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American embassy in Sana'a under attack

By: Almigdad Mojalli

SANA'A, Sept. 17 — At least sixteen people have been killed, after two cars carrying a suicide bomber and armed fighters attacked the US Embassy in Sana'a, this Wednesday at 09:15 am. The attack killed four civilians including an Indian, six security guards and six of the attackers.

A source in the security forces of the embassy has confirmed this, adding that three other security guards were injured.

The US embassy said none of its staff had been hurt.

Eyewitnesses stated that the two cars were seen passing by the embassy. The first one, which was carrying individuals dressed in military uniform, opened gunfire at security while the second car, carrying the bomb, tried to enter the embassy but blasted in front of the main gate leaving part of the building on fire.

An eyewitness also said a big explosion was heard followed by heavy gunfire after which a fire brigade and ambulance raced to the embassy. "After that, we heard three other big explosions and then the military police came and cordoned the area," the eyewitness added.

A fierce battle erupted between the terrorists and security forces and lasted for about 15-20 minutes.



Smoke rises from the U.S. embassy in Sana'a.

The spokesman for the US embassy confirmed to Reuters that the blasts were caused by car bombs and that there were reports of casualties. "This morning a car exploded at the main gate of the embassy in Sana'a. There was an initial explosion and several secondary explosions," a US embassy spokesman told Reuters via telephone.

Residents in the neighboring area said that the Yemeni police started searching the neighboring houses for terrorists and weapons, and hundreds of heavily armed troops have now surrounded the embassy building, which is strafed with

bullet holes.

A group calling itself 'Islamic Jihad in Yemen' claimed responsibility for the bombing and threatened attacks on other embassies including those of Britain, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

The group had threatened in a previous statement, released on Tuesday, to launch a series of attacks unless the Yemeni government met its demands for the release of several members from jail.

"We, the organization of 'Islamic Jihad in Yemen' declare our responsibility for the suicide attack on the American embassy in Sana'a," according to a statement released on their website.

"We will carry out the rest of the series of attacks on the other embassies that were declared previously, until our demands are met by the Yemeni government," it added.

In March, three mortar rounds targeting the US Embassy crashed into a high

school for girls next door, killing a Yemeni security guard and wounding more than a dozen girls.

In March 2002, a Yemeni man threw a grenade into the US embassy grounds a day after Vice President Dick Cheney made a stop for talks with officials at Sana'a airport.

In March 2003, two people were shot dead and dozens more injured when police clashed with demonstrators trying to storm the embassy when tens of thousands rallied against the US-led invasion of Iraq.

In 2006, a gunman opened fire outside the Embassy but was shot and arrested by Yemeni guards. The gunman, armed with a Kalashnikov rifle, claimed he wanted to kill Americans.

The group was also blamed for the 2000 bombing of the USS Cole destroyer in the Yemeni port of Aden in which 17 American sailors died and an attack on a French oil tanker which killed one person two years later.

Nojoud goes back to school



By: Amal Al-Ariqi

Sana'a, Sept. 17 — Ten year-old divorced Nojoud started her first day of school on Tuesday in one of Sana'a's public schools.

Nojoud Ali raised a national and international media storm three months ago, after she got divorced from a man three times her age.

She was the first girl of her age in Yemen to receive a court marriage annulment and her case has raised huge discussion among human rights activists, parliament members and lawyers about Yemeni Marriage Law.

The minimum age for marriage is

currently 15 years-old in Yemen, but parents and guardians are allowed to overrule the law at their own discretion, if they judge that their daughter is "ready" for marriage.

Today, Nojoud and her eight year-old sister Hifa are able to go to school thanks to the financial donations and moral support of human right activists and donors.

"We have chosen a public school despite generous donations from many charities and donors to support Nojoud in going back to school and starting her new life," said Shatha Nasser, Nojoud's lawyer.

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Expressing absolute allegiance with President Saleh Al-Houthi undertakes to abide by ceasefire agreement

By: Mohammed Bin Sallam

SA'ADA, Sept. 17 — Houthi's field leader Abdulmalik Badraddin Al-Houthi has undertaken to abide by terms of the Doha-brokered ceasefire agreement he signed with the government last February, as well as another agreement he reached with President Ali Abdullah Saleh to restore peace and security to Sa'ada governorate, media sources said.

The same sources quoted mediation committee member Faris Mana'a as saying that Al-Houthi informed a governmental committee, mandated to restore security and stability in the war-ravaged governorate, about his absolute allegiance with President Saleh, his and his followers' commitment to respect the Constitution, laws and the republican system and his readiness to implement any steps to end aspects of the war.

Al-Houthi has committed to order his followers to abandon mountaintop positions, farmlands, and public and private facilities according to a plan set by a local committee, which is formed from senior tribal leaders of Sa'ada.

According to the sources, the local committee's plan has taken an important step toward ending the war and forcing Houthi gunmen to abandon strategic positions they were taking over during their confrontations with army personnel.

The sources went on to say that Houthi gunmen also evicted schools, other government facilities, homes and farmlands, which they had been seizing control of during their fight against the army in Saqain, Haidan, Dhahian and

other areas. They also abandoned their mountaintop positions as part of an effort to ensure safety of roads and reinforce law and order throughout the governorate.

The media sources indicated that Houthi's commitment to enhance peace and end the war was warmly welcomed by the government and Sa'ada local authority. As a result, nearly 100 thousand displaced residents could return home and go to their farmlands.

Chaired by Minister of Local Administration Abdulqader Ali Hilal, Sa'ada Reconstruction Committee continues assessing war-related damage and facilitating citizens' access to basic services, as well as approving compensations for those whose property was damaged during the fighting.

In its recent report, the Sa'ada Reconstruction Committee indicated that nearly 7 thousand public and private facilities were damaged during the fighting while the government has allocated YR 10 billion to begin implementing the reconstruction projects with funds coming from Gulf and foreign states via Sa'ada Reconstruction Fund.

Al-Houthi ready to lay down arms

According to the sources, Al-Houthi confirmed to the local committee that he is ready to lay down arms and heavy equipment, and release war prisoners, among them soldiers and pro-government tribesmen, who were detained by his gunmen during the war.

Sa'ada local authority began last week appointing new directors for districts that have been used as battlegrounds by both the army and Houthis.

These districts include Saqain, Haidan and Mennabih.

Indicators of a sixth war in Sa'ada were on the rise over the past days and this potential war may break out after the holy month of Ramadan, particularly after senior government officials accused Houthis of breaching the Doha-brokered peace deal and refusing to abandon their mountaintop positions. Houthis, in turn, accused the government of violating the deal.

On a side note, other media sources reported Tuesday that a member of the Mine Clearing Committee operating in Sa'ada was hurt in a mine explosion during his search for mines in Haidan district. The 24-year-old soldier, whose left leg was severed, has been working with a team of technicians, mandated to search for and clear anti-personnel mines, which the army planted during its fight against Houthis in the Haidan district.

Three other victims, aged between 17 and 25 years, faced various injuries as a hand grenade exploded in the Sihar district. According to the Security Information Center's website in the Interior Ministry the grenade blew up as a result of being mishandled by the victims, who were immediately transferred to the Sihar district's hospital for treatment.

Last month, Houthis complained that anti-personnel mines killed up to 100 goatherds, mostly women and injured another hundred, adding that they cleared four anti-personnel mines in their areas. They also asked military leaders to provide them with maps on mine spots so that their women and children can avoid passing over them.

International alert to combat Somali piracy Yemen as an international center for information exchange

By: Aqeel Al-Halali
For the Yemen Times

SANA'A, Sept. 16 Twenty Asian and African countries will sign an international memorandum of understanding concerning piracy, next week in Sana'a. The agreement includes the selection of Yemen as an international center for coordination, liaison and information exchange to combat armed maritime piracy in the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea.

An official source in the Yemeni Ministry of Transportation said that the memorandum, which will be approved during the second regional meeting for countries of the West Indian Ocean, Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea, will include the selection of a second center in Kenya or Tanzania to combat piracy in the East African region.

The meeting comes after Somali pirates broke the record in their operations which target ships and tankers. Since this January, the number of pirate acts in the Gulf of Aden has reached 36 operations compared with 25 during the last year.

The Yemeni government has approved last week the establishment of three anti-piracy centers, particularly after Yemeni economists warned of the risks of piracy on the national economy. They said the negative impact of piracy is the increase in the cost of insurance for ships that reach the region, which in turn results in raising the cost of items.

In the meantime, the European Union Foreign Affairs Ministers approved last Tuesday a special unit for patrolling the waters along the



Yemeni Coast Guard.

Somali coast in order to protect the navigation from the piracy escalating therein.

European countries have recently sent fighter ships to the Gulf of Aden in order to free maritime tankers and hostages kidnapped by Somali pirates. The European Union's decision came a day after a military operation carried out by the French army was able to set two French hostages free.

The hostages had been kidnapped by Somali pirates, for the second time during the last five months. Nicholas Sarkozy, the French president, who ordered the execution of the military operation, called for "international alert" to combat piracy acts in the region.

The French press agency reported that Sarkozy said, soon after the two French hostages were freed, that he supports the idea of forming "maritime

police to protect the region" and conduct "punishment operations" against pirates. He confirmed that this project will be presented next week to the UN General Assembly in New York.

The French maritime operation carried out by a commandos group in apparatus continued for ten minutes during which six Somali pirates were arrested and another one killed. The Somali pirates had demanded a ransom of \$1.4 million to release the two hostages. The French army had intervened to release thirty people from the crew members who were on the "Lebanon" ship which was hijacked in international waters off Somalia.

France currently holds a series of military bases in the African Continent, paramount of which is the base in Djibouti which includes 2800 soldiers. In addition, 650 marines are deployed in the Indian Ocean.

Campaign to build HIV/AIDS response capacity in Yemen Progressio brings in four international experts to share experiences on full-time basis in Yemen target areas

SANA'A, Sept. 16 — IRIN. The Sanaa office of the international development charity Progressio is trying to build up capacity among four local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) with the aim of helping them respond to HIV/AIDS.

Funded by the Irish government and Progressio, the three-and-a-half-year project began in January 2007 in the governorates of al-Hudeidah, Aden, Sanaa and Taiz.

Progressio has brought in four international experts to share their experiences on a full-time basis in the target areas.

Abdulla al-Syari, country representative of Progressio in Yemen, said: "The four local NGOs will fully phase in to HIV and AIDS project planning, implementing, managing and executing with the skills they gained from Progressio development workers. They will act as local resource organisations cutting out dependency on foreign experts, although this may take a little time," he told IRIN/PlusNews.

Abdulla said over 1,000 people - including educators from vulnerable communities, NGO staff members and people living with HIV/AIDS - would be trained by the experts.

Others "like imams preaching in mosques, journalists creating aware-

ness in the media and peer educators educating through interpersonal education in their respective communities," would also benefit, he said.

Local capacities not strong

Irfan Akhtar, HIV/AIDS coordinator at Progressio, told IRIN/PlusNews that local capacity to respond to emerging HIV/AIDS issues was "not really strong".

"We also seek to build the capacity of people living with HIV. There are people living with HIV who don't have a voice. They feel isolated and that they are discriminated against. So we are working to increase their participation in HIV programmes," he said.

"They [people living with HIV] should be at the centre of any well-meaning programme," he said.

Progressio held the first training of trainers for 21 people living with HIV in March 2008 in Sanaa city. "Increasing their participation means giving them opportunities in planning and implementation," he said.

Abdul-Hafed al-Ward, secretary-general of the Integral Care Association for People living with HIV, said there was a need to increase the number of local NGOs dealing with HIV/AIDS and qualify them in this regard. The insufficient numbers of local NGOs

dealing with HIV/AIDS issues leads to stigma and discrimination directed at people living with the virus, he said.

"The lack of NGOs dealing with HIV/AIDS issues contributes to making the situation of people living with HIV as it is: they do not enjoy their rights, medical and health services, prevention and consultation, and qualification," he said.

Al-Ward's association is the only local association in Yemen that is fully dedicated to deal with HIV/AIDS issues. People living with HIV make up 90 percent of the association's administrative board.

This year in May, the government of Yemen and UN Development Programme office in Sanaa signed a three-year programme to develop national capacities to address HIV/AIDS. Funded by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, the programme cost US\$ 10.6 million. The programme also aimed to build national capacity in the health and non-health sectors to address HIV/AIDS issue through increasing awareness activities in the community.

According to the latest statistics of the National Programme for Combating AIDS, there were 2,431 registered cases of HIV/AIDS in Yemen.

Yemeni activist boat to set sail to Gaza

By: Khalid Al-Hilaly

SANA'A, Sept. 16 — A number of Yemeni activists are preparing to set sail as part of the first Arab expedition to the Gaza Strip by sea since the start of the Israeli blockade in the area. The group's objectives are to show solidarity with the Palestinian people, and to widen the cracks already incurred on the Israeli siege by international activists last month.

"The expedition is organized by Yemeni NGOs and will include the participation of physicians, journalists, political activists and a number of members of parliament," Sa'id Abdelmo'men said, the Secretary General of the Yemeni National Committee to Support Issues of Arab and Islamic Nations said to Al-Jazeera.

He described the voyage to Gaza as a humanitarian mission aiming to bring

help and medical equipment to the Palestinians living under Israeli siege. "It also expresses the Yemeni people and leadership's objection to the Israeli blockade against the Palestinians," Abdelmo'men added.

The Palestinian Popular Committee Against the Siege (PPCAS), an organization based in Palestine, called Ramadan a "month to break the blockade" and the boats are expected to reach the Gaza port sometime before the end of the holy month of Ramadan.

Abdelmo'men said that the voyage's aim is to draw attention to Israel's blockade of the Gaza Strip and its effect on the area's people and infrastructure.

Speaking to correspondents in Gaza, Jamal al-Khudari, chairman of the PPCAS, welcomed this step and said that the committee was prepared to coordinate the boat's easy crossing and

official reception on the Gaza Strip's coast. He said the expedition—the second of its kind since the tightening of Israel's siege on Gaza in June 2007—was an important step in breaking the blockade. He also encouraged other Arab nations to "put words into action" and follow the Yemeni initiative.

According to Al-Khudari, another European boat is scheduled to arrive on 22 September carrying eight European parliament deputies, artists, academics and doctors to carry out urgent operations for dozens of sick people.

Abdelmo'men said that a boat would set sail from Hudeidah or Aden with the approval of the Yemeni political leadership and in coordination with the PPCAS.

Last month, two boats carrying a group of international activists reached Gaza port coming from Cyprus, without prevention by the Israelis.

Al-Qarni finally released

By: Almidgad Mojalli

SANA'A, Sept. 16 — Yemeni comedian Fahd Al-Qarni was released last Tuesday from prison after being held for two days following his refusal to sign a commitment to end his politically ridden performances. The document was presented to him, by Governor of Taiz Hamoud Al-Soufi, as part of the presidential order last Thursday to abolish the judiciary decision against him. Al-Qarni refused to sign any document renouncing his political performances.

Al-Qarni stated that he informed the governor of his absolute rejection to drop political rights guaranteed to him by the constitution. "I informed the governor that I would not bow to his request, and that prison was better for me than apologizing or agreeing to his

conditions," he said.

Al-Qarni expressed his readiness to execute any tasks the Islamic opposition party Islah, which he is affiliated with, assigns him. He also called upon the security authorities to release the journalist Abdulkarim Al-Khawi.

Ali Mohammed Al-Mansoub, a member of the defendant board, considered the release of Al-Qarni a step in the right direction towards normalizing political life and rehabilitating constitutional laws. "We hope that further steps will follow toward respecting the rights of the people," Al-Mansoub said. "I was sure since the beginning that the accusation against the comedian Fahd Al-Qarni was a clear violation of the law and obvious evidence of military and criminal accusations against a peaceful person," he added.

The political security department

detained Al-Qarni six months ago after his participation in one of the public gathering of the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) in Aden.

He was sentenced to one and a half years in prison, fined YR 500,000 and ordered to hand over the recordings of all his productions. In addition, Al-Qarni would be released on bail on the condition that he would not reproduce any of his work.

Al-Qarni had also been previously been jailed in July 2006, when officers affiliated to the Criminal Investigations Bureau arrested a group of individuals, accusing them of selling a popular cassette entitled Shabi'een (Fed Up), which was made by Al-Qarni.

Making use of folk compositions in a humorous and sarcastic manner, Al-Qarni is known to bitterly criticize government policies.

Continued from page 1

Nojoud goes back to school

"We took into consideration that Nojoud comes from a very poor family, with miserable living conditions, and that putting her into an environment too different from her own might create a shock," Nasser explained, when asked why Nojoud would not be going to a private school. Going back to school was not easy for either Nojoud or those who support her.

"We were shocked when a social supervisor in a school refused to register her, saying that Nojoud might comprise a risk for other students of her age," said Nasser. "The supervisor said that Nojoud has become aware of things [sexual affairs] that she might share with her classmates and that it might mess up their minds," Nasser said.

However Njala Al-Matri, principal of a public school located in Rwdha, north Sana'a, welcomed both girls and found no problem to admit them to her school.

"We totally understand Nojoud's case. She will be in the second grade of primary level - with her sister, where they will receive the same care and education as all the school's other students. We will do our best to help her to integrate with other students," she added.

The school, which was built in 1986

with Rwdha residents' donations', receives 1300 female students in primary and secondary levels each day in two shifts (morning and afternoon). Each class contains not more than fifty students.

The school has witnessed cases in which girls have dropped out of classes because of early marriage. "Last year a thirteen year-old girl married and left school. Now she is a mother," said the principal, highlighting the link between child marriages and dropping out of school in Yemen.

According to the National Women's Committee (NWC), child marriage is responsible for the high number of girls dropping out of school and the high illiteracy rate among girls. Moreover, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) reports that Yemen faces a serious challenge in bridging the education gender gap: In 2006, for every 100 boys in primary school there were only 63 girls.

Nojoud, who lives with her parents, five sisters and four brothers in a very small house, had suspended her studying for a whole year when she was married. Her sister Hifa was forced to sell sweets in one of Sana'a streets, from where she returned at the end of the day with the sum of around YR 500 (about USD 4), the family's sole daily income.

"When we received the donations, we were also concerned about Hifa's fate. She is now the same age as Nojoud when she was married," said Nasser.

"We decided to cover the expenses of both of them," she added.

Nojoud has gained the admiration and sympathy of many people and organizations, including Yemen Times, who have shown their interest and contacted her lawyer offering their help. "I received many emails and calls from different people wanting to help Nojoud, and I really want to thank all these people for their kindness and support which helped Nojoud to survive that critical stage," said the lawyer.

Nojoud and Hifa are going to receive a 1,100 yearly from Italian and Swiss donors. These donations will fund Nojoud and her sister's education. The amount is donated to fund her education and related expenses, as well as food, clothes and medical expenses, as long as Nojoud and her sister show their commitment in studying and continue to deserve these advantages.

"I'm so excited and happy" said Nojoud with wide smile before she and her sister entered their classroom, both wearing their school uniforms - a long green overcoat and white headscarf - and carrying a new brown bag.

Their News

Total launches the training and recruitment of 75 Yemeni graduates



TOTAL

As part of TOTAL commitment to create job and development opportunities for Yemeni nationals, Total E&P Yemen is launching an intensive Training Program of 18 months for 75 Yemeni graduates with degrees in Petroleum, Chemical, Mechanical, Electrical, Telecommunications, or Instrumentation Engineering.

Applications should be sent to www.careers.total.com. No applications will be considered after 24 October 2008.

The training program, which will start in January 2009, will cover English language training, technical training, and on-the-job training. The successful 75 trainees will be employed directly by Total E&P Yemen upon the completion of this training program.

Mr. Martin Deffontaines, the General Manager of Total E&P Yemen, referred to the importance of this training program in providing Yemeni young men with the technical skills and expertise they need in order to play their role both at the present and in the future in the oil industry of Yemen. He added that, "TOTAL is also committed to the recruitment of Yemeni nationals in its operations. TOTAL's operations in Yemen are expanding steadily and the training and recruitment of 75 young Yemenis will help increase the company's production of oil from Block 10."

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

U.S. Government Signs \$3.1 Million Agreement to Strengthen Work Opportunities and Skills of Yemeni Youth

On September 15, 2008 U.S. Ambassador to Yemen Stephen A. Seche signed a Limited Scope Grant Agreement (LSGA) with the Yemeni Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC), granting over \$3.1 million dollars to support initiatives

providing workforce and skill development opportunities for vulnerable Yemeni youth. The agreement will focus on two separate areas aimed at empowering Yemen's youth population. The first component, the Small and Micro Enterprise (SME) Competitiveness Project, will develop small businesses to provide additional employment opportunities for youth in targeted areas. The second component will provide vocational technical, and other training opportunities to provide Yemeni youth with the skills needed for immediate employment and income-generation.

The end goal of this project is to increase youth workforce opportunities through on-the-job training resulting in increased productivity, competitiveness, and workforce resiliency. Over the two years of the grant, it is hoped the activities sponsored by the U.S. Government will promote sustainable economic growth in the Yemeni economy. Ultimately, the program also aims at engaging Yemeni youth in positive economic activity and away from the influence of radicalization and violence.

Speaking after the signing, Ambassador Seche said, "This agreement will allow us to address the vulnerability of the Yemeni youth; dealing with the challenges youth face, and developing youths potential. It is our hope that this will result in decreasing youth vulnerability and enabling vulnerable youth make informed, practical, and positive life choices that contribute towards the stability and prosperity of their communities."

Yemen-based banks record net profits of US\$100 million in 2007

YEMAN. Yemeni economic statements have revealed the net profits of all banks operating in Yemen during the financial year 2007 didn't exceed US\$100 million and their profits in 2006 reached US\$70 million.

According to their financial statements, the small proportion of the total profits of domestic and foreign banks operating in the country created many doubts about their capacities to promote the process of economic development and investment in Yemen.

Seven commercial and Islamic banks have released statements of their profits in 2007 which ranged from US\$2 million to US\$11 million, while the Yemeni Bank for Reconstruction and Development's profits were US\$15 million.

The financial statements showed that US\$55.3 million were the net profits of the Tadamun International Islamic Bank, the National Bank of Yemen, which is fully state-owned, Yemen

Commercial Bank, the Yemeni Bank for Reconstruction and Development, French-based Calyon Bank in Sana'a, the Cooperative and Agricultural Credit Bank, and United Bank Limited's branch in Yemen.

While financial statements for International Bank of Yemen, Yemen Gulf Bank, Yemen Kuwait Bank, Shamil Bank of Yemen and Bahrain, Islamic Saba Bank, the Islamic Bank, Arab Bank's branch in Yemen were not cited for 2007, their average profits in 2006 were between US\$2 million and US\$6 million.

Economic experts said the decline in banking profits was due to mostly to funds being invested in treasury bills which made them unable to keep pace with developments in Arab and international banking activities, as well as their weak performance and inability to expand banking activities in various provinces of the country.

Yemen celebrates International Ozone Day with new stage of Methyl Bromide soil fumigation alternatives

Mr. Faisal Gaber, director of the National Ozone Unit has announced the second stage of training the national trainers (farmers) on two of methyl bromide soil fumigation alternatives: Solar fumigation and Biofumigation that are being held in Sa'dah governorate during this month.

The announcement came on the occasion of Yemen celebration - with other world countries- of the International Ozone Day on September 16 every year. And for this occasion

National Ozone Unit in collaboration with German Technical Cooperation PROKLIMA\GTZ prepared a Phase-out Program for Methyl Bromide uses in soil fumigation since 2005, considering that 10 Kgs of this substance contribute in depletion of six Kgs of the Ozone Layer. The main goal of the programme is to reduce the uses of Methyl Bromide in soil fumigation from 36 ODP tone in 2007 to 20 ODP tone in 2010 and to zero in 2015.

In the first stage the alternatives were experienced with three farmers. This time it is with new ten farmers. The third stage will be to announce the alternatives that are being applied in some areas in Sa'dah and consequently generalization of the alternatives after ascertaining its success. "The program aims at assisting the local farmers to address the new Methyl Bromide alternatives which will be achieved by selecting technologies that are suitable to the nature and climate of Yemen," Gaber said. "This also needs

training of the farmers and agriculture engineers in the region on such technologies and consequently selects the best to be disseminated through national trainers who are selected from the farmers," he said. In Yemen, the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer is celebrated annually. However, the association is being held all around the world as the theme for this year 2008 is 'Montreal Protocol - Global

partnership for global benefits'.

"Market turmoil, economic downturns and talk of recession have historically spelt tough times for the environment. At such moments, safeguarding the planet has often been seen as a luxury, and as a burden on economic recovery and development.

But the remarkable story of the ozone layer, whose preservation we celebrate today, shows such thinking for what it is:

mere myth," said UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in his message for the International Ozone Day. On 19 December 1994, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 16 September the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer, commemorating the date, in 1987, on which the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer was signed.

بِقَلُوبِ مُؤْمِنَةٍ بِقِضَاءِ اللَّهِ وَقَدْرِهِ نَتَقَدَّمُ بِأَحْرِ التَّعَاذِي

وَأُصَدِّقُ الْمَوَاسَاةَ الْقَلْبِيَّةَ إِلَى الْإِخْوَةِ /

الْأَسْتَاذُ / خَالِدُ عَلْوِي السَّقَافُ

الْأَسْتَاذُ / رَمْزِي عَلْوِي السَّقَافُ

لَوْفَاةِ الْمَغْفُورِ لَهُ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى وَالِدِهِمْ /

عَلْوِي سَعِيدُ السَّقَافُ

سَائِلِينَ الْمَوْلَى عَزَّ وَجَلَّ أَنْ يَتَغَمَّدَ الْفَقِيدَ بِوَأَسْعِ رَحْمَتِهِ وَأَنْ

يَسْكُنَهُ فَسِيحَ جَنَاتِهِ وَأَنْ يُلْهِمَ أَهْلَهُ وَذَوِيهِ الصَّبْرَ وَالسَّلْوَانَ..

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

الْأَسِيفُونَ:

جَمِيعُ مَوْظِفِي مُؤَسَّسَةِ يَمَنِ تَايْمَزْ

Tender Advertisement no. (7 / 2008) for 1st Time
(One Envelope System - Technical + Financial)

The [Yemen Gulf of Aden Ports Corporation - Port of Aden] here announces its desire to invite bidders to Tender no. (7) for supplying [One New Twin Screw Survey Boat for Port of Aden] which will be financed from: **Government sources.**

Bidders who are willing to participate in this Tender have to submit written applications to [Tender committee Secretary] to receive Bidding Documents for an amount [150 USD] non-refundable. Bidders have to apply during the official working hours at [Yemen Gulf of Aden Ports Corporation - Port of Aden]
Tel : 00 967 02 202669/ 202083
Fax: 00 967 02 201541/205805
Email : planning2050@yahoo.com
YGAPCplanning@y.net.ye and e-chairman@y.net.ye
The deadline for selling BDs will be on [15 October 2008]
Bids must be submitted in sealed envelopes addressed to the **Chairman of the Board Executive Chairman.** The following documents must be contained in the bid:

- 1- A Bank Guarantee for a lump sum (60,000 USD for one Survey boat) (Sixty Thousand American Dollars.) Bank guarantee has to be valid for not less than 150 days from date of Bid Opening. Bank guarantee may be substituted with a payable cheque.
- 2- Valid tax certificate (A foreign bidder who is not already doing business in Yemen may provide a copy of the appropriate VAT registration document from his home country.)
- 3- Valid Insurance Certificate. (Insurance certificate is required only from firms with employees in Yemen who are entitled to benefits from the Public Enterprise for Social Security in Yemen)
- 4- Valid registration and classification certificate. (In the event of an award of contract if the successful firm is not already registered it will be required to evidence registration with the concerned Entity in Yemen as a requirement for contract effectiveness.)

A foreign bidder may provide the equivalent documents indicated in 2, 3 and 4 from its country of registration as appropriate.
The Dead line for submission and bids opening will be (Tuesday) at [11:00 Am] on [22 October 2008]. Bids received after this deadline will be returned unopened..
Bid Opening will take place at [the Office Chairman Executive - Headquarters] and at the same time mentioned above, in presence of bidders or their authorized representatives.
Potential bidders may inspect BDs before purchasing during working hours for a period 27 days starting from advertisement.

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<p>1. Position: Finance Manager Reference: FM/IPD/090908</p> <p>Responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain systems and controls to ensure the efficiency, integrity and transparency of the field office and sub-office operations in accordance with guidelines provided by Islamic Relief Head Quarters and internationally accepted accounting standards. • Ensure all accounting records and supporting documentation for all financial transactions is maintained in a systematic order and in safe and secure conditions in the field office and sub-offices. • Provide quarterly and where required monthly financial reports to the Islamic Relief HQ Finance department. • Ensure the effective and efficient working of budgetary, accounting, reporting and internal control systems for the field and all sub-offices. • Liaise with external auditors, government departments, banks regularly. • Manage and undertake local internal audits of the field and sub-offices including implemented projects. • To work as part of a team and liaise with the Country Director, field and sub-offices teams and HQ Finance department and Programmes Division. • Perform other duties as deemed necessary <p>Requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 3 years experience as a qualified Accountant (ACCA/ACA/CIMA/CCAB) or equivalent internationally recognized accounting qualification. • Excellent communication skills with the ability to present financial matters to non-financial managers and discuss proposals in English with institutional donors and other relevant parties. • Ability to manage and supervise finance staff in multiple and remote locations. • Ability to think strategically. • High degree of computer literacy. • Bilingual - Arabic & English • Proficiency in accounting software preferably QuickBooks. • Disposition of a team player. • Ability to work independently and provide initiative in improving finance functions. • Willing to travel to remote locations and in difficult terrains. 	<p>2. Position: Human Resources & Administration Officer Reference: HRAO/IPD/090908</p> <p>Responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and maintain existing programme support especially HR and office systems. • Oversee purchasing inventory, transport and procurement of project material • Handle petty cash • Assist in management; follow up, monitoring and carrying out different tasks related to custom clearance, vehicles, visas, etc... • Maintain smooth office operations including provision and operation of equipment • Co-ordinate and organize recruitment processes, induction and HR systems and procedures • Support in the coordination and organization of performance management and development activities • Ensure that the office runs smoothly and that equipment is maintained, serviced or repaired and that Health and Safety procedures are followed. • Maintain effective communication and filing systems in the office • Perform other duties as deemed necessary <p>Requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University degree in Business Administration or related field • At least 2 years experience in human resources, office management and administration. • Experience of managing a team of staff. • Excellent communications skills including written and spoken Arabic and English. • Ability to deal with people at all levels including partners, staff and officials in government offices. • Highly organized, able to meet deadlines and complete on time. • Interested in learning about and applying correctly procedures in office management, human resources and logistics.. • Good computer skills in (Word processing, Excel, PowerPoint & usage of internet)
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Please send a copy of your CV latest by 27th September 2008.

Admin Department
Islamic Relief Yemen,
P O Box 15088, Sana'a, Republic of Yemen
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Yemen and Al-Qaeda: a difficult confrontation or an even more difficult dialog

By: Aqeel Al-Halali

Soon after President Ali Abdullah Saleh declared on July 17 that the war in Sa'ada between the army and Houthis was over and reached an agreement with Abdul Malek Al-Houthi, the government started launching a wide arrest campaign against Al-Qaeda cells nationwide. The campaign further targeted people suspected of affiliation with this organization, which has been banned since the September 11 attacks in the United States.

The Yemeni government's security measures were not confined to arrest campaigns only, but broadened to encompass a stage of murders. This act is strange in the president's agenda as he has been known for his inclination towards dialog and negotiation with his main rivals both inside and outside the country, since he assumed power in July 1978.

The Al-Qaeda organization seems to be outside the policy of religious balance that Saleh prefers, according to Ahmed Ghurab, a journalist, who is of the opinion that dialog with Al-Qaeda is not in the hands of the Yemeni government alone, but in the hands of all anti-terrorism partners worldwide.

Nabil Al-Soofi, head of the Yemeni Media Group, says that whenever the internal situation is calm in Yemen, the security apparatuses turn to pursuing their permanent war with Al-Qaeda. During the last few months, the government was preoccupied with the political movements' activities in the southern part of the country and then war with the Houthis. During this period, it neglected the Al-Qaeda cells that increased their activities. The government's investigations on these activities didn't reach any results in spite of the notable increase of Al-Qaeda operations.

Even before 1998, the Yemeni government had overlooked the armed Islamists who chose the country as a place for training. In return, the

Islamists undertook to stop armed operations inside the country. However, the attack that targeted the USS Cole in the Gulf of Aden in October 2000 and the September 11 attacks in America in 2001 made Yemen a main partner in the American anti-terrorism campaign.

Therefore, Yemeni policy has changed toward Al-Qaeda, which has added Yemeni oil constructions and tourist sites as potential targets in its operations against foreign interests in Yemen.

In 2007, the government was able to convince some leading figures of Al-Qaeda to surrender and drop arms, and in exchange the Yemeni government released them and stopped chasing them. As a result, Jamal Al-Badawi, who is accused of carrying out the attack against USS Cole, was set free and Jabr Al-Banna, who is wanted by the United States for alleged affiliation with a terrorist cell, was put under house arrest.

The surrender of these leaders to the Yemeni government didn't stop Al-Qaeda's explosives, as the organization considers Yemen to be a ground for recruitment. Brian O'Neil, an American researcher in the American James Town Association, believes that a new Al-Qaeda generation in Yemen has replaced the old generation in terms of leadership, pointing out that "Al-Qaeda cells' participation in the war in Iraq and their experience in prisons boosted up their force."

O'Neil indicated in his essay "The three rebellions in Yemen", published this past May, that the new strategy of the new Al-Qaeda generation is based on undermining the Yemeni fiscal revenues from tourism and unsettling the confidence of the Yemeni people in the ability of their government to maintain security "through waging attacks against foreigners and committing random violence against citizens."

Additionally, the Yemeni Interior Affairs Ministry considers the Al-Qaeda operations against security centers and checkpoints in different governorates as

"a strategic change in the policy of the armed organization which targeted in the past foreign and tourist interests as well as economic constructions." This viewpoint was stated by an official source in the Anti-Terrorism Unit in a statement published by Al-Siyasiya newspaper this past April.

Abdul Elah Haidar Shay'e, a journalist specialized in terrorism affairs, says that "Al-Qaeda aims to establish an Islamic state. President Saleh confirmed this in his interview with the New York Times, "The Islamic state is part of a plan that aims to re-establish the Islamic Caliphate in the whole world."

Since this past January, the Al-Qaeda organization has carried out numerous armed attacks in the Sana'a, Hadramout, Mareb and Abyan governorates. The most outstanding of these operations was the attack that targeted a Belgian tourist group in Hadramout governorate's Wadi Daw'an in early 2008. In addition, a suicide operation targeted the Public Security premises in Sana'a this past July.

The most dangerous Al-Qaeda attacks were those which targeted the American Embassy in Sana'a this past March, an event that made Washington decrease its diplomatic representation in Yemen and increased its critical language toward the Yemeni government's way in dealing with the armed Islamic groups. The US demanded that Sana'a "act strictly to eradicate terrorism", according to a statement by Rhine Giliha, the embassy's media officer, to the online news website Al-Sahwah this past February.

Shay'e considers that Al-Qaeda in Yemen "an ideology more than an organization" as it is based on the mode of network cells that are formed without referring to the main organization and, consequently, expands its activities to be more painful."

Nevertheless Al-Soofi believes that Al-Qaeda cells committed a mistake when they targeted the security premises in Sana'a as they

miscalculated the security changes in the country, particularly after the war in Sa'ada was over and popular protests had calmed down in the southern part of the country. He pointed out that the security apparatuses realized an important victory over Al-Qaeda following the Sayaan operation, and that this victory was crowned with the assassination of Hamza Al-Qu'iti, one of the prominent figures of Al-Qaeda.

The main difference between the two Al-Qaeda generations has pushed Yemen to deal with Al-Qaeda in two different ways. President Saleh made clear in his interview with the New York Times that Yemen's strategy in the war against terrorism was based on two parts. The first part is ensuring security for those who surrender to the government and renounce their ideology, as well as cooperate with the government. The second part of the strategy focuses on using force against those who refuse to surrender and continue fighting against the government.

Ghurab believes that the Yemeni government can't conduct dialog with Al-Qaeda, whether with the old or new generation, unless it gets a green light from the American and Saudi governments. Considering that the war against terror has, as a matter of fact, become the task of an alliance of three countries; namely, Yemen, America and Saudi Arabia.

In this respect, Shay'e believes that the Yemeni government was not serious in its dialog with Al-Qaeda unless the organization surrenders weaponry, renounces jihad, and abides by the country's laws. He said, "These conditions are impossible according to Al-Qaeda ideologies; the organization will not accept the government's system since it is not, according to Al-Qaeda belief, in accordance with Islamic Sharia."

Al-Soofi maintained that Al-Qaeda loyalists don't believe in dialog with the government if the dialog leads to giving up jihad, referring to Hamza Al-Qu'iti's statement which stipulates that "If

Osama Bin Laden issued a fatwa to stop jihad, he must be killed."

He pointed out that the Yemeni government should conduct dialog with Al-Qaeda. He said that any dialog should be open to all media outlets and religious intellectuals should participate in order to achieve progress. "We are also in need of dialog with the security apparatuses regarding their mistakes in the arrest campaigns and illegal

practices," Al-Soofi noted.

Shay'e believes that the conflict between the government and Al-Qaeda can come to an end only when one of the two sides collapses, pointing out that Al-Qaeda benefits from its war with the government, as it gains wide experience in the field of confrontation and develops its guerilla and city war skills.

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FRANNIE LEARNS A LESSON

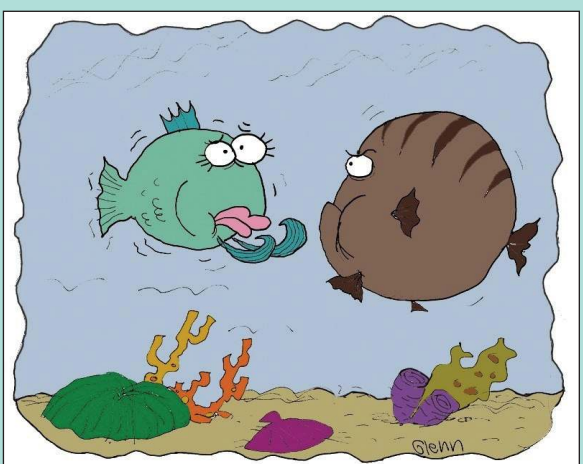
Last Chapter: Frannie and her friends meet their new teacher. Frannie is scared about taking the bus to school.

Chapter Four: "Frannie and the Blowfish"



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 next issue!!

"Hey Frannie! What are you going to do?" Suzy asked when they got off the bus.
"I don't know. What do you guys think I should do?" She asked, swimming into the school.
"No question about it," Suzy was the first to offer advice, "you should tell Mrs. S!"
"Are you crazy?" Carter jumped in. "Do you really want to involve the ex-con?"
"If you tell, everyone's going to think you're a scaredy-catfish," Tommy added.
"But I can't fight her. She's like twice my size, even before she puffs out!" Frannie reminded them.
Just then, a group of fish swam past, and one of them said, "We heard that Bonnie's going to kick your tail fin after school!" then they disappeared down the hall, laughing.
"So, the charming blowfish's name is Bonnie?" Carter said, as soon as the other fish swam around the corner.
"Hey, it's not funny Carter. I'm scared," Frannie said.
"Well, I heard that if you punch a blowfish in the middle of its belly, it'll start crying and swim away," Tommy said. "And just think how cool everyone will think you are,



after you beat up a third grader!"
The bell rang and they all headed for class.
Frannie couldn't concentrate. All day she kept thinking of that gigantic round blowfish waiting for her. For a while she'd be scared, but then she'd daydream about winning the fight. The other students would be swimming circles around her chanting, "Frannie won the fight! Frannie beat a third-grader!" Forgetting she was in class, Frannie threw both of her fins up in the air like a champion boxing fish.
"Do you know the answer, Frannie?" Mrs. S asked when she saw Frannie's fins in the air.
"Um. What was the question, ma'am?" Frannie asked.
"The question was 'who can solve the math problem on the chalkboard'" Mrs. S asked. "Can you?"
Frannie swam up to the chalkboard. She could feel the redness not only on her gills, but pretty much all over her face, too. She didn't know the answer, so she was just going to guess when the bell rang.
Everyone gathered up their book bags and swam out of the school.
"Well?" Suzy asked.
"I guess I'm going behind the gym," Frannie said, her voice shaking.
"Are you sure that's a good idea?" Tommy asked.
"Is Tommy changing his mind about me fighting?" Frannie

thought.
Frannie stopped and stared at the crowd gathered behind the gym. She wondered about her decision, and started to turn back, when she heard a scary familiar voice.
"Going somewhere, Fraydi Frannie?" Bonnie asked.
Behind Bonnie, the crowd chanted, "Fraidy Frannie, Fraidy Frannie!"
"No Bonnie, I was just coming to see you."
Before Frannie knew what happened, there was a circle of fish around her and Bonnie, and there was a blowfish fin coming straight at her face. She ducked just in time! She gathered up all the strength and courage that she had. She pulled her fin back and tightened it up. She aimed for Bonnie's belly, and started to swing, when someone grabbed her fin from behind.
Frannie looked over her shoulder saying, "Hey you guys, don't try to stop ..." when she realized that the fin that had hold of hers was pink and purple, and it belonged to Mrs. S.
"Oh no," thought Frannie. "I am in so much trouble."
"Let's go girls," Mrs. S said. Bonnie and Frannie followed her all the way back to the classroom. When she passed Suzy, Tommy and Carter, they all turned away. They didn't want to get in trouble too.
When they were in the classroom, Mrs. S asked the girls, "Okay, who started this fight?"
"Bonnie totally did," Frannie said first. "She threatened me on the bus."
"Only because Frannie threw a rock at me this morning," Bonnie replied.
"It was an accident, I was trying to throw the pearl to my friend, but I missed."
"Looks like you just had a little misunderstanding. You need to apologize," said Mrs. S.
"I'm sorry," both girls said at the same time, not really meaning it.
"That's better," said Mrs. S. Now, what would have been a better solution to this little problem that you two were having?"
"Come and talk to an adult," they both said.
"Very good, girls. I hope you will the next time."
"Bonnie, I'll talk to your teacher to see how she wants to deal with your behavior. And Frannie, tomorrow I'll be moving your desk away from your friends for one week. I hope that next time you will come up with a more peaceful solution."
Frannie thought, "But my friends are already giving me the cold fin treatment! If my desk is moved, I'll never get them to talk to me!"

To do and think about...

1. Discuss together how the fight started. Make a list of everything that you can think of that Frannie and Bonnie could have done differently.
2. Imagine and draw what would have happened if Mrs. Seaslug had not intervened in the conflict.
3. Did you think the punishment the girls received was just? What would you have done in Mrs. Seaslug's place?
4. Select an event in the chapter to read aloud to your group. Change your voice and expression to reflect the personality of the characters.

REAL LIFE & VALUES: Peer pressure

Peer pressure is when you feel obligated to do something you really don't want to do, but you do it because your friends want you to.

- Together create a list of things other people your age feel pressured to do.
- Rank them from most to least pressure.
- Come up with a list of ways you can resist peer pressure

Using the newspaper

Look for examples (in pictures and stories) of people or groups of people that are fighting. Complete the following chart:

Who is fighting?	Why are they fighting?	A possible peaceful solution is:

What will happen next?

How do you think Frannie's friends are going to treat her tomorrow at school?

More activities...

www.wan-press.org/Frannie

What a consumer doesn't understand

By: Abdullah Al-Bahri

We sometimes find that consumers take criminals, committing crimes against themselves as a result of continuing wrong behavior, unaware of the potential consequences of their actions. This is what has already been found by several surveys targeting vulnerable groups complaining of the soaring prices of basic foodstuffs and commodities.

The surveys also found that vulnerable groups complain of other problems besides the phenomenon of soaring prices, such as the growing demand for certain goods and a shortage in some basic foodstuffs.

I object to those complaining of a shortage in food supplies, since foodstuffs have become available in abundance in the local markets, as well as affordable for the majority of us. I don't know what is wrong on Earth. It may be the nature of man, created with the distinctive feature of always being in hurry to get things done.

Believe me or not! Misunderstanding and lack of awareness have a direct link with what happens on the ground,

particularly when we see people unnecessarily flocking to the markets to buy commodities they may not really need.

It may seem difficult to understand why consumers so hurriedly rush toward merchandized commodities. Temporary food crises are mostly suffered by a minority of consumers who call on other citizens to rush to markets to buy basic commodities, and are symptomatic of baseless and inauthentic rumors that have nothing to do with fact.

What a consumer doesn't primarily comprehend is that he/she contributes to creating crises of this kind. Consumers willfully help irresponsible tradesmen and monopolists to harm their quality of life by manipulating prices, despite almost all necessary products being available on the market, with the exception of some irregular cases that seem to violate familiar norms and the rules of supply and demand.

Facts on the ground point to a contradictory state, which is represented by some consumers' irresponsible behavior as they spread rumors about rising prices of a certain product or commodity, either spontaneously or as a result of irresponsible tradesmen exploiting rumors to manipulate pricelists.

As tradesmen with a sense of

monopolization seriously deal with false rumors, they change inauthentic hearsay into real facts for consumers to suffer and complain from. Those who spread baseless rumors about rising prices or food shortages actually help to maintain the hiked pricelists they generate and prolong their negative impacts on all consumers, particularly those with limited income.

I hope that consumers understand all the related matters positively, help to increase awareness in their communities and become moderate in their consumption of commodities. They must consciously avoid random consumption of unnecessary goods, for the sake of maintaining food security in their families.

In addition, consumers should give up the habit of stocking up on food in a way to raise concern and spread fear in their surroundings.

As all basic commodities are available in markets, rumors of shortage in food supplies and rising prices must be deemed baseless. It is us, the consumers, who should be accused of inventing even temporary crises.

As consumers, we don't cooperate with the competent authorities in government to stabilize prices and prevent irresponsible tradesmen

from manipulating pricelists after having been officially fixed by these authorities.

The state and its agencies should not be considered the only parties responsible for fixing prices and monitoring tradesmen who manipulate pricelists. Instead, all citizens and civil society organizations must take part in increasing consumers' awareness of how to control and ration their consumption of foodstuffs and other basic commodities.

As consumers, we should not contribute to the random consumption of commodities in an irresponsible manner in order to avoid creating any further crises.

Educated people and mosque preachers should also play an effective role in increasing the awareness of consumers to avoid extravagant consumption and prevent irresponsible tradesmen from manipulating prices.

It is time to make use of other countries' experiences, and follow the example of people who judiciously deal with price hikes, instead of spreading false rumors, rushing to markets to stock up on foodstuffs and creating crises.

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COMMON SENSE

Islam and Extremism

The republicans have got it wrong, again

One who follows the American elections, throughout the various phases of the process from the nominations to the actual race between the candidates of the two major parties is bound to catch an unusual effort to seek to include Islam as an important theme in this fight. Whether in subtle terms or direct denunciation, it is clear that there is a deliberate effort to drag the United States into a long historical conflict of cultures, that traditional Europeans have clung to for a considerable part of the 1,500 year history of Islam.

While the United States can be said to have shown a more tolerant understanding of the need for coexistence between people of all creeds, ethnic backgrounds and religious beliefs, there is no doubt a deliberate effort to have American policy encompass a prejudiced unfound view of Islam that is based on misconceived notions (partly instilled by some of our very own fellow Moslems, who are as far away from Islam as any non-believer could ever be).

One believes that Moslems throughout the world need to adopt a persistent effort of awareness build-up among those who could be prone to such hate mongering techniques against Islam and Moslems. To start with it would be rational for Moslems to start with a display of genuine Islamic character and conduct to be undertaken by all Moslems. Needless to say, this would not present any difficulty to the majority of Moslems, who truly see Islam as beyond the mechanical and undue emphasis on rites and appearance that regrettably some of our "brothers" of the faith have misleadingly reflected beyond what acceptable reason calls for. Notwithstanding the obvious effort by bigoted political opportunists and their Zionist mentors in the United States to engrain a deep hatred towards Islam among the general public, the American people can still be led to see that it is simply un-American to be allowed to be dragged into such a senseless conflict.

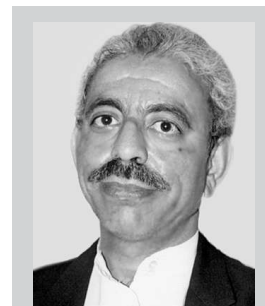
Quite often this prejudiced attitude towards Islam is pronounced openly by many of the Republicans, trying to cover up for the blundering of a failing Administration in the White House, just so they can continue to do "more of the same". An astute observer cannot help but detect an even harder line of hatred and bigotry against "Moslem terrorists and Islamic extremism" that one often hears coming out of the mouths of John McCain and his newly found ignoramus of a running mate.

This kind of hate mongering and tickling of emotions is often used by proponents of a failing regime or establishment that was for all intents and purposes unable to deliver on what their constituents really expect from them. One would think that the last eight years have shown that adoption of a hate mongering policy has not been very fruitful for the United States in many respects. In fact, even America's once staunch allies are wondering how the American people can be led to accept such dogmatism, which is incoherent with genuine American values of tolerance and understanding, which the founders of the great United States of America sought to be part and parcel of the great American dream. Yet time and again one comes across the term "Moslem extremists" or "Islamic terrorists" either coming from the running mates for the Republican Party or their even more boisterous supporters.

One cannot help but wonder if such attitude has become part and parcel of Republican thought and philosophy, or simply a return to the reliance on scapegoats to mislead the American people from the devious underpinnings that arose out of failed performance and which have characterized United States foreign policy over the last eight years. Surely, the Republican Party has a greater legacy to bank on than to have to scoop to such low-down hate mongering, which is highly encouraged by the only institution that see benefit in this, namely the hate mongering Zionist lobby, which for decades has sought to make this hate mongering as American as apple pie. Would it not be better for the Republican ticket to start working on the issues that matter most to the American people? Never mind that the Zionist prone "neo-Conservatives" have done so much great damage to the American economic and social fabric, which has taken more than two centuries to formulate and implant.

One of the saddest ironies in all this is that for many Americans, it is hard to digest that for once an American black man might just make it to the White House and thus every effort has even been made to associate not just "Barack Hussein Obama" with Islam, but all blacks. This observer recalls, when studying in the United States, the many black Americans, who genuinely regarded Moslems as "brothers", because they saw the very tolerant and fraternal attitude of Moslems towards all breeds of mankind as refreshing from the then open hatred that still existed in the United States against blacks and anyone not falling within the WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) or at least white European specifications, etc. which were then perceived as acceptable American roots. Needless to say, the true image of Islam then was not yet spoiled by the ugly misdeeds of the proponents of a Wahhabi extremist culture, in its many disguises and nomenclatures (Salafi, Al-Qaeda, "hard-line Sunni", etc), that is as far away from Islam as the "Bushies" are from genuine Gentile doctrine.

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



By: Hassan Al-Haifi

Serious dialogue needed to end Yemen's crises

The long dialogue between the ruling and opposition parties on the elections and proposed Election Law amendments has reached its usual result. However its topic still pervades the media community, highlighted by various independent, party-affiliated and official newspapers. The dialogue is being dealt with as if there were no other issues in this nation to attract the attention of all those concerned.

We conclude that the authority is the source of conflict between the ruling and opposition parties as the case has appeared over the past days, since this authority has its own irresponsible means to achieve comfortable majority in Parliament and dominate the affairs of the nation.

What the situation will look like in days to come, no one can tell. One can't judge from what one sees, because programs, promises and intents are not brought to fruition and one never sees them translated on the ground, because of scattered efforts that do not concentrate on top priorities.

Clearly, the policies followed in Yemen produce nothing more than extreme poverty and destitution amid the absence of any serious effort to tackle them. Solutions to pressing problems in the country don't come from either the authority or the opposition, which I don't think have demonstrated any distinctive



By: Farook Al-Hakimi
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practical ability to put an end to such issues.

We don't feel that such dialogues are serious enough to tackle pressing problems in the nation such as illiteracy, severe poverty as a result of rapid population growth, weak human structure and lack of qualifications to play a key role in fostering development.

If exploited in an ideal manner, investment opportunities may help reduce unemployment and curb the proliferation of dangerous diseases, most notably cancer, malaria and heart, blood and liver diseases. Statistics reveal that the number of Yemeni patients suffering from such diseases is higher than figures in other countries of the region.

Even worse, electricity services do not meet the country's growing demand and are therefore responsible for a slow development process. How is it possible for us to talk about investment opportunities

and attract investors to establish projects in a state that has failed to meet its people's minimum demand for power?

Water resources are threatened by depletion, particularly in Sana'a, Aden and Taiz. If the responsible authorities don't exert exceptional and extensive efforts to treat such a worsening problem, the situation may lead to a civil war over water resources. The gross agricultural production in several parts of the nation has declined as a result of scarce water resources and their ineffective exploitation.

The educational process in Yemen does not match the needs of development, and graduates from Yemen's various universities lack the qualifications needed by the labor market. These are some of the main reasons why investment opportunities in Yemen are poor and unemployment continues on the rise.

Yemen's most urgent issues continue worsening while we concentrate our efforts on the Supreme Commission for Election and Referendum (SCER). It is impossible for anyone to deny that the government's mismanagement and poor performance result in rampant corruption which eliminates investment opportunities.

Existing laws and administrative systems have proven to be unable to meet development needs and economic necessities, or take into consideration the strong relationship between the local and international

economies. Legislations in Yemen don't comply with the demands of our time, yet the government plans to attract foreign investors to Yemen with the intention of creating prosperity and exterminating poverty and backwardness.

The facilitation of capital and investment movement, the creation of good investment climates and the elimination of obstacles hindering development are what we need.

One may question why Yemeni businessmen in and outside Yemen don't play a prominent role in addressing these issues, particularly in the areas of development. They should also cooperate with the authority, opposition parties and civil society organizations to address any pressing matters on the ground.

As far as I am concerned, the government is recommended to give top priority to tackling all the issues highlighted in my article, mainly as they are related to our living conditions and basic necessities. When the government and all the organizations involved suggest workable solutions to these issues, it will be easy for them to generate good material and humanitarian development, enhance stability and put an end to destructive wars.

Farook Al-Hakimi is a former Deputy Minister of Culture and Tourism.

He also served as General Investment Manager for Abyan and Aden.

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The price of media silence

By: Roberto Saba and Robert O. Varenik

In 1986, opposition journalist José Carrasco Tapia was dragged from his home in Santiago, Chile, by one of General Augusto Pinochet's death squads. He was shot 13 times in the back of his head and dumped in a cemetery, joining a macabre roll call of Latin American reporters brutalized for daring to speak out during the 1970's and 1980's.

During that time, kidnapping, torture, and murder had a stranglehold over the Latin American press; stenography was an infinitely safer choice for those reporting the news. As Latin America became increasingly democratic in the years since then, more reporters chose to investigate instead of retyping government press releases.

Particularly by targeting government

corruption, brave journalists made raiding the public till more of a gamble than a birthright – and angered many of the corrupt. Today, too many Latin American governments, fearful of the media's ability to expose misdeeds, have altered their tactics but remain determined to limit press freedom.

Latin American journalists may face a diminished threat of murder nowadays, but many still confront a gauntlet of challenges designed to control them. Behind closed doors, governments wield financial incentives and regulatory powers to mute media criticism and twist editorial content in their favor.

Without a critical press, Latin America's undeniable advances toward real democracy – development of an informed, empowered citizenry and governments respectful of the legitimate boundaries of power – will be endangered, even as formal electoral

trappings become more routine.

There is an alarming pattern of press manipulation throughout the region, from Honduran authorities cutting off a national radio station's telephone service to Argentine officials shuttering a printing press. To varying degrees, local and national officials in these countries, and in Colombia, Chile, Costa Rica, Peru, and Uruguay are collectively rewriting the authoritarian playbook.

Even more widespread than indirect repression is the corrupting pressure of government money. Across Latin America, advertising from the public sector is critical for the financial survival of newspapers and broadcast stations, but especially for local outlets. In Colombia, the routine is simple: journalists who subsist on income derived from selling advertising space to government agencies call officials in the morning to get their story; later, when

they must attempt to sell the same officials advertising, they find out the real cost of independent news coverage.

Likewise, in 2004, Costa Rica's president decreed that his administration stop advertising in the country's leading daily newspaper, in retaliation for critical coverage. In 2006 and 2007, Peru's housing minister used government advertising contracts to tilt coverage of his ministry and himself in national newspapers.

Some governments practice an even more direct method of suborning favorable coverage. In Honduras, direct government payments to journalists are common, as are minimal or non-existent salaries for reporters. Some officials even require journalists to sign contracts mandating favorable coverage of government activities.

Throughout the region, government officials shut out those they regard as

troublemakers and manipulate procedures for issuing broadcast licenses to benefit political allies or silence independent voices. As a result, self-censorship chills entire newsrooms, and many noncommercial or alternative media are denied access to the airwaves. All but the most courageous remain silent; with the threat of ruin for their paper or station, the risks that reporters run are no longer primarily their own. At risk is the emerging diversity of opinion and reporting that has begun to invigorate the region's traditionally staid and monopolistic media industry.

The picture is not all grim, and, ironically, reporting on news manipulation has helped galvanize politicians in some countries to create better and more enforceable rules of the road.

Steps like fair, competitive, and transparent public-sector contracting

procedures, and civil service, rather than political control over allocation of government advertising funds would go a long way, especially combined with good reporting, to protect the media against officials' persistent temptation to control what the public may know.

Carrasco Tapia died for his vision of critical oppositional journalism. It would be a tragedy if those who still want to control the media win by taking their tactics underground, behind closed doors. The threat they pose may be less dramatic, but it is no less pernicious.

Roberto Saba is executive director of the Association for Civil Rights in Chile and Robert O. Varenik is the acting executive director of the Open Society Justice Initiative. The two organizations recently released The Price of Silence, a report on media censorship in Latin America. Copyright: Project Syndicate, 2008.

Libya calling

By: Michael Frendo

The recent signing in Tripoli of "a comprehensive settlement" between the United States and Libya marks a new beginning not only in US-Libya relations, but between Libya and the rest of the world. The agreement provides a process for compensating the victims of attacks ranging from the 1988 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, to the US air strikes on Tripoli and Benghazi in 1986. It thus removes a final hurdle to Libya establishing normal diplomatic and economic relations with the West and opens the way for US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's visit to Tripoli this week.

The Joint Statement, while clinically welcoming the agreement, states that

both parties "thereby turn their focus to the future of their bilateral relationship," underscoring "the benefits an expansion of ties would provide for both countries as well as for the American and Libyan peoples." This is a far cry from recent years, when staying at a Libyan-owned hotel would make you subject to a US felony charge!

Clearly, the way is now open for US-Libya relations to move forward in the same way that the release of a group of Bulgarian nurses, who were jailed in Libya on charges of deliberately infecting Libyan children with AIDS, unblocked European Union-Libya relations. Indeed, Libya has also just strengthened its relations with the EU: Seif al-Islam Gaddafi, the son of Libya's long-serving ruler, Muammar al-Gaddafi, recently declared that soon the two sides should be able to sign an Association agreement, giving Libyan

goods access to European markets.

In his effort to restore seemingly irreparably damaged relations with the West, Gaddafi has played the oil and gas cards that he holds extremely well. Indeed, the West's hunger for energy brought invitations for Libya's leader to visit France, Spain, and Portugal within the past year.

This opening is welcome, because Libya remains heavily engaged with the other countries of the Sahel, and across Africa in general, as well as with Arab states. A more development-minded Libya could help dampen tensions in these vital regions. Indeed, Gaddafi's emphatic call for Libya to embrace the market economy could have a sort of revolutionary domino effect among North Africa's "dirigiste" economies, improving the chances for a revitalization of plans to open and integrate the Maghreb Union

economies.

Libya's newfound engagement with the US and the EU represents not only a major shift in its international policies and diplomatic posture, but also a major internal reorientation, because the country now wants to develop an economy that is not exclusively based on oil. Indeed, like so many post-communist countries over the past 20 years, Libya is now making the gradual and at times painful transition to a market economy. Given that Islamic fundamentalism breeds in economic despair, Libya's rulers seem to want to take particular care that this process does not create an underclass of victims who might fall prey to the call of religious fanatics.

Of course, it is unrealistic and naïve to expect that the changes now underway in Libya will result in a rapid transition to European-style democracy. Libyan

politics will undoubtedly continue to be based on Gaddafi's "Green Book" and "people power," as expressed in its People's Congress. But Gaddafi now seems to want to reconcile his teachings and rule with a more open economy, including foreign direct investment and market-based competition.

Internally, Libya has launched a "Go East" policy, so that development does not become clustered only in its oil and gas regions and around the capital of Tripoli. It wants, in particular, to ensure that the people and tribes in its Eastern "Cyrenaica" territories centered in Benghazi have a chance to develop equally with the rest of the country.

A bulwark of secular government and anti-fundamentalism in a North Africa that is struggling to contain the spread of Islamic extremism, Libya is of strategic importance to Europe and the US beyond its oil riches, notwithstanding

the overwhelming significance of its energy resources. Fully aware of its growing importance in an oil-starved world, Libya will use that advantage to the full and it will no doubt guard, with Gaddafi at the forefront, its sovereign rights vociferously and assiduously.

Nevertheless, drawing Libya deeper into international discourse, despite the possibility of roadblocks along the way, is a strategic decision that, now that it has been taken, the West must pursue with patience, perseverance, and constant nurturing. In that process, underestimating Libyan diplomacy, shrewdness and negotiating skills is the folly of the ignorant.

Michael Frendo was Malta's Foreign Minister from 2004-2008, during which Malta became a member of the European Union.

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LETTER OF INVITATION TO SUBMIT BEST OFFER FOR TURN KEY DESIGN CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF SANA'A SEPTAGE TREATMENT PLANT AT AL-HUSHAISHIYA

Introduction

The Government of Yemen represented by Sana'a Water and Sanitation Local Corporation has received a grant from the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development / State of Kuwait to finance the Turn Key Job of Design, Construction and Operation of Sana'a Septage Treatment Plant at Al-Hushaishiya Area.

This invitation is open to all Internationally qualified Contractors with sound experience internationally or nationally in the field of Turn Key Projects for Treatment Plants. All qualified Contractors with solid relevant experience are encouraged to associate with local Contractors having experience in the same field of Construction works in reinforced reservoirs, Pump Houses, ... etc

Contract Documents

The Project Contract Documents includes the following:

- Letters of Invitation.
- Statistical General Information to the Contractors
- General Conditions of the Contract.
- Particular Special Conditions of the Contractors.
- Technical Specifications.
- Project Bills of Quantities.

Participation

All qualified and interested Contractors may obtain the prepared documents from the Client (Sana'a Water and Sanitation Local Corporation). Against US \$200 non-refundable, however the Contractors should inform the Client, upon the receipt of this invitation with the following:

1. Confirming the receipt of a full set of Contract Documents.
2. Confirming the Contractor's Participation or otherwise.
3. Documenting whether the Contractor will participate alone or in a joint venture.

Time of Submission (within sixty days of Invitation Date)

All Offers including the sealed Technical and Financial offers should be submitted to the

officers of Sana'a Water and Sanitation Local Corporation before 12:00 noon of 02/11/2008.

Enquiries

All enquiries which the Contractors may have should be addressed to the following address:

Sana'a Water and Sanitation Local Corporation

Att: Engineer Abdulla Al-Mut'a

General Manager of (PMU)

For Sana'a Sanitation Network Projects

P.O. box 2659, Al-Hsabah

Sana'a – Republic of Yemen

Fax: +967 237 645

Tel: +967 237 644

E-mail: swslc@y.net.ye

Additional Instructions to Contractors

1. The Contractor who will participate should fill in all forms included within the Contract documents precisely with all details including a complete break down of the main items in order to enable SWSLC to compare the offers received from different Contractors.
2. In case of Associations or Joint Venture cases between International Contractors and Local Contractors, the leading partner should be identified without releasing and other partners from his responsibilities nor his liabilities.
3. The participating Contractors should identify their relevant experience in Turn Key Projects which should be reflected clearly by having a comprehensive detailed offer with a table of contents.
4. Each Contractor should include within his offer a Bidding Guarantee issued by a certified Bank working in the Republic of Yemen for a value of 40,000 US dollars. Offers shall be valid for 120 days from the day of submittal and Bid Guarantee shall be valid for 150 days from the day of the submittal.
5. This Document will be considered as apart of the Contract Agreement.

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Unite for children

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Request for Expression of Interest for
Conducting a Qualitative Study on Child Poverty

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) invites proposals from qualified individuals/research institutions for the following:

Level: Consultancy to undertake a qualitative study on child poverty as seen by children and their care givers. **Type of Contract:** 2 months

The objectives of the study are the following:

1. Using the life cycle approach, describe young peoples' experiences of growing up in family poverty, presenting their perceptions on the manifestations, causes and consequences of poverty and strategies adopted to cope with such situations.
2. To obtain an understanding of existing knowledge from children and caregivers on the resources at their disposal and their potential to help lift them from situations of vulnerability and poverty.
3. To identify measures and actors at community and national level likely to support the reduction of child vulnerability, inequality and poverty and to adequately address their social, economic and psychological impacts.

The results of the qualitative study will be used to provide a comprehensive analysis on child poverty in Yemen that will serve to sharpen programme and policy responses to address childhood vulnerability, disparities and poverty. It will also improve the knowledge base on the well-being of children and their caregivers in Yemen in the context of the recent food price increases.

Methodology: The methodology will draw heavily on participatory approaches. The sample frame will include: Children aged between 10 -14 and 15-18 given the greater likelihood of them articulating their views; Caregivers (mothers, fathers and other relatives responsible for providing care to children etc...).

The research team will be sensitive to gender including girls and boys as well as female and male caregivers as participating groups. The sample will include children in school and out-of school children and urban/rural populations. A small number of community sample sites will be selected using purposive sampling procedures based on diversity in geographic location and social and economic conditions. Indicators such as size of the population living below the poverty line, and severity of population drawn from the 2007 Poverty assessment, will serve as a starting point.

Secondary data analysis will enable the development of poverty profiles for the selected areas. A combination of semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, life stories and other such research methods will be used with the participating population.

Expected background and Experience of the Research Team: The tasks to be performed require a researcher with the following background who will be expected to constitute a team to realise the study.

- Advanced university degree in Sociology, Anthropology, Demography, Economics or related technical field
- At least 5 years experience in developing research tools, leading, supervising and conducting participatory and qualitative research
- Experienced trainer on qualitative research methodologies
- Excellent analytical, conceptual and writing skills
- Excellent command of English, both written and oral
- Excellent command of Arabic, both written and oral
- Familiar with the UN system, in particular UNICEF

Guidance: This study is part of a wider study on child poverty therefore UNICEF documentation and technical material on the subject will be shared. The contracted person and teams will pay adequate attention to United Nations norms on evaluation that underscore impartiality, quality and ethics amongst others. Particularly important is the code of conduct to be maintained when conducting research with children, ensuring that their best interests are protected and served.Interested and qualified individuals/research institutions can request copies of the detailed document for the "Request for Proposal" (YEME/SAN/RFP/2008/004) for Mr. Yuji Taketomo at [ytaketomo@unicef.org](mailto:y.taketomo@unicef.org) by **Wednesday 24 September 2008**. UNICEF will be expecting interested and qualified individuals/institution to send

- 1) One technical proposal
- 2) One sealed financial proposal by 24 September 2008. Applications received after 24 September will not be considered.

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Get on the bus? ... I'd rather not, if I can help it!

By: Shafiq A. Fakir
English Language Instructor
University of Aden
Shaf_106@hotmail.com

I have nothing against bus drivers – except that they drive me CRAZY! There are way too many buses roaming the narrow streets of Aden.

Of course, the service they provide is invaluable. Just imagine waiting and waiting for a bus in the sultry heat of a summer afternoon in Aden. No way! If you're from a city like Aden where the summer temperature is 30+ degrees Celsius, you can understand what I mean. You can't even imagine such a thing.

For this very reason, I am grateful that there are too many buses rather than too few.

However, among these "too many" buses, many are in poor repair and lack even basic parts such as headlights, taillights and functional turn signals.

Too many buses also creates problems, as the streets become congested with them and they vie against each other for passengers

along the road. On various occasions, the instant a bus driver spots someone waving to him on the road, he abruptly brings his vehicle to a halt, with little notice to other vehicles or regard for the safety of neither his passengers nor pedestrians.

Reckless driving by many bus drivers is an issue of extreme concern, as well as a cause of accidents because they stop their buses anywhere and everywhere. They swerve, tailgate, overtake, cut in, change lanes, speed up and slow down – all without sufficient warning to other vehicles or pedestrians. What a nightmare!

However, the absolute worst nightmare is at intersections, where all traffic laws are brutally violated. "If you stop here and wait for others to go, you'll spend your life at this intersection," I heard one bus driver comment as he slammed on his brakes and cut in front of another vehicle.

These buses can be great nuisance, too. I vividly recall the day I got on one bus and tore the sleeve of my new black abaya on a metal spring popping out of one of its shabby

seats. The incident left both a bitter memory and tear a beyond repair on my abaya, ruining it for good. I wanted to shake the driver who with a mouth full of qat and a cigarette between his fingers sat oblivious to the damage that had just occurred.

For this reason, you can't imagine my delight anytime I board a clean and tidy bus, which, by the way, is extremely rare. Normally, bus seats tend to be stained, dirty, and worst of all, smell something like a dead fish, especially on hot summer days. Clean buses are a treat, believe me!

So, what should be done? I can't and won't even try to answer this question. I'll simply wait for the day when we have more stop signs, speed limit signs, traffic lights and most importantly, drivers who strictly adhere to traffic laws. And I'll await the day when these laws are enforced daily against those who break them.

Finally, I'll wait for the day when bus drivers become more conscious of both safety and cleanliness and quit doing whatever they please.

Now, close your eyes and picture all of this actually happening in our cities. What do you see?

"Fasting is like a shield"

By: Wafa'a Sa'eed Salem
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Fasting is the fourth pillar of Islam. The other pillars are faith or testimony, prayer, charitable giving and pilgrimage to Mecca. During the month of Ramadan, Muslims fast from dawn to sunset, if they are able.

While fasting during Ramadan, individuals refrain from eating and drinking and practice abstinence. It is a time of worship and contemplation to fulfill Allah's commands and keep away from all sins. It's also a time to strengthen family and community ties and be on our best behavior.

The importance of fasting is that it is secret worship. The characteristics and virtues of this type of worship are as follows.

The rewards of such worship are granted to fasters directly from Allah, as noted in the Hadith (the sayings of the Prophet Mohammed): "Fasting is for My sake and it is I who reward it. The faster gives up his sexual desire, his food and drink for My sake. Fasting is like a shield. The faster has two joys: one when he

breaks his fast and the other when he meets his Lord. The change in the breath of the mouth of the faster is better in Allah's estimation than the smell of musk."

During Ramadan, all of paradise's gates are opened and all devils are restrained, while the angels request forgiveness for fasters until the final moments of Ramadan, Lailat Al-Qadr or the "Night of Destiny," which is better than a thousand months of doing good deeds. Ramadan fasters receive mercy and forgiveness for their sins and are liberated from hell.

Ramadan is a time of intense worship, reading the Qur'an, giving charity, purifying one's behavior and performing other good deeds. As a secondary goal, fasting is a way to experience hunger because while they are hungry and thirsty, Muslims are reminded of the suffering of the poor.

During Ramadan, Muslims commonly go to the mosque where they spend hours praying and studying the Qur'an. Because they are urged to read the entire Qur'an during this month, its 114 chapters are divided into 30 equal parts for

this purpose.

In addition to the five regular daily prayers, during Ramadan, Muslims recite a special prayer called the Tarawih or "Night prayer," during which the Qur'an is recited in mosques every night. In this way, by the end of the month, the complete scripture has been recited.

Some Muslims also spend an entire Ramadan night in prayer. As mentioned earlier, there's Lailat Al-Qadr or the "Night of Destiny," which is the holiest night of the holiest month because it is believed to be the night on which Allah first began revealing the Qur'an to the Prophet Mohammed through the angel Jibreel (Gabriel).

It is a time especially devoted to prayer and there are rewards and blessings associated with it. Muslims are told in the Qur'an that praying throughout this night is better than a thousand months of doing good deeds. No one knows exactly which night it is; it is simply one of Allah's mysteries.

In short, we must take advantage of the entire month of Ramadan to do good deeds and ask Allah to accept our deeds.

Ramadan in the eyes of Muslims

By: Shafeek Al-Homaidi
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Ramadan is the holy month of every year in which all Muslims fast. It is the 'month of fasting' and the 'generous month'.

I take this opportunity to greet all the Muslims and non-Muslims alike. We also implore to Allah the Merciful and the Compassionate to show us the right path and illuminate our hearts. In Ramadan, heaven opens its doors and the devils are chased. In fact, fasting is the best way of penance to ask our God for the forgiveness of our sins, whether committed knowingly or unknowingly.

Muslims all over the world spend many hours reciting the Holy Quran and worshipping Allah, increasing the number of prayers in mosques due to the redoubled virtue of this month.

Almighty Allah imposed fasting on every human as one of the five pillars of Islam. Every day in Ramadan, we have to give up eating and drinking from dawn until sunset in order to feel the suffering of those who are poor and starving.

But how do we receive the holy month? Ramadan in our country has taken on various cultural and traditional forms, but a common practice during the holy month is to consume everything on the market.

People all over the country flock to markets to stock up on all manner of foodstuffs as if they were about to fall into a crisis. It's a pity that most Yemenis think that celebrating Ramadan depends mainly on providing their families with a variety of food and drink.

As we buy all kinds of products, not caring about their quality or expiry date, I really wonder whether Ramadan is as good for our stomach as most of us seem to think.

What is more disastrous is that the products that storekeepers get out for Ramadan have been stagnant on their shelves for months until the holy season. Only with fake discount stamps, do they lure in innocent people to buy them.

Things turn upside down in Ramadan in our country and we find many people of all ages, male and female, spending long hours at night in front of the television screen watching the season's latest movies and shows.

I am extremely happy that people enjoy their spare time in Ramadan and I am not here to admonish anybody, but I do think that we sometimes forget the main reason for being of Ramadan.

Many unacceptable things take place in our society to spoil our fasting, such as people impatiently quarrelling over minor things, or insulting each other in offensive ways. I think we should fully appreciate that Ramadan teaches people patience and the kind treatment of others. Ramadan teaches us to use our time wisely in worshipping Allah and elevating our spirits, not to waste time chewing qat and chatting idly all night long.

Ramadan teaches us the virtue of self-control in not allowing ourselves to be affected by physical desires. Ramadan is a reminder for us of those beggars who only have one daily meal.

Yet, while the rich should be feeling the suffering and hunger endured by the poor, we fill our kitchens with all kinds of vegetables, fruits, drinks and other foodstuffs.

This is a religious chance that will not come twice. We all have to seize it before it is too late!

Through The Mind's Eye



By: Maged Thabet Al-kholidy
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Mind and Heart

How is one to live without mind or heart? This article is not about a social problem or political issue. Rather, it is a personal experience that shows how people appreciate things only when they lose them.

Friendship is a supreme human relationship. It is something more valuable than fellowship, neighborliness, or even kinship.

And here I must confess that I did not appreciate the true value of two friends until after their departure.

They were friends and I was sincere and honest in my relationship with them. But their departure shook my person to the core, and made me realize that I was missing two essential elements of my life without them.

Together, these two friends used to play different roles in my life. The first played the role of the mind, the second the role of the heart. It is no exaggeration, though I realized it only after their departure.

The first one left me about two years ago. I was sad that he left, but happy for him to get a chance for higher studies abroad. Time has passed, but I ask myself daily who to turn to for serious reflection and logical conclusions. Of course, many topics in one's personal life need a mind to reflect on them. Now, that mind is no longer there.

How many times have I needed

that mind? Always, almost all the time. For a long time, he assisted me, never lazy or rejecting a topic, be it personal or general.

Everyday I remember his clever ideas, his cunning conspiracies. He used to pick up matters and give them logical solutions, suggesting ideas and plans which, in most cases, proved successful. I also remember that his love was dominated by his mind rather than his emotions, and for that we used to call it a "mathematical love".

Of course, humans are not normal without minds since they use them in everything they do. Because of this, I realize how much you are valuable to me, my dear Mind. Forgive me for not appreciating you before you left and forgive me for shedding light on some of your personal affairs. Believe me; it is because I miss you.

The heart is also an essential part in human beings. It has many functions, not only pumping blood to all the parts of the body, but also creating and recreating emotions.

He left a month ago, but it feels like a year or more. I exist, but feel nothing inside of me. He was the source of all feelings and emotions. He would remind me and others of our feelings, blaming us when we behaved without paying attention to the emotions of others.

Now that you are far away, I am confessing that I miss you Heart.

Only when he left, I appreciated

his being with me. Since then, I have remembered every minute we spent together.

I remember how he was always a man of the heart, not only for me, but also for others.

I remember his love story which was rich in emotions. I remember the day on which he spontaneously approached his sweetheart and told her "I love you", without any hint or introduction to the topic. I remember many things, but without feeling.

I remember his role on many occasions when I and other friends took decisions against others. He always used to say: "Have mercy!" Now no one says it, as you are far away.

Oh Heart, only now do I appreciate the time we spent together. I ask for your forgiveness for not appreciating you when you were here. Forgive me also for revealing some of your personal affairs in this article, and keep in mind that I did it because I really miss you.

Yes, dear readers, life is abnormal without such friends who are only appreciated after their departure. Every reader should appreciate the value of everything and everyone they have.

Finally, I want to reveal the names of these two persons: Waleed (the mind) and Amar (the heart), hoping that it may relieve my heartfelt loneliness, and attribute them the value they truly deserve.

Engagement seldom lasts except between educated people

By: Mofeed Al-Jaad
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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.

The curse of qat

By: Stephen To
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I read with interest that Yemenis in your country are so very fond of chewing qat and consequently, neglect their important business and family affairs.

I saw a picture entitled, "Chinese

Opium Smokers," attached here for your readers. As I am a British citizen of ethnic Chinese origin, the recent opening of the Beijing Olympic Games and my memories of this picture add poignant meaning to one's national self-respect.

The Chinese were poisoned and many undoubtedly had to accept that they themselves were responsible for

this self-poisoning. I'd hate to see your people and your nation suffer the same way China and the Chinese did, as it took more than 100 years to recover.

I hope that with appropriate measures by your nation's leaders, including raising awareness about the various harms to qat users, you can avoid lasting damage.

Islamic Dietary Laws in Practice Halal for All

It's not easy to eat a purely halal diet. Muslim consumers in Germany have to be well informed and sometimes accept compromises. There are now halal seals of approval and a telephone hotline to help them. But it is still almost impossible to avoid traces of pork in food products. By Ute Hempelmann

The Muslim dietary laws aren't actually all that complicated: no alcohol, no pork products, and cows or lambs have to be slaughtered in the Islamic way, hung to drain out the blood, to make sure the meat is halal – ritually pure and permissible to eat.

But many consumers are still unsure about products, even if they are marked with a halal sticker. They prefer to check carefully, and only shop in supermarkets they trust.

In Germany, Islamic-style slaughtering was banned until recently for animal welfare reasons, and can now only be practiced under special conditions. A recent judgement by the federal constitutional court allowed the authorities to grant special licences. However, the animals must be slaughtered by qualified staff in registered slaughterhouses.

"The laws conform to animal welfare" Nevertheless, there are still unanswered questions on the details of the slaughtering procedure, according to Ahmet Yazici from the Association of Muslim Communities in North Germany. He is a member of a commission that brings together animal welfare representatives, imams and meat producers. There are no problems with lamb, chicken or turkey, Yazici says, but there are still arguments going on over the permitted stunning methods for cows.

"At the moment, we're talking about the stunbolt method – whether it's Islamic or not," explains Yazici. "This kind of short-term electrical stunning would certainly be Islamic. But it isn't very common here yet." The dietary laws are basically for Muslims, but Yazici considers they also conform to animal welfare requirements.

Halal stamps and hotline

Prompted by Yazici and other religious Muslims, six years ago the Association of Muslim Communities in North Germany developed a halal certificate. Muslims can look out for this in shops and supermarkets.

The European Halal Certification Institute provides halal stamps and runs a telephone hotline, where consumers can find out more details about particular products.

Yusuf Calkara is the Managing



These Turkish sausages are halal, as the meat comes from lambs or calves slaughtered according to Islamic rules

Director of the European Halal Certification Institute, which is under the financial and organisational control of the German Islam Council and the Association of Muslim Communities in North Germany. The institute carries out checks for customers free of charge, and has its own assessments carried out by food institutes.

However, the European halal seal is far from the only one. And the more certification authorities there are, the less credible each individual certificate becomes. Especially since several major food companies have designed their own halal stamps.

Traces of pork in foodstuffs

Alongside fairly easy to avoid traps such as alcohol in chocolates, Muslims face the problem of pork traces in the form of gelatine. Since the BSE scandals, gelatine has been made out of pork products in Europe – and is very difficult for Muslims to avoid, as it is used in many different foodstuffs.

Gelatine is often "hidden" in other ingredients such as spice mixes, which is a great concern for religious Muslims. There are also traces of gelatine and even alcohol in cough syrup and tablets. And it's hard to go without medicines.

So the only way to deal with the issue is with a relaxed Islamic approach. If Muslims eat pork unintentionally it is not a sin, imams say.

But many also emphasise that every Muslim has to find out as much about what they eat as possible. For most people, that's too much hard work in the long run, and they find a compromise: everyone eats as halal as they can.

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