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Autistic Yemeni children show up publicly



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Beit Al-Faqih souq still draws crowds after 800 years

Houthi representative urges mediation committee to investigate jail massacre

By: Mohammed Bin Sallam

SANA'A, March 12 — Sheikh Saleh Habra, who represented Houthis in the negotiations with government officials in Doha, claimed earlier this week that the presidential mediation committee should immediately respond to his request that a committee be formed to visit Fakhra central prison in Sa'ada and investigate an alleged massacre committed against jailed Houthi followers. The tribal leader continued that many inmates died as a result of inhaling toxic gas when the jail officials threw tear gas at them. He also said that other detainees were subjected to severe torture, requiring them to be taken to nearby hospitals to receive treatment as a result. "Such incidents, if not investigated, may intimidate Sa'ada citizens, notably the families that were not allowed to visit their jailed relatives after they heard about the torture," Habra confirmed, "I have tape-recorded voices of

the prisoners while being tortured by jail officials." The Al-Haqq party on its website accused Yemeni authorities Tuesday of killing seven jailed Houthi supporters as a result of the incident, saying that such behavior implies an attempt to breach the most recent agreement signed by Houthis and the government in Qatar. The opposition party claimed that the presidential mediation committee, mandated to oversee how committed both sides are to the agreement, was not allowed to enter the jail and investigate the incident. They mentioned that such developments followed both the authority's and opposition's criticism of the Doha-brokered peace deal. Official sources refused to comment on the incident, but said that the presidential mediation committee will release on Wednesday a statement explaining the motives and causes of the incident. Local sources attributed the jail incident to the known slogan "Death to

Israel...death to America" which some imprisoned Houthis chanted on Sunday in solidarity with the Palestinian people in Gaza. As a result, officers beat them with sticks, fired live ammunition and hurled tear gas at them. Qatari foreign minister assistant Saif Albuainain, the Qatari mediation team leader, returned to Sana'a on Tuesday to resume efforts with other team and presidential committee members with the aim of ensuring that the government and Houthis remain committed to the peace agreement, Habra told the Yemen Times. The joint committee is projected to begin negotiations on the suspended issues Wednesday afternoon, mainly those related with the compensation approved for citizens whose property was damaged in the war, releasing inmates jailed over alleged connections with Houthis and lifting an embargo on foodstuffs and medical supplies in the area, believed to be populated by Houthi loyalists.

"Official media outlets reported two weeks ago that the government freed more than 380 prisoners suspected of being Houthi supporters, but the story was later proved to be incorrect and inauthentic," Habra maintained, adding that the names of the released prisoners in the story were actually released a year ago after the authority found that they had no connections with Abdulmalik Al-Houthi and his followers. Fighting between government troops and Houthis first broke out in June 2004, and in 2006, the Qatari government persuaded both conflicting sides to reach a ceasefire agreement. In January 2007, the government and Houthi followers breached the agreement by resuming fierce clashes until February, when they signed another peace deal, sponsored by Qatar. Asked when Houthis will abandon their mountaintop positions, Habra replied, "We will request Houthis to leave their mountaintop positions and



The seized explosives displayed during the trial of Second Sana'a Cell.

return home. The government officials and military commanders sitting in their homes have nothing to do with this demand. If Houthis are guaranteed even the minimal living standards, I am sure they will abandon their positions." He added that up to five thousand homes, where more than fifteen thousand families were living, were damaged during the war, along with other property and farmlands. According to Habra, military tanks are still deployed in some Sa'ada villages. "If these tanks are pulled out of the villages, I think that Houthi support-

ers will abandon their mountaintop positions," he said, adding that he is optimistic that the mediation efforts may reach fruitful results. State Security Court on Tuesday revoked a previous decision to reveal explosives belonging to the so-called Sana'a second cell, accused of supporting Abdulmalik Al-Houthi to attendees during the hearing. Instead of displaying the explosives belonging to each suspect at a time, the court showed all the suspects' explosives once at one hearing.

Continued on page 2

Treks raise awareness about dangers of revenge killings

By: Almgidat Dahesh Mojalli

SANA'A, March 9 — Dar Al-Salam organization completed its first on-foot treks to five Yemeni governorates on Sunday. Covering the months of January and February, the trek through Amran, Al-Jawf, Marib, Hajjah and Sa'ada governorates sought to spread public awareness about revenge killing, the risks of bearing arms and the importance of contributing to fighting terrorism. Abdulrahman Al-Anisi, head of Dar Al-Salam, stated, "During this trek, we tried to acquaint people with the danger of carrying arms, fighting terrorism and the great deal of endurance of those who suffer from revenge killing and kidnapping." This first trek involved 12 participants representing 12 different governorates. As



Treks visited five Yemeni governorates.

Al-Anisi explained, "They were teachers, athletes, clerks and just everyday people." He added, "They wanted to participate in this trek, believing in their duty to spread awareness among citizens and contribute to solving our society's problems, including revenge and tribal kidnapping." During the trek, participants visited tribes such as Eial Sayiad, Al-Hanashat and Daham, which have problems with arms-bearing, revenge and kidnapping. The participants discussed the tribesmen's sufferings and problems and possi-

ble ways to solve them. They used numerous aids to acquaint people with the nature, causes and solutions to their problems, including photos of the victims of revenge and kidnapping, brochures, statistics, zamils (popular poems) and orations. "At first, it was difficult to make the tribesmen listen to the participants," Al-Anisi said, "but they used many ways to draw their attention and finally, they succeeded in getting the tribes to sign agreements to not use light arms such as pistols, guns and grenades at weddings and

other occasions." Dar Al-Salam began planning for these treks this past December and concluded its first trek with a meeting of the governors of the five targeted governorates, who expressed their support for the organization. In the same context, the organization commenced its second on-foot trek last Thursday, March 7, targeting the governorates of Al-Mahwit, Raymah, Hodeidah, Taiz, Ibb and Al-Beidha, while the third trek, which will start at the beginning of May, will cover the remaining governorates. The treks come within the framework of a five-year strategy aiming to create public awareness regarding awareness and bearing a responsibility toward issues such as religious fanaticism, kidnapping, murder and bombings, in addition to arms-bearing and revenge by 2012. According to Al-Anisi, revenge killing in Yemen has claimed more than 10,000 lives, adding that revenge killing is mostly in the nation's northern and eastern districts due to widespread illiteracy and weaponry. Although a study has mentioned that Yemen has more than 50 million weapons — ranking it second after the United States — Al-Anisi denies that anyone is actually able to count them.

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In brief

ADEN

DPI operating Aden Containers Port agreement signed

General Corporation for Aden Ports and Dubai Ports International (DPI) signed on Sunday an agreement of setting up a joint company to operate Aden Containers Port. Chairman of the corporation Mohammed Mubarak and executive director of DPI Mohammed Sharaf signed the agreement. Last December, the cabinet approved establishment of the company.

ABYAN

Abyan governor inspects \$60 mln galvanized pipeline factory project

Abyan governor Mohammed Shamal inspected on Sunday a project of galvanized pipeline factory in Dafos region on coastline of the Arabian Sea.

The cost of the project is \$ 60 million at a capability of 74,000 tons yearly.

HAJJA

Security forces thwart attempt to sell antiquity pieces

Security forces in Hajjah province have arrested two persons in connection with attempting to sell two antiquity pieces, the state-run 26sep.net reported Wednesday.

The pieces were a head of a statue and whole body of an antique statue and would be submitted to the Antiquities office in the province. The security began interrogating the two persons to find out where they came by the antiquity pieces.

It is noteworthy, Yemen suffers from attacking its archaeological sites and usually because some of sites are discovered by chance or by people.

HODEIDAH

Historical city in Hodeidah discovered

Security official here said that they discovered an ancient city dates back to 500 years and contains tens of houses with height ranging between 1-1.5 meters and includes stone passageway. Speaking to almotamar.net, the security official clarified that they have received notifications from eyewitnesses on digging works and shoveling dust that affected the discovered land in Azzahra district last week.

Those who carried out the digging say that they intended to use the land for agriculture uses.

Other citizens noted during the last three days of diggings resumption the process during the night time and stopping the work during the day while they were banning people not to approach the area using unreasonable pretexts, a matter that strengthened doubt of security apparatus and surrounded the area and arrested the owner of the land.

SANA'A

WHO visits basic needs program in Bani Hushaish district

Regional Director of the World Health Organization (WHO) for the Middle East Hussein al-Jazari inspected on Tuesday work process in program of the basic needs in Bait al-Saad village in Bani Hishish district of Sana'a.

The WHO official listened from the officials of the program to health and services activities presented by the program in the district.

Yemen to hold regional conference on illegal immigration

Yemen will organize a regional conference on illegal immigration from the East Africa countries to Yemen. Saudi Arabia, Oman and the United Arab Emirates as well as the ex-colonials of the East Africa countries Italia, Britain and France would participate in the conference to be organized with the cooperation of the United States of America, head of the Coastguards Authority Ahmed Rasi said.

The conference would tackle the issue of illegal immigrants crossing the Aden Gulf and the Red Sea from the East African countries into Yemen and security consequences, Rasi was quoted as saying.

The participants will try to establish solutions for the problem with focus on Somalis fleeing destabilization in their country.

They will call for the partnership of the international community to take part in resolving such problems.

By: Amel Al-Ariqi

SANA'A, March, 9 — A group of autistic children and their families made their first public appearance on Thursday in order to raise awareness of the disease and to face the community at large, which often stigmatizes them for being mentally ill.

Approximately 10 autistic Yemeni children partook in the charity bazaar that was organized by the Yemen Center for Autism. Over 700 people attended, including diplomats, press members and local citizens.

"This bazaar was very important to us, not just to get donations for the center, but also to spread awareness among the public about autism," said the center's director, Hussein M. Najee.

The bazaar was advertising through a campaign carried out by the Cleaning Fund in Sana'a, which distributed large wall posters advertising the event.

"Unfortunately, not all the families who have autistic children attended the bazaar, though we tried to encourage them," said Ahlam Al-Arashi, the executive manager of the Yemen Center for Autism. "I don't know what prevented them [from coming], but some families may still feel embarrassed to introduce their children into a society that assumes these children are insane."

The autistic children interacted with other attendees, had their faces painted and took photos. The children also met the young Yemeni singers who enter-



Autistic children with the American ambassador.

tained the crowd with a performance made especially for the occasion. The autistic children confidently introduced themselves and shook hands with visitors like the American Ambassador to Yemen, Stephen Seche, who visited the bazaar.

"During the bazaar, I met people who thought that autistic people are handicapped people, and they were surprised to see [that autistic children are] normal children with physical ability enjoying their time with their parents," said Najee.

"Autistic people typically exhibit difficulty in verbal and nonverbal communi-

cation, social interaction and leisure or play activities."

Autism is a complex developmental disability typically appearing during a child's first three years and resulting from a neurological disorder affecting normal brain function, thereby impacting development in social interaction and communication skills.

Because the symptoms of autism vary widely, two children with the same diagnosis may act quite differently and have strikingly different skills. However, the three main areas of difficulty which all

autistic people share are difficulty with social interaction and communication, difficulty with social imagination, failing to respond to their names, poor eye contact, appearing not to hear at times, starting to talk later than other children, losing the previously-acquired ability to say words or sentences and performing repetitive movements, such as rocking, spinning or hand-flapping.

Other characteristics include a love of routine, sensory sensitivity, specialized interests and learning disabilities.

While scientific studies say there's no cure for autism, some autistic children grow up to live independently, though others require constant support in their home and work environments.

Najee thinks that up to 150,000 Yemenis may have autism. "Estimates about autism in Yemen differ," he said. "In those countries that address autism, one thing is certain — it's more prevalent than previously believed."

While it's clear that more children than ever before are being identified as autistic, it's unclear how much of that increase is due to increased awareness and recognition of the disease and how much is due to an actual increase in autism in Yemen.

Using the most extreme ratios, Yemen's autistic population ranges from 40,000 to 133,000, or from 1 in 500 to 1 in 166, respectively, according to the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention's report from 2007. Until further studies are made, these are the statis-

tics currently used.

"The bazaar gave us the chance to introduce these children to the community. It gave us a chance to tell the public that it is important to integrate these children into society, because they are not handicapped, they are not mad, they just need to be able to express themselves and be integrated into the society," said Al-Arashi.

The bazaar collected about YR300,000 (\$1500) which will go to benefit the center. "We will use the money to plant the center's garden, and we will also give bonuses to the nineteen staff members there," said Al-Arashi.

Located in the Sana'a countryside, the center is considered the first of its kind. It currently works with 48 children between the ages 5 and 13, and employs 16 Yemeni therapists to provide the children with behavioral and communication therapy.

These programs address the range of social, language and behavioral difficulties associated with autism. Some focus on reducing problematic behaviors and teaching new skills, while others focus on teaching children how to behave in social situations or how to communicate better with others. "We hope to launch our website, where we can publish facts and studies about autism in general and the difficulties autistic people face in Yemen," she added. "In addition, we are working to contact non-governmental organizations to help us to raise public awareness regarding autism."

Agreement gives Yemeni doctors scholarships to French universities

By: Hamed Thabet

SANA'A, March, 8 — Ahmed Abdulrahman Al-Maqtari, a representative of the Yemeni Community Association in France, visited Yemen last week to arrange medical training scholarships for doctors from Al-Kuwait teaching hospital.

Ten doctors from the hospital have been chosen to receive extra professional training in France for a period of six months to two years. Doctors with knowledge of the French language will be given preference, but doctors who do not speak French will also be considered, as there will be French language courses for them six months before the medical training begins, said Al-Maqtari.

Between 1997 and 2004, an educational agreement between the two countries allowed Yemeni doctors to visit France for training, while the French Universities Union agreed to donate medical supplies and machines to Al-Kuwait hospital. However, in 2004, the arrangement was discontinued when Al-Kuwait hospital staff changed after the death of Dr. Ahmed Dhaifallah, a Yemeni doctor who graduated from a French medical school.

"Now we are here again to try and renew this program to help Yemeni doctors," said Al-Maqtari. The association has already proposed the program to French universities and received a positive response.

First, the association asked the Yemeni Embassy in France about the

idea. Once the Embassy decided to support the program, the Yemeni Community Association went to different universities and asked them to partner with Al-Kuwait hospital. The program will be conducted with the help of the French Universities Union and the University of Lyon in particular.

Dr. Hamed Al-Kaf, the director of Al-Kuwait hospital, is expected to add his signature to the project proposal on March 21.

The association hopes that if the reinstated program is successful, there will be opportunities to plan further medical training for doctors in other hospitals like Al-Jumhuri Hospital in Taiz and Ibn Sina Hospital in Al-Mukalla, said Al-Maqtari.

Al-Maqtari said that one of the obsta-

cles to restarting the program was the lack of cooperation from the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education and Sana'a University, as Sana'a University medical students practice at Al-Kuwait Hospital. Gaining the trust of Yemeni officials is another challenge that the program faces.

Al-Maqtari additionally discussed support for Yemenis living in France with government officials in Sana'a. The association hopes to put forward a formal proposal to the Ministry of Education in France in order to place Yemenis as Arabic language teachers in French public schools.

Al-Maqtari said that the Yemeni government has not yet supported or even encouraged the association's initiatives. He added that when Yemeni officials

make state visits to France, they usually do not request a meeting with the association, though last year, the Ministry of Expatriates paid them a visit.

There are currently around 300 to 400 Yemeni students, mainly on science and engineering scholarships, in French universities. The students are either sponsored by the Yemeni government or the French Embassy in Sana'a.

The Yemeni Community Association is the fourth largest association representing French citizens from the greater Middle East. The Algerian, Moroccan and Tunisian community associations, in this order, are the three larger groups.

All four community associations work in cooperation with each other in France, as well as in other countries in the European Union.

Head of GTZ pays first-ever visit to Yemen for energy talks

By: Sarah Wolff

SANA'A, March 11 — The director of GTZ, a German government-run international development agency, came to visit Yemen this week to discuss ongoing cooperation between the German and Yemeni governments.

GTZ, which stands for the German Technical Cooperation (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit), has been partnering with cooperating governments in developing countries since 1975.

GTZ currently has a variety of programs in Yemen, including a particularly significant partnership with the Ministry of Energy. The two organizations are working to find renewable energy sources for Yemen, particularly solar and wind power. Other programs include decentralization projects within the government and a water sanitation plan, among others.

Additionally, the German Embassy hosted an event for Wolfgang Schmitt, one of GTZ's two managing directors, to celebrate Schmitt's first visit to Yemen. GTZ partners with governments in 70 nations to help develop infrastructure by

partnering with local experts and leaders.

"It's the first time for a managing director of GTZ to visit Yemen," Schmitt noted, explaining, "This is a field visit to learn more about our operations, but the most important thing is to get firsthand information from our counterpart institutions here."

Annually, GTZ donates 10 million Euros to Yemeni development projects, specifically focusing on infrastructure and policymaking. However, a precondition for this aid is that the Yemeni government first must request help from the German government. GTZ currently is working in conjunction with Yemen's Ministries of Energy, Water and Planning.

Members of Yemen's ministerial vanguard also attended the reception for Schmitt, including Water Minister Abdul-Rahman Al-Eryani and employees of GTZ and the Center for International Migration and Development, or CIM, a subsidiary corporation providing staff for GTZ joint projects.

One such employee is reproductive health specialist Dr. Ruth Hildebrandt, who runs a program teaching midwives

in Al-Mahwit governorate proper birthing and neo-natal care techniques.

As she explained, "The Yemeni-German reproductive health program is working at health facilities that wish to improve the quality of clinical care they offer, providing input on reproductive health, hygiene and management matters."

GTZ and its subsidiary CIM work to implement development policies slowly while using the least possible amount of foreign interference in order to get the job done.

"What's unique is that our people — German citizens — become part of our partners' teams, so it's very much integrated," says CIM managing director Oliver Auge, adding, "They build up trust, they speak Arabic and after a while, they really are part of the team, but yet they still have this German mindset, which is exactly what our partners in more than 70 countries like, including those here in Yemen." GTZ is discussing other new projects with members of the Yemeni government now, but Schmitt declined to discuss their specifics, noting that GTZ will announce the projects once the details are finalized.

Continued from page 1

Houthi representative urges media-tion committee to investigate jail massacre

The court hearing was described by suspects and their defense-advocates as merely for media purposes, since the court invited various local and international media outlets to it earlier but delayed notifying the suspects of it until Monday evening. The session was spent mostly displaying the seized explosives, allegedly belonging to the 15 Second Sana'a cell comrades accused of having connections with Houthis.

The seized material included CDs

containing news stories about the Sa'ada war and interviews with Abdulmalik Al-Houthi, which is why the authorities arrested, jailed and tried suspected editor-in-chief of Al-Shoura Weekly, Abdulkarim Al-Khaiwani. In court, Al-Khaiwani requested that his passport, laptop and cell phone, which authorities confiscated during his detention, be returned.

The court granted the defence lawyers' appeal regarding Al-Khaiwani's belongings, to be presented at another hearing scheduled for March 25. The sitting is the first of its

kind held by the State Security Court after Supreme Court's Constitutional Department took a decision rejecting a challenge filed by Al-Khaiwani's defense advocate against the legitimacy of the prosecution.

The trial provoked harsh local and international criticism of Yemen's judiciary, accused of being unjust in prosecuting journalists. Many international organizations concerned with journalistic freedoms and human rights released various statements condemning the State Security Court and demanding that it stop its arbitrary procedures against journalists.

Job Opportunity

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WHAT IT MEANS...

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

Party pluralism in Yemen

By: Khaled Fattah
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While political parties in the Middle East differ widely in terms of their ideological packages and goals, most of them share the dilemma of operating under political and military stresses.

Ironically, such stresses have only increased following the departure of European colonial troops from the region. Arab political parties were instrumental in leading the anti-colonial struggle, e.g., the National Liberation Front in Algeria, Wafd in Egypt, Dustur and Neo-Dustur in Tunisia, Istiqlal in Morocco and South Yemen's National Liberation Front.

In the post-independent Arab state, national forces and parties that were once in the same trench directly clashed with each other regarding the path of modernization, which the post-colonial Arab state should follow.

This clash has created deep inter- and intra-party divisions, which benefited the post-independence regimes. Through their monopoly over resources and coercion, the latter were able to impose their logic and ideology.

The outcome of this unfortunate situation was the establishment and consolidation of unitary political institutions "whose function was no more than the mobilization of the masses."

Clearly, it's not the Arab cultural environment that hampered the emergence of effective post-independence political parties; rather, it was the repressive political conditions imposed by Arab regimes.

However, over the past two decades, many Arab regimes, under external and

domestic pressures, have been forced to reactivate political party work. For the purpose of projecting a desirable image to the outside world, with minimal internal political concessions, Arab regimes adopted the following two approaches:

First, supporting the emergence of new parties, mostly illusionary ones that are either one-man parties with almost no existence on the political scene or a carbon copy of Western parties, such as environment-focused parties like the Green Party. Ironically, the latter was established in one of the least green regions in the world.

The second technique is sowing the seeds of inter- and intra-party divisions and disputes. Today's numerous offshoots from mother parties in the region illustrate the success of this approach.

A closer examination of Yemen's party pluralism mirrors the achievements and shortcomings of political parties in this corner of Arabia. Regarding achievements, Yemeni scholars highlight the following positive contributions by such parties.

First, such pluralism has contributed to creating a degree of political awareness among various segments of Yemeni society. Secondly, it has contributed to creating new traditions among political parties, the most important of which is establishing dialogue between parties that previously refused to even sit next to each other.

A third important contribution can be detected in such parties' attempt to propagate a national frame of reference that overcomes traditional socio-cultural frameworks of identification, such as tribal and regional affiliations.

Fourth, party pluralism has contributed to breaking down the decades-long wall of fear in Yemen's political arena. As a result, political voices and citizens' economic demands have become louder.

Fifth, such parties' exit from the tunnel of secret work to participate in competitive pluralism has contributed to producing constant pressure upon parties to adjust their positions in such a way that enables them to compete with others.

Sixth, public political activism has made it possible for parties to build bridges with the masses, and therefore, be in touch with their daily needs, concerns and problems, and then to consider solutions.

Seventh, such parties' participation in elections has been an educational experience providing them new skills and visions. Finally, Yemen's experimentation with party pluralism has planted the seeds of conviction that political objectives should be achieved through peaceful and democratic means. This achievement is of considerable importance to Yemen's the political arena, which formerly was an arena of violence and instability.

To this list, observers include achievements made in the area of partisan press, which not only has deepened the sense of freedom of expression, but it also has acted as a watchdog over political and administrative systems.

However, Yemen's party pluralism suffers from several serious limitations and shortcomings. To begin with, the pre-unification legacy of secret partisan work continues to cast its long shadow over the decision-making process within parties. Decisions within many Yemeni parties are made by a very few top members who instruct rather than involve their fellow party members.

In other words, there's an absence of transparent democratic structures within parties and concentration of power in the hands of party leaders. Ironically, this is the exact situation in those parties calling for decentralization of power and more democracy in governing the

nation's sociopolitical life.

Another factor behind such absence is attributed to the clutching of power by the old guards within parties, which has resulted in leadership crises, resignations and divisions.

The second major shortcoming is many parties' reliance either on external funding sources or support from Yemen's governing elites. The latter source have become quite lucrative following unification when northern and southern elites were co-opting leaders of parties, unions and tribes in an attempt to strengthen their positions against each other.

In post-1994 Yemen, the political administration began manipulating the state's annual subsidies to parties in such a way that allowed state authorities to reward and punish opposition parties.

The administration also adopted a method of 'buying' elements within the opposition parties. This is reflected well in the migration of opposition party members to the ruling party in the search of financial gain and higher social status.

Several Yemeni authors have noted that the outside funding of parties has become a jeopardizing source, not only to Yemeni parties and the process of democratization, but also to Yemen's national interests. Others have gone further, labeling parties' financial dependence on external sources as a stigma that has turned political activism in Yemen into mercenary work.

The third limitation of party pluralism can be found in the unfair competition between opposition parties and the ruling General People's Congress. In addition to pro-GPC constitutional and legal changes, the GPC participates in elections, relying on the power and resources of the state's executive and administrative apparatuses, including the media. According to the opposition

parties, the GPC's victory reflects the capacity of the state, rather than that of the GPC.

The fourth important limitation presents itself in the failure of political parties to introduce a qualitative institutional alternative to the strong tribal structure. From a theoretical viewpoint, this means that Yemen's party pluralism is neither modern nor traditional.

Fifth, the mass-based activities of many parties are limited, formal and implemented only on a seasonal basis, mostly during election time. For instance, despite its large number of members and the availability of financial resources, GPC activities are almost nonexistent once elections have ended.

Sixth, voting during elections occurs on the basis of the influence of individual candidates, rather than on party programs.

The seventh limitation is Parliament's weak performance, which in turn demotivates electors. This weakness is attributed both to the GPC's dominance in Parliament and the nature of post-1994 Yemen's political system, which is neither a full presidential system nor a parliamentary one.

Another clear shortcoming is the absence of clear and well-researched economic reform plans in opposition parties' programs.

Finally, party pluralism system in Yemen suffers from the low representation of women and it's a system negatively affected by the high percentage of illiteracy, which is estimated to be as much as 46 percent of the population.

This high illiteracy rate reduces the effectiveness of the partisan press in performing its role as a modern agent of political mobilization and socialization. Without overcoming the aforementioned limitations and restrictions, democracy in Yemen will remain crippled and a lame duck.



SUPPORTING REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH, POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN YEMEN

صندوق الأمم المتحدة للسكان

The UNFPA Country Office in Yemen, Sana'a, is looking to fill the post of
Post Title: Finance/Administrative Assistant to the MoPH Program Support Unit

Grade: GS 4
Duration: One year renewable.

Duties and Responsibilities:

Under the guidance and supervision of the Project Coordinator, as a member of the CO management services team, the Administrative Finance Assistant provides functional leadership in human resource, administrative and financial systems of the Country Office. He/she delivers quality services in HR, administration and finance to internal and external clients mastering all relevant rules, guidelines, processes and procedures. He/she takes a client-oriented, results-focused approach to interpreting the rules, procedures and guidelines in service of the country programme, providing support and guidance to the Country Office and UNFPA-supported projects

I. Financial and Administrative Support :

1. Liaising with the RH, UNFPA Administrative and Finance Associates on managing day-to-day operations of the PSU;
2. Coordinating with travel agent for travel itineraries and costs
3. Arranging and planning monitoring visits;
4. Translating relevant documents from English into Arabic and vice versa;
5. Following-up on quarterly financial reports
6. Ensuring follow-up with government counterparts and NGOs on submission on sub mission on required NEX Forms (COEs, C, E, and Evaluation Forms) and ensure they are properly completed and duly signed;
7. Insuring proper book-keeping of the IPs accounts;
8. Following-up on NEX audit reports and recommendations coordination and cooperation

II. Working Environment:

- The incumbent will work at MoPH –RH Program Support Unit (PSU). Hs /she should move between centers and sites of the component projects and UNFPA office as appropriate and agreed upon with PCM.
- Works closely with MoPH HQs and branches in governorates, UNFPA programme and operations staff, project directors and admin/finance Associates

III. Required Competencies:

- Knowledge sharing/Continuous learning
- Valuing diversity
- Managing Relationships
- Personal Leadership and Effectiveness
- Results orientation/Commitment to excellence

IV. Qualifications and Experience Required Qualifications and Experience Required:

- Minimum B.A. Degree in Business Administration, Management or any other related field. Formal training in specialized programme/administration or IT field desirable;
- Two years of progressively responsible experience in administration or technical support preferably in a work related to WNC and UNFPA mandate;
- Fluency in oral and written Arabic & English;
- Adequate computer skills, good interpersonal communication and team building skills.

Please send your application with a covering letter to: UNFPA, P.O. Box 7272, Sana'a.
 Deadline for application: 24 March 2008
 Please note that only candidates who fulfil the above requirements will be considered and notified.
 UNFPA is offering equal opportunities however qualified females are strongly encouraged to apply



SUPPORTING REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH, POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN YEMEN

صندوق الأمم المتحدة للسكان

The UNFPA Country Office in Yemen, Sana'a, is looking to fill the post of
Post Title: RH National Coordinator

Duty Station: UNFPA RH project at MoPH
Grade: GS 5
Duration: One year renewable.

Duties and Responsibilities:

Under the guidance of UNFPA Assistant Representative and in collaboration with the National Program Officer-RH, the incumbent will be responsible for the following:

I. Technical Advice:

- 1) Assists in the review of Reproductive Health strategies and the review of other strategies regarding RH (i.e youth, advocacy etc);
- 2) Provide technical advice to population sector as a project coordinator, mainly in terms of coordination between UNFPA Implementing Partners (IPs);
- 3) Assists in the preparation of papers, briefs and reports on Population sector (public sector) work as PCM and on general HR activities for relevant forums upon RH and UNFPA request and contributes to special events related to UNFPA;
- 4) Prepares and presents position papers, briefs and notes on RH and youth for relevant forums and contributes to special events related to UNFPA.

II. Programme Coordination:

- 1) Support the PCM in coordinating the implementing of UNFPA supported activities of the national implementing partners (IPs) including population sector and other relevant NGOs;
- 2) Monitors progress in implementing activities and expenditure of each IP through Annual Work Plans and quarterly reports.
- 3) Undertakes monitoring field visits to the targeted governorates and districts agreed upon and according to coordinated plans;
- 4) Contributes to preparation/organization and participates in the UNFPA RH program reviews, evaluations and assists in completion of the relevant reporting;
- 5) Facilitate knowledge sharing on lesson-learned and effective practices among IPs and supports PCM data collection and procession activities;
- 6) Provides logistic support to the RH thematic group meeting and activities. Quarterly and annual RH components progress reports.

III. General:

- 1) Liaison between PCM/Population sector and different RH component implementing partners and works in close collaboration with UNFPA RH component on RH activities;
- 2) Keeps abreast with UNFPA Policies, programmes and apply them to the given conditions;
- 3) Keeps abreast with UNFPA and PCM's policies, programmes and applies them to the given conditions;
- 4) Participates in interagency theme or taskforces related to RH;
- 5) Assists in preparation of reports to PCM on RH component-related activities and performs any other functions in the field of RH.

IV. Working Environment:

- 1) The incumbent will work at Population sector office. He/She should move between centers and sites of the component projects as appropriate and agreed upon with population sector;
- 2) She/he reports on all above-mentioned tasks to the UNFPA Assistant Representative will supervise the performance of the incumbent. He/She will be subject to an annual Performance Appraisal (PAR) that will be completed by the UNFPA Assistant Representative in consultation with national sub-programme and projects management;
- 3) Works closely with population sector , UNFPA National Programme Officers, UNVs, NPPPs, CST advisors and mission fielded by UNFPA as may require.

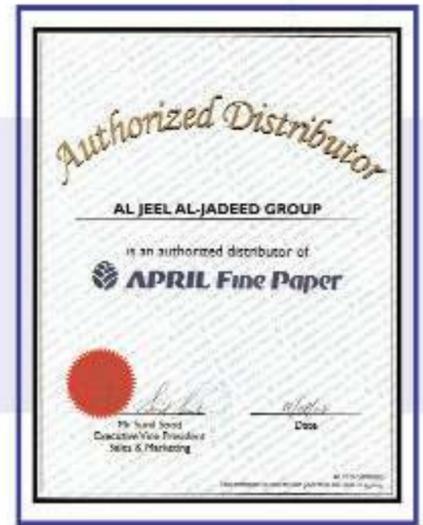
Qualifications and Experience Required Qualifications and Experience Required

- Post graduate degree in public health or other relevant sciences;
- At least 5 years of professional experience, preferably in RH/program / project ;
- Excellent professional knowledge of English, the ability to clearly communicate and report Knowledge of Arabic is an asset;
- Adequate computer skills, good interpersonal communication and learn building skills.

Please send your application with a covering letter to: UNFPA, P.O. Box 7272, Sana'a.
 Deadline for application: 24 March 2008
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Beit Al-Faqih souq still draws crowds after 800 years

By: Ian Massey
For Yemen Times

Beit Al-Faqih's Friday market is one of the most spectacular events in Yemen. Throughout the week, this small town of 5,000 lies dormant, but every Friday, thousands flock to the souq – reportedly Yemen's largest – to ply their trade, sell their goods or stock up for the coming week.

The souq sells sculptures, foodstuffs and a seemingly unending array of livestock. The range of colors, the cacophony of animal sounds and haggling human voices meld with the wafting aromas of spices and food stalls preparing lunch. All of these elements, combined with Beit Al-Faqih's scorching temperatures, tickle the senses and provide a unique shopping experience.

Beit Al-Faqih, which means "the House of the Scholar," is a small town in Hodeidah governorate named after traveling scholar Ahmed Bin Musa Al-Ujayl, the town's founding father.

A sleepy town midway between Zabid and Hodeidah, it's not an obvious location for such a vibrant event as the Friday



Come dawn every Friday, the town floods with more than 25,000 people all gravitating toward the enormous market.

souq. With only a couple of roads, a restaurant and a filling station, the town is tucked onto the souq – not the other way around. Come dawn every Friday, the town floods with more than 25,000 people all gravitating toward the enormous market.

Since its inception during the 13th cen-

try, when the market emerged as a linchpin of the Yemeni coffee trade over 800 years ago.

The spread of coffee's popularity throughout the Tihama between the 13th and 16th centuries dictated the need for a centralized distribution point. By then, coffee cultivation was ingrained in Yemen's agrarian society and nascent economy. A sedate and well-hidden settlement up until then, Beit Al-Faqih became a cornerstone of both the local and international coffee markets.

The town's fame spread throughout Yemen and beyond until the name "Beit Al-Faqih" became synonymous with the finest coffee in the world. Merchants and traders flocked to Beit Al-Faqih, spurred by the rapidly growing demand for Yemeni coffee. Traders would buy the coffee and then resell it at home for vast profits.

Danish explorer Carsten Niebuhur recorded the market's truly international nature in his diary in 1763. Niebuhur noted that, in order to buy Yemeni coffee, "Merchants come to this town from Al-Hijaz, Egypt, Syria, Constantinople and from Fez and Morocco, from Abyssinia, from the east coast of Arabia, from Persia,

India and at times, also from Europe."

By the 17th century, Beit Al-Faqih had evolved into a cosmopolitan commercial town.

The Middle East's long-established demand for coffee, combined with coffee's popularity in the fashionable districts of Constantinople, Paris and London, resulted in many commercial expeditions to Beit Al-Faqih from as far afield as Europe.

As foreign traders began learning the secrets of coffee cultivation over time, Beit Al-Faqih's international and even national importance declined. However, the town's souq has shown a durability that has outlasted the decline of Yemen's coffee trade.

Today, few international visitors can be seen on any given Friday, but in terms of scale and vibrancy, the market has retained many of its characteristics. The 25,000 people who arrive every week embody the market's importance to the Tihama population and testify to the unique qualities of the souq as a total experience.

Threading between the plethora of stalls, the hordes of people, the colors, sounds and smells of the souq – not to

mention the intense Tihama heat – all stimulate the senses.

Beit Al-Faqih's proximity to Zabid, which periodically claims the title of "the hottest town on earth," means that the souq acts as a cauldron accentuating the already stifling heat. Because of this, the souq operates at a frenetic pace, with local traders conducting business at lightning speed to sell as much as possible before the market closes at midday in an attempt to mitigate the effects of the heat.

Throughout Yemen, the souq lies at the heart of communal life as an arena for the exchange of greetings, the spread of gossip and the concluding of business. This is most noticeable while weaving between the goats, cows, chickens and camels in the animal section; or tiptoeing through the cornucopia of fruits, vegetables, herbs and spices; or exploring the intricate wares of local artisans.

It's hard not to appreciate the exalted position that social interaction and personal contact have retained in the weekly life of these Tihama merchants.

The local souq is an institution and the one at Beit Al-Faqih, with its thousands of visitors and innumerable stalls, personifies this concept.

Pen campaign seeks to bring 1,000 children back to school

BY: Saddam Al-Shmourri
For Yemen Times

The origin of the story is a smart Yemeni kid named Adel Al-Shibami. Once a Kuwaiti lady visiting Shibam and Kawkaban asked him what he needed and he told her that he needed a pen.

With some initiative from a small group of Kuwaiti ladies, named Iqbal Al-Hilali, Khawla Al-Ibrahim, and Aziza Badria Hashim, 900 schoolbags and 500 pen sets were sent to Shibam with the aim of brightening the future of a child who spoke so spontaneously and frankly.

This child became the inspiration for the first Pen Campaign, which is implemented by a number of local non-governmental organizations, including the Ibhara Foundation, Al-Itqan Association, the Shawdhab Foundation and the Yemen Mobile Company.

The campaign targets students who have dropped out of schools due to their families' inability to afford school supplies, as well as working students who left school because they were busy making money for their families.

Unlike campaigns that distribute school bags, this campaign had a special vision for how to ingrain the importance of education in the targeted group. Not only does the program provide the prospective students with materials like bags or pens but also gives them knowledge in general through a four-day extracurricular culture program. This extracurricular education also tried to inform the local community about the problems that drop-out students face in Shibam and Kawkaban.

Ali Muqbil, the secretary general of Al-Itqan Association, said the campaign's success was due to its creativity. "Taking care of school activities would encourage students continue their education," he

added.

A team of 10 volunteers from the assorted NGOs carried out two field visits to the area and contacted the largest number of people possible who truly interested in enhancing education rights for all students. The campaign started on February 27 and lasted for four days. This campaign is the first of its kind for Yemeni NGOs.

Though the number of bags were supposed to be 300 according to the field visits carried out by the project's team, there was more interest than expected.

Many companies in the private sector rejected financing the campaign until Yemen Mobile agreed to raise the number of bags from 900 to 1000 and to fund some activities in the campaign.

Also partners from the Al-Itqan Association participated in the field visits and provided transportation to and from Shibam and Kawkan during the campaign.

The significance of this project lies in the fact that it was done through contributions from all partners, who successfully disseminated its views regarding education and its importance among thousands of children in the cities of Shibam and Kawkaban.

Games:

The Ibhara Foundation held games that promoted education in rural areas, especially for girls. Here are some of the games:

1- The Basil game (promoting the importance of education):

This game aims to bring shattered picture into one piece. Two teams competitively try to come up with a picture holding the message of "READ" as a divine message that laid down the importance of education and reading fifteen centuries ago.

2- Painting workshops (girls drawing their dreams out on school tables):



900 schoolbags and 500 pen sets were sent to Shibam to help educate children.

It is important to know children's views in Shibam and Kawkaban regarding education and drawing can bring children's ideas to the surface quickly and visually.

3- Mobile puppetry stage featuring

huge pens and erasers as part of a short play that talked about education and culture, and sent the message for children to be optimistic about life through school enrollment.



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فندق سبأ



When Mr. President's term expires

By: Ahmad Mohammed Abdulghani

In July 2005, President Ali Abdullah Saleh declared that he would not stand for president again. He further said, "Now, I call on all political forces and parties to look for a new youthful and competent personality to lead the nation." This declaration was made only one year and two months ahead of September presidential and local council elections in 2006.

Despite the fact that many people welcomed such a declaration and considered it as a brave and unprecedented step made by one of the third world leaders, its aftermath was disappointing. Thousands of Yemeni and Arab writers, who exaggerated in praising Saleh for his brave and unique decision, were shocked at Mr. President's behavior rescinding his decision. Following Saleh's declaration, the Arab writers and thinkers believed that their nations may be progressing toward a prosperous future due to originate from Yemen, but their expectations were totally reversed.

The logic question being raised here is that "Was the man right? And, what motivated him make such a decision although the Constitution allows him to nominate himself for another presidential mandate?"

At that time, the interpretations and analyses multiplied; some people held the view that the man was right since he was suffering a lot and might need to take rest due to his deteriorating health. Another projected reason why the man made such a decision was that of the pressure practiced by the different political forces on his rule and the repeated criticism of his government

by the various independent media outlets.

Others were of the opinion that the declaration was merely a spontaneous expression, which the man produced unconsciously without taking into account any related consequences, as it was his habit. A third group of people believed that the president's decision aimed to declare a pressure card to any foreign players and forces that seek to be concerned about the situations in Yemen.

When faced with this question, the political achievements of the Yemeni president immediately come to mind: political stability, unity, some freedom, and political participation - in addition to the fact that he has ruled for 28 years. Does he need such theatrics to remain in power? When one puts it in the context of Arab political realities, specifically among the Arab republics, one cannot avoid asking such a question. The worst thing about it is that there can be only one answer: what happened was indeed theatrics, and not the first nor the last. Theatrics are an integral part of the Arab republican order.

Why resort to this method - as one president after another has done - of 'renouncing' office and then 'retracting' the decision? Does it reflect a disdain for the Arab people? Does it expose a belief that they lack intelligence? Or does it reflect a lack of wisdom on the part of Arab political leaders? More importantly, who or what is it that forces those leaders to make claim to a kind of democratic rule in which they clearly do not believe?

The practice of 'renouncing and retracting' exposes the deep-rooted aspiration among the Arab world's

republican leaders to be monarchs. Of course, they cannot aspire to this openly, having for the most part come to power by way of *coups d'etats* against monarchical regimes which they have condemned as reactionary and backward.

But is it not a contradiction that these *coups d'etats* have produced political systems that are in no way republican, while producing rulers who lack the characteristics or conditions to be monarchs? Some call them 'monarchical republics'. These regimes combine the negative aspects of both systems, by becoming a form of dictatorship. Despite their slogans, they claim to have qualities of which in reality they are entirely devoid.

As the man was not satisfied with the idea of not running for president, he revealed that at an early time during his unannounced meetings with some executive officials, whom were quoted as saying "by the declaration, the man want to uncover what is taking place under the table only." This was confirmed by the subsequent lack of practical steps to make a real democratic move in favor of the peaceful transfer of power.

At this point, it has been made apparent that the declaration came as a result of malignant deliberations between some invisible influential personalities, who convinced Mr. President that the declaration may be positive and in his favor at the local level and internationally.

The visits conducted by Mr. President to Thailand, Japan, United States and France in November 2005 seemed to be an exploratory journey to examine the viewpoints of international leaders and what is required in this

context. Seemingly, the joint meeting organized by the General People Congress and Council of Ministers, immediately after Saleh returned to Yemen, discussed various issues in this regard although it was held in a state of confusion. The conveners approved that the government should hold regular meetings in order to examine what is contained in the President's report on his international journey. They also advised that the government should bring appropriate means to discuss the report's content in line with a specific timeframe, and then complete the comprehensive process of democratic, economic, financial, administrative and judicial reforms.

Thus, the opposition parties' participation in the election was confined to the final stages of the political process in accordance with the Agreement of Principles, which was approved and signed by the ruling party and Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) in June 2006. The agreement proved vital to add political and democratic legitimacy to the election and its result.

As the agreement significantly coincided with naming President Ali Abdullah Saleh as the GPC candidate for the presidential election, the regional and international support increased, notably as the campaigning entered the phases of sharp competition that reflected a direct threat to President Saleh's electability. This reality was confirmed by the rallies of the JMP presidential candidate Faisal Bin Shamlan that made both the government and Mr. President live a state of unrest. The unrest and trouble experienced by Mr. President and his government were remarkably reflected in

his addresses and behaviors during the campaigning that looked unreasonable, irresponsible and unfamiliar.

Mr. President's conducts during the campaigning were believed by judicious men as evident violations against

democracy and politics, thereby labeling them as evidence that democracy in the eyes of Arab leaders is merely speeche and not action.

Source: Al-Ahali Weekly.

COMMON SENSE

In memory of Rachel Corrie Terrorism is concrete to Zionism

The death of thousands of civilians and tens of do gooders (Count Bernadotte, etc.) of the world, whose destiny entangled them in the quagmire that the Middle East has come to be, is clear testimony, as to where terrorism in the region really emanates from. Due to the continued insistence of the governments of Israel and the United States and the International Zionist Establishment on keeping the blood of innocents in the Holy Land flowing forever that in fact a solid ground has been found to allow terrorism to become a common norm of the region. Surely, history also has taught that, notwithstanding the strategic significance of the region and the hundreds of wars that have been fought in the Holy Land over the past ten millennia, it was only after the illegitimate creation of the State of Israel that terrorism, as we know it today, found the proper grounds to plant its roots. Even religious feuds of a sectarian nature only found their roots here after the Israelis and their American friends allied themselves with contractors of death - disguised as Jihadists and so called "Salafi extremists, together brought havoc and destruction throughout the region. Where do all these fly by night operations come from and who let them in, trained them and armed them and then found it suitable to declare war on anything that moves on the pretext of combating terrorism? Barak Obama, the contender for the Democratic nomination for the Presidency of the United States is right when he replied to the Republican nominee John McCain that Barak and his rival Hillary Clinton want to keep the Qaeda terrorists active in Iraq. Barak simply and straightforwardly answered: "It was only after George W. Bush and his erstwhile competitor and later supporter John McCain invaded Iraq that Al-Qaeda found its niche in Iraq."

Indeed, the land of peace and tranquility, as sought after by all freedom loving and God fearing people throughout the world, has become an ugly scenario of death for scores of innocent folks, who have never sought to become a party to any political or territorial dispute with anyone, almost on a daily basis. Even those, who cannot fail to see that the illegitimate and forced uprooting of an indigenous population of a land that has been their home for thousands of years, are not at all free from the murderous Zionist machine that thrives on the blood of the original inhabitants of the Holy Land and all those who stand in its way.

Remembering Rachel Corrie:

For those who may have forgotten (and God only knows, how can anyone really forget?), quoting from Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rachel_Corrie): Rachel Corrie (April 10, 1979 - March 16, 2003) was an American member of the International Solidarity Movement (ISM) who traveled to the Gaza Strip during the Second Intifada. She died close to the border with Egypt while trying to obstruct a Caterpillar D9 armoured bulldozer, operated by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). Of course, no one can be allowed to stand in the way of the American Caterpillar, that has become the symbol of death and destruction that characterizes the Zionist movement almost from the early days of the last century, once Zionist settlers were given a foothold to implant the roots of their evil rape of the Holy Land. It should not be surprising then that the very same monstrosity of death planted by the infamous British Empire was later to kill distinguished officers of the latter (the bombing of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem by the Stern and Irgun gangs led by Menachim Begin and Itzhak Shamir), as a token of gratitude for their kind support to the Zionist Movement. This kind of gratitude took on a different show to the American people for their unrelenting support to the Zionist state. This came when Americans, who saw injustice in the whole idea behind the establishment of a state over the crushed bones of its indigenous inhabitants and anyone who sympathizes with them, were given a taste of the inhumane nature of the Zionist death machine. This was the case with the innocent and brave Rachel Corrie, who sacrificed the best years of her age to respond to her moral conscience as she could not swallow the fact that America should partake in the biggest rip off of the Twentieth and Twenty First Century. May God bless her soul and award her bravery and courage and God bless her family, who are still being challenged by the non-pretextuous closed eyed attitude of their Government to the killing of one of America's greatest advocate for human rights in modern times.

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



By: Hassan Al-Haifi

About our right to sing

By: Faisal Al-Sofi

After the Aden Artistic concert ended and the Syrian singer Asalah Nasri and her band, fans and policemen returned home safely, the opposing extremists

turned out to be calm even for some time. But amid such calm atmosphere, I think that it is time for us to expose the scene once again and benefit from the lesson in our future activities.

Organized in Aden, the concert was supposed to be looked at as an ordinary or familiar event. Instead, it has been

labeled by extremists and terrorists as a cause leading to a war as if the Yemeni people sang for the first time in their life. These extremists and terrorists launched offensive attacks against the singer and her fans in the platforms of mosques, depicting the matter to have relation with a new Elephant Battle that has Aden as its starting point to destroy social values and traditions of Yemeni society and damage its holy shrines. The matter, however, is related with a respected artistic concert.

We claim that the fundamentalists, who waged a fierce attack against the concert before it started, realize well that they have been exaggerative in their campaign, and a clear-cut evidence of this is that they stopped their criticism of the singer and the concert as soon as the event was over.

When the news started to tell the public that an artistic festival would be held in Aden on the eve of February 14th and that Nasri and another singer would take part in the event, the Salafi extremists came together forming a resistance front against the function

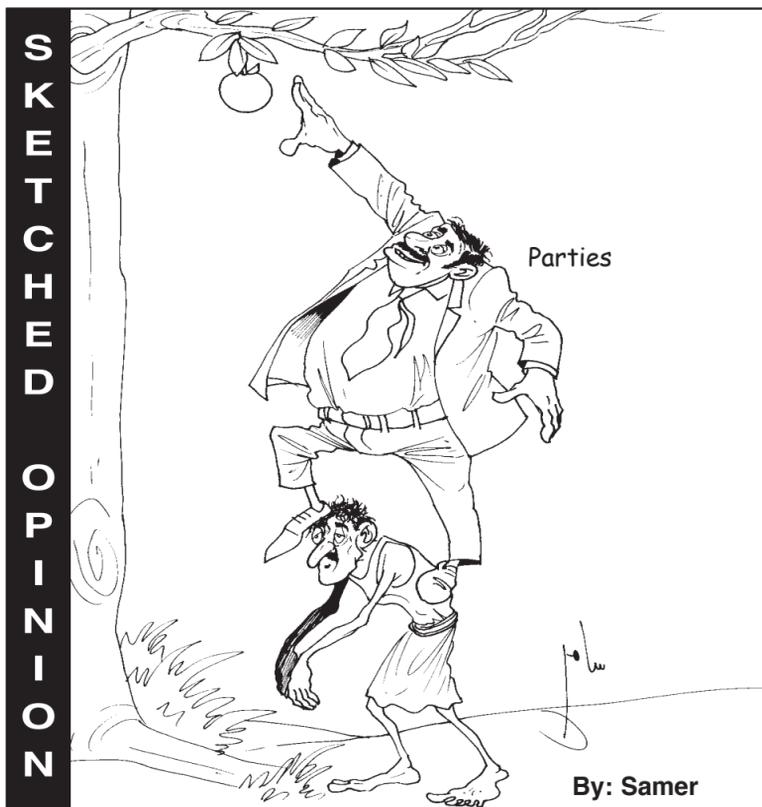
and the Syrian singer. They made up a unified line including mosque preachers, religious clerics and Qaeda comrades and all of who belong to the Salafi (Wahabi) sect that entered Yemen for the first time in 40 years.

Additionally, such a resistance movement included Parliament members, university teachers and journalistic writers who are all extremely engaged in earthly affairs and are occupying invisible posts other than their real jobs. We don't know why such people, believed to be a mirror for other members of the society, joined the fierce battle against the reputed singer and the artistic festival, thus labeling certain things as taboo and other things as permissible, however, this is not their business.

All these extremist figures met at a unified goal, thereby becoming unable to resolve their own differences over jobs and viewpoints. What they could unanimously do is collectively opposing the artistic concert, saying it contravenes the teachings and values of Islam.

They claimed that singing is taboo and the singer has no right to sing in Yemen. They also vented their anger at the government agencies for organizing a futile event that might cost tens of millions of Riyals from the State's treasury while the government should have spent the money in favor of the poor and the needy families in Yemeni society. I would like to advise these people by saying that they are walking on the wrong path. They have to review their mistakes before claiming that others do wrong.

Source: Almotamar.net



By: Samer

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Campaign against Genital Mutilation

A change of perspective in favour of the victims

Although the genital mutilation of women and girls is condemned as grievous bodily harm in countries all over the world, it is still practised even in countries like Germany, where an estimated 30,000 women are affected. Renate Bernhard reports on an alarming case in Hamburg

The Hamburg paediatrician was vigilant. She broached the topic with the parents of her two-year-old patient. The little girl was a German citizen, but her parents were from the Gambia, a country in which almost 90% of women are genitally mutilated and where the state not only does not prohibit the practice, it actually endorses it.

The child's mother told the doctor that she had herself undergone this ritual as a child and considered it an Islamic requirement to carry out the same practice on her daughter. She was completely unaware of the fact that female genital mutilation is not called for anywhere in Islam.

Task force against genital mutilation
Alarmed by this conversation, the pae-

diatrician sought advice and was eventually referred to the 'Task Force for Effective Prevention of Genital Mutilation', a Hamburg-based organisation. The people there shared the doctor's concern and together they looked into the question of medical confidentiality.

'The Provincial General Medical Council confirmed for us that doctors definitely are allowed to break medical confidentiality when a more important legally protected right, in this case the child's well-being, is at risk,' explains Ines Laufer from the Task Force.

When the family returned to the doctor to have the child examined in preparation for a trip to the Gambia, the paediatrician alerted the youth welfare office in Hamburg North.

Ines Laufer informed them about

female genital mutilation in the Gambia, as well as of the fact that, according to a decision made by the German Federal High Court in 2004, it can be considered appropriate to deprive parents of the right to determine their child's place of residence and to deny them the right to travel to their homeland in order to protect a girl who is at risk.

'The judge in charge of the case did not regard it as proven that this child was at risk,' explains Peter Hansen, the Hamburg District Office press officer. The parents had denied, in various conversations, that they wanted to subject their daughter to female circumcision.

The judge therefore permitted the parents to retain their right to determine the whereabouts of their child. They took their daughter abroad with them; what happened to her is still unknown.

'Who is honestly going to admit that they're planning to commit a crime? There's no other offence for which this would be seen as a sufficient reason to consider the case closed,' says Ines Laufer, enraged.

Improved protection for victims

Reports about the genital mutilation of girls and women have been circulating for 30 years, and while it is a known fact that this is being practised in Germany, no one has ever been apprehended. This so outraged Ines Laufer that she founded the Task Force for Effective Prevention of Genital Mutilation in February 2007.

The organisation is calling for a shift in perception. Protection of victims should become the main focus, not the question of how to reach perpetrators and possibly change their minds. 'Studies in other European countries show that between 35% and 80% of girls at risk do in fact become victims,' she says.

However, in Germany to date there are still no active measures to protect victims. 'The German state is neglecting its duty to provide protection. It should take active steps to ensure that the basic right to life and freedom from bodily harm also applies to the children of immigrant parents living here. Anything else is discrimination.'

The Task Force is therefore demand-

ing that girls in 'at-risk groups' should be regularly examined until the age of 18, 'so that a generation of girls will finally be able to reach adulthood here un-mutilated'. Experience in France shows that instances of mutilation do not occur when regular checks are being made.

High number of unknown cases

The human rights and women's rights organisation 'Terre des Femmes', which has been providing information about this topic for more than 30 years, estimates that there are around 4,000 girls at risk in Germany, and a total of around 30,000 victims. 'But the true figure is certainly much higher than this,' says the organisation's spokeswoman, Franziska Gruber.

Several groups are not included in their estimates, such as affected women living in Germany illegally, African women who have a German passport, and victims from non-African countries such as Iraqi Kurds. Ines Laufer from the Task Force estimates that in Germany there are a further 30,000 unreported cases.

A questionnaire submitted to 493 German gynaecologists by UNICEF, Terre des Femmes and the Association of German Gynaecologists provides further evidence of the extent of the danger these girls are in. 35 of the doctors questioned stated that they knew of female patients who wanted to have their daughters genitally mutilated in their home countries. 48 doctors had heard that this practice could also be carried out in Germany. Three had been asked whether they themselves could perform a circumcision.

In African circles, prices are also being quoted. The Sudanese doctor Abdul Kangoum, of the Association of German-African Doctors, reports that he was offered 10,000 to circumcise two young girls. According to Dr Kangoum, female circumcisors who are flown into the country to mutilate a number of girls receive 2,000.

Renate Bernhard
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Translated from the German by
Charlotte Collins

Fair contracts for poor countries

By: Karl P. Sauvant

A number of countries in Latin America, Africa, Eastern Europe, and elsewhere are abrogating or renegotiating contracts with multinational enterprises (MNEs), and others are likely to follow suit. The costs can be high. Governments may get better terms, but they may also become embroiled in international investment disputes and discourage other investors. For companies, renegotiations mean uncertainty and possible interruptions of production and revenue.

Significant shifts in power (typically as a result of changes in commodity prices) and ideology, or changes in the economics of projects, can lead to rene-

gotiations, especially when it comes to large investments in natural resources and infrastructure. But often the reason is that the host country considers a contract to be unfair.

While "fairness" may well be in the eyes of the beholder, in some cases, the host country may not have had the expertise required to negotiate the best possible deal - a frequent situation when MNEs negotiate with the least developed countries (the world's 50 poorest countries, most of them in sub-Saharan Africa). Mittal's 2005 deal with Liberia (renegotiated last year) and various contracts with Congo probably fall at least partly into this category, as do some deals in ex-Soviet countries.

Suppose a \$500 million petroleum or copper contract needs to be negotiated.

This will most likely involve a leading MNE, which can field a negotiating team that includes world-class lawyers, geologists, and financial analysts who understand, for example, the trade-offs between taxes and royalties and can put them in appropriate language. The host country, on the other hand, simply cannot match such a team. Perhaps it does not even know what to ask for.

The resulting contract is all the more problematic because it is likely to involve one of the host country's few important resources, which can generate more predictable (and probably higher) revenues than official development assistance - and over a long period of time. So, even without corruption, it is not surprising when a future government demands that the contract be renegotiated.

Clearly, the playing field with MNEs should be leveled. In theory, the host country could hire its own international experts to assist it in negotiations. But poor countries typically lack the funds needed to pay such a team's fees. Nor do the World Bank and regional development banks have the in-house expertise - or, as a rule, the funds - to provide technical assistance.

But what if MNEs provided the funds? Obviously, MNEs want the best possible deal for themselves; but they also want durable contracts that won't be repudiated by the next government. So they have an interest in negotiating a fair deal, and one that is seen to be fair. Besides, in large deals, the negotiating team's costs are relatively small (or they could be reimbursed out of the project's revenue stream).

But, even if a company embraces this approach, problems abound. How can it be implemented without looking like bribery (in case the company gives the funds directly to the government)? And how can companies prevent some of the funds from being misused (say, if the government hires a third-rate team)?

Here is a proposal: an Investment Contract Aid Facility (ICAF) under the umbrella of a well-respected organization. The ICAF would function like an escrow account into which the firm pays the funds required for the host country to hire a negotiating team. The escrow account manager then invites the country to select a team, suggesting what skills are required and perhaps even providing a roster of experts.

The country would be free to choose

its own team, but the escrow account manager, aided by an international advisory board of expert volunteers, would need to agree that it is, in fact, world-class. One could even include a capacity-building element by adding to the team one or two local negotiators. The result should be a contract that is as fair as possible under the given circumstances - and perceived as such.

It would be enough for a handful of CEOs and prime ministers to say that they are prepared to consider using such a Facility on a case-by-case basis. While this would not end the abrogation or renegotiation of contracts, it would eliminate one important reason them, benefiting countries and companies alike.

Source: www.project-syndicate.org

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.
- 2- Direct administrative supervision on performance of projects officers.
- 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.
- 3- Providing assistance and technical support for directors and officers of health 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 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.
- 6- Having good abilities in planning, organizing, following-up, supervising, managing and directing workers in addition to making 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: health@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: 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.

Interested applicants shall send their application letters along with their CVs to the Social Fund for Development by the following e-mail: health@sfd-yemen.org
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Coping with corruption in Yemen

By: Yemen Times Staff

Dealing within the rampant culture of corruption in Yemen is an influential element of the business environment and the government, and involvement in corruption has become seen as a means for realizing huge profits without having to compete or be transparent in their business dealings. Such dealings has raised many exclamation and question marks by international investors who wanted to expand their operations to Yemen, however, the challenge of working within a highly corrupt business culture substantially increased the risk of doing business in Yemen, and in turn offset any interest in the local economy in addition to marginalizing open competition towards the interest of an economic minority, who benefit from fueling corruption in the business environment.

Such is an example of the cost of corruption, which have raised the voices of reformers within the government, civil society organizations, the privet sector, and the international donor community in Yemen. These voices have motivated the parliament, Central Organization for Control and Audit (COCA) and several reform-oriented officials in order to intensify efforts towards combating corruption in their own government agencies and offices. However, the 'corrupting' end of the cycle has not been dealt with, until recently.

Government as a stakeholder

Through looking at the other side of the corruption cycle, the different levels of governance have varying degrees of involvement in corruption, ranging from the baselines to middle and high-level officials. However, the recent formation of the Supreme National Authority for Combating Corruption has raised hopes in the sincerity of government's efforts towards enhancing transparency and battling corruption.

However, spectators indicate that the anti-corruption commission will

have limited success in any anti-corruption reforms, quoting that the commission has distributed over 3000 applications for the disclosure of net wealth to high ranking government officials, while less than 300 officials cooperated with the commission and disclosed their net worth. Challengingly, a source who requested to remain anonymous indicated that the president himself refused a request from the commission to take the lead and disclose his own net worth in order to influence other officials, but the presidential office turned that request down.

It is obvious that the anti-corruption commission will be facing a serious challenge if it is to succeed in its anti-corruption mission; however, the hope relies within the support of the international community and donor organizations such as the World Bank and USAID.

Privet Sector as a stakeholder

The first response for corrupting pressures was voiced by the Association of Yemeni Auditors' director Mr. Ramzy Al-Ariqi, who stated that there are no government-enforced regulations that enforce transparency and privet sector disclosure. He stated that even in auditing for tax purposes, the tax authority does not have the qualifications that will enable it to identify organizations that are systematically involved in corruption and payment of bribes as evidenced in their own accounting books.

Indeed, quantifying how much companies pay in bribes will help in advocating for the size of the problem and blacklisting companies which are directly involved in spreading corruption, and for that purposes, the level of transparency in business enterprising in Yemen is very low.

Another effort was initiated by the Yemeni Businessmen Club, who has held several conferences in order to promote the concepts of corporate governance and transparency while focusing on the direct benefits on these businesses. The conferences were successful in raising awareness, but from the responses of most

participants, it was evident that much more is needed in order to influence the adoption of transparent corporate governance techniques in Yemen.

Chairman of the businessmen club Mr. Ahmed Bazaraa has indicated that the Yemeni business environment needs more transparency in order to be able to grow, he mentioned that at this time of globalization Yemeni businesses must be transparent in order to be able to partner with regional and international players, and to also push forward with plans to establish a stock market in Yemen, a venture which requires a great amount of transparency in disclosure on the part of possible partners.

Identifying corruption:

Corruption, although hardly quantifiable, has many direct and indirect costs over both the immediate and the long term. From a survey with several businessmen and managers within the privet sector, we have made an attempt in order to list the corruption-related activities which the privet sector finds itself having to be involved in corruption as a coping mechanism.

Bribes:

Perhaps the most evident pattern of corruption that is most widespread in Yemen is bribes. Bribes can be classified into two segments, facilitation money, and greasing costs. Facilitation money is bribes that are paid to lower or middle management officials within government circles or other privet sector organizations in order to speed up any - otherwise stagnating - process, examples of those include speeding up a required process or removing bureaucratic delay in any transaction, such as license renewal, processing of payment, opening of tender bids, etc. The other type, greasing costs, are costs incurred to guarantee a selected business or government transaction, or avoid any mishaps that will otherwise happen, for example bribing customs officials in order to look the other way while several goods are imported, or to overlook violation of a signed agreement or

unfitness of any good or service sold for the government. Examples of such in the privet sector are more limited, and usually includes procurement of goods and services.

Profit-sharing partnerships:

In such cases, a high-ranking official or an influential person offers to facilitate the business activities of a particular business enterprise or business, on the bases that he receives a profit margin of any activity which they have facilitated. Usually involving the government through signing unjustifiable business agreements forcing the government to buy or contract for services for a price at least double the normal costs, and then either the transaction takes place, or the business sues the government and receives sizable compensation. There are also cases where such powers are exerted on the privet sector, in such cases, coercion is usually used to force business transactions to take place, through the robbery of vehicles and personal property, kidnapping of persons, but most prominently raiding land and real estate. This coercion is lifted following the demand for the purchase or forced sale of a selected property at a nominal price.

Gifts and discounts:

These are occasions where gifts and discounts are given to decision makers in government and in the privet sector where luxurious and often expensive gifts are given in order to improve the mutual relationship between an official or a privet sector employee and a supplier in order to continue the on-going business relationship or start a new one, this is done in order to result in a favorable business decision in order to maintain the flow of gifts to the official. Such gifts can also include selling a vehicle to the official for a very nominal cost or providing other perks at very low prices as a result of the business relationship. It is worth noting that many officials do not recognize this as corruption but believe it to be a right for a discount if the business relationship is to continue.

Business in Brief

WB: Poverty in Yemen to increase by 6 % in 2008

A recent World Bank report has stated that poverty in Yemen will increase by 6 percent in 2008, attributing that to the increase in the number of people who cannot afford basic food commodities in the light of unprecedented inflation.

Al-Mutawakel: We need an industrial revolution

Minister of Trade and Industry Dr. Yehya Al-Mutawakel stated that Yemen will rely on the industrial sector and the industrial zones, adding that an industrial revolution is the means towards economic development, increasing gross domestic product, and improve the economic performance of the country.

Aden Free Zone provides more incentives for investment

The director of the Aden Free Zone Dr. Mohammed Al-Wathen stated that the free zones authority will provide free land rights to any investment exceeding US\$ 10 million in capital. Other incentives are also available to labor-intensive opportunities which will provide employment in Aden.

Anti-corruption committee to work in governorates

The Supreme National Authority for Combating Corruption (SNACC) has stated that it will start working in other governorates and demand cooperation from governorate officials in different parts of the country. SNACC has also requested that governorate officials disclose their net worth at the earliest possible.

Law to allow foreigners to undertake business

Law number 1 for 2008 has been enforced in order to allow non-Yemenis to work freely in business and trade without the requirement to have a Yemeni partner or form a local business enterprise. This law is hoped to encourage the non-Yemeni residents to be involved in business and provide employment.

Sewing factory to be upgraded

Minister of Trade and Industry Dr. Yahya Al-Mutawakel has stated that a full upgrade for the National Sewing and fabrics factory will take place starting the end of the month, the upgrade will include all the technical and manufacturing equipment which has been operational for over 50 years, and has been facilitated by a Chinese grant.

Ministry warns Oil companies on their recruitment strategies

Deputy Minister of Oil Ahmed Daris has indicated that oil companies operating in Yemen must revise their human resources strategies inline with the Yemenization program, to increase the share of Yemeni employees within those companies.

CAC Bank inaugurates its 55th branch

The Commercial and Agricultural Credit Bank (CAC Bank) has recently inaugurated its 55th branch in Taiz city, inline with the bank's strategy to become the largest bank in Yemen, providing banking services to most communities in all parts of the country.



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Yemen's exam system is a lemon

By: Ahmed Abduljalil Al-Qubati
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Yemen has many problems without solutions, one of which pertains to education and that is its exam system. There are three aspects of the problem, but I'm only going to discuss two of them: general exam supervision and exam committees in villages.

The first aspect of the problem involves cities like Sana'a, wherein all schools contain the same exam questions. However, do they all have the same strength of supervision regarding the exams? Unfortunately, the answer is no.

Some schools have strong exam supervision, therefore, students can't cheat, which is good; however others don't have strong supervision, so students can cheat easily. Thus, no one really knows which students deserve to be school graduates.

The second aspect of the problem is the exam system in Yemeni villages. Rather than simply study – and thus, actually learn something, many students work in order to make money to cheat on their exams. Because there's

no one to oversee it, they pay the exam committee to allow them to cheat on the exam, which is the easiest way to pass.

Some villages have a very organized system of cheating wherein an exam gets into the hands of someone outside the school before it makes it to the exam room itself. This outside individual then answers the questions, which then are sent into the exam room.

Another thing struck me while I was talking with some university students. At some universities, there's a funny rule that says, "In order to sit, arrive first," meaning that a student must be one of the first if he or she is to sit in a chair to take the exam!

If they're late, they either must stand or get a chair from outside the hall and then sit in the middle of the hall or anywhere available. Thus, exam halls become so crowded that students can't focus on their exam, so they can cheat easily, doing whatever they want. For this reason, there must be sufficient space and halls at Yemeni universities.

To sum up, Yemen's university and school exam system is a lemon and an empty tin can. However, I hope we can change this and develop our nation's education in general and the exam system specifically.

More resembling to the shades

By: Mohammad Noaman Al-Hakimi
mohammadalhakimi@yahoo.com

Translated by: Fuad Al-Shalabi

Verse is a more resembling to the shades
When your spectrum glimpsed or appeared to me
And reveals in eyes of the flood my soul
Crowned with bracelets of the crescent
And in the bottom of myself visions get greened
And trails with sublimity palm of fantasy
And mix ignitions of green high lands
With pains of streams and the hills
Overwhelmed me the pleasure when early starts on
Persons of the love, stands before me
Seeing when I mention Prophet Mohammad
Yearning glows in all of the feelings
Smelling odor breezing from the letters
On embers dewed in my essay
Purifying heart as long as it to be Beloved of Allah my business and concern
As long as I look at him, I'm fortunate
Secrets of the beauty and secrets of the love
As long as I submit him my devotion
I encircle every precious in whole of the life

Me O Mustafa, is a lover slave
Heading you, O Messenger in bad of the state
A pardon, O my Master to the inexperienced, is it there
And a refuge for the ideal heart?
Imagining the expressing spoiling my whole of flesh
If I retrieve the old passing days
And revise calamities and the pains
And "icons" fantasy of the time
And sank in haze of a shyness
Struggling me reduction in reduction

O master I'm in any of circumstance
A refugee at door of you thence accept my convergence
In light of hands you've, I appeal my invocations
To "The Gracious", how if you're the light
A leader to the guidance after the misleading
So grant me a blink of eye of love
Completeness I substantiate to one, that's of mine
- O Master – you, the one I know for the forgiveness
And a deserver to mediate un punishment and the grant
A leader of demonstration on the Day of Judgment
Thence no nearness of vending nor else of any cost
For this I vowed the precious of my life
To your love, myself and my belongings
Hoping you'll stay with me in communication
If communication with the world is so interrupted
And bide O my God prayers on every blinking
Upon Taha and family, his ancestry, of all the best

The Middle East in an American family's view

By: Abdullah Bin Abri Al-Nahdi
alnhd2001@yahoo.com

United States, New York City. Jake and his wife Kate have two sons, John and the eldest, Mike, who joined the U.S. Army. They are an American family.

"Dad, Dad, hurry up!" 14-year-old John shouted.

"What's the matter, son?" the father responded.

"Watch the news. They're showing some soldiers killed in an attack in the Middle East. They may show Mike," John said.

"Don't be pessimistic, son. He'll be all right," the father responded.

"Dad, why did he go there when he may not come back, right?"

"Don't say that," the father said.

"We may receive only his body, like other families," John said.

"Listen, John, your brother will return one day as one of the heroes who are fighting for freedom," the father said.

"Freedom!? How is that, Dad? As I know it, freedom is keeping your country free, not going to fight other countries," John said.

"Stop it, John! Go open the door. Someone's knocking and it could be your mother," his father shouted.

"Hi, John," his mother said, greeting

him.

"Hi, Mom," John replied.

"I heard some good news today. I read a newspaper saying the U.S. Army will return soon!" she said.

"They're liars because we hear that every day. Liars! Liars!" John screamed.

"Please, Mom, tell me the truth. What are they doing there in Iraq, Afghanistan and the other countries?" John asked her.

"Listen, baby, you have to know that most American families that have sent their sons there aren't satisfied with it, or even most of the country, but..."

"But what, Mom? Just say it!"

"It's their orders, my son. They just do what they have to. Those who make the decision and give orders have a reason for it, which is fighting terrorism. For us as soldiers' families, that reason still isn't enough for us," his mother said.

"Terrorism!? So, what is it if a huge army attacks our country in order to scare and kill us? I think terrorism is the only word that could explain that!" John retorted.

"I think I have it now, Mom. Our government is afraid of terrorism. They think it comes from the Middle East, so they want to kill it in its cradle before it reaches us."

"Hey, son, don't try to analyze things with your small mind," his mother said.

"Believe me, Mom, but according to my small mind, I think what they're doing there is just creating something called terrorism that didn't exist before," John said.

"Come on, baby, forget about that. Just think about your future," his mother urged.

"The future!? I can see my future, Mom. If no one stops this, our future will be too bad. Maybe our country is strong now, so we fight, colonize and kill for no reason. Mommy, no one knows that people may regain their energy some day and then reprisal will be their first goal.

Our army and those who are making these wrong decisions now won't be here, so I and the subsequent generations will pay the cost for that," John said.

"Oh my god! Is this really you, John? I wasn't aware that I had a political son, but your words are really affecting us. Do you see your mother's tears?" his father asked.

"Yeah, Dad, that's what I think will happen," John replied.

Ring!! Ring!!

"Hello?" his mother answered the phone.

"Hello, is this Jake's house?" the caller asked.

"Yes, this is his wife," she responded.

"I'm sorry to tell you that your hero son, Mike, was killed in an attack."

Government of India should stay firm!!

By: Raju Aneja
rajuaneja@hotmail.com

There is a report that the Indian Government may back down over the proposal for a compulsory \$265 minimum wage for unskilled workers in some parts of the Middle East, e.g. Bahrain, following protests from contractors, etc.

The Government of India should remain firm. It would be a serious error to withdraw any proposal which be-

fits those who are not covered for inflation and are unprotected. They neither have provident funds, insurance or pensions for their old ages.

Sure, the contractors will protest, because their costs will increase. But they should realise that labour costs are a fraction of their total bills, and the increase will not even register to 2 decimal places on a calculator. And they would have a motivated, smiling labour force that will complete projects ahead of schedule. India itself is on a roll, and needs labour and workers des-

perately. A business group in India (Ambanis) have imported Chinese labour for one of their projects. Another construction company (DLF) is looking to bring 20,000 Indian workers back home to complete their projects.

The Government of India, should not back down. I am aghast and astonished at the callous indifference of some rich businessmen, towards their fellowmen, who are not as fortunate as many of us in terms of education and income.



VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Representation Office in Sana'a is looking to fill the following post:

Post Title: Programme Clerk

Post Level: G-4

Duties and responsibilities

Under the overall supervision of the FAO Representative and the direct supervision of the Assistant FAOR/Programme, the incumbent will collect information, maintain records and prepare documentation and correspondence pertaining to programme activities. In particular, to:

- collect data and other information on agricultural development and/or related activities in the country;
- maintain, log, file and update records in prescribed format for subsequent use;
- process the information and data in accordance with instructions received, making necessary abstracts and computations;
- maintain and keep current registers and control plans on the status of projects at the formulation, implementation and operational stages;
- prepare background material, working papers and tables for briefing and review sessions or meetings;
- participate in the monitoring of ongoing projects, with particular reference to budgets and work-plans and maintain the FAO programme system tools;
- draft correspondence and summary tables and carry out other specific operational tasks for programme/project implementation as requested;
- performs other related duties as required.

Qualification requirements

Education: Secondary school education

Experience: Four years of clerical experience, including record-keeping and processing of information Languages: Working knowledge (level C) of the official language of the Organization used in the duty station (English,) and of Arabic.

Knowledge and skills: Knowledge of modern office procedures. Computer literacy. Accuracy and attention to detail. Ability to maintain records and databases. Ability to work harmoniously with people of different national and cultural background.

Interested Applicants should submit letter of application accompanied by the CV to:

The FAO Representative

7 Mogadishu Street , P.O.Box: 1867 Sanaa, Yemen

Tel: 207331 / 207609 Fax: 208852

Deadline for Application: 31 March 2008

- This vacancy is open to male and female candidates. Applications from qualified women candidates are encouraged
- Only suitable candidates who fulfill the above requirements will be considered and notified.



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Human Rights activist Afra'a Al-Hariri: "Former women prisoners in Yemen cannot reintegrate into society."

By: Amel Al-Ariqi
& Abdulwahid Abdullah

Former women prisoners in Yemen face many obstacles preventing them from reintegrating into society, such as absence of identification documents, violence and the government ignoring their issues, according to one human rights activist, speaking during an exclusive interview with the Yemen Times.

Afra'a Al-Hariri, a lawyer and founder of the Relief Center for Former Women Prisoners and Victims of Violence, narrated how the center's residents suffer such problems.

"The main difficulty the center faces with security agencies began when our center demanded issuing identity cards for our residents," explained Al-Hariri, whose countenance displayed a mixture of both anger and pain.

"Our executive administration followed up the matter with related security agencies via an official memo from the current governor of Aden. At first, several officers came to collect information about each resident, but then this process stopped for no reason. I demanded it commence again, so some other officers came, but to no avail."

She continued, "After this, the center conducted a media campaign and a workshop to mark its first anniversary. During that workshop, the campaign launched with taking photos of the residents demanding their identity cards."

"The security agencies began negotiating the matter again. The residents were investigated and questioned frequently in order to obtain information to issue the cards, but with no benefit."



Yemeni female ex-prisoners are subjected to various types of violence; they are rejected by their families, who refuse to take them back after their release, and in many cases, they are murdered.

no reporting would be carried out, not even by the neighbors or the tribe's sheikh," Al-Hariri explained.

She added, "I dare the security agencies to release any information or numerical data on honor crimes committed against female Yemeni ex-prisoners due to the absence of basic information about these women's backgrounds. They don't even have birth certificates."

The legal procedures for investigations by police stations and courts stipulate verifying an individual's identity. "However, in reality, this is not done, so I wonder how a verdict is ever given without verifying the identity, as the law states. This would mean that all legal procedures are invalid! What's even stranger is that some citizens have election cards when they're still under the legal age," Al-Hariri pointed out, affirming that this problem not only involves former women prisoners,

subjected to various types of violence; for example, they are rejected by their families, who refuse to take them back after their release, and in many cases, they are murdered.

For these reasons, they find themselves without financial support. "In most cases, they fall victims to violence, ending up on the streets and earning their livelihood through begging or prostitution," Al-Hariri affirmed, adding that most of these women also suffer psychological problems due to the physical violence and the "unfair treatment they experienced in prison."

What the center offers

Al-Hariri opened the relief center based on her research results regarding the situations of women prisoners at the Al-Mansoorah Central Prison in 1999. "I did it because, being a human rights activist, I have an interest in the issues of vulnerable women and children."

After the issue surfaced regarding newly freed women prisoners being rejected by their families and/or refusing to return home for fear of being killed, Al-Hariri received help from the director of the first care project while supporting the Yemeni Women's Union (YWU)-Aden for the first time.

"The center was established with the aim of providing accommodation and assistance to former women prisoners, empowering them by participating in normal life and fighting violence against women," Al-Hariri explained, noting that the center also takes in those women subjected to domestic violence.

She continued, "Former women prisoners and others who are subjected to domestic violence come through the security agencies, public prosecution and the Criminal Investigation Authority. If they come via other agency, we ask them to report there, after which they are sent to us. They also come from the legal protection project of the YWU-Taiz and its other branches under the framework of a project supported by Oxfam, Britain/Yemen. While their ages range between 13 and 45, most are between ages 16 and 23."

Having received 51 women since its establishment in 2005, the center provides accommodation, food and drink, clothing and medication. Residents attend reading and writing classes at the center using the government's anti-literacy curriculum.

The relief center offers three levels, the first of which is first and second grade of primary education. The second level is third and fourth grades of primary education, while the third and final level is fifth and sixth grade of primary education. Those who pass the third level sit for a test to join seventh grade, which is the first grade in secondary school.

The center also offers psychological and social counseling, "which are considered the most important and determine the length of stay at the center," Al-Hariri said, adding that such counseling differs depending on the case.

"Working with violence cases requires time, which differs from one woman to another. The initial work begins with treating her as a worthy human being and this is hard because peoples' personalities vary. First, we let the woman adapt to others, including our administration and staff. That takes a week in some cases and then we move to the next phase, which is offering services and training."

Rehabilitation includes providing education (legal, health, environmental and religious practices). Training includes learning to make various traditional handcrafts and those types of training that the

center can't provide are done at other associations. Such training includes computers, coiffeur, silver making, leather tanning, etc.

Al-Hariri added, "We also visit families and other places and go on trips, in addition to providing legal and judicial support for the women to follow up their cases."

Center at risk

The first of its kind in Yemen, the women's relief center receives monthly operating finances from the German Technical Cooperation, or GTZ. However, it faces a critical financial problem at the end of this year.

"We have a deal with GTZ to support us for three years and it's about to end. GTZ thought the Yemeni government would be interested in the matter and support the center later; however, the Yemeni government is hostile toward every agency independent of the ruling party, everything related to human rights and conducting justice and everything that's pure and clean and has nothing to do with corruption," Al-Hariri criticized.

She added, "Although our center has been successful in the Middle East and North Africa and considered an outstanding experience, the Yemeni authority has provided zero donations."

To the contrary, it has stood against any donations given by local traders and neither recognized nor encouraged the center's success," said Al-Hariri, who received the U.S. State Department's International Courage Certificate in June 2007 as one of the world's 10 bravest women that year.

Al-Hariri concluded her remarks with harsh comments about the Yemeni government, as well as international human rights organizations.

"International donor organizations and diplomatic agencies should be transparent and credible when it comes to human rights issues, especially those involving women and children. They become advo-

cates of the government, centered on finances and confining their relations to those the government praises based on lame excuses, such as the absence of safety in Aden," she said, explaining that finances are given to organizations in Sana'a, with special exceptions for those in Taiz.

"Such organizations should reorganize their agenda because they claim to defend the rights of women and children, but do the opposite by violating human rights with help from the government. They know full well that the law doesn't have the upper hand, but rather the tribes and the military. Poverty and corruption continue increasing while a huge portion of our resources is in their hands. So, stop toying with human rights, especially those of women and children," Al-Hariri concluded.

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Some of the inmates activities include gardening.

"I followed up the matter with the social researcher at the Civil Status Authority and the Civil Record, but they didn't take any decisive action. Instead, they accused me of publishing the residents' photos everywhere, including on the internet. Look at how people deal with women! I said, 'Excuse me, sir, but these women aren't prisoners anymore and the nation must admit that before the entire society,'" she recalled.

Al-Hariri didn't give up, publishing an April 2007 article in local newspapers comprised of a letter to Yemen's interior minister concerning this matter, but so far, she has received no response from him.

She warns about the negative consequences of ignoring the importance of issuing the women's identity cards.

"These women and girls don't exist because they aren't officially recorded, so if any of them chooses to return to their families, they could get rid of her easily by killing her under what's known as an honor crime.' However, in this situation, no case would even be raised due to the unavailability of the victim's identity, so

but many other Yemeni citizens, particularly Yemeni women.

"I conducted scientific research for my graduation from the Women's Research and Training Center at Aden University's Women's Studies and Development. I received upsetting results revealing public indifference regarding identity cards for men and women. Some groups don't even get identity cards. Men consider having it more important than women do because of their view that women have lower social status."

"Moreover, I discovered that voting cards are considered more important because the state, represented by security and military agencies, tribal sheikhs, election committees related to the ruling party and some opposition parties, are encouraging citizens to get such cards - but not identity cards!" she marveled.

Not the only problem

Lack of such documentation isn't the only obstacle facing female ex-prisoners, including the center's residents. According to Al-Hariri, these women are



The centre provides rehabilitation includes providing education, and training includes learning to make various traditional handcrafts.

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