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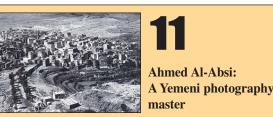
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**By: Yemen Times Staff** 

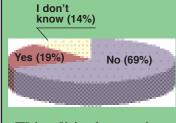
Islam and the West: Beyond **Entertainment** 





### Readers' Voice

Last edition's question: The Democracy and Freedom of Expression conference came out with a communique that triggered criticism. Do you think that the socalled Sana'a communique reflects the views of the people and NGOs?



#### This edition's question:

Joint-meeting parties (JMP) have recently declared its candidate to the upcoming presidential election. Do you think the authorities would allow the JMP to use the state media instruments to propagate for its electoral platform? - Yes - No - I don't know

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30 Palestinians, including 7 children, in the Gaza Strip. Among them were 7 Yemen Times sides by human rights members of the Ghalia family who international organizations around the were decimated in an Israeli gun-boat attack on a Gaza beach. All the others world and strongly condemns Israel's

illegal attacks and siege of the Gaza were killed by helicopter missile and Strip. These ongoing military operaartillery fire. tions are nothing less than the collec-We view the frantic international tive punishment of an entire civilian efforts to secure the release of a single population. As such they blatantly con-Israeli soldier captured in combat in travene Article 33 of the Fourth the occupied territories as utter Geneva Convention which prohibits hypocrisy and disgraceful double-stan-'collective penalties' and all likewise dards. There are at least 9,800 measures of intimidation. During the Palestinians currently being held by the period 20th May and 21st June this occupation forces in Israeli prisons. Of year Israel's occupation forces killed that number, Israel is holding 126 Palestinian women and 450 minors. The Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem has confirmed that 85% of Palestinian detainees have been tortured during interrogation.

End collective punishment of the Palestinian people

We call for an immediate end to the degrading and inhuman treatment of Palestinian prisoners. We demand their immediate release and an end to the extrajudicial killings of civilians. We urge the Yemeni government and all international governments to honor their treaty obligation to 'ensure respect' for the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.



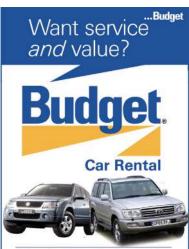


## **Opposition nominates Bin Shamlan for president**

#### By: Mohamed Bin Sallam

SANA'A, July 2 - Under the slogan "President for the sake of Yemen, not Yemen for the sake of President," the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) named former MP Faisal Bin Othman Bin Shamlan their candidate for the upcoming presidential elections. Bin Shamlan is an independent politician and has no political affiliation

"I expected the opposition presidential candidate to be one of the JMP leaders who are competent and more eligible than



me, Bin Shamlan said, addressing hundreds of people at the Sheraton Hotel. "As the JMP insisted on my nomina-

tion, hard work and total commitment have become a must.' The JMP candidate hoped that opposi-

tion and all Yemeni people have good thoughts about him, pointing out that he appreciates the JMP, which gives a constructive lesson to other parties.

"The JMP is a paved road leading to the best of changes and forming a civil democratic governance to help the Yemeni people live in peace and security," the candidate stated. He praised the JMP and its comprehensive political reform project, affirming that only peaceful struggle will be accepted. The JMP released a statement





The JMP announcing their presidential candidate

announcing their presidential candidate and political program that stated, "Based on the nomination by the JMP's Shoura Council and central committees, as well as confidence of Yemenis to exercise their electoral right for tackling their issues, the

didate for the upcoming presidential race.'

Opposition parties emphasized they will back their candidate and prepare a strong electoral campaign to win the support of a majority of voters. They trust

## Yemen refutes supporting the Islamic Courts

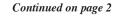
#### By: Yemen Times Staff

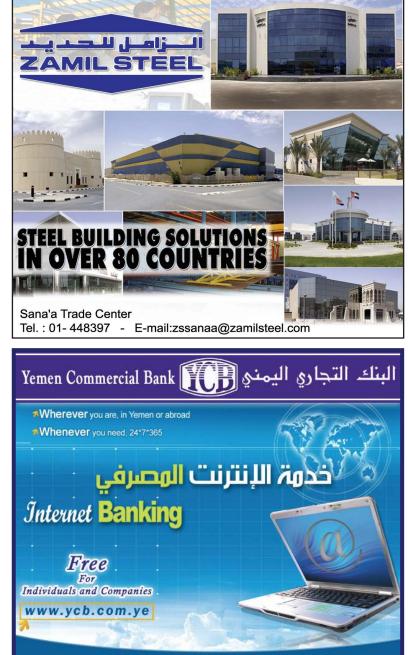
SANA'A, July 2 - Dr. Abu Bakr Al-Qirbi, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, denied last Saturday a statement by a U.S. official that Yemen is one of three regional countries supporting the Islamic Courts movement in Somalia. "What the US official said is untrue," Al-Qirbi commented.

"Yemen only supported the Somali police with light arms at an early time following the formation of the Somali

legal government under the Nairobi Accord. Since then, Yemen has not extended any financial assistance or arms to the [interim] government or the courts.'

In a statement to Al-Jazeerah, the Al-Qirbi noted: "I hoped that the U.S. official, who said she would discuss the matter with Yemen and Saudi Arabia and other governments in the region, did so before releasing the statement to help us examine the matter."





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JMP declares Faisal Bin Shamlan its can- Bin Shamlan because he is politically and

اسعارعلى مزاجك



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### **Around the Nation**



dence, to Judge Anees Al-Samawi,

Chairman of the Supreme Judicial

Council, to prove the independence of

the Yemeni Judiciary and its role in pro-

tecting the public purse and properties.

The file confirms the involvement of

high-ranking officials in misleading the

Yemeni people by granting the DIC,

along with its partner Abdullah Buqshan,

the right to run the Aden container port.

According to Al-Shoura.net, the

YOMHR intends to present a copy of the

file to the International Organization for

Combating Corruption and to another file

to the London Conference of Donor

Countries that is scheduled to be held in

Shatara declared that the deficiency in

Yemen is that of authority and not the

shortage of resources and any financial

support for Yemen that will lead to the

accumulation of debt will be to the detri-

ment of the Yemeni people.

November.

## **Parliament to receive presidential** candidates' applications

#### By: Asmail Al-Ghabri

SANA'A, July 1 – Parliamentary sources said that the Parliament Council will hold an extraordinary meeting next Monday to call on all presidential candidates to submit their nominations to the Council's Authority in accordance with the law and the constitution. The Parliament will start receiving the applications for the presidential elections in September on July 4.

Putting aside the matter of being legally and constitutionally eligible, the same sources said that the number of those wishing to nominate themselves for the upcoming elections has reached 13 people, tow of them women. The constitution requires a candidate to get at least 5 percent of Parliament members votes to be able to stand in the election.

The Supreme Commission for Elections and Referendum (SCER) confirmed that September 10 will be elections day since September 23 coincides with Ramadan.

Dr. Mohammed Al-Sayani, SCER member and the director of Technical Affairs and Planning, stressed that there has been no decision to postpone elections as has been rumored. He noted that the SCER had sent messages along with laser CDs to political parties, including the quota and sites of electoral committees for each political block in accordance with the agreement signed between the General People's Congress (GPC) and the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP), which allocates 54 percent of seats to the GPC and 46 percent to the JMP. Al-Savani added that the SCER

asked the parties to fill in documents contained on the CDs with the names of their nominees for supervisory, primary, and subcommittee positions within a week and to send them back to the committee to enable it continue the execution of its tasks. As a first step, the SCER, after receiving the names of the nominees, will form primary committees in districts and local constituencies in addition to supervisory committees in the governorates with some 17,922 people.

The second phase will start after July 18 when the contesting period comes to an end, out of which the number of poll boxes and committees will be decided. It will be followed by an announcement for calling electoral committees expected to consist of 90,000 people.

Al-Sayani expressed concern over media statements that targeted the SCER saying "the committee performs its duties on time and according to tasks stated in the constitution. If it happens that the SCER has errored in allocating the quota or anything else, then it can be sued in accordance with law and official means."

**General Prosecution investigates** electoral violations The General Prosecution office con-

tinues its investigation of electoral violations that the Supreme Commission on Elections and Referendum (SCER) referred it to. The Prosecutor's office must evaluate the cases and send cases that warrant trial to the judiciary.

SCER informed judicial authorities, represented by the General Prosecutor, of all electoral violations which reached 243,500. Of those cases, 126,000 were of underage voters on the voter rolls and 53,500 were concerned with cases added last month. There are some 64,000 cases of duplicated names.

The General Prosecution has been provided with documents and photos that prove such violations, aiming to make the voters' register free from errors as it is the key element for guaranteeing the conduction of presidential and local conductions in an impartial and safe manner, said Al-Dain.

"The General Prosecution will examine all violations and will take the required actions according to election laws. The measures include suspending the participation of incompetent persons in the forthcoming elections as for underage voters and sending those convicted to the judiciary to decide upon their cases and cancel them from the register."

Al-Dain noted that the "SCER is keen about the existence of a clean electoral register, free from all defects to ensure electoral process's success.'

## **Cartoon film on the trafficking** of children under production

#### **By: Walid Al-Boks**

SANA'A, July 1 - The Shoudhab Foundation for Childhood and Development (SFCD) honored painter Wafa Al-Ashwal for her first rank cartoon characters, featuring Yemeni family personalities. The painting will be turned into a cartoon film for children.

Lamya Al-Aryani, SFCD's director, has decided to produce the film, said that "the film we [will] produce will help spread children's rights. We want each child to live a beautiful life and avoid suffering and disregard, as well as having the attention from adults."

In collaboration with UNICEF and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, the SFCD organized a celebration last Friday in the Taj Saba Hotel, finalizing the first phase of the production if a Yemeni cartoon film according to Maryam Ibrahim Al-Shawafi, executive manager of the SFCD. The celebration was attended by an American embassy representative and the Egyptian ambassador along with his wife.

Al-Shawafi explained the various



Wafa Al-Ashwal With her character characters.

need and displacement.

One of the children, who did not mention his name, said that his journey started when somebody offered to help him enter Saudi Arabia.

"I was sleeping in Al-Hassba in Sana'a. when someone came and asked me if I wanted to travel to Saudi Arabia," said the boy. He spoke of mistreatment he sufborder, while others walked long distances

Adel Dabwan, Social Defense official at the Ministry, said that the numbers of trafficked children is falling. In his speech, he said that "the number of children trafficked into Saudi Arabia last year reached more than 20,000 persons, but numbers of children trafficked [have]

## **World Bank refutes connection** to Dubai agreement

#### **By: Yemen Times Staff**

SANA'A, July 2 - Michel Richards, a senior official on the Corruption Combating Committee (CCC) of the World Bank affirmed that the institution has no relation with the agreement upon which Dubai International Company (DIC) was granted the right to operate Aden container port.

In reply to a message sent by Lutfi Shatara, head of the Yemeni Group in Britain and head of the Yemeni Organization for Monitoring Human Rights (YOMHR), Paul Wolfowitz, World Bank Chairman, and Susan Rich Folosom, Richards mentioned that the "Corruption Combating Committee stresses that WB has no tie with this transaction, and WB does not finance and has no intention to finance the project." Yet, the Yemeni government stresses that

the World Bank is a key party to the

agreement Lutfi Shatara welcomed the immediate response of the World Bank in reply to a query by the YOMHR to ascertain the alleged involvement of the World Bank with the agreement concerning Aden port

"This message is considered an official document received from the World Bank, determinedly denying its relation with the deal, of which a number of Yemeni officials misled the people," said Shatara. Lutfi Shatara asked World Bank officials to reveal the nature of the role played by Mohammed Zimam, representative of "Coast Cities Development Project," the project financed by World Bank, particularly when he was among the members of Technical Committee formed by the Cabinet in the Resolution no. 188 in 2005.

The YOMHR intends to present the case file, supported by documentary evi-

### **Female presence and participation** in NGOs called "peculiarities"

SANA'A, July 1 - Yemen is an exception and has peculiarities in its civil society, said the French Ambassador to Yemen, Alain Moureau at the opening session of the symposium on Civil Society, Citizenship, and Local Governance in Yemen. The event was held Saturday in Sana'a.

"The issue of civil society has become a challenge at the international level. Yemen has peculiarities in its civil society and that lies in the presence and participation of women in the non-governmental organizations," Moureau noted.

Human Rights, stressed the importance of the civil society in Yemen. The issue of civil society has gone through several phases, she said.

'Civil society institutions are the outcome of historical phases, and their existence was proved by the existence of the unification in 1990."

**Continued from page1 Opposition nominates Bin Shamlan for president** 

Khadija Al-Haisami, Minister of

The statement, read out by Ali Al-Sarari, a JMP leader, added that "As all opportunities made available to Yemen were lost, the country [had] to suffer [from] poverty, backwardness, poor living standards, epidemics, illiteracy, and corruption.

"The situation goes from bad to worse due to poor education, health and electricity services, unemployment, restricted freedoms, and increased assaults on the freedom of expression, journalists and opinion writers, coupled with preventing civil society organizations from playing a tangible role to defend citizens' rights and promote equality."

The country fell victim to the absence of law and order, the inability of authorities to carry out their responsibilities, disrespect for the independence of the judiciary, the exploitation of the public treasury, cronyism when allotting government posts, absence of political plurality, and the creation of impediments to democratic transformation reads the statement.

These issues, the statement continues, caused violations and deprived citizens of having a state of order, law, and equity; which is why the wheels of development have gone in reverse.

"The JMP is heading toward a shining future thanks to their comprehensive political reform program, crowned with the

it attain a prestigious status among other nations," the statement says.

The statement makes the argument that democratic directives in Yemen have faced obstruction with the intention of mutilated them into mere slogans lacking content. Perceiving such extreme difficulties, barriers, and challenges, the JMP insists on pushing forward the wheels of the democratic transformation to help restore content to democracy in Yemen.

The JMP listed their demands to ensure that the presidential elections are administered in compliance with the international standards and it welcomed the international monitoring of the polls.

Concluding their statement, the opposition parties said that "Approaching the presidential polls, the JMP bets on the awareness of Yemeni voters, and the competence and loyalty of its leaders to tackle their country's issues."

The JMP is planning to gather voters throughout the country to persuade them that the best choice for Yemen is the JMP as the election of JMP candidates will help rescue the country from illiteracy, unemployment, and corruption.

Yemen's presidential elections are planned to take place this September. Meanwhile, leaders of the JMP nominated Faisal Bin Shamlan as their candidate during a meeting last Thursday in Sana'a.

Well-informed sources reported that Islah is the primary party supporting the candidacy of Bin Shamlan in the upcoming election.

Faisal Bin Shamlan was born in the Hadramawt and assumed several high posts in Qahtan Al-Sha'abi's Government before Yemen's Reunification. He worked as a manager of the General Corporation for Electricity and Power.

Following the declaration of Yemen's Reunification in May 1990, Bin Shamlan was appointed a member of Parliament. After the 1994 Civil War, President Ali Abdullah Saleh appointed him Minister for Oil and Minerals succeeding Saleh Bin Hesseinun who was killed in the war.

Throughout his posts, Bin Shamlan has maintained no party affiliation, even during rule of the Yemeni Socialist Party in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. He resigned his post as the Minister so as to be elected to Parliament, but tendered his resignation in protest against Parliament's decision to extend its term to six years instead of four.

The ruling General People Congress named President Saleh its candidate for the upcoming elections last Saturday. Parliament will begin to receive documents for candidates who have been nominated starting Tuesday. Any presidential candidate must win at least 5 percent of votes in Parliament and the Shoura Council where 20 percent of Socialist Partym and the Nasserite members have opposition party affiliations.

stages of the first phase. The first phase "included diverse preparations and field visits to five governorates to find more than 1,000 cartoonists participate in drawing the cartoon characters.

"Later, all the cartoons were subject to the judgment of a specialized committee to select the wining cartoon, following the opinion poll of a vast number school children... thus, today the painting is before you and it will be in the cartoon film in the second phase."

#### Trafficking of children

The SFCD presented a report, prepared by the foundation in cooperation with UNICEF, on the trafficking of children to neighboring countries. The report, titled "Children out of Borders," included child narrated stories that conveyed their personal experiences being trafficked. According to the film, the main causes and motives for trafficking were those of fered along with many other children when they fell into the hands of soldiers at Yemeni checkpoints. These soldiers refused to let them pass unless they paid 5,000 Yemeni Riyals.

The child described his situation in Saudi Arabia as dire, saying that he was a beggar and then a camel herder for an unspecified period of time. He did not get a wage, but got paid in food and water. He said that he was compelled to steal some money and a pistol and run away.

Another child, tempted by one of his friends, recounted his escape that ended in him becoming a beggar in Saudi Arabia. Later on, he worked together with his friend as a metal seller, collecting 500 Saudi Rivals over 45 days.

"I bought clothes and came back to Sana'a. Now, I have no money even to pay for transport," said the boy.

The report told of scenes of children riding donkeys on their way to the Saudi

come down due to the spread of awareness and the address of the problem by the mass media."

Dabwan added that families looked at the trafficking of children as a good thing without evaluating its risks, "but now they understand well such risks and refuse to hand their children to traffickers, though they live [through] hard economic situations.

He welcomed the use of cartoon characters in the forthcoming film for "children imitate cartoon characters they watch."

Nassim Abdul-Rahman, UNICEF Representative in Yemen, highlighted the role played by the organization in creating awareness about children issues-especially trafficking-and its attempt to find solutions for them.

"Yemen has started to [become] aware of hazards, and it tries to [make] them right," Al-Rahman said.

#### nomination of an eligible candidate [Bin Shamlan for president]. This proves that Yemen is rich with leading figures gualified enough to build the country and help

The JMP consists of five parties; the most important of them are Islah, the Yemeni Unionist party.

### Yemen refutes supporting the Islamic Courts

According to Al-Qirbi, stability in Somalia cannot be achieved with partiality, whether such partiality favors the interim government or the Courts. Only joint efforts by neighbors can restore stability and help make create a suitable atmosphere for dialogue between the government and the Courts.

Al-Qirbi said that the Al-Ejad Organization agreed with countries neighboring Somalia to send a committee to Mogadishu and then to Bedu to organize a dialogue between the Somali government and the Islamic Courts on how to end the bloodshed.

Dr. Jendayi Frazer, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, accused Yemen, Saudi Arabia, and Eritrea of backing the Islamic Courts in Somalia, which has recently taken over parts of the country

Frazer confirmed that representatives of the Islamic Courts have no intention to suggest alternatives to the interim federal government in Bedu

"The need for a dialogue between the legal courts and the transitional federal government is persistent," Frazer opined. She confirmed that the U.S. administration is working with international experts to tackle the restive security situation in the war-ravaged country.

Fighting terrorism in Somalia is one of he numerous goals of American political leadership in the horn of Africa. She went on to say that her country's government

"is still concerned about the terrorists born outside Somalia, and found a safe heaven for them there over the last few years.'

"In the time at which terrorism is considered among important issues, it is not so for America as it focuses on the governance mechanism, providing human aids for the Somali people, and enhancing regional stability and security."

"U.S. and other countries discuss with the Arab League the matter of money flows from the Arab countries to Somalia." said Frazer

"I do not want to say that Saudi government supports the Islamic Courts, but I know that money comes from Saudi Arabia. The money and arms come from Yemen and Eritrea as well as other places through Somali businessmen."

When asked about the measures followed by the U.S. to put pressure on Saudi Arabia minimizes the flow of money, she said that "We surely want to speak with governments of Saudi Arabia and Yemen as well as other governments in the Middle East.'

She also pointed out that they get contradicting messages from the Islamic Courts. When Sheikh Ahmed, a moderate personality, sends reconciliation messages to the U.S., Hassan Dhaher Auis, who is in the U.S. list of those affiliated with Al-Qaeda, has been appointed as the Islamic Courts' Head. Wishing not to mention their names, a

number of Yemeni political figures told Yemen Times that "a large number of Islamic Courts leaderships studied in the Al-Eman University, Dammaj Center in Sa'ada and other places across Yemen. They get support from the same sources that support Al-Eman University and other Centers that teach Sunni Faith, which is close to Wahabi thinking."

The same sources added that a lot of Somali students, who has not finished yet, in the above mentioned centers left weeks ago to Somalia to support their relatives, under the consent of their Sheikhs and Arab sponsors.

Yemen Times contacted AI-Eman University to verify the news that speaks of the involvement of some leadership in the university in supporting young leaders affiliated to Somali Islamic Courts. Al-Suhili, the manager of the university rector's office said "any allegation against the University is not true and it aims at defaming the educational and scientific status of the university. The claims that the university supports [the Islamic] Courts' leaders are baseless.

Regarding the existence of Somali students at the university, Al-Suhili said "We have a lot of students, belonging to different countries, and all students study here under the consent of their countries, among them Somali students." Ultimately, Al-Suhili asked mass media to be cautious and make sure of the validity of information they publish.

## Yemen, Jordan move toward economic partnership

SANA'A, July 2 – President Saleh and Jordanian King Abdullah II chaired the Yemeni-Jordanian discussions that took place today, focusing on bilateral relations and exchange of viewpoints on matters of mutual concern.

Dr. Abu Bakr Al-Qirbi, the Yemeni Foreign Minister, declared that the Jordanian king's visit to Yemen is of great importance because of the deep relations between the two Arab countries. Discussions are to focus on aspects of cultural and economic cooperation in addition to the situation in Palestine, Iraq, and Somalia.

Yemeni-Jordanian relations have witnessed noteworthy progress with 11 bilateral cooperation agreements signed since the end of the eleventh round of the Joint Yemeni-Jordanian Supreme Committee which was held in Amman in 2005.

Bilateral relations between the two countries date back to 1988 when the two states signed comprehensive cooperation accords. At that time, King Hussain bin Talal paid a visit to Sana'a. Following his

visit, both countries agreed on forming a supreme committee to be chaired by the prime ministers of the two countries.

Jordan and Yemen signed an agreement on scientific and technical cooperation in the field of oil and gas in 1990. Following a visit made by King Hussain after Yemeni Reunification in 1990, the Supreme Committee meetings started to be regularized and they resulted in the conclusion of many agreements and protocols, as well as the exchange official visits.



### Report

## Sana'a International Conference on Democracy, **Political Reforms and Freedom of Expression**

By: Raidan Al-Saqqaf

aking place in Sana'a on June 25th-26th, the Sana'a Conference had a substantial agenda to be discussed, allowing participants in the conference to have higher expectations than usual, especially as the stated objective of the conference was "to assess progress made in dialogue for democratic reform since the Sana'a 2004 Conference, facilitating and reinforcing the various initiatives carried out in the MENA Region in the last few years".

President Saleh insisted that he inaugurate the conference himself to explain to



Dr. Abu Baker Al-Qirbi, **Minister of International Affairs** 



Scott Carpenter, Head of **Delegation, US Dept. of State** 



Lawyer Mohammed Naji Alaw, **Director - HOOD** 



Laura Salama, MENA Program -Article 19

the world through this conference that democratic development in Yemen and other developing countries is only conditional to economic development, calling on donor countries to focus on helping economic development in Yemen just as much as they focus on democratic development as both go hand-in-hand, President Saleh stated. The conference started with an interesting concern raised by Dr. Erayni, who chaired the first session, stating that a discussion on democracy would be unfeasible if the government continues to monopolize broadcast and radio media and if the judiciary is not impartial and does not have independent enforcement mechanisms.

However, the roundtable discussions diverted away from the first part of the conference's objective - to assess and for-

Under the auspices of President Ali

Abdullah Saleh, President of the Republic

of Yemen, the Sana'a International

Conference on Democracy, Political

Reforms and Freedom of Expression was

convened in Sana'a on 25-26 June, 2006.

The Conference, which attracted more

than 500 participants from both govern-

ments and civil society from countries

throughout the Region, was hosted by the

Government of Yemen in collaboration

with the non-governmental organisations

Human Rights Information and Training

Centre (HRITC) and No Peace Without

The Conference participants included

representatives of governments of the

Region, the G8 and other democratic part-

ners, as well as international organisations

and non-state actors, including politi-

cians, parliamentarians, academics, intel-

lectuals, democracy advocates, opinion

makers, NGO and media representatives.

The Conference was held in the frame-

work of the Democracy Assistance

Dialogue (DAD) to offer a viable plat-

form to consolidate free dialogue among

participants over vital issues pertaining to

democracy, political reforms and freedom

The gathering fostered the free

exchange of ideas and provided a valu-

able opportunity for participants to criti-

cally review the achievements made with-

in the Region since the launch of the

BMENA initiative, including in particular

the two sessions of the Forum for the

Future held in Morocco in 2004 and

Bahrain in 2005, along the path of democ-

ratisation and political reforms. Other

achievements made within the framework

of the on-going DAD dialogue were also

- Acknowledge the successful experi-

ence of Yemen in democratic practice and

in involving civil society organisations as

partners in the DAD program;

- Emphasise the contribution of non-state

actors as essential counterparts of dia-

Justice (NPWJ).

of expression.

reviewed.

The participants

mulate mechanisms to measure the success ... - and focused primarily on discussing and reinforcing the various regional initiatives. Therefore one can conclude that any success of the Sana'a conference was only partial and limited, considering that most Yemeni NGOs had articulated the need to measure and assess our progress in order to know where we stand and in which direction we are heading on the democratic development map.

There were three roundtable discussions during the conference discussing democratic reform: fostering freedom of expression; and the enhancement of the role of women in the political system. The discussions resulted in several findings and recommendations which were endorsed by most participants.

Nevertheless, the participants were dis-

Region, based on the

process:

the

lowing:

appointed in the briefing of the final communiqué which was presented during the closing session of the conference. Having overlooked first part of the objective of

the conference related to the assessment mechanisms, most participants did not find the communiqué brief reflective of their discussions or inclusive of their recommendations which they had voiced or submitted to the organizers. News of a parallel communiqué started to spread as several representatives of NGOs who were present in the conference grouped to formulate their own communiqué. Yemen Times received three different communiqués following the events each claiming to be the parallel communiqué, reflecting the disorganization of participant NGOs.

Below is the revised version of the Sana'a communiqué. Final Communiqué of the Sana'a Conference



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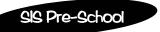
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- Arabic program from 12:00 noon 2:30 p.m.

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in genuine consultation with a broad spectrum of interested civil society organisations, including the media, for example through the establishment of governmentcivil society working groups.

Any legislation adopted in the area of freedom of expression should be consistent with relevant international law and standards, as contained inter alia in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 32 of the Arab Charter of Human Rights and the Sana'a Declaration on Promoting Independent and Pluralistic Arab Media.

Principles and ethical on media regulation and policy

Governments should encourage the development of knowledge societies by exploring the development of legislation with a view to legalising private and community broadcasting, where not yet in place.

- Enhance the capacity of State broadcasters to provide public service programming and reflect a plurality of views

 The independence of any public authority with regulatory powers over the media should be protected by law and through practical measures.

Closure of a publication should not be permitted, except as a penalty of last resort, where less intrusive measures have failed, and only following a fair trial before an impartial tribunal.

The development of know

be encouraged and supported, to ensure the promotion of professional standards in the media.

Principles on the work of journalists Support for the work of media freedom and journalists' rights NGOs should be encouraged.

- Journalists must be able to exercise their right to freedom of expression without fear of prosecution or intimidation, which would undermine effective journalism and the free flow of information to the public. Effective measures shall be taken to prevent and punish any such persecution or intimidation.

- In times of conflict, the status of media practitioners as non-combatants shall be respected at all times, and measures taken to ensure their safety.

- The right of journalists to establish and operate independent syndicates and associations without interference should be guaranteed by law and in practice.

- Criminal sanctions for offences committed in the course of the practice of journalism should be abolished or replaced by appropriate civil proceedings. Any trial of a journalist should be fair and be held before an impartial court.

#### Content restrictions

Restrictions on freedom of expression shall only be permissible foreseen by law and necessary in democratic society. - Laws which protect individuals against attacks on their reputation should take due account of the need for democratic debate about the functioning of public officials

positive experience of the involvement of other actors in the - In reference to the implementation mechanisms of democratic development, participants emphasized the fol-- Firstly, to call upon governments to accelerate the pace of

reform and to include civil society in order H.E. Mohammed Al-Tayeb, confernece coordinator and to overcome the mul- chair of the Shoura Council Human Rights Committee.

challenges tiple faced upon the path towards democratic development; and, to provide enabling conditions for the development of good governance by removing those obstacles which impede the peaceful, free and transparent organisation of civil society and political parties.

Secondly, the need for all governments in the Region to establish timeframes for the realisation of peaceful democratic transition.

- Third, to commit to the following basic mechanisms for peaceful democratic transition:

Remove restrictions from all forms of media - whether audio, visual or print and allow the private ownership of media through the breaking of state monopolies; through legislation, guarantee the security of judges and the independence of the judiciary, the latter being the underpinning of the rule of law and one of the cornerstones of democractic transition:

- Recognise that the freedom to establish civil society organisations and political parties is the backbone of democracy, while empowering the independent judiciary to monitor and evaluate their performance in public life.

- Fourth, with the practical involvement of civil society, establish national and regional watchdog institutions, the goals of which would be to monitor and report

progress on reform in the Region, finding operative techniques to assess and evaluate what has been done in each country; - That participants call upon the Arab League to review the proposed draft Arab Charter for Human Rights with a view to promote its acceptance by Arab counties

(governments and civil society actors). (B) On Democracy and the Rule of Law That international law and national legislation safeguarding the independence of the courts be respected;

- That terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, be regarded here as a serious threat to the growth and to the development of democracy, and world peace. Acts of terror create an atmosphere of distrust, panic and fear which undermine universally cherished values such as the freedom of thought and the freedom of expression; to combat terrorism requires addressing also its root causes;

(C) On The Role of Civil Society in Democratic Processes

- That priority be given to the promotion of democratic values within the three branches of state (i.e. the legislative, judicial and executive authorities) to ensure fair and democratic practices in compliance with the rule of law, deemed essential to accelerate the process of polit-

dom of expression should be undertaken



Dr. Lotfi Najji, Persident of **Tunisian Journalists Union** 



AbdulRahman Al-Rashed, Chairman - MBC Board of Directors



Hafedh Al-Bukari, Yemeni Journalists Syndicate

logue in the democracy-building process, sharing an important responsibility alongside governments;

- Renew the commitment of the countries of the Region to strengthen democracy and to broaden the scope of participation in political life as well as the commitment of the G8 and other partners to accompany and support effectively these reforms, in a spirit of partnership and mutual respect. In this respect participants welcomed the announcement of the establishment of the board of directors of the Foundation for the Future and recommended that it operate in consultation and cooperation with other regional and international initiatives supporting democracy in the Region and in particular the DAD;

Reaffirm their intention to continue the current and future political reforms and to undertake concrete action to implement the commitments made within the DAD processes;

- Reaffirmed their commitment to advancing the implementation of all recommendations made jointly by Governments and non-State actors at the Rabat International Colloquium on Political Pluralism and Electoral Processes of October 2005 and those made in plenary at the Intergovernmental Conference on Empowering Women in Public Life, in Ankara in May 2006;

Welcome the commitment of the Government of Yemen and HRITC to propose a mechanism of consultation between governments and non-state actors, identifying clearly defined timeframes and benchmarks, to pursue the DAD theme to promote freedom of expression in line with international standards;

Encourage the expansion of DAD activities and partnerships in order to enhance its operational reach across the on the accomplishments and failures of democratic transitions, and the protection of basic freedoms throughout the Region. - The participants also take note of the repression experienced by professional associations in the Region, and call for this situation to be remedied through respect for the independence of these associations in all their affairs, in conformity with the aims of this conference. - Finally, Request that the results of the Sana'a Conference be presented during the third meeting of the Forum for the Future (Jordan, December 2006);

- Acknowledge the important support of Italy, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the U.S. Middle East Partnership Initiative and United Nations Development Programme for their financial contributions to the successful organisation of the Conference.

In concurrence with the above, the participants welcome and endorse of the recommendations of the three thematic sessions, which are annexed to this document.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **On Democratic Reform:**

(A) On Political Systems and Democratic Transformation:

That parliaments of the Region engage in a process of dialogue with their counterparts to reinforce their skills and capacities:

- That institutional reforms be accompanied by reforms of administrative structures, including increasing the professionalism of the public servants and the accountability towards the citizens;

That Regional countries shall develop with NGOs their own systems to evaluate

ical reforms and to guarantee progress in the protection of human rights as well as to foster the transparency and accountability of institutions;

- That necessary measures be taken to promote the values of peace and tolerance through cross-cultural dialogue;

That the role of youth in the dialogue between civil society and government be strengthened and that, to this end, measures be taken to increase youth participation in good governance; that media and cultural exchange and school curricula be encouraged to contain principles of democracy and democratic values;

Endorses the many civil society networks in the Region and recommends that they be stregthened and built assume their role as a strong partner in the democractic reform process in the region;

And in conclusion, as it is at the national level that commitments taken at the Regional level need to be implemented in order to be effective, the participants welcome the willingness of the Government of Italy and No Peace Without Justice to follow up on the commitments which resulted from the first year of DAD activities on political pluralism enshrined in the Venice Workshop and Rabat Colloquium declarations.

#### On Fostering Freedom of Expression

- That, as a result of the conference, a process be initiated towards the formulation of Arab standards on freedom of expression, consistent with international law and taking into account existing standard-setting documents relevant to the region, including the African Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression.

#### Process for reform

- Any reform of legislation affecting free-

eties shall be encouraged by facilitating access to the internet, and avoiding attempts to monitor it.

- Given the contribution of satellite TV to the realisation of the right to freedom of expression in the Region, promote access to satellite television.

Professional standards in journalism Initiatives to develop journalistic codes of ethics should be encouraged and supported, as a step towards the replacing of official regulation by self-regulation.

- The establishment and development of training institutes for journalists should

Access to information

- Governments and civil society shall work together to examine the possibilities of adopting and implementing laws guaranteeing the right to access information held by public bodies.

No undue restrictions should be imposed on the ability of journalists to gather news, including on access to meetings of official bodies.

On the role of Women No recommendations.

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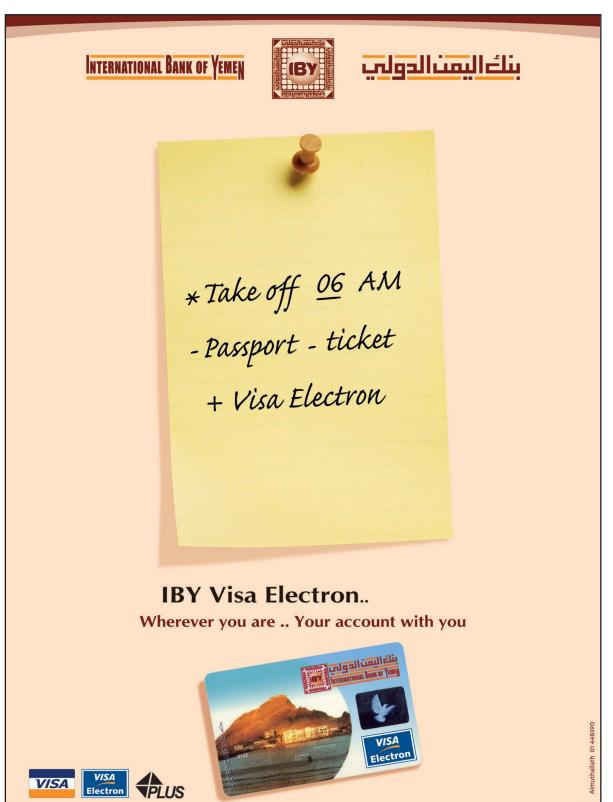
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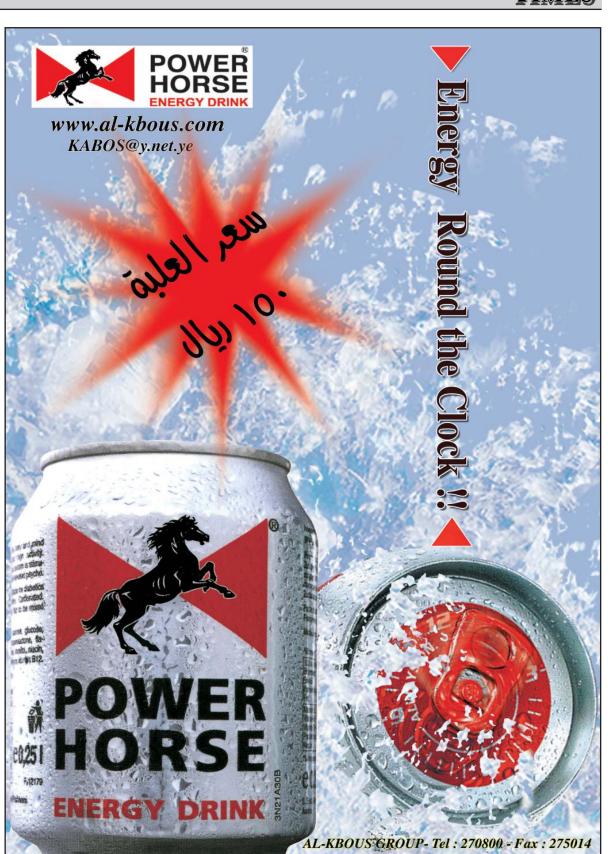
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### Report

## Cinema in the Arab World **Islam and the West: Beyond Entertainment**

The recurring culture clash themes on Islam vs. West conflicts are being outrightly abandoned by Middle Eastern film producers. They favour a return to an art cinema free to choose its own topics.

#### By: Antonia Naim

TEMEN

he burden of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the continued occupation of Palestine are obviously involved. As for Lebanon, the feverish reconstruction of the country and the reminiscences on the civil war, the weight on sectarianism and the deep rift between classes, almost totally pervade

the new Lebanese film industry which, though often supported by Europe there is no public assistance for the cinema in Lebanon – remains a national cinema portraying a national reality. Starting from this trend, can we

obtain a new cinema? It would be of an unusual nature, probing into a period of confrontation. And is this cinema unrelated to the social reality, to the Palestinian citizens that massively elected the Islamic party Hamas or the Israeli extremists that refused to leave the colonies in Gaza?

#### Revisiting political and artistic dimensions

Cinema, the 7th art, has always been, year after year, a shield against narrowminded religions and values, trying to impose their vision of the world and to colonise the political sphere of societies. Even Censorship, both Eastern and Western, has a scant long term effectiveness on this matter.

Today, some would like to prove to the world that Middle-Eastern societies have become almost totally Islamic and are populated by kamikazes manipulated by religious groups that advocate the destruction of the West. Cinema in this geographical area reacts to these clichés by revisiting two essential dimensions

of the whole history of cinema, that is, the political and artistic dimensions.

The Palestinian filmmaker Elia Suleiman is one of the most notorious examples. Through his last films, "Chronicle of a Disappearance" and "Divine Intervention", he inquires on circumstances that pretend to foster civilisation, but prefers going back to the introspection of his main character, placing him at the centre of the story.

This is also the case of recent films such as "Atash" by Tawfik Abu Wael (2004), a biting, radical piece; or "Paradise Now" (2005), by the Palestinian filmmaker Hany Abu Assad, which has had a big success and received an Oscar nomination.

Abu Assad chose to tackle the particularly controversial topic of suicide attacks through the history of two childhood friends living in Nablus, Khaled and Said, selected for an attack in Tel Aviv.

#### The story of Khaled and Said in "Paradise Now"

Although they start off as voluntaries in an Islamic group, the two friends start having doubts on the need to commit this action. Throughout the film, we get acquainted with their lives: they work off and on in a garage, but spend most of their time on the top of a hill, watching over an occupied Nablus, daydreaming and brooding over their daily humiliations and lack of freedom and work.

Deep wounds have marked their lives: Khaled's father was tortured by Israeli soldiers. As for Said, he has to live with the disgrace of a collaborator father, executed by Palestinian militia when he was 10.



Cinema in the Middle East responds to Western clichés by revisiting the political and artistic dimensions. The Palestinian filmmaker Elia Suleiman is one of the most notorious examples.

agree with the myth of martyrdom and returns to the debate on politics; if the violence of the Palestinian colonisation fosters further violence, that of attacks, it prompts an even more terrifying violence, that of the destruction of the Palestinian society, human morality. The film was shown in Ramallah, in one of the two cinemas left in Palestine, the Al Kasaba theatre on September 2005.

#### The comeback to politics in Israeli cinema

As for Israeli cinema, the comeback to politics is especially strong in documentaries: a few filmmakers chose to question society and to battle against the fake representations imposed by the present power, to denounce the lack of respect of human rights, the pursuit of colonisation in Palestine, the erection of a totally illegal wall condemned by international conventions.

Simone Bitton and her film "The Wall" - Juliano Mer Khameis and the striking film "Arna's Children", an The filmmaker at this point fails to homage to his own mother who was

recruited as a young girl in the clandestine Jewish army of Palmach, married an Arab communist intellectual after 1948 and then became a leftist Israeli militant

After the first Intifada, Arna created a theatre in the refugee camp of Jenine with the camp's children who, she will discover as her son returns to Jenine in 2002, will have come to a tragic end: either killed by the Israeli army or became kamikaze...

Avi Mograbi is one of the enfants terribles of Israel's cinema, a troublemaker who is set, film after film, to build awareness for his people and to deconstruct Israel's myths. In his last film, in 2005, "Pour un seul de mes yeux", Mograbi abandons his former grating and burlesque comedy to investigate (together with his public and his people) on two Israeli myths:

Samson (who is classified as the first kamikaze in history) and the myth of the Massada hill, extolling the collective suicide of the Zealotes. The young Israeli generations have had their fair share of these two myths, both in school and during group visits to histor-

## The tree that killed its caretaker

The following is a true story of a farmer who died in his gat field while hanging onto one of its tall trees.

By: Mohammed Al-Jabri

qat fields of his grandfaers. As a child. Ali

for qat." They also used to say about him, "Even if you asked him to leave atem Ali grew up in the his house to sell you qat, he would leave his comfortable seat and qat session to fulfill your demand "

never disappointed anyone requesting qat without money. He also used to sell qat on a post-payment basis.

Those farmers who worked with him bear witness to his being a generous and good man and he treated them kindly. They never got bored or tired of working in his fields, especially because he used to create an atmosphere of humor for them. When he saw

Tragically, Ali's life ended this past January. Having prayed Al-Fajr prayer, he headed for his qat fields as usual, having his breakfast under the very tree on which he soon after died. It was 10 a.m. when he set a stepladder against the tree because it was too tall for him to reach its leaves. The ground below was full of water. His death hour quickly approached, as he didn't notice the ical sites, which seem more like the reunions of a sect...

As for fiction, the filmmaker Amos Gitai has of late cast off his interest for Jewish orthodox communities represented in his film "Kadosh", and is going back to research in his disturbing film Promised Land, which thrusts us in the slave trade and the Eastern prostitutes market and unveils the lack of values of Israel's society.

#### A "clash of civilisations" in a very personal light

A distressing, highly subversive film that has been much criticised in Israel. "Alila" and "Free Zone", are also disturbing films. They are tales of free women, stories of friendship between women of opposing cultures, one American, the other from Israel, the third Palestinian, the famous clash of civilisations again, but in a very personal light...

As for the Lebanon, some young filmmakers like Ghassan Salhab ("Terra incognita",1998, "Beyrouth fantôme", 2002), Danielle Arbid ("Raddem", "Dans les champs de bataille", 2004) abandon the aesthetic codes imposed by the large Egyptian film industry as well as the American model, by creating new codes and crossbreed narrations that thrive on European art cinema and other more remote cinema.

In "A perfect day" (2006), Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige have progressed even further by producing a cinema d'auteur, which although abstract, it deals with shapes, space, time and the loss of memory, such a central theme in Lebanon.

It is a minimalist film, which reflects Antonioni with his adventures, where silences make sense. Beirut is there, an inconspicuous star, and for the first time our senses are spared of the wounds of the civil war or of its feverish reconstruction: they remain in the background, in that non visible space, the viewer's imagination.

Considering this brief summary of the cinema in the Middle East, we can ask ourselves: is cinema the last barricade under siege or on the contrary, the building ground for a future transnational civil and secular society with strong international ties?

In any case, the cinema witnesses the conflicts that cross each one of these societies, that animates them and makes them live or tests their own existence

It represents a place of contact, of dialogue even between societies at war. The fact that cinema, being present in festivals world wide, instantly becomes an international show should lead us to think on how European societies take part in the financial aid, the co-production of these national cinemas, of this "regional" Middle Eastern cinema, of which I have tried to pull out some common characteristics, beyond the clichés of the clash of civilisations. Source: www.qantara.de

## Yemen: Rights groups express concern over street vendor deaths

SANAA, 25 June (IRIN) – Human rights activists are calling for greater protection of street vendors following reports that several had been killed by local officials in cities throughout Yemen.

In some cases, unlicensed vendors - who are forbidden from hawking their wares in the streets - have been shot at or beaten by municipal officials, say human rights workers.

Khalid al-Anesi, executive director of the National Organisation for Defending Rights and Freedoms in Sana'a, known as HOOD, said that such attacks have become commonplace.

"Attacks against street vendors have become a daily scene," he said. "Municipality prisons are full of street vendors." Al-Anesi pointed out that, over the past year, six cases including beatings and killings – had been registered with HOOD, but that "there are other cases which haven't been disclosed".

allowed to sell in specified parts of the city. They are banned from working on major streets so as not to get in the way of pedestrians or cause traffic jams.

Street vendor Ahmed al-Raimi, 35, said that municipality workers regularly chased him and other vendors off the streets, and accused them of forcing him to work in "an environment of fear"

Human rights activist and lawyer for HOOD Ahmed Arman also pointed out that street vendors were often shot at by municipality workers. He went on to say that HOOD had received reports of the deaths of three street vendors this year. The latest case was on 13 June, when Ali al-Bahri, a mechanic, was allegedly killed over a disagreement municipality workers in a neighbourhood of the capital. "This reflects the violence of authorities," opined Arman. Yahya al-Shu'aibi, the Governor os Sana'a, however, said that such fatal attacks were isolated cases and did not represent a trend. "If it happens, then it's the result of resistance," al-Shu'aibi said. "The municipality is tasked only to remove those who violate the rules, not to take aggressive measures against them."

used to spend some time in the qat fields watching his father and grandfather pick qat leaves from the trees. When he became a grown-up, Ali befriended the qat trees after spending much time caring for them throughout the four seasons of the year.

Ali was famous for having the best quality qat in his district. When asked about the best qat, locals would say, "Ali's son Hatem is the best at caring

Ali paid much more attention to his qat fields than other farmers. He was matchless in caring for qat trees. Also, he used to describe qat leaves with superb detail and was the best describer of qat in his village, even highlighting qat's advantages.

Ali was known for being a generous farmer with a sense of humor that never left his countenance. Those without money to buy qat went to Ali's fields to request some qat leaves, as he

a sad worker of his, he said to him, "Hey man, why are you sad? OK, chew some qat and forget the world. There's no need to get upset."

As usual, Ali went to his fields after Al-Fajr prayer to care for the qat trees and water them, even if it was too cold for him to touch the water. His wife brought his breakfast to him because he preferred having it under the shade of the qat trees. Afterward, he went to sell his qat in the market until midday (i.e., until 5 or 6 p.m.).

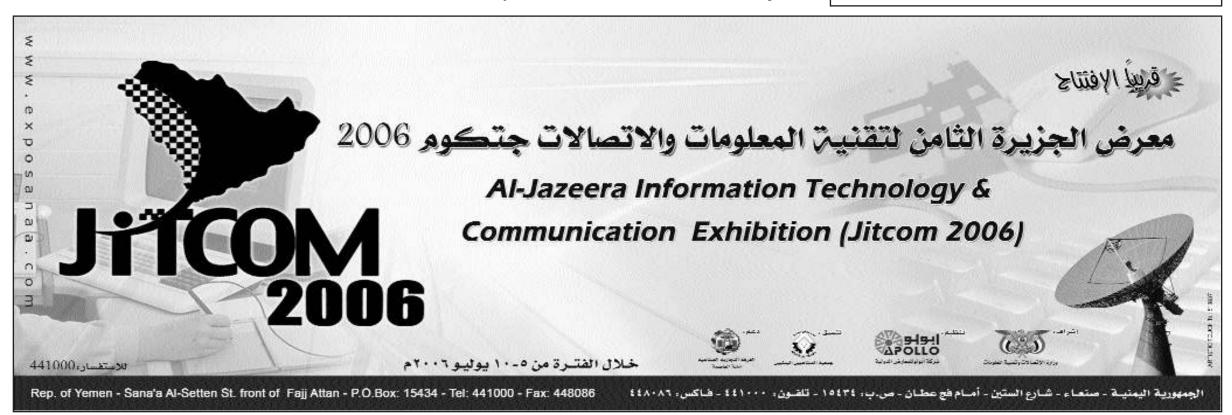
electrical wire touching the tree and the steel stepladder.

Ali ascended the stepladder and picked a few leaves. Unknowingly, he took his last look at the other qat trees he inherited from his father. Suddenly, the electric shock ran over the steel stepladder and Ali died holding onto the qat tree.

It was a black day for all the villagers because they lost one of their area's best local residents. Ali lived in a Sana'a suburb and died at age 35.

Yemen is a poor country, with some 42 percent of the population currently living under the poverty line. Street vendors, therefore, are a common site in almost every neighbourhood.

According to a recent law issued, however, street vendors are only





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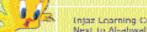
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### **8** 3 July, 2006

## Opinion





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-Saqqaf,

advances, notably globalization, is

(1951 - 1999) Founder of Yemen Times



## **Football?** Amen

ey tall guy, do something with 66 your head. Move it or remove it, we want to watch the game!" One of my tall friends, Ayman, is not quite happy with

his height these days. Apparently he continuously gets nagged while watching World Cup football matches on open-field screens. Following the tournament has become a sacred ritual for Ayman and many other Yemeni youths and adults alike. When I ask Ayman how is football these days he gives me a "yo-man" kind of gesture and says, "football rules!"

Actually these days football does rule. A recent story in *Time* magazine shows that one person out of five around the world are following the World Cup. This includes people who lack access to the matches and people who do not know what TV is in the first place. So, out of the people who do have access, perhaps the percentage is in the nineties if not greater. There hasn't been a more unifying subject for people globally than sports. In the last Olympics both North and South Korea paraded holding one flag together. It was then said that sports achieved what politics could not

This year, football fans of various persuasionseven conflicting minorities-sat together watching, anticipating, and cheering. Iraqi Sunna, Shia, and Kurds sat together as did Turks with the Germans, Russians with Ukrainians, Muslims with Christians. Everyone put aside their differences and united in the love of this fascinating game.

#### "Zu Gast Bei Freunden"

The host for the World Cup this year made it clear that it would use the occasion as "a time to make new friends." Germany is re-branding its image in order to be known as a friendly nation. The government urged Germans to be friendly hosts this summer when guests would arrive. So, football is not only a game that unites people, it is also an opportunity for conveying a message and re-branding a nation's image as a whole.

With the latest developments in Gaza, I feel sad and sorry for the way things turned out in my region, the Middle East. If only there was a way people could gather around themes such as world peace and justice like they do around a sport such as football. And if only there was a way to portray a truer image about Islam and the Arabs, a more positive one: to use an opportunity like Germany has with the World Cup and tell the world that Muslims and Arabs are more than what perceptions tell. If only we could use such an opportunity to get rid of violence that targets our fellow human beings and to unite with the entire world under the rubric of humanity, peace, and justice.

> Nadia Al-Sakkaf Editor-in-Chief

or the second time, Sana'a hosted this international conference those concerned with democracy in the Arab nation gather. The importance of the gathering, similar to the

previous one, was signified by the large numbers of intellectu-By:Dr. Abdulaziz als, journalists, broadcasters, government personnel, and opposition members who

attended. From June 25-26, the conference discussed three key issues: democracy and political reform; democracy and freedom of expression; and democracy and the situation of women. From my standpoint, it was quite

where

enough to focus on one issue, allowing all

## **Dues must be paid**

attendees to present their opinion, instead of being limited to a few minutes of discussion on each topic.

The conference was not without of interesting statements. Among them was a reference that stressed that talk about democracy and political reform had been so frequent so as to cause monotony. Until now, democracy remains mere talk. The essence of something

lies in what is seen, rather than in what is heard or read. It is a fallacy that Arabs are satisfied with talk and are unconcerned about action.

Furthermore, it is not surprising that a number of conference attendees emphasized

that they had attended more than 15 meetings of conferences to discuss a project of democracy and political reform with the same dissertations. Nevertheless, they have not witnessed the application of one item discussed at all those conferences. It is not surprising that these attendees remain interested in preparing for listening to the same working papers again and again.

There were many first-rate working papers presented at the Sana'a conference, but I cannot hide my admiration of the paper submitted by Dr. Abdulkarim Al-Eryani. The paper contained a genuine and highly important description of the reality of democracy in the Arab nation through his evaluation of the practice of Arab states. Al-Eryani notes that the Arab states implementation of democracy remains halfhearted. Arab states

either have democratic systems that are beginning to emerge, are still incubating, or are embryonic.

This frank description springs from profound political experience and accurate reading of the Arab nation's reality. Though Al-Eryani has not named the regimes reviewed in his paper, the reader can discern which states Al-Eryani is talking about. His assessment confirms that the achievement of democracy in the Arab nation is a long way off. There are many obstacles that hinder reaching this goal. Dues inevitably will have to be paid both before and after so that such an achievement is realized.

Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Maqaleh is a prominent Yemeni poet and intellectual. He is the director of the Yemeni Center for Studies.

## Will there be impartial elections?

ith a dialogue lastfor ing more than W 0 t months, the ruling General People's Congress (GPC), headed by President Saleh and the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) have signed an agreement on "elections impartiality," which is the first of its type

in the Arab world and perhaps in other Third World countries as well.

GPC's signing of such an agreement indicates a lot, for election impartiality is a right guaranteed by the constitution and laws. Though both the constitution and legislated laws may be imperfect, the defects of these statutes can be reviewed and discussed by parliament. Yet, the moody and angry nature of the ruling party have made this important issue the battle of all battles.

From the start of this year, the differences between the ruling party and the opposition have mounted to the point that the opposition has hinted at revolution. GPC's signing of the agreement on elections is considered to be a confession of the flaws in the elections mechanism and a decision to abandon its policy of not tolerating criticism of the Supreme Commission for Elections and Referendum (SCER). It is in fact a tactic and partial retreat. Yet, the agreement remains important on the grounds that the GPC implicitly admits misconduct and expresses an interest in fixing the problem and maintaining dialogue.

The JMP also retreated in its allegations deprived of inheritance and most Yemenis that the SCER is but a toy in the hands of backed members and 46 percent for opposithe ruling party, partial, dependent, and tion parties members. contrive to leave women penniless. It seems The GPC considers the agreement to be a biased. For accepting the participation of that even her rights of voting and nominating are manipulated. two JMP membes on the committee does waiver since it still clings to its right to not mean that this partisan committee will name parliamentary chairs. Moreover, Though they speak of the impartiality of suddenly become unbiased and independthe allocation of public sector jobs, the GPC's acceptance of checking voter regisent. Ironically, this agreement will diminish tration lists to eliminate errors was a signiflegitimate use of public money, and the neuthe claims of opposition parties and tral role of the army, what is more pressing icant concession. The fourth article of the agreements stip- is the level of practical commitment to this Syndicate. decrease the credibility of their demands.

Though interpreted to be mindful of the democratic process, JMP's decision to participate in the elections imposes further burdens on an already confused opposition. Achieved by dialogue, the

agreement is considered an important accomplishment, yet what is more important is the commitment to this agreement to the letter and in

action. Those who follow Yemeni politics know very well that Yemenis are experts in penning agreements, yet their difficulty lies in realizing the substance of these agreements

Agreement on going to voting boxes for presidential and local elections is not insignificant, but what is more essential is that these elections are impartial, free, and transparent. So, does the agreement live up to these aims? When the GPC allowed the SCER to be a subject of dialogue, the opposition decided to participate in a committee which has had its legitimacy called into question.

Lets leave all this aside and read the details of the agreement where the first item states that two more members will be added to the seven-member committee to make it a nine-member committee. This action requires a constitutional amendment. The two extra members will be chosen from among those selected previously by parliament, when the committee was formed. The agreement calls for the division of the supervisory, primary, and subcommittees with 54 percent of positions for GPC-

ulates that publicly owned media will remain impartial and that all parties and political organizations will participate in the elections. Other articles relate to control and transparency. Parties are to be provided with electronic copies of registered voter lists.

What is dangerous in this accord is the collusion to sideline woman by using floating formulas instead of allotting a definite number of posts for women. Article 11 should represent gender equality within society.

It is necessary to support Yemeni woman, defending their constitutional and legal rights without any condescension. "Women are half-brothers of men," and all parties and political organizations should consider women's political participation a national goal.

Article 11 does not go beyond preaching and a call on women to participate, a style suitable if voiced by a preacher or human rights defender, but not in a draft law. For a clause like "Women are half-brothers of men," which was adopted from the Yemeni constitution amended following the 1994 war, is a meaningless chatter.

The awfulness of this text lies in the fact that it promises more than it really will give. What is more appalling is the fact that women, though comprising 55 percent of the Yemeni population, are represented by a single woman in a parliament containing 301 members. Though the ruling party and the opposition agree upon women's rights, we find the text to be more a sermon than a code, and mere promises exist where there should be definitions and commitments.

In many Yemeni areas, women are

agreement. The agreement bans the use of public funds on publicity campaigns, even though it is difficult to distinguish public money from personal property. We find that GPC leaders behave as if state institutions were their own property, while merchants contributed one billion Yemeni Riyals to support Saleh's campaign.

The agreement also disallows the use of public institutions and mosques for electoral propaganda. Though prohibited in extant election laws, emphasis upon this issue indicates that there has been abuse. In reality, the agreement is no more than analgesic, a medicine to tranquilize the tensions of political life, which are coming to a climax.

What is positive is that the "antagonist brothers," the ruling party and opposition, have managed to compromise. Further, the choice of resorting to dialogue even in a minimal degree is another encouraging act. While the GPC sinned by refusing the principle of dialogue, the opposition's flaw manifested itself when it increased its demands, then retreated and accepted a substandard agreement.

As for comprehensive reform issues, they were set aside and compensated for in the agreement by promised legal amendments or in laws suspended until after the elections take place. The issues relate to the formation of the SCER from a pool of impartial and competent judges, reforming the administrative and technical apparatuses of the committee, and finalizing the civil register.

It seems that this agreement represents a détente for the GPC, while it has become a impasse for the opposition parties since they now should accept the SCER's election results, as they are a participant in it is activities. Furthermore, the opposition should nominate their presidential candidate, and agree on the names of its nominees in the governorates.

Abdulbari Taher is a Yemeni Journalist and the former chairman of Yemeni Journalists



Al-Maqaleh

### Letters to the Editor

#### Nightmarish news

Tt was a request of my mother, my wife, and I my children to switch off the TV. It was news time on Y.tv, Al-Jazeera and CNN. It was not an amazing request really, because I understood what they meant quickly. Watching the news means spending a night full with nightmares. A Palestinian family killed in cool. Hundreds of dead in Iraq. Bloody clashes in Somalia. Confrontations in Sudan. Killing in Afghanistan. Threatening Iran over its nuclear program while other countries have nuclear bombs. Unemployment, corruption, the false democracy adopted in the Arab world, the tyranny of Arab leaders, and the tyranny of the developed countries over the underdeveloped ones. The request had to be taken into consideration. I asked my mother "Why should we switch the television off now?" She replied

"You see the killing in Palestine, Iraq, Sudan, Somalia, Afghanistan, and all over the Arabic and Islamic worlds. The crying of mothers and children give me nightmares. It is so difficult to see all these catastrophes and not feel a great sadness. My son, don't the Arabic and Islamic leaders see what we see on TV?"

> Abdulkreem Al-Awage abdulkreem\_h\_alawage@yahoo.com

#### Yemeni traditional Dress Unaccepted

Tfeel offended when traditional Yemeni attire is not honored. Our national garb is culturally rich and it has a place deep in our social milieu and heritage. My problems began when an Omani official guest, who happened to be my classmate during my college days abroad, invited me and others to watch a World Cup football match at the

Mövenpick hotel. We were warmly received by my Omani friend, but one guest was rudely treated.

A hotel employee shamelessly mentioned that the management would not permit one of the guests, who was wearing traditional Yemeni attire, to enter. The employee was adamant about disallowing the man into the hotel wearing Yemeni attire, saying he was merely doing his job.

If hotel rules rule out the entry of guests clad in traditional attire, why wasn't this posted? These hotel 'rules' hurts our national pride and I will not compromise with whomever created these horrific rules. I believe that the Ministry of Tourism should investigate this case to see if the hotel is operating in accordance with Yemeni laws. Ali Sherif

"alisherif50@hotmail.com



#### Hodeidah Bureau: **Editorial Staff** Publisher & Editor-in-Chief Offices **Policies:** YEMEN Mazen Abdulghani Al-Saqqaf, Nadia Abdulaziz Al-Sakkaf - All opinion articles that have not been written by Al-Ajel, Fatima Aden Bureau: Mobile: 711404122 Yemen Times staff on the Opinion, Op-Ed and Youth www.yementimes.com Al-Ariqi, Amel Ridhwan Alawi Ahmed pages do not necessarily represent the newspaper's Managing Editor Al-Ghabri, Ismail Tel: +967 (2) 347-057, 346596 Ibb correspondent: First Political bi-weekly English opinion and hence YT could not be held accountable Fax: +967 (2) 347056 Newspaper in Yemen. Founded in Al-Jabri, Mohammed Nashwan Dammai Dr. Hamdan Zaid Dammag for their consequences. Mobile: (+967) 733840609, 1990 by Prof. Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf Email: ytaden@y.net.ye - Letters to the Editor must include your name, mailing Al-Khawlani, Adel Email: naschuan2000@yahoo.com address, or email address. The editor reserves the Head of News Dept. Al-Mayasi, Yasser Tel: +967 (1) 268-661 Taiz Bureau: right to edit all submissions for clarity, style, and Mohamed bin Sallam Al-Molsi, Shaker Fax: +967 (1) 268-276 Imad Ahmed Abdullah Hadramout Correspondent: length. P.O. Box 2579, Sana'a, Yemen Tel: +967 (4) 217-156, - Submissions will not be returned to the writer under Al-Saqqaf, Raidan Saeed Al-Batati Head of Design Dept. E-mail: editor@yementimes.com any circumstance. Telefax: +967 (4) 217157 Mobile (+967) 733896986 Khidhr, Mohammed Ramzy Alawi Al-Saqqaf - For information on advertising, contact the advertising Advertisement: ads@vementimes.com P.O.Box: 5086, Taiz Email: albatati88@yahoo.com Patterson, Dana department at any of the Yemen Times' offices Letters: letters@yementimes.com Email: yttaiz@y.net.ye Fax: +967 (05) 360303



## **Press Review / Opinion**





AL-Wahdawi weekly, organ of the Nasserite

elections Two persons killed and four other

Unionist Organization (NUO), 27 Jun 2006.

Main headlines NUO central committee approves participation in the upcoming

wounded in armed confrontations in Bani Hushaish Imprisonment to two officers condemned of kidnapping, torturing and raping of a child, Citizens storm Yafie security administration

Despite apology of the foreign

Ali

Saleh

be

## SILVER LINING **Democratic reform** must proceed

Al-Qadhi

-t is fine to have state and non-state actors meet and debate common concerns in the Arab countries like what happened last week at the Sana'a conference on democracy, political reforms, and the freedom of expression. Although the conference was dominated by the governments

and its recommendations were not up to expectations, still such activities are good. It is good to encourage the networking of civil society reformers in the region by brining them together to discuss the possibilities of boosting democratic reforms in their respective countries and the challenges ahead, provided that such activities are not turned into propaganda for authoritarian regimes.

I heard the presentations made by some of the government representatives who presented a very rosy picture about democracy in their countries. In 2004, I remember attending a similar conference on participatory government in the Middle East and North Africa countries in the U.K. where I heard similarly pleasant speeches. I asked the audience then why were we there if the situation is so wonderful.

I guess these regimes will never freely realize the challenges and the democratic reform gap between us and the rest of the world. The first step towards change and reform is the acknowledgement that we have a problem. But, these guys are reluctant to admit we are sick and need to be healed.

Yes, the region is in flames. We see violent and terrorist acts here and there. However, we should not try to fool ourselves and the world, claiming this is because of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict or the situation in Iraq or Somalia. Yes, these are a major headaches that affect all the countries in the region. It is illogical, however, to say that we have to postpone democratic and political reform until these issues are sorted out. This is ridiculous and nonsensical. Even the Palestinians who are under occupation and are in a real fix nowadays have impressed the world in demonstrating their democratic rights and electing a new parliament in a very transparent manner. In fact, they gave a very good example that we as Arabs are fully mature to handle democracy. We are not juvenile or, as our regimes claim, unprepared for democracy and the peaceful transfer of power. Such kinds of discourse are fabricated by oppressive and tyrannical regimes which want to remain in power forever, preventing any possible change. They have even created this "horror movie" that they are the key element to the stability of their countries, and that if they stand down, their countries will collapse. We saw these tactic used in Sana'a last week. I do not know what kind of stability these people are taking about. The Arab states have always lagged behind, according to the international development reports. It is really humiliating that people all over the world take to the street to demand their rulers step down while we in the Arab countries ask for the reverse. It is painful that we have come to think that our already horrendous condition is more of a blessing than the unpredictable future. Other people look forward to a better

tomorrow, while we fear the future. What a pity! President Abdullah addressed the democracy conference noting that democracy and reform cannot thought of being enacted while terrorism strikes the region. He said that **By: Mohammed** the West is now making theories on democracy

> and civil society organizations while the people of the region are poor. Sardonically, he said, "teach us [democracy] and feed us.'

I should ask why the West has to teach us and feed us as if we were their babies. It is not their responsibility to do all this while we remain idle, waiting for their sympathetic support.

#### Why terrorism and poverty?

The region is plagued with terrorism because it lacks democratic traditions. Instead, it has an authoritarian culture that fails to recognize the right of others to exist or express their difference of opinion. Talking about the Palestinian issue, making it the sole reason of our plight, is unjustifiable. I understand the ordeals of the Palestinians and the outrageous atrocities the Israelis carry out against them. Yet, it is unreasonable to halt developmental and reform processes that target hundreds of millions citizens living in the other Arab countries. I know that we do not fully agree with the foreign policies of the West, but this does not mean that we should look at their support for our democratization with suspicion.

Again, our poverty and backwardness are not completely due to our lack of resources. We are poor because we lack good governance and powerful legislatures that are able to nip the corruption of the executives in the bud and hold them accountable. We are poor because nobody knows where our public money goes. We are poor because most of our budget goes to armaments instead of health and education. If our resources were channeled properly, none of the Arab countries would need the support of the West or other rich countries, or let us say our need then will be limited. What we need from conferences such as the one held in Sana'a is not mere recommendations and polite talks. Rather, we need developed countries to exercise effective pressure on Arab regimes so that they stop harassing democracy activists and journalists. The West needs to lay down its support for greater progress in political reforms and the freedom of the media. I agree with Dr. Saad Eddin Ibrahim that Arab regimes should show us timelines for democratic transitions, even though it is impossible to set a timeframe for such an open-ended and sophisticated process. Yet, such timelines would provide some evidence of their determination to implement serious action. Non-state actors should think strategically and figure out what can be exactly concretized, and not just keep their heads in the clouds. For example, in the field of media, we need to see the end of the state monopoly over the broadcast media and more room for journalists to operate without restraint. Don't you agree?

minister, the American ambassador to Yemen criticizes the president's speech Al-Hamdi: Presidential elections,

an opportunity to effect change in the Yemeni reality

Massive festivals by the JMP demanding for reform and free elections

- Criticized violation of the principles agreement by the ruling party, The NUO assistant secretary general Asim: retraction of the president an expected drama
- Al-Mouayad demands ending his 3000-hour suffering Symposium on Yemen accession
- to the WTO
- General Assembly of Yemen International Bank approves raising the Bank's capital

On the president's retraction from his decision of not running for presidential elections for a second term, writer Muamar Mohammed al-Batoul says the Arab rulers are among rulers who stay the longest period in power. It has become a habit practiced by majority of Arab presidents, except in very rare instances. The Arab citizen is not accustomed to see on the ground a democratic practice, peaceful transfer of power without any problems except in the example of Lebanon. Many of Arab presidents managed to score records in the length of their stay in power.

The president's decision of not nominating himself for another term was a surprise to many Arab leaders and the Arab peoples too. It was considered a good initiative and conclusion had he clung to that historic and national decision and he would have been the first Arab president to do something like that. I think the president had had a full conviction in not nominating himself for another term but it seems there are some centers of power that do not prefer this matter. These powers are beneficiary from of his stay in governance and keeping the situation as it is. These forces consider the president's departure from his post a departure and loss of their interests and power.



mistreated them and violated their rights it could be their right because they are their masters. On the other hand, the rulers remained considering themselves as the shadow of God on the Earth.

The rulers might accept democracy as a slogan and form to improve their image before the world. But the democracy that they accept is the one that does not approach their positions and limit their authorities or affect their privileges as well as it should not lead to cross the red lines by criticizing them. The rulers think constitutions and laws as a formal complementary aspect of the state, similar to the flag and the national anthem. The decision taken by the ruler stays above the constitution and the law.

As a result of this despotic and totalitarian culture there is the nonexistence of separation between powers, the sovereignty of the law, peaceful transfer of power, and respect of human rights. Balloting boxes competition remains governed by the will of rulers. That situation has made the opposition compete in elections with the state that possesses all capabilities and powers rather than with another political party.



Main headlines

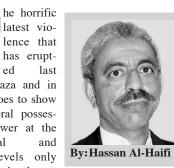
- Opposition parliamentarians: No Hope for the JMP in the upcoming elections
  - Chairman of the Higher Council of the alliance of the tribes of Marib, Jawf, Shabwa, and Saada: The tribe above partisanship, our alliance aims to make the state listen to the tribe voice
- Armed clashes renew in Al-Hadda Whooping cough disease spread in four villages in Bait al-Faqieh Government forces launch intensive attack on Jumaa Bin Fadhil area in Saada
  - Prisoners of the military prison in Hudeidah demand the parliament the formation of a committee to investigate into violations and crimes perpetrated against them

The newspaper editor in chief discusses in an article acceptance of President Ali Abdullah Saleh to

## COMMON SENSE The arrogance of power

lence that has erupted last week in Gaza and in Iraq only goes to show that unilateral possession of power at the international and regional levels only underscores the danger

that can come with such hegemony. Here we have the "decorated" State of Israel releasing all its powerful weapons against a helpless civilian population that is already suffering the most miserable conditions of being totally besieged without recourse to any relief from any outside force that might have some mercy still to dish out on these helpless Gazians. It is not enough that Israel has frozen any possible economic activity to allow these helpless Palestinians to eke out some sort of subsistence living. They have no access to the outside world. They have no access to clean water. They have no access to any readily available aid that could come to them from their fellow Arabs, or other many still kind people in the international community. Now the Israeli "Defense" Forces, which have been on the offensive since the date of the establishment of the State of Israel, unleashes all its power to destroy what ever is left of the vital infrastructure that may keep these people on the borderline between death and survival. Yes, the IDF has decided to make use of a minor military disappointment, when its forces were confronted with a legitimate resistance against an illegal occupation that led to the imprisonment of a conscripted Corporal to bring death and destruction to the vast majority of the civilian population of Gaza. With its tanks standing ready to mop up, the Israeli artillery and aircraft shelling of civilians and the unlawful detention of designated political leaders, democratically elected by the Palestinians to hopefully bring them



majority of innocent civilians, we have the US Ambassador to the United Nations calling Damascus the cause of all this mayhem unleashed by the Israelis for not surrendering Khalid Mash'al, the leader of Hamas. That is not exactly what calling a spade a

spade is all about. But then John Bolton is one of the engineers of the biggest flop in American history with the invasion of Iraq. One wonders what John Bolton has to say about the rape and murder of an Iraqi woman along with the three other members of her family, including a child, carried out by the very forces that Bolton and his havoc engineering friends in the Right Wing Establishment that is holding the helms in the United States?

Israel has an unlimited scope to unleash death and destruction to defend itself, says the White House even if it means the annihilation of the Palestinian people. But anyone who dares raise a finger of resistance to the most horrific occupation of all times is a terrorist and murderer in the White House glossary of words, which now even the United States Supreme Court can no longer stomach.

The increasing horrors that this region is being witness to are the engineering fine works of the right wing establishment on behalf of their Israeli friends, who seem to have driven this region into an abyss of violence, for which no clear exit is in sight.

Thank you, Mr. Bolton for your contemptuous appraisal of events in the region. We wish to tell Mr. Bolton that it is American weaponry that is being unleashed against the people of Gaza and not the toys of weapons that Damascus may own. We also wish to tell him that it is the Israeli Mossad that is actively at work fomenting all sorts of violence in Iraq and elsewhere in the region, including Lebanon. Perhaps Mr. Bolton is not aware that a big ring of Mossad agents was captured in Lebanon planning for another major explosion there, after all the previous explosions, the latter of which are becoming less of a mystery now that this ring was captured.

Hassan Al-Haifi has been a Yemeni political economist and journalist for more than 20 years.

Mohammed Al-Qadhi is a Yemeni journalist and columnist. (mhalqadhi@hotmail.com)

#### 📕 اسبوعية - سياسية - مسبقلة - شاملة Main headlines

- Bin Shamlan most prominent opposition presidential candidate Considering the president's acknowledgement of liquidating Nasserite leaders as self-criticism, Al-Afif demands the regime to unveil bodies of those executed and deem them as martyrs
- Asking for civil disobedience, Sana'a conference excludes civil organizations and reflects governments vision
- America intensifies its military presence in the Horn of Africa waters, warns Yemen against supporting the Islamic courts
- The president thanks tribes sheikhs and criticizes his party's leaderships in the capital
- Under request from education minister presidency security prevent women school inspectors from protest

Dr Abdulmalik al-Mutawakil writes saying while we are seeking to build a democratic society we have to admit that the major problem from which our least developed societies suffer is that we, as rulers and the governed have remained hostage of authoritative despotic culture that has dominated over our societies for long period of time. The majority of the citizens consider themselves as subjects not as citizens. They consider their rulers as heavenly ordained. If the rulers treated them well it is a favor done to them and if they

nominate himself for the Yemeni presidential elections. He says maybe the opposition would say that the action has been a kind of a drama or other such descriptions but the fact is that millions of the people have gone to the streets to tell the president to be their candidate to the presidency. The writer says the masses of the people have done that voluntarily and that their action portrays the Yemenis nature that is ready to bear difficulties and hunger and poverty for participating in what they think is

correct. The truth of what happened is a spectacular image of democracy that means diversity and difference at a time the opposition says it is not with nomination of Ali Abdullah Saleh. It is also at a time other some declares in writings that they do not want president Saleh. There are on the other hand the masses who took to the streets to support Saleh's nomination. This is indeed the democratic school the president talked about in his speech and this is the freedom of opinion and expression and the freedom of choice, the writer says.

Now the ball is in the court of the opposition that is in need to take its decision to declare its candidate to the presidential elections. The opposition has signed the agreement of principles with the General People's Congress and competition is required in the democratic process and the existence of more than one candidate is a required matter. Above all the tendency towards stabilization of

democracy pillars is the basic thing, looking towards the future and fighting corruption is the hope and the demand.

out of this predicament of Israeli

occupation, world indifferent, local

authority incompetence and many

many other ills that seem not to find

any cure with anyone holding the

helms of authority in the Holy Land.

How can the world allow such bar-

Yet amidst the world outrage at

what is obviously a bad exploitation

of a mismatch, let alone exaggerated

mass punishment against the helpless

barity to occur?

The writer concludes his article by hoping to hear from the opposition what would help build the democratic process and to play the ball in its court in the correct way.



#### Main headlines

- candidates, Bin Shamlan, al-Hamdi and Damaj
- Sana'a declaration calls on governments to respect independence of trade unions and to unleash the media freedom
- Attempted assassination against taxes authority deputy during his son's wedding ceremony
- Financial corruption in Yemeni islands
- Government institutions and influential personalities seize endowments lands in Saada

The writer Abdulbari Tahir discusses in an article the impartiality of elections saying after two months of dialogue the ruling GPC party and parties of the JMP (the political opposition) have signed a document on elections honesty. It is an

agreement that maybe the first of its kind in our Arab homeland or maybe in our third world. The decency of elections is a right guaranteed by the constitution and the laws regulating elections. It is known that the Yemeni constitution and the election law stipulate that. There might be in one of them or in both some shortcomings in this regard and in such a case conducting dialogue and through the parliament such shortcomings could be reviewed and rectified.

The agreement through dialogue is an important gain but the most important is the commitment to it in word and action. Observer of the Yemeni case can see the extent of the Yemenis response to the signing. In fact the accord to go to balloting boxes in the presidential and local elections is an important matter and what is more important is the achievement of an amount of decency, freedom and transparency. The question is whether the document would provide those aspects.

Probably the most dangerous thing in the agreement is the connivance against the role of the woman and the resorting to floating formulas instead of defining proportions of her participation whether through the quotas or certain percentage obligatory to the two parties.

Regarding neutrality of the official media and public service and public property as well as the armed forces, it is a good mater but more important is the extent of those institutions commitment in practice.

Al-Nidaa weekly, 28 Jun 2006. Main opposition presidential



## **REPUBLIC OF YEMEN Ministry of Oil & Minerals**

**Petroleum Exploration & Production Authority** 

## Tender Announcement



Announcing the general tender No. 2 for the year 2006, the Petroleum Exploration & Production Authority (PEPA) invites well-qualified consultants to prepare studies and design of PEPA's Building.

PEPA invites experienced companies and consultation offices in and outside Yemen, having the desire to compete for the tender, to apply to the PEPA's General Administration for Financial and Administrative Affairs, the Political Zone, opposite to the National Tobacco and Matches Company, during the official working hours to receive the tender documents for a non-refundable sum of 50,000 Yemeni Riyals.

#### The following requirements have to be met:

- Submitting bids in envelopes stamped with red wax. 1-
- 2-The technical offer must be submitted in one envelope and the financial offer in another envelope, and each envelope must contain an original and three authorized copies of each offer.
- Enclosing a photocopy of the tax card valid for 2006. 3-
- 4-Enclosing a photocopy of the insurance card valid for 2006.
- 5-Enclosing a photocopy of the zakat card valid for 2006.
- Submitting a preliminary deposit, with the financial offer, equivalent to 2,5% of the bid value. This can be via a payable check or a bank guarantee from 6an accredited bank in Yemen valid for 120 days from the date of opening the envelopes.
- The sum must be paid in local currency (Yemeni Riyal). 7-

The closing date for receiving technical and financial offers is Tuesday, August 15, 2006.

Technical envelopes will be opened at 11:00 of the same day in the presence of bid owners or their representatives. No bid will be accepted after the abovestated deadline.

#### For inquiries, contact us at the following address:

General Administration for Financial and Administrative Affairs, Petroleum Exploration & Production Authority, P. Box: 7196- Sana'a, Tele: 967 1 441230 Fax: 967 1 448726



## Culture

## Ahmed Al-Absi: a Yemeni photography master

#### By: Atif Awad

YEMEN

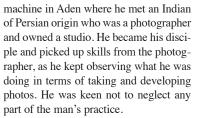
hmed Omar Al-Absi was born in a village in central Yemen in 1911, according to his son Mohammed Ahmed Omar, a doctor in Dhamar province. His grandmother used to retell the story of her son to her grandson. Mohammed still remembers his grandmother describing the story of Al-Absi and his fascination with the camera.



Ahmed Omar Al-Absi.

"As a child, he used to hear grownups mention a machine that could marvelously depict people's faces and bodies when they stood in front of it," she recounted. "He became obsessed with it. When he became a teenager, he went to Britishcolonized Aden, hell-bent on seeing the machine that could exactly reproduce faces in pictures and on paper."

Al-Absi began searching for the



Spending considerable time with the Indian photographer, Al-Absi became a professional in the art of photography. He then thought of returning to his native province of Taiz and introducing that first marvelous machine - the camera - to former North Yemen.

People had heard about it, but few believed it. Aden was an isolated British colony that no one could enter easily, aside from the fact that traveling at that time was difficult and tiresome. Not many Yemenis could afford to pay the travel expenses to Aden; therefore, the majority used donkeys and mules as means of transportation and less frequently by automobiles, which were very few.

Despite difficult circumstances, Al-Absi continued to practice his beloved profession in the city of Taiz. He encountered many hurdles such as the alleged illegality of photography which some muftis say is against Islam. However, Al-Absi wasn't practicing the profession to earn his living but rather spontaneously and instinctively.

With his camera, he wanted to record Yemeni events which thereafter continued to conjure up sad but important memories. Had it not been for Al-Absi, Yemenis couldn't have acquainted themselves with atrocities perpetrated against Yemeni revolutionists by the imam and his henchmen. With his lens, he captured



Pre-Revolution Taiz city, a photograph taken by Ahmed Omar Al-Absi.

the horrible executions of revolutionists in a square in the city of Taiz, both those of the 1948 and 1955 revolutions.

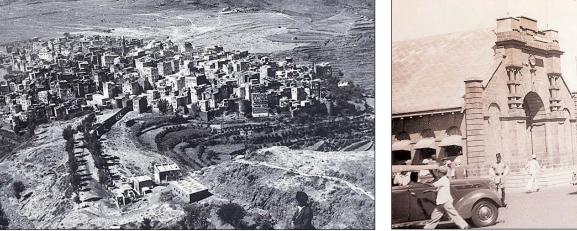
Of those revolutionists whose executions were memorialized on film by Al-Absi's still camera were judge Al-Sayiaghi and Al-Luqayiah. Through his lens, he depicted the horrible sword of Al-Woshah, the imam's executioner, beheading revolutionists. Even the moment of executing Al-Woshah himself, the imam's faithful henchman, was attended by Al-Absi's camera.

It was not only executions that were recorded by the lens of this creative and spontaneous artist. Al-Absi also shot numerous scenes from the miserable life of Yemenis at that time and their villages, as well as public places and the remarkable landmarks in Taiz and Aden.

Abdul-Rahman Bajjash, deputy Editor-in-Chief of Al-Thawra daily, said practically every real photographer in Yemen and every studio in any Yemeni city have something to do with this great photographer, who was a pioneer and a master in the art of photography. Al-Absi sensed his responsibility toward his nation and his people and carried it regularly and constantly without reluctance. He taught all those wanting to learn photography and master its nuances. Not only that, he also helped those who wanted to learn but had little sustenance. Al-Absi's son Mohammed displayed a

great quantity of pictures his father shot. Each photo retells a thousand tales and stories, reviving memories and enlivening scenes from Yemeni villages and people in the past. The collection is a registry that surpasses organized corporate efforts.

While showing the collection, Al-Absi's son voiced his wish to see his father's works cared for by the state or any organization by publishing a book displaying and preserving such an invaluable heritage.



Ibb city as in 1950.

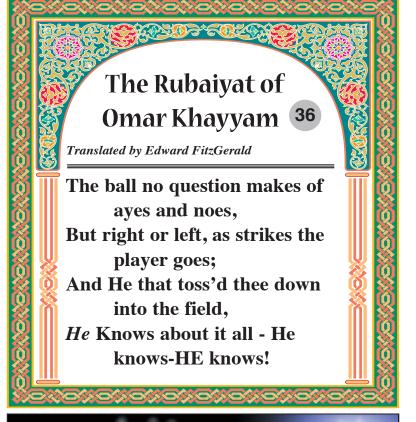


## **Koran Studies:** A Reappraisal of the position of women

women in Islam is often gious tradition of dialectics (kalam) has heresy. **ibstantiated by citing** long offered tools to "crack open" texts.

he supremacy of men over approached in Islam. The Islamic reli- having to fear charges of apostasy or Muslims. A Muslim man came to me and

said, "What you have written is certainly interesting, but it is unfortunately once





and Culture (VII) Author: Qadhi Abdullah Abdul-

Wahhab Al-Shamahi Language: Arabic Publisher: Dar Al-Hana Printing Year Published: 1973 No. of Pages: 370

ith the entry of the

Zeidi faith, began a long history of onand-off Zeidi rule that sometimes encompassed all of Yemen proper; i.e., the geographical bounds of natural Yemen extending from way inside the Hijaz, the Central and Southern highlands of Yemen, Hadhramaut and even Oman. However, by its nature and its calls for rebellions against any tyrannical or despotic ruler, a sustainable institutionalized Zeidi regime could not be well established in Yemen. Thus, much intermittent warfare occurred throughout the 1000 years or so of Zeidi rule and it would not be unusual to see brothers warring against each other, with each brother claiming that he is more competent in upholding God's law on Earth. Along this period, however other dynasties flourished in the more subdued regions of Yemen. This was mainly in the South, the Tehama region and the other lowland plains area of Yemen. As these regimes rose, the Zeidi regime tended to lie in dormant state in the far northern highlands surrounding the City of Sa'ada where Imam Al-Hadi Yahya Bin Al-Hussein had set up the Zeidi caliphate, with almost all the Imams being descendants of Ali, cousin of the Prophet Mohammed (PBAUH) and Fatima, the latter's daughter through their son Hassan, whereas the Shiites of Persia and the Fertile Crescent usually followed the Imams that descended from Hassan's brother Hussein. Notwithstanding the above, it is worth mentioning that there were several states that rose in the intervals between Zeidi rule, which were replete with culture and learning and great artistic achievements. We will briefly look at the most prominent of these regimes and note there significant contributions to Yemeni modern culture.

together many of the independent sultans and princes that had domains in Yemen and formed a council out of them to manage the affairs of state in Yemen. During the reign of Ali Bin Mohammed Al- Sulaihi relative peace prevailed and Sana'a and many cities saw a flourishing building boom, which included enlargement of the Grand Mosque. However this peace and tranquility was not to last. The first Sulaihi ruler was killed on his way to a pilgrimage to Mecca in the Year 456 AH in the plains of Tehama. His son, Al-Mukarram Ahmed Bin Ali Al-Sulaihi took over the throne. The latter was able to sustain the Sulaihi dynasty and overcome the rebellions that began to rise after his father's death. After some intermittent fighting among the various Sulaihis themselves and the beginning of the dissolution of their vast domain, a few Sulaihi rulers came and went until the throne became in the hands of Queen Arwa around 492 AH, where she ruled indirectly or directly up to 532 AH. During her reign several achievements were realized and many architectural symbols are testimony to the grandeur and aesthetic inclinations of the Sulaihi regime. These included the Al-Janad Mosque in Ta'ez, the West wing of the Grand Mosque in Sana'a and the several fortifications, dams and reser-

Verse 4.34 in the Koran. An academic institute in Germany has just published a new study on the Verse. Susan Javad of "Qantara" interviews the editor.

Luise Becker, how did you and the Center for Islamic Women's Studies (ZIF) in Cologne arrive at the idea of compiling a work on Verse 4.34? Luise Becker: For one thing, the Verse in Sura 4, which goes under the heading "Women," is regarded as a bone of contention per se in terms of relations between the sexes in Islam. No other text offers at first glance such a misogynous definition of prescribed relations between men and women. But, as I say, at first glance, and in its translated version.

The impulse for our work came from the fact that this topic has been vehemently discussed in the German and Western European context and also because this text poses a great difficulty for Muslim women, especially those who lack the foundation to interpret and critically approach the Verse. In addition, this text is still used by men to underpin their supposed God-given privileged status.

Our work, however, also aims to provide a signal to German society by demonstrating how texts can be

#### Verse 4.34:

'Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given the one more than the other [...]. As to those women on whose part ye fear disloyalty and ill-conduct, admonish them, refuse to share their beds, and beat them!"

Exegetic and hermeneutic work within Islam is nothing new, yet this has been largely forgotten.

Our work, therefore, should not be understood as any sort of final answer. As subjective beings, there is no way we can provide definitive answers.

#### Do you then see yourselves in the tradition of Islamic scholarship or rather in an anti-traditional role? And how do you assess dogmatism in Islamic teachings?

Becker: I think that this is one of the greatest problems in Islam. An absolute standpoint is very often taken according to the motto "this has already been stated by such-and-such a scholar centuries ago." With all respect, this easily leads to opinions gaining acceptance as "Godgiven" laws. In contrast, we regard our position as being in accordance with the approach of early Islamic scholars, who tended to hold the view that "my opinion dies with me."

Such a path, followed by Abu Hanifa, for example, is actually quite an enlightened one. Yet, all this is apparently forgotten or ignored as a result of special interests. This is why our work includes the commentaries of past scholars as well as contemporary academics, and also points out the contradictions to the original text with respect to relations between the sexes as prescribed by the Koran.

We would like to see an end to traditional, conservative ways of thinking and a return to the open-mindedness that prevailed in the early days of Islam. At that time, *ijtihad* (independent interpretation) and ra'y (personal judgment) were practiced and there was room for alternative opinions and pragmatic solutions, without those expressing varying viewpoints How do you then deal with Verse 4.34? **Becker:** The first exegesis of this Verse was actually provided by the Prophet himself. He said, "Do not beat women. Those who hit women are amongst the worst of creatures." Supported by the prophetic example, the word "hit" could be interpreted within the given context to mean "hit out upon or adopt another path." In this case, it doesn't refer to the emotional domestic conflict, but rather distances itself from this context. Curiously, this prophetic course of conduct is not considered.

The actual problem, however, is whether one takes the context into account when interpreting the Koran and whether one is prepared to say that even the word of God has, quite naturally, been conveyed within a specific context and that herein lies the binding and timeless essence of the Koran with respect to justice between the sexes. Should one cite texts that state the equality of the sexes alongside those, such as the above quoted Verse, with no context, thereby generalizing the historical example for all times?

This would probably leave readers extremely perplexed and unable to see the equality advocated by the Koran. Fortunately, the apparent contradictions have been extensively explored and also debated among Muslims. This is a fundamental debate that has to take place in the Islamic world.

#### What reaction have you so far received from Muslims to the publication?

Becker: Most of the response has come from non-Muslim circles. I tend to regard the meager response from Muslims as being rather typical. The topic evidently involves still too many risks for

again directed against us men." When I then told him that a well-known contemporary male scholar had come to very similar conclusions, he changed his position and was at once prepared to engage in a detailed discussion on the topic.

This is a great problem, as such work done by women is not taken seriously enough. And it is women who are affected. This also indicates how men fundamentally think about women. Of course, this phenomenon is not just specific to Islam. Whenever a man expresses the same opinion as a woman on a topic, people are prepared to listen to the man.

Yet, we have also experienced positive to euphoric responses from Muslim women. Even some men have responded positively, rarely in writing, however, but more often in telephone calls or personal conversations. This once again shows how men fear making a public admission of such views.

Does the ZIF enjoy contacts with other Muslim groups following similar approaches?

Becker: Unfortunately, there is still no sufficiently established network for cooperation in Europe or even worldwide. But it is emerging. Previously, it has been mainly individuals, such as Fatima Mernissi, Amina Wadud, and Rifaat Hassan, who were noted for such work. We would like to establish contacts with women and groups that use the Koran as the basis for their work and do not only regard Islam as a significant cornerstone of culture. To date, we are the only group in Germany using this approach to interpret the Koran.

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#### The Sulaihi Dynasty

The Sulaihi dynasty began with Ali Mohammed Al-Sulaihi, who rose in 436 AH from the "castle of Masar", as the author states, in what is today Haraz. He was followed by the followers of the Ismaeli Shiite Sect. He was able to defeat the prominent Yemeni leaders that thought the Ismaeli sect to be heretical, including the Rassi leader Ja'afar Ibn Al-Qassim Al-Iyani, and their tribal allies from Hamdan led by the Sultan Abi Hashid Ibn Al-Dhahhak, and after fierce fighting in several fronts the Sulaihi forces got the upper hand and finally took Sana'a after the latter was defeated and killed in the Bani Matar area. Within a short while after that. Mohammed had control of most of Yemen and a significant part of the He brought Arabian Peninsula.

voirs that stretch through Ibb, Ta'ez and the other territories they were able to hold on to. However, death of the Queen ended the zenith of power and prosperity reached by the Sulaihis

The Sulaihi dynasty was followed by another period of divisions and competing dynasties and the Shiites of the North were able to take an active role again in the state of affairs, in the areas of "Sa'ada, Hashid and Al-Ahnoom", which the author notes was neglected by the Sulaihis. In addition other sultans and local chiefs or sheikhs were able to establish themselves in their local regions and Yemen became divided again with many states reigning here and there until the Year 554 when the Imam-King, as the author titles him, Ali Bin Mahdi Al-Himyari took control of Zabid. His sectarian inclination was neither Zeidi nor Shafei and he did not believe that the "rule of the State should be under the Qurieshis as the latter. He was known for his scholarly attributes and also believed that tyrannical despots should be overthrown, if necessary. He followed the Hanafi sect to a certain extent, but did not mind taking from some of the other sects any beliefs that agreed with his scholarly persuasion. He was a devoted pious man, according to the author, and really felt that he was fighting in the right path, since he never refused to cease his determination to establish his view of a proper Islamic state. The noted significance of the rule of Ali Bin Mahdi was the complete dissolution of the Ethiopian influence in Yemen and "Yemen was never to se the latter come into prominence to this day", says the author.

#### Health





## **Taiz anti-TB center: Citizens** must pay for treatment

**By: Yemen Times Staff** Taiz bureau

he current prevalence of tuberculosis (TB) in Yemen is 1.5 cases per 1,000 people. Medical reports estimate that between 2,000 and 2,500 Yemenis die from TB every year, making it the fourth cause of death in Yemen. This estimation seems in sync with several hospital statistics. In reality, most deaths in Yemen occur outside of hospitals, especially in rural areas where the majority of the population lives.

Therefore, in cooperation with international organizations, the Yemeni government is conducting a National Tuberculosis Program aimed at eliminating TB in Yemen. Anti-TB centers have been established in many governorates to receive patients and examine, treat and provide them drugs.

Additionally, the centers are responsible for preparing medical files including dates of patients' cases as well as determining methods to help patients become involved in the treatment program by providing them with free medical services. Such measures are supposed to remove obstacles for mostly poor patients.

The Taiz anti-TB center manager was attacked by unidentified individuals and the deputy manager excused himself from being interviewed.

However, many Taiz governorate patients claim that such measures aren't applied at the Taiz anti-TB center, as patients must pay for everything and in every section of the center, beginning from diagnosis and ending with the cost of medication.

The national anti-TB program



manager addressed an April 10 memorandum numbered 111 to the Ministry of Health, wherein he highlighted the situation at the Taiz center. According to the memo, the center has established a lab to increase its income by conducting routine medical tests like blood tests, typhoid, rheumatism, pregnancy tests and liver and kidney function tests.

Additionally, the center opened a pharmacy selling medication at costs similar to those in the private market. According to the memo, such additions are against the program's policy and its main aim, which is building and equipping a Taiz governorate center specialized in treating TB patients freely, like centers in Sana'a and Aden.

The Taiz center manager couldn't be interviewed because he suffered a stroke due to an attack by unidentified individuals who struck him on the head. The deputy manager said he couldn't do an interview, saying he was very busy, particularly with the manager's absence.

Dr. Ameen Al-Swidi, head of the center's lab section, said the center receives very few TB samples. "The national anti-TB program has opened anti-TB units in many Taiz governorate directorates to reduce difficulties patients face in traveling to the center. We also trained technical personnel in these units to test, diagnose and distribute medications," he said.

"The few samples that reach the center are for microscopy examinations. Such samples are sent to the center if routine tests fail to diagnose the infection," he added.

Samples reach the center in closed, sterilized plastic containers prepared for that purpose. "The containers are used only once. Used containers are burned directly after we finish the tests to insure that they won't be the cause of infection," he explained.

Al-Swidi confirmed that the Taiz anti-TB center is ready to diagnose TB infection by direct testing or microscopy examinations, adding that the center is discovering

> 600 to 800 TB cases annually.

> > However,

"If there are any defects or trouble, we contact the national institute in Sana'a. which provides us with everything we need, whether equipment or solutions," he noted.



The anti-TB center in Taiz governorate.

important to our work because we can prepare and save reports and databases of our patients, our center and other sectors and units," he explained.

Handling 600-800 TB cases annually, center staff are exposed to infection transmission due to lack of public knowledge.

Regarding the safety of the center's staff, Al-Swidi said medical staff are exposed to infection, particularly those working in the lab because they deal directly with TB-infected patients or samples that are considered very dangerous.

"There's a lack of knowledge in this regard. That is, many patients don't know that sneezing, coughing or spitting are sources of contagion. So protective materials employees use in the lab aren't enough because they're exposed to infection in the corridor or anyplace where patients have spit or coughed, especially given that sanitation inside the center isn't good enough," he said.

Dr. Abdulwarth Al-Sulwi, also from the Taiz center, discussed the disease and its treatment, explaining that TB is a chronic and acute bacterial infection caused by a rod-shaped bacterium called Mycobacterium tuberculosis. It primarily attacks the lungs, but also may affect the brain, kidneys, bones and lymph nodes.

TB symptoms include coughing, chest pain, shortness of breath, loss of appetite, weight loss, fever, chills and fatigue. Children and those with Sulwi stated, "WHO predicts that between 2000 and 2020, nearly one billion will become infected with the TB bacteria and 35 million will die from the disease. Ninety-five percent of these patients are found in developing countries." According to Al-Sulwi, the reason

for the disease's prevalence in such countries is their low treatment rates because patients don't complete the full six to nine months of antibiotic therapy required to cure TB. Many stop taking antibiotics when they begin feeling healthier, but successful TB treatment requires therapy beyond the period of obvious symptoms.

When patients fail to follow the prescribed treatment, they may become actively infectious, spreading the disease to others. An infected individual may infect as many as 10 to 15 others in a single year.

Failure to complete the full round of treatment also can cause the emergence of TB bacterial strains with acquired drug resistance, further complicating treatment by increasing the length and cost of therapy. The emergence of multiple drug therapy-resistant bacteria strains is a serious problem, particularly because no ready drug treatment is available to combat newly emerging strains.

TB is transmitted from person to person usually by inhaling bacteriacarrying air particles. When a TB patient coughs, sneezes or speaks, small particles carrying two to three bacteria surrounded by a layer of moisture are released into the air. When another individual inhales these particles, the bacteria may lodge in that person's lungs and multiply.

The Taiz center opened a lab to conduct routine medical tests in addition to TB testing.

Al-Sulwi pointed to many general preventive measures that can be taken to reduce TB's spread in public places, including:

• Those infected with TB should cover their mouth with a handkerchief or tissue when sneezing or coughing.

• Those infected with TB shouldn't spit on the floor inside homes but rather in a tissue that must be burned afterward.

· Children must be vaccinated against TB immediately after birth and

until they reach age 4.

· Avoid smoking tobacco or water pipe with others.

• Good and balanced nutrition. • Early diagnosis and early treatment.

• Allow light, heat and air to enter the house by opening windows because fresh air with light and heat kills TBcausing bacteria.

While Al-Sulwi confirmed that TB isn't a hereditary disease, it is chronic. However, it's considered preventable, even in those who have been exposed to an infected individual. Fatality occurs only when the patient is late in diagnosis and treatment.

Diagnosing TB requires two separate methods. Tuberculin skin testing is a method of screening for exposure to TB infection. An individual infected with TB will have developed a hypersensitivity to the TB bacteria, even if he or she didn't develop the disease.

A purified protein derived from the bacteria is injected into the skin and the area is inspected for a bump 48 to 72 hours later. A positive test implies that TB infection has occurred. Skin tests aren't 100 percent accurate and they don't always indicate the presence of active disease.

TB diagnosis also is done by identifying bacteria in sputum (matter coughed up from the lungs) or other bodily fluids and tissues in conjunction with an abnormal chest X-ray and the presence of TB symptoms. Once TB has been diagnosed, further testing is required to determine the most appropriate drugs to treat the particular strain of TB bacteria.

## **WHO updates aviation** guidelines for TB prevention

WHO today issued updated guidelines for the airline industry that will further minimise the risk of tuberculosis (TB) and other infectious diseases being passed from passenger to passenger on board aircraft. The 'Tuberculosis and Air Travel' guidelines stipulate that people with infectious TB must postpone longdistance travel, while those with multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) must postpone any air travel.

To date, no case of active TB has

Prolonged journeys of more than eight hours in a confined aircraft cabin may involve an increased risk of transmission, but the risk should be similar to that in other circumstances where people are together in other confined spaces. The guidelines also advise that aircraft ventilation systems should continue to operate when the aircraft is delayed on the ground and the doors are closed. If not in operation, ground delays should be kept to less than 30 minutes.

locator card has been developed. If there is suspected case of a communicable disease of international importance on board, designated passengers would be asked fill it out. The card records the name, seat number and emergency contact information.

"Increasing global TB incidence and the emergence of drug resistant strains of the disease has raised concerns about the international spread of particularly dangerous strains. We need clear and effective procedures in place to reduce the risk of transmission of infection on board flights, and to ensure the appropriate follow up when necessary," said WHO's Director of Stop TB, Dr Mario Raviglione.

The Taiz anti-TB center lab diagnoses 600 to 800 asked for a computer for TB cases annually. many years. A computer is

Al-Swidi weakened immune systems are the confessed that the Taiz most susceptible to TB and half of all center still lacks some untreated TB cases are fatal.

equipment. "We have "Every year, eight million people contract this disease and tuberculosis causes two million deaths a year," Al-

been identified as a result of exposure on a commercial aircraft. The quality of the air on board commercial aircraft is high and under normal conditions cabin air is cleaner than the air in most buildings.

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) and its partners, including WHO, are actively looking at ways to improve the accuracy and availability of passenger information. As an interim measure, a

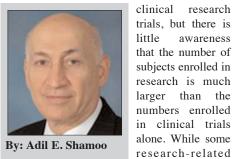
## Serious harm by research

media, legislators, and other organizations often raise concerns about human-rights violations and ethical breaches in clinical research. Such cases are legion. Human subjects are allowed to be bitten by 100 mosquitoes that could carry malaria in a study in Brazil. A French doctor

performs a face transplant without the benefit of the usual research that would accompany such a high-risk procedure. An 18-year-old subject in a gene therapy trial dies, with numerous lapses in the clinical trial noted after his death.

Just months ago, a clinical trial in London that saw the first use of a drug in humans resulted in six healthy subjects becoming violently ill. Two of the volunteers nearly died. The volunteers were paid several thousands of dollars to participate in the trial.

The general public is aware of



deaths reach the popular media, the actual number of deaths in research is higher. Even regulators and industry experts are not aware of the true numbers of deaths and adverse events, due to the lack of proper reporting.

The large numbers of human subjects in research are an outgrowth of the legitimate need for more and better health care throughout our everlengthening lifespans. No single entity keeps track of the real extent of the abuse of all human subjects engaged in research either in the United States or worldwide. I estimate that in the US

clinical research alone, there are more than twenty trials, but there is million subjects, half of whom little awareness represent drug trials. Worldwide, this number could exceed fifty million, that the number of with about half that number in drug subjects enrolled in studies. These staggering numbers research is much larger than the present an awesome responsibility for numbers enrolled our citizens and our governments in clinical trials alike.

The immediate ethical issue facing us is the real harm inflicted on unsuspecting subjects through a vast array of indignities, adverse events, injuries, and death. Many of those who are harmed are poor, uneducated, and politically powerless. Some are impaired in their ability to give informed consent due to mental or cognitive disabilities, or are exposed to coercion, improper monitoring, and pervasive conflicts of interest. Moreover, the justice of the distribution of risks and benefits is questionable when research subjects are concentrated on a vulnerable segment of our society.

Bloomberg Market magazine

recently published an extensive article on the unethical practices of the largest contract research organization conducting some clinical trials in Florida. Trial subjects drawn from illegal Latin American immigrants were threatened with reporting of their illegal status to the US Department of Homeland Security if they complained about the risks of the drug that they received.

That is only one example. The system of protections for human subjects worldwide is either nonexistent or broken. In Europe since May 2004, all clinical trials in the 25 nations of the EU must conform to the European Directive (ED) issued in 2001 at the behest of pharmaceutical industry. Each country's regulatory body will have to issue their own regulations that are within the bound the Directive.

The Directive brings the protections for human subjects in European clinical trials in line with those in the US. But in both the US and Europe, the

system has serious shortcomings and gaps. For example, there are highly decentralized ethics committees with varied qualities to protect human subjects. The EU directive does not regulate social and behavioral research while the US. does not regulate research that is privately funded and not related to drug licensing.

Further down the chain of supervision, research institutions are designated to "manage" their own conflicts of interests as well as those of their investigators. Yet many institutions and investigators have a financial stake in the clinical trials they conduct. Most investigators have little or no training in ethics and regulatory compliance, for which there is no mandatory education.

Advocates in the US, such as the ten-year-old human rights organization, Citizens for Responsible Care and Research (www.circare.org), which I co-founded, have proposed a universal National Human Subjects Protection Act. However, there is no likelihood of passage anytime soon.

Opposition to serious reforms to protect human subjects in research comes from two groups: the pharmaceutical industry and universities. The objections of industry rest on the narrow issue of added financial cost. The objections coming from universities are more puzzling, as it is in their long-term interest to conduct research ethically.

In both cases, the effective protection of human subjects should receive much higher priority, thereby justifying the modest added expense, which probably would amount to no more than 1-2% of the overall cost of clinical studies. If such research is truly to serve the public good, the safety, health, and dignity of human subjects should not be compromised.

Dr Adil E. Shamoo is Professor at the University of Maryland School of Medicine and Editor-in-Chief of the journal Accountability in Research. Source:Project Syndicate, 2006.



#### **Republic of Yemen**

Cooperative and Agricultural Credit Bank Sana'a, Head-office

## International Tender Notice TENDER NO.:01/2006/CACBANK

- The Republic of Yemen has received a Grant from the Government of the United State of America (USA) towards the cost of the "FY 2003 Food for Progress" and intends to apply part of the Grant proceeds towards eligible payments under the contract for consulting services for the upgrading and modernization of the Cooperative and Agricultural Credit Bank (CACBANK)
- 2) The Cooperative and Agricultural Credit Bank (CACBANK) invites qualified international consultants with a minimum experience of not less than ten years in restructuring of Banks and financial institutions, and shall submit their sealed bids for the following services:
  - a) To enhance CACB's management by possible identifying of three strategic hires for senior management positions and evaluating current staff, responsibilities and staffing levels;
  - b) To propose improvements to CACB's organizational structure;
  - c) To assess the strength of CACB's capital accounts in terms of present capital adequacy and future growth, evaluate new sources of capital, and formulate a plan to develop the existing public/private relationship;
  - d) To prepare a detailed plan to strengthen CACB earnings;e) To review the CACB risk management system and make recommendations to bring it in line with industry norms and best practices;
  - f) To evaluate CACB's new accounting system for functionality and efficiency and propose an effective disaster recovery plan;
  - g) To review CACB's lending strategy and design work plans that will improve training, procedures, quality and oversight;
  - h) To design a multi-year strategy for CACB's banking activities; including rural sector and agricultural lending aiming to improve lending and minimize existing and future risks; and
  - i) To propose a methodology for assessing new product offerings and suggesting additional product offerings with a high likelihood of success.
  - j) The consultant shall carry-out a financial market survey to collect the required information and data in order to asses the level of liquidity available, new products demand, target groups. etc, to enable CACB to exercise different future banking activities.
  - k) The consultant shall look into the possibility of opening an Islamic window at branch level as part of CACB future products.
- Consultants shall submit proposals for all of the tasks generally described above. Proposals will be evaluated based on both Quality and Cost, and compensation will be on a lump sum basis.
- 4) Interested Consultants must provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform the services for all of the project tasks.
- 5) Documents shall be purchased at below address on submission of a written application for non -refundable fee of US\$ 2000(two thousand dollars), plus US\$ 100 for the courier charges for overseas delivery ( if required) from the following address:

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- 6) Bids shall be acompanied by a bid security of a minimum of USD (\$20,000) or its equivalent in a freely convertible currency and valid for a period of 120 days.
- 7) Bids shall be valid for a period of 90 days from date of submission and shall be delivered in sealed bids to the address mentioned above on or before 10:00 noon, Sunday 17th September 2006, late bids will be rejected and returned to bidders.

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## **Sports**

#### **14** 3 July, 2006

## Al-Saqr needs 3 points to clinch title

#### By: Ismail Al-Ghabiri

n round 22 of Premier League play, the Al-Saqr team from Taiz drew Al-Yarmouk last Friday at Al-Meraisi Stadium in Sana'a. The draw postponed announcement of the first placed team as the titleholder. Al-Saqr, howeverm increased its points to 50, needing only three points to win the title. Al-Yarmouk raised its points to 28 and is in eight place.

At Al-Kibsi Stadium in Ibb, Sha'ab Ibb reclaimed second place with 39 points thanks to early goals from Fikri Al-Hubaishi in minutes 16 and 31 with a 2-1 win over Al-Telal. Machawba, from Congo, scored the visiting team's goal in minute 43 of the second half.

Al-Hubaishi has become the top scorer with 20 goals netted and has a three goal lead over Ahli Sana'a forward Adel Al-Salimi who has been sus-



.

pended for five games under a Yemeni Football Federation's decision. Al-Telal remains in the fifth place with 35

Premier League standings								
Team	Games	Wins	Draws	Losses	Goals	Goals	Total	
	played				for	against	points	
Al-Saqr	22	15	5	2	39	13	50	
Sha'ab Ibb	22	11	6	5	39	28	39	
Ahli Sana'a	22	11	5	6	37	28	38	
Helal Hodeida	22	10	6	6	42	33	36	
Al-Telal	22	11	2	9	33	30	35	
Hassan	22	9	7	6	24	20	34	
Sha'ab Hadramout	22	9	4	9	28	36	31	
Al-Yarmouk	22	7	7	8	25	28	28	
Al-Shu'la	22	8	9	7	27	26	27	
Tadhamun Shabwa	22	8	2	12	27	36	26	
Al-Rashid	22	7	4	11	21	30	25	
Shabab Al-Jeel	22	8	5	11	23	28	23	
22 May	22	5	3	14	28	44	18	
Ta'awen Ba'adan	22	4	5	13	31	44	17	

points.

Sha'ab Hadramawt beat its host Helal Al-Hodeida 5-4 in a dramatic play to jump to the seventh place with 31 points, while Al-Helal retreated to fourth place with 36 points.

In Abyan, Hassan thrashed its guest Ahli Sana'a 3-0 climbing to sixth place in the league with 34 points, while the visiting team retreated to the third place with 38 points.

In a Shabwa game, Al-Tadhamun defeated its guest Shabab Al-Jeel from Hodeida to take tenth place with 26 points, while the loser fell back to the twelfth place with 23 points.

At 22 May International Stadium in Aden, Al-Shu'ala downed Al-Rashid from Taiz 4-0 taking ninth place with 27 points, while the visiting team slid to eleventh place with 25 points.

Round 23 kicked off on Thursday with the 22 May team from Sana'a defeating its guest Ta'awen Ba'adan 3-1 to occupy the penultimate place with 18 points, while the visiting team remained in last place with 17 points.

## More than a game

By: Neil Stormer

ashington, D.C. – "Some people believe that football is a matter of life and death. I am very disappointed with that attitude, it is much, much more important than that!"

With those words, former Liverpool football coach Bill Shankly inadvertently alluded to a new reality: football is not just a game, but is also an economic force, a model of globalisation and, more importantly, a vehicle for conflict resolution.

Two days ago, in the pages of this paper, Pascal Boniface discussed the relationship between football and geopolitics. In the context of his article, Boniface jokingly stated that football fans believe that FIFA should be given a Nobel Peace Prize. While concerted, pro-active efforts need to be made before the noblest of Nobel Prizes is conferred upon football's governing body, it is true that football and sports in general can play and have played a role in limiting the reaches of war and de-escalating violent situations.

There are numerous examples from the 20th and 21st centuries showing just how large a role football and sports have played in mitigating conflict. Consider the Christmas Truce during World War I; caked in mud and nearly frozen, Germans and Brits climbed out of their respective trenches along the front, set aside their guns and mutual animosities and celebrated Christmas by playing football. The truce didn't last, the war continued, but soldiers on both sides found themselves unable to fire out of their trenches - to fire across their erstwhile football pitch at their enemies. A large amount of wasted ammunition was recorded on the following days as guns were trained at the stars above and not at the enemy.

In 1967, Pele travelled to Lagos, Nigeria, then in the midst of a brutal civil war, to play an exhibition match.

In order to allow both sides of the conflict to see the greatest ever play the game, a 48-hour ceasefire was called and honoured. A single footballer stopped a war.

World Cup qualification can do it too. Cote d'Ivoire is in the middle of a civil war. After the country's qualification for the World Cup, President Laurent Gbagbo acquiesced to the pleas of the Ivorian football federation and restarted peace talks. The country now enjoys a tense ceasefire, thanks solely to the team's trip to Germany. The peace may not survive much longer than the World Cup, but any cessation in fighting is a reason to celebrate.

Football can be a force for violence however. There is a tendency towards nationalism and racism, and the 1980s witnessed the rise of football-related gangs notorious for criminal behaviour and drunken brawling. The game has also "started" a war: a riot erupted at a series of games between Honduras and El Salvador, and the ensuing diplomatic collapse resulted in the 100-day Soccer War.

But the violence is the exception, not the norm. Sports have long served as a means of bridging gaps through peaceful exchanges and act as a diplomatic tool. While rivalries are occasionally inflamed through athletic contests, sports exchanges are seen as a safe icebreaker.

The real sports-related conflict resolution success to be had though is not through the temporary unity achieved during international tournaments or the diplomatic thaw following a friendly football match. While a successful national team's efforts can bring warring sides together for the duration of the World Cup, the way to leverage football and all sports in the name of conflict resolution is through consistent, grassroots efforts to enlist the masses in peaceful interaction.

An increasing number of organisations take advantage of this form of peace building. Football 4 Peace is one such organisation. Since 2001, F4P has been bringing Muslim and Jewish youth together to foster understanding and to overcome differences through sport. The Peres Centre for Peace has used football in a variety of ways to foster peace between Israel and Palestine, from a mixed Israeli-Palestinian exhibition team to camps and tournaments for children from both side of the divide.

Acknowledging the role sports can play in building peace, among other things, the UN General Assembly, passed Resolution 58/5, proclaiming 2005 to be the International Year for Sport and Physical Education. The goal was to use sports "as a means to promote education, health, development and peace".

Organisations that promote understanding through sports see in them an unrivalled ability to overcome cultural, political and religious differences while promoting unity and understanding.

While the temporary ceasefire in Nigeria during Pele's visit and Ivory Coast's World Cup-inspired peace are not to be overlooked, these examples are only part of the bigger picture. The path to peace should be paved not just with the one-off event and top-down, tournament-inspired ceasefires, but also with long-term efforts of those who try to build from the ground up.

The premise behind the practice is simple: just as the World War I-era British and Germans who entered into a wartime Christmas football match would not readily fire upon each other, those who play together find it difficult to remain foes.

No one seriously contends that football is more important than life or death, but if applied to more serious pursuits, it can mean the difference between war and peace.

Neil Stormer works in conflict resolution and foreign policy in Washington, D.C.

This article was distributed by the Common Ground News Service (CGNews) and can be accessed at *www.commongroundnews.org*.

## **Brazil 0 – 1 France**

Thierry Henry's superb volley sent holders Brazil out of the World Cup as France moved into the semi-finals.

Inspired by man-of-the-match Zinedine Zidane, France were the better side in the first half, but failed to create clear chances to trouble Dida.

That changed just before the hour when Zidane swept a free-kick to the far post where it was sumptuously volleyed past the Brazilian goalkeeper by Henry.

Fabien Barthez denied Ronaldo late



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on to set up a semi-final with Portugal.

Prior to that save Barthez had flapped on a couple of occasions, but it was a mark of Brazil's lacklustre play that Ronaldo's shot came in stoppage time.

Brazil had strolled their way to the quarter-finals, but Carlos Alberto Parriera's side had no answer to a France team that combined defensive discipline with some wonderful attacking play.

France's route to the last eight has involved plenty of huffing and puffing, but the knockout stages have brought out the best in Raymond Domenech's side.

Zidane was magnificent throughout, while after the interval the speed of Henry and Franck Ribery unsettled the Brazilian defence.

As early as the first minute Brazil were given a glimpse of what they were to experience for the remaining 89 minutes as Zidane glided away from a succession of Brazilian tackles as he executed a quick turn and that trademark stepover.

A Zidane flick that deceived Cafu was equally breathaking, while he held off and teased Kaka by juggling the ball.

Not to be outdone, Brazil's number 10 Ronaldinho deftly touched the ball into Ronaldo's path before the Brazilian striker was closed down by the French defence.

A Zidane free-kick set up France's best chance in the first half but Florent Malouda headed over.

A minute before the interval another piece of Zidane wizardry released Patrick Vieira, who was scythed down by Juan, who was booked.

Within a minute of the second half

Thierry Henry's superb volley sent holders Brazil out of the World Cup as France moved into the semi-finals.

starting Vieira went close with a glancing header from a Zidane free-kick.

As the second half developed Henry began to come to the fore, first sprinting past Cafu, then troubling Lucio, before the Frenchman's backheel nearly released Vieira.

So often in their careers with France, Henry and Zidane have failed to quite click, but on 57 minutes they combined to devastating effect.

Zidane whipped in a free-kick to the far past that Henry spectacularly volleyed past Dida into the roof of the net.

Soon after the waspish Ribery nearly created a second goal for France when his penetrative cross was almost inadvertently turned into the Brazilian goal by defender Juan.

Ribery then almost latched on to a Henry pass, but Dida just got to the ball before the Marseille winger.

The win means France have beaten Brazil in three of their four World Cup

- encounters.

**Brazil:** Dida, Cafu (Cicinho 76), Lucio, Juan, Carlos, Juninho (Adriano 63), Silva, Ze Roberto, Kaka (Robinho 79), Ronaldinho, Ronaldo. Subs Not Used: Cris, Emerson, Fred, Gilberto, Julio Cesar, Luisao, Mineiro, Ricardinho, Rogerio.

Booked: Cafu, Juan, Ronaldo, Lucio.

France: Barthez, Sagnol, Thuram, Gallas, Abidal, Ribery (Govou 76), Makelele, Vieira, Zidane, Malouda (Wiltord 81), Henry (Saha 85). Subs Not Used: Boumsong, Chimbonda, Coupet, Dhorasoo, Diarra, Givet, Landreau, Silvestre, Trezeguet.

**Booked:** Sagnol, Saha, Thuram. **Goals:** Henry 57.

Att: 48,000. Ref: Luis Medina Cantalejo (Spain). Fifa man of the match: Zinedine

Zidane Source: BBC Sports

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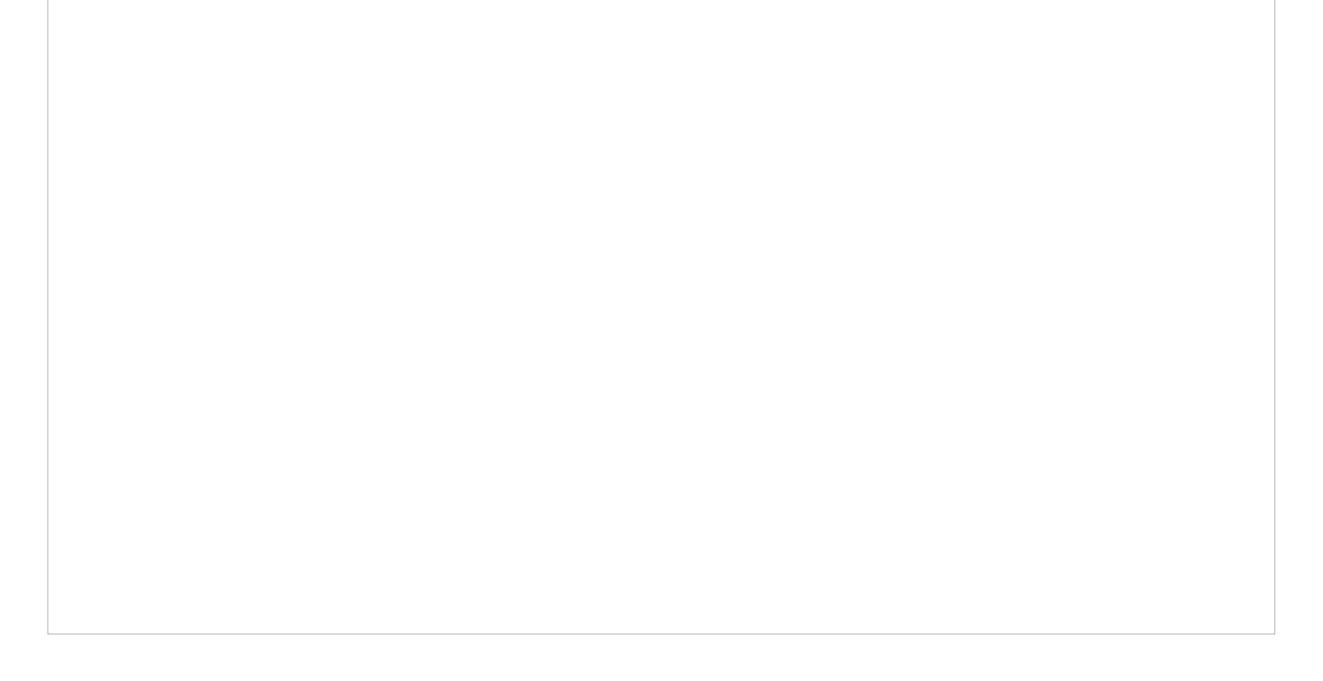
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## **Abayas and skirts**

#### By: Beth Boal, Larin Brink and Fahad Mohammad

ichmond, Virginia; Kuwait City, Kuwait; Iowa City, Iowa - Black shadows walking side by side with women wearing Escada Jeans and tops while flaunting the latest Prada bag are a typical scene in many of the oil-rich Gulf State shopping malls. The abaya, a long, loose cloak covering the entire body from head to toe is often worn by Arab women. However, it has had to make way for the latest European and American haute couture. Just a few decades ago most Gulf women were seen only in black abayas, but today denim and abaya-clad women are as frequently found side by side. In politics and the workplace, women are also making strides in bringing together the modern and the traditional, in unique and quiet ways.

There have been numerous misconceptions concerning Arab women by the Western world, but negative stereotypes by the media are slowly being transformed by Arab women themselves. For instance, Arab women are often seen by their Western counterparts as being veiled by an oppressive patriarchal society. The reality is quite different. This reality varies, however, depending on which Arab country you are referring to, and which Arab woman you are talking about. For years, Westerners have misconstrued the hijab, the Islamic practice of women wearing a veil, as a control mechanism used by Arab men to oppress women. What most Westerners do not know is that wearing the veil is not mandated in most Arab countries, and Arab women choose to wear it in effort to avoid the male gaze.

The veil is based on Islamic religious doctrine, but is not much different from Christian-Judeo tradition which also calls for women to cover their heads in certain circumstances. Women who choose to wear the veil do so to protect themselves from unsolicited stares and to avoid being



seen as mere sexual objects. In contrast, although women in the U.S. are not required to wear tight jeans and low-cut tops, many choose to do so knowing that this will increase their sex appeal. The end result, ironically, is that Arab women are seen as oppressed and American women are seen as liberated, despite the fact that the latter's wardrobe seems designed to be physically pleasing to men while the other attempts to downplay the physical.

However, Arab women are subtly incorporating western fashion into their own styles, as if to send a message to the Western world that they can create a balance between these opposing viewpoints, and incorporate both of them. It is not uncommon to see women wearing brightly collared hijabs, some decorated with glitter and using striking, bright patterns, with tight, hip-hugging denim jeans.

In a similarly paradoxical way, Arab women are gaining access to other parts of society that were formerly closed to them without having created an overt feminist movement or even denouncing traditional roles, as feminist movements in the West did. Rather, change just seems to be happening, as many Arab regimes are slowly embracing women's suffrage. Almost a year ago, Kuwaiti women got the right to vote and run for parliament, a breakthrough political decision that was debated for years and one already enacted in Bahrain and Qatar. Today, conservative Islamist MP's have acknowledged the positive impact of this decision and have already taken steps to win women votes by putting on the table anti-discrimination laws. After decades of being a halfdemocracy, Kuwaiti women can now become involved in the political process. The involvement of women in politics is a must to show the West that Arab women are not merely oppressed, and will increase respect for Muslim countries

everywhere. In the economic arena however women have made only minimal progress. For women in the Middle East, barriers to employment perpetuate the gender inequality of the region. The World Bank report "Gender and Development in MENA: Women in the Public Sphere" addressed the issue, stating that "[a] key entry point to bring about change is to focus on women's economic rights." While blue collar jobs will no doubt remain off-limits to women, there is also a thriving corporate job market, which women are often unqualified for because of a lack of education. The impact is great. If a country does not employ half of its citizens, it stifles innovation and possibly stagnates development. Because of high unemployment, a lack of a female work force, and a large population of people too old or too young to work, the Middle East and North Africa have the largest economic ratio dependency rate in the world, which is to say, relatively few wage-earners provide for a large segment of the population. Some reports show that a household's income could increase by 25% if women were a more active part of the labour market.

Nevertheless, there are some prominent exceptions to the rule. In several Arab countries, like Lebanon and Kuwait, women make up one-third of the workforce, and they are even entering maledominated occupations as ambassadors, doctors and engineers. In addition, many women have started businesses and entered the stock markets, forcing their way into the patriarchal business sector and paving the road for the next generation of Arab women. Opening up the possibility of greater economic freedom for women could be the catalyst needed for gender equality in the region.

Flip through Arabic TV channels these days and you will see significant changes and paradoxes in Arab societies. There are elegantly dressed news presenters on Lebanese channels, raunchy, hip-shaking video clips of Haifa Wahbi, Elissa and other female singers, and women speakers at financial presentations in Doha and Dubai. Change is both subtle and dramatic, and will no doubt always seem "odd" to Western eyes. It is inconceivable that the women in this region abandon the abaya and the hijab in favour of low-tops and skirts, but it is quite possible that women will rise to the top of the political structure. The world should not expect outcomes that parallel the development of women's rights in the West, and foreign values and ideologies mustn't be imposed on the region. Rather, we should celebrate that a balance has been struck between abayas and skirts.

Beth Boal, Larin Brink and Fahad Mohammad wrote this article as part of the Soliya Connect program, an online dialogue program that allows students from American and Arab universities to engage in inter-cultural dialogue. This article was written for the Common Ground News Service (CGNews) and can be accessed at www.commongroundnews.org.

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