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Inside:  **5** Ramadan in America: Pursuing faith and spirituality

 **10** Ramadan Page: Muslim women in married life

Yemen among the world's most vulnerable states

By: Amel Al-Ariqi

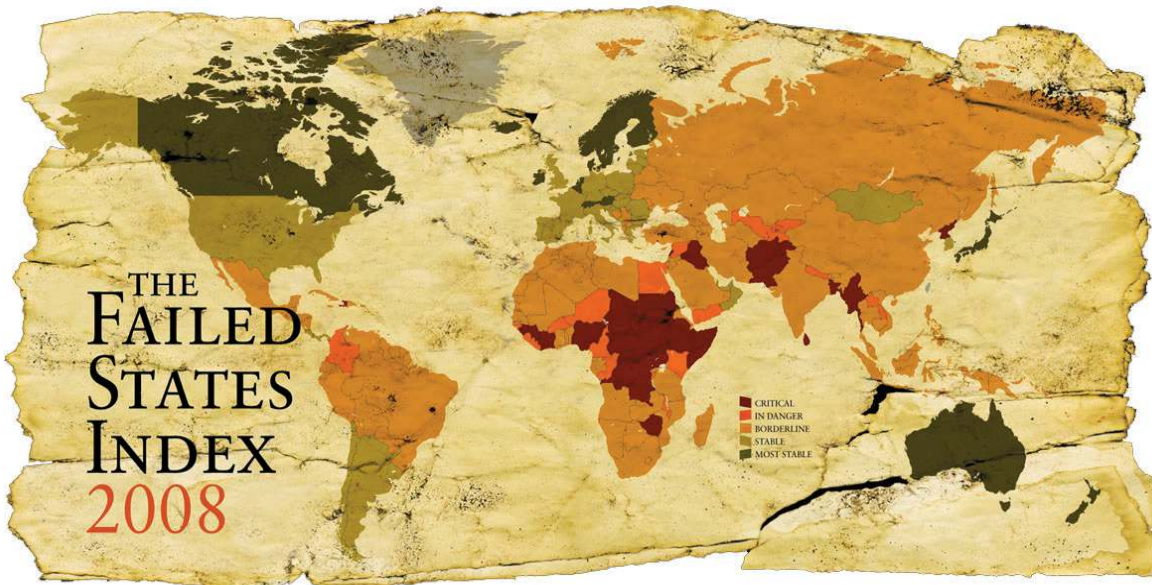
SANA'A, Sept. 7 — Seven Arab countries, including Yemen, head a list of the world's 60 most vulnerable states in the Failed States Index 2008, an annual index published by the Fund for Peace think-tank and Foreign Policy magazine.

While Somalia, Iraq, Sudan and Lebanon were classified as "failed states", Yemen, Egypt, and Syria were defined as "states in danger" in the index which ranked 177 states in order of their vulnerability to violent internal conflict and societal deterioration, using twelve social, economic, political, and military indicators.

Though the indicators are not designed to forecast when states may experience violence or collapse, they are meant to measure a state's vulnerability to collapse or conflict.

The index defines the failed state as one which can no longer perform its basic security and development functions and has no effective control over its territory and borders.

States which show symptoms of failure — "weak states" in the index — are the most exposed when crisis strikes, a food



All countries in red, orange and yellow categories display features that make parts of their societies and institutions vulnerable to failure.

crisis for example.

"These shocks are the sparks of state failure, events that further corrode the integrity of weak states and push those on the edge closer to combustion. As the food crisis has shown, these political and economic setbacks are not unique to the world's most vulnerable countries. But weak states are weak precisely because they lack the resiliency to cope with unwelcome — and unpleasant — surprises," the report added.

The report, which ran last month, considered corruption as a huge problem at every level and branch of Yemeni government, saying that insider deals, embezzlement, and procurement are all common.

However, the report declared that there was slight progress compared to previous years as state legitimacy had improved with the parliament's first-ever challenge to the executive branch in a number of corruption cases.

The report described Yemen's military forces as "disorganized", as they had not been able to put a definitive end to the ongoing violence between the state and al-Houthi's followers.

It also said that the country's police force had been responsible for numerous human rights violations including arbitrary arrests, torture and murders, and added that it had not been able to protect citizens from violence caused by tribal disputes.

The report pointed to the Ministry of Justice attempts to institute a few reforms and conduct conferences around the country especially in 2004 and 2005, showing that the ministry had established two model courts to help women

and other underrepresented groups, conducted training for 350 judges on judicial transparency, and implemented a program to reform the infrastructure of eight courts of appeals.

Continued on page 2

Primary study: 30,000 university graduates to combat illiteracy

By: Almigdad Mojalli

SANA'A, Sep. 6 — The Minister of Education stated that the ministry is preparing a primary study to employ 30,000 university graduates under the program of Eradicating Illiteracy. "We are preparing a primary study to employ at least 30,000 university graduates under the Eradicating Illiteracy Program," Minister of Education Abd Al-Salam Muhammad Hizam Al-Jawfi said.

According to Al-Jawfi, the illiteracy rate in Yemen was 63 percent during the 1990s, but has now decreased to less than 45 percent. "The efforts exerted by the government, NGOs and international organizations, the spread of schools, primary education and the redistributing of teachers helped a lot in decreasing the illiteracy rate," Al-Jawfi affirmed.

He also said that the illiteracy rate is expected to decrease to 20 percent by 2013.

Official statistics have recently revealed that the illiteracy rate in Yemen has dropped from 56 percent to 45.7 percent in children aged 10 years. The statistics also show that there are more illiterate women in Yemen than there are illiterate men. According to the Department of Eradicating Illiteracy, the illiteracy rate stands at 29.8 percent for men, whereas it is 62.1 percent for women.

Despite the remarkable efforts that have been exerted towards implementing many literacy programs and improving the educational capacities of local teachers, the level of educational achievement of Yemen's adult population is among the lowest in the world.

Continued on page 2

Yemeni Coastguard rescues Saudi ship from Somali pirates

By: Yemen Times Staff

SANA'A, Sept. 7 — Yemeni Coastguard forces were able to save a Saudi trade ship from attempted piracy by Somali pirates while the ship was passing through the international waters of the Gulf of Aden. The ship was on its way from Jeddah to Bahrain.

Rukn Shuja, head of the Coastguard's operations, said that the Yemeni Coastguard received a message from a Saudi ship asking for help last Saturday afternoon. He pointed out that the ship was around 90 kilometers away from Ras Qawah on the Yemeni coast. He said that the Yemeni Coastguard authority sent the boat that

was patrolling the area to the location of the ship.

Shuja maintained that three boats belonging to Somali pirates intercepted the Saudi ship and opened fire before the Yemeni coastguards arrived and chased them away. He noted that the Somali pirates were forced to flee toward Somali waters.

He made clear that most piracy acts occur in the international waters off the east coast of Yemen, between Ras Amran and the region of Shaqrah, due to a lack of coastguards in that area.

The Yemeni Coastguard forces saved a Japanese oil tanker this past April after Somali pirates targeted it with an RPG shell.

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Hilal dismissed from heading reconstruction committee Houthis fear possibility of new setback

By: Mohammed Bin Sallam

SANA'A, Sept. 7 — Tribal sources in Sa'ada said that the security situation is relatively better in the governorate, but that tension and fears have returned after Abdul Qader Hilal, Minister of Local Administration, was dismissed from heading the reconstruction committee, particularly given that some centers of power attempted to obstruct the ceasefire agreement between the Yemeni army and Houthis.

"The involved centers of power, which receive support from neighboring countries, are recruiting thousands of youths from the Bakil and Hashid tribes in order to prepare for a sixth war," said the source.

Official sources revealed last week that the president Ali Abdullah Saleh authorized Omar Al-Kurshimi, Minister of Labor, to head the reconstruction committee in Sa'ada instead of Abdul Qader Hilal.

According to online website Newsyemen.net, official sources justified the president's decision saying there is a need to transfer the reconstruction committee from the security and political level to the technical level, which is part of the Ministry of Labor's work.

A number of prominent Sa'ada sheikhs showed their apprehensions concerning "dealing with the Sa'ada file as a technical issue," pointing out that the war-torn governorate is in

need of security and political efforts to support peace. They confirmed that Abdul Qader Hilal was the qualified person to complete this task if the government were actually seeking means to ultimately close the file of war.

Sheikhs and other fundamental bodies in the governorate exerted pressure on the government to dismiss Hilal from his position in Sa'ada as he allegedly doesn't deal with Houthis strictly. The president responded to these pressures out of his belief that the dismissal would be on behalf of pacifists against those who advocate war inside the government.

In cooperation with the local mediation committee, Hilal was able to achieve peace and security in all the districts of Sa'ada including Haidan and Dhahian. His performance didn't appeal to war advocates who had been lobbying against him ever since the beginning of his nomination as head of the reconstruction committee.

This past month, press reports revealed that Hilal submitted a report to the president in which he clarified the situation in Sa'ada after the war. In the report, he demanded that the government take several urgent measures, the most important of which were ending the state of emergency in Sa'ada city, restoring electricity and telephone services, and releasing detainees. The report said that this would enhance confidence in Sa'ada citizens and ensures the closure of the final Sa'ada war file.

As for the detainees of the Sa'ada war, the newspaper 26 September reported last Thursday that, based on the president's directives, a group of detainees would be released during the upcoming few days. The newspaper's online website had reported last week that there were directives to release 132 detainees including Fadhil Al-Houthi, and scholar Mohammed Muftah who hasn't been released yet.

Human rights activists said that releasing detainees is a good step by the government.

The directives to release detainees followed a series of sit-ins, carried out during the past months by the families of the detainees to protest against the detention of their relatives. Protestors met Abdul Qader Hilal who promised to work on the detainees' release as one of the outstanding factors contributing to closing the Sa'ada war file.

Sources said that, after the detainees' relatives met Hilal, he confirmed that the detainees included in the list of names he was given would be released, along with other detainees.

Over 1,200 people who were arrested during the last Sa'ada war are still detained in prisons without charges. Some of them have been subjected to torture.

Media outlets reported that General Ali Mohsen Al-Ahmar went to Libya as an envoy of President Saleh, as part of his visit to a number of Arab countries to ask for help in reconstructing the war-torn governorate of Sa'ada.

Human rights violations in prisons

By: Almgidat Mojalli

SANA'A, Sept. 4 — Human rights' violations, lack of medical care and insufficient nutrition plague the Central Prison in Sana'a city, the House of Social Guidance and Dar Al-Amal for female juveniles. This is according to a revealing report, released last week by the Minister of Human Rights Dr. Huda Al-Ban, who visited the prisons between June and July 2007.

Central Prison

The first part of the report dealt with the Central Prison in Sana'a city and highlighted the miserable situation of both male and female prisoners there.

According to the report, many of the prisoners were sent to the prison by sheikhs and authorities that don't have the legal right to warrant an arrest.

Many of the prisoners were arrested for long periods of time without prosecution. In many cases juveniles were imprisoned together with adults, female prison workers lacked the proper training and expertise on methods of dealing with prisoners, and many individuals had been imprisoned as hostages instead of a relative fugitive.

Regarding nutrition and hygiene, the quantity of food given to prisoners was not enough, especially for pregnant prisoners as the meals lacked in nutritional value. Kitchens and prisoner dwellings were found to be unclean.

The report also revealed that many of the prisoners were suffering from psychological and nervous diseases, while the appointed treatment center was unable to offer the simplest requirements of necessary care.

As for the cultural and educational situation at the Central Prison, the report stated that studying halls lacked basic necessities such as pens and copy books, as well as modern publications. Adult prisoners and juveniles were all gathered together in one study hall, and female prisoners were deprived of adequate guidance and preaching.

The House of Social Guidance, for male juveniles

With regards to the House of Social Guidance, the report revealed that the male juveniles imprisoned there were exposed to physical beatings and other forms of severe treatment. Many juveniles are sent to the house for trivial matters, some under the orders of illegitimate authorities. As a result of this, many suffered acute psychological problems. According to the report, the house is in need of specialized doctors as well as basic medical equipment, medication and essential foodstuffs.

On a more positive note, the report did point out that the cultural and educational situation in the House of the Social Guidance (Juveniles) is better than the Central Prison as it contains a computer hall, theatre and a distinctive library.

Dar Al-Amal (The House of Hope), for female juveniles

According to the report, none of the seventeen employees of the Dar Al-Amal were registered at the Ministry of Civil Services. Dar Al-Amal also lacks many social workers and psychological specialists. The report revealed that there is a continuous lack of cooperation between Dar Al-Amal's administration and prosecutors, pointing out that the female juveniles aren't allowed to appoint a lawyer to defend themselves.

Despite this, Dar Al-Amal does contain a computer room, library, workshop for dressmaking and embroidery, studying classroom and a sitting room with a TV. Unfortunately, Dar Al-Amal provides female juveniles with a male preacher instead of female one which makes it difficult for them to enquire about some of their private issues.

Although Dar Al-Amal has a high level of hygiene and the female juveniles enjoy healthy nutrition, they are deprived of specialized medical practitioners to treat them and the center's pharmacy lacks necessary medicines.

Better food, additional training for staff and stronger government support

Minister of Human Rights Dr. Huda Al-Ban made a few recommendations. With regard to the Central Prison, she recommended that the Ministry of Interior increase the quantity and quality of food provided for prisoners, especially for pregnant inmates.

She also recommended the Prison Authority to set qualifying and training programs to raise the competence of penitentiary system employees in their different activities, and strongly suggested bringing in more male and female preachers to refine prisoners religiously and ethically.

Al-Ban also recommended the Ministry of Interior perform periodic changes in the management and surveillance of prisons in all governorates.

She also recommended that the Ministry of Education provide materials like pens and copy books for prisoners. In addition to this, Al-Ban advised that the Ministry of Interior build special dwellings for juveniles away from the adult prisoners.

The Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice and the Public Prosecution are recommended to release those imprisoned by sheikhs and other illegitimate authorities.

Al-Ban recommended stronger cooperation between the Prison Authority and the various ministries, to ensure a better exchange of information and facilitate cooperation between the two sides.

Regarding the House of Social Guidance, Al-Ban called the Minister of Public Health and Population to provide the house with a specialized pediatrician and essential medical requirements.

Furthermore, Al-Ban called for the immediate release of all prisoners that were imprisoned mistakenly, and for the rapid transfer of all juvenile inmates' files to the appropriate specialized members of prosecution.

Head of Mandate Refugees Association in Yemen warns Dire circumstances will force refugees to become involved in acts of terrorism

By: Amel Al-Ariqi

SANA'A, Sept. 7 — The head of the Mandate Refugees Association in Yemen, Abiy Abeb, revealed his grave concern over the dire situation of most African refugees in Yemen. "I'm afraid that an unstable security situation and poor economic circumstances in Yemen are creating an environment in which African refugees' rights can be easily breached. This environment also may force some of them to become involved in acts of terrorism," he warned.

According to Abeb, African migrants, including Ethiopian and Somalis, who flee their countries in massive numbers every day are facing illegal detention in Yemen. "Recently many of those Ethiopians and Somalis who have been given asylum in Yemen, have been arrested and put in prison by members of the Yemeni security force. Many of them have spent several days in prison without charges, which is against both Yemeni and International Law," he added.

Abeb confirmed that some of these refugees, especially those of Ethiopian origin, were likely to be deported. "One Ethiopian refugee who was granted asylum in Yemen in 1999 suddenly disappeared in 2001, leaving his wife behind. We later found out that he was deported by Yemeni immigration authorities," he recalled.

He pointed out that the Yemeni government recognizes Somalis prima facie, so Somalis do not need to undergo indi-

vidual status determination. However, newly arrived Ethiopians are considered illegal and subject to deportation, without any distinction made between migrants and asylum seekers. "These deported people may face assassination or torture in their homeland," said Abeb.

In this regard, the official news agency Saba reported on Friday that the Yemeni government is holding 35 Ethiopian migrants and is planning on returning them to their homeland. The agency quoted an unidentified security source who declared that the refugees had entered Yemen from the Horn of Africa in an attempt to flee their country, but had been captured and faced extradition by the Yemeni Immigration and Passport Service.

"Detention and deportation are not the only risks facing African migrants," said Abeb.

"Due to their poor economic situation and difficulty to integrate in Yemeni society, many of these refugees lose hope. Such circumstances may force some to engage in terrorist acts against the Yemeni state or people, or they may become involved in inner tribal conflicts to guarantee themselves incomes and aid that they cannot obtain from either the government or the U.N. refugees' agency," he forewarned.

In the Arabian Peninsula, Yemen is the sole signatory to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol.

Many international reports have

declared that the increased influx of African immigrants to Yemen will cause an extra burden to the state, which is considered one of the poorest countries in the Middle East.

Upon arrival to Yemen, the refugees are given two choices: either be taken to the Kharaz refugee camp in the middle of the desert in the Lahj governorate, or make it on their own in Yemeni cities. Most pick not to go to the camp, as living conditions there are extremely difficult. Others make their way to poor urban areas, such as the Safia neighborhood of Sana'a or the Basatin slum in Aden. "The camp refugees get UNHCR aids including shelter, food and protection, while the urban refugees have no access to such basic aids," Abeb confirmed.

According to the UNHCR, more than 22,532 people have made the perilous Gulf of Aden crossing aboard smugglers' boats from January to August this year. More than 165 people have died trying to make the voyage this year and 220 have gone missing.

It is expected that the influx of African refugees will continue as long as conflict, poverty and drought persist in the Horn of Africa.

"It is obvious that Yemen, under the current circumstances, is not able to provide these immigrants with protection and basic needs, so the UNHCR needs to consider the option of resettling these refugees in a third country," Abeb concluded.

Continued from page 1

Yemen among the world's most vulnerable states

However the report stressed that social ties and bribery rule Yemen's judiciary, and that the executive branch of the government often interferes in its affairs.

"Judges have been harassed, re-assigned, and fired for ruling against the government. Police often personally bargain with families and tribesmen concerning the release of prisoners," said the report.

"Yemen is in need of much improvement. The government needs to work internally to reduce corruption. It has already taken preliminary steps to doing this within the justice system, and if progress becomes more widespread, the country will be in a better position to address other issues. Once the government institutions are strengthened, Yemen may be able to more effectively unify the country through peaceful means and protect its citizens," the report concluded.

The think-tank organization Fund for Peace and the magazine Foreign Policy, based in the United States, have

published an annual index called the Failed States Index since 2005. The list only assesses states who are members of the United Nations.

30,000 university graduates to combat illiteracy

Education specialists say illiteracy in Yemen is most rife in rural areas, where 75 percent of the population lives. These areas suffer from a lack of basic services, especially schools, which makes it difficult for some to receive education, according to Dr Arwa Al-Deram, executive director of SOUL, an NGO dealing with education.

According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), access to education is still one of the biggest challenges facing children in Yemen, especially girls. Because of the scarcity of schools in rural areas, children have to travel long distances for education. Nearly half of primary-school-age girls do not go to school.

Established in 1997, SOUL is a non-governmental and non-profit Yemeni organization committed to raising the

quality of life for Yemeni women and children.

According to the general director of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), a staggering 774 million adults worldwide are illiterate which means that the organization is far from reaching its goal of halving the number of illiterate parents around the world by 2015.

Even though the literacy rate has risen, the absolute number of illiterates has increased in some regions due to population growth. "Nearly ten million children die before reaching the age five, most often of preventable infectious diseases, and it is children of the poor who are most likely to be treated for serious illnesses," said the general director.

Literacy levels have a direct impact on health-seeking behaviors, with the risk of contracting malaria increasing significantly amongst the illiterate population. In addition, women with secondary education are five times more likely than illiterate women to know facts about HIV and AIDS.



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The dead line for the submission of applications is the 10th 18th of September 2008.

In brief

SANA'A Yemen, U.S. discuss ways to fight terrorism, sea piracy

Defense Minister Mohammed Nasser Ahmed met on Sunday with the commander of U.S. Task Force in the Horn of Africa, Admiral Philip Greene.

During the meeting, they discussed ways to develop bilateral military relations between the two armies of the two countries, particularly in fighting terrorism and sea piracy and preserving the security of international maritime navigation in the Red Sea.

The meeting was attended by the U.S. Ambassador to Yemen Stephen Seche.

USAID to assist Yemen to fight Malaria and Bilharzias

The US Agency for International Development (USAID) voiced on Saturday its readiness to provide assistance to the Public Health and Population Ministry to fight Malaria and Bilharzias.

The Deputy Director General of the USAID in Washington said during his meeting with Minister of Public Health and Population Abdul Karim Rase'a that the Agency would cooperate with World Bank and

World Health Organization in this regard.

The USAID official noted that its agency has a plan to support health programs to fight these diseases.

Moreover, the meeting reviewed the implementation progress of the USAID-funded health programs in governorates of Saada, Jawf, Marib, Shabwa and Amran, in addition to discussing cooperation bilateral relations in health fields.

Rase'a praised, during the meeting, the assistance provided by the USAID to Yemen, including medicines and medical equipments in addition to training Yemeni medical cadres.

ADEN

Funds for qualifying Aden for 20th Gulf competition allocated in 2009 budget

Aden governor Adnan al-Jafri said that the governorate has allocated funds in its 2009 budget to prepare for the infrastructure in field of roads, waters, electricity and other fields to qualify the governorate for hosting 20th Gulf football competition.

The competition will be held next January, 2011.

During his meeting with media persons last Friday, the governor

called them to cooperate with the technical bodies by highlighting their activities to do arrangement for this event. He said that the media is mirror for reality which we could find fault and fix it.

YR 1.3 million granted for helping poor families in Aden

Loans and assistance at YR 1.3 million were granted by Aden Gulf Society for Charitable and Social Development for poor families in Aden city during the eight months ago.

Head of the society Jawad Makawi stated to Saba that the loans were offered to support small business to enhance incomes of the women and improve living standard of the beneficiaries.

Makawi said that businesses include swigging, hairdressing, and frankincense and perfume manufacture.AH

Al-Saleh Foundation distributes foodstuff for poor families

During the coming days, al-Saleh Social Foundation for Development is to distribute foodstuffs to the beneficiaries of the poor in Aden province.

Speaking to Saba, the representative of al-Saleh Foundation in Aden Ahmed al-Ghail said that foodstuffs include rice, sugar and Vegetable oil.

As the foodstuff distribution completed, the Foundation will also distribute school bags and Eid clothes for 6,000 students, al-Ghail said.

YR 6 bln allocated for water, sanitation projects

The total allocation of investment projects for Local Institution of Water and Sanitation in Aden province for 2009 reached YR 6.6 billion.

In a statement to Saba, director general of Planning and Statistics at the institution Najeeb Mohammed pointed out that the investment program for 2009 includes 13 projects including 11 projects under implementation in several stages.

Yemen establishes navigational channel in Aden

An engineering technical team from Aden Gulf Ports Authority is currently prepared to establish the navigational channel of maritime pavement of the General Authority for Maritime Affairs in Aden.

In a statement to Saba, director of Media and Marketing Department at the authority Abdul-Ghani Saif said that the process of deepening was launched last August and is expected to be completed next October in accordance with the designs, drawings and technical surveys.

SA'ADA

Committee of celebration holds meeting

A committee of celebration in Saada governorate held its meeting on Saturday headed by acting secretary general of the local council over preparation for 46th anniversary of 26 September revolution.

The meeting reviewed the program and technical arrangement for the

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ceremony in this occasion. The meeting asked the public works office to ask owners for the stores in the governorates to raise flags and painting doors of their stores as kind for expressing happiness in this occasion. The meeting also asked the office of planning to list projects that would be opened in this event.

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Their News

Al-Jeel al-Jadeed Group opens new branches

Coinciding with Yemen's celebrations of the two revolutions -26 of September 1962 and 14 of October 1963- and in accordance with its policy of constantly improving its services, the Al-Jeel Al-Jadeed Group, which is considered the largest stationary shop chain in Yemen, has opened a number of new branches in the Ibb, Hudeidah and Hadramout governorates.

The Al-Jeel Al-Jadeed Group already has several branches of its stationary shop in the country's major governorates.

In a ceremony to mark the official opening of its stationary shop in the governorate of Ibb on August 20, the Deputy Governor of Ibb, Ahmad Badruddin, cut the ribbon of the group's new branch. A number of officials, businessmen, trade bank representatives and members of the press attended the ceremony. The branch is considered to be the greatest shop for stationary supplies in the governorate and is located in Al-Odein Street opposite the MTN Company.

The group's new branch in the Hudeidah governorate is located in Sana'a Street opposite the Central Bank of Yemen. Its launching ceremony, held on August 31, is considered to have been the greatest in Hudeidah and was attended by a number of important personalities.



Furthermore, the Deputy Governor of Hadramout, Ali Ba Haisami, launched the group's new branch in Al-Khour on August 31. This stationary shop is located before the Al-Amoudi bridge near the General Investment Authority, and is considered to be a great promoter of literacy in Mukkalla city.

The Al-Jeel al-Jadeed Group specializes in a wide range of imported office and school stationary supplies and is seen as one of Yemen's most prestigious trade houses. The group's branches are considered to be the biggest stationary shops in the country and offer, under one roof, modern stationary to fit all Yemenis' needs.



Progressio is an international organisation working for sustainable development and the eradication of poverty.

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Ramadan in America: Pursuing faith and spirituality

By: Shaker Lashuel
For the Yemen Times

Sizzling eggs and beef bacon on a hot grill produce a delicious smell that begins to fill the Yemeni-owned delicatessen on Rutland Avenue, Brooklyn. The colorful, fragrant well-done eggs on the metallic grill, sprinkled with salt and pepper, are enticing the appetite of many, but Wadah Al-Abdy is not convinced.

Wadah, a twenty-five year old Yemeni-American, has been working here making sandwiches for the past year. A day in the life of Wadah in Ramadan is a typical day for many Yemenis in America working the twelve hour shift. Wadah's seven day work routine does not change in Ramadan. He starts work at 6 am and ends at 6 pm, almost one hour before

heading home to his wife to break his fast with her. "I don't feel the spirit of this holy month when I am at work," said Wadah, "I feel more spiritual when I am at home reading the Quran and praying." But Ramadan for Yemenis in America is still a special time; it is still a period of worship and reflection and for most it brings many moments of nostalgia.

In America, Yemenis have to create a Ramadan atmosphere for themselves. Fasting and meeting with relatives and friends are just some of the ways this is done. "It is hard for me to spend Ramadan here," said Fadhil Nagi, a twenty six year-old Yemeni, who appeared hungry and tired when I visited the hardware store his family owns in Queens, New York. When Fadhil spends Ramadan in Yemen, he enjoys festive meals with his relatives, but here he has to break his fast while

attending to his customers.

Not everything is bad about spending Ramadan in America. "The only part I love about spending Ramadan in America is going to pray Al-Taraweeh," he admitted. "People pray Al-Taraweeh in Yemen too, but I sense that when people go to the mosque in America they are more devoted, and are not rushing to go home to chew qat."

His brother Sultan shares his sentiment about missing Ramadan in Yemen, mostly the group breakfast at the village mosque which brought everyone together as a family. Fadhil's brother, Mohamed, is a high school student who spends his lunch period in the school library during the month of Ramadan. Mohamed began to fast two years ago and cannot wait to spend a future Ramadan with his family in Yemen. "I miss *al'masooba* and other traditional dishes," he said in a low voice.

Ramadan is about fasting, faith and food, but Fadhil wanted to remind me that it is also a month of generosity. "Our prophet told us about the virtue of generosity during this month and in Yemen you find a lot of poor people to give to directly, but here you do not find needy people like in Yemen." Many of their customers have become familiar with Ramadan and always ask them if they are fasting and how are they able to do it. "We tell them, because we're used to it," said Fadhil.

Some Yemeni-American families head to the mosques to break their fast and pray Al-Taraweeh with other Muslims. *Samboosa*, *shafoot* and *aseed* are common dishes in many Yemeni homes in America during the month of

Ramadan. Yemeni-Americans often feel that cooking these traditional meals for their families and guests in Ramadan make these gatherings even more special. Moreover, families these days enjoy television programs via the Yemen Space Channel and, in this sense, share at least one aspect of Ramadan with their relatives in Yemen, namely special Ramadan television programming. These programs both take them home to Yemen and bring the Yemeni atmosphere of Ramadan to them in the U.S. Many of them wait for the Ramadan comedy shows all year. Programs like *Shar Al Baliah* and *Keeny Meeny* help to create a Ramadan atmosphere in a society where fasting is not a part of collective worship.

The one place that is sure to surround you with the spirit of the holy month is the mosque, which is visited by many Muslims from various backgrounds. United by their desire to increase their rewards for praying, reading the Quran and performing good deeds, many head to the mosque to pray in groups. A group breakfast is available to those who can make it, and many often attend for the sense of community and faith found there. The group breakfast is often followed by the Maghrib, Isha, and Taraweeh prayers, and then mosques usually hold different programs to educate their local groups on the principles and virtues of the faith.

In Yemen, Ramadan is everywhere, but in the U.S. you are more likely to find it in the hearts of the faithful and within the walls of the mosques. This makes it a greater challenge and "God willing, it will earn the faithful a greater reward," Wadah affirmed with a smile.



World Literacy Day 2008: "Literacy is the best remedy"

This Monday September 8, as Yemeni children flock back to school for a new academic year, children and parents on five different continents will be celebrating World Literacy Day.

First established in 1965 by the United Nations Educational,

Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Literacy Day has been an annual celebration of UNESCO's success in its continuing endeavor to make literacy accessible to all those who need it worldwide.

"Literacy is the best remedy" is the theme for this year's celebration, and it aims to raise awareness of the

direct correlation between a good level of literacy and good health care.

According to Koichiro Matsuura, the Director-General of UNESCO, "Literacy is a powerful yet too often overlooked remedy to health threats, with the potential to promote better nutrition, disease prevention and

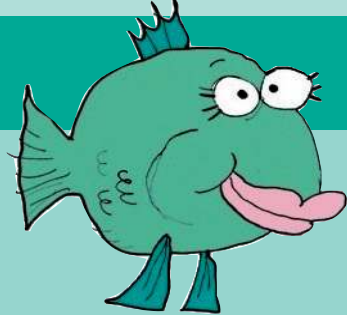
treatment."

Although the battle is far from being won with roughly one adult out of five in the world unable to read or write and 75 million children still excluded from the educational system, notable progress has been made with global literacy rising from 76 to 84 percent

in the last few years, according to recent figures published by UNESCO.

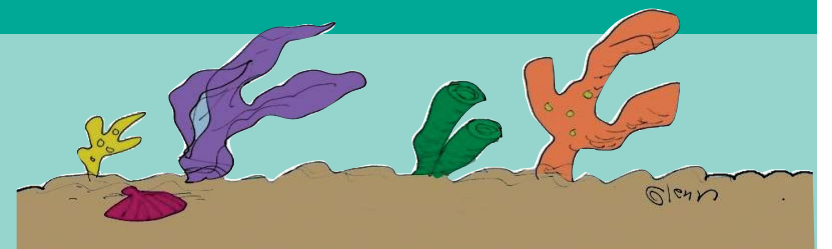
In celebration of this year's World Literacy Day, the Yemen Times will be publishing, in collaboration with the World Association of Newspapers (WAN), an eight-part story entitled 'Frannie Learns a

Lesson' in the next issues. The story is a short adventure for parents and children to read together, or individuals to read on their own, as a gesture of continued appreciation for the value of the written word in our world today. We hope you enjoy it, and don't forget to look out for the next chapter on Thursday!!



FRANNIE LEARNS A LESSON

Chapter 1: Frannie's First Day



"Wake up!" said Frannie's mother. "Today is your first day of second grade!"

"Mom! Just five more minutes?" Frannie whined.

"Nope. Get up, lazy fins!" Frannie's mom grabbed the green and red seaweed blanket and quickly uncovered Frannie. She shivered in her cold bedroom. "Brrr," she said.

"Get up and start swimming. You'll be warmer in no time," Mom said as she headed for the kitchen.

Frannie swam across the room and looked into the mirror on the wall. Her fins were ruffled and her eyes looked tired.

"Well, I can't go to school looking like this," she said, straightening her fins. "Not that I want to go anyway. What if no one likes me? What if it's too hard? What will my teacher be like? Why can't Mom and Dad come, too?" she asked into the mirror.

She stared back at herself for a few minutes, hoping that the mirror would answer back.

Very scared now and wishing for happy answers to her fearful questions, Frannie swam over to her closet. She took out a blue shell fin clip that matched her shiny new book bag. "This'll look nice," she said. She swam back over to the mirror and clipped the shell on her back fin for a fun decoration. Frannie, now dressed, was ready for breakfast. She swam down the hallway to the kitchen.

"Sand muffins!" squealed Frannie. "You made my favorite breakfast!"

Frannie's little brother, Freddie, was already in his chair chewing his sand muffins with his mouth wide open. Her father, as usual, was at the table reading the Coralville Times newspaper. He lowered one corner of the newspaper when Frannie swam in.

"Well it's about time the princess joined us at the table," her father joked. "Freddie and I thought we were going to have to eat all the sand muffins ourselves! Freddie! Chew with your mouth closed, please."

"No way, Dad. Save some for me!" Frannie grabbed a stack of the warm, yummy sand muffins and put them on her plate.

"So Frannie, are you ready for second grade?" her dad asked.

"Not really," answered Frannie. "I'd rather stay home with all of you."

"Well sweetie," her mom responded, "Dad is getting ready to go to work, Freddie is going to day care, and I'll be heading to my office. So you see, there isn't going to be anybody home today. Besides, don't you miss some of your friends from last year?"

"Well, I haven't seen Suzy Starfish and Tommy Tuna for a really long time." Suzy and Tommy were her best friends from first grade. "I would kind of like to see them again, I guess," Frannie admitted.

"See? It'll be fun, and you'll learn all sorts of new things. You'll be smarter than your parents one day," her dad said.

"What do you mean one day?" asked Freddie. "I'm already smarter than Frannie!" Frannie stuck her tongue out at Freddie.

"Okay you two, stop acting like a couple of dumb fish. Finish your breakfast, it's almost time to leave," her mother said.

The family of four finished breakfast and prepared to leave. Luckily, her dad had just bought a nice new car and he offered to drive Frannie to school, since it was her first day.

"Awesome," thought Frannie.

As they got closer to the school, she started feeling less nervous and more excited. After all, she had a nice morning with her



family, and they reminded her that she would get to see her friends again. Plus, she'd ridden in her dad's cool car! As they pulled up to Coralville Elementary School, she saw Tommy and Suzy waiting for her. She was so excited to say hello, she almost forgot to thank her dad and give him a hug goodbye.

"I'll be back to pick you up after school!" her dad called as she swam up to Tommy and Suzy.

"Hey guys! What's up?" she asked.

"We're all in the same class again this year," Suzy said, frowning.

"What's the matter with that? Isn't that a good thing?" Frannie asked. "Yeah," Tommy said, "but our new teacher is a sea-monster!"

"A sea-monster?" Frannie asked, getting scared.

"Yeah, my brother's friend's neighbor said she's super mean and super hard, and she doesn't let you have recess!" Suzy said.

"What? No recess?!" Frannie said.

The three friends were growing more nervous as they tried to change the subject to something fun, like their summer vacations. They had almost forgotten about their scary new teacher when....the bell rang.

To do and think

1. Find three words that you did not understand, and look for their meaning in the dictionary. If you are studying another language, translate these words.
2. Describe your first day of class this year. Make a drawing to illustrate your story.
3. Browse books and the internet to find different types of fish. Chose your favorite to represent Frannie, and explain your choice.
4. Did you imagine Frannie the way she is drawn in the story? Write to the illustrator and tell him what you liked best of his drawing, and also what you did not like. Then make your own drawings of Frannie, her family, and friends.
5. Create a comic retelling Frannie's activities from the moment she wakes up until she has breakfast.

Using the newspaper

1. Look for three pictures of objects that could be used in Coralville. Cut and paste them. Write beside each image how you would use this object in Coralville.
2. How do you think the first page of the Coralville Times would look like? Browse different issues of (name of newspaper) to get an idea of what elements might be included. Then create your very own first page of the Coralville Times.

Real life & values: dealing with fear

Tell or write about a scary moment you had.

- Why were you frightened?
- How did you stop feeling afraid?
- What advice would you give Frannie to help her face her first day of class?

What will happen next?

How do you think Frannie's new teacher will look like?

More activities...

<http://www.wan-press.org/nic>

World Association of Newspapers
Reprinted in cooperation with the World Association of Newspapers and by permission of Cathy Sewell and Jennifer Hermes (authors) and Glenn McCoy (artist - original illustrations). Additional art by Arosemena.

Words of Wisdom



The problem is the helplessness people feel. Most people feel they have lost control, and even a sense of direction. They drift along with the current. They feel uncomfortable with the flow as they believe there is no one in charge.

This is because the Yemeni individual is used to an autocratic system in which things are predetermined and people are given exact roles to play.

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



OUR OPINION

Yemenis and the US elections

Running joke in the Yemeni community has it that Yemenis should be allowed to vote in the US elections instead of Yemen's, because "the result of Yemeni elections is predefined so their vote doesn't make a difference, whereas, since the United States of America rule the world, they have the right to decide who the next American president will be."

Regardless of the extent of truth in this joke, the fact is that Yemenis are very concerned by the current American elections because they believe that whether Obama or McCain is elected will make a difference in US policy in the Middle East.

Many members of the Muslim community in the US were, until recently, in favor of Obama since he represents minorities and has Muslim origins. When Obama denied the latter and took a pro-Israel stand during his visit to the Middle East, many of his potential supporters started changing their minds. Yet, despite how disappointing Obama has turned out to be to the Muslim community in the US, McCain will not get their votes, or so they say in blogs on the internet.

With an internet participation of less than one percent in Yemen, and with less than ten percent of the country's population tuning into English media, the heated debates between Obama and McCain are not part of the average Yemeni's sphere of knowledge.

However, Yemenis know that the continuing war in the Middle East, especially in Iraq, is one of the debated points between Democrats and Republicans. They realize that, unlike Bush's Republican administration, the Democrats oppose great spending on the war in Iraq and think of it as a waste of both Americans' tax money and lives. For this reason only, Yemenis are following the progress of the race to the White House, with some actually praying that the Democrats win.

Even active Yemeni women are hoping that the Democrats win because they admire Hillary Clinton. The fact that Sarah Palin is the first female republican nominee as vice president does not change their attitude, as they are still pro-Hillary and will support whoever she is supporting. "We know Hillary and admire her, but we have never heard of this Palin woman, so we'd rather stick to what we know," they often comment on this point.

What Yemenis don't realize is that US policy towards the Middle East is not really going to change with a new president. The amount and allocation of spending might differ, but priorities will remain more or less the same.

Perhaps it is part of the conspiracy theory the Arab world is so blinded by that makes Yemenis hope that the Middle East's rescue will come at the hands of a new American president. Perhaps this is why they hope, despite history repeatedly showing that politicians in the Oval Office don't carry all the keys to closed doors and often don't have all the answers.

Nadia Al-Sakkaf

Citizens receive Ramadan with expired commodities

By: Najeeb Al-Ghurbani

All the farmers and laborers are extremely engaged in how to provide bread for their families while the government and opposition is very busy in constitutional amendments and useless speeches. Both the government and opposition made us in trouble while Friday remains the same Friday and the sermon remains the same sermon. This implies that there is nothing new in their speeches, dialogues or negotiations.

Suddenly without any indicators, Ramadan, the Holy Month of worship and purification, came. And because the government is unable to do anything in Ramadan or throughout the year with regard to fighting the phenomenon of price hikes, created by irresponsible tradesmen, who never consider exaltedness of the holy month, the local markets have become flooded with expired foodstuffs and other commodities.

I would like to inform you that one day I went to a pharmacy to buy a Cerelak milk for my baby girl, but I was shocked to find out that this commodity is not available. In the street, I found that large quantities of expired commodities are being sold by vendors. I also noticed that vendors are selling various kinds of commodities such as honey, milk and dates.

The local markets are excessively flooded with expired foodstuffs while citizens, who

are seemingly suffering from malnutrition, anemia and severe poverty, rush to purchase a lot of such expired commodities merchandized by vendors. Those rushing to buy from these expired goods are either limited income citizens, farmers, laborers or marginalized people whose living standards deteriorated due poor policies exercised by the government that only encourage corruption to become rampant and poverty to become severer.

I remained perplexed asking myself, "Where are the oversight authorities and agencies concerned with product specifications and quality control, as well as the Consumer Protection Authority? No one of these parties monitor expired commodities sold by vendors in streets of the capital city and other main cities nationwide.

It is not acceptable, if not taboo, for citizens to receive Ramadan with expired or faked commodities. Why the good government doesn't realize the risky diseases suffered by citizens from day to day. The Yemeni citizens consume trafficked pesticides and cancerous substances, which have remained in stores until becoming unusable.

Shame on our government: The Yemeni popular markets turned to be a landfill for waste disposal, specifically as goods merchandized in such markets contravenes even the simplest international specifications followed in the other world countries. The neighboring states don't justify what happens in Yemen's local markets

where the government approves the mechanism of free market while vendors exploit this concept to replace free trade by free chaos.

Street vendors also exploit the government's being unable to arrest or question any tradesmen, who have been already charged with monopolizing goods or trafficking them illegally into our homeland. They also exploit poor awareness on the part of citizens, who never check the dates of production and expiry on cans or boxes of products. The government doesn't feel ashamed to say that it has many oversight committees to monitor foodstuffs in local markets. The government doesn't feel ashamed that it has no specific laws to govern the process of exporting foreign products into the country.

It is extremely ridiculous to see that citizens are living in a territory without law and order, particularly as their own government cares about sponsoring irresponsible tradesmen who create multiple crises with negative impacts on citizens' living conditions.

The shame is on a government that proved unable to monitor and control what is taking place in the local markets. The ordinary citizen has become a victim of his government. Ramadan Karim and acceptable fasting for the ordinary citizen! In order to be healthier, the government should fast by refraining from corruption and stop embezzling public funds.

Source: Al-Tagheer.com

Ramadan Karim:

Similar memories get repeated every year

By: Kamal Faruq

Like every year, Ramadan comes with memories flash back into my mind. The holy month is the most wonderful time I spend with my family, friends and relatives every year. Remembering how my mother makes the "Iftar" after returning back from work makes me yearn and tear to those warm days. My sister cutting the onions, tomatoes, cucumbers, etc, my father bringing the hot fresh "Samoon", the Iraqi bread, and me preparing the daily orange juice, is how we help my mother in making the food ready on time.

"Allahu Akbar", is on TV announcing it's time to are going to share Iftar with them. "You are so kind and we will never forget this favor," the mother told me while she was wiping her tears from her sad eyes. "We are a family. We should share our food together," I said. Then we joined them and had one of the wonderful times in my life.

When I was in college, I used to go with my friends to have Iftar every Wednesday to a very well-known restaurant in Baghdad, Qasim Abu Al Gus. My favorite part in this was drinking the dark Iraqi tea after finish-

ishing Iftar. We go to the living room, pray and then watch our favorite series and TV shows. But when we had examinations, we had to study instead of watching TV!

Ramadhan: Best time to invite relatives Every Ramadhan, we have to invite relatives and friends for Iftar and vice versa. This great month makes all of us full of will and happiness to help others. Once, we had a next-door neighboring family who were not able to buy a piece of bread due to the difficult life many Iraqis went through during the sanctions. I remember my mother decided to cook for them the whole Ramadan.

Carrying the tray, once I went to tell them that we are going to share Iftar with them. "You are so kind and we will never forget this favor," the mother told me while she was wiping her tears from her sad eyes. "We are a family. We should share our food together," I said. Then we joined them and had one of the wonderful times in my life.

When I was in college, I used to go with my friends to have Iftar every Wednesday to a very well-known restaurant in Baghdad, Qasim Abu Al Gus. My favorite part in this was drinking the dark Iraqi tea after finish-

ing eating.

Life was so normal, safe and happy at that time. Although there was an embargo but I remember that Ramadan time was different. People used to deploy in Baghdad after Iftar. Adhamiya, Karrada, Palestine Street, Mansour, Kadhimiya and other neighborhoods were thirsty to have the people irrigate them with love and warmth

The happy days in Ramadan changed a little bit after I graduated from college. Of course, I have a job now where I spend twelve hours in it everyday. So, normally, I have Iftar in my office instead of my home.

In this office, I have another family whom I share Iftar with. "Time for Iftar," our friendly colleague F. announces every day. We all gather to share the great food our amazing cooks make. Eating, chatting and laughing, we spend our Iftar time and then go back to work. Being among my second family makes life for me a little bit normal in an abnormal time my country is going through.

I cannot say I am completely optimistic but I believe that one day, normal Ramadan will be back and we will have normal life, if not for us, maybe for the coming generations.

Sheikh Mohammed Al-Moayyad: a philanthropist in a U.S. jail

By: Raddad Al-Sallami

The worst crime committed by the U.S. Administration against Yemenis is the kidnapping of aged sheikh Mohammed Al-Moayyad and his companion Mohammed Zayed on baseless and inauthentic charges. They were arrested on false speculations fabricated by an agent who burnt himself over unfulfilled promises made by the U.S. Administration.

All Yemeni people know that the 65-year-old sheikh has nothing to do with charges filed against him, and under which he was inducted to Frankfurt Airport in Germany on Feb. 10, 2003 as he was flying to the German city for medical treatment. He was cheated in a way violating the international law.

Al-Moayyad was subsequently transferred to the United States of America on Feb. 16, 2003 following a false report by an intelligence agent. Al-Moayyad has been known as a man of charity and humanitarian assistance for the needy and poor.

During his visit to Washington, President Saleh asked for the repatriation of Sheikh Mohammed Ali Hassan Al-Moayyad, a Yemeni religious scholar extradited from Germany to the United States (along with his assistant Mohammed Zayed), where he is serving a prison term after being convicted of supporting Hamas (but acquitted of supporting al-Qaeda).

Yemeni human rights organizations are agitat-

ing for the sheikh's release on the grounds of declining health. The head of a national committee to free Al-Moayyad (who is popular in Yemen for his charitable work) notes that, since "Europe and the whole international community are (now) dealing with Hamas as an independent entity, why is it forbidden for Al-Moayyad?" (quoted from the Yemen Observer).

Other Yemeni nationals suffer similar ordeals:

Saleh also discussed the case of Yemeni citizens held in Guantanamo Bay. Although official Yemeni sources claim that Saleh requested the release of all the Yemeni Guantanamo Bay prisoners, there are signs that Yemen's government is not overeager for their repatriation.

In a March visit to Yemen, Marc Falkoff, a lawyer for 17 of the Yemeni detainees, revealed that he had obtained documents from the Pentagon showing that many of the Yemeni prisoners had been eligible for repatriation as far back as June 2004.

The Yemeni government justifies its inaction by claiming that the citizenship of some of the Yemeni detainees is under question. According to Falkoff, "Fully one-third of the Saudis are back in Saudi Arabia, more than half of the Afghans are home with their families and every single European national has been released from Guantanamo.

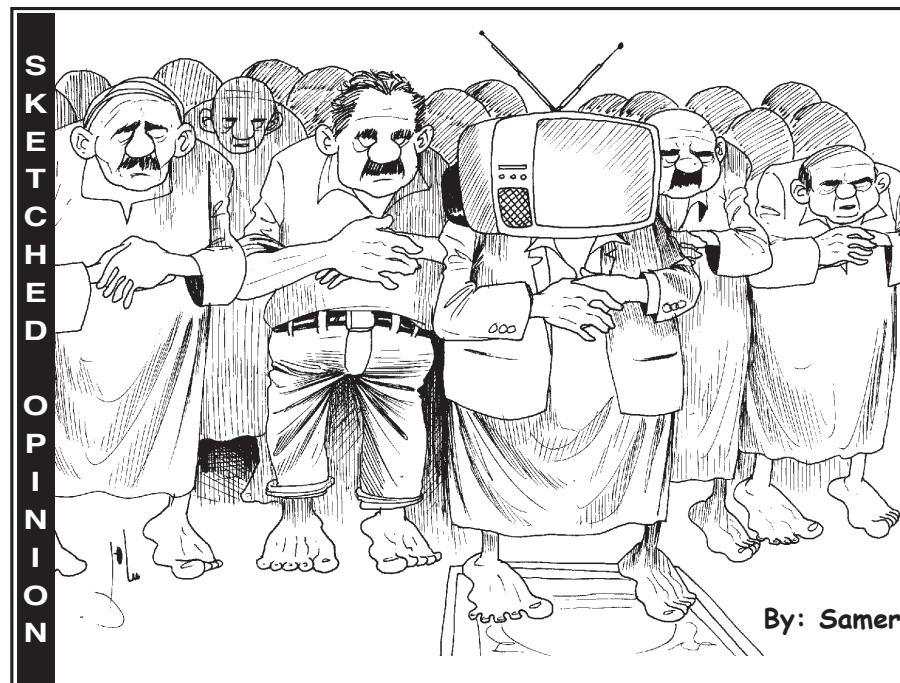
Yet, more than 100 Yemenis remain at the prison—sitting in solitary confinement on steel

beds, deprived of books and newspapers, slowly going insane" (quoted from the Yemen Times).

U.S. officials claim that there are 107 Yemeni prisoners at Guantanamo, while human rights activists cite as many as 150, but there is no doubt that Yemenis form the largest single group of foreign nationals detained at the facility.

Although the government may be in no hurry for their return, reports of alleged torture practiced on Yemeni detainees in U.S.-run detention centers have inflamed anti-American sentiment in Yemen.

Source: Marebpress.net



By: Samer

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Al-Motamar.net, affiliated with General People Congress (ruling party)
Wednesday, Sept. 3, 2008

Top Stories

- A Study calls for integrating handicapped in education
- GPC calls for exploiting the holy Month of Ramadan to enhance national unity
- SCER approves general plan and timeframe for reviewing election tables

The Supreme Commission for Elections and Referendum (SCER) on Monday approved the general plan and the time frame for implementing the stage of revising and amending election tables for 2008, presented by the two sectors of technical affairs and planning and legal affairs in the SCER, the ruling party's website reported in its lead story.

In meeting held Monday and moderated by commission's chairman Khalid Abdulwahab Al-Sharif, SCER members agreed to send invitation to political parties and organizations to take part in reviewing and amending the election tables according to the proportions followed during the presidential and local elections of 2006.

The SCER also entrusted the two sectors of technical affairs and planning and civil society organizations to communicate with the political parties and organizations to provide the Commission with names of their candidates for those

committees.

In another article, the website reported that SCER members were sworn in before President Ali Abdullah Saleh on Saturday. Saleh then had a meeting with those members during which he congratulated them on the great confidence they obtained to form the SCER after it was boycotted by Joint Meeting Parties (JMP).



NewsYemen.net, an independent news website
Thursday, Sept 4, 2008

Top stories

- At-Tawasul Organization for Human Development continues Iftar AlSayem project in several governorates
- Up to 34 ships have been exposed to piracy in Aden Gulf this year
- JMP suggests solutions to "Yemen's major crisis"

Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) on Monday sent a letter to President Saleh warning against any attempt to exclude it from the political equation and provided solutions for what it said "Yemen's major crisis", the independent news website reported.

According to the website, the opposition coalition said it its letter that widespread corruption, poor living standards, the influence of the executive authority on judiciary and biasness of the Supreme Commission for Elections and Referendum (SCER) caused Yemen's current crisis, calling for solving such

problems to save the country.

The letter also asked President Saleh to release all political detainees and stop GPC media campaign against the JMP. It also called for a national conference to discuss means to save the country.

The website went on to say that SCER approved on Monday a plan and schedule to revise the voter registration lists. The SCER called upon all political parties to participate in this process.

Member of SCER Abdu Mohammed Al-Janadi said in a press statement that the number of subcommittees will be distributed between parties according to their seats in parliament and local councils. He said GPC and JMP will get 46% for each.



Al-Sahwa.net, affiliated with the Islah Party
Thursday, Sept 4, 2008

Top Stories

- A senior JMP leader describes Parliament Speaker as "a tyrannous oppressor"
- Water projects in Hadramout threatened by halt due to diesel shortage
- JMP leaders: We will not allow ruling party to eliminate us from elections

Yemen's major opposition coalition, also known as Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) has stressed its stances toward the elections, considering them an approach to

solve crises in the state and not a tool to help these crises worsen, the website reported in one of its lead stories.

In a letter addressed on Monday to the president, JMP explained that any election commission should be a comprehensive system and not a commission imposed by the ruling majority, emphasizing that JMP would not allow the ruling party to exclude it from politics.

Chairman of JMP supreme council Abdul-Wahab Al-Anisi affirmed that the opposition would go on struggling until its demands are met, asking the government to release all political prisoners, end tensions and create political environment in which constitutional and legal rights are respected.

"While democratic principles give the ruling majority the right to run the state according to its own platforms and visions, they do not give it the right to reshape these principles according to its own interests", the Al-Sahwa.net quoted Al-Anisi as saying.

He said that customizing elections according to special agenda that breaches the state's constitution is considered a counterfeit of the people's will.

"You accused JMP of attempting to foil or hinder the up-coming parliamentary elections, but you know well that our interests and peoples lie in holding free and fair elections. Without elections, multiparty system and democracy will be meaningless," the JMP's letter further reads.

JMP held the authorities responsible for any grave consequences associated with inciting the military and security institutions against the opposition. It

recommended that the government should halt hostile campaigns launched by official media against the opposition, remind the president, in the meantime, of current crisis risks; on-and-off conflicts of Saada and political tensions in southern governorates.

It also warned of paying heavy costs as a result of rampant corruption, which is about to destroy the state, pointing out that they would be only tackled if there are all-out national visions for reforms.

Yemen's Parliament had rejected a bill of controversial amendments to the election law, and this escalated tension between the ruling and opposition parties.



Al-tagheer.com, an Independent News Website
Wednesday, Sept. 3, 2008

Top Stories

- Al-Tagheer.com publishes JMP's letter to President Saleh
- Unidentified gunmen attack a government complex in the Al-Jawf governorate
- Al-Janadi: JMP's refusal to participate in SCER will not affect any decisions to be taken by the committee

Head of Media and Electoral Education Sector at the Supreme Commission for Elections and Referendum (SCER) Abdu Mohammed Al-Janadi ruled out that Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) refusal to participate in the commission may

affect its decisions because SCER already has the legal quorum to take any decision including the one related with forming field election management committees, the independent news website reported.

It quoted Al-Janadi as denying in a statement to Al-tagheer.com that return of former SCER members may be an indicator for a heated electoral battle between the competing parties. He further added that the former commission performed its task in a better way exceeding all expectations.

Al-Janadi pointed out that the former SCER received numerous meritorious awards and certificates from the various international organizations that participated in monitoring the most recent presidential and local council elections in 2006 in recognition of its excellent and dutiful performance throughout the various stages of the electoral process.

He went on to say that SCER members don't receive directions from any political party, pointing out that they quit their partisan affiliation during their work at the commission.

JMP should take part in the SCER and other election management committees due to be composed after the holy month of Ramadan since, according to him, this may constitute the biggest guarantee to hold free and fair elections.

President Ali Abdullah Saleh and the ruling party formed SCER from former members following a heated debate with the opposition parties that refused to submit a list of their candidates for SCER membership because the ruling party's majority at Parliament refused to vote for amending the current election law as proposed by a recent agreement between both sides.



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RAMADAN 2008



By: Harun Yahya
www.harunyahya.com

Muslim women in married life

By: Harun Yahya

Relationships based on worldly values can degenerate into baseness, as often happens in marriage. When people's love and respect is based on these values, they can lose these feelings quickly when circumstances change. This is almost inevitable when love, respect, and loyalty depend on one's beauty, wealth, health, job, or status, for when these temporary and superficial characteristics disappear, so will the other person's love. Someone who follows such criteria will find no reason to continue to love and honor his or her spouse when the basis for those values is lost.

Belief, fear and respect of Allah, and decency of character are what make love, respect, and loyalty endure. Someone who loves his or her spouse for their belief and character will, in married life, be respectful, loyal, and decent. Losing one's youth, health, or beauty will not affect the love and consideration among spouses for each other, and neither will losing one's wealth or social status. They will not cause trouble or discontent to the other person because of their firm belief and fear and respect of Allah, whatever the circumstances. Believers will always be gentle and compassionate, as well as fair and tolerant, for they will consider this to be a responsibility entrusted to them by Allah. Islamic morality has a very high opinion of women and seeks to prevent them from suffering any difficulties or hardships. Thus, believing men safeguard the rights of women and are most considerate toward them.

So close is the marital relationship

that the Qur'an says of the spouses: "They are clothing for you, and you for them" (Surat al-Baqara: 187). In this verse, Allah reminds people that each spouse has equal responsibilities. The word "clothing" stands for the responsibility of guarding and protecting one another and also suggests that men and women have complementary qualities.

Another verse states the importance of love and compassion in marriage: "Among His Signs is that He created spouses for you of your own kind, so that you might find tranquillity in them. And He has placed affection and compassion between you. There are certainly Signs in that for people who reflect" (Surat ar-Rum: 21). Believers consider their spouses to be gifts that Allah has given into their care, and therefore value one another greatly. They show affection and compassion when their spouse makes a mistake or falls short in some way, and know that behaving according to the Qur'an will help them overcome all difficulties and solve their problems. As a result, marriage helps both spouses find contentment and peace.

With the phrase "you have been intimate with one another" (Surat an-Nisa': 21), Allah proclaims the closeness and intimacy of married life. The secret of this closeness, intimacy, and valuing of each other is their intention to create an everlasting togetherness that will extend into the Hereafter. True loyalty and love requires this attitude. Since their love is neither selfish nor temporary, but intended to be everlasting, they are completely loyal, close, honest, and intimate with one another.

Qur'an's morality forms the basis for a marital relationship based on

togetherness, one in which both parties fear and respect Allah and follow His morality. In such a relationship, each person's loyalty, faithfulness, love, sincerity, tolerance, and modesty complement and support the other person. Such a marriage is stable and long-lasting. The marriages of people without these qualities, on the other hand, are short-lived.

Islam considers marriage to be a comfort for women, for in it she experiences love, respect, loyalty, and faithfulness in the best possible way. She is always respected, valued, and honored. The absence of any pride, superiority complex, and lies enables her to find peace and contentment.

Being Protective of Women

By proclaiming "We send down in the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy to the believers," (Surat al-Isra': 82) Allah states that Islamic morality will always direct people toward the good and that the Qur'an's verses are a mercy for them. These verses, revealed to create contentment and justice among people, guarantee the rights of women in both their social and family lives. And, the verse "We bring you the truth and the best of explanations" (Surat al-Furqan: 33) makes clear the fact that the Qur'an contains all of the knowledge needed to find the value, love, and respect that they deserve in every aspect of their lives.

This is a great mercy, comfort, and gift from Allah for women as well. When people behave according to the Qur'an's morals, all disputes over the role and place of women in society, as well as the controversy surrounding them in unbelieving societies, will certainly come to an end.

We will now explore some of the

verses that guard women's social rights and reveal their importance and value in Islam's moral system.

All true and lasting solutions to women's problems are found in the Qur'an. Islam, which was revealed to guide humanity to salvation, genuinely values women. Many verses protect women and their rights, for the Qur'an eliminated the prevalent misguided stereotypes of women and gave them a respectable position in society. Our Lord teaches that superiority in His presence is based not on gender, but rather on one's fear and respect of Allah, faith, good character, devotion, and dedication to Him.

Allah has revealed the steps that women need to take to ensure their protection and respect within society, and for them to find the love and dignity that they deserve. All of these measures benefit women and seek to prevent damage to their interests or any form of oppression and unnecessary stress.

Divorcing Women with Their Consent

The believers' fear and respect of Allah, as well as their belief, cause them to obey their conscience and the Qur'an's values at every moment. But for unbelievers, their base instincts and Satan are their guiding influences. Thus, they seek to satisfy their self-interest and their ego instead of acting fairly and nicely. This scenario is often seen when relationships end, such as a marriage based upon financial self-interest.

For these people, divorce means the end of all bonds based on mutual interest, for when these interests no longer exist, there is no longer any reason for them to value or respect the other party. As a result, they see no



reason to do anything good for that person, and so move to protect their own interests regardless of the other person's situation.

Believers display a totally different type of behavior in such circumstances, for their only goal in life is to win Allah's good pleasure. Fully aware that following the whims of their self-interest or ego displeases Him, they adhere to the Qur'an's morality and their conscience. Therefore, even in the case of divorce, they treat each other well and with justice.

Allah commands men to divorce their wives in the best possible way: "When you divorce women and they are near the end of their waiting period, then either retain them with correctness and courtesy or release them with correctness and courtesy" (Surat al-

Baqara: 231). Pursuing only Allah's good pleasure, they treat their ex-wives with tolerance, compassion, politeness, respect, and thoughtfulness, thereby continuing their former loving and respectful manner toward each other. Allah reveals the male believers' correct behavior in such circumstances:

O you who believe! When you marry believing women and then divorce them before you have touched them, there is no waiting period for you to calculate for them, so give them a gift and let them go with kindness. (Surat al-Ahzab: 49)

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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The Grand Mosque in Zabid City

Zabid is one of Yemen's famous historical cities with a unique architectural style and urban cultural heritage that led to its being classified as part of the international community heritage by UNESCO. According to historical sources, Zabid had answered the call of Islam conveyed by Abu Mousa Al Ash'ari and his companions, by the beginning of the eighth year of the Hijra.

The city was called Zabid after the valley which carried the name of the Zabid tribe who used to live in the plains of Tehama. It is situated 30km away from the Red Sea and 100 km

south of the city of Hudeidah. Though hot in summer and temperate in winter, the weather is surprisingly cool at night because of the sea breeze from the west and land breeze from the east.

Zabid was built in 805 A.D by Mohamed bin Abdullah bin Ziad to be his capital city. The city is enclosed by a wall with a number of doors, and supported by several towers. Being an Islamic city, the mosque was the first building to be constructed, and was later followed by other buildings and structures. The original mosque was a simple edifice which was renovated by Al Hussein bin Salama in 994 A.D., and later reconstructed by Al Mubarak bin Monqez in 175 A.D.

The eastern, western and rear parts of the mosque were added by Sultan Taghtakeen bin Ayoub who also set up the minaret and placed a pulpit inside. The Rasul family then took it upon themselves to care for the mosque. Later, King Al Zafer Amer bin Abdul Wahhab restored the mosque, built the ceiling and embellished it with decorations and written inscriptions. Rulers and governors have continued to take care of the mosque till our present day.

The mosque has an open nave in the center flanked by four porticos, the deepest of which is



that of the Kiblah which occupies a space of 4500square meters. There are two mihrabs (niches), between which stands a wooden pulpit. The place for prayers is covered with a wooden ceiling that is adorned with decorations and colored elements similar to watermelons. The mosque is covered by several domes, and has thirteen doors and forty windows to let light in. The eastern part of the mosque has two storerooms, porches for pupils, and minaret placed at the back of the mosque.

As Zabid was a center of Islamic teaching, it's not surprising that the Great Mosque has a special spiritual

and sacred status and is the meeting place for the city's intellectual and religious community. During the eras when science began to flourish, the mosque became a chief source of Islamic thinking in the field of science, philosophy, history and other arts. These, along with jurisprudence, Arabic grammar, geometry and other sciences were taught in the classes of the mosque. In fact, many of the sciences that came into being in this blessed mosque are today recognized as beacons of progress in human thinking.

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