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 **8** Ramadhan Page: How Islamic union will affect the economic development

While Somali pirates demand \$ 4.7million Malaysian-Yemeni cooperation to release the two tankers

By: Aqeel Al-Halali
 For the Yemen Times

ADEN, September 1 — Malaysia asked Yemen and Somalia to cooperate with it to release the two tankers hijacked last month in the Gulf of Aden near the Yemeni coast. To release the tankers, the Somali pirates demanded US \$4.7 million.

A press release issued by the Malaysian Foreign Ministry and published by the Malaysian National News Agency, "Bernama," said that Malaysia had asked for cooperation with Yemen and Somalia's foreign ministries. The Malaysian Foreign Ministry hoped the two partner countries would make an effort to guarantee the release of the Malaysian and Filipino crews who were in the two tankers belonging to MASC Limited Company and ensure the Malaysian boats will be safe in the

Gulf of Aden. The two tankers were hijacked on the 19th and 29th of last month.

The statement revealed that Malaysia plans to suggest to other countries whose boats were subjected to similar incidents to report their problem to the United Nations. It said that Malaysia "formed a special unit to follow the issue of the Malaysian tankers hijacked in the Gulf of Aden."

According to the Malaysian Foreign Ministry, the aim of forming such unit is to monitor the recent developments in the incident. The ministry said that the second tanker was hijacked while it was en route to Singapore from Saudi Arabia's Yanbu harbor while loaded with petrochemicals.

Yemeni security sources said last Monday that the Yemeni Coast Guard forces are searching for a ship for chemical transportation, adding that the

Coast Guard received a message showing that the ship was hijacked in international waters off the Gulf of Aden.

The Manager of the East Africa Sailors Assistance Program said that the Somali pirates demand US\$ 8.2 million to release the two Malaysian tankers and another tanker belonging to a Japanese company hijacked while sailing in the Gulf of Aden.

The Manager told Reuters that the pirates demand US \$4.2 million to release the Malaysian tankers in addition to US \$3.5 to release a Japanese ship hijacked this past June. He pointed out that the three ships are near the Somali village of Ail, where the pirates have strong local support from residents.

For its part, the Yemeni government agreed last Tuesday on a memorandum of understanding written by countries of the West Indian Ocean region, the

Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea in regards to eradicating piracy and armed robbery of ships.

The government authorized Khalid Al-Wazir, the Minister of Transportation, to sign the memorandum and supervise preparations for the second regional meeting that is scheduled to be held in Sana'a late next month. In addition, the minister will also supervise the procedures of constructing the building of the Regional Center for Information Exchange, which will help fight against piracy and armed robbery of ships traveling in the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea.

The Horn of Africa and the Gulf of Aden are considered to be the most dangerous of all the international waterways due to continuous civil war in Somalia since 1991 and the weakness of the interim government.

Continued on page 2



The chaotic Gulf of Aden: Somali pirates are roaming the sea in easy-to-manuever boats and armed with portable rocket launchers, searching for possible target.

JMP: Election is a good approach to resolve crises

By: Mohammed Bin Sallam

SANA'A, Sept. 9 — Joint Meeting Parties (JMP), the major opposition coalition in Yemen, have stressed their stance toward the upcoming parliamentary election, labeling it as "a good approach to settle current crises in the country and not a as tool to expand them or let them worsen."

On Monday in a letter addressed to President Ali Abdullah Saleh, the JMP explained that elections, from its viewpoint, are not the same as a committee imposed on others by the ruling majority, implying how the ruling party formed the Supreme Commission for Elections and Referendum (SCER) from its staff exclusively.

The opposition parties added that the elections represent a fair electoral system that preserves rights of minorities as well as the majority as well. The JMP reiterated that election management must be respected by both the ruling and opposition parties.

JMP leaders noted that Constitution of the Republic of Yemen and the relevant laws stipulate that the various procedures of the election must be undertaken properly without any violations or discrepancies. They continued that the constitution bans exploitation of

public funds, official media, government posts, or any security or military institutions in favor of a particular party.

According to opposition leaders, the constitution stipulates a political climate based on respecting citizens' rights, with political and popular organizations to present their programs and express their positions through all the legally ensured means and methods. "Effective popular participation in the election is the safe means to help rescue the nation from its dire situation," these leaders stated.

Exchange of accusations between ruling and opposition parties
 The JMP's letter to President Saleh reads, "Your letter (Saleh's letter to JMP) contained a frank charge against the JMP. It accused the opposition coalition of plotting to hinder the upcoming parliamentary election. Meanwhile, you know that our interest is on behalf of the national interest, which requires conducting free and fair elections."

"Without elections, political parties and the multi-party system will be meaningless. Only the ruling party that have an interest associated with hindering the election, particularly as it has wasted time since the dialogue between it and the JMP began on March 19, 2007," the letter adds.

In its letter, the JMP Higher Council proposed solutions to what it called "Yemen's current crisis" claiming an immediate release of political prisoners, as well as opinion prisoners in all Yemeni governorates. "Through positive interaction, the ruling and opposition parties can examine pressing problems in the country and suggest work-

able solutions to them," JMP leaders said in the letter.

JMP blames government for instigating army against its members
 The JMP Higher Council holds the government accountable for the negative consequences associated with instigating security and military personnel against JMP member parties. It emphasized the necessity of having neutral military and security institutions in Yemen amid political competition between parties. It warned against involving these institutions and their staff in political contests, saying that the government must improve living conditions of military and security personnel so that they can perform well.

The council also warned against exploiting military and security institutions in favor of a particular party or organization, adding that such institutions should be based on national principles, and their staff should be promoted according to the law.

The Chairman of JMP Higher Council, Abdul-Wahab Al-Anisi, affirmed that the opposition would go on struggling until its demands are met, insisting that the government must release all political prisoners, end tensions and create political environment

in which constitutional and legal rights are respected.

JMP confirmed that it had clear opposition to the Sa'ada fighting by saying that such conflicts must be resolved through peaceful dialogues, not by further conflicts. "We claimed that the problem must be resolved according to the Constitution," their statement said.

With regard to popular protests in southern Yemen, JMP determined a frank position about what is occurring there. It said that political congestion in the southern governorates was symptomatic of the government's poor policies and arbitrary practices against citizens.

Ruling party reacts to JMP statements
 The ruling General People Congress (GPC) accused opposition parties of instigating secession and fragmentation of the nation.

The Head of GPC Media Sector, Tariq Al-Shami, said during a news conference in Sana'a, "Regrettably, JMP foments fragmentation, violence and secession in the southern governorates."

He added, "In many countries,

Muslim brothers are either detained in jails or exiled abroad. But in Yemen, they practice their democratic rights and the government cares about effective participation of all the social groups in politics."

Al-Shami called all JMP member parties to participate in the upcoming parliamentary election, due to take place on April 27, 2009. "Under no circumstance may the election's date change," he said.

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Germany campaigns against qat, tackles food crisis in Yemen



Qat consumption in Yemen to be one of the most important factors behind the country's structural problems.

By: Amel Al-Ariqi

SANA'A, Sep. 2- Germany is providing 16 million euros (around US \$ 24 million) to support Yemenis in coping with the food crisis, said the German Embassy in Sana'a last week.

"The German government is granting Yemen financial and technical assistance to relieve the plight of its poorest people who suffer from rising food prices. With this contribution, Germany also wants to support the Government of Yemen in its efforts to improve food security and to cope with the internal root causes for Yemen's dependence on food imports," said a press release issued on Tuesday.

According to the statement issued by the German Embassy, US \$ 10.5 million will be used to support a food security policy, provide seeds and fertilizer to farmers for national food production and launch a campaign against the production and use of qat. The period of the campaign is four years, from 2008 to 2012.

"Qat consumes an important proportion of family income which could be spent on food instead, and is a major factor for the over-extraction of ground water and the dwindling water resources in Yemen," said a spokesperson for the embassy, adding,

in an exclusive statement to Yemen Times, that it considers qat consumption in Yemen to be one of the most important factors behind the country's structural problems, such as food shortages, economic development and dwindling water resources. The spokesperson further declared that the campaign is aimed at raising awareness of the harmful effects of qat consumption to Yemen's economy and society.

According to the statement issued by the embassy, target groups of the campaign are malnourished and at-risk people as well as households in Yemen who will ultimately profit from the project due to better strategies and measures to achieve a more stable food situation.

Yemen's malnutrition rate for children under five is one of the highest in the world, according to the Ministry of Health.

The German Embassy, which is a member of the Joint Task Force on the Food Crisis in Yemen, said that the aim of this grant is to support the Government of Yemen in improving its policy on food security and dealing with the internal root causes for Yemen's dependence on food imports.

According to the World Bank, Yemen imports 75% of its food and half of its population lives on less than

\$2 a day, yet households continue to spend 10 percent of their income on qat.

The spokesperson for the embassy stated that the awareness campaign would have to show that qat cultivation may reap quick profits, but that only very few are benefitting from these, whereas every Yemeni will suffer from the consequences of qat cultivation, if it continues to harm local food production by consuming a great part of non-renewable aquifers.

In addition to this grant, the World Food Program (WFP) will receive US \$ 13.5 million from Germany over the next three years for its nutrition program for pregnant and breast-feeding women, as well as children under five who are particularly vulnerable. The spokesperson for the embassy said that the German government had worked with the WFP on many levels in many countries and would continue its successful cooperation with WFP in Yemen, adding that the Government of Yemen had agreed that it was an efficient way to relieve the plight of the poorest people who suffer from the food crisis.

With this additional grant, Germany will increase its two-year pledge for Yemen for the years 2007-2008 to 89.5 million euros, which is around US \$ 135 million.

About 2,000 people displaced by drought in southern mountains

(IRIN) - Hundreds of families (totalling about 2,000 people) in the southern governorate of Abyan have begun to leave their homes due to severe drought in their mountain villages, a senior official has said.

Sirar District, a mountainous area in Abyan, has been particularly badly affected since May.

Al-Khader Mohammed Saleh, director-general of Sirar District, told IRIN that over 300 families had left their villages over the past week as a result of the drought.

"People could not stand the water shortages and so they decided to leave their homes. More and more people are leaving their villages for the same reason. The number of displaced is doubling," he said.

He said the displaced families had

moved to areas like al-Huson and Jaar in the same governorate.

"A lot of them are living in tents. Some have rented houses. They are facing very difficult conditions," he said.

According to the official, Sirar villages are arid, barren and mountainous. Any rain that does fall quickly runs off down the steep valley sides, as there are no dams in the area to harvest rainwater.

"As such, the rains are of no use when they fall in the area. Springs and water wells have gone dry," he said.

Saleh said some people had installed small concrete tanks on their houses to harvest rainwater, but these had remained dry because of the lack of rain. He said the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) had built and repaired a

number of concrete tanks in Sirar District.

Plea for help

The drought has caused damage to the livestock, beehives and farms on which local people are heavily dependent for their livelihoods.

"They live in miserable conditions with no source of income. We call on aid agencies to assist them," Saleh said.

Saleh said the displaced families had not received any relief assistance from any local or international non-governmental organisations. "They will overburden local services if the number of displaced families increases," he warned, adding that schools in the drought-hit area are closing as villages are abandoned

as 2007 there were 25 hijacking operations in 2007.

Yemeni economists warned that the Somali pirates that target international ships and commercial tankers in the African Horn and the Gulf of Aden will have a negative effect on the Yemeni economy, and demanded that

security measures should be taken to maintain the national economic security.

The International Security Council has recently allowed military ships to enter Somali waters to combat pirates that target the African Horn and Aden gulf waters

Women in Politics: Women's Quota Law is not enough

By: Salma Ismail

Sana'a, August 31— The Women's National Committee (WNC) and the National Democratic Institute (NDI) organized a meeting this week to talk about increasing women's participation in politics through a variety of factors.

In recent years, though more women have chosen to run for election as candidates, more appointed to government positions at a national, state, and local level, progress is nonetheless slow.

Hooria Mashhour Ahmed Kaid, the Deputy Director of the WNC, stated that the number one obstacle to women achievement in the political arena is the recommendation law. The law she is referring to states a woman needs to have a recommendation, which is a requirement for nomination, with a minimum of 300 signatures.

According to Mashhour, best way to achieve the prescribed quota of women in politics is to "put pressure on the ruling party to change this law" while supporting and encouraging independent women candidates. The meeting's participants agreed that one of the main obstacles to women's representation lies in the process of candidate selection and recommendation. They called on political parties to name their women candidates while also pressuring political parties to change the law.

There was still strong support at the meeting for the application and fulfillment of Women's Quota Law in elected bodies. In September 2007, President Ali Abdullah Saleh delivered

a speech in which he jump-started change in the political arena by introducing the quota system for female politicians. This quota mandates that 15 percent of participants in electoral bodies should be women, which translates to about 45 seats in Parliament. The next round of parliamentary elections will take place in April 2009.

Hooria Mashhour called for strategic cooperation to tackle issues that hamper the empowerment of women. She also called on WNC's machinery, organizations, political parties and national bodies to translate the country's verbal commitments into specific actions that will help implement the quota.

The meeting participants also voiced their concerns about issues hampering Yemeni women's right to hold decision-making positions and improving women's political participation. Although Yemen ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1984, without any substantive reservations, it still has far to go to achieve full equality between the sexes.

Sameer Al-Abdali, from Erdat Shaab Organization for Democracy Development and National Issues Support, a local non-governmental organization focusing on democracy and human rights awareness, had his speech read out for him by a woman in a show of support. Al-Abdali called for the leveling of the political playing field while citing the fact that 250,000 women leave their homes each morning to work side by side with

men. "It is time to take them to Parliament," he said. "The 21st century is the century for the contribution of women," he added.

Fatima Oqba from the NDI condemned organizations that were not present at the meeting to fight for women's rights. She went on to call for constitutional reforms to pave the way for the 45 seats allocated for women in Parliament to become a reality. She also said the filling of the quota is a long-term goal; the short-term goal is the participation of at least more than one woman.

Participants at the meeting had also suggested that Yemen form a political party for women to help increase women's access to decision-making positions. This would not be the first gender-based political party; India has a women's political party that launched in October 2007, the first of its kind in the world. Called the United Women's Front, it is run exclusively by women and focuses on women's empowerment.

In June 2007, Australia launched its first political party for women, What Women Want (Australia), and it currently has 780 members in the country. The group is now a registered political party with the Australian Electoral Commission focusing mainly on women's issues.

However, the Yemeni constitution states that political parties are not allowed to be formed based on gender. Mashhour said that establishing a political party based on gender is "not worth it" because to obtain constitutional reform to form it would take too long.

While citizens rush to markets to buy Ramadan supplies, Ministry of Commerce warns that markets are full of expired and rotten food

By: Saddam Al-Ashmori
For The Yemen Times

SANA'A, Aug. 31 — The Office of Commerce and Industry (OCI) in Sana'a stated last Thursday that 10 tons of expired and rotten food items had been seized in four stores in the Shu'aub district, Sana'a.

The quantity is considered to be the biggest since the beginning of the campaign launched by the government ten days ago. It was confiscated in cooperation with security forces and representatives for the prosecution authority who attended the confiscation process.

Among the confiscated items were milk, soup, spaghetti and other food including dates which are in high demand during Ramadan. The OCI accused Yemeni traders of importing food items of poor quality from European and Arab countries in order to fill the market before Ramadan, and of taking advantage of people's poor

financial circumstances by selling these products on streets for low prices.

In a press release, the OCI revealed that other stores in the Sanhan and Hiziaz districts were caught with numerous expired products including tea powder, yoghurt, spaghetti and other items. The quantity that was seized in these districts is estimated at around 2 tons. The OCI said that the confiscation process came after wide monitoring of these stores by the office.

Some of these food items were leaked out into the markets, according to Abdul Basit Al-Kumaim, head of the OCI. He warned citizens about the presence of rotten and expired items on the market and advised them to check food before buying it.

He pointed out that monitoring committees will accelerate their efforts to find the expired food that was bought from these stores and taken to the local markets.

The General Authority for Measurements, Specifications and

Quality Standards (GAMSQS) has called on all citizens to check dates before they buy them, confirming that a big quantity of expired dates has entered local markets.

Ahmed Ahmed Al-Basha, head of the GAMSQS, said that during the first day of the campaign launched by the authority, 112 sorts of expired food were caught in Sana'a alone, pointing out that the campaign will continue until the 20th of September in the different governorates.

He said also that, within only a week, the authority caught 3,000 cartons of expired mango juice, 668 cartons of bottled water and 390 cartons of Turkish chocolate among other products. He maintained that these items were either expired or against the national standards of quality.

Al-Basha further disclosed that the campaign's primary findings confirmed that Yemeni traders do not observe health regulations when importing food items, notably during their storage.

Yemeni-American detainee Khalid Al-Sherif held without charges by PSO

By: Khaled Al-Hilaly

SANA'A, September 1—The US Embassy provided an American citizen, Khalid Al-Sherif, 23, who is being held by the Political Security Organization (PSO), with a list of Yemeni lawyers to defend him though there are no charges against him.

Al-Sherif, who recently graduated from a U.S. college in Atlanta, Georgia, came to Yemen four months ago to visit his mother in Sana'a. According to a source close to Al-Sherif, on June 16, he left his grandmother's home and headed for shopping in nearby market, only to be surrounded by several armed men in civilian clothing and was forced to enter their car.

The National Security Bureau (NSB) held him in secret for over 50 days. According to the source, knowing that the U.S. Embassy was searching for him, the NSB decided to transfer him to the PSO until August 11



Khalid Al-Sherif

when the U.S. Consul in Sana'a, Mr. Terry West, met him at the PSO for the first time.

According to a US Embassy spokesperson, Al-Sherif, who is still in PSO custody, "has yet to be charged with a crime and the U.S. Embassy has provided him with a list of Yemeni lawyers."

At the time of Al-Sherif's kidnapping, the NSB agents told him that they

believed he was sympathetic to the rebels in northern Yemen and that he met with their leader, a charge which Al-Sherif said was unfounded and baseless because he never left Sana'a during his four-month long visit to Yemen.

The U.S. Embassy in Sana'a filed a diplomatic note to the Yemeni government protesting the mistreatment of American citizen Khalid Al-Sherif by the NSB, according to the source close to Al-Sherif.

The US Embassy is actively monitoring Al-Sherif's case and the US Consul has visited him at the PSO detention facility, said a U.S. Embassy spokesperson. "We are in the process of arranging another visit to Al-Sherif," the source added.

Al-Sherif comes from a Hashemite family, and the Yemen Times previously heard claims during the last Sa'ada war that Hashemites were targeted by security authorities throughout the country.

Continued from page 1

Malysian-Yemeni cooperation to release the two tankers

Since early this year, the African Horn and the Gulf of Aden regions witnessed the hijacking of 35 ships, tankers and yachts according to the Yemen Times' approximation, where-

Their News

Japan abolishes \$ 16.8 mln of Yemen's debt

Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Abdul Karim al-Arhabi and Japanese ambassador to Yemen Masakazu Toshikage signed Saturday memos for abolishing \$ 16.8 million of Yemen's debt to Japan.

Speaking to Saba, al-Arhabi expressed Yemeni government's appreciation to Japan's initiative for abolishing part of Yemen's debt to Japan, indicating that this initiative reflects continuous development Yemeni-Japanese cooperation relations witness.

The initiative that comes in the framework of supporting Yemen's development is not the first of its kind. Tokyo has previously abolished \$38 million of Yemen's total debt for years 2003-2007.

Yemen's vibrant cellular market will reach 10.5 million subscribers by end of 2012, a cellular penetration rate of 42.4%.

The entrance of a fourth cellular operator in December 2007 has enhanced growth and competition in the Yemeni cellular market. A new report from Arab Advisors Group fully analyzes the Yemeni communications markets.

Yemen's Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Technology (MTIT) regulates the country's telecommunications market. The ministry is in charge of collecting operator's license fees. The Government of Yemen also fully owns and directly oversees the operations of the monopoly fixed line operator, Public Telecommunications Corporation (PTC), and owns a controlling stake in the CDMA cellular operator, Yemen Mobile, through the PTC.

The Arab Advisors Group projects Yemen's mainlines to reach 1.432 million lines by end of 2012 with a penetration rate of 5.76%. This corresponds to a CAGR of 7.1% between 2008 and 2012. This growth is expected to be mainly through the PTC's efforts to provide fixed line services in the rural areas of Yemen.

A new report, Yemen Communications Projections Report was released to Arab Advisors Group's strategic research

service subscribers on July 30, 2008. The report -which has 61 pages and 51 detailed exhibits- fully analyzes the communications markets in Yemen and presents detailed profiles of all the major operators including PTC (Public Telecommunications Company), TeleYemen, Sabafon, MTN Yemen, Yemen Mobile, and "Y".

The report also provides 5-years historical and 5-years projections for many telecom and demographic indicators in the country.

This report can be purchased from the Arab Advisors Group for only US\$ 950. Please contact the Arab Advisors Group to get a copy of the report's Table of Contents.

"The Arab Advisors Group projects Yemen's cellular lines to continue its healthy growth. With the entry of the fourth cellular operator in Yemen, the Arab Advisors Group projects Yemen's cellular market to grow at a CAGR of 15.7% from 2008 to 2012, reaching 10.537 million subscribers (a cellular penetration rate of 42.4%) up from 4.437 million by end of 2007." Mr. Hussam Barhoush, Arab Advisors senior research analyst of Arab Advisors Group wrote in the report.

The Arab Advisors Group's team of analysts in the region has produced close to 1,250 reports on the Arab World's communications and media markets. The reports can be purchased individually or received through an annual subscription to Arab Advisors Group's (www.arabadvisors.com) Strategic Research Services (Media and Telecom). To date, Arab Advisors Group has served over 490 global and regional companies by providing reliable research analysis and forecasts of Arab communications markets to these clients. Some of our clients can be viewed on <http://www.arabadvisors.com/clients.htm>

UNHCR and Yemen Red Crescent Society agreement

Signing of a Memorandum of Understanding, MOU between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, (UNHCR) and the Yemen Red Crescent Society, (YRCS).

A memorandum of understanding,

(MoU) was signed today between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR and the Yemen Red Crescent Society, YRCS.

The rationale of the MoU aims at enhancing the effectiveness of the humanitarian responses between the two organizations for the protection of refugees, asylum seekers and the Internal Displaced Persons, (IDPs). The MoU also stipulates areas of cooperation in facilitating and expediting the agencies' internal process of formalizing agreements for timely interventions for the benefit of the above persons of concern. It further seeks to build on the recognized comparative advantages of each organization and to establish operational modalities of cooperation.

The WHO's report on the "Social Determinants of Health" is a manifesto for mass unemployment

The World Health Organization's claim this week that "social injustice is killing people on a grand scale" is misleading and ignores the real determinants of health, says the Campaign for Fighting Diseases.

Moreover, the WHO report on the "social determinants of health" promotes policies that would stunt economic growth and so confine the world's poorest to unhealthy living conditions and the diseases of poverty.

The WHO report is based on the idea that relative poverty — as opposed to absolute poverty — is an important determinant of health. This is based on lead author Sir Michael Marmot's research that shows that people on the bottom of the socio-economic hierarchy suffer more stress and therefore more disease than their wealthier counterparts.

The report therefore proposes a plethora of worldwide government interventions to promote "equity" — such as increases in tax, government monopolisation of healthcare, state control of urban development and restrictions on the sale of food and alcohol.

Such measures, along with the restrictions on free trade advocated by the WHO, would undermine economic growth — perpetuating poverty in

developing countries and reducing the ability of people to afford lifesaving essentials such as clean water and electricity.

In "The Real Determinants of Health", the Campaign for Fighting Diseases outlined the positive links between free trade, development and health.

The report's author Philip Stevens commented: "Economic growth is essential for tackling the biggest causes of ill health in developing countries: dirty water, a lack of clean fuel and malnutrition. The WHO's fixation with inequality would undermine the fragile process of economic growth and create unemployment and economic stagnation. In a time of global economic uncertainty, their prescription for tackling health inequality is irresponsible and dangerous".

A New Deloitte Corporate Finance Joint Venture in the Middle East

Deloitte today announces a joint corporate finance venture between the UK and Middle East firms and, as a first step, is relocating six partners from the UK and other member firms to the region. The joint venture company, Deloitte Corporate Finance Limited, is registered and authorised by the Dubai Financial Services Authority, and will initially focus on offering M&A advisory and support services, valuation, business modelling, IPO advisory, forensic & dispute services and, importantly, Islamic finance advice in the GCC market.

John Connolly, Deloitte Global Chairman and UK Firm Senior Partner and Chief Executive, commented: "The Middle East is a very important region, with strong sustained economic growth and immense investment firepower. By joining forces with the Middle East firm, we will have the scale and breadth of financial skills to provide a full range of M&A services to clients from within and from outside the region."

Omar Fahoum, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Deloitte & Touche Middle East, added: "We are delighted to be embarking on this new venture. The private equity industry in the Middle East is expected to exceed \$670bn in the next ten years. Strong fundamentals, rapid growth and greater availability of funding means that deals are set to grow in size from millions to billions. By combining our expertise and talent we will be able to ensure that we are at the forefront of this market."

We look forward to welcoming the incoming partners and working together to set the standard for professional services in the Middle East.

Chris Ward, global head of corporate finance advisory at Deloitte, will lead this business.

He commented: "We have ambitious plans to grow the new business, both in size and in the range of services offered. We predict the M&A market in the Middle East will grow at a staggering rate in the next few years; we intend to be at the vanguard of this development."

Total launches new scholarship program for Yemeni students



Total E&P Yemen celebrated yesterday, 30 August 2008, its first-ever International Scholarship Programme in Yemen. Based on this Programme, TOTAL is going to sponsor ten scholarships: six undergraduates, three diplomas, and one master. Students are scheduled to travel for study both in the United Kingdom and France early September 2008.

Mr. Martin Deffontaines, the General Manager of Total E&P Yemen, stressed in the speech he gave on this occasion on the importance of this programme and the benefit it will have on not only the oil and gas industry in Yemen but also at the socio-economic level.

Total E&P Yemen culminated its celebration by signing two Memorandums of Understandings with the Universities of Sana'a and Hadhramout. The two memorandums will allow for broadened scientific and academic cooperation with these two leading universities. Based on



these memorandums, TOTAL will send its experts via its non-profit TOTAL Professeurs Associés (TPA) to universities in Yemen in order to transfer TOTAL know-how and expertise to Yemeni students.

Mr. Deffontaines added that, "in order for TOTAL to be more welcomed by the Yemeni society and in order for TOTAL to be part of life in Yemen in the long term, we should act as good corporate citizens and help effectively in the educational development in Yemen."

About Total E&P Yemen

Total E&P Yemen is the operator of Block 10, east of Shabwa and holds several other participations in oil exploration and production blocks. TOTAL is the major foreign investor in Yemen. Since 1997, the company has been producing from Block 10 and has celebrated early this year the production of 100 million barrels.



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شروط التوظيف

- رتاب منافس لكبرى الشركات في المنطقة.
- بدل سكن بما يعادل ثلاثة رواتب.
- مكافأة سنوية بما يعادل راتب أساسي.
- عناية طبية للموظف وأفراد أسرته.
- بدل مواصلات.
- نظام تملك أسهم الشركة (نظام إداري).
- أن يكون المتقدم حاصلًا على إحدى الدرجات المذكورة أعلاه.
- الإلمام باللغة الإنجليزية و الحاسب الآلي.
- أن يكون لديه خبرة عملية لا تقل عن ثلاث سنوات.
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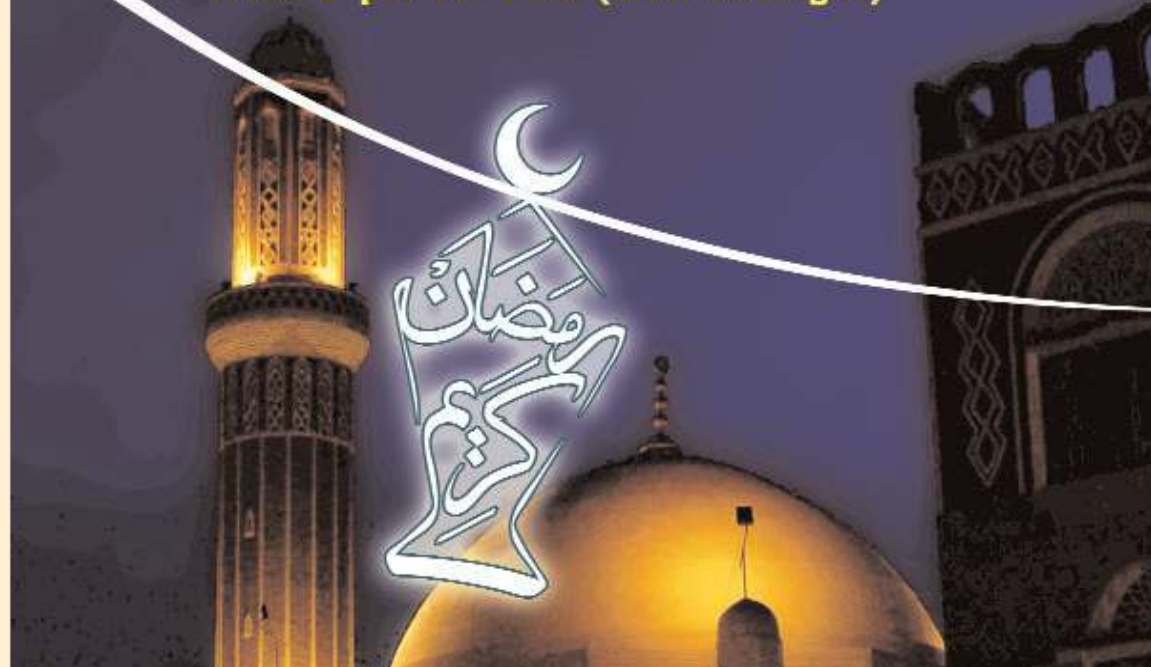
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رمضان مبارك

Relief center helps female ex-prisoners

The Social Care House in Aden has been helping rehabilitate young girls after prison since 2005. Officially known as the Relief Center for Female Ex-Prisoners and Victims of Violence, the shelter is considered to be the first refuge of its kind in the Middle East.

By: Wojoud Hasan Mejalli
For The Yemen Times

"Do you have any younger sisters?" she asked in a low voice. "Promise me you will look after them. Don't lose them as my older sisters did me."

This is how 16 year-old Salwa*, one of the nine girls currently living at the Social Care House, began her story.

"My father pushed me out onto the streets to beg, though we have many properties as well as a house. My father doesn't want to work, all he wants is easy money given to him from me and my other siblings," she said.

Salwa was living in Sana'a while she was begging, but she was seized by security in Aden and charged with

prostitution.

"I met some bad girls and ran away with them to Aden. Escaping from the house and life I was living, I didn't realize that I was running towards a worse fate. The girls led me down a terrible path that I don't want to talk about. I was told that I had to pay for staying in their apartment, and that I would have to work for it," she recalled.

The police caught Salwa among others. After having served her sentence at Aden jail, she tried to return home but was rejected by her father.

"He simply said that if I came back, he would kill me. According to him, I didn't have a birth certificate so I didn't exist, and no one could accuse him of anything.

"Since then I have lived here at the shelter, and received a lot of psychological, as well as social care,"

she concluded.

According to Afra'a Hariri, head of the Social Care House, the wide range of medical, psychological and educational needs of female prisoners and their children are not met in prison, and most of these women leave prison without any skills or the capacity to survive in mainstream society. The Social Care House provides a home for the girls after being ostracized from society.

"Girls and young women who run away from domestic violence, abuse or child marriages can neither find an institution for help and advice, nor a job to earn their living legally," Hariri said.

The relief centre offers legal, psychological and medical support to the girls in the shelter. It provides legal aid and assistance in court dealings, literacy classes and handicraft courses. It also works to help in the re-socialization of released female prisoners by finding them a decent job to ensure them a better future, as well as helps raise awareness for victims of violence in the community.

"Most of the cases are stealing as well as prostitution and it is hard for anyone to stand up for these girls in

such cases to try to help them. It is something to be ashamed of in our society," Arhab Khamis, lawyer of the shelter, said.

Khamis described the reasons why most girls are living in the house: "Many girls are simply ostracized from the community. It becomes hard for them to interact with other members of society after they have been in jail or faced violence in their family. They lose their confidence and some of them may actually begin to hurt others. The shelter looks after those girls and tries to rehabilitate them so that they can easily re-enter society and be able to earn a living."

The Social Care House, which was established in 2005, has witnessed its share of tragedy, but there are also some happy stories. "One of the girls is married now and it was amazing looking at her father accepting her all over again when he came to approve the marriage," said Khamis. 43 women and girls have been supported by the Social Care House from the time of its establishment. At the moment there are nine girls and one child living in the house. Three of those nine girls are going to school.

"I started working in the shelter as a volunteer and simply decided to help these girls. There surely should be closer cooperation between the government and the civil community on this issue but, despite several attempts to establish a bridge between the two sides, there still isn't one. Such a goal won't be achieved unless we cooperate more," Khamis finally added.

Amal*, now in her last month of pregnancy after her marriage, explained: "I really felt like a human being and a lady. Getting married as a true woman with all my marriage expenses was really amazing and made me simply feel alive again. I'm glad I am treated as a normal woman and not as a stranger anymore after my father's denial of me for almost seven years."

"In order to be reintegrated into their families and society, they have to have access to medical care and psychological support, upgrade their professional skills and get help in finding suitable jobs and this is what the shelter is trying to fully provide," Hariri said.

"Three girls are now in school studying. After taking part in the literacy classes at the shelter, they were able to join governorate schools. I feel glad these girls have become



There are literacy classes, a library and handicraft courses to help in the re-socialization of released female prisoners

more aware of their rights. For example, one of the girls is starting to debate legal issues with me. She keeps arguing about human rights and what she is entitled to do or not. Some of the girls are actually trying to impose their rights on me in the house," she finally added.

The Relief Center for Female Ex-Prisoners and Victims of Violence or Social Care House is a part of the Arab Foundation for Supporting Women and Juveniles (AFSWJ). The center enjoys support from the Ministry of Human Rights, and will continue to receive core funding from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) until June 2009.

The first of its kind in the Middle East, the Social Care House approaches female prisoners at Al-Mansura Prison in Aden and other female prisoners from other governorates upon request. It aims to help released female prisoners, victims of violence and especially victims of child marriage, as well as and female refugees.

"The BMZ received a proposal for the project from the AFSWJ and the proposal was approved. The Social Care House is supported by the GTZ on behalf of the BMZ," said Heba Ahmed, an intern for the GTZ Equal Chances for Women program.

She went on to say that Germany and Yemen are striving to implement gender equality and especially give equal chances to women, one of the

Millennium Development Goals (MDG), and are supporting the Social Care House as part of this effort.

Ahmed described the project as a pilot project in Yemen and in the Arab world. Despite fear of the project being rejected by Yemeni society, the Social Care House has received great support, with many people volunteering to help.

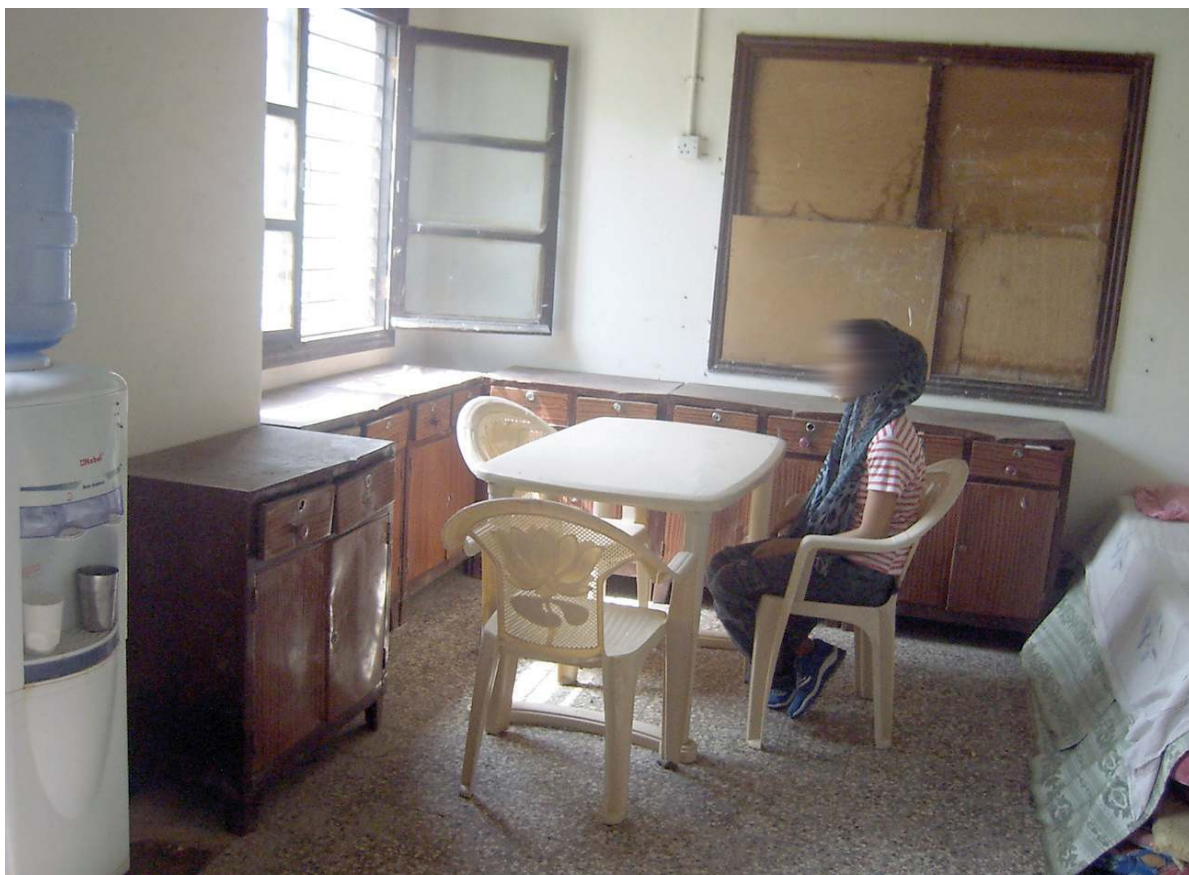
"The funding will come to an end next year in June. We hope that the project finds other supporting donors and gets more support from Yemeni institutions and persons," she finally added.

Noura Al-Q'atabi, head of the Court of Appeal in Aden, said, "Such a shelter house in Yemen is really something beneficial, helpful and educational for girls and young women who run away from domestic violence and child marriages as well as female ex-prisoners. Their rehabilitation is obviously helping society and the government is planning to build a bridge with the shelter as soon as possible."

"There is no specific cooperation between us and the shelter now because most females facing problems are not from the Aden governorate. Most of them actually come from the northern governorates.

Those who are released from prison in Aden don't face such serious problems as others because their families accept them without any trouble," Al-Q'atabi said.

Names have been changed to protect the identity of the girls interviewed.



ex-female inmates undergo rejection of their families and society

"Take my hand to live together"

Orphanage wants to improve children's futures

By: Hafsa al-Tayyib
& Nisreen Shadad
For The Yemen Times

Orphans yearn to be integrated into their community, to study at university, to have enough food and clothes. Under the slogan, "Take My Hand to Live Together," the Cultural and Social Union for Youth and Life Makers Meeting Place launched a program on August 18th to make these dreams come true for the children of Al-Aitam government-run orphanage.

The program was run under the auspices of the Minister of Youth and Sports, Hamoud Abbad.

"This program targets 60 students who graduated from al-Aitam orphanage's school. It aims to qualify them in computers, English language and mobile conservation," said Akram Al-Kumaim, the Project Manager at Life Makers Meeting Place. Al-Kumaim added that it will help youths become independent and face obstacles they might have while trying to find jobs, even if they don't enter the university and complete their studies.

"To integrate the [orphan] students into the community, we send them to institutes to study with other students or we bring students who are not orphans to the orphanage to study with



them," said Mirzah Sha'ab, the Manger of the Study and Research Department at Al-Aitam.

Al-Aitam tries to help orphans while struggling with internal problems

However, Al-Aitam still faces obstacles to helping their charges. "The number of the activities has decreased. There were about six activities: memorizing the Quran, sports, acting, music, art and calligraphy," Sha'ab said. "Now they are only two: sports and Quranic

memorization."

The orphanage suffers from a lack of the staff as well as a lack of funding. "[We have] only three psychological specialists in an orphanage with 1,474 students. The orphanage needs 19 specialists at least to look after the orphans," said Sha'ab.

"The support we receive is for their clothing and nutrition—and it is not enough. Children receive three [items of] clothes a year and three meals daily," said Sha'ab. "The menu is as the

same at the orphanage age; there is no change," he added.

Are Al-Aitam's students really ready for "the real world"?

"I lived and studied in Al-Aitam from my childhood until now. When entering the university, I was shocked by reality," said Salah Al-Udaini. Al-Udaini said it was as if he lived apart from society for all those years. He said he realized he had been deprived of the community that he suddenly found himself surrounded by, and which he knew nothing about.

According to Al-Udaini, the main problems for those who leave the orphanage to attend university are residence and nutrition. "There are many students who left university due to these two obstacles," he said.

"I don't have money to buy the books and the handouts, but because of cooperation with students this problem was solved for me," Al-Udaini added. Students from level two give their handouts to students in level one and so on, he explained, adding that sometimes, students collect money to buy handouts and distribute them among the others.

Mohammad Al-Nabary, a former resident and student at Al-Aitam orphanage said that orphans can study in the university for free, but still have the problems of where to live and how

to obtain food and books. Al-Nabary concurred with Al-Udaini that these are the main reasons Al-Aitam's graduates drop out from university.

The orphans' problems aren't always relegated to integration in the community. Orphans also have psychological problems they suffer from that can sometimes make them more violent, according to Sha'ab.

"Regular meetings are very important for some children whose problems are severe and may lead them to commit crimes," said Sha'ab. "There are domestic edifications [therapy sessions] held individually and in groups. We as well contact their families to discuss their problems and try to interact together to solve them," Sha'ab added.

Another way was to bring the orphans together was to show them educational videos and CDs to make them aware of how to deal with their problems; to show them they are not the only ones who have difficulties in their lives, Sha'ab continued. The orphans are divided into families; each family consists of a father (a psychologist acting as a supervisor) and kids (around 100 orphans) and there is a dining hall for all of the orphans.

Some of the orphans have the feeling of inferiority. "When I see children that have fathers to defend them and look after them, I feel I am less than they are," said Al-Nabary. Mohammed

Al-Thafer, a student in class 10 at Al-Aitam, said he has this feeling when he faces obstacles, but the feeling decreases when getting the same opportunities that the other children get.

Being an orphan expresses the deprivation of everything in this life, said Al-Udaini, who is now studying in level two at a university in Sana'a.

Hope is still exists at the orphanage

But what makes them proud of being orphan is that they share an affinity with Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) who lost both of his parents by age six. "Why I should feel down while the Prophet was an orphan?" wondered Wadhah Mohammad Hamood, an Al-Aitam student in grade eight. Hamood has lived in the orphanage for seven years and he said he looks forward to completing his studies in order to find a good job in the future.

Hamood is not the only one who sees the positive side at Al-Aitam. The orphanage is now working on a computerized program to help people access information related to the social status, physical and psychological health of the orphan, as well as a network to monitor changes through monthly assessments of each orphan. This project is financed by the Social Fund for Development, a Yemen-based charity.

Yemen's ignored issues should have place in Arab media

By: Fahmi Haweidi

When one of Yemen's tribal leaders visited me and said that he decided to reside in Cairo having realized that his life in Sana'a is threatened, I thought that he was exaggerating in his conversation with me. Having asked him whether he has connections with Houthis, currently involved in bloody confrontations with government troops in the northern Yemeni province of Sa'ada, the tribal leader replied, "I was a member of a mediation team, mandated to conciliate between the authority and Houthi supporters."

According to the tribal leader, he has no connections with Houthis, but opposes the government's policy toward Houthis, particularly as it insistently uses various kinds of heavy weapons to repress and crack down on Houthi loyalists.

I then narrated the story to one of Yemen's educated dignitaries when I recently met him in Dubai. "This is an exceptional case but more likely to happen since the atmosphere in Sana'a is full of such threats and concerns because the security authorities don't observe the effective relevant laws while intervening in any community issues," the man reacted.

He went on to say that Yemen's

security authorities don't hesitate to practice all the forms of violence, torture and liquidation against citizens the police are supposed to protect from any potential risks. Security agents in Yemen violate press freedom, fabricate charges against journalists and force them to pay illegal fines.

The Yemeni citizen further told me that Yemen is suffering the mother of all crises in the Arab countries where power is exclusively controlled by certain parties that only care about edging out the role of other social constituents. This is why the human situation in Yemen continues to worsen.

Due to its strategic location, Yemen is distinguished from other Arab states by being easy for its rulers to practice blackout of information about what happens in the ground. And, as information blackout continued for up to 30 years, the accumulated outcome has become troublesome, warning of unknown bad developments and calamities.

I viewed a festival organized in the Yemeni capital city of Sana'a on the so-called 'Democracy Day' that coincides with April 27 every year and learned that the event was held as a reaction to growing pressure practiced by Yemeni opposition in the form of demonstrations and sit-ins over the recent time period. Under no circumstance were the events of Democracy Day cheerful.

In addition to heightened security

in the capital city, the northern province of Sa'ada witnessed a new round of bloody clashes between Houthi followers and government troops while public rage and congestions escalated in South Yemen. Having observed locations of tension in the nation's map, I discovered that consequences of tension swept the country from north to south and east to west.

Having advanced in my search and investigation, I learned that Yemen, which we read and hear about in the various printed, auditory and visible media outlets, is different from its image in the internet websites. I expect that other stories and facts controlled by blackout are many times more than what is announced and heard.

On one of Yemen's websites I usually visit, I found a story which was never seen in the Arab press. The story unveiled the trial of Fahd Al-Qarni, a popular artist, who was abducted in Taiz city and subsequently accused of fueling sectarian and regional violence, and social fragmentation.

Although I did not hear about Fahd Al-Qarni, I found that trying a well-known artist in any community for his words that irritated the government is clear evidence that the authority lost control of its nerves. I also learned that Yemen's security authorities have entered the phase of cracking down on critics and opponents, thereby staining image of the government and

harming its record.

I am shocked at how much news, information and criticism highlighted the dire situation of South Yemen, which merged with the north in 1990. Undoubtedly, North Yemen's problems have their place in the Arab media, particularly since the fighting between the army and Houthis first broke out in June 2004.

There are two factors for the fighting between the army and Houthis having place in the Arab media, the first of which is that the armed clashes left large numbers of citizens and soldiers killed or injured. In the fighting, the government used its fighter jets and rockets that left hundreds of homes in Sa'ada wreckage. The second factor is that the clashes went beyond the Yemeni border, thus becoming a regional issue following the mediation efforts expended by the Qatari government to conciliate between both conflicting sides.

The issue of South Yemen, on the other hand, is still being treated at the local level. Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) attempts to contain the problem via continuous pressure on the authority to suggest workable solutions to the problem. Seemingly, JMP's efforts have not reached practical results to end notable rage in South Yemen. Such an issue may have a place in the Arab media only if it goes beyond the Yemeni border.

Source: Al-Sharq Al-Awsat Daily

COMMON SENSE

Ramadhan and Taxes

"Look Mom, you are not going to stay up all night just praying and reciting the Qur'an, are you?" asked Nasr hoping that he could get his mother to give some consideration as to how to fill her son's tummy when the sunset cannon booms. This is the first year that it has become obligatory for him to fast the whole month.

His brother Abdu could not let go of the opportunity: "Yeah, Mom. You ought to be checking out your recipe book to see what can fill up our brother's ballooning stomach after having spent 14 hours or so trying to figure out how he is going to break the fast! Really now Nasr, get a hold of yourself, Mom is not forgetting that her primary God ordained duty is to keep our tummies full, especially in Ramadhan".

Nasr wasn't at all pleased with the first part of his brother's remark and was ready to accept the second: "Abdu, you know how hard it is for me not to stop filling up my tummy as the day goes on. Now, a couple of hours a day are all right, but 12 to 14 hours a day, that is really taxing."

His father was aroused by the word with the T A X in it: "It is not more taxing than the taxes the Government has come to impose upon us left and right. If you had to pay just half the taxes I pay, you would probably call the Security Council to an extraordinary session to see how the world governments could bail us out of the monster that our government has come to be in taxes."

The mother never liked her men to get carried away about complaining about the Government: "Now, Gents, how many times must I tell you stop blabbing away at the Government anytime you guys feel like it. Can you tell me which Government has managed to live without taxes? Even our oil rich neighbors to the North impose some taxes, when everyone knows that they do not need such things"

Abdu again wanted to get a chance at his mother this time: "Mom, you do not think anyone of us here is an informer do you, going out of your way to defend our helpless Government. In any case, I do not mind paying taxes, as long as I can see where the taxes are going."

Nasr also saw a good opportunity to get a punch in at the Government: "If you want to see where your taxes are going just take a stroll along the 'diplomatic' quarter of Sana'a, where all the plush palaces of our government officials are now bringing in the US \$ rentals to our already over bloated officials. Have you ever seen such extravagance: green stones mixed with red and fine glass stained arches hanging above Swedish mahogany carpented windows? Now how can you claim that you do not see where your dad's taxes are going?"

The mother's protective instinct again came forward: "Now that is touching the Government where it really hurts and where it will send any of you to jail if not all of you."

Now the boys were showing their unhappiness at their mother's chicken streak. Both said at the same time: "Mom, would you stop this cowardice!"

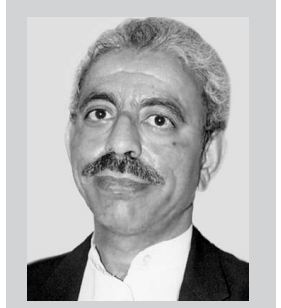
The father again spoke: "Now you guys, I will not tolerate you speaking to your mother like that. She is only doing what her instinct as a mother tells her to do. She is only safeguarding her children's teeth, lest some of the thugs of the security organs decide to knock a couple of the teeth out in some obscure corner of the outskirts of the city! Can you imagine Nasr here trying to make up for lost time after the Muezzin has made the call to the Sunset Prayer with half his teeth gone?"

The mother showed another side of her instinct: "Now you guys should stop making fun of Nasr, just because he likes to eat his mother's cooking!"

"Come on mom", Abdu cut in, continuing, "Nasr wouldn't stop munching even if all that he could find was hay. Did you not see how he filled his belly up just before sunup? I almost thought that his stomach was going to blow up from the overload it was carrying after that meal."

The father again came up with a remark: "I am taxed heavily thrice: once by the cut throat government that will soon tax us for the air we breathe, which is polluted anyway by the public enterprises it owns and the petrol (not well refined) it sells to us; by the sleazy merchants who have never heard of any profits less than 200% and by Nasr here, who insist that half of the grocery is rightfully his and now does not even want his mother to take time out for prayer."

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



By: Hassan Al-Haifi

Culture: an element being absent from summer centers

By: Dr. Adel Al-Shujaa

The state shows high interest in the youth. Preparing and rehabilitating youths, as well as activating their participation in the national work and strengthening their mental, physical and spiritual capacities is thought of as the most important issues of development and progress in Yemen.

Serious efforts are expended in this regard with the aim of helping generations cope with demands of the contemporary time, of which technological achievements mostly depend on the mental resources, and the active minds that are more able to enrich the field of creativity with their inventions and meet challenges of the future.

The primary goal of "Summer Centers" is to invest energies of the youth, help them benefit from their leisure time, direct their capacities toward addressing the national issues, discover the talented members in society, review marvelous sites of the nation, and develop strong relationship among youths and ensure continuity of this relationship.

President's platform cares for the youth

President Saleh's platform paid special attention to the youth group. In more than one occasion, Saleh demanded that universities, ministries of education and higher education & scientific research to review their curricula with the intention of strengthening national allegiance among the youth and producing skilled graduates from the various

educational institutions.

Here, we intend to draw the attention of the ministries of youth & sports, education and endowment & religious guidance to notable weaknesses and limitations within the summer centers, which were established without specific objectives. Those in charge of running these centers intended to bring students back to schools to exercise unidirectional activities only, and nothing more.

In fact, the sought-after objective of these centers is educating the youth, increasing their awareness about the comprehensive concept of peace, strengthening the peace values and transforming them from theoretical or moral concepts into behavioral practices.

Subjects to be covered by summer centers

We expect these centers to cover subjects like 'peace, forgiveness, respect for the environment and keeping it clean, individual and collective accountability, means of communication and dialogue, personal freedom, respecting others, building safe society, effective participation in the everyday activities and loyalty with one's homeland.

Culture, as the element being absent from these centers, is a vital instrument for bringing individuals together for peace as a common value to enhance security, stability and development, build youth's capacities and encourage them to participate in social activities, as well as transfer others' experiences to them and provide them with the necessary tools required by their dialogues to effective

and fruitful.

We still need the government and society to encourage the youth, as well as motivate them to change their negative practices and acquire the kind of positive behavior that helps them be creative and expand the scope of their options in life. The primary objective is investing the available communication among youths from both genders in the summer centers.

We know that Yemen's young population is targeted by multiple direct and indirect means, and that there are various attempts to fragment Yemen's social fabric through persuading youths to stay idle and do nothing for the development of their nation.

YR 1 billion is the approved budget for summer centers. Having being used wisely, this money would be enough to fund the establishment of permanent centers for youth in the various zones and parts of the nation. This money is also enough to make such centers more productive, thereby offering multiple cultural and social services, playing an effective role in developing concepts and encouraging families to send their children to these centers.

Having been established, these permanent centers would provide a training package fitting abilities of the different age groups. Through these centers, the relevant authorities in the government may issue a 'civic education manual' to help the youth learn about the values of citizenship, equality and democracy.

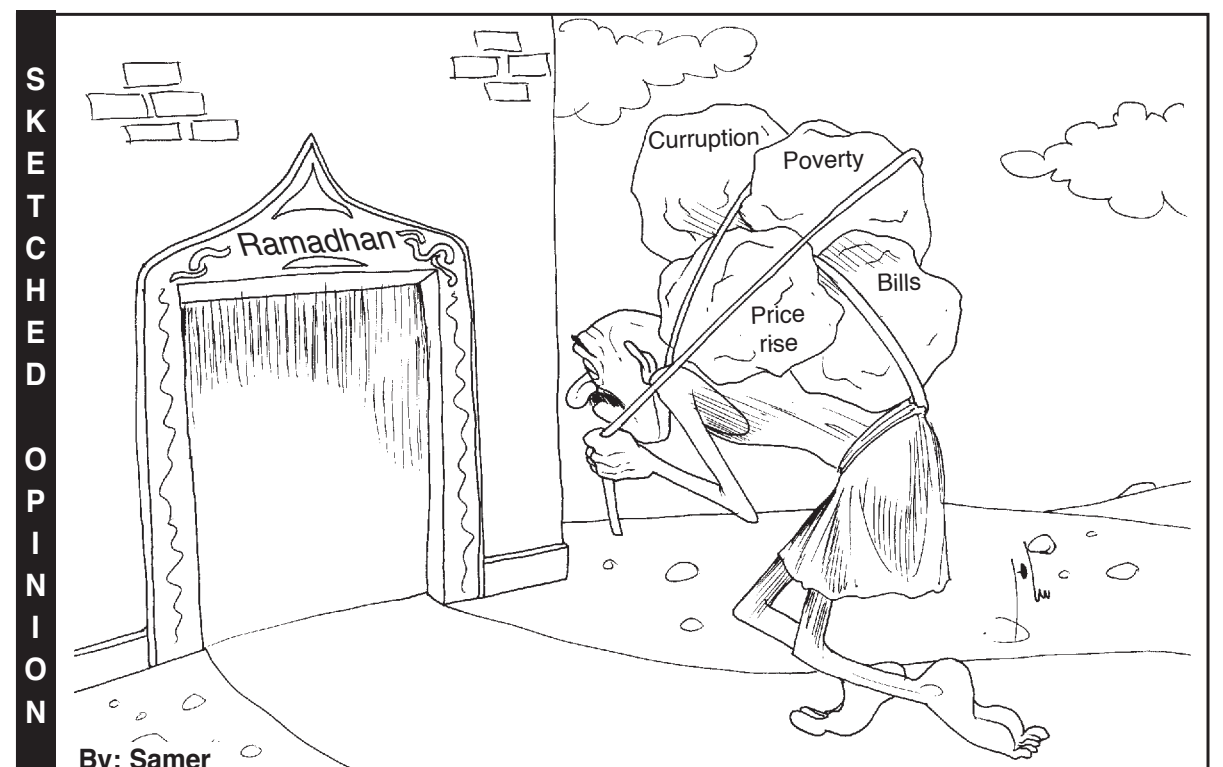
How the output would like if such centers were established with the aim of eradicating illiteracy of the adult population and putting a stop to the

phenomenon of school dropouts.

I needn't prove that such centers don't play their role as required because they were supposed to be an open workshop via which the institutions involved may develop training programs, foster voluntary work and engage youths in the various spheres of development.

The current summer centers in Yemen lack sporting, artistic, poetic and technological contests, which are indispensable for encouraging youth to be creative and express their viewpoints and understanding of peace values.

Source: Al-Thawra State-run Daily



By: Samer

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Lebanese defense policy vague, but unity guaranteed

The long impasse that prevented seating a Lebanese government was broken only when Hizbullah and other opposition parties were given veto power of decisions of the new government. Controversy increased when the government's policy statement included a clause that in effect allows Hizbullah to pursue armed confrontation with Israel. This article examines whether that same clause places Lebanon in direct conflict with United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1559 and 1701, both of which require disarming all non-government forces - and therefore the international community.

By: Charles Chuman
The Media Line

The Lebanese cabinet recently formed under Prime Minister Fuad Siniora released its governing policy statement on August 12. The statement was issued after days of committee dialogue and stormy parliamentary debate.

Despite gaping legal loopholes and text some consider contradictory, the statement seems to have placated all Lebanese parties and sets a tone of conciliation for the new government prior to parliamentary elections in 2009.

However, the statement potentially places the new government on unstable ground with Israel, the United Nations and the international community by virtue of a clause that seemingly overlooks key objectives of Security Council Resolutions 1559 and 1701. The former called for the disarmament of all militias in Lebanon, while the latter ended the 2006 war between Hizbullah and Israel.

The main problem with the policy statement is defining "resistance" against Israel, and who has the right to defend Lebanon. Article 7, paragraph one allows the Lebanese state resistance, and the people the right to defend the country.

In addition to the international considerations, the policy statement's wording has triggered domestic dissent.

Human rights advocate Wa'il Kheir argues that, "This is a contradiction. Lebanon is a democracy. The Lebanese people elect representatives who act within the Constitution as the state. The resistance is not defined."

One American University of Beirut student points out the absurdity of the law, jesting, "If any Lebanese citizen can legally go to war with Israel, can we also legally arrest other Lebanese acting as policemen? I want to arrest all of the politicians for corruption."

What is most worrying is that the policy statement could be construed as a violation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1701 and 1559.

According to Lebanese Renaissance Foundation analyst Elie Fawaz, "The policy statement is an agreement here, but is not clear to those abroad. This is important. The Lebanese government is

indefinable, and thus prevent either the pro-Western March 14 Coalition or Hizbullah and its allies from defining Lebanese defense policy. In effect, a stalemate has been reached.

A top priority now for both factions is to define the relationship between the Lebanese state and the "resistance," a term Hizbullah appropriated to define itself, but which has historically been used by many groups fighting Israel.

Sunni March 14 parliamentarians argue that Hizbullah does not have the right to monopolize the resistance, an exclusive privilege given to them by the Syrian regime when it controlled Lebanon.

Hizbullah explicitly states it will not give up its weapons. However, March 14 politicians argue that the Lebanese state must have full control and sovereignty over the country.

Al-Sayegh says: "We are not against Hizbullah. We want the Lebanese state, the logic of statehood to face the logic of anti-statehood; this means militias, private security, so-called resistance. We don't [explicitly] name it, the resistance, in our political discourse."

However, given Hizbullah's desire to retain their weapons and statements saying that any force interested in disarming them is against them, Al-Sayegh's statements are interpreted by Hizbullah as explicitly hostile.

A March 14 fear is that Hizbullah wants to position itself as a group similar to the Iranian Basij Resistance Force - a group whose Kalashnikov-adorned flag is strikingly similar to Hizbullah's - which is under the command of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

The Basij and IRGC fight on behalf of the Iranian regime and for the regime's ideology, but have a unique inter-relationship with the Iranian state. The Iranian state under the president and parliament does not control these entities.

The Basij and IRGC work alongside the state, and according to some March 14 analysts, this is what exists de facto between the Lebanese state and Hizbullah.

The Lebanese state does not espouse the same ideology as Hizbullah, but it cannot oppose the group, thus allowing the semi-governmental Hizbullah to operate in tandem with the sitting government.

Nadim Koteich, host of Future Television's political crossfire program Beit el Yeik, argues: "Hizbullah is the only successful export of the Iranian revolution, but Hizbullah is not the Iranian Basij. The Iranian government and the Basij have the same objective and ideology. This is not the case with Hizbullah and the Lebanese government. In Lebanon the state and

Hizbullah have opposing job descriptions."

Koteich contends that Hizbullah still threatens other political faction and the entire Lebanese state.

"The capital is still under occupation. The moment they decide to repeat May 7, they can do it. The people are still there. The buildings are filled with weapons."

Wael Kheir maintains that, "Ultimately, you have the moqawama [resistance] blocking the cabinet." He notes increasing threats and censorship of statements of which Hizbullah does not approve.

"If parliamentarians cannot speak freely, who can? It is pure intimidation."

However, the very fact that Hizbullah and the March 14 Coalition are governing together and managed to pass a controversial, contested, yet accepted policy statement supports the argument that Lebanese politicians have agreed to disagree and will settle their ideological battles in the election booth.

The Doha Accords, the composition of the current cabinet, and the policy statement all indicate that Lebanon is in a transition period.

"All of this is in preparation for the 2009 parliamentary elections," argues Lebanese American University professor Imad Salamey.

The policy statement "brings Lebanese factions back together after what happened in May," when Hizbullah and its allies took over Beirut and went to war in the Druze mountains overlooking the capital, he says.

Salamey contends that there are currently "multiple guardianships over Lebanon. The questions of peace or war remain in the domain of undefined groups."

The policy statement does not bring unity, but according to Salamey, "It's the best thing they could get so far."

Despite all the pessimism about the defense clauses of the policy statement, the vast majority of the document offers positive indicators.

The social and economic clauses of the text adopt the positions of the previous, highly contested Siniora government. From December 2006 until May 2008, the Hizbullah-led opposition claimed they would overturn the poli-

cies of the previous government; this and the instability it would have caused have been avoided.

The policy statement acknowledges U.N. Security Council Resolution 1701, approves of the U.N. Tribunal investigating the assassination of former Lebanese prime minister Rafiq Al-Hariri, and approves of the economic package agreed to in the Paris III Accords.

According to Al-Sayegh, "In the past the opposition has expressed its reservations of the spirit and the content of these. They have accepted this, which is

progress for March 14."

In the end, the policy statement says little about how the Lebanese government will actually govern.

"It's long and involved and has a lot of theater attached to it. Few policy statements have had much of an impact, per se. They are a good barometer, but they do not have much of an impact," argues Carnegie's Salem.

"It has no direct bearing on what's going to happen. [That] depends on the dynamics between Hizbullah and other factions, or Hizbullah's dynamics itself."



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China's Post-Olympic Challenge

By: Orville Schell

Almost everyone in the world who watched the 2008 Olympics in Beijing was impressed by China's preparations, the acumen of the Chinese in running such a complex and challenging event, and the rich harvest of medals - especially gold medal - that Chinese athletes won.

It was abundantly evident in the run-up to the Games how important it was to Chinese everywhere to show themselves to advantage. One got a sense of this when China's reputation and the Games' status came under attack during the Tibetan demonstrations and protests against the Olympic torch as it made its tortured progress around the world.

But, when all was said and done, through what turned out to be often Draconian controls, China pulled off quite a feat! Indeed, it is hard to imagine that the British will care as much, or go to such extremes, for the London Olympics in 2012.

For many years, especially since the Tiananmen Square massacre of 1989, China has felt a deficit of global respect. This feeling has deeply troubled its leaders and filled its people with a sense that, despite all their economic progress, their proper place in the world was not only eluding them, but being denied to them by the endless criticism of the so-called "developed world."

For the last two decades, Chinese leaders have been diligently trying to build a new edifice in order to gain some of that missing respect. This

made a successful Olympic Games, when all the world would be watching, an urgent matter.

But, now that the Games have ended, Chinese leaders cannot quite say, "Mission accomplished."

While China's achievement is worthy of genuine esteem, its efforts to gain a full measure of international respect and real "great power" status will not succeed until it matches its new economic and military power with a certain essential moral force. That, in turn, requires a society and a leadership that seeks to be exemplary in all ways that make human beings more human, including respect for truthfulness, openness, tolerance, and people's right to disagree with their government.

I fear that China's leaders and people will continue to feel a certain gnawing, inchoate sense of deficiency and incompleteness in their quest for global respect until they find the strength to begin addressing the crucial, but elusive, issue of making China an ethical, as well as an economic and military, power. For a country steeped in millennia of Confucianism, the need for ethical leadership should be clear.

To fully address the question of the moral and ethical base of a new form of Chinese governance, China's government and its people must be able to look back freely and come to terms with their recent history: the Great Leap Forward, the Cultural Revolution, the events of 1989, Tibet, and other sensitive issues. They must also freely be able to discuss the future and what kind of society they wish to see rise from the ashes of Mao's revolution.

I make these somewhat critical

observations about China not with any sense of moral superiority or a wish to relieve myself of the responsibility to level the same critique at my own country's recent failures. As most of the world knows, America's quest to maintain its claim to the title of "greatness," has, of late, also been elusive.

Arriving from different starting points, both the United States and China now find themselves confronting a similar challenge: restoring global trust and respect. Their success inevitably requires directly confronting their evident moral failures.

If many of those same viewers who have been impressed by China's successes in Beijing now also find themselves recoiling at the idea of a stronger and more prideful China, that is understandable. For strength unalloyed by checks and balances - and by a capacity for self-critical reflection about the rightness and wrongness of state action - can be unnerving. Many Americans, too, have recently had to learn this.

One hopes that China will derive a new measure of respect and self-confidence from these astounding Games. But one also hopes that China's successes will enable its leaders to feel strong enough to begin looking honestly at China's recent past in a more critical way. Such forthrightness is not easy for any country. But, having completed such an important step forward, China must now find new, more humanistic ways to continue to reinvent itself.

Orville Schell is the Director of the Asia Society's Center on US-China Relations.

Source: Project Syndicate, 2008.

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RAMADAN 2008



By: Harun Yahya
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How Islamic union will affect the economic development

Contemporary world politics make it necessary for nations to integrate into international unions in the interest of their own national security and economy. In these international unions, which are usually based upon geographic location, such factors as natural resources, trading blocs, and even cultural values play an important role. Many neighboring countries combine their resources under the auspices of such organizations, create defensive alliances, and cooperate on a wide array of issues. The goal of such unions is to preserve peace, control the arms race, resolve disputes through diplomacy, promote socioeconomic development, and protect fundamental human rights and democracy. At the present time, NATO, the OSCE, the EU, NAFTA, OPEC, ASEAN, the G-8, the D-8, and APEC are the foremost international political, military, and economic unions.

These institutions are subject to organizational reforms because of new members or a widening of scope. All of these organizations, formed in the aftermath of the Second World War, have contributed to creating stability and order in the world and have played a major role in global socioeconomic development. Member nations protect their economic and military interests, and also acquire a stronger regional and international position. Even the developed world perceives the necessity of such partnerships. The creation of free trade zones, regional trade agreements, abolished customs controls, and even a common currency (as in the EU) safeguard the future of member states. Defensive pacts enable member states to reduce military expenditures and to divert those resources to cultural and educational fields.

A similar organization will provide considerable benefits to Muslim nations. For those that are desperate for technological as well as economic development, the foremost step toward stability is the creation of a central organization or, in other words, a unified Islamic world under the auspices of the Islamic Union.

Economic Development and Increasing Prosperity

Economic cooperation is necessary on two counts: stability and development. Muslim nations must bring stability and solidity to their economies. Developing industries and making the required investments is vital, as is the need for a comprehensive development plan and the simultaneous development of education, economy, culture, science, and technology. While various sectors are developed technologically, the labor force's educational levels and standards must be raised accordingly. Society must be motivated to become more productive, and the resulting economic cooperation will play a major role in eradicating poverty, illiteracy, the unjust distribution of wealth, and other socioeconomic problems rampant in Muslim countries. This partnership can be formed only by the creation of free trade zones, customs unions, and common economic areas.

Most Muslim countries have geostrategic importance as well as rich natural resources (e.g., natural gas and crude oil). These resources and strategic opportunities, however, are not being used effectively. In the Islamic world, 86% of the population's living standards fall below \$2,000, 76% under \$1,000, and 67% under \$500 per year. When the Islamic world's total resources are considered, this is quite a paradox: Roughly half of the petrol consumed in the West is exported from the Islamic world, as is 40% of the world's agricultural production. Many economists and strategists freely admit that the world economy depends upon



the Islamic world's oil and gas exports, in particular those of the Persian Gulf.

The Persian Gulf holds two-thirds of the planet's discovered crude oil reserves. Data obtained from research concludes that Saudi Arabia alone holds 25.4% of the world's oil reserves, or 262 billion barrels. A further 11% is found in Iraq, 9.6% in the UAE, 9.2% in Kuwait, 8.6% in Iran, 13% in other OPEC member states. The rest is distributed across the remainder of the world. Research commissioned by the U.S. Department of Energy shows that between 2000 and 2020, oil exports from the area will increase by 125%. This means that the world will continue to meet most of its energy needs by imports from the Gulf region. Moreover, the Middle East has 40% of the global natural gas reserves; 35% of these reserves are in the Gulf region. Algeria, Libya, and other North African countries have 3.7% of the world's reserves.

The Caucasus and Central Asia are also rich in oil, natural gas, and other natural resources. For instance, Kazakhstan has between 10-17.6 billion barrels of proven oil reserves, and its natural gas reserves are estimated at between 53-83 trillion cubic feet. Turkmenistan has between 98-155 trillion cubic feet of natural gas reserves, making it the fourth largest producer. Some other Muslim countries have valuable mineral resources. For instance, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan are two of the world's leading gold producers. Turkey has one of the world's richest boron reserves, only recently discovered to be very important, and Tajikistan has the world's largest aluminum producing facilities.

These advantages will become more important in the twenty-first century, which some have already christened the "energy century." Energy is an essential element of modern society in terms of the military, industry, urbanization, and transport. Given that economic activity and manufacturing depend primarily upon energy, nations will do their best to achieve control over these energy resources. The Islamic world is not using its resources effectively, for many of its members lack the infrastructure and technology to increase the production and use their natural resources to develop themselves. Therefore, the resources' contributions to the country's economy are limited to export earnings. These countries do not have the means to process their own crude oil, use it in their industrial complexes, or to develop their industries. Worse still, some Muslim nations do not even have the necessary

means to explore and research their natural resources or to discover and extract them. Explorations undertaken by foreign companies reveal that other Muslim nations have oil and gas reserves, but they cannot benefit from their resources.

Naturally, the ineffective use of natural resources is not the Islamic world's only economic problem. However, solving this problem can begin the process of solving many other problems. The economies of Muslim nations contain differences in structure and functioning. Some nations' economies depend upon mineral resources, such as the members of OPEC, while other nations' depend upon agriculture. These differences are also reflected, to some extent, in their social structures, such as the widely varying degrees of rural and urban populations.

Developing complementary relationships and helping each other in their respective areas of expertise can turn these differences into a source of riches. All of this will be possible with the Islamic Union.

Joint ventures and project partnerships will be an important step in the right direction, for they will enable countries to benefit from one another's experiences and the income earned from investment projects will benefit all of the participating countries. Such mutual financial support is compatible with Islamic morality, for helping the needy and having a sense of social responsibility are important characteristics that Muslims strive to acquire. Many Qur'anic verses remind Muslims to watch over the needy.

Society's internal cohesion must be extended to international relations. As international cooperation within a partnership cannot be one-sided, employment and income levels will rise in both countries. For example, one country will produce oil and another one will process it, and agriculturally dependent countries will be able to import the food they need from agriculturally developed countries. A manpower-poor country will be able to help out a manpower-rich country that does not have enough jobs for its people. Rich countries can invest in poor countries to the benefit of both. Sharing know-how and experience will increase prosperity, and all Muslims will benefit from technological developments.

Joint ventures that realize the Islamic world's unification of opportunities and means will enable Muslims to produce hi-tech products. The Islamic common market will make it possible for

against other investment groups and will become an important part of the global economy.

The living standards and wealth of Muslim nations will increase, and their existing inequalities will disappear. Some free trade agreements are already in place between countries in the Gulf, the Pacific Rim, and North Africa. Trade agreements signed by Turkey are already operational in the Islamic world. Bilateral cooperation exists in some regions; however, their scope must be widened. Such cooperation will safeguard the rights and interests of all Muslim nations and lead to all of them becoming developed—a result from which all of them will derive a far greater benefit than if they do not cooperate with each other.

All of these can be realized only under a central authority's leadership and coordination. Achieving this will be possible if Muslim nations adopt the Qur'an's values and the Prophet's (may God bless him and grant him peace) Sunnah, or, in other words, if they adopt Islamic culture. The Islamic Union must lead the way to this cultural awakening, as well as the resulting political and economic cooperation.

Mutual cooperation among Muslims, part of the Islamic code, must be adhered to by all Muslims, for God commands people to refrain from avarice and to guard the needy and support one another. In fact, destitute people have a due share of the believers' wealth (Qur'an, 51:19). As the Qur'an proclaims:

Those of you possessing affluence and ample wealth should not make oaths that they will not give to their

relatives, the very poor, and those who have migrated in the way of God. Rather, they should pardon and overlook. Would you not love God to forgive you? God is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Qur'an, 24:22)

He who has plenty should spend from his plenty, but he whose provision is restricted should spend from what God has given him. God does not demand from anyone more than He has given it. God will appoint ease after difficulty. (Qur'an, 65:7)

Our Lord also reveals that believers are one another's guardians (Qur'an, 9:71). The word "guardian" conveys such meanings as friend, helper, mentor, and protector. It also expresses the importance of cooperation and solidarity between Muslim nations. The cooperation that will arise from this fraternal awareness between Muslim nations will bring prosperity and wealth to Muslims and eradicate poverty, an important problem of the Islamic world. Societies that follow the Qur'an's values will not experience famine, destitution, and poverty. Muslims will develop their nations by following rational and long-term policies, establishing good relations with other nations and people, valuing trade and development, and learning from other cultures' experiences. This was so in history and, God willing, under the Islamic Union's leadership it will be so once again.

Harun Yahya, whose real name is Adnan Oktar is a prominent Turkish intellectual who specializes in religious philosophy. More on the author at www.harunyahya.com



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وليد عبد العزيز السقاف

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الدولية من جامعة أوريبرو في السويد وتبليغه لتقدير امتياز مع مرتبة الشرف لبحثه حول
واقع الإعلام الإلكتروني في الجمهورية اليمنية

كما نهنئه لحصوله على منحة لتحضير الدكتوراه في نفس الجامعة تقديراً لدوره الأكاديمي
لا سيما في تأسيسه لمحرك البحث يمن بورتال نت والذي تم اعتماده كوسيلة بحث
لاستخدامها في الأبحاث العلمية والأكاديمية المرتبطة بالإعلام الإلكتروني
مع تمنياتنا له بمزيد من التآلق والنجاح

Staffers of Yemen Times extend their warmest congratulations to the newspaper's former
publisher and editor-in-chief

Walid Abdulaziz Al-Sagqaf

for receiving his Master degree in Global Journalism from Orebro University in Sweden and
for passing with distinction for his thesis on online media in the Republic of Yemen

We also congratulate him for winning a PhD scholarship award to continue his studies at the
university in recognition for his contribution in studying Online Media particularly through the
establishment of YemenPortal.net, which was recognized as an academic research tool to be
used for scientific and academic research in studying online media.

Welcome Ramadan

By: Mofeed Al-Gaad
mofeed336@yahoo.com

People in different parts of the world adopt diverse religions like Islam, Christianity and others, but majority of rational people adopt Islam as it is the religion of tolerance, justice, education and mercy. Thus Muslims have their own holy month which distinguishes them from others. Ramadan is the holy month of Muslims and fasting this month is one of the pillars of Islam that are required to be performed by every Muslim. So every Muslim who is able to fast ought to fast this month. Ramadan is knocking at the door, approaching an Islamic nation as a blessing and kind guest, so every Muslim is overwhelmed with a sense of happiness and pleasure. Ramadan has countless blessings that make Muslims pray to God to expand their age until the coming of Ramadan in order to touch God's mercy during this holy month. Following the holy Quran in Ramadan is one of the characteristics that distinguish it from other months. The

first inspiration comes to our Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) in Ramadan while he was praying God in an isolated place.

Ramadan days can be classified into three periods of time. The first 10 days are described as the days of mercy. During these days people become kind and helpful to each other. As rich people stay all daylight fasting and suffering from the pain of hunger, they feel poor people's pain and how they are suffering from hunger for long months. Consequently, rich people have pity and mercy upon poor people, providing them with the necessary demands of life. Above all, God places his mercy on all his creations of human beings during these days, glorifying the act of fasting as he said in Al-Hadeeth Gody, "All the deeds of Adam's son are for him, but fasting is for me and I am the one to evaluate that."

The middle period of Ramadan is described as the period of forgiveness. During these days God accepts sinners, forgiving their sins. Moreover, God imprisons devils, preventing them from spreading among Muslims. Therefore,

most sinners seize this opportunity, praying to God day and night in order to erase their sins that they have committed in the past months.

The final period of Ramadan is the period of saving people from hell. During the last 10 days of Ramadan, every night, God saves many people from the painful torture of hell. That means a large number of people join companions of heaven every night of the last 10 days of Ramadan. Therefore, during these days, Muslims spend most of their time in the mosque, praying for God to save their brothers who died from the torture of hell. At the end, I advise my brothers and sisters in Islam to seize this opportunity and fast during Ramadan faithfully, following the way that our prophet Mohammed (PBUH) did, leaving the earthly greed behind, because God captures our life suddenly without any warning and we may not live until the next Ramadan.

I would like also to congratulate all Muslims all over the world on this holy occasion, the coming of Ramadan, and say to them "Ramadan Kareem."

Ali and his lofty dreams

By: Mofeed Al-Jaad
mofeed336@yahoo.com

There was a humble Yemeni family of two parents with three boys, the eldest of which was Ali.

Ali was active, studying at school in the morning and helping his father on the farm in the afternoon. Ali's parents encouraged him to complete high school and in this regard, they were very helpful to him, to the extent that they gave him everything he needed. In those days, the dream of Ali's parents was to see their son become a truly educated man.

Ali graduated from high school with distinction three years later, but alas, he was unable to pursue his university studies due to a change in his parents' dream. Upon seeing the sons of his cousins, who were immigrants in the United States, return to their village with big cars and plenty of money, Ali's father decided to force him to abandon his studies and go to the U.S. like his cousins.

"My dear son, as you know, I love you dearly and my dream is to see you happy in life. I can't deny that I encouraged you to complete high school, but I now advise you to abandon studying at university and emigrate to America," he instructed.

"What do you mean, father? Do you want me to leave college after I've spent so many long years getting to this stage?" Ali asked.

"Yes, son, I want you to go America to earn hundreds of thousands of dol-

lars with which you can fulfill both your desires and please your poor family. Just look at your cousins - they left school, went to America and then returned with a lot of dollars, which enabled them to build big houses, buy big cars and marry the girls they loved, whereas you, my dear son, have neither the ability to marry the girl with whom you're in love nor give us at least YR 10,000 for monthly expenses."

He continued, "Look at your little brothers; I've become too old so that I can't cover their needs and demands. They're even wearing the hand-me-down clothes from your cousins! After Allah, your brothers depend upon you. Despite the fact that you're educated, your cousins despise you because you're poor. Am I right? Is what I've said realistic and logical, my dear son?"

"Yes, father, you're right and I totally agree with you. To prove it, inshallah, I'll go to America next month in order to earn hundreds of thousands of dollars, with which I can build a big house, buy a big car and give you whatever you want," Ali replied.

A month later, as promised, Ali did indeed travel to the U.S. Once there, Ali adjusted to his new surroundings, becoming familiar with everyone and everything. Because his main purpose was to make money, he worked day and night to amass as much as he could.

After making a large amount, Ali sent his father \$150,000 to build him a large house, sending an additional \$1,500 monthly for the family's expenses. While Ali sent a lot of

money home, he retained a large amount for himself, which he deposited into a bank. Day by day, his bank account increased significantly.

Four years later, Ali became homesick and believed that it was time to return to his parents and marry the girl awaiting his return throughout those long years. Thus, Ali decided to leave the U.S. and return to his homeland.

However, there was one dream he still hadn't fulfilled and that was buying a modern new car, so he immediately sent his father \$55,000 to buy him a large modern car. Ali's desire was to be the first driver of his car and drive from the beach to his village.

For this reason, he requested his friend buy the car and park it near the beach until his imminent arrival. Upon arriving at the airport, Ali went straight to the beach where he was so pleased when he saw his beautiful car. Before getting in, he telephoned his family to inform them of his coming and then started off for his village.

As Ali happily drove his car, many beautiful images ran through his mind. He was imagining how he would drive his car proudly in front of his cousins. He also imagined how he'd enjoy every beautiful thing in his village - his big new house, his parents, his brothers, his sweetheart, etc.

Unfortunately, Ali never realized his lofty dreams. While driving fast on the highway, he had a terrible accident that took his life and destroyed his new car and every beautiful thing he had imagined. In the end, Ali died with his dreams, ultimately becoming a victim of money, greed and snobbery.

Engagement seldom lasts except between educated people

By: Mofeed Al-Jaad
mofeed336@yahoo.com

I've enjoyed reading Maged Al-Kholidy's series entitled, "To marry educated or uneducated women?" because it addresses a tangible and widespread issue within our society.

I want to shed light on the idea of suitable marriage between educated people, which Al-Kholidy discussed in the Aug. 14 issue No. 1181, "To marry educated or uneducated women? Part 5," but I'd like to discuss this issue during the engagement period.

Many young men these days face financial obstacles preventing them from marrying. For this reason, they first desire to build their future and then think about marriage later.

For example, most young men today have a specific woman in mind to marry, but they can't handle or take on domestic responsibilities yet because they're either still college students or new graduates without jobs.

Thus, these youths desire to get engaged to the woman whom they've

chosen as a proper and perfect wife and then marry her later after gaining employment and achieving some of their dreams.

Here, the crucial role of educated women is obvious because they understand that today's young men need time to get a job and realize some of their simple dreams, so such women are prepared to postpone marriage following their engagement because they believe that they must share their love's forbearance of life's ups and down.

To the contrary, uneducated women aren't ready to wait a long time after engagement because they only think about the pleasure and sweetness of marriage; thus, they prefer a life partner who's ready to marry as soon as possible. However, in doing so, they ignore the heavy burdens of domestic responsibilities they must bear and the difficult circumstances today's young people face.

To illustrate this point, a friend of mine dearly loved one of his classmates, so following their graduation, he told her frankly, "Darling, I'm ready to get engaged to you this week, but our marriage must be postponed for at least two

years."

After thinking awhile, she said, "Because I'm your life partner, I should share in all of your problems, so I'm prepared to wait for you - even more than 10 years." My friend eventually got a good job and married his faithful sweetheart.

Thus, relationships seldom weather the engagement period except when they're between two educated people. To clarify, relationships during the engagement are impossible between uneducated young men and educated women.

For example, an uneducated man once became engaged to an educated young woman. They loved each other and communicated by phone. One day, the woman said to her love, "I want to get a job and teach after marriage." Unfortunately, the man refused, which led to the breaking off of their engagement.

To summarize, I think marriage is more suitable between educated couples than uneducated ones because educated individuals are more aware of life's ups and downs and the domestic responsibilities of marital life. Their education also helps them look at life in the proper way.

Through The Mind's Eye



By: Maged Thabet Al-Kholidy
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To marry educated or uneducated women? (Part 6)

Firstly, I am really sorry for not publishing my column in the last Thursday's issue because I was somehow busy. Then, I would like to thank Mr. Adel Hassan who responded to the series of my topic "to marry educated or uneducated women?" in his article entitled "Educated women: between misunderstanding and misbehavior" which was published last week, issue No. 1183. In his article, Adel shed light on an important point which is how men look at some cases of educated women, and accordingly they generalize any negative aspects of such cases for all educated women.

Actually I like Mr. Adel's points of view, though I have some comments on some of them. These comments are not only for Adel but for all those who are interested in the topic.

Adel refers to our Prophet's (PBUH) saying that: "Educated individuals belong to the soil of wisdom". That is right, but that is not restricted to only one gender (male or female).

This reference was to respond to those who "misunderstand" women in their behaviors. The two examples that Mr. Adel gave of this misunderstanding are: 1. educated women will be like "controlling ministers" at homes, and 2. it will be easy for such women "to make relations with more than 100 guys".

Though Mr. Adel rejected the idea of generalizing this concept of educated women, I am against his

point of view in the sense that even if it is generalized, there are reasons behind that. When the educated women become like ministers at homes, it is not always something negative. Such women do many things good for homes, children and above all for husbands. They turn to ministers, or it is better to say behave like ministers, because they realize many things related to life around them, not because they are bad and must be avoided as wives, but because they became aware and enough acquainted with this-and-that of life. They, thus, behave confidently, doing best to safe and serve marriage life. In spite of this, some husbands look at this point negatively.

Adel also refers to those who claim that educated women may have relations with guys easily. Again he rejected the idea of generalizing this for all women. It is good, but Adel may have forgotten that they do this because the environment of study that sometimes requires so.

They, moreover, make such relations, not away from our social and religious conventions, regardless of some exceptions.

That is to say, university girls make relations with boys but these relations are not necessarily bad or immoral. Mr. Adel and myself also were university students, for example.

Of course, we came across many relations with ladies. But such relations were marked with respect, morality so that we dealt with ladies as if they were sisters to us. So all people

have to know that it is not the fault of such women, but it is the requirement of study which helps the two genders to trust each other and to understand, not to misunderstand, the relations that take place between them.

In the last part of my series I shed light on how men deal with women from different angles. I insisted upon the idea that when men are educated they easily accept many behaviors of educated women and vice versa. But the case will be different if one of the couple is educated and the other is not. So, it is better to deal with matter from this point at least at current time at which many traditional conventions are still dominant in our society.

Adel's preference of marrying educated woman is somehow convincing and logical. But again it is so only to those who are educated and know the nature of educated women, while uneducated men may reject the idea and take it as a sensitive matter.

In brief, I do thank all those who responded to my articles, appreciating their participations, taking them into account seriously. I also call all of you, dear readers, to suggest new topics which can be valuable for all the society, and convey something about our culture for readers abroad.

Maged Thabet Al-Kholidy is a contributing opinions writer form Taiz. He holds a Masters Degree from the English department at Taiz University and is the former editor of Taiz University's English-language magazine.

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Al-Janad Mosque witness the first Friday prayer in Yemen

Located at the Governorate of Taiz just 20 km away from the city, the Al Janad mosque is one of the most important religious sites in Yemen. It was built by the Prophet's companion Mo'ad bin Jabal (may Allah be pleased with him) who was dispatched by the Prophet Muhammed (may Allah's peace and blessing be upon him) to Yemen to convey the message of Islam.

Upon his arrival in Yemen, Mo'ad built the mosque, and held a meeting with Bani Al Aswad, who was the commander of the army, on the first Friday of the month of Rajab. Mo'ad preached and led the congregation in prayer, heralding the first Friday prayer to be performed in Yemen. From then on, the people of the city marked that day to converge on the mosque and perform prayers and religious rituals, so as to get closer to Allah.

Though the Al-Janad mosque underwent repairs and renovations throughout its history, the most important renovation were the square tiles that were laid by Vizier Al Adal Ibn Abi Al Barakat in 1087 A.D. during the era of the Daughter of Ahmed. Al Janad mosque was next renovated during the reign of King Ayoub bin Sayf Al Islam Taghtakeen who built the two sides and the rear in 1206 A.D. He rebuilt the ceilings of the mosque with tiles and gypsum, and embellished its inscriptions with Gold.

As a result, the ceiling of the mosque became an extraordinary landmark, famed after for its splendor and the precision of its construction, to the extent that 'Look at the pulpit of the Mosque of Taiz and look at the



The ceiling of Al Janad Mosque' became a common saying among the local population. Renovations and restorations have continued till our modern times.



The mosque has a rectangular shape, with an outer length of 65.5 meters and width of 43 meters. It is enclosed by a fence that is topped by 144 pointed triangles. Inside, there is an open nave with the dimensions (35.5 x 25.5 meters), and a 2-meter square column that is used as a sundial to decide the timing of prayers. The column is surrounded by four porticos, the deepest of which is that of the kiblah which consists of four wide colonnades.

The wall of the kiblah is decorated with two mihrabs, with a wooden pulpit placed in between.

The pulpit is a real work of art, rich with engraved, perforated and assembled decorations, and is one of the few pulpits that survived from the

time of Taghtakeen bin Ayoub in the last quarter of the 12th century A.D. The importance of this pulpit is its link between the early style of pulpits and the pulpits of Yemen during subsequent periods, i.e. the Rasulid and Zahiria eras.

The minaret occupies part of the southwestern corner of the mosque, and consists of a cylindrical part in the bottom, topped by an octagonal shape, and pinnacled by a hexagonal shape with a dome surmounting the minaret. Next to the minaret is a stone panel with the name of Sultan Amer bin Abdul Wahhab inscribed to it. This is in addition to other panels on which successive renovations made in the mosque were recorded throughout the mosque's history. The mosque is open to visitors all round the year, a state which the mosque deservedly enjoys for the sacred and spiritual status it has in people's hearts.

Source: Tourism ministry, Endowment ministry

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