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Hostile protests coincide with Independence Day celebrations

By: Mohammed Bin Sallam

TAIZ, Dec. 2 — Official and popular celebrations on the 40th anniversary of National Independence Day, which took place from Nov. 29 to Dec. 1, were accompanied by angry and hostile demonstrations against the authority in several Yemeni governorates, notably in Taiz, which hosted the biggest rally. Aden, Lahj, Al-Dhale', Abyan, Sana'a and Ibb were other governorates that witnessed enraged protests against the government.

Securities can't prevent the marches
Security authorities failed to prevent citizens from joining the demonstrations, although they closed all outlets to Taiz and opened fire on some people while they were trying to enter the city via entrances other than those containing checkpoints. Three citizens were injured badly in the process.

The protestors chanted slogans against corruption, demanded that the government carry out reforms and punish policemen who fired on demonstrators in Taiz, Radfan, Al-Dhale', Mukalla and Aden. At the rally, former Secretary General of the Yemen Socialist Party Ali Saleh Ubad said, "The people, who are exercising peaceful sit-ins and protests, are the

only guarantee for protecting unity and independence."

"The regime has transferred national liberation into a type of hatred, embodied in the oppressive policies seen today. The authority oppresses independence and its military and civic servants, and is therefore responsible for damaging unity by emptying out its national and democratic content. It has changed unity into a cover for influential and corrupt officials to exercise property theft," Ubad added.

"Today, as we celebrate the National Independence Day that witnessed the evacuation of the last British soldier from Aden, we expect the oppressors and corrupt individuals to leave our homeland," Saleh Hamoud Hassan declared, addressing demonstrators in Taiz on behalf of Radfan locals. "We came from Radfan to you to search together for a homeland free of tyrants and influential persons. We came to you to unite in a peaceful struggle for the sake of Yemeni people in the north and south.

He continued, "Oppressive officials have violated our rights, looted our wealth, plundered our lands and damaged our unity. Regrettably, they are now celebrating the National Independence Day, while in fact they resemble the foreign invaders in terms of oppressing natives and robbing their wealth."

The rally released a statement pressing the authority to be serious in carrying out comprehensive political reforms, including reforming the electoral process and compensating victims of peaceful protests in Radfan, Dhale', Aden, Hadramout and Taiz. The statement called on all Yemenis and political forces to unify their lines, strengthen their positions and exercise further efforts to reach the goals of the Yemeni Revolution and restore liberty and dignity to the country.

Protests in Hadramout call for fair distribution of wealth

In Hadramout, the Joint Meeting Parties organized on Friday two rallies, the first of which took place in Ghail, Bayamin District, and the second in Al-Qutun. Both rallies were

attended by thousands of people. The rallies released statements calling for the government to promote equality, freedom and the fair distribution of wealth, which once had been the goals outlined by freedom fighters and martyrs during the Liberation and Independence War.

The statements strongly denounced arbitrary arrests of innocent citizens for joining peaceful protests against the deteriorating political and economic situations in the country. They urged the government to respond to the demands of its people and cease the use of power and violence against citizens, as such a policy serves only corrupt officials and property thieves, it claimed.

Aden and Ibb Citizens march although the helicopters monitoring

Nearly ten thousand people from Aden and other neighboring governorates participated in the Independence Day festival, organized by Sheikh Othman upon invitations from retirees and JMP leaders. Police began heightening security measures on Wednesday evening to prevent the entry of thousands of locals from Abyan, Al-Dhale', Radfan and other areas into Aden with the intention of joining the rally.

According to eyewitnesses, hundreds of people were forced to go on foot for long distances after the security authorities prevented them from driving their cars into Aden. A helicopter landed at Al-Alam area with troops from the counterterrorism unit in order to prevent citizens from reaching the rally's venue. Other helicopters prevented people in Radfan and Al-Dhale' from assembling, using tear gas and firing into the air to disperse them and force them to return home. Local sources said that government troops killed one citizen and injured another three, one seriously, while trying to disperse the gathering.

In Ibb, thousands of people rallied Friday to express their solidarity with the legal demands of military and civil servants, and those dismissed from their jobs throughout the governorate. They expressed concern about the



Thousands of protesters headed to the streets in Aden carrying anti-corruption banners Friday. Just one day after president Saleh (inset) called on opposition leaders abroad to return to Yemen.

repeated behavior of local authorities that prevents the JMP from holding their activities at public places. Citizens accused the local authority of restricting these places to functions of the ruling party.

They confirmed that protests and sit-ins taking place nationwide reflect the strong rejection of the government's poor policies and encourage citizens to claim their rights via peaceful and legal means.

And The President called the opposition leaders to come back

Aden hosted on Thursday a carnival on the 40th Anniversary of the National Independence Day in the presence of President Ali Abdullah Saleh and other senior government officials, while the JMP organized a popular rally on the occasion at the same time at Liberty Square in Sana'a. Giving a speech during festival in Aden, President Saleh called on opposition leaders abroad to return home and exercise their political rights.

"We welcome the opposition leaders who live abroad to come back and exercise their political rights," Saleh

said, without naming any of the exiled leaders.

Continued on page 3

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Sixty eight African refugees die

By: Amel Al-Ariqi

MUKALLA, Dec. 2 — Sixty eight African refugees drowned on Thursday when their boat, carrying 127 passengers, overturned off the Yemeni coast, said an official at the UN refugee agency.

"It was around 9 p.m. when the vessel (carrying 92 Somalis and 35 Ethiopians) sank close to Mukalla beaches," said UNHCR field specialist Aouad Baobid.

Only twenty six bodies were found washed ashore early Friday, while 42

refugees remain missing. "We buried 15 Somalis and 11 Ethiopians; we are still searching for 44 Somalis and 24 Ethiopians. We believe that they are dead," explained Baobid, complaining that Yemeni authorities made the decision to bury the bodies very late. "We found the bodies early in the morning and received the decision at night. We tried to talk with the concerned authorities in the region to ease the burial process," he added.

Most of the bodies were buried by locals in mass graves on the coast. However, in Hadramout authorities

prevented coastal burials, asking locals and UNHCR officials to bury the refugees far from the beach.

The boat carried passengers who were between the ages of 8 and 50, and overturned when all the passengers went to one side of the boat. After the boat sank, the immigrants tried to swim to the nearby coast. "It was dark, and they were afraid, so instead of swimming toward the beach they swam further into the ocean, where they drowned about 200 kilometers from the beach," stated Baobid.

Continued on page 3

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In brief

ADEN

Handball competition

Dec. 1 — The General Handball Union in Yemen is organizing a competition for junior handball teams at the closed sports auditorium in Aden.

Participating teams from across the nation will compete for the Independence Cup, which will be awarded to the winning team at the end of this month.

SANA'A

Yemeni Russian business forum

Dec. 2 — The Yemeni Russian Business Council will hold a five-day forum in Sana'a beginning Dec. 8. Among the longstanding projects Russia is supporting is a railroad connecting Yemen with Saudi Arabia and Oman. The Yemeni government is encouraging Russian businesses to invest in the project, promising to facilitate their foreign investment in Yemen.

102 women trained in vocational fields

Dec. 1 — Organized by the Ministry of Vocational Training's General Department for Women and Gender, 102 female vocational students received training on how to apply their vocational knowledge in real life. The students, who studied commercial dealing, sewing and beauty services, received a month of training, sponsored by banks and other private sector companies, to enable them to overcome any barriers to their participation in the paid workforce.

Female Yemeni activist receives ICC badge of honor

Dec. 1 — Amel Al-Basha, Middle East and North Africa coordinator for the International Criminal Court, received a badge of honor commemorating the late ICC coordinators, Akli Sabeh and Osama Al-Obaidi, who were assassinated in Iraq in October 2007. The award was granted during the sixth conference of the ICC collation, which occurred at the beginning of this month.

Teachers' sit-in scheduled for Tuesday

Dec. 2 — The Yemeni Teachers Syndicate has announced its intention to hold a sit-in at Tahrir Square in Sana'a to protest against the deteriorating conditions of teachers in Yemen. The teachers demand better pay and a more efficient compensation system that considers the hardships of teachers, especially those in rural areas.

First forum for Yemeni businesswomen

Dec. 2 — "For a promising launch of businesswomen in society's development" is the slogan of the first Yemeni businesswomen's forum, which will commence this Thursday. Approximately 150 businesswomen will participate in the forum, which is being organized by the businesswomen's department of the Yemeni Businessmen's Club.

By: Hamed Thabet

SANA'A, Dec. 2 — An international report complained about a data clash between the number of victims and survivors from mines and explosives left behind from wars in Yemen. The ninth report concluded from the recording sector and land survey for mines that in 2000 there was a total of 4,904 victims because of mines and explosives: 2,560 dead and 2,344 injured.

"The new international report for the assembly in charge of watching over and taking care of mines and explosives, gave its appreciation to authorities in charge of removing mines, and Yemen's commitment to clearing and dismantling hidden mines. These are the remains of the 1962-1975 war between the Royalists and Republicans, the Sept. 26th revolution against British Occupation in 1963-1967, a war known as the Armed National Battlefront from 1970-1983, and finally the Summer War in 1994." The report noted.

The report recommended that Yemen commit to dismantling the mines by applying the fourth item, 'the Mine Ban Treaty' on the destruction of its stockpile of stored mines in Yemen, which amount to 74,000, recommending that Yemen destroy them by the end of March 2009.

The Center's concern is about not

getting support in order to do its job properly. Removal equipment isn't useful and needs to be replaced by newer equipment to make swift progress. The Yemeni Center is struggling and asking for an extension on the time period for this operation, as it claims there are many mines in many different locations that cannot be removed with available equipment. The report pointed out that mine victims have doubled in the past three years.

The report explained, "Yemen could reach the deadline for the agreement on the grounds that a new strategy will be implemented in 2007.

The UNDP in its report about mines said, "Currently the government of Yemen lacks adequate national resources to effectively address and manage both man-made and natural crises."

Also from this standpoint, the UNDP assists Yemen in clearing mines from the most affected areas and rehabilitating lands so they can be made available to communities for productive use, thereby boosting economic growth and reducing rural poverty.

Furthermore, the UNDP aims to develop the capacity of concerned authorities and institutions in the area of disasters, for disaster management and contingency planning, establishing the necessary conditions to prevent and

limit the impact of disasters.

The study showed that clearing roads of land mines created easy access to lands and many villages that were full of mines. But the problem is that people in these areas do not trust that their lands are free of mines. It added that special authorities should convince residents that their lands are usable and safe to live in, and there is no need to be scared.

The report pointed out that a mine survey, conducted in Yemen in 2000 as the first step in planning a mine removal strategy, estimated that mine-laden areas in Yemen are about 923 square kilometers.

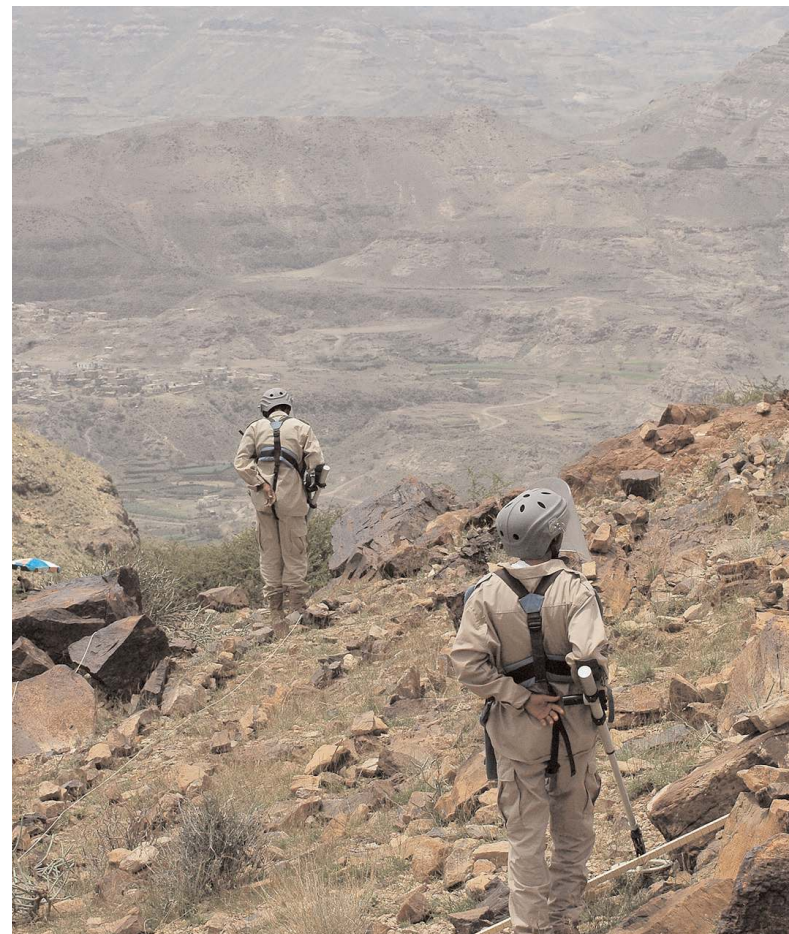
Moreover, in July 2007 there were still 419 square kilometers of land in need of clearing, including 8 urban communities which are affected and also 274 rural communities which really need to be cleaned out.

A program conducted by the Anti-Mine Center from 1997 to Dec. 2001 educated 410 people about the risks and dangers of mines.

In 2007 the average for mine incidents improved greatly. Still, there are 4 to 6 victims every month (48-62 annually). It is estimated that five Yemenis die every month as a result of land mines.

From 2000 to June 2007, the number of mine fatalities was 122, including 53 men, 14 women, 27 boys, 21 girls and

Five Yemenis die every month as a result of land mines, report says



Al Dholee, Yemen, Members of Demining unit 5 work in a mine field on Jebal Al Nozhah near the village of Bait Al tawil. Edward Parsons/IRIN

7 mine clearing workers.

Yemen signed the Mine Ban Treaty on Dec. 4th, 1997 and countersigned it on Sept. 1st, 1998. The treaty was implemented in March 1999.

Moreover, Yemen participated in the seventh meeting of the States Parties in Geneva in September 2006, where

statements were issued about problems of mine clearance and victim assistance. Yemen also attended meetings of the Standing Committees in Geneva in May 2006 and April 2007. In April, Yemen provided lectures about mine clearance and victim assistance and new stockpiles which were discovered.

Study warns against exploitation of sea cucumbers in Red Sea

SANA'A, Dec. 2 — Mahmoud Shediawah, Director of the General Authority for Protecting the Environment, emphasized the importance of preserving sea cucumbers considering them an environmentally and economically important resource.

A workshop was conducted in Sana'a on Nov. 28 to study the findings and recommendations of a report on sea cucumber fishing in Yemen. The report was prepared in cooperation with the Regional Authority to Preserve the Red Sea Environment and Gulf of Aden.

In the workshop, Shediawah said that increased demands for sea cucumbers created pressure to exploit them, leading to an environmental imbalance threatening to make this resource extinct.

He also invited new programs to systemize sea cucumber fishing as well as to preserve and protect the environment. The sea cucumber is threatened due to a huge depletion of their numbers, he claimed.

In turn, Zaher Aghwan, an environmental specialist and representative of the Regional Authority for Preserving the Environment in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, presented a report evaluating sea cucumbers in Yemen.

Current Situation and Challenges
Aghwan said that the state of sea cucumbers was evaluated in Yemen in March 2007. The evaluation process

aimed to prepare an attachment on the current situation of fisheries and presented recommendations to the Yemeni government in regard to developing a long-term management plan for sea cucumber resources.

Additionally, a proposal was made to establish a project managing depletion and extinction risks, including a two year ban on the fishing and trading of sea cucumbers.

Studies were also conducted on sea cucumber reserves and implementing proper management for sea cucumbers in addition to establishing a common framework for concerned parties.

The study warned against the over fishing of sea cucumbers and recommended measures to achieve sustainable management of this resource.

The sea cucumber is a sea animal existing off Yemeni shores and other countries of the world. It is used as food products and for medicinal purposes.

The workshop was organized by the General Authority for Protecting the Environment and was attended by 15 fishery office managers as well as representatives of the Fishery Cooperative Union and technicians in the authority.

In related news, Ba Jamal, a Presidential consultant, calls on countries bordering the Red Sea, including Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Eritrea, to form a security system for its protection, con-

sidering it an important artery between Africa and Asia.

In a statement to Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, Ba Jamal stated that these countries are best able to protect the Red Sea, and that Egypt and Yemen are the primary keys to keep it secure, located at the sea's northern and southern borders, respectively.

Every six months, periodic meetings are held between Yemen and Egypt concerning Red Sea security. These meetings have not ceased despite events taking place in Iraq and Eritrea, he added.

He also confirmed that countries bordering the Red Sea must cooperate to reach mutual ends, emphasizing the importance of engaging Saudi Arabia to secure the Red Sea, as it is an oil exporting country. Eritrea is also involved in the process.

Jamal further stated that Yemen and Egypt can form a security system for the Red Sea, adding: "This will go against the strategy of the U.S. and Israel. Therefore the Red Sea countries, namely Yemen, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Djibouti, and Eritrea, have to think together to form a security system to protect the Red Sea," indicating that this matter requires resolving Somalia's crisis.

On the African side, Egypt, Sudan, Djibouti and Eritrea border the Red Sea, whereas Yemen, Saudi Arabia and Jordan are on its Asian border.

Man dies twice

TAIZ, Dec. 2 — While carrying their dead father's body after being executed, Jalal, heard his father whisper "I am still alive, take me to the hospital."

Jalal Ashraf Mohammed whose father was convicted of murder and executed in Taiz on Nov. 16, appealed to all human rights organizations to help investigate the alleged torture of his father during the execution. He says the process caused agony to his family members.

"The executioner fired many bullets at my father's breast following the instructions of the physician. After my father ceased moving, the executioner took the body and submitted it to the family, along with the burial license, which was to take place in the village," he said.

While transporting my father's body to the car, I felt that my father was still alive; we heard him say: "I am still alive, take me to the hospital." We took him to Al-Boraihi hospital where they advised us to take him to Al-Thawra Hospital.

Over there, one of the doctors did what was required to do, saying that the bullets missed his heart, as planned by the executioner."

Jalal further confirmed that his father was exposed to outrageous injustice and torture. He claimed that men from criminal investigation removed the IV drips from his body when they learned that he was still alive.

He further added that they dragged him from the bed and placed him in the vehicle roughly, then took him to the central prison, where the death sentence was again carried out against him while family members were absent.

Jalal, who buried his father in the old airport area in Taiz, said that in 2000 his father was convicted of killing his friend using a jambiyya over a banal dispute. He was jailed until the sixth of November, 2007, the day when he was executed.

The executioner shot Ashraf, 42, dead in the second execution. When he was buried, many raised questions disappeared.



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Deadline for application: December 30th 2007



Invitation for Expression of Interest

The World Bank Office in Sana'a is advertising its need in Arabic-English and English-Arabic contractual **simultaneous translation/interpretation** services with occasional written translations of workshop materials.

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Sana'a, Republic of Yemen

Russian community in Yemen votes for Russian parliament

SANA'A, Dec. 2 - Last Friday, tens of Russians in Sana'a headed to the Russian Embassy there to vote for candidates in the Russian parliament. Ballot boxes were distributed for voting earlier in the governorates of Aden, Taiz, Hodeidah and Ibb for Russians residing in those governorates or neighboring ones.

In the Federal Republic of Russia, parliamentary elections ran smoothly, according to media sources, among which some sources expected that the United Russia party chaired by Vladimir Putin would achieve a sweeping victory.

However, media sources reported that Russia earmarked 4.3 billion rubles for the elections from the federal budget, exceeding the amount allocated for similar elections in 2003 by 1.5 billion rubles.

1,000 police officers and 150,000 members of interior forces maintained security during the elections, with eleven political parties participating. More than 170,000 security officers guarded polling stations.

Moreover, the election candidate lists covered 4,600 persons, with 10 candidates running for each seat in the Russian parliament, consisting of 450 members.

The participating parties are: the Russian Agricultural party, Civil Force



party, Russian Democratic Party, Russian Communist Party, Right forces Union, Social Justice Party, Russian Democratic Liberal Party, Fair Russia Party: "Home, Retirees and Life," Russia's Patriots Party, United Russia Party, and Yabolko Party.

More than 108 million Russians are entitled to vote. The voters' list includes Russians residing abroad, numbering about 1.7 million. 96,000 polling centers were opened, 360 of which were in 141

foreign countries.

Three million people participated in running the elections, with 1.5 to 2 million observers affiliated with 11 political parties. In addition, one million people will be working within the electoral committees at different levels.

Three hundreds and thirty six invitations were given to international observers to participate in observing the parliamentary elections. 55 of these invitations were given to the Parliamentary

Association of Europe Council and Parliamentary Association for Security Organization and Cooperation in Europe as well as the Parliamentary Association for Independent Countries League.

It is expected that the election results will be announced Dec. 3rd. However, they will be officially proclaimed by the Central Commission for Elections three weeks after the casting day. The first session of the new parliament will be held on the thirtieth day after the elections.

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Statistics shows increasing AIDS cases in Yemen

By: Fatima Al-Ajel

SANA'A, Dec. 2 - The National AIDS Program in the Ministry of Health reports that AIDS cases in Yemen are increasing; according to latest statistics, in June of this year the number of AIDS cases reached 2,890.

Because of the increased number of AIDS cases in Yemen, many workshops and camps were arranged in many governorates to highlight the danger and negative effects of AIDS, especially among youth, who face tragic ends if infected with AIDS.

In Aden, the Woman's Sustainable Development Association organized a three-day training course about the danger of AIDS to 20 women from civil society organizations. The course provided participants with scientific knowledge and practical applications, defining AIDS, ways to get infected,

protection against it and the role of woman and societies in enlightening society about this disease.

Dhamar is another governorate which celebrates World AIDS Day. The National Association for Combating Aids (NACA), in cooperation with the Reproductive Health Program, organizes this week a joint enlightenment program on means of fighting AIDS. The program features a number of enlightening symposiums and lectures, among which is a discussion session on the role of state and local bodies in combating the disease and boosting health enlightenment. It also includes field visits to a number of districts and quarters.

In a workshop held in Dhamar, National AIDS Program general manager Ahmad Al-Thabibi stated that behind each case there are about ten hidden cases, so the approximate AIDS

statistic in Yemen is closer to 21,890 cases. Therefore, he called for medical checkups on foreigners and refugees who come to Yemen. "About 780 AIDS cases come from refugees entering Yemen, according to official statistics," Al-Thabibi mentioned.

Dr. Nabil Abdul-Rab, the National AIDS Program coordinator in Aden, explained that lack of surveillance and reporting in Yemen has made it difficult to estimate the magnitude of HIV/AIDS in the country.

Most AIDS cases are registered while patients undergo routine medical checkups, when the cases are discovered. The National AIDS Program announced statistics for many governorates during the first half of this year, but these were not exact figures, according to Al-Thabibi.

According to the National AIDS Program, 20 cases were registered in

Aden; most of the patients range from 20 to 49. Consequently, a large camp has begun for youth and citizens in Aden's poor areas, considered high-risk groups.

In Hadramout and Taiz, 13 cases were registered for each governorate. In Hadramout most patients were young men between 20 and 30 years old; the rest consisted of a foreigner, two children, and two women.

However, Raima hasn't registered any AIDS cases yet this year. Dr. Abdul-Aziz Al-Amri, the National AIDS Program coordinator in Raima,

mentioned that Raima is considered the governorate with the lowest numbers of registered AIDS cases; the National AIDS Program registered only 8 patients for AIDS cases in Raima from 2004-2007.

The World AIDS Campaign slogan for 2001-2010 states, "Stop AIDS. Keep the Promise". As part of the campaign, World AIDS Day 2007 will emphasize the theme of leadership.

For the first time in Yemen, Global Fund held a regional meeting in December 2006 and awarded Yemen with \$14 million to fight AIDS as a

step to raise community awareness about the tragedy awaiting AIDS patients.

HIV/AIDS specialists working in Yemen say actual figures are higher than those provided by the Ministry of Health. According to the ministry, as of last year there were 1,821 individuals living with HIV/AIDS in Yemen. At least 60 percent of the total was male, 44 percent were children and 45 percent were foreigners. However, the 2005 WHO report estimates the number of HIV/AIDS patients in Yemen at 11,600.

Continued from page 1

Hostile protests coincide with Independence Day celebrations

However many political analysts assumed that that Saleh's call was addressed to 14 leaders of the 1994 failed secessionist rebellion, mainly the former prime minister Haidar Abu Bakr Al-Attas.

Al-Attas, the first Prime Minister in Yemen after unity was established in 1990, urged the Yemeni people to renew their struggle in order to restore what he called 'the abducted goals of the September and October revolutions.' Interviewed by Al-Wasat weekly, Al-Attas said, "I am confident that the heroic citizens in north Yemen, who live in constant suffering, will join their brothers in the south in their struggle to restore unity and its goals from the stupid abductors."

Al-Attas and the other top secessionist leaders fled to Syria, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Oman and the United Kingdom.

They were among four southern leaders who received death sentences in absentia by a state security court in 1997.

In the aftermath of the war, Saleh announced a general amnesty, which applied to nearly 8,000 southerners who left the country after the war, but not for the 16 top dissidents.

In the same context, Houthi leader Abdulmalik Al-Houthi gave a speech before a large number of his followers in Dhahian district, saying that "The 40th Anniversary of the Independence Day comes as the country is involved in a critical standoff, with a negative impact on national security, stability and unity. The country has turned into

a battleground, leading people to an unknown catastrophe while the government and its officials are stupidly engaged in useless celebrations and festivals."

Al-Houthi called on all social groups, political parties and civil community organizations to be engaged in serious dialogue with the authorities, with the aim of suggesting possible solutions to the persisting standoff.

Sixty eight African refugees die

Many immigrants attempt to cross from Somalia to Yemen, which they see as a gateway to other parts of the Middle East and the West because it is cheaper compared to other means of travel. A large number who attempt the journey are desperate to flee conflict and persecution in their home regions in Africa. "Recently all the refugees affirmed that they crossed the sea for the first time. They are fleeing bloody genocides," said Baobid, who added that the UNHCR's center for receiving these immigrants recorded twenty four boats which set out from the Somali port of Bosasso in November. "This number is small compared to the seventy seven boats in October and sixty seven in September," he went on to say.

Somalia was plunged into anarchy after the 1991 ousting of dictator Mohammed Siad Barre, and since then many Somali refugees have died trying to cross to Yemen looking for a better life.

The UNHCR estimates that more than 20,000 people have made the perilous crossing this year, with more than 439 deaths and another 489 people missing.

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- Maintains stationery supplies and office equipment for the department.
- Uses the Company's specialized software (SAP) to assist the Reservoir Development Manager with financial reviews and approvals as needed.
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Sexual abuse spreading in Sana'a primary schools

By: Nawal Ali
For Yemen Times

Ten-year-old Ahmed (not his real name) was a prominent student in his fourth grade class, always sitting in the front row and participating in class. According to his teachers, he was a distinguished student, but last year, he changed remarkably. He began sitting in the last row and was silent most of the time. He didn't do his homework. He became isolated as his psychological state deteriorated. One of his teachers threatened to go to his parents if he refused to tell her what was wrong, at which Ahmed told her that he was being sexually abused by older students in his class.

How many stories like Ahmed's exist in Yemen? A 2006 Ministry of Interior report entitled "Sexual Abuse Against Children" revealed that there are 606 sexual abuse cases involving children in 19 Yemeni governorates; however, it's unclear whether the incidents occurred in schools, at home or on the streets.

The report didn't include sexual abuse of children in Marib, in Al-Jawf governorate or in Al-Mahrah governorate due to traditional customs, where people regard the issue of sexual abuse as sensitive. The Yemeni government also has no specific figures on sexual abuse in primary schools.

A female teacher who didn't want to be identified affirms that she has firsthand knowledge of sexual abuse at her primary school in Sana'a. She says poverty plays a big role in the problem's spread because, with just a little money, poor children are easily convinced to be sexually exploited.

Another teacher also wishing to remain anonymous believes no Yemeni primary schools are healthy in this regard because they contain older (between 41-17 years of age) students who have been studying the same grade for years. "Older students studying in the same classroom with children has negative effects on the young students," she maintains.

"The presence of older students in children's classrooms is dangerous enough to poison our children's minds, so they should be separated. Additionally, the Education Ministry should come up with a suitable solution

for this situation," she proposes.

Many Yemeni secondary students study in the morning, while primary students attend class in the afternoon. According to some educators, this time for primary students, who are actually children, is not good. Because older students leave school when primary students are arriving, some older students find it an ideal and easy time to exploit children due to the absence of administration then.

One female teacher alleges, "Young students are molested by older students. Additionally, younger students get out of school just before sunset, which is too late for them. Yemen's Education Ministry should change this schedule to suit students and protect schoolchildren," she says.

Another teacher believes such problems occur due to carelessness and lack of supervision by both families and school administration; thus, parents and teachers should be sufficiently aware to raise children healthily, as it is a shared responsibility.

A spreading phenomenon

Jamal Al-Shami, chairman of the Democracy School, a local NGO, notes that sexual abuse of children is a taboo no one dares talk about and which people prefer keeping quiet rather than informing security authorities. "People are afraid of shame and scandal," he explains.

Once his organization adopted this issue and began opening files on child sexual abuse in Sana'a, Al-Shami went on to say, "We found many people willing to talk about the problem."

"The Children's Parliament played a large part in opening those files and promoting children's rights," he points out, noting, "We found many cooperative security authorities, families and doctors. Additionally, we were able to diagnose and publicize many other similar issues."

Al-Shami considers sexual abuse of children a widespread phenomenon. He believes that one major reason for it is that Yemeni youth are suffering psychological suppression due to misusing such technologies as television, mobile phones and the internet.

Another reason for such sexually abusive behavior in Yemen is that children sleep in the same room with their parents, who are unaware that this may neg-

atively impact their children's behavior, especially when they have sex. "Parents think their children are unaware of such things," he adds, "however, children are curious to emulate."

Parental carelessness also increases the problem because they don't inform their children about sexual abuse. Al-Shami adds, "This is why children will remain victims. Families should understand their important role to raise their children with enough knowledge about the outside world," noting that children should be taught about sexuality simply from the viewpoint of protecting them.

He further asserts that the Education Ministry should move forward by empowering primary school supervisors and providing Yemeni students sexual education, including healthy instructions and information strictly regarding nothing more than protecting themselves.

Al-Shami also blames Yemeni laws, which he describes as sketchy, and which encourage abusers to continue such abuse, especially when they are related to the children. "Legislation should be strict upon such criminals, whoever they are," he points out.

Last year, the Democracy School organized a campaign against sexual abuse of children, including posters with colorful drawings and messages such as, "Say no to bad touching," "Never stay outside of the house too late," "I tell my family everything that happens to me" and "Never go with strangers."

Although the campaign was successful, the organization wasn't allowed to put such posters in primary schools, so the group distributed them during its other activities.

Ali Awadh Farwah, head of the Interior Ministry's Women and Juveniles Department, maintains that sexual abuse of children is not widespread in Yemen, but only a problem in one or two areas of the country. "Because Yemen is a very conservative society, we rarely receive reports of child abuse," he says.

According to him, sexual abuse of children is spreading throughout the nation due to ignorance and illiteracy, noting that, "People are unaware of children's rights and the consequences of sexually abusing them."

He goes on, "Yemenis have no idea that the law is there to order their lives and that they should respect it. The law considers sexual abuse of children a



Sexual abuse is spreading in primary schools, according to some educators.

crime, for which abusers will be punished according to child protection laws no. 24, 26 and 45."

Farwah points out that Yemen does have a juvenile court and that every police station contains a representative from his department to handle juvenile cases. Additionally, he notes, "We printed a guide for police officers on how to deal with juvenile problems properly and this guide is provided to all police stations."

Farwah also states that his department, in cooperation with the Education Ministry, will implement a new education program in Yemeni primary schools to protect children and ensure their safety.

However, according to the department's media section, sexual abuse of children likely will increase because people don't like to report such cases.

"Because they worry about the shame of it, citizens don't report child sexual abuse, but then they keep complaining about such problems and saying that security authorities don't do anything," one media official noted.

One female sociologist at a Sana'a primary school reveals that she's handled several sexual abuse cases at her

school, receiving them from school-teachers themselves. Having talked to many sexually abused schoolchildren, she explains, "Such children exhibit particular behaviors, such as being worried, absentminded or confused when talking to them."

According to her, the offending older students exhibit such misbehavior in class, including kissing other students, behaving abnormally, winking at students, touching boys' genitals, etc.

She continues, "I talk calmly to sexually abused children when they come to my office and they tell me everything. However, parents often refuse to believe or deny such stories when I tell them because they don't want to acknowledge such behavior regarding their children. Consequently, they then insult and beat the child harshly."

The sociologist points out that a wide gap exists between students and their parents, noting that "Other people often know that a child has been sexually abused, but not the parents."

She goes on to say that because they can be tempted and threatened, younger students are more easily sexually abused than older students.

"Older students exploit the innocence

of younger students, in whom they may satisfy their sexual desires. However, some youngsters are curious to try deviant behavior such as homosexuality, but they fall prey in the end," she explains, further exhorting Yemeni parents to raise their children according to Islamic teachings, in addition to observing their friends and their children's behavior.

Psychologist Salah Al-Jumaei believes that sexual abuse at primary schools is a recent phenomenon due to weak religious adherence, asserting that "Our children need to be raised religiously and mosque preachers should play a significant role in increasing youths' awareness."

He adds that youth experience high levels of suppression due to modern technological advances such as satellite television, mobile phones, the internet, etc. "This is why they attempt to find different ways to discharge their sexual desires by sexually abusing children," he explains.

Chewing qat also increases the distance between parents and their children, Al-Jumaei says. "Parents are involved in qat sessions, while their children are left alone on the streets or with strangers."

Trafficked children tell their stories

By: Saddam Al-Ashmori

Every day, hundreds of Yemeni children between the ages of 9 and 18 find their way to the vast frontiers leading to Saudi Arabia, some accompanied by smugglers or relatives. They go there seeking work or to beg due to their miserable living situations and extreme poverty. Smugglers pay Yemeni parents to take their children to Saudi Arabia; however, such parents don't think about the dire consequences caused by their actions.

These children cross the desert by foot, never suspecting that they've been sold. Often, they are exposed to sexual abuse and torture or coerced into taking drugs until they become addicted. Ruthlessly abused both physically and mentally, their parents don't care about them due to the extreme poverty they experience themselves.

Smugglers find such work profitable, as there are large numbers of children to be smuggled. The buyers or recipients are devoid of their moral principles and religious values. Because they are better off, they seize upon this opportunity to seduce poor parents and then treat the smuggled children badly.

This horrific situation begs the following questions: Where is the Yemeni government? Where are human rights organizations and associations? Have parents lost their mercy and tenderness? Don't their neighbors have any mercy?

"We were confined for a week, during which they committed inhumane acts that are against our values and principles," one smuggled child recounted. He had found his way to Yousef Al-Naqeeb, seeking his help to release his brother, who had been held with him for more than a week, during which they were



Many children cross the desert by foot. They are exposed to sexual abuse and torture.

abused physically and sexually.

The child continued narrating, "After receiving his commission, the smuggler brought us to the buyers. We asked them about the type of work we were going to do, to which they replied ominously, 'You'll see in the evening.'"

"That night, three persons came and attacked us. We attempted to resist, but they beat and handcuffed us and then sexually abused us. They free me in order to feed and get water for my brother, provided that he remained handcuffed," the child related.

Trafficking themselves

After hearing that many others had succeeded at finding work in Saudi Arabia, 16-year-old high school student Al-Naqeeb decided to go there with some of his friends, but without telling his parents. However, upon his return home, he reported, "I found no job opportunity there, but rather, a chance to be alive here."

He narrates, "We reached Al-Khubah area in Saudi Arabia via Yemen's Al-

Malaheet district, which borders the kingdom. We found dozens of children and elderly people there; every one had a group of children and we all sat together. Suddenly, the Saudi smugglers arrived, asking, 'Children, qat, shammah or fireworks?' Most of the 'goods' were trafficked children.

"We requested the smugglers take us. They dropped us off at a mountain called Al-Mashnaq and we headed to Al-A'rdha area and Jazan," Al-Naqeeb continued.

Sexual abuse

Al-Naqeeb's traveling companion Mohammed went on, "On our way to Al-A'rdha and Jazan, we encountered a guy named Al-Kawkabani. He was pale and had a harsh voice. We realized that he had a problem. As we became friendlier, he told us that Saudi security had arrested him and handed him over to Yemeni customs. However, he had managed to smuggle himself into Saudi again. 'I've been in this place eight months,' he said. I asked him, 'Why did-

n't you return to your family?'" to which he replied, "How can I return jobless and sexually abused?"

"He then narrated the following story: 'The Yemeni smuggler handed me over to the Saudi one, who took me to the employer for which I'd be working. When we arrived, we found two people. They brought us coffee. I fell asleep and awoke two hours later to find myself exhausted and sexually abused. They had drugged my coffee and then photographed me. They discarded me after several days and I've been wandering since then. I neither found a job here, nor did I return home due to the sexual abuse.'"

Mohammed continued, "We all agreed that if any one of us found work, we would share it between us. Also, if we returned home, we would contact his father and explain what had happened to him."

Al-Naqeeb and Mohammed did indeed return to Yemen and contacted Al-Kawkabani's father, who took his son back. However, the father refused to allow his abused son to be photographed for this story, considering it a scandal.

Children's deaths

Bashir Al-Sane', one of three children smuggled into Saudi Arabia, was shocked to hear about the deaths of some smuggled children. He recounts, "When we arrived at the Saudi area of Subia, Yemeni workers told us that a large number of children had died of hunger and thirst either in Al-Karbous Prison located in Jazan area or in Al-Baqar Desert. Some were bitten by snakes. They provided some of the names of the deceased, whose bodies were taken to the hospital. We were flabbergasted, so we decided to return home, surrendering to the Saudi patrol, which

took us to Haradh area and then we went home."

Contacting a smuggler

One smuggler advised the three smuggled children previously mentioned that they wouldn't find a better job except through him, as he had a relationship with some Saudis. Further, he gave them his mobile number so they could call him if they were arrested.

A Yemen Times reporter contacted the smuggler, saying that he wanted to get into this type of work and that he has a large number of children to smuggle. The smuggler knew the smuggling routes, but the reporter, pretending to be an aspiring smuggler, didn't know how the current labor market is or to whom to smuggle the children.

The smuggler informed him that the secure areas for child trafficking are Al-Malaheet, Al-Managrah, Al-Mazariq and Al-A'rdha, Al-Khubah and Al-Mashnaq in Saudi territory. He noted

that these areas are empty, while others are used to smuggle qat, shammah and fireworks. Additionally, he said Saudi Arabia's Subia area is a famous market for child trafficking.

The smuggler eventually turned off his phone without answering all of the inquiries. At the mobile company, the smuggler's phone is registered to a woman.

Extreme poverty is the reason

Ministry of Human Rights reports issued earlier this year revealed that poverty is one of the key reasons for trafficking children and smuggling them from Yemen into Saudi Arabia. Many Yemenis experience this problem of extreme poverty, rendering their children as its first victims.

The report further indicated that poverty causes deprivation leading to desperation, depression and alienation, as it is the root of many, if not most, problems.

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Intending bidders may obtain the bidding documents from the Statistics and Planning Department at the headquarters of the Corporation in Tawahi, Telephone +967-2-202669 on payment of a non-refundable fee of US\$50.00.

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Tawahi, Aden
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Email: ygapcplanning@y.net.ye and planning2050@yahoo.com.

- Bids must reach the headquarters of YGAPC at or before 10.00 hours on Tuesday 15 January 2008 and will not be accepted after this date and time. Envelopes will be opened at 11.00 on the same day.
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Words of Wisdom



One issue that is so crucial that I can't exaggerate its importance is the need to catch up with the world in computers. I know it looks stupid to call for computer training and education when half the population is illiterate. But, we can't wait to become fully literate to start looking into computers. We can actually embark on multiple parallel efforts.

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



OUR OPINION

Livin' in the USA

I had just returned from a six week visit to the United States of America. I was selected as one of several Arab media leaders to participate in the MENA Media Leaders program organized by IREX and funded by the US State Department.

This was my first experience in the US and it was splendid. If there is anything I had learnt from my visit is that you can't generalize about America or Americans just the same way you can't generalize about Arabs and Muslims. My program dictated that I visit Washington DC, Chicago, and Salt Lake City in Utah. In all the places I have visited I felt very welcomed and supported. It was an amazing experience where I learned about American media and culture, as well as tried to tell about mine.

I realized that both American and Arab media are not doing justice to either culture. Most of the American's I met had so many misconceptions about Arabs and Muslims, just like we have about America and the American people. They were willing to learn and eager to understand. All I had to do was speak English in order to be able to communicate. There were no barriers or prejudice against who I am and what I represent. I made many friends and invited them to visit Yemen. I really hope they will, so that I can return the kindness I received and allow them to experience my culture.

I saw how great American women are and how hard they work to prove themselves, just like Yemeni women have to. That they share our dreams, our aspirations and many of the challenges we face.

I also realized that sports in America is BIG. That shopping is a life or death matter. And that you better stick to the food you know. I learnt that living in USA means having to put up with funny fluctuating weather and that you can't trust the weather forecast.

I found out that America is a great place to live in and has so many opportunities for growth and prosperity. I learnt many things I can use in my career and personal life. This experience opened my eyes to the much potential Yemeni media has, and made me tempted to explore.

This visit has given me the opportunity to redefine my priorities and see my country in different light. This experience is something I wish every bright Yemeni could get. Fortunately there are many exchange programs that allow talented Yemenis to visit USA. In fact the program I had just completed is organized every year, and if you are an Arab working with media whether in the editorial or in the marketing and management side you can apply for it. Contact me if you have any questions and I will be more than pleased to help.

The Editorial Board

Mistakes mustn't be corrected by other mistakes

By: Muneer Ahmad Qaied

The report, forwarded by the Parliamentary Labor and Social Affairs Committee, was recently discussed by members of parliament after it was referred to them by the Parliament Presidency Board to review the progress of placing in effect the Law No. 45 of 2005 concerned with the new system of salaries and wages. It touched upon a sensitive and vital issue while MPs did their best for discussing the report and highlighting the issues it shed light on. Now, we needn't the same ideas, viewpoints and recommendations given by MPs at their session assigned for discussing the report to be repeated once again, as the issue necessitates comprehensive discussion and objective assessment of any relevant problems. The discussion is a modest attempt to explain some of the aspects of the issue but lack complete details on the issue as a whole.

It is worth mentioning that the government has started to carry out comprehensive reforms since 1995 and reached successful achievements in economic areas during the early years of economic reforms implementation. But, the progress of reforms was hindered over the recent years and this caused several successful achievements reached in the economic sector to deteriorate. It was supposed for the march of reforms to attain good success in other areas and sectors such as the administrative one. If radical reforms were carried out in the administrative field, any relevant success would be in favor of citizens. Moves toward administrative reforms began in the 1990s but their progress was somewhat slow and there was no clear goal for such steps.

All these problems stopped the wheel of administrative reforms that primarily aimed to tackle inflation, reshuffle management, upgrade per-

formance of the government executive offices and improve living standards of public sector workers. All these were the main goals behind the government's moves toward administrative reforms. In light of this, the government set a new strategy for wages and salaries with the aim of achieving a key goal related with driving forward the wheel of administrative reforms. Within the context of efforts pursued for achieving this goal, other goals are being reached such as improving the living standards of government employees and helping them lead a stable life. Public sector workers were strongly encouraged to learn how to be more creative and productive as such is reflected in the whole performance of the state's administrative system.

The government's new strategy aimed to drop names of the dead, those who don't work and the surplus workforce from payrolls and put an end to the phenomenon of multiple-post employees. Thus, we realize that the continued infringements, problems, negatives and mistakes in the government administrative system serve the interests of corrupt individuals and influential persons, who are fund of the illegal earning of money and property.

Maintaining our respect for the hard efforts pursued by the concerned government bodies and Parliament for preparing the new wage and salary strategy and applying it in real-life situation, we are angered by corrupt officials, who made out of the strategy a rampant confusion and chaos in the government institutions. Implementing the strategy was transferred into a public opinion issue in order to hinder the strategy from addressing the living standards of the government employees. The concerned bodies in the government started implementing the strategy with false introductions, which in turn led to false and non-reliable results. The strategy's implementation was accompanied by mistakes, thereby compelling

public sector employees to lose their confidence and have no trust in the strategy. The group of corrupt officials intervened in implementing the strategy to adapt it in their favor, and this hampered efforts exerted for eliminating the phenomenon of multi-dippers or multi-post employees. The payrolls haven't been cleared of the dead and those who don't work. Thus, the poor living standards of the government employees go from bad to worse, and this issue requires expending serious efforts to dismiss any corrupt officials in the key government positions since they are responsible for the sufferings of modest employees. The government junior employees need stable life in order to be more productive and contribute to the national development of the country.

As long as the state works on establishing great strategic projects to help reduce the high unemployment rates, such a move should be accompanied by real solutions to the persisting problems and issues. A top priority should be given to dealing with the repeated infringements in the state's administrative system and correcting mistakes as soon as they occur. All these moves are essential for interpreting and implementing the platform of President Ali Abdullah Saleh, particularly the parts addressing issues related with employees and their living standards.

Citizens hope that policies, work plans and programs should be devoted to serving the public interests of all Yemeni people without any exception. They also expect a brief reshuffling of the comprehensive development management in line with the noble goals sought by the majority of Yemenis, not in line with the opportunistic goals set by corrupt officials who are only interested in the illegal earning of money, property and any other personal interests.

Source: Al-Methaq weekly.

The Culture of imitating the worst

By: Mohammed Al-Areqi

Many youths live a state of dissatisfaction in their private and public lives because they aspire to be like others who could have made material gains and spiritual strength, plus influence and fame without exerting any practical or scientific efforts. These youths turned to search for secrets of the shortest way that help them attain their sought goals as soon as possible with the minimum of effort or with no effort at all. They found that connection, favoritism, flattery, courtesy and bribes are standing in their way, which is why they, even though some of them are well-qualified, found themselves forced to re-qualify themselves in search of means for progressing in the wrong way.

The phenomenon of imitating what is wrong is not limited to seeking job opportunities, as we realize that the culture of imitating the worst is broadly prevailing our behaviors, as well as our private and public performance. In the meantime, many people turned to feel that they are missing prosperity and pride, and for them it is impossible

to reclaim recognition and fame unless they behave contrarily to the law and order, even when they drive cars or break order while lining up with other people at the doors of water and electricity offices to settle bills.

With regard to job-related rights and duties, some of the workers have their own means and tricks for obtaining a lot of entitlements without expending the required efforts. These workers then constitute a typical example for other employees to imitate in order to obtain similar entitlements even they don't deserve them.

Away from the practical life, the educational field was also affected by the phenomenon of imitating the worst, as cheating at exams is a manifestation of such ill-fated culture. We rarely hear students talking about the long hours, which they spend studying at home in order to prepare themselves well for the exams, as many of them seem to exploit their skills for contriving new means for cheating in the exam rooms. Schoolboys don't feel ashamed while talking about their tricky means for cheating in the exam rooms before their friends, relatives and family members. Instead, they pride themselves for

inventing new manners of cheating.

All these are the results produced by the culture of imitating the worst. This kind of culture destroyed all the values of creativity and competition for introducing what is new and profitable to our daily lives.

Source: Al-Thawra State-run Daily.

SILVER LINING
Liberation Objectives Betrayal

What is the difference between November 30, 1967 and November 30, 2007? What was the ambition of the people like in 1967 and how is it now? Did the liberators feel satisfied and happy about what they did? Or that they let down the ambition of the masses? My mind is troubled with several questions of this type.



By: Mohammed Al-Qadhi

Of course, any people never like to live under occupation. They always look forward to be free and independent. This is the case of the people across the Arab region that wholeheartedly backed up liberation and independence movements during the 1950s and 1960s. Their sublime dream was to attain independence as the key instrument for development and prosperity. However, the situation after revolutions and gaining independence in most of the Arab countries has been disappointing. The freedom fighters who assumed power after the departure of the colonialists put their countries in bottlenecks and situations of bloodshed and showdown. History of the region is pregnant with such tragic incidents of bloody coups. Let us take the former south of Yemen as an example. After the British left Aden and the National Liberation Front (NLF) leaders assumed power, the era of bloodsheds and killings started. The first president Qahtan al-Shabee was jailed until he passed away, Salem Ruba'e Ali known as Salimeen was bombarded. Others leaders like Abdulfatah Ismail, Ali Antar Abdullateef al-Shabee, Saif al-Dhal'e and several others were killed in the same way during various rounds of conflicts over power. People do not even know their graves now. In the north, the situation is not different. The same kind of bloodless and bloody coups took place after the revolution of 26 September 1962. The unification of the two parts was peacefully achieved in 1990. However, the conflict between the two unification partners ended in the disgusting 1994 civil war whose consequences are now putting the country in hot waters. Unfortunately, all these crimes have passed without holding their perpetrators accountable.

These Arab regimes assuming power through conflicts have become haunted with how to prolong their stay in power as long as they can. Some are now obsessed and busy with inventing tricks of how to transfer power to their sons. They have not been able to generate any real development in their countries just like what has happened in India, for instance. The Arab region is plagued with horrible economic problems and its people are living in miserable conditions to the extent they sometimes regret the pre-revolutions eras. This is always the case with the Arab people, longing for the past prosperous days. The paradox is that the past is always glorious. The present is frustrating and the future is dismal too.

Of course, I do not intend to say the colonialists were better for these countries. I mean these liberation movements have not come to the highest expectations of the public and in fact, let them down. I do not also intend to put on trial all the leaders who fought for independence. Some were honest and not infatuated with the power allurements. Some died silently while others continue to fight painfully, this time not for independence, but for a decent life. Mercenaries and usurpers are gaining the fruits of independence and revolutions, however.

The ongoing protests in the southern governorates are an interesting reflection of the situation and the depression overwhelming the hearts of the people. I am sure that the Yemeni people no longer feel the joyful triumph they had felt in November 30, 1967 and in September 26, 1962. The difference is that wide for the ideal objectives of the liberation movements have been greatly betrayed and abused. Do not you think so?

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



By: Samer

YEMEN TIMES

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Fax: +967 (1) 268-276

P.O. Box 2579, Sana'a, Yemen

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Subscription rates:

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Yemeni companies/corporations: YR 8,000
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Yemen Press Review



Al-Sahwa Weekly, Mouthpiece of the Islah Party
Thursday, November 29

Top Stories

- President attends carnival festival in Aden while JMP organizes another one in Sana'a
- Two soldiers, five Houthi supporters killed in a strike against military camp in Sa'ada
- Al-Dhal'e retirees turns down a presidential offer to quit Aden's festival
- Lawmakers criticize judiciary for lack of neutrality
- Student unions in Sana'a and Taiz universities protest against situations in their colleges
- Taiz doctors prepare to stage massive strike after lifting red signs

Brooklyn court reserved Monday Sheikh Al-Moayad and his companion Mohammad Zayed case to unknown time after the pair has been jailed in a U.S. detention for more than five years on alleged charges of funneling money and support to terrorist groups, mainly Hamas Movement in Palestine, the weekly reported. "The hearing was somewhat positive "Al-Moayad and Zayed's lawyer was quoted as saying by Al-Moayad's son, Ibrahim."

The lawyer challenged last sentences issued against Al-Moayad and Zayed ,75 and 45 years in prison respectively, citing that the Brooklyn court which issued the rulings is not specialized in such cases and that the

it was affected by New York as a scene of the September 11 events.

Al-Moayad and Zayed did not attend the trial due to the court's orders. Representatives of the Yemeni Embassy to Washington, Yemeni Consulate and lawyer Mohammad Alaw authorized by the president to follow up the case as well as journalists and activists attended the hearing. Yemeni Foreign Minister, Abu Bakr al-Qirbi, had requested last Monday the US Attorney-General Michael Mukasey to transfer Yemeni cleric Mohammed al-Moayad and his companion, Mohammed Zayd, from their cells into a section of a general prison in U.S.



26 September Weekly, Organ of the Yemeni Army
Thursday, November 29

Top Stories

- Ruling party lashes out at opposition MPs over boycotting budget discussions
- Government signs partnership agreement with Dubai companies to operate Aden Port of Containers
- Constitutional Amendments
- Constitution calls for more women representation at Supreme Commission for Elections and Referendum
- Popular Movement to Defend Unity and Fight Corruption to be declared in Mukalla
- President Sale pledges YR 1 billion per annum for cancer treatment Centers

HE President Saleh attended a celebration organized by National Corporation for Fighting Cancer Infections (NCFCI) in Aden city while inaugurating a Hope Unit for Treating Cancer Cases under the slogan "Grant Us a Smile of Hope," the weekly reported in a front page story.

Saleh expressed thanks for efforts of the National Corporation for Fighting Cancer Infections during the past four years. "I have given orders to set up a center of cancer tumors and allocated YR 100 million for operation of the cooperation annually," he said. He also ordered the government to allocate YR 1 billion, pointing out to the reports that show around 20,000 cancer cases every year.

He asked by the Ministry of Industry and Agriculture to shoulder their responsibility to prevent dangerous insecticides as they are responsible for increasing cases of cancer diseases. Such insecticides are produced in Zionist factors and smuggled to Arab markets, he said. The leader said that doctors of the health ministry will organize a campaign to spread awareness on risks of these insecticides via various media outlets.

According to the weekly, Chairman of Trustees Council at the corporation Abdul-Wasa Hayel Saeed said he is very happy to attend the ceremony and his support for the corporation. He added that the corporation, in cooperation with health ministry and National Atomic Energy Commission, will set up a national center for cancer tumors in Al-Jamhoori Hospital in Sana'a and hope units in Hodeidah and Ibb

governorates. He made clear that the works in establishing hope units in Hadramout and Taiz governorates would be finished soon. The corporation would pay further efforts to coordinate official and popular contributions to combat this disease, he said.



Al-Wahdawi Weekly, Mouthpiece of Nasserite Unionist Popular Organization (NUPO)
Tuesday, November 27

Top Stories

- JMP has a unified stance for rejecting government's proposal to amend election law, says JMP Spokesman
- Newly established Local Community Development Institution pledges to outperform other NGOs
- Dhamar educational inspectors to protest against procedures delaying hardship allowances
- NUPO leader call on government to withdraw proposal to amend election law
- First batch of Yemeni pilgrims arrives in Jeddah Airport
- JMP and independent parliamentary blocs release statement about ruler's coupe against democracy
- Partisan plurality in Yemen constitutes one of the national principles that accompanied establishment of Reunification in May 1990 while democratic practices remain functioning as the front valve for the unity, the weekly said in a

critical article on its front page. It added that the Yemeni Constitution confirms that the political regime in the country is based on pluralism, thereby increasing competition between political parties and forces in convenient atmospheres, but such did not happen in real life situation.

The weekly went to say that the constitution stressed the necessity of having an independent and neutral Supreme Commission for Elections and Referendum. It added that the Election Law stipulates that all the supervisory and sub committees, concerned with election management, shall not be formed from a single party in order to ensure the minimum level of integrity.

According to the weekly, JMP and independent blocs at Parliament were shocked to see the General People Congress's government submitting a proposal to amend the election law, which SCER to be formed from judges. The opposition parties accused the regime of planning a coupe against democracy and public liberties.



Al-Methaq Weekly, Mouthpiece of the General People Congress (Ruling Party)
Monday, November 26

Top Stories

- International report praises Yemeni government's efforts to clear homeland of mines
- Al-Methaq Institute trains GPC leaders in Sana'a
- Prime Minister: Small enterprises occupy important status in

economies of Arab countries

- You will receive support in recognition for what your fathers did for the nation, President Saleh tells Martyrs' Sons Forum
- Parliament listens to government's note concerning amendments to election law
- President's Saleh initiative to be widely discussed in the United States

The Support League for Human Rights and Immigration (SLHRI) in the United States is preparing to hold many discussions in mid December about the most recent initiative declared by President Saleh to reform the political system in his country, the ruling party's mouthpiece reported. The prospective discussions will include viewpoints, suggestions and comments of Yemeni expatriates in the U.S. regarding the presidential initiative. Lawyer Mohamed Ali Allow, Head of SLHRI clarified that the league's branch will hold a discussion under the slogan 'National Duty, and Constitutional and Legal Right Ensured to the Yemeni Expatriate'.

Allow pointed out that the function is the first of its kind to be launched by the league's branch in the U.S. as part of its program to engage Yemeni expatriates in assessing the valuable initiative. The weekly quoted the lawyer as saying that "Invitations were distributed to a number of Yemeni civil community organizations to attend the discussions due to last for three days."

He mentioned that there are a number of work papers to be presented by many expatriates and NGOs representatives at the event.

Déjà-vu in the Middle East

By: Joschka Fischer

Does history repeat itself, after all? Recent developments in the Middle East suggest that the answer is "yes," because the situation at the end of President George W. Bush's tenure increasingly resembles that of Bill Clinton's final year in the presidency. Both presidents, at the end of their respective terms, sought to resolve one of the world's most dangerous conflicts, while facing the threat that time was running out on them.

One could despair: the Bush administration has obviously wasted almost seven years during which it could have pursued a solution. We are now back to the starting point: the Camp David and Taba talks – flippantly abandoned in January 2001 – are to be taken up again. Still, as the wise saying goes, better late than never!

The Middle East conference to be held in Annapolis, Maryland should be a forum for final status negotiations between the parties, dealing above all with the establishment of a Palestinian state and its borders (those of June 1967, with some negotiated exchanges of territory), its capital (Jerusalem), Israeli settlements, and the right of return for Palestinian refugees. It should also address questions of security, the termination of the decades-long state of war, and recognition of Israel by the Arab states. Indeed, it is high time for progress on a two-state solution, because the Palestinians are increasingly losing hope of ever having a state of their own. Without it, the Middle East conflict will remain at a stalemate and violence will only intensify.

Acceptable compromises on all of these questions have been negotiated repeatedly by the parties and stowed away for many years. The only missing ingredient is the political will

and strength to enter into a peace agreement.

But this very political strength is precisely what both the Israeli and Palestinian governments lack. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas are very weak domestically, and, given the compromises needed on both sides, they will be risking a lot.

The same is true of President Bush. Indeed, the US government does not even stand whole-heartedly behind its own initiative. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice wants the conference to happen and has done much to push it ahead. But how much risk is Bush – without whom a real breakthrough will be impossible – prepared to accept?

Fortunately, existing taboos about what is acceptable in the final status talks have fallen – on both sides. The parallel weakness of Olmert and Abbas has produced a parallel interest in a peace settlement. Indeed, both men hope for political survival through a peace agreement: Olmert by means of new elections and Abbas by a referendum through which he can regain ascendancy over Hamas. So will a failed "Peace of the Strong" be followed by a successful "Peace of the Weak"?

As the domestic situations in Israel and Palestine have changed, so, too, has the regional political environment changed in a positive direction, because most Arab states today are more afraid of Iran's regional domination than they are of Israel. This development offers an unprecedented opportunity.

There are obvious pitfalls, to be sure. Olmert's room for maneuver within his party, and particularly within his coalition, is very small. Can he make sufficient concessions on borders and Jerusalem? Similar doubts apply to Abbas. Can he deliver the security guarantees that Olmert needs, especially given the Palestinians' fear that, in the end, they will give too much, without getting

back concessions on what they see as their fundamental demands?

Moreover, the critical hurdle will not be the negotiations, but rather implementation of whatever agreement may emerge – and its political cost will be very high. The Palestinians are already in the midst of a civil war. The compromises necessary for peace are likely to lead to a stark political confrontation in Israel as well. Obviously, Olmert is thinking of fusing an agreement on the final status with the Road Map mechanism. Such an agreement should be implemented gradually, and progress should depend on the parties' fulfillment of their obligations each step of the way.

Yet a mechanism of this kind can only work if a third party (the US, the "US plus," or the Middle East Quartet) is available to monitor the agreement. Otherwise, disputes about fulfillment of this or that provision will lead the entire process back into the familiar quicksand of Middle East futility.

So, from a realistic point of view, a positive outcome for the Annapolis talks seems almost impossible. Why should this conflict, which has proven to be unsolvable in the past, be suddenly solved (or brought closer to a solution) by three actors – Bush, Olmert, and Abbas – who are all in a state of profound domestic weakness?

Karl Marx wrote that history always repeats itself, first as tragedy, then as farce. One might fear that Camp David proves to be the tragedy and Annapolis the farce. But, then, this is the Middle East, where earlier breakthroughs grew out of defeat, not victory. So one should never give up hope, even when hope seems impossible to sustain.

Joschka Fischer, Germany's Foreign Minister and Vice Chancellor from 1998 to 2005, led Germany's Green Party for nearly 20 years. Copyright: Project Syndicate/Institute for Human Sciences, 2007.

America's failed militarized foreign policy

By: Jeffrey D. Sachs

Many of today's war zones – including Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Somalia, and Sudan – share basic problems that lie at the root of their conflicts. They are all poor, buffeted by natural disasters – especially floods, droughts, and earthquakes – and have rapidly growing populations that are pressing on the capacity of the land to feed them. And the proportion of youth is very high, with a bulging population of young men of military age (15-24 years).

All of these problems can be solved only through long-term sustainable economic development. Yet the United States persists in responding to symptoms rather than to underlying conditions by trying to address every conflict by military means. It backs the Ethiopian army in Somalia. It occupies Iraq and Afghanistan. It threatens to bomb Iran. It supports the military dictatorship in Pakistan.

None of these military actions addresses the problems that led to conflict in the first place. On the contrary, American policies typically inflame the situation rather than solve it.

Time and again, this military approach comes back to haunt the US. The US embraced the Shah of Iran by sending massive armaments, which fell into the hands of Iran's Revolutionary Government after 1979. The US then backed Saddam Hussein in his attack on Iran, until the US ended up attacking Saddam himself. The US backed Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan against the Soviets, until the US ended up fighting bin Laden. Since 2001 the US has supported Pervez Musharraf in Pakistan with more than \$10 billion in aid, and now faces an unstable regime that just barely survives.

US foreign policy is so ineffective because it has been taken over by the military. Even postwar reconstruction in Iraq under the US-led occupation was run by the Pentagon rather than by civilian agencies. The US military budget dominates everything about foreign policy. Adding up the budgets of the Pentagon, the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, the Department of Homeland Security, nuclear weapons programs, and the State Department's military assistance operations, the US will spend around \$800 billion this year on security, compared with less than \$20 billion for economic development.

In a stunning article on aid to Pakistan during the Bush administration, Craig Cohen and Derek Chollet demonstrated the disastrous nature of this militarized approach – even before the tottering Musharraf regime's latest crackdown. They show that even though Pakistan faces huge problems of poverty, population, and environment, 75% of the \$10 billion in US aid has gone to the Pakistani military, ostensibly to reimburse Pakistan for its contribution to the "war on terror," and to help it buy F-16s and other weapons systems.

Another 16% went straight to the Pakistani budget, no questions asked. That left less than 10% for development and humanitarian assistance. Annual US aid for education in Pakistan has amounted to just \$64 million, or \$1.16 per school-aged child.

The authors note that "the strategic direction for Pakistan was set early by a narrow circle at the top of the Bush administration and has been largely focused on the war effort rather than on Pakistan's internal situation." They also emphasize that "US engagement with Pakistan is highly militarized and centralized, with very little reaching the vast majority of Pakistanis." They quote George Bush as saying, "When [Musharraf] looks me in the eye and

says...there won't be a Taliban and won't be al-Qaeda, I believe him, you know?"

This militarized approach is leading the world into a downward spiral of violence and conflict. Each new US weapons system "sold" or given to the region increases the chances of expanded war and further military coups, and to the chance that the arms will be turned on the US itself. None of it helps to address the underlying problems of poverty, child mortality, water scarcity, and lack of livelihoods in places like Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province, Sudan's Darfur region, or Somalia. These places are bulging with people facing a tightening squeeze of insufficient rainfall and degraded pasturelands. Naturally, many join radical causes.

The Bush administration fails to recognize these fundamental demographic and environmental challenges, that \$800 billion of security spending won't bring irrigation to Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sudan, and Somalia, and therefore won't bring peace. Instead of seeing real people in crisis, they see caricatures, a terrorist around every corner.

A more peaceful world will be possible only when Americans and others begin to see things through the eyes of their supposed enemies, and realize that today's conflicts, having resulted from desperation and despair, can be solved through economic development rather than war. We will have peace when we heed the words of President John F. Kennedy, who said, a few months before his death, "For, in the final analysis, our most basic common link is that we all inhabit this small planet. We all breathe the same air. We all cherish our children's future. And we are all mortal."

Jeffrey Sachs is Professor of Economics and Director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University. Copyright: Project Syndicate, 2007.

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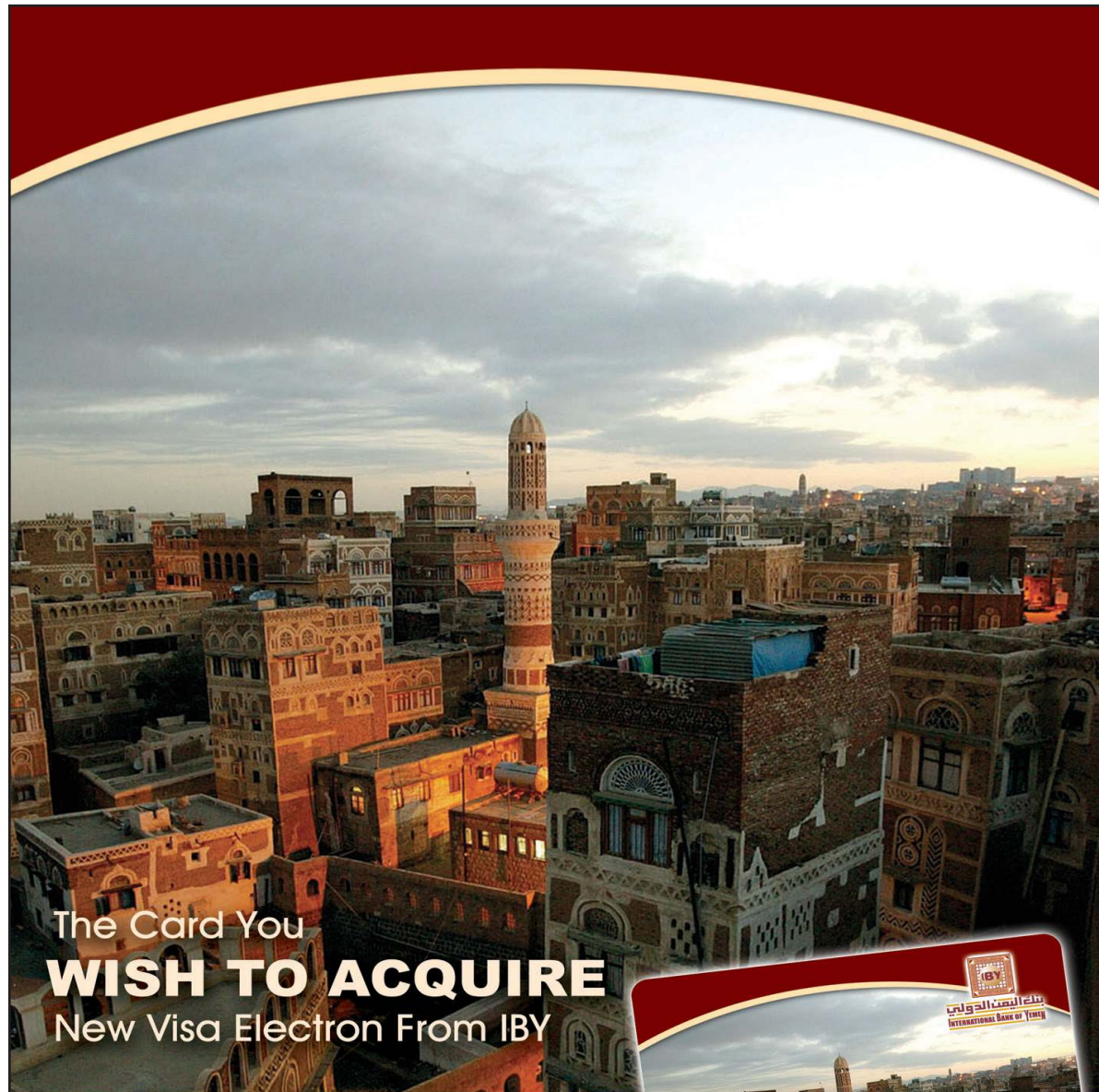
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TOYOTA

Malignant diseases are a threat to the poor

Health specialists say poor Yemenis suffering malignant diseases can't afford the treatment costs, which worsens their conditions. Currently, approximately 40,000 Yemeni citizens are suffering from cancerous tumors, while government hospitals lack proper treatment for them. **Hamed Thabet** reports.

“Here in Yemen, huge numbers, especially the poor, suffer various life-threatening diseases, but can't afford treatment at government hospitals. They also suffer due to lack of proper education and information about these diseases,” says Afif Al-Nabihi, director of Yemen's Cancer Fighting Association.

Dr. Assam Khalifah, manager of the blood bank at Kuwait Hospital in Sana'a, explains, “Blood diseases often can become blood cancer if

patients don't receive treatment early. The main problem is that patients go to the hospital only after their disease has reached its final stages. Moreover, medications for these diseases are unavailable in Yemen, which is why many patients die without receiving any medical treatment.”

He continues, “Diagnosing such diseases also is a major problem in Yemen due to doctors not having new technological equipment necessary to diagnose patients. Additionally, some medicines, such as tranquilizers, are used for blood cancers and HIV; however, they're too expensive for Yemenis, so

they're not useful.”

Al-Nabihi notes, “It's important to give more attention to Yemeni patients because they really are suffering many different diseases, especially tumors. Approximately 40,000 Yemenis – and maybe more – have cancerous tumors. Anemia also can develop into blood cancer if not diagnosed and treated early.”

He continues, “The problem here in Yemen is that we don't have enough laboratories that can diagnose such diseases at an early stage and our staff really aren't qualified to take on this responsibility. I wish our staff could receive modern training and education in diagnosing and understanding these diseases before they reach the final stages.”

“Despite the fact that we don't have modern, well-equipped labs or qualified staff in our hospitals, the examinations for diseases like blood cancer, anemia, AIDS and many fungal diseases aren't free, but Yemeni patients are too poor to pay for them.

Additionally, the medicines we have are expensive, so their effectiveness toward these diseases isn't as useful as it should be,” Al-Nabihi explains.

Ahmed Al-Ansi, director of Al-Thawra Hospital in Sana'a, says, “Because we don't

have good treatment for tumorous diseases, anemia, fungal diseases and HIV, Yemenis are compelled to travel to other countries for treatment. However, not all have the means to travel outside, so for this reason, mortality rates and suffering are high.”

On the other hand, he commented, “Modernizing equipment and training staff are the first areas on which to focus. Aside from profit, I wish pharmaceutical companies first and foremost would see to the quality of the medicine they supply and which medication will benefit patients because many such companies are producing useless medicines.”

Saleh Al-Raimi, general manager of the new Blue Sky pharmaceutical company in Yemen (known as Gilead in the United States), notes, “In the past, HIV

was kept a secret for security reasons and anyone who tried to talk about it surely would be in trouble. Fortunately, things have changed today. There are studies about the disease and it is receiving more attention by governments and various organizations.”

The Yemeni government is doing its best to contain HIV and AIDS by focusing on its borders and airports to ban and stop anyone with AIDS from entering the country. It also is holding programs to enlighten and educate citizens about the dangers of AIDS, Al-Raimi notes.

So far, 2,136 AIDS cases officially are registered in Yemen. Regardless, another doctor confirms anonymously, “The number of those with AIDS in Yemen is much more than that mentioned.”

Al-Raimi explains, “Most Yemeni AIDS patients don't receive proper treatment and their medication is too expensive. Additionally, nearly all HIV medicines are untrustworthy regarding their quality and effect.”

He continues, “Our problem here in Yemen is that AIDS patients can't be part of the community because they are neglected and banished by everyone, even their families. Because of this, we

must enlighten Yemeni citizens that only 30 percent of AIDS patients contracted the disease sexually. Others become infected many other ways, such as through blood transfusions, shaving [by shared razors and blades used in barber shops] and other ways.”

However, “Yemen has been given \$6 million to help combat AIDS, but to date, none of it has been used in that field. Here in Yemen, we use medicines from India, which aren't useful at all but are cheap,” Al-Raimi admits.

Dr. Sharif Al-Wahab, Blue Sky's Middle East regional director, explains, “Blue Sky, a new company now operating in Yemen, will offer new and standard medication to cure many diseases related to tumors, anemia, fungal diseases, HIV and many other inherent diseases.”



Chronic cutaneous coccidioidomycosis showing granulomatous lesions on face, neck and chin.

He adds, “Because Yemen is one of the world's poorest countries, our company will provide medication at cheap prices, as the Yemeni government will support it as well.”

He continues, “Gilead is a worldwide leader among pharmaceutical firms and characterized by uniquely innovative research. The company is the most well-known worldwide for its cure for avian influenza.”

Al-Wahab notes that Blue Sky/Gilead also offers HIV medication to treat AIDS, pointing out that “It is considered the topmost pharmaceutical company, producing and conducting much research on HIV. It also cooperates with the World Health Organization to donate and sell HIV drugs to poor countries at a low price

and sometimes free of charge.”

The other major medical field that interests Gilead is treating antifungal diseases. “These types of fungus attack patients with low immunity, such as kidney transplant patients, who already suffer low immunity,” Al-Wahab notes.

He goes on, “By authorizing Blue Sky to operate in Yemen, the firm has much to offer in many different fields of medicine that are neglected and ignored by other companies who only care about how to turn a profit in a short time. Furthermore, local agents esteem Blue Sky.”

“It's important to note that our medication can cure and deal with all types of blood cancer.” Moreover, he adds, “The Federal Drug Administration has approved the medicine's capability.”



Al-Raimi (left) and Al-Wahab, Managers at 'Blue Sky Company' have offered medication for HIV, blood cancer and different inherent diseases.

Yemen celebrates World AIDS Day

By: Yemen Times Staff

SANA'A, Dec 1 — Yemen joins the world in celebrating World AIDS Day to draw attention of the leaders, civil society, media and above all the young people to the dangers of HIV and AIDS, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) said.

The Day was celebrated across the world on December 1 and focused on a special theme to help enhance the efforts for fighting the denial, stigma and discrimination that surrounds the most devastating epidemic the world has seen.

With its focus on leadership, the theme set by the World AIDS Campaign makes a clarion call to “Stop AIDS, Keep the Promise” A range of activities are planned with the assistance of UNICEF to mobilize the young people to help create awareness and national debate on the issues that need to be addressed.

UNICEF Representative in Yemen Aboudou Karimou Adjibade in his message on the day said “the only vaccination against HIV and AIDS is education and we are determined to bring young people in the fore front of the mobilization activities.

UNICEF is already supporting a number of innovative initiatives for Peers Education in the country and during the observance of the day, young people will participate in activities at schools, shopping malls and playgrounds to get the message through.

Aden Governorate is taking the lead in these observance activities along with a series of discussions on radio and television.

More notable among the events to commemorate World AIDS Day are: endorsement by the Governor, other officials and NGOs representatives. 20 peer educators, community focal points

representing schools, community and street kids, will actively disseminate HIV messages to shoppers in Aden Mall.

Each peer educator will be wearing a distinctive T-shirt. They will distribute coffee mugs with HIV messages to shoppers. In addition to this, 60 street children will perform/participate a drama play on HIV and AIDS for the customers in Al-Hammra restaurant.

Finally, there will be a volleyball competition harbouring messages on HIV prevention where three teams from the girls' schools will play against three female teams from the community.

World AIDS Day is a day when people from around the world come together within a single effort to raise awareness about HIV and to express global solidarity with people living with HIV and AIDS. More importantly the World AIDS day is not just about raising awareness; it also provides a global opportunity to urge governments and leaders to hold on their promises for combating AIDS.

New data show global HIV prevalence—the percentage of people living with HIV—has levelled off and that the number of new infections has fallen, in part as a result of the impact of HIV pro-

grammes.

The latest figure for infected people is 33.2 million. The young and children are facing the brunt with 2.5 million out of them being children— a fifth of the total infections. Already 2.1 million people— a sixth of them children— have died of opportunistic infections following prey to AIDS.

The observance of the Day in which leaders, celebrities, development partners, young people and people living with HIV and AIDS reiterate their resolve to combine their efforts for building strong momentum and disseminate education.

Shift work may be cancer risk

Although scientists are still in the dark about identifying all of the environmental causes of breast cancer, the evidence is getting clearer that women who work the night shift may be at higher risk, an international agency has found.

In an announcement to be published Saturday in the journal *Lancet Oncology*, the International Agency for Research on Cancer, part of the World Health Organization, will label shift work as a “probable cause” of cancer.

The designation — rooted in the theory that the disruption of circadian rhythms could be a culprit — puts shift work on a par with ultraviolet radiation or anabolic steroids as suspected carcinogens, but does not say it is a definitive cause of cancer, such as cigarette

smoking.

The agency based its conclusions on studies looking at breast cancer, but researchers are also exploring links between night work and other types of the disease, including prostate cancer.

The agency's designation is a vindication of sorts for Richard Stevens, an epidemiologist at the University of Connecticut Health Center, who was ridiculed 20 years ago when he speculated that electric light might be one of the elusive causes of breast cancer.

On Thursday, Stevens stressed that there are not enough data to tell tens of millions of women who work night shifts just how risky their jobs might be — or whether they should quit their jobs. A spokesman for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration said the agency was not in a position to com-

ment on the implications for workplace safety.

“I would be a jerk to quantify that right now,” said Stevens, who noted that shift work has already been linked to a number of other health problems in men and women, including cardiovascular disease and obesity.

But he does say that in the past two decades, a compelling case has been building that artificial light might be a culprit in the rise of breast cancer in developed countries during the past century. Stevens was part of a 25-person committee of the International Agency for Research on Cancer that reviewed data about shift work as a potential cause of cancer.

“Lots of people are now worried about lighting of the night and the impact on modern disease,” Stevens

said. “We did not evolve in this environment.”

The agency found the biological explanation for the linkage between electric light and breast cancer put forward by Stevens and others to be “plausible.”

It found that rats exposed to high levels of electric light were more likely to get mammary cancer than rats exposed to lower levels.

The idea is that artificial light disrupts the body's circadian rhythms, which govern sleep and wakefulness. The disruption affects the production of hormones such as melatonin, which in turn triggers cancer.

“The indications are positive,” said Vincent Coglian, director of the carcinogen classification unit at the International Agency for Research on

Cancer. “There was enough of a pattern in people who do shift work to recognize there is an increase in cancer, but we can't rule out the possibility of other factors.”

There are a limited number of studies that measure breast cancer in shift workers, but they are consistent in their findings, Stevens said. For instance, a large-scale study of nurses' health found that women who rotated day and night shifts for long periods of time had higher levels of breast cancer.

Stevens noted that there could be other explanations for the association. It could be the change in shifts, not the night shift itself, that is the risk, he said.

The observation is certainly provocative, but it may be of more immediate interest to scientists than to women who want to know whether to get off the

night shift right away, said Dr. Carolyn Runowicz, director of the Neag Comprehensive Cancer Center at the University of Connecticut Health Center.

For instance, the theory may explain why women in northern latitudes tend to get ovarian cancer more often, Runowicz said.

But is it the lack of light that is the culprit or some other factor, like decreased levels of Vitamin D? she asked.

Stevens said artificial light might be having a profound effect not only on the health of individuals, but also on the environment.

“This light at night may be changing nature in ways we don't understand yet,” he said.

Source: www.courant.com

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Save Socotra, the sleeping beauty of Yemen

Many international and national calls are demanding Socotra become a UNESCO World Heritage Site. However, Miran A. Hvala, a retired Slovenian electronics engineer and economist has done more than simply call for this; he has launched a program to promote the nomination, as well as protect the island, which drew him at first sight. Wojoud Hasan Mujalli interviews Hvala, who talks about the program and his experiences in Yemen.

Including this visit, you've been to Yemen 26 times. Why? What attracted you here?

I first visited Yemen in 1983 for work. I was—and still am—attracted by the simple life here. Because of that, I returned the following year in 1984 and made the first Slovenian and Yugoslav documentary film about Yemen called, "Sight to Yemen."

In subsequent years, I volunteered for numerous activities to work in Yemen, the last time being from 1987 to 1997 for technical support in servicing Radio and Television Yemen's transmitter network.

When was your first visit to Socotra and how many times have you been there?

I made the first of nine visits to Socotra in 1999. At first, I wasn't allowed to access the island, but a friend of mine in the army got permission and then later that year, it was opened to tourists. I was astonished by life on the island—the amazing sights and scenes there—the general impression was different. Rare trees were on every part of the island.

A year later, I requested help from the United Nations Development Program for every possible bit of information and for local transport to film the island in order to make the first professional documentary film about Socotra. Including me, the team was only three people and



"Many locals have affirmed that Socotra should be protected and saved and that it's everyone's obligation to do so."

filming took five days, but preparing for it took about five months. But in the end, the film was produced.

When and why did you initiate the idea of nominating Socotra for the UNESCO World Heritage Site?

Actually, I've been promoting Socotra's nomination through promotional materials such as a Socotra DVD, posters, postcards, etc., for the past six years. But this year, the idea to nominate Socotra as a UNESCO World Heritage Site struck my mind. I believe the best way to save and protect the island is for it to be declared as a part of that program.

With its beautiful sights, Socotra is the Sleeping Beauty of Yemen and one of the most unspoiled parts of the world. The island's rare and amazingly different tree varieties are simply unbelievable. Because of this, scientists consider the Socotra archipelago the Galapagos

of the Indian Ocean.

As the largest Arabian island in the Indian Ocean, legend has it that Socotra was where the mythical Phoenix arose from its ashes. The ancient Greeks also named the island "dioscurida" after the stars due to its unique geographical and weather conditions.

Simply, the island is unique and must be protected under the best conditions. UNESCO standards are very high and excellent. Many locals have affirmed that Socotra should be protected and saved and that it's everyone's obligation to do so.

Please explain what the promotional program is and how it works.

The promotional campaign is the first step toward winning Socotra's nomination as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and includes the following:

1— A Socotra DVD

2— A Socotra archipelago DVD including folk music, the idea and initiative for which was executive produced and co-produced with the Yemen Music House and currently in production.

3— A 2008 Socotra wall calendar and table calendar.

4— Socotra posters

There's a 50 percent or more probability that Y Mobilization Company will become the general sponsor to promote the calendars in most public places in Yemen, especially at schools, colleges, hospitals, in the private sector, etc. The free calendars will be distributed to promote "Save Socotra," because promotion is the way toward the island's nomination.

Socotra really is one of the most beautiful places on earth, so everyone should contribute throughout this campaign to help save this virgin island.

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Sawako Ariyoshi, one of postwar Japan's finest female writers

Prepared by: Eyad N. Al-Samman

Japanese novelist, short story writer and playwright Sawako Ariyoshi was born in 1931 in Wakayama, a Japanese port city on southern Honshu Island and the capital of Wakayama prefecture. Ariyoshi moved with her family to Tokyo in 1935.

At age 6, her family again moved to the southern Indonesian island of Java, where Ariyoshi spent part of her childhood. She returned to Tokyo in 1941 to attend Tokyo's Negisi Elementary School. She continued her secondary education in Tokyo schools, graduating from the Metropolitan Women's High School in 1949.

In April of that same year, she began studying literature and theatre at the Tokyo Women's Christian College, from which she graduated in 1952. As a student, Ariyoshi developed a deep interest in the theatre, both modern and traditional Kabuki.

Soon after graduating, Ariyoshi joined the staff of a publishing company, contributing to literary journals, in addition to working as a secretary for the Azuma Kabuki theatrical dance troupe.

After winning a Rockefeller Foundation scholarship in 1959, she moved to the United States for a year to study at New York City's Sara Lawrence College, where she continued studying the performing arts, a field that had interested her since her days at Tokyo Women's Christian College.

Ariyoshi returned to Japan in 1960, working as a correspondent for Asahi newspaper. She also had the opportunity to visit China in 1961 as a member of the Japanese literature delegation.

Additionally, she visited Papua New Guinea and Indonesia in 1968, returning home that same year. Beginning from 1968, Ariyoshi dedicated most of her time to writing and composing literary works. She visited China more than four times, stopping at the Great Hall of the People, and returned to Japan in July 1978.

In her later years, Ariyoshi issued many literary and lyrical works published by Japanese publishers such as Kodansha, Shinchosha, and Shueisha up until the mid-1980s.

Although Ariyoshi's life was relatively short, she was extremely productive, completing more than 100 short stories, novels, essays, plays, musicals and movie scripts.

A prolific novelist, she dramatized significant issues in her fiction, such as the suffering involved in senility, the effects of pollution on the environment and the effects of social and political change on Japan's domestic life and values.

Many of her stories focused on Japanese women, their complex roles in society and the social issues affecting them.

Her works and writing style often are used in Japanese universities, as well as Japanese literature courses in the U.S.

Ariyoshi's career as a writer began with the 1956 publication of the story, "Juita" (Ballad), which was nominated for Japan's highest literary prize, the Akutagawa Prize. Among her other short stories are "Shiroi Tobira" (The White Door, 1957) and "Kiyu No Shi" (The Death of Kiyu, 1962).

However, Ariyoshi emerged as a major novelist in 1959 with the publication of "Ki No Kawa" (The River Ki), the first novel in her river trilogy, which would include 1963's "Arita-gawa" (The



Sawako Ariyoshi

River Arita) and 1965's "Hidaka-gawa" (The River Hidaka).

"The River Ki" is the insightful story of several generations of aristocratic women in one family. It's a detail-filled novel depicting the changes in daily life and family relationships as society changes.

Resulting from Ariyoshi's time in the U.S., the novel "Hishoku" (Without Color, 1964) tackles the volatile topic of racial discrimination and prejudice, portraying the feelings of a woman who has had to leave her home country to accept the conditions of her black husband's country and culture.

Ariyoshi's 1969 historical novel "Izumo No Okuni" (The Kabuki Dancer) is a fictionalized biography of Okuni, a 17th-century priestess and dancer at the Grand Shrine in Izumo village, whom Ariyoshi credits as the founder of Kabuki theatre.

Selling more than a million copies in less than a year, her 1972 novel "Kokutsu No Hito" (The Twilight Years) describes how the heroine cares for her father-in-law as he slowly succumbs to senility.

Among Ariyoshi's other novels are 1975's "Fukugo Osen" (The Complex Contamination), which deals with environmental pollution, and 1978's "Kazunomiyasama-otome" (A Dairy about Princess Kazunomiya), which fictionally and historically depicts the life of Princess Kazunomiya.

Ariyoshi wrote 1978's "Chugoku Repoto" (China Report) following Ariyoshi's last visit to China. It is a photographed documentation of her stays in Beijing, Shanghai and other cities, but more importantly, about the time she spent with farmers at several communal farms throughout the country.

Perhaps her best-known novel, "Hanaoka Seishu No Tsuma" (The Doctor's Wife), first was published in 1966 and translated into English in 1978. It became a bestseller in France upon its 1981 translation into French.

"The Doctor's Wife" is a historical novel tracing the life of Hanaoka Seishu (1760-1835), a Wakayama physician who first developed the technique of general anesthesia. In general, the novel explores the institution of the family and the supporting role of women, who are controlled by the traditional family system and their dependence on men.

Ariyoshi quietly passed away in her sleep on Aug. 30, 1984. During her lifetime, she received several Japanese literary awards, among them the prestigious Mainichi Cultural Prize in 1979.

Although Ariyoshi passed away more than decades ago, her works continue to resonate with significance for contemporary Japanologists, especially in how she portrays the challenges for Japanese women arising from their culture and traditions.

Immigrants in the distorting mirror of the media Stirring things up for immigrants

Media reporting on immigrants has taken on a harsher tone since the terrorist attacks of September 11. Some old prejudices are back in fashion and being joined by some that are completely new. Christoph Butterwegge has been assessing the mood in Germany

The attitude of the German mass media to foreigners living in Germany is much the same as their attitude to reporting on foreign countries — it is only done in exceptional circumstances, should be as spectacular as possible, and ideally have a touch of catastrophe thrown in for good measure.

There is a tendency to associate immigrants with chaos and crime: Mafia murders, gang robberies and asylum fraud. If it's true that "only bad news are good news," then, as far as the German press is concerned, one might say that only bad foreigners are good foreigners!

Journalists tend to judge immigrants according to two criteria: their use to Germany, or, more precisely, to the German economy, and their ethnic origin. Migration may be portrayed as a threat or as an advantage to the native population, but it is only seldom presented as the normality of a globalised world.

Whilst capital crosses borders in fractions of a second, immigrants, particularly those from poorer countries, remain undesirable — unless of course they are highly qualified or young families who are welcome to fill the role of demographic stopgaps.

Islamophobia as a consequence of 9/11

The attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon constituted a turning point for media coverage of the topic of immigration. Since then, in West Germany at least, the Arab or Turkish Muslim has replaced the southern European immigrant worker and the black asylum seeker as the country's favourite foreigner stereotype.

Since then a triple modification of the way in which migration is reported on has become discernible. Firstly, the migration and criminality discourses have now become even more closely interlinked

than they were during the asylum debate of 1991/92.

Secondly, the discourse on criminality has become politically and ideologically charged, has intensified into a terrorism discourse and, through the mass dissemination of the "clash of cultures" metaphor, become a global discourse on war.

Thirdly, both the migration and the criminality discourses have been Islamicised. Plans for Turkish membership of the EU have played a crucial role in terms of foreign policy, as have Muslim headscarves, "honour" killings and forced marriages on the domestic policy front.

Now, the image of Islam in the German media is not simply becoming darker, the media is even joyfully subscribing to the unhappy revival of interpretations of world politics as a "clash of civilizations" (Samuel P. Huntington) or a "war of civilizations" (Bassam Tibi).

DIE ZEIT magazine, in a bout of uncharacteristic sensationalism, published an editorial on September 13, 2001. Its title, in red print, the headline announced that war had been declared on USA read: "The Target: Our Civilization. Total and Global Terror".

Symbols of the culture clash

In the wake of the 9/11 attacks, Osama bin Laden and Al Qaida became bywords for terror, symbols of a "clash of cultures" between Islam and the West. For much of the media, terrorism, fundamentalism and Islamism became omnipresent dangers to be robustly opposed in pugnacious solidarity with US President George W. Bush.

Prevailing liberal attitudes in migration policy fell casualty to the new bogeyman of the "sleeper" after 9/11. From now on, immigrants were to become even more strongly associated with criminality, irrationality, backwardness, religious fundamentalism and ideological fanaticism.

For a long time after the attacks, the German mass media was dominated by images of the burning twin towers, by military metaphors and martial language.

The Turks as domestic and foreign policy problem

One year after the terror attacks in New York, DIE ZEIT published an article by Hans-Ulrich Wehler on what he called

"Das Türkenproblem" (The problem of the Turks). In the article, he claimed, "the West needs Turkey as a front-line state, a buffer against Iraq. But the Muslim country should never be allowed entry to the EU." The anti-Islamic thrust of the piece was already clear from the title.

Wehler identifies a clear "cultural frontier" between Europe and Turkey, and uses this to justify his claim that: "Muslim minorities all over Europe are proving resistant to assimilation, and are withdrawing into their own subculture. "Germany, too," he says, "as is well known, does not have a problem with foreigners, it has a problem with Turks."

When the bombers came to Europe, blowing up trains in Madrid on March 11, 2004, migration policy became an even hotter political potato. Following the murder of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh on November 2, 2004, a new media term, "parallel society" entered the fray as a counterpoint to the notion of the "multi-cultural society".

Modernised bogeyman

The debate culminated in the article, "Die Schlacht um Europa" (The Battle for Europe) by Gilles Kepel in the Welt am Sonntag newspaper of November 21, 2004, and in the title page headline of Focus magazine on the following day: "Sinister Guests. Muslim Counter-culture in Germany". The old Cold War bogeyman was being resurrected and modernised.

Media open season on Muslims had been declared. Dramatist Botho Strauss did his bit to nourish fears of an Islamisation of the West through his historical reminiscences on crusades, Turkish wars and the Reconquista (medieval expulsion of the Moors from the Iberian Peninsula) when, in Der Spiegel of February 13, 2006, he posed the question whether "looked at from today's point of view, the successful defences of Christian Europe against the onslaught of the Arab hordes had not all been in vain. With the Muslim populations of Amsterdam and other major cities moving towards a majority position, they will soon no longer be in need of our tolerance," he claimed.

Whilst it is certainly possible that

immigrants could represent a majority of the population at some point in the distant future, they will certainly not all be of the same religion, nor is it very likely that they will all feel compelled to convert to Islam. a

The mass coverage of topics such as "forced marriages" or "honour killings" was also replete with racist undertones. Muslim immigrants, Turks especially, were being stigmatised by a media that was reinforcing the impression of entrenched groups, walled off in their "parallel societies", oppressing their women, and generally not fitting in with "us", being more suited to the places they had originally come from.

Mosques, minarets and muezzins

In March 2007, a Frankfurt divorce court judge denied a battered wife the right to a quick divorce on the grounds that she should have been aware of her violent Moroccan husband's religiously given right to beat her. And though the media duly expressed their outrage, it was not the judge's inadequate and unhistorical interpretation of the Koran that raised their ire, but rather the fact that the judge had taken a foreign interpretation of law into consideration.

It is the terms in which the media choose to engage in the public discourse on foreigners, refugees, migrant workers and ethnic minorities, but also on the possibility of a successful coexistence with them, that will be crucial in deciding whether "foreign" will become synonymous with "exclusion zone".

The media has a responsibility towards society, playing an important role in determining whether it breaks down entirely or evolves a common perspective for all its members. In the light of what happened in the town of Mügele recently when eight Indian immigrants were subjected to a mob assault, journalists should have become more aware than ever of the responsibility they carry for ensuring the success of integration.

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Professor Christoph Butterwegge teaches Political Science at the University of Cologne. This article is translated from the German by Ron Walker.

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Dance Towards Peace: Wordless expression

By: Yemen Times Staff

Following well-received performances at the sixth International U.K. Congress and the U.N. Day in Amman, Jordan, professional dancers and Dance Towards Peace founders Fady Shmouni and Abby Lindenberg had their Dubai debut.

The pair performed their message-infused dance, Para Los Niños (For the Children, in Spanish), on Nov. 26 at the third Arab Media Humanitarian Forum, organized by UNICEF in partnership with the Dubai Press Club and the United Arab Emirates' Al-Bayaan newspaper. The forum ended Nov. 27.

Lindenberg stated, "We're thrilled to continue spreading our message of peace through our dancing, especially with the support of UNICEF, a world leader in philanthropic causes and an organization with which we share many of the same beliefs and values."

For 60 years, UNICEF has been the world leader regarding children, working on the ground in 155 countries and territories to help children survive and thrive from early childhood through adolescence.

Lindenberg continues, "Because dance knows no borders, colors or races, rather than set limits, it lifts the spirit and frees the soul. Dances are timeless, forever expressing words, thoughts and emotions that can't be spoken."

Shmouni and Lindenberg founded Dance Towards Peace after meeting in Amman. As Lindenberg explains, "Fady is originally from Iraq, while I was born and raised in the United States, so I think this makes our message even stronger, given the prevailing issues between our two countries."

Together with UNICEF, their organization seeks to raise awareness and spread a global message of peace. Dance Towards Peace particularly is concerned about the welfare of children in the Middle East.



Para Los Niños is a captivating and explosive dance employing elements of salsa and modern dance to send the world the message that, much like dance, peace can set us free.

In their dance Para Los Niños, Shmouni and Lindenberg combine their dance talents with their passion for world peace to bring light to children suffering in today's global society. "We dedicate this dance to all of the world's suffering children and what better place to send this message than in the Arab world's most international city?" Shmouni points out.

"When people refuse to listen to words, dance can send messages that otherwise would be lost," Lindenberg explains. "Para Los Niños is intended to do just this - bring light to the world's suffering in the hopes of uniting us all in one common goal, which is peace."

The three-part dance's first movement is contemporary in style. Clearly portraying two extremes, Shmouni depicts an aggressive role, representing today's society filled with poverty, suffering and war. Contrasted with this, Lindenberg, who depicts a more gentle

character representing those suffering in today's world, mainly the children.

This contemporary movement ends with the commencement of a film. Drawing on all areas of the world, the short photo sequence highlights suffering and distress.

The third and final movement of Para Los Niños ends with a salsa in the hope of highlighting how the world can be when we forget our differences and connect through dance.

"Dance, more specifically salsa, is about positive energy. It brings people together, connecting them both on and off the dance floor," Shmouni asserts.

In addition to the sixth International U.K. Congress, the pair have performed Para Los Niños at the sixth International Medsalsa Congress, Spain's first International Salsa Congress in Grandia, Valencia and the Dubai Salsa Festival.

Dance Towards Peace formed in Amman, when Lindenberg, newly stationed in Jordan for work, was introduced to Shmouni, who had been studying in Amman for four years, at a salsa night. Despite coming from two conflicting countries, the dance duo quickly overcame any preconceived differences. This enabled them to realize their myriad similarities.

Together, they created the organization's first dance, Para Los Niños, stemming from their passion to create an awareness of children's suffering in today's world. Thus, Dance Towards Peace was born.

The organization is a youth-led initiative aimed at spreading a message of peace through dance, which often expresses ideas, thoughts and ideals that can't be expressed verbally.

Additionally, the organization is active in bridging cultural gaps, spreading awareness, offering educational alternatives and complimentary programs, employing a humanistic approach to working with underprivileged and impoverished children, promoting youth groups, assuring child protection and human rights and teaching the acceptance of diversity through dance.

Dance Towards Peace utilizes the power of dance to create change and promote world harmony. While focused on conflicts in the Middle East, the organization welcomes any opportunity worldwide for all causes dedicated to promoting peace.

Trained in ballet, jazz, hip hop and modern dance, Lindenberg worked as a professional dancer in New York City. Her dancing credits include Liza Minnelli's "Liza's Back!" London and Broadway tour, the MTV Video Music Awards, as well as work for Samsung, Toyota and Rolex, among others.

As a choreographer, she has worked internationally for industrials, casino shows, cinema and live stage performances. Her works include "Fire & Ice" in Atlantic City, Ici Disi Madrid in Spain, New Holland's annual conference in Seville, Spain and Argentina's

La Luz New Year's Fiesta in Buenos Aires.

Currently studying medicine at the University of Jordan, the Iraqi-born Shmouni was forced to move following the first Gulf War and subsequently grew up in Canada, Dubai and Jordan, where he began dancing salsa. He currently is Middle East ambassador to the Medsalsa Congress. Having performed and taught throughout Canada and the Middle East, Shmouni also dances and teaches Argentine tango.

Once he completes his medical degree in 2009, he intends to practice child psychiatry in Canada, where he hopes to use dance as a curative therapy for psychiatric disorders.

Additional source: www.dancetowardspeace.com/aboutus.htm

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