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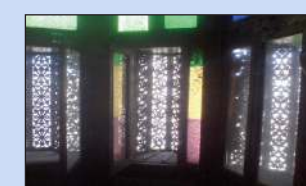
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Dozens killed, homes destroyed in ongoing Sa'ada clashes

By: Mohammed Bin Sallam

SA'ADA, Jan. 27 — Bloody confrontations started weeks ago between the army and Houthi supporters continue to occur, leaving 70 dead and dozens injured on both sides, and destroying citizens' homes and other property, tribal sources from Sa'ada governorate said.

According to a media source, the fighting between government troops and Houthis have escalated and become more vicious in January, specifically in the Haidan district, the main stronghold of Houthis, where the army increased its attacks with heavy weapons and tanks against the Juma'a Bin Fadel area and other nearby villages in an attempt to regain a strategic position controlled by Houthis since Thursday.

The same source noted the government troops were forced to withdraw from three positions near Dhehyan city, north of the governorate's provincial capital, and the nearby Suq Al-Talh last week as a result of Houthis' sudden guerrilla wars.

"By intensifying their siege and attacks on the military troops in various military positions, the Houthis attempt to control their heavy weapons and ammunition, plus the new positions from which the government pulled out its troops during the second half of last year, according to the Qatari Mediation Committee's demand," the source added. "The army was already evicted from numerous positions in the Haidan's Wald Nawar area after it suffered heavy losses, with many soldiers killed or injured."

One of the relatives of Houthis' leader Abdulmalik Al-Houthi accused the military forces of concentrating their attacks on Juma'a Bani Fadel with different types of weapons, adding

that their assaults targeted citizens' cattle. He continued that most of the Saphia residents evacuated their homes due to continual military strikes against them.

Abdulmalik Al-Houthi warned the government that a fifth outbreak in the war-torn governorate will have negative consequences on the country's army and economy, urging the government to prefer dialogue and give the national interest precedence over the interests of war traders and blood shedders.

Fierce confrontations between government troops and Houthis broke out in various Sa'ada areas over the past few weeks, indicating that a fifth war may erupt, particularly as repeated local and Arab mediation efforts over the past four years failed to resolve the crisis.

According to official sources, military and security detachments deployed in different Sa'ada areas were exposed to more than 80 assaults and ambushes by Houthis recently, claiming 70 lives and injuring dozens from both sides.

Other tribal sources reported that Houthis became stronger and better prepared for launching guerrilla wars against military and security soldiers during the most recent truce, which enabled them to reorganize themselves, stockpile supplies and ammunition, dig trenches and obtain different types of arms and explosives. The truce also helped them carry out strong offensives against military troops in several areas.

Local media reported that an army fighter jet was obliged to land near the Haidan district after it was hit by Houthis while transporting ammunition and arms to besieged troops in the area's mountains. They continued that another fighter jet of the same model was also forced to land last Thursday

with Sa'ada governor Mutahhar Rashad Al-Masri, Minister of Public Works Omar Al-Kurshimi and many local councilors on board while it was heading for the Qatari-based government complex, west of the governorate. The same sources confirmed that Al-Masri faced minor head injuries and was then transferred to the nearby hospital.

Accusations were exchanged between both sides over the reasons behind the resumption of war in the Haidan district. Some Houthis complained that the 17th Armored Detachment has been blockading the area for one year and preventing food supplies from coming to some villages believed to be loyal to Abdulmalik Al-Houthi, while military sources said that groups of armed Houthis besieged a military detachment in the area.

Some tribal leaders in the governorate attempted many times to bring the conflicting parties together and rescue citizens from repeated lockdowns. Their mediation efforts, however, failed to contain the situation after being rejected by 17th Armored Detachment Commander Abdulaziz Al-Shehari, an alleged Salafi extremist believed to be responsible for the escalating tension in the Haidan district, the Zaidis' stronghold, while other areas are free of any tension.

Members of the Presidential Mediation Committee (PMC), in negotiations with Houthis, warned that the Sa'ada security situation may worsen due to renewed armed clashes between government troops and Houthis following three months of relative quiet. They claimed that the government should help them contain the situation before it worsens.

In a statement to the media, PMC member Yaser Al-Awadhi, who is also a Parliament member, expressed that his

committee fears that armed clashes may resume. He warned that a worsening situation may cause the Doha Agreement between the government and Houthis to fail, describing the agreement as suffering "brain death" for being ineffective.

The MP urged the conflicting parties to maintain the relative quiet and stability in the governorate, pointing out that the Qatari mediation team's return to Yemen has become a must in order to help both parties abide by the agreement's terms and cease bloodshed.

On Saturday, the National Defense Council held an emergency meeting in which it discussed many heated issues in the nation, mainly the deteriorating security situation in Sa'ada. The meeting came up with a statement saying that war on terrorism is mandatory for everyone and that the military and security forces must not be lenient toward wrongdoers. "We will firmly confront those plotting to damage the nation and its unity and stability," the council reacted.

According to the statements, the council took many decisions with the aim of strengthening the defense capacities of security and military forces. "The council decided to send more troops, believed to have successfully completed the required military training, to Sa'ada to crack down on Houthi loyalists," an official source said. "The Houthis have built a mobile hospital with specialist medical staff from abroad. They also received drugs and medical equipment from Gulf states via the Empty Quarter."

The Sa'ada most recent clashes coincided with protests and sit-ins nationwide against the government's poor policies, which protestors blame for the country's ailing economy and dire situation.

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In brief

DHAMAR

Advocacy workshop for women
The Cultural Development Programs Foundation will be holding a workshop on women's rights advocacy and support in Dhamar governorate on Tuesday Jan. 29. The workshop will target 20 civil society activists from Dhamar. This is the second workshop in a series of the human rights activities the foundation is carrying out during 2008.

ADEN

YR 27.8 bln exports via Aden Seaport and Airport in 2007

Yemeni exports via Aden Port and Airport reached YR 27.8 billion in 2007 at an increase of YR 2.8 billion compared to 2006. Deputy chairman of the Aden Customers Office Hussein Ahmed stated to Saba that the exports included frozen and fresh fish, cottons, honey, coffee, vegetables, sweets, and perfumes. He made clear that the revenues of the office was YR 15.7 billion in 2007 at an increase of 5 percent compared to revenues of 2006. He attributed increase of exports to the growing navigation activity in the Aden Seaport and Airport.

Bahamas tourist ship arrives at Aden

The Bahamian cruise ship (Astor) has arrived at the Aden harbor coming from the Omani Salala port, on its aboard 550 tourists of various nationalities.

A tourist source said that tourist programs have been prepared for the tourists included visits a number of historical and tourist landmarks in Aden province, especially the Aden water container, the Sirra castle and the heritage museum in addition to visit ancient popular quarters and markets in the city. Over 240 tourists headed for Sana'a city to acquaint with its historical and tourist landmarks.

RADAA

Dutch tourists visit Radaa

A tourist source said that a group of 19 Dutch tourists arrived on Sunday the main city of al-Badha province Radaa to visit a number of historical and tourist sites in the city.

Speaking to Saba, the source said the tourists would visit many historical sites, including the historical al-Amiriya school and mosque, the Great Mosque of the Old Radaa city and the famous Ahumairih castle.

TAIZ

SAF to hold democratic forum

Sisters Arab Forum for Human Rights (SAF) in collaboration with Al-Saeed Foundation for Sciences and Culture will organize late this month a democracy forum under the title "Obstacles of Democratic Transformation and Women Political Participation". The forum aims to raise awareness on the importance of women political participation issue and ways of supporting women to reach decisions making centers.

It is worth mentioning that the activation of Taiz campaign came to support women political participation to raise their representation in the parliamentary election in 2009.

SANA'A

Yemen, IFAD discuss six joint-funded projects progress

Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation Mansour al-Hawshabi reviewed on Saturday with Assistant President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) Matthew Wyatt the implementation progress of the six projects the IFAD contributes loans of \$86 million to their total cost of \$144 million. The six projects are two rural development projects in Mahrah and Dhamar provinces, society resources development project in Dalei province, rain-fed agriculture project and rural road project.

Hashid Tribe expresses allegiance to Sadeq Al-Ahmar as new leader

By: **Sadam Al-Ashmori**
For Yemen Times

Amran, Jan 26 — The Hashid tribe declared its support for Sheikh Sadeq Abdullah Bin Hussein Al-Ahmar to replace his father Sheikh Abdullah Bin Hussein Al-Ahmar, who died of cancer one month ago, as its leader. This came during a huge popular rally, attended by tens of thousands of citizens from Amran and other Yemeni governorates, at the late sheikh's house in Amran's Khamir district.

Yemen has three major tribes, Hashid, Bakeel and Madhaj, of which the Hashid tribe is the largest.

Rally participants raised slogans backing Sheikh Sadeq Al-Ahmar and confirming tribal loyalty to him in order for Yemen's tribal community to contribute greatly to national development.

At the rally, Sheikh Al-Ahmar, who is also a Shoura council member, announced that he will follow in his father's footsteps to help fight injustice against citizens, bring them together and reinforce Islamic law, or sharia.



Sadeq Al-Ahmar during the rally.

Al-Ahmar promised to remain loyal to his tribesmen and exchange mutual trust and confidence with them. "Along with you, we will contribute to national development, stability and prosperity for the sake of helping our homeland

advance more than it did before," the tribal leader said, addressing his tribesmen at the rally. He called on all Yemeni tribes to quit revenge killings, highway robberies and wars that, according to him, create incurable

crises, weaken the national economy and destroy development.

Al-Ahmar pointed out that unity among Hashid tribesmen is what helped make their tribe strong and free. "Our tribe's unity is the front valve for Yemeni unity," he said. "We will work harder on reinforcing the sharia and enhancing noble human values."

"By God, I and my brothers will follow in the footsteps of our father and demonstrate the same behavior and commitment for serving our tribesmen, and I am confident that you will support us," the tribal sheikh went on to say. He called on Hashid tribesmen to come together and unify their lines like their fathers did in support of his father, as well as Sheikh Mujahid Abu Shawarib and other revolutionaries in the 1960s. The new Hashid tribe leader labeled fragmentation as 'a heavy loss', saying that a wolf can only attack isolated goats, and stressing the necessity of his tribesmen to come together. He told them that he will back the Palestinian cause, like his father.

Jubran Mujahid Abu Shawarib, son of late Sheikh Mujahid Abu Shawarib,

gave a speech at the event, pledging allegiance to Sheikh Sadeq Al-Ahmar as leader for the Hashid Tribe. He reaffirmed his own tribe's loyalty to and support of the new sheikh.

Parliament member Abu Hourya recollected the achievements and positions of the late Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ahmar, saying he struggled hard for the sake of fostering the country's economy and enhancing its security.

The former Parliament Speaker and "Sheikh of Sheikhs of Yemen", Sheikh Abdullah Bin Hussein al-Ahmar, passed away in King Faisal Bin Abdul Aziz hospital in Riyadh on December 29th, 2007, at age 74 after undergoing treatment for cancer and heart troubles in London and Riyadh.

Hundreds of thousands of Yemeni citizens from all parts of Yemen took part in his funeral, headed by President Ali Abdullah Saleh, Vice President Abdu Raboo Mansour Hadi, Prime Minister Ali Mohammed Mujawar and other officials, ministers, MPs, sheikhs, ambassadors, and social dignitaries on December 31, 2007, in Sana'a.

Parliament to discuss juvenile law amendments

By: **Hamed Thabet**

SANA'A, Jan 26 — A discussion about preserving children's rights in Juvenile Court will be held in the coming Parliament session in order to change Yemeni laws to better benefit children.

Dr. Afrah Badoweilan, the head of the juvenile courts system in Yemen, along with some children's rights organizations and parliament members, is trying to change how the criminal court will protect and care for juvenile offenders. After Parliament approves the changes, a parliamentary committee will take on the responsibility of amending child-specific court processes, she said.

Articles to be discussed include article 38, which specifies that a juvenile offender is a child under the age of 18, and article 37, which details that a child found guilty of any serious offense must serve a prison sentence between three to 10 years instead of execution. (Executions cannot be carried out until the child reaches the age of 18 in any case.) If a child under the age of 15 commits any crime, even one of the gravest nature, the sentence will be no longer than three years in prison.

"All children up to the age of 18 should be represented under the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court," said Badoweilan. She added that 15-year olds are currently tried in the first time offenders' court, which she feels is wrong, because Yemen's government signed a law

in 1991 to ensure that all offenders under the age of 18 are considered juveniles.

Even though the death penalty cannot legally be carried out for anyone under the age of 18, Badoweilan said that sometimes executions happen anyway, since many people do not have any proof of their age. In these cases, the judge alone must decide whether or not to believe if the defendant is under 18 or not.

"A child cannot be sent to prison for just any charge. In addition, if a child is arrested, he should be sent to a rehabilitation and protection center. We are insistent about this amendment, as a disturbed child must be well-cared for and given special treatment to solve his problems in order to make a change for the better, instead of totally destroying his life," said Badoweilan.

Badoweilan and her supporters also support amendments assuring that any person involved in endangering a child, such as forcing the child to steal, or commit other illegal activity, should have to pay a penalty of at least 20,000 YR or more, plus serve a jail term up to a maximum of three years. The children's rights supporters also think that there should be a penalty of 100,000 YR for anyone who publishes the name, photo, or court proceedings of a child.

Another amendment, article 15, says that there must be a juvenile court in every governorate. Juvenile cases will be sent to each governorate's Court of First Instance only

if that governorate's court cannot convene because it lacks enough juvenile cases.

"There are lawyers who specialize in juvenile cases. These lawyers are supported by the government and the Ministry of Justice so that they may devote their time to helping deprived children," Badoweilan said. "They also get many training courses for free, which teach them the right way to handle juvenile cases." In the past, judges in Yemen were not qualified to rule on children's cases, but Badoweilan said that there is now one specialized judge in each juvenile court in the entire governorate, with two specialized experts next to the judge.

Each juvenile court includes a judge with two social workers, one of whom must be a woman. This is an important feature, since more and more girls are being tried in juvenile court each year. Badoweilan mentioned that some girls find it difficult to talk to a male lawyer about their problems, so the presence of a woman expert is crucial to their defense.

Article 34 mandates that no legal fee can be imposed on a child for his/her case, even if the child is found guilty. In the national prison, located in Sana'a, there is a special facility for juveniles that provides services like education and health-care, and ensures that juveniles do not mix with other adult prisoners. Though many Arab countries still lack specialized juvenile court advocates, Yemen has special laws, courts and judges for children.

Scholars Encourage More Study of the Yemen-Turkey Historic Relationship

SANA'A, Jan 26 — Turkish professors from Al-Fatih, Istanbul and Marmara universities visited Yemen Wednesday and Thursday in order to participate in a conference held at University of Science and Technology in Sana'a. Both Turkish and Yemeni professors talked about Yemen-Turkey relations from a historic point of view.

Abu Bakar Al-Qorbi, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, expressed that cooperation between Yemen and Turkey isn't new, but dates back hundreds of years to Ottoman rule in Yemen. The Ottoman Empire ruled Yemen for two periods, first in 1538 to 1638, and again from 1828 to 1918.

Moreover, by giving more attention to the history and research in order to grasp the Ottoman role in Yemen, scholars and the public can better understand whether the Ottomans presence in Yemen was an occupation or merely an authority there to preserve and spread Islam, said Dawood Al-Hidabi the Vice-Chair of the board of directors of the University of Science and Technology and the chair of the science research center at the Sana'a university.

Many Arabs, but especially Yemenis, disagree about the Ottoman role in the Arabian Peninsula. Some consider the Ottomans as colonial ruler, while others feel Ottoman rule was largely in place to protect Yemen from other countries like Portugal and England.

"The Ottomans were not angels. For

sure they made some mistakes in Yemen, but in general their presence saved Yemen from the attack of other countries," said Dr. Alparslan Acikgenc, the dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science at Fatih University in Istanbul, Turkey.

The main goal of the Ottoman rule in Yemen was to make Yemen a powerful country with a strong army, said Dr. Tufan Buzpinar, the head of the history department at Fatih University. Buzpinar said that Yemeni locals took jobs in the army alongside the Ottomans and many Yemenis were promoted to officer-level jobs. Some became advisers to Ottoman ruler and others assisted judges and generals.

The Ottomans presence in Yemen had many positive economic effects and Yemen developed an extensive coffee trade under Ottoman rule, said Dr. Najat Muhammad Sa'im Khalil of Sana'a University. During the Ottoman period, the coastal town of Mocha (Al Mukh_) became a coffee port of international importance.

The conference aimed to stimulate study of Ottoman history in Yemen during the both periods of occupation. A common opinion is to think that the Ottomans occupied Yemen for their own benefits, following a policy of expansion, Professor Dr. Abd Al-Fattah El-Awaisi, Humanities and Social sciences research at the University of Science and Technology. Awaisi said there will be a conference in Turkey next year to discuss the same issue.

Latest attack on Belgians severely affects tourism in Yemen, Al-Qaeda claims responsibility

Hadamout, Jan. 26 — The secretary-general of the Yemeni Union for Hotels and general manager of the Yemeni Hotels Company, Tawfeeq al-Khamiri told the media on Saturday that the tourism sector in Yemen was severely affected by the latest terrorist attack on a Belgian tourist convoy in Hadramout's Do'an area, killing two Belgians and two Yemenis.

News Yemen website quoted Al-Khamiri that many reservations were canceled after the attack. He also criticized the official media, accusing them of "misleading people when it declined to mention any effect on tourism after the terrorist act." He stated, "Official media outlets do not give facts about the great financial losses the private sector is suffering. Revenue lost from the private tourism sector has amounted to millions of dollars."

He said his company and other tourism agencies in Yemen have discharged some employees and given some others open vacations as revenues of the tourism movement

declined. He said the state's policy towards tourism was wrong. "Official promises to support tourism and offer exemptions and facilities haven't materialized yet," he stated.

A local newspaper reported that an Al-Qaeda source announced in a telephone call that Al-Qaeda was responsible for the attack in Hadramout last Friday.

Al-Wasat weekly mentioned that the Al-Qaeda source told them the attack came in retaliation for bad and inhumane treatment of Al-Qaeda militants in political security prisons. It said that some Al-Qaeda militants are suffering from serious diseases and some have died due to mistreatment.

The source also refuted statements by security authorities that some of the attackers have been arrested. It said it is impossible for the attackers who carefully planned the attack to be captured so easily, and that the people arrested were not Al-Qaeda militants, but normal citizens who have no identification cards.

"Forum for Future" convention canceled for ambiguous reasons

SANA'A, Jan 25 — The Yemeni Government declared on Thursday that it will not hold "The Forum for the Future" in Sana'a, a convention scheduled for the end of December, 2007.

A foreign ministry spokesman said on Thursday that Yemen decided to excuse itself from hosting the fourth Forum of the Future "...because it has not received a commitment from the Group of Eight on a new date."

He indicated that a ministerial meeting concerning the forum was postponed pursuant to a request from some of the G-8 states provided it would be held at a new date to be agreed on by Yemen.

He explained that that the transition of the G-8 presidency from Germany to Japan created a new problem con-

cerning the joint presidency with Yemen. However an Agency French press AFP reporter quoted a western diplomat, who spoke on condition of anonymity, that the real reason was because of "security concerns".

The diplomat pointed out that the American administration is also unhappy with the Yemeni authorities for releasing Jamal al-Badawi, an Al-Qaeda leader in Yemen wanted by the United States for terrorism.

Badawi was sentenced to death in September 2004 for his part in the USS Cole bomb attack, which killed 17 sailors, and which was claimed by Al-Qaeda. An appeals court later altered the sentence to 15 years in jail.

In February 2006 Badawi broke out of jail with 22 other Al-Qaeda mili-

itants, but after more than a year on the run he handed himself in to the authorities in October 2007.

However many media outlets reported that Badawi was allowed to return home after making a pledge not to engage in violent or Al-Qaeda activity.

The Yemeni interior ministry denies such reports, insisting that Badawi is still in custody.

The Forum for the Future was created by US President George W. Bush in 2004 as part of his Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative, so that G-8 and regional leaders, and representatives from business and civil society, could meet to discuss reform.

The first conference was held in Morocco in 2004, then in Bahrain in 2005 and Jordan in 2006.

WHAT IT MEANS...

What it means is an analytical feature of Yemen Times, in which Yemeni topics are discussed and analyzed by Yemeni and international experts. Contributions and comments are welcomed, they could be sent to the feature's coordinator; Dr. Abdullah Al-Faqih (dralfaqih@yahoo.com).

When soldiers rally for Palestine

On Tuesday Jan. 23, 2008, Kanan for Palestine, a GONGO (semi-governmental NGO), comprising state officials, academics, and pro regime elements organized a march to protest the Israeli blockade on Gaza. The huge crowd which showed up for the rally was not surprising because Yemenis are well known as a strong enthusiast of the Palestinian just cause. What was surprising is the alleged participation of thousands of soldiers in the protest. The allegations are substantiated by the fact that Kanan is led by Yahya Mohammed Abdullah Saleh—a nephew and an in-law of President Saleh and a brigadier general of Yemen's Central Security Forces. In fact, Yahya himself headed the crowd and called, in a speech delivered to participants, on unspecified countries to "open the door for jihad and resistance" promising that "our people will join." The Tuesday incident raises some very important questions concerning the role of military in politics in general and the motives for the Tuesday showoff in particular.

Traditional role

The role of soldiers almost in every country is to fight wars, tightly control borders, hunt drug and human traffickers, and serve as a guarantor of a country's security and stability. In developed countries, the role of soldiers in politics is carefully monitored by both partisan politicians and civil society activists. It is almost unanimously believed in democratic countries that those who earn their livelihood from waging wars should never be entrusted with decisions relating to peace and war. In some developing countries, soldiers often-times serve as a source for legitimacy; he who controls the guns controls political power too.

In Yemen, the military's has playing a prominent role in politics. In the northern part of Yemen, it was the military who overthrew the Imamate in 1962.

While failing to defend the republican regime vis-à-vis tribes loyal to royalists, it nevertheless managed after the national reconciliation to consolidate a very powerful political role. In fact, four out of the five presidents who reigned in north Yemen between 1962 and 1990 came from the military. In south Yemen, the ruling single party subjugated the military to party control. But that did not mean the military stayed out of politics in the south. As the 1986 confrontations between party factions illustrate, military commanders practiced a subtle but very vital political role.

When the two Yemens merged together and formed the Republic of Yemen in May 1990, one of the institutions which were kept divided was the military because both southerners and northerners viewed their militaries as the main guarantors of their political survival. And only with a divided military the northern and southern factions in power could go to war in 1994.

Changing rules

The role of military in politics in Yemen did not change with the adoption of democracy or the occurrence of the 1994 civil war. What changed are the rules by which politics has been played in most recent years. President Saleh, who no longer wears the uniform, never doubted at any time during his long political reign that his political survival and his ability to pass Yemen's throne to his son depends completely on maintaining a strong, and loyal military. For that reason in particular, he suddenly decided in the late 1990s to withdraw his elected son Ahmed from parliament and started training him as a commander of the elite forces—the Republican Guards and of



By: Dr. Abdullah Al-Faqih

the Special Forces. In essence, Saleh has been trying over the past few years to restructure the army around his son, colonel Ahmed, and a few of Ahmed's loyalists. And one thing, which Saleh persists in doing, is to go in front of military units and starts denouncing his political opponents and inciting the military against his rivals.

Almost totally controlled by the president's brothers, clansmen, and close relatives, the army since 1994 has claimed new political roles. For one, it has become the largest employer in the country and one of the most significant channels for the distribution of patronage and as such a major recruiter of voters and political supporters. For another, the military, with its high mobility, has been used repeatedly as a manipulating mechanism to undermine opponents in various districts during parliamentary elections. Most recently, plain clothed soldiers have been used occasionally to stage huge rallies in support of the president and his ruling party.

A different Palestine

It would be a mistake for one to underestimate the tremendous support for Palestinians in the Yemeni streets. That support is enormously evident. And if that is the case one must wonder: why use soldiers if one can easily mobilize hundreds of thousands of ordinary Yemenis to rally for Palestine? The answer to the question probably lies in the current political context and in the struggle for power within the country.

Two things, in particular, are worth noting here. First, a rapidly growing fracture between different factions within the ruling elite has made mobilization a very slow and costly effort. It is also

feared, at some levels, that some politicians may seize the moment and try to make some political or financial gains. Second, on the question of Palestine, the Yemeni opposition appears to have an edge over the ruling party, and as a result, political rallies for Palestine have been used intentionally or unintentionally as a way to signal to the regime and to the population in general the strength

and popularity of the opposition. In response, the regime has tried hard to dominate this foreign policy issue using all means possible, including the mobilization of military and security soldiers.

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

Response from a reader

Dear Dr. Al-Faqih,

I read your article in the Yemen times (17 Jan., issue 1121); to be frank, I am concerned about the situation in Yemen.

Firstly, the Saleh government has to realize that things cannot continue like this; change will come whether they like it or not.

It is much better for the government to be part of that change instead of being a casualty of it. What Saleh needs to do is stop denying that there is a problem and stop blaming others for the current problem.

The government needs to know that hungry people will revolt; it is natural that when people have nothing to lose they resort to anarchy.

Southern people had behaved wonderfully considering the situation that they are in. The government must start helping the people of the south economically, that is the core of the problem. There is no need for clever Saleh speeches; what is needed is economic help. If the government tries to be too stingy in this area, it will pay dearly in the future. This economic problem will cause a civil war and consequent secession. People in the south are in dire need of economic help.

Development is not encouraged in Yemen; I know this personally. I have a great deal of experience in the fishing industry from when I worked in Norway. I tried to invest in Hadramout by establishing a world-class seafood

plant. When I received the help of a Swedish bank for a loan to buy the facility that could create jobs in the south, the banks in Yemen refused to guarantee the loan.

Factories like mine, which could have created jobs, cannot get financing, while goods imported from around the world receive bank financing; how is that useful to the people of Yemen? We are expatriates with experience, able to create jobs, and we are turned down.

Analysts and journalists should go beyond reporting incidents. They should tell the authority what needs be done and how best to do it.

The government may say we have no funds for the south, but sooner or later they will pay in cash and human lives when they plunge the country into civil war.

Southerners, on the other hand, must tell us who their leaders are. I hope they no longer follow warmongers as before. They also have to be careful of intruders in the peaceful demonstrations who foment havoc and start chaos.

If Ali Saleh doesn't pay attention in the immediate future, another Somalia is going to happen, which will destroy everything we've worked for.

This is my humble opinion, my friend; please keep up the good work and advise those arrogant, corrupt rulers.

Yemeni woman from the south monaarman@yahoo.com

Their News

Indian embassy celebrates Republic Day



Hoisting the national flag and singing the anthem was only the beginning of the Republic Day of India celebration on Saturday Jan. 26. The Indian embassy in Sana'a welcomed Indian nationals in a patriotic gathering in the morning at the embassy's premises for remembering the Republic Day.

In the evening, in a festive environment a ceremony held at the Indian embassy in Sana'a where Ambassador R. M. Aggarwal and his wife Mrs. Mamta Aggarwal received the embassy's guest on Saturday evening.

The reception was attended by a number of diplomats and members of the Indian community in Yemen, as well as friends of India. Aggarwal praised the Yemeni-Indo relations and welcomed more progress in future projects. Khaled Bahah minister of oil was present at the celebration and he also called on exploration and investment companies to start projects in Yemen. His invitation came in line with the visit of the Indian minister of oil Mr. Murli Deora to Yemen in 2007, along with six Indian oil companies. Similarly, Bahah during the oil and gas conference that was carried out in New Delhi last year, had offered India the opportunity to create the third refinery in Yemen. In the celebration he confirmed that indeed one of the Indian oil companies showed interest in the project.

International NGOs in Yemen to bid farewell to UN's Mrs. Flavia Pansieri
In order to express its appreciation for her outstanding contributions to fostering relations between all those who support the development process in Yemen, the International NGO Forum

will host Mrs. Flavia Pansieri, the outgoing UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative for a farewell function on 28th of January 2008 in Sana'a.



As Mr. Khalid Almulad, chair of the International NGO Forum and Country Director for Islamic Relief Yemen explains, Mrs. Flavia

Pansieri has played a key role in supporting the establishment of coordination mechanisms between the donor community and international NGOs in Yemen: "Thanks to Mrs. Flavia Pansieri's efforts, the coordination between international donor agencies and international NGOs in Yemen has reached new levels. This is crucial in order to improve the performance and impact of the complementary work we do here in Yemen. It is therefore our privilege and duty as International NGO forum to honour Mrs. Flavia Pansieri and express our gratitude to her as she leaves the country for a new posting".

The International NGO Forum is a group of more than 20 international non-governmental organizations working in the field of development and humanitarian support in Yemen. All member NGOs are registered with the Yemeni Government and some of them have been active in Yemen since the 1960s. The purpose of the forum, established in 2006, is to strengthen networking and coordination between the international NGOs and to eventually make an improved contribution to the development process in Yemen.

Ten Year Development Partnership Arrangement (DPA)

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Al Arhabi, and the British Ambassador Tim Torlot signed the first year of monitoring benchmarks for the 10 Year Development Partnership Arrangement (DPA) signed between Yemen and UK on 1 August 2007. The British Ambassador also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ambassador for the Royal

Netherlands Embassy, Harry Buikema. This MoU formalises for the first time in Yemen a programme of joint working between the UK and Royal Netherlands Embassy to strengthen our combined support to tackling Yemen's development challenges. The first joint programme under this MoU is Maternal and Neonatal Health



Deputy Prime Minister Al Arhabi praised the UK and Royal Netherlands Embassy for the leadership they are showing through these initiatives. He hoped other donors would follow the UK and Royal Netherlands' example to move towards longer term commitments to Yemen and joint working agreements to increase the impact of donor support to Yemen.

The Ten Year Development Partnership Arrangement (DPA) was signed by Shahid Malik, UK Minister of International Development and Deputy Prime Minister Al Arhabi on 1 August 2007. It is only the seventh Ten Year Arrangement that the UK has signed worldwide, and the first in the Middle East, evidence of how important Yemen is to the UK. Through the DPA, the UK has demonstrated its long-term commitment to reducing poverty, promoting reform and stability in Yemen. It has also strengthened the relationship between the UK and Yemen because unlike previous agreements, the DPA has commitments for both Yemen and the UK, not just Yemen, making this a true partnership. The Government of Yemen has committed to increasing progress on poverty reduction, human rights and public financial management. In turn the UK has committed to making its aid more effective in Yemen.

These commitments are set out in the benchmarks signed today. They will be discussed in the annual partnership talks, the first one to take place in September 2008, when new targets will be agreed for 2008-2009.

Employment Vacancy – HR Manager

Are you ready for the next challenge?

A rapidly expanding international company in the oil and minerals sector, based in Sana'a, has an opportunity for an experienced HR professional with a strong generalist background.

The role, based in our Sana'a office, with regular visits to the project site, involves playing a leading role in the recruitment and management of around 350 people, to be recruited over a 2 year period for a project that is the first in its field and which features a very substantial investment. The position, working closely with the Europe based GHRM, is suitable for someone with a minimum of 8 years strong generalist HR experience, ideally gained in an Oil/Telecoms/Cement/Manufacturing environment in Yemen.

With a proven background in employee management / relationships, you will have an excellent knowledge of Yemen Labour Law and will also have experience working with western companies. You will be expected to play a leading role in developing training programs, creating appropriate remuneration structures, and managing employee relations, whilst also ensuring that all relevant Labour regulations are complied with in conjunction with the GHRM and group policies.

It is a requirement that the candidate is fluent in both Arabic and English. Yemeni nationals are particularly encouraged to apply.

For further details please submit your CV including details of your current remuneration and availability to jsapplications@yahoo.com .



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More than 40 traditional Old City homes risk collapse

By: Sirajaddin Al-Aslami
For The Yemen Times

The Al-Ghaimani family's woes began Dec. 12, 2007, when the central wall of their traditional mud house, located in Samrah neighborhood in the heart of the Old City of Sana'a, suddenly collapsed.

Nineteen people, including children, were inside at the time, with debris covering one child up to his neck, but he was only slightly injured. The entire family was trapped in the rubble, as neighborhood locals and a police team hurried to the scene to save their lives.

Following their home's collapse, the family split up into three groups, with the first, a group of females, settling in a nearby Qur'anic school where staff are on vacation, but will resume work soon. A second group simply sleeps in a nearby mosque, while the third took refuge on the street.

Although no one was killed, the father, 65-year-old Mohammed, can do nothing because he doesn't work. His eldest son, 28-year-old Mansour, also doesn't work because he has artificial heart valves and the family's children simply look miserable.

Neither the neighborhood's local council nor local charities immediately assisted the Al-Ghaimani family. However, a month ago, a

group of foreign students studying Arabic at a Yemeni language institute in the same area purchased wool blankets for them for YR 18,000 (\$90). The group includes Jeff from Australia and his colleagues from Indonesia, Singapore and Korea. Additionally, they gave the family food and took the children to the park during Eid Al-Adha.

More than 40 Old City homes like this one, which are mostly made of mud and bricks, are in danger of collapse due to their age and weak internal structure.

Samrah neighborhood leader and local council member Mohammed Al-Qadhi contacted his fellow local council officials and obtained YR 1,500,000 (\$7,500) for the family, who received it Jan. 22. However, saying the amount is insufficient, Al-Qadhi has called on charitable associations and local authorities to assist the family more.

The Yemen Times contacted the Yemeni Red Crescent Association (YRCA), whose secretary-general, Elias Manei, soon visited the site. After assessing the damage, the YRCA team provided an additional 10 blankets and set up a tent, with Manei promising to seek further assistance for the family.

Additionally, the Yemen Times contacted the Charitable Society for Social Welfare, a local NGO, which also promised to visit the Al-Ghaimani

home.

In an attempted visit to the governmental General Organization for the Preservation of Historical Cities in Yemen, or GOPHCY, neither its head, his deputy or even the general manager were found; only Ali Rizq Al-Babeli, the organization's deputy head of inspections, who maintains that the organization is simply responsible for preserving the beauty of Old Sana'a, not protecting area residents' lives or properties.

"A technical team visits Old City homes three times a day, but I wasn't informed that that particular house likely would collapse," explains Al-Babeli, who holds neighborhood leaders responsible, adding that he's ready to give the Al-Ghaimani family a month of his salary.

He further alleges that the technical team's ignorance partially is because its members didn't receive their wages from GOPHCY, noting, "Ten of them have filed complaints seeking their wages."

Another GOPHCY official requesting anonymity claims that the organization suffers corruption and bribery and that neither its budget nor international donations are used well, explaining, "The administration is paralyzed and there are countless violations within the organization."

Mohammed Al-Sayadi, head of GOPHCY's statistics and planning department, blames citizens and the

Photo by Sahel Baguisher



This room, plastered with posters of President Ali Abdullah Salih, collapsed in December, displacing a family of 19.

local council, as well as the Ministry of Water's Water Foundation, to which Abdulhameed Qatab, head of the local council's services department,

responds, "The GOPHCY is behind most problems existing there."

According to Al-Sayadi, 48 Old City homes risk collapse, with Qatab

adding that another 22 already are semi-ruined, which means some 1,400 residents likely will face the same tragedy as the Al-Ghaimani family.

Photo by Sahel Baguisher



Photo by Sahel Baguisher

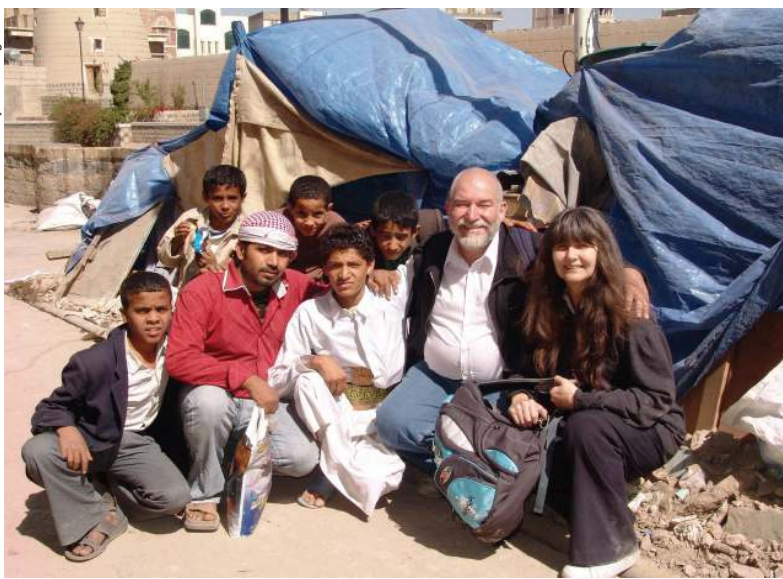


Photo by Sahel Baguisher



International students joined the aid efforts in Old Sana'a.

The city that was built overnight

By: Hamed Thabet

For both residents and visitors, entering the Al-Lail neighborhood requires either walking on foot or riding a motorcycle. Entering by car is simply not possible, due to the dust, garbage and badly deteriorated roads. Hamed Thabet visited the area and talked to residents.

The first time a person enters the Al-Lail neighborhood, they will think that the road is made of dirt. The fact is that there are no roads at all – only a few

meters exist at the entrance to the neighborhood. Because of the poor road system, grocery store owners bring in everything by themselves, causing price inflation. All items here are more expensive than in other quarters of Sana'a.

When the Yemen Times asked a council assembly member, who gave only his first name, Noma'n, if there were any future plans to construct roads and help low-income residents in the area, he replied, "We don't talk to newspapers about these things."

When asked about Al-Lail's poor

4U

The worst slum in Sana'a:
- Mahwa Aser, west Sana'a city, and is home to around 17,000 people.
- If you know of more slums in Sana'a, please contact Hamed Thabet at:
hamed_thabit@hotmail.com

living conditions, the official balked. "I think I am clear, I'm not in a position to speculate and even if I could speculate, I wouldn't talk to you. If you want any information go and ask the government," he answered, forgetting that he is a member of the government.

Al-Lail neighborhood

The neighborhood was named Al-Lail (meaning "night") for two reasons. First, the residents in that neighborhood built their houses at night because of harassment from the government. From sunset to sunrise, houses were constructed out of nothing but cement blocks. Second, the neighborhood has no electricity, turning it into a ghost town at night.

"The municipality bothers us too much. They ask us to pay the government to build houses," said Abdul Hafiz Al-Shara'abi, an Al-Lail resident. "But people here are very poor; they have no money left after providing for their families." Al-Shara'abi went on to say that almost all the houses in Al-Lail were built illegally, without licenses.

The government previously asked the residents of Al-Lail to vacate the homes, but without success. "After residents finish building houses, the government comes and tries to demolish them," said a source in Al-Lail who wished to remain anonymous, fearing government retribution. "In the end they don't, because we give them bribes, and it works." The source added that when government officials don't accept bribes, residents promise them that they will make the buildings legal by obtaining licenses, though this method only avoids catastrophe for a short while.

Residential Life in Al-Lail

Most Al-Lail residents come from the southern province of Taiz. Many have temporary jobs, do manual labor for private companies, or drive motorcycle taxis for a living. Almost all of them are trying to raise their children while working in low-paying jobs.

"The Government wants us to pay them money for insurance, services and other house-related things," stated Mohamed Moqbal, a resident of Al-Lail. "But people here are so poor that they don't have money to pay for anything except food for their families."

"Instead of helping us, the government looks for ways to inconvenience us. That is why people here have no choice but to work for a better life, even if it is illegal," said Moqbal.

There are many differences between Al-Lail and other neighborhoods, but the most noticeable difference is that Al-Lail has no water services. Residents must buy water from outside the neighborhood. "The only service

Photo by Hamed Thabet



A view of Al-Lail neighborhood shows houses that have been built overnight.

that can be found here is the telephone," said Moqbal. "The electricity goes off many times in one day. But we are used to this way of life." Walking there, one notices that bathroom water is everywhere in the street. There is no sewage system, so the smell and sight of excrement is everywhere.

In Al-Lail, there is no security at all, except for one small police station with one vehicle. Robbery is widespread there, and some residents said that even the mosque and the school were robbed.

Education in Al-Lail

It is difficult to recognize Al-Lail's "schools" because of the terrible condition they are in. Only a handwritten note on the wall that says, "School," marks these cement blocks as places of learning. "There are only three schools here, each one smaller than the other, and the classes are not suitable for

studying," said Nasser Al-Jaleli, a teacher and Al-Lail resident. "The classes, one of which was formerly a bathroom, seat 50 students with great difficulty, but sometimes we have more than 110 students," he lamented. More than 70 students were sitting there on the ground during the Yemen Times' visit. "One of the roofs is about to fall down, but we have no other choice except to use these classrooms until we find a solution," Al-Jaleli remarked.

Speakers and microphones do not exist in the school because they were stolen, according to one of the teachers. Since then, the teachers have been asking officials in the Ministry of Education for new ones, but to no avail.

Al-Lail is a part of Sana'a, and desperately needs basic services and renovations. But as of now, the residents of Al-Lail still live in their own permanent darkness.

Photo by Hamed Thabet



This classroom used to be a bathroom. Its roof is likely to collapse.

Photo by Hamed Thabet



Unstable power lines can be seen in the middle of the neighborhood.

ARE YOU PLANNING TO WATCH THE NEXT OLYMPIC GAMES?



HERE'S ONE THING YOU WILL NOT SEE

In August 2008, the Olympic Games will for the first time be held in China. It promises to be a splendid event, followed by hundreds of millions of people around the world.

One thing that the Chinese authorities are keeping very quiet about are the journalists – more than 30 – who are currently serving prison sentences in the country.

Not because they did something wrong, but because they had the courage to tell the truth and break news that the government tries to conceal.

There is Zhu Wanxiang, for example, who received a ten-year prison sentence when his paper dared to report on the protests of villagers over government seizure of their land.

Or Li Yuanlong, who received a two-year prison sentence for posting articles on the internet in which he criticised living standards in China.

And there is Shi Tao, who received a ten-year prison sentence for informing foreign websites about how the Chinese authorities forbid the media from commemorating the 15th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre.

At least 30 other journalists are in jail for similar "crimes".

Do you feel comfortable with the thought of the Olympic Games taking place in a country that imprisons its own journalists for telling the truth?

If not, join our campaign and send a message to the Chinese authorities, calling on the release of all imprisoned journalists ahead of the Olympic Games. You can make a difference.

To visit our campaign website, go to:

www.wan-press.org/china

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for celebrating his 3rd
birthday wishing him
a prosperious future
facilitators:
Your Father Mhammed Al-Khawairi
and Your Maternal uncle Nayef Ali

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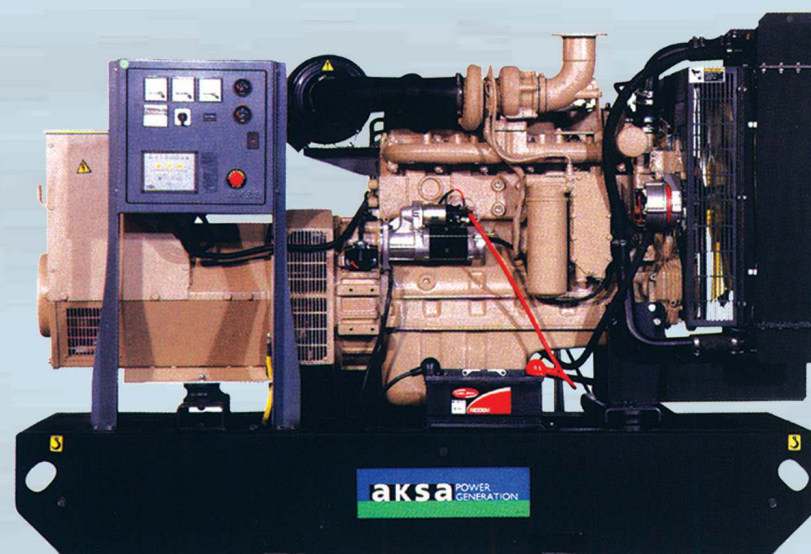
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**MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND POPULATION
HEALTH REFORM SUPPORT PROJECT (HRSP) – CR NO. 3625
CREDIT ADMINISTRATION UNIT (CAU)**

**Announcement for National Consultants on
(Survey on Cost-Sharing in Public Health Services)
FOR HEALTH POLICY & TECHNICAL SUPPORT UNIT**

The Credit Administration Unit (CAU) within the Ministry of Public Health & Population intends to hire an individual consultancy who will be contracted to carry out the following tasks:

Objective of the Consultancy

The consultant is expected to conduct a survey on cost – sharing in public health services and producing a report on the findings. The survey is expected to explore the cost-sharing revenues on different levels of the national health system. These data are to be elicited through the development and application of a survey tool that will explore these costs from the prospective of the health providers and consumers of health services.

The findings of the survey will feed into the current effort of the MoPHP in developing the coming National Health Accounts report. The consultant will be accountable to the Head of the Credit Administrative Unit and the Director General of the Health Policy Unit.

Proposed Tasks of the Consultant

The consultant is expected to carryout the following activities and/or responsibilities, which include but will not be limited to:

- Carry out a survey on cost – sharing on different levels of the national health system. Accordingly, a framework for the study and a survey tool will be developed and shared with the MoPHP before pre-testing and application.
- To choose a representative sample of health facilities on different levels of the national health system; health units, health centers, district hospitals and governorate hospitals in agreement with the MoPHP. Consequently, the survey tool will be applied followed by collection of data and analysis.
- The survey tool shall include two elements to gather the information from the prospective of health providers and consumers. The MoPHP will facilitate the communication with public health providers through its governorate and district health offices.
- Review of related documents and reports on the issue of cost-sharing as well as applicable laws and guidelines.
- Carryout related field visits as well as meetings and interviews with related bodies leading to gathering of and validation of essential review information.
- Produce a report on the findings and analysis of cost-sharing in public health services as well as policy recommendations for further action. The report is expected to be produced in Arabic language.
- To present the findings of the review to the senior public health officials and interested parties in a workshop organized after the completion of the consultancy.

Duration of the assignment

- The expected time to finish the work is one month.

Expected Deliverable

- Draft Report will be submitted to CAU for approval by Health Policy & Technical Unit.
- Submit to the CAU the final Report Original in the form of hard copies (2 copies) as well as an electronic soft copy (2 Copies).

Required Qualifications and Experience of the Consultant

- A university degree in Economics / Finance or a degree in Health Economics / Health Care Finance.
- Previous experience in similar analytical studies, preferably in the area of Health Economics or Health Care Finance.
- Capability to carry out related fieldwork activities.
- Verbal and written capability in Arabic Language and preferably in English Language.

Applications with supporting document and CV's - should be submitted to the credit Administration unit by 24th February 2008 to the HRSP located on the 4th floor in the Ministry of Public Health and Population, Al-Hasaba, Sana'a.

Tel : 00 967 1 252 224 - Fax : 00 976 1 251 622 - Email : hrsp@y.net.ye

**MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND POPULATION
HEALTH REFORM SUPPORT PROJECT (HRSP) – CR NO. 3625
CREDIT ADMINISTRATION UNIT (CAU)**

**Announcement for National Consultants on
(Survey on Development Partners Contributions to the National Health System)
FOR HEALTH POLICY & TECHNICAL SUPPORT UNIT**

The Credit Administration Unit (CAU) within the Ministry of Public Health & Population intends to hire an individual consultancy who will be contracted to carry out the following tasks:

Objective of the Consultancy

The consultant is expected to conduct a survey on Development Partners contribution to the national health sector and producing a report on the findings. The survey is expected to explore the development partner's contribution through projects and programmes as well as direct support to the national health system. These data are to be elicited through the development and application of a survey tool that will gather information from those partners and other national bodies.

The findings of the survey will feed into the current effort of the MoPHP in developing the coming National Health Accounts report. The consultant will be accountable to the Head of the Credit Administrative Unit and the Director General of the Health Policy Unit.

Proposed Tasks of the Consultant

The consultant is expected to carryout the following activities and/or responsibilities, which include but will not be limited to:

- Carry out a survey on development partner's (bi-lateral and multi-lateral assistance) contributions to the national health system.
- Accordingly, a framework for the study and a survey tool will be developed and shared with the MoPHP before pre-testing and application. The framework will include the scope of the survey, the categorization of the expenditures and the final presentation of findings, considering that the framework and the tool will be subject for annual updating in the future.
- To consult with the MoPHP on communication with the development partner's agencies in order to carryout data collection.
- Review of related documents and reports.
- Carryout related field visits as well as meetings and interviews with related bodies leading to gathering of and validation of information.
- Produce a report on the findings and analysis of amount and scope of developments partners' contribution as well as policy recommendations for further action. The report is expected to be produced in Arabic and English language.
- To present the findings of the review to the senior public health officials and interested parties in a workshop organized after the completion of the consultancy.

Duration of the assignment

- The expected time to finish the work is one month

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Tel : 00 967 1 252 224 - Fax : 00 976 1 251 622 - Email : hrsp@y.net.ye

**MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND POPULATION
HEALTH REFORM SUPPORT PROJECT (HRSP) – CR NO. 3625
CREDIT ADMINISTRATION UNIT (CAU)**

**Announcement for National Consultants on
(Study on Comparative and Analytical Study on Operational & Maintenance Costs)
FOR HEALTH POLICY & TECHNICAL SUPPORT UNIT**

The Credit Administration Unit (CAU) within the Ministry of Public Health & Population intends to hire an individual consultancy who will be contracted to carry out the following tasks:

Objective of the Consultancy

The consultant is expected to conduct a **comparative and analytical study on Operational & Maintenance Costs**, and producing a study report. The study is expected to review and analyze the operational and maintenance allocated budgets in the national health system over the past three financial years 2004 - 2007. These are to be compared with the actual needs on all levels of the system and interpreted into recommendation for further action. The consultant will be accountable to the Head of the Credit Administrative Unit and the Director General of the Health Policy Unit.

Proposed Tasks of the Consultant

The consultant is expected to carryout the following activities and/or responsibilities, which include but will not be limited to:

- Carry out a study which will review and analyze operational and maintenance allocated budgets and expenditures over the past three financial years 2004 – 2007.
- Comment on the financial gaps and trends in allocation and actual spending based on relevant financial data. The review ought to explore the appropriateness of the current system of budgeting and disbursement of funds in these areas compared to best practices.
- Findings of the review are to be compared with the actual financial requirements of optimum operation and maintenance. The scope of examine the financial gaps includes all levels of the national health system.
- Review of related documents and reports including MoPHP financial accounts on different levels corresponding to the given years of review (2004 – 2007).
- Carryout related field visits as well as meetings and interviews with related bodies leading to gathering of essential review information.
- Produce a report on the findings and analysis of financial trends of the study as well as policy recommendations; fiscal adjustments; expenditure prioritization and resource allocation and budgeting leading to further action. The report is expected to be produced in Arabic language.
- To present the findings of the review to the senior public health officials and interested parties in a workshop organized after the completion of the consultancy.

Duration of the assignment

- The expected time to finish the work is six weeks.

Expected Deliverable

- Draft Report will be submitted to CAU for approval by Health Policy & Technical Unit.
- Submit to the CAU the final Report Original in the form of hard copies (2 copies) as well as an electronic soft copy (2 Copies).

Required Qualifications and Experience of the Consultant

- A university degree in Economics / Finance or a degree in Health Economics / Health Care Finance.
- Previous experience in similar analytical studies, preferably in the area of Health Economics or Health Care Finance.
- Capability to carry out related field work activities.
- Verbal and written capability in Arabic Language and preferably in English Language.

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Date and place of opening envelopes

Envelopes will be opened at 11:00 am on Tuesday, March 11, 2008 in the corporation headquarter.

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Words of Wisdom



One of the key characteristics of working in the media is the concept of deadlines. Everything has a deadline. Everybody is under some kind of time pressure. While this pressure may not be good for one's health, it is a wonderful contributor for efficiency.

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



OUR OPINION

Gaza: How much more stupid can one get?

It has been almost two weeks since seize was imposed on the Palestinian people in Gaza on Jan. 16. It has also been a week since the crumbling down of the Rafah boarder between Egypt and Gaza on Jan. 22.

Israel's policy was to turn the Palestinians against Hamas by starving them. Little did it know that Palestinians are used to starvation. And pushing them over the edge has fired back through creating an outlet for hundreds of thousands of Palestinian people who seized the chance to stock up on medicines, food and consumer goods.

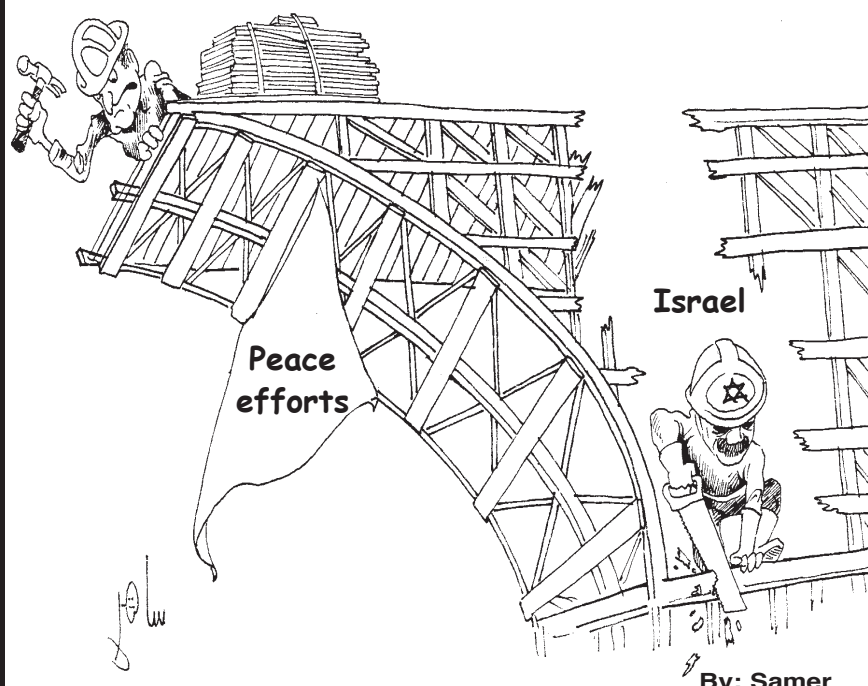
After the breaking of the wall, Israeli leadership is frowning at the Egyptians for letting the situation escalate. And slowly the Egyptians are trying to gain control of the boarder and organize the crossing of Palestinians who might as well carry a few ammunitions along with the food and medicines in order to continue their resistance against the Israeli government, who once again proved it is not capable of creating peace.

Now the Muslim foreign ministers plan to meet in Saudi Arabia on Feb. 3, to discuss what happened. They did not meet earlier when the Palestinians were suffering from inhumane conditions. But now that the Palestinian people took matters into their own hands, the Muslims decided they must meet and discuss. The EU and the UN have also issued statements, mostly vague about peace and humanitarian conditions. And Bush will return to the region in May to take part in Israel's 60th anniversary celebrations and perhaps to reinvigorate his peace initiative.

So where does this take us? Starving Palestinians has helped create a turning point that highlighted the foolishness of decision makers in the Middle East. The Palestinian people proved there is a limit to enduring and so they lashed out at the wall in order to save themselves. However, it seems there is no limit to stupidity as our leaders around the world keep making the same mistakes when it comes to the Middle East.

Nadia Al-Sakkaf

SKETCHED OPINION



By: Samer

It is truly a "New Yemen"

By: Abu Malik Al-Yemeni

One year has just passed since the slogan of "New Yemen... Better Future" came to existence, and that was during the campaigning of President Ali Abdullah Saleh, ahead of the presidential election on September 20, 2006. Such a slogan is manifested in the poor situation of Yemen, a precedent that can hardly be seen in any part of the world. The first part of the slogan "New Yemen" is already achieved. It is reflected in the poor situations and hard living standards in the country while the second part "Better Future" doesn't exist at all.

It is truly a "New Yemen" with standards and details, which we have never seen before. A "New Yemen" with the tragic crisis extending from the north to the south and from the east to the west. One can hardly find a village or a city where locals don't complain of poverty, deprivation, epidemics, illiteracy, lawlessness and corruption.

What forced me write this article about "New Yemen" is the furious reaction by the enraged citizens who take to streets almost every day in different parts of the country, venting their anger at the government's poor policies that failed to eliminate corruption and corrupt officials. On this day, the day of writing this article, I am enthusiastic enough to damn corruption that destroyed every beautiful thing in my country and took it into a dirty swamp where rats grow and then defy any honest and sincere calls for establishing a "really New Yemen" that can show more respect

for the human values and dignity.

I have learned a lesson from the enraged citizens who stream into streets nationwide that the time of pervasive silence has come to an end and we are getting nearer and nearer toward reality. I have also learned that the snow ball is rolling down and will never stop despite tricks of the magicians whose noses get swelled when they hear about reality. They then resort to threats and intimidation, and rudely try to cheat minds, have facts counterfeited and beautify every ugly thing, or shape false image of their country to deceive others. Undoubtedly, all such attempts are doomed to fail even if those who administer the country seek the help of worldwide magicians.

The author of these lines is a Yemeni expatriate residing in another country. He is of the hope to return home, and usually draw plans and strategies on his homecoming, but his dreams get destroyed when he sees and hears about the painful situations in his homeland. His decision of homecoming has become like a suicide attempt.

Dear readers, in order not hastily accuse me of treason, being a traitor or hateful toward my homeland, I will raise this question to you, "What attracts you in Yemen so that you can prefer homecoming?" Please, tell me about any beautiful thing and goodness that may encourage a Yemeni expatriate to return home even if he/she is residing in Tora Bora Mountains or in the lanes of Mogadishu.

Because of the behavior of a group of people who claim to be natives of this country, Yemen has turned to be a horrible environment

thereby forcing the true natives of different age and professional groups to migrate to other parts of the world in search of better living standards. Believe me or not, if Yemen's borders with the neighboring countries are open, all the Yemeni people will flee their homeland to seek better livelihood and safer living.

Nowadays, we never hear anything pleasant or satisfying about Yemen. The local, regional and international organizations release reports about the shameful situations in Yemen that only gives you a shame to the country of expatriation. Yemen is one of the failed or the would-be-failed countries. It stands last in the human development index, corruption has become rampant in all the state's agencies and its ailing economy is unlikely to recover amid the government's poor policies.

The situation of our homeland today pleases one burst into tears of blood. The People turned to lament their fate under a totalitarian regime having starvation and poverty of its people, plus chaos, rampant corruption and civil wars, as the most important guarantees for its stay in power. It is now that the Yemeni people understood well that the regime fomented conflicts, chaos and civil wars in order for citizens to remain living under the poverty line, fight hard for subsistence and suffer illiteracy and backwardness.

Conditions under "New Yemen"

At the very beginning, President Saleh launched his platform "New Yemen... Better Future" in the wake of 2006 elections to finalize Chapter Four of Sa'ada War north of Yemen. Then, he shifted the con-

dition scene to the southern governorates in order to use force against enraged people protesting peacefully to claim their constitutional rights. In addition, many innocent demonstrators, who streamed into streets claiming a stop to the looting of public and private property, and land grab, were shot dead by the merciless police, whose duty changed from maintaining security and stability into killing oppressed citizens.

Moreover, anarchy and lawless are terribly expanding, particularly as the country turned to live a state of repeated wars that kill innocent people and destroy the country's infrastructure. As the state of law and order doesn't exist in Yemen, citizens are highly concerned about their safety and security.

In the country where we are residing, we sometimes intend to meet Yemeni officials during their various visits and ask them about people's conditions and the country's situations. "Every thing is nice and things are going well" is their

only response. But when we tell them about the desire for homecoming, they say, "Why do you want to come back to Yemen since you are comfortable here. It is better for you to stay here and never think about homecoming."

Once I went to a Yemeni diplomat serving in the Yemeni government's embassy in the country where I am residing and found him sad and depressed. Asking him why he looks sad and miserable, "We will return Yemen" was the only answer he gave to my question. I then asked him why he is sad over homecoming, he replied, "It is not good to return to Yemen and live on less than one dollar a day." This is a tragedy, but we hope that there is a possible end to such a tragedy. We why said that the goal of "New Yemen" was achieved. Before such a slogan was made, the country was experiencing poor situations, and after the slogan, the situation went from bad to worse.

Source: Al-Sahwa-yemen.net

SILVER LINING

Can Censorship still be Effective?

I watched the video tapes

broadcasted by youtube website for the reconciliation and tolerance rally run in Aden January 13 which al-Jazeera and AL-Hurra TVs were not allowed to cover. After that, I started thinking how fruitless are the government efforts in banning TV reporters from covering the ongoing protests in the southern governorates or any other activities. We do now live in a digital era where censorship and control are no longer effective. It is an era of mobile technology and citizen journalism. In other words, people are no longer passive receivers of news and information produced by journalists; they are rather active participants in the media production process and therefore, it is no longer possible to set what they should and should not get of news. Everybody using the internet was able to watch what happened during the rally and even al-Jazeera was able to broadcast footages of the rally it got from volunteer people despite locking its reporters in a hotel. I understand banning TV channels from covering such events prevents millions of people who have no access to internet but I just want to underscore it has become very difficult and even fruitless to exercise censorship on media.

The harassment of journalists has recently soared up. Some journalists were arrested and put in jail simply because of taking photos for the intimidation exercised by the Sana'a municipality police against street vendors. Access to some independent websites including Yemen Portal, Yemen's first internet search engine, was blocked to suppress their reporting and criticism. The information minister has recently accused some writings of crossing the red lines and jeopardizing the national interest of the country, and bluntly warned that intimidation against media outlets would increase. This shows journalists are to face the most difficult time in the coming days.

I do not find any reason for this hysteric campaign against the media only that the people in charge are losing control. It seems the old guards or cronies around the president did not see or were more attentive to the major influence of the media but the new cronies around the new people in charge are aware of the growing important role of the media and thus should be manipulated or gagged, a policy that only authoritarian and totalitarian regimes still exercise. However, how far can such a policy of censorship be effective in controlling the information flow and the right of the citizens to be informed?

I wonder if the regime has forgotten about its commitments towards the international community and donors to respect democratic freedoms or it has thought the international support would flow in regardless of its respect to democracy and human rights because the international community has to support. In other words, the regime thinks the donors and the neighboring countries should support Yemen out of concern of the collapse of the system that would influence their interests and that their support should not be on condition of respecting freedoms. But, I guess the government has abused Yemen image as an margining democracy as local and international human rights organizations have been making a big fuss about such a futile policy of censorship and blocking access to media outlets. These voices obviously will influence donors to change their policy towards a regime that does not respect its commitments.

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



By: Dr. Mohammed Al-Qadhi

We respect the military and security institutions

By: Jamal Mohammed Al-Ja'abi

Attending the New Training Year's inaugural ceremony on June 5 at the Central Security, commanded by his nephew the young BG Yahya Mohammed Abdullah Saleh, the President of the Republic presented a subject related with the security and military institutions. According to Mr. President, any criticism of one of the two institutions or both is prohibited and punishable since such institutions represent all the Yemeni people.

Mr. President denied that these institutions are oppressive. At this

point, I agree with what Saleh said about both institutions and we can further praise them since their members stay up sleeplessly for the sake of citizens' security and safety. One hardly finds a household without one of the family members being recruited in one of these institutions. We can make our suggestion for clarifying a very critical issue related with military and security servants as a form of backing these institutions and advocating that injustice on them be lifted.

Mr. President may not feel the sufferings of our brothers and sons, who are members in the army or security bodies, and therefore are exposed to oppression and injustice and their rights are abused. The senior security and military commanders, who continue extorting junior officers and soldiers and deprive them of good meals and wears, required by the nature of their duties.

I personally don't imagine that the kinds of rice and beans given to our brothers in the security and army institutions are edible, nor are the blankets they receive useable. Above all, army members and policemen in Yemen don't receive a humanitarian treatment like their counterparts in the neighboring countries.

When we sometimes see that traffic men or soldiers in police stations look for futile sums of money from drivers or citizens coming to their offices, we question, "Are these policemen accountable for behaving this way or are they justified to ask people for money due to their low salaries and poor living conditions?" Consequently, policemen in Yemen seem to behave like those who served the government under the rule of Imamate since they used to live at citizens' expenses.

Undoubtedly, there are outsiders in both institutions who receive high salaries and hold posts which they may not deserve, and other people, senior to and more qualified than them are eligible for their posts. There are some senior officers who deserve high military posts, however, they find themselves confined and restricted by high-ranking officials to do jobs that don't match their capacities and seniority for other reasons that have nothing to do with qualification or seniority.

Ordering the deployment of policemen and army members in streets of many cities and giving them the green light to open fire on peaceful protesters and innocent citizens, like what happened in Sharab'a of Taiz governorate, Aden's Radfan district, Al-Dhale' and Hadramout, harms reputation of the security institution and helps trigger citizens' hatred and animosity toward policemen. In the meantime, the incompetent military and security commanders must be held accountable for the foolish orders they gave to soldiers to fire live ammunition on protestors and enter in clashes with them. Such operations are impossible to be carried out by the Israeli army against the Palestinian people. The tragedy is even worse when commanders order soldiers to sacrifice themselves in fighting with citizens while they stay inside the military facilities.

We back what Mr. President says about the military and security institutions, but we hope that he should know about the pains and sufferings of servants in these institutions, who receive low salaries that are not enough to provide for their families.

Source: Al-Thawri Weekly.

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Yemen Press Review



Al-Thawri
Weekly, Mouthpiece of the Yemeni Socialist Party
Thursday, January 24

Top Stories

- Security authorities arrest 228 suspects having connections with terror crimes
- Sana'a experiences overnight arrest and crackdown campaigns by police against potential terrorists
- Aden Writers Union: No confusion between unity and totalitarian regime
- Armed tribesmen raid medical laboratories center in Sana'a, destroy its contents
- Government transfers Al-Sadda officials and Ibb Antiquity Department manager to judiciary for investigation over antiquity robbery
- Al-Qaeda network in Yemen claims responsibility for Hadramout's attack on Belgian tourists
- The weekly newspaper reported that Al-Qaeda organization in Yemen claimed responsibility for the Hadramout terrorist attack that targeted a Belgian tourist convoy, killing two women, their Yemeni driver and leaving three others, including a Belgian tourist, injured. It quoted a Qaeda comrade as scorning statements by security authorities that they arrested some of the suspects involved in the terrorist attack, among the two gunmen who fired into the tourist convoy.
- The Qaeda leader said that those who launched the attack against the European tourists managed to flee the scene immediately, adding that the security authorities arrested innocent citizens who have no connections with Al-Qaeda or the attack. He noted that its

organization launched the attack in retaliation for death of one of its comrades after severe torture in a political security jail. "This is also retaliation for the mistreatment which the jailed Al-Qaeda elements receive in security prisons," the Qaeda leader reacted.

The weekly quoted American media as saying that "It's been a bad week for the Arabian Peninsula nation of Yemen. The country has been fighting hard to lure tourists, international donors and foreign investors to give its struggling economy a lift. But it's been beset by turmoil.

First there was a fresh outbreak of sectarian violence that left hundreds of people displaced in the country's impoverished north. Then came the Jan. 18 killing of two Belgian tourists visiting the country, allegedly at the hands of Al-Qaeda. The renewed clashes between security forces and a small Shiite group caused the most consternation."



Al-Sahwa
Weekly, Mouthpiece of the Islah Party
Thursday, January 24

Top Stories

- Medical report warns that Al-Moayyad and Zayed's conditions may deteriorate
- Yemeni protestors condemn Arab silence toward Gaza lockdown
- Hadramout praises efforts of Socotra local councilors preventing entry of Qat into the island
- Aden farmers protest against plundering of their lands by influential persons

- Head of Islah Party Office in Sa'ada calls for dialogue and ceasefire
- Minister of Planning and International Cooperation: Yemen's agricultural sector is weak despite adequate support
- HOOD reveals that Amran-based 127 Military Infantry Division has been detaining a child for 4 months

The National Organization for Defending Rights and Freedoms, known as HOOD, urged the Attorney-General to hold talks with Defense Minister and the relevant judicial authorities on why a 15-year-old child has been arrested by the 127 Military Infantry Division in Amran for nearly four months, the weekly reported in a front page story.

It also called for investigating why the division's commander gave orders to his troops to capture the young boy Walid Ahmad Mutahhar Saleh on July 7, 2007 over a civil conflict, the case file of which is being already provided to Houth Preliminary Court.

In its letter to the Attorney-General, the organization demanded the official to give directions for immediately releasing the inmate or bringing him to the relevant court if he is found guilty of committing a crime.

"Despite directions by Amran's Appeal Prosecution on September 18, 2007, demanding that the kid must be freed and returned to his parents, in addition to other similar procedures taken by Khamer's Prosecution, the child is still detained up until the moment. HOOD labeled Walid's detention as a legal violation of the constitution, as well as a punishable crime.

According to the weekly, the human rights organization stated that any civil or military servant found guilty of jailing the juvenile must face a penalty of no less than five years in prison by

the criminal law.



Al-Wahdawi Weekly, Mouthpiece of the Nasserite Unionist Popular Organization (NUPO)
Tuesday, January 22

Top Stories

- Interior Ministry prevents demonstration in solidarity with Palestine from approaching Egyptian Embassy
- NUPO Secretary General participates in the Palestinian National Conference
- Saudi authorities hide a Yemeni citizen, capture his brother without a clear reason
- Authorities tighten the noose on freedom of expression, block five electronic websites
- 20 African illegal immigrants die in adventurous trip to Yemen
- Yemeni Journalists Syndicate condemns blocking of YemenPortal.net
- Yemeni Journalists Syndicate lashed out at authorities for blocking YemenPortal.net, a newly established news website run by former Yemen Times Editor-in-Chief Waled Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf, and preventing readers inside Yemen from visiting the website, the weekly reported in a front page story.
- The syndicate labeled blocking of YemenPortal.net as 'a flagrant violation of the freedom of press and expression', adding that the government always denies citizens their legal rights to obtain information in a way contravening the Constitution and Law. YJS expressed its strong

condemnation of the arbitrary procedures the government takes against press freedom in Yemen, regretting blocking of YemenPortal.net.

Stressing the necessity of the government showing respect for the law and having an independent judiciary to be concerned with press issues, the syndicate claimed the relevant agencies should quit such behaviors.

Readers in Yemen have been denied access to YemenPortal.net since Sunday, Jan. 20 without any clear reasons. Also International organizations and donor countries advocating press freedom had expressed concern about a deteriorating level of press freedom in recent years, citing beatings of journalists, newspapers closures and more recently, blocking of political websites.



Al-Methaq Weekly, Mouthpiece of the General People Congress (Ruling Party)
Monday, January 21

Top Stories

- Antiquities Team resumes work in Asabia ancient site, local authorities identify looters
- General People Congress denounces exploitation of freedom to damage national unity.
- Ruling party leadership condemns Israeli aggression on Palestinian people
- Deputy Minister of Social Affairs & Labor accuses Islah Party of committing legal violations
- MPs: Yahya Al-Rae'i has the greatest chance to become Parliament Speaker
- Political parties resume dialogues

Tuesday
- President Saleh calls on Arab leaders to hold emergency summit on Palestine's situations

President Ali Abdullah Saleh emphasized the necessity of Arab leaders being responsible for the sufferings of their Palestinian brothers regardless of the political and partisan positions to the issue, the weekly reported.

It added that Saleh considered what is currently happening in Palestine as provoking all the clear consciences, and on the contrary, harms reputation of the Arab nations.

Saleh on Monday called on his fellow Arab leaders to hold an emergency summit to discuss the Israeli lockdown of the Gaza Strip and military operations in the area.

In a phone call to Arab League Secretary General Amr Mussa, Saleh urged a meeting at the foreign minister level to prepare for an Arab summit early in February. He called Israeli actions in Gaza 'insulting to all Arabs,' according to a report published by Yemen News Agency, Saba.

Israel had cut off shipments of fuel to the only power plant in the Gaza Strip and closed border crossings to the territory since Friday. On Monday, it authorized a one-time fuel shipment, but Defence Minister Ehud Barak said Israel would continue to apply pressure on Gaza to stop rocket attacks into its territory. Israel has also stepped up military operations in Gaza.

Advising all the Lebanese political factions to unify their lines and come together for resolving the current turmoil in their country, Saleh insisted that the Arab League should expend hard efforts in this regard. He highlighted that the Lebanese factions should make painful concessions for the sake of the national interest.

At the end of the day, it's all about human life in Gaza

By: Ibrahim Abdil-Mu'id Ramey

The are two images, often juxtaposed, that define life for the people of Gaza in the eyes of world media.

One image is the picture of idle workers, hungry kids, and hospitals that are broken and dysfunctional as a result of the embargo of fuel and electricity that persistently cripples the economy of Gaza.

The other, more recent image, pictures thousands of gleeful Gazans streaming into Rafa, Egypt across the southern border between Egypt and Gaza, buying everything from goats to televisions, and taking them back to into Gaza using every conceivable mode of human transportation. These images convey a sense of jubilation, and relief.

Indeed, much of the world is happy that the Egyptian authorities are reluctant to use force in turning away the people of Gaza - sending them back to where they came from.

But the political dynamics of the situation are more complicated. Israeli authorities are now openly discussing the possibility of a total cut-off of Gaza in the north, which would, in effect, abandon some 1.4 million people and leave them in a state of total economic collapse with only a three-day supply of fuel for their primary electrical power plant.

And the United States government, which voiced its disapproval of the Egyptian non-response to the "invasion" of thousands of desperate people from Gaza, has said nothing - at least, in public - about Israel's central responsibility for the embargo.

The world sees this mess, and focuses on the ideological issues of the political rule of Hamas "militants" and the sporadic rocket fire from Gaza that provokes so many devastating Israeli military counter-strikes.

The presidential candidates, from

both major parties, see what is happening, and say absolutely nothing about the policies of Israel and the United States that keep Gaza on nearly permanent lock-down (except to blaming Hamas for the entire situation).

While these events occur, and while they are being noticed by the entire world, the misery and humanitarian tragedy in Gaza continues.

If all politics are local, as the saying goes, then all politics, in the final analysis, must be about the simple dignity and human rights of ordinary people, and their right to survive.

Survival, with dignity, must become the ultimate human right that trumps divisions over race, nationality, and religion. And this is a priority that the leaders of Israel, the U.S., and especially the political leaders of Gaza, must not fail to recognize.

The political and ideological divisions are not likely to go away, at least in the foreseeable future, but the ordinary people of Gaza won't disappear either, and every concerned party - all of humanity - must make their survival a central priority.

I've pointed out, in a previous essay, that a tactical shift on the part of the political leadership of Gaza is imperative. Violent attacks from Gaza against civilian targets in Israel are both immoral and tactically useless, and they only provoke counter-attacks that heap more devastation and destruction on the heads of those who are already defenseless and vulnerable.

Those attacks must end. But Egypt, the United States, the State of Israel, and the global community must also fundamentally change their ways.

Egypt, to begin with, must allow a reasonable flow of Palestinians into Egyptian territory to purchase necessary commodities for their basic survival.

Israel must suspend the closure of the border crossing between Gaza and Israel, and totally end any current and future embargoes of food, fuel, and

medical supplies into the territory.

The international community of nations and civil societies must contribute more material aid to Gaza, and be assured that this aid will reach those in need, without interference, interdiction, or the misuse of such aid by any and all agents of corruption.

And the United States, as the major power-broker in the conflict, has the responsibility to push for the demilitarization of the conflict (on all sides), while upholding the human rights of all parties concerned. This a particular challenge for Muslim leaders who use the occupation as a rationale for hurling rhetorical rocks at the Jewish state, while doing precious little to alleviate the suffering of the actual victims of occupation.


Also, for the Israelis and their allies, there should be recognition that the notion of collective punishment, in any case, is simply morally unconscionable, as well as a violation of international human rights law and the Geneva Convention.

Striking civilian infrastructure targets to hit back at Hamas is counter-productive, because this strategy only pushes people to more desperate, and violent, forms of "resistance".

In fact, no party in this convoluted political equation can be let off the hook. Each party must develop new means of resolving the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, and for that matter, the whole of Palestine.

We must demand the following: No more killing. No more bickering, posturing, or in the case of media, outright denial of the magnitude of the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. No more denial of this tragedy by those who aspire to the American presidency. And no more blind political allegiances based on the permanence of colonial occupation or injustice.

Because for me, at the end of the day, what really matters is that no more children in Gaza will die for the sake of political business as usual.



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Autism... the invisible world

By: Amel Al-Ariqi
amel11ariqi@yahoo.com

Ahlam Al-Arashi always noticed that her older son Ashraf wasn't like other children. At age 3, he was unable to speak with a normal tone or rhythm. When he entered nursery school nearly at age 5, he had difficulty recognizing colors, naming pictures and remembering numbers and letters.

Finally, at age 10, Ashraf was diagnosed with Asperger syndrome, one of several autism spectrum disorders (ASD) characterized by difficulty in social interaction and by restricted, stereotyped interests and activities.

Autism is a complex developmental disability typically appearing during a child's first three years and resulting from a neurological disorder affecting normal brain function, thereby impacting development in social interaction and communication skills. Autistic children and adults both typically exhibit difficulty in verbal and nonverbal communication, social interaction and leisure or play activities.

His mother recalls, "I was alone on this journey. I felt like I was completely in the dark, with no idea what was wrong with my child. After numerous

medical tests and talking with doctors in Yemen, Iraq and Jordan, most admitted that there was a gap between his mental progress and his actual age, but said he'd be fine at a certain stage. However, one Iraqi doctor suggested that my son, who was age 10 by then, might be autistic."

Thereafter, Al-Arashi began amassing medical studies, books and other materials in an effort to get more information and educate herself about the disorder.

She admits, "For a long time, I was in denial, unable to believe that my child is autistic, although most of the symptoms were obvious. Part of my denial resulted from the fact that I had no idea how to deal with Ashraf as an autistic child."

Thus, she spent another three years seeking treatment for him, until she met Suad Al-Eryani, another Yemeni mother of an autistic child, who established a center in 2005 to receive autistic Yemeni children.

"When I came to the center, I realized that my son wasn't alone and that many Yemeni children suffer this disorder. In fact, my son's case isn't so bad, compared to others with mild autism. However, I also observed the confusion most parents feel because they have no background information about autism; thus, they have no idea how to deal with their autistic children," explains Al-Arashi, who now is executive manager of Al-Eryani's center.

Located in the Sana'a countryside, the center is considered the first of its kind to receive children with this disorder. Currently working with 50 children between ages 5 and 13, 16 Yemeni therapists work eight hours a day to provide the children behavioral and communication therapies.

These include numerous programs developed to address the range of social, language and behavioral difficulties associated with autism. Some focus on reducing problem behaviors

and teaching new skills, while others focus on teaching children how to act in social situations or how to communicate better with others.

Observing a lack of care for autistic children in Yemen, Al-Eryani established the Yemen Foundation for Special Education and Autism in 2005 and the Sahar Autism Center, named after her autistic daughter. Due to lack of funding, she began with only a table and chair from her home, in addition to the support of her husband Dr. Ibrahim Al-Adofi, currently Yemen's ambassador in Switzerland, and Al-Arashi's selfless involvement.

With no funds, Al-Eryani was forced to sell her jewelry to support the center and when that was gone, she started digging into the modest inheritance left to her by her late father. As the center began gaining recognition, private, government and non-governmental organizations eventually began supporting it.

Under the auspices of the Ministry of Social Welfare, the center's name was changed to Yemen Center for Autism this past October in order to better reflect its ambitious mission regarding autism throughout Yemen, according to its director, Hussein M. Najee.

Despite the center's limited facilities, both Najee and Al-Arashi believe that those children who come to the center are lucky because they are able to receive the type of care and attention that many autistic Yemeni children can't access.

Al-Arashi explains, "Because autism remains a mysterious and unknown word to most Yemenis – including Yemeni doctors and Yemeni governmental officials – it's difficult for us to explain these children's cases and their needs so that they can obtain their rights and get the therapy that will allow them to integrate into society and have a better life."

Likewise, Najee notes that Yemeni families' ignorance about autism may create social problems within that family, which can't deal with an autistic child, who in turn, may become violent and frustrated because they can't



Some children with autism will grow up able to live independently, while others may always need supportive living and working environments.

express themselves properly.

He adds, "It's hard to create an awareness of autism because those with it don't look disabled. Parents of autistic children often say that others simply think their child is naughty, whereas autistic adults find that they are misunderstood."

Estimating that as many as 150,000 Yemenis may have autism, Najee explains, "Estimates about autism in Yemen differ, depending on what ratio is used. In those countries that address autism, one thing is certain – it's more prevalent than previously believed. While it's clear that more children than ever are being classified as having autism spectrum disorders, it's unclear

how much of that increase is due to changes in how we identify and classify ASD and how much is due to an actual increase in its prevalence."

Different countries use different ratios due to how much better and more consistent are their estimates; for example, Dubai's estimate is 1 in 145, the United States is 1 in 150 and the United Kingdom is 1 in 100.

Using the most extreme ratios, Yemen's autistic population ranges from 40,000 to 133,000, or from 1 in 500 to 1 in 166, respectively, according to the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention in February 2007. Until further studies are made, this range must be used.

While scientific studies say there's no cure for autism, some autistic children grow up to live independently, whereas others require constantly supportive living and work environments.

Both Najee and Al-Arashi insist that the best way to help an autistic child is through early intervention because it can change the way the brain develops. This means that diagnosing the child as early as possible is essential so he or she can begin therapy early.

Najee notes, "In order to achieve this goal, we must learn about autism, training and developing Yemeni staff to be able to screen autistic children and help them lead a less stressful and more meaningful life – with their families. Such trained staffers eventually can serve as future instructors for an outreach program to train and develop other Yemeni staff from the government so that more centers can be

Those from all nationalities and cultural, religious and social backgrounds can have autism, although it appears to affect males more than females, as 4 out of 5 autistics are male. It is a lifelong condition wherein autistic children grow up to become autistic adults.

started in Yemen.

He continues, "We should obtain training materials and instructors from overseas to keep abreast of developments in the field of autism by attending workshops overseas, as well as holding them in Yemen. This will serve to advocate change in community attitudes, as well as support the needs of autistic individuals and their families, in addition to increasing both public and government awareness regarding Yemen's substantial autistic population and the disorder's rapid growth.

"Additionally, we should develop a central library with books, research information and data and training materials for Yemen, in addition to cooperating with local and regional universities and autism centers for training, research and exchanging expertise," Najee concludes.



The Yemen Center for Autism provides the children with behavioral and communication therapies, including many programs have been developed to address the range of social, language and behavioral difficulties associated with autism

Because the symptoms of autism vary widely, two children with the same diagnosis may act quite differently and have strikingly different skills. However, the three main areas of difficulty which all autistics share – sometimes known as the "triad of impairments" – are: difficulty with social interaction and communication, difficulty with social imagination, failing to respond to his or her name, poor eye contact, appearing not to hear at times, starting to talk later than other children, losing previously acquired ability to say words or sentences and performing repetitive movements, such as rocking, spinning or hand-flapping Other characteristics include a love of routine, sensory sensitivity, specialized interests and learning disabilities.

Diarrhea threatens Yemeni children

By: Alia Eshaq
For Yemen Times

SANA'A, Jan. 22 – A new report issued by the United Nations Children's Fund, known as UNICEF, indicates that diarrhea is responsible for the deaths of 84,000 children each year in Yemen.

Entitled, "Child Survival," the international report was released Jan. 22 in Sana'a in the presence of Yemeni officials, including Health Minister Abdulkarim Rasa'.

Every year, 84,000 children under age 5 die in Yemen and one of the main causes is diarrhea, constituting nearly 17 percent of total mortality among children under 5, according to the latest UNICEF report.

Diarrhea, which many people consider a mild illness, is second only to pneumonia in cause of deaths among children. Diarrhea kills more children than malaria, measles

and AIDS put together.

Yemen currently is ranked 41 out of 189 countries with the most deaths of children under age 5 and diarrhea is a large contributor to Yemen's high death rate for youngsters. "The number of children affected by diarrhea who come to me is uncountable," says Dr. Ali Hassan, a physician at Al-Saba'een Hospital in Sana'a, who notes that diarrhea is widespread in Yemen, especially during the summer, due to dehydration.

Diarrhea becomes a serious disease when it causes severe and irreversible dehydration, thereby resulting in death. "Most deaths due to diarrhea occur before a child's first birthday," Hassan points out.

He adds that the most severe cases he has seen are from rural areas where residents live in poor conditions far from proper health care. Such families are uninformed about the dangers of diarrhea and therefore, don't supply their children with enough fluids to replenish water loss.

"Diarrhea is widespread in Yemen due to water pollution, sanitation and dehydration," states Nasim Al-Rahman, chief of communication and information for UNICEF-Yemen. He points out that many Yemenis are ignorant about the outcomes of this illness and the importance of replacing fluids during bouts of diarrhea.

"According to our research, we've found that the best way to fight this phenomenon [diarrhea] is breastfeeding children exclusively during their first six months," Al-Rahman notes, meaning that mothers should only nourish their children via breastfeeding, without giving them any additional fluids – even water.

Agreeing with Al-Rahman, Hassan points out that in order to keep sick children safe, parents must give them fluids immediately and visit a doctor as soon as possible because although diarrhea is a major killer of children, it's also an easily-cured disease that's mostly preventable.



Diarrhea is widespread in Yemen due to water pollution, sanitation and dehydration.



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Migration, youth violence and Islam

A culture of looking carefully

Is the high level of violence among first, second and third-generation migrants in Germany really due to Islam? Absolutely not, argues the cultural anthropologist Werner Schiffauer in an interview with Claudia Mende. Werner Schiffauer is a lecturer in cultural anthropology at the Viadrina University in Frankfurt/Oder. His ethnological case studies such as *Die Gottesmänner – türkische Islamisten in Deutschland* (Suhrkamp 2000) provide an insight into the lives of Turkish migrants. Schiffauer is a member of the German academic council on migration (Rat für Migration) and co-editor of *Migrationsreport*.

Werner Schiffauer, is the state turning a blind eye to the tough reality of immigration problems?

At the moment, every phenomenon is being brought down to migration and integration. There is a problem with violence among young immigrants, and the criminologists say that although the number of juvenile offences is falling, the number of difficult multiple offenders is remaining constant or even rising. All immigration societies have to deal with this problem.

So why is the percentage of violent criminals among Muslim youths so high?

According to the criminologist Christian Pfeiffer, the rate of criminality among ethnic German emigrants from Eastern Europe, migrants from Yugoslavia and young people from Turkey is particularly high in Germany. But I find it difficult when people refer to Muslim youths,

because that Islamicises the problem. What was once traced back to integration and social problems is now linked with Islam. In my opinion, that's a catastrophic development.

What exactly do you object to?

If you take a closer look, you can see that the situation is far more complicated than that. Take for example the discussion on violence at the Rütli School in Berlin. Islam was blamed for that problem as well. But as it turns out, part of the problem was young Palestinian refugees with traumatic experiences and an extremely uncertain residential status in Germany, with all the well-known social consequences such as depression, unease over masculine roles, and domestic violence at home. These young people have no prospect of getting vocational training because of their residential status, and no future.

If you "Islamicise" a social problem



Werner Schiffauer is opposed to "Islamicising" social problems

like this, you are distorting reality. You have to look very carefully at who the offenders are. What we urgently need is detailed qualitative studies that give us an impression of the problem situations in migrant families.

Violence on the streets is one thing, but other young men are drifting into Islamist terrorism. What do you see as the causes for this phenomenon?

We have to draw a strict line between political violence and street violence. Young men who get involved in violent crime on the street often have little interest in Islam. Terrorists, on the other hand, carry out crimes in the name of their religion. And their biographies are also very diverse. The two Lebanese "suitcase bombers" had only been in Germany for a year, tried to settle at university and then turned to terrorism. The Hamburg cell from which Mohammed Atta came was well integrated and then became mobilised for the terrorist cause.

Some of the young people who planned an attack in the Sauerland region were middle-class ethnic Germans who had converted to Islam. If there's one thing the converts and the foreign-born radicals have in common, it's the fact that 80 percent of all terrorists have a university education. That's no coincidence; young stu-

dents tend to be open to radical positions.

Should Germany's internal security service be monitoring Muslim communities to pick up on these tendencies at an early stage?

It's not the mosques that breed cells like that. They're more likely to meet in university canteens, they get their information from the internet and form their ideologies in discussion circles. The religious communities organised in the various Muslim umbrella organisations are trying to develop a counter-programme to radical Islamism. From the point of view of revolutionary Muslims, these communities are made up of lukewarm compromisers.

What happens when "hate preachers" stir up the communities?

There are a handful of "hate preachers", for example in Ulm, but it's very important to the Muslim communities themselves that they control and isolate them. There is a strong group of Muslims in the communities who want to be integrated into German society. It's an absolute exception when populist preachers make radical speeches and are supported by the community. The large Milli Görüs community has sidelined about five of these radical preachers in the past few years. There are disputes going on in many communities over political orientation; but at the moment, the groups that favour integration are strong.

But the state can't just stand by and watch whether the communities distance themselves from radical preachers or not, can it?

Germany has laws against incitement to hatred. But what I am concerned about is when aliens law is used as a weapon against radical preachers. People are quick to suspect imams of being "hate preachers". Sometimes it's enough to say a prayer for the victims of the Iraq war in the mosque – I know that from my own reports for the courts. Unlike criminal law, aliens law hardly allows people any chance to defend themselves. And it's often used to pull out the weapon of

deportation. It even works when suspects are unlikely to be found guilty in a criminal court.

What can be done to calm the situation down?

I'm in favour of a culture of looking carefully. Criminal law can be an effective weapon. If someone is inciting religious hatred, that has to be sanctioned. But I'm against a dual criminal law system, one

for Germans and one for migrants. Treating people differently plays into the hands of precisely the people who argue that foreigners have no rights in Germany. A society that treats everybody on the same level has a far greater potential for integration.

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Werner Schiffauer: "A society that treats everybody on the same level has a far greater potential for integration"

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Archeologists unearth ancient horse tooth, thousands of rarities in Hodeidah

By: Almgid Dahesh Mojalli

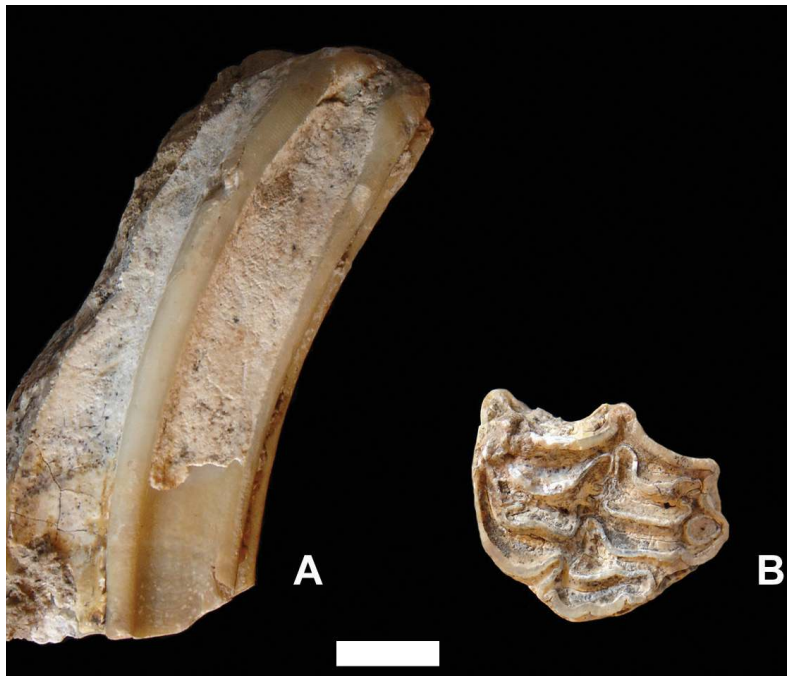
A French archeologist has discovered an ancient horse tooth, in addition to thousands of rare pieces during excavations last month in the area of Khamis Bani Saad in Hodeidah governorate's Tihama district.

The month-long dig was conducted and funded by the French mission at the University of Poitiers and Yemen's General Authority for Antiquities.

According to the French expert, Professor Roberto Macchiarelli, an important prehistoric (Middle Paleolithic) site called Shi'bat Dihya has been discovered near Wadi Surdud on the road connecting the villages of Khamis Bani Saad and Bajil.

The expert stated that the horse tooth is the dig's most important discovery, as that particular type of horse currently doesn't reside in the area, but rather in Middle Asia.

The nearly 100,000-year-old site also contains an abundance of lithic tools such as cores, flakes and blades



The horse's tooth is an important discovery.

made of volcanic rock, as well as the remains of incinerated bovines and horses.

Macchiarelli affirmed that such ani-

mals had lived there long ago, but left the area due to climate change, as the climate had been dry and cold, but is now wet and warm. This fact, in par-

ticular, may open several scopes for new studies in the field of climate change in Yemen.

Sedimentary analysis indicates that the climate at that time was dry and cooler than today, with open and grassy terrain.

Participating archeologists further propose that some pieces discovered at the site indicate that the area's inhabitants were fishermen, not farmers like today, meaning that the sea was nearer.

The Poitiers-Yemen project planned to excavate in Yemen since 2005 in an effort to identify the most ancient traces of human existence in the Tihama, as well as reconstruct the geological dynamics, climatic fluctuations and environmental scenarios during the Pleistocene period.

According to Yemen's General Authority for Antiquities, the first phase of the excavation involved three areas of five square meters each. The French mission will resume the second phase by the beginning of February with a team of Yemeni specialists working for a month in three new areas.

The Ottoman influence in Yemen

By: Hamed Thabet

Sana'a is the beating heart of Yemen, full of elemental force and vitality and considered a veritable paradise on Earth by its people. The city, whose name means "fortified place," is also one of the oldest inhabited Arab cities, purportedly founded by Shem, one of Noah's three sons.

The Old City of Sana'a has been inhabited continuously for more than 2,500 years and contains a wealth of intact architectural gems, for which reason the United Nations declared it a World Heritage Site in 1984. Efforts are underway to preserve some of its oldest buildings – some more than 400 years old – and many other buildings, as well as the area's surrounding ancient clay wall, which stands six to nine meters (20 to 30 feet) high and dates back to pre-Islamic times.

The Ottomans ruled Yemen for two periods, first in 1538 to 1638, and again from 1828 to 1918. Many changes occurred in both the Yemeni lifestyle and architecture during these two periods, especially in Sana'a.

Yemenis took jobs in the army alongside the Ottomans, thereby gaining military experience through them. Yemenis were good citizens, which made the Ottomans trust them enough to provide them with extra benefits like allowing them to become officers, advising Ottoman rulers and assisting judges and generals.

Besides gaining Turkish military knowledge, Yemen also adopted Turkish aesthetics. Buildings in the Old City of Sana'a were influenced by the Ottomans, as evidenced by the decorations added to them. Some Old City homes more than 400 years old are built of dark basalt stone and decorated with intricate frieze work. Additionally, the area's surrounding wall is extremely well-preserved due to Ottoman fortification.

Moreover, a total of 12 hammams or bath houses in the Turkish style were constructed during the Ottoman periods in Sana'a.

Many homes in Old Sana'a look like ancient skyscrapers, reaching several stories high, topped with flat roofs and decorated with elaborate friezes, stained glass windows and intricately carved window and door frames representing an accumulation of effort and offering a pleasing sight to those entering the area.

Sana'a has approximately 100 mosques, most dating back to the two Ottoman periods and incorporating sculpted and ornamented wood designs. Upon entering mosques in Old Sana'a, one notices Qur'anic verses carved into the walls and wooden doors. Ottoman craftsmanship such as this gradually fused into local Yemeni culture.



One of the Koshks from inside where women can see outside without being seen. It is also useful to see who the caller at the door is. Tainted glass which gave a majestic look.

Windowmaking

The Turkish influence upon buildings was especially prevalent in the style of windows, including mashrabiyya or latticed windows each with their own meaning and use in Yemeni architecture.

Mashrabiyya, or latticed windows, have numerous holes that are necessary for ventilation. Such windows don't completely face the sun, but rather allow air to enter, in order to maintain a constantly cool room temperature.

Because women in those days weren't able to go outside as much as men, this type of window provided a way to stay in contact with the world outside their homes. Women could observe the goings-on outside without being seen and check who was at the door. Windows like these are still in use today.

Shubbak windows are often made of brick or stone, whereas wooden shubbaks are small, cage-like mashrabiyyas affixed to the outside wall. Shubbak windows were used for both ventilation and for preventing the cold from entering.

Dubbed with the Turkish word for kiosk, kushk windows are decorated very artistically with patterns much more complicated than the other types of Turkish windows.

One such kushk is in the palace of Imam Ahmed's daughter, who was mar-

ried to one of the sons of Shami, who is one of the famous families in Sana'a.

Made for Imam Yahya's son Ahmed in 1938 in Bir Al-Azab – where most kushks are found in Yemen – Khushk Al-Khair is one of the largest kushks in Sana'a, able to seat three to six people. The imam's wives used this kushk to peer outside without being seen, since kushks were used much like enclosed balconies.

During the 18th century, Yemen prospered economically mainly due to its trade in coffee and incense, which afforded it contact with the outside world. Because of this, Yemenis learned more about the uses for glass, one of the best window-making materials, but also a rare and very expensive commodity.

Stained glass windows enjoyed popularity because when the sun shone through them, it refracted beautiful colors into a building's interior; however, due to its rarity and high cost, such glass was used almost exclusively by the wealthy.

Ottoman development of Yemen

Under Ottoman rule, Yemen developed an extensive coffee trade, with the coastal town of Mokha becoming an internationally important coffee-producing hub. Despite this, the Yemeni highlands, which also were under Ottoman rule, remained economically and culturally isolated from the outside

world from the mid-17th century until nearly the mid-19th century, during which time modern thought and technology greatly influenced Western Europe.

Originally belonging to Ottoman residents of Sana'a, Souq Al-Milh is one of Yemen's oldest existing markets. Although its name means "Salt Market," a wide variety of goods were and continue to be sold there today, including vegetables, spices, qat, pottery, woodwork and clothing.

The Ottomans experienced significant opposition from Yemenis in the early 1900s under the leadership of Zaidi imam Yahya Al-Din. Yemenis staged numerous uprisings and after years of rebellion, the Ottomans finally granted Imam Yahya autonomy over much of Northern Yemen in 1911. Defeat in World War I (1914-1918) forced the Ottomans to evacuate Yemen in 1918.

With the passage of time and their country modernizing, Yemenis have made a shift from the old to the new. However, the Ottoman influence on Yemeni architecture remains apparent not only in the old homes of historic Sana'a, but also in the newer ones, as such traditional influence continues in modern Yemeni building. Yemenis still can feel the spirit of Ottoman influence in their lives, something that fascinates the rest of the world.

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Ali Mohammed Luqman, a Yemeni pioneer in romantic poetry and poetic drama

Prepared by: Eyad N. Al-Samman

Ali Mohammed Luqman was a Yemeni poet, playwright, journalist and politician. Born in Aden in 1918, Luqman was raised in an open cultural environment by his father, a pioneer in Aden's enlightenment movement during his generation.

Luqman received his primary and secondary education in Aden before traveling to study at the Islamic University in India in 1934. Moving to Egypt in 1944, he enrolled in Cairo's American University, from which he graduated with honors with a bachelor's in journalism.

Upon returning to Aden, Luqman was editor-in-chief of Fatah Al-Jazeera (The Arabian Peninsula's Girl) newspaper established by his father in January 1940. In April 1949, the General Assembly political bloc formed in Aden, with Luqman elected its secretary-general in June 1944.

Luqman contributed positively to this period's political activities, being appointed president of Aden's Cultural Council following the end of World War II in 1945.

In 1952, Luqman established and was editor-in-chief of the weekly Al-Qalam Al-Adeni (The Adeni Pen) newspaper, the General Assembly's official newspaper, and adopted the unique idea of Yemeni unity.

Still during British colonization, Luqman became a member of Aden's Constitutional Council in 1959, while at the same time continuing his journalistic endeavors in Aden by founding and heading up a daily newspaper called Al-Akhbar (The News) in 1964.

South Yemen gained independence on Nov. 30, 1967, thus ending 128 years of British rule, as well as the period of political disagreements between various national authorities in Aden. Following the National Liberation Front's emergence as an absolute dominant power in Aden, thousands of nationalists were displaced to North Yemen, including Luqman, who resettled in Taiz in 1972, working in a store.

Besides being a pioneer in and a reviver of romantic poetry, Luqman is considered a prominent figure in Yemeni literature, journalism and politics. He's one of the great figures occupying first place in Aden cultural life between 1946 and 1966.

Attempting his first poetry at age 16, Luqman's diverse literary works include divans, poetic dramas, critiques and journalistic pieces. He published some of his early poems in Fatah Al-Jazeera newspaper and eventually penned eight poetic divans, including one in the Adeni dialect.

Luqman's first divan, 1944's "Al-Watar Al-Maghmoor" (The Obscure String), was the first poetic divan published in Aden. In it, he renewed



the structure of classical poetry by employing three different poetic meters in a single poem and by changing the rhythm within the same poem.

His second divan was 1945's "Sorrows in the Night," followed by "Moans of a Nation" in 1961, which included numerous social concerns and political attitudes associated with pre-revolutionary poetry. Luqman issued the divan, "Hadeer Al-Qafilah" (Caravan's Roaring), in June 1965, therein poetically expressing his viewpoint on various causes such as Palestine and Arab nationalism.

"The Seven Routes" (1969) studied Arab peoples' happiness and sadness, such as gaining political independence from their colonizers. Among his other divans are "Stranger's Nights" (1965) and "Al-Warrad" (Goods and Water Supplier), which was written in the Adeni dialect.

In the field of dramatic literature, Luqman is considered a pioneer in Yemeni poetic drama with his seven poetic dramas. He began writing one-act plays and publishing them in Fatah Al-Jazeera newspaper in 1941.

His first poetic drama was 1943's "Pygmalion," which was performed onstage at the British Institute Hall in Aden. Depicting a Cypriot sculptor of the same name and derived from Roman mythology, the play later was published in 1948.

"The Lost Justice" (1956) was a social and romantic poetic drama by Luqman looking at human relationships between man and woman and mother and child. Among his other romantic dramas was "Qais and Layla," published in August 1957, portraying the conflict between the old and new aspects of social life through the romantic relationship between the two protagonists and the various obstacles they encounter.

The 1966 historical drama, "The Arabs' Brunette," depicted the life of Zenobia, the Syrian Queen of Palmyra who flourished in the third century A.D., and her struggle against the Romans. It was filled with lines depicting the nationalist attitudes of Yemenis against British occupation.

Luqman's other dramas include "The Desired Shadow" and "Adonis or Peace on Earth."

In the field of political writings and critique, Luqman issued a 1949 book entitled, "Autonomy or Adenis' Sufferings and Expectations," which included social and political essays about situations in Aden. Additionally, he penned another book, "The Victory of Intellect," published by Aden's Cultural Council, in addition to an essay in English about Fatah Al-Jazeera newspaper.

Luqman died Dec. 24, 1978 while receiving medical treatment in the United States and was buried in Sana'a. His intellectual maturity helped him become an excellent and a rightful researcher. While free of self-conceit, no one could dispute his cognitive richness and his rapid comprehension.



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Students protest increase in bus fares

By: Amira Al-Shariff
For Yemen Times

A demonstration that started with a few university students and grew to include over a hundred protestors took place at the New Sana'a University roundabout on Sunday, Jan. 27.

The students, who gathered at around 12:30 pm, protested against the sudden bus fare increase from 20 Yemeni Riyals to 50. Although the increase has been attributed to a rumoured increase in fuel prices, the actual price of fuel has not yet increased.

"Every time there is a price increase, life becomes unbearable; how do you expect us to commute to the university now that the prices have more than doubled?" said one angry student.

The spontaneous rally dispersed after one hour due to interventions of security forces, alerted to the traffic jam caused by the student protest.

Some of the bus drivers denied any alleged increase. Ahmed Hashim, a bus driver, explained that the fuel price for 20 liters of gas was 1,200 YR yesterday and is the same amount today. As to why some bus drivers have been demanding 50 YR instead of the standard 20 YR, he said he did not know.

However, some commuters have



Students protesting the increase in bus fares by some bus drivers. "Might as well start walking to university if the bus fares remain high," they complained.

already begun paying the new fares. Sarah Wolff, an American student in Yemen, says she has been paying the increased fare for the last week. "Everyone else in the bus paid the same price, so I assumed it is the standard price now," she said.

Official newspapers earlier this month contradicted rumors of fuel price hikes, stating that there is no real increase. In fact, a petrol station in Khawlan Street that tried to close down temporary in order to increase fuel demands and prices were forced open by police who were

patrolling such stations. "The police checked the tanks of the station to see if it was true that the station was empty. When they found that it had fuel they forced its manager to reopen the station to customers and sell at the standard price," said Khalid Al-Badani a resident of the area.

However, the price of gas cylinders used for cooking has increased almost 30% since the beginning of the year. The increase happened during a shortage in natural gas supply in Yemen. Citizens predicted fuel prices would subsequently increase.

Seminar to discuss political role of tribes in Yemen

By: Yemen Times Staff

The Yemeni Observatory for Human Rights, in cooperation with the International Development Research Center in Canada, will be holding a two-day seminar on the political role of tribes in Yemen.

The seminar, which will conclude the first phase of a joint project between the Yemeni observatory and the Canadian center, will introduce research results and existing studies on the subject, as well as form an occasion for discussion. The main themes of the seminar are: the tribe and economy, the tribe and women, institutionalising the political role of tribes, and the tribe and the state.

This partnership is part of a regional project started in July 2007 on the political role of tribes in Yemen, Iraq and Jordan, and funded by the Canadian center.

The seminar will be held at the Taj Sheba hotel on Wednesday and will include contributions and research papers from businessmen, political leaders, academics and researchers as well as civil society representatives.

The event will begin with an introduction of the project, then the first session will focus on the tribe, the state and the market. The second session concerns the experiences of political parties in dealing with tribes, and the third session is

about citizenship under the co-existence of tribes and civil society.

The second day starts with a session on gender roles in the legislature, Islamic jurisdiction and tribal culture, with a second session on the representation of Parliament in a traditional society.

Political Role of Tribes: Analysis of Tribalism, Islamism and Gender in Iraq, Jordan and Yemen

The institution of the tribe continues to represent a major component of social structure throughout the Middle East, particularly in Iraq, Jordan and Yemen. Tribal relations are deeply intertwined with political relations. In a country like Yemen, for example, tribes constitute a formidable challenge to - and at times even appear stronger than - the state.

When countries such as Jordan and Yemen adopted political pluralism, the political parties that were brought into existence reflected tribal influence, some of them becoming mere extensions of tribal institutions. In Iraq, occupation by the Coalition forces provided fertile ground for the growth of tribalism, ethnicity and sectarianism. Animosity between the three main groups (Shi'a, Sunni and Kurdish) unleashed by the ousting of Saddam Hussein's regime aggravated contests for control of the country and its political organization.

The project will endeavor to understand how clans and tribes act as political units and how their participation in the political system promotes or impedes good governance and the sense of active citizenship. They will also look at the relationship between tribes and Islamism, and the impact of tribes on the participation of women in policy processes. The study is expected to result in practical recommendations for integrating tribes into a modern political system.

Partner organizations

The Yemeni Observatory for Human Rights is a non-governmental civil society organization that focuses on democracy and human rights issues in Yemen. It is active in monitoring violations against human rights and freedoms in Yemen and issues annual reports on the situation.

The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) is a Crown corporation created by the Canadian Parliament in 1970 to help developing countries use science and technology to find practical, long-term solutions to the social, economic, and environmental problems they face. Their support is directed toward creating a local research community whose work will build healthier, more equitable, and more prosperous societies. The IDRC believes in empowerment through knowledge.



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