

## Female activists threaten to boycott coming elections

Political Parties rejected the Quota System as a solution to ensure women's representation in the elections. As a consequence female activists threatened to retaliate by withdrawing from coming elections as candidates, but most importantly as voters.

#### By: Rasha Jarhum For Yemen Times

SANA'A, September 9 – Yemeni women should not be influenced by western concepts, such as the quota system, and want to change their lives accordingly. This was the reaction of political parties to female activists demanding a quota of 30% in the coming parliamentary elections 2009. The debate was part of the Second Democracy Forum organized by Sisters Arab Forum for Human Rights cooperation with National in Endowment Development. NGOs representatives and members of the Democracy Forum challenged the political parties' that as they used women as voters, they must allow them a chance through positive discrimination as candidates

"Resolving women issues should not be based on a Western concept instead it should be based on Islamic values stemming from the Islamic history," said Abdulwahab Al-Anisi, Secretary General of the Al-Islah conservative party. He stressed on rejecting the ideas coming from the west as they create ethical ciaos and referred to how the situation for western women is miserable supporting his argument with the statistics of harassment and rape in the western countries.

Frustrated by this attitude, Intisar Sinan, director of the political component of the Woman National Committee said: "This is not acceptable at all. Let us try the quota system and if it does not work we'll try something else." She added that democracy as many other concepts have been adopted through western influence so why should the Quota System be any different

Sultan Al-Atwani, Secretary General of the Nassirates Unionist warned Sinan that she should not feel frustrated from one meeting, and that it took

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men more than 50 Years and many failures to achieve what they have today. He criticized the current electoral system stating that it does not allow women or even men to succeed. He elaborated that the individual constituency electoral system that is currently being followed is constraining men and women alike because the standards for selections are according to social standing and money and not based on the competency or the popularity of the candidate. Al-Atwani added it is important to amend the electoral system and apply the relative system instead.

Regarding the quota system he said: "This system will only limit women to closed electoral centers. A better alternative is to empower women and men by using the relative list system." He also indicated that appointment of individuals in political positions should stem from the competency of the candidates regardless of gender. He added "the social context in Yemen does not allow women to compete in terms of communicating with people, for example, in Qat sessions which takes place in electoral constituencies.

Similarly, although Abdul-Salam Al-Razaz, Assistant Secretary General of Popular Forces Union, started off in an optimistic tone saying: "We appose any discrimination against women, and we



More than 60 activists debated whether the quota system is best to promote women in decision making positions in present Yemen. Most of the political parties disagreed.

want women to reach everywhere. I don't even mind her becoming the president." Yet, he then expressed his agreement with Mr Al-Atwani regarding the Quota issue.

However, Amal Al-Basha, director of SAF fired back asking representatives of the political parties what they have prepared in order to enhance women's political participation, since they dislike the quota system that much.

She noted that in 1997 Morocco was in the same situation as Yemen, however, Morocco, which is an Islamic country has already passed that and approved the quota system.

Tahani Al-Khaibah a member of the democratic forum in agreement with other female activists stated that if nothing is done by the political parties to prove their commitment to women as candidates, then they will launch a campaign to encourage women to boycott the coming elections both as voters and candidates. "They rely on women as voters to support their male candidates, but when it comes to what women want, there is no chance. We will get our forces together and prove to them our worth," she said adamant-

The percentage of women in the pre-

ly.

icant in the playing a role in the presidential elections to take place in 2013. Political parties would not want to risk losing seats because of nominating women." He said.

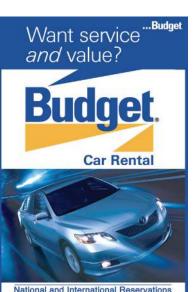
Shafiqah Saeed, member of Nassirates Union, and Khadigah Al-Khatry, member of the ruling party shared their experiences in the democratic process as candidates. Both women are members of the Women Partisan Network established in 2003 by NDI. The network aims to support women regardless of their political affiliation.

"One of the most important steps that WPN did last elections was meeting with all political parties and making them nominate female candidates. The Nassirates Union Party for example, nominated and supported 4 women. They even supported a fifth who ran as an independent candidate," said Saeed. Al-Khatry stated that the not many female candidates were nominated because of the internal conflicts within the party itself. This is why, in her opinion, a quota system is important.

Mohammed Al-Maqalih, Socialist Party Representative, talked about what he claims to be the political party's great encounters to empower women. According to him the socialist party. He also noted that SP was the first party to send letters to other political parties suggesting the assignment of particular constituencies to women in 2003, which was rejected by a letter from Dr Abdulkarim Al-Eriani on behalf of the ruling party at the time. Al-Maqalih then announced that his party is also against the quota system and called upon the relative list system and promised that if the system were approved, the first 5 names on it would be for women. He then indicated that the Yemeni women situation is much better than the situation for women in Gulf countries.

Nasir Al-Attar, Director of the Ruling Party GPC, also listed the victories of his party in relation to women issues. He stated that they believe in the role that women play in all aspects of life. However, he diplomatically rejected the Quota system by stating, "we believe in the Quota system and we are with any mechanism that empower women, but in one condition that all other parties commit to it as well.

The only party that supported the Ouota system was Al-Haq Party which. Mohammad Al-Mansour representing the party stated, "for the coming elections we will dedicate 15 percent for



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Dr Mohammed Al-Thahiri, Director of Political Science department at Sana'a University indicated that there is a positive relationship between development and women's political participation. He suggested the Quota system as the only short-term solution to promote females as candidates without jeopardizing the political parties chances in the coming elections.

"I'm afraid political parties support of female candidates will decline in 2009 because these elections are signifparty was the first to appoint a woman in a high ranking position in the hierarchy of the organizational chart of the

females to represent the party and we have no problem in following the Quota system."









## **Around the Nation**



## In brief

#### SANA'A

Gender budget auditing Sept 9 - The Women National Committee in cooperation with the UNFPA organized a three-day workshop on gender auditing. The workshop aimed at presenting other experiences on gender-balanced budgets and how to ensure a more sensitized plan to gender issues.

#### **Children Parliament** visits governorates

Sept 9 — The children's parliament started its visits around the republic to survey locals' aptitude to registering their newborns and issuing birth certificates for their children. Especially that the state had exempted the citizens from the fees to issue such certificates.

#### Smart woman's center

Sept 8 — Smart woman's center was established last week by the family development sector of Al-Islah Charity. The center aims at providing women with opportunities to learn new skills and develop their capacities in order to become more independent and productive in the society.

### TAIZ

#### Fresh batch of Quran studies graduates

Sept 9 — Fifty eight male and female Quran students celebrated their graduation, which was organized by Hael Saeed An'am Charity. Chairman of the board of directors of the An'am group said it is important to hold strongly to the tolerant principles of Islam away from fanaticism.

#### WB supports infrastructure projects

Sept 7 — The second phase of Municipal Development Project and other infrastructure projects supplied by the organization funded by the WB are on their way to be completed. Protecting Taiz against flood to enable it to be the ideal governorate in establishing governmental and local compounds, are of the main projects.

#### ADEN

#### **Confiscating meat and** vegetables container

Sept 8 — The animal wealth and veterinarian authority confiscated a container that included 16 tons of meat and vegetables after it was found unsuitable for human consumption. The authorities reported that the food was rotten and the container had a bad smell.

Junior swimming competition

SANA'A, Sept. 9 - The Yemeni Center for Historical Studies and Future Strategies (Manarat) was established last Monday in Sana'a, after two years of negotiations.. The non-partisan assembly is headed by Major General Ali Muhsein Al-Ahmar, commander of the northwest military areas, Yahya Al-Ra'ei, deputy of the parliament, and Major General Ali Al-Ansi. . The assembly members were distrib-

uted across all the republic's governorates. Only three women including the parliamentarian, Dr.Oras Sultan Naji, participated in the assembly.

Furthermore, the founders signed "a code of conduct to commit themselves to an independent, scientific and private center."

Consultants to the centers were limited to four, including the former chairman of the parliament, Abdull-Kareem Al-Eryani, the Minister of Higher Education, Dr.Saleh Ba Surah, the former rector of Sana'a University, Abdull-Aziz Al-Makalih, and finally\_ the secretary general of the Al-Ba'th Socialist party, Dr. Abdull-Wahab Mahmoud

# Military leaders to sit on new assembly

# The assembly –according to its first issue- aims at collecting, studying and archiving as well as at circulating stud-

ies, documents and manuscripts pertaining to the old and modern Yemeni history. The purpose of the assembly is also to conduct studies and scientific researches in different fields related to the requirements of social and economic development as a contribution to achieve the civil project for modern Yemen. It aims at improving the thought of culture and humanity, creating new lofty ideas as well as enlightening culture free from all old restrictions of thoughts and culture by renewing the heritage dropping all the fanatic ideas.

The center comprises a number of divisions specialized in studying and collecting old Yemeni history, Islamic history and modern and contemporary history. It also has researches centers concern about studying the popular heritage, population and behavior studies, social-economic and educational studies, following up the scientific and technological progress of the world. In a statement Dr.Abdullah AlFaqeeh, professor of political studies in Sana'a University," I respect the Major general Ali Muhsein Al-Ahmar the founder and head of the center and consider him to be elected by consensus. He is a paramount figure and has the knowledge to entertain Yemen's problems. I am optimistic about this center as it will help transfer Yemen into a democracy.

He stated that," I observed that 'Sanhan', the tribe of Saleh, along with older leaders has controlled this center, whereas academic figures are in charge of secondary roles. This center is considered a focal point that is aiming to confront the political transformations that are taking place in the southern part of Yemen. It is also similar to the committee formed by presidential decree. As it has been known, at the end of last August, a presidential decree was declared to form a committee to evaluate the negative social phenomenon affecting social peace and national unity. The committee consisted of 51 figures besides the secretary generals of the local councils in the governorates. Moreover, it was chaired



The Assembly is a contribution to achieve the civil project for modern Yemen. It aims at improving the thought of culture and humanity

by the political consultant to the president, Salem Saleh Mohammed. "This center may be the real thing and Salem Saleh's committee is its shadow," Dr. AlFageeh added.

Ffilling the positions of the new center has also been a topic of great concern. Al-Faqeeh went on to say, "we wonder about the availability of researchers in the center in Yemen".

"We fear that there is an initiative to rebuild the history of the country in the mirror of discrimination and sectarianism", he concluded.

## **High Treason label for** anti-national unity elements

SANA'A, Sept. 7 - In a statement circulated to media outlets last Tuesday, the Supreme Security Committee (SSC), chaired by President Ali Abdullah Saleh, warned against any practices disfavoring national unity.

"Any practices that harm national unity and jeopardize the national ranks unity by any party, organization, group or individual, shall be firmly confronted and perpetrators shall be referred to the judiciary for high treason," the statement said.

This measure complies with the effective Yemeni constitution and laws applicable in the country, the statement claimed.

"The SSC has perceived some unconstitutional and illegal practices. It has seen that some elements who are malicious to the revolution, republicanism, and unity, chanted anti-national unity slogans and acted in a way that threatens the unity of national ranks, while rallying and demonstrating in some areas around the country," the statement explained.

Out of its constitutional, legal and national responsibility, the SSC urges

organizations to cooperate with local and security authorities in all Yemeni provinces in order to strongly stand against all elements that lift or chant slogans against the national unity or violate the constitution of the Republic of Yemen and national fundamentals. the statement added.

The SSC pointed out that such practices constitute a crime punishable under the law and constitution and threatened to refer the doers to Prosecution and try them for high treason. It further warned that should any political party, organization, group or individual lift or chant slogans against the national unity or call for disuniting national ranks, they would be tried on high treason charge.

The statement said the SSC would coordinate with the local authority and judicial enforcement agencies to take all measures to arrest those elements and bring them to court for trial.

On the other hand, Sana'a-based opposition sources said higher level instructions were issued to the effect of court-martialing retired Brig. Nasser Al-Nawbah, Chairman of all citizens, and political parties and Coordinating Council of the Military

Pensioners Associations, and inflict him with military penalties.

This security measure comes after the State failed to contain the demonstrations and sit-ins staged by military pensioners across southern and eastern provinces, displaying anti-regime slogans and calling for redirecting the "Yemeni Unity's course." The fiercest demo took place last Saturday and resulted in several deaths and injuries especially in Aden and Hadhramout.

The demonstrating pensioners took to the streets and demanded the full reinstatement of personnel forced to retire after 1994, settling their conditions as well as the conditions of servicemen and military personnel who quitted or were suspended prior to 1994. They also requested the examination of petitions filed by the pensioners and quitters whose properties had been confiscated on the same par as other social groups. The list of demands called for a solution to the pervasive unemployment among youth and enabling them to join universities, military academies, and institutes, and have out-of-country scholarships.

## **University students** demand civil guards

SANA'A, Sept. 9 - In a statement to Yemen Times, the head of the Islah Party at the Faculty of Trading and Commerce, Belal Al-Nehari demanded civil guards for the university instead of the military ones.

Al-Nehari accused the military guards at the university of attacking students in the University yard while they were defending their rights in registering at the University peacefully. He, also, refuted the accusation of the GPC head Abdulmaleq Al-Sayaghi at the Faculty that the students shot fires towards the military guards. "We absolutely refuted the accusation of Abdulmaleq Al-Sayaghi that we shot fires towards the soldiers or even used sticks against them. we are sorry that the ruling party defends the crimes of security soldiers. Therefore, we ask for civil guards fit the message that the University presents." Al-Nehari said.

This deny comes as a reply to the statement released by Al-Sayaghi in Yemen Times on the August 19th in which he accused the Islahi students at the University of shooting fires towards the soldiers and spread riot at the University yard.

Sana'a University witnessed riot and strong clashes between new students and security soldiers during the enroll period in the middle of August. The clashed lead to injuring the student Ameen Al-Shubati on head when one of the soldiers beat him by the back of his pistol. The security administration at Sana'a University refused to give information about the reaction of the administration towards the incident or about the number of the security soldiers at the University.

The Sana'a University witnessed clashes between the Students of GPC and Islah in 2005 during the elections of the General Union of the Yemeni Students. The head of GPC Abdulmaleq Al-Sayaghi stated that the Islahi students by this demand just wants to attract the sympathy of the new students in order to attract them to the Islah party . Al-Sayaghi added that the Islahi students want to get rid of the military security because they can't attack them since it is a crime according to the law while it is easier for them to attck the civil guards and to spread riot in the University. " the one who doesn't want security, is the one who wants mass." Al-Sayaghi stated.

Al-Sayaghi stated that the law prevents any political activities in the worship places and the public places such as the University.

## **Al-Eryani Secretary General of**

Sept 8 — The General Union for Swimming concludes its first championship for juniors at the police officers club in Aden. The championship includes 48 participants from 8 governorates of Yemen in four swimming techniques.

#### DHAMAR

#### Annual exhibition of crafts

Sept 8 — The annual exhibition for handicrafts created by women was conduced by the women-training center in cooperation with the reproductive health program. The exhibition included fashion designs, knitted clothes, home care products, embroidery...etc.

#### Archeological explorations and surveys

Sept 8 – historical and archeological sites in Dhamar are being documented these days by a team of national and international experts. The project will last for three months and is hoped to preserve historic sites and prevent destruction of monuments.

#### IBB

#### 20th medical camp

Sept 8 - So far the camp 1650 cases were treated and 250 surgeries were conducted at Shaheed Abdulmughni Hospital in Ibb. This comes under the 20th medical camp organized by the ministry of health. The camp administration hopes to treat 2500 patients and carry out 450 surgeries total during the two weeks camp.

## Forum to be Established Soon

**Parliamentarians & Media** 

#### **By: Abdulgader Al-Emad** For Yemen Times

SANA'A, Sept. 6 – Scores of journalists and parliament members agreed to establish a forum called "Media & Parliamentarians Forum", in which they can discuss important issues.

This agreement came during the workshop entitled "Building Coalition between the Parliament and Media to Promote Freedom of Opinion and Expression".

In this workshop, which was organized by Human Rights Information & Training Center and IRIX, the participants discussed several issues considered a big concern for parliamentarians and for journalists as well. Both sides believe that they urgently need each other to solve problems and tackle issues concerning the country.

According to the Yemeni Constitution in Yemen each citizen has a right to show his opinions but in accord with law. The conditions put in this law restrict freedom and cripple constitution as well.

Further, legislation concerning press and journalists can in fact lead to charges against them. In other words, it is easy for the ruling regime to trap any journalist and put him/her in trial. It is also worth noting that this workshop came in response to the urgent pleas from journalists, demand-

ing the recognition of their rights, according to national standards. Moreover, journalists in Yemen over the last few days have faced physical and legislative abuse from the government. But parliamentarians claimed that they suffer as well, not just journalists.

MPs complain that there is no media coverage for the sessions of parliament. While parliamentarians in the workshop were asking for good coverage of events and activities by the journalists, journalists ironically complain about actions taken against them whenever they want to cover a parliamentary session.

Sami Ghaleb: Editor in Chief of Al-Nida Newspaper commented: "Both sides do not do their best in helping each other for the sake of our nation – criticizing national press that work for special advantages. I went several times to the parliament to cover its sessions, but they never allow me to enter with a camera, recorder, or any other equipment that are usually used in press coverage".

"Most of the Yemeni media has not positioned itself as independent yet, and since the majority of PMs belong to the GPC, it creates a real problem in understanding each other for the Public Advantage", Ghaleb continued However, one of the most important mechanisms that came out of the discussion was that the media and the

parliamentarians are dependent on each other. On one hand, the media has to play its role in supporting the PM's defense of their political immunities. On the other hand, PMs should help in modifying and creating good that preserve journalists' rights.

For journalists, they were admired for their role the parliament is taking to address the concerns, but they say it is one-sided kind of cooperation. This is because the parliament usually comes out with positive recommendations and decisions, but they never follow them up until they become workable. Thus, they have demanded to make the follow-up process a priority of this coalition in the future.

The workshop, which lasted for two days concluded its program with devising workable for the forum to be called "Media & Parliamentarians Forum". This will come hopefully after a meeting that is going to be held in the next two weeks.

HRITC represented by its General Director; Ezzadin Al-Asbahi, has promised the center's readiness and logistic support until the participants can manage the forum themselves. This forum, according to the attendants, also is open to anyone who wants to join, in order to share their concerns for the development of legislation, enforcement of law, stabilizing democracy and freedom of expression.

## the Arab League for Democracy

SANA'A, Sept. 5 (ACHRS) - The Arab League for Democracy held its second meeting in Sana's, the Yemeni capital, where Dr. Abdulkarim Al-Eryani was elected as secretary general of the league. The meeting also discussed the association's statute which held that the city of Sanaa (Yemen) is the headquarters of the league, provided that there will be an executive office in Amman (the capital of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan). The initiative to get to the focus, implementation, follow-up, and preparation were through the fruitful and voluntary efforts of the Culture Bridges Forum, the National Center for Human Rights and Democratic Development, and the Amman Center for Human Rights Studies.

The Board of Trustees of the League consists of the founding members of the league from (18) Arab countries, namely : Dr. Ibtisam Al-Ketbi (UAE), Professor Ahmed Barqawi (Palestine), Dr. Ahmed Al-Sufi (Yemen), Dr. Emhemed Maliki (Morocco), Dr. Amna Shekhawi (Tunisia), Professo. Iyad Barghouthi (Palestine), Dr. Ja'far Shayeb (Saudi Arabia), Mr. Jamal Al Awadhi (Yemen), Dr. Joma'a Atiqa (Libya), Dr. Hassan Abdel-Atti (Sudan), Sheikha Hessa Khalifa Ahmed Al-Thani (Qatar), Professor Taher Boumedra (Algeria), Dr. Abdel-Hussein Sha'ban (Iraq), Dr. Abdul-Karim Ali Al-Eryani (Yemen), Professor Ali Eddin Hilal (Egypt), Mr. Ali Seif Hassan (Yemen), Dr. Omar

Ahmed Kosh (Syria), Ms. Ramziyah Al-Eryani (Yemen), Mr. Mohamed Mohamed Tayeb (Yemen), Dr. Mohamed Wild Saydati (Mauritania), Professor Massoud Daher (Lebanon), Professor Munira Fakhro (Bahrain), Dr. Nizam Assaf (Jordan), and Dr. Hilah Hamad Al-Mekimi (Kuwait).

The Board of Trustees also elected a Board of Directors consisting of nine members who are: Mr. Jamal Al Awadhi (Yemen), Professor Taher Boumedra (Algeria), Dr. Abdel-Hussein Sha'ban (Iraq), Dr. Abdul-Karim Ali Al-Eryani (Yemen), Professor Ali Eddin Hilal (Egypt), Dr. Mohamed Wild Saydati (Mauritania), Professor Massoud Daher (Lebanon), Professor Munira Fakhro (Bahrain), and Dr. Nizam Assaf (Jordan).

As a legal and intellectual entity, the AAD, which was founded in Sana'a on June 13-14 2007, is part of Arab civil society. It is therefore not affiliated to any government, external agency or any political or religious group. Although the AAD has been created to reflect the unique character of the Arab society, its culture, spiritual and universal values, it also takes into account the spirit of our times and the global trends towards democracy, reform, the rule of law, social justice, plurality, the peaceful succession to power, the separation of the different branches of power, the autonomy of the judiciary, respect of human rights, and the freedom of expression.

## International

## Iraq PM defends govt and urges regional cooperation

#### **By: Waleed Ibrahim**

YENEN IME

BAGHDAD (Reuters) - Iraq's Shi'ite Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki defended his government's record on Sunday and urged neighbouring countries to work together to stop what he called "evil" from destabilising the region.

Maliki was speaking a day before top U.S. officials in Iraq deliver a longawaited assessment to the Democratcontrolled Congress on President George W. Bush's decision to send 30,000 extra soldiers to Iraq.

The reports by the U.S. commander in Iraq, General David Petraeus, and Ambassador Ryan Crocker could influence any decision Bush takes on troop numbers amid demands from Democrats and some Republicans for U.S. forces to start leaving Iraq.

Addressing a meeting of officials from neighbouring countries, Maliki said his government had made progress "in all directions".

"This government is working hard to develop the political situation. It has made many gains despite the huge destruction left by the former regime," Maliki said.

"We are at the beginning of the road, but at the same time, we say that what has been achieved is something promising.'

Senior Democrats in the United States have slammed Maliki's performance, with some even calling for his replace-



Iraq's Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki speaks during a meeting of the neighbouring countries in Baghdad September 9, 2007.

ment.

The assessments by Petraeus and Crocker are expected to highlight a reduction in violence in Iraq but also note the country's failure to pass laws aimed at reconciling warring majority Shi'ites and Sunni Arabs.

Petraeus said in a letter to troops on Friday that the government's record on political reforms had been disappointing.

"Stand together"

Maliki, referring to attackers including Sunni Islamist al Qaeda, said all nations had a stake in making the region safer.

"Evil wants to strike this or that country, it will not stop at the border of one country. For this, we have to stand together as a wall in the face of this evil," Maliki said.

The purpose of Sunday's meeting is to review the work of several committees that were set up after a high-level conference in Egypt in May where ministers from the region and major Western powers discussed ways to stabilise Iraq.

The committees have been looking at greater cooperation in security, energy and economic matters.

Fresh from his visit to Iraq where he raised the possibility of cutting troop levels, Bush said on Saturday he would address Americans next week to "lay out a vision" for the future U.S. role in Iraq after Petraeus and Crocker deliver their testimony. CNN said Bush would speak on Thursday.

Bush's administration has to give its own report to Congress by next Saturday.

One of the goals of Bush's sevenmonth-old troop "surge" was to give Iraq's divided leaders breathing space to reach a political compromise. U.S. troop numbers now stand at 168,000.

But differences run deep, with the ruling Shi'ite majority reluctant to cede too much power while Sunni Arabs dominant under Saddam Hussein feel marginalised.

Leaders of Iraq's parliamentary blocs met on Sunday to try to resolve some issues blocking reconciliation, officials said.

Adnan al-Dulaimi, leader of a Sunni Arab political party, said items to be discussed included proposed amendments to the constitution, a key demand of Sunni Arabs and the United States.



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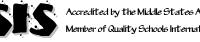
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## **Bin Laden threatens Iraq escalation**

Al-Jazeera – Osama bin Laden has used his first videotape message in nearly three years to threaten to escalate the violence in Iraq and attack the US government.

The video, which was released just days before the sixth anniversary of the September 11, 2001, attacks, urges Americans to turn to Islam if they want the Iraq war to end.

Bin Laden derides George Bush, saying events in Iraq have spun "out of control" and the US president "is like the one who ploughs and sows the sea: he harvests nothing but failure".

#### **Convert or else**

The tape, released on Friday, ends with bin Laden telling US citizens that they should "embrace Islam" if they want the war in Iraq to end.

According to a transcript released by a US-based website which monitors radical websites, bin Laden suggests that there are two ways the Iraq war could be ended.

"The first is from our side, and it is to continue to escalate the killing and fighting against you," he said.

The second is for the US to abandon its democratic system of government. He said that US Democrats had failed to stop the Iraq war because of the power of US corporations.

"The mistakes of Brezhnev are being repeated by Bush," Bin Laden said on the tape, in a reference to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan which began in 1979

He said the war in Iraq was continuing for "the same reasons which led to the failure of former president [John F] Kennedy to stop the Vietnam war those with real power and influence are those with the most capital".

#### 'Dangerous world'

Commenting on the video from Sydney, Australia, where he is attending the Apec forum summit, Bush said English: "A message from Sheikh

the tape was "a reminder about the dangerous world in which we live, and it is a reminder that we must pull together to protect our people against these extremists who murder the innocent in order to achieve their political objec-

"If al-Qaeda bothers to mention

The tape was released in advance of a testimony on Monday by General David Petraeus, the senior US commander in Iraq, and Ryan Crocker, the US ambassador to Iraq, on the status of the so-called surge of US troops in Iraq

streaked with grey.

Osama bin Laden to the American people."

Authenticity A US intelligence official told AFP news agency that the tape was probably produced as recently as early August because of a reference to the 62nd anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima on August 6.

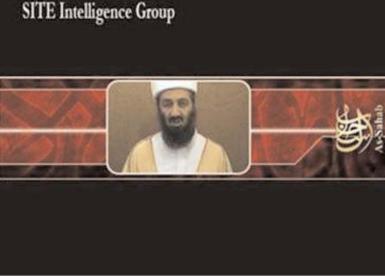
"I think people are pretty confident it is his voice," the intelligence official said on condition of anonymity said.

References in the video to Nicolas Sarkozy, the French president, and Gordon Brown, the British prime minister, are also believed to suggest that the video is only a few weeks old.

#### Authenticity doubted

Adel Darwish, political editor of Middle East magazine, told Al Jazeera that he had "doubts" about the authenticity of the tape.

"Any kid these days with an electronic kit can alter images and edit the way that he or she likes," he said on



Friday.

"There is no close-up of bin Laden, the beard is thick and black and then there are large segments where the image is a still."

Marwan Bishara, Al Jazeera's senior political analyst, said bin Laden had released the video to tell the Americans that he was still alive and still leading.

of words in this new asymmetrical warfare in the 21st century between the US and al-Qaeda," he said.

Bin Laden was last seen in a video statement shortly before the US presidential election in 2004.

Since then, he has issued a number of audio messages, the last in July 2006 when he vowed al-Qaeda would fight the US across the world.

Sharif firm on Pakistan return

tive.

Iraq, it's because they want to achieve their objectives in Iraq, which is to drive attacks and develop a safe haven."

In the video, bin Laden is shown with his beard much shorter and darker than in his last appearance, when it was

A banner on the screen reads in

Al-Jazeera — Nawaz Sharif, the former Pakistani prime minister, has vowed he will return to Pakistan, ignoring a call from Saudi Arabia for him to remain in exile.

Sharif said on Saturday that both he and his brother, Shahbaz, would return to Pakistan on September 10, despite suggestions that they could both be arrested on corruption charges.

Earlier, Muqrin bin Abdul Aziz, Saudi Arabia's intelligence chief, had called on Sharif to honour the terms of a Saudi-brokered deal which sent him into exile seven years ago.

Korea

Sharif was sentenced to life in prison on treason charges but released on condition that he live in exile for 10 years.

He was jailed after being ousted in a 1999 military coup led by Pervez Musharraf, Pakistan's current president.

Sharif is set to ignore the Saudi request and reaffirmed his intention to return home at a news conference in London.

On Friday, a court in the eastern city of Lahore issued an arrest warrant on Friday for Shahbaz in connection

with a murder case Sohail Rahman, Al Jazeera's corre-

spondent in Islamabad, said indications are Sharif would take a Middle Eastern carrier and arrive in Pakistan on Monday through Muscat.

Sharif has to take the detour since he remains banned from using Pakistani state airlines.

Sharif demanded Musharraf stop trying to block his way, asking: "Why is Musharraf so afraid that he is putting the country's solidarity at stake by involving the brotherly country of Saudi Arabia?"

He said it was Musharraf, and not he, who had broken his word.

#### Counter-charge

Sharif said: "Today he is accusing me of breaching the contract when in fact he is the one who broke the constitutional pledge that he took when he was appointed army chief.

"I am a Pakistani and it is my mission to go to Pakistan and save my country from the current turmoil and chaos.'

Saad al-Hariri, son of assassinated ex-Lebanese prime minister Rafiq al-Hariri, has also called on Sharif not to return.

Sharif acknowledged that al-Hariri, who visited him in a Pakistani jail after his conviction in 2000 on terrorism and hijacking charges, had secured his release with an understanding that he would not return for a decade.

But Sharif said that al-Hariri later told him the period of exile was only five years, though he acknowledged that this was not mentioned in the document he signed.

#### Crackdown

Pakistani authorities have, meanwhile, detained more than 2,000 supporters of Sharif, his party said on Sunday.

"The way the government has acted has proven our point that there is no democracy under Musharraf, there is dictatorship in the country," Ahsan Iqbal, Sharif's spokesman, said.

He said authorities had detained more than 2,000 activists from Sharif's party in Punjab province, Sharif's political power base.

"Politically, they are very sacred of a big show of popularity upon his arrival," Iqbal said.

A provincial police official said 250 "trouble makers" had been picked up. Ali Dayan Hasan of Human Rights Watch told Al Jazeera that many are being held on terror-related charges and some without charge.

He said the government plans to seal off Islamabad's airport to prevent people from reaching there to receive Sharif.

Media reports say a "VIP cell" at a 16th-century fortress is being prepared for Sharif.

#### Twin rivals

Musharraf is facing political unrest as both Sharif and Benazir Bhutto, another former premier, are poised to return.

Bhutto will announce when she will go back to Pakistan on September 14, but has said it will be within weeks, not months".

Musharraf has denounced both Sharif and Bhutto as corrupt and incompetent and blamed them for Pakistan's near-bankruptcy in the 1990s.



#### VACANCY Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist

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- 2. Reviewing, revising, and/or creating data collection and reporting instruments
- Coordinating with program and administrative staff in data collection 3.
- Updating routine data bases 4.
- Providing leadership in data analysis 5.
- 6. Preparing weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annual reports
- Responding to non-routine requests for data and other information 7.
- Making recommendations for achieving greater program efficiency and 8. effectiveness based on data and program analyses

#### General Requirements:

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- Excellent computer skills, especially Excel and other statistical packages
- 5. Yemeni national

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## مراكز الإستبدال المعتمدة أوأحد فروع شركة متكو



## Report

## Media freedoms in the Arab world – semi annual report 2007

Translated and summarized by: Nadia Al-Sakkaf

ournalists in Iraq and Palestine are the most violated journalists in the Arab world according to a recent report by the Amman Center for Human Rights Studies. Amman Center for Human Rights Studies monitored the violations and abuse against press freedom and journalists in 18 Arab countries during the first six months of this year. These countries are: Jordan, UAE, Bahrain, Algeria, Djibouti-, KSA, Sudan, Somalia, Tunisia, Yemen, Syria, Palestine, Iraq, Libya, Lebanon, Egypt, Morocco, and Mauritania. The report took into consideration the type of violations with relevance to the political and geographical environment of each country.

The aim of this report is to document the status of media freedoms in the Arab world in order to provide an authentic foundation for projects and programs working on developing media laws and professional journalism in the region.

#### General over view of Yemeni press freedom in the first half of 2007

It seems Yemen is going through yet another bad year in terms of press freedom. During the first half of this year Yemeni journalists underwent difficult times because of legislations allowing the imprisonment of journalists and because of the personal threats they keep facing.

Cases of assault and threat have reached the highest this year. Moreover, there are a number of pending cases in courts, which prove the judiciary system is not adequate in protecting journalists.

Journalist Khaled Dallaq was released on bail on January 3, as per the guarantee of the Yemeni Journalist Syndicate and according to instructions of the prosecution general. The journalist was accused to threaten a military official. This is the third accusation this journalist faces from the same official during the last one and half years. Khaled Dallaq has broken a record in the number of trials he had gone through. Until the writing of this report, he had been subjected to 98-persecution hearing, 65 court sessions, 4 trails in the general prosecution, and 6 cases between preliminary and appeal courts. Thus, he had been issued three verdicts, a 4-month jail sentence because of an article in Al-Wahdawi newspaper, an 8-months imprisonment, and a fine of 150,000 Yemeni Riyals. Only once was the ruling in his favor where he was given back his papers and car, which were confiscated by the security

Dallq had been a regular visitor of courts for 10 years now, spending 362 days behind bars, 90 days of which he was imprisoned in one of the military units against the law.

A group of the Faithful Youth organisation of cleric Badr Al-Din Al-Houthi threatened on January 6, to kill journalists AbdulFattah Al-Batoul because of his writings against the group. However, he had not received any support and accused the state of not protecting journalists, despite the fact that he had reported the ministry of defense and the syndicate that he had received threats "to chop his head off like Saddam Hussain's head."

On January 17, police from Al-Himyari police station arrested journalist Waleed Al-Sadah editor in chief of Al-Liwa Al-Akhdhar newspaper while on his way home.he was arrested on charges of publishing lies in an article his reporter Najeeb Al-Ghurbani, in which the Central Organsiation for Control and Audit was accused of corruption. The journalists were fined 50,000 Yemeni Riyals, yet they appealed the verdict.

The print and publication prosecution summoned on January 21 editor in chief of Annahar Newspaper Shihab Al-Ahdal who was accused of offending the judiciary system. He had published in his newspaper a story of a 16 years old murderer from Taiz who despite the forgiving of the victims family received the death penalty. The newspaper called on the judiciary system to reconsider highlighting violations in the case process.

On January 23 Mohammad Al-Ghubari correspondent of AL-Bayan UAE newspaper and another three journalists were assaulted by the security of the Prime Minister's office where the journalists came to cover the meeting between the Yemeni and Jordanian prime ministers.

On January 26 Foud Rashid member of the journalists syndicate in Mukalla was chased down by the criminal investigation director in the city because of his writings that criticise the criminal investigation. He was threatened by the director of criminal investigation to be charged with fake crimes and imprisoned.

Armed confrontations at Saba News Agency almost took place because of the bodyguards of Sheikh Khaled Misar member of parliament and the agency's security. The MP's guards argued with the condolences page editor on attaching military rank and post of a deceased relative of the Shiekh in the publication. The bodyguards left without getting into clashes although they threatened the editor.

On February 1, the General Prosecution referred the case filed by journalists Hadiz Al-Bukari and Rahma Hujaira as well as Yemeni Journalists Syndicate against Al-Bilad Newspaper, to the specialized court. The newspaper is accused of defaming the journalists and attacking their honor and integrity. Deputy of the press and publication

prosecution ordered the arrest on February 18, of journalist Sadeq Al-Garash editor in chief of Al-Zajel newspaper on grounds of defaming the editor of Al-Ayam newspaper.

The following day, Journalist in the state run 14 October Newspaper Sami Yousif complained that his newspaper's management is taking measures against him because of his writings criticizing the central organization for control and audit accusing it of corruption.

On February 25, after being stopped from publication as a hard copy and the sixth months imprisonment of its editor Abulkarim Al-Khaiwani, the website of Al-Shura Net newspaper was blocked. The website had reported on the war in Sa'ada in a way that did not please the government.

#### Support committees

Journalists have staged a number of demos and protests in support of their and in protest against the

radio complained that her program called "heya wa howa" because demanding her rights from the station since her employment in 1993. She was fired and prevented from approaching the station building and was assaulted by the station manager. On March 18, members of the Yemeni Parliament

Country

Jordan

Bahrain

Algeria

Djibouti

Sudan

Somalia

Tunisia

Yemen

Syria

Egypt

Morocco

Mauritania

Total

Palestine

Violations by Israelis

Violations by armed

Violation by official

authorities

Iraq Armed groups violations

Foreign troops violation

Iraqi authorities

violations

Palestinians

demanded brining in the Minister of Interior for questioning regarding violence and assaults against journalists. Aidaros Al-Naqib, head of the socialists block at the Parliament criticised the increasing targeting of journalists by state security. Editor in chief of Al-Wahdawi newspaper had been attacked by security men along with one of his editors Moath Al-Maqtari. Sami Ghaleb and Hamdi Al-Bukari of the Syndicate were also attacked because of their profession as members of the syndicate's main com-

mittee.			
Next	day,	Ahmed	Al

Shalafi correspondent of Al-Jaseerah said that two of the political security men assaulted him and threatened to do worse. He was covering a protest by the Somali refugees along with the cameraman.

In the same day, Al-Ayam newspaper's journalist Raid Al-Jahafi was harrased by the director of criminal investigation in Sa'ada where the journalist is based because of his reporting on the

On March 20, Al-Mustaqila Newspaper was threatened by fax that an organisation called Ibad Al-Rahamn Movement will "blow the building down".

#### Article 19 and press laws

war.

On March 22, ARTICLE 19, the international organized concerned with freedom of press organized in cooperation with the Yemeni Women Media

Forum a workshop in order to create a media working group on the current media legislation in Yemen. The local laws were evaluated and compared to standard laws and international rights treaties Yemen has signed, and recommendations were proposed for future action. The working group came out with three priorities:

Summoning Jail Fines Threat

1

2

2

1

Preventing

publication

Kidnapping Palestinian

journalists

Threat

Preventing

1

1

Assaul

assaul

15

Assault

Attempted assassinatio

Arrest

Arrest

- Reforming the current press code Creating a law on access to infor-
- mation Allowing private broadcasting

Women Journalists Without Chains organsiation condemned the Ministry of Information's decision of not granting the organsiation a licence to publish their own newspaper. Despite the application and the law that grants the organisation this right, the ministry has declined.

#### **Freedom Square**

murder

Vandalizing

Closing dow

and closing Harassment Blocking Arresting

Starting from Tuesday May 30, journalists and activities launched weekly sit-ins at the square between the Cabinet premises and the Ministry of Information. They called that area Freedom Square and it was used regularly after that for protests and demos.

Injuries

Kidnapping

foreign journalists

Kidnapping

Break in

Prosecution

Arres

threat

Assassi nation 33

murde

The sit-in was the third regarding the banning of news sms services that used to be carried out by four media organsiations: Al-Ishtiraki Net, Al-Shoura Net, Nass Mobile, and Bila Qiyoud Mobile.

The specialized penalty court refused to release journalist AL-Khaiwani o June 20, who was arrested the same day and opted to keep him in custody for one week, for investigation purposes. The court did not charge the journalist with a specific crime, although it criticised his possession of paper and materials relating to the war in Sa'ada.







## The British Foreign & Commonwealth **Chevening Scholarship Scheme**

of violence against journalists assaulting them by the occupation Despite earlier promises persecuforces, PLO, Hamas and other tion and arrest of journalist on

**Direct and indirect factors** 

print issues has not been stopped The first of its kind in the Arab world, the access to information law approved

#### UAE

Jordan:

State control of media still exists

#### Bahrain

- Inclination toward cancelling imprisonment of journalists on publication issues
- The relation between opposition and state authorities

#### Algeria

Fighting terrorism affects freedom of press

parties journalists from Preventing

#### reporting and taking photos during Israeli attacks

#### Iraq Lack of security and safety measures for journalists and media establishments

- Preventing journalists from covering certain events the government is not happy with Preventing journalists from cov-
- ering certain events the foreign forces is not happy with Attack by anonymous armed

groups on all media tools in Iraq Explosions and armed confrontation between Iraqi military, for-

The vagueness of the defamation law

#### **KSA**

Tight control of state on media

#### Sudan

- Temporary suspension of newspapers and imprisoning journal-
- Applying unconstitutional laws
- Political conditions especially relating to Darfour and the armed groups

#### Somalia

Current political conditions and creating a new government of an emergency nature and harassing journalists

#### Tunisia

Vast violations against journalists and limiting freedom of independent media

#### Yemen

Imprisoning journalists and closing down newspapers

#### Syria

- Inclosing on the international political rights issues because of the country's external political status
- Limited approach towards more Morocco freedom of press

#### Palestine

- Media converge of the PLO and Hamas conflict
- Covering the confrontations Mauritania between the Israeli army and Palestinian resistance
- Terrorising journalists and

- eign forces and armed groups No real investigation or persecu-
- tion against those who attack journalists
- Preventing journalists from accessing areas the Iraqi authority or the foreign forces do not favor Government control on information flow

#### Libya

- State control of media ٠
- Ambiguity in handling human rights issues

#### Lebanon

- Confrontation between opposition and the government
- The problem of respecting the different point of view
- Violence in more than one place in Lebanon

#### Egypt

- Limits on access to and flow of information
- Ambiguity in handling human rights issues
- Imprisonment of journalists and increasing fines to extreme amounts
- The power of businessmen and politicians
- - Harassment by the political police
  - Ambiguity in handling human rights issues

Obvious improvement in freedom of press while there is still need for a new press law

status of freedom of press in Yemen. The Yemeni Journalists Syndicate has lead many of these protests. On March 13 a number of journalists gathered at the syndicate in support of their colleagues such as Mohammad Mohammad Al-Maqaleh who had been attacked by anonymous armed men outside his home. The journalists also condemned the attack on Abulkarim Al-Khaiwani especially regarding his coverage of the war in Sa'ada north of Yemen.

Another attack took place against members of the syndicate Sami Ghaleb and Hamdi Al-Bukari by the Court of Appeals security.

Also the security of the cabinet attacked journalist Mohammad Al-Ghubari.

In the support meeting at the syndicate, the journalists also condemned what their colleague Abid Al-Mahthari editor n chief of Al-Diyar newspaper who had been chased down by influential parties and whose car was stolen by them without the state taking any action.

Al-Mahthari has also received a suspended one-year jail sentence because of his coverage of the war in Sa'ada, where the verdict was issued.

Journalists running the online Marib Press news site had been regularly threatened because of their liberal reporting. Also Al-Shoura net website of the Yemeni Socialist Party had been blocked.

Simultaneously, journalist Zaid Al-Ghabiri was attacked by military police in Taiz, and the journalist community demanded an investigation of the attack.

Broadcasting journalist in Hudaidah

The British Council invites applications for the Foreign & Commonwealth Office Chevening Scholarship Scheme. This highly-competitive scheme offers full-time postgraduate scholarships for study in the UK to Yemeni women and men who will play a key role in promoting Yemen's political, economic & social development.

Applicants, who must not be over 35, should have a university degree and very good written and spoken English. Candidates will be selected on the basis of their potential and motivation to rise to positions of authority.

The deadline for applications is 01 November 2007.

The application form and full information are available from the British Council web site:

http://www.britishcouncil.org/me-learning-funding-your-studies-chevening.htm

You can download the application form as a word document from the website and fill it in electronically. You may also print on or complete the form in handwriting, but you should be aware that this might not work to your advantage in the selection process.

Please submit your application form to:

The British Council, 3rd floor, Administrative Tower, Sana'a Trade Centre, Algiers street, Sanaa - or send by mail to PO Box 2157, Sana'a (but remember that applications must arrive before the closing date).

For further information on the scheme please visit the following web site: www.chevening.com or contact us on 01 44 83 56





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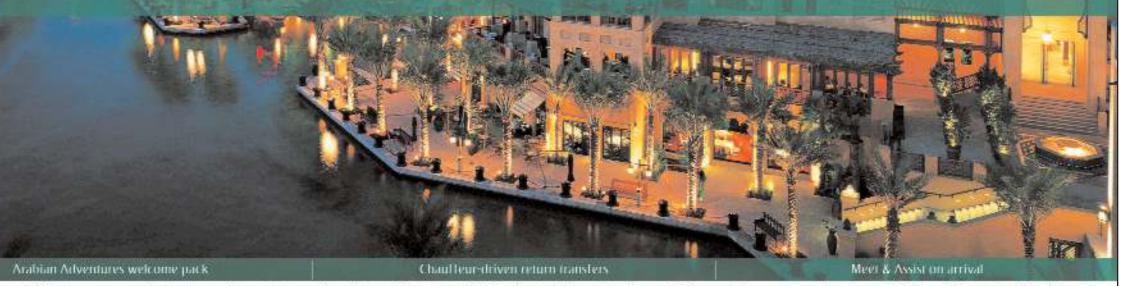


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### **8** 10 September, 2007

#### Words of Wisdom



In the Third World today, the rulers have no fixed budgets or allocations, even when these exist on paper. The rulers simply spend as they please. Actually, the only limiting element is the lack of funds or the general poverty of the country. Here in Yemen, this problem exists in a shameless way. Just a couple of weeks ago, a number of government

weeks ago, a number of government palaces built by foreign aid were simply given away to the top president's men.

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



ominating news in Yemeni press draw a very gloomy picture of Yemen. There are endless demonstrations for various reasons, there are conflicts and troubled areas, there are political ploys and selfish games...etc.

The state of unrest worries me, and worries any person who cares about Yemen or has an interest in the welfare of the country. How can the situation be mitigated without much loss, is the question. And a very difficult one especially that trouble is on several frontiers.

The gloomy picture painted by media and politicians as well as everyday experiences give us the feeling that Yemen is on the verge of collapse. Natural resources are being exhausted, and people's tolerance to hunger and deteriorating living conditions is wearing thin. This causes unrest, and the opposition takes real good advantage of the situation in order to create change.

However, all of this is only one side of the story. Recently I have met with extraordinary people working in the government who are trying hard t make things better. I am definitely not talking about politicians, I am talking about professional specialists working in different sectors who are usually not in the lime light and whose efforts most of the time goes unnoticed.

If Yemen is on the verge of collapse, then why are those people doing what they are doing to ensure a better future for the generations to come. For example, why would the traffic authority coupled with the technical department of the municipality work around the clock to materialize a 20 years long plan that would change the features of Sana'a drastically? Why would the director of the rural water projects improvise a scheme to modernize the working process, and ensure eople's applications are smoothly executed? Why would ministry of water and environment expand the only water treatment plant in Sana'a in order to minimize the water waste in the capital city? You will soon read about all these projects and efforts in a constructive way during the coming weeks. Yet the point is: let's not indulge too much in blaming the government as a whole for everything that is not working. Let's not blame the municipality for the unclean roads while we encourage our children to throw rubbish in the streets. And let's not complain about power cuts when we don't take time to turn the lights off when we leave the room. Unfortunately Yemeni culture is a very dependant one which lacks initiatives and does not encourage self-motivation. We need to see what's wrong, find out what we as a community and as individuals can do to make it better. and while doing this, let's not forget to praise the efforts of those who are trying to make a difference.

## **Opinion Palestinians: From calamity to tragedy**

henever the Arab nations go through hard cir-

cumstances and tough challenges, we get shocked at the situation, as such circumstances and challenges are not the worst in the history of Arab states. This means the Arab states are bound to experience worse conditions than those.

In 1948, the Hebrew State emerged under the guise of independence while the Palestinians and Arabs remained lamenting the catastrophe's consequences until 1967 when they suffered an unprecedented military defeat in the history of Arab-Israeli conflict. But, the permanent betting has been manifested in the Palestinian national unity and its rigid.

In June 2007, a setback occurred. Remarkably, the calamity and the setback are symptomatic of external events and foreign interventions. But now, it is time for us to take a useful lesson from what happened in the past. The Palestinian brothers, particularly those supporting Hammas, had organized a coupe against the regime amid inflammatory regional circumstances and difficult international situations. This raises before us numerous remarks.

The separation between Gazza Strip and the West Bank is a historic dream, which Israel has been seeking to achieve. For the sake of reaching this dream, Israel exercised tricky means and policies during the time period that followed 1967. The Zionist state was always of the hope to see Gazza Strip under the Egyptian administration once again. It also wanted the West Bank to be under the Jordanian administration as it prefers having borders with Egypt and Jordan to dealing the Palestinian Authority. Israel is the only winner in the most recent tragic developments in the region.

What happened in June 14, 2007 is a geographic division of the Palestinian Cause and this follows the political fragmentation, which the Arab state suffered over the past few years. We have been proud of the Palestinian national unity and considered it a rock that destroyed all the Israeli conspiracies on various occasions. At this point, I have to admit that the Palestinian national unity has passed very difficult tests and complicated situations, and furthermore has resisted very sensitive conditions until its sudden collapse in the past few months. This collapse was caused by a state of gradual deterioration since the announcement of the Palestinian Legislative Elections' results.

The violence that took place in Gazza reflects a severe congestion, the crisis of lost confidence and the instigation of conflicts between Hamas and Fatah. It makes those interested in the issue raise questions about the actual reasons behind what has happened. The coupe, organized by Hamas against Palestinian Legitimate the Authority, is merely a reflection of risky developments that are impossible to be interpreted without a relation with what happens in the region. And, this doesn't mean that we underestimate Hamas's legitimacy and capacity to rule the country, specifically as it scored a landslide victory in the most recent legislative elections. The United States, Israel, Iran, and all the Arabs are key players in the Palestinian field directly or indirectly, but the climatic point of the tragedy is manifested by the fierce practices, which Hamas pursued when its leaders talked about liberation. Some of Hamas supporters raised their movement's flag in Gazza in lieu of the Palestinian flag



and threw some of Fatah elements from the upper floors of the buildings, thereby becoming victims at the hands of their brothers and not the Israelis. What about the commitment Hamas leaders made before the Holy Mosque to respect the Makka Agreement. They didn't remain committed to abide by the agreement. This is an approach and a justification for Israel to say to the world that the Arabs don't respect any commitments they make or agreements they sign with their brothers. The Zionist state may wonder how it is possible to live in peace with Hamas

The Palestinian Cause is a national issue before being a religious one, while the other experiences and practices, which have associated between the religion and politics, appeared to be at expense of the religion, which depends on absolute matters. Politics, on the other hand, doesn't seem to deal with anything of relative authenticity.

As Muslims, Christians and Jews participated in the Palestinian national movement, any condemnation or denouncement of conflicts is a huge mistake. When we talk about the Eastern Quds, for instance, this means we are talking about a Palestinian territory, which has been occupied since June 1967. The Resolutions No. 242 and 238, released by the UN Security Council regarding conflict in the Middle East, may apply in this case.

I objectively believe that Hamas Movement has taken control-colored stances, as it rejected Oslo Agreement and then participated in the legislative elections, which are an Oslo Agreement's outcome, as well as an important mechanism of the national authority. This controlcolored choice of stances makes us anxious about the current developments since democracy is a completed bargain and we are not authorized to take any part of this bargain and reject the other parts. I think that this point is a joint factor that combines Hamas Movement with the other Muslim Brothers' factions in the Arab region.

We don't deny Hamas's struggle and sacrifices of its supporters in the

tury, amid circumstances known to everyone, should be linked with the future of its relations with the Hebrew State and the international community as a whole. On the contrary, Fatah Movement played the role of a cover for some Hamas leaders during their dealings and contacts with Israeli officials under the shadow of Hamas philosophy strongly rejecting any contact with the Zionists. This is why unconfirmed tales about Hamas contacts with Israeli officials via its prisoners in the Israeli jails began to circulate throughout the region. I personally cast doubt on the authenticity of these tales that raise numerous questions. I have been expecting a fragmentation to take place at the expense of the Palestinian independence, restoration of the occupied lands and insult of the Holy City, in a way similar to what happened to various national liberation movements. In South Yemen, for instance, there had been two liberations of struggle against the British Occupation. Namely, they are the National Front, led by Qahtan Al-Sha'ebi and the Liberation Front under the leader Abdulqawi Makkawi. In addition, Zimbabwe had in the past two leaders for national liberation, the first of whom is Gushu Nuckomu and the second is Robert Mughabi, who has become the President of the Republic since the independence until now.

At this point, we want to say that the Palestinian National Liberation Movement, which has ever paid the most expensive price in the contemporary history, should remain unified on the face of the occupation. When the latter is forced from the Arab land, it will be the most important subject to be discussed worldwide.

The fragmentation and factional conflicts between Hamas and Fatah, which Palestine has suffered, led to a wider division in the Arab region between Hamas and Fatah supporters. This never serves the Palestinian issue, as it left behind a huge gap between the Palestinian people and their Arab brothers. We feel anxious about what is happening in this changeable world. We are unhappy about the Middle East's future. We want these remarks to highlight the size and scope of the bloody tragedy, which is related with what took place in Gazza in 2007. Such a tragedy mostly and repeatedly occurs in the month of June, which is, in my opinion, the month of tragedies and sadness.

Prof. Abdulaziz Al-Tarb is an economist and a professor in Political Science. He is the head of the Arab Group for Investment and

## SILVER LINING The business community and reform agenda

ome are mistaken when they think that working for reform is the responsibility of politicians and civil society organizations who usually have no job to perform. Reform and democratization is no longer a luxury but an inevitability we all have to work to attain. Everybody has a stake and an interest in good governance, transparency, accountability, a fair and independent judiciary, professional and free media, fair and free elections and others. All these elements ensure that justice is achieved and human rights are well respected, which



brings about a good environment for security and stability—politically and economically. Therefore, a coalition of reform activists and beneficiaries in the Arab countries must be set up involving joint work for both business and civil society organization leaders that should lobby for a positive change in their respective countries plagued with oppressive regimes. For the resolution of these issues, the "Broadening Coalition for Reform: Business and Civil Society Organizations Working Together for Change" workshop was organized by MEPI at the US State Department. Implemented by Beyster Institute, the event was supposed to take place in Yemen but for security reasons it was delayed and then moved to Jordan. I was invited to that important workshop where issues of reform and how to build partnerships and develop action plans for change were debated, but unfortunately I could not attend due to prior important engagements.

The business community should not stay off track and must get involved in such a long and arduous process that is the business of all of us in the Middle East. It is not an issue of ethical commitment only that the businessmen take part in this process, but rather it is a matter of interest to them. I would guess that many of you share with me the opinion that it is in the advantage of the businessmen to have good governance, fair and independent judiciary system, free media, and the rule of law. Some businessmen still think they should not poke their nose in politics only so much as it will appease the ruling regimes. However, businessmen in the region should no longer keep mute and just exercise lip service to authoritarian regimes as it is happening right now in most of the Arab countries. They should not keep themselves aside and must be a key partner in the overall drive for change.

Let us take, for instance, the match-up between the liberation of broadcast media and the interest of the business community in Yemen. The existence of a vocal professional and independent media is, of course, of interest to the businessmen as it will enable them to get their message and advertisements to their target audience efficiently instead of airing them through monotonous, state-monopolized broadcast media. Moreover, liberation of broadcast media will enable them to invest in this promising sector. In addition, the facilitation of free access to information will enable the professional media to address issues of corruption. Such corruption issues hit the majority of the businessmen like tenders, and bids which, if processed transparently and competitively, might be gained by the real professional businessmen rather than those clone ones protected by some of the big-wigs at the power center. It is also in the interest of the business community to have a professional media with a strong code of ethics that would protect it against some newspapers that blackmail them for advertisements. It is no doubt that the reform of such areas and others would be of benefit to both the business people and the public at large.

I understand some businessmen have an interest in the absence of law rule and accountability, and are furthermore prevalent to corruption. However, this is not a sustainable interest because it is not institutionalized and professional. In order to achieve the sustainable development everybody seeks to have, the business community should play a pivotal role in supporting reform and democratization agenda. Independent business can not flourish when a strong third party, in this case the government is calling the shots. It is in an environment of security, stability and political, economic and social peace attained only through reform and democratization that their businesses can prosper. Their role in boosting change is therefore unquestionable; in democracy exists the prosperity of the masses, including the businessmen.

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



Nadia Al-Sakkaf Editor-in-Chief

first and second Intefadas (uprisings). Additionally, we don't neglect another confirmed fact that Fatah is a movement of struggle, which began its activities in January 1945. It sacrificed famous and great martyrs for the sake of homeland such as Abu Ammar, Abu Ayyad, Abu Jihad, Abu Al-Houl, Abu Al-Letf, Abu Mazen, Kamal Nasser, Mohammed Udwan and other historic leaders. Attributing bad events to Fatah policies and accusing its leaders of corruption is a denial of the fact and an unfair verdict against history. We admit that the serious mistakes, committed by Fatah, helped Hamas to score a landslide victory in the most recent legislative elections. Hamas won the majority of Legislative Council seats, thanks to Fatah mistakes and deviations of Fatah leaders, and this victory has nothing to do with Hamas's platform. Similar cases of this kind took place in different Arab countries such as Yemen and Egypt. The establishment of Hamas

The establishment of Hamas Movement in the 80s of the last cen-



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## Press / Op-Ed



فولي ينفى علاقته بالمحا



#### Al-Sahwa Weekly, Mouthpiece of the Islah Party Thursday, September 6

#### Main Headlines

- Islah Party's Shoura Council denounces crackdown on protesters in Aden and Hadramout, expresses solidarity with retiree's demands
- An education ministry source: High school exam results announced, no technical problems reported
- Two policemen injured in confrontations with Al-Awaleq tribes in Shabwa
- Politicians and legislators urge MPs to hold an extraordinary meeting to discuss the country's situations
- Manager of Public Works Office in Damt accuses influential persons of burglarizing public funds
- Syndicate Yemeni Lawyers condemns assault on President of Banks and Insurance Companies Union
- President Saleh releases Sheikhs of Hamdan and Shulan tribes amid demands to resolve their issues

The weekly newspaper reported in a front page article that President Ali Abdullah Saleh on Wednesday released the tribal Sheikhs of Hamdan and Shulan tribes in Al-Jawf governorate, who have been detained in the Ministry of Defense for more than one year and half a year over revenge killings between both tribes. Local sources in Al-Jawf urged the government to expedite resolving the disputes between the two conflicting tribes in order to help the area avoid any new clashes, particularly following release of tribal leaders.

According to the weekly newspaper,

the Ministry of Defense detained the tribal chieftains of Hamdan and Shulan tribes with the aim of ending the bloody confrontations that lasted up for eight years over revenges. It added that President Saleh sponsored a six-month ceasefire, which both tribes signed.



#### 26 September Weekly, Organ of the Yemeni Army Thursday, September 6

#### Main Headlines

- President Saleh to new envoys: You have to improve ties and enhance cooperation
- Security authorities confiscate 1800 arm pieces
- Prime Minister directs Ministry of Public Works and Highways to finalize capital city's plans, develop services
- Yemeni government and World Trade Organization discuss Yemen's WTO entry
- Authorities to transfer riot detainees to Public Prosecution
- IPA to deport 52 African illegal immigrants

The weekly paper quoted an official source as saying on Wednesday that the Immigration and Passports Authority (IPA) is about to repatriate 52 African immigrants entered illegally to Yemen. The source added that the sneaking Africans were 35 Somalis and 17 Eritrean natives, noting that the IPA is about to complete legal procedures to repatriate them to their homes next week. Yemen's coastguards have detained those immigrants attempting to sneak to the country through beaches of Shabwa province, 400 km east of the

#### capital Sana'a.

According to the newspaper IPA denied the authenticity of reports saying that the Authority has arrested 77 African people. It said that only 59 African refugees, some of them are Somalis, have been in the authority's custody for a month. UN agencies are working to prevent thousands of undocumented migrants and asylum seekers from risking their lives onboard overcrowded open fishing boats whilst trying to reach Yemen as deadly annual people-smuggling season resumes in full force in the Gulf of Aden.



Comprehensive Independent Weekly Wednesday, September 5

#### **Main Headlines**

- Houthi lashes out at regime, instigates protestors in the south to escalate tension
- Recurrent attempts to pass prohibited pesticides into Yemen A prominent member withdraws

from Islah Party Shoura Council membership Personal gains and interests given

precedence over performance in government offices, U.S. report reveals

- Unidentified people open fire on officers as they are handed over their plots of land
- Yemen ranks worse among world countries in decision making
- Demonstrations escalates authorities crack down on protestors

The weekly newspaper reported in a front page article that thousands of protesters faced off with bullets, tear

gas and water cannons in their demonstrations for the release of 200 veterans in Yemen. Riot police clamped down on the protesters on Tuesday, most of whom are southern Yemeni veterans who lost their jobs after they were defeated by the northerners 13 years ago.

"Any party, movement, group or individual who stages or carries slogans that put national unity in peril, or calls for destruction of national unity, will be tried as a traitor," the newspaper quoted a top security official as saying. According to the constitution in Yemen the penalty for treason is death.



Al-Wahdawi Weekly, Mouthpiece of the Nasserite Unionist Popular Organization (NUPO) Tuesday, September 4

#### Main Headlines

- Protestors in Al-Shu'aib district denounce crackdown on citizens, confirm continuity of efforts for peaceful change
- Awaleq tribesmen block Aden-Shabwa highway, demand detainees be released
- Aden Security authorities arrest BG Nasser Al-Nuba, take him to unidentified place after raiding his home in plainclothes
- As attachés exercise corruption, Yemeni scholars in Cairo ask Cultural Attaché there to return home
- At least ten people reported injured as fence collapses in Sa'awan area,
- Security Authorities seizes over 2,500 firearms, enforce arm-bearing ban

The weekly paper reported that Yemeni police confiscated more than 2,500 firearms in the first week of a nationwide campaign to enforce a ban on carrying weapons in cities. It quoted the Interior Ministry as saying that weapons have been seized at checkpoints outside the capital Sana'a and other major cities since August 23. The campaign was aimed at reducing the visibility of arms that discourage tourism and investments in the country.

The weekly went on to say that the ban includes bodyguards of highranking officials, legislators and influential tribal chieftains. The government launched a campaign in last April to collect heavy and medium weapons from local markets through a buy-back program. Estimated 12 arms markets and about 300 light weapon shops are spread across the country. Unofficial estimates put the number of firearms in circulation in Yemen at around 60 million. A UN-sponsored small arms survey, released on August 29, concluded that Yemenis own between six and 17 million firearms.



Al-Methaq Weekly, Mouthpiece of the General People Congress (Ruling Party) Monday, September 3

#### **Main Headlines**

- Crime rates in Yemen decline by 35 percent as government passes arms bearing ban
  - Anti-Corruption Authority's members ratify financial liabilities before Parliament

Yemeni Countedness and Anti-Corruption Organization to sue

President Saleh: Social Phenomena Evaluation Committee is neither seasonal, partisan, nor receives instructions from any political

dissidents

democracy

organization Yemen's tender-related experience reviewed at an international symposium

who

misemploy

- Aden Governor, British Ambassador discuss investment benefits in Aden
- Yemen participates in an international conference on family planning, maternal care and newborns
- Opposition's protests damages national economy, says ruling party leader

The newspaper reported that Assistant Secretary General of the ruling General People Congress Sheikh Mustafa Al-Barakani considered the opposition's protests as merely chaotic acts that have nothing to do with changing the economic situations in the country. He was quoted as saying that "Such functions don't pay harm to the ruling party or the regime as much as they damage the nation, its reputation and political system. These acts of vandalism arouse fear among foreign investors who have plans to initiate projects in Yemen

Al-Barakani pointed out that the economic content was included in the list of dialogue issues, but the opposition exploits the subject to attain political objectives. He confirmed that the ruling party and its leaders care for establishing joint cooperation with other political parties and organizations for the sake of boosting the national interest and addressing citizens' issues. The GPC leader attributed the recent economic crisis to price rises at of foodstuffs at the international level.

# **The Missing Prestige**

#### By: Jihad el-Khazen

as the swift air confrontation between Syria and Israel a deliberate provocation or a mistake, or did it not happen at all?

the official Israeli silence leave all

Syria, via third parties, by means other than common diplomatic channels and back-doors.

At any rate, the Syrian case can not be dissociated from the Lebanese or Palestinian situation, especially in the light of Syria's alliance with Hamas and Hizbullah. In my opinion, the two Islamist groups are unlikely to leave The brief Syrian communiqué and Syria on its own in the event of a military confrontation.

Hamas has now delivered a legal opinion prohibiting prayer in public squares. What is meant is a political position, not prayer itself. I asked Dr Tibi about the drawback in all this. Citizens have the right to express their views, and then any legal opinion against praying in public squares will be met by another legal opinion permitting it, which indeed took place.

## Arab regimes ignore **Turkey's democratic example**

**By: Saad Eddin Ibrahim** and Mensur Akgun

> e were both in Turkey before and after Sunday, July 22, the day of the intensely fought

parliamentary elections. Given the contentiousness of large-scale demon-

night of July 22 to allay the fears of the AKP detractors. He assured all concerned of his solemn commitment to the secular principle of the Turkish Republic. He equally reiterated his drive to join the European Union; and proudly pledged to maintain the high rate of Turkey's economic growth.

The whole world was watching Turkey that day: some admiringly,

democratically elected Mauritanian president.

It is abundantly clear that when such developments occur in Arab or Muslim-majority countries, it proves doubly embarrassing. This may also explain - at least in part - why many of these regimes are reported to be under-

mining efforts to democratize Iraq. The triumphant AKP was again vic-

## as northeast of Sana'a

options open, including the possibility that Israel might be diverting attention to Syria, for its government's realization that no progress will be made with the Palestinians at the level of a settlement in the coming conference or afterwards. Knesset member Dr Ahmad Al-Tibi did not exclude deliberate provocation while I was talking to him on the phone. He said the Israeli chief of staff believes that a confrontation with Syria is the easiest option, and that a quick blow, very precise in nature, is sufficient to restore the missing prestige in the aftermath of last summer's defeat in Lebanon.

He thinks it is more probable that the politicians are not in favor of an escalation, but he warned of the fact that matters might have a dynamism of their own, and that the Israeli military has been for some time inciting a strike against Syria, while claiming that the latter is gathering its forces on the border and enhancing its air defense.

Dr Al-Tibi says the military leadership in northern Israel needs to prove that it has improved its performance and that it has become stronger than it was last year. Its first target is Syria and the second one is Lebanon, in addition to the permanent option of invading Gaza, a request made by the southern leadership.

Will the confrontation take an unintended course? There is always the law of unexpected outcomes, or maybe the Israeli government has decided to resume negotiations with

In the past three days, I met three Palestinian officials, Nabil Abou Roudayna, Jibril Rajjoub, and Mohammad Dahlan in Washington who are fully knowledgeable about the course of events and then I called Ramallah.

There is no concrete progress that can be discussed whether regarding the negotiations between Abou Mazen and Ehud Olmert, or between Hamas and Fatah. No one expects the coming conference to bring any success. I did not even hear anyone expect to see any progress in the peace process throughout next year, ie in the remaining period in George Bush's second mandate.

Hamas refuses to retract the coup d'etat it staged in the Gaza Strip, and it seems to be satisfied with the Islamic Gaza princedom while Fatah insists on going back to the previous status quo, otherwise it considers no other option.

The Palestinians are now opposed to the two factions. Some did not vote for Hamas in as much as they voted against Fatah in the parliamentary elections. Now thousands from among them are demonstrating against Hamas, not against Fatah, due to the failure of the Hamas government to respond to the minimum of citizens' demands. It was supposed to presume, regardless of the reasons behind its occupation of Gaza, that regional and international forces will not allow it to achieve success, because its success will encourage Islamists in all countries.

Upon asking about the solution, I heard of a possible Arab settlement. But I find it unattainable as Egypt has adhered to caution and neutrality whereas Saudi Arabia is dissatisfied with both parties who broke the Mecca Agreement. I also heard of an international settlement, but I see that any solution of this type denotes a major role for the United States. I do not think the Bush administration has the potential to bring success in any matter, especially with the problems it is facing in Iraq. Afterwards, there is the Israeli suggestion of a solution. The invasion of Gaza will turn the tables on all the Palestinian parties and will create a new situation.

The day following my previous conversation, a Syrian communiqué was released on the violation of the Syrian air by Israeli planes. A Syrian-Israeli confrontation could be the way out for everybody since it will not be restricted to the two countries; it will rather involve local parties including Iran and the United States.

What drew my attention in the conversation with the Palestinian officials is that they put forward solutions among which there was not a single Palestinian solution.

The three officials came to London in order to be operated on, one for the kidneys, the second for his feet after his belly while he is walking with crutches, and the third for the knees. I have found them broken and defeated like their cause.

Source: english.daralhayat.com

strations and the fears of military intervention over the issue of secularism, there were hundreds of international observers expecting something spectacular to happen. But to their dismay, and to the dismay of many others, balloting was calm and orderly. No violence or irregularities were

reported. It was one of the highest voter turnouts in the history of Turkey's democratic elections (84.4 percent). The highly debated role of the religiously affiliated Justice and Development Party (AKP) was put to the test for the second time in five years. The party passed with flying colors.

The Turkish political community had anticipated the outcome. The few surprises had to do only with margins of performance of the various actors. Though the AKP was poised to win a majority, it did far better than expected with 46.7 percent of votes - 12.4 points higher than its 2002 victory.

Among the losers was the Turkish military, which has never hidden its deep misgivings with the ascendancy of the AKP in the country's sociopolitical space. It is widely believed that the military blessed the pro-secular demonstration earlier in the spring as well as the unification of center-right and center-left parties. Though clearly rebuffed by the voters, the military seems to be learning to manage such public adversities, at least for the time being.

The prime minister, and AKP leader, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, went out of his way in his victory speech later on the

some cynically, looking for any mishaps to justify keeping the country out of the European club. And yet others watched nervously, for fear of a success that would put pressure on them to follow its model. Among the latter were Arab autocrats, to whose reactions we now turn.

While Arab opposition parties, civil society and democracy activists cheered the news from Turkey, there was official silence from Arab governments, as if the elections had occurred on another planet. Unlike the frontpage headlines in independent media, the state-controlled media in many Arab countries ignored, delayed or relegated the Turkish elections story to internal pages or the tail-end of their regular news.

By the third or fourth day, Arab media pundits reflecting their regimes' lines went out of their way to tell their respective audiences how different the situation in Turkey was from that of Arab countries. Some played up the chronic Kurdish, Armenian and Cypriot problems as if to dampen any Arab joy for their northern neighbor.

In some ways, this was reminiscent of cool or even hostile reactions by the same Arab autocratic regimes to Mauritania's giant step toward democracy. Libya's leader, Moammar Gadhafi, already well into his 38th year of dictatorial rule, had dismissed Mauritania's experience as an exercise "in backward tribalism." None of the Arab heads of state cared to attend the April 2006 inaugural celebration of

torious in the election of the mostly ceremonial president of the republic, an event which became controversial a few months earlier over the headscarf of the would-be first lady. Yet a challenge for the AKP in the short-run will be to deal with the army's request to use military means to crush the Kurdish rebels in the southeast. Erdogan has resisted so far in search of non-violent alternatives and support from regional and domestic players.

In the medium and longer term, the AKP has managed not only to become solidly mainstream in Turkish politics but also, through its own example, has paved the way for other Muslim democrats, in a manner akin to Christian Democrats in the West.

Beyond the Middle East, the latest democratic election in Turkey, coupled with the success of other religiously affiliated parties in recent years in other countries, from Indonesia to Mauritania, may be putting to rest the suspect proposition of "Muslim exceptionalism." If countries like Turkey can survive as democratic regimes with Muslim-majority populations, why can't others?

Saad Eddin Ibrahim is a human rights activist and founder of the Ibn Khaldun Center for Development Studies in Cairo, Egypt. Mensur Akgun is the program director for the foreign policy department at TESEV, an independent think tank in Istanbul, Turkey. The Yemen Times publishes this commentary in collaboration with the Common Ground News Service.



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### **Health**



# **Combating Female Genital Mutilation:** What is the role of health policy?

By: Sawsan Al-Refai **For Yemen Times** 

emale Genital Mutilation has since many decades been considered as a major challenge for human rights and women activists. In spite of many decades of studies and research as well as funds into anti-FGM pouring programming, the prevalence rates of this practice are still shocking. More than 100 million women and girls are estimated to have had FGM worldwide mainly in Africa.

The very slow reduction of practice rates compared to resources allocated to anti-FGM programmes has encouraged all stakeholders to pause for a moment in reflection on the past efforts. Evaluation of previous programs revealed significant gaps.

One main aspect of programming that was subjected to evaluation was the scope and approaches of anti-FGM programmes. It was found that many reports and studies have been produced to address the root factors maintaining FGM mainly tradition and socioeconomic structures of the communities where this practice is prevalent. Many programs have focused at community level on advocacy for girls and women empowerment and women rights considering that FGM is a practice that infringes most of the rights at stake including right to health. Nevertheless. lack of comprehensiveness when addressing FGM stood out as one of the main

obstacles on the path of FGM programmes. Programmes that addressed all health, social and economical consequences of the practice and engaged all stakeholders particularly those who make decisions or influence opinions were those of higher and more sustained impact. There has been also much evidence that contextualizing work is vital in developing the messages against FGM. There are no blanket approaches or one messages that could be applied in all regions.

Because FGM practice in Yemen is considerably low at the national level, compared to other countries in Africa, it is expected that FGM programmes are of both limited scope and effect. There are no reliable data sources on how prevalent the practice is within and outside the traditional coastal locations where practice in some districts may exceed 90%. There is almost no data neither on how many girls are at risk of FGM, nor on the complications of the practice.

The current efforts exerted by the civil society organizations in target areas are much appreciated, however these efforts are being dissolved time after time due to dwindling resources, lack of policy level commitment, as well as absence of advocacy networks at local levels. Furthermore, anti-FGM campaigns in many cases are unfocused and go in different strategic directions with diverse target groups. Lack of coordination and of comprehensiveness has resulted in incomplete contradicting or

messages to the communities. Consequently results were fragmented and not very long-lasting. There is a lot to be told on the sociocultural dilemma in Yemen when addressing FGM, but my main concern in relation to the above, is the extent to which health policy makers and polices are involved in the processes of combating FGM in Yemen. Since FGM programmers globally are now moving towards a prioritized and comprehensive approach, what is Yemen's position on this? More precisely, where do our

health officials stand on this? If intended to be introduced into the list of health priorities, FGM would be expected to fill a very bottom slot on the list. It is expected, but it is not right. It is well known that the ministry of health is facing large-scale challenges in terms of lack of health infrastructure, lack of qualified staff and devastating rates of mortality and morbidity. We cannot say that there is an excuse for health policy makers to put FGM on the margin though. We do not do the FGM victims justice by just looking at the current numbers that may not reflect the true magnitude of the problem. In areas where this practice is prevalent such as governorates of Hodeidah, Mahra, and Hadrmout, there are some indicators that the practice is not decreasing. Moreover, there is some alarming news that the practice is spreading in areas where it did not exist before and that it is actually increasing in other places due to external and internal migration of refugee communities.

Why is the health argument behind FGM?. FGM is a health problem that has grave health consequences. FGM victims do not only suffer physically also mentally and but psychologically. FGM prevents their entire well-being. In a place with such a very high rate of maternal mortality like Yemen, strategies, policies, and planned programs can not give deaf ears to FGM when talking about reproductive health for example. Reliable evidence about the effect of FGM, of various types, on obstetric outcome is now available. Most recently, a Lancet article published in 2006 (issue 367), showed that women with FGM are significantly more likely than those without FGM to have adverse obstetric outcomes and that risk seem to be greater with more extensive FGM. The new evidence states that FGM health impact extends beyond

the classical information we have. Medicalization of FGM is another main point which deserves the attention of the health authorities. As literacy increases and as more health staff become available, communities where FGM practice are starting to use health staff (including midwives and trained traditional birth attendants) to perform FGM in an attempt to fulfill their religious and tradition requirements on one hand and prevent complications of infection and bleeding on the other. Despite the ministerial decree that was issues in 2001 which banned all health staff from performing FGM, yet studies report that in places like Hadrmout where people are of high

income, health staff are tempted to perform FGM in return for generous financial incentives. Medicalization of FGM not only puts the whole accountability of health cadre at stake, but furthermore maintains the practice by dealing with the short term complications of FGM but not with the medium and long-term ones.

It is interesting to know that health is also used an argument to promote for the FGM practice. Many of those who believe in FGM spread the notion that the practice is beneficial for the sexual and reproductive health of girls and women and some go further than that by claiming that infant mortality is low among women with FGM. These false claims are unfortunately promoted for by religious and community leaders who usually have no medical or health knowledge.

Therefore, the argument that health policy makers should provide more attention to the issue is strong. It also entitles us to challenge the current trend of having civil society organizations that work in the field of women and human rights to carry the heavy burden. In communities with high illiteracy rates and strong traditional power relations, as is the case in most rural areas in Yemen, "rights" or "gender empowerment" messages against FGM may not be taken well as we may imagine. However a clear and committed "health" message may go through more easily, at least for the time being.

More attention should be provided to FGM from health policy makers.

Attention does not mean words on workshop banners or headlines in newspapers but should translate into policies and plans. Health authorities should be committed to spread the correct health messages on FGM and support them with reliable data from the ground on the health consequences of FGM. It is a shame that medical students and young physicians do not even know this Yemen. practice exists in Reproductive health in medical curricula should be inclusive of this practice and health staff including traditional birth attendants should be trained on its negative consequences and on dealing with its complications. Moreover health staff should be monitored and medicalization of FGM should be seriously addressed.

There is great need for data on health consequences of FGM on mothers and infants to be accessed by and transmitted to all those who maintain the practice including community and religion leaders, mothers, local health staff, and men. On the other hand, traditional means of advocacy and communication should be revisited to incorporate clear health information on FGM. It will be stating the obvious to say that all the above should be accompanied with improved reproductive health services at community levels.

There should be some space for FGM on the health policy agenda, otherwise a day may come when it climbs up the priority list by necessity. We do not want that day to come.





also required so as to help physicians to diagnose the medicine at the earliest possible stage.

Furthermore, females should take vaccines against the German Fever as another preventative measure. Parents should also follow up on keeping their children's medications up to date.

The Islamic religion orders us to take care of children, thus infected children must be treated well and tenderly, taking their agony into consideration. The entire family should also tolerate this disease even

very difficult to deal with. Thus the family should deal with the patient kindly, paying attention to his/her nutrition.

The purpose of the Skills Development Establishment on Cerebral Palsy is to help infected children feel independent. It also aims to increase the level of education and awareness and to spread a culture of education among the patients' mothers. The foundation physicians specialized in cerebral palsy as well as social workers are

to psychologically and physically deal with infected children.

The foundation also works nobly to involve infected children in the entire community through social activities and works to educate parents since most of them lack information about cerebral palsy.

Furthermore, it organized an educational seminar on cerebral palsy in Sana'a, last month. The seminar was mainly held for mothers. holds educational seminars where However, it was also attended by parents of children belonging to the foundation, primary care physicians,

Neven Al-Kaff, the executive manager of the foundation delivered a speech in which she stated that the foundation is "exerting every effort to develop a community of joint work and cooperation". She also said that the foundation has "humanitarian and charitable objectives." It offers financial support for poorer families in an effort to bring their infected children to the foundation and receive medication. "There are more than 75 male and female children out of 200 children registered. The 75 children are receiving medication inside the

The third educational seminar on Cerebral Palsy organized by Skills **Development Establishment.** 

#### By: Ismail Al-Ghabri

ducating mothers of children with cerebral palsy and how to deal with it properly, as well as finding relationships within the community, has been a priority for many health organizations in Yemen.

Simple mechanisms are the best

way to prevent Cerebral Palsy. For example, proper and safe pregnancy ensures the health of babies as well as the mothers. Hygiene awareness and proper nutrition are also key factors. Finally, pregnant mothers should be educated to the fullest extent. For example, they should not smoke, they should not use medicines during pregnancy, and they should avoid any form of radiation. Regular tests are



though the psychological aspect is invited to deliver lectures about how and the technical managers.

foundation," she added.



## **Special Report**

# Keeping ties with the past Yemeni Jews and modern challenges

**By: Mohammed Bin Sallam** 

ews have lived in Yemen for nearly 2500 years. They settled down in different parts of the country whether rural and urban. Remains of their life is still visible today through distinctive Jewish architecture whether in the decoration of buildings or the Jewish temples. European researchers who visited Yemen before the 26 September Revolution in 1962 documented more than 38 Jewish temples in Qa'a Al-Yahoud (Jewish Ground), which is called today, Qa'a Al-Ulifi.

In Aden, Jews were present in large numbers in the downtown areas where what was known as the "Jews' Avenue" used to exist. Some country people still remember their Jewish neighbors in mountainous villages. Beit Qatina, located in Mahwait province, is one of such hill stations where Jews settled down in the past. Their homes and shops still exist today as was in the past before they left the country decades ago

Yemeni Jews are natives of Yemen as they had been here for centuries before Christ and Islam. They had maintained their religion throughout the years and lived in communities within the Yemeni society until they migrated to the "Promised Land" in Jerusalem.

Yet Yemen also contains some religious sites visited by Jews from all placed. Salem Yousef Al-Shebzi, was a Jewish religious cleric, who lived in Taiz in the 16th Century after he transited from a nearby village. He is a wellrespected Yemeni Jew, and Jews from Yemen and all around the world come to visit his grave, known as the "Shebzi Grave". Although the exact location of the grave is not known, Jews flock to a site near Al-Qaherah Fort in Taiz city, and camp there for several hours. They take blessings from a small water stream in that area.

Between 1949 and 1950 majority of Yemeni Jews migrated. The migration operation was terms the 'the magic carpet', when more than 48,000 Yemeni Jews migrated to Israel. Thousands of the Yemeni Jews remained in Yemen, some held to their religion, while others converted to Islam whether by force or by choice. Some 350,000 Yemeni Jews have been converted to Islam since 1948.



A fort in Raidah - Amran where Muslims and Jews used to live together.

#### Yemeni Jews today

Today, the number of Jewish remnants in Yemen doesn't exceed one thousand living in small communities in Sana'a, Amran, and Sa'ada. They freely exercise their religious rituals and have several religious occasions, which they mark every year such as Eid Al-Gufran or Eid Naisan, Khudhaira, Mudhalat or the Return.

However, they are not integrated completely in all aspects of the public life such as the education system. True that they share the difficult living conditions with all Yemenis, yet their children are generally deprived of formal education in public schools. Yemeni Jewish children go to religious teaching sessions established by the elders of their community members. Recently a small school containing 25 students was constructed by the state for the Jews displaced from their homes because of war in Sa'ada north of Yemen.

Some Yemeni Jews visit their relatives in Israel via Jordan, and the Israeli authorities allow them to enter the state by granting them temporary residency documents, which is usually enclosed in their Yemeni passports.

#### A love affair

Because of the inadequate education provided for Yemeni Jews, the males are sent to either USA or Israel once they are 16 or 17 years old. There are approximately 20,000 Yemeni Jews in USA mainly concentrated in Brooklyn and New York, and around 400,000 in Israel. These men get used to the better life style and generally do not return home.

However, Yemeni Jews are very

much influenced by conservative traditions and therefore, decline to send their daughters abroad. They fear their daughters would be changed by the modern liberal practices of the west. This lead to an increasing number of Jewish girls compared to males in Yemen. Because of this fact and because of the proximity to Muslim Yemenis families some Jewish girls fall in love with Muslim boys and elope with them.

Jewish families in Yemen do not approve of their children marrying into other religions in fear for the Judaism. However, since this religion is passed through the females some Yemeni Jews eventually accept their daughters' decision to marry a Muslim especially if the father is not very particular about religion. Some other families are not so tolerant and to them, these eloping girls are as dead.

#### Saturday Sabbath

Yemeni Jews like most Jews around the world still maintain the Sabbath, which is dedicating Saturday's for rest and worship.

Although many Jews around the world do not maintain this practice anymore, Yemeni Jews take their Sabbath very seriously. They stay in doors and do not communicate with the outside world. They even close their mobile phones and abstain from shopping or slaughtering or any other form of earthy activities. The ritual starts from Friday before sunset when the house lady lights up candles representing Sabbath light until the sunset of the following day. The families usually recite some verses of the holy book especially verses relating to creation. The man of the house blesses the wine and bread and then divides the bread among his family



Yemeni dance from the South performed by Yemeni Jews in Israel. The group of 200 artistes tours the world presenting Jewish arts.

He had been to Yemen where he spent more than 45 days in Sana'a. Grafi's visit was mostly dedicated to addressing issues of Yemeni Jews, and investment opportunities in the country. All of his seven children are living in the U.S., while he spends most of the year traveling between the U.S. and Israel, and recently Yemen.

When he was barely nine years old, Grafi traveled with his family to Israel via Aden in November 1949. He had not been to Yemen since then, and was astonished by the development the country has seen in the last sixty years.

Grafi praised President Saleh's efforts in promoting development in Yemen.. He expressed his pride that Ali Abdullah Saleh is president of eh country and confirmed that in his opinion, Saleh is the best who can lead the country to progress and development, hoping that he can meet him one day.

He urged the president to allow Yemenis who had migrated out of the country, to visit their homes and villages. "At least to give permission to the older generations who were born in Yemen, if not to the new generations of over 70,000 Jews of Yemeni origin living in USA," he urged.

During his visit Garfi toured Taiz, Ibb, Aden, and his hometown in Sa'ada. "I found our home and even my

songs sung in Yemeni Jewish communities in Israel still maintain their Yemeni touch in lyrics and tune, although they had been modernized to an extent to suit the times.

"Yemenis preserved the handicrafts and traditional vocations they inherited from their ancestors. Many Yemenis in USA are still working in traditional trades such as goldsmith," said Grafi.

Yemenis in Israel, according to Grafi have taken up many professions and have integrated with Jews from other



The designs of the cloths clearly resemble the Yemeni Miwaz worn in the south governorates of Yemen.

#### Supporting the community Morris Harari, is another Yemeni Jew

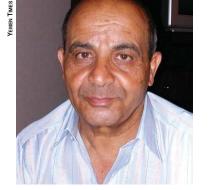
who had migrated from Sana'a in the late fifties. He currently lives in Bir Sebe', south of Israel. However, Harari is a more frequent visitor to Yemen as he visits the country at least four times a year and creates activities in support of the Jewish community in Yemen.

He had been to Yemen recently during the opening of the Jewish school for Sa'ada Jews. Harari provided the students with books, clothes and educa-





Morris Harari, continuous support to education of Yemeni Jews.



Shlomo Grafi, after an absence of almost sixty years, he came home.

members before they start eating dinner.

One of the reasons why older Yemeni Jews do not appreciate living in modern Jewish societies around the world is that the latter do not respect such traditional religious rituals any more.

#### **Reliving childhood memories**

Yemeni Jewish immigrants who had become influential in their new homes frequently return to Yemen in order to help their community. Shlomo Grafi is the director of the Yemeni Heritage Foundation in USA concerned with Yemeni Jews welfare around the world.

grandfather's home still intact. I was very delighted to relive the memories from my childhood," he commented. When his family migrated they left everything as is and just left. Muslims from the area moved into the houses and lived there for decades since then. When he introduced himself to the locals, he was received warmly with a hint of surprise as over sixty years had passed since he had been there.

He described living in Israel as joyful, particularly as Yemeni Jews never abandon their habits and traditions while living in Israel. They dance, sing and eat all the Yemeni popular foods, such as Saltah, Luhouh and Malouj (Yemeni bread).

He remembers a Yemeni Jew who had been in USA over 80 years of his life and still speaks old classical Hebrew and Arabic with Yemeni dialect. His main dish is Yemeni Saltah and has the Mada'ah (water pipe) and traditional Yemeni books in his house. He used to be nicknamed El-adwar in Yemen by his friends and when he reached American soil he named himself Edward. "You could never guess he had been in USA for 80 years, it's as he had just come from Yemen a few days ago," said Grafi about his friend.

Yemeni Jews in Israel still chew Qat and grow Qat trees in their house gardens or farms. The Israeli authorities does not ban Qat plantation. Grafi bragged that the most admired Israeli dance is actually Yemeni and is performed while wearing traditional southern Yemeni clothes with distinctive Yemeni work and embroidery. Even the



Jews Temple in Raidah, North West of Sana'a, a religious center for around 700 Yemeni Jews.

origins, just like they have done in USA.

Many Yemeni Jews have become well off businessmen in USA and would like to contribute to the development of Yemen. Grafi believes tourism in Yemen has great potentials and will make Yemen one of the most attractive tourist destinations around the world. He continued, "I was impressed with glass and marble industries and I urge Yemenis and non-Yemenis regardless of politics and religion, to invest in these sectors, as well as in tourism."

Grafi thinks that creating a historic museum for old documents and scriptures would be a great idea. He encouraged the state to invest in a heritage house where Yemeni legacy pre and post Islam is documented. He commented that many Muslims in Yemen have inherited old texts that are very valuable and must be collected and preserved in such a museum.

tional materials. He also provided help to Jews who needed medical or financial assistance.

Harari is married and a father of one daughter. He dedicates his efforts to helping Yemeni Jews especially regarding education. He periodically facilitates the Jewish school in Raidah, North West Sana'a, and contributes some money to pay teachers their salaries.

Harari has kept close ties with his homeland and still remembers the narrow lanes of his neighborhood in Qa'a Al-Yahoud (Jewish Ground), and takes pride for being a Yemeni. "I don't feel like a stranger at all when landing at Sana'a airport or face any kind of discrimination when touring the country," he said hinting at evidence of numerous Israeli stamps in his passport indicating his frequent travel to Israel.

He too praised President Saleh, thinking of him as the accomplisher of Yemeni unity, and wished for Saleh a long life.

"Shebzi Grave", a Jewish religious site in Taiz city, where Jews visit from all around the world. The star of David near the top of the dome had been vandalized, yet the shape could still be distinguished.

## Culture

## **Energize your soul with Ramadan**

By: Nisreen Shadad& Houriya Al-Sa'ady

amadan: the holy month which provided Muslims with spiritual energy to work and worship Allah, is quickly approaching. Furthermore, Mustafa Husny, one of the best-known Islamic preachers from Egypt has been invited to Yemen for Ramadan. "It is time to awaken our hearts and soften ourselves for Ramadan," said Husny.

10 September, 2007

Husny has been invited by the Life Makers Association, with support from the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, to speak about the internal reward of fasting for Ramadan.

Husny's words touched so many hearts in the audience that tears were even seen on numerous occasions. "Every action of the son of Adam is multiplied. Allah Almighty said 'fasting is Mine and I repay it. He leaves his appetites and food for My sake. The faster experiences two joys: a joy when he breaks his fast and a joy when he meets his Lord."

There are three important points he has mentioned to assist the devout ones in making their heart's alive to remember Allah. The first one is to be grateful to all the blessings from Allah: everything in our lives is a blessing from Him. The second is to be aware of your faults and sins; even if they are simple as we disobeyed the King of the earths and heavens. The last one is death, "live your life to the fullest and remember that we are but travelers in this earth and it will come the time to leave it."

Husny was born in 1978. He has a bachelor's degree in accounting and a diploma from the Preachers' Ethics Institute. He also has studied in the mosque under the hands of numerous scholars. Furthermore, he has studied under the expert tutelage, Amr Khalid, an international Islamic preacher and the founder of Life Makers Association.

For almost eight years, Husny has been working in the field of Da'awa. He became a founder of some Islamic television programs, particularly in Iqra channel. Furthermore, he has produced numerous Islamic cassettes.

The message he intends to convey in his programs is that life is utterly beautiful while attaining Islamic principles. Good Muslims have to see the beauty of their lives and live with a smile drawn in their faces. "When a person gets closer to Allah, he is going to taste the beauty of life."

The heart is the king of the whole body

The topics of Husny's lectures are entitled: 'how can you make your heart alive before Ramadan' and 'why do we love Allah'. Husny considers these two topics

b)

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Mustafa Husny is a preparer of Islamic programs in Iqra channel.



"The eyes of the man easily can reveal what's in his heart, therefore love them to let you enter their hearts," said Husny.

who will stay in a country for a short time. "Because I will stay in Yemen for two days only, I have to speak about the things that inspire the person and impact his heart."

The heart is like the "king of the whole body", according to Husny. "The prophet said that if this small piece of flesh--the heart--is good, the whole body will be good. Conversely, if it is corrupted, the whole body will thus be corrupted. This is thus important since love is obligatory upon each Muslim.

To worship, we need to love the Creator. To work sincerely, we need to love our works. Love is everywhere and must exist in our relationship with Allah. Further, love has to exist among friends, "None of you believe until you love your brother in the way in which he loves himself." Love as Husny defined is to give preference to your beloved's wishes than

The beginnings of Husny in the Da'awa field

"The life of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) and his struggle to make the message of mercy be omnipresent affected me a lot. The happiness we live in today, under the arms of Islam, is because of the Prophet's struggle. Now it is our turn to continue what our Prophet has begun. I began to talk about the beauty of Islam with my friends, then my neighbors and after that I intended to make my vision wider so more people could gain access. Thus I developed the Iqra channel to prepare programs."

#### Youths need youths

Many Islamic preachers that appear today are actually youths, though before preaching was almost monopolized by

"Youths need someone whose age is closer to them to understand their needs, they need to see youths like them who are devoted to their religion", Husny said.

"On the shoulders of youths, the world can be changed. Therefore, we should take great interest in them for they only need someone who understands their problems", according to Husny.

Also, it is important as to whether the preacher is young or old in order to understand different levels of association. To be in touch with people gives the preachers the opportunity to know what they are actually looking for and consequently, when presenting their thoughts, all people are keen to listen and change their behavior. "Knowledge must be their swords", Husny said.

#### The characteristics of the preacher

There exist two main characteristics for any preacher, but before attaining them he/she must be humble. The first characteristic is to truly love people. "The eyes of the man easily can reveal what's in his heart, therefore love them to let you enter their hearts", said Husny. The second is to be aware of the reality in which people live. It is thus vital to understand people's needs to be realistic and touch the reality of people.

Surely they will find many obstacles, and the most serious obstacle is the man's soul. Subsequently, the love of appearance and to be praised is the main ordeal the preacher has faced.

The preacher is an example for many; he must strive to be an example even when he\she gives up his/her rights. His/ her characteristics should be inspired from Quran.

#### The steps to be a successful preacher

Many youths still feel the difficulty of being obedient to Allah; however a strong belief that Allah is the Creator can lead to happiness and satisfaction. "We must understand that Allah has never asked us to do anything unbearable", Husny said. "Da'awa is not for a particular group,

each person is responsible of changing evils with whatever means he/she possesses. The preacher in his home needs less knowledge than the one who is preaching on television."

"The first step the preacher needs is proper and legitimate Islamic sciences. Secondly, he must maintain an awareness of his society's problems. Thirdly, he must strive to have good companions throughout life and lastly he needs a particular aim for which to work," he concluded.

The most important thing that Husny draws attention to is the generosity of Yemenis, however, some negatives still exist. For example, he observed in his country and in Yemen that the Mosques are still quite empty and the relationship



Faces & Traces is a cultural series of concise biographies of local or international famous and obscure personalities in fields such as literature, arts, culture and religion in which these individuals contribute affirmatively. It is a short journey in contemporary history, attempting to tackle numerous effective characters in human civilization.

## Zaid Mutee' Dammaj: Novelist with an Affection for Yemen

Prepared by: Eyad N. Al-Samman

aid Mutee' Dammaj (1943-2000), one of the most well-known Yemeni novelists, was born in the Yemeni district of Al-Naqilain, Ibb province. He received his preliminary education in his village's school and then entered Al-Ahmadia School where he earned his elementary certificate in 1975. He continued his secondary and university studies in Egypt where he joined the College of Law at the University of Cairo. Due to his literary interests, he discontinued his study at the College of Law and joined the journalism department in the College of Arts. He eventually had to discontinue his academic study because of his father's critical health condition and return to Yemen.

Dammaj grew up in a revolutionary and national ambiance. His father was a revolutionist and an opposer to the Imamate in Yemen and established the Liberal Political Party in Yemen. Dammaj started to contribute his political and social essays and first short stories to the New Yemen magazine and other local periodicals. His fictional works express national, political, and social events full of local characters and issues related to Yemeni society. Dammaj's literary works garnered major local attention due to his affection for Yemen and its original arts.

He started his political career and was elected as a member of the first Yemeni parliament in 1970. In 1976, he was appointed as the governor of Al-Mahweet province and in 1980 was appointed as the minister plenipotentiary and chargé d'affaires in Kuwait. In 1982, he was elected as a member of the permanent committee for the General People's Congress (GPC) and was the reporter of the GPC's political committee. In 1997, he was appointed as the minister plenipotentiary in the United Kingdom, which was his last governmental appointment. Dammai's fictional works started to appear as published short stories in newspapers and periodicals. His romantic literary works are diverse and include short stories, narratives and novels. His first published collection of short stories was entitled Tahish Al-Hawban (Al-Hawban's Beast, 1973) and included stories from

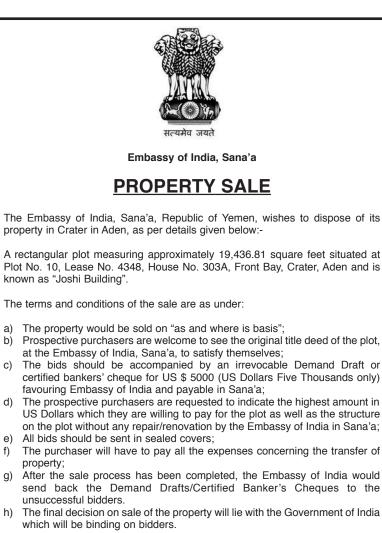


the ambiance of ancient Arabian knighthood. Subsequent collections of short stories included Al-Jisr (The Bridge, 1986), Ahzan Al-Bint Mayyasah (Grieves of The Girl Mayyasah, 1990), Al-Midfa'a Al-Asfar (The Yellow Cannon, 2001) and Al-Inbihar Wa Al-Dahshah (Gasp and Astonishment, 2000, a narrative book). Additionally, he published two novels, the first one entitled Ar-Rahina (The Hostage, 1984; published in English 1994 by Interlink Books, New York, USA) and the second novel entitled Al-Madrasah Al-Ahmadiah (Al-Ahmadiah School, still in press).

Dammaj's novel, The Hostage, is considered as one of the most famous novels in the Yemeni literary field and one of the 100 most important Arabic novels throughout the twentieth century. The novel discusses various social, political and humane issues during the Imamate prior to proclamation of republican rule in Yemen. The Hostage depicts the experience of a young boy who, having been taken hostage, in line with the Imam's general practice, as a pledge for his father's political obedience, is sent to serve as a young male attendant in the palace of the city governor. The young boy becomes an attendant (duwaydar) for the palace women and with time he is experiencing a love affair with one of the Imam's beautiful female relatives, before finally winning his freedom. The growth of the boy's political, social and personal awareness is movingly portrayed against a background of bygone times whose decadence and injustice are presented with vivid satiric force. Critics commented that The Hostage, with its diverse characters and fates embodies the Yemeni people's eagerness to demolish the Imams' prisons and build a better world. The novel was translated into many foreign languages including French, German, Indian, Russian and Serbian. Translations into other languages such as Spanish and Japanese are underway. In 1998, the novel was selected for the UNESCO project, "A Book in a Newspaper," and was published in its entirety on the pages of Al-Thawra official Yemeni newspaper. Zaid Dammaj passed away at the age of 57 on March 20, 2000, after more than a decade-long battle with cancer. He had a number of plans for projects of new novels and short stories. He passed away after sharing his soul through his words, leaving behind his works as an everlasting trust in the hands of his people.

the elderly.

among Muslims is still weak.



All those who are interested in bidding are requested to send their bids as soon as possible but not later than 31st October, 2007.



The ICRC is a neutral and independent international organization

The international Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Yemen is looking for suitable candidates to fill the following vacancy:

#### Water & Habitat Engineer (Water engineer or civil engineer)

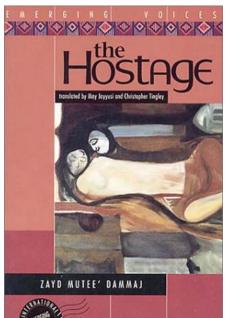
#### Your tasks:

- Carry out field assessments in the Sada'a region
- Define rural water and habitat construction projects and assist in preparation of plans and budget
- Manage implementation of the project

#### Selection requirements:

- Civil engineer diploma or equivalent in the field of water supply
- 2 to 3 years of professional experience in a similar position (knowledge of project implementation), would count to the applicant's advantage, but not a strict requirement
- Good knowledge of the Sada'a region, preferably having grown up or lived there, would count to the applicant's advantage, but not a strict requirement
- Good command of written and spoken English, as well as computer skills

Please submit your application (letter of motivation, CV, copies of certificates/diplomas) to the ICRC, Administration, Baghdad Street, No 19-Po.Box 2267, fax 467875, Sana'a. Please clearly indicate on the envelope the function you are applying for. Only short-listed candidates will be contacted. The last date for receiving the applications is 17.09.07.



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## **Ethiopian Community plants peace trees**

undreds of Ethiopian community members residing in Sana'a planted more than 2,700 green saplings in more than 37 islands centering Ethiopian Street.

Ethiopia street is more than one kilometer with a 40 meter width and is located in the northern part of Al-Jeraf area to the north of Sana'a.

The Ethiopian ambassador, Dr.Tawfeek Abdullah Ahmed was one of the participants. He told Yemen Times that they came up with the idea of planting trees and to take care of them. They will also continue watering the plants on a regular basis throughout the capital secretariat.

"The communities representing other countries have not taken such an initiative to add something beautiful to the aesthetic views of the streets named for a country or its capital in Yemen. Such action demands recognition. Our initiative will encourage other countries, as well as communities, to follow us". Dr. Tawfeek stated.

Furthermore, Dr. Tawfeek explained: "we seek to find a piece of land in the capital city of Sana'a to build a school, temple and a graveyard. Currently, we are negotiating with the Yemeni government to provide us with a piece of land good enough to realize such a goal "

"We face a big problem in burying our deceased who are Christians because their relatives refuse to bury them with Muslims. Consequently, their relatives are obliged to pay a large sum of money to transfer the deceased by air to Ethiopia. However, some of them can't afford this hefty sum, so the deaths remain in the hospital for a long peri-



Ethiopian ambassador planting seedlings in Ethiopia Road

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od of time," he declared.

Furthermore, on the occasion of the second millennium, a bazaar was staged sponsored by Al-Sa'eed Trading Company, a member of Hayel Sa'eed Anam group manufacturing companies in Yemen. The bazaar aimed at displaying works, such as leather shoes, clothes, crafts, man-made antiquities, made in Ethiopia.

It was attended by a significant number of Ethiopian residents.

Moreover the mayor of Adisababa. Birhanu Deressa, visited the bazaar. He told Yemen Times, "The main purpose of his visit to Yemen is to sign an agreement between Sana'a and Adisababa. Our two countries have a long history of relations from the time of Queen Sheba until now-

3.500 years. There are thousands of Yemeni people living in Ethiopia particularly in Adisababa and also Ethiopians come here to live. Now this natural affinity of the two peoples has to be consolidated and strengthened by formal ties. This is the purpose of my visit to Yemen. I am visiting also to exchange experiences between the two countries on urban management. Furthermore I came here to extend cultural values and a way of life, making sure that our citizens have the best of circumstances. Yemenis are living in Ethiopia and Ethiopians are living in Yemen. So, it is a relationship that will encourage investment between the two countries. There are many Yemeni people who would like to invest in Ethiopia and Ethiopians would like to come

here and do some business. Thus, it is important to have a formal agreement that is governed under the rules of law."

He also said, "The Yemeni government was very enthusiastic because I was invited to come here by the mayor of Sana'a. Thus, this is a relationship that is going to continue. Before signing any formal agreement, I want to stress that Yemen and Ethiopia already have good relations. We share many common values. Ethiopia is a country of Muslims and Christians. I even think that there are more Muslims in Ethiopia than in Yemen. This is a tie between people, religion, and culture.

"This is my first visit here and I would like to come again because we have such a vibrant community here. Planting trees is one of the ways in which we exchange experience because one thing that Yemen is in desperate need of is trees. Thus far, we have planted six hundred millions trees. So, we can supply Yemen with saplings and experience on how to plant and take care of them " he maintained

I found the Yemeni people so cooperative and so friendly," he concluded.



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