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Inside:  **5** YASP boosts role of women in agribusiness  **8** Malaria threatens Hajjah governorate  **10** "Yemen's heritage is precious and deserves tremendous care" - Elizabeth White

Kharaz refugee camp caught in crossfire between government and tribes

By: Amel Al-Ariqi

SANA'A, March 9 — The Yemeni government will not move the Kharaz camp to another region, said officials from the United Nations refugee agency (UNHCR) in Yemen. The camp has been caught between feuding local tribes and the government.

"So far neither the Yemeni government nor the UN refugee agency has discussed this topic," said Saddo Quol, senior protection officer with the UNHCR.

Quol's comment came after the statements by the Dutch Development Cooperation Minister, Bert Koenders, who visited the camp last week and suggested moving operations to another loca-

tion inside Yemen.

During his visit, Koenders was received by female African refugees who held their arms up and crossed above their heads to signify that they are being held as prisoners in the camp.

"The camp is located in an isolated semi-arid area in the Lahj governorate (approximately 100 miles west of Yemen's commercial capital, Aden) with harsh climate conditions," said Quol of the refugees' behavior.

According to the Dutch media, most of the refugees inside the camp angrily complained to the Dutch minister about the awful conditions inside the camp, saying that the camp "is like a prison," and asked to be transferred to a third country.

"The development cooperation minister's staff and accompanying journalists had handwritten letters pressed into their hands, with pleas for the lives of the refugees to be improved by allowing them to go to another country," according to Netherlands radio website. "A group of women tried to approach the minister, but were held back by Yemeni soldiers." One of the minister's staff saw what happened and promised the women that they could speak to him later.

Dr. Ali Khamis, director of medical care facilities inside the camp, explained to the Yemen Times that the camp is going through difficult times due to a problem between the tribes in the district and the Yemeni government. "The tribal men demanded the government to release one of their influential men from the prison. Nowadays they send threat letters to the UN refugee officials asking them to put pressure on the Yemeni government to meet their demands," said Khamis. "There are many activities inside the camp have been suspended due to the unstable security conditions inside the camp." Only the outer clinics have stopped working, while the emergency units still receive the refugees.

The Dutch media quoted Koenders as saying that the atmosphere inside the camp was tense as a group of 200 armed men came to the camp the night the minister visited. The people found this



The refugee population permanently living in Kharaz camp is mainly vulnerable individuals made of mainly of refugee women and children.

threatening and the camp had to be guarded by the army. "Tribes in the district are hostile because they want to force the Yemeni government to grant certain favors," said the Dutch minister.

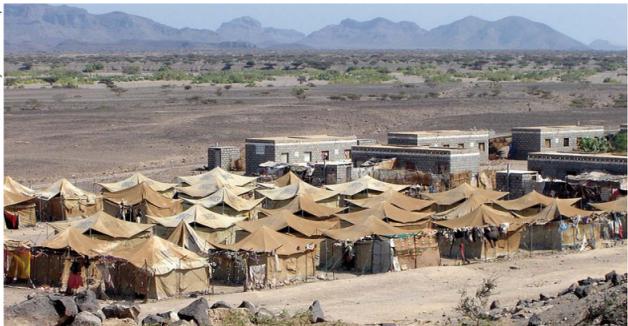
According to UNHCR statistics, the refugee population permanently living in Kharaz camp is mainly vulnerable individuals who are dependant upon UNHCR assistance, made of mainly of

refugee women and children. More than 60 percent of the total population is under the age of 18 and women are the heads in 50 percent of the families in the camp.

The most recent statistics from 2006 reveal that the camp houses 9,297 people, consisting of 8,562 Somalis and 735 Ethiopians. All African refugees came to Yemen in risky voyages over the Red

Sea, where many refugees lost their lives before reaching the Yemeni coast. Others died due to the mistreatment by the smugglers.

The Dutch minister promised half a million Euros to improve the situation of African refugees in Yemen. In April, the Netherlands has promised to send a naval frigate to Somali waters to protect relief supplies from being plundered by pirates.



The camp is located in an isolated semi-arid area.

Government officials create obstacles to mediation efforts, say sources

By: Mohammed Bin Sallam

SA'ADA, March 9 — Both the presidential mediation committee and Qatari mediation team are working hard to implement an agreement reached by the government and Houthis in Qatar last February, Sheikh Saleh Habra, who represented Houthis in the agreement, told the Yemen Times. He added that mediators'

efforts have not been deterred by violations and obstacles created by "war brokers" planning to foil mediation and reconciliation efforts.

According to reliable sources, the Qatar Red Crescent Association began compensating citizens whose property was damaged in the Sa'ada war that first broke out in June 2004. They disclosed that some government officials created obstacles for the Qatari team

in charge of assessing the damage and compensating affected citizens, as they planned to illegally take a portion of the compensation approved for citizens. As a result, Qatari foreign minister assistant Saif Albuainain, the team leader, left Yemen for Doha to discuss the problem with his government.

Sa'ada tribal sources stated that government troops struck Dhaiban

mosque in Haidan district with tanks during last Friday's noon prayer, leaving four people injured, two seriously. The sources added that Haidan's Qahza village was attacked with tanks at the same time.

The presidential mediation committee began investigating what happened in light of a report from citizens about the attacks.

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In brief

ADEN

Workshop on industrial zones in Yemen to be held

The Ministry of Industry and Trade, in collaboration with Egyptian experts, will organize a workshop on Sunday focusing on schemes for establishing industrial zones in Aden, Lahj and Abyan provinces.

The four-day workshop will review several plans and studies on infrastructure requirements for the industrial zones. The studies were conducted by an Egyptian committee and headed by deputy industry minister Samir Abu al-Naja.

A symposium on the importance of industrial zones and their role in development and creating jobs will follow the workshop.

DHAMAR

FCC to distribute educational equipment for Dhamar schools

The French Cultural Center (FCC) will launch on Monday a program for distributing educational equipment to six schools in various districts in the province. The program is funded by the French embassy in Sana'a.

In a statement to Saba news agency, program coordinator Saif Dakha said that a workshop for 24 French language teachers on teaching methods and modern electronic communication will be held during the program. He pointed out that 3,000 students are studying French through the program.

HODEIDA

Workshop on UNICEF's children report

60 representatives from health, education and media institutions will participate in a workshop on Saturday concerning a UNICEF report on children's conditions in Yemen for the year 2008.

The UNICEF-organized workshop reviewed a number of documents, including plans for reducing child and mother mortality rates, the media's role regarding child mortality, health conditions for children and mothers, filling the gap between the media and health sectors and encouraging the media to promote social activities for reducing mortality rates among children.

The report stated that in Yemen, one of the world's poorest countries, 84,000 children die every year because of diseases they could easily be protected against.

SANA'A

FAO takes Yemeni proposal to define Myiasis as cross-border disease

The World Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) accepted a Yemeni proposal to regard the Myiasis disease as a cross-border disease requiring concerted actions.

In the 29th FAO conference held recently in Cairo, Yemen put forward many proposals to fight such diseases, in addition to promoting cooperation among Far East countries and advocating the study of plant and animal genes.

Agriculture and irrigation minister Mansour al-Howshabi said the conference tackled the issues of cross-border diseases, promoting agricultural development as a vital factor in reducing emissions and identifying practices that will help restrict emissions and improve the management of natural resources to create sustainable living.

SOCOTRA

Socotra candidate for world's seven wonders

The Swiss New Seven Wonders Foundation announced that Socotra Island is on the list of 77 international sites being considered for the new seven wonders of the world.

Among the 77 sites, the island is ranked 74th.

Other sites include Al-Ahsa' oasis in Saudi Arabia, the Dead Sea in Jordan, the Jeita Cave in Lebanon and the Nile River in Egypt and Sudan.

In the second stage, 21 sites will be chosen from the list, from which seven will be selected in January 2009.

Surveys have revealed that more than a third of close to 800 or so plant species on Socotra are found nowhere else in the world. Botanists rank the flora of Socotra among the ten most endangered island flora in the world. Fourteen mammal and 175 bird species that currently live on the island have been recorded as endemic species. Having been virtually isolated from the rest of the world for a long period, Socotra remains one of the most fascinating places on earth.

Draft law for promoting independent Judicial Authority

By: Nadia Al-Sakkaf

SANA'A, March 9 — Independence of the Judiciary System has been raised as one of the issues that must be dealt with in order to promote democracy, human rights and investment in Yemen. Driven by a Yemeni human rights organization known as HOOD, a project proposing a draft law for the judicial authority is underway with funding from the Middle East Partnership Initiative. The draft law has been completed and was proposed a Parliament member (MP) to Parliament. It is still with the Constitution Committee, which will approve its consistency with the constitution before sending it to the Justice and Endowment Committee at Parliament for discussion. It is the latter committee's responsibility to review the draft's content before forwarding it to Parliament for voting, said MP Ali Abu Hulika, chair of the Constitution Committee.

The proposed law is based on article 149 of the Yemeni constitution, which states that "The judiciary authority is an autonomous authority in its judicial, financial and administrative aspects and the General Prosecution is one of its sub-bodies...The judges are independent and not subject to any authority, except the law. No other body may interfere in any way in the affairs and procedures of justice..." However, other than these few lines there is no mention or practice endorsing the independence of the judiciary authority.

The judges are treated as employees of the Ministry of Justice, which gives



On July 2004 Sana'a Criminal Court charged six Al-Qaeda suspects in connection with the bombing of the USS Cole 2000. Suspects shown at the courtyard with judge and court staff. With the new judicial law, judges will be more capable of dealing with terror suspects without being dragged into the political power struggle.

them their salaries and supervises their performance and related issues, such as pensions and absenteeism.

The highest judicial branch of the state is the Supreme Council for Justice, which is comprised of 15 judges appointed by the president, who is head of the executive authority of the republic.

"The new law will enable judges to be free from state control and then truly speak their mind without fearing consequences in their paychecks or appointments," said Khaled Al-Anisi, executive director of HOOD.

Instead of the judges being appointed, they would be elected, with five judges directly elected by Parliament, who would hold the highest positions in the Judiciary authority. Another five would be elected by the Judicial Forum for Judges, to be created. Two would be elected by the General Association of the Supreme Court. One judge would come from the General Association for the Attorney General's office, one would be appointed by the Supreme Judicial Council to become the dean of the council's institution, and finally the last of the 15 judges would be the chief

of the lawyers syndicate.

The new proposal also deals with issues such as the judiciary authority's budget, giving the authority full autonomy in spending and in defining the budget, which should be no less than 10 percent of the national budget. The new law touches on operational issues such as judicial leave and vacations that suspend the courts for three months every year. The new law grants judges an annual leave of one month, which they have to take alternatively so that the courts would remain in session.

"We are excited about this draft because it bases the merits given to judges on seniority and not on who knows who. It is a modern law and would create a leap in the judicial system in Yemen," said judge Taher Al-Tayar, chair of the board of trustees of the Judicial Independence Research and Studies Center, a non-governmental organization concerned with carrying out legal research and reporting violations of the executive authority against the judicial authority.

The new law prevents judges from holding executive positions in the government, a widespread phenomenon in the current system. According to Al-Anisi, this would also prevent judges from playing a role in politics, as they should always hold an unbiased and independent position.

The draft law has been distributed to judges, MPs, government authorities and concerned bodies. Judges have expressed their pleasure although they are apprehensive about it, since it would limit the control of the Ministry of Justice and put matters into the hands of

the judges themselves.

There are around 1,600 general attorneys and 2,500 judges in Yemen, some of which are retired. The new law would improve the living conditions of the retired judges, since it would make their pensions equal to the salary of working judges. Through the proposed law, they would play an active role in the elections being members of the Judicial Forum for Judges.

This is the first time a project of its kind has been created for the reform of the judicial system. The World Bank and USAID, among other donors, have helped reform the current system through education and awareness training for the judges and lawyers. However, these events were done in partnership with the Ministry of Justice and did not target the judiciary system as an independent authority.

Yemen's judiciary has five types of courts: criminal, civil and personal status (for example, divorce and inheritance), kidnapping/terrorism, commercial, and martial. All laws are codified from *sharia* (Islamic law), under which there are no jury trials. Criminal cases are adjudicated by a judge, who plays an active role in questioning witnesses and the accused. In addition to regular courts, the law permits a system of tribal adjudication for noncriminal issues, although in practice tribal "judges" often adjudicate criminal cases as well. The results of such mediation carry the same, if not greater, weight as court judgments. Persons jailed under the tribal system usually are not charged formally with a crime but stand publicly accused of their transgression.

Malaria fighting project begins near Saudi border

By: Hamed Thabet

SANA'A, March 8 — An extensive Saudi-Yemeni campaign to combat malaria, which began March 3, will continue throughout this month in three Yemeni governorates near the border with Saudi Arabia, with the aim of reducing malaria in those areas.

Public Health and Population Minister Abdulkarim Rasa' said the campaign will target 13 districts near the Saudi-Yemeni border and parts of the Tihama region.

The campaign is targeting 263,319 citizens in more than 45,000 homes with anti-mosquito pesticide. According to Mohammed Al-Hinami, a senior official at the National Malaria

Control Program, "Specialized teams will spray 141,335 rooms with effective anti-malaria pesticides," he said, adding that more than 300 workers will carry out the campaign.

According to the World Health Organization office in Yemen, approximately 60 percent of Yemen's population lives in malarial areas. Yemen witnesses 800,000 to 900,000 malaria cases annually and approximately 12,000 die of the disease every year. Globally, malaria causes at least a million deaths per year.

The one-month campaign will enhance the successes achieved during the first phase conducted two months ago, but this campaign is more serious, which reveals the Saudi health min-

istry's readiness for increased cooperation in this field, said Hajjah Governor Farid Mujawar.

Earlier this year, a mosquito net campaign distributed 381,138 mosquito nets to 95 malaria-infected districts near the Saudi-Yemeni border and parts of the Tihama on Jan. 15. However, Hajjah governorate's Bani Qais and Aslam districts haven't received anything until now and still are awaiting their turn.

Mujawar added that authorities have asked locals in the targeted areas and districts to cooperate with the field teams in order to ease their job.

Malaria also is entering Yemen through infected Somali immigrants. New research shows that a high influx

of Somalis represents a continued risk of reintroducing the parasite.

According to Yemen's Interior Ministry, malaria is the most widespread disease among refugees and more are arriving daily. There are approximately 800,000 African migrants in Yemen, mostly from the Horn of Africa, and most are Somali.

Another cause of malaria is the Plasmodium falciparum parasite, which causes 90 percent of Yemen's malaria cases, with WHO affirming that the parasite is responsible for the vast majority of malaria deaths.

Minister Rasa' notes, "Yemen can't truly combat malaria alone because it's a poor country with little resources," which is why the Gulf states have sup-

ported Yemen with \$47 million to fight malaria. Additionally, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria has contributed to Yemen's anti-malaria program.

Rasa' emphasized the importance of activating Yemen and Saudi Arabia's malaria-fighting partnership, which began in 2001.

The National Malaria Control Program says the two countries aim to make the Arabian Peninsula malaria-free by 2015.

In this regard, 16,707 homes, inhabited by more than 100,000 residents were sprayed last March, thanks to a Saudi-Yemeni campaign in six border districts.

Read Report Page 8

28 students to hold positions in Sana'a local council

By: Alia Ishaq
For the Yemen Times

SANA'A, March 9 — Children gathered at 28 different schools and associations on last week to participate in elections, supervised by the Democratic School and the Supreme Committee for Elections and Referendum in Sana'a. Four hundred and fifty candidates, including 250 girls, participated in the elections, which chose a student representative from each of school and organization to participate in the Local Council for Children.

"The elected children will deal with issues that concern them, like planning activities and projects that will benefit Yemeni children, as well as dealing with environmental problems in their neighborhoods and schools," said Jamal Al-Shami, principal of the Democratic School. "The children will also attend [council] meetings and express themselves alongside adults," he added.

The elected children included 15 boys and 13 girls. Three members of the group are special needs students, while another three belong to the marginalized al-akhdam people.

The marginalized and disabled students participated in the elections as well. The marginalized gathered for their elections near the Hilltown hotel and disabled students met for elections at special centers where they study and receive treatment.

The election is a project of the Child Protection Initiative, a non-governmental body that promotes children's rights. The elections are also supported by the World Bank and the Arab Urban Development Institute (AUDI), a regional non-governmental, non-profit urban research technical and consulting



Four hundred and fifty candidates, including 250 girls, participated in the elections.

organization.

Afrah Hamood, an 8th grader at Om Salamah public school in Sana'a, said she has high hopes for the Children's Local Council. "We want to be able to have more activities, a library at our school and cultural programs, in addition to music classes," said Hamood.

Hamood's friend, Samar Hamed, said she thinks that the elected children will make positive changes for children and Sana'a at large. "We want better care for the environment and more attention towards children's right issues," said Hamed. "I'm very optimistic!"

"I'll do my best to fulfill my promises," said Maha Al-Moradi, a 10th grade student at Om Salamah who won her school's spot on the local council. "I promise to help support school activities, provide more libraries and find reasons and solutions to why a lot of students perform badly at scientific subjects." Al-Moradi was one of 16

nominees who participated in the election at her school.

The first such election took place in 2003 and was held exclusively in Al-Tahrir district, in which only 17 children were elected to participate in the council.

"The previous election wasn't a successful experience since it included only one district, whereas this election includes the whole capital," said Al-Shami. He added that he was optimistic about the project this time around.

The first meeting of the Local Children's Council was held on Wednesday, March 5. The elected representatives gathered in order to get to know each other before deciding who will fill which post inside the council. In the upcoming meetings, the children will elect one person from their group to be the council president and choose other positions for the rest.

Continued from page 1

Government officials create obstacles to mediation efforts, say sources

Locals claimed they were not involved in the war against the government, but were subjected to harassment by personnel from the 17th military division, commanded by Abdulaziz Al-Shihari, a Salafi extremist.

"After the mediation committee investigated the incident, it discovered that military soldiers fired at the mosque, full of people performing their Friday prayers, with heavy machine guns and tanks, because children standing near the mosque chanted the slogan: 'Death to America...death to Israel'," Habra said, pointing out that the committee found ten large holes in the mosque as a result of the attack.

Other tribal sources said that the incident was caused by a sharp dispute between Houthi supporters and army personnel deployed in the area, as the troops didn't allow Houthis to enter Dhaiban mosque to perform their prayers unless they laid down their weapons. The Houthis also prevented two soldiers from entering the mosque at gunpoint during a previous Friday prayer. The soldiers returned to their positions without performing their prayers.

Local sources in the Safra district disclosed that many Houthi supporters entered three Sunni mosques in the Al-Ammar area on Friday and chanted slogans against America and Israel inside the mosques following the noon prayer. The area's locals then demanded that the Houthis not recite the slogans in their mosques, as they did not want clashes with government troops. "If they want to chant such slogans against Israel and America, they can do so in their own mosques," the sources were quoted as saying.

Many observers feared that Houthis, allegedly receiving regional support, may breach the Doha-brokered peace deal and resume destructive fighting with army troops. The Yemeni Defense Ministry accused Houthis of killing a prisoner-of-war, but later published a statement on 26September.net claiming that only committee members Abdul Al-Janadi and Mohammad Al-Khawi accused Houthis of the act.

In a statement to army-affiliated 26September.net, Al-Janadi said, "I did not accuse Houthis of killing the citizen Aziz Qashaqish. We received information that this victim was kidnapped by Houthis one month ago and after a while was found killed inside his home. We then submitted a

report on the murder to the security committee, chaired by Mohammed Al-Khawi, to investigate the incident. Having identified the killers, we will announce them to the media, but now we cannot accuse anybody of killing Qashaqish."

Asked how he was quoted by the army-affiliated website as saying that Houthis are responsible for the murder, Al-Janadi replied, "When a journalist asked me what will happen if Houthis are found guilty of killing Qashaqish, I then answered him that this is a flagrant violation of the peace deal and we will demand the Houthis' leader to hand over the perpetrators to the court."

Al-Janadi concluded, "As my statement was manipulated or misunderstood, I am obliged to write any statement from now on by my own hand and then publish it in media outlets as is, particularly after a false statement was attributed to me."

26September.net, Al-Jumhouria Daily and May.net, all state-run media outlets, published the story. Also, in its latest issue, Akhbar Al-Yaum Daily reported Qashaqish's killing, urging the relevant authorities to investigate the incident, but it didn't hold Houthis accountable for the crime.

26September.net, however, on Tuesday reported a story with the headline, "Houthis kill war prisoner, amputate him and bury him inside his home." The story was also published by other media outlets.

Security committee chairman Mohammed Al-Khawi denied that Houthis have connections with Qashaqish's murder, indicating that the committee is still investigating the motives behind it. He confirmed that those involved in the crime, whether Houthis or others, will be revealed as soon as the investigation is finished.

Local sources clarified that the victim was not held captive by Houthis, venting their anger at the media for publishing what they claim is an incorrect story. They added that the victim was engaged in various disputes with drug traffickers, who may be involved in his killing.

Media sources confirmed that at least 6 people believed to be Houthi loyalists were injured at a military checkpoint in Sehar district. One of the injured's relatives said the incident occurred at 9:00 p.m. when a pickup truck transporting passengers was suspected by police of being loyal to Abdulmalik Al-Houthi. Following a heated argument with soldiers at the checkpoint, the soldiers fired into the truck, injuring six of its passengers.

WHAT IT MEANS...

Muslim Identity & Global Change

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).

The controversy in the UK over voluntary partial adoption of shariah law to help solve domestic disputes within some Muslim migrant communities led to a storm of criticism of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the leader of the Anglican Church, over what he did not say, and very little discussion on the implications of what he did say.

The subsequent bashing of the Archbishop with the image of violent intolerant Islam did not reflect the findings of the recent global Gallup poll on what world Muslims think, and was ritualistic, political and diversionary. But it did convey that part of British public opinion is now frightened of Islam and that British Muslims are nervous that British identity and loyalty are in question. The problems encountered in UK are not unique and are part of a more global picture. The Archbishop was right to imply that a new synthesis must emerge, but this goes wider than a new synthesis with Islam.

First, globalization is accelerating and migrants from countryside to town may find themselves marginalized in poorer urban communities, whether in Pakistan or the UK. Economics is the driver and social development has to catch up. Second, urbanization and the drive for secular rights and democracy, especially in rapidly modernizing Muslim states, conflicts with traditional tribal and religious values. Thirdly, society whether in Europe or in modernizing Muslim societies wants consumerism and secular democracy but seeks to preserve religious, cultural and regional identities. We cannot build the new

world in the cathedral of a shopping mall with the values of a TV soap opera. There has to be more to life than that.

Given these rapid changes those feeling loss of identity search for their roots, or seek to retain the values of the past. There can be a retreat from globalization and modernity as a reaction to lack of success in adaptation to new circumstances, and this can lead to pockets of rural under development in between factories and shopping malls. This is now happening in Europe as well as in the countries in economic and social transition from whence the migrants come. The marginalized part of the Muslim migrant community in the UK has a disproportionate number of its young men in jail, with too many poorer male migrants held back by lack of education and training. These are problems of economic deprivation and underdevelopment, not of religion.

It is inevitable in this process that the host society changes as well as the migrants, and in the UK these demographic and social changes may be one of the reasons why Islamophobia can become a symptom of a deeper unease at the felt loss of identity, especially by the marginalized groups in the majority culture - "the poor whites".

There are therefore two parallel synergistic processes going on in the UK. The first that the migrants are changing, and the second



By: Dr. Terry Lacey

that Britain is changing, and the two are related. Recent Indonesian first time visitors to UK are quite surprised at how cosmopolitan it has become after waves of migration from Commonwealth countries and from Eastern Europe along with large numbers of visitors from the Middle East. Just as Britain is changing, the migrants are changing, not just because they have moved from rural Asia to urban Britain but also because the countries they came from are in a dynamic process of urbanization and modernization.

Paradoxically some of the rural under development in British back streets reflects relative isolation from the rapidity of economic and social changes in Pakistan and Bangladesh as well as from modernity in the UK. Some older migrants have missed out on the modernization process in both societies and their children really suffer because of this! This is a double whammy that has to be addressed or it will lead to more problems, but these are problems of under development, not directly attributable to Muslim identity, which can and does incorporate modernity.

A key part of the modernization process in Muslim societies is to find a new balance between the secular rights and freedoms which the great majority of people now demand, and the cultural and social implica-

tions of the religious identity which still defines who they are. The determination to acquire the first has to be reconciled with the strong desire retain the second. This requires some dexterity but is not impossible. This also becomes easier to manage if the gaps between haves and have-nots can be reduced. The degree of economic under development generally affects the intensity of the feelings on religious and cultural identity politics, but some of the feelings of frustration or of being somehow second class or a victim of great changes persist as education and income improves.

Some of the greatest sense of frustration for the young may be when the speed of actual economic and social achievements does not correspond to the revolution in rising expectations. Commonly young people in this position no longer respect much their elders, the mosque, or the traditions they come from. These are the conditions in which extremist ideas can prosper, filling anomalous gaps in identity and self esteem.

The voluntary adoption of shariah law in marginalized migrant communities, far from contributing to extremism, as has been suggested, may help to strengthen and adapt traditional values so that local UK migrant communities can address the issues of gradual incremental change on a firmer basis, using ideas people already know and understand to help resolve domestic and family disputes which may now be cross border in nature affecting land rights "back home" as well as property rights in UK.

Much depends here on building wiser local leadership that includes younger people and

women, backed by social and community workers who understand where people are coming from and what is needed. An interchange of best practice between social workers dealing with urbanization between UK cities and cities in Asia would seem a very sensible idea, and might help pull things together better.

Sensible progressive changes in Sharia Banking and other aspects of Islamic law will result in due course in synergistic changes with UK secular law, as British laws adapt to the changing balance and nature of British society. The true test of Britishness will not be the nationality test given to would be citizens, but the capacity of the British legal and social system to adjust with greater realism to the new realities of the multiculturalism bequeathed by the British Empire, and accelerated by modern globalization. This is no time to reject multiculturalism in UK or Europe, but a new improved approach is needed that is more aware of the twin challenges of underdevelopment and modernization, and that identity is part of modernization and not an obstacle to it. Persuading the West that Muslim can mean modern as well as moderate will be a longer job, but this has to be done as well!

Dr. Terry Lacey is a British Muslim with a background in economic and social development in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean Basin, and the Middle East. For further information on modernization in Indonesia the author can be reached at terrylacey2003@yahoo.co.uk

Their News

Danish Minister condemns any action that attempts to demonize people on the basis of their religion



Dr. Per Stig Møller, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark stressed on the importance of promoting universal adherence to human rights and as the key forum for dialogue within the United

Nations on human rights issues at the seventh session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, Geneva, Wednesday 5 March 2008.

"...It should be used to reduce misunderstandings and mistrust among different opinions, civilizations, cultures - and religions. The need for dialogue cannot be disputed. This includes dialogue on freedom of expression and freedom of religion and it means accept of differences of opinion and respect for religious feelings," he said.

He commented that one of the yardsticks in this regard is the Universal Periodic Review to be launched next month when sixteen states are up for review. And that the Universal Periodic Review provides a unique tool in the protection and promotion of human rights through monitoring and dialogue. In this sense Denmark sees the Universal Periodic Review as a confidence building measure.

Non Governmental Organizations and National Human Rights Institutions are important stakeholders in observing and warning about human rights violations all over the world. We are therefore very pleased with the role foreseen for NGOs and National Human Rights Institutions in the Universal Periodic review. We hope they to the fullest possible extent will become actively involved in this process. Whether they represent specific concerns such as the rights of indigenous peoples, or are more broadly founded, their participation is an important element in making the Universal Periodic Review credible and facilitating dialogue.

Another yardstick will be the review at this session of Special Procedures mandates. We need to strengthen - not to weaken - the Special Procedures, their independence and efficiency. They are the eyes, they are the ears of the Human Rights Council, but are not always appreciated by states under scrutiny. All states must cooperate unreservedly with them in good faith and take their recommendations seriously.

We will counter all efforts to weaken Special Procedures mandates.

"Our society is based on democratic values and the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Freedom of expression is one of the core human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of

Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and it is a necessity in a democracy. It is a right also enshrined in the Danish Constitution where censorship is prohibited. It secures the right for all citizens to express their opinions on all matters and to exert influence on the shaping and changes of the very societies in which we live.

The concrete exercise of the freedom of expression may not always be convenient for our governments. Such is democracy. And dissatisfaction with a concrete exercise of the freedom of expression can never justify death threats or indeed killing another person. In a democratic society based on the rule of law everybody must play by the rules. Decisions on whether the law is violated pertain to the courts and not to the government. It goes without saying that in a democratic society freedom of expression is one of those rights that have to be balanced against other rights," he added.

In connection with the recent re-publication of a cartoon of the prophet Muhammad it has become clear that many Muslims have felt their religion offended.

He emphasized that the position of the Danish Government is clear: "We condemn any action that attempts to demonize people on the basis of their religion or their ethnic background. We expect all religions to respect each other. And we respect Islam as one of the world's major religions as well as their religious symbols, as we respect all religious creeds and communities," he said.

The Danish Government takes the concerns voiced by large numbers of Muslims very seriously. We have seen demonstrations in several countries, and we listen to the intense debate going on in various fora. We appreciate that those who feel hurt have exercised their democratic rights and expressed their anger in most instances by peaceful means.

This is the way forward: Dialogue, collaboration and cultural understanding - not an endless spiral of misunderstandings and further polarization. That is why the Danish Government continues to actively promote a number of dialogue initiatives at all levels - between governments as well as among civil societies.

Denmark is already engaged in the Alliance of Civilizations. Let us use also this new laudable and important forum as a global platform for discussing how to overcome prejudice, how to overcome misconceptions, how to overcome misperceptions and polarization. In the community of man there are differences between cultures. We shall see these differences as an asset, not as an offence and learn to live with and respect these differences. But these differences must stand on common ground and that common ground is human rights.

Since the adoption of the Universal Declaration sixty years ago, new ways and means of actively exercising the right of freedom of expression have become available. The age of globalization with its access to the Internet and satellite television have provided opportunities that could not be imagined just a few years ago. We have vast and fast, formal and informal means of communication. News travel fast indeed - faster than ever before. It is an irreversible trend.

He concluded with an observation that for many years we have been talking about a "culture of impunity" - and tried to redress this culture. It is important to continue to do so unabated. But it is at least equally important to combat what I see as an emerging "culture of indifference" - a culture where we remain indifferent to the sufferings of other people, to violations of their human rights. Through human rights we must alleviate and combat the sufferings in the world. We can easily create more sufferings, but our task is to prevent the sufferings of individuals and the conflicts of the World.

International Women's Day Global Coalition Says National Implementation of Rome Statute Critical to Ending Impunity for Violence against Women



In honor of International Women's Day, the Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC), a global network of more than 2,500 organizations in 150 countries advocating for a fair, effective and independent International Criminal Court (ICC), today reiterated a call for governments to ensure justice for women at the national and international levels. The full implementation of the Rome Statute into national laws is an important step toward making certain the landmark standards and protections for women set out in the Rome Statute are enforced for women and girls everywhere.

Countries that have ratified the Rome Statute, or are in the process of ratifying, are strongly encouraged to bring their national laws in line with the standards

enshrined in the Rome Statute, both in terms of criminalizing the serious crimes contained in the Statute and by assuring that laws make full cooperation with the Court possible.

"In this tenth anniversary year of the Rome Statute, full implementation of the Statute's robust protections for women is paramount," said Tanya Karanasios, Program Director of the CICC. "International Women's Day marks an important opportunity for us to assess how far governments have come in fulfilling the promise of the Rome Statute's gender provisions and how far they have to go." Since the inception of the ICC, NGOs have monitored the Court's implementation of its gender mandate, in particular regarding the investigation of gender-based crimes and crimes against women. The assessment so far has been mixed. While some arrest warrants have been met with criticism for lack of focus on gender based crimes, last year, the ICC Prosecutor announced that his investigation in the Central African Republic will focus on gender-based crimes. According to the Prosecutor, in this situation, the

incidence of rape and other forms of sexual violence far outweighed the number of deaths.

"International Women's Day brings into sharper focus the urgency of the Court's work to end impunity for crimes against women," said CICC Convenor William Pace. "But it also serves as a reminder that we need to push State Parties to the Rome Statute to continually move forward with effective and comprehensive implementation so that protections for women's rights are guaranteed at both the international and national level."

Sexual crimes in the Rome Statute represent a historic advance for international justice: the Statute is one of the first international treaties to extensively address gender-based crimes as crimes against humanity, war crimes, and in some cases, genocide. Specifically, the Statute recognizes rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced sterilizations, gender-based persecutions, trafficking of persons particularly women and children, and sexual violence as among the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole.

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مركز خدمات الزبائن ☎ ١٥٣

YASP boosts role of women in agribusiness

By: Almigdad Dahesh Mojalli
Almigdads8@yahoo.com

The Yemen Agriculture Program (YASP) said it has targeted 15,000 farmers in five Yemeni governorates as part of its program implemented in collaboration with the office of Rural Women's Development at the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation.

This program is an important component of a series of events entitled "Raising awareness about the Issues Facing Women in Agribusiness" which aims to draw attention to specific issues regarding women's work in the field of agribusiness and engage the community in discussion regarding the possible ways to overcome these issues. YASP has also addressed the lack of a constant food supply as root causes for conflict and militancy. The activities are carried out by Ardinc (ARD), an American non-governmental organization (NGO), based in Sana'a and funded by USAID. The five target governorates include Al-Jawf, Amran, Marib, Sadah and Shabwa.

Dr. Najeeb Al-Hammadi, the general manager of YASP, said that while the program focused on 15,000 farmers, the number of farmers who benefited from the program was actually much greater.

YASP trained over 2,500 farmers in the animal health field and more than 4,000 farmers in the food industry field. "YASP supports more than 26 agricultural associations in the five target governorates with YR 130 million as a concrete support," said Al-Hammadi. "The grants were allocated to develop agricultural and animal production. 3,028 men and 2,293 women benefited from the concrete grants of the YASP. More than 65 people participated in the activity."

In a workshop organized by ARD and held on March 2 in Sana'a, three agribusiness women were selected as examples of the success of women in the rural areas. These women are

Khairiya Al-Sarafi, Hayah Abdullah Musaed, and Eftekar Hazem Al-Shameri. In the previous issue (1134), The Yemen Times discussed the life of Khairiya in detail.

Hayah's story

Born in Lahjj, Hayah earned her bachelor's degree in 1984 from Aden University. After her graduation, she worked as a secretary for the central government of Lahjj until 1995 when she became manager of a local association for family affairs. There, she began working to build women's abilities, teaching them administrative skills such as marketing, accountancy and time management.

Hayah is now in charge of the Savings and Trust in the Agriculture Development Project in collaboration with the Rural Development project in the Dhamar governorate. Hayah helps women to found associations in Dhamar and trains them in income-generating practices through agriculture, handicrafts and marketing. She helped to establish 44 savings associations in the governorates of Lahjj, Dhamar and Hodeidah.

Eftekar's story

Eftekar, 29, was born in Shamer village, Taiz. She always wanted to study, but her village and her family did not approve of educating women. Her family only allowed her to learn dressmaking, so she taught herself how to read and write secretly at the Domestic Technical Center. She then moved to Taiz where she received training in natural cosmetics and other skills like dressmaking and embroidery. Afterwards, she married and moved with her husband to Sana'a. Today, Eftekar works as a trainer and teacher. She has led training in the fields of dressmaking and weaving for more than 300 women in Marib, Aden, Shabwa, Hodaidah and Taiz. In addition, she worked as a trainer with the Social Fund for Development at the women and children's division of YASP in the Marib



Although it is Khairiya Al-Sarafi who really runs the family's agriculture business, it was her husband's photo that is allowed to appear in the newspaper.

governorate. She attributed her success to her husband's support throughout difficult times.

Khairiya's story

Khairiya, 55, was born in Bani Hushaish district and inherited a big land after the death of her father. Though she couldn't join schools, she compensates that in her nine children who study in schools and universities. Khairiya decided not only to plant her lands but also, could indulge herself agribusiness. She markets and sells the products of her land herself. Furthermore, she added 2.2 hectares to her original land. In addition, she is about to buy a water pump at YR 12 millions.

After listening to and discussing these three successful agribusiness women, the conference attendees broke into smaller discussion groups. These groups were an important part of the event, as they gave all the participants the opportunity to provide input on the status of women in agribusiness from their own unique experiences. Each group of about 10 to 15 people was given two to three questions to consider for an hour. At the end of the hour, a representative

from each group presented the group's findings to all the event's participants and answered any questions that were raised.

In spite of women's success in agribusiness, they still encounter many difficulties. "I face problems with the Ministry of Agriculture," said Khairiya. "They don't provide us with the modern irrigation systems and their employees never respond to us when we need them to spray plants with pesticides."

The difficulties that women face in agribusiness vary with the level of their business. The difficulties of Amna Al-Amrani, also known as the Queen of Oranges, are bigger than those of Khairiya. "The most prominent problems I have in my business are the barriers in the ports," Amna remarked. "I deal with fruit and I have to export it quickly, but the routine of the people in the ports is so complicated. So, if the export process is delayed more than one day, the fruits will shrivel."

Part of YASP's success stems from the program's focus on strengthening both agricultural production and marketing, commented Jeff Gray, YASP's senior technical advisor. By working in

collaboration with the Yemeni Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation and training the agency's own extension officers to implement YASP's initiatives, the program provides constant locally-operated support for the participating farmers.

YASP also trained eight Yemeni females as extension agents who in turn conduct similar livestock training for other women who manage a family's "petite ruminants," or small livestock like sheep and goats. The women also learned to make yogurt and cheese from goat's milk. This milk usually goes to waste because it isn't culturally acceptable to use it for drinking.

"We had to use a different approach and strategy to target women," Gray said. "It is a fact that women play a key role in agriculture in Yemen, but they often don't have access to the same supports - to credit, to training, and to other resources that are available to men."

Gray added that the fund of YASP is \$5 millions supported by the USA.

YASP also addressed Yemen's horticultural market, using demonstration field models to show local farmers how cer-

tain growing methods can enhance crop quality and production. This model is especially useful, Gray said, because an entire region can actually witness the benefit of fertilization or of using technology to measure ground moisture. "The proof is right there - it is a physical thing they can see," he said. "They don't have to take our word for it."

But it isn't enough for farmers to grow more, better-quality food. In order to benefit the farmer, the food must be in demand. YASP helps farmers to identify high-demand products and then assists them in effectively marketing their products. YASP also teaches the value of canning, juicing, milling, pressing and creating new products.

The Yemeni government has been so pleased with YASP's progress that the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation has pledged to continue supporting YASP activities from their own local budgets, even after the program wraps up next month. Governors of two of the five targeted governorates recently sent letters voicing their support as well.

Abdul-Hammed Amer, head of the Peace and Development Association in Al-Jawf Governorate, said that YASP came to the governorate two years ago. Since then, he said, it has offered much help to farmers. "The program trained farmers to make irrigation networks using plastic pipes instead of streams in order to save water," said Amer. "Also, the program provided people with developed seeds of high quality and good pesticides to fight blights."

He added that the program provided farmers with veterinary services and offered small-project grants like loans of sheep and palm trees. The farmers learned about how to give basic care to their animals through hoof trimming and regular haircuts.

The 44-month program funded by USAID and implemented by ARD will draw to a close in April. YASP achieved success while creatively overcoming challenges presented by Yemen's harsh deserts, unstable political relations, gender inequality, and security hazards.



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Words of Wisdom



If more meaningful change is to be made in respect for human rights, the daily violations against the rights of ordinary citizens have to be addressed. This means introducing new values through education and re-education. One clear target is to train law-enforcement agencies and officers on the rights of citizens and how to respect them. Another has to do with re-training of prison wardens and personnel.

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

OUR
OPINIONPresidential guidance
while living on the edge

Rumour has it that in the "staged" protest against the reprinting of the Danish cartoons at the Sabeen Square in Sana'a earlier this month, a citizen shouted: "I don't care about the Danish cartoons, I care about my hungry family". He was protesting the price hikes which increased basic consumer goods by three folds in one year. Apparently the security officers controlling the protest caught and beat this protester black and blue, for getting his priorities right.

According to Maslow's Pyramid of Needs, physical requirements such as food and shelter come way before psychological requirements such as faith and intellect.

"Feed my family, cure my children, give my husband a job then I'll tell you what I think of the Danish cartoons," a poor lady on the street told me when I asked her opinion on the issue.

To add insult to injury on the other way round, there goes our "beloved" president threatening that the prices will even go higher if someone other than him ever is to rule Yemen. It's like he was saying: "vote me king, or die".

Not that the opposition parties are any better. They are immersed deeply in their political ploys that they do not care about the real needs of the people. Worse, they are using the citizens' anguish to stir them against the ruling party. The opposition leaders have no idea what the average citizen is going through every day just to survive. Why should they? When their homes are warm, and their bank accounts are full just like those of the ruling party.

So while the president is visiting Europe, he realizes that learning English is good, and vocational education is the way forward. As if people have money to spare for better education or selective language learning.

Even educated people are struggling. Once again this week I lose another reporter who decides the salary she gets in Yemen Times is not enough. In one year, I have had an employee turnover rate at the editorial department of 77 percent. And the people who stayed are complaining that they want a significant increase in their income because the prices have gone up drastically.

There is nothing I would love to do more than keep my staff happy, or just keep my staff. But the government does not help, in fact, there goes again the tax authority harassing us and coming up with new percentages every year. There is no subsidisation for paper, for electricity, for fuel, for distribution costs...etc.

We cannot even get direct support from international organizations that are willing to help independent press in Yemen because it is against the law. Apparently if we do, we would be traitors.

So the situation is that we have laws that don't allow us to get help, a local environment that does not want us to prosper, and a president who is preaching about how nice it will be to have everyone speak English, and how bad it will be if he goes.

You don't get it Mr. President, do you?

Nadia Al-Sakkaf

The invisible girls

By: Dr. Raofa Hassan

"The Invisible Girls" is a documentary film on housemaids who migrate from other countries to Yemen. The film focuses on following up the everyday life of four dark-skinned girls from Ethiopia and Somalia working in Sana'a houses belonging to families originally from Hodeida and other areas nationwide. We see these maids moving in the early morning, from homes furnished with plastic papers and thin sponge mattresses that hardly protect their bodies from cold weather, to other luxurious houses where they clean floors, walls and kitchens, as well as iron clothes of family members, cook their meals and look after children until the end of daytime.

In their videotaped stories, one of these maids narrates the story of her husband's murder in Somalia and her subsequent migration to Yemen with other refugees with her eyes shedding tears. She recalls what has happened to her and her family, forcing us to burst in tears. The victim continues narrating her daily business in order to provide for her fatherless children.

Another victim told us about her interest and fondness of music and theater. She also spoke of her studies prior to the Eritrean-Ethiopian conflict that divided her family between both conflicting countries. As a result, she was forced to seek a job that can ensure her survival in this life.

This maid disclosed the mistreatment practiced against her by a Yemeni individual in charge of transporting housemaids to

Yemen. She also narrated the story of how she fled her exploiters who were harshly mistreating her. Consequently, she found herself in an illegal status without even a passport, and with the passage of days, the fine imposed on her for lacking a passport increases, thus becoming unaffordable for her to pay. Neither the Ethiopian government may treat her as an Ethiopian citizen nor may the Somali government accept her as a Somali national.

Images shaped by tales:

While reading the tales compiled by the Yemeni storywriter Mohammed Abdulwali, Ethiopia and Addis Ababa were depicted in my mind as trade stores or groceries that have certain corners for migrants who come from rough mountains to rest and sleep in. Voice of the late singer Abdullah Al-Sima was repeating the "Balah" - a Yemeni lyric - thereby depicting in my mind the difficult voyage in the sea and restless wages in the eve of sealing through the Red Sea toward Asmara.

The film of "The Invisible Girls" included an Ethiopian young girl from the countryside who attended school until she became able to communicate with her family members and tell us of her news and stories and likewise receives their news and stories. She is working here in Yemen to provide for her mother, brothers and sisters, who are still living in their homeland in order to make their life easier.

The film takes us to Ethiopia and lets us know about a family that sent two of its girls to work - One in Yemen and the other in a Gulf state - in order to bring them money. The mother revealed how

eager she is to see her daughters and via the camera we had a glance at their rural house with pictures of the Christ on its walls. The film exposed to us the Ethiopian lifestyle and the beautiful elements of nature in the African county such as the high mountains and flowing rivers.

We communicated with the girls once again while gathering at the home of one of their compatriots on Friday, their weekend. We saw them watching an Ethiopian singer on the T.V. Screen and at the same time repeating what he was saying. Seemingly, the song focused on exodus, forcible departure, homesickness and dreams of a better tomorrow.

What made you tolerate bitterness?

The film tells us something about ourselves. The camera moves in the street screening traffic men grazing at housemaids while on their way to the houses where they work. The camera sometimes concentrates lengthily on the famous buildings of the Old City of Sana'a, thus granting the ancient location its unique color.

From time to time, we listen to voice of the English novelist revealing the ancient civilization of our country, plus the situation of housemaids that is closely related with their masters. Maids with good financial conditions since they are working with rich families were not included in the film and they are mostly from Philippines. The film only concentrates on the maids who migrated to Yemen illegally via the sea, and therefore their survival is put at risk.

Source: Al-Thawri State-run Daily

We pray to God to save Yemen

By: Fawaz bin Hamed Al-Fawaz

Yemen is a neighboring and brotherly country. So, its situations and circumstances are of crucial importance to the security and stability of the region's countries, specifically the bordering states of Saudi Arabia and Oman. As often said, the ideological politics may change while the geographical politics are impossible to undergo any change. This is why Yemen's situations have been very important to security and stability of the region since the Yemeni Unity was established in 1990 and prior to the unity, as well as during the post-unity age when people of the country resumed full rest while peace turned to prevail.

Following the establishment of its national unity, the Yemeni government has so far taken serious steps to join the Gulf Cooperation Council. But these days, we are shocked to see Yemen returning once again to the ground of political conflicts and congestions that may have their malignant influence on neighbors.

Prior to its unity, Yemen was experiencing three major problems, the first of which has something to do the economic management and health development obstacles. Such a problem may not be basically different from any persisting economic problems in the third world countries, except for the vulnerability of natural resources and rampant cor-

ruption to due to an urgent need for money in this country.

The second of the problems, which seems to be riskier, is manifested in the security situations of North Yemen, particularly as efforts expended in this area reached a deadlock. Yemen turned to suffer from guerrilla wars. If the Yemeni government doesn't adopt effective mechanisms in its fight with guerrilla fighters until they force them to surrender, these fighters will eventually win the battle. The state of unconfirmed stability may be a troublesome factor in the future.

Currently, the phenomenon of recruitment is spreading in the southern areas of the country, specifically in Hadramout, until the extent of exercising treason and fueling violence and counter-violence. Thus, we fear that the central government may be unable to contain the inflaming situations. Amid these complicated situations, the government and opposition are advised to reduce sharpness of resentments and give the national interest precedence over the personal one.

The third problem is associated with waste of the mental and economic wealth by the consumption of qat leaves since this habit involves an obvious combination between pleasure and waste of time and money.

Such pressures on the central government threaten the top priority issues contained in the government's agenda. Therefore, this government needs to closely monitor the situa-

tion and its developments so that the neighboring countries can help it while the Yemeni people have to exert joint efforts with the aim of resolving their domestic problems.

The intervention of some regional countries in once North Yemen's affairs was evident, however, the then government of North Yemen managed to disclose any foreign interventions in its local politics and plans. The radical solution is still unreachable even if the situations returned calm and this calm period may determine permanent peace if the government and Houthis cease fierce talks about wars and exchange of accusations. The best option for the Yemeni government is to grant its localities more local authorities, connect the country's areas with good road networks and facilitate trade and human movements between the various parts of the country.

The phenomenon of qat cultivation and consumption has exacerbated over time, thereby becoming an essential part of the social fabric, and any alternative agricultural products or awareness campaigns failed to put a limit to such a destructive phenomenon. Nevertheless, Yemen's political leadership is required to work harder on suggesting sophisticated, but not traditional, solutions to the growing phenomenon.

Source: Newsyemen.net
The author is a Saudi writer who can be reached at:
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SILVER LINING

Yemen clergy & public concerns neglect

During the last two weeks, Sana'a witnessed several protests against the Danish cartoons and the Israeli attacks against the Palestinians in Gaza Strip. It is fine that politicians and clerics mobilize the public towards such issues. However, what is strange is that outstanding clerics like Sheikh Abdulmajeed al-Zindani never appear to be critical to the oppressions their fellow people in Yemen are going through.

Let us take, for instance, the question of the al-Ja'ashin citizens who have been facing the oppression of their influential Sheikh Mohammed Ahmed Mansur for several months. They have been campaigning in Sana'a, waiting for a positive response to their plight. They have been let down by their government, by their representatives in the parliament from Ibb. Only some NGOs and some newspapers are trying to raise awareness about their problem.

I can understand the motives of the ruling party in mobilizing school students last week to take to the streets and protest the Israeli aggression in Gaza. The party wanted to divert the public attention from their real concerns which is the crazy price hike of bread and soak up any angry feelings that might be there for some time.

But, why do not our clerics at least voice concerns over the dramatically increasing hardships of the people? Why do not they state that corruption is a major headache that urgently needs to be addressed? They are hypocrites and always look for internal issues like the conflict with Israel or the Danish cartoons to lash out at. I am not saying they should not talk about such issues. However, they should at least with the same or even less zeal and emotion talk about the ordeals of their own people in Yemen. They should be the voice of the oppressed people and stand by them.

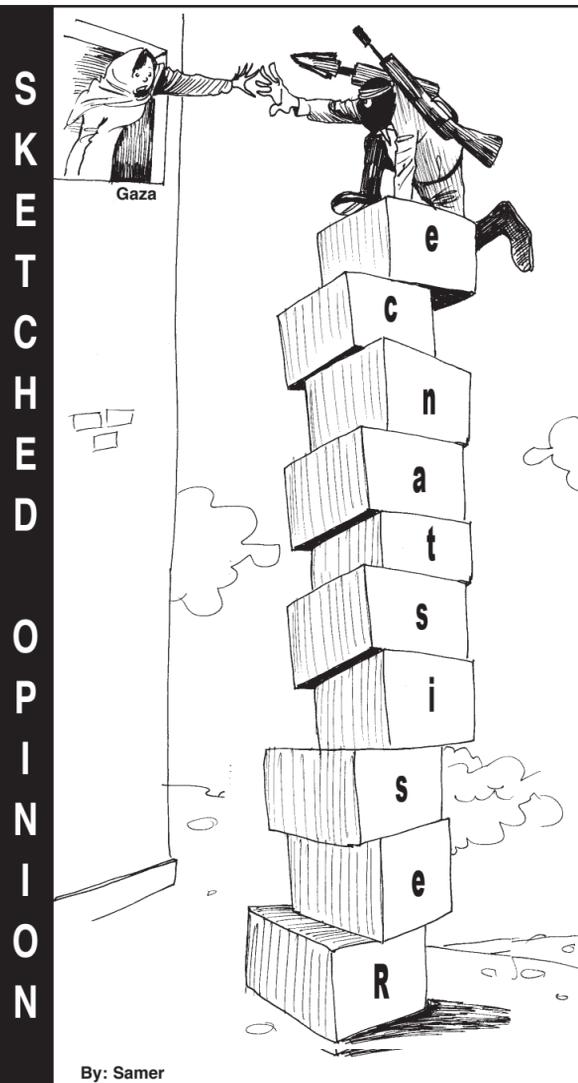
Our problem in most of the Muslim countries is that the coalition between the clergy and the regimes has succeeded in thwarting any substantial and effective role for the clergy and clerics in adopting the real concerns of the public. Religion is not all about God worship but, as these clerics argue, a way of life. If this is the case, why do not you focus in your preaching sermons about the problems of the people? These toothless clerics have, in agreement with the ruling regimes, played an instrumental role in stupefying the people by creating phantom foes. It is simply running away from our main concerns.

Our major enemy in Yemen is not Israel or the West. It is corruption and corrupt crooks eating up the resources of the country and the generations to come. Our focus should be how to overcome development challenges.

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



By: Dr. Mohammed Al-Qadhi



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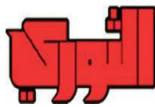
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Yemen Press Review



Al-Thawri Weekly, Mouthpiece of the Yemeni Socialist Party
Thursday, March 6

Top Stories

- Al-Janadi denies that he accused Houthis of killing a war prisoner
- YSP Secretary in Aden: Secession and animosity slogans have nothing to do with the dire situation in the country
- Aden Security department rejects a court order in favor of a former deputy interior minister
- Information Ministry suspends Al-Sabah newspaper for covering protests in south Yemen
- Thousands of teachers stage a huge demonstration in Rahida although authorities released detained poet
- Laborers protest at Marib governorate's premises, accusing ruling party of rigging trade union's votes

Tens of public sector workers gathered on Monday before Marib governorate's premises protesting against the ruling party for allegedly rigging trade union elections that took place in the governorate, the weekly reported in one of its front page stories. It added that the Marib local authority ordered tens of security and military soldiers to take control of the hall where the election was held, following withdrawal of the protesters, who challenged integrity of the election and neutrality of the supervisory committee in charge of overseeing the electoral process.

According to the weekly, the protesters also demanded the competent authorities in the government to take

firm procedures against those accused of rigging the vote and committing other illegal violations with the intention of manipulating the vote result in favor of the ruling party.

Despite two of the supervisory committee members quit as a result of the challenges presented by the protesters, branch of the General People Congress in the governorate continued its activities and manipulated the vote result in favor of its candidates. The Ishteraki.net correspondent in Marib mentioned that the protesters staged a peaceful demonstration after they withdrew from the election conference, adding that they didn't involve in clashes with policemen.

The weekly quoted a protester as saying that there are individuals, who were appointed by the ruling party as agents for its candidates, however, they don't work in the governorate, pointing out that the party also appointed ghost workers.



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

Top Stories

- Corruption in Marib costs government billions of riyals
- Yemeni scholars in India press government to cash their financial entitlements
- Aden Branch of Joint Meeting Parties accuses authority of fomenting chaos in southern governorates
- Yemen is progressing toward an unprecedented catastrophe, say observers

- Arab Nationalist Conference accuses Arab regimes of collaborating with enemies of Islam
- NUPO leader: Arab rulers are only concerned about how to satisfy enemies of Islam

"Arab leaders are only concerned about how to satisfy the Zionist enemies who practice all the forms of brutality and atrocity against the Muslim citizens in different parts of the world, the weekly quoted NUPO Secretary-General Sultan Hezam Al-Atwani as saying. Al-Atwani added that the fierce offensive launched by the Zionist and American aggression on the Gaza Strip is aimed at liquidating the Palestinian people, mainly as the Israeli occupation failed to achieve its objectives with regard to making the Palestinians submissive to its will and plan.

The opposition leader noted that the Zionists are attempting to separate between the Palestinian Cause and the Arab Nations, describing what is happening in Gaza as "mass liquidation and annihilation" against innocent citizens. He commented that the Arab leaders remain silent toward what is taking place in the Gaza Strip, believed to risk the peace process. "The Arab leaders don't sympathize with the innocent Gaza inhabitants who are suffering the cruelest attacks," the man reacted.

In a statement to the Sahwa.net, the NUPO leader urged all the political parties and NGOs in Yemen and other Arab countries to demonstrate solidarity with the Palestinian people, and support them financially and spiritually. He advised these parties and NGOs to press their governments and leaders so that they may react to what is happening in Gaza and back the Palestinian's right to have an independent state,

adding the other Arab states may not escape the escalating turmoil in Palestine and Lebanon.



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

Top Stories

- Government leads 'a bread war' against citizens
- Joint Meeting Parties deny that they resumed dialogue with General People Congress
- Qatari mediation team quits intervention in Sa'ada efforts, flies back home
- A burnt human body found in military prison
- Ja'ashin citizens attempt to escape powerful sheikh's oppression
- Influential persons grab a plot of land belonging to an Aden-based cultural association
- Yemen threatened by climate change, says UN report

Discussed at a regional conference in the Egyptian capital city of Cairo, A UN report, revealed that Yemen is threatened by climate change the most, given its existing low income levels, rapidly growing population and alarming water shortage, the weekly reported in one of its front page stories.

"Changes in temperature, rainfall and climatic extremes will only add to the stress on agricultural resources in Middle East where land vulnerability and degradation, food price shocks and population growth are already a major concern," the weekly quoted the report as saying.

According to the UN report, among the problems climate change could cause is an increased risk of conflict over the scarce resources. In the meantime, FAO says that the Middle East and North Africa are particularly exposed to water shortages and thus an additional 155 to 600 million people may suffer a worsening water shortage in North Africa with a three degree Celsius temperature rise. "The number of dry days is expected to increase everywhere in the region," said Wulf Killmann, chair of FAO's working group on climate change.



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

Top Stories

- President Saleh stresses necessity of updating marine and coastal defense forces
- Effective participation for Yemen in the Arab summit in Damascus
- Qatari mediation team doesn't withdraw from Sa'ada, expends efforts to end crisis
- Government takes tough procedures to ensure that bakeries sell bread by weight
- Yemen welcomes Fatah and Hamas' interaction with its initiative
- Yemen to host international conference on fighting cancer
- Vice President confirms government's support for women in all development fields

Vice President AbduRabu Mansour Hadi attended on Wednesday the opening session of the annual meet-

ing for the Yemeni Women Union (YWU) Central Council, the weekly reported, adding that Hadi delivered a speech in which he expressed happiness to attend the meeting, saying that the union is considered the biggest popular organization at the governorate level, and therefore works in partnership and cooperation with the government and other civil community organizations.

The vice president confirmed his government's support for women in all development fields and in positions of making political, economic and social decisions. He highly appreciated role of the union in spreading awareness among society about rights of women, acknowledging that active women constitute an important element to enhance development in the nation while civil community organizations represent the basic grounds for the development process.

Regarding development in the region, the Yemeni official condemned recent attacks on Gaza Strip by the Zionist entity, considering the silence towards these attacks as contravening humanitarian principles and international laws of human rights.

Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Amat Al-Razaq Humad emphasized the necessity of marking out of the International Women Day a key turn to support Yemeni women. She also highlighted the role of the union in improving status of Yemeni women, and their political, economic and social participation in the development process. According to Humad, her ministry is working to evaluate all civil community organizations, their role and activities, as well as reviewing laws and bylaws of these organizations.

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The Social Fund for Development (SFD) was established as per law no. 10/1997, as one of the social security network components in order to reduce the side effects of the governmental reform programs. The developmental objectives of the SFD are represented in improving the poor groups' access to basic social and economic services, providing a model for an efficient establishment to improve method of services, supporting local authority and empowering targeted societies to participate in developing their regions.

The SFD is working towards achieving its objectives through three main programs, which are:

- 1- The Community Development Program to facilitate access to basic needs (education, water, health, rural roads and environment).
- 2- The Capacities Building Program for the SFD local partners such as local gatherings, governmental authorities, NGOs, consultants and contractors.
- 3- The Small and Micro-enterprises Development Program by developing financial and non financial services sector of the small investors.

The SFD aims at achieving its developmental objectives in cooperation with local and foreign partners, and it is willing to attract high efficient and qualified cadres to occupy the following posts:

Job's Title : Education Sector Senior Administration Officer
Job's Location: Headquarter of the SFD, Capital Secretariat

Responsibilities and tasks:

- 1- Developing policies and strategies related to activities of the sector.
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- 3- Providing assistance and technical support for directors and officers of education projects at the SFD branches.
- 4- Revising and approving projects' studies and proposals submitted by the branches.
- 5- Approving annual work plans concerning the sector after careful review.
- 6- Monitoring progress achieved in the on-going projects and checking the completed ones.
- 7- Coordinating and establishing relationships with SFD partners "Ministries, local authority, civil society organizations, donors, local councils, and societiesetc".

Required qualification:

- 1- University degree in the field of educational planning / educational administration / economics of education / education.
- 2- Minimum of three years experience in running and planning educational services.
- 3- Fluent in English language (Reading & Speaking).
- 4- Computer-literate.
- 5- Having skills in managing time and cost, communicating and reports writing.
- 6- Having good abilities in planning, organizing, following-up, supervising, managing and directing workers in addition to taking decisions.
- 7- Full-time employee as per SFD system.
- 8- Willing to travel and move among governorates.

Interested applicants shall send their application letters along with their CVs to the Social Fund for Development by the following e-mail: education@sfd-yemen.org
Or by mail to the following address:
Social Fund for Development, Headquarter, Faj Attan, P.O.Box. 15485
Deadline for receiving applications is 20/3/2008

Job's Title: Health Sector Senior Administration Officer
Job's Location: Headquarter of the SFD, Capital Secretariat

Responsibilities and tasks:

- 1- Developing policies and strategies related to activities of the sector.
- 2- Direct administrative supervision on performance of projects officers.
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Required qualification:

- 1- University degree in public health / health administration.
- 2- Minimum of three years experience in running and planning educational services.
- 3- Fluent in English language (Reading & Speaking).
- 4- Computer-literate.
- 5- Having skills in managing time and cost, communicating and reports writing.
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Deadline for receiving applications is 20/3/2008

Job's Title: Programs Officer in the field of primary health care, reproductive health, health education
Job's Location: Headquarter of the SFD, Capital Secretariat

Responsibilities and tasks:

- 1- Studying the requests submitted by societies or authorities and sorting them in office and field.
- 2- Developing projects' proposals and submitting them to sector's officer.
- 3- Managing the projects financially and technically.
- 4- Continuous supervision and follow-up of projects progress.
- 5- Submitting periodical reports for the head of the unit regarding implemented activities.
- 6- Preparing the annual plan concerning activities of the programs assigned to him/her.
- 7- Communicating and contacting concerned parties in all stages of the project.

Required qualification:

- 1- University degree in the following fields: community medicine diploma after the bachelor degree or holding bachelor degree in general medicine / public health / health administration.
- 2- Minimum of two years experience in one of the above mentioned fields.
- 3- Fluent in English language (Reading & Speaking).
- 4- Computer-literate.
- 5- Having skills in managing time and cost, communicating and reports writing.
- 6- Having good abilities in running projects, following-up and supervising, and capability of learning and developing.
- 7- Full-time employee as per SFD system.
- 8- Willing to travel and move among governorates.

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Malaria threatens Hajjah governorate

By: Sirajaddin Al-Muqri
tch_tv@hotmail.com
For The Yemen Times

A recent proliferation of malaria is threatening nine districts in Hajjah governorate with a combined population of nearly 590,000. Most of those infected are children, pregnant women and the elderly. Even worse, these nine districts are suffering a medical supply shortage.

Bani Qais and Aslam are two of the most malaria-affected districts, followed by Khubran, Aflah Al-Sham, Qufi Shamar, Abs, Mustaba, Kashur and Kuaidina. According to the 2004 general census, these districts are densely populated.

"Malaria is spreading in Hajjah. We're usually able to discover infected cases year-round. The disease is responsible for numerous deaths, particularly in areas with harsh topography where citizens have no easy access to hospitals or health care facilities," noted Taha Yahya Bari with Khairan Muharraq district's Health Center.

Ibrahim Yousef, 23, of Aslam district reports that his daughter Sharifa is infected with Plasmodium falciparum, a protozoan parasite and one type of plasmodium that causes human malaria. His daughter has been receiving treatment at the private Ibn Rushd Hospital for two months now at an estimated cost of YR 30,000.

Working at Khairan Muharraq district's private Physicians Hospital, Dr. Ali Qadri maintains that the Chloroquine medicine usually prescribed for malaria sufferers is ineffective at treating infected cases in his area, particularly feverish or comatose children who are admitted to hospitals.

Asked about any risks or side effects of this medication, Qadri replied that it contributes to pancreatic and liver diseases, while Egyptian pharmacist Azzah Ahmed notes that malaria medicine is available in most of Hajjah governorate.

Lack of health care
Local councilor Sheikh Mohsen



High illiteracy rates, lack of health awareness and malnutrition resulting from poverty, as well as the spread of mosquitoes are the main reasons for malaria proliferation in many districts.

Hizam, chairman of the Hajjah branch of the General People's Congress, states that there are six health facilities, one health center and a physician for his district's 50,000 residents, further pointing out that mosquito nets that have been distributed don't meet area inhabitants' growing demands.

Mabkhout Mohsen Zain, 48, says his malaria treatment has cost him YR 100,000. However, feeling that his condition worsened, he went to the Saudi Hospital in Hajjah city. Zain complains that he hasn't received any free medicine from the government.

"Because we have no easy access to medical facilities and the government doesn't care about providing our areas with the prerequisite health services and medical equipment, the only thing I could do is take my ailing baby daughter to a private hospital for treatment, which cost me a lot," regretted Hassan Badri, father of a nearly 2-month-old daughter suffering from malaria since her birth.

Sheikh Khalid Sha'abein, manager of Khairan district's Health Office, says government contributions and

efforts in this regard are very limited, adding that the related ministry only provides patients Malaquin, a cheaper generic form of Chloroquine, in addition to mosquito nets that don't meet the growing demands by his area's citizens.

Abs Health Office Manager Ibrahim Aram reports that malaria has hardly spread in Abs city, but it may be proliferating in the numerous villages surrounding the city. For this reason, he urges relevant authorities to implement a malaria-fighting program in Abs because, according to him, Abs lies in the center of those areas with record malaria cases.

Shawqi Shuheit, manager of Aslam district's Endowment Office, says there's insufficient coordination between his office and competent health authorities to increase public awareness about the infection and the necessary measures that may help prevent the disease.

Causes of malaria proliferation in these areas
According to Dr. Mohammed Issa, a

former officer with the Program to Fight Malaria, Hajjah's semitropical climate encourages the malaria parasite's development in valleys and swamps.

Additionally, high illiteracy rates, lack of health awareness and malnutrition resulting from poverty, as well as the spread of mosquitoes are the main reasons for malaria proliferation in many districts of the governorate.

Malaria's impact on school students "Five years ago, we did malaria checkups while several malaria researchers recently came to our area and did checkups for students enrolled at Al-Hikmah, Al-Dawlahi and Awis Al-Qarni schools," said Hassan Al-Qadhi, principal of Al-Hikmah School in Aslam district.

"These researchers found that nearly all of the pupils are infected with malaria, notably children in the lower grades, who suffer diarrhea and vomiting," he continued, adding, "Many pupils in the first three grades vomit in class, which has a negative impact on their learning."

"Malaria's effects sometimes reach the brain, and as a result, students begin to daydream, lose attention and progress at a very slow acquisition rate," explains Abdu Zain, principal of Omar Bin Al-Khattab School in Raqaba district, while Ali Murshid, a teacher at the school, maintains that malaria is responsible for school dropouts, particularly among girls.

Sheikh Yahya Hafaj, a local councilor in Hajjah's Bani Qais district, says his area's 55,000 residents have only seven health facilities and one physician.

Aslam district tribal sheikh Jalal Al-Aslami notes that malaria is spreading in every house and every family year-round.

He appeals to the relevant government officials in his district to provide locals good health services and top-quality education.

Sheikh Khalid Falah, a prominent tribal leader in the governorate, strongly denounces the dire situation in Hajjah and the false promises made by local councilors, who, according to him, are doing nothing to save area cit-

izens' lives.

According to media reports, international organizations and Gulf states have given the Yemeni government financial aid to upgrade medical services and health care in the vulnerable country.

Bahrain News Agency estimates the Gulf states' assistance for fighting malaria in Yemen at \$47 million. Yemen's Public Health and Population Minister Dr. Abdulkarim Rasa' re-

confirmed this same amount in a statement to Saba News Agency prior to his scheduled visit to Saudi Arabia to attend the Feb. 5 meeting of Gulf health ministers.

Additionally, Yemen's satellite television channel announced on its 9 p.m. news broadcast on Feb. 24 that the Yemeni government received up to \$62 million from an international fund to be spent to fight malaria, AIDS, bilharzias and tuberculosis.

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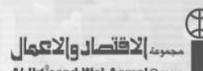
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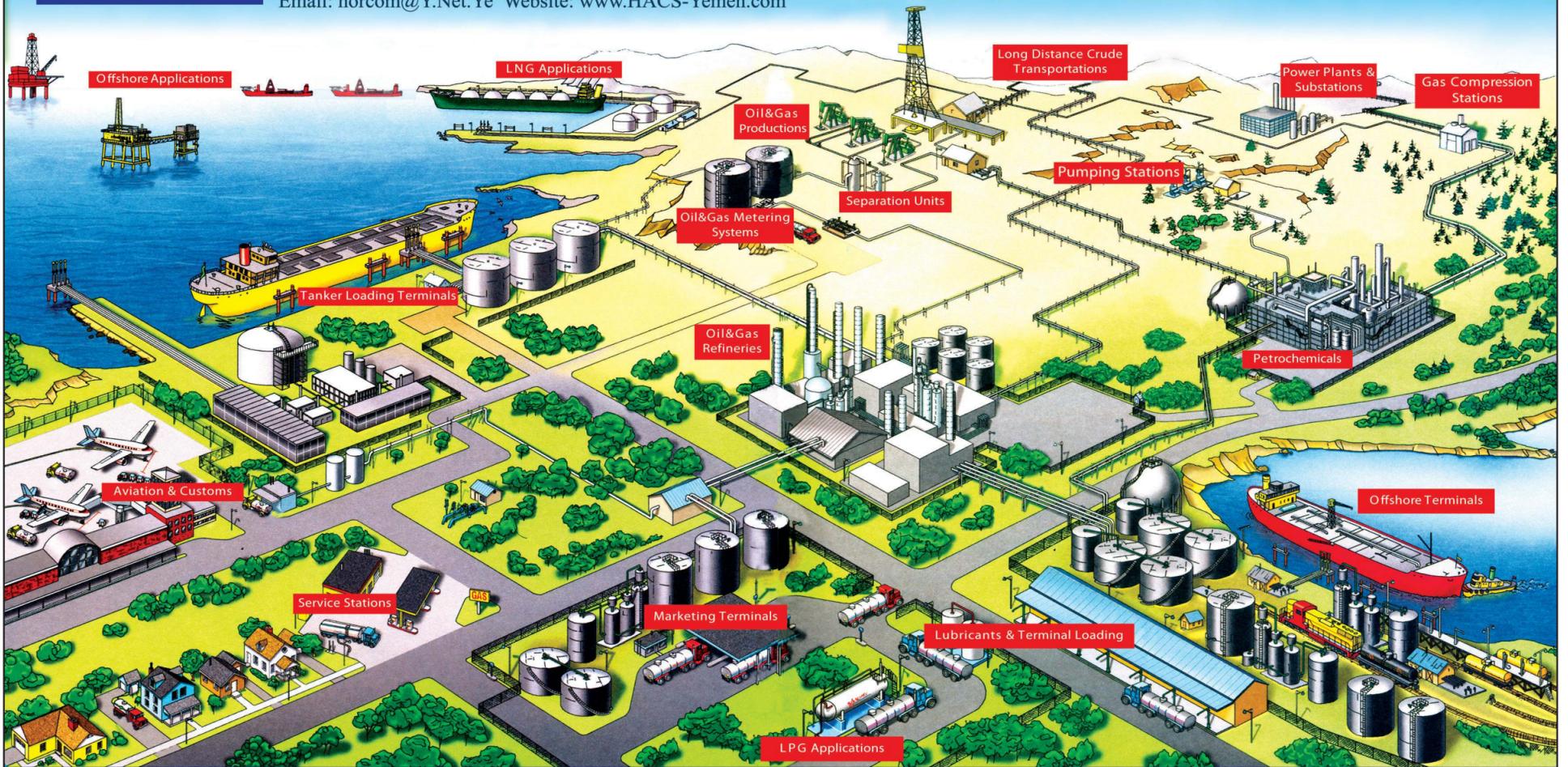
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“Yemen’s heritage is precious and deserves tremendous care” – Elizabeth White

In an exclusive interview with the Yemen Times, Elizabeth White, director of the British Council in Yemen, talks about the council’s activities in Yemen. Elizabeth White is from northern England. After studying English literature at Oxford, she then worked at universities and in education development. For the past 12 years, she has been with the British Council in Ecuador, Russia, Kazakhstan, Russia, Czech Republic and Yemen.

What type of cultural activities does the British Council do?

It depends on how you define cultural activities. Worldwide, the British Council in general works in the field of cultural relations, which can relate to all kinds of activities seeking to enhance relations between two countries in fields not specifically political, economic or commercial, but having to do with how individuals, organizations and institutions in Britain and Yemen can work together in partnership.

For us, cultural relations involves working together in education, in the English language, the arts, sciences and information. Because that’s a wide range of potential engagement, we respond by having a very diverse program.

For instance, let me tell you what we’re currently doing in the arts. In our arts program, it’s important that we’re always working in partnership and in response to the interests we find from our networks here. I’ll give you a few examples:

One of the biggest projects we’re working on at the moment is an important regional exhibit called “My Father’s House.” This project isn’t just in Yemen, but also in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman and the Emirates.

In the exhibit, we’re looking at the issue of building heritage, involving architecture and more specifically, housing in each of these countries and how people live in and with their building heritage.

We have a dual approach in each country. We first commission an artist from each country to create a portfolio of work on the theme “My Father’s House.” At the same time, we bring British artist/photographers to the region to look at the same theme with a different eye.

For example, Yemen’s artist is looking at how people live in the houses of the Old City and in the new housing around Hadda, the styles of buildings there and the ways people live.

Opening in October, the exhibit will tour the region and then prestigious venues in the U.K. The British artist who’s coming to Yemen to work is Tim Hetherington, who just won the World Press Photo of the Year award for a picture from his work in Afghanistan. It’s going to be a major exhibit and I’m looking forward to seeing it here.

We’ve also been working on a major program involving schools, which is partly educational but with an artistic element. We’re working on this with a British photographer who came out to Yemen and the region. He went around to schools, taking pictures in classrooms so that every child in the class is in the photograph.

He also asked the children a standard set of questions, such as “What do you dream about?” “What do you talk about with your friends?” and “What’s your favourite food?” He then combined this region’s classroom portraits and interviews with portraits and data from British schools and we exhibited them this past December at the National Museum.

It was an incredible success, as thousands of school children came to see their country’s classes and the

U.K. and compare the experiences of being a student in them. After all, that’s one thing we all have in common – the experience of school life and studying.

By using art to illustrate this shared experience – just as with Connecting Classrooms – young people in the U.K. and the Middle East have an unusual and engaging opportunity to discover more about each others’ lives, explore different cultures and exchange ideas.

We’ve also been preparing for the London Book Fair, Europe’s second largest book fair. Because the Arab world is this year’s honored guest, across the region and in Yemen, we’ve been looking at who can travel to the fair to promote Arab literature, as well as promote interest in writing in the Arab world and translation of work from the Arab world.

We’ve spoken with Yemen’s Book Authority about the nation’s representation

After leaving Prague three years ago, she wanted to work in the Arab world in a Muslim country in order to learn a new culture and a new way of looking at the world.

at the event, so we hope to have a good delegation from here.

One thing that’s particular to Yemen is that its Ministry of Culture has commissioned the Arabic translation and publication of the recent British novel, “Salmon Fishing in Yemen,” which we hope to launch in London.

In general, we hope this book fair will result in a greatly increased British and European interest in and knowledge of Arab literature.

Additionally, over the past two years, the British Council has been working with the Ministry of Water and Environment and a number of NGOs in Yemen, looking at public awareness of climate change.

We held a large exhibit in Mukalla, Aden and at Sana’a University with a program of speakers and workshops examining climate change, how it will affect life in Yemen and how people can adapt to the idea of climate change.

We worked with a large number of young environmentalists and youths interested in journalism. Following the initial seminars, this group of young journalists from Yemen and other countries in the region wrote articles, researched and created programs.

A group of them – including eight Yemenis – are in London right now working with science journalists and observing how science and environmental journalists and lobbyists work in the U.K. We’ve been very impressed by the quality of their engagement and their passion for this.

Although they’re only there for a week, it’s very intensive. I hope they’ll return with wide open eyes and even more enthusiasm. In fact, if you have any openings at your paper for these bright, young, hopeful Yemeni journalists, we can put you in touch with them!



Elizabeth White

Can you describe the cultural relations between Britain and Yemen?

I think there’s a good deal of interest in cultural relations, in the arts and culture of Britain in Yemen and indeed, in the culture of Yemen in Britain. There’s quite a lot going on; for instance, there’s currently a big exhibit in Sheffield called, “Coal, Frankincense and Myrrh,” looking at British Yemenis and I believe it’s enjoyed strong support from the Yemeni Embassy in London.

However, by and large, there’s also a great deal of lack of knowledge, as each of these countries knows little about the cultural riches, diversity and potential for engagement with the other, so there’s a lot to do.

In my country, generally most people don’t know a great deal about Yemen. For instance, every time we invite British musicians, artists, writers, scientists or teachers to Yemen, unfailingly, they’re surprised, dazzled and delighted by what they find here, by the welcome they find, the nation’s cultural riches and beauty – which is good, but it shouldn’t be a surprise.

I’d like it to be the case that my country knows more about Yemen and knows what treasures Yemen has to offer – and the same in the other direction. Part of our role here is to promote a stronger appreciation and understanding of the achievements and creativity of arts in the U.K. in areas which are or might be of relevance and interest to Yemenis.

We aim to always begin by identifying areas of common ground and shared interests and then work from there, rather than showcasing a piece of art from Britain.

“I think I’m very lucky to find myself in Yemen for my first experience in this part of the world. I wanted to come to this part of the world because I felt that there’s a lot of work to do to increase understanding between Britain and Yemen.”

This is why we’re very keen on partnership, engagement and people working together. It’s an important principle for us.

Based on your experiences in Yemen these past three years, how would you describe the nation’s cultural treasures?

What’s always striking is the richness and history of Yemeni culture. Here, we’re dealing with traditions in literature, craftsmanship and architecture that go back centuries and centuries. When my Gulf colleagues come to Yemen, it’s this richness that impresses them.

While I don’t yet know enough about Yemen’s literary culture, Yemeni writers or the importance that literary culture and poetry in particular holds in the Yemeni consciousness, this certainly is one of the cultural treasures we hope to work with.

Then, there’s the way Yemen’s building heritage fits with its landscape. It’s quite remarkable – there’s nothing like it. It’s a very precious heritage that you have – and one that deserves tremendous care.

Tell us about the British Council’s educational activities.

The British Council has always worked in education. We’ve been in Yemen since 1947, first in Aden and then in Sana’a, so the British Council has been here for more than 60 years, in one form or another, working in education and English language teaching all of that time.

At the moment, our biggest learning projects mainly have to do with teaching English. In one Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) project, we’ve been working with the Education

Ministry for two years now, helping them introduce English into secondary and primary schools from grades four to six. Our role is in training teachers and inspectors and the methodology of teacher trainers.

We now have pilot programs with some 54 schools in Sana’a, Aden and Taiz where schools are trying out the materials and the training, seeing how they work and generally evaluating the program – and fourth graders in these schools are going home speaking English! The ministry is very pleased with this progress and looking to roll out and extend the project nationwide from 2010 onward.

This surely is a very positive move for Yemen at the moment. Although there are many dedicated and talented English teachers, children often complete school, after studying English, still unable to speak it.

However, beginning earlier and having access to good materials and training will provide the next generation of Yemeni schoolchildren better access to English. English now has become essential in the working world – as essential a basic skill as typing or information technology skills – so we want to help the ministry provide this skill to future generations.

Another education program we’re running is called Connecting Classrooms, which establishes dialogue between young people in the Middle East and the U.K. in an effort to challenge stereotypes and develop projects in the field of social responsibility. The project develops ties and links between these students through discussion and teamwork across borders.

So far, 24 Sana’a schools have established links and another 16 links will be set up this month. We’ll be supporting these links to develop an exchanges of ideas, projects, methodologies – and even exchanges of teachers and students.

Additionally, we provide access to educational opportunities in the U.K. by easily assisting anyone needing reliable information on how to study in the U.K.; for example, how to study English, how to attend a U.K. university.

We also administer Foreign Office scholarships to the U.K., annually sending 10 to 15 students to study for a fully-funded one-year master’s degree. It’s very strong competition, as we have maybe 200 applicants each year and I have to say that the quality of applicants is extremely high.

I’ve worked with this scholarship program in many other countries, but in Yemen, we find students who are committed, dedicated, hardworking and do very well.

They generally get into good universities; for example, we’ve had students at Cambridge, London School of Economics, Warwick University and University College London.

In fact, five of the Yemeni students in last year’s group finished with distinctions, so it’s a program that does very well indeed and I’m very impressed by the quality of candidates we receive.

What do these students study while in the U.K.?

They study a variety of topics. We don’t say we’re looking for one economist, one journalist or one politician. Rather, we’re looking for individuals and for those we think will make a difference in Yemen’s future, who have the scope and potential to be future leaders – and that can be any field.

This year, we have an economist, a commercial lawyer, the head of an NGO and a man working in health policy. However, it’s not really about the field, it’s about the individual.

How many Yemeni students so far have been sent?

I’ve been here three years and during that time, we’ve sent some 32 students. The latest group is waiting now to learn if and when they’re going.

What about those students who only want to study English in Britain?

Because so many students would like to study English in Britain, we can and do assist anyone interested in studying English in Britain, helping them choose the school and get information, but we don’t have a scholarship program for that.

I think if you ask any Yemeni school child if they’d like to study English in Britain for a few months, they’ll probably say yes! But we have to focus our resources, so we concentrate on post-graduate students.

What we hope to do is help develop Yemen’s English language teaching capacity so that, ideally, in 10 years time, Yemeni school graduates will have the necessary English skills to take their places in the working world without needing further study.

CULTURAL SERIES FACES & TRACES

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

Ahmed Mohammed Al-Noman, the politically active and liberal professor

Prepared by: Eyad N. Al-Samman

Known as “the professor,” Yemeni politician, diplomat, essayist and writer Ahmed Mohammed Al-Noman was born April 26, 1909 in Taiz governorate’s Dhubhan district, where he memorized the Qur’an and the prophetic tradition.

He traveled to the southwest Yemeni city of Zabid in 1924 to study Islamic religion and Arabic language. Returning to Dhubhan in 1931, he began his teaching career at the district’s mosque.

While visiting Aden in 1935, Al-Noman came up the idea of establishing a social and cultural club known as the Arab-Islamic Reform Club.

Following his return to Dhubhan, he established a school, equipping it with modern curricula including geography, math and sports. However, then-ruler of Yemen Imam Yahya opposed the school, so Al-Noman was placed under house arrest and, consequently, the school closed when its students scattered.

Al-Noman then went to Egypt in 1936 and enrolled in Al-Azhar University, graduating in 1939. While in Cairo, he met many Free Yemenis, including Mohammed Al-Zubairi, with whom he jointly established a national political movement known as the Yemeni Youth Detachment.

Returning to Yemen in 1940, Al-Noman was appointed education manager of Taiz by Crown Prince Imam Ahmed. Al-Noman met Al-Zubairi again in 1942 in Taiz and together, they attempted to convince Ahmed to take serious steps to reform Yemen’s miserable situation, but the crown prince refused, threatening to kill them, which prompted them to escape to Aden.

While in Aden in 1944, the two established the Freeman Party, which later became the Great Yemeni Assembly in 1946. They also began publishing the opposition Voice of Yemen newspaper as the mouthpiece of the newborn party.

Following the outbreak of the 1948 Revolution, a constitutional government was formed and Al-Noman was appointed minister of agriculture. However, while returning to Sana’a from Aden, he was arrested in Dhamar after Crown Prince Imam Ahmed succeeded in seizing power in Sana’a.

Al-Noman was imprisoned in Hajjah’s Al-Qahira Prison, where many Free Yemenis were executed; however, he escaped death and instead was imprisoned for two years.

Released in 1950, he was appointed principal of Hajjah schools and educational supervisor of the governorate. In 1955, Al-Noman was appointed a political consultant to Crown Prince Imam Mohammed Al-Badr.

However, due to deteriorating relations between Imam Ahmed and Al-Noman, he escaped in August 1955 to Egypt where Al-Zubairi was living. They resumed their political activities by republishing the Voice



of Yemen newspaper opposing Ahmed’s policies in Yemen.

Al-Noman remained in Cairo until the outbreak of the 1962 Revolution, which toppled Yemen’s thousand-year-old dynasty. Returning to Yemen in mid-October 1962, he was appointed minister of municipal administration in the nation’s second republican government that was formed.

Upon his appointment as Yemen’s Arab League envoy at the end of October 1962, Al-Noman returned to Cairo before returning to Yemen again in 1964 and being appointed president of the first state council.

Appointed vice prime minister in 1965, he was nominated to form Yemen’s seventh government in April, but then resigned from his prime minister post after only three months.

Al-Noman was renamed prime minister and minister of foreign affairs in May 1970 before being appointed a consultant to the republican council in 1972 and then an elected member of that council in 1973.

Because of his opposition to imposed tribal authority upon the government and upon the republican council, and due to the assassination of his eldest son in Beirut in 1974, Al-Noman retired from his work that same year.

He subsequently lived and moved among such Arab countries as Syria, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia, eventually choosing to settle in exile in Geneva, Switzerland in 1987.

Al-Noman is considered one of the most active intellectuals and politicians to play a significant role in modern Yemeni history.

In late 1930s Cairo, he published a monthly magazine, The Verdant Yemen. He also penned essays about Yemeni causes in numerous Egyptian and Yemeni newspapers.

Among his educational contributions was establishing the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Bilqis at Aden University in 1961.

Including handwritten and inscribed works, Al-Noman’s patrimony exceeds 400 files preserved with his family. American University of Beirut published his recorded memoirs and personal archives posthumously in 2003 in “Memoirs of Ahmed Mohammed Noman: His Cultural and Political Biography.”

Published in the late 1930s, the booklet, “Al-Annah Al-Awla,” (The First Moan) included prosaic articles by the author about Imam Yahya’s autocracy and the oppression of the poor by his guards. Another of his works was “The Verdant Yemen”, which he published in the 1930s in Cairo, about past and present Yemen.

Additionally, Al-Noman published a series of newscasts and booklets in the mid-1950s entitled, “Lights on Yemen’s Route,” published and distributed in Aden, Beirut and Cairo.

Al-Noman died Sept. 27, 1996, in Geneva. Throughout his long political struggle in both the government, as well as the opposition, Al-Noman was a true supporter of reforms, enlightenment and development, further adopting a liberal and reasonable approach toward establishing the principles of a civil society and a modern state.

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Desperate neighborhood residents collect scrap metal for income



Most of Al-Mu'almeen neighborhood locals, including children, depend on collecting scrap metal for their lives.

By: Amira Al-Sharif

In Al-Mu'almeen neighborhood, one of the poorest sections of Aser district, a majority of residents work as can collectors, according to neighborhood sheikh, Mohammed Dahan Al-Sa'eedi. Many of Al-Mu'almeen's population of approximately 6,000 collect cans and other metal odds and ends as their main source of income.

Residents collect cans, plastic and wire in the area and then sell their finds to junk shops, which don't buy electrical or phone cables - only iron, plastic and other miscellanea. These shops then use a pressurizing instrument to compact the items and resell them to factories in Yemen or overseas for recycling.

According to Fadhil Muqbal Mansour, general director of foreign trade at the Ministry of Industry and Trade, there are no specific statistics

regarding the number of people supporting themselves by collecting cans. However, according to some authorities, as many as 90,000 in Yemen are working as can collectors.

Both age 75, Hussein Mohammed Nasser and his wife Saoud Ali Gaseem, along with seven other family members - including his divorced daughter and her baby - all live together in one room. His daily income of YR 80 comes only from collecting cans.

Junk shop owner Ahmed Abdullah Mohammed, 45, says selling metal sundries is a good way to earn an income. He has more than 70 clients every day - old, young, men and women - coming to him to sell recyclable trash.

"This simple career covers the expenses of five families: those of my brother and sister, both of whom died,

both of my married sons' families, as well as my own family," Mohammed explains, noting that his store pays YR

30 for a kilo of water bottles and YR 1,000 for a kilo of copper wire.

Neighborhood children say they



Al-Mu'almeen residents collect cans, plastic and wire in the area and then sell their finds to junk shops.



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spend more than four hours each day searching for cans discarded nearby.

Jalal Najee Al-Salmi, 11, who earns YR 40 per day, says he works to cover his school expenses, as well as to buy staples like flour, oil, tea and sugar for his family.

Waleed Mohammed Hizam, 13, spends his YR 30 per day earned from selling recyclable trash to buy sweets.

Yousef Abdulrahman, 7, gives his YR 60 per day to his mother to cover daily expenses.

Ali Suleiman Hassan, 10, earns approximately YR 500 to YR 600 per day from collecting various odds and ends.

According to the Ministry of Industry and Trade, copper is exported because there are no facilities in Yemen for reusing it. However, iron and metal sundries remain in-country and go to Yemeni factories for recycling.

Mansour says the Ministry of

Industry and Trade discussed this issue at a meeting last week and plans to appoint a committee to study the sundries-selling field to determine the number of workers, the type of metal, the capacity of factories and the economic effects.

"With the exception of iron, recyclables are exported to China and the Gulf nations," he explained, "Additionally, old cotton and woolen clothing also are exported [for recycling] because there are no factories here in Yemen."

Every ton of sundries sold to Yemeni factories is valued between YR 27,000 and YR 30,000.

"Nowadays, collected items are going to specialized Yemeni factories, including two companies in Aden," Mansour noted, adding, "Buying iron and metal sundries from shops and junkyards is a great investment project."

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