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# YEMEN TIMES

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## As JMP boycotts voter registration committees Fears grow over possibility of postponing upcoming elections

By: Mohammed Bin Sallam

SANA'A, Nov. 9 — Electoral committees, currently in charge of reviewing and correcting voter registers, face numerous obstacles hindering their performance in many governorates including Sa'ada, Lahj, Al-Dhalea, Hajja, Mahwit and Ibb. The situation has increased fears over the possibility of postponing the upcoming parliamentary elections. In Sa'ada, one of Al-Houthi loyalists told the Yemen Times by phone that they will not allow voter registration committees to begin their job unless the government rescues refugees, reconstructs houses and other infrastructure damaged by the four-year fighting between the army and Houthi gunmen. Leadership of the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) sent a memo to branches of its member parties countrywide urging them to continue boycotting voter registration committees. It also informed JMP member parties' branches in Sa'ada to continue to boy-

cott what they described as "illegitimate voter registration committees", adding that the upcoming electoral process will be rigged, and the government must first compensate citizens whose property was damaged during the conflict. In the Dhalea governorate, the so-called Peaceful Action Body in the Shuaib district organized a huge sit-in in front of premises of the Main Election Committee. The sit-in is the first peaceful event launched by the body that strongly rejects and boycotts the voter registration committees. Participants chanted slogans strongly denouncing the upcoming electoral process. The protesters released a statement confirming their unaltered decision of boycotting all the electoral process and its committees, which they described as "illegitimate". They added that it is their legal right to boycott and reject a rigged electoral process which they

describe as "a comedy". "We don't accept to be used as tools for acting in such a comic play; we don't want ballot boxes to be graves for burial of evident concerns in South Yemen," the statement read. "We don't seek an election whose price is paid by noble people and fruits are reaped by corrupt individuals." The statement applauded the male and female teachers in the governorate who refused to participate in voter registration committees. It called on teachers in other governorates to take a similar stance and demanded that these committees be removed from schools in order not to hinder students' progress. In Lahj, tribal leaders last week approved a specific date to protest in front of premises of the Main Electoral Committee in the governorate. From his side, the Lahj governor ordered directors of Hebail Jabr and Radfan districts to calm tension in both districts following rioting during a stu-

dents' protest against the use of their school by voter registration committees. Hundreds of students from the Muntaser High School in Hebail, Jabr district took to the streets chanting slogans demanding the government remove the voter registration committee from their school. In Ibb, the Islah Party Shoura Council's branch expressed their strong denunciation of President Saleh's alleged bias with his party, the ruling General People Congress (GPC), affirming that Saleh's partiality had worsened the current political crisis in the country. It also expressed sorrow about what it called "individualized steps" taken by the ruling party to compose the Supreme Commission for Election and Referendum (SCER) and other unconstitutional procedures in this regard. The party branch called on citizens across the governorate to boycott the voter registration process and

any other procedures taken by the illegitimate SCER. In a live-broadcast interview with a foreign satellite news channel, Chairman of Supreme National Consultation Committee Sheikh Hamid Al-Ahmar, who is also a Parliament member from the JMP, said, "The ruling party's feeling that the elections are not going in its favor made it hinder JMP's engagement in the process by refusing to respond to constitutional and legal demands raised by the opposition coalition." Al-Ahmar continued to say that the ruling party had reached no successful achievements throughout its long term in power. "What successes have been made by the ruling party? Poverty, crises, conflicts or an ailing economy?" he questioned.

The Parliament member added, "We consider the upcoming elections as a coup against democracy. We did not oppose the elections until the ruling party breached an agreement we reached with it at Parliament to amend the election law." Al-Ahmar went on to say that JMP member parties have clear alternatives, which are to respect the Constitution, law, and principles of the unity state, improve democracy, endorse equal citizenship rights, peaceful transfer of power, and free and fair elections. "We will continue the peaceful struggle for the sake of improving democracy and conducting free and fair elections," Al-Ahmar added. "JMP member parties represent an ideal example for all Yemenis as they unify for the sake of the nation."

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# In Brief

**Syrian media plan to promote Yemen heritage**

Syria's Information minister Muhsin Bilal has unveiled a Syrian media plan that includes broad promotion campaign of Yemen's heritage and civilization.

The announcement was made at a meeting with deputy director general of the Arab news section at the Yemen News Agency Saba Ahmed al-Jabr and the deputy executive director of the Alsyasiah newspaper Adnan al-Sanawi.

Bilal praised the level of cooperation between Yemen and Syria in the information area, calling at the same time for expanding this cooperation through exchanging daily news particularly those concerned with the message aimed at achieving common goals and aspirations.

**Yemen to take part in London World Tourism Fair**

A Yemeni delegation led by Tourism Minister Nabil al-Faqih headed for London to take part in the WTM London World Tourism Fair which will be kicked off during 10-13 November.

Al-Faqih added that Yemen looks for bringing Yemeni tourism into British tourism as well as Europe, in general, in addition to meet tour and travel agents associations to help improve tourism in the country.

On the sidelines of the fair, an international conference will be launched in which it will discuss international conditions affecting tourism climate.

**ADEN**

**Yemen participates in Arab Cities Conference**

Yemen to participate in 47th Arab Cities Conference which will last for two days and to be held on Sunday in Ajman city of United Arab Emirates.

Upon his departure, governor of Aden Adnan al-Jifry said to Saba that the delegation of Yemen is interested acquaint the participating delegations the conference with various sides of developmental advances in Yemen, in general, and Aden city, in particular.

He added that the delegation would also review current procedures and steps to develop Aden Free Zone to receive investments and grant facilities which are provided by Yemeni Investment Law.

Al Jeffry made it clear that the delegation would participate in activities of World Environment Conference which is to be held in Dubai in November 11-13.

**SANA'A**

**SCER invites ASSECAA to monitor 2009 parliamentary election**

The Supreme Commission for Election and Referendum (SCER) invited on Saturday the Association of Senates, Shoura and Equivalent Councils in Africa and Arab world (ASSECAA) to participate in monitoring the coming parliamentary election in April 2009.

Chairman of Foreign Relations Sector in SCER Jafar Ba-Saleh reviewed with the ASSECAA General Secretary the current arrangements for reviewing and amending the voters' lists.

**Court halves jail term of "al-Bana"**

The Appeal court halved Saturday the prison sentence of the Jaber al-Bana from five to three years in the case of attacking oil facilities in Hadramout province.

The court chaired by the Judge Mohammed al-Hakimi reduced also the sentence Emad Shas to 5 years as well. The court also ordered to re-jail the accused Jamil al-Haimi who has been acquitted previously to three years.

Moreover, the court upheld the previous sentences against the other 31 accused including the fugitives.

The appeal involved 36 militants, 32 of whom were handed prison sentences,

The Penal Court of First Instance delivered in November 2007 sentences of between 2 – 15 years for 36 convicted, while four others were acquitted.

# Using sewage water in irrigation threatens health of Yemenis

**By: Salah Al-Warafy  
For the Yemen Times**

SANA'A, Nov. 9 — A seminar on the hazards of using sewage water to irrigate crops was held on Thursday in Taiz during the Al-Saeed Forum for Sciences and Culture.

Chaired by Professor Abdulrahman Al-Zubairi, chairman of the department of Microbiology in the Faculty of Sciences at Taiz University, the seminar stressed the importance of immediate attention to the fact that a shortage of water resources has prompted many Yemeni farmers to resort to use sewage water to irrigate their farms.

Al-Zubairi explains, "The shortage of water is the result of both the increasing rate of population growth and irresponsible irrigation. Only

Main irrigation sources	
Irrigation sources	Hectares
Rain	661152
Wells	429182
Floods	148172
Streams	35347
Dams	19142
Tank on car	15650
Other	634
Total	1309279
Source: Agricultural Statistics Report 2007	

## Journalists join forces to promote civil society issues



Thirty five Yemeni journalists from Sana'a, Taiz and Aden gathered on Saturday to create a network of journalists who had participated in the Investing in the Future program over the last three years.

**By: Ola Al-Shami**

SANA'A, Nov. 9 — In a first of its kind initiative sixteen journalists from state, political parties and independent newspapers as well as freelancers came together to promote civil society issues through their work.

The journalists agreed to create a coordination committee of three journalists who will align the efforts of the rest of the group and hence a campaign for a particular topic relating to civil society each month.

This initiative came as a result of a five-day training workshop on basic journalism skills organized by the Investing in the Future program for the sixteen journalists.

The first topic has already been selected as a part of the training, whereby the journalists will write features on child labor and publish them in three state media newspapers, two media websites, four independent newspapers and two affiliated with political parties, as well as the program's website menassat.com.

During the workshop senior trainer Petrus Schothorstin explained that the program includes another training element on legal defending of journalists.

This training targets lawyers and sensitizes them to the issues of press freedom and how to defend journalists if prosecuted because of their profession.

The group which included several female journalists will also create a seed for a larger network of professional media persons in Yemen

Funded by the German Constructor Bank, the stations enable farmers in these governorates to reuse sewage water for irrigation.

However, researchers at Taiz University have found that health hazards still exist. Because these filters are only capable of removing solid waste from sewage water, parasites and bacteria remain in the water, according to Al-Zubairi.

He explains that sewage water runs through valleys, directly polluting watercourses and indirectly polluting groundwater. He adds that farmers use sewage water in irrigating vegetables that grow underground like garlic, leeks, and onions.

"Most people in Maitam, a district in Ibb governorate, were discovered to be infected with skin diseases, which was traced back to the use of sewage water [in farming]," says Al-Zubairi.

As a result of the using sewage in irrigation, many diseases prevail among Yemenis. "Parasite worms like scares, namibia, cardiac and dysentery are rampant. In addition, infectious diseases like cholera, typhoid, diarrhea, and viral diseases like the liver virus have spread due to the pollution of vegetables. Sewage water is usually full of nitrate salts, which cause stomachache and even cancer," Al-Zubairi explained.

"Sewage could be used in a suitable way. We have to learn from developed countries to use sewage to irrigate forests and parks" said Al-Zubairi. He adds that drying out sewage water and turning it into fertilizer allows it to become less hazardous and is better than using it directly for irrigation.

An official from the Yemeni Authority for Standards, Measurements and Quality Control suggested that authorities should impose a fine on farmers who use sewage to irrigate vegetables. Abdullah Saleh, a governmental official responded, "If there is someone to be fined, it is the polluters, not the farmers who are affected by the waste of the urban areas".

He also suggested that the tariff of the sewage collection should be increased.

Al-Zubairi recommended concerned



A farmer woman showing off grapes from her family's vineyard. Yemen is one of the most water-scarce countries in the world. According to government figures, per capita water use is 125 cubic meters per year, well below the global average of 1,500 cubic meters per year.

## Health care facilities closed down in Sana'a

**By: Almigdad Mojalli**

SANA'A, Nov.7 — The Office of Public Health and Population in Sana'a has closed down 12 out of a total of 53 health care facilities in the district of Sanhan and Bani Bahloul after its inspection campaign there this week. The campaign targeted clinics, pharmacies, medicine storage facilities and health care centers.

Most of the violations are related to licensing and smuggled medicines. A few others were related to unsuitable buildings which don't have ventilation, elevators and narrow rooms.

According to Dr. Abdulghani Faraj, the manager of the Office of Public Health Care and Population, of the 53 health care facilities inspected, 12 were

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# Their News

## British Council – Peter Lucantoni: English Teacher Training Workshops

The British Council in Sana'a is hosting a visiting British speaker and author Peter Lucantoni, a well-regarded international ELT specialist.

On Tuesday afternoon, 11th November, Peter Lucantoni will deliver a workshop on: Teaching Monolingual Classes at the University of Science and Technology, Girls' Section, Great Hall. On Wednesday morning, 12th November, at the University of Sana'a, Faculty of Education, he will deliver the same workshop again.

Peter Lucantoni is the author and co-author of several popular coursebooks for students, including IGCSE English as a Second Language and Our English (both Cambridge University Press), KET Practice Tests Plus (Longman) and International English (Hodder Murray), and has written a book of practical classroom ideas for teachers and teacher trainers.

This is an excellent opportunity to focus on key issues related to the relevance of student's first language and its usefulness in learning English, at the same time as exploring ways to increase the amount of English spoken in class. These events are open to any interested academics, English language teaching professionals and university English students. The workshops will be delivered in English.

### Workshops:

Tuesday 11th November from 2.30pm-4.30pm at the Great Hall (ground floor) of the Girls' College, University of Science and Technology, Sana'a.

Wednesday 12th November from 10am-12.00am at the Faculty of Education, University of Sana'a.

This visit forms part of the British Council's initiative to support English

teachers through their informal Network of English Language Teaching Professionals (NELTP).

For more information on how to join the Network please consult [www.britishcouncil.org/me](http://www.britishcouncil.org/me).

If you would like to attend the events on Tuesday/Wednesday and require further information please contact the British Council office on (01) 448356.

## Germany signs EUR 56 million grant agreements with Yemen

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, his Excellency Abdulkarim I. Al-Arhabi, and KfW Group's Senior Vice President for MENA and Europe, Ms. Doris Koehn – in the presence of the German Ambassador, H.E. Mr. Michael Klor-Berchtold – have signed six grant agreements on German support for programs in the water and education sectors amounting to EUR 56.2 million.

In the water sector, three supplemental financing agreements were concluded for the rehabilitation and improvement of water and sanitation systems in provincial towns (EUR 28.2 million), and one supplemental financing agreement was concluded for the extension of the sewerage project in Aden (EUR 2.45 million). All projects are aiming at the improvement of the health of the population in the respective regions. In the education sector, two financing agreements were concluded, one for the Secondary Education Development and Girls' Access Program (EUR 8.0 million) and the other one for the Social Fund for Development (EUR 17.5 million). Both programs aim at improving access to and quality of education, with a particular focus on girls in rural areas.

Germany is one of the major donor

countries in the areas of water and sanitation as well as education. KfW Entwicklungsbank, the German Development Bank responsible for German Financial Cooperation on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, is engaged in Yemen for almost 40 years and has since then committed funds amounting to about EUR 550 million.

## United Nations Democracy Fund invites civil society organizations to apply for funding

The United Nations Democracy Fund hereby invites civil society organizations to apply for funding for projects to promote democracy. Project proposals may be submitted on-line between 10 November 2007 and 31 December 2008 at [www.un.org/democracyfund](http://www.un.org/democracyfund).

This is the third round of funding to be launched by UNDEF, which was established by the UN Secretary-General in 2005 as a United Nations General Trust Fund. UNDEF funds projects that build and strengthen democratic institutions, promote human rights, and ensure the participation of all groups in democratic processes. Some 35 UN Member States, spanning all continents, have so far made voluntary contributions to UNDEF.

As with previous UNDEF rounds, the thematic categories for applications are:

- democratic dialogue and support for constitutional processes;
  - civil society empowerment, including the empowerment of women;
  - civic education and voter registration;
  - citizen's access to information;
  - participation rights and the rule of law in support of civil society;
  - Transparency and integrity.
- Priority will be given to projects that

enhance inclusiveness and gender equality.

Only on-line applications in either English or French will be accepted. The application procedure is described in the Project Proposal Guidelines available at [www.un.org/democracyfund/XProjectProposalGuidelines.htm](http://www.un.org/democracyfund/XProjectProposalGuidelines.htm).

## National Endowment for Democracy offers journalism fellowships

The Washington, D.C.-based National Endowment for Democracy (NED) invites journalists worldwide to apply to be part of the 2009-2010 Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellows Program. Selected fellows will take up residence at the Forum, a research division of NED, for five to ten months. Deadline: November 10.

According to its organizers, the fellowship seeks to provide experienced journalists with an opportunity to reflect on their work, learn from counterparts in the United States, and reevaluate techniques for building democracy in their country of origin. Projects must be in English.

Each participant will receive a monthly stipend for living expenses, health insurance and reimbursement for travel. Fellows also receive a fully equipped office and research support.

For further information, including eligibility information, visit <http://www.ned.org/forum/reagan-fascell.html> or contact [fellowships@ned.org](mailto:fellowships@ned.org).

## International Center for Journalists Photo Exhibition

The International Center for Journalists is now auctioning signed photographs by award-winning photojournalists such as David Burnett, Arthur Grace

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developing countries. You can own world-class photography and support ICFJ at the same time.

To bid on these photos, go to [www.icfj.org/photoauction](http://www.icfj.org/photoauction) and select the image to read the photographer's descriptions. Online bidding will end on Nov. 10, 2008 and the photos will be in a silent auction at the ICFJ Awards Dinner on Nov. 12, 2008 at the Ronald

# Medicines for Humanity and SIG donate medicines to Yemen

Brigadier Ahmad Al-Suunidar, MP and Chairman of Sana'a Social Society for Development received Saturday Nov. 8, 2008 medicines for heart, blood pressure, diabetics and Asthma from Al-Shaif International Group (SIG).

The medicines were a gift from Medicines for Humanity Organization which donated medicines worth of USD 300,000 to Yemen through Al-Shaif International Group. The medicines were given away to Al-Saleh Foundation to distribute to charitable hospitals and clinics and Sana'a Social Society for Development which runs charitable Al-Zahrawi Medical Center that receives more than 1000 patients a day.



Part of the medicines received.



GM of SIG Hisham Al-Qubati (left) delivering the medicines to Brigadier Al-Suunidar.

# Car for Sale

The Embassy of the Republic of Sudan, Sana'a, would like to sell a vehicle with the following specs:

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### Duties

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- ¥ Prepare construction procedure, and/or, method of statement, if required by the Client, related to site work inspection and testing operation.
- ¥ Interface with external Engineering Companies regarding QA-QC matters.
- ¥ Provide relevant procedures and instructions for Mechanical, Civil Works and E&I departments - as per ISO 9000 standards
- ¥ Supervises Document Control, Engineering documentation, Project tracking and records.
- ¥ Supervises QA-QC staff and activities on site(s), engage all QA-QC actions for projects

### PROFILE REQUIREMENTS

- ¥ Graduated Engineer in Mechanical, Civil Works or Electrical, with significant experience (over 5 years) in QA-QC.
- ¥ Knowledge of Oil & Gas activities and associated standards, codes and engineering practice.
- ¥ Able to work in Arabic and in English.
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Proposals must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "Proposal Enclosed" to Ms. Dianne West, General Service Office, American Embassy – Sanaa on/before 1600 hrs local time on Saturday December 13, 2008.

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JMP Chairman Sultan Al-Atwani to the Yemen Times:

# “The government doesn’t recognize what is going wrong on the ground”

By: Mohammed Bin Sallam

Sultan Al-Atwani is currently Chairman of Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) and has spoken on behalf of the opposition coalition on various occasions. He demands that the Supreme Commission for Elections and Referendum (SCER) be reshuffled in order to operate according to the amended election law, stressing that all the aspects and causes of tension and political congestion must be cleared to help create a positive environment for free and fair elections.

Al-Atwani holds the view that partial deals with the authority have become one of the most important obstacles to the democratic process, adding it is necessary for the time being to reconsider national options, which are collectively agreed upon by all Yemenis. These options are as follows: the principle of national partnership, the multi-party system, the rule of law, equal citizenship and the broader involvement of people in power and decision-making.

With regard to the upcoming parliamentary elections, Al-Atwani has confirmed that JMP member parties still are committed to approving the proportional list as an alternative to the current electoral system. According to him, the voting quorum at SCER must be the majority of two-thirds of the commission's staff regarding issues related with appointments, recruitments, enactment of bylaws and approval of vote results.

The opposition leader has called for a stop to all the arbitrary practices and pressures, corruption and hostile policies targeting political parties, unions and civil society organizations. For further information on what is going on in Yemen's political ground, the Yemen Times met Sultan Al-Atwani, Parliament Member of JMP, and conducted with him the following interview.

**First, let's discuss the electoral issue. What is your reaction to arrangements and procedures taken so far by the authority as part of its preparations for the upcoming parliamentary elections?**

We have demonstrated a clear position about electoral arrangements and confirmed that elections in our country should at least meet the minimum requirements of integrity and take place in a safe environment. We made these suggestions prior to the most recent presidential and local elections in September 2006, assuring that any general elections must be fair and free.

Before the presidential and local elections of 2006, the JMP and the ruling General People Congress (GPC) signed the Agreement of Principles, and hoped that such an agreement would help the country conduct free and fair elections. However, GPC leaders have not remained committed to the agreement.

When it comes to the upcoming parliamentary elections, we attempted early on to create a positive electoral environment through issuing new legislation, reforming the old election system and reshuffling the election management body.

During the Parliament's sitting on last 18 August, GPC bloc and its members breached the agreement, annulled the proposed amendments to the election law and formed a new SCER in a way contravening the agreement we reached with them. They also named individuals to represent JMP in the SCER without consulting the JMP member parties, which is not in line with the principle of political parties' right to appoint their own representatives by themselves.

All the procedures so far taken by the GPC contradict the electoral legislation, the Constitution and the norms according to which political parties behaved during non-election times. We therefore labeled these procedures as illegal and any actions by SCER or its affiliate committees are also illegal. We clearly declared that we would never accept any procedure taken by the illegally-composed SCER, and therefore have refused to participate in voter registration committees in order for us not to submit to what takes place on the ground.

**Can you tell us about your demands in this regard?**

Our demands include the approval of the proportional list, which JMP views as fairly reflecting voters' wills, and which therefore may help overcome any



JMP Chairman Sultan Al-Atwani

discrepancies faced by the electoral process. We raised this demand after having seen that, in the current political situation, the single member majority system cannot possibly reflect voters' wills or the popularity of contesting parties.

The authority told us that it is difficult to approve the proportional list for the time being since it requires amending a particular constitutional article, which is impossible to be done now. It added if there is a need to amend this article, this must be part of a larger constitutional amendment to be studied and later agreed upon.

**We have heard about a joint agreement between you and GPC to implement particular recommendations released by the European Union Election Observation Mission (EUEOM). Can you explain what happened in this regard?**

In its report on Yemen's presidential and local elections in September 2006, EUEOM recommended that the proportional list should be adopted. Consequently, we worked harder after those elections to execute the mutually agreed-upon recommendations. There are other issues related with the election management body and voter registers. Some of these issues were contained in the proposed amendments to the election law while others were not as the authority claimed that it faced difficulty treating those issues.

*Terrorism has become a troublesome phenomenon both at the local and international level.*

**Do you think the authority may respond to your demands before the upcoming elections?**

We stress the necessity of annulling all the procedures made after 18 August, if we want to prepare well for the upcoming electoral process. The situation seems to have improved. And we always attempt to improve conditions of the electoral process and annul the post-18 August procedures. I think that the upcoming elections will not be conducted unless all the requirements of free and fair elections are met.

lead a peaceful and free life.

What happened is that government officials don't recognize what is taking place on the ground. They don't admit that there is a crisis, nor do they care about suggesting workable solutions to this crisis. They only paid attention to the behavior of some protestors who raised a flag of the former state of South Yemen and a picture of a former leader in that state, and therefore labeled them as secessionists. However, those protestors clamor for justice and equal citizenship, an issue we side with.

We called for suggesting solutions to this crisis but the government did not interact with our claims. Regretfully, the authority only deals with the real secession advocates: Habbour, Shabbour and Hantour – hinting to pro-government figures from southern governorates. The authority only communicates with these irresponsible individuals and dialogue with them and ignores the role of political parties that are really concerned about settling the crisis.

The primary reason why the authority refuses to dialogue with political parties is that they call for carrying out comprehensive reforms.

**Is the government serious to end the Sa'ada crisis or does it intend to have Sa'ada calm until the elections end and then resume the war? And what is JMP position about this crisis?**

At the very begging, the JMP suggested that the Sa'ada crisis be resolved by peaceful means according to the Constitution and law. We have been opposing the Sa'ada war since it first broke out. JMP insisted that the crisis should be settled without weapons and that the government must not confront any misconduct or illegal actions by Houthis with military and security troops. Such a problem should have been solved by the Constitution.

During the first Sa'ada war, which erupted four years ago, we called for a stop to the fighting; however, the authority saw us as being pro-Houthi since we didn't back its position. In fact, we do not support either the Houthis or the government. We supported efforts to cease the war, and called for ending it as soon as it erupted.

*When it comes to the upcoming parliamentary elections, we attempted early on to create a positive electoral environment through issuing new legislation, reforming the old election system and reshuffling the election management body.*

In addition, we called for the formation of a national committee to be in charge of putting an end to the war and treating its impacts. But under the Qatari government's supervision, the government and Houthis reached a deal, by which a Yemeni-Qatari committee was formed to end the war and treat its consequences. I was a member of this committee in mid-2007 when gunfire ceased and practical procedures were taken on the ground.

After the Qatari officials withdrew, the committee halted its operations, but the ceasefire agreement reached between the government and Houthis lasted up until the final days of 2007. Later on, we were surprised to see that the war had resumed. In early 2008, both sides of the conflict signed the second Doha-brokered deal. Although we didn't learn about the content or terms of this deal, we applauded all the efforts that led to this peace deal and put an end to the fighting.

When the fifth Sa'ada war broke out, it was fiercer than the previous ones, according to information we obtained. A surprise decision was taken to end the war, and we said that halting the fighting must be given precedence over other issues in order to prevent further bloodshed and the killing of citizens and troops. We applauded this effort to end the war once again, but worried about the lack of guarantees to ensure that clashes didn't resume. We hope that both sides

remain committed to the ceasefire agreement in order for clashes not to break out once again.

**As confirmed, there are forces that fuel the fighting according to foreign plans that want Yemen to experience endless crises. How do you see this?**

I uphold this deduction since resumption of the war after it ceases at a particular time point is the result of efforts expended by war brokers to thwart any positive steps taken to end the war. The Sa'ada war actually exhausted many resources and killed numerous people: War brokers were the only beneficiaries from it. Both sides concerned are required to understand well that harboring war brokers and covering their opportunistic plots will destroy the whole nation.

*The combination of government service and trade at the same time is one of the primary causes of corruption*

**Terrorism continues to grow in Yemen amid poor security. Who do you think provides funds to terrorists in Yemen? Are there any foreign conspiracies targeting Yemen's stability?**

Terrorism has become a troublesome phenomenon both at the local and international level. In my opinion, growth and expansion of such a phenomenon seems to have relation with a horrible criminal plot that receives funding from inside and outside Yemen. I also believe that there are foreign players that don't want Yemen to stabilize. And due to its geographic location and prominent role in enhancing regional security, Yemen turned to be the cornerstone of terrorism.

It is no wonder that conspiracies from in and outside the country target Yemen's stability, and there are many individuals who support terrorism to retaliate against their political opponents, which is irresponsible behavior. It is often said that deals and negotiations usually take place among terrorists, al-Qaeda comrades or members of the Islamic Aden-Abayan Army. This phenomenon must be fought.

As we heard, the recent attack on the U.S. Embassy in Sana'a disclosed links between the attackers and violent acts in Saudi Arabia.

This problem needs to be settled before it worsens. I think that security problems must be publicized and disclosed in order for people to be aware of them and avoid their threats.

The issue of national security must be the collective responsibility of all Yemeni people and their government and the latter must not deal with this issue with high confidentiality. We don't know about any security agreements our government has signed with foreign parties.

**Once interviewed by the Yemen Times, a former Yemeni interior minister revealed that the government indifferently accepted the entry of nearly 34,000 Arab Afghans, sent by former Saudi intelligence officer Turki Al-Faisal to stand against the Socialist Party or the so-called communists. Is the government accountable for hosting these terrorist groups?**

Surely, I believe that the government is responsible for adopting these groups. During the Afghan war, the government learned about all those who went to Afghanistan to fight against the Russians, and all of whom were militants as viewed by the government in response to American demands. The then U.S. administration provided funding to governments and encouraged them to send their citizens to fight against the Russians.

Following the birth of the Taliban movement and the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the U.S. in 2001, those citizens turned out to be real terrorists even in the eyes of their governments that began treating them according to the American concept of fighting terrorism, which is why they comprised terrorist groups.

Some of these people became involved in a government security plan to confront the Socialist Party and other political opponents while others remained to operate alone.

I think that IDs of all those who participated in the Afghan War are

recorded in the security authorities' agendas. Bandar Bin Sultan and Turki Al-Faisal, Saudi officials, are the main sponsors of any plots carried out by terrorist groups in Yemen.

I see no difference between those groups and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Thousands of Yemenis receive funding from foreign parties, be they those sent by Turki Al-Faisal to Yemen or others who were working in Yemen. I don't care about their names.

I only care about how they get the funds and the agencies that facilitate their transfer to them.

**The combination of government service and trade activities is said to be responsible for rampant corruption in Yemen. Which means do you see are the best to fight corruption?**

I don't think that corruption is symptomatic of mismanagement and lack of transparency.

The combination of government service and trade at the same time is one of the primary causes of corruption. The spread of corruption contravenes the Constitution. According to the Constitution, government officials, within the top four ranks in the state's job ladder, are not allowed to exercise trade activities even through their children. Apparently, these officials are not satisfied with their senior government jobs, and therefore tend to control other commercial businesses and deprive citizens of good living.

Amid the absence of accountability in appointments for government jobs, we see that the government excludes 'clean-hand' candidates and give the jobs to corrupt individuals and relatives, which is the main reason why corruption has become rampant in all the state's institutions. What makes the phenomenon worsen is that Yemen doesn't have a fair and honest judicial system, coupled with the lack of courts and prosecutions specializing in fighting corruption.

During the reign of former Yemeni President Ibrahim Al-Hamdi, the cabinet established finance and accounting department, plus auditing committees, a positive step that helped the state's general revenues increase unexpectedly. This achievement is the direct result of having political will. Within a short time period, Al-Hamdi raised the state's revenues, reduced corruption to the minimum possible level and reformed corrupt servants by the law.

These days, we never hear that a corrupt official was referred for questioning and interrogation even after being convicted of corruption charges. Most of the reports on corruption by the Central Organization for Control and Audit (COCA) disappear in drawers, which is a primary reason why corruption has turned out to be an immense threat to Yemen's development in various areas.

**In the past, you said that having a parliamentary system would be effective to reform the government. Now, do you favor the parliamentary or presidential system?**

We presented our viewpoint in this regard to reform the whole political system and the government, given that the system of governance is the main approach to political reforms.

We still hold the view that the parliamentary system is the best to help Yemen get rid of its current turmoil and this subject is under discussion. If the majority of Yemeni educated elites say there is another system better than the parliamentary one, we will adopt it.

However, we see that the parliamentary system is the best as it may help separate the three authorities (legislative, executive and judiciary) from each other, enhance accountability and have Parliament control the Central Bank of Yemen. This system doesn't exempt anyone from questioning and accountability.

**Do you have any final comment?**

I thank your newspaper for being highly concerned about pressing issues in the nation.

I would like to reiterate that Yemen is undergoing numerous crises in various areas, and such crises are no longer invisible.

In the JMP, we see national dialogues and consultations as the best and most effective means to tackle pressing issues and alleviate people's sufferings, as well as enhance justice, freedoms and equal citizenship.



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## Words of Wisdom



If more meaningful change is to be made in respect for human rights, the daily violations against the rights of ordinary citizens have to be addressed.

This means introducing new values through education and re-education. One clear target is to train law-enforcement agencies and officers on the rights of citizens and how to respect them. Another has to do with re-training of prison wardens and personnel.

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

OUR  
OPINIONEducation, education  
and English education

It has been ten years since we first started the education page in the Yemen Times. Led by Dr. Ramakanta Sahu, English Associate professor at the University of Science and Technology, the idea started to fill a gap for Yemeni youth, especially university students, aspiring to improve their English.

Ten years have passed since then and there has been enormous feedback, as well as many contributions from students and readers. Although many of the educational materials are written by non-Yemeni professors, those who benefit are mostly Yemenis.

The education page, which today is a monthly supplement, aims at creating a platform for Yemenis to learn more about English, education and to interact with each other, especially as university communities.

The "Improve your English" series, today a pack of 321 lessons, is a comprehensive wealth of educational materials for middle level English students on grammar, linguistics, phrases and idioms and many other English language skills. We plan to publish it in a booklet format and make it available at a discounted price as a package to English language students in Yemeni universities and all interested.

We also plan to expand the education supplement to include more interactive features and perhaps competitions between university colleges around the country.

However, the most exciting point is that the number of readers among the Yemeni youth is increasing rapidly. They understand that English is an important language and even their ticket to a better and global career. This is why we are encouraged to take this service further for the sake of youths' development and the country's prosperity as a whole.

Finally, all our gratitude to Dr. Sahu who has been the man behind this project, and who has given it his uttermost, even in the darkest hours and when he was very ill. As we celebrate the supplement's ten years anniversary, we hope that we continue to provide and inform in a professional way, to fulfill the newspaper's founder's dream for Yemen through the Yemen Times: "To make Yemen a good world citizen".

*Nadia Al-Sakkaf*

The opposition: Between boycotting  
and postponing the elections

By: Hassan Abbas Antar

Events proceed at a rapid rhythm and the Election Day gets nearer and nearer while other parties in the political game are still in a state of growing controversy and exchange of accusations over various political issues, particularly those related with reforming the election system and implementing agreed-upon amendments.

The opposition did not expect that the ruling General People's Congress (GPC) would continue endorsing the old election law. At this point, the arguable matter is that how Parliament members should vote for and approve a law, which is already placed into effect without being amended, while the ruling party continues to take further steps until it reached the phase of naming members of voter register review and correction committees.

Until the moment, it is impossible for anyone to predict how the next developments in the

political scene will look like. However, through the most recent political developments and interactions, we can draw an approximate picture of what will happen in the near future.

Joint Meeting Parties (JMP), known as the major opposition coalition in Yemen, insist that the old election system must be amended, and the proposed amendments include approving the proportional list, purifying the voter register from any legal violations and receiving a soft copy of the voter register after being reviewed and corrected. The opposition parties, which the Supreme Commission for Election and Referendum (SCER) has promised to give a soft copy of the corrected voter registers since the most recent presidential and local elections in September 2006, also threatens to boycott the upcoming parliamentary elections and undertake several protesting actions and activities.

## A unified position

The one, who reads or hears

speeches of opposition parties, most notably the Islamist Islah Party, may suspect that boycotting the elections has become a well-studied option and executable. But in fact, the idea of boycotting the elections is nothing more a type of political representation meant to demonstrate a unified position of the various JMP member parties that have various rightist and leftist orientations.

## Concessions in exchange for participation

In addition, the idea of boycotting the elections is meant to increase pressure on the ruling party and press it to make some concessions in exchange of participating in the elections. Undoubtedly, the ruling party realizes how important it is to have the opposition parties participate in the upcoming elections. It realizes well what the consequence would look like if JMP member parties boycotted the elections.

The ruling party admits that it will face internal and foreign embarrassment that may cause the

vote results lose its credibility in case the opposition parties boycott the elections. It also admits that local and international pressures on the regime will be on the rise in event the ruling party runs in the elections alone.

Therefore, GPC is currently working harder to persuade even some of the effective opposition parties to participate in the upcoming elections in order to add legitimacy to the electoral process on the basis of already known vote result.

As GPC will be hurt if JMP boycotts the elections, the latter will be hurt more than the former, particularly in event its opposition was proved passive and ineffective.

The most recent initiative made by President Saleh, which suggested presenting the proposed amendments to the election law once again to Parliament and recomposing SCER by adding JMP representatives, hasn't met JMP's expectations. The opposition coalition primarily focuses on correcting the voter register, getting a soft copy of it and approving the

proportional list before reshuffling SCER.

Nobody can rule out potential deals between both sides to reach a compromise in the days to come, particularly as the previous electoral processes saw numerous deals of this kind. The JMP members fear that one of them may decide to participate in the elections, thereby hurting other allies in the coalition.

Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP) admits how much it will cost it if it boycotts the elections like it did in 1997. And, the Islah Party admits that boycotting the elections means that the next Parliament formation will include no one of its representatives. Other parties in the opposition coalition admit that retaining the old formula of the voter register and the election system will lead to a landslide victory for the ruling party. Consequently, the days to come may see unprecedented political surprises in the form of deals in exchange for concessions and the likes.

*Source: Al-Tagheer.com*

## Knowledge is not a closed and fixed Salafi circle (1)

By: Ahmad Al-Hubeishi

In his valuable study on the position of some Islamist groups in the west, which was published by the Al-Arabi, a Kuwaiti magazine, in May 1992, the Islamic Thinker Hussein Ahmad Amin established a historical comparison between this position and other similar positions in other religions. He pointed out that the historical experiences signaled the emergence of solitary religious groups in several communities.

The author added that these groups intend to close the doors before them, live in isolated places and avoid liberalism or communication with scientific and intellectual currents seen by their communities at various times.

Amin clarifies his idea in detail, saying, "This is what has happened in the Islamic world at the very

beginning of the 1930s when Islamist groups began promoting a call, which is totally different from that of Islamic moderators, and also known as followers of Tahtawi and Mohammed Abdu. They view those moderators as heralds, who promote westernism and secularism as they don't criticize the western values, but rather impersonated them for Islam."

Amin adds, "Generating their initial support from the Muslim Brotherhood Movement, those Islamist groups went on to say that Islam alone is able to confront the above-said challenges without any need to get quotes from other civilizations. However, they only succeeded in highlighting some points and issues they focused on and repeated many times. By these issues, I mean usury and bank interests, appearance of women in public and birth control. They avoided using methodologies of scientific

and historical researches in human sciences." According to those groups, the concept of knowledge and information is stable and immortalized, thus producing their findings:

First: According to these Islamist groups, knowledge is no longer a creative and dynamic element in the field of intellectualism. As a result, this contributes to repressing any free intellectual activity under the pretext that it violates the Salafi ideology.

Second: Viewing knowledge as a closed and fixed circle makes it difficult for one to accept or create new knowledge unless it is documented in the old Salafi thought.

Third: The means of acquiring knowledge is to compile it from ancestors' books or any modern books with cited quotes from the ancestors'. These groups don't promote excerpting experiences and free

thinking. All these consequences produced a wrong picture among non-Muslims that Islam will have no prosperous future as long as it is unable to cope with developments.

In this context, Dr. Ishaq Al-Husseini in his book "Muslim Brothers" and Ghazi Al-Tawba in his book "Contemporary Islamic Thought" noted that Hassan Al-Banna, Abdulqader Awda and Sayed Qutb, who were assassinated or executed, were more adherent to Salafism and desirous of violence.

## Liberal approach to modern thought

On the contrary, the Brotherhood School in Syria, represented by Mustafa Al-Sayai, Mohammed Al-Mubarak and Maaruf Al-Dawalibi, demonstrated a liberal approach toward the modern thought. Both Al-Sayai and Al-Mubarak participated in the parliamentary elections in the

1950s and led the Islamic Socialist Front at the Syrian Parliament in 1959.

The Top Guide of Muslim Brothers in Syria authored his famous book "Socialism of Islam" in the same year. The Jordanian School, however, moved toward violence in the 1950s following the crackdown on Muslim Brothers in Egypt over an assassination attempt against former Egyptian President Jamal Abdulnaser in 1954.

At that time, Taqi Addin Al-Nabhani founded what was called "Islamic Liberal Party", stressing the necessity of establishing the Caliphate State before reforming the political, economic and social situations in the country. Other various groups, derived from the Muslim Brotherhood Movement, moved toward thinking and violence.

*Source: 14October.com*

Why is the opposition boycotting  
the upcoming elections?

By: Ahmad Othman

Boycotting the upcoming parliamentary elections seems to be a compulsory

decision taken by Joint Meeting Parties, as well as a bitter option the opposition coalition bravely selected for the sake of homeland. In loud voice, JMP disclosed its decision to boycott the upcoming, however, the electorate is suggesting that JMP should conciliate with the ruling party and its government as they don't know what will be in their favor.

By boycotting the elections, the opposition coalition will make numerous achievements in the long and short terms. Most importantly, JMP will throw the ball to the field of people, who are concerned with the matter and should stand against the will of single and permanent player in this field, which is the ruling General People's Congress (GPC).

"Why is the opposition boycotting the elections?" is an important question JMP should answer with monotonous details through its popular dialogues, publications and meetings with the public. The answer to this question needs to be changed into a multi-faced cultural and

political strategy in order for the ordinary citizens to understand that the opposition coalition decided to boycott the upcoming elections for their sake, and to increase their value in this homeland. These citizens will have understood that the coalition did not decide to boycott the upcoming elections for the sake of political parties or groups.

It is insufficient to address this message (Why did JMP decided to boycott the elections) to the educated elite, the ruler or the international community, as the primary challenge relates with how this message can be delivered to the ordinary citizens with the intention of enabling them to learn how to practice their democratic right and defend their interests collectively.

## The source of the problem:

Delivering the above-said message is a very difficult task, however, it is great and necessary in order to inform the ordinary citizens about all the direct and indirect risks related with the election, particularly as those

citizens still view the election as an affair that doesn't concern them, and therefore they needn't involve themselves in the issue. This is the primary source of the problem.

No wonder that elections are the spirit of democracy, however, boycotting the elections amid irresponsible experience and dominance of GPC constitutes an urgent necessity to rescue the nation and draw citizens' attention to what is going wrong with our democratic experience. Like a hunger strike, boycotting the elections is a legal means to protest against violations, which a particular political party commits against homeland.

The decision to boycott the upcoming parliamentary elections is the only way to reform dire situations nationwide and draw citizens' attention toward what is going wrong with Yemen's democracy.

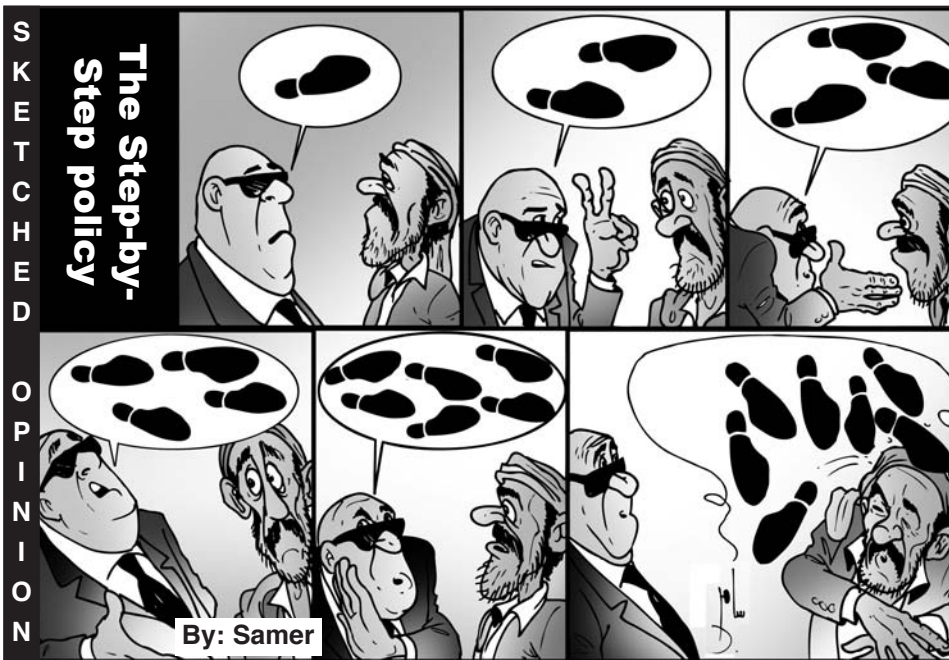
The job of national parties is nothing more than establishing evidence of what is wrong for people and help them learn about a potential collapse threatening

all the so far reached achievements. Citizens needn't listen or consider rumors that any parties boycotting the elections will lose. When the national achievements are threatened, there will be no feasibility of calculating victories and losses as political parties do. The job of national groups is to sacrifice for the sake of people and public interests.

It doesn't matter that parties may lose or sacrifice. These parties should do their best for the sake of Yemeni people. How people, homeland and democracy can benefit from rigged elections that only help the "democratic nightmare" survive for a longer time period and promote corruption.

When JMP boycotts the election with a good spirit, this means that it said the right before an irresponsible ruler. By sticking to its decision to boycott the election, JMP will lay the foundation of building a strong and modern Yemen.

*Source: Al-Sahwa weekly*



By: Samer

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# Yemen Press Review



**Al-Sahwa.net, affiliated with the Islah Party**  
**Thursday, Nov. 6, 2008**

## Top Stories

- Ibb-based JMP branch holds broad meeting to activate efforts of boycotting voter registration committees
- Head of Islah Party parliamentary bloc: Government has no humanitarian actions toward Hadramout catastrophe
- JMP sticks to reforming the election system

Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) has stressed the necessity of carrying out all-out election reforms as a positive step toward peaceful and democratic change, the website reported, adding that during its regular meeting, the opposition coalition stated it would struggle in order to amend the election law according to the Agreement of Principles it signed with the ruling General People's Congress (GPC) and the European Union Election Observation Mission.

JMP further stressed that it would do its best to eliminate all illegitimate procedures taken by the ruling party regarding elections and approve a new draft election law which includes recommendations of EUEOM, Agreement of Principles, as well as real representation of women.

According to the website, in its report on Yemen's presidential and

local elections in September 20006, EUEOM recommended that the proportional list should be adopted. Consequently, we worked harder after those elections to execute the mutually agreed-upon recommendations. There are other issues related with the election management body and voter registers. Some of these issues were contained in the proposed amendments to the election law while others not as the authority claimed that it faced difficulty treating those issues.

The opposition parties also emphasized the necessity of annulling all the procedures made after August 18, if Yemen wants to prepare well for the upcoming electoral process. Situations seem to have improved. "And we always attempt to improve conditions of the electoral process and annul the post-August 18 procedures. I think that the upcoming elections will not be conducted unless all the requirements of free and fair elections are satisfied," the JMP chairman, Sultan Al-Atwani said.

All the procedures so far taken by GPC contradict the electoral legislation, the Constitution and the norms according to which political parties behaved during non-election times. Al-Atwani noted, "We therefore labeled these procedures as illegal and any actions taken by SCER or its affiliate committees are illegal too. We clearly declared that we never accept any procedure taken by the illegally-composed SCER, and therefore refused to participate in the voter registration committees in order for us not to look as submissive to what takes place on the ground."



**Al-Motamar.net, affiliated with the General People's Congress (GPC)**  
**Wednesday, Nov. 5, 2008**

## Top Stories

- International community praises government's effort in assisting affected residents
- President Saleh praises responsible cooperation with disaster-affected areas
- SCER doesn't rule out JMP's involvement in voter registration staff

Member of the Supreme Commission for Elections and Referendum (SCER) Abedu Al-Janadi said that staff of the voter registration committees, formed from the education sector to revise and correct voter registers undoubtedly has their political and party affiliation, the website reported. "We don't rule out that the voter registration staff involve members, who are either Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) members or sympathizers.

Al-Janadi affirmed that members from the opposition coalition are present in those committees or ready to take part in carrying out the process of revising voter registers as they are from education employees before their being party members.

Meanwhile the main committees began on Sunday receiving heads and

members of the sub-committees of men and women to be in charge of the process of revising voter registers that is scheduled to begin on the 11th of November.

On the other hand, member of the SCER Dr Mohammed Abdullah Al-Siyani said the, main committees would begin Tuesday to replace the absent members from a standby list.

On a side note, the website reported that Assistant Secretary General of the General people's Congress (GPC) Dr Ahmed Ubaid Bin Daghr expressed last week his regret that leaders of the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP) have lost the ability to distinguish between the right and wrong, thereby claiming responsibility for only what is right, while reality and history belie day by day the results they have reached or are going to reach.

Commenting on statements by YSP Secretary General Dr Yassin Saeed Nouman, Bin Daghr said, "The socialists have considered themselves as representatives of the south and by that they do not only deny the right of the President who received the support of the majority of the south in the elections of 2006 or the MPs representing the people of the south local councilors elected by sons of the south but they also deny the right of their partners JMP and all the national force,s some of which were supported to represent sons of the south."

Bin Daghr addressed Nouman by saying that those who represent the sons of the south are their representatives at the parliament and the President is whom the sons of the south had granted their votes in the

presidential elections, adding that sons of the south did not vote for the presidential candidate of JMP, a suspicious alliance, YSP is affiliated with. Bin Daghr added that the YSP contested in the local elections and before them the parliamentary ones, and any votes it won reflect the size of support and popularity it enjoys on the ground.



**26September.net, affiliated with Yemeni Army**  
**Thursday, Nov. 6, 2008**

## Top Stories

- Government to meet with donors to discuss reconstruction of flood-hit areas

Under chairmanship of Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs and Minister of Planning and International Cooperation AbdulKarim Al-Arhabi, the government is expected to hold on Thursday a meeting with the donors to discuss the mobilization of the financial resources for facing the damage caused by the floods in Hadramout, Al-Mahrah and lately in Hodeidah, the website reported in its lead story.

According to the website, Several representatives of international donors and the Gulf donors' funds in Yemen will attend the meeting, Director-general of International Cooperation, Nabil Shaiban told 26 September Net.

The meeting acquired more impor-

tance as Shaiban expressed for it will review the survey's results carried out by the United Nations in assessing the urgent humanitarian needs in the flood-prone areas, in addition to discussing the survey's results carried out by the World Bank (WB) with regard to damage caused by the floods on the infrastructures, facilities and housings.

The meeting will assess the size of the general damage and identify the steps to collect the financial resources so as to proceed the reconstruction process in the flood-prone areas, Shaiban added.

On a side note, the website reported that the government reviewed in its cabinet's meeting held on Tuesday transport minister's report on situation of ground, air and marine transport in Yemen.

The cabinet formed a committee of concerned ministers to study the report and inform the cabinet about the outcome reached by efforts to settle difficulties and obstacles facing transport sector in order to improve it.

The report included inclusive analysis to the current situation of transport sector, mechanisms of its work, measures and projects in transport field and obstacles and difficulties facing it as well as future intentions for improving it according inclusive prospective.

The cabinet also approved mechanism suggested by the ministerial committee for distributing wheat assistance provided by the United Arab Emirates to Yemen. The cabinet approved distributing this assistance to all cases affiliated with social care across the country.

## A conspiracy so immense

By: Naomi Wolf

Is this the Age of the Conspiracy Theory? Plenty of evidence suggests that we are in something of a golden age for citizen speculation, documentation, and inference that takes shape – usually on the Internet – and spreads virally around the globe. In the process, conspiracy theories are pulled from the margins of public discourse, where they were generally consigned in the past, and sometimes into the very heart of politics.

I learned this by accident. Having written a book about the hijacking of executive power in the United States in the Bush years, I found myself, in researching new developments, stumbling upon conversations online that embrace narratives of behind-the-scenes manipulation.

There are some major themes. A frequent one in the US is that global elites are plotting – via the Bilderberg Group and the Council on Foreign Relations, among others – to establish a "One World Government" dominated by themselves rather than national governments. Sometimes, more folkloric details come into play, broadening the members of this cabal

to include the Illuminati, the Freemasons, Rhodes Scholars, or, as always, the Jews.

The hallmarks of this narrative are familiar to anyone who has studied the transmission of certain story categories in times of crisis. In literary terms, this conspiracy theory closely resembles The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, featuring secretive global elite with great power and wicked aims. Historically, there tends to be the same set of themes: fearsome, uncontrolled transformative change led by educated, urbanized cosmopolitans.

Students of Weimar Germany know that sudden dislocations and shocks – rapid urbanization, disruption of traditional family and social ties, loosening of sexual restrictions, and economic collapse – primed many Germans to become receptive to simplistic theories that seemed to address their confusion and offer a larger meaning to their suffering.

Similarly, the "9/11 Truth Movement" asserts that al-Qaeda's attack on the Twin Towers was an "inside job." In the Muslim world, there is a widespread conspiracy theory that the Israelis were behind those attacks, and that all Jews who worked in the buildings stayed home that day.

Usually, conspiracy theories surface where people are poorly educated and a rigorous independent press is lacking. So why are such theories gaining adherents in the US and other affluent democracies nowadays?

Today's explosion of conspiracy theories has been stoked by the same conditions that drove their acceptance in the past: rapid social change and profound economic uncertainty. A clearly designated "enemy" with an unmistakable "plan" is psychologically more comforting than the chaotic evolution of social norms and the workings – or failures – of unfettered capitalism. And, while conspiracy theories are often patently irrational, the questions they address are often healthy, even if the answers are frequently unsourced or just plain wrong.

In seeking answers, these citizens are reacting rationally to irrational realities. Many citizens believe, rightly, that their mass media are failing to investigate and document abuses. Newspapers in most advanced countries are struggling or folding, and investigative reporting is often the first thing they cut. Concentration of media ownership and control further fuels popular mistrust, setting the stage for

citizen investigation to enter the vacuum.

Likewise, in an age when corporate lobbyists have a free hand in shaping – if not drafting – public policies, many people believe, again rightly, that their elected officials no longer represent them. Hence their impulse to believe in unseen forces.

Finally, even rational people have become more receptive to certain conspiracy theories because, in the last eight years, we actually have seen some sophisticated conspiracies. The Bush administration conspired to lead Americans and others into an illegal war, using fabricated evidence to do so. Is it any wonder, then, that so many rational people are trying to make sense of a political reality that really has become unusually opaque? When even the 9/11 commissioners renounce their own conclusions (because they were based on evidence derived from torture), is it surprising that many want a second investigation?

Frequently enough, it is citizens digging at the margins of the discourse – pursuing such theories – who report on news that the mainstream media ignores. For example, it took a "conspiracy theorist," Alex Jones, to turn up documentation of microwave

technologies to be used by police forces on US citizens. The New Yorker confirmed the story much later – without crediting the original source.

The mainstream media's tendency to avoid checking out or reporting what is actually newsworthy in Internet conspiracy theories partly reflects class bias. Conspiracy theories are seen as vulgar and lowbrow. So even good, critical questions or well-sourced data unearthed by citizen investigators tend to be regarded as radioactive to highly educated formal journalists.

The real problem with this frantic conspiracy theorizing is that it leaves citizens emotionally agitated but without a solid ground of evidence upon which to base their worldview, and without constructive directions in which to turn their emotions. This is why so many threads of discussion turn from potentially interesting citizen speculation to hate speech and paranoia. In a fevered environment, without good editorial validation or tools for sourcing, citizens can be preyed upon and whipped up by demagogues, as we saw in recent weeks at Sarah Palin's rallies after Internet theories painted Barack Obama as a terrorist or in league with terrorists.

We need to change the flow of information in the Internet age. Citizens should be able more easily to leak information, pitch stories, and send leads to mainstream investigative reporters. They should organize new online entities in which they pay a fee for direct investigative reporting, unmediated by corporate pressures. And citizen investigators should be trained in basic journalism: finding good data, confirming stories with two independent sources, using quotes responsibly, and eschewing anonymity – that is, standing by their own bylines, as conventional reporters do.

This is how citizens can be taken – and take themselves – seriously as documenters and investigators of our common situation. In a time of official lies, healthy investigative energy should shed light, not just generate heat.

*Naomi Wolf, the author of The End of America: Letter of Warning to a Young Patriot and Give Me Liberty: A Handbook for American Revolutionaries, is co-founder of the American Freedom Campaign, a US democracy movement.*  
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www.project-syndicate.org

## Development beyond 2015

By: Jean-Michel Severino

It is now halfway to the target date of 2015 for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – the ambitious blueprint, backed by the entire development community, for development in the world's poorest countries. In the wake of the global financial crisis, which is about to hit the developing world, it is time to ask the right questions about the international community's commitment to achieving these goals.

Sadly, we know that most countries will not meet the objectives by 2015. And the global food and financial crises threaten to stymie recent progress. If the global poverty reduction target is met, it will be due to high growth in emerging countries such as China or India rather than to a decline in absolute poverty in the

neediest countries.

This is worrisome, because it is a symptom of two more significant ills. First, the international community seems to be suffering from schizophrenia: whereas all countries solemnly affirmed their commitment to the MDGs, few have provided the means to achieve them. The reality is that aid increased only slightly over the 2000-2006 period: because of massive debt write-offs, the substantial increase in official development assistance did not translate into new and available funds on the ground.

The MDGs were meant to help international solidarity move from a logic of inputs (how much aid do we give?) to one of outputs (what concrete impact are we aiming for?). But with deliverable aid levels remaining practically constant, and given strong population growth, notably in Africa,

the international community has not given itself sufficient means to reach its ambitious targets.

Second, this poor performance shows how short-sighted the international community can be. Global responsibility to assist developing nations goes far beyond the MDGs – in both time and scale. The pace of sustainable development is necessarily slow. In areas such as health or education, the acceleration needed to meet the targets in many countries would be faster than anything we have witnessed in history. While more action is needed to accelerate progress, a failure to achieve the MDGs by 2015 would not mean that they are worthless, or that aid is inefficient. Achieving these goals is an important step on the slow path to lasting development.

Thus, by focusing on the (arbitrary)

date of 2015, we fail to perceive the fundamental change that the MDGs represent. By aiming for targets that are far out of reach of the poorest countries' public finances, the international community has agreed to substitute itself for those states in providing essential social services through long-term financial transfers.

The current global inequalities in living standards are close to those that existed within our own societies over a century ago. Globalization has generated a new global market, but also global risks that beg for collective management. No single economic space has ever been created without the parallel establishment of solidarity mechanisms to handle these risks and care for those left behind.

What is at stake with the MDGs is the creation on a global scale of the same sort of public redistribution

mechanisms that were progressively established in the world's richest societies over the course of the twentieth century. As most of today's financial, environmental, or sanitary crises are unpredictable and ignore borders, it is in everyone's interest to create a global "social safety net" that will span an indefinite period of time.

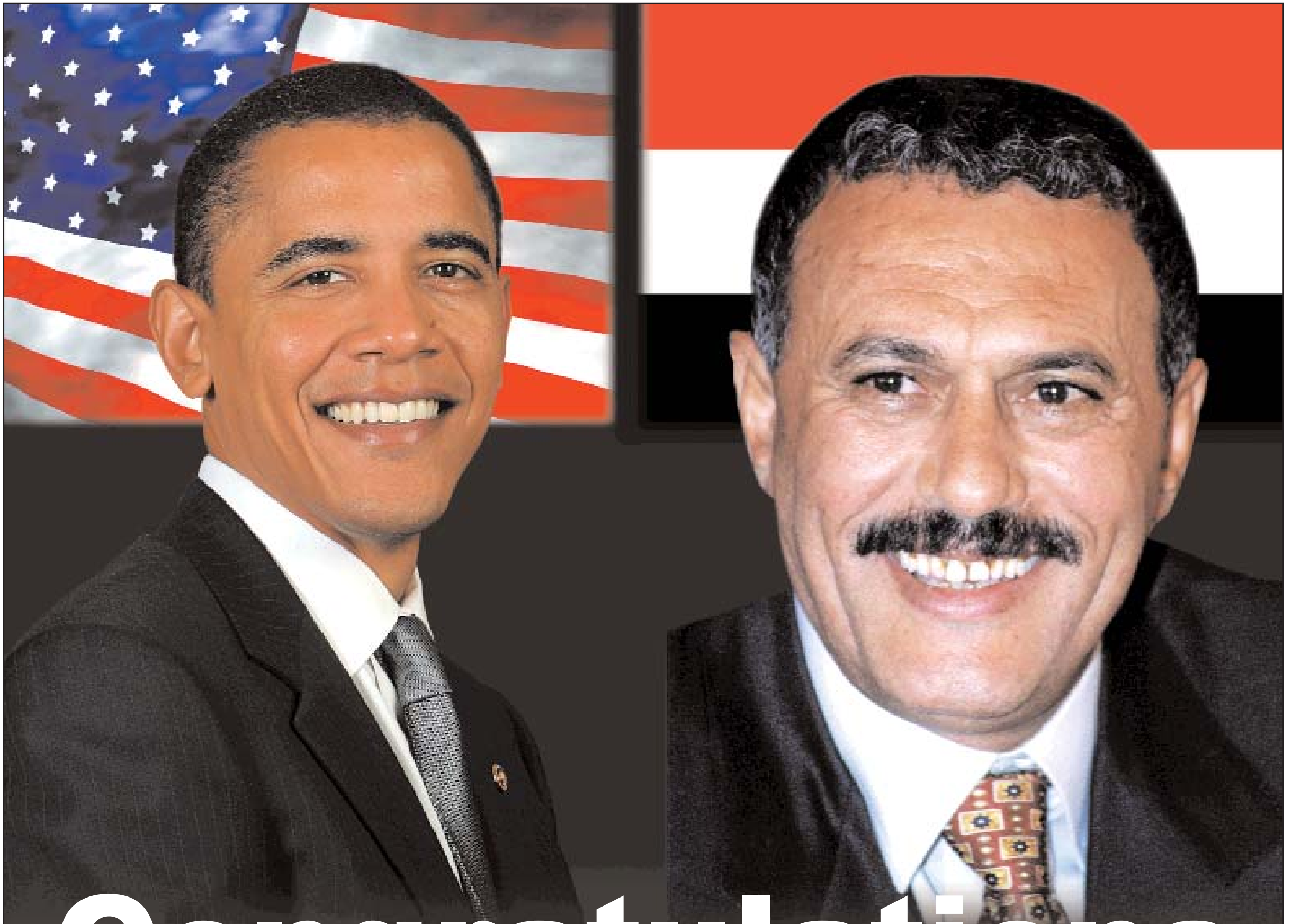
If we accept the logic behind the more pragmatic and ambitious philosophy of international aid that underpins the United Nations' "Millennium Declaration," we must quickly adapt our instruments to ensure more sustainable and predictable modes of financing. This is one of the main aims of global taxation mechanisms, such as the International Finance Facility initiative and the Airplane Tax. We also need instruments that are better suited to delivery of long-term international

transfers. Finally, we must find ways to nurture stronger and more vigorous economic growth, a prerequisite to solid investment in social sectors.

Beyond the MDGs semi-success or semi-failure by 2015, the key question is whether the international community will be able to overcome its myopia and schizophrenia. It must accept the idea of a long-term international redistribution policy to assist those who are excluded from the benefits of globalization, and give itself the means to implement this ambitious policy. Otherwise, any success in the battle on poverty is bound to be short-lived.

*Jean-Michel Severino is CEO of the French Development Agency and a member of www.ideasfordevelopment.org.*  
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# Ninety four percent of Yemeni children vulnerable to violence

By: Mahmoud Assamiee

Nearly 94 percent of Yemeni children aged between two and 14 years old are subject to psychological or physical violence from their parents or guardians, according to the Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey (MICS) conducted by Ministry of Public Health and Population in September 2006.

The results of the survey, which took place over a period of 21 days, were made public at a workshop held last month. They show that 82 percent of these children are subjected to physical punishments, of whom 44 percent were boys and 38 percent were girls.

The survey shows that 25 percent of children aged between 2-9 years are affected with at least one type of disability, the more widespread being delayed motor skills and slow cognitive development in that order.

The results also reveal that early education in Yemen is rare as only 3 percent of children aged between 3 and 5 years old attend early education institutions and only 40 percent of children attend first grade of elementary school when they are six years old.

Up to 68 percent of children aged from 6 to 14 attend elementary school, of which 76 percent are boys and 60 percent are girls. On average, only 24 percent of adolescents aged between 15 and 17 years old attend secondary school, with 32 percent for boys and 15 for girls.

As for illiteracy among mothers, the health ministry's survey shows that on average 35 percent of married Yemeni women aged between 15 and 24 are literate, with 59 percent of married women in urban areas and 26 percent of married women in rural areas being able to read and write.

The study, which involved 4,000 families across the country, reveals that only 22 percent of children under the age of 5 years of age were registered at birth. The widespread reason for this low statistic was the unawareness of the importance of obtaining a birth certificate for one's child.

With regards to vaccination, around



A child beggar being protective of his little sister who also begs in the streets. Many of the domestic violence cases push little children to the street where they face an even harsher environment and are vulnerable to more violence.

38 percent of children aged between 12 and 23 months old had been completely vaccinated during the period the survey took place, and that 18 percent of them have received all vaccinations before reaching one year of age.

The study reveals that 34 percent of children aged under five years old had diarrhea during the first two weeks of the survey, of which nine out of ten children have received oral re-hydration salts to help them get better.

In the same period, 13 percent of under-fives were suffering from acute respiratory tract infection. Dangers of the infection in Yemen have increased due to the use of solid cooking fuel, which is used by 30 percent of families in urban areas and 52 percent in rural areas.

The mortality rate for children under five years old in Yemen decreased from 102 per 1000 during the five years before the survey to 78 per 1000 cases after conducting the survey.

The results of the survey also reveal that the mortality rate among newborns has dropped to 37 per 1000 in comparison to 69 per 1000 during the five years before the survey. Fifty percent of newborn mortality in Yemen occurs during the first month of age, which means that

nearly one child in 15 dies before reaching one year of age.

Conducted upon directions of the World Health Organization (WHO) toward achieving the health-related Millennium Development Goals, the study indicated that 28 percent of married women use contraceptives or birth-control and 47 percent of women receive health care during pregnancy, but only 24 of them deliver at health centers.

The results show that the fertility rate in Yemen is 5.2 deliveries to every woman. They show that the fertility rate in rural areas is higher than that in urban areas, with 6 children per woman in rural areas and 4 children per mother in urban areas.

The survey also reveals that 59 percent of Yemenis use improved water resources -74 percent in urban areas and 52 percent in rural areas- and that 52 percent of Yemenis live in houses with improved sanitation facilities, while 31 percent lack this basic service.

Similar surveys that have been carried out in 50 countries across the world with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Arab League's Pan Arab Project for Family Health.

## Afghanistan's dying mothers

By: Carol Mann

Roughly 75% of Afghan newborns that die do so because of lack of food, warmth, and care. Unloved little girls fare the worst. In Afghanistan as a whole, a woman dies of pregnancy-related causes every 27 minutes – and perhaps even more frequently, because many such deaths go unrecorded. Many, perhaps most, are under sixteen years of age.

The Taliban – blamed nowadays for just about all of Afghanistan's ills – have officially been gone for nearly seven years, so why are conditions still so abysmal?

In Kabul and Herat, mobile phones abound, a tooth-eroding concoction called "Afghan Cola" is sold, the Internet works (sometimes), there are ATM machines, sophisticated heroin laboratories, four-wheel drive vehicles, five-star hotels, ads for private banks – all the trappings of globalized modernity. Yet so many women die like flies, in pools of blood and deep-rooted indifference.

While billions of dollars in aid have led to improvements in urban areas, where health facilities have been built and midwives trained, the overall maternal death figures have hardly changed. As one doctor told me: "A competent midwife or nurse would rather be out of work in Kabul than stuck in a remote village." But most Afghans live in remote villages – those in Badakhshan can be reached only after a day's bumpy ride on a donkey.

This miserable situation has been attributed to various causes, mainly lack of infrastructure and local economic conditions. But cultural questions must also be addressed, because gender discrimination is the most important cause of maternal mortality.

In Afghan society, discrimination begins at birth. One obvious reason is that a boy is destined to support his parents and much of his family all his life, and therefore represents a long-term investment, whereas a girl will be given over to her husband's family as soon as possible. Feeding a girl is seen as effectively looking after someone else's property.

Once, I heard a dreadful story of a breech birth which a traditional midwife did not know how to handle. In the end, she wrenched the baby's body out, severing it from its head, which remained inside the mother's womb. It took six days to get the woman to a hospital in Jalalabad though it was not very far from where she lived. She somehow survived, with major health complications, including permanent fistula, which will condemn her to a life of exclusion from her family and unrelieved misery. That tragedy can be read on many levels, each more heart-rending than the next. But note that it occurred near a health facility. As soon as the midwife saw that the baby was coming out feet forward, she must have known that there was little she could do to save either mother or baby. Even before that, she would have noticed that the child had not turned properly, and that major problems were on the way.

This means that someone – a husband or mother-in-law – had taken the decision not to send the young woman to the hospital, instead keeping her in inhuman suffering for nearly a week.

The solution is not just to build more hospitals, but also to change deep-rooted disdain for women. And, sadly, things have become worse in the past 30 years, as Afghanistan's particular brand of Islam, combined with its legacy of dire poverty and war, compounds an already misogynist pre-Islamic tradition.

Maternal mortality is a sinister consequence of this complex situation. The legal system, schools, and the media could bring change, but no official entity takes the problem seriously enough to initiate effective action. The central reason is despairingly simple: women's lives are not valued, and even women themselves perceive their suffering as being unavoidable.

What Afghanistan needs is an inquest after each death and laws making it a criminal offense to forbid access to medical aid, when available, to women and children (or, more correctly, to children and their children, given that girls are often married by age 14). Prisons, I fear, would be full of abusive husbands and, I regret to say, vengeful mothers-in-law. Health education through public media, reaching distant areas of the country, is an urgent priority, but has been utterly ignored in favor of commercial priorities.

Questioning culture is, of course, a politically incorrect approach. But we must refuse to bow before the altar of tolerance when it comes to what is truly unacceptable, wherever it occurs, and this is what the world is witnessing passively in Afghanistan. Does diversity authorize such brutal deaths and senseless violence against women simply because some supposedly traditional practice allows them to be married before their bodies are ready and denies them health care when they give birth?

The fight against maternal mortality in Afghanistan must become a global priority. Ultimately, a society that allows women to be brutalized will remain a breeding ground of generalized violence.

Carol Mann is Director of FemAid and teaches at the Sorbonne in Paris.  
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**Job Profile:** This is field based position reporting to Project Division Manager, position holder is responsible for overall project execution at site

#### Qualification Criteria

- ¥ Bachelor's degree Mechanical or Industrial Engineering
- ¥ Seven years experience in similar position, preferably within the oil and gas industry
- ¥ Strong project management and prioritization skills
- ¥ Good command of English Language
- ¥ Computer literate
- ¥ Knowledge of Quality and HSE Standards will be an added advantage

### JP002 MECHANICAL ENGINEER

**Job Profile:** This is field based position reporting to the Project Manager, position holder is responsible for mechanical works at site

#### Qualification Criteria

- ¥ Bachelor's degree Mechanical or Industrial Engineering
- ¥ Five years experience, preferably within the oil and gas industry
- ¥ Strong project management and prioritization skills
- ¥ Understanding of designs calculations and analysis of work requirement
- ¥ Good command of English Language
- ¥ Computer literate

### JP003 PIPING/ PROCESS ENGINEER

**Job Profile:** This is field based position reporting to the Project Manager, position holder is responsible for preparation of process viewpoint and conceptual design

#### Qualification Criteria

- ¥ Bachelor's degree in Mechanical or Production Engineering
- ¥ Five years experience, preferably in design of oil & gas facilities
- ¥ Proven track record in Engineering design, process modifications including preparation of PFD & PID's and piping calculations
- ¥ Demonstrate an understanding of design philosophy and Engineering codes
- ¥ Good command of English Language
- ¥ Computer literate

### JP004 INSTRUMENTATION DESIGN ENGINEER

**Job Profile:** This is office based position reporting to the Services & Engineering Manager with frequent field visits, position holder is responsible for all electrical and instrumentation Designs

#### Qualification Criteria

- ¥ Bachelor's degree in Instrumentation Engineering or Equivalent
- ¥ Five years experience in design of field instruments in oil & gas facilities
- ¥ Good track record in instrumentation design, PLC and Process control
- ¥ Strong analytical design skills and Engineering codes
- ¥ Good command of English Language
- ¥ Computer literate

### JP005 ELECTRICAL ENGINEER

**Job Profile:** This is field based position reporting to the Project Manager, position holder is responsible for all sites Electrical works

#### Qualification Criteria

- ¥ Bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering or Equivalent
- ¥ Five years experience in Electrical Installations
- ¥ Good track record in Electrical design and development tasks, including drawings, calculations, cost estimates, and specifications
- ¥ Strong analytical design skills and Engineering codes
- ¥ Good command of English Language
- ¥ Computer literate

### JP006 CIVIL ENGINEER

**Job Profile:** This is field based position reporting to the Project Manager, position holder is responsible for all Civil works at site

#### Qualification Criteria

- ¥ Bachelor's degree in civil Engineering
- ¥ Five years relevant work experience in design, construction and project management
- ¥ Understanding of designs, construction management, cost estimation, designing of remedial systems and preparation of reports
- ¥ Good command of English Language
- ¥ Computer literate
- ¥ Training in ISO QMS/EMS/HSE will have an added advantage

### JP007 QUALITY CONTROL ENGINEER

**Job profile:** This is a field based position reporting to Site construction Manager and Functionally to Head of QC, the position holder is responsible for site quality control activities

#### Qualification Criteria

- ¥ Bachelor's degree in a relevant Engineering discipline
- ¥ Five years relevant work experience in construction QA/QC activities and project management
- ¥ Good command of English Language
- ¥ Computer literate
- ¥ At least Level II NDT certified
- ¥ Knowledge of API and ASME and ISO standards will be an added advantage

### JP008 HSE SUPERVISOR

**Job profile:** This is a field based position reporting to the head of QHSE at Head office, the position holder is responsible for enforcing client and Company HSE rules and improvement of the HSE Management system

#### Qualification Criteria

- ¥ Diploma in any Engineering/science field
- ¥ Five Years experience in the oil and gas sectors as a Safety officer
- ¥ Fluent English
- ¥ IOSH/NEBOSH training
- ¥ Trained First Aider is an added advantage

### JP009 SITE ADMINISTRATOR

**Job profile:** This is a field based position reporting to the Head office HR officer and responsible for camp administration

#### Qualification Criteria

- ¥ Diploma Level Education preferably in Business administration or Human resources
- ¥ Two years Experience in HR or Administration
- ¥ Use of Microsoft applications
- ¥ Understanding of Camp operations
- ¥ Training in HSE will be an advantage
- ¥ Fluent in English and Arabic

### JP010 EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

**Job profile:** Office based position reporting directly to the Chairman Board of Directors, Position holder is responsible for General Diary handling for the Chairman

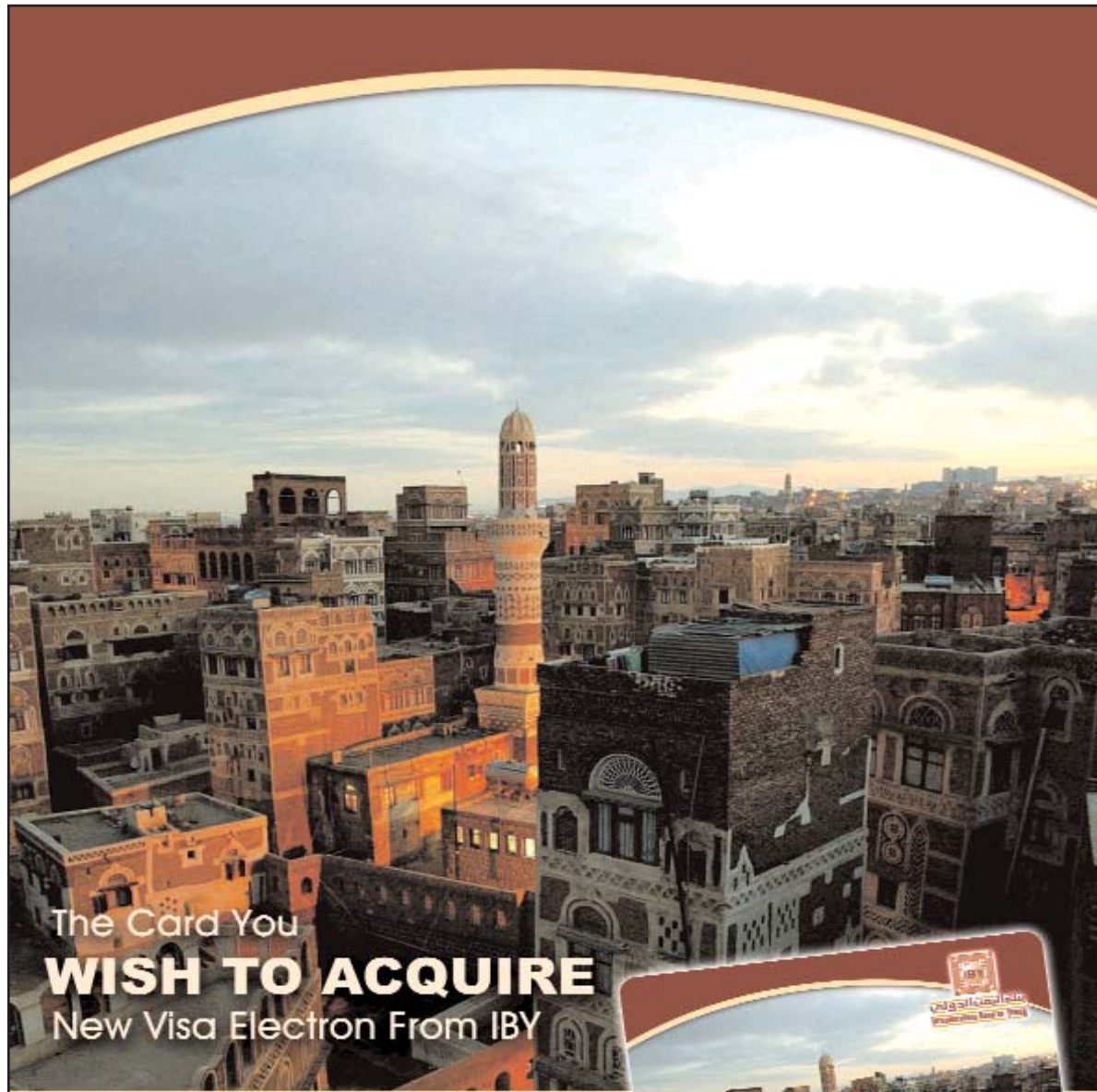
#### Qualification Criteria

- ¥ Minimum Diploma Level Education preferably in Business administration or Secretarial studies
- ¥ Three years experience as Executive secretary
- ¥ Strong organizing skills
- ¥ Use of Microsoft applications
- ¥ Fluent in written and spoken English & Arabic

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# Al-Rawda Grand Mosque

By: Mahmoud Assamiee

**A**l-Rawda Grand Mosque is located in the historical city of Al-Rawda, north of the capital Sana'a. The mosque was built over 400 years ago in 1046 A.H. by Ahmad bin Al-Imam bin Al-Qasem known at that time as Abu Taleb, from whom the current Abu Taleb family members, still powerful in the area, are descendants.

In his will, Al-Imam ordered his son not to change anything in the mosque; and for the most part it has been preserved. The mosque was built in a rectangular shape with three doors in the western wall, three in the southern and one in the eastern wall. It is composed of four galleries which all lead to an open hall in its center.

The northern part of the mosque has eight columns linked to decorated arches in line with the qiblah [direction in which Muslims turn to pray] to the North. In the middle of the qiblah wall stands the mihrab, a hollow arch for the imam to lead worshipers in prayer, surmounted by an arch beautifully carved with verses of the Holy Quran.

On the left side of mihrab, an old inscription bears the date of the mosque's construction and name of its founder.

The mosque's eastern gallery is composed of seven columns carrying arches with two doors, one leading to the mosque's grounds and the other to the library. The western gallery has the same number of columns as its eastern counterpart, but with three doors. In the western quarter, there are two yards.

The southern gallery is made up of two quarters, with eight columns carrying arches facing the qiblah wall, three doors leading to the eastern gallery and two doors leading to the western gallery. In the middle of the wall, there is decorated mihrab on which the name of the founder of the mosque and the date of building are carved. The gallery has three doors leading to southern yard.

The minaret is located in the south-eastern corner of the mosque. It was built next to the mosque's main gate on a large square base to enable it to carry the 20 meter high minaret.

In the southern part of the mosque, a well was drilled during the time of the mosque's foundation and ensures the

irrigation of surrounding farmland. The produce of these fields are sold to provide salaries for the mosque's caretakers to ensure its good maintenance.

"The founder of the mosque also ordered his sons nearly 400 years ago to pay a salary from his own wealth to those who looked after the mosque as well as the muezzin [prayer caller]," says Hasan Abdul-Khaleq who has served in the mosque for 60 years. He adds that the mosque's well has not dried up since its beginnings, even though it is open to all, including people from other areas who come to the well to drink.

Abdul-Khaleq says that the Abu Taleb was very rich with wealth and farms in places other than Sana'a. According to him, the imam's descendants have carried out his will respectively and most of them still live in Al-Rawda.

The founder's father was the leader of the whole area surrounding Al-Rawda at the time of the mosque being built. He faced a rebellion from the Al-Kabsi family but, with the help of his son, arrested all the rebels and imprisoned them.



The minaret is located in the south-eastern corner of the mosque. It was built next to the mosque's main gate on a large square base to enable it to carry the 20 meter high minaret.

## Slowdown in tourism growth reflects current uncertainties



One of the Al-Kaff palaces in Tarim-Hadramout. Despite the fact that tourism in the Middle East is doing better compared to the global scenario, tourism to Hadramout had been greatly affected by local issues such as instability, security and the recent environmental hazard.

By: World Tourism Organization

**T**he latest edition of the UNWTO World Tourism Barometer confirms the rapid slowdown of international tourism growth since mid 2008, reflecting the impact of rising oil prices at the beginning of the year and the deterioration of the economic situation as well as of consumer confidence in recent months. Overall growth for 2008 is though still projected at around 2%, building on the strong results of the first five months. UNWTO's "Resilience Committee" will support its Members with accurate economic analysis and response mechanisms. The tourism sector's effective response to the economic downturn will be discussed at the Global Ministers' Summit at World Travel Market (London, UK, 11 November). A series of regional response groups will follow, starting in the Middle East (Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt, 23-24 November).

After a sound start to the year (international tourist arrivals worldwide averaged 5.7% from January-April), growth fell below 2% in June, July and August as the high price of oil and rising inflation took their toll, and together with recession fears, squeezed travel budgets. For the first eight months of 2008, growth averaged 3.7% compared with the same period in 2007 while for the year as a whole it is now projected to be at around 2% globally.

And, as the current troubled economic scenario is expected to continue into 2009, UNWTO's initial forecast for next year is an even more modest performance.

Asia and the Pacific was the region whose growth has deteriorated most

rapidly so far and after 18 consecutive months of sustained growth, declining from March onwards and even sliding into negative growth in August.

Growth in Europe also stagnated over the northern hemisphere summer months. The Americas, Africa and the Middle East weakened as well, but the slowdown was much less pronounced.

### Inside the regions

Although regional trends may vary as new data becomes available, the Barometer identifies the following regional trends:

- Europe currently stands at +2% for the first eight months of 2008 (well down from the 5% growth of the last two years), and the slowdown has not spared any of its four sub-regions.
- Asia and the Pacific's growth (+4%) is also well behind its 2007 level, with Oceania and North-East Asia suffering the brunt of the downturn in demand.
- The Americas has so far performed better than in 2007 with 6% through the first eight months. The region appears to have only experienced a modest slowdown in July and August.
- The Middle East is once again the star performer in 2008 so far, with growth for the period January through August estimated at 17%. Data, though, is still limited which may lead to the need of revising this estimate.
- Africa's growth is currently running at less than half the level achieved in 2007, and this is still largely thanks to North Africa's strong performance as in Sub-Saharan Africa

average growth has been pulled down noticeably as compared to the 2007 growth rate.

### Prospects

Including August, 23 million more arrivals have been counted for 2008 so far, totalling 642 million international tourist arrivals. But much of the figures for the period January-August reflect the situation before the beginning of the slowdown - following a steady worldwide increase, which even reached 7% in May. The growth in international tourist arrivals fell to less than 2% in June, and 1% in the peak travel months of July and August showing that energy prices, inflation and the credit crunch started to have a real impact on travel and tourism demand.

The economic downturn, combined with the current uncertainties, extreme market volatility and a decline in both consumer and business confidence, are expected to continue taking their toll on demand for tourism - at least in the short to medium term:

- Many businesses are expected to retrench, and any such retrenchment will be quickly felt in consumer markets.
  - Given the current stress on many companies' balance sheets, business travel is also expected to be more adversely impacted than the leisure segment.
  - Unlike previous crisis such as with H1N1 and SARS, the current downturn does not impact on the desire to travel.
- The major concern is about whether one can afford to travel or want to spend on it given the uncertain economic situation. So far international tourism has

resisted the downturn better than other economic sectors such as construction and real estate or car manufacturing. As in previous crisis situations:

- traffic to closer destinations, including domestic travel, is expected to be favoured as compared to long-haul travel;
- segments such as visiting friends and relatives, repeat visitors, as well as special interest and independent travellers are expected to be more resilient;

- the decline in average length of stay as well as on expenditure is projected to be more pronounced than in the overall volume;
- destinations offering value for money and with favourable exchange rates have an advantage as price becomes a key issue;
- companies will and should concentrate on containment of cost in order to keep their competitive edge;
- more than ever it is necessary to closely work together in the tourism value chain, between public and private sector, and destinations with trade.

The Barometer stresses that the anticipated softening of international tourism growth in 2008, and further in 2009, follows four historically strong years. Between 2004 and 2007 international tourist arrivals grew at an extraordinary rate of 7% a year, well above the 4% long-term average.

A detailed forecast for 2008 and 2009 for the world and by region is included in the current issue of the UNWTO World Tourism Barometer.

## Vacancy Announcement Program Manager

### Background:

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**Location:** Sana'a -Yemen

### Qualifications:

- ¥ BA degree in Finance, Financial Management or Business Management.
- ¥ At least 5 years management experience (Banking sector preferred).
- ¥ Proven ability to nurture a smooth working relationship with varied stakeholders (MFIs, banks, technical assistance providers, international donors, research agencies, etc)
- ¥ Sound knowledge of microfinance products and delivery mechanisms is a definite asset
- ¥ Proficiency in written and spoken Arabic and English

### Skills:

- ¥ Financial and analytic skills
- ¥ Administrative skills
- ¥ Demonstrated management skills
- ¥ Strategic thinking.
- ¥ Leadership skills.
- ¥ Good command English (Oral and written).
- ¥ Excellent computer skills.
- ¥ Good communication skills.

### Duties and responsibilities (not limited to):

- Contribute in setting the general strategy of the program.
- Execute the program general strategy approved by the board of directors
- Follow up the application of approved by-laws in the program and ensure its effectiveness and contribution in its development.
- Maintain the portfolio's quality and take all needed procedures to keep its quality.
- Set general plans and report to the board for review and editing as required.
- Determine the program's financial needs and budgeting and review the financial performance and correct any imbalances that could exist.
- Seek financial resources and negotiate with donors within certain limits.
- Manage the program and its branches on a daily basis and determine the program's needs i.e. technical, training, human resources.
- Organize periodical meetings with the branch managers to review and monitor performances.
- Direct and evaluate the employees and help them raise their technical qualifications.
- Report periodical reports and financial statements to the board of directors.
- Perform other tasks that the administration council as requested by.

### Submission guideline:

The application should comprise of a one-page cover letter explaining the applicants' interest and suitability for the position, indicating earliest joining date if selected, and a detailed CV.

Interested candidates should submit their application by email to: [smed@sfd-yemen.org](mailto:smed@sfd-yemen.org) before Nov 20, 2008

Applications received after the closing date will not be considered. Only short-listed candidates will be contacted for interviews.



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Contact: 733638425  
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Contact: 733803194  
■ Bachelor degree in Computer Engineer, diploma in computer science, 10 years experience as a

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■ Experienced M.sc chemistry teacher available for home tuition for grade 5 to grade 12, Ministry syallu bus, Gcse, O level and A level  
Contact: 713812066 - 735399019  
■ Farhan Rajeh, B.a degree in business management, computer diploma in application

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Contact: 711098682  
■ Badr Ali, 2007-2008 Dip. in "Hydraulic and Pneumatic" technical Institute (Alhawban - Taiz)  
Contact: 777548905  
■ Bachelor degree in Computer Science (IT), 3 years experience in (IT), experiences computer

■ Bachelor degree in Art, English language, Computer Diploma, Secretary, customer care, marketing, sales skills, correspondence, and other courses. One year experience in 4 star suites hotel, one year in pubic relation and now work in 4 start hotel.  
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## Cultural engagement outing for college students

By: Yemen Times Staff

**T**wenty Yemeni college students, including five girls, and nine foreign students studying at the Yemen College of Middle Eastern Studies ventured on a one day tour to the outskirts of Sana'a last Friday.

The foreign students came from France, America and Switzerland to study Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies at the YCMES in Sana'a and have been interested in interacting with Yemeni youth and engaging with them culturally.

Abdulrazaq Al-Azazi, editor of the Intilak college newspaper which organized the trip, explained that Yemeni youth wanted to reach out to foreign youth in Yemen and discuss their impressions about Yemen with them.

"They enjoyed the trip and were impressed that Yemeni girls went on such a tour; they said they have never seen Yemeni girls taking part in such an activity," he said.

The students visited the historical site of Ghaiman Palace and the surrounding archeological heritage site which includes an ancient cemetery. They had lunch there and listened to traditional poetry recited by some of the Yemeni students.

Among the issues discussed, especially by the foreign female students,



was how Yemeni men look down at women and sometimes harass foreign girls. They had a negative impression of Yemeni men as being shallow and not respecting girls. But this notion soon changed as on the trip they met fifteen delightful and engaging men from Yemen, who were respectful of other cultures and wanted to create a bridge between Yemeni and foreign students.

"I found that the Yemenis are nice people and enjoyed the trip because it allowed me to meet many new people," said Amélie from France.

Intilak is a monthly college newspaper that had been running for three

years by the media college students at Sana'a University. It aims at promoting youth issues and creating a platform for the students to discuss the challenges they face and find solutions to them in a positive and constructive way.

The Yemeni College for Middle Eastern Studies is the first academic institution of its kind in the Middle East that offers Contemporary Middle Eastern Studies along with Arabic language learning in a purely Arabic environment that encourages learning the language and getting first-hand knowledge of Middle Eastern culture and history.



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