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Inside:



5
Qat causes infant disfigurement



12
Blood brokers: A source for needy patients



14
Hadramout valley: A tourism treasure trove

After Shibam... Zabid attracts attention of Germany

By: Hamed Thabet

ZABID, Nov. 25 — The Yemeni-German project, "Economic Development of Historic Cities in Yemen" began its first activities in Zabid yesterday, with the purpose of developing the city and its inhabitants.

Dr. Irene Fellmann, Development Cooperation Counselor for the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, said, "The project, which is under the auspices of German company GTZ, will cost around 7.5 million Euros and be expected to finish in 2015. The Development Social Fund is contributing around 2.5 million Euros, with the Federal Republic of Germany covering the remaining cost."

The announcement was welcomed by locals in Zabid, who expressed their happiness through traditional dancing, singing and performing horse dances. "Zabid is a world famous city, and has rightly so- been placed on the list of World Heritage sites, thus giving it great potential," declared Germany's ambassador in Yemen, Michael Klor-Berthold, who added, "We want to contribute in developing the city so that its World Heritage status is not only maintained, but also and foremost that everyday lives Zabid's inhabitants are improved through a combination of restoration and development of the city's economy. Working con-



Locals in Zabid express their happiness of the project through traditional dancing.



tracts will increase, there will be more job opportunities, and demands for building materials and traditional construction skills will be created. Families who participate in preservation efforts are expected to increase their household income by an annual average of 20% until 2010."

The ambassador also confirmed that the project puts particular focus on helping women to profit from the economic development measures.

Recently, many reports and studies warned that Zabid may be removed from the list of World Heritage sites if expansion of new construction, which threatens

Zabid's historic and cultural buildings, continues. "We will not be lenient with anyone who wants to destroy historic places in Hodeidah, especially in Zabid," said Ahmed Al-Hajri, governor of Hodeidah, explaining that anyone attempting to demolish valuable antiquities in the city would be punished. He added, "This historic city is not only for Zabid's residents, but for all Yemenis, and it is our responsibility to do our best to protect what is left."

According to Al-Hajri, many of Zabid's ancient monuments and historical places have been blotted out. "Today we and the

German government want to start a new page and join hands to restore this city." He continued, "Everyone here should know that we are not here to confiscate lands or to take the place of the city's residents. Our only purpose is to serve."

Abdullah Al-Methwahi, General Manager in Zabid, demanded, "Demolishing new buildings in Zabid, which represent new architecture, is very necessary, because this city must only be historical, as in former times. However, in order to achieve this goal, we need a factory for making yajour (a brick material used to construct traditional buildings);

we have this material, but due to a lack of financial support we cannot do anything with it. Also, we should teach locals here how to use yajour whenever they want to repair their houses." Al-Methwahi additionally noted that construction materials should be affordable for Zabid's inhabitants.

Ahmed Al-Baishi, whose house dates back to ancient times, was the first resident to cooperate with authorities in restoration efforts, agreeing to put control of his house under control of the German Embassy and local assembly to save it from collapse.

Since 2000, Germany's government has provided funds supporting efforts by the Yemeni Ministry of Culture for the

preservation and economic development of Shibam, another World Heritage site. "Shibam is an example of a successful project. We want to bring the same success to Zabid," mentioned the German ambassador.

To date, more than half of Shibam's spectacular 6-9 story mud buildings have been upgraded and rehabilitated. Traditional skills for mud construction created a large demand for labor. "The project helped not only to create jobs for traditional builders, it also developed the city's economic situation through trade, shop owners, tourism, agriculture and women's handicrafts," confirmed the ambassador.

Continued on page 3

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Members of press face death penalty over publication charges

By: Mohammed Bin Sallam

SANA'A, Nov. 25 — Editor-in-Chief of Al-Share' Weekly Nayef Hassan, the paper's managing editor Nabeel Subei and Mahmoud Taha, a reporter, appeared on Saturday before Chief Judge of the State Security Penal Court Ridhwan Al-Namer at the first hearing for a lawsuit filed against the newspaper by the Defense Ministry.

At the hearing, the press members demanded that the court adjourn the hearing so that they can appoint a lawyer to

defend them. The judge then accepted their request and adjourned the trial until December 8.

The three journalists were summoned last Wednesday to appear before the court after the prosecution investigated them regarding the lawsuit by the Defense Ministry against them for publishing a story about voluntary fighters who support the army in the Sa'ada fighting. The indictment demanded that the three pressmen be executed under new legal provisions.

Referring Al-Share' Weekly to State

Security Court provoked protests at domestic and international levels because the court specializes in terrorism and not in publication or press issues.

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) warned last August that the lawsuit filed against the newspaper, followed by a raid on the newspaper's head-office, is a dangerous assault on the independent press in Yemen. The federation condemned charges filed by the Yemeni government against the weekly, accusing it of threatening national security.

Continued on page 3

Upcoming elections won't be customary, JMP warns

By: Almgid Dahesh Mojalli

SANA'A, Nov.25 — The Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) warned the ruling General People's Conference (GPC) against making any unilateral decision regarding the constitution of the Supreme Committee for Elections and Referendum. The JMP called on the GPC to cease its pride, asking it to reconsider its policies that push the country to more crises and political congestion.

In its Supreme Council meeting on Nov. 22, a JMP parliamentary and legal team announced its rejection of any decision made solely by the GPC, either by parliamentary majority or other means. The JMP affirmed that it sticks to the recommendations of the European Union (EU) Elections Observation Mission regarding upcoming elections.

Mohammed Al-Sabri, JMP spokesman, clarified that contents of the agreement document regarding the constitution of committee judges was merely a disputed suggestion in the working schedule after the presidential elections which hasn't been endorsed yet.

According to Al-Sabri, the GPC has no right to appoint judges to the committee. "The ruling party wants to appoint committee judges, but we abide by Constitution laws. In case the GPC carries out their plan, it will bear the responsibility of its decision because elections won't be customary as a result." Al-Sabri said.

Continued on page 3

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In brief

New policewomen to work in security services

Nov. 25 — The police training school in Sana'a currently is preparing to receive a new group of Yemeni women for training in security tasks. Senior school teacher Abdulbasit Hayel, reports that 455 women from every Yemeni governorate will receive security training. "Registration and testing will begin Dec. 1 for those women willing to work in security services," Hayel notes, adding that the new policewomen will be distributed among civil, passport and airport services.

Yemen suggests Islamic Fund for Cultural Development

Nov. 25 — At the fifth Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers, which kicked off its activities last Wednesday, Yemen suggested establishing an Islamic Fund for Cultural Development in order to assist the conference's member countries in implementing a plan for cultural development.

At the meeting, Yemeni Culture Minister Mohammed Al-Mafalhi reviewed Yemen's vast Islamic transcripts and historical cities with regard to establishing a cultural strategy for the Islamic world.

Yemeni investment and tourism potential touted in Frankfurt

Nov. 25 — Abdulkarim Abu Talib, director of the Abu Talib Travel and Tourism Group and a member of the Tourism Promotion Board, reviewed in Frankfurt the potential for investment and tourism in Yemen, as well as grants under Yemen Investment Law, which encourage investors and business people to have a share in Yemen.

At a promotion symposium, Abu Talib noted that the Yemeni tourism and investment market remain in their infancy; however, they are developing rapidly and remarkably. He further affirmed that Yemen currently is moving toward more concern for tourism and investment, commenting that the indicators of this are many.

ADEN

Conference on drug smuggling, money laundering

Nov. 25 — The General Authority for Post and Postal Savings is participating in the first international conference to combat drug trafficking and money laundering currently being held Nov. 24-28 in Libya. Abdulazim Al-Qadasi, director general of Aden's postal region, gave an extensive presentation about the role of the Yemeni post in fighting drug trafficking and money laundering.

Aden security seizes drugs, counterfeiters

Nov. 24 — Yemeni security apparatuses in Aden arrested several suspects involved in trafficking and distributing drugs and counterfeit money from different countries. Aden security director Abdullah A. Qirat reported that security forces arrested suspects carrying 55.1 grams of hashish. Additionally, the suspects were trafficking and distributing drugs and hashish substances. Security forces further arrested a group of foreigners possessing counterfeit money from countries including the United States and Saudi Arabia. The source did not identify the foreigners' nationalities. Qirat confirmed that all suspects and their possessions have been referred to the appropriate prosecution to be tried judicially.

SANA'A

Campaign against weapons continues its success

Nov. 25 — Interior Undersecretary Mohammed Abdullah Al-Qawsi stated on Friday that the campaign against bearing arms in Yemen's provincial capitals so far has netted 42,616 weapons violating the decision since the campaign began Aug. 23.

Approximately 40,000 arms have been seized at surrounding security checkpoints and city entrances, while more than 2,500 arms remain inside the cities.

Authorities free elderly man, detain son

By: Almigdad Dahesh Mojalli

SANA'A, Nov. 24 — Security forces negotiated the release on Friday of Mohammed Al-Mutawakil, 95, from his kidnappers, but his son Abdul-Jabbar, 45, remains in prison.

Al-Mutawakil was kidnapped in Khawlan, 25 km from Sana'a, for six months when he refused to sell a land connected to the Ministry of Endowment in Jibla. Abdul-Jabbar Al-Mutawakil, son of the kidnapped cleric, recounted the story: "Our relatives in Khawlan tried many times to make my father sell the endowment land to them. When my father refused, they kidnapped me for one week a year ago to force my father to sell the land. Then, after they released me, I lodged a complaint to the court."

When the kidnappers discovered that Abdul-Jabbar had lodged a complaint against them, they decided to kidnap his



Mohammed Al-Mutawakil

father to force both Abdul-Jabbar to drop the complaint and his father to sell the land.

On July 14th, 2007, Mohammed Al-Mutawakil went to the mosque to pray, not knowing that he would spend the

next six months in a pitch-black room apart from his family. "My father went to the mosque to pray. We waited for him that day until 2 pm, then we looked for him in all the hospitals in Ibb. When it got dark, we knew that he had been kidnapped and informed the police. I learned from my father that a landcruiser intercepted him after he exited the mosque. Four people took him into the car and drove off quickly. While escaping, they ran into a car and gave its driver ten thousand riyals because they didn't want to waste time or be caught," Abdul-Jabbar said.

According to Abdul-Jabbar, who gave Yemen Times exclusive phone interview from his prison, father was put in a very small, dark room in Maswar village, in Khawlan district. Mohammed Al-Mutawakil wasn't allowed to leave the dirty room for six months. Furthermore, he was prevented from praying Friday and Eid prayers in the mosque, although

such is obligatory in Islam. "The kidnappers dealt with my father very harshly, though we are relatives. They used to give him rotten food, and never allowed him to meet anybody at all for six months," Abdul-Jabbar explained.

After six months, the Ministry of Interior was able to force the kidnappers to release Al-Mutawakil but instead of arresting them, the ministry sent Abdul-Jabbar to prison to comply with conditions set by the kidnappers. "The Ministry of Interior called me and told

me to come and pick up my father. But when I arrived, they sent me to prison. This was the kidnappers' condition for releasing my father. The kidnappers complained that I defamed them by lodging a complaint in court after they had kidnapped my father and asked the ministry to send me to prison to exonerate them. Ministry officials agreed with some Parliament members to send me to prison for a few days but I have been here since Nov. 11th, 2007," Abdul-Jabbar complained.

IUCN commission visits Socotra



By: Musa'ed Suwaileh
For the Yemen Times

SOCOTRA, Nov. 24 — Recently, a specialized commission from the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), along with Minister of Water and the Environment, Abdul-Rahman Fadhle Al-Eryani, paid a visit to Socotra to explore the island's natural features, as well as confirm information indicated in the file to nominate Socotra as an official World Heritage site. David Sheppard, head of the international mission, told the Yemen Times about the IUCN's mission and the importance of putting Socotra on the World Heritage List. He went on to say, "The purpose of the visit to Socotra is to get acquainted with Socotra as a first step towards nominating it as a World Heritage site. It is very important to include Socotra on the list because it has a large number of plants, birds and so on which are endemic to the island, so it is very important that these unique fauna and flora are preserved."

The IUCN is the body responsible for nominating World Heritage sites; additionally, it is the body that advises the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to accept nominations. In July 2008, the IUCN committee will

meet to discuss the nomination of Socotra as a World Heritage site.

The IUCN has more than 50 member states all over the world, with offices in Africa and Asia, as well as regional offices, such as the regional office in Jordan.

Before ending visits to protected areas, David Sheppard delivered a lecture in the premises of the Socotra Conservation and Development Program (SCDP), in Hodaibo, the biggest city in Socotra. The lecture was attended by the Minister of Water and the Environment as well as local authority members in Hodaibo and Qalinsiyah districts and governmental office officials. The lecture was about qualifications for Socotra to be placed on the World Heritage List. Future challenges that might need to be met were also addressed.

He further congratulated the Yemeni government and Socotra's locals on Socotra's qualifications, especially those related to nature. He also advised the government and community to enhance opportunities of getting Socotra accepted as a World Heritage site during the 2008 IUCN meeting in Canada.

He admired what he had seen and heard during his visit to the island's protected areas. He commented on the performance of the SCDP, saying: "I know the good it is doing."

Efforts exerted to improve condition of children in Yemen

By: Ismail Al-Ghabri

SANA'A, Nov. 24 — On the occasion of International Children's Day, official parties announced that they will spare no effort to reduce child labor, trafficking, and smuggling, as well as amend the Juveniles' Law.

Huda Al-Ban, Minister of Human Rights, highlighted methods undertaken by the ministry to protect children against abuse, saying, "The ministry has created a hotline for complaints and notifications of child abuse or any human rights violations."

Huda went on to say that officials in the ministry receive reports of infringement, adding, "We find juveniles imprisoned, while others are abused in police stations."

Role of the Ministry of Human Rights

The ministry is attempting to increase the legal age of children to 18 years. Parliament members are currently discussing the amendment. If passed, Yemeni law will comply with conventions and agreements Yemen signed regarding children's rights.

In Yemen, the Juveniles' Law sets the legal age of a child at 15 or younger. The law violates a children's rights document ratified by Yemen; the document establishes children as 18 years of age or younger.

Role of the Democratic School

Jamal As-Shami, principal of the Democratic School, said that Children's Parliament copes with common practices which violate children's rights in Yemen. A committee was formed to defend juveniles, as well as to follow up on their issues. The com-

mittee is also in charge of conducting prison visits to ensure that the prisons are free of children. It is also appointed to report incidents of child labor. Some reports reveal that juveniles are still detained, demanding the amendment of the Juveniles' Law. Child labor and gross truancy were also highlighted in the reports.

The reports conducted by Children's Parliament further indicated that there are some shortcomings in girls' education and an absence of girls in schools, due to reasons including a lack of school bathrooms and co-education schools in rural areas. According to the reports, these reasons discourage females from attending schools. There are about two million children absent from school, of which 500,000 are exposed to child labor.

Families encourage child smuggling

In her statement, Ammatul-Razaq Ali, Minister of Social Affairs and Labor, confirmed that "children smuggled to Saudi Arabia over the past year amounts to 900 children, ranging in age from 6 to 14."

Ammatul-Razaq also pointed out that Yemen and Saudi Arabia have agreed to implement practical solutions to reduce the smuggling of Yemeni children to Saudi Arabia, and have sought help from international experts.

She further explained that most of the children who enter Saudi Arabia are not kidnapped, but encouraged by their parents. She attributed this to the fact that most Yemeni families believe children should work.

Child Labor Law 2

Abdu Mohammed Al-Hakimi, Deputy Minister of Social Affairs and Labor,

pointed out, "Labor Law 2 of 1995 has been amended, giving importance to juveniles or their labor. The ministry has signed a number of agreements and recommendations to reduce child labor."

Absence of children's culture

The Ministry of Culture plays a vital role in developing and expanding children's perceptions. Najeeba Hadad, Deputy Minister of Culture for Popular Arts and Theater and also an expert in children's affairs, stated, "The Ministry of Culture plays a very important role in developing relationships between the child and his/her family. It was not long ago that a children's culture was absent and ignored. Illiteracy spread throughout the country. So, a children's culture is very important in developing a child's personality, as well as expanding his/her perceptions, imagination and creativity."

Overview

In the first half of the twentieth century, international concerns began to focus on children's rights. In 1924 the Geneva Declaration for Children's Rights was announced. Since then, there have been more and more concerns about children's rights. A number of universal conventions and agreements were successively issued, comprising many articles related to children's rights. More importantly, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was issued in 1948, followed by the Declaration of Children's Rights, approved by the United Nations General Assembly in 1959, and then the Declaration of Women's and Children's Protection in case of emergency and armed conflicts in 1974.

Arab academic researchers call for Islamic Jerusalem studies

SANA'A, Nov. 24 — The newly established Humanities and Social Science Research Center at the University of Science and Technology organized its first international academic conference on humanities and social sciences under the theme, "Introducing the New Field of Islamic Jerusalem Studies to the Arab World."

Jointly organized by the Center for Islamic Jerusalem Studies at Al-Maktoum Institute, located at Scotland's University of Aberdeen, and the Humanities and Social Science Research Center at the University of Science and Technology in Sana'a, the conference seemingly was a success.

Approximately 250 attended, including the university's top management team, several Yemeni university presidents, Arab ambassadors or their representatives and professors and lecturers from Yemeni and other Arab universities.

Attendees first were introduced to the new field, which was developed in the U.K., and were interested in the field and its various aspects, including pro-

moting an Islamic Jerusalem as a model for conflict resolution, peaceful coexistence, security and multiculturalism.

The field's founder, professor Abd Al-Fatah Al-Awaisi, explained its historical development in the U.K., particularly at Al-Maktoum Institute, over the past decade, further highlighting the field's future development, especially "transferring" it to the Arab and Muslim worlds.

Attendees also heard from two members of Al-Maktoum Institute, Khalid Al-Awaisi, who discussed the rediscovered boundaries of the Islamic Jerusalem region, and Maher Abu-Munshar, who introduced Islamic Jerusalem as a model for multiculturalism and diversity. Another Arab world researcher presented various papers on new understanding and theories within the field.

The conference yielded two practical recommendations for the Arab world, both of which were approved unanimously. First, Yemeni universities should teach Islamic Jerusalem studies at the undergraduate level and second,

the Arab Universities League should encourage all Arab universities to teach the course at the undergraduate level.

Founder Al-Awaisi noted, "This is an exciting time for this new field as it transfers a well-established field from the U.K. to a much needier Arab world."

Al-Maktoum Institute's acting principal Malory Nye stated, "This is the first time we've participated in such an event in the Arab world to promote our cutting edge research in Islamic Jerusalem studies. It's pleasing to hear of the conference's good response in the Arab world."

Also director of the Center for Islamic Jerusalem Studies, Al-Awaisi says Islamic Jerusalem studies is a new and exciting field that has been well-received in the Arab world for its inclusive and multicultural agenda.

"We're looking forward to a series of similar conferences in capitals across the Arab and Muslim worlds to promote multiculturalism and diversity during these times of ignorance and alienation," he concluded.

Trading measures hinder setting up cancer treatment device

By: Muhammed Al-Fa'iq
For the Yemen Times

SANA'A, Nov. 24 — In an illegal action, the director of the National Center for Cancer Swellings confiscated the bank guarantee of the company which implemented a project to set up a linear accelerator to treat cancerous tumors. The device, valued at \$2,660, was confiscated under the pretext that the time limit given for setting up the plant had expired. The device was supposed to be set up last September, according to the contract signed by the center and Al-Masiyah Company for Trading and Information Technology.

Previously, Dr. Nadeem Mohammed Sa'eed, director of the National Center for Cancer Swellings, who is also in charge of the National Committee for Atomic Energy headed by Minister of Electricity and Power, Mustafa Bahran, accused Bahran of hindering the plant and sending soldiers belonging to the committee to the center to prevent the company's engineers from entering the plant site. He also confirmed that Al-Masiyah committed to abide by the contract agreed upon, and in case the company takes the matter to court, it will win the case and be com-

pensated.

Mohammed Ateeq, manager for Al-Masiyah, considered the confiscation of the bank guarantee illegal, because the time limit for the plant is nine months from the date of receiving the work site, not from the date of signing the contract, as stipulated in the eighth clause of the contract signed with the Center. The Center refused to give the site to the company, hindering it until the date of submission expired. The National Committee for Atomic Energy also refused to stamp the documents and proposed amendments to the room designed for the linear accelerator, submitted to the company in mid-March. He further affirmed that the company resorted to a lawsuit in an attempt to seek justice and compensation for the company's losses.

Ateeq also noted that the company committed itself to abide by all the articles written in the contract according to the ministers' council resolution No. 262 of 2006. But the National Center for Cancer Swellings and the National Committee for Atomic Energy were in dispute with each other, resulting in hindering the plant and implementing it in the determined period.

Yemeni PM calls rich countries to open its borders to African refugees OIC donates to African refugees in Yemen

SANA'A, Nov. 25 — While United Nations (UN) agencies continue distributing aid to Somali citizens who fled their country due to civil war, Yemeni Parliament members (MPs) called for neighboring countries to open their borders for the African refugees.

On Saturday, MP Abdul-Aziz Jabbari requested that rich neighboring countries assist Yemen in accepting African refugees and asked the government of Yemen to install refugee camps. Almotamor.net, the website for the ruling party, quoted Jabbari as saying "the refugees should not be allowed to leave camps except in certain cases due to their causing security problems."

MP Bassam al-Shater, member of the external committee participating with the Committee of Human Rights in preparation of a report on the refugees, confirmed that in case African refugees head for the Gulf states, they will be directly deported to Yemen because there is no agreement signed between those states and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as is the case with Yemen.

Yemen is the only signatory state in the Arab Peninsula for receiving refugees.

The call of the Parliament members came two days after the official Yemeni media reported that sixty-five people, including three children, drowned in the Gulf of Aden while trying to cross

from Somalia to Yemen. About 15 others swam to safety after a vessel carrying the migrants sank close to Aden, said the Saba news agency, adding that the survivors were Somali nationals who were directed to a refugee camp in Lahj, north of Aden.

According to an AP reporter, Yemeni fishermen who saw floating bodies reported the incident to the army, which spearheaded the rescue mission and body recovery operation. The Yemeni navy and local fishermen pulled 50 bodies from the sea, while 15 bodies were found on the beach.

The dead migrants were buried in a mass grave, according to residents who witnessed the burial.

According to the UN, more than 400 Somalis perished while attempting to sail to Yemen in the Gulf of Aden this year alone. Almost 500 are still missing.

Strife between the interim government and Islamic groups have pushed impoverished Somalis to try their fortunes in neighboring Yemen via a risky sea journey.

Early this month, Yemen discovered 40 dead Somalis on the shores of Abyan. They were thrown overboard by human trafficking syndicates preying on a desire by poor Africans for a better life.

In related news, The UN World Food Program (WFP) announced on Sunday a first-ever contribution from the

Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) of \$300,000 to support the UN food agency's work in Somalia, Benin and Yemen.

The donation, which is from the OIC's Islamic Solidarity Fund, includes \$200,000 for Somalia, \$50,000 for Benin and \$50,000 to assist Somali refugees in Yemen.

Ghazi Bakhsh, Executive Director of the OIC Islamic Solidarity Fund, said that they will be signing a Memorandum of Understanding on future cooperation with the UN food agency.

"We are keen on cooperating with UN organizations and are in the process of signing a Global Framework Agreement with WFP that would provide the basis for our future humanitarian assistance in the Islamic world," Bakhsh said.

WFP Somalia Country Director Peter Goossens said the \$200,000 for Somalia would help ease pressure on WFP food supplies.

WFP aims to feed a total of 1.2 million people in Somalia in 2007. This includes people who fled their homes in Mogadishu during recent fighting and farming families short of food in the Middle and Lower Shabelle regions in the south of the country because of rain shortfalls, insecurity and an influx of displaced people.

"We thank the OIC for this donation, which is very timely, especially after

our appeal for more funds. We hope other donors can do the same and help us avoid a gap in our food assistance," Goossens said.

In addition to its operations in Somalia, the WFP has been providing assistance to Somali refugees in Yemen since 1992. Its current operation — valued at about \$3.6 million — provides some 34,000 Somali refugees, including women, children and new arrivals, with a total of 6,346 metric tons of food.

"We appreciate this generous contribution from OIC's Islamic Solidarity Fund, especially since it comes at a critical time, when the increasing number of refugees arriving in Yemen has put great pressure on the limited resources of both the Yemeni Government and WFP," said WFP Yemen Country Director Mohamed El-Kouhene.

The \$50,000 donation to Benin comes at a key moment with people suffering from devastating floods. The WFP already provides daily meals for 60,000 pupils across the country. The WFP also assists 90,000 internally displaced people and refugees in Benin and Togo, as well as 24,000 people living with HIV/AIDS.

"We welcome this donation, which will help WFP purchase some of the food aimed at feeding pupils in 400 schools," said Jacques Roy, WFP representative in Benin.

Israeli, Palestinian leaders in U.S. for talks

By: Jeffrey Heller

WASHINGTON (Reuters) — Israeli and Palestinian leaders arrived in Washington on Sunday two days before a conference in nearby Annapolis that they hope will launch talks to end 60 years of conflict and create a Palestinian state.

Tuesday's meeting in Maryland, where Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert will be joined by many Arab ministers, aims to agree a resumption of negotiations on a Palestinian peace with Israel.

The talks come seven years after a summit at Camp David hosted by President George W. Bush's predecessor Bill Clinton collapsed.

In a boost for the organisers, diplomats said Syria, long at daggers drawn with Israel and Washington, had agreed to attend.

"We consider the Annapolis conference a launching pad for final status negotiations that will lead to the realisation of the Palestinian people's dream of establishing a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its

capital," Abbas aide Nabil Abu Rdainah told Reuters after the Palestinian leader's arrival.

Olmert, who also landed in Washington on Sunday, told reporters on his plane before leaving that he hoped Annapolis would launch serious negotiations on "all the core issues that will result in a solution of two states for two peoples".

In Jerusalem, Israeli police set up roadblocks to try to avert violence after a security alert. Israeli troops killed three Palestinian gunmen in raids in Gaza and the West Bank.

Like Clinton in his final year in office, Bush hopes he can clinch a deal before he steps down in January 2009, a feat that could burnish his administration's reputation in the Middle East after years of controversy over the U.S. occupation of Iraq.

However, all sides have played down the prospect of any breakthrough at Annapolis or afterwards. Abbas, Olmert and Bush all face severe limitations on implementing any agreement over borders and the fate of Palestinian refugees and Jerusalem.

Limitations

Abbas has lost control of the Gaza Strip to Iranian-linked Hamas Islamists, Olmert is unpopular with voters, not least due to corruption accusations, and faces opposition to concessions within his own coalition. Bush has barely a year left in power.

Israeli and Palestinian negotiators have so far failed to agree on a joint document on how to proceed with negotiations.

Abu Rdainah said they would meet again in Washington on Sunday and Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni told reporters on Olmert's plane she expected the two sides to agree on a document to "launch the (peace) process, not solve (the conflict)."

Both sides are expected to reaffirm commitments under the U.S.-backed "road map" to peace, agreed in 2003. Israel has made any final deal conditional on Abbas preventing attacks on its citizens. Palestinians say Israel's occupation of the West Bank undermines their efforts and want Israel to halt settlement.

The mere attendance at talks with Israel of Arab states like Saudi Arabia and Syria,

which have had cold-to-hostile relations with the Jewish state, is likely to be hailed in Israel and Washington as a major achievement at Annapolis.

Livni said the Arab presence boosted chances for success, saying that without Arab support, there was not "a single Palestinian" who could reach a deal with Israel.

The prospect of better ties with Arab neighbours could also help Olmert sell any deal.

Non-Arab Iran, which the United States has ostracised for developing nuclear technology, has not been invited and said on Sunday the conference would erode Palestinian rights. Hamas's armed wing vowed to keep fighting Israel and said any concessions would be tantamount to "treason".

Livni had said she believed Syria — which wants its claim to the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights on the agenda — would attend the meeting after the inclusion of a forum on "comprehensive peace in the Middle East", where the Golan could be mentioned.

Continued from page 1

Zabid attracts attention

In September, the project in Shibam was awarded the prestigious Aga Khan Award for Muslim Architecture, one of the most renowned international architectural awards. In its decision, the jury highlighted that "The Shibam Urban Development Project has approached the city as a living community rather than a historical artifact frozen in time."

The ambassador concluded, "This shows the philosophy of the project: not only the preservation of unique historical architecture, but equally the improvement of living standards in the city. What was accomplished in Shibam can be realized in Zabid."

Members of press face death penalty

It also criticized the government for trying the newspaper in a state security court, which is usually concerned with terrorism, adding, "If convicted, the suspected journalists will be executed."

"We are shocked to see Yemeni authorities resorting to penal prosecution and directing charges to members of the press, and such charges may risk the lives of innocent journalists," Aidan White, IFJ Secretary-General, said. "This issue has a terrible effect, as the media will fear publishing any reports criticizing the government or the army in order to keep its personnel safe."

The Defense Ministry filed a legal action last July against Al-Share' weekly after the newspaper published a series of stories and reports about clashes between the Yemeni army and Houthi followers in the northern province of Sa'ada.

On July 30, ten armed men riding in a

car with military plates raided the newspaper's office in search of chief editor Hassan, who was unavailable in his office at that time. The armed men threatened to kill him in the presence of newspaper employees.

Representing six hundred thousand journalists in 114 states, IFJ announced its support for the protests staged by the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate (YJS), which warned that referring the case to penal prosecution is a dangerous precedent that may have bad consequences for journalists. According to the syndicate, this precedent may have a negative impact on the constitutional and legal pillars upon which the journalistic profession has been built since the establishment of a unified state. "This may lead to abolishing the constitutional and legal protection of freedom of press and expression," the syndicate went on to say.

Marwan Dammaj, YJS Secretary-General, had earlier demanded that the Yemeni government respect the rule of law, ensure legal protection for Al-Share' reporters and arrest the perpetrators who stormed the newspaper's office.

"The newspaper published an article about voluntary tribal leaders who joined government troops in the fight against Houthi supporters. The paper also wrote about corruption and the malicious desire of those who want confrontations between the government and Houthis to last for a longer period of time in order to serve their personal interests," Nabeel Subei told the media. "It also published reports about groups from the Aden-Abyan Islamic Army, an active terrorist group in Yemen, who backed the army in the fight against Houthis. These groups were training volunteers on how to fight the so-called Sa'ada rebels."

In an unprecedented step, the case file was referred to penal prosecution instead of press and publication prosecution. According to Article No. 176 of the Yemeni Penal Law, the Defense Ministry filed numerous charges against Hassan, Subei and Taha, accusing them of harming national security and stability, influencing the Yemeni army's morale and divulging military secrets.

Owned by prominent journalists Nayef Hassan and Nabeel Subei, Al-Share' is an independent weekly that issued its zero issue on the second day of last June. The paper's first issue included reports about the Hashid fighters in Sa'ada, thereby drawing the attention of readers and researchers seeking facts about events there.

As the paper devoted a large amount of space for information about developments, conflicts and complicated relations in Sa'ada, especially the way army and tribal leaders deal with soldiers and volunteers, this has helped increase its popularity among readers, particularly those interested in the Sa'ada crisis.

Observers of the situation consider the issue a distinctive effort by the newspaper and its reporters, who they believe outperformed other private, independent and party-affiliated papers in covering developments in the restive governorate.

In an article titled "Bismarck", a name given to Sa'ada volunteers who back the army in the fight against Houthi loyalists, the newspaper reported that a large number of these volunteers were killed by the army, while others fell victim to friendly fire. The newspaper mentioned that the number of Bismarck fighters exceeded nine thousand, most of who came from the Hashid tribe.

The paper's first issue included various subjects related to the Sa'ada crisis,

such as 'Bismarck in Sa'ada', 'Bismarck's victims', 'Youths with happy lives', 'The difference between fighters and leaders', and 'Hashid is a threatening force'. The distinctive issue disclosed human catastrophes and war crimes against humanity in the northern governorate that has undergone repeated wars since June of 2004.

JMP warns

In addition, Al-Sabri stated that the GPC violated a signed agreement detailing recommendations made by the EU Election Observation Mission, Aden report and other agreements through which the GPC and JMP conducted their dialogues.

Al-Sabri added that the GPC hasn't presented any detailed procedure regarding the appointment of committee judges.

Parliament member (MP) Sultan Al-Attwani acquainted the council with discussion points between the ruling party and JMP and the myriad of choices available for both concerning the constitution of committee judges. Al-Attwani mentioned that the choices proposed by the GPC were rejected because they uphold what he considers a corrupt system which doesn't reflect political balance in the country. He further believes that the GPC's insistence on its decisions fails to serve the democratic process, development and stability of the country and will push the country to more tension and congestion.

JMP leaders affirmed the necessity of consistency among political forces in terms of the constitution of the Supreme Committee for Elections and Referendum in order to keep the country's political stability.

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Thousands detained before Sharif return to Pakistan

By: Simon Gardner

LAHORE, Pakistan (Reuters) — Pakistan police detained thousands of supporters of Nawaz Sharif before the former prime minister's expected return from exile in Saudi Arabia on Sunday, according to party loyalists.

U.S. ally President Pervez Musharraf imposed emergency rule on November 3 to safeguard his presidency, but, under pressure from Saudi King Abdullah, he reluctantly acquiesced to the return of Sharif, who he deposed in a bloodless coup eight years ago.

Sharif's departure from the holy city of Medina was delayed, and he was expected to arrive in his hometown Lahore around 6.30 p.m. (1:30 p.m. British time) on a flight laid on by Saudi King Abdullah.

"We want all steps taken on November 3 to be withdrawn," Sharif told independent Pakistani news channel ARYOne World television before departing from Medina.

Sharif plans to discuss a possible boycott of a parliamentary election set for January 8 with the other main opposition party led by Benazir Bhutto, another former premier who General Musharraf allowed back last month in the hope that she would become an ally.

In Lahore, police detained activists from Sharif's party, known as the Nawaz League, to stop them coming out to greet him. Party spokesman Ahsan Iqbal said probably more than 3,000 had been detained, but police said the numbers were exaggerated.

Police used batons to drive out around 150 Sharif supporters who pushed their way through the airport to reach the VIP lounge. They carried green party flags, portraits and chanted "Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif" and "Go, Musharraf go".

"Look at all these men in black," said Imran Abbas Lalika, a 30-year-old market researcher, referring to hundreds of

police swarming around the airport, carrying riot shields, batons and rifles.

"They are here just to scare people," he said. "Mainstream political leaders should be here to get rid of this general."

The Saudi king has provided Sharif, travelling with his wife Kulsoom and politician brother and fellow exile Shahbaz Sharif, with an armour-plated Mercedes, aides said.

Mounting insecurity

Mounting insecurity in Pakistan was underscored by two suicide attacks in Rawalpindi, the garrison town next to the capital Islamabad, on Saturday. The attacks killed at least 15 people, military spokesman Major-General Waheed Arshad confirmed on Sunday, although some media reported it was more than 30.

Once they arrive, the Sharifs hope to visit a shrine in the city before making for the family residence on the outskirts. Sharif was returning just in time to file nomination papers for the election in case he decides to take part.

Unpopular and politically isolated, Musharraf now has to contend with two rivals he has spent much of the last eight years trying to marginalise.

Bhutto welcomed Sharif's return but did not talk in terms of a boycott as she filed her nomination papers at her constituency in southern Sindh province.

"God willing, an election will be held and People's Party and the people will win," Bhutto told reporters.

Musharraf co-opted the rump of Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League after ousting him. Leaders of the ruling PML fear many of their party may now defect to Sharif's camp.

Resigned to Sharif's coming back, Musharraf hopes the former prime minister's party will take part in the election, so the vote's questionable credibility will not be further diminished by an opposition boycott, according to a presidential aide.

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Way of Life!

A call to qat chewing mothers Qat causes infant disfigurement

Most Yemeni women don't know the negative medical effects of chewing qat, especially for pregnant women who chew qat, where both mother and child face health problems. Numerous studies and campaigns call upon Yemeni society, especially women, to reduce the increasing phenomenon of female qat chewers.

By: Fatima Al-Ajel
fatimafjr@yahoo.com

Nouri Mohammed is the addicted qat chewing mother of an 8-month-old. Because she didn't stop chewing qat – even after her delivery, within the first months of giving birth, her baby refused to feed from her breast. Although she knows the importance of feeding a baby from natural milk, having heard it from both her mother and from older generations, she still wondered why her baby refused to drink her milk.

Numerous studies highlight the negative effects of mothers chewing qat upon their newborns. A study conducted in Ethiopia confirms that qat does affect breastfeeding infants and causes the reduction of born children weight.

Like Mohammed, most female Yemeni qat chewers don't know that they are endangering their babies by chewing qat, as many studies have found. Chewing qat

changes the taste of the breast milk as a result of illegal pesticides used in qat cultivation, which transfer to the baby through the mother's milk.

A recent study at Aden University mentioned that more than 118 types of pesticides are used in qat cultivation, while statistics from the Ministry of Health, the Yemen Cancer Center and The Charity Organization state that qat pesticides cause approximately 70 percent of cancers in Yemen. Additionally, Ministry of Agriculture statistics point out that 77.7 percent of agricultural land was being used for qat in the 1990s, increasing annually at 7.8 percent.

Dr. Arwa Al-Darram, executive manager of the Yemeni organization for Women and Child Development SOUL, says that both chewing qat and smoking changes the flavor of mother's milk. She cited the results of a study conducted by Najat Hatim Khalil on a sample of 805 women in Sana'a, which found that 77.3

percent of such women chew qat.

In a step to educate Yemeni women about the problems of chewing qat – for both mother and child – the Yemeni organization for Women and Child Development, known as SOUL, in cooperation with the Qatar Charity Organization from Nov. 15 to Dec. 15 has arranged a month-long campaign against the dangers pregnant women pose to their unborn children by chewing qat.

Nashwan Al-Sameri, information specialist for the campaign, described the steps of the campaign and messages to be broadcast and distributed regarding the hazards of both chewing qat and smoking.

The campaign involves many activities, beginning with special program at four girls' schools in Sana'a, in addition to preparing radio and television programs for mass media, as well as distributing posters and brochures illustrating the dangers of qat and smoking to the lives of mothers and their babies.

Ibtisam Al-Jaadi, a media officer at SOUL, says her organization has arranged with four secondary girls' school administrations to select four active students to volunteer during the campaign. SOUL has given the schools all of the necessary posters and brochures to increase secondary schoolgirls' awareness of the dangers of chewing qat by forming clubs, which will present lectures during morning school broadcasts.

The campaign seeks to inform schoolchildren about the negative aspects of chewing qat by distributing free brochures and magazines informing girls in particular of the leaf's dangers and showing health statistics based on actual statistical information about the dangers accompanying qat.

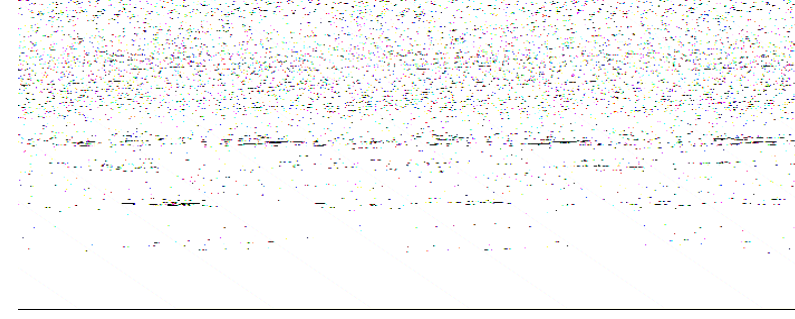
The campaign also has provided volunteers with numerous studies and research proving the dangers of qat chewing for women in general and pregnant women in particular. Qat's negative impacts upon health are many, including high blood pressure and underweight children. Additionally, pregnant women who chew

qat at higher risk of contracting cancer this from pesticide residue.

"Basically, this campaign, which was prepared for seven months, seeks to educate women about the health risks of chewing qat, particularly malnutrition and underweight births," Al-Jaadi explains. She notes that the campaign is being initiated in Sana'a as a first step and "If it succeeds, we'll move on to other areas in Yemen."

While surveying qat consumption habits in April and May 2006, the World Bank found that approximately 72 percent of Yemeni males chew qat, compared to 33 percent of females, and that most Yemenis are habitual users, with more than half of those who chew doing so daily.

The survey also found that some 80 percent of all male users and 70 percent of all female users report health disorders perceived to be related to qat consumption. Additionally, a quarter of all users



experience chronic sleeplessness related to qat usage. Nearly all qat users self-treat these ailments with a range of traditional and modern medicines.

Over the years, numerous research has revealed qat's harmful effects and the dangers it causes. For example, studies show that chewing qat undoubtedly causes insomnia and weight loss and may cause mouth cancer. Doctors say it's even more dangerous for pregnant and breast-feeding women and their children, if she chews qat or is near those who are smok-

ing. Thus, it's important for qat chewing mothers like Mohammed to think seriously about quitting qat chewing for the sake of their own health and that of their babies. They must know that doing so will protect their babies from future diseases.

This campaign is the second mutual cooperation project launched in Yemen and organized by SOUL and the Qatar Charitable Society after the "Child to Child" was the first cooperation project.

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Al Hashmi International Group, winner of International Quality Award in London Conference 2007

Al Hashmi International Group celebrated, in the presence of international investors, businessmen and number of ambassadors in Sana'a, the International Reward to Al Hashmi International Group for competence in for areas: customer satisfaction, innovation, efficiency and leadership.

By: Saddam Al-Ashmori

The second occasion was the inauguration of the new head quarters of Al Hashmi International Group in a space of 1800 square meters in two-floor building across

Through our tour, we saw a wall board indicating the branches of Al Hashmi International Groups which reached 14 with more than 120 staff employed at specific

the marketing activities of real estate on Red Sea Cost and some Yemeni islands in the presence of many investors from the Gulf, headed by the Qatari Gusti Nawaf Al Mejlad and Mr. Ibrahim Fadel, chairman of international tourist services in Saudi Arabia which is a aging in terms of investment flow and creating partnership agreements between to two sides.

We have taken a big space on the Red Sea estimated at 2 million square meters which will be presented to the guest to take their opinion about it and we have obtained an initial approval from the investing gust to open the space for all so that individuals, firms and special entities can benefit based on their resources.

Thus many investors and businessmen talked ... The Qatari Investor, Nawaf Al Jellad said Al Hashmi Group made quick steps in establishing relations with Arab States in areas of travel, tourism, investment, real estate services. This group is like a good tree whose root is well established and keeps growing.

We bless this achievement and high level reward which is an international proof of the Group's quality of work. Today we signed with Al Hashmi International Group a partnership agreement

for all excellent areas such as trade services and investment.

The Qatari Investor praised the direction of Yemen under the leadership of HE Mr. President Ali Abdullah Saleh in the provision of all facilities

for investors. Mr. Ibrahim Fadel described the rewarding of Al Hashmi International Group as a source of pride for all great works and high performance. He confirmed that Al Hashmi Group enjoys a good reputation and high performance to gain this international reward among ten Arab Groups on London conference. He stated that af-

ter these two occasions, he will encourage his friends to communicate and conclude deals with Al Hashmi International Group or for marketing their international products in Yemen. He showed readiness to personally provide all necessary guarantees if so requested due to the great confidence in the ability and excellence of Al Hashmi International Group as the name in the Market is the strongest guarantee.

From their side, the deputy ministers and ambassadors witnessed the tangible developments of Al Hashmi International Group in all areas and they blessed such progress.

Points of the Article:

- Al Hashmi International Group inaugurates the new head quarters of the Group



Yemen & Kuwait Bank in Zubairi Street. Through the tour of the guests in the new head quarters, it was found out that it is equipped with the latest technology, programs and equipment. They really deserve the Crown and the international certificate due to their great reputation and their distinctive style even in the stuff uniform of the traditional dress of Yemen on top of the official one. As you enter the center, you feel you are in a bank or high class center.

criteria set by Al Hashmi International Group.

A question we presented to Chairman of Al Hashmi International Group, Dr. Saleem Atyah Abu Al Hashmi: what is new in Al Hashmi International Group?

He said: the achievements of the Group are a source of pride and the international recognition motivates us to do more of work, quality and aspiration towards more success.

The most important thing is inaugurating



in a space of 1800 square meters.

- Al Hashmi International Group rewarded by the International Quality Award in London Conference 2007

- Sheikh Nawaf Al Jellad: we signed today at the Ministry of Industry & Trade a partnership agreement with Al Hashmi International Group in all trade, service and areas. The partnership is called (Al Hashmi & Mejlad Company for Trade, Construction, General Services, Advertising, Printing and Real Estate Investment)

Student activities v.s security authorities

Political activities at Sana'a University affect student performance. As a result, fighting has broken out among students many times, including reported shooting incidents. A report by Amel Al-Ariqi, Fatima Al-Ajel and Al-Miqdad Mojalli.

Political Security arrested Amin Al-Faqih in 2003 for conducting political activities at Sana'a University.

At that time, Al-Faqih was head of the General Union of Yemeni Students, known as GUYS, while being a level four student in the university's Faculty of Languages. He also belonged to Islah, Yemen's largest opposition political party.

Al-Faqih recounts his ordeal: "That particular day, a friend and I were not at the university. Two taxis and a private vehicle obstructed my car and surrounded us on Al-Qadsia street near the university. At first, I thought it was tribal revenge, so I told my friend to keep down in order to avoid any gunshots. Several men in civilian clothing then dragged me and my friend from my car, justifying their actions by saying that they were from Political Security."

Al-Faqih says he was shocked at this behavior and protested that he and his friend had not been summoned for arrest by security authorities.

He continued, "They drove us to the Political Security detention, where we remained for almost a week. Neither our relatives nor our friends knew of our arrest. My friend was released, but I was moved to the Criminal Investigation Office in Sana'a, where I endured a new investigation. There, I was allowed to phone my family to find me a lawyer."

Al-Faqih was accused of actively opposing the republican system,

inciting a riot at Sana'a University and attacking university staff. Several lawyers stood with Al-Faqih, defending him voluntarily.

During their investigation at Political Security, Al-Faqih says he and his friend were blindfolded. "The investigators called us terrorists, continually telling us that we wouldn't get out of prison. They put us in a small room with other criminals and those accused of terrorism," he adds.

"The accusations leveled against me were unclear and lacked evidence. Moreover, the way they seized and put me in the Political Security prison and then at the Criminal Investigation detention without giving me any legal explanation for such behavior motivated many lawyers to defend my case," he notes.

Two weeks later, Al-Faqih was released and his case referred to court, which sentenced him to a year in prison and stayed his execution. Because he had to be at court for his trial, Al-Faqih couldn't sit for his final examinations that year.

"My studies were affected. I had been one of the prominent students in our faculty. I still haven't graduated yet due to the circumstances I endured," he laments.

In his opinion, he was arrested for belonging to Islah and he denies conducting any type of political activities.

He goes on to say, "The students elected me head of GUYS. They didn't ask me about my political affiliation



Al-Faqih ex-leader of GUYS

and my relations with them were good, regardless of their political affiliations."

According to Yemeni law, GUYS must be independent. The union's aim is to provide university students different services, such as books, handouts, organizing graduation ceremonies, receiving and directing new students, launching cultural activities and trips, etc.

However, Al-Faqih notes that many students, including GUYS members, conduct political activities, adding that there's no law preventing university students from promoting their political affiliations.

The presence of Political Security at Sana'a University and students carrying guns is the result of practicing politics at the university, Al-Faqih says, wondering why Political Security remains at the university despite specialized guards to protect it.

No longer is a member of GUYS, Al-Faqih doesn't regret being a leader of the union, despite his difficulties and hardships. "As a member of GUYS, I learned leadership skills and expanded my knowledge. It gave me an opportunity to get to know many

people and strengthened my relations with others. It also enhanced my confidence," he notes.

A major struggle exists among Sana'a University students over the control of GUYS, which opposition parties have run for many years. For this reason, security authorities have maintained a strong presence at the university in order to thwart any attempts by opposition parties to win GUYS leadership. This has affected student performance and created a type of unfriendliness among them.

Majed Al-Homaidi, deputy head of the General People's Congress - students' sector- at Sana'a University's Faculty of Arts, explains that the members of GPC including students and teachers don't ask students to demonstrate in the streets; rather, they attempt to organize them and inform them about the National Covenant and what the GPC can offer them.

Al-Homaidi admits that partisan political activities can affect students' performance during their studies. "You can do many other activities while studying, but you have to bear in mind that your main task at university is to study," he notes, adding that he graduated first in his class although he is deputy head of the GPC within the his faculty.

He notes that in order to attract students to a particular political affiliation, political party leaders must use suitable students who can represent them.

"Most politicians are university graduates. You'll find that most ministers have been and are professors at Yemeni universities because they are able to manage the country," Al-Homaidi observes.

He goes on to say that the problems among Sana'a University students are not due to political or GUYS activities, but rather the narrow understanding of some students. "Some professors at Yemeni universities support those



Gate of Sana'a university

students with political affiliations similar to theirs. For example, professors affiliated with the GPC only support those students affiliated with the GPC, while professors affiliated with Islah support Islahi students," he maintains.

Asma'a Al-Qubati, GUYS member and a student in the Faculty of Arts, affirms that political activities negatively affect students. "Political activities mustn't be allowed at the university because Muslims must be one party, not divided," she says.

She believes professors play a large role in political activities at Sana'a University, saying, "Every professor has his own methods and political affiliation and he or she somehow tries to attract students to his affiliation."

Saleh Al-Sanabani, who established GUYS in 1981, says the aim of forming such a union was to represent university students in numerous fields both inside and outside of Yemen, regardless of their political affiliations.

He says the union essentially is a syndicated work. University students have this union to defend their rights and represent the expectations.

"However, multiple political activities have played a role in changing the union's principles. GUYS cares about defending students' rights and formulating a better future for them, as well as for Yemen," he notes.

He continues, "If students understand the correct meaning of multiple political parties in Yemen, and at the university as well, they'll benefit from it; however, many students misunderstand how to use them.

"There's a lack of cultural and democratic awareness. Students require more concern by governmental and private university administrations. What's happening at the universities is simply the result of some university staff and GUYS leaders siding with their own political parties," Al-Sanabani concludes.

An Internal Clash of the Civilisations?

Few other television channels have received such intense media attention as the English version of Al Jazeera when it was launched one year ago in 2006. Has the channel lived up to expectations? Stefanie Dötzer reports

Even a full year after its launch, the daily stream of visiting journalists from all four corners of the globe has not abated in any way. Most of them cannot hide their admiration for what is the most modern newsroom in the world.

The statistics are impressive: over 40 different nationalities work at the station's headquarters in Doha alone. The channel broadcasts to approximately 100 million households. The feedback from viewers - from Malaysia to Mexico - is overwhelmingly positive; the disappointment in the Muslim community, however, is considerable.

The reason for this is that Al Jazeera English is not what they expected. International, yes, but not the least bit Islamic; critical, yes, but not truly controversial. While its sister channel, which broadcasts in Arabic, gained global notoriety because of its no-

holds-barred approach to reporting, Al Jazeera English wants to appeal to viewers - all viewers.

This could seal the fate of the channel because as yet, several fundamental issues remain unresolved. Should the English-language channel explain the Arab view of the world to the West? Should it speak on behalf of the South? Should it build on the reputation of the Arabic channel? Or should it prove that Al Jazeera is not as bad as the American government claims?

Two opposing views

The hope is that Al Jazeera English will be all of this and more simultaneously. That being said, the debate as to which of these aims is the most important continues to rage behind the scenes.

There are two opposing parties. For the first group, Al Jazeera English is primarily an international news chan-

nel in the style of the BBC and CNN, but one which reports more than these two channels from countries that are so often neglected. As far as this group is concerned, the objective is to reach large numbers of viewers in Asia and Africa.

The second group pursues very different aims: for them, Al Jazeera is about fulfilling the hope of being able to wake people up, particularly those in the West, whose attention has been distracted by the mainstream media away from the issues that matter towards less important, phoney issues.

Instead of going along with stereotypes, they would like to give a voice to people in Gaza, Beirut, and Baghdad, explain contexts and background issues.

It is very easy to find out who belongs to which group, because it frequently has much to do with where the employee in question comes from. British citizens, who make up the majority of staff members in Doha, do not feel personally affected by the conflicts in the Middle East.

Many Arabs, on the other hand, joined the crew so that they could at last explain their points of view to those who don't understand what is going on in the Near East.

Internal controversy

This closely resembles the suggestion, which was made during the second intifada and the Iraq war, that Arabic stations should be translated into English so that the West could understand why Muslims were so angry. But a straightforward translation is not the answer.

"We need different words to express the same thing," says Ibrahim Helal, one of the directors of Al Jazeera English. This is why the English-language channel uses a different vocabulary from the original Al Jazeera. This is a bone of contention between the two channels because those who work for the Arabic channel feel that their



Walking a journalistic tightrope between a Western and an Arab audience: Al Jazeera English

ideals have been betrayed and view the English-language channel with mistrust.

The controversy could, however, inadvertently be good for journalism, because the debates and discussions among colleagues in the canteen are nowhere as passionate and lively as they are at Al Jazeera. What is Islamist? Who is a resistance fighter, who an extremist, who a terrorist? And is one a martyr because one was killed accidentally by a stray bullet?

Criticism from both East and West

It is up to the journalists alone to clarify these definitions. Although the emir of Qatar is the channel's only financial backer, he bears no influence on the channel's content - probably in the hope that the English-language chan-

nel will acquit Al Jazeera of the unfounded yet stubborn charge that it is merely a mouthpiece for terrorists.

This is a subject about which the British get very upset too. More channel time is devoted to Bush, they claim, than to Bin Laden. Moreover, strange as it may seem, the channel has been criticised by both the American government and al-Qaida alike.

Steve Clark, head of news at Al Jazeera English, has no trouble at all defending the channel. "I have worked for western television channels for twenty years, but I have never experienced journalism that is as free as it is here."

A journalistic tightrope walk

That being said, journalistic freedom does not release Al Jazeera English

from other constraints. If the channel were to orient itself towards its legendary sister, it might deliver what non-Arabic-speaking Muslims expect from it, but it would have great difficulty establishing itself on the North American television market. At present, no North American cable network operator dares to broadcast Al Jazeera.

However, if it orients itself away from its Arabic sister, it will lose the trust and confidence of those viewers who watch the channel because they want something they can really get their teeth into after the mish-mash served up by the mass media.

Success in this case means walking a journalistic tightrope. However, if any channel can manage it, Al Jazeera can.

© Stefanie Dötzer



Al Jazeera English aired their first programme on 15 November 2006 with Shulie Ghosh, left and Sami Zeidan, right, as their presenters



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Words of Wisdom



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

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



OUR OPINION

Negotiating a new Press Law

The current press law of 1991 was formulated under a two-polar government system, when Yemen had a coalition government consisting of the two parties which played a role in the Yemeni Unity, i.e. The General People's Congress and the Yemeni Socialist Party. When we revisit the provisions of the law we find that the relative freedoms of expression granted in that law were a giant leap forward compared to the totalitarian and socialist systems which were in place prior to unity.

Today as we negotiate an updated press law, we deal with a single-polar government whose commitment to democracy and freedom of expressions is highly questionable. It is the same government which refuses to implement the constitution and deprives over a hundred civil society organizations and media establishments of their constitutional right to operate without any justification.

The prime difference between the 1991 when the first press law was formulated and now is not in the government's commitment to democracy and freedom of expression, the government of Yemen has never had a genuine commitment to democracy throughout its existence. But what Yemen had had in 1991 was a willingness to gain credibility and to establish a media sector which can be used as a tool in harassing other political parties and communities, a tactic which has contributed towards the 1994 civil war and the sharp decline in freedoms which followed the war.

Free media has a critical role to play in the development of any society, especially in Yemen where the media is needed to play a watchdog role to monitor the violations to the rule of law, detect cases of corruption, and provide critical criticism to policy makers and the government in order to keep it in check. However, efforts by the regime continues in order to limit the role of the media in this regards, and the draft press law is the primary evidence to support this statement.

We need a new giant leap forwards in terms of freedom of expression. We demand the liberalization of broadcast media, lifting the restrictions on print media, and issuing licenses for civil society organizations, newspaper and other media establishments. We also demand that attempts to regulate and ban online media and mobile text-message news outlets are stopped.

It is bad enough that Yemen's economy has a gloomy future and the society is suffering from intense pressures, what logic does it make to restrict even political rights and democratic activity, which are an outlet for the people of Yemen, unless the regime hopes for a violent revolution to take place in the country.

The Editorial Board

Why do they want a dialogue?

By: Nabeel Al-Sofi

First of all, I disagree with those who criticize the commencement of dialogue between political parties represented in Parliament. The growing state of isolation, which began in the wake of 1994 Civil War and reached our political sessions and democratic means, must be stopped as soon as possible.

We are in an urgent need for a political dialogue. We need to learn via the different media that Secretary General of Islah Party met with Chairman of the General People Congress and that Head of Political Circle at Yemeni Socialist Party engaged in a discussion with GPC Secretary-General and so on, in order for the one-side alignments to be reduced. These alignments pose a greater threat to us because we have no forces to protect us nor do we have institutions to fulfill our needs. Such meetings will necessarily oblige party leaders to deal with their counterparts without any ideological expressions, reminding us of the pre-unity statements when each party was insisting to stay alone in the political arena while other parties were looked at as merely a target to be removed from the political life.

If we returned to analyze parties' speeches during the past two years, we would find that Joint Meeting Parties are realized as an evil by the GPC national pact while GPC is seen as merely a group of thieves and bandits among supporters of the Nasserite

Party. This phenomenon will ultimately lead to a sharp social catastrophe, while elimination and counter-elimination, which is taking place over southernism and northernism, is one of the results of such a phenomenon.

While Abdulqader Bajammal, GPC Secretary-General and Abdulwahab Al-Anisi, Islah Party Secretary-General, were listening to Abu Bakr BaDhaib, YSP Assistant Secretary-General, who was talking about demands of the current stage, giving dialogue values precedence over other issues, Abdulkarim Sha'ye and Ansaf Mayo were assembling behind walls of a small hall for the elections of Doctors Syndicate branch. No one dares say that such positions and conducts have something to do with democracy development.

In the meantime, the civil service and health offices in Taiz were punishing 19 employees, most of who affiliate with the Islah Party, under baseless pretexts, symptomatic of the political trickiness that helps embody conflicts and discourage dialogues.

While the dialogue was concentrating on Yemen's future, a mother in the Labor Island, a youngster in Al-Aidarous people, a girl in Abyan Coast and a child in Aden's Mualla district were discussing their present conditions. If there is a will to elevate the values of dialogue instead of conflicts, discussions in lieu of bullets, listening to the other instead of exchanging eliminations and protecting the national unity via protecting its

democratic reform project, the political parties, mainly GPC, must have the dialogue tangible and positive in the eyes of people. And, being held in Aden, the dialogue should have this governorate, which has never experienced rest or comfort since the Independence Day, its primary target.

Why the GPC and JMP branches in Aden don't hold dialogues aimed at restoring happiness to the sad face of the city, threatened by the waves of hatred, which the conflicting factions trigger against each other. It is this city that welcomed the different religions, races and occupations, as well as the social and moral characteristics.

A dialogue that doesn't aim to divide the nation since it is held between citizens belonging to different political parties and organizations. Obtaining the majority of Aden votes in the local and parliamentary, GPC has to understand and consider the needs of Aden citizens irrespective of their political affiliations. It should then discuss the problems of politicians who differ with one another, land disputes, water shortage and human rights abuses that are usually committed by those who won the 1994 Civil War.

It is this kind of dialogue that can ensure protecting Aden city from the consequences of regional and factional conflicts. Otherwise, the dialoguing parties will find themselves face to face with a new type of destructive conflicts.

Source: Al-Wasat Comprehensive Political Weekly.

In order to avoid an inevitable catastrophe

By: Abdulelah Al-Qadasi

Noble and sincere personalities, intellectuals and political party leaders are now obliged to suggest a practical vision in order to rescue the country from multiple threats that have begun to escalate in the southern and eastern governorates. Such destructive threats are increasing over time because of the terrible dominance of corrupt individuals and influential persons who grabbed citizens' lands, and looted public and private property without any legal, constitutional or moral justification.

Authorities in those governorates did nothing to stop influential people from dominating other's property and exercising human rights abuses. Corruption has become rampant in all the government offices without an exception while events, seen in the southern governorates, are merely reactions rejecting the unjust situations that contravene all the human laws and legislations. The way the government confronts sit-ins and demonstrations with treason charges and labels proctors as traitors and enemies of the national unity is responsible for the escalating tensions and exacerbating living conditions, thereby making it impossible for authorities to contain the situation.

As we are anticipating the regime to adopt practical steps for reaching the minimum level of social justice, nothing of this takes place except for widening the living gap between social groups at the expense of the sought equality. The state must have no choice but to open a comprehensive and serious dialogue for suggesting fair solutions in the eyes of the dialoguing parties. And, the persisting issues must be resolved in a way serving the national interests and protecting the homeland via exterminating corrupt officials and influential figures, who are spreading in different state's agencies.

Accusing demonstrators of being traitors and enemies of the national unity may lead to devastating conflicts between the enraged people and the government troops. And, conflicts of this type are usually exploited by the army and security forces to crack down on citizens under the pretext of protecting homeland and enhancing national security and stability.

The duty of homeland protection is not limited to the army since this patriotic duty consists of the inner feelings and sentiments of Yemeni citizens, males or females, youths or aged people. This duty also depends on citizens' loyalty with their government, and such loyalty doesn't exist unless citizens experience social justice, enjoy their rights and feel the dignity of their citizenship. This implies that homeland must not be a private property for a particular group of people, be it a family or a tribe.

The country with all its trees, valleys, pains and mountains is a homeland for every native born and raised in its soil. As said earlier, homeland protection must be a mandatory on every citizen while citizens should sacrifice all that they have for the sake of their homeland's security and stability. But, these words don't mean shedding citizens' blood to ensure stability and continuity of

their oppressors, who underestimate their being citizens, insult them, and abuse their rights and dignity.

Yemen is a homeland for the ruler and the ruled as well, and both are responsible for what is taking place and what will take place in its soil. The ruled is accountable for his/her silence and indifference toward the various infringements that lead to corruption, and corruption that leads to destruction. The ruler is accountable for not avoiding the repeated mistakes in running the country's affairs, thereby helping them become persisting threats to national security and stability. There is an inevitable catastrophe unless the ruler reforms the standing situation.

Source: Al-Nihar Weekly

SILVER LINING

Fragmented media ventures

Several new weekly newspapers have started operating this year. It is good that there are ambitious colleagues who would like to have their own projects. Some of these newspapers are now doing well. They are readable. However, when I have discussed with them the commercial aspect of the project and if their newspapers will be able to sustain in the absence of a professionalized advertising market, the answers have been discouraging. This has raised my concerns about the sustainability of such ambitious ventures. I understand some of these newspapers are painfully managing to survive. However, this is not the goal. The objective should not be limited to survival only where many journalists working in these newspapers feel unrewarded and some even quit to the thought of initiating their own small enterprises. Every time I meet some of my colleagues, I find them haunted with the idea of starting their own newspaper. I have been myself thinking about this idea. The overall objective of any of such project should be more ambitious to grow further and attain success and wide circulation. I mean, the people want to see their newspapers making constant progress and success.



By: Mohammed Al-Qadhi

This zeal of motivated young journalists to have their own media outlets is the outcome of a number of reasons. First, the reluctance of the business community in investing in this sector has pushed these journalists to make their own initiatives. I have written several times that it is crucial the business community starts investing in media for they are able to set up strong media outlets that can work professionally and sustain. However, the business community in Yemen is very much afraid of the political regime for the people in charge still believe the role of independent media is mischief. They do not perceive its crucial role in booting democracy and development at large.

Second, the frustration of these journalists with their employers either the political parties or owners of private newspapers is another reason behind such fragmented personal media endeavors. Most of these employers also hold a wrong view of the media and task of the journalist. Some employers take advantage of their journalists need and do not pay them well. Some journalists feel no appreciation for their brilliant work while others find that the owners of these newspapers are not able to give them a free space to operate, let alone the absence of institutionalized professional management that gives the journalists in running these media outlets and give them a hope in a better future. Journalists need to feel secure about their future in these newspapers.

I understand such small enterprises serve the interests of the information ministry and the government at large to maintain a fragile media that is not able to influence the public and thus produce any change in the society. The ministry of information might find the fragmentation of the journalistic energies and nerves achieve its objective in having weak newspapers whose main concern is how to survive. This is not, of course, a call for the ministry to stop granting new licenses. It is rather a call for my colleagues to join hands and work together. Such small enterprises might serve individual interests on a short-term scale. Nevertheless, only strong professional and institutionalized media can achieve the aspirations of everybody. I guess it is possible that many of these independent weeklies can merge in a few strong independent and institutionalized daily or weekly newspapers that can make use of all these fragile and dispersed efforts.

To drive the point home, this pile of new newspapers demonstrating individual ventures does not help promote a strong professional press. We need to have institutionalized business-oriented media so that it can grow, sustain and pay off. When these media outlets are financially autonomous, they can operate professionally and be the voice of the voiceless. Media is a crucial instrument of democratization and therefore, the stronger it is, the greater the democratic drive is.

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



By: Samer

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Offices
Aden Bureau:
Ridhwan Alawi Ahmed
Tel: +967 (2) 347-057, 346596
Fax: +967 (2) 347056
Email: ytaden@y.net.ye
Taiz Bureau:
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Yemen Press Review

الميثاق
Al-Methaq
Weekly, Mouthpiece of the General People Congress (Ruling Party)
Monday, November 19

Top Stories

- President of the Republic: The nation will witness great influx of foreign investments in days to come
- GPC leader Al-Barakani lashes out at Joint Meeting Parties for breaching agreements
- Children Parliament discusses phenomenon of child trafficking
- Saleh gives orders to concerned parties to immediately resolve central security retirees' issues
- United Nations confirms support for President Saleh's initiative

The United Nations confirmed its support for the initiative made by Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh to conduct multiple political reforms and develop the democratic system in his country, the ruling party's mouthpiece reported. It quoted Flavia Pensiari, Resident Representative of UN Development Program in Yemen, as saying that Saleh's initiative will have an effective impact in supporting the local and democratic governance at the domestic level. She affirmed that implementing Mr. President's initiative will be an important and historic occasion for UN in order to increase its support for Yemen and help boost progress of local governance and partnership at the national level.

She pointed out that the international organization will be a partner with the Yemeni government in enhancing decentralization, explaining that decentralization is one of the most significant components in President Saleh's political platform and that UN

will support such a move. Pensiari ascertained that Yemen has reached remarkable progress in the area of local authority and governance. "Over the past four years, UNDP expended great efforts in strengthening local governance benefiting from its previous experiences in the field of enhancing decentralization," she went on to say.

الوسط
Al-Wasat
Comprehensive Political Weekly
Wednesday, November 21

Top Stories

- Al-Wasat weekly reveals names of government officials who illegally sold citizens' lands in Aden and Shabwa
- Protests in southern governorates continue while Marib citizens reject inheritance of power
- World Bank refutes government's allegations about offering good investment climate
- President Saleh praises firm procedures to prevent entry of arms into main cities despite Hashid rally

President Ali Abdullah Saleh praised the tough measures taken by security authorities to prevent penetration of weapons into main cities and curb the phenomenon of arm bearing in the country, the weekly reported in a front page article. This coincided with a huge rally led by Sheikh Hussein Abdullah Al-Ahmar in Amran's Khamer District as an alleged reaction to preventing the MP from entering Sana'a with his bodyguards who were carrying machine guns. Hussein Al-Ahmar lashed out at President Saleh saying he doesn't belong to Hashid tribe and accused the authority of

denying his tribe's role in the 26 September Revolution and the national unity.

"There is only a small minority of tribal leaders who believe to have been negatively affected by the tough procedures taken against arms bearing. Only people who show off their tribal popularity and have narrow interests object to such a modern and civilized procedure. It is those people who exploit their armed guards to plunder public and private property," the paper quoted Saleh as saying during his meeting with military and security leaders in the Southern Military Flank.

البلد
Al-Balagh
Independent Political Weekly
Tuesday, November 20

Top Stories

- Dismissed servants in northern governorates claim reinstatement into military and civil institutions
- Education workers syndicates' branches in Al-Dhale' call on teachers to stage massive sit-in unless government cash delayed hardship allowance
- Al-Jazeera Satellite Channel will have wider coverage in Yemen, says Director Khanfar in a press conference
- Yemen Football Association declares war against sport press
- Yemen's national team eliminated from remaining 2010 World Cup qualifiers
- Amran witnesses civil mutiny by Hashid tribesmen.

Amran's Khamer district, north of Sana'a, witnessed on Saturday a huge public rally for Hashid tribesmen led by Sheikh Hussein Abdullah Bin

Hussein Al-Ahmar, who vented his anger at the government for being lenient toward corruption and corrupt individuals and depriving his district of basic services and development projects, the independent weekly reported on the top of its front page. It added that nearly ten thousand armed tribesmen from Hashid Tribe assembled on an invitation from Sheikh Hussein Al-Ahmar, who is a member of parliament. The exceptional rally took place at Al-Salam School in Khamer in the presence of many tribal leaders and social personalities.

At the rally, Sheikh Al-Ahmar gave a speech, denying that the assembly was staged as a reaction to preventing him from entering the capital Sana'a under the pretext that his guards were carrying machine guns. The newspaper quoted Al-Ahmar as saying that the assembly is part of a series of nationwide rallies to press the government to modify its policies and resolve the deteriorating situations in the country.

26 September Weekly, Organ of the Yemeni Army
Thursday, November 22

Top Stories

- President Saleh to military leaders: Unity means freedom, security and safety, no need to worry about it
- Under President's directives, government to establish fund for military housing developments
- Mauritanian Foreign Minister to visit Yemen next week
- France reviews its warnings to nationals not to visit certain areas in Yemen

Undersecretary of Agriculture & Irrigation Ministry: Yemen is free of avian flu

Yemen expects Japan to increase aid for national development

Organ of the Yemeni organ reported that Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs and Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, Abdulkarim Al-Arhabi is planning to conduct an official visit to Tokyo in the second half of next January on the high-level delegation in an effort to seek more Japanese government's support for national development. The weekly quoted official sources as saying that Al-Arhabi will talk with the Japanese Prime Minister, Fukuda, who chaired up the Yemeni-Japanese Friendship Society earlier.

The sources added that Al-Arhabi will explain during his visit the latest economic and political developments, plus the remarkable achievements in the areas of reforms. He will also discuss with the Japanese side the ways to develop relations and support development plans in Yemen during the years to come. The Japanese government's support to Yemen amounts up to 40 million dollars per annum.

الوحدوي
Al-Wahdawi
Weekly, Mouthpiece of the Nasserite Unionist Popular Organization (NUPO)
Tuesday, November 20

Top Stories

- JMP condemns violations committed by official media against constitution
- More than half a million handicapped receive human services

Yemen gives a \$ 6 million compensation to Canadian company, Parliament demands interrogating those held accountable

JMP calls for releasing peaceful protesters' detainees, referring perpetrators to court

Specialized Penal Prosecution frees Sana'a Second cell member for health conditions

Popular female tribunal for election system demands constitutional amendments

Many women activists organized on Monday a popular tribunal for suing the electoral system with the aim of shedding light on the various, obstacles and challenges posed to women's political empowerment, the NUPO mouthpiece reported. At the popular tribunal, organized by Civil Community Coalition and Arab Sisters Forum for Human Rights (ASFHR) in Sana'a, ASFHR Chairwoman Amal Al-Basha said that such a step comes as a contribution to destroy a thick well obstructing the illumination of justice. The tribunal aims to liberate women and reveal facts concerning the sufferings of Yemeni women that are prevented from political participation and exposed to violence due to political and social factors.

The formal tribunal, considered the first of its kind in the country, was attended by politicians, lawyers, rights activists and NGOs representatives while its prosecution filed a lawsuit against the electoral system, Parliament, Constitution, Election Law and other laws for denying women their rights to participate in politics. The tribunal prosecutors said the constitution abandoned the principle of equality between men and women, criticizing formation of the Supreme Commission for Elections and Referendum (SCER) by an executive authority's decision.

Thanksgiving message

By: Marc Falkoff

Today is the Thanksgiving holiday in the United States, a day when American families by tradition gather together and offer thanks to God for their health and happiness. Because it is not unusual for adult children to live hundreds and even thousands of miles from their parents and grandparents, for many Thanksgivings is one of the few times during the year when families are reunited. For many Americans, myself included, this holiday is typically spent among brothers, sisters, uncles and aunts, and is always a very emotional time.

This morning, circumstances are such that my wife and I must celebrate the holiday alone in Chicago, while our families congregate hundreds of miles away, in New York and Boston. Although we will enjoy the holiday nonetheless, we are both melancholy about not being with our families. In our home, the smells of a roasting turkey are the same, the holiday decorations are the same, and the Thanksgiving parade broadcast on the television is the same. But without family, the holiday feels somehow empty.

So, today we are melancholy. But, as has been the case for more than three years, it is impossible for me to feel self-pitying for long. For more than three years, I have represented more than a dozen Yemeni who have been imprisoned at Guantánamo since January 2002. These men – your fathers, your uncles, your brothers, your sons, your countrymen – have had not contact with their families for nearly six years. Many Eid feasts have come and gone, and many marriage and birth celebrations have taken place while these men sat in solitary confinement in small, steel-and-concrete prison cells on an island thousands of miles from their families.

Consider how long your countrymen – none of whom treated in accord with the Geneva Conventions – have been separated from their families. The wife of one of my clients gave birthday to a daughter not long after my client was brought to Guantánamo nearly six

years ago, which means that my client has never seen or spoken to his five-year-old daughter. Husbands have been separated from wives, fathers from children, and sons from parents for more than half a decade. Some of my youngest clients have now spent a quarter of their lives behind bars, uncharged and untried, having been treated at times barbarously.

It does not have to continue like this. More than 770 men from dozens of countries have been detained at Guantánamo since 2002, but more than 400 of them have subsequently been released. Saudi Arabia, for example, has had 100 of its 130 citizens returned from the prison camp. Yemen is now the country with the largest number of prisoners at Guantánamo, and only 12 of its 110 citizens – including 1 of my clients – have been released during the past 6 years. A thirteenth Yemeni was returned in a body bag, having died under suspicious circumstances at the prison. Even more frustrating, a number of the Yemeni detainees – including 2 of my clients – were designated years ago by the military as eligible to be released back to Yemen, yet they are still in prison on the remote Cuban island.

Why are so many Saudis and so few Yemenis back home? According to an article in today's *Boston Globe* newspaper, U.S. officials say the answer is simply that "Saudi Arabia has been more assertive than Yemen on the issue." Saudi Arabia has also chosen to invest significant resources in a "rehabilitation program that includes religious reeducation, psychological counseling, furnished apartments – even brides." The head of the Pentagon office that reviews evidence against the Guantánamo detainees told the same newspaper that Saudi Arabia was "willing to come up to the plate," and that if more countries followed suit, more detainees would be released "in a heartbeat."

I personally believe that for many (if not most) of the Guantánamo prisoners from Yemen, any reeducation or rehabilitation program is unnecessary because many (if not most) of these prisoners are in fact innocent of any wrongdoing whatsoever. But if all that stands between my clients' continued

imprisonment and their transfer back home is the lack of a similar rehabilitation program, then surely it is in the Yemen citizenry's best interest for you to demand that your leaders establish a similar program.

The government would not need to start from scratch. As many of you know, Judge Hitar has had great success running a similar program in Yemen, convincing extremists to renounce their anti-social beliefs by engaging in dialogue about the true meaning of the Holy Qur'an. If President Saleh and the Yemen government were to beef up this program, devote more significant financial resources to it, and perhaps consult with the Saudis about the structure of the program, then there seems an excellent chance that we will begin to see more repatriations from Guantánamo.

I do not place the blame entirely on the Yemen government, of course. To my mind, the U.S. should return the prisoners immediately to Yemen, for the simple reason that their continued detention is illegal – a patent violation of the American Constitution, the Geneva Conventions, and international law. But realities are realities. If you want your countrymen to come home then you, the citizens of Yemen, must demand that your leaders work more proactively for their release.

Today, my wife and I are separated from our families, but we still give thanks to God for the blessings we have received. We recognize that we are lucky and privileged. As we sit down to our meal, our thoughts and prayers will go out to my clients who remain at Guantánamo, having been separated from their families for far too long. I hope that Mahmood, Majid, Yasein, Saeed, Abdulsalam, Adnan, Jamal, Othman, Adil, Mohamed, Abdulmalik, Aref, Sadeq, Farouk, Salman, and Makhtar are in your prayers as well.

Marc Falkoff is a professor of criminal law at Northern Illinois University. Along with the firm Covington & Burling, he represents sixteen Yemeni men who have been detained at Guantánamo for nearly six years. This article was written on Thanksgiving day marks 21st Nov.

Crime and Punishment, refugee style

By: Norman Manea

The horrible murder of Giovanna Reggiani that took place near a Romanian refugee camp in the suburb of Tor di Quinto in Rome shocked both Italy and Romania. The case gained significance by adding fuel to the fiery public debates now underway not only in Italy but across Europe on the status of refugees and foreign residents.

Some Italians responded violently; some Italian and Romanian politicians, eager to offer quick and tough solutions, made scandalous statements that echoed the xenophobic and totalitarian slogans of the past. We are encountering, not without irony, a kind of grotesque reverse of the "national pride" seen when cultural and sporting stars are appropriated by the state and presented as part of the collective patrimony.

Although the murder was an individual crime, to compound the tragedy of a crime through measures that target an entire minority is irresponsible, and will have grave moral and social consequences not only for the unjustly punished but also for the punishers. No minority is, after all, homogenous, which was demonstrated by the fact that the person who alerted the police was a compatriot of the killer and from the same camp of refugees.

Collective punishment also means not only a type of amnesia by Italians and Romanians about what happened under fascism, nazism, communism, but also for their own national histories. Italians, after all, migrated not only from Italy's south to its north, but also to other countries looking for a better life. They, too, know what it is like to be a refugee, an exile, a stranger.

Romania, for its part, has a history not at all admirable in regard to its "Roma" minority, whose shortcomings and deeds always attract blame but never any real action by the state to improve their condition. The Roma minority first appeared in Romania in the 14th century, but only in 1856 was its slavery abolished!

Romanian society nowadays is dealing with the consequences of decades of terror and lies, of demagoguery and poverty that scarred several generations.

These wounds cannot be instantly healed. Communism's fall unleashed a huge surge of human energy, but this started with a bizarre and cynical transfer of privileges and assets within the old "nomenklatura," and with a new general Darwinian struggle.

Although economic progress is visible across Romania, and a gradual renewal of a civic conscience through the arrival of democracy has appeared, Romania's burlesque of a political life – despite its European Union membership – shows how persistent its bad old habits of duplicity, inconsistency, fatalism, inertia, and corruption are. Corruption, indeed, now seems to be the society's engine. There remain in Romania today disadvantaged and neglected groups who are pushed to society's sordid margins. The Roma population, indeed, has 41% seasonal workers, 33.5% lack any professional skills, 38.7% are illiterate. This is not only a Romanian problem, but has become a problem for all of Europe.

Nicolae Romulus Mailat, the young man of 25 accused of Giovanna Reggiani's murder, had been interned at age 14 in a school for re-education. He was later condemned again for theft, but was pardoned a year before arriving in Italy.

Was poverty the cause of his juvenile offenses in Romania and his crime in Italy? In Dostoevski's great novel *Crime and Punishment*, Raskolnikov is pushed to committing his crime not only by his nihilism and rebelliousness, but also by poverty. His social identity is not the same as Mailat's, his spiritual "entity" is drastically different, but his double crime is no less abominable.

For now, there is no reason to hope that Mailat will find through his crime a new start towards salvation through suffering and spiritual renewal. But perhaps we should hear again the words of one of Raskolnikov's interlocutors when he speaks about the "disgusting Sodome" in which he wanders and says that poverty is not a vice, but misery. In poverty one still keeps a kind of "innate noble sentiment," while in misery moral collapse is inherent and disastrous.

Mailat sought escape from his Romanian misery and his Romanian past, but could not imagine that he would find in an Italian refugee camp as

much misery as before; that the image in the mirror of his daily new life would be that of a killer. People who know the frightening neighborhood of Tor di Quinto, where Giovanna Reggiani was killed have harsh words to say about the neglect and indifference of Rome's city government. This isn't, of course, an excuse for this crime or for any crime, but it cannot be ignored.

Although we cannot expect a miraculous reincarnation of the criminal Mailat, we can and must ask for a radical review of the situation that marginalized people like him face. That review must be done not only by Romanian and Italian states, but by the Roma community in Romania and Italy and also by the European community itself. For the perpetrator is a member of all these communities.

We hear voices now who are exasperated by the EU's enlargement and the social tensions it provoked. Increased migration is, indeed, a daily fact in our centrifugal and global modernity, but it isn't only a negative one. The free movement of people doesn't only mean more social conflict and criminality. It also means a gradual and beneficial cohabitation that began immediately after WWII as a common effort to help out the defeated countries and enhance their chances for democracy and prosperity.

When I visited Barcelona and Madrid last year, I was delighted to receive enthusiastic news about the successes of the growing Romanian community in these cities. Some Romanian refugees were already candidates for the local elections, praised for their hard work and honesty. It will happen, I hope, also in other places and not only with Romanians but with all the people ready to face the provocations of our time. For these are examples not only of individual success, but are victories for the community as well.

Europe deserves to prove that it is a real community, one diverse, democratic, spiritual, free, and prosperous.

Norman Manea is a major Romanian writer and has been translated into 20 languages. His latest book The Hooligans's Return, received in 2006 the Prix Médicis Étranger. Copyright: Project Syndicate, 2007.

Yemen Commercial Bank



البنك التجاري اليمني

كنز الطفل

برنامج

استقبال العمل



عزيزي الأب .. عزيزتي الأم :

لا شك أن أطفالك يعنون لك الكثير .. ولذلك فإن قيامك الآن بفتح حساب كنز الطفل وتوفير بعض المال من أجلهم وهم صغار سيكون له بالغ الأثر في تأمين مستقبلهم في شتى المجالات المختلفة .
 فبادر الآن بفتح حساب كنز الطفل لدى أي فرع من فروعنا وتمكينهم من الاستفادة من مزايا وفوائد هذا البرنامج .
 ✦ علماً بأن حساب كنز الطفل يضم الأطفال من سن يوم إلى ما تحت سن الثامنة عشرة .

مزايا البرنامج :

- 1- هدية مجانية عند فتح الحساب تكون حافظاً لترسيخ مبدأ الإيداع .
- 2- إمكانية فتح الحساب بمبلغ 1000 ريال .
- 3- بما أن حساب كنز الطفل هو حساب توفير فإنه لا توجد على الحساب عمولة الرصيد المتدني ولا توجد عليه أي مصاريف أخرى .
- 4- يتحمل البنك نفقات الدراسة الجامعية لأفضل خمسة متفوقين في الثانوية العامة يحتفظون بحسابات لدى البنك .
- 5- إمكانية استقطاب المتفوقين والتميزين في العمل لدى البنك .
- 6- هناك العديد من المزايا والمفاجآت القيمة .

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Yemen and Czech Republic Decades of distinctive relations

Relations between Yemen and the Czech Republic constitute one of the distinctive types of international cooperation and interaction that consolidates the bond between Yemen and other world nations.

The relationship between Yemen and Czech Republic is neither a new nor a growing one constituted by foreign interests and policies; rather, both states enjoy a historical relationship dating back to the early years of the mid-20th century.

Over the years, their relationship became deeply-rooted based on mutual visions and beliefs, which nations depend on to enhance their cooperation and unify their views on various regional and international events during a specific time period.

During the most recent visit to Yemen by a delegation from the Czech Senate, headed by Karel Bartak, chairman of the Committee on Education, Science, Culture, Human Rights and Petitions, the chief delegate expressed his happiness at touring the distinctive Arab nation.

In an interview with the Yemen Times last Tuesday at a reception the Czech Embassy in Sana'a organized to honor the visiting delegation, Bartak stated, "This visit is part of my state's efforts to have more open relations with Yemen, which the Czech government has placed among the top eight states to be given priority in its foreign relations."

He further indicated his hope that Yemen's Shoura Council and the Czech Senate will improve their roles in both countries in such a way that contributes to developing mutual cooperation and strengthening Yemeni-Czech relations, which he described as "ancient."

During the interview, the Czech official spoke about the availability of excellent opportunities to develop such cooperation, particularly in cultural areas, affirming that the coming years will witness more technical cooperation between the two nations.

"I decided last year to visit Yemen after the Czech government approved its



Karel Bartak, chairman of the Committee on Education, Science, Culture, Human Rights and Petitions.

foreign aid program, including Yemen among the top eight nations in the Third World to be given priority under the program. Yemen was the only Arab state within that group," Bartak noted.

"I'd like to recognize that during the past decade, Yemen has taken the first steps on the course toward building a democracy. Such steps resemble what happened in our country, as we hadn't made any appropriate steps toward democracy until the National Revolution broke out in 1989 and the Communist totalitarian regime ended."

He continued, "Another reason for my visit is the nature of this committee's activities concerning culture, science and human rights. Certainly, I know that Yemen is a historic country, rich in civilization and heritage. As a state within central Europe, Czech Republic views Yemen as a nation with an ancient civilization deserving respect, appreciation

and attention.

The official added, "Being affiliated with the Czech Senate, our committee isn't concerned with primary and vocational education exclusively; rather, it works in all areas of education, including universities. We're seeking the possibility of cooperating within the various university majors because many Yemeni graduates have studied at Czech universities."

"We're proud to see and hear that these graduates now are serving their society and occupying prestigious places in their homeland. Such graduates prove that Czech Republic offers good, quality education."

Bartak went on to recount, "Before I became a senator, I taught at the Charles University Faculty of Medicine in the city of Hradec Kralove. During this visit to Yemen, I took the opportunity to meet some graduates, thanks to efforts by the

charge d'affaires at the Czech Embassy in Sana'a, who arranged a meeting attended by some 15 students who had graduated from different Czech universities. Luckily, three of the attendees were students I had taught and they were good.

"Speaking with such graduates, I learned that Yemeni health authorities highly appreciate and respect them, giving them posts matching their scientific qualifications. They are extremely happy to serve their homeland, which hasn't been stingy toward them," he noted.

Additionally, the Czech official remarked, "I was very glad to visit those agencies concerned with protecting Yemen's historic heritage. I found that such agencies' officials are exerting great efforts in this respect."

According to Bartak, "I once met with the undersecretary at Yemen's Human Rights Ministry. Through that meeting, I learned that the legislation package concerning human rights in Yemen, whether already approved by Parliament or underway for approval, is relatively similar to my country's effective human rights laws. This is an appropriate step. It's very important to put any human rights-related laws and regulations into practice."

Asked about any fruitful results from his visit, Bartak noted that the visit wasn't conducted by an executive body within the Czech government but rather by a legislative authority. "We briefed our friends in Yemeni government agencies about the ideal methods of formulating proposals, telling them that there are many proposals, agreements and protocols to be submitted to the Czech government via diplomatic channels," he explained.

The Czech visitor indicated that he met with numerous senior Yemeni officials, including Deputy Parliament Speaker Abdulwahab Mahmoud, Shoura Council Chairman Abdulaziz Abdulghani, Ministry of Culture Undersecretary Ahmad Salem Al-Qadhi, Aden Governor Abdulkarim Shayef, Mohammed Al-Tayyeb, head of the

Shoura Council's Human Rights Committee and Dr. Mohammed Abu Ghanem, who is concerned with education affairs, in addition to numerous NGO leaders.

The delegation also toured the Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational Training, as well as several

primary and secondary schools in Sana'a. Concluding the interview, Bartak said, "I want to affirm that we met many Yemeni youths and staff who deserve our highest consideration. I'd also like to take this opportunity to express my wishes for further development and prosperity for all Yemenis."

Job Opportunity Administrator

The Charitable Society for Social Welfare (CSSW) is looking for an administrative person to work with the ACCESS Project (Alternatives to Combat Child Labor through Education & Sustainable Services) in Sana'a.

The incumbent should:

- Have a university degree at least;
- Have experience in administration;
- Have fluency in both Arabic and English;
- Be prepared to travel and stay overnight in some governorates.

The initial contact will be for a period of three months renewable upon satisfactory performance for a period to be decided upon.

Interested applicants should send their C.V. to the following e-mail address: al_haddi@hotmail.com

Please note that telephone calls and personal visits will not be considered.

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted for interview.

Deadline for application is: 5 December 2007

ACCA

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Tuesday 27 November 2007

ACCA* Representative and teachers will be available to provide information

* ACCA: Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (UK)

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Time: 7.00 pm

It's for free.

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Tender Announcement

Sana'a University announces an international tender regarding, preparation of the studies and engineering designs for the **Central Laboratories**, and invites interested consultant companies and offices (residing and out-siding the republic) wishing to participate in this tender to submit their offers, at the following address:

Republic of Yemen – Sana'a University

P.O. Box (1247) tel. (01464677)

The General Administration for Financial Affairs –
Wadi Dhahr Road

Tender documents can be obtained upon submitting a written request to the general secretary, against non-returned amount (US\$200). Bids should be submitted in 2 envelopes (technical financial) sealed by red wax original bid + 3 copies and duplicated (in Arabic and English).

A primary security (bid bond) with amount (US\$3,000), by payable cheque from a bank recognized in the Republic of Yemen or a bank guarantee valid for (120 days) from the envelopes opening date to be attached with the bid.

The date of opening bid (technical envelopes) shall be at: 11:00 a.m. on **Sunday, December, 16, 2007** in the presence of the bidders or any party representing them.

Blood brokers: A source for needy patients

By: Hamed Thabet

The job of blood brokers, who can be found waiting outside Jumhury Hospital in Sana'a, is to donate blood for needy patients in return for money via their own methods and process. For example, when a patient requires blood, his friends or relatives go to the blood brokers and ask them for blood," one doctor at Jumhury Hospital explained.

He continued, "Such brokers go to the laboratory with a patient's friend or relative and pretend that they are the patient's relative, swearing repeatedly in order to convince the doctor that he's a real relative."

Another doctor comments, "It's illegal to take blood from brokers because donors may only give blood four times a year whereas brokers donate every week, if they get the chance. In fact, by donating numerous times via unhealthy methods, their blood is useless, so instead of helping patients, they become a risk to them."

Abdulrahman Al-Junaid, head director of Jumhury Hospital's blood bank, notes, "Of course, the doctor doesn't know if someone's a broker. After giving his blood to a patient, the broker receives between YR 600 and YR 1,400."

However, Al-Junaid adds, "If we see the same individual [broker] again pretending to be another patient's relative, we discover that he's a liar. In this case, they are asked to leave, sometimes by force."

Another doctor notes, "Very often, those in authority at the hospital, such as doctors and administrators, with one phone call, they demand it, and ask for blood for their friends and relatives who are in the hospital. Blood bank authorities accept their request without insisting upon any type of guarantees from them in turn. The blood is given to them with their promise to replace it, but



This donor have waited for an hour to donate!

the truth is that 99.99 percent of the time, they just ignore that."

Yet another doctor explains, "We sometimes encounter difficult situations, such as when patients immediately require blood in an emergency and the quantity is insufficient, while at the same time, we receive an order from a high authority to give blood to their relative. This is a big problem because we must satisfy both, so we go and ask for more blood, getting it by any means."

Ahlam Khalaf, general director of laboratories and the blood bank at Jumhury Hospital, further explains, "In emergencies, when an unknown patient comes to us, we just give him the necessary blood in order to save his or her life. Poor people sometimes come and tell us they have neither money to buy blood nor anyone to donate blood for them, so in this case, we give the blood free of charge. Certainly, in some cases, we ask either a doctor on duty or one who knows the patient's situation. If he [or she?] tells us the patient is poor and has no resources, we give the blood directly to the patient. In fact, 40 percent of our blood goes free of charge to those

in need and in an emergency."

She adds, "Even though there's a shortage at our blood bank, we give blood for free to those who can't afford it and are really poor. When patients swear in God's name and say they don't have money, we must believe them and give them blood without requesting any guarantee or making them replace it because in the end, it's our duty to help people."

However, a source at Jumhury Hospital says, "Doctors and labs contract with clinics outside the hospital and ask patients to do their testing there, which is completely illegal because blood testing must happen at the hospital's blood bank. Doctors do this simply to take a cut of the profits from such clinics."

The source continues, "When this happens, we can't ensure whether the donated blood is clean and free of disease because these clinics don't care. They don't examine blood properly because patients sometimes are in hurry and have no time to wait. In this case, doctors at such clinics sometimes just write anything on the test paper and let the patient go to the hospital, where the



The only blood container available in the blood bank at Jumhury hospital.

doctor there accepts it without question."

The same source adds, "When we've asked doctors, 'Why are you doing this because it's illegal to play with people's lives?' they reply, 'It's ok. We trust these clinics, so there's no need to worry. We don't send all patients there, only some. We do that so as not to raise doubt because we must write in the record books whoever donates or receives blood.'"

Khalaf notes, "Many times, we experience blood shortage at our bank. We're sometimes asked to reserve blood for a patient who's scheduled for an operation the following day; however, an unforeseen emergency arises and we must provide that reserved blood for another patient. We then must find blood to cover the operation. Most of the time, patients don't understand when we tell them that we had to do this because someone else needed the blood. They always believe that we sold it."

She continues, "Even when there is a blood shortage, we go to other banks, arranging to get it at any cost because it's our responsibility to manage the blood supply or we'll be in trouble."

"In some emergency cases when we need more blood, we go to the bank blood next to Al-Kuwait Hospital or the National Center on Al-Saba'een Street. We'll provide the patient's relative with a letter from the hospital mentioning that the bearer requires blood and to give him what he needs."

She adds, "Also in times of shortage, we'll go to camps and ask soldiers to donate blood. They like donating because they receive holidays by doing so."

She continues to say "There's neither financial support from the government nor any other authority to improve the blood bank. Moreover, medical equipment is old, outdated and not useful as it must be. Also, the room for taking blood from donors isn't up to required standards."

She goes on, "It's a known fact that donors must receive special treatment, such as informing them about the process and giving them juice in order to gain energy. However, we don't give them courage to come again because due to being uneducated, upon seeing their blood drained from their bodies, many donors think they're going to die and instead of calming them down by explaining the process to them, they are ignored. For sure, if donors don't receive good treatment, they won't come again and then we'll keep needing blood."

Al-Junaid explains, "We're doing our best for the safety and security of donors' blood and patients, as we must satisfy both parties. There are some basic conditions in order to donate blood; for example, donors should be aged 18 to 60 and weigh 50 to 85 kilograms."

He notes, "Those from countries such as those in Africa are handled differently because of the prevalence of diseases like HIV and malaria; thus, we monitor them more closely than others until we determine whether they carry any diseases."

Al-Junaid continues, "Before accepting their blood, we ask donors background questions, such as, 'When was the last time you gave blood?' and 'Do you have any allergies, especially those of the skin?' Men may donate four times per year, but women only twice a year."

"After inquiring about their background, donors are asked to provide their name, age, gender, address and

The dentist-patient relationship: It's all about trust

By: Dr. Moein Pourahmari

Research at Malak Dental Center in Sana'a, where I work, shows that most people maintain an enjoyable relationship with one dentist for long periods. Our study found that:

- 80 percent of patients have had the same dentist for three or more years
- 75 percent of patients reported a relationship lasting five or more years
- 45 percent of patients have reported to the same dentist for 10 years

Such research suggests that these patients value a strong dentist-patient relationship.

So, how can you develop this type of dentist-patient relationship? The key word is trust. Because this relationship is built on trust, the best way to establish trust is to have good communication between you and your dentist.

By engendering feelings of ease and confidence in his or her abilities, a skilled dentist can allay a patient's fears and render the dental experience a pleasant and painless one. A heightened sense of trust further facilitates a patient's interactions with the dentist, provides a greater feeling of satisfaction with services provided and promotes therapeutic compliance.

In the dentist-patient relationship, trust comes from the assurance that personal information will remain confidential, that any procedures are in the patient's best interest and that patient autonomy is recognized.

To keep communication rolling, you may want to ask your dentist the following questions:

- Can you give me step-by-step explanations as you examine my oral health needs?
- What treatment options are there regarding my specific needs?
- Which of these options will yield the best outcome for me?
- What should be treated now and what can be treated later?

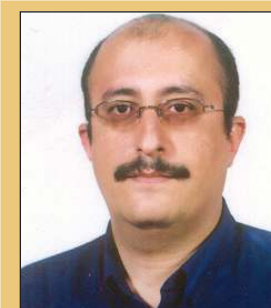
Determining the right dentist

All patients must decide for themselves if their rapport with their dentist is satisfactory because everybody is different and everyone expects different things from a strong dentist-patient relationship. Generally, though, quality, comfort and cost are the main factors patients should consider when building a relationship with their dentist.

Quality and comfort

Every dentist is responsible for providing quality, patient-specific oral health care in accordance with professional and practice standards and guidelines. Patient-specific means that your care is a decision made by you and your dentist together, based on your personal oral health care needs and circumstances.

Patient satisfaction with his or her dentist is largely dependent on specific



By: Dr. Moein Pourahmari

patient preferences, as the opinion of what makes a good dentist and a good dentist-patient relationship may very well differ from patient to patient.

Ultimately, only a patient can decide if he or she is comfortable with his or her dentist. Patients are responsible for finding a dentist they are comfortable with and one who responds to their needs and concerns.

Dentist responsibilities

Always get a cost estimate from your dentist before treatment begins and ask him or her to explain any aspect of treatment or cost about which you have questions.

In order to build upon the foundation of trust in the dentist-patient relationship, it's imperative that dentists follow certain guidelines during their consultations. While they have the right to offer an honest opinion or even a second opinion, dentists always should act within the jurisdiction of fairness and truthfulness and in the patient's best interests.

Improving their communication skills should be another important priority of dentists as they strive to make the dental experience pleasurable and worthwhile for patients. Accomplishing this likely will have dual benefits, the first being that by displaying genuine sympathy and interest in the patient as an individual, the dentist may make him or her feel more at ease, thereby assuaging those who exhibit dental fear and anxiety.

The second and potentially most significant benefit of improved dentist-patient communication may be to foster continuity in regularly seeking dental care and encouraging the patient to adopt a more active role in maintaining proper oral health.

Besides being more personable, dentists also need to understand their patients' various ethnic and/or cultural backgrounds in order to better accommodate their individual needs and concerns while still showing respect for their values and beliefs.

However, the most pressing issue dentists should attend to is the issue of patient involvement in the decision-making process. Offering longer and more thorough consultations likely will lead to a greater willingness to participate, while informing patients of their rights and the circumstances surrounding their case may encourage more active debate.

Dr. Moein Pourahmari is a dentist and maxillofacial surgeon, as well as a lecturer at Sana'a University's Faculty of Dentistry.

reason for donating. Most of the time, we perform basic testing before taking their blood, but we sometimes take their blood and then examine it," he explains.

"After examination, if we discover that a donor's blood reveals some disease such as HIV, syphilis or anything else, we call and tell him or her, 'You have some type of infection in your blood, so please come in for testing again.' When he or she returns, certainly we do another test just to be sure. If we discover that he or she is carrying a disease, he or she is handed over to the authorities in charge of such diseases. Of course, dirty or unclean and expired blood is destroyed immediately."

Al-Junaid continues, "Sometimes, due to the overcrowding, we just take their blood and test it later because we can't make donors wait four to six hours to see if their blood is usable or not. Because we don't have modern equipment, it takes a long time to perform a test because we must do it the old way. (The blood is not exposed to all tests)"

The head director says with satisfaction, "There's no way for a mistake to be made during a transfusion because the blood results and information are written on the front of the bag."

Moreover, he says, "We use two

different refrigerators: one for usable blood that's ready for patients and the other for untested blood. Usable and untested blood can never get mixed with each other because we work carefully to separate them."

Al-Junaid further comments, "Due to illiteracy and being uneducated, citizens don't know the value and importance of donating blood for others. The media also plays no role in this regard. We suffer many problems at the blood bank, the main one being lack of volunteer donors, who average about four per month. Most donors donate for their friends and relatives. This type averages 200 to 300."

As an example, 27-year-old Mubarak Al-Abadi was at the Jumhury Hospital blood bank, explaining, "I'm donating because one of my relatives needs blood."

After finishing and carrying his blood outside, he angrily recounted, "I waited here for an hour before they led me to a small room. The way they took my blood was so bad; however, the worst thing was that once the bag was full, they handed it to me and simply said, 'Take your blood.' I have no doubt that this way of dealing with this is wrong because it's blood! Someone will die if I don't give him this blood, so it must be in good condition." The donor said.

في خدمتك، في أي وقت ومن أي مكان

الخدمة المصرفية عبر الإنترنت

الخدمة المصرفية الهاتفية

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Hadramout valley: A tourism treasure trove

By: Ismail Al-Ghabri

As the largest valley in Yemen, Hadramout valley is a very significant and historic symbol. In his book, "Geography of the Arabian Peninsula," famed Yemeni writer and historian Abu Mohammed Al-Hasan Al-Hamdani described the Hadramout valley as the particular characteristic of eastern Yemen. It is similar to the Moor Valley in western Yemen.

Linking the wonders of nature with the creativity of mankind, Hadramout valley is a palm oasis, as well as a source for wheat. It is also the location where the most ancient groups of humans lived on the Arabian Peninsula. It contains the city of Shibam Hadramout, which boasts the world's oldest skyscrapers. Additionally, it has the most unique architectural styles and designs existing in Yemen, and indeed on the Arabian Peninsula.

Moreover, Hadramout valley is the destination of immigrants who spread the message of Islam into Southeast Asia and North Africa. In this regard, it is the stronghold of scholars, as well as those seeking to make their fortune. For example, most of the caravans overloaded with frankincense found their way via the Hadramout valley. Thus, the area represents a treasure of Yemeni civilization.

All of the abovementioned features help make the Hadramout valley the most desired tourist destination nationwide. This is attributed to the wide

spectrum contained in its tourism, traditional and modern patterns.

Cultural tourism

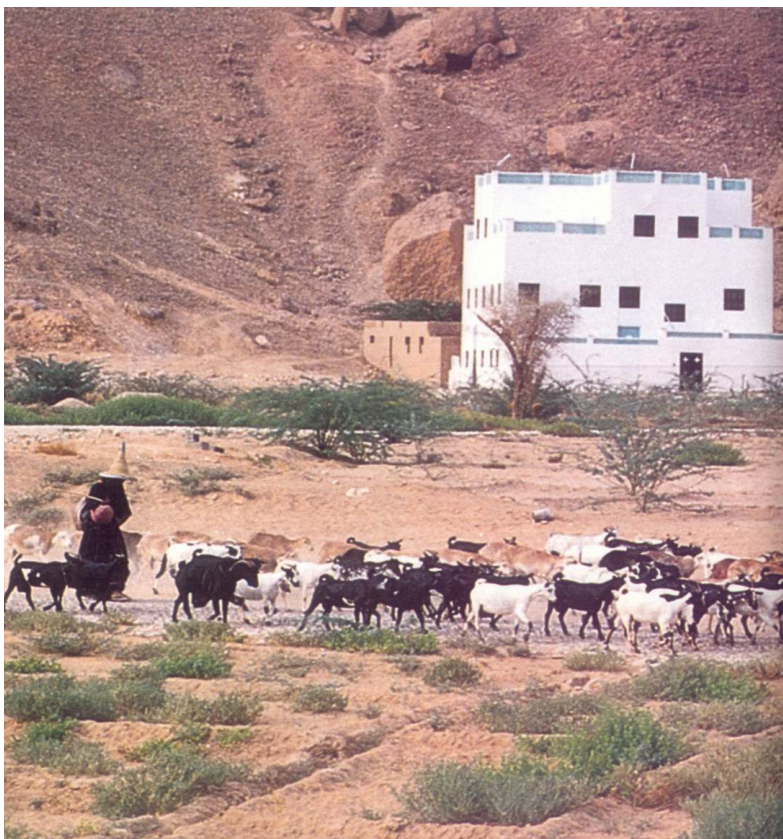
Cultural tourism is chief among the valley's most outstanding tourism patterns. Archeological excavations have led to the discovery of the oldest human colonies, particularly in the valleys of Du'an, Rikha and Huraidha, where the Archeological Moon Temple is located.

The valley's historic cities also have significance. Shibam Hadramout city tops those cities as it was registered on the World Heritage List as the location containing the oldest skyscrapers. Along with its sister cities of Sayoun and Tarim, it is the most important station for transporting and exporting frankincense to the outside world via Qana port.

The graves of prophets in the area offer another tourist feature to Hadramout valley. Additionally, there are many Sufi religious schools in the area, as well as other cultural centers that attract vast numbers of Arabs and Muslims. Traditional handicrafts are yet another tourist attraction to the area.

Hadrami architecture, which is that especially in the Hadramout valley and its tributaries, remains an attraction for cultural tourists from various nations worldwide.

In Hadrami architecture, which depends mainly on clay, the buildings are large and tall. With such construction being the most expensive nationwide, immigrants from the Hadramout valley readily provide their capital to



Hadrami farmers wearing their distinctive cylindrical hats to cover their heads and protect them from the sun's heat.

prosper such architecture.

Mountain tourism

Located on a hilltop 1,000 meters above sea level, the Hadramout valley and its tributaries offer picturesque and natural views from the hills overlooking the valley. Moving from the valley to the hilltops is fundamental for

mountain tourism and this area has all of the necessary features for such tourism.

Agricultural tourism

Most Hadramout valley residents mainly depend on agriculture, as they have done since the fourth millennium B.C. Wheat, dates and barley are the most important products from the area, where bees also feed on trees to produce the best varieties of honey ever tasted.

Agricultural tourism, which has begun to gain momentum all over the world, is similar to environmental tourism in terms of requirements. Tourists live in an agricultural environment, experiencing and interacting firsthand with its various components. In doing so, they learn about farmers' activities, experiences, traditions and customs prevailing in the area.

The Hadramout valley likewise is an agricultural tourism location, attracting both Arab and foreign tourists who initially come to visit the area's historic cities and view the original Hadrami architectural patterns. Such tourists also will spy Hadrami farmers wearing their distinctive cylindrical hats to cover their heads and protect them from the sun's heat.

Desert tourism

The desert of the Empty Quarter is located in northern Hadramout, comprised of both fine dunes and long rocky plains extending east to west and surrounded by sand dunes.

In the Hadramout valley, tourism is the economic sister of agriculture and it has a significant role in shaping the local economy, as the valley is one of Yemen's main tourist attractions.



A view of Hadramout

Al-Jannah, a barren paradise

By: Saddam Al-Ashmori
For Yemen Times

Al-Jannah, which means paradise, is a vast land, but it is also a burned area as far as the eye can see. Devoid of trees, it contains old craters and volcanic dunes instead, making it an area to contemplate, especially as its perimeter is covered with trees. In viewing the land itself, one believes it has been burned because it has that look.

Al-Jannah is located 30 kilometers north of Sana'a near Amran. Previously called Suran, it's now called Dhuran and part of Hamdan. Although Al-Jannah is a large area, few people live there.

When asked about its barrenness and emptiness, Mu'ammir Al-Thaifani replies, "The reason is that the land was burned and people believe that cursed land has no blessing anymore. Those

who do want to live in the area must bring stones to build their houses, as the area's stones aren't useful for construction because they are burned and fragile.

"Likewise, the soil also must be removed and replaced with other soil brought from other locations," he adds.

He continues, "Instead, people dwelled in the area's suburbs, which became famous for their qat trees, such as in Hamdan. Thus, people started living in the area, choosing those areas near the public road or its edges."

Agriculture in Al-Jannah

Upon entering Thaifan area in Al-Jannah, one sees no trees and only a few cultivated areas. Rajab Al-Thaifani explains this, saying, "The land was burned after a volcano erupted, so it's now unarable, especially the topsoil, which isn't fertilized.

"Some qat trees recently were planted when the topsoil was removed and replaced with other soil. In this replaced

soil, we grow wheat, barley and corn; however, most people here mainly depend on qat trees because areas such as Hamdan and Eyal Suraih are famed for their qat trees."

Al-Jannah's destruction

The story of Al-Jannah is written in the Qur'an in Surat Al-Qalam (The Pen). Yemeni scholar Mohammed Ibn Ali Al-Shawkani interpreted the passage as indicating that Al-Jannah was located in Yemen two leagues (10 kilometers) from Sana'a.

The land was owned by a kind old man who used to help the poor and needy. When he died, his sons inherited the land, where palm farms were grown. Claiming they were too many and no longer could help the needy, the sons deprived them of what their father used to give them and quit giving to the poor. Instead, they planned to harvest in the early morning without the needy people's knowledge.

Thus, for this reason, Allah ordered Al-Jannah completely burned. When the sons went together to harvest their land as agreed, they found it completely burned, at which they exclaimed, "We are misled! This is not our farm!" However, after some contemplation, they discovered that it indeed was theirs, at which they cried, "Allah has punished us because we are sinful and we deprived the needy of what our father used to give them."

One of the sons, the best one, instructed his brothers to pray to Allah, but they disobeyed him, instead blaming each other for what happened to their land. However, they soon regretted that and repented to Allah, requesting He compensate them and promising to continue what their father had done. Thus, they prayed to Allah, who responded to their prayers and compensated them.

However, since this time, the land of Al-Jannah has remained barren.

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Al-Baradoni, the last great Arab classical poet

Prepared by: Eyad N. Al-Samman

Yemeni poet, intellectual and writer Abdullah Saleh Al-Baradoni was born in Dhamar governorate's Al-Baradon village in 1929. Having contracted smallpox at age 4, by age 6, he had lost his vision entirely.

After receiving his preliminary education at his village's kuttab, where he memorized a third of the Qur'an, he moved to Al-Mahalla village in 1935 to live with his sister.

In 1938, he went to Dhamar city to complete memorizing and studying the intonation of the Qur'an, attending Al-Shamsia School, where he studied jurisprudence, Arabic grammar and other sciences. Al-Baradoni spent nearly 10 years in Dhamar city, during which time he began writing poetry at age 13, in addition to obtaining a certificate in sheikhdom from Al-Shamsia School.

Like many other Yemenis, Al-Baradoni suffered social, political and economic tragedies during Imamate rule in Yemen. He satirized the regime in some of his poems, which were published and distributed as confidential pamphlets. In 1948, he was arrested and imprisoned for nine months at Dhamar city's Al-Qashla Prison.

After his release, Al-Baradoni moved to Sana'a where he continued his religious studies at the Great Mosque, after which he attended the House of Sciences in Sana'a, obtaining a certificate in Islamic law and Arabic Language Sciences in 1953, the same year he was appointed an Arabic literature lecturer at his alma mater.

Al-Baradoni practiced law from 1954 to 1956, arguing court cases related to divorced women; consequently, he was dubbed, "The Divorcees' Lawyer."

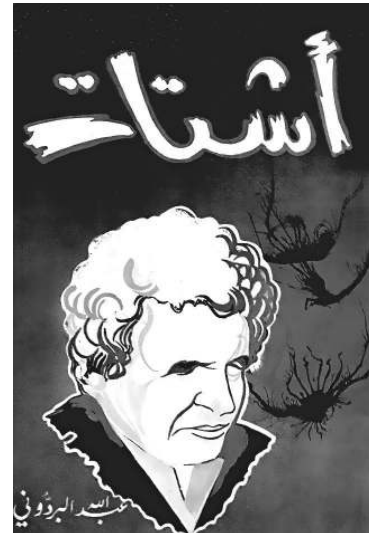
Following the outbreak of the 1962 revolution in Yemen, Al-Baradoni was assigned to Sana'a Radio and began writing his weekly program, "Majallat Al-Fikr wa Al-Adab" ("The Magazine of Thought and Literature"), which was broadcast until his death in 1999. He was appointed manager of Sana'a Radio in 1969, as well as being a cultural supervisor for The Army Magazine from 1969 to 1975.

For political reasons, he was removed from his governmental position at Sana'a Radio in 1970 when he was elected the first president of the Yemeni Authors and Writers Union. However, he returned to Sana'a Radio as program manager until 1980. He also was a member of the advisory council for The Culture Magazine and The New Yemen magazine.

Al-Baradoni is described as the last great Arab classical poet who versed and renewed classical rhymed poetry. With 12 poetic divans (a collection of poems, especially Arabic poetry) and eight published books on contemporary cultural, political and social Yemeni history, he also has hundreds of essays, studies and research comprising a great cultural and literary encyclopedia.

His first divan was 1961's "Min Ardh Bilqis" ("From the Land of Bilqis") published by the Supreme Council for Arts and Literature in Egypt. It was dedicated to supporting Palestine and denouncing colonization and Zionism.

Al-Baradoni's second divan, "Fi Tariq Al-Fajr" ("On the Dawn's



Way," 1965), represented the Baradonic renewal of the classical form of rhymed poetry. The third divan of his works entitled, "Madinat Al-Ghad" ("The City of Tomorrow," 1970) was where he dreamed of a utopian society characterized by love, peace and sympathy.

His other poetic divans include: "For the Eyes of Bilqis's Mother" (1972), "Smoky Faces in the Night's Mirrors" (1977), "The Ages' Reply" (1991) and his last divan, "The Return of the Wise Man, Ibn Zayed" (1994).

Among Al-Baradoni's other literary and critical books is "A Journey through Ancient and Modern Yemeni Poetry" (1972), which is a historical study of the development and deterioration in Yemeni culture and literature summarizing Yemen's poetic period from the pre-Islamic age until modern times.

His other books include "The Art of Popular Literature in Yemen" (1982) and "From the First Poem to the Last Shot" (1993), which is a study of Mohammed Al-Zubairi's poetry. Al-Baradoni's last work was 1994's "Ashtaat" ("Fragments").

Al-Baradoni's works translated into English include "The Popular Culture" and "20 Selected Poems," in addition to his poetic divans translated into French, "La Ville de Demain" and "Le Yémen Républicain."

Al-Baradoni also has unpublished works, such as his novel, "Uncle Maimon," which he mentioned in interviews, the poetic divan, "Love in the Moon's Harbors," and "Al-Baradoni's Autobiography," which is considered the largest book he ever wrote.

Al-Baradoni received numerous local and Arab literary awards. He received his first Arab award during his first appearance outside of Yemen in 1971 when he participated in the Abu Tammam Poetic Festival in Mosul, northern Iraq, by reciting his famous poem, "Abu Tammam and the Arabism of Today."

He won the award at Cairo's 1981 Shawqi and Hafiz Poetic Festival, as well as the 1983 Jerash Poetic Festival in Jordan. He also won the 1993 Al-Awais Cultural Award for poetry.

In his Yemeni homeland, Aden granted Al-Baradoni its Medal of Literature and Arts in 1982, followed by the capital city of Sana'a awarding him the same medal in 1983. Additionally, UNESCO minted a silver coin in 1982 bearing Al-Baradoni's portrait as a disabled individual who overcame his disability via his literary career.

On August 30, 1999, Al-Baradoni passed away on his 70th birthday, after immortalizing his name as one of the 20th century's greatest and most famous Arab poets. He was a blind genius who enriched Arabic literature with his distinctive works and his great poetic masterpieces.

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Exhibit depicts Arab classrooms

By: Yemen Times Staff

A striking new British Council photography exhibit opened Sunday at the National Museum in Sana'a. Entitled "Classroom Portraits," the exhibit captures in images and facts the classrooms and views of students in 25 schools across Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain and the United Kingdom.

Yemeni Education Minister Abdulsalam Al-Jawfi, British Ambassador to Yemen Timothy Torlot and Elizabeth White, director of the British Council in Yemen, opened the event.

British photographer Julian Germain was commissioned by the British Council to take the series of 24 photographs and ask students about their likes and dislikes, aims and ambitions during each classroom visit. Postcards highlighting statistics from his surveys accompany the photographs.

The project with schools in the Middle East follows Germain's work in 2004 with schools in England. The British Council aims to eventually create a global collection of such classroom portraits.

The photographer explains, "School is our life from age 5 to 16. We all leave school, but it never leaves us. Our school days are a collective formative experience, a memory matrix allowing even complete strangers to find common ground and understanding."

Germain notes that his photographs have the potential to trigger all sorts of responses and memories from anyone who has attended school, adding that, "The statistics tell us things that the photographs alone cannot. They add to our sense of what the pupils think and feel about themselves, school and the world beyond."

He continues, "What interested me as a photographer was the physicality of school - the buildings, the classrooms, the uniforms and the children."

The exhibit features students from primary, intermediate and secondary schools across Yemen and the Middle East region. Surveys of intermediate students in Yemen revealed that religious studies was the favorite subject and white was their favorite color. Additionally, most students interviewed wanted to become doctors, pilots, scientists or football players.

English school books will be given as prizes in a fun quiz taking place at the exhibit, in addition to a student English writing competition based on the exhibit photographs. Additionally, packets containing postcards with information about the exhibit will be available for schools and a smaller exhibit featuring just the 11 Yemeni schools photographed will tour the country in early December.

British Council Director White points out, "Whatever our background, "Classroom Portraits" provides all of us a common focal point. By using art to illustrate this shared experience, young people in the U.K. and the Middle East have a wonderful

opportunity to discover more about each others lives, explore different cultures and exchange ideas.

She adds, "The British Council is delighted to support Germain in this exciting project. We'd like to thank all of the Yemeni and regional schools that participated in this innovative project. In time, we look forward to building "Classrooms Portraits" into a global collection of images and statistics from schools worldwide."

The photography exhibit's opening comes at a peak time for the British Council, which is intensifying its activities via numerous cultural and artistic events during November and December under the name, "Multaq: Yemen and Britain—Celebrating Cultures in Contact."



Female students class in one of the Gulf counties.



Omer Al-Mukhtar secondary school in Yemen. This photo is taken in May 2007.

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