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Digital books leave Arabs cold

Human Rights Watch 2010 world freedoms report The abusers' reaction: Intensifying attacks on human rights defenders, organizations, and institutions

Extractions from the report

SANA'A, May 9 — The 20th annual World Report summarizes human rights conditions in more than 90 countries and territories worldwide. It reflects extensive investigative work undertaken in 2009 by Human Rights Watch staff, usually in close partnership with human rights activists in the country in question.

According to the report, Yemen is not doing well at all. The human rights situation in Yemen deteriorated significantly in 2009. Yemen's previous advances in the rule of law have been eroded by hundreds of arbitrary arrests and use of lethal force against peaceful demonstrators as the central government responded to increasing political unrest in the south. A resurgence of conflict with Houthi rebels in the north saw both sides reportedly commit laws of war violations, and use child soldiers, and the government continued to deny humanitarian access to the displaced. Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula launched attacks from Yemen inside the country and in Saudi Arabia.

The Human Rights Watch 2010 report focuses on how the world governments' are dealing with opposition and human rights activists and the price paid on both sides. Especially since the global human rights movement has made sure that abuse carries a price.

Conflict in the North

On August 12, sporadic clashes between Houthi rebels and government forces in the northern Sa'da governorate erupted into the sixth round of heavy fighting since June 2004. The conflict has displaced more than 150,000 people, many of whom remain out of the reach of humanitarian agencies. Saudi Arabia in September blocked refugees' access to the kingdom, denied humanitarian access to Yemen through its territory, and forcibly returned refugees who had crossed its border. In November Saudi forces became a party to the armed conflict.

Yemeni authorities continued to restrict access by international aid agencies to persons in need in Sa'da governorate, shutting down telephone lines as well. The United Nations in August called for humanitarian corridors and localized ceasefires, to allow aid to reach civilians, and for civilians to be able to flee to safety.

Government forces and Houthi fighters

both recruited children for combat. Houthi fighters carried out summary executions and put civilians in harm's way by firing from populated areas. Government forces reportedly conducted indiscriminate aerial bombardment in civilian-populated areas, including a crowded market in al-Talh on September 14 and a gathering of displaced persons in al-'Adi on September 16.

Suppression of southern separatism

Security forces carried out mass arbitrary arrests surrounding protests of the peaceful Southern Movement, a loose grouping with broad backing demanding secession. Security forces erected checkpoints on days of announced protests and arrested suspected participants, but also uninvolved bystanders. The number of arrests at a July 7 Aden protest led authorities to move detainees into industrial hangars and even to the sports stadium.

Yemen remained notorious for its forced disappearances, including that of Muhammad al-Maqalili, a journalist for the opposition Yemeni Socialist Party's online party organ, *Eshtraki.net*. A group of men grabbed Maqalili in September 2009 in the capital Sana'a, shortly after he had criticized the government over its bombing campaign against northern rebels. His associates said sources had identified him at the Political Security Organization prison, then at a Ministry of Defense prison, and, in November, in a prison in Aden.

Other arrests targeted perceived leaders of the Southern Movement. In early June police stopped Walid Shu'aibi, the head of the Union of Southern Youth in al-Dhali, and dragged him into their car as he was walking from his student housing in Aden. Lawyer Muhammad Hasani on May 7 tried to represent detainees, but was arrested and detained at the Criminal Investigation Division for six days instead. Ahead of the planned July 7 protest, authorities on July 2 arrested two leaders of the Southern Movement, Qasim al-Da'iri and Ali al-Sa'di, who remain in detention at this writing.

Security forces also "disappeared" people. In April they arrested Ahmad Ba-Mu'allim in Hadhramawt; his whereabouts remained unknown until lawyers for HOOD, a rights organization, got access to him in San'a's War Prison in July.

During an April 15 protest in Habibain, riot police without warning or provocation fired automatic weapons directly at protestors, wounding one man in the foot. During a May 21 protest in Aden security forces on several different occasions opened fire without warning or provocation, wounding 23 protestors including Nasr Hamuzaiba, a former army officer and Southern Movement activist. Protestors responded by throwing rocks at the security forces, who again responded with deadly force. Rock-throwing by the protestors, while possibly criminal, does not warrant lethal responses in such circumstances. On May 30, protestors marched peacefully in Shahr, demanding the release of some 75 persons detained during a protest two days earlier. When they came to within meters of riot police blocking the road, police fired first into the air, but then at the protestors, killing 'Awwad Baram. The government held no inquiry into the fatal shooting. In al-

Dhali, security forces shot and killed Tawfiq al-Ja'di during a May 31 demonstration without warning or provocation.

Media freedom

On May 11 the judiciary created a new court to try journalists. On July 11 this Specialized Press Court held its first criminal hearing, relating to earlier (December 2006) charges against Sami Ghalib, editor of Al-Nida newspaper, over an article about corruption at the Ministry of Endowments' Hajj and 'Umra department. A special prosecutor for press and publication matters can take journalists and media personnel to court over violations of the penal code and the Press and Publications Law.

Information Minister Hasan al-Luzi on May 4 announced a ban on the distribution of eight of Yemen's leading independent daily and weekly newspapers, Al-Ayyam, Al-Masdar, Al-Watani, Al-Diyar, Al-Mustaqilla, Al-Nida, Al-Shari, and Al-Ahali, for publishing articles "against national unity and the country's highest interests" and "incit[ing] violations of law and order, spreading hatred and enmity among the united people of Yemen." The government also imposed informal censorship, imposing "red lines" that included publishing interviews with Southern Movement leaders and gory pictures of injured or killed southern protestors, and mentioning the names of the organizations behind the protests. Pressure by authorities on media outlets extended to physical attacks on Al-Ayyam, Yemen's oldest and largest independent newspaper. On May 1, armed individuals stopped Al-Ayyam's delivery van in the Milah area of Lahj governorate and burned 16,500 copies.

Continued on page 2

Heavy rain to continue in Yemeni highlands



Recent floods in the capital last week swept ten vehicles away, damaged around 181 houses and 15 shops. Seven people died, according to the Ministry of Interior.

By: Ali Saeed

SANA'A, May 9 — The Yemeni National Meteorological Center has renewed its warning of more heavy rain in the western highlands of the country.

The rain is expected from Sa'ada in the north down to Taiz in the south during the coming 48 hours, an official at the center told Yemen Times, adding that heavy rain may extend to reach southern coasts and Socotra Island.

Last week, heavy rain in the capital resulted in huge floods that caused human and material losses. Seven died and eight others were injured, the Ministry of Interior reported last Friday. Around 181 houses and 15 shops were

damaged by rain and floods and ten cars were swept away, according to the ministry.

The ministry also reported that in Raima governorate heavy rain swept away large agricultural areas and some agricultural crops.

According to the Saba news agency, local councils in the capital have announced an urgent bid for a project to warn civilians of floods, following heavy rain in the capital.

The project would focus on warning Yemenis of possible floods in the Salla, a road in the center of Sana'a that is also the traditional passageway of water after heavy rain. Last Thursday, unprecedented floods in the paved road swept away ten cars.

The ministry said that it instructed the Civil Defense in the capital and all governorates to prepare to face any casualty caused by future floods.

Similarly, the general director of the Traffic Authority Yahya Zاهر yesterday warned drivers in flooded areas and advised them to wait until the water recedes.

In the Yemeni highlands, heavy rain often leads to rockslides and the meteorological center is always warning citizens to take precautions to avoid such disasters.

In October 2008, in Hadramout, Shabwa and Al-Mahra which are eastern Yemeni governorates, floods displaced around 3,000 people and around eighty people were killed.

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Saudi Fund for Development signs funding deals with Yemeni Banks

By: Ali Saeed

SANA'A, May 5 — On Monday May 3rd, the Saudi Fund for Development (SFD) signed funding agreements with three Yemeni banks in order to facilitate Saudi exports to Yemen.

During the signing ceremony, Ahmed Al-Ghanam, general director of the Saudi Exports Program, said that this agreement aims to secure Saudi exporters when they deal with Yemeni suppliers.

He also said that funding would boost trade between Yemen and Saudi Arabia and would make it easier for Yemeni traders to import from Saudi Arabia.

The funding agreements were signed with the Cooperative and Agricultural Credit Bank (CAC Bank), the Yemeni Commercial Bank and the Yemen Kuwait Bank.

The funding agreements total USD 23 million.

CAC Bank received the highest amount with over USD 15 million. The first agreement was signed by Al-Ghanam, the General Director of The Saudi Exports Program, and the Chairman of the Board of CAC Bank, Hafiz Me'yad.

The second agreement was signed by Al-Ghanam and the Assistant General Director of the Yemeni Commercial Bank, Mahmoud Haboub, with funding ties reaching USD 5 million.

Finally, the Yemen Kuwait Bank received USD 3 million.



At the signing ceremony, Ahmed Al-Khawi, the head of the Yemeni Banks Association called on all banks and financial institutions to provide the proper environment for investment in the country.

However, some economists who attended the ceremony criticized Yemen for not having programs for Yemeni exports in order to support non-oil exports.

"The Saudi Exports Program is an excellent experience that supports Saudi exports, but this program is not going to help Yemeni exports. Yemen is in need of a similar program to support its own exports," Mostaf Nasr, chairman of the Studies and Economic Media Center told the Yemen Times.

"Foreign suppliers are in need of financial facilities to motivate them to

import Yemeni goods and the Yemeni government should provide such facilities to support its exports," he added.

These funding agreements would push Saudi exports into the Yemeni market, however, Saudi goods are already flowing into Yemen and face no difficulties. The problem is with Yemeni exports that are not supported and vulnerable to a lot of difficulties in reaching the Gulf States markets, according to Nasr.

He pointed out that there is no governmental authority in Yemen that helps Yemeni exports.

"There was a Yemeni Exports Supreme Council, but it was closed recently as it had a weak performance and now there is no authority to supervise and support Yemeni exports," said Nasr.

Sana'a University professors remain on full strike

By: Ali Saeed

SANA'A May 9 — The Workers Union of the Universities of Sana'a and Aden has reached an agreement with the leadership of the Ministry of Higher Education to lessen its three hour strike to two hours and to open lectures, libraries and lab classes. However, professors at Sana'a University are still on strike, according to the union.

The union said that representatives from their organization met with the Minister of Higher Education, Saleh Ba Sura, and the Rector of Sana'a University, Khaled Tamim, on Saturday at the ministry.

Representatives from the workers union of the Universities of Sana'a and Aden came out with a meeting statement after in their meeting with the Minister and the Rector. This memo assigned the Minister of Civil Service, the Minister of Higher Education and the Minister of Finance to discuss and investigate workers' demands at the universities and to set up proper solutions for the status of technicians and administrative personnel.

According to the memo, the assigned officials will discuss workers' demands according to the appropriate laws concerning their posts and their wages.

The memo also said that representatives from the workers union of Aden and Sana'a University would participate in the proceedings of the committee responsible for following-up on



Workers Union at Sana'a University has been on strike and protest for one month, yet the state has just started to resolve their problems.

workers demands.

Representatives from workers unions at other universities also have the right to participate in the proceedings of the committee and attend its sessions.

Workers at public universities such as Sana'a and Aden University have been struggling to get their rights for a long time. This time, they are intensifying their strike to force the state to improve their financial status and provide them with medical insurance.

In a press release, the Workers Union of the Universities of Sana'a and Aden, welcomed the ministry's response to their demands. However, they threatened to only reduce the strike to two hours for two weeks and

warned that if the state kept procrastinating they would go back on full strike.

Similarly, the Head of the Professors Union at Sana'a University, Dr Abdullah Al-Azazi, told the Yemen Times that his colleagues at the university remain on strike. Furthermore, he stated that the government has started to respond to their strike, saying that his union would meet the leadership of the Higher Council.

The professors are in a similar situation to that of the technicians and administrative personnel, they demand that the state optimize their financial status, provide them with medical insurance and promote academic reform through combating corruption.

Yemeni media lacks professionalism, says academic

By: Sadeq Al-Wesabi

SANA'A, May 9 — Academics and journalists described the Yemeni press as "weak" and "unprofessional" during a symposium organized by Al-Afeef Cultural Foundation last Tuesday.

The criticism follows a recent opinion poll by the Yemeni Polling Center, according to which over 21 percent of Yemenis do not trust the Yemeni media at all.

"The message of the press is accusatory in the governmental media, declamatory in the partisan media, and uninterested in the private press," said Dr. Abdurrahman Al-Shami, professor of media and communication at Sana'a University.

"The press in Yemen is characterized by exaggeration, contradiction, and propaganda," he said.

Al-Shami criticized the excessive politicizing of journalism in Yemen and confirmed that the most Yemeni newspapers have not used the professional tool of investigative reports on corruption in Yemen.

"Journalists are confused between news and opinion," said Al-Shami, adding that the press in Yemen lacks credibility and accuracy, besides it lacks to professional journalists.

Reading newspapers has declined due to the absence of ethics, according to Al-Shami: "There is a bad stereotype about journalists by the society that look at them extorters."



Yemeni press are either governmental that promotes the state's achievements, partisan that always accuses the state of not doing well or private that does not serve the public interest, according to the professor.

There is also no respect for public opinion in Yemeni media, according to Al-Shami.

According to the recent opinion poll by the Yemeni Polling Center, over 18 percent of Yemenis believe that the Yemeni media does not express citizen issues at all.

"Interaction between the press and its audience is very bad, so the influ-

ence of the press on its audience is ineffective," said Al-Shami.

Repressive laws

"Unfortunately, until now, there are Yemeni journalist in jails and cases of repression by the government increase day by day," said Saeed Thabet, first deputy director of Yemeni Journalists Syndicate.

Thabet criticized the bad performance of the Ministry of Information, accusing it of working against journalists and working to control all newspapers and websites.

He described the ministry as "having set a record in projects to deprive journalists of freedom," stressing that for the first time in the history of Yemeni press, eight newspapers were confiscated last year at the same time.

"There is a tendency to legitimize the repression adopted by the Ministry of Information through new laws," Thabet added, hinting to the new law proposed by the ministry to regulate audio-visual media.

Thabet indicated that amendments to some articles in the penal code may increase penalties relating to freedom of speech.

"We won't accept these repressive laws and we will refuse them totally," he said.

"Not only do journalists in Yemen suffer from a low income, but Ministry of Information always intimidates them," he said.

"There is no democracy without free press," said Elham Abdulwahab, the head of the Center for Transparency and Studies.

Abdulwahab suggested establishing a fund to support the Yemeni press.

"We need society to support the press, the mouthpiece of the people that protects their interests and conveys their problems," he concluded.

Yemeni Worker's Union threatens full strike

By: Mahmoud Assamiee

SANA'A, May 9-The Yemeni Workers Union announced, on Saturday, that a full strike will start from the May 15 if the government does not respond to its demands.

The strike will be applied in both public and private sectors and even within international and civil society organizations.

Work in public services that touch urgent human needs like emergency and operation rooms, airport monitoring, firefighting operations, and electricity will be given exceptions.

The union is demanding an improvement in its workers' living conditions. Specifically, they want the difficulties resulting from the devaluation of local currency and the subsequent prices hikes, to be addressed.

The union's primary demand is that the minimum monthly wage should be no less than USD 300, instead of the current minimum monthly salary of less than USD 100.

The union is also demanding the release of annual bonuses, and the additional increases promised by the government years ago.

They also want a reduction in the taxes imposed on employees -currently 16 percent of employees' salaries, improving health conditions of workers, and giving fixed jobs to contractors.

"We call on all laborers in Yemen

to respond to the call to strike," said Jamal Assanabani, the deputy chairman of the Yemeni Workers' Union.

"These demands are based on a study of monthly basic needs of employees in the minimum wage level," he added. "This threat of a full strike came after the government refused to respond to our legal demands."

Assanabani said that all Arab and international labor unions and federations, as well as International Labor Organization, support the Yemeni Workers' Union in its legal demands.

"Today, we extended a letter to the president to press the government to respond to our demands," said the deputy chairman of the Yemeni labor union.

Earlier, the council discussed a number of labor issues that included the agreement between the union and the government to form a committee to tackle the workers' demands.

On the celebration of Labor Day, President Ali Abdullah Saleh issued directives to establish a bank for workers with capital of YR 3 billion.

"This bank does not respond to our demands," said Assanabani.

The union authorized its executive office to resume talks with the government provided that the government's representatives are able to make decisions and sign an agreement regarding the legal demands to be presented by the negotiation team.

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Continued from page 1

Human Rights Watch 2010 world freedoms report

On the night of May 2, soldiers at two military checkpoints outside Aden confiscated more than 50,000 copies of Al-Ayyam, providing employees with a receipt signed by the police, the intelligence service, and the Ministry of Information. On May 4, Al-Ayyam suspended publication due to a siege of their offices. On May 12, security forces exchanged fire with guards at the Al-Ayyam compound in Aden, leaving one bystander dead and another gravely wounded.

Terrorism and counterterrorism

Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, a new merger of al Qaeda's Yemeni and Saudi branches, carried out attacks on both countries from Yemen, where about two dozen wanted Saudi militants, including nine former detainees of the United States at Guantanamo Bay, are said to be hiding. In March a suicide bomber killed four South Korean tourists in Hadhramawt, and in August a suicide bomber who crossed into Saudi Arabia nearly assassinated the Saudi counterterrorism chief, Prince Muhammad bin Nayef. Islamist militants are among the possible suspects in the June abduction of nine foreigners in north Yemen, three of whom-two German nurses and a South Korean teacher-were killed.

Security forces arbitrarily detained more than 135 terrorism suspects without charge, including one former Guantanamo detainee held for five months, and two children held as hostages to induce relatives to surrender.

US concerns about Yemen's counterterrorism measures stalled repatriation of more than 90 Yemenis at Guantanamo-nearly half the remaining detainees. Only two Yemenis have been returned since 2007: Salim Hamdan in November 2008 and Ala' Ali Ahmad in September 2009.

Death penalty

In 2009 Yemen executed more than 30 persons as of October, including Aisha al-Hamza for murdering her husband, whom she alleged had abused their daughter. Courts sentenced to death members of al Qaeda, Huthi rebels, and alleged spies for Israel and Iran.

Women's and girls' rights

In a positive step, parliament in February gave women the right to pass their nationality on to their children, and set the minimum legal age for marriage at 17. However, early marriage remains widespread, exposing young girls to domestic violence and maternal mortality, and cutting short their education. In September a 12-year-old married girl died in childbirth. Yemen has one of the world's highest maternal mortality rates, with an estimated eight women dying each day from childbirth complications. Seventy-five percent of Yemenis live in rural areas with no hospitals.

Women who marry against parental wishes are sometimes charged with adultery and imprisoned. Marital rape is not criminalized, trapping forcibly married girls and women in relationships with abusive husbands. Women fleeing domestic violence are sometimes incarcerated, and may face prolonged detention when male relatives refuse to collect them. A new policy allows female relatives to collect female detainees as well, but to date it is not consistently observed.

Key international actors

Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and other Persian Gulf states provide substantial amounts of assistance to Yemen, including to tribal leaders and religious institutions.

Nine European Union states also provide aid to Yemen. The largest donor, the United Kingdom, plans to give the equivalent of US\$189 million between 2007 and 2011. For fiscal year 2010 the Obama administration requested from Congress US\$55.5 million, an increase of US\$20 million compared to 2009, bringing US aid levels back to 2007 levels. The biggest increases went to programs of "governing justly and democratically," and to human rights and the rule of law within that category. Washington publicly supported Yemen's unity but criticized attacks on Al-Ayyam newspaper.

The UN and donor states played a greater role in 2009 pressing the government to grant humanitarian access to civilians affected by the Sa'da conflict.

Their News

Make your dreams come true! Travel for free on Yemenia Airways every Thursday until 2 June, 2010

By: Mohammed Mansour Al-Haj
For the Yemen Times

Yemenia Airlines has launched a new competition for its customers to better its customer service and to stick by its supporters as we always got used to it to be the closest to us.

A celebration was held in the hall of the Sana'a Trade Centre (STC) in Algeria Street, for free tickets on all local and regional routes, on May 6 in the evening.

Jubran Salim Al-Jahdri, Marketing Director for Yemen Airways, participated in the festival.

"Our Love for the customer is the main objective of this festival, and we are always present to meet his or her expectations," he said.

Al-Jahdri added that Yemenia Airways is a strong and competitive company at the international level through the first-rate services it provides, the most important of which are: insurance, special offers for holidays, organizing trips for medical treatment, online booking, V.I.P. services.

"I wish success to all and hope that all win with Yemenia," he said to participants.

For his part, Hani Fathi, Promotion and Advertising Specialist at Yemenia Airways, said that the goal of this ceremony is "promotion for Yemenia

Airways, to make known the services of Yemenia, its special prices and to become closer to the public."

Fathi expressed his delight at the



large attendance and congratulated the winners who obtained free tickets, wished success and good fortune for all and invited all to engage in the competition.

Abdul-Karim Al-Aordoni, a student, won a free ticket.

"This ticket came on time, because I need to travel abroad to treat my eyes," he said. "I thank all Yemenia staff."

Mohammed Al-Hamdani, another winner, was equally pleased to have won.

"It is the first time in my life for me to win something of such worth, which is a free return ticket from Sana'a to Dubai," he said. "My impression of Yemenia Airways is that it is a pioneer company, exemplary in its pilots, has modern fleets, and has achieved continued developments."

He thanked Yemenia Airways.



Al-Rowaishan Group Heavy rain and land slide causes bus to slip

Marketing and sales managers at Al-Rowaishan Group for Yemeni and International Transportation, Abdulkareem Al-Hatemi, said that a land slide caused a bus to slip in Bani Al-Mansoor area. Four passengers died as a result and another 16 were injured.

According to Al-Hatemi, heavy rain caused damage on the main road and caused the bus to slip. The bus, which was on the Hodeida-Sana'a road, was carrying 35 passengers from Sana'a to the Saudi Arabia.

He said that the bus driver has 12 years' experience on international roads.

Al-Hatemi added that Al-Rowaishan Group rescue the injured, visited their families, and provided assistance to them.



He added that all passengers obtained complete insurance when they bought their tickets. Their luggage was delivered to their families after the accident.

On behalf of the group employees, Al-Hatemi conveyed the sincere condolences to the victims' families and thanked all who helped to rescue them.

US government assists in Yemen facing disaster

USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) provided USD1.9 million in April 2010 to three non-governmental organizations for the provision of humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and other conflict-affected populations in northern Yemen. The new programs will provide an estimated 250,000 IDPs with urgently needed shelter materials, food assistance and health services, in addition to supporting the logistics operation of these organizations in their humanitarian activities. The implementing partners for these grants are Relief International, Save the Children, and ADRA.

In addition to the new USD1.9 million, USAID has previously provided over USD10 million in emergency assistance to people affected by conflict in northern Yemen.

On May 2, Vice Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Hisham Sharaf Abdullah and U.S. Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Angie Bryan signed an agreement to allocate USD4.66 million in U.S. Department of Agriculture aid to Yemen for development projects across the country. The agreement will help Yemen achieve food security and boost Yemen's capacity to respond to food-related disasters around the country.

The agreement pledges USD2 million to renovate and upgrade the Aden Republican Hospital, and it dedicates USD2.66 million to bolster the capacity of Yemen's agricultural sector, including funding an agricultural laboratory in Sana'a, a water and irrigation project for Abyan, Ta'iz, and Sana'a, and a vocational training program for women in rural areas across Yemen.

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Charitable Society for Social Welfare publishes its Annual Report 2009

The Charitable Society for Social Welfare annual report for the year 2009 contained the activities and functions conducted by last year. The report also contained the beneficiaries' names and the services they received.

In the report's introduction Judge Murshed Al-Arashani, director of CSSW said that the society displays transparency through the publication of this report in which it mentioned all accomplishments in fields of

health, society, education and development. The report also mentioned the functions done in women development field.

Al-Arashi added that the society aspires to becoming the number one society in achieving the sustainable development to reduce poverty.

He stressed that CSSW mobilizes the community to work together and share a sense of social responsibility in both public and private spheres.



أن تنطلق بسيارتك من ١٠٠-٠ كم قبل أن تكمل قراءة هذا العنوان... تلك هي المتعة.

لا شيء يضاهي متعة التوق على الطريق في جميع الظروف، فقد تم تجهيز BMW X5 M بنظام xDrive الفريد للدفع الرباعي ومحرك جبار تصل قوته إلى ٥٥٥ حصاناً مع تقنية التوربو المزدوج لتنتقل بسيارتك من وضعية السكون إلى ١٠٠ كم/الساعة خلال ٤,٧ ثانية فقط وتهيمن على سائر أنواع الطرق. أما تصميمها فيجمع بين عراقة الطرازات M وتميز سيارات الأنشطة الرياضية، بدءاً من شبك التهوية الكروي الواسع ذي فتحات الاستنشاق الكبيرة، مروراً بالخياشيم المميزة للطرازات M، وانتهاءً بخطوط الهيكل الانسيابية التي تعكس جراءة السيارة بكل وضوح. انطلق اليوم في BMW X5 M وستبقى أنت سيد الطريق. تقدم معها خدمة BMW الشاملة النفقات للصيانة لمدة ٥ سنوات أو لمسافة ٦٠,٠٠٠ كلم مجاناً وضماناً لسنتين دون تحديد المسافة.

BMW X5 M تعني المتعة.

BMW M.

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Encouraging girls to go to school: Focus on Dhamar governorate



Around 90 percent of girls in Dhamar drop out from school, starting from the fourth grade, because of cultural barriers, according to Jalila Sharhan, Director of the Girl's Education department at Dhamar's Education Office. For families with many children, priority goes to educating the boys, leaving the girls behind to do house chores or work in the fields.

With at least 35 percent of Yemeni girls between 6 and 14 who have never been to school, Yemen has realized its need to carry out national and local initiatives to increase girls' enrolment in schools and make sure they continue studying. Creating schools in support of such efforts is another initiative supported by the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

By: Yemen Times Staff

Tears filled her eyes every time she returned from the fields, collecting wood for home. She was not sad because she had to carry the load on her head or because she had to walk under the burning noon sun. What hurt her most was that while she was carrying wood, girls of her age from the same neighbourhood were carrying books on their way to school.

Jamila Khaled is a 32-year-old housewife from Dhamar governorate who has dropped out from the seventh grade. Her family decided that she has become a woman and in her father's opinion, decent girls didn't go to mixed schools.

Around 90 percent of the girls in Dhamar drop out of school, starting from the fourth grade, because of cultural barriers, according to, Jalila Sharhan, Director of the Girl's Education Department at Dhamar's Education Office. However, in order to mitigate this problem, there are several initiatives being implemented by both local authorities and donors, with the support of civil society organizations.

"Coordination councils for girls' education have been created to carry out specific projects and improve girls' education in this governorate. Some of these initiatives involve fee exemption for girls and contracting girls with secondary level degrees to teach in girls' schools," explained Sharhan, adding that the council carries out awareness events as well.

"Only 44 percent of girls in Dhamar are enrolled in schools while the rest stay at home because of social, economic and cultural reasons," said the Deputy Director of the Education Office in Dhamar, Saeed Al Ghaberi. According to authorities and specialists, in addition to social and economical reasons, girls either don't go to or drop out from schools because of a lack of female teachers and girls' only classrooms in rural areas.

Moreover, in some schools there are no facilities, such as toilets or barriers to protect girls' privacy. Statistics show that Dhamar governorate has a high female illiteracy rate. It also suffers from a high dropout rate because many girls' schools are located in crowded areas, such as a market area or government compounds, which means they would

have to walk through these crowded areas where many men are present. This is not accepted culturally.

According to Al-Ghaberi, marriage at an early age for girls contributes to the increase in dropping out and the rate of illiteracy. Most families in the rural areas and villages of Dhamar prefer their daughters to get married before they become 18 years old.

Gender equality in development

There are three guidelines supporting Whole School Development in Yemen. These are: the Child Friendly Schools developed by UNICEF, the Whole School Improvement (WSI) developed by the Basic Education Development Programme (BEDP) funded by the World Bank, and BRIDGE (Broadening Regional Initiative for Developing Girls' Education) guidelines developed by JICA.

The BRIDGE guidelines were implemented during the BRIDGE phase I project in the Ta'iz governorate, during 2005-2008. All those manuals consider gender equality as a core component.

JICA recently launched the second phase of BRIDGE, to be implemented in Dhamar governorate. One of the main outputs of BRIDGE II is to unify those three guidelines and develop a national manual to be used by the Ministry of Education. This manual will first be piloted and constantly modified during its implementation in Dhamar governorate, during its 4 years life span.

JICA project's team leader, Kenichi Tanaka, noted that "the Project aims at increasing the number of girls' enrolment in schools and reducing the dropout rate. The project will also aim at developing a unified manual improving school management. This manual will be put to practice during the project's timeframe in Dhamar governorate, starting the school year 2010/2011."

He added that the project will implement a number of training activities for school management, based on the bottom-up approach. This means the training will focus on building the capacities of the school management to develop annual school improvement plans for activities. Activities within these plans will aim at improving school accessibility and quality, with special focus on attracting girls to enrol in schools. They will work in coordination with the school committee that include parents, local community members,

community leaders, teachers and students.

Tanaka added that the school committee will develop activities based on local, specific needs whether it be building new classrooms, renovating and/or maintaining available classes, or training teachers, all within the amount allocated. The school then will submit their plan to the education directorate management for review, to ensure its appropriateness, and then take it to the education office in the governorate to review it once again before final submission to the ministry.

The ministry then sets the plan for a final review and approval, and once approved the financial budget will be issued for each school so they can apply the plan. Tanaka explained that now the budget allocated for each school is being discussed, but it will probably range between USD 2000-3000 per year for each target school.

Why Dhamar governorate?

Amani Abdullah is a 28-year-old illiterate mother from Dhamar. She understands the importance of education and pushes her children to study, but since she was not educated, she can't help them with their school work.

"My son came to me asking for help with his homework. When I said I couldn't, he was annoyed and complained that if I, the mother, can't do it, how could he, the child, do the homework? It made me very sad," remembered Amani, who has never been to school.

Tanaka explained that the selection of Dhamar was done jointly with the Ministry of Education, as it ranks low in terms of girls' education and has high illiteracy rates. He added the schools and districts within Dhamar were selected, based on the low enrolment and high dropout rates of girls, in addition to the accessibility of district schools, as well as the security and safety of locations.

He continued, "We have hired a research company to carry out a baseline survey in Dhamar to assess the situations of schools selected."

Tanaka also indicated that JICA is strategically considering expanding the project to other governorates and that for the time being, they are ready to provide technical support for those governorates who manage to raise funds from their budget or other development partners, to implement the Whole School Development system based on a unified manual.

Tanaka said "The success of the program achieved in Taiz, its impact and efficiency, has made the Ministry of Education draft a proposal for the Japanese government to implement a second phase of the project on a central level in the ministry."

Girls' education for development

Karima Hassan is a teacher in a girls' school in Dhamar. She explained that teachers need to be trained on how to overcome local cultural barriers against girls' education.

"The number of girls in classes reduces rapidly in higher grades. Sometimes the number reduces from month to month and by grade six only five percent of the girls who enrolled at grade one remain," said Hassan. She added that some families make their daughters drop out not because of culture but because they can't afford to buy the stationary or uniform and the various extracurricular activities' fees. Sometimes it is about not even having a few riyals to buy the girl a sandwich to eat during lunch break, especially for families with more than five children. For families with many children, priority goes to educating boys, leaving girls behind to do house chores or work in the fields.

During the previous phase, the governorate education office in Ta'iz applied the model by themselves and when they realized its efficiency and huge impact in the governorate, they worked on providing the needed governorate budget. At the end of the project for the 59 schools that were targeted, they added 60 new ones and provided them with the required funding.

The project has commitment from the Yemeni government in order to guarantee its continuity. The Ministry of Education's commitment is providing 10 percent of the total fund and identifying a budget for schools from the Yemeni government, to be spent accordingly after the end of the project.

One of the JICA Project Team experts, Professor Keiichi Ogawa, noted that "The project focuses on encouraging girls to enrol in schools but it doesn't ignore boys. The project believes that girl's education is of prime importance in enforcing development efforts."



Only 44 percent of girls in Dhamar are enrolled in schools while the rest stay at home because of social, economic and cultural reasons," said Deputy Director of the Education Office in Dhamar, Saeed Al Ghaberi.

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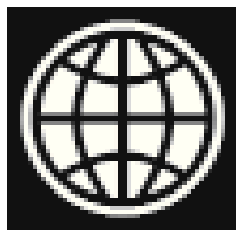
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The World Bank in Sana'a, Yemen is recruiting qualified personnel through a local hire for the following position to be based in Sana'a:

SENIOR WATER SPECIALIST (JOB NO 100953)

The selected individual will have two major responsibilities. First, to represent the Bank in all donor harmonization activities in Yemen. Second, to function as a country-based focal point for the Yemen Water Team, which consists of headquarters and Sana'a based staff engaged in project and policy work in the country in the water resources management, urban and rural water supply and sanitation, and irrigation subsectors. The Senior Water Specialist should have an advanced degree in water related fields and at least 8 years of directly relevant professional and operational experience working on water sector planning and institutional aspects including current developments in Yemen and in the region

Interested candidates should apply via the World Bank site www.worldbank.org/jobs, the section "employment opportunities" job number 100953, where more details on the Job Description can be found. Deadline for submitting applications is May 18, 2010. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT Yemen Microfinance Network (YMN)



The Social Fund for Development (SFD) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) jointly initiated a project to establish the first member based National Microfinance Network in country. The network, an entity in its own right is called the Yemen Microfinance Network (YMN). YMN will act as a secretariat for the Microfinance Institutions (MFIs) in Yemen, creating a platform for member institutions to strengthen themselves as capable and viable institutions enabling them to reach the poor of the Republic of Yemen in the most effective and efficient manner. YMN will focus on training, capacity building, information exchange and transparency.

YMN is looking for capable individuals, who are resident of Yemen (Yemeni nationals), to fill up the following position, based in Sana'a.

Research & Development Executive (1 Post, Gender: Any, preference will be given to female candidates)

To successfully achieve the objectives of capacity building and increasing transparency in the sector, under the overall leadership of the Managing Director of the Network, Research & Development Executive will be responsible for: -

Specific Responsibilities:

Technical assistance to member MFIs:

- Conduct market research and support MFIs staff and management in product development;
- Stay current and networked around innovations and new initiatives on microfinance in the world;
- Develop a database of service providers (individuals and companies) in the microfinance sector;
- Facilitate members requirements of specific information on industry;
- Facilitate members on new initiatives and interventions on products, systems, internal controls etc.

Training and capacity building:

- Conduct research to support development of training modules and curriculum for diploma and certificate programs;
- Assist the process of customization of training modules;
- Write case studies and conduct impact assessment of training initiatives;
- Ensure that networks training services are update and as per current industry trends and standards.

Increasing transparency in the sector:

- Conduct research for development of data collection tools;
- In collaboration with consultants develop data collection tools to analyze the industry performance;
- Develop industry benchmarks and regularly publish industry indicators;
- Publish for internal (manuals; technical reports) and external (studies for the microfinance field) purposes;
- Support the development of networks website and information exchange centre;
- Conduct research to assess the industry information requirements;
- Ensure regular update of network's website;
- Develop new areas of research and development and maintain relationships with networks, universities and other research institutions;

Skills/qualifications/experience:

- Bachelor Degree (Masters preferred) in Economics, Marketing or other Social sciences;
- Significant experience in microfinance market research, product development and/or research on impact and client satisfaction evaluation;
- Experience in using a variety of research methodologies – qualitative and quantitative and publishing peer-reviewed papers;
- Experience in publications;
- Excellent writing and speaking communication skills in English and Arabic;
- Excellent computer skills, knowledge of data analysis and statistics software;
- Ability to think out-of-the-box and develop innovative solutions;
- Willingness to travel to rural Yemen;
- Ability to work independently within tasks assigned, and as part of a team in terms of collaborative climate and dedication to deliver results;
- Proficient computer skills in MS Office applications including MS Word, MS Power Point and MS Excel;
- Demonstrated high professional and ethical standards;
- Knowledge of microfinance operations and best practices, familiarity with standard reporting metrics will be a plus;
- Ability to manage multiple projects within a dynamic environment with a high level of urgency without compromising productivity;
- Ability to build and maintain excellent working relationships with the top and lower level management of member MFIs in order to facilitate feedback and enhance implementation;

Submission guideline:

The application should comprise of a **one page cover letter clearly stating the position applying for and explaining the applicants' interest and suitability for the position**, indicating earliest joining date if selected, and a CV.

Interested candidates should submit their application by email to: huda.alnadh@yemennetwork.org before the deadline of 24th May 2010. Applications received after the closing date will not be considered. Only short - listed candidates will be contacted for interviews.

Other information:

The position will be subject to a comprehensive term of reference and this document will serve as the official task and duties for the above mentioned position.

Vacancies Announcement

Background

The Water Sector Support Program (WSSP) is a multi-donor initiative designed to support the implementation of the National Water Sector Strategy and Investment Plan (NWSSIP). WSSP will provide funds of about US\$340 million on a Sector-wide basis over a five year period (2009-2014) to be financed from the Government of Yemen and their Development Partners (WB – Germany – Netherlands).

Under the WSSP, the Coordination Secretariat (CS) shall hire the following Staff:

A) Financial Advisor

The advisor will work Under the Chief Team Leader of the CS

Objective and Scope of Work

The goal of the Financial Advisor within the CS is to ensuring proper systems and coordination for allocating, expending, accounting and reporting on program funds. Following the rules set out in the PIM and in the Financial Manual,

Tasks and Responsibilities

Guided by the objectives outlined above, Reporting to the Chief Technical Adviser, the Financial Advisor is responsible for:

- Acting as coordinator and supervisor for all financial aspects of the WSSP program.
- Developing and coordinating a comprehensive budget for the entire WSSP period (2009- 2013) including the budget for all components in all sub-sectors, and for the annual budget process.
- Participating annually in the update of the MTEF, ensuring that NWSSIP/WSSP financing requirements are properly reflected.
- Within the agreed MTEF, supporting the annual budget process for NWSSIP/ WSSP, including participating in budget meetings, to ensure that the NWSSIP/ MTEF annual budget is adequate for program execution.
- Developing and coordinating an annual disbursement plan for WSSP for each component and subsector and for the program as a whole. The plan should be broken down on a quarterly basis, and updated regularly.
- Consolidating the budgets and disbursement plans for all components and sub-sectors into a comprehensive annual plan that links financial resource allocation to targeted activities, to outputs and milestones, and to the respective agency procurement plans.
- Establishing the financial management procedures and accounting and internal control systems for the management of the financial affairs of the CS, including for management of bank accounts (if any) and for approval of expenditures.
- Coordinating the external and internal audit functions for WSSP.
- Working closely with the ACAP advisor on financial aspects of ACAP.
- Developing disbursement procedures and supervising the disbursement function.
- Preparing regular WSSP financial reports, matching expenditures and disbursements with budgets, and explaining differences.
- In close collaboration with COCA, ensuring that external auditors acceptable to the IMSC and WSSP DPs are recruited, that the external audit is promptly and professionally conducted, and that findings and recommendations at the level of each component and subsector and of NWSSIP/WSSP as a whole are explained and followed up, including any actions required by the implementing agencies.
- Responding to any other needs that are deemed necessary to the program financial affairs and internal audit control.

Desirable Qualifications and Experience:

- Minimum Bachelor's degree in Finance, Accounting or related fields.
- Minimum 15 years experience in Finance and accounting, preferably in a water sector related areas
- Excellent writing and speaking in Arabic and English
- Advanced Computer literacy (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, e-mail, searching the internet) as well as experience in the use of website content and Financial Management programs and management systems
- Dynamic, open and networking personality

B) Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist

Objective and Scope of Work

The WSSP M&E Specialist will coordinate with the sub-sector working groups, the sub-sector mandated agencies and the core donor group on regular basis to collect, compile and analyze M&E data. This information will be compiled in progress reports to be published on quarterly basis. The quarterly data will feed into Joint Annual Review (JAR) to be held in June-July each year.

Tasks and Responsibilities

The M&E Specialist would work within the WSSP Executive Secretariat, and report to the Head of that unit. He/she will execute the following tasks:

- Review related NWSSIP and WSSP documents and participate directly in the WSSP implementation exercises;
- Prepare the required analytic background for the institutional implementation arrangements based on the M&E knowledge;
- Plan, design, and organize the proposed WSSP M&E system and draw useful lessons and recommendations from previous NWSSIP JAR exercises;
- Develop a detailed work plan for the existing M&E Unit at WSSP Secretariat and the human and financial resources requirements to sustain the Unit;
- Through effectiveness, finalize all baseline indicators;
- Build capacity within the M&E Unit based on needs as they arise;
- Assist in the preparation and review of TORs for local staff for the M&E Unit;
- Upgrade skills in the design of indicators and reporting systems, socio-economic data collection, data analysis, and design;
- Develop TORs and action plans for data gathering, needed surveys, data analysis, and computerization of the system;
- Analyze regularly the results from the M&E system, reporting major findings to the project management and formulate options and recommendations for improvements;
- Work closely with all water authorities as well as the Ministries of: Agriculture and Irrigation, Planning and International Cooperation, and Finance;
- Work closely with civil society, and the core group of donors in all tasks;
- Coordinate work with on-going development work by others;
- Assist in discussing recommendations with GOY Counterpart Committee (MOF, MOPIC, MWE and MAI)
- Work on other related tasks for WSSP as may be requested to support the M&E component; and
- Assist in the M&E information preparation and conduct of presentations for stakeholders and donors in the Joint Annual Review (JAR) process.

Qualifications:

- University Degree in a relevant discipline.
- A minimum of 5 years of professional work experience of which at least 2 years shall be in the field of Results-Based M&E Framework in water /irrigation/ agricultural sector in Yemen.

- Good communications skills and a working knowledge of English.
- Computer knowledge with expertise in Microsoft Office tools.
- Good inter-personal skills and demonstrated ability to work closely with professionals from other disciplines.

C) Executive Bilingual Secretary

Reporting to the Chief Technical Advisor in the Water Sector Support Program (WSSP) Coordination Secretariat

Tasks and Responsibilities

- Receive and record all official correspondence (letters, faxes, e mails) and other pertinent documents addressed to the WSSP Coordination Secretariat.
- Organize and prepare required arrangements for meetings and write Minutes of these meetings when required.
- Follow up the implementation of decisions and administrative orders issued from the Coordination Secretariat (CS) Chief Technical Advisor (CTA).
- Review, revise record letters, reports issued by the CS.
- Keep an updated record of files, letters, mails issued or coming to the CS
- Manage the telephone calls of the CTA in the CS.
- Maintain an updated record of addresses of individuals and institutions and private companies dealing with the Water Sector Support Program.
- Meet visitors and organize schedules of meetings of the CTA in the CS.
- Manage the office machines in the CS (Computers, printers, faxes, telephones and keep regular records on their maintenance needs in close collaboration with the Administrative and Financial Officer).
- Follow up, collect copies and record all what is published on WSSP in the newspapers and prepare periodical brief reports on the published information, news, analysis articles etc...

Qualification required

- University Degree in Secretarial work or Information Technology or in any related field of development with a minimum of Five Years experience in the field of executive Secretary.
- Certificate from a commercial institute with a minimum of ten years experience in secretarial work.
- Proven experience in archive, data base and management of information.
- Fluency in English (written and communication).
- Proven experience in computer programs (Excel, word, windows, access, etc).
- Preference will be given to those who were directly involved in secretarial work in agriculture or water sectors.

Duration of assignment for the posts:

Initially for probation period of three months, then annual contract will be offered thereafter.

Those who are interested, and strictly meet above requirements, may submit their applications with CVs and supporting documents On or before 30 May 2010 to

The Water Sector Support Program (WSSP) Coordinating Secretariat (CS)
Office western Ring Road (Old Residence of DR Abdulkarim Al- Eryani – Sana'a Opposite of MAM Show room)
Fax 00967 1 467581 Phone 00967 1 208045
e mail address: awmukred@yemen.net.ye

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted for tests and interviews.

Sheikh Al-Marwani to the Yemen Times:

”A new law should regulate the possession of guns with licenses.”

This February and March alone, 22 people were killed and another 101 injured in weapon-related accidents in Yemen. Most victims were children and women. Despite the relative success of a 2007 law banning people from carrying weapons in Yemen's cities, the parliament has still not passed a law to ban the possession of weapons at home.

Sheikh Abdel-Rahman Yahya Al-Marwani, head of the Dar Al-Salam or "House of Peace" organization since 1997, urges for a new law so that only those Yemenis with a gun license from the Ministry of Interior can keep weapons at home. He also calls for a law to ban Yemenis from firing guns into the air at traditional celebrations.

Now working in up to 1,600 Yemeni villages, Al-Marwani's organization has successfully convinced 251 families and tribes to sign a pact not to use fire arms at weddings and other traditional occasions. He says that more families are welcome to sign the document. Mahmoud Al-Harazi interviewed the sheikh known as the "peace maker" for the Yemen Times.



The result was to push parliament to issue a law to prevent [the carrying of] arms in August 2007, and to close down weapon dealers.

These marches pressured parliament to reconsider its arms law and start a serious discussion about it. It's good that this law is still working in the main cities.

Dar Al-Salam organization is following up any violations, and cooperates with the parliament and Shura Council, and the Ministry of Interior.

Yemeni law says that Yemenis have the right to keep guns for self-defence. What do you think about that?

Small weapons are an international problem and they are available everywhere, but there are laws in the other countries regulating their ownership. The lack of laws for weapons in Yemen is the biggest problem.

Yemenis prefer buying arms to participating in society's development.

There are hundreds of victims every year because of the lack of laws to regulate arms in Yemen. It's very difficult to estimate the negative effects on government and society.

One study has reported that Yemen has lost more than USD 180 billion over the last 20 years in revenge killings and the misuse of weapons. What are the other effects?

There are many effects, but most important

are the people who died because of those arms. Over three years, more than 77,000 crimes have taken place in Yemen, of which about 35,000 were linked to the misuse of weapons. It's a really high number of victims!

Then come the health, psychological and physical losses to society and government, on which a new, thorough study should be conducted to evaluate the total losses. This is what we are going to do during the next five years.

Moreover, because it is easy to acquire guns in Yemen, some extremist groups have found the means to resist the state and some ringleaders have taken over other people's lands. This not only harms the national economy and security, but also disrupts investment and tourism, denying the country millions of US dollars.

There is not yet a study or even correct data. The proof is the great contradiction between the figures from international institutes and the Yemeni government. We are trying to conduct an accurate study on the number of weapons in Yemen, and are trying to reduce this number over the next five years.

The Ministry of Interior has pushed for a law to ban carrying guns, but not to ban their possession. To what extent do you think that a law must be issued and implemented for both?

A new law should regulate the possession of guns with licenses. When the parliament

passed a law to ban carrying guns in the cities, the result was perfect - at least in the main cities.

I wish that there were a law to ban the possession of weapons at home, unless its owner has a license by the Ministry of Interior.

There should also be a law to ban the use of guns during traditional Yemeni celebrations.

What can be done to exert pressure on the government in this respect?

Dar Al-Salam is using several effective ways, such as raising awareness among society, notably among school children and tribes. The organization has also held some meetings with parliamentarians and civil society leaders to expose society's suffering from guns.

What is stopping such a law from being passed and implemented?

There is controversy, even among parliamentarians. Some are completely against carrying or possessing guns at home, but unfortunately others are in

favor of both.

Dar Al-Salam aims to regulate the possession of guns, and ban carrying guns or using them in traditional celebrations. Weapons must be registered at the Ministry of Interior because enhancing security is the government's responsibility.

As you mention, in some parts of Yemen, men still fire guns into the air to celebrate weddings or other traditional celebrations, shooting people by accident. What have you done about this?

Many accidents have occurred this way, so we carried out a big awareness campaign in the media.

The results of this campaign is signing a document of honor between about 251 families and tribes to prevent the use of fire guns in several traditional celebrations. This document is still open to signed by other families and tribes.

More than 25 occasions and traditions throughout the year allow guns, and, of course, Dar Al-Salam aims to reduce guns being fired during them.

These include: the Muslim Eids, hosting and bidding farewell to guests, announcing a war between two tribes, warning of the risk of floods, marking the bride's first meeting with her groom on the first day of a wedding, the departure and return of pilgrims, and announcing revenge.

Other tribes fire guns as a way of speaking, and even shepherds fire guns to signal to each other. And there is more.

You mentioned that you raise awareness about the dangers of weapons via radio and television. Why did you choose these forms of media?

Radio and television have a big effect on people because they reach all homes. They play an effective role in making people change their point of view about the risks of weapons. This has been proved.

But Dar Al-Salam also uses many other ways to raise awareness such as through mosque preachers, distributing stickers, leaflets, cassettes and posters, as well as by using microphones.

We also use poetry and theatrical plays.

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Words of Wisdom



The fall-out from technology advances, notably globalization, is clearly ahead of us. We need to grapple with this and the sooner we assess the issues and decide on what we need to do, the better prepared we will be. A main component of globalization is liberalization.

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



OUR OPINION

Documenting our small successes

Donors say Yemen is too complicated. Politicians say the situation is too difficult and that the future looks absolutely terrible. People complain that nothing changes for the better and that things are going from bad to worse.

The media only highlights these three points of view and then, adding some background analysis, suddenly all the news we read is about the "fear of failure."

Today, I was with a delightful group of civil society organizations from Aden, Hadramout and Hodeida governorates. They were talking about their work and the baby steps they are taking in order to create change for the better in their local communities.

A civil society network in Aden narrated how they stood up against corruption and advocated hard until land that had been taken by an influential person was turned into a much needed girls school.

A grassroots association in Hadramout spoke about how their work has helped more than a hundred women become economically independent by generating income to sustain their families.

A government affiliated organization, working with the public in Hodeida, described how they managed to change local perceptions and get families to send their daughters to school.

These success stories came flooding one after the other. Is there change happening? Sure there is. Is this change for the better? Well, it is making people's lives better and making people happier.

The only problem is, had I not been honoured with the opportunity to spend time with these organizations, I might have never come to know about these stories, despite the fact that I am "media." The organizations knew they were doing good work they just did not have the time, or the tools, to make their stories heard.

From now on, I am going to have a series of these civil society success stories in order to play my part in highlighting good deeds.

This will also perhaps help donors, politicians and the public realize that, although the situation may be quite complicated and desperate, we should focus on the good parts. We should nurture the agents of change and promote their achievements, even if they are small. For example, simple successes such as finding a job for a widow with which she can sustain herself, or enrolling a handicapped boy in a school which he would not have had the opportunity to join without help.

We need to document our successes and make them public. Moreover, we need to direct those who want to help us to where they should invest their money and energy in order to change Yemen for the better. It's not as complicated as it seems, nor is it as desperate. If you look a little more carefully you will find proof, just like how I found these beautiful, yet simple, stories.

Nadia Al-Sakkaf

The hypocrisy of child abuse in many Muslim countries

Child marriage and pederasty are tolerated in Muslim societies where homosexuality is strictly condemned

By: Shaista Gohir
guardian.co.uk

Some Muslims are fond of condemning western morality – alcoholism, nudity, premarital sex and homosexuality often being cited as examples. But Muslims do not have a monopoly on morality. In the west, child marriages and sex with children are illegal. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for many Muslim countries.

I recently saw the documentary on the Dancing Boys of Afghanistan. It exposed an ancient custom called "bacha bazi" (boy for play), where rich men buy boys as young as 11 from impoverished families for sexual slavery. The boys are dressed in women's clothes and made to dance and sing at parties, before being carted away by the men for sex. Owning boys is considered a symbol of status and one former warlord boasted of having up to 3,000 boys over a 20-year period, even though he was married, with two sons. The involvement of the police and inaction of the government means this form of child prostitution is widespread.

The moral hypocrisy is outrageous in a country where homosexuality is not only strictly forbidden but savagely punished, even between two consenting adults. However, men who sodomise young boys are not considered homosexuals or paedophiles. The love of young boys is not a phenomenon restricted to Afghanistan; homosexual pederasty is common in neighboring Pakistan, too. In my view, repression of sexuality and extreme gender apartheid is to blame.

And in the Middle East, it's young girls who are considered desirable and men are able to satisfy their lusts legally through child marriages. In Yemen,

more than a quarter of girls are married before the age of 15. Cases of girls dying during childbirth are not unusual, and recently, one 12-year-old child bride even died from internal bleeding following sexual intercourse. In another case, a 12-year-old girl was married to an 80-year-old man in Saudi Arabia.

So why is the practice of child marriage sanctioned in Muslim countries? Unfortunately, ultra-conservative religious authorities justify this old tribal custom by citing the prophet Muhammad's marriage to Aisha. They allege Aisha was nine years old when the prophet married her. But they focus conveniently on selected Islamic texts to support their opinions, while ignoring vast number of other texts and historical information, which suggests Aisha was much older, putting her age of marriage at 19. Child marriage is against Islam as the Qur'an is clear that intellectual maturity is the basis for deciding age of marriage, and not puberty, as suggested by these clerics.

Whatever one's view on the prophet's marriage, no faith can claim moral superiority since child marriages have been practiced in various cultures and societies across the world at one time or another. In modern times, though, marrying children is no longer acceptable and no excuse should be used to justify this.

I find the false adherence to Islamic principles and the "holier than thou" attitude of some Muslim societies similar to the blatant hypocrisy and double standards of 19th-century Victorian Britain, where the outward appearance of dignity and prudishness camouflaged an extreme prevalence of sexual and moral depravity behind closed doors. In those days, too, there were many men willing to pay to have sex with children – until a plethora of social movements arose that resulted in

changes in laws and attitudes in society.

A similar shift in social attitudes is also required in traditional Muslim societies. Having boy sex slaves or child brides should not be seen as badges of honour. Instead, Muslims need to do more to attach shame to such practices; otherwise, acceptance of this behaviour will make them complicit in the sexual exploitation of children. I fail to understand why Muslims are so vocal on abuses by the west in Abu Ghraib, Guantánamo, Iraq and Afghanistan, but display moral blindness when it comes to children? It's about time this silence was broken, so these violations of innocence can be stopped.

A too-passive attitude in dealing with child abuse has rubbed off on Muslim communities in Britain, too. I have heard many stories at first hand of child sexual abuse and rape, which show that the issue is not being addressed at all. Those who have had the courage to speak out have been met with reactions of denial and shame. Such attitudes mean that children will continue to suffer in silence. Sexual abuse of children happens in all communities, as has been revealed by the recent Catholic church scandal. At least, they have finally started to take action. Muslim communities should learn from this and also start being more open, instead of continuing to sweep the issue under the carpet.

I am finding that more and more Muslims feel it is their duty to criticize others for actions they consider sinful – quoting the following popular saying of Muhammad to justify their interference:

"If you see something wrong, you should correct it with your hand and if you are unable to, then speak out against it and if you cannot do that, then feel that it is wrong in your heart."

I wonder how, then, Muslims can remain silent when it comes to the sexual abuse of children?

Yemen at a crossroads in its response to Al-Qaeda

By: James Hider
Middle East Correspondent
The Times

The suicide bomb attack on the British Ambassador's convoy in the middle of the Yemeni capital yesterday underscores how far the Yemeni Government and its Western backers have to go in combatting terrorism in the country.

While the Government tried to argue that the failed assassination attempt on

Tim Torlot was a mark of Al-Qaeda's frustration at repeated attacks on its mountain hideouts, it also demonstrated that the militants are capital of striking in the capital, despite increased training of Yemeni troops by US forces.

Despite its constant pledges to tackle Al-Qaeda, the Government has been distracted by what it sees as more pressing concerns. An uneasy truce with Shia rebels in the north, aimed at ending the six-year-old conflict that displaced more than a quarter of a million people, has been plagued by accusations from both

sides that the other is not honouring the agreement. In the south discontent is still simmering, with the once-independent region resentful that the Government benefits from its oil and other natural resources while investing so little in its infrastructure.

Yemen sits on the crossroads between the world's important oil routes and the Shia rebellion in the north, which dragged in Saudi troops last year, has sparked a tensions between Sunni Riyadh and Shia Tehran, the two leading global leaders in oil production.

But Yemen also sits at a key nexus for Al-Qaeda, many of whose most hardcore fighters have been recruited in the rugged, dirt-poor country that is the ancestral homeland of Osama bin Laden. Just south of Saudi Arabia, with Islam's holiest sites, and just north of the lawless Horn of Africa, into which Al-Qaeda has begun to move in recent years, Yemen could become a safe haven for the terrorists, many of whom hail from its fiercely independent tribes.

Yemen's unrest is further stoked by its dwindling oil supplies and booming young population growing up in deep poverty, as well as the fear that it could be the first country in the world to run out of fresh water.

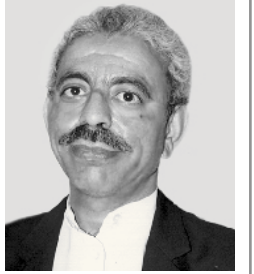
The West is also hindered in its military involvement in the country after senior clerics threatened to declare a jihad, or holy war, if foreign troops were deployed there. A similar deployment in Saudi Arabia after the first Gulf War in 1991 helped boost to Al-Qaeda's recruitment and funding.



COMMON SENSE

No, this is not Auschwitz, it is Gaza!

What is the difference between Nazism and Zionism?



By: Hassan Al-Haifi

If anyone cares to keep track of the situation in Gaza, it would be incapable to conclude that there are a lot of meeting grounds between Zionism and Nazism and it would be foolish to think that there are no humanitarian crimes being inflicted on a daily bases there. Yet, why is this sad horror being kept out of the public eye throughout the world? How could American Congressmen be so oblivious to the hell that a proud and indigenous people of the Holy Land are being subjected, with Zionist thugs preventing them from access to clean water and preventing their hospitals from treating the ill and the wounded from the savage random firing of their free American apaches and F15s and F16s. One is at all not surprised by the misdeeds of the Zionist mob in Tel Aviv, for the people of Palestine have known suffering for close to a hundred years culminating in tragic massacres of ethnic cleansing from Deir Yassin to Sabra and Shatila and to the slow and systematic annihilation of the people of Gaza. Yes, Gaza is the latest and largest enclave of harsh suffering among the hundreds of enclaves which the dirtiest occupation of all times has created in the illegally occupied territories of Gaza and the West Bank of the remaining Palestinian inhabited territories. You see, the so called Israeli Defense Forces have a mandate to kill, maim and bleed the people of these besieged cantons of human despair and deprivation. They are also expected to simply make life unlivable to the point that infants will never even find milk in their mother's breasts to fulfill their nutritional needs for survival. In fact, even canned milk is a rare luxury, which will probably have to be purchased at fivefold its normal price in the international markets.

So, what is the IDF trying to do in Gaza? Simply put, the IDF is adamant to repeat Auschwitz in far greater dimensions of human death and suffering as never before witnessed by sane humans of this world, if there are any left. Yes, this suffering is not occurring behind closed doors, but to the disbelief of the very agencies that are supposed to monitor such slow and painful manslaughter. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the occupied territories:

"Since January 2010, there has been a serious deterioration in the supply of electricity in the Gaza Strip. The immediate reason is that Gaza's sole power plant, the Gaza Power Plant (GPP), is able to produce only half the electricity that it did prior to January 2010, due to a lack of funds needed to purchase the industrial fuel required to operate the plant. As a result, almost all of the 1.4 million Palestinians residing in the Gaza Strip, with the exception of those who live in the Rafah area, must cope with scheduled electricity cuts of 8-12 hours daily, compared to 6-8 hours prior to January 2010."

It is worth mentioning that this half is only half of the original installed capacity of the Gaza Power Plant. The European Commission has cut off the fuel subsidy that was formerly provided to Gaza. There is simply no environment for expecting fruitful peace talks to occur in the Holy Land, when an unholy mob controls all the vestibles for the necessary elements of life to enter Gaza and refuses to allow any semblance of economic life to continue providing sustenance and some degree of self esteem for the poor people of Gaza. The same report by the same UN office states that this kind of deprivation provides sufficient grounds for an ongoing aura of death and hardships beyond description.

The electricity situation in Gaza, as we can certainly attest to here in Yemen, is resulting in death in the hospitals, and in the places that operate stand by generators, and also death from disease of use of unclean water and sanitation facilities that operate far below substandard levels of performance. Here is a history taken from the same UN report:

2002 – The Gaza Power Plant (GPP), a private company, becomes operational as Gaza's sole power producer.

2004 – The GPP reaches its maximum production capacity of 140 MW, filling the production gap remaining after electricity purchased from Israel and Egypt are received (120 MW and 17 MW respectively).

28 June 2006 – The Israeli Air Force bombs the GPP destroying all six transformers at the plant; production is halted.

June 2006 – The European Commission (EC) begins subsidizing fuel for the GPP.

November 2006 – Seven transformers with lower capacity are installed and partial production resumes, reaching 65 MW at peak production. (A year later, the plant's production capacity had reached 80 MW).

June 2007 – Israel imposes a blockade on the Gaza Strip, which severely restricts the import of necessary electrical equipment, spare parts, consumables and essential electrical inputs.

19 September 2007 – The Israeli Cabinet declares the Gaza Strip a 'hostile territory' and imposes further restrictions, including a restriction on all types of fuel allowed into the Gaza Strip.

28 October 2007 – Israel begins implementing the September 2007 Cabinet decision regarding fuel restrictions.

30 January 2008 – The Israeli Supreme Court rejects a petition by human rights groups challenging the government's decision to reduce the electricity and fuel supply to the Gaza Strip.

November 2009 – The contract between the EC and the Palestinian Authority (PA) which provides for the EC's direct subsidy to the fuel purchase for the Gaza Power Plant expires.

January 2010 to present – Shortage of fuel for the GPP leads to further power cuts.

April 2010 – The PA establishes a mechanism to generate funds from the private sector, international organizations, PA ministries and others that can be used to pay for consumed fuel. Israel approves entry of PA-purchased electricity meters and paper, to measure household electricity consumption and issue bills.

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

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On the occasion of the World Labor Day: Yemenia awards its prominent employees



Yemenia Airlines on May 1 awarded in Sana'a 172 of its most prominent employees for 2009.

At the ceremony, the Chairman of the Board of the company, Captain Abdulkhaleq Al-Qadi confirmed that the celebration to award the company's prominent workers was in appreciation of their achievements during the past year in increasing production

and reflecting a positive image of the company to its clients.

"This award gains special importance as it coincides with valuable occasion to all Yemenis of the twentieth anniversary of unification on May 22, and in thanks to efforts over the past year during which the company faced a lot of difficulties, especially the Yemenia plane crash on the coasts of Comoros in mid-2009," said Al-Qadi.

He noted the huge role of the political leadership represented by His Excellency President Ali Abdullah Saleh and his government who had instructed that strategies be applied to enforce the company's weight among its competitors in the market.

Al-Qadi also confirmed that the company is careful to raise its employees' salaries according to a new mechanism conditioned with productivity that enforces workers' capacities and awarding those who are working hard.

He indicated that the company has undertaken several administrative changes to increase productivity and

said, "We have started this year and all of us are optimistic to achieve a lot of proposals and exert more effort to a better change."

He indicated that the company has achieved many projects, among which the establishment of a new private

company focusing on food supply.

The company also would work in the coming period on converting the sectors of engineering and maintenance into independent departments, both financially and administratively to bring huge benefit to the company.



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Rada'a: Wars over water used to irrigate qat

By: Mahmoud Assamiee

Rada'a is the biggest district of the Al-Beidha governorate. It contains six districts that witness 'water wars' every now and then mainly over the irrigation of qat trees. The province is famous for its qat.

Located east of Dhamar, it has vast flatlands similar to those in Dhamar and these are used for cultivating vegetables, but with qat expansion in Rada'a, sadly these areas have been changed into qat farms.

The water supply has become a challenge for the Rada'i people, especially those in rural areas. Disputes over water in this violent and big province, soon to be a future governorate, are always erupting between villages.

Only few months ago, conflict erupted between Wadi Thah and the Al-Mas'oud tribes over a well irrigating qat. According to Dhan Al-Rada'i, an eyewitness from a village overlooking these tribes, 11 people were killed, six from Al-Mas'oud and five from Wadi Thah.

In Azzan village, tensions still run high between villagers and people from Rada'a city and a well was closed after clashes previously erupted between them. People from the city used to

come to Azzan to get their water but the Azani's stopped them for fear of running out of water. Consequently, there is conflict between these two groups. Both villages were using water for irrigating qat. Farmers make a good business from qat as they supply most of the southern governorates, which do not produce their own.

The clashes have stopped now, after reaching an agreement that people from the city will not to come to Azzan for water and that people from Azzan are banned from using water to irrigate qat, but only for drinking and home use.

The previous well where clashes have occurred, has been closed and instead, another one nearby has been dug. Around the new one, you can see people, some armed, monitoring it and threatening to kill anyone from Rada'a city trying to approach it or anyone from their own village too, wanting to use the water for irrigating qat.

Near to the Sabah district, conflict is flaring up nowadays between the villages of Al-Riyashia and Qa's. Again, the reason is the use of water for irrigating qat.

The General Manager of National Water and Sanitation Authority, Fahd Abdul-Aziz, said the drought is threatening the whole governorate. Water resources are being depleted and the an-

nual rainfall is deteriorating. The whole governorate suffers from a scarcity of water and depends only on rainfall, which has been very low recently.

The worst factor is that Al-Beidha'a basin is only 70 meters deep and Rada'a's is only 800 meters, as compared to other basins at 1400 meters. "The situation is going to be a disaster. Every year, people are boring wells to more than 40 meters, which is above international regulations which only allow boring wells no more than 120 cm annually," said Abdul-Aziz.

According to him, there are 4702 wells dug illegally in Rada'a alone, with annual increase of wells numbering 200. The monthly production of water is 98,000 cubic meters.

Although he admitted that there are clashes over water in rural areas, he confirmed that the problem has been solved inside the city. He said that security in Rada'a is weak and cannot control these clashes so that water problems will continue until the security is enforced, or people get enough water.

Abdul-Aziz made it clear that all these tribal clashes are happening due to qat irrigation. He said the people's need of water in Rada'a is only 5 percent but that 95 percent of water goes towards irrigating qat, whose cultivation is expanding rapidly.



He said that the problem in the city was solved after the National Water and Sanitation Authority requalified 14 wells inside the city during the second half of 2009. But the problem is still huge in Al-Beidha'a city and the Muqairs district.

According to him, these two areas are suffering the sharpest water crisis across the governorate because of their low rainfall and the depth of water, which does not exceed 40 meters. At this depth, the ground water has been depleted.

Because of the shallow basin in these areas, Al-Beidha'a can be ranked the worst affected area.

Ineffective qat programs

Although there are several anti-qat programs adopted by The World Bank and Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation and the two new qat centers adopted by GTZ and Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, no practical work has yet been carried out.

The General Manager of National Qat Center, Dr. Jamal Al-Salemi, said the center will work on educating people about the dangers of qat and will try to

encourage farmers to dig up their trees from agricultural lands.

"It is difficult to tell people to stop growing qat overnight," he said. "Doing this takes gradual steps and the establishment of the qat center is the first one towards this end."

According to Al-Salemi, the center has started work in Dhamar, Haraz, Manakha and Bani Matar, to uproot qat trees of the farmers who were happy for this to happen. The center gave them almonds trees to replace their qat.

Concerning the measures taken to stop qat expansion in these areas, especially Rada'a, he said the most important point of the Monday meeting, is to stop its cultivation on both private and public agricultural land.

Most officials from the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation who attended the meeting, confirmed the difficulty of decreasing qat agriculture and convincing people to abandon its cultivation. They agree that fighting qat will take a long time.

The Minister of Water and Environment, Abdul-Rahman Al-Iryani, said Yemen is a very dry region and 40 percent

of its water resources have already been depleted. He said climate, geography, population growth and mismanagement are the main reasons behind this depletion and that qat cultivation consumes the greatest amount of water.

He mentioned the previous clashes over water in the mountain areas which left dead and injured people.

Solutions

The General Manager of National Water and Sanitation Authority in Rada'a said there are measures in place to stop this random digging for water but they need cooperation and support from security services. He also believes that the obvious solution is to stop qat growing and this, in turn, requires coordination between the ministries of water and agriculture, in order to convince people to abandon any expansion of qat cultivation.

However Minister Al-Iryani talked about alternative solutions such as persuading people to leave the mountains and live in the valleys. Recycling water and importing qat from Ethiopia are other possible solutions.



Protests in Lebanon against religious influence

The confessional system in the dock

More than 3,000 Lebanese took part in a demonstration in Beirut last weekend against the influence of religion on politics, an influence that they believe represents a long-term threat to internal peace in Lebanon.

By: Birgit Kaspar

"What's your religion?" – "Mind your own business!" chant the demonstrators. Some 3,000 Lebanese have gathered in downtown Beirut for a rally in support of secularism and a reform of the confessional system – a premiere for the Lebanese capital. Most of those present are young people, intellectuals and artists.

"We are making it clear that there is a new generation with values other than those that simply defend religious assets," says 29-year-old actor Aurelien Zouki. We do not want to uphold the power of individual confessional communities, but to reflect on a collective Lebanon, he adds.

The population of Lebanon totals around four million, and many people here are unhappy about the confessional system. But at the same time, they do as a general rule define themselves primarily through their religious affiliation. There are 18 officially recognised confessions, with 15 different religious courts regulating matters of family law. A civil marriage is just as rare as a state regulation of inheritance laws. This exacerbates the social division between religious communities.

But nevertheless any attempt to change the status quo is blocked by religious institutions – both Christian and Muslim. This is not surprising, says Paul Salem from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Beirut: "This is one of their last bastions of power, and it's an important one," he says. Family law is after all something that affects everyone in at some point in life, he adds.

Complicated proportional system

In addition, the long arm of these religious institutions reaches far up into the high echelons of politics. Political statements by those leading Friday prayers in Mosques are just as much part and parcel of daily life as a weekly commentary from the Maronite Patriarch Nasrallah Sfeir on current political developments.

Salem explains that Sfeir is trying to serve as a spiritual leader for Christians in Lebanon, by setting out a general political direction: "Rather like the Shiite Ayatollah Sistani in Iraq, not directly involved in politics, but very influential," he says.

Another example of how religion exerts an influence on politics is provided by Hezbollah: Party leader Hassan Nasrallah bears the religious title of "Sayyed", which assigns him religious status, but at the same time makes him the most powerful politician of Hezbollah.



In view of the prolonged confessional conflict in Lebanon Paul Salem, Director of the Carnegie Middle East Center, recommends cautious reforms

Lebanon's 1943 National Pact

The situation in Lebanon is further complicated by a National Pact agreed in 1943, when the country adopted a democratic model based on confessional affiliation. It means that all political posts in Beirut are assigned according to a religious code: the President must always be a Maronite, the Prime Minister a Sunni Muslim and the Speaker of the parliament, a Shi'a Muslim.

The 128 seats in parliament are divided equally between Christians and Muslims, and a particular religious proportionality is also taken into consideration when filling all posts across the public service.

This can, for example, lead to a situ-

ation where a post remains open for months because no qualified candidate from the right confession is currently available to fill it. Retired teacher Aman Makouk thinks this is absurd:

"This job is for a Muslim, and that one for a Maronite. Why?" she asks. "Even in the government. Why should the President be a Maronite? He could just as well be a Muslim, a Druze or anyone else for that matter!"

Fair, or too complicated?

The confessional system is blamed for many problems in Lebanon. But Paul Salem from the Carnegie Endowment stresses that the system also ensures that no one feels overlooked. That could also trigger unrest, and for this reason he proposes a programme of cautious reforms. A good start could be a reform



Fear of religious influence on politics: some 3,000 Lebanese demonstrated in downtown Beirut for secularism and a reform of the confessional system

of electoral laws, aimed at delivering greater proportionality. But such a suggestion was just recently blocked again, just before the local elections scheduled for May.

Salem says this is a classic problem in governing oligarchies of five or six dom-

inant politicians. "They won't share their power voluntarily or change the system in way that would weaken that power," he says.

Although more than 50% of respondents to a recent poll expressed dissatisfaction with the confessional system, it does not look as though the hidebound model will soon be relaxed. It would seem that the desire to see religion viewed a private matter for individuals is only being expressed by an avant-garde movement in Lebanon. Most people are simply too afraid of the unknown.

"The Christians are afraid because they live in a Muslim Middle East. The Shiites are afraid of the Sunnis, and vice versa. And the Druzes are afraid of everyone!" says Salem. Everyone is afraid, everyone perceives himself as a victim – in view of this general mood – it is difficult to instigate such profound reforms, he adds. But this should not prevent those young Lebanese who are hungry for reform from increasing their social pressure on the political sphere.



"Confessionalism is bad! Let's do away with it!" – demonstration in Beirut

Fresh or frozen: Sea food in Yemen

Yemen is considered an unexplored market when it comes to consuming frozen food. Gradual interest in buying processed meat or chicken nuggets is slowly growing, but when it comes to fish, there is strong reluctance to buying it frozen.

By: Nadia Al-Sakkaf

The fish is lined up neatly everywhere according to type, length and seller. It is so fresh you can see some of the fish still actually moving on tables and on the marble floor of the fish market, as buyers argue with sellers on the prices. As you walk around the busy fish market of Sera in Aden, the sense of the fishermen's excitement is so contagious that you would think you have lived all your life near the sea.

Some visitors buy fish to be cooked immediately for lunch or dinner so they choose the fish and sea food caught most recently. There are people around who will clean your fish for one hundred riyals (less than half an American dollar). Then you take your catch to any of the nearby restaurants and tell the waiter how you want your fish cooked and what kind of bread or any other food items you would like to eat with your meal.

The restaurants are on the seashore so it is easy to find a nice table and enjoy your meal whilst gazing at the sailing boats, or listening to the waves crash into the shore. The whole operation would not cost more than YR 2000 per person (less than USD 10) and your meal is guaranteed to be fresh and healthy.

But what if you don't live in any of the coastal cities and don't have access to fresh fish sold directly from the sea?

In any of the fish markets in the mountain cities such as Sana'a, the sellers all claim that their fish is fresh.

"Check the gills are a bright colour and look for the glow in the eyes. These fish are guaranteed to be fresh because they were caught just this morning," shouts one of the fish sellers of Al-Bullaili fish market in Sana'a.

However, Mohammed Al-Agbari, sales and marketing manager of Burum Seafood Company in Aden, says that fish sold in non-coastal Yemeni cities should not be taken as fresh.

"You should understand that the freshness of the fish is tied to the distance from the sea. This means you are less likely to find really fresh fish in Sana'a than in Taiz, for example. Moreover, the fish is being transported by road in ice. Our research shows that almost all the fish being moved long distances is not adequately stored during the trip. Not enough ice, long hours and inadequate packing," he explains.

The trip from Aden to Sana'a takes between seven and nine hours depending on the speed and load weight of the vehicle. Many drivers also stop several times for meals and buying qat for chewing whilst on the road.

To overcome these problems and



to provide customers in mountain and valley towns with safe yet fresh seafood, Burum provides frozen fresh seafood.

"We have three branches around the country. We also export to countries in the region and even countries further afield, such as Europe and East Asia," added Al-Agbari.

No more fish in the sea?

The problem with the Yemeni fish industry is that it is challenged by climate change and piracy. Fishermen complain that since the Tsunami in 2005, there are not as many fish in the sea. According to Abobakr A. Hashem Executive Manager of the Yemeni Fishermen Exporters Association, this natural disaster has driven fishermen into fishing further out to sea, risking their lives because of the dangers both from the ocean and Somali pirates.

"I would not be surprised if we discovered a major fishing vessel just outside our national waters, capturing fish using advanced technology and changing fish routes. This is very likely and a reason why our farmers, with their traditional tools and lack of information, are suffering," said Hashem.

The lack of information on fish numbers and locations in the Arabian and Red Seas, or their type and life cycle, are very important for the Yemeni fish industry, according to Wisam Qaid, Director of the Small, Micro and Medium Enterprise Support Agency. SMEPS has launched a project with fishing companies and has just finished holding a workshop at end of last month in Aden, where 26 Yemeni companies working in the fish industry, were trained in packaging and marketing.

"There is so much potential in the fishing industry but we need to teach these businesses how to keep their fish fresh, package it to reduce loss

and use efficient marketing," said the trainer, Engineer Murad Said Ahmed Fish Quality Assurance Expert.

Fresh versus frozen

Fish and shellfish are good sources of essential vitamins, such as niacin, and minerals, such as selenium and iodine. But since seafood rots very quickly, all these nutrients could turn into toxic materials and cause many health problems.

According to Burum, frozen seafood is the obvious answer although it is not yet accepted by the local Yemeni market.

"Yemen has over 2000 kilometres of coastline, but are not exposed or interested in frozen food. They are still suspicious over canned food so imagine if we tried to introduce them to a readymade meal, which they just have to pop in the microwave for a few minutes. We need to create awareness in the culture of frozen food, not only from a health aspect, but also to help working women who don't have time to cook," argued Al-Agbari.

As it is eating fish is not so popular

in Sana'a and people are very slowly getting used to eating other sea food. Elham Yahya, from Sana'a, says her grandmother would not even come close to fish. She said that whenever they bought fish, she would get nauseous because of the smell.

"She almost fainted when my father bought shrimps. She thought we were eating insects. They indeed looked disgusting with their many legs and antennae," laughed Elham, a 30 year old school teacher.

However, the idea of frozen seafood, especially if it is easy to cook, is gradually finding appeal as Al-Agbari predicted, among working women. Fatima Al-Dubai, also living in Sana'a, says that her freezer is stuffed with burgers, fish fingers and frozen fish fillets.

"Frozen fish especially is a life saver. All I need to do is to take it out of the freezer just before I go to work. By the time I come home, it has already defrosted. I put some salt and spices, fry it and serve it with salad and bread. My children love it and it takes less than 15 minutes to prepare," said Fatima.

Different types of seafood also give different health benefits. Check out the lists below.

Oily fish

- includes fish such as salmon, mackerel, sardines, trout and herring
- is rich in omega 3 fatty acids, which helps prevent heart disease
- is a good source of vitamins A and D

Oily fish

- Anchovies
- Carp
- Eel
- Herring (Bloater)
- Hilsa
- Jack (also known as Scad, Horse mackerel and Trevally)
- Kipper (herring)
- Mackerel
- Orange roughy
- Pilchards
- Salmon
- Sardines
- Sprats
- Swordfish
- Trout
- Tuna (fresh)
- Whitebait

White fish

- includes fish such as haddock, plaice, pollack, coley and cod is very low in fat. This means, just like beans and pulses or chicken without the skin, white fish is a healthier low-fat alternative to, for example, red or processed meat that tends to be higher in fat, especially saturated fat
- contains some omega 3 fatty acids, but at much lower levels than oily fish. See Oily fish,

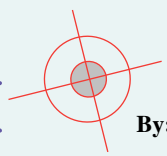
shellfish and omega 3 for more on omega 3 fatty acids

White fish

- Brill
- Catfish
- Cod
- Coley
- Dab
- Dover sole
- Flounder
- Flying fish
- Gurnard
- Haddock
- Hake
- Halibut
- Hoki
- John Dory
- Lemon sole
- Ling
- Marlin
- Monkfish
- Pangas (also known as R ver cobbler, Basa or Pangasius)
- Parrot fish
- Plaice
- Pollack
- Pomfret (also known as Butterfish)
- Red and grey mullet
- Redfish (also known as Ocean perch or Rose fish)
- Snapper (also known as Jobfish and Red snapper)
- Rock salmon/Dogfish (also known as Flake, Huss, Rigg or Rock eel)
- Rohu (also known as Ruhi)
- Sea bass
- Sea bream (also known as Porgy)
- Shark
- Skate
- Tilapia
- Tuna (canned)
- Turbot
- Whiting

Source: Food Standard Agencies

HEALTH WATCH



By: Dr. Siva

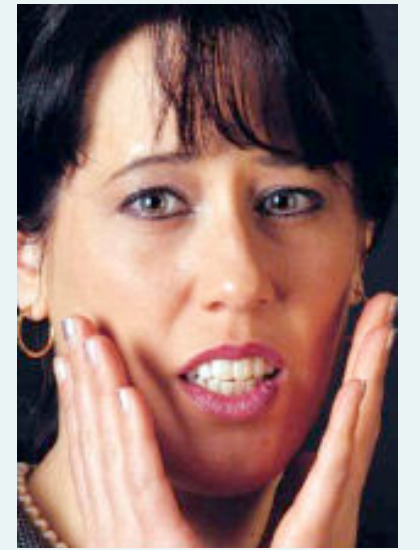


This weekly column is to disseminate health information to the readers in Yemen and outside. Dr. Siva is currently working at Aden Refinery Company Hospital. Life style diseases and cancer prevention are his special interests. Complementary medicine and Naturopathy are his passions.

There's nothing cool about "hot flashes"

Elena is forty eight. One day, when she was helping her boss with various data at a board meeting, it came as a bolt from the blue. Elena developed a sudden, intense, hot feeling on her face and upper body, accompanied by a rapid heartbeat and sweating. There was an enhanced feeling of nausea, dizziness, anxiety, headache, weakness, and a feeling of suffocation. Her face reddened and she started perspiring. She had this feeling on and off for six months and wanted to consult a doctor. Somehow she managed to be there at the meeting, but her friend Suzann who was sitting next to her, noticed her predicament.

In the evening Suzann took Elena to a gynecologist. On hearing her complaints and examining her, the doctor told her that Elena suffers from 'hot flashes'.



What is a hot flash?

A hot flash — sometimes called a hot flush — is a momentary sensation of heat that may be accompanied by a red, flushed face and sweating in a woman around menopause. The cause of hot flashes is not known, but may be related to changes in blood circulation. Eighty percent of women nearing menopause suffer from this. Between 20 and 50% of women continue to have them for many more years. As time goes on, the intensity decreases.

Hot flashes occur when the blood vessels near the skin's surface dilate to cool. This produces the red, flushed look to the face. A woman may also perspire to cool down the body. In addition, some women experience a rapid heart rate or chills.

This heat-releasing mechanism in the body keeps you from overheating in the summer. In 'peri-menopausal women', the process is triggered by a drop in estrogen. The brain's confused response can make you very uncomfortable. Some women's skin temperature can rise to six degrees Centigrade during a hot flash. Your body cools down when it shouldn't, and you are miserable: soaking wet in the middle of a board meeting or in the middle of a good night's sleep.

How long will one have hot flashes?

The severity and duration of hot flashes varies among women going through menopause. Some women have hot flashes for a very short time during menopause. Other women may have hot flashes for life. Generally, hot flashes are less severe as time passes.

The faster you go through the transition from regular periods to no periods—the peri-menopause or climacteric—the more significant your hot flashes will be. Hot flashes are severe after surgical menopause (when ovaries are removed). For a woman who is not aware of hot flashes, a sudden severe episode can be frightening; she may even confuse the flash with a heart attack!

Hot flash survival tips

While it may be impossible to completely avoid hot flashes during menopause, there are certain triggers that may bring them on more frequently or cause them to be more severe. To prevent hot flashes, avoid these triggers:

- Stress
- Caffeine
- Alcohol
- Spicy foods
- Tight clothing
- Heat
- Cigarette smoke

How to keep hot flashes at bay

- Stay cool. Keep your bedroom cool at night. Use fans during the day. Wear light layers of clothes (so you can peel off one layer after another as you get warmer) with natural fibers such as cotton. Don't wear wool, don't wear synthetics, and be wary of silk.
- Try deep, slow abdominal breathing (six to eight breaths per minute). Practice deep breathing for 15 minutes in the morning, 15 minutes in the evening and at the onset of hot flashes.
- Exercise daily. Walking, swimming, dancing, and bicycling are all good choices.
- Chill pillows; cooler pillows to lay head on at night might be helpful.
- Use cotton sheets only, not synthetics
- Take a cool shower before bed.
- Arrive at meetings early so that you can get the coolest seat.
- Whenever possible, keep ice water handy so that you can sip to cool yourself.
- Ease the pressure. Give yourself more time to plan your work, to rehearse your presentation, to deliver your assignments, to arrive where you're going. If you are doing a series of presentations, give yourself a chance to relax and cool off between sessions. And plan your schedule so you avoid meetings or decision making when you're most likely to be in a sweat.

Short time (less than five years) hormone replacement therapy or HRT prevents hot flashes in many women. In addition, it can help other symptoms of menopause, including vaginal dryness and mood disorders. However, even short-term hormone therapy carries some risks and hence you should discuss with your gynecologist the merits and demerits of it. Vitamin B complex, vitamin B6, (200–250 milligrams daily) Vitamin E (800 I.U., range 400–1000), anti-oxidants and analgesics are very helpful. Rarely one may need anti-depressants.

Soy products contain estrogens from plant source (phyto-estrogens) and iso-flavones which may be helpful. Evening primrose oil, starflower oil and flaxseed oil are said to offer relief, though there is no scientific evidence.

Blood pressure-lowering medications such as clonidine (Catapres-TTS, 0.1–mg patch applied once weekly) and Aldomet (250 mg twice daily) can lessen the severity and frequency of hot flashes. They modify how the blood vessels respond to the brain's command to give off heat quickly. These drugs must be prescribed and adjusted carefully by your doctor.

A low-fat diet helps some women with hot flashes. Losing excess weight helps, but losing too much weight, or being too thin, can worsen symptoms. Relaxation exercises, breathing exercises, meditation, visualization and yoga help minimizing stress which may be associated with hot flashes.

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**TAIZ UNIVERSITY
CENTRE FOR GRADUATE STUDIES
POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Centre for Graduate Studies at Taiz University (CGS) seeks to recruit a qualified and experienced Director to manage its Centre and programs.

The Centre's mission is to provide excellent innovative engineering and IT graduate education that will foster among graduates, professional excellence, scholarship, responsible citizenship and service to society. The Center was established in a cooperation agreement between Taiz University and Delft University of Technology (TUDelft) of The Netherlands, with funding from the Netherlands Programme for Institutional Strengthening in Higher Education (NPT).

The Center will operate as a financially and administratively autonomous unit of Taiz University and is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of representatives of Taiz University, the Hayel Saeed Anam Group and the Public Telecommunication Company (PTC). For the Management of all Master's Degree Programmes under the CGS, the Board invites Taiz University staff to apply for the following position:

Position title: GRADUATE CENTRE DIRECTOR (Male or Female).
Duration: One year (renewable).
Place of Work: Centre for Graduate Studies (CGS), Taiz University.

Main Responsibilities:

- He/she will be responsible for the management of all Master's Degree Programmes under CGS and the day-to-day management of the Master's Degree Programme, including, marketing, procurement, staff recruitment, public relations, project management, supervision, and quality assurance of its programs and activities;
- Other tasks will include the drafting of internal regulations and procedures for the Master's Degree Programme for approval by the CGS Board overseeing the implementation of policies, strategies, and plans approved by the CGS;
- Candidate will also prepare the annual budget for the Centre in accordance to the guidelines and priorities set by the Centre Board and will be responsible for the recruitment of Centre staff and teaching staff;
- Candidate will also serve as the official representative of the Centre with all internal and external parties on all matters related to the Centre in accordance with the mandate accorded the position by the Centre board.
- The Centre Director will report to the University Rector and the Centre Board.

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- PhD degree from an accredited institution
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- Demonstrated Proficiency in the English Language: excellent reading, writing and comprehension skills.
- Ability to work in complex environments.

For general information about the Center, interested candidates may visit the Centre's website at www.taizu-cgs.net. Interested candidates are required to submit their application with their CVs and supporting documents, to the office of the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs, **Dr Abdulrahman Sabri**, or have them emailed to careers@taizu-cgs.net

Deadline for submission application: **2 June 2010**.

Qualified female candidates are strongly encouraged to apply.

مزمز رمضان

ميرندا

الطعم أحلى والجلسة تحلى

Obama's fragrance in Yemen: Fancy package, cheap quality

By: Ahmed Hezam
ahezamyem@gmail.com
For the Yemen Times

With the announcement of US Administration to appoint a new American Ambassador to Yemen Mr. Gerald Michael Feierstein, it looks that US Foreign policy towards Yemen will continue with its counterterrorism agenda yet with may be some new flavor and fragrance. An Omr/Awalqi approach-file that is leading to more strictness, pressure, and confrontation. However, it does not look very clear which tools will be used to achieve that. One may ask which hands, crafts, and new creative ideas will be used to taste and test such new upgrading policy, confrontation, and its "Divine Sault". Could it be the option between a development humanitarian aid approach with new direct local field mechanism and quick responsiveness and measured short term impact, and/or the common known ideas of the "Rules of Engagement" but with some Yemeni (good or bad) mixed or/and misleading readings and interpretations that can simply achieve the goals and objectives!

May be a little bit before 9/11 and since after that, the US Foreign Policy towards Yemen (if there was any a concrete one before that at all) started gradually to be more based on a counter terrorism agenda/goals/perspectives more than a sociopolitical and rights based human rights one (if any of that also has been existed or developed at all before) - or/and even more than a clear long term strategic partnership that was supporting Yemen socioeconomically. When, how, and what was US For-

eign Policy towards Yemen! And did it achieve its goals!?! And whose interests it was serving!?

With the regional escalation of 9/11 from Iraq to Afghanistan; with all its levels, nature, complexity and compound interactions/epic/silly jokes/and drama...etc, Yemen seems stuck from time to time within this big "creative miss". The Yemeni regime may sometimes, as some analytical approaches may suggest, played its cards very smartly from time to time putting the head of regime interests first - but for sure failed in tackling the issue serving Yemen and Yemenis national interests, as other writings may point out.

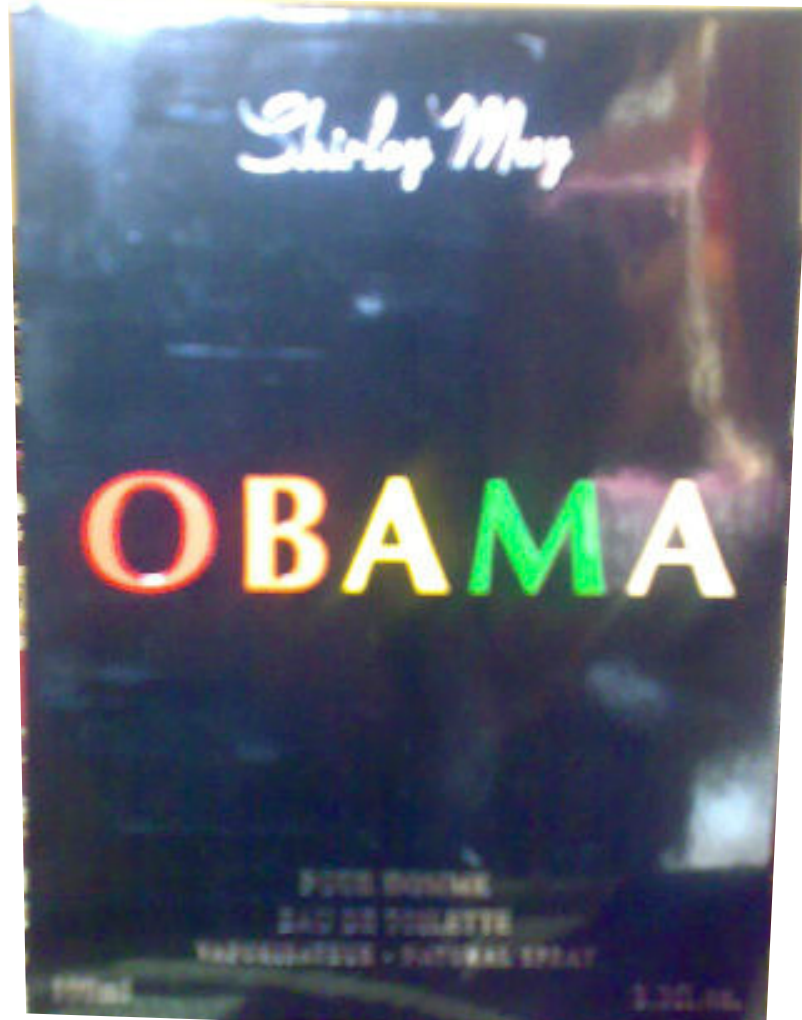
Moreover, is Al-Qaidah and radical Islamic terrorism in Yemen is the real dilemma and problem that the Saleh's regime cannot alone deal with, COMING EVEN FIRST before the Southern Mysterious Hiraak and Sadaah Puzzle!?! From the US ex Ambassador to Yemen Edmund Hull and his successor Mr. Thomas Krajeski, why the US Administration has been nominating Ambassadors to Yemen that have an obvious intelligence and counterterrorism background and CV may be more than anything else!?! Yet, what would be so different or that distinctive with the New Ambassador Feierstein!?! What would come first for him; Public Diplomacy mixed with aid and educational exchange programs with a special youth focus or/and more air strikes and civilians casualties!?! Or maybe the quick preparation for His own "Army of Liberation/Salvation"!?!

One may wonder after this long US/Yemeni diplomatic relations; exchange and sociopolitical readings and reporting...etc., that goes back to the 1940s, if the US Government really knows Yemen very well and its leadership and

people knowing what she wants exactly! Is it so difficult to figure it out and set a clear policy, strategic interests, and foreign policy priorities if any at all! Can the US really deal with Yemen or too complicated and not in its front line that it might be better and wise to leave it to other regional players/powers and/or another Western European "Big Brother"!?

Will Mr. Feierstein bring us lessons of one of his own old Egyptian experience and/or may be from his GCC interactions or/and may be more contemporary one of his Counterterrorism Approaches with some Pakistani fragrance and Waziristan flavor! Wondering if it really worked there!?! Could it be possible that such a package that could be mixed with careful reviewed aid strategies and mechanism to work here in Yemen? I wonder how it will be a year or two from now; looking like something new and creative that worked; has been working; or never worked that successfully - especially with the existence of Saleh's regime! - considering the inner lines and interactions with Yemen's other domestic conflicts and its resolution issues and Yemen's sociopolitical and socioeconomic hardships. Or more likely we will be all running after him in a circle that has no ends - or maybe he will be running after himself and us!

Like the other counterterrorism interactions, stories, attacks, and drama in Yemen, the last attack on the British Ambassador to Yemen Mr. Tim Trolot, as some analysts and experts may explore it, was a little bit strange and raised so many questions. Why British and why now? Was he really the target? Is this road is used by so many other western Embassies, and internationals or only the British Diplomats used it.



What about the type and nature of explosion used. What about the suicide attacker interactions, relations, and recent history with some of the government intelligence structures as well as with some of the so called sociopolitical and religious elites/sheiks and schools. What about the new approaches and

mechanism of brainwash and training! Thus, was the attack meant to harm and kill or send a friendly message by whoever behind it...etc.

A US foreign Policy towards Yemen, if any at all, should be build first on citizens' interests and economic ties and smart aid approaches. A reawakening

of real Public Diplomacy, educational and cultural programs/exchange and Media approaches and sociopolitical marketing. A Policy of sustainability, stability and human rights/democratic approaches. A policy of political well and diplomatic pressure, credibility, positiveness, transparency, and real achievement record.

On the other hand, the policy of fear, the policy of the NewCon., the policy of Airstrike and civilian casualties, the policy of military interventions, and the policy of ignorance will never serve US Foreign Strategic interests and counterterrorism Agenda in Yemen. Or has it been working in Yemen and elsewhere!

More than Al-Qaidah and Radicalization which still be a very important file, Common Yemenis, sociopolitical elites, and some Yemen's local and international experts - with some clear simple in-depth approach/analysis/investigation/and follow up can clearly identify and figure out that Yemen's first priorities and dilemma comes from the threats against our national unity and the Huthis conflicts in the North that can be escalated and inflamed any minute as recent and current signs and indicators suggests.

Thus, "I have a dream" that US foreign policy and New Ambassador will really figure it out finally after all the contemporary modern interactions between the two countries - and that will not be ended quality wise like the Obama's New Fragrance I found in the Yemeni local market; Fancy Package/Brand that distract me and attract me away from its cheap quality, especially that I personally admire President Obama character, achievements, approaches and Change that I hope we all can believe in!

Digital books leave Arabs cold

By: Rachelle Kliger
The Media Line

The digital book revolution has so far failed to make an impact on the Arab world. Is the problem technical, or does it run deeper?

Was Saudi Crown Prince Bin 'Abd Al-'Aziz being over optimistic when he said that more e-books should be published in order to promote Islamic culture?

The answer is probably yes.

While e-books are becoming all the rage in Western countries, the digital book age has so far failed to make a significant impact in the Arab world.

Political pressures, technological problems of incompatibility and a tenuous grip on old paper-loving habits are impeding a swift move from hardcopy books to digital books in the Middle East.

While chairing a meeting of the Supreme Council for Islamic affairs this week, the Saudi royal said the Kingdom should seek to encourage digital books and modern technology as a way to promote Islam.

But it appears what the knowledge people are seeking with this technology is not what the prince has in mind.

Jalal Abdallah, managing director of Arabic E-Book, an online store for digital books in Arabic, said the most popular books sold on his site deal with culture and politics, while books on religion rank at the bottom of the list.

His website features a 'Most Popular Sold Titles' list, which is currently leading with a romance called I Love You More than I Should.

The reason digital books on religion take a back seat to other genres is due to the shifting sands in Arab culture, Abdallah said.

"There's a new culture in the Arab world and people have a different thinking," Abdallah told The Media Line. "There are young people who are using the computer all the time. Culture will change in a couple of years in the Arab world with support of readers like Kindle and Sony Reader."

The Lebanon-based Arabic E-Book was founded in 2001 and has about 2,500 titles of Arabic books in stock, all in PDF format.

The emergence of e-book readers such as Kindle, Sony Reader and the iPad, are poised to revolutionize the book industry and change people's reading habits. Users can download the text of a book onto their device for the price of a hardcopy or less, and can store hundreds of books on their reader. To the consumer, this means no shipping fees or delays; no books out of stock; and no heavy loads to carry around.

In the Arab world, where the Internet faces restrictions and governments habitually try to control the flow of information, this change is likely to be a lot slower.

Abdallah said there were several reasons for this. "First, I'm sorry to say that in the Arab world they don't read a lot," he said. "Second, the economic situation for people in the Arab world is not so good. They don't have the facilities for credit cards to buy books online, or other books in general."

The third reason touches on the difficulty Arab publishing houses have in conforming with technological changes in the industry.

"The publishers don't support this kind of digital publishing," he admitted. "They're old people who prefer traditional paper to the e-book. The culture here in the Arab world is still paper-based, so most of our sales come from Arab people from outside Arab countries."

Most of the clientele who use Arabic E-Book are Arabic readers located in the United States, Europe, Australia and Canada, where many of the books sold on the site are not available in hardcopy.

The advanced digital book readers that recently hit American and European markets are not being distributed yet in the Arab world. Middle Easterners who purchased the readers abroad and brought them back to their home country cannot always download a book in Arabic because not all devices carry the software that enables it to read bi-directional text (Arabic, unlike Latin languages, is written from right to left).

Another reason that e-books have not yet caught on in the Arab world is that the political climate, in which governments are likely to be wary of a technol-



ogy that makes it harder to monitor the information flow reaching the people.

Abdallah admitted that he practices caution in selecting the titles to display in order to prevent his site from being blocked.

"Arabic E-Book doesn't try to offer books that talk about people or religions or cultures in a bad way. We're very careful about that and we don't need to make problems for others," he said. "We are trying to be on the safe side."

Saudi blogger Rasheed Abou-Alsamh said he believes e-books carry great potential in skirting the censors in Saudi Arabia.

"Many famous Saudi authors have their books banned in Saudi Arabia it-

self, and Saudis must travel to Cairo, Damascus and Beirut to buy them and bring them back to the Kingdom," he told The Media Line.

"Customs officers at Saudi airports used to open the baggage of all incoming passengers in the past, and books were the top targets, along with video tapes and DVDs, on their list of things to apprehend. There was even a censorship room at the airport, where officials would sit and rip pages out of books and magazines, and view videos for banned content. Nowadays, the baggage of most incoming passengers is just x-rayed, and is rarely opened by custom officers unless they see something suspicious on their scanner screens."

"I don't think that e-books will re-

place printed books in Saudi just yet," Abou-Alsamh said. "Those within the younger generation of Saudis who like to read will probably take to e-books enthusiastically, but I still think they will be small minority of the population."

Abeer Mishkhas, a features editor at the London-based A-Sharq Al-Awsat, confirmed that the e-book has so far made little impact in the Arab world, and attributed this to the fact that most of the e-books on the market are in English.

As it is, she said, Arabs are not avid books readers, and this is reflected in the Arabic digital book industry.

"You're talking about a limited number of people who know how to deal

with the Internet and download books," she told The Media Line.

Mishkhas attested to a plethora of websites that have popped up in recent years that provide illegal scans of Arabic language books without paying royalties, and have become very popular. These websites, it appears, provide at least a partial solution for those seeking controversial books in Arabic.

The digital book reader revolution is not likely to change much, Mishkhas said, "not until it can carry Arabic, because these are English books and it isn't the majority who can read English and know how to deal with electronic media. If it does carry Arabic, I expect a lot of people will be happy to read books in Arabic."

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KALBOARD COLOURS

A 24-hour trip to a virgin Yemeni Island

By: Malak Shaher

Our eyes glittered as we, the Yemen Times staff, heard of a trip to Kamaran, the largest Yemeni island in the Red Sea. Before getting to the island, we first had to go to Al-Saleef Port, in Al-Hodaida governorate. As we reached the coast

guard authority "office", near the coast, were spotted boats being prepared for us to leave for Kamaran.

As our boats moved across the sea, the waves took us high and low. Our hearts were pounding as we were taken up and down. The island was still not in the horizon.

As we travelled further out into the sea toward Kamaran, the peaks of traditional

Tihama huts started to appear. Finally, it took about 20 minutes to get to the island. Our first steps on the hot sand promised an interesting visit, the island appeared untouched, clean and natural.

The island is quite flat, with few hills. The island is also extremely quiet with only the constant sound of waves crashing against the coast. One rarely hears any unnatural sound, like that of a car's engine.

Modern buildings are absent from the east side of the island, where we stayed. Only traditional Tihami buildings are constructed here.

As the sun was setting, it gave the sea a golden color. Soon, the moon switched places with the sun and reflected a silver color on the sea. The name of the island was originally Qamaran, or two moons in Arabic. This is a fitting name, given to the island by those who conquered it so many years ago.

At night, the tender fresh air swayed through our clothes and even through the small specks of sands touching our feet.

"You need to sleep so that you do not miss the sun rise, you can see dolphins," an employee at the resort told us.

In spite of this, we preferred to stay awake so as not to miss the priceless moments of the full moon night. However, the early minutes of dawn also deserved not to be missed. We got up early in the morning, prayed and got to see the sea while the weather was subtle and not yet fiery hot.



YT photo by Khalef Al-Helaly

Unfortunately, this time, no dolphins were in sight. With this breathtaking dawn scene, we snatched our cameras from their bags and tried to stop time with photos. Our results are hundreds of moments captured through photos. Time, however, was running out and the hot weather forced us to take shelter in the sea or under the shade of Tihami sun umbrellas.



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A tour of the mangrove forest

One should not miss a boat tour of the mangrove forest, where trees grow in the water.

The mangrove forest is majestic. There is a mixture of rich and pale green. Magnificent white clouds hovered above the rich green of the forest, while the pale green of the forest reached deep into the sea.

On the way back, the driver of our boat, a small boy, decided to do us a favour and take us faster and faster over the relatively large waves of the turbulent sea. At one

point, the boat bounced almost a meter into the air, hitting the water abruptly after. We felt our hearts jumping out of our chests. As we screamed, the boy was thrilled and made the boat move faster than ever, up and down over the angry waves.

We felt safe as we finally reached the Al-Saleef coast. "Oops, I forgot to take shells and corals with me," I proclaimed. "Don't worry; the sun did not forget to give you a tint of bronze color," one of the young boat drivers murmured.



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OMEGA OFFICIAL TIMEKEEPER

Press Release

OMEGA to serve as Official Timekeeper for IAAF Diamond League

OMEGA, widely known for its role as Official Timekeeper at the Olympic Games, has signed an agreement with the Diamond League AG confirming that it will provide the same services to the new IAAF Diamond League circuit in its 2010 inaugural season.

The IAAF Diamond League is an annual series of one-day meets which intends, as one of its main goals, to enhance the worldwide appeal of athletics. The 14 meetings planned for 2010 replace the Golden League, whose six meetings were contested exclusively in Europe. The IAAF Diamond League will still include the most prestigious events on the European athletics calendar but will also feature meetings in China and the United States and will kick off its ambitious schedule in Doha, Qatar on the 14th of May.

In addition to its timekeeping and data handling activities at some of the world's highest-profile sporting events, OMEGA has been responsible for the development of much of the key technology in sports timing, including the Scan'O'Vision photofinish camera with its ability to "photograph time". OMEGA has served as Official Timekeeper at 24 Olympic Games since 1932 and recently extended its agreement with the International Olympic Committee through 2020.

Stephen Urquhart, the president of OMEGA, said, "We are looking forward to timing the performances of the talented men and women competing in the international IAAF Diamond League meetings. We already know many of these top athletes through our association with the Olympic Games and we are pleased to be part of this new initiative which will bring world-class athletics to an even wider audience."

IAAF President Lamine Diack reflected on OMEGA's history of timing athletic events and expressed his enthusiasm about the partnership. "Athletics as the Olympics' number one summer sport has had a long standing and historic relationship with OMEGA. Accurate timing and measurement are at the core of an objective sport such as athletics, and the results of the IAAF Diamond League will particularly be in the public's focus this summer as the best athletes in the world vie for more than US\$6 million in prize money."

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