedom.
And colored by wisdom.
You makes me believe .
That I should achieve.
my destiny and shape my identity.
And recognize the quality over the quantity.
If once I was proud that's only because
of you (Your daughter).

Breathing life into our future

By: Maisara K.D.
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Sometimes I ask others about their thoughts concerning their future. I wonder what their plans are. I get nothing. If I research students' aims in any secondary school, college, or university, unfortunately I find most of them have none. I think it is a huge problem, which needs attention. If students are studying just to graduate or only to get a certificate, it is just wasting time.

Each person should have an ambition in his life. If we do not have a goal, we will be as a body without a soul because our life will be useless. We will be doing nothing for ourselves or for our future life. So, can you tell me why we are here in this world? Surly it sometimes seems worthless.

We should think about this carefully and make a decision to have our own goal in life. However, the question is how we can form these goals and then fulfill them.

To begin to solve this problem, we should choose an activity that we like doing and want to excel in. Then, we have to gradually fulfill it and we should trust in our ability, because, if we look inside, we can find lots that we like doing, as preparation for future life. After that, we can progress to the next step, where we have to determine our main aim and how we want to achieve it. Many obstacles may confront us but we have to struggle and motivate ourselves to fulfill our supreme goal. In addition, we have to try our best to get experience from others, which will help us to develop our practical skills. The last step is to listen to the opinions and advice of others because they

around us: me, you, your sister, my sister, your mum, my mum, your wife. This problem is going to be an epidemic in our society.

A random study of groups of women found out that 81.7 percent of women were exposed to vulgar words, 73.1 percent of women were exposed to the touching of parts of their body, 67.6 percent of women were exposed to the touching of their hands, 64.4 percent of women were followed by aimless young men, 51.9 percent were harassed over the telephone, 45.9 percent were exposed to shameful gestures in public.

After all this, do these results require us to think again about our behavior?

Think again

By: Hanna Al-Hodaimi

Tell the believing men to lower their gaze, (from looking at forbidden things), and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts)," said God, "and tell the believing women to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things), and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts)." That's what our God said.
But the essential question is: Does anyone listen to him? Does anyone understand his message?
There is a big number of victims all

around us: me, you, your sister, my sister, your mum, my mum, your wife. This problem is going to be an epidemic in our society.
A random study of groups of women found out that 81.7 percent of women were exposed to vulgar words, 73.1 percent of women were exposed to the touching of parts of their body, 67.6 percent of women were exposed to the touching of their hands, 64.4 percent of women were followed by aimless young men, 51.9 percent were harassed over the telephone, 45.9 percent were exposed to shameful gestures in public.
After all this, do these results require us to think again about our behavior?

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شركات للتأمين
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الوطنية للتأمين: ٧٧٣٧٣/٧٧٣٧٣ - فاكس: ٧٧٣٩٢٤
مرب للتأمين: ٢٠١١٢٩/٨/١٢
الشركة اليمنية الإسلامية للتأمين وإعادة التأمين: صنعاء: ٢٨٤٩٢٣
عن: ٢٤٤٣٨٠
تلفون: ٢٥٨٨٨١
شركة اليمن للتأمين: صنعاء: ٢٧٣٨٠٦/٢٧٢٩١٢/٤٤
عن: ٢٤٦٧١٧
تلفون: ٢٥٠٣٤٥

مدارس
روضة واحة الأطفال: تلفون: ٤٧٠٢٥٠ - فاكس: ٧٣٤٥٢٢٢٥
مدارس صنعاء الدولية: ٣٧٠١٩١/٢ - فاكس: ٣٧٠١٩٣
مدرسة التزكية الدولية: ٤٤٨٢٥٨/٩
مدرسة الماجد اليمنية: ٢٠٦٦٥٩

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التسليم للسفريات: ٢٧٠٧٥٠
العالمية للسفريات والسياحة: ٤٤١١٥٨٩/٦٠

مطاعم
مطعم ومخازن الشيباني (باسم محمد عبده الشيباني)
تلفون: ٢٦٦٣٧٥ - ٥٠٤٢٩٠ - فاكس: ٢٦٦٦١٩

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Yemenis voice their concerns on recent price hikes

By: Ismail Al-Ghabri

Prices have increased recently by 10-15 percent, according to importers who buy goods in bulk. The prices, however, have increased even more for average consumers who buy individual items, notably staple food items such as wheat, sugar and cooking oil.

Economists have pinned the price hikes on the devaluation of the Yemeni riyal compared to the dollar, and a recent cabinet decision to increase custom fees on 71 imported goods. At the beginning of April, an emergency meeting in the Chamber of Commerce discussed the custom fee increase. Participants decided to send a letter to the cabinet highlighting the negative consequences of this decision and pleading for it to be revoked. Yemeni Minister of Trade Yahya Al-Mutawakil has called the measure a temporary one.

The Yemen Times asked people from different social and professional sections of society to offer their thoughts about the current situation.

Ahmad Ali Al-Seyani, employee

There is no doubt that the sudden price hikes have affected my budget badly, so that, in order to live, I will buy only basic foodstuffs.

Mohsin Mujahed Ma'odh, retired employee

May God help the employees who are retired. The financial crisis has affected people badly, especially those with a limited income. This crisis is the result of the greediness of merchants. It was also caused by the state's unreasonable behaviour and carelessness towards its own people. I do not have plans for the future because I can barely afford to feed my family.



Popular market near the old city of Sana'a - With the additional custom fees, the retail prices of all goods have increased. This could push people to buy cheaper goods of lesser quality and put their health at risk.

Abdul Mun'em Al-Gaberi, teacher

The situation that Yemen is experiencing, such as the financial crisis, has made me abandon some habits of mine. I will quit smoking cigarettes and chewing qat. I will even stop buying soft drinks, because for me, the situation is terrible.

Saleh Al-Fajom, soldier

I do not have future plans because my salary is not enough to even cover my daily expenses. I can not pay my debts.

Zaid Al-Shami, soldier

Soldiers in this country are miserable men. I have five children and my salary is YR 25,000 (USD 140). I do not have enough money in my pocket and I chew qat. Sometimes I work in construction so that I can buy qat. The government does not provide its citizens with the basic requirements for a decent life.

Nashwan Al-Haj, recent graduate

After these price increases, I have decided to get married in a year's time. Hopefully, conditions will get better.

Saleh Al-Radi'e, bus driver

Contrary to other countries, where governments try to better their economic situation, in Yemen the government is imposing price hikes on people. I work from 6 am till midnight. I try my best to pay for my family and never overspend, but the new price hikes have forced me not to spend one extra riyal on finer foodstuffs.

Hamoud Al-Hobaishi, retailer

The government has placed a heavy burden on people. Some have become richer as others become poorer. Food is more expensive and its price is increasing. I feel embarrassed when clients have to pay more money food than they did the

previous day. It is known that retailers make less money than wholesalers.

Abdul Kareem Al-Kuhali, construction contractor

The turbulence in iron prices has meant that some construction work has stopped. The increase in prices has sparked arguments between government authorities and construction contractors, because project plans were initially based on the lower prices.

Mojahed Ma'odh, real estate contractor

The price of iron used in construction varied between YR 180,000 and YR 170,000 or USD 900 and USD 850 a ton. In the past, it varied between YR 120,000 and YR 115,000 or USD 600 and USD 575 a ton. The iron used in forming doors is now YR 230,000 or USD 1,150. In the past, it was YR 120,000 or USD 600.

I fear that this increase in prices will contribute to the recession in the Yemeni construction industry, since the beginning of the financial crisis. People will not be able to own a house due to these price hikes.

Mohammad Al-Kuhali, construction materials contractor

The price of scrap iron has increased by 35 percent and the price of crude iron has increased by 10 percent.

Mohammad Humaid, economist

The increase in prices is linked to the value of the dollar. Prices decrease when its value is low, and increase when it is higher. A number of economists have called on the government to coordinate with businessmen to keep prices fixed and not increased.

When the prices of local commodities as well as imported commodities change, it negatively affects efforts exerted to end poverty. The impact of the

devaluation of the Yemeni riyal by 12 percent compared to the dollar cannot be ignored.

The relationship between the US dollar and the Yemeni riyal resembles one between two boxers, in which the strong dollar is beating up the weak Yemeni riyal, who cannot stop either the punches or the fight.

Mohammad Salah, Deputy of the Chamber of Commerce

The increase of custom taxes on 71 different commodities is an aggressive strike against local capital and has had a negative impact on people. The current conditions cannot cope with these price increases. They threaten local capital by forcing it to be invested outside the country.

The government has lost its capacity to treat these problems, except by increasing customs taxes on commodities that it says are 'extras', whereas they are necessary ones, such as fertilizers.

Ahmad Mohammad, construction worker

I do not have a monthly salary, although I work from early morning till 5 pm. I try to pay for my family, who live in the village, but I cannot give them all they need, due to the increase in prices.

Naser Al-Doba'e, retailer

The recent increased prices have made people insult us. They think that we ourselves have increased them. How can we

live in a country that does not provide our basic needs?

Yaser Al-Awadhi, grocery owner

The state does not respect its citizens. Take the example of Nido powder milk, I used to buy it for YR 3,000 but now the wholesaler sells it for YR 3,700.

Um Mohammad, housewife

Poor people cannot afford their families' basic needs. My husband's salary is not enough for me, him and our seven children.

Nabila Mohammad, housewife and teacher

I used to manage the family's budget in the past and could save some money. But now I can't because prices are unstable and change unexpectedly. Corruption and bribery are rampant in government establishments, and it is the people who are the victims.

Naser Al-Rade'e, grocery owner

Prices have increased by 15 to 20 percent, and an extra YR 400 or USD 2 have been added to the price of cooking oil and milk powder. Their prices were YR 3,400 or USD 17. Now they are around YR 4,000 or USD 20. Prices have increased by YR 300 for imported cooking oil. Their prices were YR 2,000, 1800 and 1600. The price of cheese, milk and juice has increased by 5 percent. The price of wheat is now YR 4,000 or USD 20. It was YR 3,600.

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