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Calligraphy: an ignored art in Yemen

Readers' Voice
Last edition's question:
Do you think that GPC was behind firing Al-Khaiwani?
I don't know (25%) No (7%) Yes (68%)
Do you think that negotiations with China's Hutchison Whampoa Ltd will result in a better deal compared to that of Dubai Ports International for managing the Aden container terminal?
- Yes
- No
- I don't know
Go to our website at: yementimes.com/poll and have your voice heard

Al-Khaiwani still detained, authorities ban visits

By: Amel Al-Ariqi
SANA'A, June 24 — Yemeni Journalists Syndicate issued a statement last Saturday condemning the detention of the former Editor-in-Chief of Al-Shoura.net Abdulkarim Al-Khaiwani, considering it a dangerous precedence because of the awful way by which security forces broke into his house and violently arrested him at the presence his wife and children and without allowing him to put on his clothes.
The Syndicate also denounced the inspection of his house by the security group who did not reveal their identities or show the permit from the concerned authorities to do so, together with confiscating his personal papers, laptop and other belongings. In order to let them in, the security group claimed they are electricity employees and need to check the power fuse box inside the house, according to sources close to his family.
Furthermore, the syndicate voiced resentment over the physical and psychological abuses Al-Khaiwani was subjected to while taking him into the Specialized Penal Prosecution office.

The signs of cuts and bruises were clear on his body. Despite his demands to be examined by a doctor to prove the attacks on him, the General Prosecution declined his demands and just jailed him.
It sees such measures taken against Al-Khaiwani to come within the frame of harassments and suppressive acts aiming to silence him, particularly after his recently published articles, considering his detention as law and constitution-violating. It also demanded the Attorney General to release him immediately.
Al-Khaiwani's lawyer Khalid Al-Anisi assured the Minister of Interior Rashad Al-Alimi directed security authority to prevent any visit to Al-Khaiwani.



Al-Khaiwani during a previous trial.

Al-Anisi told Yemen Times that journalists, political activists and lawyers were prevented from entering to see Al-Khaiwani and the guards declared they have directives from Al-Alimi. *Continued on page 3*

Relative calm in Sa'ada, mediation committee faces difficulties

By: Mohammed bin Sallam
SA'ADA, June 24 — Yasser Al-Awadhi, a spokesman for the committee tasked with implementing the Sa'ada ceasefire, told media outlets that significant difficulties are hindering the committee's work, hinting that Houthis affected by the war are full of gall.
Al-Awadhi, deputy head of Parliament's General People's Congress bloc, pointed out that while the difficulties are many, the committee's task isn't impossible, assuring that it will proceed in its tasks in the coming days.
He also indicated that up until now, they and the Qatari mediation delegation have been unable to meet with Houthi leaders; however, they established phone contact via local mediators.
Al-Awadhi added that the committee last Sunday discussed how to implement the ceasefire agreement's second article, which dictates Houthis handing

over their medium-sized weapons and descending from the mountains.
Sources reveal that calm has dominated Sa'ada's districts since last Wednesday, following the ceasefire agreement signed between Yemeni government forces and Houthi loyalists.
However, tribal sources report tension between the two warring sides in Wadi Al-Ghail, where a large number of pro-army tribal fighters are positioned. Fierce clashes broke out Friday and continued until Sunday, although intermittently.
Intermittent confrontations also were recorded in Qatber and Munbeh districts involving Houthis, tribal fighters and locals in the two districts; however, the number of victims remains unknown.
Abdulmalik Al-Houthi has declared that Houthis won't remain inactive unless the authority ceases its attacks on some Sa'ada areas. *Continued on page 3*

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Saleh instructs negotiations with Hutchison Whampoa Ltd

By: Yemen Times Staff
SANA'A, June 23 — President Saleh has issued last month his directives to the Cabinet to start negotiation with the Hong Kong based company, Hutchison Whampoa Ltd. to operate Aden Containers Terminal.
The directives came after 2-years of dispute and severe criticism by independent and opposition bodies over the lack of transparency in contracting the Dubai Ports International Company (DBI), which won the tender of operating Aden Container Terminal in December, 2005, under the previous government for the period of 25 to 30 years.
Sources mentioned that president Saleh has approved the third choice within a list of alternatives was submitted by Prime Minister Mujawar, in order to sort out the Aden Container Terminal issue.
Last month, Dr. Mujawar, has enclosed in his letter to the President the outcomes of the last negotiations with DBI along with four alternatives from which the president selected to go for the Hong Kong based company, which transfers 50 million containers per year, while DBI transfers 8 million containers per year.
According to Al Nedaa newspaper, Dr. Mujawar explained that the Chinese company has applied to the tender but

withdrew for unknown reasons. "It's better to open the door in front of all interested reputable international companies including DBI and transparently analyze their applications and select the best offer" the Prime Minister pointed out in his letter.
The four alternatives that Mujawar's letter included were; accepting the last offer by DBI which speculates that Yemen shall receive 50% of the pure profits, but he warned that selecting this choice is against the tender conditions and the criteria, which were announced, will hold Yemen responsible before the two competing companies.
The second choice was to cancel the current tender and re-advertise for a new tender but again he stated that Yemen would risk its reputation in the event of a new tender. These risks represented in the unlikely chance to get better offer than what the three current companies offered and the negative role that DBI may play as a result of canceling its application.
The third choice which President Saleh approved was to start negotiation with the Chinese Company. However, the fourth choice was to cancel the current tender, therefore, the government undertakes the implementation of the first construction phase with a capital of USD 120 millions as state-financed or through loans from national banks. *Continued on page 3*

President flies to Paris

By: Yemen Times Staff
SANA'A, June 24 — The president of Republic left the Sana'a international airport heading to Paris in response to an invitation by the French president Nicolas Sarkozy.
The two presidents are going to discuss the two-sided relations between the two countries and ways to enforce the bilateral cooperation as well as discussing the current regional and international issues of joint interest, top of which the developments in Palestine, Iraq, Lebanon, and Sudan.
"This Visit is a good opportunity for us to discuss the ways for reinforcing our cooperation and friendship relations with France for the best of our countries" the president told the Saba news agency today.
The president also confirmed that several regional issues are to be discussed with the French officials such as the current developments in Palestine, Iraq, Lebanon, Somalia and the Iranian nuclear file, as well as the Arab peace Initiative and role that

France is to play in this regard.
"Yemen is one of the essential partners of France and we appreciate the support that France provides for the development and democracy in Yemen in both bilateral or through the European Union." The president declared.
The president also welcomes the French investments in Yemen and said that Yemen is expecting more influential role from France to play in respect to pushing the peace movement and development in the region as well as practicing pressure on the Israeli government to abide by the Arab principles of peace.
"We welcome the French firms to invest in Yemen and we provide all the facilities for them. *Continued on page 3*

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In brief

SANA'A

1600 illiterate females learn to read and write

June 22 — Director of the literacy and adult education department at Sanhan district in Sana'a governorate confirmed that the program has successfully educated 1600 females, who were illiterate, in 2006. This is the result of 38 adult education centers distributed among 40 villages. In addition to literacy classes, the program trained 62 females as guides and educators during the past year. The guides will work as motivators as well as community ushers in order to decrease the high illiteracy rate among women in the district.

Tennis Union organizes TOT

June 24 — The Yemeni Tennis Union has started trainers' qualifying workshop yesterday for five days at the tennis compound in Sana'a. Twelve tennis coaches coming from various governorates participated in the training and will copy it to their colleagues in their own governorates. The workshop trainer is Krim Sa'ad Allah, West Asia Development director of the International Tennis Union. The workshop includes lectures and presentations on dealing with beginners in tennis, as well as school sports education.

ALDHAF

Teaching aids and laboratory equipments distributed

June 23 — Seventy two schools were furnished with complete laboratory equipments for chemistry, physics, and biology. The schools also received a number of teaching aids and facilitating equipments such as TVs, VCRs...etc, for the basic education schools at the governorate. The supplies were provided by the basic education development program at the governorate, which also provided 45 schools with small libraries each containing 90 titles related to history, culture, science, and arts. The program also provided 29 computers for the same purpose.

ADEN

Aden investors guide in English

June 22 — The information section of the chamber of commerce branch in Aden has issued a commercial guide in English targeting investors. The guide includes data and information about the investment zones in the governorate, the infrastructure, the natural resources, the labor force, the monetary system, and the privileges as well as the facilities provided by law for investors. The guide also contains a manual on legal and administrative procedures which need to be done by those who are interested in investing in Aden.

HUDEIDAH

Fine Arts College kicks off second TV film festival

June 24 — After celebrating the graduation of the fine arts students, the Fine Arts College of Hudeidah University launched its second TV film festival yesterday. The graduation celebration included various entertainment and musical activities, while the film festival includes analysis and discussion regarding 15 short films created by graduates of the broadcasting and TV departments in the college. The festival continues for three days.

SOCATRA

Vocational and technical training institute to be inaugurated

June 23 — The first vocational and technical training institute in Socatra will be opened soon. Ba Haswan, director of the vocational training office in the island, confirmed that the institute will be up for running within a week. He also said that the institute will provide training in three specializations: electricity, plumbing, and welding. The institute will be able to accommodate 45 students at the beginning while some students will be sent to Hadramout for higher training and to work as trainers and teachers at the institute. The center will be officially inaugurated in September.

For lacking evidence The Primary Court vindicated the accused of raping little girl

Amran, June 22 — Last Wednesday the First Court vindicated the person accused of raping Susan M.S. Al-Mudhla', 19 years old. The vindication of the man came due to the lack of evidence according to the court, chaired by judge Abas Al-Washali, in Amran governorate north Sana'a.

The trial was held while the accused man and the lawyer of the victim, Jamal Al-Jabi, appeared in person along with human rights activists. After the release of the verdict, the lawyer of the victim requested the appeal.

Susan Al-Mudhala was subjected to sexual abuse when she was eight years

old, according to Tiseer Al-Gabali, a lawyer and a human activist, Susan accused the 55-year-old Nasser Ahmed Zid, who denied the accusation, of raping her.

In a statement, the Sisters Arab Forum for Human Rights, which adopted this case, described the verdict as "arbitrary". The statement also said, "This arbitrary verdict that vindicated the accused man came because the trial lacked the justice conditions." It further explained that a lot of events were not taken into consideration and witnesses did not attend the trial especially the nurses of Amran hospital to which the

victim was taken and where a medical report proved the rape case by the Russian doctor, immediately after she was raped.

This case had a large scale of interest among the public and the organizations of human rights over the year. Before the trial, the Sisters Arab Forum for Human Rights was afraid of the court verdict. The forum said that the case had engaged the public opinion and it lacked the fair trial conditions because the prosecution could not bring the witnesses to appear in person which is a negligence that revoked the fairness of the verdict that could not bring justice to the victim.

Yemen is still in need for more funds, says Mujawar

SANA'A, June 23 — The aids of donors pledged in London's Donor Conference has helped cover partially for the gap in the aggregate investment finance of the third five-year plan whose total costs reach \$25 million, according to Yemeni Prime Minister Ali Mujawar.

Opening the activities of the consulting meeting involving the Yemeni government and the partners from the donor countries, Mujawar commended the efforts of donor countries, hinting more challenges are still ahead and Yemen is in need for more funds.

"To face such challenges, the government is exerting efforts with the partners to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by the 2015 according to the strategic vision and the national reforms agenda," said

Mujawar.

He noted the donors conference has helped build a development partnership with donors' community, stressing the importance of hastening the measures of signing the agreement and embarking on the implementations of projects.

Moreover, Mujawar praised the role played by the General Secretariat of the Gulf Cooperation Council as it helps Yemen's development and integration into the Council.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Abdulkarim Al-Arhabi emphasized the importance of holding such a meeting as it helps evaluate what has been achieved as of now.

Al-Arhabi also reviewed the accomplishments achieved so far and hinted about 56.5 percent of funds were allo-

ated for development projects, adding that around 32 percent of Gulf pledges, which amounted to 45 percent of the total pledges in London's Donor Conference, have been provided.

He pointed out that the current funds were distributed to human development sector with 85.5 percent, social welfare and infrastructure with 43.3 percent, and productive sectors with 12.4 percent; while institutional reforms and good governance received 77.3 percent.

For his part, the head of Economic Circle at the GCC's General Secretariat Abdulaziz Al-Aushiq renewed the readiness of GCC to support Yemen so as to implement the third five-year plan (2006-2010), indicating that the investment program and the third five-year plan are important as they help prioritize the investment demands.

Experts: Yemen needs to stop subsidizing Oil

SANA'A, June 23 — In a meeting held at Sana'a University, experts from the World Bank met with the faculty of Sana'a University, economists, and development experts in order to discuss the developmental challenges Yemen faces in the coming short terms.

During the event, the World Bank experts have presented two country reports, the first is the Development Policy Review, and the second is the Country Social Analysis. Under-secretary of the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation Dr. Mutahar Al-Abasi, expressed the government's faith in the reports of the World Bank, considering that the bank has respectable international experience which provides analytical and technical support for the countries in which it operates. He also stated that the World Bank is heavily involved in the developmental strategies of Yemen in various sectors.

However, he also indicated that although the report did tackle several important economic and social issues affecting Yemen's development, the report ignored other important aspects such as economic growth, macroeconomic reforms, administration of public funds and the government's budget, fiscal policy, as well as other challenges.

In addition to that, he also stated that the report should be more 'optimistic' about the abilities of the Yemeni people, who have fought to survive hardships throughout their history, indicating that such social analysis reports should be less pessimistic in order to provide a more realistic picture.

World Bank Economist Mr.



Mr. Srinivason Thirumalai

Srinivason Thirumalai, author of the Development Policy Review in Yemen, has stated that although Yemen has had accomplished an average of 5 percent growth rate since unification, however, it does face some serious challenges.

Mr. Thirumalai has summarized the challenges Yemen faces in five points, the first of which is the declining of oil production, which indicated that Yemen might exhaust its Oil resources by 2012, the second is the weak governance mechanism and the problem of widespread corruption, the third is the high population rate of 3 percent, the highest in the Arab world, while the fourth is the shortage of drinking water and the severe water crisis.

Dr. Ali Al-Ansi of Sana'a University has stated that Yemen will face a devastating disaster within the coming few years, as Oil production and revenue declines, this will result in the government's failure in maintaining fiscal sustainability. He also added that although the gas revenue will barely compensate for one quarter of the current oil revenue, Yemen will have severe fiscal crisis. Additionally, he indicated that the development policy review sug-

gests that Yemen lifts all subsidiaries on Oil, and increases taxes, a recommendation which he has several reservations on. He elaborated saying that it is virtually impossible to lift Oil subsidiaries due to the social impact and the increases of almost all prices.

Professor of Economics at Sana'a University Dr. Ali Qaid has stated that the development policy review has some fundamental flaws, as the review has ignored focusing on the sources of positive economic growth, such as the focus on industrial development, human capital creation, and other sources of economic growth. Further, he indicated that the recommendations given by the World Bank to illuminate fuel subsidiaries and increase taxes in order to maintain an acceptable fiscal sustainability is simply "bad advice", indicating that the social ramifications and the impact this would devastating on the public.

Mr. Thirumalai, author of the development review, has commented that the reforms the World Bank is advocating for is a package, as there are programs on the way in order to create a social safety network in order to help the most deprived segments of the society. Moreover, he pinpointed that Yemen spends 9 percent of its budget on fuel subsidiaries, which benefit mainly the richer segments of the society; he said that subsidiary reduction should be gradual, as a sudden removal of this subsidiary would be suicidal in a fragile economy such as Yemen's. He concluded his remarks by stating that the Yemeni government spends only 2 percent of its budget on health, which does not make any economic sense.

Sport for All Unions prepares for summer activities

SANA'A, June 20 — Preparations are underway by Sport for All Unions for the summer activities that will be staged across the Republic. These activities are to last for three months, starting from July 15 and ending on October 14.

The secretary general of Sport for All Unions Naji Al-Riyashi told Al-Thawrah newspaper that the activities

will be conducted over different phases, starting at the level of districts moving up to the level of governorates i.e. the winners in each district will meet together to decide the champion of the governorate.

As for the sports due to be staged during this summer, Al-Riyashi indicated that the matter is left to the governorate

offices to choose the type of sports in accordance with each governorate's climate.

He added that the activities will involve over 19200 participants across the Republic, calling on all people to help the success of these activities as they will allow youth to fill their spare time.

World Bank urges Yemen to endorse EITI

SANA'A, June 24 — Yemen must join the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI) in order to upkeep the remaining oil reserves and get the optimal benefit out of it, says the World Bank.



The bank also called for ending petroleum subsidies in a gradual but time-bound way and further to work on improving the management of oil sector.

It hinted that the endorsing of the initiative by the Yemeni government would improve the government's credibility with civil society and the international donor community. Such a step requires a regular publication of all oil, gas and mining payments and revenues, making all information accessible to the public.

Transparency also involves making

payments and revenues subject to credible and independent audit and engaging the civil society in design, monitoring, and the evaluation of the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative implementation process.

The bank also stressed the importance of phasing out petroleum subsidies as they would improve macroeconomic stability, indicating that the prices are below the international ones and subsidies on the petroleum products for domestic consumption remain large, about nine percent of GDP in 2005.

Moreover, the bank pinpointed that Yemen lacks relevant environmental laws and regulations on production and use of oil and gas, demanding the establishment of quality standards and requirements for oil products.

Shooting took place at the Occidental Petroleum Company

Shabwa, June 24 — An oil worker was killed and other 6 foreigners were injured when a Yemeni guard opened fire, last Saturday, shortly after they landed at Occidental Petroleum Company, located in (SI) sector in Janan field, east to Osailan district, Shabwa province, some 300 miles south of the capital, Sana'a

Al-Ayam newspaper said that the victims were all coming off a plane that was landing at the oil company's airstrip, Al-Na'eem, in Shabwa when the guard randomly opened fire at them. The worker killed in the attack was an Indian national; the other casualties included John, the manager of the production in the sector, two Britons, Dr. Steven Bosh, the commander David Juliet, Mike, who is Philippine mechanic engineer, along with the Tunisian captain Mohammed Al-Ghandori and his Yemeni partner Abdulaziz Mabrook.

The bullets, penetrated into the

plane's oil tank, resulted in injuring the guard and damaging two cars, stopping on the airstrip to take the experts to the company site.

The preliminary results indicate that the guard was mentally ill and the victims are critically injured.

The U.S. Embassy in San'a confirmed the attack in a message posted on its Website, mentioning that the US citizen was "critically injured." Also, the embassy canceled travel to Shabwa and Marib regions "for the near future" and recommended that Americans should avoid those areas.

Also last Saturday, Yemeni security officials said that they have arrested two men suspected of al-Qaida links and confessed their link to the attack on an oil pipeline, last Tuesday, near the port city of Aden. The men tried unsuccessfully to blow up the pipeline with TNT, the officials reported, speaking on the condition of anonymity.

HOOD demands the release of ex-Guantanamo detainees



There are, at the present time, about 375 men in Guantanamo.

SANA'A, JUNE, 24 — Yemen's National Organization for Defending Rights and Liberties, known as Hood, demands the immediate release of the four ex-Guantanamo prisoners that U.S set free last week.

"We sent a message to the political security asking them to declare the identity of the four prisoners and to release them immediately" said Ahmed Arman, an activist and a lawyer in Hood, who confirmed that re-arresting those men without charging them is illegal measure especially when they are prevented to meet lawyers or any family members or relatives. "We insisted on releasing the four men especially Fwaz Numan Mahdi who suffers mental illness as we were informed" Arman said.

It is worth mentioning that Yemen has received, last Monday, four of its citizens who were detained in Guantanamo. The four prisoners are Fwaz Numan Mhdi, Sadeq Mohammed Sa'eed, Hani Abdu Musleh Albadani, and Ali Mussen Saleh, according to the Defense Ministry's website. The four Yemenis were among six detainees the

U.S announced transferring back to their countries last Tuesday, including two Tunisians.

Yemeni security had already re-arrested a number of Yemeni ex-Guantanamo detainees before they were tried, accusing them of forgery, however no one accused of terror links.

According to the U.S Defense Department, there are, at the present time, about 375 men held in its military base in southeast Cuba on suspicion of terrorism or links to al-Qaida or Taliban.

The Department said that 405 detainees were released and returned to their home countries. They are from Albania, Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Bahrain, Belgium, Denmark, Egypt, France, Germany, Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Maldives, Morocco, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, Sudan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Uganda, United Kingdom, and Yemen. Also, it indicated that about 80 of the remaining prisoners have been cleared for transfer or release and are awaiting this determination.

The first summer center for orphans launches

By: Nisreen Shadad

SANA'A — June 23, under the slogan, "With working, our hopes are achieved," Orphan sector and lodging houses (accommodations); a branch from al-Saleh association for social development, launches the activities of the first summer center - on Saturday- for empowering the orphans who are elder than ten years old.

The summer center is considered the preliminary stage, "The whole sector was established 55 days ago," according to Huda al-Yafe'e, the director of Orphan sector and lodging houses, who added "The strategy we will follow is of three stages which aim to make constant development. The first stage is opening a center to qualify the orphans. The second stage aims to develop the widows' skills. The last stage is the stability of housing," she said.

"The preparatory stage will last for two months while the second ranges from two to three years. Applying the third stage plan depends enormously on the success of the first and the second stages. The number of orphans who are involved in the first stage is 500 orphans; 250 girls and 250 boys." Al-Yafe'e elaborated.

"Training is going to take place in two different schools; one for boys and another for girls. Students are to study Holy Quran and life skills. Other training courses are related to computer, English, sewing, and maintaining. In the third stage, we will provide orphans and widows, who are not stable in Sana'a, with houses provided with the essential facilities, farms, shops, etc according to one's specialty," said Ibtisam al-Khawliani, the director of training and education section in the sector. She confirmed that The President Saleh provided the sector with the land in which the houses are going to be built.



"Since they are noisy, street is a better place for them," said an actor to the two boys' uncle, so as to highlight the orphans' situation.

We have another program which is called the elder brother which is concerned with educating and empowering the "elder brother in a family", who take the father's responsibility and position, according to al-Khawliani.

The opening party was under the auspices of Ahmed Ali Abdullah Saleh, the director of al-Saleh association for social development. Numerous ambassadors, ministers, and representatives

of private sector attended the opening party to finance this project. The donations of the attendees ranged from YR 100,000 to a million

Muhammad al-Qubati, a seven grade orphan delivered a word about the orphan's feelings when his father or mother passed away unexpectedly, saying "Yes I lost my father, however I do not lose hope."

Bandar al-Dahish, eight-grade

orphan and the eldest boy in his family said "I'd like to study computer in the center to be independent and join college in the future." "Engineering college is expensive, but strongly I believe that I can work and study," he added.

Khadija al-Haisami, the previous Minister of Human Rights, confirmed the significant of such centers, especially when there is a big number of orphans in Yemen.

Report: Mismanaged human resource causes underdevelopment

By: Moneer Al-Omari

SANA'A, June 23 — An international report recently ranked Yemen among the weakest and most vulnerable countries, lagging behind in terms of economic, social and political indicators.

The report by the Fund for Peace, an American establishment promoting sustainable security, and the U.S. State Department's "Foreign Policy" magazine ranks Yemen 24th among 69 countries subject to failure or breakdown due to human or natural disasters.

Despite the fact that Yemen slowly has improved its record, it remains among the weakest countries due to rampant corruption, unemployment and mismanaged resources and human capital.

As for social indicators, with the world's highest fertility rate, Yemen's inordinate population increase causes many problems for its ailing economy and increases demand on basic services. Other factors include the massive movement of displaced peoples and African emigrants, which further burden Yemen and Yemenis.

Moreover, the country suffers chronic and sustained human flight/emigration and brain drain, together with tribal dominance of political life. Likewise, its economic factors are worsening and it is experiencing a sharp economic decline, as well as uneven economic development.

Regarding political indicators, vulnerable nations like Yemen suffer progressive deterioration in public services, absence or improper application of law and widespread human rights violations. Further, security apparatuses and administrations are outlaws and operate as a state within a state.

Corruption currently is ranked as Yemen's top problem, as it is rampant in all state institutions. Despite positive steps recently taken to form an anti-corruption committee and issue new legislation to combat it, there's been little or no progress.

The Yemeni government's human rights record has improved slightly.

The report considers Yemen's security apparatuses responsible for human rights violations including arrests, torture, murders and breach of citizens' privacy. Political Security and National Security apparatuses linked directly to the presidential palace are responsible for gross human rights violations. Further, prison conditions in Yemen are horrible and substandard.

Additionally, the margin of opinion and press freedom has shrunk dramatically. Children's abuse is prevalent and there is trafficking and violence against women and children, as well as discrimination against minorities.

Despite mutual cooperation with the United States in matters related to the "War on Terror," Yemen has been a haven for terrorists, particularly those groups linked to Al-Qaeda; however, it has managed to unravel their webs and hunt down the organization's affiliates.

Long ruled by President Ali Abdullah Saleh since 1978, Yemen is suffering from corruption and lack of transparency. Formal restrictions are exercised against the country's essentially disorganized opposition parties.

Further, Yemeni security and armed forces are relatively disorganized and, although they managed to quell the Houthi upsurges, they are unable to defend citizens against tribal and factional violence.

Social fanaticism and bribery are common and the Yemeni judiciary isn't totally impartial, as the executive authority interferes in the work of judges and high-ranking officials pressure judges and prosecutors to rule otherwise. Nevertheless, Yemen's judiciary system has begun to improve under reforms instituted by the Ministry of Justice and President Saleh's ceding of the Supreme Judicial Council presidency.

The Yemeni state's inability to achieve success is attributed mainly to the spread of corruption, low salaries and mismanaged human resources. The report stresses the importance of working to alleviate corruption and strengthen state institutions, as well as granting more authority to the judiciary.

Continued from page 1

Al-Khaiwani still detained, authorities ban visits

He hinted that Interior Ministry has violated the law and deprived Al-Khaiwani from his own basic rights: including his right to be visited by his lawyer. It is further an intervention with the prosecution's work. He maintained they will submit a complaint to the Attorney General demanding him to question Al-Alimi.

Assistant secretary general of the Public Forces Union Party Mohammed Al-Mutawkel stressed the arrest of Al-Khaiwani is an attempt by the state to show off and to move from the on-going military crisis into a political one.

Upon the end of the war, the authority is left with two options either reforms or intentionally creating new crisis, according to Al-Mutawkel.

"I am afraid that Al-Khaiwani's arrest is an introduction for a new crisis, because the authority is impaired to make reforms and not qualified to do so," said Al-Mutawkel.

A member of the political office at the Yemeni Socialist Party Mohammed Ghaleb Ahmed pointed out arresting Al-Khaiwani, in his sleeping dress, is not strange to the authority especially under the absence of a real democracy or a security authority that protects citizens.

Ghaleb added what happened to Al-Khaiwani may happen with others, announcing his stance with Al-Khaiwani and all those subjected to terrorization and suppression.

Yemeni Armed Forces' newspaper 26 September.net attributed detaining Al-Khaiwani to his links with the third Sana'a terrorist cell accused of implanting explosives in the Capital Sana'a.

Deputy Head of the media department at the Yemeni Socialist Party Mohammed Al-Maqaleh denounced what was published in 26 September.net, maintaining is a mere fabrication.

He added Al-Khaiwani's arrest is no more than a settling of accounts and those who prepared for his arrest did not put in their minds the defame on Yemen and the protests of civil society organizations and politicians.

The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists issued a statement in which the Yemeni government was asked to set Al-Khaiwani free,

expressing its concern over punishing Al-Khaiwani for his opinions and criticism of President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

The committee also demanded the government to bring in its evidences against him in case their claims are true.

Likewise, Joint Meeting Parties denounced arresting Al-Khaiwani and assured such an arrest comes within the frame of violations against pressmen and journalists in particular and human rights in general.

Change Organization, under establishment, demanded all civil and political powers to sand by Al-Khaiwani and to exert more efforts in order to set him free. It called further for trialing all those involved in Al-Khaiwani's arrest

Relative calm in Sa'ada, mediation committee faces difficulties

In a statement released last Tuesday, Al-Houthi pointed out that Yemeni authorities haven't halted their aggression, despite progress achieved in negotiations. He called on the state to respect the mediators because they are exerting strong efforts to stop the bloodshed and treat the war's consequences.

"If the authorities continue their aggression against us and decline all mediation efforts, we won't remain motionless, but we will exercise our rights to defend ourselves," he warned.

He further called upon those he termed as "liberals and honest people" to continue their efforts to halt the aggression and devastation and treat the current situation via peaceful means, noting that battles continue being fought in Qataber district, as well as Al-Saifi, Al-Masa'ah and other areas.

Sa'ada locals and human rights organizations in Sana'a denounced the negligence of the Yemeni government and charitable societies toward the displaced peoples of Sa'ada.

"There's overwhelming public resentment about the issue of displaced peoples in Sa'ada, who amount to 60,000, while no one is paying attention to them," a Yemeni Socialist Party official told Aleshteraki.net.

"The governorate's sons, especially those whose homes were demolished, are bitter at the negligence of the gov-

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ernment and their fellow citizens. What increases that bitterness is the fact that no party or charitable society has sent any medical or relief supplies to the dozens of displaced families."

The official added, "We thought the end of military operations would open the door for the media and charitable societies to raise funds and provide food and medicine to displaced people in Sa'ada, but this hasn't happened."

He stressed that Sa'ada locals are not poor and they aren't beggars; rather, they are citizens displaced by the more than four-year-old dirty war that crippled their businesses.

For its part, the Civil Society Coalition demanded the Yemeni government stick to the ceasefire agreement, lift the media blackout and send aid to the displaced people in Sa'ada, stressing the importance of withdrawing military barracks from population areas and treating the war's consequences regarding detainees and those fired from their jobs over the situation. One article of the recently signed ceasefire agreement dictates treating the issue of detainees and those affected by the war.

Fired Member of Parliament Yahya Al-Houthi hailed Qatari efforts resulting in the ceasefire between the Yemeni government and Houthis, considering it a political feat and a triumph over those wanting to incite sectarian sedition in Yemen.

He further indicated that the agreement includes many articles, topped by freedom of expression and the possibility of forming a political party for Houthis, together with freeing all arrestees and exchanging captives. He demanded all government and pro-government media outlets halt the media war regarding applying the agreement, which bans such incitements.

Al-Houthi went on to say that they recently managed to create an electronic web site to present their viewpoint and they now are preparing to launch a satellite channel whose main task is to present Houthi viewpoints to both the Yemeni and the Islamic public, as well as revive Zaidi doctrine.

Moreover, Al-Houthi praised the efforts of the Yemeni opposition, particularly the Joint Meeting Parties, noting that Houthis maintain good relations with opposition both inside and outside of Yemen.

In related news, Bahraini Interior Minister Gen. Rashid Abdullah Al-

Khalifa noted that his ministry has received no information about any Bahrainis involved in supporting Houthis in Yemen.

Responding to Yemeni Foreign Minister Abu Bakr Al-Qirbi's statement regarding Yemen having material evidence of such groups' involvement with Houthis, Al-Khalifa said his government is contacting the Yemeni side to learn the names of the alleged Houthi supporters.

He stressed that his country will investigate any individual or group providing such support, if proven, noting that Bahrain is keen not to interfere in other nations' affairs.

Al-Qirbi told media outlets that some groups in Bahrain support Houthis; however, he declined to provide further details

Saleh instructs negotiations with Hutchison Whampoa Ltd

It is worth mentioning that the DBI Company has involved in a hot competition with other two companies, one of them is Kuwaiti company, before winning the tender after which it received a wide media criticism by local press. As a result, the government has transferred the whole agreement to the parliament to be ratified. Sources also confirmed that the presidential decision to abandon the agreement with DBI comes to avoid the tension of the press and the public due to the obvious defects in the agreement.

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Haniyeh calls for talks with Abbas's Fatah faction

By: Nidal al-Mughrabi

GAZA (Reuters) - Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, prime minister of the Palestinian government dismissed by President Mahmoud Abbas, called for power-sharing talks on Saturday with Fatah rivals routed from the Gaza Strip.

"There will be no dialogue with Hamas," responded Hussein al-Sheikh, a senior Fatah official in the West Bank.

Hamas seized control of Gaza just over a week ago. It faces isolation there, not only from Israel and Western powers, but also from the emergency cabinet Abbas has set up in the occupied West Bank and from Arab states such as Egypt and Jordan.

Abbas on Saturday appointed a commission to investigate how his Fatah forces lost control of the strip to the Islamist group. He also dismissed a senior Gaza commander who "surrendered" rather than fight.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said Hamas's bloody takeover of Gaza amounted to a "coup against legitimacy" that damaged the Palestinian cause.

Israel plans to choke off all but humanitarian and basic supplies to Gaza, home to 1.5 million people, while opening the financial taps to Abbas's emergency government.

Negotiations held up

Some aid groups said Abbas's decision to sever contacts with the Hamas leadership in Gaza was holding up negotiations on reopening Gaza's main commercial crossing at Karni.

"Food is being used as a political weapon," a senior Western diplomat involved in the negotiations said.

Hamas is considering hiring private contractors to take over the border crossings because Israel refuses to deal with the Islamist group, an official close to Hamas said.

Israel will begin next week to transfer some \$400 million of tax revenues to Abbas's emergency government in the West Bank and will ease some travel restrictions there.



Members of Palestinian security forces loyal to President Mahmoud Abbas walk at his headquarters in the West Bank city of Ramallah, June 22

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert will offer the gestures to Abbas on Monday when the leaders meet at the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh.

In Gaza, a Fatah official who has broken ranks with Abbas warned Israel not to expect any help from the emergency government which the Palestinian president established a week ago, and said militants in the coastal strip could retaliate.

"More pressure and more closures will explode in (Israel's) faces. The government which is collaborating with the occupation (Israel) will not be able to bring them security," Khaled Abu Hilal said. "Remember that we are ready to do all we can to preserve our dignity and we will race for martyrdom."

Hamas militant seized

Israel seized a top Hamas militant in the West Bank on Saturday and officials identified him as the founder of the group's armed wing in the territory.

Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri said the arrest was proof "we are facing a dual conspiracy" in the West Bank, one led by Israel and the other by Abbas's security forces.

Abbas has ruled out any dialogue

with Hamas, which he accused of trying to assassinate him. Hamas has denied the allegations.

"The way out of the current situation is launching a Palestinian dialogue without pre-conditions," Haniyeh told Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh by phone.

Haniyeh said the talks should be held "on the basis of no loser and no winner, and on the basis of no harm to anyone, and on the basis of a national unity government", his office said.

Israeli officials say some \$400 million in tax revenues will be transferred to Abbas's emergency government in stages, short of more than \$700 million the Palestinians say they deserve. Israel says the remainder has been frozen by court order.

U.S. officials have asked that Israel ease restrictions on Palestinian access to the Jordan Valley, as well as remove barriers, checkpoints and roadblocks near major Palestinian population centres, including Hebron, Bethlehem and Nablus.

Israeli defence officials have mainly objected to removing the roadblocks and checkpoints near Nablus, arguing they are needed to prevent militants from criss-crossing the West Bank and infiltrating Israel.

U.S. and Iraq forces kill 90 al Qaeda in offensive

By: Alister Bull

BAQUBA, Iraq (Reuters) — U.S. and Iraqi forces say they have killed 90 al Qaeda fighters around Baghdad during one of the biggest combined offensives against the Sunni Islamist group since the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Seven U.S. soldiers were killed in roadside bomb attacks in and around the capital on Saturday, underscoring a warning from military commanders that U.S. casualties are likely to mount as more troops are put in harm's way.

U.S. air strikes on Saturday killed seven suspected al Qaeda fighters in Tikrit in Salahuddin province and near the city of Falluja, west of Baghdad, the U.S. military said in a statement.

Thousands of U.S. and Iraqi soldiers are taking part in simultaneous offensives in provinces around Baghdad to deny al Qaeda militants sanctuary in farmlands and towns from where they launch car bomb attacks and other violence.

In the capital, Iraq's parliament voted to cut its summer vacation by a month to focus on passing laws Washington views as crucial to healing Iraq's deep sectarian divide. Lawmakers said the current session would be extended until the end of July.

The move is likely to be welcomed by U.S. President George W. Bush, although the bills have yet to be presented to parliament for debate.

The laws include those on sharing revenues from Iraq's huge oil reserves more equitably, holding provincial elections and allowing former members of Saddam Hussein's Baath party to return to the government and military.

The U.S. military said on Saturday that 55 al Qaeda militants had been killed in Operation Arrowhead Ripper, a key plank of the combined offensives, which began in and around the city of Baquba in Diyala province on Tuesday.

Another 28 militants have been killed in separate operations in the past several days in Diyala, north of Baghdad, the U.S. military has said.



An Iraqi soldier adjusts the blindfold of one of the suspected insurgents captured during a joint U.S.-Iraqi military operation in Baquba, 65 km northeast of Baghdad, June 23.

U.S. officials say al Qaeda is trying to spark all-out sectarian civil war in Iraq.

In the worst attack against U.S. soldiers on Saturday, four were killed when a roadside bomb struck their vehicle northwest of Baghdad. The military did not say whether they had been taking part in the offensive. Three others were killed in roadside bomb attacks in Baghdad and Tikrit.

Tightening cordon

U.S. soldiers have been tightening their cordon around al Qaeda fighters holed up in Baquba, advancing carefully through streets lined with roadside bombs and booby-trapped houses. Baquba is an al Qaeda stronghold that has also become a sanctuary for militants escaping a four-month-old security crackdown in Baghdad.

Colonel Steve Townsend, commander of the 3rd Stryker Brigade, told local Iraqi political and military leaders in Baquba that progress was being made.

"I believe the initial stage of the operation will be completed in another three to five days," Townsend said at a building that serves as a joint com-

mand centre for U.S. and Iraqi forces.

The overall offensive around Baquba is expected to last many weeks. U.S. military commanders have said the combined operations were taking advantage of the completion of a build-up of U.S. forces in Iraq to 156,000 soldiers.

Bush has sent 28,000 more troops to Iraq to buy time for Shi'ite Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki to reach a political compromise with disaffected minority Sunni Arabs, who are locked in a cycle of violence with majority Shi'ites.

U.S. officials had been urging parliament to either scrap its July-August summer holiday or reduce the two-month break so legislators can speed up passage of the laws.

Maliki said last week the drafts were ready and would be presented to parliament this week, but that did not happen.

Parliamentary committees dealing with the draft laws would not take any summer break, one lawmaker said. Washington believes the laws will boost Sunni Arab participation in the political process.



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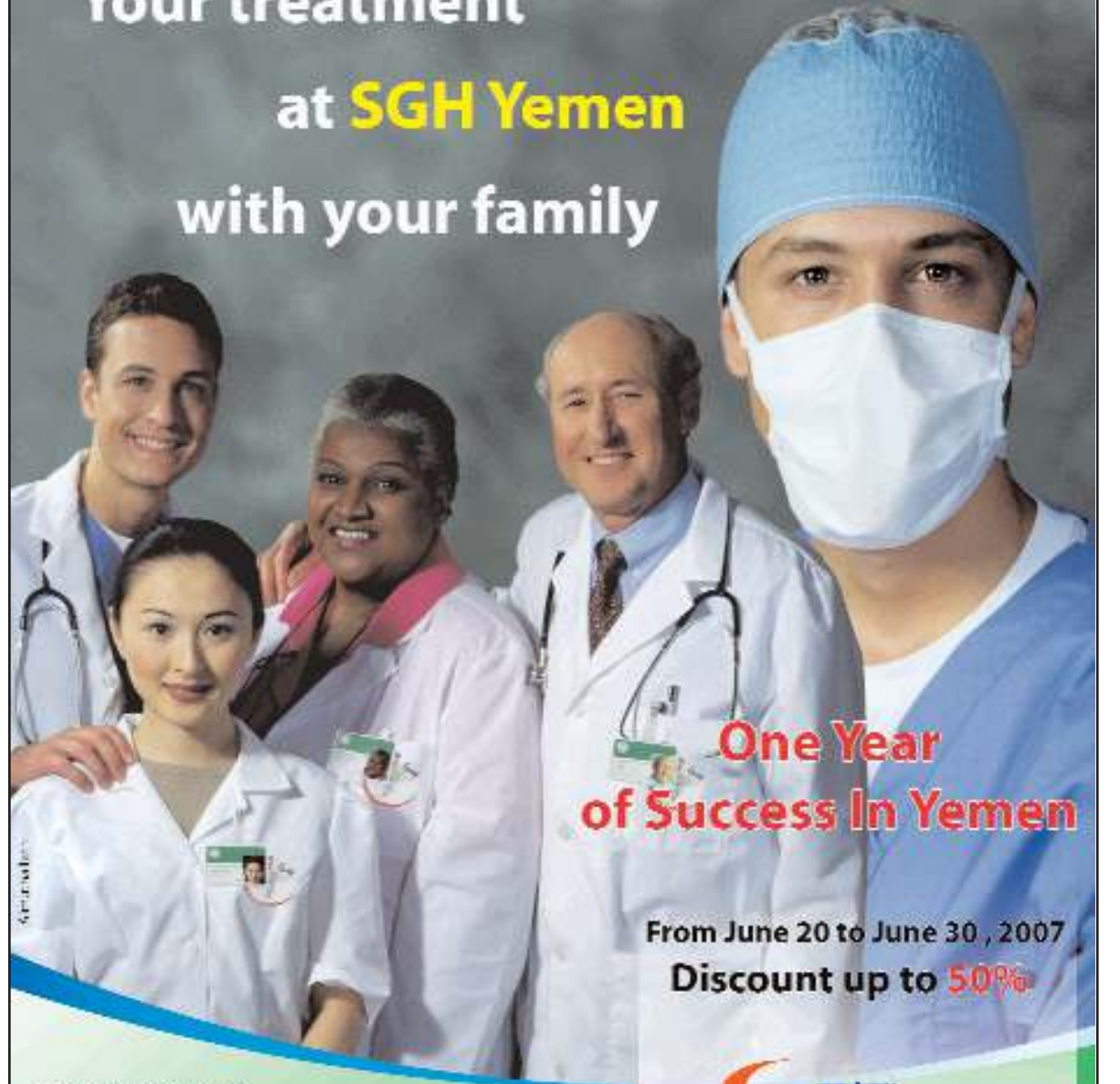


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Ibb University rector: Yemeni population increases by 700,000 annually

In a lecture about the impact of population increase on economic growth in Yemen, one attendee questioned Ibb University Rector Ahmed Shuja'a Al-Din about the population explosion in the Arab world and how Arab regimes, under the pretext of such an explosion, justify their failure to achieve a real developmental renaissance eradicating unemployment, poverty and illiteracy. Another attendee wondered how the two billion-strong Chinese and Indians have achieved two of the world's strongest economies. The following was extracted from an interview with the rector.

Interviewed by: Abdulqawi Sha'lan

Population growth in Yemen isn't keeping up with its development requirements. What's your opinion of Yemeni government remedies for this problem?

I think it's very important to educate people and include the subject of population in the curricula in different phases of education because this will help increase public awareness about the importance of family planning so as to reduce the number of family members. Hence, the government will be able to provide job opportunities for the public.

What's the average population growth compared to economic and social growth in Yemen?

Developed countries always connect population growth with economic development; yet, in Yemen, current population growth is 3.4 percent after dropping from 3.7 percent. This means we need double that to achieve a balance between population growth and economic and social sources in order to achieve a better living standard.

Does the Yemeni government have a clear population policy?

Yes, the government has a clear population policy currently being used. The policy began in 1988 before unification. After that, a first conference was held in 1990 and a second in 1996. The policy has its own programs.

But this policy isn't vivid because during your lecture, you spoke about a coming population explosion.

The Yemeni government has a vivid policy along with objectives and programs, all of which have the same method of how to connect economic and social development with population. Responsibility is shared between the state and the community; therefore, mosques, schools, universities and other educational institutions play a vital role.

When the government makes a policy, it should find a way to apply it, but citizens also are responsible to apply such policies. If a family father's income is YR 30,000 or YR 40,000 and there are more than 10 family members, how can he provide them a good, educational and healthy living standard? Every year, Yemen has 700,000 new births.

What's the role of universities in this respect and does research conducted receive responses to be carried out in reality?

Universities play a fundamental role in making people aware of the population issue, but it's changing rapidly and this requires potentials to prepare teaching staff who can communicate with students very vividly and with a sound vision.

Moreover, universities should offer libraries containing references and sources to help researchers in this regard. Such references and sources are

available at some universities; however, curricula should be available in all Yemeni universities and be part of student requirements. Thus, there can be no gain in saying that the availability of the population issue has begun to be on the right track regarding the issue of educating people about family planning.

Population growth dropped from 3.7 percent to 3.4 percent. Is this evidence of improvement?

It is a small indicator because decreasing the population requires improved health and education services, as well as public awareness about the importance of family planning. This will result in decreasing population growth and human fertility percentages.

How do you evaluate Yemen's average mortality rate?

The mortality rate started to decline due to fighting epidemics that left thousand dead. However, I can't say that the decline of the death rate is rapid, but very slow.

Some think the 1994 census was better than the 2004. What's your response to that?

Detailed results of the 2004 population census haven't come out yet, so we can't compare the two, but administrative problems hindered the census results. In general, I can't make a judgment before having the detailed results from the 2004 population census.

Some countries have a population of more than a billion, but they can absorb the population explosion. Does the problem lie in the population explosion or in the failure of government policies that couldn't succeed in achieving a developmental renaissance?

Population explosion still is a problem in China and India, yet these two countries are able to absorb the explosion



Ibb is the most populated governorate. Also, its average crime and unemployment is Yemen's highest. Photo: Elderly and his grandchildren walking in one of Ibb city's alleys.

due to their large economic growth. In China, there are follow-up legal and legislative measures; however, in India, there are educational and awareness issues due to its circumstances, its multicultural atmosphere and languages.

What about Tunisia and Iran?

Tunisia and Iran are this region's two successful countries because they have dealt with population issues with reality. Likewise, we hope we can take real

measures and approach our problems. Regarding Tunisia, since Bu Raqeebah's reign, they've made policies concerning family planning, so they've succeeded in adjusting between economic growth and population. But in Iran, one single jurisprudential reference helped follow the style of education and awareness through mosques preachers; so, consequently, they succeeded.

Do you support Iranian style or

Tunisian style measures?

The situation is different in Yemen. Experience has proven that taking measures is futile, but promoting education and awareness through mosques, schools, universities and television channels is best for Yemen because everyone is responsible for this problem, not just the state.

What are Yemen's most populated governorates?

With a relatively small area of approximately 5,200 square kilometers and a population of 2,131, Ibb is the most populated governorate. Also, its average crime and unemployment is Yemen's highest.

How do political wrangles affect population politics?

Of course, political wrangles have an effect on population politics. Instead of chewing qat and discussing political matters, people should talk about useful issues such as public awareness, including family planning. I hope all efforts will move toward the nation's interests, regardless of differences.

Does population politics go against Sharia law?

Population politics does not go against Sharia law at all because Islam calls us to have family planning. Qur'anic verses and traditions enlighten us in our social life, especially on this issue.

According to the last Yemeni census, what's the male-female ratio?

There are 105 females to 100 males due to the mortality of males because of accidents and other death-causing factors.

What governorates have more males than females?

Those would be less populated governorates with the highest immigration rates, such as Al-Mahrah, Shabwa, Hadramout and Al-Jawf.



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Yemeni Jews in Israel retain Yemeni customs

By: Mohammed bin Sallam

This article is not about the Jewish emigration during the 1940s and 1950s; rather, it is about those who immigrated during the 1980s and continue to do so up until today.

Former Yemeni President Ibrahim Al-Hamdi assured that all Yemeni immigrants, including those who immigrate to Israel, have the right to dual nationality according to the Yemeni Constitution. Official statistics reveal that there are 54,000 Yemeni Jews in Israel. Al-Hamdi later requested they return to Yemen, promising them full rights and duties, as is the case with Yemeni Muslims.

Under Al-Hamdi, Jews numbered more than 20,000; however, this number decreased following his tragic assassination, as many Jewish, Israeli and American organizations hastened to deport them to Israel with the help of Yemeni mediators. Only around 1,000 remained in Yemen, mostly children and elderly people.

Unofficial sources assert that Jews of Yemeni origin comprise 10 percent of Israel's population, or approximately 600,000. Further, more than 12,000 Yemeni Jews reside in the



Yahya Al-Marhabi

United States and approximately 15,000 in Canada and the U.K.

The question is: Do some or all of them have the right to dual nationality, as is the case with most Yemeni

expatriates worldwide?

Yahya Al-Marhabi immigrated to Israel seven years ago with his wife and children, leaving behind his elderly father and more than 10

brothers and sisters. In his early 30s, Al-Marhabi is married with two sons and three daughters and living in a house in Beir Al-Saba', where most Yemeni Jews live.

He explained, "I came to visit my father, mother and brothers who live in Sana'a and Amran. My father came from Sa'ada governorate several months ago to escape the ongoing war there."

Both in his name and on behalf of all Yemeni Jews, Al-Marhabi thanked President Ali Abdullah Saleh for his attitude toward his family and all Jews expelled from Sa'ada, commenting that such attitude was welcomed warmly by Yemeni Jews both in Israel and across the globe.

"President Saleh offered them suitable housing in the capital and provided them secure and comfortable conditions, together with food, clothing and medical services," he explained, "He also offered classes for boy and girls to study and made them feel that he is a real father to all Yemenis, regardless of their religion or race."

He added that Saleh's sympathetic attitude toward Yemeni Jews prompted thousands of Yemeni Jews in Israel to display his photo and the Yemeni flag inside their homes in

respect.

"Jews feel comfortable under President Saleh's generous sponsorship. We come here to visit our families and we feel secure, receiving both welcome and care. We are Yemenis and we take pride in being so," Al-Marhabi declared, "Wherever we are, we long for our homeland because it's impossible to forget where you were born."

He added that he visits Yemen once or twice a year, noting that he enjoys every visit.

Regarding whether his family will return to Sa'ada, Al-Marhabi points out that it would be difficult for them to return there, but they may do so once the situation improves because unless the state provides them permanent housing and employment, they can't remain in Sana'a forever, as they have no fixed income.

"While Yemenis in Israel lead a comfortable life, they long for their homeland. All Yemenis there, especially those who left in 1948, wish to visit their cities and villages. However, the problem remains that they don't have Yemeni passports or identity cards because they had no identity cards upon their departure; thus, they live in endless sadness," Al-Marhabi lamented.

He added that most display Yemeni flags and photos of President Saleh inside their homes and all watch the Sana'a satellite television channel in order to follow events in their homeland.

He further asserts that they maintain close relations with one another, assembling during weddings, celebrations or religious occasions, in addition to visiting each other during hardships or when someone is ill.

Moreover, Yemeni Jews gather for qat sessions in Israel and some plant it around their homes. They maintain Yemeni customs and traditions, including dancing to the *mizmar* and drums as they did in Yemen. The only thing that has changed is their dress; however, even those born in Israel take pride in being of Yemeni origin.

Responding to a question about treatment by Yemeni airport authorities, Al-Marhabi answered, "We are Yemenis and we enjoy all of the rights guaranteed in the Yemeni Constitution. We are treated like all Yemenis and we don't encounter any discrimination."

He concluded by hoping that he can meet President Saleh, as well as build a house in Sana'a where he can meet with all of his family members during his visits.

Muslim female tennis players – a rare species

Ever wondered why you don't see Muslim women on the professional tennis circuit? As the skirts get shorter it seems ever harder for Muslim women to break into the professional tennis scene.

By: Yaniv Berman
The Media Line Ltd.

When tennis player Sania Mirza leaves her home in Hyderabad, India, she is rarely seen without her bodyguard.

Mirza is a member of the Indian Muslim community and at the age of 18 was the subject of a fatwa (Islamic religious decree), calling on her to change her tennis outfit which "leaves no room for imagination."

Now 20, Mirza is one of a handful of professional Muslim female tennis players. That is why her story, whilst gaining much publicity, is mostly treated by the media as a personal matter, and not as part of a larger phenomenon.

The Women's Tennis Association (WTA) Official Rule Book determines that "for tournament matches all players will be expected to dress and present themselves in a professional manner." According to its rules, a player "shall wear appropriate and clean attire and shall not wear sweatshirts, sweat pants, t-shirts, jeans, or cut-offs during matches."

Nothing in the rules specifically refers to the length of the garments. The word skirt is not mentioned. Yet, somehow it became accepted that a skirt had to be worn, the length of which was too short for the average Muslim woman to wear.

The WTA rules also determine that it is up to the referee to approve or disapprove of an outfit. "A player may be

asked to change if the referee deems it necessary," the Rule Books reads.

"Every year the skirt gets shorter and shorter. Why not longer?" asks Aravane Rezai, who is ranked in the WTA's top-50.

Her parents were born in Iran and immigrated to France before she was born. Nevertheless, she considers herself a practicing Muslim and is bewildered by the WTA rules.

"I think if this rule would change and if everybody could choose what to wear, then many girls in Muslim countries would be able to play tennis," Rezai says.

When Rezai is training, she wears long pants and long-sleeved shirts. She regards this attire as "respectful." Several times during her short career Rezai asked to play in official tournaments with Bermuda pants, which cover the legs down to the knees.

"If Raphael Nadal can, why can't I?" she asked. But the referees refused.

Rezai believes this rule stops many potential talents in the Muslim World from developing.

"I saw many juniors, who stopped playing tennis at the age of 14 because of the family and their religious tradition," says the technical director of Tennis Emirates, Salah Bramly.

Bramly, a former tennis player from Tunisia, arrived in Dubai in 2001 and joined the United Arab Emirates' tennis association. One of the first things he initiated was the UAE national championship for children under the age of 14. His vision was to promote tennis in the oil-rich UAE, where football and horseback riding take the



lead. To his amazement, out of 200 participants, 60 percent were girls.

Bramly understood the potential, but knew what obstacles lay ahead.

"Many people are very conservative. They do not like their girls to play sport, especially when they become young ladies," Bramly explains.

The WTA ranking includes very few players from the Muslim world, most of whom are very low on the list. There is no UAE player in the rankings.

But this might change in the coming years, regardless of whether the WTA dress code changes or not.

Dubai, one of the richest places in the world, is moving back and forth between the Muslim traditions on the one hand, and its growing proximity to the West on the other. This situation has led some parents to encourage their daughters to continue their tennis careers, even if it means settling for shorter clothes.

Fatima Janahi, 12, is a talented tennis player, who has no intention of putting an end to her already seven-year-long career. A year ago she approached her father, 'Abbas, and told him how she felt. His answer was simple: "It's up to you. The door is open."

Unlike many other parents in the Muslim world, 'Abbas sees no problem with the skirt issue.

"If Fatima would like to wear a skirt then I'll let her. The dress Sharapova wears is different from what we're used to. Fatima can wear it if she

wants; it's very nice," says 'Abbas.

When asked what her dream is, Fatima answers with no hesitation: "I want to be a professional tennis player. If I really want to reach the top 10, then I think I can," she says.

Headscarf on the tennis court

Despite the obvious obstacles, Rezai believes Iranian tennis players could, and would do well in international tournaments, if only they could participate. Rezai took part twice in the Muslim World 'Olympic Games' in Tehran. Women wearing traditional dress and headscarves participated in all kinds of sports, including tennis.

Rezai is relentlessly trying to push Muslim girls to participate in tennis and in other sports.

"I want to show that women can take part in the same activities as men," she says.

"I want people to understand that I can play tennis even if I wear a chador (a dress which covers the entire body)."

But Rezai knows that no matter how hard she tries to promote tennis in Iran, if the WTA rules don't change then all her efforts will be in vain.

Erhan Oral, the technical director of the Turkish Tennis Federation, agrees.

"We had a case two or three years ago during an international tournament in Ankara, when a tennis player from Iran wanted to play with a scarf and long clothes. The international supervisor did not allow this because it was against the international rules of

tennis. Everyone thought that because Turkey was a Muslim country, she would get away with it, but she didn't," Oral says.

Turkey's population is almost 100% Muslim. Nevertheless, its secular tradition, which goes back to the 1920s, does not place any obstacles in the way of its female tennis players. Turkey has five WTA-ranked women tennis players.

The Media Line asked the WTA to comment on the dress code issue, and the response leaves some room for optimism.

"While we are not aware of any player requests to wear non-traditional tennis attire due to religious reasons, if such a request were made, it would be reviewed by the Tour on a case-by-case basis," says the WTA Tour vice president for communications, Andrew Walker.

Walker adds: "My best guess is that as long as the request did not interfere with play or result in an unfair distraction to the other player, it would be granted. As a matter of principle, we would do everything in our power to respect the different religious beliefs and customs of our players, while at the same time ensuring an even playing field on the court."

Asked specifically about Rezai's request to play with Bermuda pants, Walker says he was not familiar with the request. He adds, however, that he could not believe that a referee would "deny a bona-fide request based on personal religious reasons that doesn't

interfere with the play or the opposing player."

The bottom line, according to Walker, is that the WTA is doing all it can to ensure a "balanced playing field, respect for players and their beliefs, and at the same time professional and proper match attire."

Sounds promising? Maybe. Still, the rules are not about to change soon, and so the referee in each match still makes the final decision as to whether or not an outfit is "proper."

And then there is another problem.

Even if the WTA would indeed change the dress code and allow players to wear what they want, Rezai is afraid that this would also cause problems for Muslim players, this time for those who are actually comfortable playing in skirts.

"What if other players, like Sania Mirza will not want to play in pants? Then people would ask her why she does not wear pants and it may create more problems for her," Rezai says.

Rezai knows she has a long way to go before she achieves her goals: being number one in the world and opening the door to the tennis world for more Muslim women. But she is not discouraged.

"I feel I am not alone. So many Muslim girls in Iran want to play in different sports, not only tennis. But they cannot do this outside Iran. It is difficult to change the rules of a country like Iran, but surely the WTA can change its own rules."

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Words of Wisdom



At this juncture of human history, the lies of politicians have hit record levels. It may be that the lies of politicians have been at about the same level throughout history, but that now we are more aware of them given the extent of information flow. Even if that were the case, I contend that Yemeni politicians are working hard to hit the Guinness Book of Records in this aspect.

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

OUR
OPINIONThe last straw...
now Yemen will break

It was the first time Abdulkarim Al-Khawi, who is currently detained, opened his heart to me, while we were having lunch together earlier this year. As a fellow journalist, and one who has a vast experience in Yemeni media, talking with Al-Khawi was very useful and interesting. We talked about his journey in politics and how journalism turned out to be a death road for him. I asked him why he doesn't seek political asylum anywhere else in the world. I am sure after what he had gone through he is totally justified to do so. He said: "I feel safer in Yemen." His logic was that in Yemen, if anything happens to him, because he is a well known person and has been in the focus of media more than once, this gives him immunity in a way. If he went abroad, the risk of being assassinated would be higher as he would be a "nobody on foreign land".

I still have my reservations against this explanation, and I am sure he does too now. The ruthless security men who attacked him in the night and dragged him from his home in his underwear had a "red color forceful summation order". This is given when the targeted is a very dangerous criminal, who is likely to resist arrest and open fire on the security. This meant if Al-Khawi had resisted his capturers - although I doubt this is possible considering five armed men dragged him from his bed room - they had orders to shoot him dead. Probably that was the intention in the first place. But God's will is to have him still alive so that new chapters for Abdulkarim's sad story will be written.

I can't say for sure if his arrest was against the law, because we don't know the law that much. Because there are written laws and unwritten laws. There are local practices and there are international laws. So it would be really silly to argue that this arrest and the charges of terrorism are illegal, especially with such a lame and corrupt judiciary system. It would also be ridiculous to argue that this is against humanity, because who said political security officers are human in the first place? I saw a hair-raising documentary by the BBC on child soldiers. They explained that children are taken at a very early age and trained to kill. This way their sense of right and wrong and their appreciation of human life are skewed. They have no shame, or doubt that by killing "the enemy" they are doing the right thing. I believe our men and women in the political security forces and now the anti-terrorism unit are somewhat being programmed that way.

There is a message here. It's been a while since a journalist was brutally beaten or imprisoned this way. I know 2007 will be a rough year. This is probably the last straw before something drastic happens and Yemen breaks. Despite the claims, Sa'ada war is not over, and trouble in Abyan is in the horizon. My hand is on my heart thinking who or where it will be next. I fear for many of the brave men and women who are challenging the system and refusing to go with the flow. May God rescue Yemen, and protect its brave and honest men and women. As for the rest, may they all burn in hell.

Nadia Al-Sakkaf
Editor-in-Chief

By: Dr. Abdullah Awbal

We would like to be very frank in presenting the factors behind our backwardness, as well as the causes of our failure to build the state of strong institutions and make available the kind of development that helps rescue citizens from cowardliness and timidity. The situation doesn't allow me to express the reality of continued confusion between the state's project and the historic inheritance that enhances the traditional infrastructure during the project implementation.

The matter is not a new discovery, but for us, the political and social thinking claims an inauthentic reality. Why? There is nobody to claim the non-existence or the absence of tribal traditions from the social map. We are

required to put a stop to the influence of tribal traditions on the government institutions and remove it from being exercised elsewhere.

Such tribal traditions appear futile while those who remain adherent to these traditions have lost their role in the historic perspective in light of requirements of the contemporary state, which is based on the institutional system and status of the law and equal citizenship. It is impossible for any community to establish a regime under an ideological and religious cover having strong faith in tribal traditions and their influence.

The most complicated matter is that the social forces that adopt the state's project are distributed among various political and social organizations, as well as the other regional, ethnic and tribal entities. Some people don't take into consideration the number of civil community organizations while overlapping of the political environment components is

reflected in the political structure. This leads to formulate a hypothesis reading that "Reaching a real political action necessitates resorting out all the social components and entities via useful programs addressing clear and specific interests."

Frankly speaking, we attempt via this analysis to interpret the phenomenon of the statements, which are frequently and repeatedly made by the President of the Republic before and after elections. Also, a great portion of our effort is devoted to explaining the lack of enthusiasm on the part of institutions to carry out the announced reforms. We should ask who stands behind delaying the direct election of governors and district directors like the local council members.

Mr. President ordered suspending any direct elections of executive officials and asked legal experts to make the necessary amendments in

two months from the most recent presidential and local council elections. Now, we have entered the ninth month since the president made these statements. Who did hinder formation of the Anti-Corruption Authority, however, a series of steps have been taken with the aim of making up the authority. Numerous questions of this kind arise.

The officials who are holding key government positions fear any comprehensive administrative and financial reforms because they are bound to lose certain gaps via which they earn money illegally in case any corruption laws are reinforced. For the government to make its policies successful, there should be a nationwide referendum on the components of reform, and after a short while, we will see who backs reforms and who opposes them.

Source: Al-Tagamu Weekly

School of national wrath

By: Jamal Al-Awadhi

In Yemen, we hear many people talking about the democratic course. They say: "Yemen is a democratic country." However, this implies a kind of exaggeration that may not be in favor of developing such a democratic course. So, we have to make sure that Yemen's leadership had chosen such a course toward democracy, based on the "democratic experience", which in turn requires much time to be established, as well as to implant its roots deep in the process of economic, political, and social development.

In a country like Yemen, which suffers the consequence of illiteracy, backwardness, ailing economy, and rare resources, coupled with the spread of financial and administrative corruption, it is good to deal with the Yemeni progress toward democracy in the framework of the democratic experience. All the developing countries, which announced the democratic course, exercise the democratic experience, however they are not democratic in nature.

In contrast with many countries that enjoy good democratic course, Yemen, with all its consequential sufferings, is labeled among the developed countries in the sense of its democratic experience that allowed a considerable scope for freedoms. As Yemen exercises the experience of growing democracy, this means

that the country has not reached the limit of perfection. It still is in a difficult stage that necessitates solidarity and cooperation between all Yemenis including authority, opposition, civil community organizations, and independents to help establish and develop the country's democratic experience.

Really, I don't agree with those who exaggerate in the description of political and economic situations as they say these situations are good. I have a different viewpoint from those who describe situations in Yemen as gloomy leading the country to catastrophe. Such wrath is unbelievable.

Democracy requires hard work and joint efforts, and not merely frustrating words of praise or criticism. When we analyze the situation with logic not malice - with moderation not extremism, we find that we are in a phase with its special problems, like any other country going through a new stage and experience and facing the problems of each stage, part of them (problems) can be cited worldwide, another part is experienced in the developing countries while the third part is associated with the country itself.

In one of his articles about "The School of Wrath", the late Egyptian writer Ahmad Baha Addin said: "every nation and every generation should be enraged by everything in life until it obtains the motive to develop and progress forward. But when the matter

changes into the black wrath with everything in our past, present, and future, we have to seriously confront this ailing phenomenon and convert the way it is perceived and understood." The writer gave a thorough description and applicable name to the enraged people who deal with the real-life situation and its requirements only with more wrath and malignance. The one who reads the writings of pessimistic people or listens to opposition figures, he/she may bear in mind that Yemen was the worst country throughout the world, and that it is the only country that experiences corruption, illiteracy, and poor economic and political development.

They have forgotten the acceptable reasonability that Yemen is a poor and developing country suffering economic and financial corruption, and that the state work hard together with the society to eradicate corruption with modest means. They have forgotten the fact that reaching progress is not impossible if everyone works hard with loyalty and seriousness.

Any progress has a value and each development stage brings new problems, but the situation requires the state and society to work hard to reach new solutions to these problems. It is difficult to compare ourselves and situations with Europe and the U.S. that went through many difficult stages and hardships until they reach their current level of develop-

ment. We should not forget that we have a poor and developing country, whose north part was enslaved and south part was occupied for centuries and is currently passing through a hard stage toward democracy that necessitates solidarity and cooperation of all.

Constructive efforts must be pursued by the state, opposition, and civil community to help them all attain one goal and unified vision in the framework of comprehensive development to reach all citizens in rural and urban areas as well. During their hard work toward the one goal and unified vision, these entities (state, opposition, and civil community) have to shift attention away from the schools of wrath and blind malignance.

We all admit our mistakes, but the best thing is that we should correct these mistakes and deal with them with logic and reasonability to suggest convenient solutions. We must not display mistakes and increase them. Away from tension and malice, we don't want our youth to fell a prey to despair and frustration, which in turn lead to bad consequences that are not in line with the national interests and harm reputation of Yemen's peaceful society. It is not more than a simple call for a better future for us and the generations to come.

Jamal Al-Awadhi is the director of the National Center for Human Rights and Democratic Development.

The deadly virus of mobile

By: Khalid Al-Dhahbani

As days pass, we go through several technological, cultural, political, and oil-related technologies. We move from one century to another while our minds, as Arabs, remain the same without development and continue to imagine what is unbelievable and unreasonable.

Televisions, space channels, computers, and cell phones appeared with all their sophistications and techniques that made information closer to us than anything else. But, thanks to our foolish cleverness, we

employed such devices and systems in what serves our surface and simple beliefs. The space channels discuss the topics of jinns, black magic, and dreams. Further, it sparks sectarian conflicts while the Internet is used for gratifying the lusts and discussing futile matters that only waste money and time, as well as the mental energy.

The last example of such futile matters is that of the mobile's deadly virus, which transmits via cell phones to kill those who answer calls of certain numbers that allegedly carry the virus.

The bad thing is that such rumor came after the Yemeni Minister of Telecommunication and Information Technology sponsored an international conference on the electromagnetic radiations and how to reduce their risks. Up to 70 percent of the work papers discussed at the conference were merely meant for spreading awareness about radiations produced by the mobile devices. That most important thing is that the conference concluded that no risks are caused by radiations coming out from the mobile devices. Up until now, there has been no scientific research to confirm any risks associated with the ordinary use of mobile devices.

It is clear that our understanding is totally different from what really happens and that our actions are constructed in a way contradicting what is happening in real life situations. Such rumor came from the Gulf countries and stretched to reach Yemen with the same influence on people, and due to the social nature and norms of Yemenis that facilitated leakage and spread of the rumor nationwide, particularly among women, the rumor has been repeated several times until it came true for people.

The disgusting thing is that we heard educated youths, seemingly aware of what happens around them, speaking that the virus

penetrates into the brain and kills human beings. The youth's faith in this false rumor is the deadly virus. Nobody could dare ask him/herself about the computer's virus; what is this virus and how does it grow and spread, and what are its risks?

The Internet and space channels are available in every house and libraries, spread everywhere, but the statement given by the Minister of Telecommunication and Information Technology is usually misunderstood. "As the government denied such stories, these stories are real." The statement is understood this way.

There is no smoke without fire. The government fears any bankruptcy of mobile companies. Finally, a statement was released by an official source at the Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Technology to be published via the three mobile service providers to their subscribers. The statement raised questions and rumors among Yemeni people, particularly those living in rural and remote areas.

The computer or mobile virus is merely a small program, which was prepared by experts who are skilled in computer sciences and engineering. They are experts but they use their skills in constructing small risky programs that rapidly spread into computers and destroy any available or stored data. Sometimes, computers become unable to work in case they are infected by such viruses.

The program is composed of computer orders, which are usually written in numerous computer languages. The computer can work only through these programs, and this similarly applies to the use of cell phones, remote control devices, and other automated systems.

I think that the 'terminology' helped promote the spread of such rumors, as any risky programs were given the term 'virus',

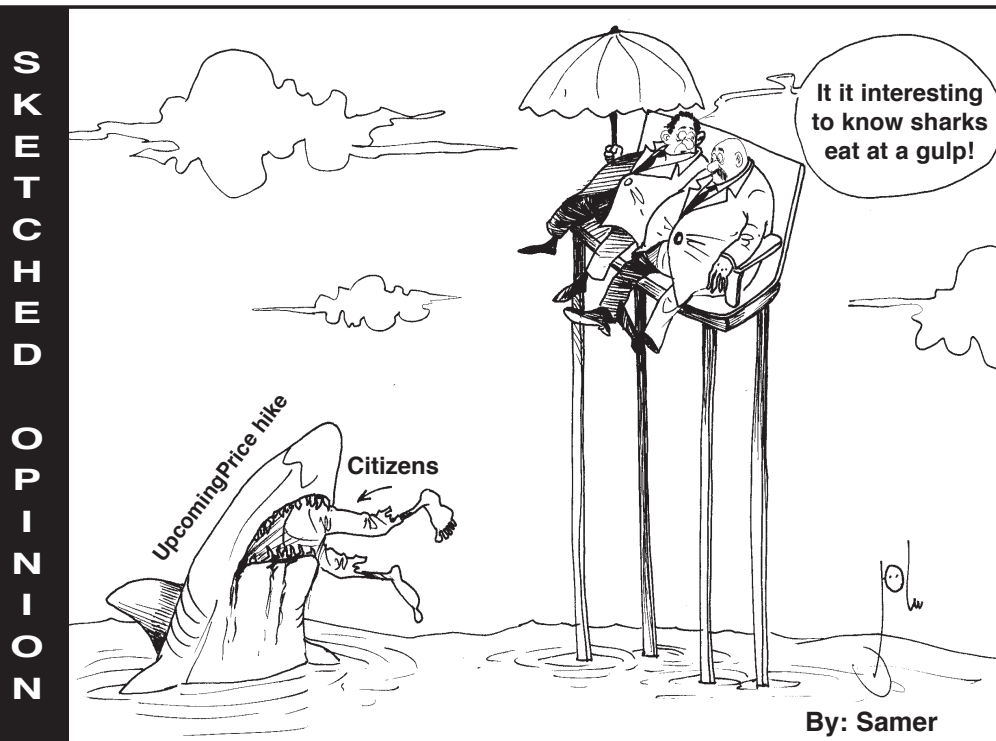
thus modelled after the viruses that infect human beings. Why is this terminology? The risky programs of computer and mobile devices were mistakenly named 'viruses' because these programs spread via the computer and Internet networks. No computers or mobile devices can escape these viruses except for the immune ones that have anti-virus programs.

The risky programs were given the terminology of viruses because they spread easily and simply like the flu viruses. They aren't like the viruses that infect human beings, which are animate cells that nourish and reproduces in the infected human body. Some of these viruses cannot be overcome unless there are strong antibiotics that help strengthen the body's immunity system. On the contrary, the computer viruses are inanimate and cannot be seen via the microscope or any other means. They cannot be touched while the virus-infected computer can be treated easily, however, reputed computer companies suffer heavy damages due to the loss of valuable data.

The terminology of virus was given as a caution or a warning to the computer users in order to maintain a high level of vigilance to protect their computer and data from such malicious viruses, which were supposed to better be given a name pertaining to what they do to computers, mobile devices, and the consequential damage they leave on machines and gadgets, as well as the stored data.

After this simple definition of the computer and mobile viruses, I believe that everyone has become confident that programs written by Latin letters have nothing to do with the health of human beings.

Source: Al-Thawra-Stat-run daily



By: Samer

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Yemen Press Review



Al-Sahwa Weekly, Mouthpiece of the Islah Party
Thursday, June 21

Main Headlines

- Penal Court rules on jailing journalist for one week, investigates his injuries when he was arrested
- Shaiban discloses a corruption scandal of YR 1 billion in Ministry of Youth and Sports
- Citizens block North Sixty Meter Road in protest against repeated accidents
- Senior YJS leader denounces Al-Khaiwani's arrest while journalists stage sit-in
- Human right activist released after hours of captivity in Taiz jail
- Joint Meeting Parties welcome any initiative to end Sa'ada fighting
- Fund for Peace labels Yemen among failed countries

The weekly reported that an international report, recently released by the Fund for Peace, put Yemen in the list of failed countries worldwide. For the third consecutive year, Yemen remains enlisted among the 60 countries, which the fund labels as the worst countries in the world due to various indicators including the absence of law and order, human right abuses, foreign intervention in the country's domestic affairs, the unorganized growth, the ailing economy and poor public services, as well as corruption and poor living standards of people.

Yemen stood fourth after Nepal, Uzbekistan and Sierra Leone in the list of countries threatened of failure and

came 24th in the list of failed countries worldwide. The report attributed the poor situation in Yemen to fragmentation of the regime and conflicts between tribes and the authorities.



26 September Weekly, Organ of the Yemeni Army
Thursday, June 21

Main Headlines

- Prime Minister: Government works hard to reach Millennium Development Goals by the advent of 2015
- Funds pledged by donors to Yemen up to \$5.6 billion, says Minister of Planning and International Cooperation
- President Saleh to visit France by the end of June
- Dozens of troops killed in Sa'ada fighting laid to rest
- Firms make bids for winning Aden Port of Containers' project
- Ruling party leader: Fighting in Sa'ada stopped, parties of the conflict abide by ceasefire

The Yemeni army organ quoted Yasser Al-Awadhi, a ruling party leader and spokesman of the recently formed committee to implement the ceasefire between Houthis and government troops, as saying gunfire has been stopped since Tuesday's morning in all the districts of Sa'ada governorate. Al-Awadhi went on to say that the committee hasn't received any reports that the ceasefire was breached, adding that his committee needs at least 24 hours to ensure that both parties of the conflict abide by the ceasefire before it

moves to the second step of making roads safe, returning the displaced families to their homes and ordering rebels to leave their hideouts on the top of mountains.

He noted that the committee demanded Houthis to lay down their heavy and medium-size arms and return home to live in peace, pointing out that Abdulmalik Al-Houthi and Abdullah Al-Rizami will fly to Qatar after the concerned committee completes all the procedures related to enhancing the ceasefire.



Al-Wasat Comprehensive Political Weekly
Wednesday, June 20

Main Headlines

- Al-Wasat weekly: the only paper publishing reports on international movements of Houthis
- Yemen ready to introduce its dialogue experience to the world, says Justice Minister
- A terrorist cell plots to put poison in army-owned water tanks
- Yemeni laws oppress citizens outside the legitimate retribution
- Fund for Peace enlists Yemen among failed countries in the world
- Military forces gather with the aim of assaulting Al Abed area in Abyan
- Spread of weapons among citizens provokes controversy in Parliament
- Authorities and Houthis exchange accusations over breaching truce

In the first indicator, described as failure of the Qatari mediation efforts, which led Abdullah Al-Houthi, leader of the Rebellion in Sa'ada, to declare a

ceasefire and abide by law and order, the government troops broke a signed truce with Houthis and attacked several areas on Tuesday, the newspaper reported in its lead story. In a statement, of which a copy was obtained by the weekly paper, leader of the rebellion warned the authorities of continuing their assaults on citizens and advised them to learn how to behave according to the human values.

"We urge the authorities to show respect for the mediation efforts exercised by the Qatari government with the aim of stopping bloodshed and resolving the tragic situation in the restive governorate after the government troops destroyed all the life components," the newspaper quoted Abdulmalik Al-Houthi as saying.



Al-Wahdawi Weekly, Mouthpiece of the Nasserite Unionist Popular Organization (NUPO)
Tuesday, June 19

Main Headlines

- Criminal investigation officials arrest a lady after she requested to visit a jailed relative
- Symposium discusses obstacles posed to journalists' ownership of media means
- NUPO condemns harassment of prominent party leader at Sana'a International Airport
- Government is good in creating crises, putting extra burden on citizens due to rampant corruption, says opposition leader
- Yemeni Journalists Syndicate rejects Jaradi's resignation, discusses its bylaw amendment project

- Yemeni government suggests Friday and Saturday as weekend instead of Thursday and Friday

The NUPO-run weekly quoted an official source in the Ministry of Civil Service and Job security as saying the government is forwarding a proposal to Parliament suggesting that that Friday and Saturday be the weekend instead of Thursday and Friday. According to the weekly, Al-Thawra State-run daily reported on Sunday that the government made such a proposal on the grounds that foreign embassies and international organizations working in Yemen have Saturday and Sunday off as weekend in conformity with the effective bylaws in their countries.

The weekly newspaper went on to say that the Yemeni government realized that Thursday and Friday a weekend for workers in its bylaws made foreign embassies and international organizations working in Yemen have four days as a weekend, and that there is a difficulty communicating with the concerned organizations to set a compromise weekend for workers in different sectors and organizations.



Al-Methaq Weekly, Mouthpiece of the General People Congress (Ruling Party)
Monday, June 18

Main Headlines

- Saudi investor calls for establishing joint companies and securities market in Yemen
- Minister of Public Health and Population: 150% of basic salary approved as hardship allowance for

- medical staff
- Ministry of Education signs contracts with 850 high school leavers to teach in eight governorates
- Prime Minister launches secondary school examinations
- Qatari Prime Minister praises Yemeni President's efforts to end Sa'ada fighting
- GPC leader: The Ishteraki.net appears to support Sa'ada rebellion for publishing Al-Houthi's statement
- Functions of Second Regional Conference on Resisting Violence against Children kick off

Functions of the Second Regional Conference on Resisting Violence against Children and Indifference toward Childhood are due to kick off on Tuesday, June 19, the ruling party's mouthpiece reported on a front page article. It added that the conference will discuss as many as 70 scientific researches and work papers on violence against children in the presence of 450 distinctive personalities interested in childhood issues in the Arab world.

Dr. Nafisa Al-Jae'fi, Secretary General of the Higher Council for Motherhood and Childhood, clarified that the international community praises the sincere efforts expended by the Yemeni government to make available better environment and welfare for children. In a statement to Al-Thawra State-run Daily, Al-Jae'fi pointed out that the conference, due to be inaugurated by Prime Minister Ali Mohammed Mujawar, will focus on several childhood-related issues experienced at the local level and regionally. She went on to say that the conference is due to review results of a World UN Survey on state of the world children, which was conducted by the end of 2006.

China and Russia in the new World Disorder

By: Dominique Moisi

Can Kosovo achieve independence without the tacit consent of Russia, and can there be a humanitarian and political solution to the tragedy in Darfur without the active goodwill of China? The two crises have nothing in common, but their resolution will depend in large part on whether these two permanent members of the United Nations Security Council use their veto power.

Comparing the respective abilities of Russia and China to block key international initiatives makes no sense in itself, but it does constitute a useful tool for understanding the transformation of the international system that is now taking place as a direct consequence of the relative decline of America's global power. From that standpoint, the deepening of chaos in the Middle East poses both opportunities and risks for Russia and China,

which may force them to define the roles they want to play and the images they want to project in the world.

The key question is this: Is Russia taking giant steps in the "wrong direction" while China is taking "minuscule" steps in the "right direction"?

Superficially, Russia and China may give the impression that they are pursuing the same path when they both proclaim with pride that they are "back" on the world stage. But this boast means different things for each country.

For China, a deeply self-confident country, to be "back" simply means regaining the country's historical centrality in the world after an absence of more than two centuries. After all, at the end of the eighteenth century, China became the world's first producer of manufactured goods, and it perceives itself as a center of civilization unequalled by any other in Asia, if not the world.

China's renewed self-confidence is

based on its remarkable economic prowess, which is derived not from natural resources, but from productivity and creativity. Whatever the huge political, social, and economic tensions may exist, there is a "feel good" factor in China, a sense of progress, with the 2008 Olympics in Beijing figuring as the symbolic moment that will proclaim to the world the scale of the country's achievements.

Above all, with the exception of the Taiwan issue, China is a satisfied status quo power when it comes to the evolution of the international system – a patient actor that finds it perfectly legitimate to behave and to be seen as the world's number two power.

By contrast, the Russians remain insecure about their status in the world. Russia's explosive "revisionist" behavior on the eve of the recent G8 summit is an indication of the Kremlin's "unsatisfied" nature. Because they know they are less potent, particularly in demographic

and economic terms, Russians feel they have to do "more." For them, to say "Russia is back" means that the humiliating Yeltsin years are over, and that they now must be treated as equals, particularly by the United States.

Russians are nostalgic not for the Cold War as such, but for the international status they lost when it ended. Now that America is no longer a "hyperpower" with no strategic challenges, Russia has reasserted its status as a "superpower," a claim that is not necessarily supported by reality. Unlike the Chinese, the Russians do not create economic wealth, but merely exploit their energy and mineral resources. Moreover, unlike the Chinese, they have not always been confident of their position in the world. Torn between Europe and Asia in cultural and political terms, victimized by a dark, narcissistic instinct that pervades their reading of their past and their visions of the future, it should

surprise no one that Russia is now behaving like a "revisionist" power.

Unsatisfied with their inner identity, it is only natural that Russians should demand changes that make them feel more secure and proud. Less than 20 years ago, the Czech Republic and Poland were part of their sphere of influence, so Russians understandably cannot accept the US unilaterally implanting its security system there.

Of course, in their respective judgments on Russia and China, the West – and Europeans in particular – may be demonstrating selective emotions. "We" tend to be less demanding of China than of Russia, because we tend to see Russia as "European" (at least culturally). As a result, the culture of physical violence and verbal provocation that is gaining ground in Putin's Russia is deeply disturbing, whereas we tend to judge Chinese misdeeds with a greater sense of distance, if not indifference.

But the differences between Russia

and China today may prove to be less significant tomorrow if the deterioration in the Middle East imposes a sense of collective responsibility on all five permanent members of the UN Security Council. It is one thing for Russia and China to exploit America's growing difficulties from Gaza to Kabul; but it is quite another if the situation deteriorates to the point of general destabilization in the region.

Indeed, the Middle East's deepening problems may impose a sense of restraint in Russia and China by forcing them to calculate not in terms of their global "nuisance value" vis-à-vis the West, but in terms of their ability to make a positive and stabilizing contribution to the world order.

Dominique Moisi, a founder and Senior Advisor at Ifri (French Institute for International Relations), is currently a Professor at the College of Europe in Natolin, Warsaw. Copyright: Project Syndicate, 2007.

The Hamas moment

By: Barry Rubin

Hamas's capture of the Gaza Strip has created, along with Iran, a second radical Islamist state in the Middle East. The region, probably the Arab-Israeli conflict, and certainly the Palestinian movement, will never be the same.

Fatah's defeat in Gaza is not due to American foreign policy, Israel, or anyone but Fatah itself. It is Yasir Arafat's ultimate legacy, for he encouraged not only terrorist violence against Israel, but also anarchy and corruption within his own organization.

Most importantly, Arafat failed to resolve the conflict or give his people an alternative vision to one of extreme radicalism and endless fighting. By rejecting a compromise peace solution in 2000 that would have created an independent Palestinian state with its capital in east Jerusalem and \$23 billion in international aid, Arafat made clear that there would be no alternative, moderate scenario for resolving the Palestinians' problems.

It was clear before the January 2006

elections that Hamas was heading toward a victory. Under weak leadership, Fatah did nothing to address its deep-seated divisions and corruption. Competing Fatah candidates split the vote, ensuring that Hamas nominees won. Even after the defeat, Fatah implemented not a single reform or leadership change. Its leaders squabbled, regarding themselves as the sole possible rulers and engaging in wishful thinking that some external factor would hand them whatever they wanted.

Meanwhile, like communist and fascist parties in the past, Hamas moved forward, with a clear doctrine, relative discipline, and grim determination. Fatah's ideology and practice laid the basis for Hamas to advance. With Fatah demonizing Israel, rejecting compromise, demanding total victory, glorifying terrorist violence, and portraying moderation as treason, Hamas merely needed to prove that it was better at pursuing this course.

No one should underestimate Hamas's extremism. Indeed, the only difference between Hamas and al-Qaeda – though the two groups do not

generally work together – is that the latter emphasizes attacks on Western targets, while the former has until now focused on Israel.

Consequently, Hamas will not moderate its stance, and its victory sets back the chances of Israel-Palestinian peace for decades. Buoyed by its triumph, enjoying backing from Syria (where its headquarters are located) and Iran, Hamas will pursue its genocidal and openly stated goal: the extinction of Israel and its people. Any thought of concession or compromise is gravely mistaken.

Four specific issues now move to center-stage: the fate of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, the future of the Fatah-ruled West Bank, the world's attitude toward Israel, and the strategic impact of Hamas's victory on the Middle East.

Until now, while Gazans have suffered from the constant fighting and economic failures brought about by their leaders' policies, they have been left alone in their private lives. Hamas might go slower or faster with an "Islamicizing" program. Nevertheless, it is determined to transform the lives

of those it rules. It will kill as it chooses, abolish women's rights, and indoctrinate schoolchildren with hatred and the ambition to be suicide bombers.

Gaza has suffered from anarchy; now it will be under the heel of a ruthless dictatorship. For example, when Hamas forces seized the Shati refugee camp, they deliberately executed three women – two teenagers and a 75-year-old – because they were relatives of Fatah officials. Those truly concerned with the Palestinians' well-being should direct their criticism at that people's leaders and seek to protect their human rights in the Gaza Strip.

Fatah's rule is still strong in the West Bank, but even the Gaza catastrophe is unlikely to lead it to change its ways. Israel's willingness to work with Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah regime and resumption of full-scale aid by the United States are intended to consolidate a relatively moderate Palestinian government on the West Bank. But, whereas Abbas appointed Salam Fayyad, a veteran economist who is respected in the West, as his new prime minister, he probably should have picked someone capable of being

tough, organizing his forces, and fighting back.

Logically, Fatah should now embrace moderation, crack down on cross-border terrorism, and seek some kind of peace with Israel. But Fatah has its own view of what is logical – one that might not coincide with such prescriptions. As wildly different as the two cases are, Fatah resembles the French monarchy before the revolution, incapable of learning from experience or taking the steps needed to avoid its own downfall. The world cannot save Fatah; only Fatah can save itself.

For Israel, of course, developments in Gaza pose a great challenge. Israel has long since decided that it has no interest in renewing its control over the Gaza Strip. In some ways, Hamas's coup makes things clearer. Gaza is ruled by a completely hostile regime. Israel will feel free to retaliate for cross-border attacks and continuing rocket fire at civilian targets within the country.

At last, the world must recognize that the hopes stirred by the 1990's peace process have been completely dashed. In effect, Hamas has returned

the conflict to the 1960's and 1970's, when progress toward peace had to await the PLO's readiness to stop using terrorism and accept Israel's existence. Israel's survival and right to self-defense now has to be supported internationally, and the slander and demonization of recent years should come to an end.

The strategic implications for the region are equally grim. Hamas's takeover of Gaza is a victory for the bloc comprising Iran, Syria, and Hezbollah, as well as the separate branches of the Muslim Brotherhood (of which Hamas is one) seeking to capture power in their own countries. These forces fully comprehend that the most important global contest today is between radical Islamism and the rest of the world. The question is when the rest of the world will figure that out.

Barry Rubin is director of the Global Research in International Affairs (GLORIA) Center and editor of the Middle East Review of International Affairs (MERIA) Journal. His latest book is The Truth About Syria. Copyright: Project Syndicate, 2007.



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Water in Yemen: The reality of suffering

By: Fatima Al-Ajel
fatimafnfr@yahoo.com

“I still remember the old woman crying at the top of the mountain as I was coming home from school in my village. The sun was in the middle of the sky and it was very hot; dogs, sheep and some reptiles were searching for a few drops of water to drink. In that hot weather, with sweat pouring, the woman was crying because the water she spent all day collecting had spilled.”

Mohammed Al-Ariqi, a Yemeni

journalist and member of the International Water and Media Committee, recently published a book entitled, “Water: the reality and future vision,” focusing on Yemen’s water shortage and the reasons for it. In his book, Al-Ariqi presents several solutions to this serious problem facing Yemen.

“At first, I thought she might have been attacked by a wild animal, but when I asked, she told me what had happened,” Al-Ariqi said, continuing to narrate the old woman’s story.

She said, “I went to the well after sunrise to ensure my turn to wait for the chance to collect water. After a

long time of waiting, it was my turn.”

However, while returning home with the water for her children, she stumbled on a rock and the water spilled all over the ground. “I walked four hours for nothing. Now I must go back and wait my turn again,” she cried.

The above story is one of many Al-Ariqi narrates. Such stories reflect the fact that most Yemeni citizens are suffering due to increased water needs in urban and rural areas, which requires pumping more water for their survival.

Lacking water sources, such as rivers, lakes and waterfalls, Yemen depends completely on groundwater and rainfall; thus, this is one of the most important reasons for its water shortage. As a result, Yemen is classified as one of the world’s water-poor countries and is vulnerable to future disasters. This is the main topic discussed in the book, especially considering qat the first cause of the shortage and increasing it in Yemen.

A study published by the United Nations Environment Program and the World Health Organization reported that Yemen in general and Sana’a in particular are facing a critical water shortage due to unregulated and uncoordinated water use. Moreover, there is a potential risk of groundwater contamination from unregulated wastewater disposal.

The risk of groundwater pollution could incur serious health problems because more than 50 percent of the city’s population relies on private wells for their water needs. In addition to adverse health effects, polluted groundwater is very costly to treat.

According to a December 2005 report prepared by a Yemeni parliamentary committee for water and environment, waterborne diseases in unclean drinking water threaten 75 percent of Yemen’s 20 million-strong population. The study went on to reveal that only about 7 percent of the population enjoys modern and



Water shortage can impact on domestic use of water

effective water treatment systems. As a result, the percentage of contaminated water nationwide stands at 90 percent.

Chapters three and four spotlight the risks of water shortage, such as internal migration of farmers. Due to water shortage in agricultural areas, many farmers are forced to leave their farms and migrate to urban areas looking for any type of job on which to live.

Musa’id is one of those affected by Yemen’s water shortage problems. An active farmer since his childhood when he helped his father on the family farm instead of playing with other children, he used simple farming

tools to improve his position and increase his production and yield.

However, Musa’id is like many who migrated to Sana’a after losing his farm due to water shortage in his Taiz village.

“I met Musa’id with a group of guys living in a small room. They had come together to look for work. Long after leaving their village, they still were hoping either to find jobs or return home if the water shortage problem is solved one day,” Al-Ariqi writes.

He adds, “Such migration increases the water shortage problem in cities, especially with the added need for water for daily use in urban areas.”

While Yemen receives approximately 65 to 93 billion cubic meters of rain annually, every area has a different rainfall rate, according to its topography and proximity to sea level.

Between 1990 and 2000, national water consumption increased from 4.5 billion cubic meters to 13 billion cubic meters. This number is increasing and forecast to reach 19.7 billion cubic meters by 2020.

The old woman mentioned at the beginning was forced to return to the well, walking for hours to bring her children water, regardless of the difficulties she faced.

Desertification: More financial support needed

By: Mohammed Al-Seragi

More than 250 million people in more than 100 countries suffer due to desertification and are considered below the poverty line and among the poorest on the planet. However, approximately 100 countries have signed a United Nations agreement to battle the problem.

Yemen, which depends on rainwater for agriculture and where most agricultural areas experience 250 mm. of rainfall annually, is one of those countries, which established a national plan in 2004 to prevent desertification.

Furthermore, the Yemeni government and its international partners, represented by the Ministry of Agriculture and the General Administration of Forests and Fighting Desertification, with the help of the U.N. desertification program, have inserted the concept of fighting desertification into numerous strategies, including Yemeni agricultural strategies, the national population strategy, the anti-poverty strategy and the national strategy.

However, looking at the number of agreements made and accomplished by the government and its partners, a large portion never have been achieved, according to a report issued by the forest administration, which listed the main reasons for such failure as:

1. Lack of implementing rules and policies fighting desertification.
2. The organization’s failure to divide and assign duties to each department or agency.
3. The poor job by various agencies to implement agreed points in the national fighting desertification plan.
4. The poor job organizing between involved departments.
5. Inability to communicate with regional and international programs.
6. Limited research and training programs in this field.

Ali Mohammed Al-Thameri, an engineer at the General Department of Forestry and Desertification Control, insists that the main factor in the weakness of the work done to fight the prob-



lem in Yemen is his department’s scant financial support and economic resources to carry out the national plan to battle desertification.

“The plan is estimated at \$24 million, whereas our annual budget doesn’t exceed YR 8 million and doesn’t fulfill the needs of the department and field work to problem areas,” he said, noting that, “The department’s annual budget is only 1 percent of the ministry [of Agriculture]’s budget.”

According to the May 2006 report on implementation of the United Nations convention to combat desertification, in Yemen, this is caused directly by construction expansion on agricultural lands, wrong methods in land preservation, cutting down trees, dry weather conditions, low rainfall and both national and international emigration.

Indirect factors include additional and unorganized well drilling in unapproved locations, overpopulation and land pollution due to sewers and other pollutants.

The General Department of Agricultural Research conducted a 2006 study that revealed Yemen’s total agricultural area as 455,502.47 sq. km., including 50,706 sq. km. experiencing water erosion, 5,781 sq. km. experiencing wind erosion, 127 sq. km. experiencing physical erosion and 389,179 sq. km. of unusable area.

Hassan Al-Gathi, owner of invested in agricultural land in Bajel area, in

Hodidah governorate, pointed to other reasons, saying, “A large portion of land has been affected by many reasons, such as farmers aren’t able to expand their land, no instructions or care from the Ministry of Agriculture, diesel costs are too high and local farmers are unorganized in planting different kinds of crops. All of this leads to desertification.”

He believes that the least Yemeni farmers can do to control the problem is plant their lands, noting that planting certain crops like mango and palm trees “is surely a good way to stop desertification.” However, he said such crops take approximately four to five years to grow, so most Yemeni farmers don’t plant crops whose economic incomes aren’t obtained quickly.

Al-Gathi further criticized government efforts to combat the problem, saying, “They are very weak.”

Strategies and plans also should be applied, says engineer Ahmed Al-Attas, director of the General Department of Forestry and Desertification Control. He referred to the importance of improving his department’s work by suggesting “changing the department into an independent national agency and increasing its financial resources so as to be able to carry out its plans and duties nationwide in the expected matter, both administratively and financially independent.”

ANNOUNCEMENT

Within a credit from IFAD, the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation is implementing Al-Dhala Community Resource Management Project in Al-Dhala governorate (Al-Dhala CRMP). Al-Dhala CRMP is a rural development project implemented through Project Implementation Unit (PMU) located in Al-Dhala City. The targeted groups of the Project are the poor of the rural areas to whom development services will be provided. To assist in prioritizing of target the Project would like to contract a social expert for one month to design and implement a Participatory Poverty analysis and mapping exercise in order to provide a better understanding of the spatial distribution of poverty within the Governorate and districts as a guide to the allocation of Village Units for inclusion in the Project by district, to the establishment of appropriate section criteria and to the selection of villages for Project implementation.

The terms of reference would include, but not be limited to:

- (a) Designing the overall participatory poverty mapping exercise including defining the PRA methods to be used, scheduling of villages, etc.;
- (b) Training the STMPs in the PRA methods and the overall approach of the participatory poverty analysis;
- (c) Participating in and supervising the STMPs in the conduct of the participatory poverty analysis;
- (d) Analyzing the data and ranking villages according to relative poverty and mapping the resulting data;
- (e) Providing Project management with recommendations on the allocation of the 100 Village Units by district and ranking of the villages within each district for inclusion on the basis of the poverty criteria and mapping (to be verified by ground-truthing to reflect social cohesiveness of communities and community attitude to Project’s basic operational principles).

The Social Expert should have a higher degree in a relevant discipline and a minimum of 10 years experience in the application of participatory poverty analysis and mapping using PRA techniques. Experience in the region and fluency in Arabic would be an advantage.

Qualified experts are invited to submit their application attached with updated CV within One Month to the director of Al-Dhala Community Resource Management Project NiSham Al-Dhala city.

Al-Dhala governorate, Yemen
Tel: 009672421968,
Tel: 009672431971
Email: a-dukail@y.net.ye

Alert to protect global tobacco treaty ahead of COP-II in Thailand

By: Bobby Ramakant
bobbyramakant@yahoo.com

The second Conference of Parties (COP-II) meeting about the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control – the first global public health and corporate accountability treaty, which Yemen ratified on February 22 – will begin at the end of this month in Thailand.

Corporate Accountability International (CAI, formerly In Fact) has played a key role as a civil society watch organization, along with the Network for Accountability of Tobacco Transnationals, from the initial discussions of the treaty. It continues to play a pivotal role in monitoring the tobacco industry and gathering evidence to protect public health.

At the forthcoming COP-II meeting, CAI will release a groundbreaking report compiling evidence from civil society members worldwide in outlining the three major issues impeding the convention's implementation. These three public health challenges are:

- Protecting public health policy from tobacco industry influence
- Preventing tobacco industry interference in agricultural diversification and alternative crops to tobacco
- Ensuring full funding of the treaty's implementation program

There is an emerging powerful consensus among health advocates and public officials around the world that the tobacco industry should have no influence on public health policies and the treaty enshrines this concept in international law.

Article 5.3 of the treaty obligates parties to "protect [public health] policies from commercial and other vested interests of the tobacco industry." Allowing tobacco corporations to influence tobacco control policy violates both the spirit and letter of the convention.

Unfortunately, Big Tobacco's interference in health policy continues to be one of the greatest threats to the treaty's implementation and enforcement. Philip Morris/Altria, British American Tobacco and Japan Tobacco use their

political influence to weaken, delay and defeat tobacco control legislation around the world. While the industry claims to have changed its ways, it continues using sophisticated methods to undermine meaningful legislation.

Transnational tobacco corporations have supported and sustained a production system that has undermined human health and stifled human development. Therefore, in keeping with World Health Assembly Resolution 54.18 and Article 5.3 of the treaty, these corporations shouldn't be at the table discussing alternatives to tobacco production.

Acting as a mouthpiece for the tobacco industry, the International Tobacco Growers Association and its country chapters have spread misinformation and attempted to influence tobacco growers in countries such as Brazil, Argentina, India, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Malawi and Kenya as a strategy to slow down or block the treaty's ratification and implementation.

The international tobacco association's chief executive spoke on behalf of eight government and non-governmental organizations at the public hearing on agricultural diversification and alternative crops to tobacco held in Brazil in February, claiming to represent governments and farmers, while neglecting to reveal its connection to tobacco transnationals.

Tobacco is the world's leading cause of preventable death – killing five million people annually. The generous commitment by New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg marks a major change in the landscape for global tobacco control. His \$125 million gift represents four times the 2006-2007 biennial budget of WHO's Tobacco-Free Initiative.

Tobacco control advocates in priority countries should tap into this funding for their policy, media and monitoring initiatives. Both governments and NGOs can apply.

All countries benefit when the cycle of dependence on tobacco is broken. Additionally, tobacco control policies have been shown to be good for the world's economies.

The World Bank estimates that high-income nations spend up to 15 percent

of their health care budget to treat tobacco-related illnesses. In 2002, China spent \$3.5 billion on healthcare costs attributable to tobacco. If these costs were reduced just 20 percent, China could afford to hire more than half a million additional primary school teachers.

Wealthy nations that have chartered, assisted and benefited from international expansion of tobacco transnationals bear a responsibility to make transition away from tobacco-dependent economies viable.

Political realities in the developing world also make assistance pragmatic and could help speed the treaty's implementation. Japan paid \$87 million in 2006 to support WHO – more than any other nation – yet Japan's support of WHO represents only 10 percent of its share of Japan Tobacco's annual profits.

Seventy-nine percent of the world's tobacco was sourced in developing nations in the late 1990s, up from 52 percent four decades earlier. However, countries that have most aggressively embraced tobacco production haven't seen advances in their development. Only five of the 125 tobacco exporting nations derive more than 5 percent of their export income from tobacco.

Five nations are concentrated at the bottom of UNDP's 2006 Human Development Index: Uganda (ranked 145 out of 177 nations); Zimbabwe (which derives nearly a third of its export income from tobacco and ranks 151 out of 177); the United Republic of Tanzania (ranking 162 out of 177); Malawi (which derives more than half of its export income from tobacco and ranks 166 out of 177); and the Central African Republic (ranking 172 out of 177).

Far from being a path to prosperity, tobacco production paves the way to poverty.

Let's hope that the three concerns raised by CAI's evidence-based report (www.stopcorporateabuse.org) to be released at COP-II later this month will receive due attention.

Bobby Ramakant is a senior journalist and a member of the Network for Accountability of Tobacco Transnationals.



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An example of Al-Thilth script.

Calligraphy: an ignored art in Yemen

By: Nisreen Shadad

At an international competition held every three years in Turkey, Yemeni calligrapher Hamoud Al-Banna received third prize in *Al-Jali Al-Diwani* group and Abdulrahman Al-Junaid received fourth place in symbolic prizes in *Al-Diwani* group.

Approximately 21 prizes were distributed, as well as 74 awards and 42 symbolic prizes. The first three places were the competition's official prizes, followed by eight awards and then symbolic prizes. Al-Banna and Al-Junaid received \$250 and a certificate.

This was the seventh international competition, intended to preserve one of the most typical expressions of Islamic spirit. "This is the first year I participated in this competition," Al-Banna noted.

The idea of holding an international competition for Arabic calligraphy in Istanbul was to commemorate the brilliant calligrapher, Hamid Al-Amadi. A symposium was held in 1983 at Istanbul's Research Center for history, Art and Islamic Culture. This seventh competition commemorated Hashim Al-Baghdadi, another distinctive calligrapher.

A group of well-known calligraphy professors evaluated and selected the winners between March 28 and April 6 at the research center headed by gener-



Abdulrahman Al-Junaid

al director Khalid Arn.

The 916 participants representing 38 countries employed 14 different styles on approximately 1,616 alabasters, which judges studied in order to select the best.

Al-Banna formerly was a member of the Yemeni Calligraphers Association, but it shut down within a year due to lack of financing. "Calligraphy enjoys better conditions in other Arab countries, but our situation is very bad in Yemen. Our association was established two years ago, but when the Minister of Culture changed, he stopped financing it, so we couldn't remain. There's no interest in this type of art; we are neglected."

Al-Banna has a teaching diploma and likes to draw and write. "I stopped drawing because I like writing and



Hamoud Al-Banna

learning calligraphy art more than anything else." Now working as a calligrapher, his works have been presented at embassies and shows simply for display rather than for selling.

Because there's no school to teach this type of art, those eager to learn it usually must search and obtain books that can help them, according to Al-Banna, "I used the book, *The Rules of Arabic calligraphy*, in order to learn," he noted. Al-Banna used *Al-Jali Al-Diwani* style in the competition.

With a bachelor's degree in education, Al-Junaid learned calligraphy art under both Iraqi and Yemeni teachers. "Whenever I heard that a calligrapher was visiting Yemen, I went to ask him to teach me at his home because we have no schools or institutes," he explained.

Classical styles of Arabic lettering

Arabic styles offer unlimited possibilities to artists. Contemporary designs presented at the competition indirectly utilized these styles to create an abstract, yet readable representation of words and provide a postmodern interpretation of the letters.

Creating numerous styles of lettering was due to the need to distinguish a letter from an announcement, a difficult type of writing mostly used in titles, as well as *al-bismalah*, which is writing in the name of Allah in the Qur'an or a book.

Calligraphy is one of the most important fields in Islamic civilization. It was used as decoration on mosques and school walls, as well as on copper vessels and containers.

Calligraphy's golden age was during the Ottoman period, as caliphs at that time were interested in this type of art and encouraged innovative practitioners. For example, the sultan's calligrapher received 400 gold Ottoman Jinih; the name of their money at that time monthly.

Calligraphy styles

Al-Kufi script (Kufa is a city in Iraq) Originating in the second Hijra century, Al-Banna explains, "It's a type of drawing. This type can be written using a ruler, as letters usually are written in straight lines and then decorated on the top or bottom according to the letter's form. Many calligraphers consider this drawing rather than a type of calligraphy."

Kufi has horizontal lines that are extended. The script is considerably wider than it is high. This gives it a certain dynamic momentum. The script often is chosen for use on oblong surfaces. With its glorious Handasi (geometrical) construction, Kufi could be adapted to any space and material — from silk squares to the architectural monuments left by Timur at Samarqand.

Because Kufi script was not subjected to strict rules, calligraphers employing it had virtually a free hand in the conception and execution of its ornamental forms.

Al-Naskh script – copying

Called naskh because of the frequency of its use, it helps writers write quickly. Also, the letters produced are clear and beautiful.

Al-Thilth script

This is the most superb type of calligraphy, as it requires the most attention and accuracy; however, it's not used frequently because it's difficult and takes time.

Al-Diwani script – announcements

This is official calligraphy. It's called *diwani* because it was used to write the sultan's *al-dawaween* (edicts). It was a secret type of writing for the sultans' announcements during the Ottoman period, but it became widespread after that.

Riqa'a script – patch

This is simple handwriting mostly used in all Arabic countries. Because it is written in patches, it's called *Riqa'a*.

Al-Farsi, script – Persian,

"This was created by a Persian, Mear bin Ali," Al-Banna noted.

Al-Jali Al-Diwani script

This style grew out of Al-Diwani and is more decorated.

Al-Ijaza script – authorizations and licenses

This style is used to write licenses. According to Al-Banna, calligraphers have created other contemporary scripts, but because they aren't subjected to rules as the earlier ones, they haven't been added.

Literary Corner

By: Abu Al-Kalima Al-Tayybah

The Zeidi Sect (I)

Subject Book: The Zeidi Sect
Author: Dr. Ahmed Mahmoud Subhi
Part I of Volume II in the Science of Theology Series
Publisher: Arab Writer's Press
Year Published: 1991 AD
No. of Pages: 768

One of the least known Islamic sects is the Zeidi sect, which is confined to small constituencies that are found in Yemen, Azerbaijan and a small community in North Africa. Nevertheless, the sect has aroused the interest of many Moslem scholars throughout the ages, since the death of its founder, Zeid Bin Ali Bin Al-Hussein Bin Ali Bin Abi Talib (80 AH – 122 AH = 699 AD to 740 AD). He is the victim of a heartrending betrayal or more appropriately abandonment by the very same masses that have urged him to rise and lead them to rebellion against the oppressive Omayyad Caliph of the time (more on that later). The Zeidi constituency is indeed one of the smallest Moslem sectarian constituencies, nevertheless, there is no doubt among all the leading scholars and even "founders" of Moslem sects that Imam Zeid is regarded as the first Islamic scholar of religious jurisprudence. Even modern researchers of modern Islamic studies are quick to recognize the latter's role in initiating the study of Moslem Jurisprudence or "Fiqh" or "doctrine" at a time when most Moslems have become more inclined to mundane distractions that diverted them from looking into the many problems brought on by rapid wealth and the inclusion of many non-Arab communities into the fold of the faithful, soon after the death of the Prophet Mohammed. This significance in the development of Moslem theological scholarship cannot be underestimated. The teachings of Abu Hanifah, Ja'afar Al-Sadiq, Mohammed Idriss Al-Shafe'i and many other Islamic scholars that followed him all refer to the teachings of Zeid and all respect his prominence in the development of their own views accordingly.

The interesting feature of this book is that it comes from an academician of philosophy, who is, in fact an adherent to the Sunni (Shafe'i) sect, whereas the Zeidi sect is regarded, to a large extent, as a Shi'ite sect, if one looks at it from a purely political angle. It is worth noting that the religious sectarian affiliation in Islam is often rooted to political differences that followed the passing away of the Prophet Mohammed (PBAUH) and only later took on their religious or theological manifestations. Even the most ardent Sunni scholars took on political views that were to bring to them tragic fates, including such renowned Sunni scholars as Ahmed Bin Hanbal, who was known for his puritan interpretations of much of Islamic doctrine. The point to be made here is that prominent Moslem scholars were all in agreement that the cause of Islam was indeed the removal of oppression and transgressions in all their political, economic and social manifestations. However, as the centuries passed after the times of these great scholars, even their own followers let this important aspect of their teachers' lives take a back seat in their own religious persuasions. It is no wonder that these teachers were quick to attract the elements of the downtrodden of the society and the masses that often became the social products of the oppression that was rampant in their times.

The author begins the book by giving a brief dissertation on the dogma of Shi'ism and how this active force in Islam helped to bring about the dissemination of the teachings of the likes of Ali Bin Abi Talib and his many supporters in his age and throughout the Moslem periods that followed. He notes the political ramifications of Ali, his descendants and other followers and how that appealed to those who really saw in Islam as a movement of liberation that underscores the political relevancy of Islam and undoubtedly remind historians that indeed Islam was the first human movement that considered freedom and democratic governance as part and parcel of religious doctrine, and that if God made oppression as forbidden upon Himself, then surely it goes without saying that oppression by men should also be considered as anathema to all religious beliefs. This was bound to bring about an ongoing conflict, not so much resting on religious beliefs or theological persuasions, but rather on the obvious disdain that Islam has for all forms of oppression, persecution and social injustice. That is why it is very difficult for Moslems to separate religion from politics, since the origins of Islam are primarily based on the fight to eradicate all the elements of injustice and economic and social oppression, not to mention the wanton persecution that prevailed in the Sixth Century, not only in the Arabian Peninsula, but throughout the "civilized" world then.

It is important to note the political dimensions of Islam, at the outset as the author has done here in this very deep analytical assessment of the Zeidi sect, because this became a prominent feature of the history of the followers of Zeid, especially in Yemen, as we shall see later.



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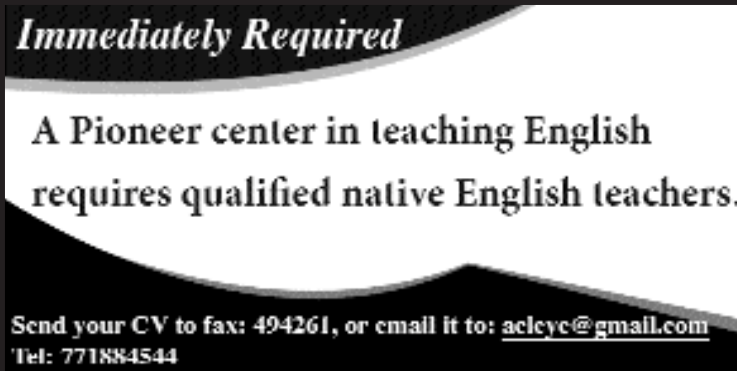
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11 days left, take time to make history

Petra is the only Arab wonder competing to win the title as one of the new seven wonders in the world. On the seventh day of the seventh month of the seventh year of this millennium, which means 11 days from today, history will be made again and only seven wonders will be chosen among the 20 candidates as the new wonders. This project was created in order to revive the wonders concept especially that only one of the old seven wonders made it through until today. This is the Pyramids in Egypt.

For Arabs and Yemenis it is especially important that an Arab candidate is selected among the new wonders. Not only will it be a source of pride, but it would defiantly boost tourism. Also, Petra deserves to win because it is truly an ancient wonder displaying magnificent sculptures on the mountains.

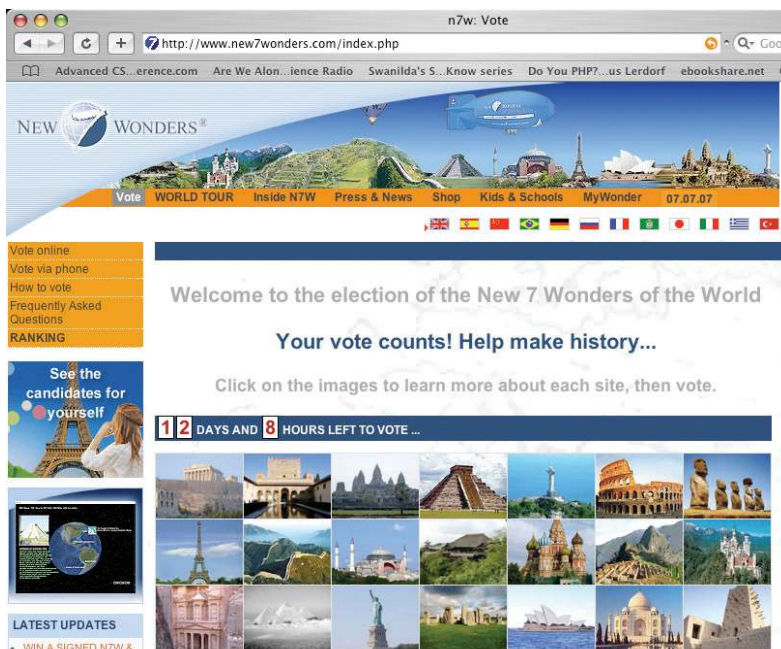
Last Friday, the Jordanian Society Club held a carnival to promote Petra

in Sana'a and encourage locals to vote for Petra. The activity included a lecture by the executive director of the heritage protection foundation professor Mohammad Al-Noad, and professor Mohammad Ba Salama of the monuments department at Sana'a University.

Dr. Mohammad Noman, secretary general of the Jordanian Society Club explained that this activity has been organized to encourage Yemenis and Arabs to vote for Petra, especially that it is very likely that the city wins among the new seven wonders considering the high rank it has achieved so far.

"Petra is the cultural ambassador of the Arab countries to the rest of the world. It was originally created by the Napatin tribes who originated from Yemen," he said.

Ahmed Jaradat, Jordanian ambassador to Yemen, gave a speech on the importance of this event and the participation of Yemenis to make Petra a world wonder.



In his opening statement he said: "Yemenis take pride in this city because it was originally created by them. Now their voting for it will strengthen the ties between the two countries even further."



Candidates for the new seven wonders of the world

Petra

Petra is the treasure of ancient world, hidden behind an almost impenetrable barrier of rugged mountains, boasting incomparable scenes that make it the most majestic and imposing

ancient site still-standing nowadays.. It has been said "perhaps there is nothing in the world that resembles it", actually, for sure, there is nothing in the world that resembles it. The rock-carved rose-red city of Petra is full of mysterious charm, it was "designed to strike wonder into all who entered it".

Petra is considered the most famous and gorgeous site in Jordan located about 262 km south of Amman and 133 km

north of Aqaba. It is the legacy of the Nabataeans, an industrious Arab people who settled in southern Jordan more than 2000 years ago. Admired then for its refined culture, massive architecture and ingenious complex of dams and water channels, Petra is now a UNESCO world heritage site that enchants visitors from all corners of the globe.

The approach through a kilometer long, cool, and gloom chasm (or Siq) a long narrow gorge whose steeply rising sides all but obliterate the sun, provides a dramatic contrast with the magic to come. Suddenly the gorge opens into a natural square dominated by Petra's most famous monument, The Treasury (El-Khazneh), whose intricately carved facade glows in the dazzling sun.

More facades beckon the visitor on until the ancient city gradually unfolds, one monument leading to the next for kilometer after kilometer. The sheer size of the city and the quality of beautifully carved facades is staggering and leads one to reflect on the creativity and industry of the Nabataeans who made Petra their capital.

Petra is always breathtaking, and never to be forgotten. It flourished for over 400 years around the time of Rome and Christ (pbuh), until it was occupied by the Roman legions of the Emperor Trajan in 106 AD.

The Petra basin boasts over 800 individual monuments, including buildings, tombs, baths, funerary halls, temples, arched gateways, and colonnaded streets, that were mostly carved from the kaleidoscopic sandstone by the technical and artistic genius of its inhabitants.



"Al-Deir" in Petra

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