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Yemenis celebrate eid with increased traffic accidents

By: Fatima Al-Ajel

SANA'A, Dec. 26 – Due to vehicles being overweight and carrying more than the appropriate number of passengers, 74 were killed and 356 injured in traffic accidents between Dec. 15 and 22 during this year's Eid Al-Adha holiday.

According to the General Traffic Administration's most recent report, traffic accident victims during this eid involved 50 men, 18 women and six children. The administration's Deputy General Director Salim Awad stated that according to the latest official statistics, 197 accidents occurred across the country.

Official numbers for last year's Eid Al-Adha reported that 171 traffic accidents killed 46 and injured 167 citizens.

The administration attributed the increased number of eid accidents mainly to reckless driving, poor vehicle maintenance and drivers' carelessness. Awad further explained that during eids, drivers utilize the opportunity of many citizens returning to their villages to carry either more than the legal weight or more than the allowable number of passengers for their vehicles, which contributes to the large number of deaths and injuries.

While there are rules and traffic laws

preventing buses and vehicles from carrying more than the legal number of passengers, due to ignorance, neither drivers nor passengers heed them.

Poverty and poor economic situations are other reasons forcing many to take public buses or cheaper transportation, even if they aren't safe. "Many passengers prefer paying less money for such transport, regardless of the dangers they might face," Awad noted.

A few days before this Eid Al-Adha, Yemen's Interior Ministry launched an awareness campaign, distributing 250,000 booklets and pamphlets to drivers and citizens nationwide urging them to seek to avoid increased traffic accidents, especially during the eid.

The ministry recommended drivers in all Yemeni governorates be careful while driving, maintain their vehicles and obey traffic laws.

However, compared to this past Eid Al-Fitr and last year's, the number of traffic accidents did increase, with the General Traffic Administration pointing out that official statistics still aren't exact, as many accidents in urban areas aren't registered in its report.

Sixty-seven were reported dead and 262 others injured in 339 car accidents nationwide during this year's Eid Al-Fitr holiday.

Official statistical sources further



The General Traffic Administration's deputy general director says the main reason for the increased number of traffic victims in Yemen is riding in the back of pickups, compared to other countries, which experience more accidents, but less victims.

reveal that between January and the end of September, 9,420 accidents have occurred throughout Yemen this year, causing the deaths of 1,706 citizens.

General official statistics for 2006 report that there were 13,342 traffic accidents in Yemen, killing 2,816 and injuring 17,147. Official figures reveal

that more than 2,000 people die annually in traffic accidents in Yemen.

An estimated 1.2 million are killed annually in vehicle accidents world-

wide and as many as 50 million are injured, according to the World Health Organization's 2004 world report on road traffic injury prevention.

JMP acknowledges growing failure since loss of leader

By: Mohammed bin Sallam

SANA'A, Dec. 26 — Five years have passed since the politically-motivated assassination of Jarallah Omar, Assistant Secretary General of the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP). The Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) laments his loss, as he played the

most vital role in forming the opposition bloc.

Had Omar escaped assassination, the opposition bloc's popularity would not have declined over time, since the man proved vital in bringing all the opposition parties together and unifying their lines, according to Mohammed Al-Mekhlafi, defense-advocate of Jarallah Omar's family.

Al-Mekhlafi said there were political reasons behind the assassination of the YSP leader; the authority predicted that he was bound to play a greater role in creating strong opposition to the ruling party in the country. "Had Jarallah Omar survived, all the Yemeni people would not have suffered such noticeable fragmentation and splits, as he used to do his best for the sake of restoring the spirit of solidarity among Yemeni people." The lawyer added, "He surely would have worked hard on eliminating all the negative consequences of the 1994 civil war. He was able to improve and strengthen relations between citizens in the north and the south."

Al-Mekhlafi went on to say, "Omar was a symbol for a nationwide movement toward creating national harmony in the political and social spheres. He represented YSP, a party that has advocated strong bonds between citizens in South and North Yemen since its formation."

The human rights activist stressed that the Yemeni people currently live in a state of outrage, characterized by severe poverty, despair and fragmentation between community members. He is of the opinion that the country is gradually moving backwards due to government policies aimed at weakening the role of the opposition.

The nation is experiencing a forcibly-imposed bond between citizens in the south and the north following the 1994 Civil War, contrary to the efforts expended by Omar with the aim of maintaining a voluntary relationship among people nationwide, not only among YSP members.

"Omar's extensive effort in this respect was one of the motives behind his assassination, as there is no official desire for a voluntary bond among Yemenis," the defense-advocate remarked. "Assassination of the YSP leader caused disintegration within the opposition parties at the national level, plus a break-

down of relations between the southern and northern parts of Yemen. Jarallah Omar managed to bridge a persisting gap within the opposition parties; his assassination could not destroy what he had built to bring the opposition forces together, unifying them under the "Joint Meeting Parties" banner.

Initially, some Yemenis speculated that Omar's murder could portend violence in advance of parliamentary elections scheduled for April 2003, while others assumed the shooting was connected to a string of al-Qaeda terrorist attacks in Yemen.

Many political, social and human rights organizations in five Yemeni governorates are preparing to hold a huge rally in Damt District of Al-Dhale' governorate today, commemorating the five year anniversary of Omar's death.

"On Thursday, Dec. 27, we will stage a huge rally in Damt District of Al-Dhale', which is due to involve participants from different governorates, all of whom have strong faith that Omar was the torch, glass, heart and symbol of the Yemeni opposition," said Islah party leader Mohammad Qahtan. "The main goal of killing Omar was to fragment JMP members. Attributing Omar's murder to fatwas allegedly given by Islamic scholars Abdulmajeed Al-Zindani and Abd al-Wahhab Al-Dailami is incorrect and baseless because the victim was assassinated for political reasons that have nothing to do with the fatwas released by both clerics."

The Yemeni Communities Coordination Council (YCCC) in North America declared its solidarity and support for those in charge of organizing the festival. In a statement distributed last Sunday, the council called on the Yemeni people to oppose the religious fatwas, which the regime exploits to violate human rights, and were allegedly the reason behind Omar's murder. "Assassinating Omar over his viewpoints and ideas is a dangerous precedent," said



Late Jarallah Omar

the council.

Prior to his death, Omar focused on building a broad opposition front including Islamists, leftists and nationalists, as part of a program with specific tasks aimed at enhancing democracy and respecting pluralism. He had the conviction that a strong opposition bloc is necessary to help the nation avoid destructive conflicts based on its tribal structure.

Jarallah Omar was killed by Ali Ahmad Mohammed Jarallah, a mosque preacher in Sana'a, on Dec. 28, 2002, after the victim gave his speech at the Islah Party conference the same day. The gunman approached Omar and fired several shots at close range. Two bullets fatally wounded Omar, who died en route to the hospital. Islah bystander Saeed Shamsan was also injured. The assailant was apprehended on the spot and taken to the nearby home of Sheikh Abdallah Al-Ahmar, Speaker of Parliament and an Islah Party Chairman. There, in the presence of security officers and on videotape, he was interrogated by 16 representatives of Yemen's various political parties. In the afternoon, the assailant was transferred to the Criminal Investigation Bureau, and by

evening was finally handed over to public prosecutors. By permitting this irregular procedure, the government apparently intended to make his uncoerced confession a matter of public record.

Omar's history:

Once a guerrilla fighter, Jarallah Omar became a prominent pro-democracy activist and early advocate of Yemeni unity who had the potential to lead a national opposition coalition. His life dramatized some of the classic fault lines in Yemeni politics and spoke to key events in contemporary Yemeni history. He was a Northerner but also a Southerner, a student of religion and of revolution. Born in the village of Kuhlal in the Northern province of Ibb in 1942, he studied Islamic jurisprudence in Dhamar as an adolescent. Like many upwardly mobile male youths of his generation, he was then trained as an officer in Sana'a.

Credited as a force for Yemeni unification in 1990, Jarallah Omar served briefly as Minister of Culture in one of the post-unification governments, but resigned as partisan differences threatened the unity accords. Opposing both war and secession, he was forced to flee Yemen during the brief civil war of 1994 only to return a year later to play a vibrantly contentious role in Yemeni political life, speaking out against injustice and hosting debate sessions in his home. He became widely known as a liberal democrat devoted to the electoral process and respect for human rights.

Omar became Assistant Secretary General of the YSP in 2001, and pushed for reform within the party even as it prepared for parliamentary elections. He was a key broker of the 2002 alliance between the YSP and Islah. A popular politician prominent in a strengthened opposition, he challenged hard-liners in his own party as well as Islah's radical right wing, while also making the ruling General People's Congress uneasy.

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In brief

HUDEDAH

Bara' preservation receives 4 thousand visitors
Thousands of local tourists have decided to spend some time at the beautiful natural preservation of Ba'ra' during the recent Eid holidays. Many of the visitors fled the cold in Sana'a and other governorates in order to enjoy the moderate climate in Hudidah at this time of year. Bara' is known for its distinguished greenery and rare birds, yet it still lacks many touristic facilities such as restaurants, restrooms and places to sit.

Warning of high waves at Red Sea coast

Two boys drowned while swimming in Hudidah coast because of the high waves. The authorities warned citizens against swimming in the sea during this season. Many families visited the beach during the holiday season, unfortunately two girls dies during the Eid holidays because of the high waves.

SANA'A

National weather authority warns of windstorm
The Yemeni National Forecast Center warned residence of mountain areas in Yemen that there is a sandstorm coming from Saudi desert. The storm is predicted to last for a few days and will affect the horizontal line of vision because of the sand particles. The center warned people with asthma or other breathing problems, and advised them to take cover and precautionary measures until the storm ends.

Defected car oilcans seized
Thirty five boxes of defected car oil cans has been seized in the past few days by the trade and industry office as a part of its quality control campaign. The oil is of Mobile Company, where the sellers repacked used car oil into new cans and sold it to customers. During this year, the office has reported two thousand and thirty one violations of various types.

Local Administration Ministry launches website
The Ministry of Local Administration will be launching its official website starting from 2008. The website is a part of the ministry's information systems project costing one and half million dollars. The project includes training of staff on technology and using information systems as well as developing the ministry's infrastructure.

DHAMAR

Early marriage campaign
For six days local citizens at Wisab Al-Safel area in Dhamar participated in intensive awareness sessions on early marriage. The sessions were organized by Al-Wafa Women's Charity funded by the Reproductive Health Program at the Ministry of Health. Dhamar is one of the Yemeni governorates where the early marriage phenomenon is prevalent.

ABYAN

Mainstreaming gender issues in national strategies
Yemeni Women's Union in Abyan conducted training on how to integrate gender issues in national policies and strategies. The participants were 15 members of the Women National Committee at the governorate including the presidents of WNC and YWU at the governorate. The Middle East Partnership Initiative funded the training.

ADEN

First class referees tests
Fifty-seven football referees of sixty-one candidates availed their licence as first class referees in football. The tests included 40 meters race in six tries. The second exam was the fitness test which has been endorsed as the official referees test three years ago.

Fearless in Yemen

Veteran Yemeni journalist Abed al-Karim Al-Khiwani is going through an unprecedented legal battle to prove that he is not a terrorist plotting to topple the regime.

By: Bashir al-Sayyed

SANA'A, Dec. 25 - On the morning of June 20, 2007, in the Yemeni capital Sana'a, veteran journalist Abed al-Karim Al-Khiwani was arrested by a security team during an early morning raid at his home. According to the accused, the police beat him out of his sleep and dragged him into the street in his pajamas as his five children and wife watched on in horror. He was charged as a terrorist and placed second on a list of ten suspects accused of being affiliated with a terrorist cell named "the second cell of San'a." The government accused the group of "plotting violent activities and planning to blow up military and governmental headquarters, in addition to liquidating military leaders and poisoning the drinking water."

The state officially charged Al-Khiwani with "plotting to topple the ruling regime" and put him under provisional detention.

Abed al-Karim Al-Khiwani was used to such tactics. In the fifteen-plus years he has been working as a journalist, the 42-year old has experienced blatant censorship and a ban on his work that lasted four years. He was known throughout Yemen for his scathing pieces against the government and had been in and out of prison for years.

This time, however, he was being held based on information obtained from items confiscated during the June raid: personal documents, a laptop, a camera and a mobile phone.

In total, Al-Khiwani spent 31 days in prison and was released on bond due to his medical situation. (Al-Khalil had had bypass surgery a few months before he was arrested). And while Al-Khiwani's defense called for the state to drop the charges against him, citing larger constitutional problems with his arrest, the case is still in limbo pending a final decision from the court on the matter.

Al-Khiwani and the authorities

Observers of the case say it was clear that the authorities wanted to silence Al-Khiwani once and for all. When Al-Khiwani assumed leadership of the editorial staff of the opposition paper Al-Shoura in early 2004, he helped explore issues that were considered untouchable subjects in the press. Under his leadership, Al-Shoura exposed an illegal plan by Yemeni president Ali Abdullah Saleh to cede power to his eldest son. Al-Shoura also uncovered rampant corruption in the economic and petroleum sectors and wrote about serious human rights violations in north Yemen against followers of the insurgent Hussein Al-Houthi.

Al-Khiwani was continually harassed and charged with numerous offenses: insulting the president, stirring up regional sensitivities, and endangering national security were among the charges leveled against him.

In 2004, he was sentenced to one year in prison (the preliminary verdict) for allegedly supporting the northern Houthis insurgency. The Yemeni authorities prevented any of Al-Khiwani's appeals of reaching the Appeals Court, and he spent seven months in prison.

During his detention in 2004, massive international and local criticism was directed at the Yemeni government. Legal and civic activists conducted a fierce public relations campaign to secure Al-Khiwani's release. A presidential decree was issued seven months into Al-Khiwani's prison term. Al-Shoura newspaper started publishing again shortly after his release.

Al-Shoura daily and the insurrectionist crew

When fighting between government forces and Houthis rebels broke out in northern Yemen (Sa'dah) in 2005, Al-Shoura once again confronted the government's military policies.

The Yemeni authorities adopted new measures to mute Al-Khiwani. It arranged a leadership coup within the union that published Al-Shoura, the Union of Public Forces, and while Al-Shoura continued to publish under the new leadership, the paper had been effectively silenced as an opposition voice.

Al-Khiwani then turned to the Internet and launched Al-Shoura.net where he continued to report on issues of corruption and abuse of power in the government.

Al-Shoura.net was banned in January 2007, after a third round of fighting broke out in Sa'dah, and since the beginning of this year, the Yemeni government has imposed a strict media blackout - censoring journalists and detaining legal activists who sympathize with the Houthis rebels.

In one controversial chain of events, photos of the fighting in north Yemen were leaked to international and local media outlets.

The authorities succeeded in extracting confessions from detained journalists who said that they gave Al-Khiwani pictures captured from the battlefield.

It was on the basis of these confessions that the Yemeni authorities authorized the June 20 raid of Al-Khiwani's house.

Prison and Kidnapping

Al-Khiwani's resolve against government intimidation has been shaped by his various stints in prison. During his most recent imprisonment in



July of this year, Al-Khiwani was put in the central prison of San'ah. While there, he discovered broad infringements against prisoners' rights. He listened to the stories of prisoners with long term sentences and those without judicial verdicts. He discovered prisoners who had completed their sentences but still lingered in jail because elements of the state or the military prevented their release.

Al-Khiwani also discovered scores of minors in the prisons, many of whom were girls, all exposed to the very real threats of prison violence. Ultimately, Al-Khiwani wrote an investigative report about prison culture in Yemen, calling it: "Ahead of the state: a homeland behind bars, where judiciary depletes the souls, minds, and pockets of the prisoners."

On August, 27, 2007, just a few days before publishing the report, six men kidnapped Al-Khiwani in a public square in front of other journalists, store owners and by-standers.

Eighty kilometers east of Sana'a, Al-Khiwani's kidnapers wrapped a piece of cloth over his eyes and they took turns beating him on his face, head, and chest, all the while asking him about his article, "Ahead of the state, a homeland behind bar."

One of his interrogators asked him about the hand he used for writing and Al-Khiwani pointed to his left hand, so he approached and put a wire cutter on his left finger. Another interrogator intervened, saying: "The orders are clear. We don't want anything too obvious."

Before Al-Khiwani was released, his kidnapers asked him to swear not to write about others (who were neither named, nor described).

"Who are the others?," Al-Khiwani asked his kidnapers.

"You only have to swear!" So he swore not to write about others. Then they threatened to kill him and his family members if he resumed writing. On the morning after he was released, the government newspapers published a denial attributed to a security source who said the kidnapping "was a play carried out by Al-Khiwani to gain the sympathy of public opinion in his case that is being examined by the State Security Court."

Recently, Al-Khiwani identified one of the kidnapers, and said he was among the same security group that broke into his house on June 20.

As Al-Khiwani told MENASSAT.COM, "I am paying the price for believing the government and its claims about pursuing rise of democracy. After they broke into my house and terrified my family and kidnapped me in public, in front of the Al-Nida newspaper, I have this feeling that the authorities have decided to

spill my blood." Three weeks ago, in a last ditch effort, Al-Khiwani went to the offices of Amnesty International in Sana'a to give them his last will and testament: "I hold the president directly responsible for anything that happens to me or to my family."

IFJ demands dismissing charges on Al-Khaiwani

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) today urged Yemen's President to dismiss terrorism charges against journalist A. Karim Al Khaiwani who is facing trial after he received photographs of a remote region closed to journalists from a supporter of a group that the government considers violent.

"By dismissing this case, you will send a clear message that independent journalism is protected by your administration and that journalists can cover the news without fear of facing charges in connection with their reporting," IFJ General Secretary Aidan White said in a letter to

President Ali Abdullah Saleh. Al Khaiwani is awaiting trial on terrorism charges stemming from his contact with a supporter of Zaidi-Shiite Leader Badr al-Deen al-Houthi in Saada, who gave him some photographs of the remote region that has been the location of fighting between the government and al-Houthi's group. Al Khaiwani is a well-known journalist who has been critical of the government in the past. The IFJ is backing its affiliate, the Yemen Journalists' Syndicate, in its support of Mr. Al Khaiwani and its call that the charges against him are dropped.

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Significant increase in gulf-based investments

SANA'A, Dec. 26 — Following favorable responses from gulf-based investors with respects to reforms in the Yemeni business and investment environment, the Government of Yemen is currently adopting an additional range of measures and policies to attract more investments into the country.

The aim of the Yemeni new economic reform policies is to develop comprehensive legislations to address the existing structural imbalances, improve the performance of government administration, and increase the utilization of the country's assets and resources through partnership with the privet sector and investors. Additional measures include an attractive investment law, both in terms of tax and customs exemptions, and in terms of ensuring the unrestricted flow and transfer of funds.

Real Estate and tourism sectors are expected to have the lion share of the influx of investments, and correspondingly, formulate legislation to allow not only foreign establishments to purchase real estate, but also allowing people as well. This legislation followed allowing non-Yemenis to ven-

ture into small businesses and sectors which were previously limited to Yemenis, such as food trading, retailing, and community services.

The focus on attracting gulf-based investments is derived from the belief in regional integration in the Arabian peninsula, as the Gulf Cooperative Council (GCC) countries are Yemen's largest trading partner, and have been witnessing an economic boom derived, in part, by the sky rocketing Oil returns, thereby decreasing the cost of capital. This belief in regional integration is mutual, as the GCC countries have pledged over US\$ 2.7 billion in the 2006 donors conference, in order to improve the infrastructure and the business enabling reforms.

Apart from the pledges, several investors have expressed interest in investing heavily in Yemen, with amounts exceeding US\$ 70 billion over ten years. According to the latest data issued by the General Authority for Investment, the period of April-September 2007 witnessed above-average growth in the flow of foreign investments, increasing by 5.75% over the same period of 2006.

Additionally, the number of invest-

ment projects licensed in the third quarter of 2007, have reached 110 projects, exceeding the accumulative number of licensed projects in the first two quarters of the same year, which stood at 102 projects, compared with 78 projects during the corresponding period of 2006.

Chairman of the General Authority for Investment Salah Al-Attar commented on the increase by stating: "The government reforms aimed at continuing efforts to improve the investment environment and include reviewing all policies encouraging foreign direct investment and the laws governing them and the law on banks and the Central Bank of Yemen's law and commercial law and corporate law and the law of commercial brand names and intellectual property law and trademarks The Customs Act and the Tax Code and the law and have the foreign investment law."

He also reiterated that the increase in number of licensed projects is a direct consequence to the reforms made by the government of Yemen, and that there is a very large potential for more investments to come to the country in the near future.

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3. Assist in the scheduling and organizing of government interview missions to field locations;
4. Communicate with governments, NGOs, and permanent missions regarding particular caseloads/situations or actions taken on behalf of individual cases;
5. Oversee resettlement cases processed by field offices, including those without direct involvement of the Resettlement Section, provide advice as required, share observations with the supervisor and propose appropriate follow-up action;
6. Monitor resettlement work and liaise with field offices in particular with regard to the use of quotas and to ensure that accurate statistics are provided;
7. Assist the supervisor in the annual exercise of resettlement planning;
8. Assist and support resettlement training activities, including organization of workshops and management, updating, and distribution of training materials;
9. Assist in the editing of the Resettlement Handbook, arrange translations, and assist in the distribution and tracking system;
10. Act as a focal point for the resettlement page of the UNHCR Internet Site, including updating and maintaining its content;
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Foundlings: Citizens without an identity

While there are very few foundlings in Yemen, those in this category face legal issues regarding their identity. A report by *Azya'a Al-Amri* and *Rashida Al-Ziyadi*.

Foundlings typically are children abandoned, almost always by their mothers, soon after birth. While there's rarely any intention that the child should die, the mother usually is in such a mental state that she can't act rationally or in such a position that she is – or feels unable to – approach social services for help.

Such children usually are left somewhere such as a hospital or on a doorstep, where they'll be found soon. This sets them apart from feral children (where the loss usually is accidental, although some may be abandoned deliberately), from captives, those stolen from their families and those deliberately exposed with the intention that they should die.

"One jailed woman beggar had been renting a house from a local sheikh on the outskirts of Taiz governorate. She told us she gave birth to an illegitimate child after her landlord raped her. She made a complaint to the court that the landlord had raped her and she shouldn't be jailed with her child," recounts Ishraq Al-Maqtari, manager of the Legal Protection and Support Project (LPSP), a local NGO.

"This phenomenon [of foundlings] is spreading within fragmented communities, such as marginalized peoples (known as the Akhdam), while prisons have become common places for the availability of foundlings due to the cases of adulteresses, whom we defend in court," she explains, adding, "Most jailed women are pregnant with illegitimate babies to be added, following delivery, to the other ones available in jails."

Because Yemen is an extremely conservative society, women who have babies after committing adultery often leave them on the street or in other places out of fear of censorship by their society. Such babies sometimes are left in the garbage after being killed, as was the case in one Sana'a neighborhood where police found a newborn wrapped in a plastic bag next to a garbage bin. The day-old child had been stabbed in the head.

The main problem with being a foundling is that it is a child without an

identity, meaning that it carries no family's surname, such as Al-Mutawakil, Al-Harazi, etc. In Yemen, foundlings simply are given generic names like Mohammed or Ahmed, but no surnames. Consequently, these children lose their relationship with their own family and community because, according to experts, foundlings are expected to deviate from their family, so society disowns them.

According to Yemeni legislation, if a father disowns his child, that child then will be related to his or her mother. This usually happens as a result of divorce and breaking the marital relationship.

If the mother insists that the child is hers, he or she will be related to her family. However, some families refuse to allow disowned children to take their family surname; thus, the mother's relatives go to the Yemeni government's Citizenship Authority and register the child with a surname other than theirs.

Employees at the Citizenship Authority sometimes complicate this registration process because, by law, the father – not the mother – is responsible for registering a child. But if the father is absent, the process becomes more complicated.

Col. Abdulaziz Al-Sa'afani, manager of the Legal Affairs Department at the Civil Status Authority in Sana'a, maintains that the 1991 Citizenship Law, which hasn't been amended up until now, doesn't contain clear or adequate details regarding foundlings and their issues. He notes that a special committee within the authority suggested amending the law, even forwarding it to the Interior Ministry for approval, but it has yet to be received back.

However, attorney Khalid Al-Shamiri doesn't believe the Citizenship Law offers a good solution to foundlings' issues, commenting, "Such a phenomenon is continuous and will continue because we can't deny its existence, be its causes domestic or international. If we discuss foundlings' issues from a legal viewpoint, we'll find that the law doesn't discuss the issue adequately, thereby leaving the problem unsolved."

Asked how the problem of foundlings'

identities can be resolved, religious scholar Abdurrahman Qahtan replies, "Foundlings can be given common names such as Mohammed, Abdullah, Abdurrahman or Naji for males, according to many reputable books on legislation and jurisprudence. Those who adopt a foundling can tell him or her that his or her parents died in an accident, for example, after which they then adopted and raised him or her to be their child so that the foundling won't feel any inferiority."

Additionally, Qahtan notes, "Citizens may obtain identity documents for any adopted child by summoning two witnesses to appear in court and testify that they adopted and raised the foundling."

Al-Sa'afani further explains, "The legal procedures are easier for a foundling than for one with parents, particularly as the Citizenship Law states that a Yemeni citizen either is one whose parents both are recognized; whose mother is a Yemeni citizen but his or her father is unidentified or whose parents both are unidentified," noting that, "A foundling may obtain citizenship and birth documents immediately and easily and there's a legal article to support this."

He adds that the law states that Citizenship Authority staff aren't entitled to indicate on a birth certificate that someone is a foundling and that the spaces for filling in the parents' names should be left blank. Rather, a foundling should be given three generic names implying no difference or discrimination in the eyes of others, as well as not indicating that he or she is parentless.

Monitoring newborns in hospitals

Dr. Abdulmalik Al-Sayyani, director of Taiz's Al-Thawra Hospital, notes, "Cases involving illegitimate children are few. In fact, the hospital has registered only one or two over the past seven years. As a mother is admitted to the hospital, we immediately ask her the name of the child's father before she delivers it in order to record it in the logbook because at the time of her admission, no mother

experiencing labor dares to lie."

He continues, "We don't request marriage contracts because we aren't a relevant authority, particularly when a woman comes in with her father and gives his surname as the baby's. If her father is willing to adopt the child, we don't object to it because we want citizens to adopt such babies."

The doctor adds, "Undoubtedly, women who conceive illegitimately are perceived to have made mistakes, but we aren't responsible for their mistakes. That's the responsibility of criminal investigation bureaus and other security agencies. Our job simply is to help women deliver their babies."

Al-Sa'afani notes, "We have a Citizenship Authority agent in every hospital to send reports and notifications regarding every birth, whether legitimate or not. The hospital authenticates these documents, which the Citizenship Authority agent then signs in order to facilitate the required procedure for obtaining a birth certificate from any of the citizenship authorities."

Poverty and tourist marriages

According to Al-Maqtari, the existence of rich and poor, family disintegration and immoral crimes are some of the main reasons for foundlings.

"While tourist marriages and marrying a foreigner are legitimate, such phenomena involve numerous problems related to identity cards and procedures at citizenship authorities," she explains. "At the LPSP's Social Center, we have one case involving an 11-year-old girl whose mother married a man from the Arabian Gulf for a short time. The husband then disappeared with the wife's relatives knowing nothing about him and leaving the little girl without an identity."

Dr. Anisah Dukam believes poverty is one reason for the foundling phenomenon because it forces women to deviate, while others are subjected to rape. Lack of education and moral values is another reason, as many girls aren't raised well in educated societies; thus, they fall victim to deviation and rape. Some Yemeni families even disown their children due to poverty

and the inability to feed them.

NGOs neglect foundlings

While multiple NGOs are concerned about children's rights, do they really treat all children equally? NGOs must take into consideration numerous social differences while advocating children's rights; however, despite the multiplicity of NGOs and organizations working on children's rights, none were found to include foundlings on their agendas and programs.

For example, programs of the Human Rights Information and Training Center don't include foundlings or disowned children. Likewise, the Shawthab Foundation for Childhood and Development is a local NGO expending much effort to prevent child trafficking, but it also does nothing regarding foundlings' issues.

However, the foundation's Secretary-General Maryam Ibrahim Al-Shawafi notes that in the coming days, foundation staff will establish a vision for programs focusing on foundlings and seeking to improve the situation for deprived children in several government institutions, such as the Orphans Care School and the like.

Al-Shawafi says, "Speaking as a children's worker, I don't believe foundlings have committed any sin; rather, they are innocent children paying the price for crimes committed by adults. Such cases aren't new – they've existed since ancient times – but our main concern is how to increase public awareness of the phenomenon and how to reform foundlings' situations within alternative families in order for this group of children to adapt with other families and surroundings."

She continues, "Civil community organizations can do something in this regard; however, decision makers are more able to suggest workable solutions to improve foundlings' situations. Additionally, the community is responsible to provide solutions to this problem by increasing awareness among schoolchildren, who know nothing about the phenomenon."

"It's noticeable that the family plays no role in this respect amid weak social relations, whereas awareness about foundlings should be spread at various venues, such as schools, mosques and

men's and women's gatherings. Mosque preachers should discuss a variety of social problems, including the foundling phenomenon, during Friday sermons and suggest workable solutions to persistent problems in their communities," Al-Shawafi proposes.

Family House for Child Care

A facility called the Family House for Child Care, located on Hadda Street in Sana'a, houses as many as 50 foundlings, with those in charge behaving like they are the real parents of the disowned children.

Executive Director Saddam Al-Dhaibani, explains, "The house was established following a field study conducted as a reaction to media reports saying that stray children in Yemen are subjected to beating and oppression due to lack of shelter, which, even if available, are similar to jails. The situation encouraged us to establish the house and play a pioneering role in this respect."

Likewise, Dukam, who helped found and now manages the Guidance and Psychological Research Center affiliated with Taiz University, says, "The Safe Childhood Center isn't a facility offering shelter for foundlings; rather, having studied the reasons forcing children to become strays, its job is to return them to their families. The center has received only one case involving a little girl, but we only learned that she was a foundling after she fled the center."

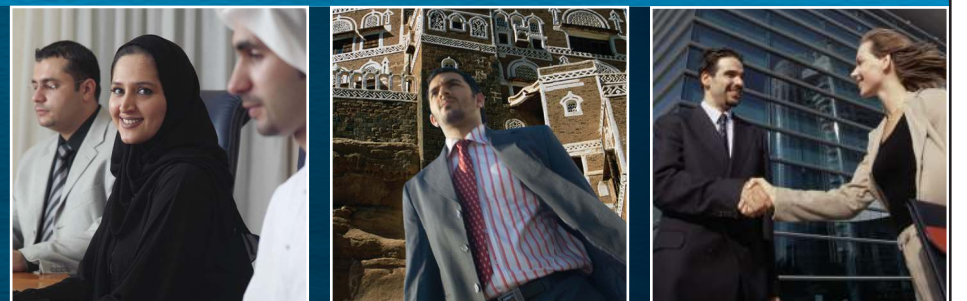
Most of those interviewed for this story agreed that Yemeni society must show respect for foundlings and assist them to lead new lives and forget their fate. Government agencies must play a greater role in this respect, facilitating procedures for foundlings to obtain birth certificates and identity documents.

As attorney Al-Shamiri notes, "The Western world has preceded us, conducting studies and suggesting possible solutions to the foundling phenomenon. While it's important for our ideology to prosper, it's also important for us to benefit from others' experiences and apply their useful studies to our Muslim community, as this will help lawmakers and legislators bring about workable solutions befitting our real-life situations, whereas shifting attention away from the phenomenon may exacerbate it."



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The Yemeni Opposition's strong man

By: Dr. Abdullah Al-Faqeh

Hameed bin Abdullah bin Hussein Al-Ahmer, now at the age of 40, has become one of Yemen's most influential men. This huge achievement is only partially due to being born into one of Yemen's most powerful families—Al-Ahmer family of the Hashed tribal confederation. His father Abdullah bin Hussein Al-Ahmer, was and still is the paramount leader of the Hashid confederation. Senior Al-Ahmer is still, at least nominally, the Speaker of the Yemeni House of Representatives (HR). He is also the most respected living revolutionist. For more than four decades, senior Al-Ahmer has been known as the presidents' maker and breaker, but he never sought the highest office for himself.

Hameed Al-Ahmer was born in an era of turmoil not only in north and south Yemen but also in the Arab world. In less than a decade, senior Al-Ahmer lost his father and a very bright brother to the cause of political change. In addition, the battle between the republicans and the royalists was still raging. In such a political environment, Hameed was named after his politically ambitious, popular, and talented uncle, who was executed by the Imam.

While it was extremely rare for the sons of sheiks to worry about education during the 1970s and the 1980s, Hameed had a personal inclination to education. It was something inside him that led the son of this powerful, albeit traditional, family to educate himself to the best possible. As a youth, Hameed would travel to the U.S to spend summers where he would stay with an American family in order to learn English.

In the early 1990s, Hameed, who is now a fluent speaker of English, attended Sana'a University and earned a bachelor degree in economics with honors. Like his other brothers, Hameed must have enjoyed the support of his rich and powerful family. Unlike his brothers and most sons of Yemeni sheiks, however, he opted for the hard way in life.

One of his professors privately conveyed to the author that he used to double check Hameed's exams to search for mistakes. The professor was afraid that people would not believe that a son of sheik Al-Ahmer would get a full grade in an economic course. One of the students who attended



By: Dr. Abdullah Al-Faqeh

school at that time said that Hameed, who would usually be followed with many armed bodyguards, would reach the gate of the College of Trade and Economics and hand over his small gun to the university police in order to keep it for him until he picks it up on his way out from classes.

The late professor of economics at Sana'a University and the founder and then publisher of the Yemen Times Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Saqaf interviewed Hameed, the young entrepreneur, in one of the early issues of Yemen Times. That interview reflected a professor's fondness of a young man who seemed keen on making a difference in the life of his country and people. But late professor Al-Saqaf himself might not have thought that Hameed in a few years over a decade would become one of Yemen's most achieving businessmen, owning icons such as Sabafone—a cellular telecom with more than a million and a half subscribers—the Islamic Bank of Saba, and at least a dozen other businesses.

But Hameed is not only a brilliant businessman. He is also a courageous, diligent, innovative, and goal oriented politician. Capitalizing on the power and influence of his family, Hameed was elected to the Yemeni HR for the first time in 1993, reelected in 1997 and again in 2003. It is worth noting that while Hameed's older brother—Saddiq—remained politically independent and his younger brother Hussein joined the ruling General People's Congress (GPC), Hameed from the onset ran on the ticket of the party presided over by his father—the Yemeni Congregation for Reform—which is known by its short Arabic name *Islah* (meaning reform).

It was no coincidence that Hameed would find himself after a decade and a half of multi-partisan politics as one of the top leaders of *Islah* which is unequivocally the largest opposition party in the country. It is very likely that senior Al-Ahmer, a father of many

sons and daughters, and one of the most shrewd politicians in today's Yemen had saw in Hameed—his second son—what it takes to inherit his father's powerful political role. It is also worth noting that the rise of the political star of Hameed has paralleled the gradual withdrawal of senior Al-Ahmer from political life partially due to deteriorating health conditions.

Whereas senior Al-Ahmer has been most of the time out of the country for treatment and rehabilitation over the past few years, junior Al-Ahmer has been calling the shots in his father's place. While not outsider to politics, Hameed's rise to the nation's top rank of outspoken politicians took place in the last three years. His acquisition of an important political role coincided with many developments in the Yemeni political scene. For one, the old alliance between senior Al-Ahmer and President Saleh started filtering. The immediate causes are many but the single, and probably most significant long-term cause, is a struggle over power among the younger generation of the Hashid confederation. For another, senior Al-Ahmer as said earlier has been gradually withdrawing from public life partially for health and partially for political reasons.

And, regardless of the causes of the rift between senior Al-Ahmer and President Saleh, politics in Yemen seems to have dramatically changed over the past few years thanks to Hameed's entrepreneur skills, political ambition, and determination. It is widely believed that Hameed has played a vital role in solidifying the opposition's stand against Saleh in September 2006 presidential elections. At that time, Saleh, with no signs of credible competitor in the horizon, had hoped for a smooth renewal of his term in office. To his dismay, junior Al-Ahmer surprised him with a fierce elections' battle that attracted the attention of friends and foes.

While accompanying the Joint Meeting Parties' presidential candidate engineer Faisal bin Shamlan in his camping trail across Yemen, Hameed seemed to have redefined the contemporary politics of Yemen. He proved the old slogan of tribal politics, which states "my nephew and I are against the outsider," to be inaccurate. The most telling moment, probably in the politics of modern Yemen, occurred in the summer of 2006 when Hameed with the support of some of his brothers mobilized tens of thousands of

Hashid's tribesmen for the opposition parties' presidential candidate bin Shamlan's campaign stop in the city of Amran to the north of the capital of Yemen—Sana'a.

It is true that Saleh is the one who decided to shift from the politics of consensus to the politics of competition. It is truer, however, that junior Al-Ahmer is the one who defined what the politics of competition looks like today and will look like in the future. And, while the door for reconciliation of differences among the younger generation of Hashid is not completely closed, the likelihood of reconciliation and a return to the politics of consensus seems remote. The best the sons of Hashid can hope for in the future is not the impossible return to the politics of consensus, but the attainable goal of acceptance of the right and legitimacy of the role of each other.

Hameed, who is widely perceived among the opposition—specially the youth—as their strong man, repeatedly asserts that he is ready for the long haul of political competition and struggle. In response, the regime has been keen on targeting him. Since he openly started opposing Saleh's rule and policies and calling for deeper and comprehensive political reforms, the regime has reacted hastily, using state institutions, resources, and public media outlets to undermine his flourishing businesses, and to tarnish his reputation. But despite being subjected to all types of harassment, Hameed seems to be undeterred. In a recent interview, Hameed, an optimist and a strong motivator, told his supporters and opponents too that he is ready to pay the price for the cause he believes in.

Some of Hameed's friends, however, fear for his life. One of his proponents wrote a long article in 2005 asking "will Hameed become the Hariri of Yemen?" referring to assassinated businessman and prime minister of Lebanon Mr. Rafiq Al-hariri. For those who know him well, the fate of his late uncle at the hands of the Imam raises a legitimate concern.

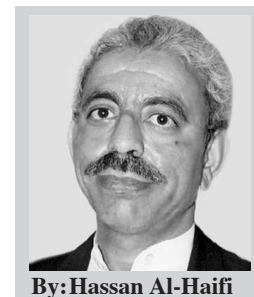
Unlike his friends, Hameed prefers to look at the bright side of events. After all, the heinous murder of his ambitious uncle and grandfather led his father to mobilize the Hashid tribes, normally supporters of the Imam, to the side of the revolution when it broke out in north Yemen in 1962. The efforts of his father, family, and tribesmen eventually led to the permanent demise of the Imamate's 11 centuries' rule. "We are now better off" said Hameed, in a recent interview, comparing the conditions of opposition leaders today to those of the 1960s revolutionaries in the southern and northern parts of Yemen.

The author is a professor of politics at Sana'a University. For comments, please email the author at: dral-faqeh@yahoo.com

COMMON SENSE

Annapolis or no Annapolis, in Palestine the killings go on

Perhaps there have never been any people, who have been subjected to an ongoing systematic campaign of killing, imprisonment, isolation, torture and all the other agonizing trials and tribulations that could only come with Zionist occupation, as the Palestinian people have. More than that, no people have been neglected and left to surrender their fate to an ugly hate mongering chauvinistic regime that insists it can thrive on a steady campaign of ethnic cleansing while picturing it as an acceptable norm.



By: Hassan Al-Haifi

Furthermore, that the rest of the world can regard itself free from any responsibility for letting this machine of Zionist oppression unleash its machinery of death and continue to systematically do away with the remaining helpless Palestinians still left in the Holy Land surely raise questions about the state of the conscientiousness left in the world.

The acceptance of the ongoing slaughter of the Palestinians seems to have become an accepted fate even to the rest of the Arab states. The daily deaths and assaults created by the Zionist homicide machine is not even worthy of coverage as headline news, breaking news or even any news for that matter in the Arab media, especially the English media (newspapers and television). Is it has because Zionist homicide has become so much a part of the daily life of the occupied West Bank and the not so independent Gaza – Palestine – in case people have forgotten that there was once an idea of creating a Palestine state out of the two areas? Even the word Palestine is stated almost embarrassingly in most of the media, in the Arab world. Stress is given now to the "people of the West Bank or Gaza (with the added 'now controlled by Hamas'.

Apparently, the international community has, for all intents and purposes, given a de facto recognition to death by Zionist ordinance as justifiable. Why waste time, calling for UN condemnation, when the US veto is bound to block such an effort anyway? Never mind that the rights that have been violated in the Holy Land actually never have been allowed to exist in any territory ever occupied by Israel whether in 1948, 1956, 1967 and 1982. The Arabs were misled to believe that the Arab military coups were going to rekindle the realization of all national aspirations of the Arabs including the liberation of their brothers in Palestine. However because of their failures in all directions, Arab military regimes always cover their own demise by creating new fiascos.

In most of the Arab States where governance is established by the nozzle of tank guns even the guns that they purchased are actually meant to ensure that the military continues to keep their hands on the reins of power forever and the military brass can continue to waste the resources of the land until nothing is left to be channeled to improve the welfare of the overwhelming majority of the population. How can they hope to improve the welfare of the people when they have rendered access to the resources of the land as a privilege to themselves, since we are led to believe after all they are the vanguard that will someday bring liberty and relief to their Arab brothers in Palestine. That is the argument they use to supposedly accord such juntas legitimacy and to keep their people shackled. Yet the fact is that all their presumed "efforts" towards bringing progress to their constituents have proven to be a mockery of social justice and sound governance.

Our non-military Arab regimes have also decided to take no action or even say anything while their brothers in Palestine are mowed down, beaten, besieged and denied even the most basic of sustained life such as clean air and water. Why this menacingly frightening silence on the horrible daily plight of the Palestinians remains a mystery to most of the Arab citizens of both the traditional regimes and the juntas? It is no mystery that most of the people in the Arab countries would love to help the Palestinians in one way or another.

However, there simply are no channels left open by which to send help whether in cash or in kind. Even strong pronouncements of support to Palestinians or protests against the daily torture of the Palestinians is now unwelcome by most Arab governments, if not met with the severe repression and sometimes war!

One wonders, have the Arab Governments forgotten on behalf of whom are they ruling? If one asks any random pickings of citizens from most of the Arab states, one will find the quick unanimity in the answer and the almost unanimous contempt of all of them of their respective governments, traditional or otherwise. The discussion continues

I would like to thank Dr. Alan Balboni of the University of Nevada for providing the inspiration for the above article.

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

In anticipation of resolutions!



Courtesy of CAT-TON

Letters to the Editor

Reviving the spirit of Christ in Christmas

In 1223, St. Francis of Assisi simply and joyfully commemorated the scene of the Nativity according to the infancy Gospel, and the Crib thus became one of the traditional and best-loved symbols of Christmas. In the crib we contemplate the One who stripped himself of divine glory in order to become poor, driven by love for mankind. Beside the crib the Christmas tree, with its twinkling lights, reminds us that with the birth of Jesus the tree of life has blossomed anew in the desert of humanity. The

crib and the tree: precious symbols, which hand down in time the true meaning of Christmas!
Today, amid a consumerist Christmas attitude, we are allowing ourselves to be stripped of our traditions, the dearest and most venerable, the oldest and sweetest, the truest and most beautiful, so that carelessly, through neglect, we are abandoning Christ to follow the latest futile fad.

A sensitive Christian would not let anything replace the Crib and Christmas tree. Commemorating these

means passing on the history of popular piety and religiosity. Putting up the Crib and Christmas tree in homes and public places, not in a folkloric manner but as symbols of faith, prayer and offering, means rediscovering joy and the solidarity of friendship, the human tenderness of relations and the piety of souls of enchanted children and adults.

In advancement of faith, family and fraternity may we all strive to keep Christ in Christmas!

Paul Kokoski
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Decentralize in conflict areas in the Middle East and North Africa

By: Yossef Ben-Meir

It may initially seem a paradox that national-level governments are strengthened when they decentralize decision-making power by giving local communities control over, or at least a decisive voice in, matters relating to their own development. One naturally assumes that a country's autonomy is strengthened the more power is concentrated at the national level.

However, in reality, when national governments assist initiatives that enable a community to determine and implement its priority development projects (in job creation, education, health, environment, etc.), they create in the process diverse administrative partnerships at all domestic levels. Everyone benefits. Local organizations and communities are desirous of maintaining these partnerships at the national level because government support helps satisfy their specific needs and better enables the people to shape the institutions that govern them. Central governments also benefit because by creating overall goals that encourage inter-regional balance and competition, they can foster better performance, positively affect areas far from the national capital, and enhance the central government's legitimacy. The diverse benefits of decentralized development enable it to generate what is particularly needed to help resolve the complex regional conflicts involving, for example, Iraq, the Israelis and Palestinians, and the Western Sahara with Morocco.

There are a wealth of examples of decentralizing initiatives with national support from all over the world and in history. As early as 1956, the Administrative Committee of the United Nations stated that a major function of national governments is to unite with the efforts of the people and improve the conditions of local communities. In both mixed economies and socialist societies in Asia, for example, rural institutions became more effective promoters of development because of support from higher levels of government. In Brazil, the process of decentralization and the local participation it encourages allowed citizens to be directly involved with municipal fiscal planning that in turn enhanced transparency and responsiveness of social services. Joint forestry programs in India, organized by local organizations, met with government encouragement, which led to the central government's enhanced legitimacy. The organization of the United States is also based on the same idea, that is, the principle of federalism or decentralization. The system of federalism is central to the U.S. Constitution, which imposes limits on the national government by giving local and state governments substantive independent powers.

"Participatory development" has become the term used to refer to community planning methods that create decentralization. These methods involve the participation of "facilitators" who organize local community-wide meetings at which participants plan their own development projects. Teachers, government extensionists in

the ministries of agriculture, health, education, and so forth, community workers from NGOs, personnel from international public and private groups, and local community members can all be effective facilitators. Once trained, facilitators bring local people together to assess their social and environmental conditions and determine and implement development projects in areas most important to them—such as in job creation, education, and health, among others.

In the case of the Palestinians, their economic structure is extremely dependent on Israel. This dependency makes Israeli-Palestinian relations increasingly bitter and volatile while perpetuating the extreme economic underdevelopment of the Palestinian people. What the Palestinians immediately need are relief and opportunities for livelihood achieved through fostering a self-reliance that restructures their economy, decreases its vulnerabilities to external influences, and enhances regional stability.

Decentralization, it was found, advances local and national self-reliance, which, in turn, is associated with increases in independence from external control, self-help, and self-governance. Palestinian communities will increase their power and the influence of indigenous institutions and of the civil society. Significant democratic foundations will be established, and internal political processes will be more responsive and accountable. Decentralization vests control at the community level and can consequently more quickly generate life-sustaining

development projects, which also cost less.

This development approach could work best in some areas where aspects of partnership may be possible with Hamas, since the majority of Hamas' activities are already in community services. The impacts of working together wherever possible with even perceived enemies can in time affect overall relations between larger groups and even between societies.

In Iraq, the sectarian conflict is placing the central government in jeopardy, with the country breaking apart or a loose federal arrangement seemingly the most likely outcome. The creation of development programs as outlined here offers a third possible outcome, which is Iraq's central government can increase its chances of survival and utility by supporting reconstruction programs that are driven in their design, implementation, and evaluation by local communities.

Decentralization can readily incorporate local reconciliation processes, which in turn can significantly influence decisions made at the regional and national levels. Another advantage of participatory projects is that they are dispersed, small in scale, and thus are not as strategic of targets as the more visible and foreign-conceived reconstruction projects insurgents typically sabotage. In addition, ample evidence from Iraq itself strongly suggests people do not destroy reconstruction projects that they determine and then manage themselves.

It is impossible to justify in developmental terms the extreme involvement

of foreign companies in the reconstruction of Iraq. The opponents of peace, in a context where communities receive the real benefits from their participation in development is more determinedly dealt with internally by the Iraqi people themselves, and in ways that allowed for the continued benefits of the larger majority. This is why the United States should immediately follow through on the Iraq Study Group's suggestion to allocate \$5 billion for reconstruction, and direct these funds toward assisting local people to come together, plan, and implement projects that meet their self-determined socio-economic and environmental needs. No other approach is now on the table that can enable Iraqis to feel more vested in their surroundings and future, further the reconciliation, development, and political tracks, and provide the national government with legitimacy and purpose (and perhaps save it!) through giving this type of projects its full and active support.

As a final example, last April, the Moroccan government submitted to the United Nations Security Council an "autonomy within Moroccan sovereignty" proposal for a resolution to the 32 year old Western Saharan conflict. The proposal catalyzed intensive negotiations among the parties (including Morocco and the Polisario, with Algeria and Mauritania invited to observe) under the auspices of the United Nations.

Considering Morocco's position to enable the maximum possible autonomy for Western Sahara within the context of its existence within Moroccan

sovereignty, it should broadly assist the coming together of Western Sahara's local people so they can plan and implement their priority development projects. This will create greater autonomy for the Saharan region, bring desperately needed relief and opportunity to the approximate 160,000 Sahrawi refugees, and forge mutually beneficial relationships and institutional connections with Morocco. If the process goes forward, new trust and partnerships among the parties could help to more clearly define the form of regional autonomy within a broader sovereignty that Morocco proposes.

Morocco's broad support of decentralization of development in the Western Sahara would affect the results of a referendum in Western Sahara that helps to decide its future (that is, if the parties agree to the terms upon which a referendum were to take place). Individuals and organizations that support projects created by communities in the process advance their public diplomacy too. Pursuing the projects communities wanted—that met their self-described needs—wins hearts and minds and will influence who wins the "war of ideas." It is this kind of action that should form the basis of United States public diplomacy in the Arab-Muslim world.

Yossef Ben-Meir teaches sociology at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. He is also President of the High Atlas Foundation—a non-profit organization that assists rural development in Morocco (www.highatlasfoundation.org).

Beyond the Christmas lights, the real Bethlehem

Every year at Christmas time, thousands of pilgrims and journalists converge on Bethlehem. Most never get a glimpse of the real Bethlehem beyond the Christmas lights.

By: Fadi Abu Sada

Of all the cities in Palestine, Bethlehem is by far the most beautiful. Especially at this time of year, when dozens of laborers are decorating the streets in preparation for Christmas. At night, when all the lights come on, it looks even more fabulous. And yet, the city that beats with life during this time of the year is in reality a dead city.

The dead city remains largely hidden from the hundreds of journalists from all over the world who have begun to arrive in the city in order to cover the Christmas celebrations. It remains hidden to most of the Christian pilgrims who have come to celebrate Christmas in the birthplace of Jesus Christ.

As they arrive in Bethlehem from the North, which is the only possible approach due to the Israeli occupation,

the pilgrims and the journalists might catch a glimpse of some of the ironic art on the security wall that Israel established in the city.

They might see the human leg protruding from the wall, or the portrait of an Israeli soldier checking the ID of a donkey, the Palestinian Child investigating an Israeli soldier, or the peace pigeon in the sights of a sniper already anticipating its death.

What they will not see is the historical path that Jesus Christ took from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, as this path has been closed off by the Israelis with a cement wall.

For sure, on Christmas, the Israelis will remove the wall for half an hour, just long enough for the Latin Patriarch Michel Sabah to arrive in Bethlehem, as if nothing had happened.

They also can't see the Israeli soldiers at the checkpoints distributing flowers and sweets to the Christian pilgrims arriving in Bethlehem, telling



them, "Welcome to Israel!"

Sure enough, visiting journalists will frequently focus on the secondary aspects of these ceremonies, such as the Christian emigration and its rea-

sons. They might also highlight some of the Israeli measures in the sacred city, such as the issue of the separation wall, or the colonization fence around the city that consists of 19 settlements,

and the deteriorating situation of tourism due to the occupation.

Palestine TV, the official channel affiliated to the Palestinian Authority, doesn't remember Bethlehem unless it's Christmas.

Here it is sending live broadcast cars to the city along with large crews of technicians to ensure 24 hours coverage of the event.

This is all because the Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas always visits Bethlehem at Christmas, and leads the mass. Covering his presence and participation is a big issue, and all the TV channels in the Arab World will carry it.

All this coverage doesn't reflect real life in this sacred city.

Nabil Tawfiq Audi, an intermediate level teacher of Christian Religion, said that "the real Bethlehem is supposed to occupy a larger portion in the media during this event, and I don't feel that this side is covered sufficiently in both the local and international media".

The real Bethlehem might be the one of a group of youngsters who decided to form an unofficial framework under

the name "Markab" [the boat]. Their aim is to collect money from the wealthy people who come to Bethlehem at Christmas in order to distribute it to the city's poor.

"The media doesn't know anything about this, and doesn't mention the poor people of the city and the cruelty of their lives", said Raja Awwad, a member of Markab.

According to Awwad, "the media intentionally overlook that we in Bethlehem are still living under the Israeli occupation, and that the occupation forces penetrate daily into the city in order to carry out assassinations and detention operations. They also ignore the fact that we are living in a small prison, whose doors are open only on holidays so that we can see new faces and feel - even for a short time - that we are still alive. After that, the doors will close once again, as if nothing had happened. Where does the media stand on that?"

Many happy returns!

Fadi Abu Sada is the director of the Palestine News Network, www.pnn.ps. Source: menassat.com

The "war on terror" and the worst humanitarian crisis in Africa

By: Sadiya Ali Aden

Approximately three months ago, Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG), pressured out Prime Minister Ali Mohamed Gedi. Surprisingly, this political re-arrangement of deckchairs generated much noisy headlines. Meanwhile the real story—the great unfolding humanitarian disaster—continued unnoticed.

For the Somali people, the Ethiopian invasion of December of 2006 could not have started at a worse time. Defeating the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) and propping up the TFG; this was Ethiopia's immediate rationale for violating Somalia. The larger goal? Forging a partnership between Washington and Addis Ababa in order to execute "war on terror"...

A year later, this mission has not been accomplished. Instead, the "war on terror" has become the terror of war being visited on the Somali people. Admittedly a handful of Somalis have benefited from the invasion, specifically the dozens of warlords previously

driven out of Mogadishu by the UIC. These warlords, the instigators of Somalia's current civil conflict, were reinstalled in their fiefdoms riding on the backs of Ethiopia's invading tanks. As a result, the reviled check points and road blocks used to bully cash out of unarmed civilians were reintroduced in Southern Somalia, particularly Mogadishu.

To keep the invasion and Africa's worst humanitarian catastrophe going, heavy and modern weapons, including airplanes were used. One was a U.S. Air Force AC-130 gunship that attacked and killed Somali villagers and countless livestock in the hunt for three foreign men suspected for the bombing of 1998 American embassies in Africa, who yet remain at large.

Among those caught in the chaos were visiting Somalis from the Diaspora. In the period between June and December 2006, Somali technocrats returned to their native country to partake the rebuilding in the six month period of peace and stability that was established under the rule of the UIC. The Diaspora arrived with the intention to give back to the land and the people they left

behind and contribute to rebuilding their lives.

Unfortunately, an extraordinary rendition program were the gratitude they received; in that, the TFG, Kenya, Ethiopia and US all being implicated. Young men as young as 12 years of age were taken out of their homes in the dead of the night, blindfolded and taken into unknown destinations.

Fleeing refugees of mostly women and children did meet a similar fate. Unfortunately, these refugees had no where to escape, as Kenya decided to close its borders and deny them entry. This paved the way to the current nightmare scenario: 1 million internally displaced persons (IDPs,) mostly children and women, without any provision or protection from the UN or other humanitarian agencies or NGOs.

In order to create a safe haven for the displaced refugees, the international community must demand the neighboring countries to open their borders. It is all too often that the casualties of war are those that are unmentioned. The innocent men, women and children, caught in the middle, left with no way out.

The UN's High Commissioner for Refugees, António Guterres, said border security measures should not impair the ability of deserving Somali civilians to enter Kenya to seek safety and protection as refugees. The neighboring Nations have humanitarian responsibility to safeguard these refugees.

On October 30, 2007, 40 international NGOs have released a joint statement ominously warning against a gathering cloud of humanitarian catastrophe in Somalia urging the international community to respond to this man-made calamity as the Ethiopian forces and militias loyal to the (TFG) callously prevent the delivery, and bluntly stating that "there is an unfolding humanitarian catastrophe in South Central Somalia". Meanwhile, Ethiopian forces continue their shelling of Mogadishu neighborhoods and killing, according to Elman Human Rights group, 7000 civilians mostly women, children, and elderly between January and November of 2007.

"In Shell-Shocked, Human Rights Watch's August 2007 report of our investigation of the March-April hostilities, we documented many of the most

serious patterns of abuse by Ethiopian troops, such as indiscriminate attacks on civilians, summary executions and repeated targeting of hospitals," wrote Tom Malinowski, Washington Advocacy Director for Human Rights Watch, in an open letter to Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates. However, the international media by and large remain morally selective in what they show to the world.

Somali caricaturist, Amin Amir (AminArts.com,) depicts this morally selectivity on his December 12, 2007 cartoon. The powerful imagery shows a representative of the international media zooming his camera on a severely malnourished child standing in the middle of a killing field where many bodies are on the ground and Ethiopian fighter jets are flying overhead and dropping missiles. The child retorts: I don't need your coverage; it is these atrocities—pointing to the dead—that you need to be telling the world.

The current Somali nightmare was exacerbated by the systematic assassination of Somali independent media groups who are not pro TFG and the Ethiopian occupation. And the silence

of the international community on this matter is deeply disturbing and sadly deafening.

This year alone, eight Somali journalists were killed—their crimes being to have simply dared reporting the reality on the grounds of Mogadishu. The TFG & Ethiopian forces are terrorizing Somali reporters creating an uncomfortable environment of terror and coercion.

According to the United Nations Children's Fund, one-quarter of the refugees around Afgoye are younger than age of five. Sick children and pregnant women often are turned away at checkpoints, and trucks carrying food and other humanitarian aid are routinely charged \$500 each for passing through.

"Things are now getting absolutely worse," said Christian Balslev-Olesen, the UNICEF representative for Somalia. "There is a dirtiness to this war. Children are a real target."

Sadiya Ali Aden is a mother, writer, and voice for justice and equality who lives in Virginia. She can be reached at: sadiyaaden@gmail.com

Advertising and marketing: A dilemma for the Yemeni business

By: YemenTimes Staff

Commonly defined as controlled communications, sending out carefully designed messages to a targeted audience, hoping for a favorable reaction. Advertising, Marketing, Promotion, Publicity, Public Relations, and other associated concepts share that common definition, with minor twists in adherence to the nature of business activity and operating environment.

Yemen is an underdeveloped economy with virgin markets, limited competition, and a few business enterprises which take advertising and marketing seriously. However, with regional integration, openness to foreign investments and international competition, and the increasing competition in selected sectors, This is bound to change.

are conformists, where they opt to follow the most acceptable consumerism behavior, even if the single consumer does not believe in a particular brand, she will still buy it because it is the best seller. This indicates that market leaders will continue dominating the market for simply because they maintain their image as market leaders.

Al-Waseet advertising newspaper has undertaken a survey to determine the objective of advertising in the press. The results of the survey indicates that only 30 percent of advertising has marketing objectives, while the remainder 70 percent was either to maintain strong links with the media institutions, or to obtain financing for advertising from headquarters – usually located outside Yemen.

Yet, the largest section of advertisers do not advertise for market purposes according to Al-Waseet survey. Explains Raed, stating that there is a



Outdoor advertising has been very popular among business due to the high perceived exposure these signs have over a long period of time.

sive investment which does not have guaranteed rewards, and do prefer to use advertising funds to subsidize the prices, therefore slightly decreasing the retail price and in turn boosting sales. He added that the price sensitivity of the Yemeni consumers allows companies to manipulate the prices in order to gain market share, a strategy deemed more effective than advertising.

“...There has been a change in the perception towards advertising in Yemen, from a mere expense to a strategic investment...”

“brand exposure results in improved brand recognition and in turn brand popularity”

Exposure is another important objective for marketing in Yemen, Rafiq Abdullah, a branch manager, reiterated that a company must always be at the face of the targeted audience, stating that brand exposure results in improved brand recognition and in turn brand popularity. He stated that intensified advertising and promotion will make a brand seem as the market leader, and this is a winning ticket in Yemen.

However, advertising is only one way of marketing in Yemen, as the largest portion of companies rely heavily on direct marketing activities, such as printing brochures, flyers, leaflets, and coupons. Says Yassin Ahmed, a commercial printers manager, “We have selected clients who have periodical promotion campaigns, based mainly on brochures and flyers, this method seems to be gaining popularity due to the increased demand, so I deem it to be more effective”.

Another popular medium for advertising is billboard signs and outdoor advertising, these have gained in popularity due to the fixed annual expense and the high degree of exposure to traffic. Outdoor advertising has been very successful in Yemen and has taken many forms including giant billboards, small signs on the road, cloth banners, and projected screens. The success of outdoor advertising has been driven mainly by the belief that the on-going traffic is exposed to the sign, however that theory has not been tested.

Given the fact that the largest portion of the Yemeni population reside in rural areas and do not have access to newspapers and print materials, most fast moving consumer goods manufacturers still rely on TV advertising and Radio broadcasts. The popularity of these two mediums have increased with the recent emergence of a new television channel in Yemen, Al-Sa'eda, and the ability to use local radio stations in advertising different messages to different locations. The success of this method of advertising have even started spreading to non-fast moving consumer goods to luxury items such as mobile phones, where advertising messages for the phones now specify the model specifications, the price, and the location where it could be bought from. This method in advertising also have a measureable impact which encourages business to undertake such advertising.



Marketing Specialist Raed A. Moula says that there is a fundamental change in the perception towards advertising in Yemen, from a mere expense to a strategic investment towards manipulating customers. It builds on changing what customers think they need, and in turn redirecting them towards the company's products.

Marketing Strategies in Yemen
Professor of social behavior Dr. Nabil Ali states that the Yemeni consumers

corrupt relationship between political newspapers and business enterprises, where business controls what the newspapers publishes in order to avoid having these newspapers publish on corruption of the business or maintain allegiance with the media outlet, using advertising as a way to finance it.

Thabit A. Sallam, an advertising agent in Yemen, indicated that advertising is still underdeveloped in Yemen, were corporations view it as an expen-



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Business in Brief

Al-Jabri: Yemen Telecommunications sector ready for WTO

Minister of Telecommunications Kamal Al-Jabri has stated that the telecommunications industry is completely liberalized and is governed by market competition, he also added that the legal framework has been reformed inline with WTO guidance. He also indicated that the telecommunications sector will benefit from the WTO and other international treaties especially in terms of introducing the latest information technologies to Yemen.

Ministry of Agriculture to invest in genetically modified crops

The Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation has obligated a 100 million Riyals to be invested in increasing the production and distributing of genetically modified seeds of wheat. This decision was taken in the light of the increase of 70-77 percent in yield of genetically modified wheat, as evident from a pilot experiment undertaken in Hadramout governorate. This move aims at improving Yemen's food security and reducing wheat imports.

159 million Riyals to boost fisheries in Hodieda

Director of the Fisheries Office in Hodieda governorate stated that the fisheries quality control labs and the distribution of 183 small and medium fishing boats will have a significant impact in improving the quantity and quality of fisheries produced by the governorate. The establishment of the lab and the boat give-away cost over 159 million Riyals, and will benefit over 600 fishermen directly.

Vocational Training Institutes attracts more students

The Number of students enrolling in vocational training centers in Yemen during the Academic year 2007/2008 has increased to 24,126 students,

compared to 22,166 students in the last academic year, distributed over 65 institutions. The ministry of vocational training attributes the increase to the awareness of pupils of the importance of vocational training skills, which allows for direct employment in the job market.

Illiteracy increases due to lack of funds

An official report has recently indicated that illiteracy has increased to 50 percent of the population of eight governorates in the country. The report stated that the financing gap between the needed US\$ 29 million and the actual expenditure of only US\$ 9 million has affected mainly the enrollment of the 6-14 years segment in schools, where around 40 percent of pupils in this segment 'never' been to school.

Yemen to participate in 2008 Dubai Shopping festival

Apollo Exhibitions announced that Yemen's participation at the 2008 Dubai shopping festival will be more than 'spectacular', as Yemen was awarded one of the most prominent locations within the festival venue, to display the Yemeni Cultural village. This participation is expected to increase brand awareness of Yemen as a unique and adventurous tourism destination among the festival's visitors.

Marine Research center undertakes successful fish farming experiment

The Marine Research Center located in Aden, has recently announced the success of the first shrimp farming experiment in the country. The experiment started last November, where scores of female shrimps were put in breeding pots, thereafter the infants are put in other pots where they can grow and reproduce and repeat the cycle. Ten researchers are currently working on this project with possible implications including fish farming of larger species of marine creatures.

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Armed Mujahidin Brigades revealed for first time

By: Yaniv Berman & TML Staff
The Media Line Ltd

Israeli soldiers will be killed en masse if the Israel Defense Forces launches a major invasion of the Gaza Strip is the warning issued by the Mujahidin Brigades (MB) during its first-ever on-camera interview, conducted exclusively by The Media Line.

Established approximately two years ago, the organization has taken responsibility for numerous rocket attacks against Israel. Its leader, Abu Hafis, was killed earlier this year, and since then the organization has not announced the name of his replacement for security reasons.

Though virtually unknown among Israeli intelligence experts, the organization comprises some 500 fighters, most of whom are, or were until recently, members of Fatah, TML has learned.

"We are a military organization, which finds its roots in Fatah," says MB spokesman Abu Bilal. "We adhere to a particular Islamic way of life."

In prior conversations with MB members, TML was introduced to its unique agenda. Its fighters are proud of their membership in the secular Fatah movement, but see its downfall in the Gaza Strip as a direct result of its corruption.

More so, they see the rise in Hamas' popularity as being generated from its Islamic agenda, which is considered purer and uncorrupted. The organization is therefore trying to combine the two ideologies: that of Fatah, which is secular and promotes a Palestinian national struggle, and that of Hamas, which is religious and uses Islamic terminology.

Abu Bilal describes the two ideologies: "We consider the whole of Palestine as one unit, which cannot be divided. Palestine is an Islamic endowment, which every Muslim has the obligation to liberate."

"God willing, with the powers of Allah, and through our belief in the holy book which encompasses everything... the enemy will be struck down," says one MB member.

The interviews, which were conducted in a small apartment in the Gaza Strip, took place during a small-



scale Israeli incursion into the region.

When asked how MB would react to any large-scale incursion, which many expect will occur very soon, Abu Bilal says the enemy's "massive attack will not scare us. Our people will not wait for them with roses. They can expect many surprises."

Clearly uneasy as he stands in front

of the camera for the first time, Abu Bilal, a man in his early twenties, uses well-known slogans to cover over his nervousness. One such slogan, which has been used by Hamas in the past few weeks, warns the Israeli army that Gaza will turn into its graveyard if it invades.

Talking about the recent Annapolis



conference, where Israeli and Palestinian leaders resumed negotiations for the first time in seven years, Abu Bilal is resolute.

"The enemy has never understood the language of dialogue. It does not honor agreements it signs. The resistance is the legitimate and only way to liberate this land. The rapist enemy

does not understand any language other than the language of blood," he says.

According to MB members, all its activities are self-funded. Despite its affiliation with Fatah, the organization makes it clear it does not receive any financial support from the mother movement.

Do Palestinians already have sovereignty over Eastern Jerusalem?

By: Bassem Roomie & TML Staff
The Media Line Ltd

The European Union has announced a \$2.8 million investment in eastern Jerusalem – such a small sum that it would not normally make the headlines. But this time the news was announced in the headquarters of Palestinian leader Mahmoud 'Abbas.

Israel claims sovereignty over the east of the city – something most of the international community will not recognize.

But does this investment mean the European Union is already beginning to recognize Palestinian rule in the city – de facto at least?

The Media Line reports from Ramallah and Jerusalem.

A \$2.8-million investment hardly ever makes it into daily newspapers these days, unless that money is being spent in eastern Jerusalem under the auspices of the Palestinian Authority without Israel's knowledge.

Israel captured east Jerusalem during the war of 1967 and declared the entire city its capital, while the

Palestinians claim the eastern sector as the capital of their future state.

Today, around a third of the city's residents are Arabs, who call themselves Palestinians, and live in its eastern neighborhoods. They say they lag far behind the western Jewish areas in terms of employment opportunities, infrastructure and educational services.

Representatives from the European Commission and the Palestinian Authority have agreed to an aid package from EU countries worth \$2 million in support of the development of social services and education in the eastern part of the city. All of this took place without Israeli governmental knowledge, until The Media Line informed three government ministries of the investment.

Two ministries chose not to respond to the matter at all – the Prime Minister's Office passed the buck to the Foreign Ministry, where a "decline to comment" was the order of the day.

The agreement was signed by Rafiq Al-Husseini, adviser to Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud 'Abbas and John Kjare, head of the European Commission Technical

Assistance office. The ceremony took place at 'Abbas' headquarters in Ramallah.

Praising the European Union for supporting eastern Jerusalem, Al-Husseini said the agreement was aimed at improving educational and social centers, adding the money would help bring in new job opportunities and developments for the "Palestinian residents" of the city.

"The plan includes several development projects for the city, the future capital of the incoming Palestinian state," he added.

Kjare noted that Jerusalem was one of the key issues in the final-status agreement between Palestinian and Israelis and this project was part of the EU efforts to achieve that goal.

"I want to stress here that this aid is not the first by the European Union to benefit the residents of east Jerusalem," Kjare said.

The aid is provided to underpin the EU policy regarding east Jerusalem and to halt the deteriorating socio-economic situation of the area because of what Palestinians see as the negative impacts of the construction of the separation barrier.

The money has been earmarked for: A community center in the Silwan neighborhood refurbishments in eight schools, including computer, library and classroom equipment and teacher training the creation of a technical-support mechanism based in 'Abbas' offices for monitoring and evaluating future needs in eastern Jerusalem

The contracts will be awarded by the Europeans rather than the Palestinians, with the process being managed by the European Commission.

An EU statement said the spending package was for what it called urgent needs that resulted from Israeli underinvestment in the eastern parts of the city, where more than 150,000 Arabs reside.

Residents in the eastern part of the city face lower levels of public-service provisions so that it falls below the western part in a number of development indicators, such as employment rates and income levels.

Arab residents see this as part of an "overall discrimination policy" by both the government and the municipality in every aspect of life. "Whoever decides to invest in

Jerusalem is more than welcome," says Avi Bitzur, the director general of the Israeli governmental ministry charged with Jerusalem affairs. "But it must be done via the sovereign body with responsibility for all of Jerusalem, and that is the State of Israel."

Bitzur says he is happy to sit with whoever wants to pump money into the city, as long as it is done "non-discriminatory," with similar sums being spent in the eastern and western areas.

Jerusalem's municipality recently unveiled a so-called "Marshall Plan" to revamp the long-neglected Arab neighborhoods. The \$51-m. program targets the central districts of eastern Jerusalem, aiming at strengthening the unity of the city, as Mayor Uri Lupolianski confirmed.

The plan, which still needs approval from local and regional authorities, is an attempt by the mayor to counter growing signs that Israel's leadership is willing to cede parts of the city in return for a peace deal with the Palestinians, say The Media Line analysts.

In the wake of renewed Israeli-

Palestinian peacemaking efforts, some Israeli officials have proposed ceding sovereignty of some areas of eastern Jerusalem, such as Shu'afat and Beit Hanina to the Palestinian Authority as part of a future peace deal.

Jerusalem is considered one of the main points of contention in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and one of the issues impeding efforts for the achievement of a final peace deal.

Bitzur, however, said he had no intention of protesting the EU cash injection, despite all of its political implications.

The EU said it would not invite Israel to be part of any signing ceremony for the investment because it did not recognize Israeli sovereignty over eastern Jerusalem.

But does it recognize some special management role for the Palestinian Authority over that part of the city?

"No, we don't recognize Palestinian sovereignty over East Jerusalem," a European Commission official told the Media Line.

Only one thing unites Brussels, Ramallah and Jerusalem on this issue: the verbal commitment to help the people of eastern Jerusalem.

Free magazine for children in Morocco

Since October 2007, Moroccan children have their own free magazine. The French-language Tikchbila targets children between the age of 6 and 12. With a circulation of 5000, this bimonthly is distributed exclusively in Casablanca, the economic capital of the kingdom. Tikchbila is paid for entirely by advertising revenue. Arab Press Network interviewed Oukacha...

Fatima-Zahra Oukacha, founder and editor-in-chief of Tikchbila, is a business management graduate who worked at Procter&Gamble and Kraft Foods before launching the magazine.

APN: How did you come up with the idea to create a free magazine for children?

Fatima-Zahra Oukacha: The idea came to me in September 2006, during a weekend when I was babysitting my nieces. I wanted to keep them busy, and to my great surprise, I found there were no Moroccan magazines for children! That was when I decided to create one that would be 100% inspired by Moroccan kids, their desires and their needs. The idea became a concept, then the concept turned into a business plan and then a magazine. I wanted it to be free so that it would be read by as many children as possible. This free access of course requires a high volume of advertising. In average the ads make up for 3 pages out of a total of 36 pages per



Fatima-Zahra Oukacha

issue. We distribute Tikchbila at the end of the school day in about forty schools, and it is available in various shops, as well as arts and sports centres.

APN: How has the magazine been received by the readers?

FZO: The children are thrilled. The response has been great, not only to the magazine, but also to the website (http://www.tikch.com) and especially to the concept of the special Tikch Universe we have created around the publication. The children are happy to have their own world and to be able to participate in creating the content of the magazine. In our second issue, the columns Miams (recipes) and l'Intello (book column) are written entirely by young readers. We asked another young reader to write the dialogue for our cartoons. The CyberTikch column is filled with jokes and riddles posted by the readers. Lastly, the two columns

Careers and It's Stylish It's Cool It's Tikch have been developed through weekend workshops with our readers. The number of visits to our site, over 3000 unique visitors per month, exceeds our expectations and offer the best proof that children like our magazine.

APN: And the advertisers?

FZO: We have succeeded in attracting many of them, with some supporting us from the very first issue. The budget for 2008 is currently being finalized and we are crossing our fingers that Tikchbila will get its share of next year's advertising budgets.

APN: What challenges have you faced?

FZO: The first challenge was to fully understand what children enjoy. We had to meet with dozens of kids, chat with them, prepare the design and remain open to comments. After that had been done, the real challenge began: to continue to interest our readers by bringing something new to each issue of the magazine, such as improved quality, new ideas, new concepts. In order to develop customer loyalty in children, satisfying them is not enough, you have to impress them. And that is our everyday challenge.

APN: Lastly, what have been the pleasant surprises?

FZO: The best surprise has been the mothers who have offered to become



Tikch Seniors. The idea emerged during a workshop we organized for our readers in November. And since we usually try out all the suggestions we get, we

tested the feasibility of engaging the parents. We took a poll, which revealed that over half of the parents read Tikchbila. Consequently, we have start-

ed to look into the best way of meeting their expectations. We might offer them a supplement, but the concept has yet to be defined.

Eid's traditions in decline

By: **Abdulkreem Al-Aawage**
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There were many funny and joyful traditions; some were preceding Holy Eids' days and some during the celebration. For example, on the eve of Eid, people in villages and some towns used to start bonfires on their rooftops. Young boys and youths went an extra step as they collected wood to burn on hilltops. The firelights around the village created an atmosphere of celebration and joy.

Creating the bonfires was also a matter of competition between youth. Some used wood and dry grass and mixed it with gasoline and lit them on the edges of the house

roofs in an attractive design. This way was called (Hishal) which was one style of showing joy for the coming Eid.

The second way was creating the shaping (Jamal Al-Bahry)- the sea camel. They created a module from cloths and wood, and had two men carry it on their shoulders. The men represented the legs of the camel. This custom was practiced during the Eid day itself. There would be a third man to lead the camel posing as the farmer while singing some traditional songs known as (Maghrad).

Also there is the "Al-Muajib", the jester, who attracts all eyes and attention of the people during the celebration of Eids' Days. He was the main character and the most

popular among boys, and girls, children and old people. He would be traveling from one village to the other, and each village people would anticipate his arrival in order to laugh at his jokes and moves. This was like the clown in western culture and in some Chinese traditions. The Yemeni jester would be wearing real goat horns and scalp and sometimes wear and artificial scary mask. His role was the highlight of Eid celebration because he would be deciding the program of the Eid celebrations during the Eid days. He also is given the authority to punish people who did not give their Audhia (animal sacrifice) according to the Islamic descriptions. He would punish them by tie them onto a long wood and have two men carry each

person amidst the laughter of the attendees at the celebration square.

The fourth tradition that was practiced during Eids' days especially among the children was Al-Madrasah, which was a simple swing created by typing ropes to a tree and men and boys would ride them while singing beautiful songs.

In fact, in Eid days you only see and watch joy, happiness and laughs on all faces old or young.

However, now most of these traditions have disappeared because of TV, satellite channels and the others distractions. But also poverty has made people less happier and less enthusiastic about celebrating Eid. It has stolen the smiles from the parents' lips and the laughs from the children mouths.

Through The Mind's Eye



By: **Maged Thabet Al-kholidy**
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Time units as parts of one's life

By: **Al-kholidy, Maged Thabet**
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Time passes. It never comes back. Too soon, the present becomes past and the future present. This is not a philosophy but a reality that everybody feels. The problem lies in what to do with this realization and how to use every minute in ones life.

It may seem that I am not saying anything new, nevertheless, this is to remind every one of us of how unknowingly time robes us our youth. Ironically we seem to notice, only a little too late.

When a year has passed, we realize that it will never come back. It is only when we celebrate a birthday, or a new year that we realize we lost something, we lost years of our lives.

We grieve for a while then we go back to our daily routine of wasting our precious time. Worse still, when we realize that time is robbing us of our opportunities, we do not take any procedure to save ourselves. By this, I do not mean to stop time or to keep try and live forever, but I mean to use every second doing something good for ourselves that would help us in this life and the ever after.

Almost in all the languages of the world, time indicators play a crucial role as linguistic units of time. In return, we pay less attention to them as measures of our lives.

In our talk, we clearly distinguish between past, present and future tenses. We make a fuss if someone mixes them up but as the future slowly turns into past, we hardly notice or give a damn.

Let us take the matter from a more realistic viewpoint. Did any one of us observe what he has done in a particular period of time? If anyone keeps on asking himself about what he has done everyday or every week or every month and what changes may take place in our lives, what would be the answer?

Answering such a question may

make us review the time that has passed, and probably feel it has gone in vain. It will make us feel sad for that, but we will learn many things in return.

It is better to take a real case to set the idea clearer. Suppose any one of us counts what he has done for the last week. Many things might have been done. But are these things are enough to be done in such a period of time?

Since it is the first time to take it into account in this way, we may say that there was no plan for the things to cover all the time. This is the first lesson we may learn from this. For the next week we will prepare plans in which we arrange the things to be done through the coming week. Such plans will remind us of the importance of every minute in which we should do something.

At the end of the next week, we count what have been done. According to the plans, there might be something missed because of bad arrangement or any relevant reason. This time again, we are going to learn another lesson which must be taken into account in the plan of the next week.

This way, many lessons will be learnt to solve further problems we may face. At the same time, it would enable us to be aware of time as units of our life. Subsequently, we would do more and more things to save every unit of time. This is only one way we arrange plans according to that time we have. There are many other useful ways and actually it depends on the person's choice.

At last, the tone of the article may sound gloomy to some readers. I am sorry for that. My aim is for the sake of all of us to get self-satisfaction of how we spend our ages better than to regret at the end, as the proverb says 'cry over the spilt milk'.

Maged Thabet Al-kholidy is a writer from Taiz, currently doing his M.A. at English Dep, Taiz Uni. He is an ex-editor of English Journal of the University.

An absence of Manhood

By: **Fatima Kaid Al-Hottami**
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To be a woman and to be annoyed everywhere, even inside buses, and to be harassed by men to get on the bus is really difficult and harmful to a great extent. A precise example is a girl who was riding on a bus, who was eventually annoyed by a man sitting beside her. When she requested that he stop annoying her, he started addressing the other men on the bus, telling them that the girl was annoying him the whole time, and every man stood by his

side, even the bus driver. After hearing this story, I started asking myself, "What happened in our countries to cause a loss of manhood in men?"

In the past, manhood meant a sense of honor and magnanimity, which means you must do whatever you can to help and protect any weak person who is in trouble, even if that help will cost you a lot. Manhood meant considering any girl like a sister, if she is young, and like a mother if she is older. It meant having mercy on any weak person, such as old people and children. But now, most of the men understand that manhood means how you can show your power in front of others.

It means how a man can insult any person weaker than him. Nowadays men habitually annoy girls in streets, buses and even in the universities. What makes this matter worse is that when we look to these men we will come to see they are not just uneducated people, but mainly educated ones.

Comparing what has been mentioned previously about life in the prophet Mohammed's [peace be upon him] time, we will see that women were highly appreciated. And one of the best examples of manhood at that time is the example of the mother of Mu'meneen Aisha when she was found by Safoan Ibn Al-Moatel in one of the invasions.

When he saw her, he gave her his horse to ride on till they caught up with the others. He did this regardless of the consequences, which we all know. However, nowadays we see men in some places do not care whether the person in front of them is a girl or a boy; rather, they may treat boys better than girls for no other reason than that she is a girl and they are men.

In short, of course we can not generalize this point of view to all men, but since this is what is really happening in our lives, it is necessary to discuss the point and shed some light on such a serious issue.

Men's negative view of women

By: **Hanan Al-Shibami**
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Society has both positive and negative concepts. Some negative concepts have changed over time, but others still stick in our minds and it's difficult to change them. One such concept is the negative view of men toward women, a concept that has remained unchanged since Allah created Adam. So, let's look at the mind of men to see how they view women.

Not all, but some men consider women a commodity to be bought and sold, while others view them like a piece of furniture to be

changed whenever they want. Still others consider women toys to play with until they get bored and then throw them away.

Some men believe women are less than men in religion and mind, according to the Prophet Mohammed's sayings; however, they've misunderstand the Hadith, simply interpreting it as they want. As an example of this, one husband stated, "I never take my wife's opinion on anything because she's less than me in both mind and religion."

Some Yemeni villages have additional negative concepts, such as considering a woman's name shameful and feeling embarrassed when anyone knows wives' and/or

sisters' names. Some men go so far as to even dislike accompanying their wife or sisters anywhere because they don't want anyone seeing them together, as if such family relatives bring shame to the man.

Another negative concept of some men involves those women who request their help on the job - or anywhere, for that matter - because men immediately think badly of such women. Unfortunately, some men don't think of women as people with minds, but rather as movable dolls. Although we're now living in the 21st century, we still have these concepts.

Men actually don't need to blame

women for listening to what's called "women's liberation" in the West, whereupon women seek any way possible to be equal with men and care about such things as fashion and makeup.

Do you know why? Because they don't find themselves living in this type of society, losing their self-confidence and searching for anything to feel that they exist in this world, even following after silly things.

To conclude, women aren't asking to be equal to men; rather, they want to be respected as human beings with both rights and duties. They have the ability to do great things; they simply seek the chance to do so.

Who is the friend?!

By: **Yousra Ali Alhamzi**
Sana'a University student
Third level

They are friends. Say nothing about them. Get out. Don't come here again. You aren't my friend anymore." These were Ali's last words in a quarrel with his friend Mohammed.

Ali did not know that he was in danger when taking that group for his friends, and he made a big error with his close friend when he punished him and said those words to him in that way.

Six months later, Mohammed learned that Ali was in prison, accused of drug dealing. He was in bad health. At that time Mohammed started to find a lot of information about his friend, Ali, and what had happened to him.

"Good morning Mr. Ali. I am your lawyer; my name is Yasser. This is doctor Salem. He came here to cure you," Yasser said when he came to the prison to meet Ali. "Oh...but... who sent you here for me? ...I..." Mr. Ali asked the lawyer. "Now is not a suit-

able time to answer your question. The important thing is that you tell me about everything that happened to you and your friends and to do what the doctor orders you. Your health comes first, then we will know what we have to do in your case," Yasser answered Ali.

All the time Ali was asking and thinking about the person who was helping him. Yasser always answered him the same way: "If you become free, I will tell you who supports you, because this is his only condition."

The next month, Yasser was able to prove Ali's innocence. Ali became a reformed man. The night of his release, the lawyer gave Ali a letter from the person who did everything for him without asking for anything in return.

Ali took the letter quickly and read it. Then the letter fell from his hand. He hung his head and covered his face with his hands, crying. "What was written in the letter?" Yasser asked. Ali couldn't answer. He was repeating these words: "This is my fault...this is my fault..." The lawyer took the letter; only one sentence was written upon it. It was: "A friend in need is a friend indeed... Mohammed."

Losing the Path

By: **Abeer Ali Al-Radai**
Sana'a University

One day, as I walked on time to the train,
I found a child,
A small child, but one in big pain,
So I called on time.
I called on life and I called on the dawn.
I called on childhood, which lives on constraint.
Suddenly, I heard a beautiful whisper.
A child's whisper cuts through time.
"Abeer, stop calling. Stop your grief.
I'm just a child. Everything has died inside
Before the judiciary and before destiny."
Oh, from the irony,
I answered him, "Stop, my child,
You should be ready for a new day."
"But how? My agony has become like a thousand doors
With no possible getaway through any of them."
So I called to humanity,
"Stop injustice, which may kill
Every nice tune and
Every heart's distress from long suffering."
"Abeer, stop calling.
You won't find anyone listening.
You won't get anyone's attention,
So Abeer, stop calling. Stop hoping."

Creation Concerto

By: **Fuad Noman**
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In the wake of time's shadow,
A marvel of symphony
Behind my wooden window.
The unique white-vented euphony
Enticed the strength of my mind
And drove my fortified spirit
To hover over the legend of time.
Staring at the tremendous rainbow
In the night sky, a bright glow;
Aurora Australis,
Aurora Australis
Came into view.
Sui generic,
Rara avis,
A lone peripatetic bird
Amid an unclouded orchard.
Set thyself, thou
On the beloved's bough,
Playing her best Creation Concerto.
In a friendly way, I hailed,
Hello, hello!
Whilst breathing in and out
An oceanic whine
In a gentle show,
Redoing the mirror of the Peace
Motto.

Love and peace reside behind
Heaven's meadow
Before her exodus to whence she
came
Still to carry Freedom's Song.
So suddenly
Chirped an amazing canto
From the reign of Zeus;
Actus reus,
Adsum, adsum.
Never be absum.
Cura te ipsum.
Si vis pacem para bellum.
Compos mentis,
Still custos morum,
Silentium est aureum.
What a harmonious performance!
Thy joy's influence,
For all time,
I enjoy
To my heart's home.
Only you are flying free,
Having the right of entrée,
Because you tell no lie,
Embracing all humans' secret.
Even so, your endurance is up a
tree!
Thou art Solomon's hero.
Thou art only my alter ego.

Only I hold hope's flame,
Time after time,
In life's cages.
I remember the time we spent,
With the trace of dawn and sunset,
In the grapevine's soul.
Deep sighs and sighs
Under her eyes' shade.
Love's charm owns a healthy taste.
Just once, it starts by a divine date,
Even if it is somewhere
Jailed or veiled.
Love comes without law.
Since the star's dream missed
The inevitable fate, the right way,
Time flees like a shadow.
The unique flits of heart
Are still in rhyme!
By all my own,
She knows my means of access
Faithfully.
No way to hidden hatred
When I've begged to view her beats,
She did not hesitate,
Freely offering a neat heart
On a golden plate.
Thou art such an exquisite bird.
I'm immensely grateful for
Your superior verse that I heard.

كلمة

مؤسسة يمن تايمز للصحافة والطباعة والنشر والتوزيع والإعلان
تتمنى لكم عيد أضحى مبارك

YEMEN TIMES

كلمة

الجديد، ٨ غرف، ٤ حمامات، من خمس غرف وثلاث حمامات مع حوش كبير. الإيجار الشهري ٦٠٠ دولار. للتواصل: ٧١١١١٠٨٢٣ • للإيجار: منزل دور أرضي مكون

DHL: 441099/87/6
ARAMEX أرامكس صنعاء ت: ٤٤١٠٢٤/٥
عدن ت: ٢٤٢١٢٤/٥ فون ت: ٢١٢٤٨٩
المكلا ت: ٢١٩١٠٠/٥ الحديدة ت: ٢١٩٦٤٢

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السيم للشحن والتوصيل ت: ٤٠٧٩٠٥
ولد لينك ت: ١٠٤٤٤٥٠٠٤٤١٩٣٥

مستشفيات

مستشفى الثورة ت: ٠١-٢٤٢٦٦٦-٦٦
المستشفى الجمهوري ت: ٠١-٢٤٢٨٦٨/٧
مستشفى سدة الأهلي ت: ٠١-٤١٣٨٩١
المستشفى الألماني الحديث ت: ٠١-٦٠٠٠٠٠/٦-٢٠٠٠٠٠
فون: ٤١٨١١١١
E-mail: felixpene@hotmail.com

فنادق

فندق فرساي ت: ٠١-٤٢٥٧٧-١/٢
فندق شيراتون ت: ٠١-٢٣٧٥٠٠
فندق موفيميك ت: ٠١-٥٤٦٦٦٦
فندق تاج سبأ ت: ٠١-٢٣٣٧٣٧
فندق ريلكس ان ت: ٠١-٤٤٤٨٧١
فندق وأجنحة الخليج السياحي ت: ٠١-٦٠٣٥٥٠ - ٦٠٣٥١٥/٨

معاهد

معهد يالي ت: ٤٤٨-٣٧-٢٧ فون: ٤٤٥٤٢ ٣/٤-٤٤٨-٣٩
معهد اللغة الألمانية ت: ٢٠٩٤٥
المعهد البريطاني للغات والكمبيوتر ت: ٢٦٦٢٢٢
فون: ٥١٤٧٥٥

معهد كاروكوس ت: ٥٢٢٤٣٤/٥ فون: ٥٢٢٤٣٦
معهد ليك ت: ٢٤٠٨٣٣-٢٤٠٨٣٣-٥١٠٦١٢ فون: ٢٦٥٥٧٧

شركات للتأمين

الوظيفة للتأمين ت: ٢٧٢٧١٣/٧٢٧٧٧٣ فون: ٢٧٢٩٤٤
مأرب للتأمين صنعاء ت: ٢٠٦١٢٩/٨١٣
الشركة اليمنية الإسلامية للتأمين وإعادة التأمين صنعاء ت: ٢٨٤١٩٣
عدن ت: ٢٤٤٨٠
فون ت: ٢٥٨٨١١

شركة اليمن للتأمين صنعاء ت: ٢٧٢٧١٣/٧٢٧٧٧٣
عدن ت: ٢٤٧١١٧
فون ت: ٢٥٠٣٤٥

مدارس

مدرسة رينبو ت: ٤١٤٠٠٣٧/٤٢٤-٤٢٣
مدارس صنعاء الدولية ت: ٣٧-١٩١٧/٢ فون: ٣٧-١٩٣٣
مدرسة الزكية الدولية ت: ٤٤٨٢٥٨/٩
مدرسة المجاهد اليمنية ت: ٢٠٦١٥٩

سفرات

السيم للسفرات ت: ٢٧٠٧٥٠
العالمية للسفرات والسياحة ت: ٤٤١١٥٨٩/٦٠

مطاعم

مطعم ومخبزة الشيباني (باسم محمد عبده الشيباني)
تلفون: ٢٦٦٦٧٥ - ٥٠٢٩٠ - فاكس: ٢٦٦٦٦٩

الانظمة

IMPORTANT Numbers

للإشتراك في هذه المساحة الإتصال على
تحويلة ٢١١ ٣٦٨٦٦١

طوارئ الكهرباء ١٧٧، طوارئ الشرطة ١٩٩،
الإطفاء ١٩١، طوارئ المياه ١٧١،
الاستعلامات ١١٨، حوادث (المرور) ١٩٤،
الشؤون الخارجية ٢٠٢٥٤٤/٧، الشؤون الداخلية ٢٥٢٧-١/٧، الهجرة
٢٥٠٧١١/٢، وزارة المواصلات (تلفون) ٥٢٢٢٢٠٢،
الإذاعة ٢٨٢٠٦٦، التلفزيون ٣٣٢٠٠١/٢،
مؤسسة الباصات للنقل داخل المدن ٢٦٢١١١/٢،
وزارة المواصلات ٢٥٢١١٠/١/٢، السياحة ٢٥٤٠٢٢،
الصليب الأحمر ٢٠٢٢١٢/٢، تليم ٧٥٢٢٢٢٧

البنوك

بنك اليمن والخليج فون: ٢٦٠٨٢٤، ت: ١-٢٦-٩٦٧-١
فرع عدن ت: ٢٢٧٨٩٩ - ٢ - ٢٢٧٨٩٩ فون: ٢٢٧٨٢٤
البنك التجاري ت: ٢٧٢٢٤ فون: ٢٧٢٢٤
مصرف اليمن البحرين الشامل ت: ٢٦٤٧٥٠٢٤٧٠٢
فون: ٢٦٤٧٠٢٠٢٣٥٠٢٣٥٠

بنك اليمن الدولي ت: ٠١-٤٧٠٢٠٠
البنك العربي ت: ٠١-٢٧٥٥٥/٢
بنك التسليف الزراعي ت: ٠١-٥٢٣٨١٣
البنك المركزي ت: ٠١-٢٧٤٣٤

تأجير سيارات

زأويه (Budget) ت: ٢٠٦١٨٠٥٠٦٣٧٢ فون: ٢٤٠٩٥٨
يورب كار ت: ٢٧-٧٥١ فون: ٢٧-٨٠٤
هيرتز لتأجير السيارات صنعاء ت: ٠١-٤٤٠٢٠٩
فرع شيراتون ت: ٥٥٥٨٥٥
عدن ت: ٢٠٢٤٥١٢٥

مراكز تدريب وتعليم الكمبيوتر

أنيك لتعليم الكمبيوتر (تركيز على الانترنت، مناهج، تجارة إلكترونية)
شهادة ايزو ١.

صنعاء ت: ٠١-٤٢٨٢٠٥
فاكس: ٠١-٤٠٧٤١٩
عدن ت: ٢٠٠٢٣٧١٩٩
فون ت: ٤٠٢٥-٢٤٣
المكلا ت: ٥٠٢٠٢٧٤٢

Infinit Education T: 444553
ت: ٤٤٥٥١٨/٧-٤٤٢٠٧٣ NIIT لتعليم الكمبيوتر

البريد السريع

صنعاء ت: ٤٤٠١٧٠/٧٧
الحديدة ت: ٢٤٨٢٣
إب ت: ٤١١٨٨٨
المكلا ت: ٣٠٢٤٤١
شبه ت: ٢٠٢٣٦٦
سيئون ت: ٤٠٢٤٢٩

مطعم ومخبزة الشيباني
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فاكس: ٢٦٧٦١٩
ص.ب: ٥٤٦٥
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Haddah st. in front of Al- Komaim Center
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P.O Box: 5465

النظام المحاسبي يبحث عن عمل مناسب
الامتكا مل (يمن سوفت)
للتواصل: ٧٧٧٢٢٣٩٨٢ - ٧٧٧١٩٩١٦٤

عبدالله النعماني - بكالوريوس محاسبة ومراجعة بتقدير جيد جدا - خبرة في مجال الحسابات والمراجعة والرقابة الداخلية - يجيد اللغة الإنجليزية كتابة ونطقا - يجيد استخدام الحاسب الآلي والمراسلة على الإنترنت. يرغب في العمل كمدير مالي أو مدير رقابة.
للتواصل: ٧٢٣٧٤٣٧٢٩

عبدالله محمد - دبلوم عالي (برمجة حاسوب) - حاصل على شهادة خبرة في مجال تدريس البرامج التطبيقية - يجيد اللغة الإنجليزية - يرغب في العمل في مجال الكمبيوتر أو في أي مجال مناسب
للتواصل: ٧٣٣٢٠١٩٣٣

شوقي أمين أحمد - ثانوية عامه - سنة ثالثة تجارة (قسم محاسبة) - دبلوم سكرتارية كمبيوتر - يرغب في أي عمل مناسب في صنعاء.
للتواصل: ٧١١١٨٢٣٢٢

يوسف علي - بكالوريوس محاسبة (جامعة تعز) - معرفة في

صدام أحمد العامري - بكالوريوس لغة انجليزية - يجيد التعامل بالمراسلات الخارجية والتجارية - يريد العمل في هذا المجال أو اعطاء دروس خصوصية في الفتره المسائية.
للتواصل: ٧٧١٦٠٧١٤٠

عبد المجيد - ثانوية عامه - دبلوم لغة انجليزية وكمبيوتر - حاصل على رخصة قيادة - يجيد التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية بطلاقة - يرغب في العمل في مجال السياحه.
للتواصل: ٧٧٧٣٦٤٧٥٨

عبدالله قايده - بكالوريوس هندسة حاسوب - يجيد اللغة الإنجليزية - يرغب في العمل في مجال الكمبيوتر.
للتواصل: ٧١٢٢٨٠٥٢٤٢

تامر سعيد ثابت - ليسانس آداب قسم لغة انجليزية - خبرة عالية في مجال الكمبيوتر - يجيد اللغة الإنجليزية إجادة تامه.
للتواصل: ٧١٢٢٨٢٥٤١

سيارات

مكتب أحمد محسن المرسي
للخدمات العقارية
حده - الحي السياسي - الأضحي - بيت بوس
سيار: ٧٣٣٨٠٢٨٥٥

* للبيع: دورين وبدروم عظم، جديد، حي الوزير، بيت بوس. مساحة الأرضية حوالي ١١٠٥ لينة حر. على شارع ١٢ متر. تصميم رائع جداً، حجر جرانيت دائره، بناء شخصي، مبني على حوالي ٥ لبن. شطب على نوك. فرصة نادرة * دور واحد في المدينة السكنية، حده، مساحة الأرضية ٨ لبن حر، الإتجاه شرقيه. سعر البيع ٢٣ مليون ريال.
* فيلا دورين وبدروم، جديد عمر سنتين، مساحة الأرضية ١٥ لينة، حر، حده، سعر البيع ٦٠٠٠٠٠٠ ألف دولار.
* أرضية حر، حده، ١٢ لينة، سعر اللبنة ثلاثة مليون ومائتين ألف ريال * فيلا دورين مسلح، شارعين، مساحة الأرضية حوالي ١١ لينة حر، حده، المدينة السكنية، ٦٥ مليون ريال
* للإيجار: فيلا مستقلة، المدينة السكنية، حده، مفروشه بالكامل * غرف نوم وحمامين. الإيجار الشهري ٧٠٠ دولار.

باحثون عن وظيفة

بكالوريوس محاسبة - جامعة صنعاء - دبلوم سكرتارية كمبيوتر النظام المحاسبي من (يمن سوفت) الإصدار السادس - خبرة في مجال المبيعات والحسابات.
للتواصل: ٧٣٣٦٦٧٠٣٥

بكالوريوس علوم وهندسة الحاسوب - خبرة في مجال الكمبيوتر والإنترنت - خبرة في مجال برمجة وصيانة الحاسوب - خبرة في مجال مبيعات وبرمجة التلفون السيار - يرغب في العمل في مجال تخصصه.
للتواصل: ٧٧١٨١٨٤٢٠ أو ٧٧٧٢٢٤١١٥

فهد علي السقاف - بكالوريوس لغة انجليزية - دبلوم صيانة كمبيوتر - دبلوم برامج تطبيقية في الحاسوب - دورة في مبادئ المحاسبة - يرغب في أي عمل مناسب في صنعاء.
للتواصل: ٧١١١٨٢٣٢٢

يوسف علي - بكالوريوس محاسبة (جامعة تعز) - معرفة في

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The Old City of Sana'a: Matchless beauty

By: Ismail Al-Ghabri

History and literature books always mention the Old City of Sana'a, which is the central attraction for both foreigners and locals. I still remember when I met a foreigner on the roof of one of the area's homes. In discussing its history, a question occurred to me. "Why do you like this particular area, although you come from a huge and very modern city?" I asked him.

The visitor's answer contained a splendid description. He said, "The

Old City of Sana'a reminds me of the fictional tales. Its houses, walls and decorations appear as if they were made of chocolate bars and cream." The foreigner - whose name I can't remember - dwelt on the description of the area, which he truly loved.

I felt proud of the city, whose beauty is represented in its architecture, buildings, walls and streets that embrace love and warmth for visitors. This beauty originally belongs to Sana'ani society, which possesses its own exclusive traditions and customs.

In ancient times, successive rulers governed the Old City area, all attempting to organize its social life by issuing various laws and regulations. For example, they issued laws regulating sales and trade within its markets and other laws regarding the area's cleanliness. Thanks to the forefathers who lived within the Old City and had a sense of beauty to decorate their homes inside and out, they set an example of a modern civil society by adhering to cleanliness and tidiness.

Cleanliness within the Old City area grew out of both Islamic teaching, as well as the social customs and behaviors of its local residents and has become a peculiarity among citizens living there. Sana'a Commercial Law I and II issued during the reign of Imam Al-



Green areas are widespread within the Old City area and many gardens can be seen throughout. Photo by Fadhl Al-Amdi



Decoration is one of the forms of beauty within the Old City of Sana'a and is found on nearly all of its buildings. Photo by Fadhl Al-Amdi

Mansour and his son regulated buying and selling in the Old City, as well as cleanliness. Additionally, municipal workers were assigned to keep the area clean, particularly the markets and stores, and residents were asked to keep the areas around their homes clean and tidy.

This cleanliness took different forms. Remarkably, sanitation was present throughout the area as public

bathrooms were established in several areas. Designated cleaners then would carry such bathroom waste to areas outside the Old City via carriages driven by donkeys.

Decoration

Decoration is one of the forms of beauty within the Old City of Sana'a and is found on nearly all of its buildings. Such decorations include lettering

from ancient languages and other Islamic calligraphy, as well as verses from the Qur'an and sayings of the Prophet Mohammed (pbuh).

Green areas are widespread within the Old City area and many gardens can be seen throughout. Representing another form of the area's beauty, they are considered good places for local residents to spend their time.

Recent studies suggest that orchards

and gardens cover more than a third of the Old City area. Previously, every mosque was connected to an orchard and most of the palaces owned by emirs and other leaders in ancient times had very beautiful gardens.

Additionally, the city of Sana'a itself was surrounded by agricultural lands famous for producing grapes, from which wine was made in pre-Islamic times.

Odd News

UFO debate invades politicians' space

TOKYO (Reuters) — A debate over flying saucers has kept Japanese politicians occupied for much of this week, ensnaring top officials and drawing a promise from the defense minister to send out the army if Godzilla goes on a rampage.

"There are debates over what makes UFOs fly, but it would be difficult to say it's an encroachment of air space," Defense Minister Shigeru Ishiba told a news conference Thursday.

"If Godzilla were to show up, it would be

a dispatch for disaster relief."

His remarks came after the top government spokesman was asked Tuesday about an opposition politician's demand that the government confirm the existence of unidentified flying objects.

"Personally, I definitely believe they exist," chief cabinet secretary Nobutaka Machimura said, drawing laughter from reporters.

Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda took a more guarded stance later in the day, say-

ing he has yet to confirm their existence.

The debate started Tuesday when the cabinet issued a statement in response to the opposition lawmaker's question, saying it could not confirm any cases of UFO sightings.

Not all lawmakers are enthralled.

"Give me a break," ruling party lawmaker Toshihiro Nikai was quoted as saying by the Yomiuri newspaper. "There are many (other) things politics has to respond to."

Funeral director charged with ashes fraud

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (Reuters) — A former funeral home owner has been charged with fraud for allegedly giving families cremated ashes that were not the remains of their loved ones, Canadian police said on Wednesday.

Police began investigating a defunct funeral home in Princeton, British Columbia, in 2006 after receiving complaints from families in the small town, who said they believed they had received — and in some cases buried — the wrong cremated remains.

The families discovered the problem when contacted by another funeral home

that had received 56 urns of cremated human remains from the Princeton-Similkameen Funeral Services after it shut down in 2005 for operating without a license.

The urns were labeled as being unclaimed by the families who had paid for cremations and thought they already had the ashes. Police spent 19 months investigating the case and determining which remains went to which family.

The former funeral home's owner has been charged with 34 counts of fraud, and two counts each of neglect of duty and "offering an indignity" to human remains, the Royal Canadian Mounted

Police said. Most of the 56 urns have been reunited with the proper families, but some still remain unclaimed.

"We don't know if that's because there aren't any family members around any more to claim them or what," said RCMP Constable Julie Rattee. "It's a tragic case."

100 arrested for not having toilets

KAMPALA (Reuters) - Local authorities have arrested at least 100 Ugandans for failing to build toilets in their homes in the midst of a cholera epidemic that has killed 8 people and infected 164, state media reported Wednesday.

"We cannot watch as people die (of cholera)," northwestern Bulisa district administrator Norbert Turyahikayo told the New Vision daily, justifying the arrest of Ugandans found to have huts with no pit latrines Tuesday.

Police spokesman Hassan Kasinje told Reuters the building of homes without proper toilets was forbidden in Uganda, though he did not know of the arrests.

"It is illegal ... but it is not an arrestable offence. Whoever arrested them is wrong," he said. "A health officer is supposed to instruct them to build or they can be cautioned."

In September, 70 Ugandans in the east were seized for the same offence. Many in remote villages lack latrines. Cholera epidemics spread by poor sanitation are common.

Cards from heaven have dead man talking

ASHLAND, Ore. (AP) — Even in death, Chet Fitch is a card. Fitch, known for his sense of humor, died in October at age 88 but gave his friends and family a start recently: Christmas cards, 34 of them, began arriving — written in his hand with a return address of "Heaven."

The greeting read: "I asked Big Guy if I could sneak back and send some cards. At first he said no; but at my insistence he finally said, 'Oh well, what the heaven, go ahead but don't tarry' there." Wish I could tell you about things here but words cannot explain.

"Better get back as Big Guy said he stretched a point to let me in the first time, so I had better not press my luck. I'll probably be seeing you (some sooner than you think). Wishing you a very

Merry Christmas. Chet Fitch" A friend for nearly 25 years, Debbie Hansen Bernard said, "All I could think was, 'You little stinker.'"

"It was amazing," she said. "Just so Chet, always wanting to get the last laugh."

The mailing was a joke Fitch worked on for two decades with his barber, Patty Dean, 57. She told the Ashland Daily Tidings this week that he kept updating the mailing list and giving her extra money when postal rates went up. This fall, she said, Fitch looked up to her from the chair.

"You must be getting tired of waiting to mail those cards," he told her. "I think you'll probably be able to mail them this year." He died a week later.

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