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**Inside:**  **5** Soqatra revisited  **8** Micro exporters demand support, complain of tough Saudi regulations  **9** Bahrain's "anti-porn" campaign heightens censorship

## 5th World Water Forum attempts to bridging divides for water

By: Nadia Al-Sakkaf  
 and World Water Council Media Desk

5th WORLD WATER FORUM  
 ISTANBUL 2009



BRIDGING  
 DIVIDES  
 FOR WATER

ISTANBUL, March 24 — For seven days over 27 thousand participants from 182 countries met in Istanbul to discuss water and sanitation issues and to figure out solutions for global challenges in water and sanitation sectors. Those participating were diplomats and politicians, water group activists, development and human right organizations, individuals who wanted to discuss and lobby for the right to adequate water and sanitation, and experts and business representatives working in the water sector who wanted to exchange knowledge and share the latest techniques in the field.

World Water Forums are held once every three years jointly with the chosen host country. This was the fifth forum that was organized by the World Water Council which had record breaking attendees. Participants included a number of heads of state, more than 90 ministers, 63 mayors, 156 delegations, and 263 parliamentarians from 57 countries.

Despite pressure from human right advocates, the Ministers' Declaration — which wasn't issued until the last day — did not clearly specify adequate water and sanitation as a right for all people; instead, it was specified as a basic need. However, the 22 point declaration highlighted the need to intensify efforts to achieve the millennium development goals, focusing on the 7th goal which concerns water and sanitation. It also included promises to integrate issues of water security, water resources management, and respect for international laws governing water resource conflicts.

Concluding their sessions, the parliamentarians requested an international

'Helpdesk' to aid political cooperation on water legislation. They recognized the need for a globally integrated campaign to face challenges in the water and sanitation sectors such as a lack of centralized systems, climate change, trans-boundary conflicts, and corruption in water management.

Among the many issues debated during the forum was how to balance between steady agricultural growth while maintaining water clean resources for the population. Global food production has so far kept pace with population growth, yet 900 million people remain undernourished and rural migrants are leaving farms for cities. It is further projected that from the years 2000 to 2030 the demand for food crops in developing countries will increase 67 percent, straining the already over-tapped water resources.

Experiences from countries in Latin America, Asia, and Africa described how agricultural industry consumes water resources and pollutes the water environment.

"Population growth means that in the next 40 years there will be an increased demand for energy, food, and water services," said Alexander Mueller, Assistant-Director of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. "The question is how to manage these demands along with our natural resources. Business as usual is not an option for us."

A solution that came out of many high level panels was to invest more in water projects. Annual water-related investments worth US \$400-500 billion have a proven track record of providing consistent and steady yields, even in turbulent times. But today, the public coffers of Europe, America, China, Japan, and of emerging economies have run dry or into debt. As social, economic, and environmental pressures mount, it will be tough to increase or even maintain spending on water and sanitation.

The fear is that with the current world economic crises governments will cut back on funding instead of spending more on water and sanitation, and the already inadequate services will become worse, especially with the



Two Yemeni girls enjoying the cool water of a local reservoir in rural Sana'a.

new challenges ahead caused by climate change. The High-Level Expert Panel on Water and Disaster at the forum identified six specific priorities and forty action guidelines to prevent, prepare for, manage, and recover from water-related disasters. It then called on governments of all nations to endorse and adopt these measures immediately.

Failure to act would turn a grave situation even deadlier. In 2008 alone, 321 water related disasters killed 235,816 people, affected 211 million others, and cost US \$181 billion worldwide.

Moreover, since the greatest yields are public, the biggest investors in water have been, and will remain, centralized federal governments. Every US \$1 spent on the water and sanitation sector yields US \$8 in income, health, productivity, and infrastructure-related jobs.

But in a world of financial uncertainty, the very dynamics that make water a smart public investment tend to make it a safe haven attracting private sector funds. Water's unexciting lack of volatility has now encouraged private funds to flow into the sector.

### Bleak picture on sanitation

Three months after the U.N. concluded its "Year of Sanitation," the 5th World Water Forum convened a panel of experts to accelerate momentum, focus direction, and make progress on sanitation which has remained the planet's deadliest disgrace.

The UN Water Development Report, released two weeks ago, made clear that while access to water in much of the world has improved, access to safe sanitation has not. The consequence of falling short of the Millennium Development Goals is lethal.

Diarrhea kills more children than malaria, tuberculosis, and wars combined. A "business as usual" scenario means 5 billion people, or two thirds of the world population, may suffer without improved sanitation by 2030. By then an estimated 79 million people, mostly children, will have needlessly perished from contaminated water.

"The lack of sanitation means our cities are sitting on top of a ticking time bomb," said Ger Bergkamp, Director General of the World Water Council. "We must work together to find solutions through collaborative approaches and to equip nations with the motives

and the means to defuse it in time."

Due to rapid global urbanization, that sanitation time bomb grows deadlier each day it is neglected, as more than half the world now lives in cities. Also, uncontrolled waste discharges generate water and food diseases, loss of income, increased health costs, massive fish kills, and lead to a massive transfer of poverty downstream.

Globally, 15% of the world's populations are connected to a waste water treatment facility and only 2% to modern waste water treatments. Guy Fradin, CEO of the Seine Normandy Basin Agency (AESN) has made the link between cities and downstream users explicit in practice and urged nations to address water and sanitation together in policies. The World Water Council has maintained that solutions are within reach, given political will.

Treating human waste pollution is hardly expensive — a cheap latrine can slash diarrhea episodes in half and sewers cut outbreaks by two thirds — but nations rarely dedicate more than 0.3% of the global GDP to sanitation. Moreover, experts are urging development agencies to move beyond the traditional paradigm of water-borne

### Did you know?

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sewage and flush toilets to explore creative approaches that employ diverse, appropriate technology and policies.

"If we were building whole cities anew and asked ourselves the question of whether we would supply water and sanitation in a similar or different way than we do today," said Paul Reiter, Executive Director of the International Water Association, "I guess the answer would be that we might accomplish things in a very different way."

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## Piracy "a pretext for military presence"

By: Mohamed Bin Sallam

SANA'A, March 25 — Ideas were bounced around on ways to solve the Somali problem and maintain the security of the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, and the Arabian Sea at the forum "Yemen and the African Horn," which took place at the beginning of this week.

Organized by the French Cultural Center in collaboration with Sana'a University and the European Union in Sana'a, the two-day forum was attended by 25 politicians and academics from Yemen, France, Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Somalia.

Participating members discussed the historical relations between Yemen and the Horn of Africa countries and the geographical strategic position of Yemen that connects the Asia and Africa.

They reviewed the vital role that Yemen can play to tackle all major issues in the region, at the front of which is the piracy off the Somali coasts.

The forum also focused on the importance of the Bab Al-Mandab strait, which is located between Yemen and Djibouti and connects the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden. One of the world's busiest maritime transit points, it is vital to international maritime activities.



Panelists discussed topics related to Yemen and the Horn of Africa

Abdul Karim Al-Eryani, the Yemeni President's political advisor, pointed out at the opening of the forum that Yemeni foreign policy was affected by the situation in the Horn of Africa. "Internal conflicts and changes that took place in Ethiopia and Eritrea led to the flight of a big number of their population, particularly from Somalia, into Yemeni lands," he said.

"Yemen highlighted the issue of Somalia from among all its major con-

cerns in many international quarters," Al-Eryani confirmed. He noted that Yemeni calls to give priority to the Somali issue and the "old-new piracy issue" are met with silence.

He questioned the increase of piracy acts at a time when international forces and navies simultaneously increased their presence in the area. Although he pointed out that he doesn't believe in the so called "conspiracy theory," he referred to some political analysts who

said that "piracy is fabricated" and that "it is merely a justification for the big military presence."

Al-Eryani further wondered whether the "maritime military mobilization in this part of the world will solve the issue of piracy or whether it will recall historical concerns that will result in real piracy that may threaten the world." He further stated that the international community can and should offer assistance to countries overlooking the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden so that they can stabilize and secure the region.

Al-Eryani allocated part of his speech to talk about his "wonderful experience" in dealing with "the French diplomacy with regards to the Hunaish Archipelago that Yemen and Eritrea disputed over and ended with success on behalf of the two countries." He pointed out that the way Yemen dealt with this issue has become an example for many countries in the Horn of Africa to solve their border disputes.

Nabil Al-Soufi, a journalist, criticized the weak political attention with regards to Yemeni relations with Horn of Africa countries, pointing out that the power of Yemen is its location near Africa. He said that the minimal attention towards this issue is because the "political elite is not concerned with the coast."

Awada Hassan Ahmed, professor of

contemporary of history who specializes in Horn of Africa affairs, said that Yemen has been a part of Africa throughout history. He pointed out that Yemenis migrated to the Horn of Africa, disseminated Islam, and worked as merchants in the countries where they settled. Ahmed added that they formed big communities which assumed many important positions as institutions and political parties in those countries.

For his part, Radhwan Hersi, the cultural advisor in the Somali embassy, said that Yemen didn't properly exploit its capabilities to alleviate the crisis in his country. "Yemen has a role and dimensions but it only used some of them. It didn't utilize principles or spiritual ideas to affect Horn of Africa."

Jean-Christophe Victor, founder of the Laboratory of Political Studies and Cartography Analyses (LEPAC), said that religious groups form a threat towards security of the region. He called on Yemen to intervene through diplomatic solutions to solve the crisis of Somalia. He pointed out that Yemen didn't offer security solutions to solve this crisis, further accusing Al-Qaeda of attempting to destabilize security and support extremists. "We are not experiencing military confrontations alone," Victor said. "Rather, we are in a real battle that doesn't have clear goals."

Victor confirmed that the issue of ter-

rorism and terrorism needs to be highlighted by media outlets, criticizing the idea that "media outlets aim to create horror among people through highlighting the issue of terrorism."

Ahmed Mohammed Al-Asbahi, member of the Shura Council, said that Yemen can play an important role in the Horn of Africa through developing mutual relations between Yemen and Horn of Africa countries, recovering settlement to Somalia, and achieving regional partnership.

Al-Asbahi pointed to the role that Israel plays in the conflict south of the Red Sea and in the Horn of Africa. He also said that America entered the Horn of Africa region after the September 11 attacks and established a military base next to the French base in Djibouti, which didn't solve the situation in Somalia.

He said that this military presence aims to protect interests of the great countries alone and ensure their dominance in the region.

Al-Asbahi added that partnership between countries in the region can prevent conflict, terrorism, and drugs and arms trafficking in the Horn of Africa. He said that international powers that are concerned with stability of Horn of Africa can work to enable these countries to establish cooperation and active partnerships and remove fears that affect their mutual trust.

## Trial of murdered doctor finally begins

By: Ali Saeed

SANA'A, March 24 — The Primary Penal Court in Sana'a started on Sunday its trial of seven suspects involved in the murder of Yemeni doctor Dirham Al-Qadasi while on duty in the Hospital of University of Science and Technology in December last year.

After Judge Mohsen Alwan had verified the identity of the accused, the

court's secretary read the charges against the accused.

Yousef Al-Moflehi, Tawfeeq Al-Moflehi, Sadeq Al-Moflehi and Ahmed Al-Moflehi remain at large, but Nasser Al-Moflehi, Mutaher Al-Moflehi and Yousef Ateeq were present in court.

The prosecution stated that the first and the second suspects killed an innocent Muslim, Doctor Dirham Al-Qadasi, while he was on his duty in the University of Science and

Technology's hospital.

The third, fourth, fifth and sixth suspects were accused of giving assistance to the latter by facilitating their entry into the hospital, standing by as the crime was committed and helping them escape afterwards.

The seventh suspect contributed to the crime by hiding the second suspect, Tawfeeq Al-Moflehi, in his house although he knew that he was a fugitive from justice.

The prosecution read out the evidence against them, which included the statements from investigative memos and the testimony of witnesses.

All of the accused denied being guilty, and their lawyer, Abdulmalik Al-Samawi, demanded a photocopy of the case file.

The names of the absent suspects have been made public and they have been ordered to attend the next court session next Monday.

The court also called on the victim's family to attend the trial to introduce any new argument or evidence.

"The victim's family has not yet attended the trial," said Ali Askar, prosecutor of the specialized penal prosecution.

"We will attend the next session on Monday and we have already formed the prosecution committee that will be headed by lawyer Ahmed Al-Wadaee," said Ridwan Al-Rashidi, one of the victim's lawyers.



Despite doctors' efforts to save him, Dr. Al-Qadasi died after he was brutally attacked by tribesmen angry at the death of their 85 year-old relative.

## New antiquities found in Dhamar



A slab of stone engraved with two oxen facing a tree known as "the tree of life"

By: Khaled Al-Hilaly

DHAMAR, March 24 — A Yemeni archaeology team discovered ancient works of art in Humat Thiab, 55 km to the east of Dhamar city last week.

A team of archaeologists from the General Organization for Antiquities and Museum (GOAM) in Sana'a and Dhamar, led by Ali Al-Sanabani, head of GOAM in Dhamar, conducted the excavation that led to the new findings.

"Humat Thiab is a Himyarite city on a hill surrounded with fertile agricultural fields," said archeologist Ahmad Shamsan who traveled from Sana'a to lend his expertise to the project.

"Much of the ancient city remains untouched. The ancient wall of the city, a group of building foundations, walls and remnants of reservoir are still visible," he explained.

"Based on an ancient text and preliminary evidence, the site dates back from

the first to the third century AD," said Shamsan.

"The excavation works have uncovered the northern and eastern parts of the structure of a rectangular building built in black volcanic stones," said Al-Sanabani.

The excavation led to findings including a slab of stone engraved with two oxen facing a tree known as "tree of life" and an incense burner made of volcanic stone. Archeologists also found a small stone statue of a headless woman in sitting position with two lines of Musnad script - used to write the ancient Himyarite language - on her chest, and some pieces of pottery.

"The findings are still under study and we are yet not sure what the building was," Shamsan added.

The site has been a priority for GOAM for the last few years to save the history it contains before inhabitants in the area destroyed it. In the past, people

destroyed the site's walls to use its stones to build their own houses in neighboring villages such as Al-Aqmur, or built new structures on top of the ancient ruins in their original location, said Shamsan.

In Al-Aqmur, there is an inscription in Musnad script on the wall of the old mosque which, according to Yemeni historian Mutahar Al-Eryani, dates back to around 281 AD and the time of King Yasir Yahnam and his son King Shamar Yahrash.

"The [next] phase of the excavation will start within three months and we will continue working on this site," said Al-Sanabani. Dhamar is rich in antiquities and archeological sites due to the extensive human activity in the area due to its agriculturally fertile land and mild climate since the Neolithic period.

The largest archeological museum in the country will soon open its doors in Dhamar.

## Community participation in water projects

By: Jamal Al-Najjar

SANA'A, March 24 — In conjunction with World Water Day, Minister of Water and Environment Abdul Rahman Fadhil Al-Eryani stressed the importance of community participation in water supply and sanitation programs at a conference last Monday in Sana'a.

Participants at the "Community participation for improving water supply and sanitation," organized by the ministry in cooperation with the Yemeni-German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), highlighted the role of partnerships to solve the water crisis in Yemen.

The meeting was attended by community awareness officers, general directors of water institutions in 14 cities in Yemen including Amran, Abyan, Al-Shihr, Dhamar, Ibb, Makha, Zabid, Mahwit, Hajja, Sa'ada, Bajil and Bait Al-Faqih.

"Community participation is the basis of success for most projects that have been carried out in Yemen in the water and sanitation sector," said Al-Eryani. "We hope to enhance the role

of society in the issue."

Al-Eryani suggested that more community associations be established to empower cooperation between citizens and water sector institutions in the governorates, further stressing, "These associations should be given support to encourage them to participate effectively."

He pointed to the role of GTZ in conducting activities and programs in the water sector to raise awareness of the society about water shortage as a major issue in Yemen, rationalization of water and the ways that contribute to reducing the problem.

"Mobilizing community workers is key to development in the water sector," he said. "High value jobs are being created for women under challenging social and economic conditions."

Awareness officers, both men and women, in 14 cities were trained to plan and carry out water programs, said Saleh Al-Hakami, awareness raising expert in the Yemeni-German water sector program.

"These programs focus on rational-

izing water consumption, explaining the relationship of water with health and means of preserving water including rain harvesting, as well as the importance of paying water bills on time to ensure continuous supply," he said.

Um Hani, who raises awareness on these issues in Amran, stressed the challenges to women participation in water awareness campaigns in rural male-dominated communities.

"Women in those areas achieved success through perseverance," she said. "We highlighted the importance of intergenerational dialogue in involving women in the water issue for better results."

The Germany government has allocated more funds for health sector in Yemen, confirmed Jochen Renger, head of GTZ's water sector program in Yemen, explaining that GTZ plans to continue its work in the water sector for several years.

German support to development projects in Yemen through GTZ has reached a reported USD 22 million yearly.

## 300 people homeless after Taiz fire

By: Taiz Bureau

TAIZ, March 25 — When Ahmed Al-Qumail lit a match to make a cup of tea from a traditional firewood stove, he had no idea that this innocent act would leave 300 people sleeping under the stars after 60 of their houses were set ablaze.

This fire accident in his Taiz home quickly spread because his house was made of straw, a blue canvas sheet and old tires. His neighbors' houses were made of the same material. Ahmed and his neighbors are a marginalized minority in Taiz, called the Akhdam.

The inhabitants of Ahmed's neighborhood tried to control the fire by themselves. When they saw they would not be able to do so, they called the firefighters. But by the time the fire truck had arrived, the blaze was out of control and had destroyed all houses completely.

Luckily, nobody was hurt by the fire,

confirmed Ali Mohammed Saif, head of the criminal investigation at the Nassr Police Station, who added that the reasons that the fire spread so fast were both the strong winds and easily flammable materials used in building the areas houses.

Eyewitnesses said that the fire, which broke out last Saturday at nine in the morning, could have been controlled if the firefighters had been quick to arrive. Instead, they reportedly turned up two hours later. When they finally did, their fire fighting trucks were empty. They had to call the private fire fighting trucks of Hayel Sa'eed companies to remedy the situation.

The blaze caused material losses that local authority estimated it YR 5 million.

By the time the blaze was finally put out, all inhabitants of the area were homeless and left with no other choice but to sleep under the open sky.

The local authority in the governorate

met with donor organizations on the day after the fire to discuss the situation and hastily introduce the aid to the victims.

Governor of Taiz Hamood Khaled Al-Sufi and representatives of the French DIA organization financed by European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO), the Social Fund for Development, Yemeni Red Crescent Society, Islah Social Society and the local council in the district of Al-Modhafer attended the meeting.

Local organizations representing the Akhdam in Taiz played a crucial role in informing the local authorities of the incident. DIA contacted the governor and visited the site of the fire.

All people attending announced that they would provide assistance and basic aid like tents and blankets. The local council distributed 150 mattresses, while DIA and Yemeni Red Crescent Society distributed around 50 tents.

Up to 60 families who are now homeless and in need of assistance.

## In Brief

**HODEIDAH****Hodeidah, Mocha receive eight ships, oil tankers**

The seaports of Hodeidah and Mocha received on March 24 eight ships and oil tankers. They unloaded about 51,022 tons of oil, fuel oil, sugar, cement, livestock and goods containers. Two oil tankers unloaded 28,378 tons of oil, a ship unloaded 5,000 tons of sugar and another one unloaded 301

goods containers in Hodeidah seaport. Meanwhile, an oil tanker unloaded 5,374 tons of fuel oil and two ships unloaded 12,270 tons of cement and 4,493 heads of sheep and 798 heads of cows.

**ADEN****Over 500 tons of Yemeni goods exported to Arab, foreign states**

About 517 tons of Yemeni goods were

exported on March 24 via the seaport of Aden to a number of Arab and foreign countries. An official source said that a 400-ton shipment of fish was exported to France, Italy, China, Thailand and Malaysia, while 100 tons of soap and cooking oil were exported to Ethiopia. The source added that 10 tons of liquid milk was exported to Dubai and 7 tons of perfumes to Qatar. Meanwhile, 312 goods containers and 22,083 tons of iron and cement were unloaded on the same day in the Aden seaport.

**SANA'A****Somali refugees arrive on Yemeni coast**

33 Somali refugees, among them 13 women, arrived on the coast of Thubab, Taiz, from the African Horn, Media Security Center has reported. Security bodies collected the refugees from the coastline and deported them to the refugee camp in Kharaz, Lahj. The camp has received 93 Somali refugees,

among them 61 refugees, from Shabwa and 32 refugees from Taiz.

**RABAT****Yemen participates in third meeting on violence against children**

Yemen is participating in the third meeting to follow up the UN Secretary-General's recommendations to stop violence against children, in Rabat. General Director of Social Affairs

Office in Hajja province Haitham Al-Jabri said that the report Yemen will present at the meeting was compiled from questionnaires distributed by the Arab League, including the legal plans to protect children against all forms of violence.

The third meeting of the committee is held under directions of the UN study to stop violence against children and ten countries will participate. It complements the two meetings held in 2008 in Egypt.

## Their News

**PhD students (2) "River Bed Form Evolution Modelling for Flood Management"**

University of Twente Project description and allocation of tasks: The basis for the model research in this project is formed by a morfodynamic dune evolution model that has been developed within de Department of WEM. At the beginning of the project a benchmark study will be carried out by both PhD students in collaboration with experts from the University of Twente, Rijkswaterstaat (Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management), Research Institute Deltares (former WLIDelft Hydraulics) and HKV Consultants. In this benchmark study the existing dune-evolution model will be validated against field observations. Next, the two PhD-projects will focus on extension of the modelling of river bed form evolution, in which

... PhD project 1 will be aimed mainly at modelling the decay of dunes, the interaction with smaller superimposed bed forms and the transition to upper stage plane beds.

... PhD project 2 will be aimed mainly at the effect of suspended sediment and the dynamic interaction between suspended transport and the evolution of river bed forms.

To model these processes new knowledge is needed. This knowledge will be partially obtained from laboratory experiments that both PhD students will carry out together at the Technical University of Braunschweig. The model will be validated against existing field data and advanced numerical models.

For more information go to [http://www.academictransfer.nl/org/vacancies/detail.cfm?vacature\_ID=9IHS7IE0]

**PhD Student Epidemiology AT 019/09**

The Netherlands Cancer Institute (NKI/AVL) Epidemiologic assessment of late adverse effects of Hodgkin's lymphoma.

The cancer epidemiology group of the NKI-AVL focuses on two principal research lines: (1) the assessment of the long term risks of second malignancy and cardiovascular disease following treatment of Hodgkin's lymphoma, breast cancer, testicular cancer and childhood malignancy; and (2) the assessment of the roles of and hormone-related genetic risk factors in the etiology of breast and ovarian cancer. Special interest is in cancer etiology in BRCA1/2 families. Epidemiologic methods are combined with molecular analyses a) to examine gene-environment interactions, and b) to differentiate risk factors for cancer according to specific genetic alterations in the tumor.

For more information go to [http://www.academictransfer.nl/org/vacancies/detail.cfm?vacature\_ID=RU KGSSUU]

**Lecturer interface / interaction design (1,0 fte)**

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- Proficiency in English is required; applications must be submitted in English
- Applicants must attend the full retreat, November 1-8, 2009 (all expenses paid)

**To Apply**

Completed applications are due by April 15th, 2009.

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Online submissions are preferred, however if necessary applicants can email, fax, or mail completed application forms to:

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Baltimore, MD 21202 USA  
yan-info@youthactionnet.org.  
Tel: +1 410 951 1500; Fax: +1 410 347 1188

**2009 International Study Program: Global Challenges for Youth with Disabilities**

In recognition of lack of positive social role models for young persons with disabilities, the KSRPD (Korean Society for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities) began an international study program to empower young persons with disabilities 5 years ago.

The objective of the program is, § to provide youth with disabilities with opportunities to build their capacity, so that they can full-fill their lives, and contribute to the national and global community in the future, § to bridge the gap between disability experts and persons with disability, and the gap between people with disabilities and without, through working together as a team, and § to raise public awareness of 'Ability' of young persons with disabilities.

This pioneering project has been running for the last 4 years, and has become popular not only among youth with disabilities, but also youth without disabilities, who participate in the program as assistants.

**Program 2009**

For ten days between mid August and mid September in Seoul, Korea. The number of participants of the program this year will be 50, in 7 teams (1 team per Continent and Team Korea. The overall composition of the program is as follows,

1st selection by each representative organization: approximately 4 candidates then final selection by KSRPD: 2 people from each country.

All expenses, directly involved in the program will be paid by KSRPD, including the flight ticket and expenses involved in staying in Korea during the program. However, expenses for their carers will not be able to be covered by KSRPD. For the safety or health reason, if a young person needs to travel with his or her own carer, the participant has to pay for the cost for the carer.

Selected youth will be given an opportunity to undertake an in-depth study on a chosen topic area by field trips to different regions of the world. It is anticipated that they will aim to broaden their experiences through 'cross-fertilization of ideas', which would nurture them to become the future leaders in the disability field.

Contact  
Reena Lee & Soyoung Kim  
-Tel : 82-2-3472-3709 (Direct line) or 82-2-3472-3556  
-Fax : 82-2-3472-3592  
-Website: http://rikorea.freeget.net  
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**Middle East Youth Forum**

Are you active and engaged in your community? Are you between 17 and 23? Do you have a strong opinion on how to improve the state of the world, an interest in the Middle East, and a passion for global economic and political affairs?

The British Council is pleased to announce an exciting opportunity for select youth. Apply to become a Global Changemaker, attend the Dead Sea Youth Forum May 7-11, 2009 and have a chance to participate in the World Economic Forum on the Middle East where you will interact with the leaders who are shaping our world.

**What is the purpose of the Dead Sea event?**

The Dead Sea event will bring together 150 young people from across the Middle East. Our objectives are to:

- Increase participants' knowledge, insight, and exposure to key issues facing the Middle East, with a focus on creating regional solutions for regional challenges
- Improve participants' ability to deliver their local projects by giving them the concrete tools and skills they need to amplify their efforts.
- Raise awareness and engage high-level decision-makers at the World Economic Forum on the Middle East
- Support dialogue and exchange among youth from across the Middle East

**What are the Dates?**

The Dead Sea Forum begins on Thursday 7 May and ends on Monday 11 May. Participants will be expected to arrive at the venue by the evening of Wednesday May 6.

Those chosen to participate at the World Economic Forum on the Middle East will be expected to remain in Jordan until the end of the Forum.

It is therefore critically important that all the candidates:

- Are available to be in Jordan from Wednesday May 6 to Monday 18 May.
- Have a valid passport, or are ready to get one as soon as they are selected to participate in the Forum (Since some of the participants might require a visa to Jordan, and the process of obtaining one might be long, we strongly recommend that those who are chosen to participate get their passports as soon as they are notified of their selection).

**What is the criteria for selection?**

- Be between 17 and 23 years old
- Be a national or a resident of a Middle Eastern country or have a strong interest in the region.
- Demonstrate a proven track-record of social entrepreneurship, community work, social activism or voluntary work in their community.
- Have the will and ability to learn and to meaningfully contribute to

discussions on critical global and regional issues.

- Have good communication skills and feel comfortable speaking in English. In addition have the confidence and willingness to speak in front of peers and influential leaders in a respectful manner while maintaining the capacity to challenge them as appropriate.
- If selected, commit to joining and actively participate in a Global network of like-minded youth around the world. This participation includes, but is not limited to: engagement in Global Changemakers Community Action projects; participation in Global Changemakers events, sharing best practices with fellow global changemakers.

We are looking for a balance of gender and background, with the aim of building a diverse group.

For application and questions send email to [gabriela.jaeger@britishcouncil.ch](mailto:gabriela.jaeger@britishcouncil.ch), we will be happy to help.

The deadline for applications is April 3. Selected participants will be notified by April 10.

**Felix Airways launches its regional flights next week**

SANA'A, SABA – Chairman of the Felix Airways' Administrators Board Saleh Al-Awaji announced the second phase of the company's regional transportation project, which will include an Aden-Djibouti flight connection beginning from the beginning of next week.

In the honoring ceremony held last Thursday in Sana'a to honor its employees, Al-Awaji pointed out that the ceremony coincided with conclusion of its project to operate flights between capitals of the governorates and preparations to launch the regional transportation next week beginning with Djibouti, then Salalah and Sharjah.

He pointed to efforts and competence of all workers of "Felix Airways," which had a positive effect on the success of the company through a short period. He urged company staff to exert efforts to achieve consecutive successes and planed targets. "What has been achieved is only part of the whole work," he said.

He confirmed that the company's administrators' board and supreme administration would overcome difficulties and meet needs to guarantee smooth work and team spirit inside the country.

He valued the support of H.E. President of the Republic, the Yemeni government and cooperation of Yemeni Airlines Company which contributed to the achievement of the company's success.

He pointed out that the company has an ambitious plan to establish a regional airways network to connect Yemeni cities with their counterparts in the region based on demands of the market, and to expand gradually.

For his part, Chairman of Yemenia Airlines Company's Administrators' Board Captain Abdul Khaleq Al-Qadhi reviewed the successes so far achieved by the Felix Airways.

He praised its personnel's administrative, technical and commercial experiences, particularly for those

who were transferred from Yemenia to Felix Airways, and the collaboration at the base of the new company's success of Felix Airways.

Al-Qadhi confirmed that Yemenia will spare no efforts in offering whatever contributes to the success of the Felix Airways future projects and the other strategic projects in which the company participates.

Felix Airways Executive Manager engineer Mohamed Abdullah Al-Arasha praised the company's 150 members of staff for their loyalty and honesty, and looked forward to the company obtaining its Air Operating Certificate from the General Civil Aviation Authority.

He confirmed that the company will begin launching its regional flights next week from Aden and Taiz to Djibouti. With the fourth airplane joining the Felix Airways flight schedule to arrive this March 24, the company will begin operating regional flights between Aden, Mukalla, Sharjah in the UAE and Salalah in Sultanate of Oman.

"The company is to finish the preparation of direct flights from Aden, Sana'a and Hodeida to some Saudi cities such as Al-Tayef, Al-Madina Al-Munawara, Damam and Jazan," he added. "The next phase will begin early next summer with flights to Alexandria, Sharm Al-Sheikh and Sudan. The company will also study flights in the future to some cities in Africa."

Up until mid-March, up to 52,000 passengers boarded Felix Airways flights.

The honoring ceremony was attended by Minister of Oil and Minerals Amir Al-Aidarous, Minister of Tourism Nabil Al-Faqih, Minister of Transportation Khaled Al-Wazir, General Aviation and Metrology Authority Hamed Faraj, the Saudi Ambassador to Sana'a Ali Bin Mohammed Al-Hamdan, and UAE Ambassador to Sana'a Abdullah Al-Mazwa'ee.



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# Soqatra revisited

By: Dr. Annelies Glander

I had been cherishing a precious memory of a fairly tale island I had been given the occasion of getting to know four years ago. Looking at the dragon blood painted flower pots I had taken home with me and arranged in a protected corner of a European garden, I succeeded in visualising the unspoilt beaches with only gorgeous shells swept onto flawlessly white sand banks by the tide, no litter – as if neither plastic bags, bottles, tin cans nor used toilet paper had ever made it to the island ... and none of the half naked tourists now soaking in the divine fresh water pools like too many sardines making the pools spill over.

I had been told about these changes and the devastating presence of ever more tourists, but refused to believe the bad news. But I eventually became anxious and ventured out to the island again.

Having landed I panicked, imagining I had arrived at another destination. An airport crowded with hotel taxis and tourist agents literally snatching welcome customers, depositing them in most questionable hotels, with a new Summerland construction as a climax of horror, like military barracks but with over-efficient air conditioning.

The mountain goats, formerly loveable shy creatures patiently waiting at a distance for whatever morsel of food might come their way, now snatch carefully wrapped up bananas out of one's basket if one does not protect them vehemently. The Egyptian vultures have become cheekier than sparrows in European garden restaurants or the pigeons on Piazza San Marco in Venice.

Once upon a time a guest could ask the driver to go to a certain place to spend a little time meeting the local population unaccompanied. Now everything is organised to avoid meeting the population and you are "kindly asked" to go where the hotels

want you to. They know best what you should see and explore. Whomever you meet the overall purpose will be to extract money from you.

Since there is no dictionary of the Soqotri language I had asked for the correct terms of many an object I had come across when first there. They were told to me with much patience and genuine delight at my interest. Such a request now meets with the information that the entire population is discouraged from using their very own language, that children are severely admonished to speak only Arabic.

Almost the entire island is torn into patches by extravagantly designed roads, some of them ending nowhere. Beside their splendour and technical advancement the formerly impressive dragon blood trees appear dwarfed, and the bottle trees, the formerly artistic ambassadors of unique vegetation, marginalised.

The spirit once reigning over the market – with almost irresistible offers of Soqotri

ware – has gone altogether. Imported vegetables and fruit at horrendous prices sadly look at the passer-by and do not invite consumption. And the one and only once buzzing "shop" run by a French organisation to help women, and offering handicraft of all sorts, looks as if it has been burgled, with but a few objects left, and is closed most of the time.

My bitter disappointment was very quickly mingled with growing despair. Something must have gone entirely wrong. I had been told Soqatra was to become a UNESCO heritage? While it is being discussed that 10,000 Somali refugees be relocated there? And another rumour insists that the island is to become an international free zone casino? Is this so very special place really doomed? Can it be true that only a few years after only being visited by a few more than the occasional sailor or botanist, harmless painter or devoted art specialist, Soqatra may irrevocably become a paradise lost?



## Soqatra year 2000

By: Dr. Annelies Glander

Not far away from Mukalla and at a modest distance from Aden, there is an island in the south of the Republic of Yemen, known by the name of Soqatra and at first sight representing Felix Arabia of bygone times – a genuine nature reserve of the kind we imagine paradise must have been, an idyllic spot, where flora and fauna determine the landscape, where graceful goats and slender cows zigzag between bottle and dragon blood trees and Egyptian vultures sit on a branch near you and look at you benevolently. An island neglected by modern civilisation, an area that escaped the attention of development experts?

Not quite so. Whenever the so far occasional visitor sets out to explore the territory an expert charged with carrying out an investigation or pilot study will be encountered, and very often more of them together. Proliferating in number and impressively obsessed by fact-finding tasks to be accomplished without delay they could, in a near future, outnumber the local population. It is to be hoped, though,

that their findings and reports will prove somewhat more to the point and depict both the history and the actual situation with more precision and circumspection than do the haphazardly assembled information menus available on the Internet, an assortment of misunderstandings and fanciful concoctions that will amuse the reader with phrases coined in hilariously wrong English, and exasperate the anthropologist because of a dilettantism that would offend the most modest member of Soqotran society. It is also to be hoped that these experts will approach their particular fields of activity with sufficient curiosity to first learn about the customs and philosophies of their subjects and not instruct them straight away how to handle their future.

From the very first encounter Soqotrans will surprise you by their innate open-mindedness and adaptability to a situation – their way. They dislike to be questioned for the purpose of accumulating information that will only benefit the person inquiring but produce nothing in return for the informant. In the absence of tangible products to be sold it is considered only fair that if information is so much needed

it should be paid for. And had best be doled out in smallest portions only (and taxed according to the rarity of the subject matter) so that this blissful source of income will be kept flowing for as long as at all possible ...

And if Soqotrans are now being considered to be "Yemeni people" yet another aspect should not go unheeded: While research in Yemen has already been jeopardized by the special gift of the population to invent fabulous stories and describe unheard-of customs and habits, the prospect of being paid for this may well enhance the respective trade and probably produce a bubbling economy of a very special kind.

Soqatra will remain a particularly difficult research area also because of the language problem. To really converse with the population and gain the confidence necessary for in-depth acquisition of information the language spoken on the island would have to be acquired first. As it is a spoken language the aspirant would have to study it in situ, perhaps by offering in exchange, to teach English to the Soqotran willing to co-operate – a promising example of mutual benefit

To find out who a Soqotran really is and to learn about the history of the island will prove a fairly difficult task indeed. There is a deplorable lack of trustworthy accounts or respective dissertations offering up-to-date research and findings. Soqotrans themselves will tell you that they were discovered to be a part of Yemen when the South Yemeni government took charge of the island in 1966 and initiated what they refer to as "the coming of civilisation" which in many ways changed living conditions, putting an end to the seasonal hunger during the monsoon period.

But the new administration has not yet been able to alleviate the problem of decreasing natural resources. There is, for instance, no longer enough milk for the production of the different sorts of by-products formerly available. Women would no doubt be capable and willing to contribute more handicrafts but would have to be instructed as to their marketability. The minute frankincense containers manufactured by women and offered by children in the Homhil protected area are a first attempt at making money.

Most impressive is the speed of road

construction, let alone the superb quality and state-of-the-art construction techniques employed. The government is suspected of having other ideas than make transport easier for the local population and permitting speedy distribution of local products such as fish. In the light of extensive tourism aspirations, it is assumed that the now occasional hikers are to be replaced by convenience travel customers, the rare tents so far carried individually will be supplemented by tent camps including all the accompanying catering and the costs of the roads constructed would only be justified by the erection of several luxury hotels.

All the projects are devised by outsiders, by the well established and superbly experienced tourism business, the money made will go to the travel agencies and catering enterprises and not to the population. No wonder the local population is kept ignorant. Initial attempts at staff training apparently were not designed in line with the natural disposition of Soqotrans, were not matched to the absorption capacity of the natives. Hiring staff from abroad to quickly attend to and meet the expectations of the quality guest

as suggested by fast scheming experts would be counterproductive indeed: such staff can and will never feel welcome while the discarded local population will be more miserable still.

But perhaps the Yemeni government will stop unfortunate ongoing procedures? There is still time to fashion an entirely different blueprint. To prepare a development schedule that provides assistance for the population, assuring the availability of raw material for further processing, that promotes viable trade or scrutinises the rural planes or mountain slopes for possibilities of growing vegetables on a sustainable basis in the longer term, or makes use of the creativity of women and arranges for them to produce tradable handmade goods from a multitude of readily available material.

Soqatra is an island of unique beauty to be respected and preserved and certainly enticing opportunities to be developed by experts who are knowledgeable and conscientious. A diamond to be cut to the measure of the 21st century by qualified master cutters, a pearl to be framed with loving care so as not to cause unpardonable damage.



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## Postponing elections, postponing problems

By: Muneer Al-Mawri

As the elections' postponement has become a hot topic, I here speak out as a supporter of the Joint Meeting Parties' (JMP) ideas. I think that the JMP, in its ideas, has the ability to achieve coexistence between all political sides to save the country from its permanent ordeal.

JMP leaders realize that postponing the elections is not an objective in itself, but a last chance to solve outstanding problems, instead of endlessly postponing them. The major objective is to ensure that elections are conducted without fraud or circumvention, and this will include the following five essential points.

First is electoral location. This writer lives in Virginia in the U.S., and works in Washington DC. As a permanent resident of the Virginia state, I must cast my vote in this location only. I cannot vote in the capital Washington, because I have not lived there for at least a year prior to voter registration.

To reform the electoral system in Yemen, the JMP should insist on choosing either place of birth or place of residence to be an electoral location, not both.

If the place of work is a third electoral location, then the aim is merely to rig election results through military and security camps. Yemen soldiers have both a permanent place of residence and a place of birth one of which they can choose to practice his electoral right as a citizen, instead of in these military camps.

The second point to consider is membership to the Supreme Commission for Elections and Referendum (SCER). The latter should be independent from both the government and opposition.

Additionally, membership in SCER should be based on consensus, not division. More importantly, members should be figures who are known for their integrity and independent opinion.

Mr. Mohammed Ali Abu Luhum had already suggested the idea of five members and a half from the GPC and other five members and a half from the JMP, which means that the half member of the GPC and the other half of the JMP will be an independent personality. This idea is creative and will solve the problem.

But it can be developed through another way that can lead to consensus. The GPC can veto any member nominated by the JMP if he doesn't meet required conditions of integrity. Likewise, the JMP can use the veto to reject any member nominated by the GPC if they feel that he will be receiving directives from the presidential palace.

To reach a consensus, the GPC could be given the right to select five JMP members, the JMP could select five GPC members, and an independent personality to be agreed upon by the two sides could head the committee. The latter should promise not to repeat what happened in previous elections, i.e. announcing results before sorting out the votes.

Third, the proportional list system should be considered. The JMP has to insist on the proportional list system and accept any necessary amendments that enable independent candidates to participate as a third power. It should confirm that, without it, we will be swept up in a vicious circle as contest will continue to be between individuals rather than programs.

With a proportional list system, Yemeni voters will have to select programs before selecting individuals, and party heads would hold seats in Parliament ensuring that their opinions be fruitful.

Perhaps insisting on the proportional list is more useful than insisting on transparency in public funds and jobs, which would only amount to empty promises anyway. The JMP, foreign observers or even terrorists will never believe a ruler who has never fulfilled his promises. But the proportional list is a visible change the results of which the ruler cannot circumvent.

Fourth to be considered is voter registration. I suggest that JMP leaders spend USD 50 to purchase a copy of the Microsoft Excel program (an original, not fake copy) and give it to the Supreme Commission for Elections to sort out votes and remove the repeated names. Moreover, the current voter registration should be shrunk from three months, three weeks or three to only three hours - if there is a real will to clear the voter registration from blemishes.

Through this program, voters can change their electoral location from the controversial place of work to the place of birth or residence with a single click. You should know that the SCER has more

developed computer programs than the simple Excel.

And finally, we have women participation. My opinion in this point may shock many readers and some of them may call me "backward," as they called me "regionalist" when I expressed my opinion on the issue of Dr. Al-Qadasi, may God have mercy on him. But I am not looking here for an opinion that satisfies the majority and, however shocking to some, will herein express my opinion.

Giving women a certain fixed portion of 20 to 30 percent of Parliament seats was only decided in response to foreign pressures, without consideration to Yemen's reality.

I wish there were strong female candidates to compete against their male counterparts, but I cannot trust that a woman would be able to represent me in Parliament if she is elected in just to meet the set quota. The ruling GPC has exaggerated some issues to satisfy foreign countries.

The JMP would be able to nominate strong female candidates who we could be proud of in Parliament. We should reject foreign pressure to impose the quota system, as has happened in Iraq. In my opinion, the aim should be to enable strong representatives to reach Parliament with strong electoral programs, whether men or women.

The woman who cannot run against a man for Parliament under equal conditions doesn't deserve her seat. She would not represent citizens competently, and would not be equal to her brother who carved rock from a horse's hoof to obtain his seat in Parliament.

If the quota system appeals to some people, then one percent - not 25 percent of seats should be given to Yemeni expatriates, rather than women. If the JMP can impose this ratio, expatriates would obtain three seats in Parliament to represent their main communities in Gulf countries and the two American continents and the rest of the world. The nominations would take place abroad and voting would be carried out inside the country within the proportional list system. Lists should be drawn up to determine candidate names within them.

If these five points - or at least the first four - cannot be agreed upon, then national parties shouldn't participate in elections, whether postponement lasts three months

or thirty years. Without these changes, elections would amount to more than deception to those inside the country and abroad.

Without the minimum level of guarantees, national parties will have no way out, except moving from democratic work to democratic struggle. Real democracy is not mock elections and circumvention to please foreign countries and mislead donors.

Elections are one part of democracy and justice, but not all of it. We all have to realize that democracy is not ideal, but it is the best option for all bad regimes for the reason that it creates an acceptable mechanism to transfer power without fighting, as is the case in the East and the West, Latin America and many African countries.

In our country and most Arab countries, rulers don't rely on the force of democracy, but on the democracy of force. The JMP may not need force to attain democracy, and force doesn't have to be a weapon or rebellion, but many other elements which JMP leaders understand well.

The day might come on which they are obliged to leave the capital for their villages and tribes to impose democracy in the country, as the ruling party pays attention only to foreign observers preoccupied with the world financial crisis or the tribes, who are more democratic than the ruling party.

To conclude, postponing the elections without a solution is only postponing the problems linked to them. If the JMP does nothing or even retreats it stand now, it will only stumble upon them later on in time. If the JMP concedes to even half of the GPC's desires, Yemeni politics will witness a great rift and the cause for which the JMP came into existence will die, and the GPC's goal will be realized.

The GPC itself will not be immune to this rift as half of its leadership aims to solve the country's problems. The half of the JMP that likes the GPC will unify with the corrupt half of the GPC, and the other half of the JMP will join the opposition. It may result in a new political bloc to benefit from Yemen's outrage, activities in the South and the Houthi rebellion.

Thus the ruling regime will have no real allies, except the terrorists of Al-Qaeda who will benefit from the protection of the regime and vice versa.

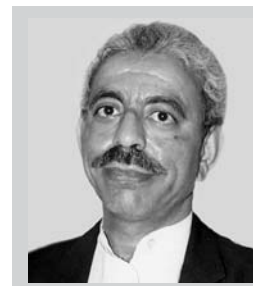
Source: Al-Tajammu'

## COMMON SENSE

In tribute to Rachel Corrie and all the innocent victims of Israeli occupation

## The murder goes on and on

"In Gaza and the West Bank, not much has changed!" wrote a very dear friend. Yes the West Bank and Gaza continue to manifest a do all you want attitude for the Israeli Offense Forces (deceivably misnamed the Israeli Defense Forces or IDF), as they proceed with their relentless campaign to turn the Holy Land into an all Jewish enclave. Under disguise of wishy-washy excuses this murder tool and the other associate instruments of the International Zionist Movement carry on with sneaky drone attacks, death squad booby traps, sniper fire, bulldozers and well planned and hidden ordnances designed to inflict the most amount of killing and bodily harm on mostly innocent Palestinians and Arabs, and others wherever they may be found, if they stand to hinder the Zionist agenda in one way or another.



By: Hassan Al-Haifi

Thanks to the closed-eye attitude of Israel's protector, the United States, Israel continues to think that it has an indefinite right to kill, maim, injure and destroy anything living or erected in Palestine and elsewhere in the Middle East, if it regards such things (living or dead) as obstacles to its Zionist dream of an Israel that extends from the Nile to the Euphrates and a hundred miles to the North, South, East and West of that. Never mind that Israel's very existence is questionable under all legal, heavenly and international ordinances and the world would eventually be held to account for sanctioning such an existence and all the havoc this has brought on to the world for the last 100 years or so (yes, folks since the end of World War I and not since the issuance of the UN unjust partition of Palestine into a Jewish and Arab state in 1947 as many suggest). In the guise of international legitimacy, according to the Law of Might Makes Right, the Israelis believe that they have the right to enter any Palestinian home, any Arab country, and any regional overpass and unleash their deadly bombs or incinerate their planted ordnances on the unexpected and mostly innocent victims they were destined to strike.

This classic arrogance should have died long ago with the Roman Empire, with the Crusades and with the Mongols under Hulaku and the other Tatar leaders from Genghis Khan onwards, and even with the international effort to turn back the ugly chauvinist culture of Adolf Hitler as recently as sixty-five years ago. But alas, some of the victims of this arrogance have now been afflicted with the same Nazi mentality of kill, maim and destroy as long as it advances the devious cause that Zionism has come to propagate and insist on forcefully implanting in the Holy Land. With all the efforts of the Zionist propaganda machine, the Israelis are still insisting that their rights transcend all the moral fabric of human society developed over centuries of Heavenly scriptures, including their very own scriptures, which they have twisted and corrupted to justify all their evil undertakings (see this link [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yisroel\\_Dovid\\_Weiss](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yisroel_Dovid_Weiss)), all human moral rulings and all international agreements and conventions that have helped the development of an international order that relies on sound moral standards and dictates. Israel regards itself as free from adherence to such regulatory dictates and even conscientious foreboding. Several international voices of conscience cry out that Israel has overstepped all limitations of "self-defense" or "legitimate" warfare by its unholy continuous occupation of the remainder of Palestine (having yet to settle its unholy acquisition and invasion of the land that has become to be regarded as "Israel proper") and its relentless reliance on the use of illegal or murderously intolerable weapons of mass destruction. Yet, Israel regards itself above all these voices after having already regarded itself above the voice of God and created its own Devine "promises" and distorted the Covenants of the Tribe of Israel with God. So recently with all this talk of possibly presenting Israel to international forums of justice, the Zionist entity has declared itself untouchable by any international or national forums of litigation, on the basis that its own judicial system is above standard and capable of enforcing all forms of judicial rulings set out by its own "civil code".

To that, all that one can say is "hogwash". Israel has no civilized code to speak of when it has sanctioned the wanton killing, injuring and maiming of Palestinian and Arab blood for the last 100 years if that stands to further its Zionist agenda. Israel is responsible for the continuous uprooting of an entire population from their indigenous homeland for the last three thousand years and accordingly could never be expected to deliver justice on its own perpetrators of human suffering, manifested by the IDF, the Mossad and all the other criminal machines the International Zionist Establishment uses to impose its unholy will on the entire world (look back at the record of the many hundreds of international leaders, British military brass, and innocent victims of Zionist aggression and occupation, including Rachel Corrie, the famed American advocate, who was killed in Gaza on March 16, 2003, whose relatives are still seeking justice for her annihilation by an IDF American provided Caterpillar bulldozer - see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rachel\\_Corrie](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rachel_Corrie)). As for the phosphorous bombs, Sabra and Shatilla and the many techniques that have come to symbolize the many forms of criminal Israeli aggression, God himself has shown his wrath in more ways than one against those who insist on crossing the moral divide between good and evil, even when it is through the misuse of His Good Name.

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

## Study time is two hours in some schools

By: Suad Salem Al-Sab'a

As the world competes towards achieving better quality of performance, we are running backwards because we neglect human rights, work, time, money and ethics. Our life is one of negligence. We hate hard work, perfection and order, but we also seek God's mercy and want Him to protect us from disasters and diseases.

How can this happen, since we can't help ourselves? God never changes anyone's situation until he or she changes his or her behavior. The government spends

billions of riyals to develop education, but we delay its progress by neglecting it.

We believe that education is the peak of development and that our children are on their way to becoming Einstein or Newton, but we mislead ourselves, our programs and goals through negligence. The results are weak and have no relation to either education or the future of development.

One instance that proves we neglect education is that some schools fail to maintain students in school past morning recess. Male students trickle out onto the street after 10 o'clock in the morning, at break time, and go home in their school

uniforms. If you asked these students why they leave school early, you would be shocked to hear that the school gives them permission to leave as the study day has finished in those schools.

A school day is only two hours long in some schools. What can be achieved during these two hours, we don't know. Those who want to know more have only to make their way to a school for boys after morning break to ask the students there about their level, of education and why they leave school early. They will learn a lot of inconceivable things.

Some schools pretend that they lack teachers, a manager or a deputy, and other come up with even more unbelievable excuses, and this is in Sana'a. What about schools in rural areas? This proves that education no longer involves studying in school.

Time and effort are needed to get to the bottom of the issue but, whatever the reasons and justifications, history will not forgive this negligence in education. God will not let those who neglect education enjoy their vainness forever.

Strangely, students and their guardians are indifferent to all this, as if they were not responsible, although by their children missing out on an education compromises their future.

We are all partners in this crime. The students' families, in their silence, participate by not complaining to those responsible. Perhaps out of indifference, they encourage the continuation of defects that happen in schools.

Officials who are directly responsible for education in some schools contribute

to the continuation of these defects as they believe written reports which tell them that everything is going well in education. Written reports often don't reflect reality on the ground, believe me. The situations of our schools and classrooms reflect the state of education in our country.

I wish that the Ministry of Education would put a new mechanism in place to monitor schools without depending on reports of staff working in them, and entrust some officials to indirectly monitor the students' situation to know the corruption and negligence in these schools.

Corruption in schools is not related to money, but to the spoiling of the minds, skills and values of future generations. How can such corruption be ignored? Education is like air and water: The supply should never be cut off, whatever the conditions. Schools remain open even during war time in many countries.

What is going on in our schools? Let us know, you who work in schools. People might be explain the reasons and we can all work together to tackle them to improve education in the country.

Or we can think together, supported by the government, about the idea of "a society without schools," and put in place plans and strategies to carry out this idea to enter the history from a new door. Parents may benefit from the idea and study at home with their children to eradicate illiteracy at the same time.

Thus, we can protect our children at home and relieve your heads of our complaints.

Source: Nabanews.net



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# شركة الشرق الأوسط للتجارة

## الحفل السنوي التكريمي لعملاء مشروب الطاقة (شارك)



نظمت شركة الشرق الأوسط للتجارة  حفلاً تكريمياً بمحافظة المكلا الإثنين الماضي الموافق ١٦ مارس ٢٠٠٩ م ٩١ عميلاً من عملائها المميزين من جميع محافظات الجمهورية حضره مدير عام شركة أوستسبا الشركة المصنعة لمشروب الطاقة  .

وفي الحفل ألقى الأستاذ / وائل عبدالله سعيد مدير عام شركة  كلمة رحب فيها بالحاضرين وشكر فيها عملاء الشركة مشيراً إلى التطور المستمر في مبيعات شراب الطاقة  خلال الأعوام الثمانية الماضية ، وأشار إلى أن هذا الحفل يأتي في سياق إحتفاء  بعملائها كل عام في إحدى محافظات الجمهورية المختلفة ، وكان الاختيار في هذا العام لإحفاة المكلا ، كما أكد على عمق العلاقة التاريخية بين  و«أوستسبا» والتي يعتبر هذا النجاح أحد ثمارها الجيدة .

كما تم خلال الحفل تبادل الهدايا والدرع التذكارية بين شركة  وشركة أوستسبا تعبيراً عن عمق العلاقة بينهما .

حضر الحفل بعض مدراء مجموعة شركات هائل سعيد وشركاه في محافظة المكلا .



## الطاقة الحقيقية



# Micro exporters demand support, complain of tough Saudi regulations



Photo by Amira Al-Sharif

Small exporters of fish and agricultural products say that Saudi custom requirements do not encourage business.

By: Ali Saeed

Yemeni fishery and agricultural micro exporters have complained of a lack of support and information on foreign markets from the government, and near-impossible requirements to export their products to Saudi Arabia.

Yemen exports its fish and agricultural products to many countries in the world, but some small exporters want to export to Saudi Arabia without a license, explained Fadhil Mansour, director of the foreign trade at the Ministry of Industry and Trade.

Around 200 agricultural and fishery micro exporters and producers made their voices heard at a consultative meeting in Abs, Hajjah, organized by the Yemen Exports Supreme Council and the Studies and Economic Media Center this month.

With the drop of the price of oil to USD 34 a barrel and the looming threat of oil depletion in the country, Yemen is increasingly concentrating its efforts on developing other non-oil sectors of the economy, especially its agriculture and fisheries production and exports.

Micro exporters convened with officials from the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, Ministry of Fish Wealth and the Yemen Export

Supreme Council to discuss the obstacles to the exporting Yemeni agricultural and fisheries products abroad.

They discussed the need for accredited exporting centers and for modernization in production, marketing and exportation methods to enhance the competitiveness of their products in foreign markets.

The meeting discussed lack of vision in internal and external marketing of agricultural and fishery products, as well as the new decision of Ministry of Fish Wealth for new fish processing center, saying that "Saudi markets demand only raw fish."

Mustafa Nassr, director of the Studies and Economic Media Center lauded the efforts of the meeting in combating the obstacles that stand against fruitful exportation.

The majority of Yemeni products, said micro exporters, reach no further than Jayzan on the Saudi coast of the Red Sea.

Some fish exporters with no license try to export their fish into the kingdom via the sea, said Mansour, director of foreign trade at the ministry. Yemeni exports reach all Gulf states and European countries and only micro exporters without a license are limited to specific markets in Saudi Arabia, he explained.

#### Obstacles at Saudi customs

Participants at the meeting, which was attended by the commercial attaché of the Saudi Embassy in Yemen and the customs office in Haradh, complained of having their goods stalled at the Haradh crossing on the Yemeni side of the Saudi - Yemeni border with Saudi Arabia, sometimes leading to them rotting.

Unlike Saudi exports which enter Yemeni markets easily without restrictions, Saudi Arabia bans Yemeni products that do not meet Saudi standards, and imposes that all micro exporters be Saudi nationals, have commercial records and bank accounts.

"There should be an understanding between Saudi Arabia and Yemen, otherwise we will deal with Saudi exports as they do with ours", said Ahmad Taleb, Director of the Ministry of Fish Wealth office in Hajjah.

Tawfeeq Sallam, manager of studies

and research at the Yemen Exports Supreme Council revealed that 25 percent of the agricultural products are lost after being harvested due to the lack of modern packing and wrapping

"Some Yemeni agricultural and fishery exports are held up by Saudi authorities at Al-Towal crossing until they start to rot," said Mohammed Al-Rajawi, chairman of the Al-Jar Agricultural Cooperative Association.

Saudi authorities use police dogs to inspect the Yemeni goods, whereas Yemeni authorities use modern machines to do so, he added. "Why are they still using such technique," he asked, stressing that Saudi Arabia is a much richer state than Yemen.

Yemeni micro exporters at the Al-Towal crossing, on the Saudi side of the border after Haradh, have to discharge their goods from Yemeni containers to Saudi trucks, added Al-Rajawi, whereas Saudi goods enter Yemen directly on their Saudi trucks.

"After the discussion of all these problems, participants agreed to form a committee from micro exporters and the concerned bodies to follow up the exporting problems and find a proper solution," Nassr said.

He revealed that the Saudi commercial attaché announced his readiness to discuss such problems and place the needful solutions.

Earlier, the Yemeni Ministry of Industry and Trade responded to the complaints of Yemeni small-time fish exporters by sending a letter to the Saudi Deputy Minister of Commerce and Industry requesting him to ask concerned authorities in Saudi Arabia to allow the Yemeni fishery exports to enter Saudi markets as usual.

For his part, Fadhil Mansour, director of foreign trade at the Ministry of Industry and Trade dismissed the fish micro exporters' complaints and stressed that some of the fish micro exporters were small time fishermen with no exporting license.

He pointed out that most of the micro exporters who complain of Saudi restrictions are wrong, since Saudi Arabia has the right to apply its regulations like other countries.

"The exporter should respect the receiving country's regulations," said the director.

"Saudi Arabia do facilitate the exportation of Yemeni products. We



Photo by Amira Al-Sharif

Yemeni agricultural exports comprise up to 57 percent of the non-oil exports.

have sent a letter to our Saudi counterparts and look forward to further discussing the issue at a Yemeni-Saudi commercial committee

next month."

Yemeni fishery exports contribute to non-oil exports by 40 percent, and Yemeni fish is well-respected among

the Arab and foreign markets. In 2006, Yemen exported 89.6 thousand tons of fish, with a total value exceeding USD 259 million dollars.



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**\*Note: All ordinarily resident applicants must be residing in YEMEN and have the required work and residency permits to be eligible for consideration.**

## Correction

The Yemeni Standardizations, Metrology and Quality Control Organization (YSMQCO) would like to correct the information published in the business article entitled "No more unhealthy or unsafe products in Yemen," published in issue no.1241 of the Yemen Times. According to a YSMQCO document sent to the Yemen Times, the article reported that an importer can obtain an International Conformity Certification (ICC) from another body if his products to meet specified international standards. However, only two authorized companies, BIVAC and COTECNA, can award the certificate in Yemen.



# Is Iraq safe yet?

By: Lowell Schwartz

The Obama administration's decision to withdraw the bulk of United States troops from Iraq over the next 19 months has sparked fears that Iraq will once again plunge into the wide-scale and debilitating violence that it endured from 2004 to 2007. Those fears are, for the most part, overblown. There are good reasons to believe that the level of stability achieved in Iraq can be maintained even without a large-scale US presence.

To understand why, it is important to know what else was going on inside Iraq in 2007, when President George W. Bush ordered the "surge" of 20,000 additional troops and General David H. Petraeus shifted US forces to a more aggressive strategy. For, although the

surge was important, two other factors played a critical role in bringing Iraq back from the brink.

First, Baghdad had been transformed into a Shiite-dominated city. Although exact statistics are hard to come by, in 2003 approximately 35% of Baghdad's population was Sunni. Today, based upon the results of the recently held regional election, Baghdad is only 10% to 15% Sunni. This means that between one million and 1.5 million Sunnis have fled the capital. Most now are refugees in Jordan and Syria, and they are unlikely to be welcomed home anytime soon by the new Shiite elite running the country.

The ethnic cleansing of many Baghdad neighborhoods in 2006 and 2007 was deplorable. But it made it difficult for Sunni insurgents to hide or blend in with the population, and deprived them of logistical and

financial support. It also provided a degree of safety and security for the Shiite-led government, which was largely the purpose of the well-organized campaign in the first place.

The second critical factor in stabilizing Iraq was its regional neighbors' recognition of, and in some cases support for, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's government. This was a major change from the 2003-2005 period, when Iraq's Sunni neighbors, fearing the country's new Shiite elite, actively opposed the US occupation.

The multiple insurgencies that developed in Iraq in 2003 and 2004 were supported at least in part by money, materiel, and fighters from abroad. Suicide bombers from all over the Arab world crossed into the country through the porous Syrian and Jordanian borders. Regional

governments may not have openly supported the insurgents, but they clearly avoided cracking down on the jihadist groups operating within their borders.

Foreign governments began to change these politics after al-Qaeda in Iraq bombed three hotels in Amman, Jordan, in November 2005, killing 60 people. Frightened governments in the region realized that the type of violence occurring almost daily in Iraq was starting to spill across the country's borders.

Soon after this incident, the highly effective Jordanian intelligence service began assisting the Iraqi government in going after the al-Qaeda network in Iraq. By June 2006, this effort was paying off. Jordanian agents were instrumental in providing the intelligence that enabled US forces to kill Abu Zarqawi, the mastermind of

the Amman bombing.

Slowly but surely, throughout 2006 and 2007, Jordanian intelligence, working with Iraqi Sunni tribes, chipped away at al-Qaeda. Moreover, quiet efforts were made in the Arab world to curtail the recruitment and funding of suicide bombers headed to Iraq.

Iran's role in Iraq also changed. The Iranian government had been a major backer of Shiite militia groups, including the Mahdi Army, led by radical cleric Muqtada al-Sadr. But the Iranians also had close ties from the beginning with elements of the Shiite-led coalition government. In 2008, following Maliki's military operation to clean out militia groups in Basra, Iran's leaders seem to have decided that this two-faced strategy had run its course.

Iran then helped broker a ceasefire

that was highly favorable to Maliki, and cemented his commanding position inside the Iraqi coalition government. No doubt Maliki's hard-line stance on the need for a firm timetable for the withdrawal of US troops was critical to Iran's decision to throw its weight behind him.

Both the transformation of Baghdad into a Shiite city and the recognition and support of Iraq's neighbors for the country's new political order have been instrumental in stabilizing the country. These changes are likely to be permanent, and offer hope that the wide-scale violence that afflicted the country between 2003 and 2007 will not return after US forces depart.

Lowell Schwartz is a political scientist at the RAND Corporation, a nonprofit think-tank based in Santa Monica, California.

[www.project-syndicate.org](http://www.project-syndicate.org)

# The fatal myth of a drug-free world

By: Kasia Malinowska-Sempruch

Negotiations at the United Nations High Level Summit on drugs in Vienna last week fell flat. Although 25 countries officially stated their support for proven methods such as needle exchange and overdose prevention, the summit's outcome was a watered-down political declaration that fails to acknowledge crucial lessons that have been learned over the last decade.

The refusal to include the words "harm reduction" seems motivated by

ideology rather than science, despite clear evidence showing that needle exchange and substitution treatment keep drug users alive and free of deadly infections.

Those advocating for harm reduction accept that drugs have always been a part of human history and aim to decrease the damage caused by their production and use.

A vocal few disagree with this approach, labeling it, in the Vatican's words, "anti-life."

Those who strive for the futile goal of a "drug-free world" refuse to recognize the proven benefits of harm

reduction. But the evidence against the "war on drugs" is overwhelming: prisons swelling with non-violent drug offenders, billions of dollars spent on military action to curb production while the availability of illicit drugs increases and prices drop, and increasing HIV rates throughout the former Soviet Union and parts of Asia.

Elsewhere, the stories of futility in the "war on drugs are more brutal: capital punishment for drug-related offenses; extra-judicial killings in the name of creating drug-free societies; drug users sent to labor camps as a form of "treatment"; and drug-using

women handcuffed to beds during childbirth. The list goes on.

**But there is reason for hope.**

Since assuming office, President Barack Obama has made clear his desire to lift the federal ban on needle exchange in the United States. Indeed, while the previous Bush administration led the global opposition to harm reduction, the US delegation struck a more conciliatory tone at the Vienna summit, indicating what some perceive as a fresh start to drug policy.

Ten years ago, when a "drug-free world" became the global drug-policy

mantra, no one imagined that in 2009 two million people in the former Soviet Union, and over a million in Asia, would be infected with HIV through intravenous drug use. Also missing from Vienna was a discussion about increased numbers of destabilized countries becoming narco-states.

There is, moreover, still an important region where drug use has not contributed significantly to HIV infection rates: Africa. Sadly, when we meet again in ten years, this will no longer hold true. Even though no African countries voiced their support in Vienna for harm reduction, African

leaders should take heed of those countries with pragmatic and humane drug policies.

Instead of signaling a new way forward for international drug policy, the Vienna declaration represents the same, failed politics of the past. Unless that changes quickly, the result will be continued suffering and death for millions of people around the world.

Kasia Malinowska-Sempruch is the director of the Open Society Institute's Global Drug Policy Program. She co-authored Poland's first National AIDS program.

[www.project-syndicate.org](http://www.project-syndicate.org)

# Bahrain's "anti-porn" campaign heightens censorship

By: Alexandra Sandels  
MENASSAT

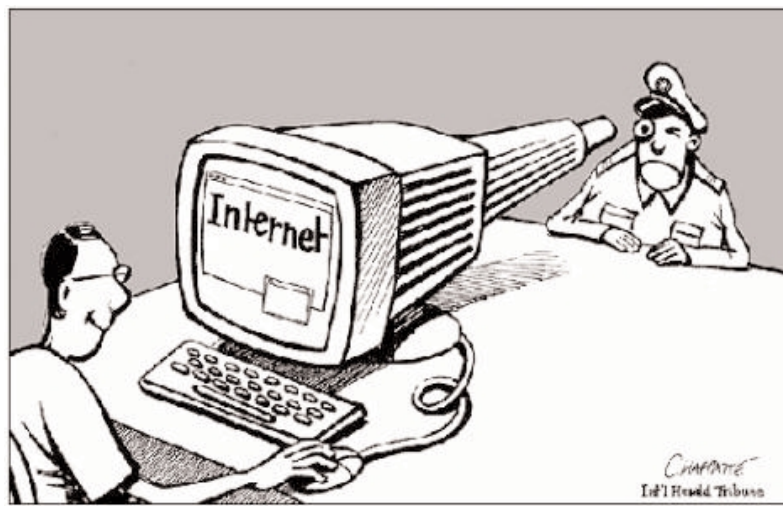
In January, local newspapers in Bahrain made public a ministerial order by Bahrain's new Minister of Media and Culture, Sheikhha Mai bint Mohammed Al Khalifa, that called on telecommunications companies and Internet service providers to tighten their measures in preventing access to websites previously banned by the ministry.

The resolution read, "Lifting the block on any site should only be on the instructions of the minister herself."

Al-Khalifa's campaign is being billed as an action against, "pornographic websites and public morality," but activists cite several examples of websites that have been censored or banned, which fall outside of the minister's edict, including those of human rights, religious, and political organizations.

According to rights-groups, hundreds of websites have been blocked by the government on the grounds that they "incite violence," the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, BCHR, reported.

Nabeel Rajab of BCHR, whose website is on Al-Khalifa's blacklist, told MENASSAT earlier this year that the majority of the sites blocked in Bahrain are dealing with human rights and political issues in the country and in "village chat forums."



Censorship in Bahrain increases, new minister Mai Al-Khalifa has the last word

Sites that are currently inaccessible in Bahrain include independent newspaper Bahrain Times, the online current events forum Montadayat, and the Arabic Network for Human Rights Information (ANHRI).

**Facebook censorship**

The Bahraini authorities appear to have also turned their attention to social media, in an attempt to block dissident voices.

In a recent press release, BCHR accused Al-Khalifa of expanding the cen-

sorship campaign to social networking sites such as Facebook. The organization "discovered" that the national authorities had removed postings on Facebook pages belonging to Bahraini rights groups that reported on the human rights situation in the country.

Among the reports that mysteriously disappeared from BCHR's page were Amnesty International's recent report on human rights defenders in the Middle East and North Africa, an AlJazeera talk report on human rights violations in

Bahrain, and a statement from the BCHR on the prosecution of Bahraini journalist Lamees Dhaif.

BCHR said it believes the motives behind the censoring of the "dissident entries" on Facebook is the "realization of the Bahraini authorities that this social site has extensive accessibility and distribution."

Rajab also personally attacked Al-Khalifa in response to BCHR's recent Facebook ordeal and accused the minister - often labeled as a "liberal" - of being the chief architect behind the censorship campaign.

"We are dismayed that this war is spearheaded by Mai Al-Khalifa, a lady modeled as liberal and presented with many medals in recognition of her support to culture and liberalism," stated Rajab.

**Not just politics and porn targeted**

A Bahraini human rights activist speaking on the condition of anonymity told MENASSAT that the current censorship campaign is "getting out of hand" with regular sites that are unrelated to porn and politics falling victim to the government's censorship campaign.

The activist added that this development has led to much frustration among Bahrainis.

"You should note that the outcry is amongst all citizens, even average business owners who rely on the web. There

are some web services, like galleries, that are blocked despite being entirely unrelated to proxies or porn or local politics. We demand that a full investigation is put in place on how and why all these sites are blocked and not only those that are either porn-related or relevant to the authorities," the activist told MENASSAT.

The activist agreed with the claims made by BCHR that the censorship campaign has expanded to social media sites, saying that authorities have been blocking Facebook links since the beginning of March.

"We can't even share articles on our Facebook profiles, which is something I do all the time," said the activist.

**Activist crackdowns**

Along with censorship, Bahraini activists are facing gloomy days as several have been sent to court for defamation suits.

The most recent was Abdul Hadi Al-Khawaja, former president of BCHR who currently works for the rights group Front Line. Al-Khawaja was accused of "instigating hatred and disrespect," in a speech he made in January, where he had lashed out against the Bahraini authorities, calling the government an "oppressive regime," that "plundered public lands, degraded the people, and used mercenaries against them."

Human Rights Watch has reportedly called on Bahrain to drop all charges

against Al-Khawaja and lift the travel ban authorities have imposed on him.

Legal suits have also been filed against human rights activists Abduljalil Alsingace, Hassan Mushaima and Mohamed Habib Al-Muqdad, "in relation to their publishing activities and speeches about the

political situation in Bahrain," reports the London-based Article 19.

The three men are due in court on March 24 to respond to the 18 charges filed against them. One of the charges is related to Bahrain's Article 6 of the Terrorism Code of 2006 and carries a penalty of life imprisonment.

In a press release today, HRW reported a "serious use of flaws" in the criminal trial of Mushaima, leader of the political opposition group Haq, and said that all coerced testimony in his trial and in that of 34 others "should be withdrawn and that those not charged with a genuine criminal offense should be freed."

Meanwhile, HRW has reported legal suits against two Bahraini journalists, Lamees Dhaif of "Al Waqt" and Maryam al-Sheroqi of "Al Wasat."

Dhaif is supposedly facing three years behind bars for writing an article series on the Bahraini court system's failures in family law. Al-Sheroqi has been charged with "insulting and degrading the Civil Service Bureau" for exposing discriminatory hiring practices at the Bureau.

# Media layoffs hit the UAE

The UAE in general and Dubai in particular are seen as financial success stories. Some even argued the emirates would be a safe haven in the financial storm. But now local media outlets are feeling the pinch and implementing wholesale job cuts.

By: Morwood Wilson  
The Media Line News Agency

The UAE's once burgeoning media landscape has not proved immune to the global malaise affecting the publishing and broadcasting industries. The drastic cuts in regional advertising budgets have seen a number of companies forced to reduce employee numbers, as well as close magazines and even television channels.

The region's biggest publisher, ITP,

announced just three weeks ago that it was closing nine magazines and laying off 60 employees in a bid to streamline the organization and refine operations.

Among the ITP magazines that have been closed are consumer magazines *Viva Girl* and *Kohl*, while the majority of magazines closed were the business titles.

Fellow publishing house and another significant player in the market, Arab Media Group (AMG), has also made cuts within its operations, but remains reluctant to confirm numbers. Reports suggest that the number of staff made redundant could be around 300, with AMG currently employing around 2,000 people.

The company released a statement through its PR agency saying, "In response to the current global economic downturn and its impact on the media industry in the region, Arab Media Group has moved to implement

a restructuring program across its businesses, aimed at increasing the organization's operational efficiency through the consolidation of some of its support services."

Dubai-based television station City 7 has also confirmed it has let go 90 employees, while retaining a skeleton staff of 50 people. The ownership said the layoffs came as a direct result of the economic downturn affecting the region.

Much of the region's advertising budget has been lost due to the downturn in the property market which previously made up substantial swathes of advertising in newspapers, magazines and broadcasting.

Dubai Holding, the government-owned group with subsidiaries stretching from property to the media sector, announced plans to cut its marketing and advertising budget by 25 percent this year in response to the economic slowdown.

Other smaller publications to have closed in recent months include lifestyle magazines, *The Buzz*, *Society Dubai*, as well as industry-focused magazine, *Your Business*.

Radio station Coast FM also spent a number of days broadcasting solely music before its owners, Fujairah Media, entered into an agreement with Ajman Independent Studios. The first phase of the agreement sees Ajman Independent Studios' Channel 4 radio network acquire exclusive sales and marketing rights to Coast FM.

One young journalist who had come to Dubai fresh from completing her masters found herself out in the cold when the cutbacks began.

"I think I noticed things changing a while before the actual layoffs. We were told that there was a hiring freeze as well as no annual pay rises," she said.

Asking to remain anonymous in order to make sure of references, she

has found that the recruitment market in the region is overflowing with a large number of journalists competing for a shrinking number of jobs.

"There are a lot of people looking for work and from what I can tell, for the most part, the majority of retrenched staff are intent on staying in Dubai until their visas run out or they find other work. Truth is the market is dead everywhere, and for many this is [still] better than where they are from," she explained.

The lay-offs in Dubai come in stark contrast to reports that Abu Dhabi's flagship newspaper, the *National*, is on the verge of launching an Arabic version newspaper.

The paper, which is bankrolled by the Abu Dhabi government, was begun less than a year ago and has recruited from across Europe and North America; its editor Martin Newland previously helmed the *Daily Telegraph* in the UK.

The source of these reports, who asked to remain anonymous, said that the staff had already been recruited and were already in place to roll out the new publication. It would be in keeping with the region's emphasis on symbolism if the paper were to see the light of day at the beginning of April as the *National* celebrates its first birthday.

Abu Dhabi has made its intentions clear as it strives to become a force in the media sector with the creation of its own media hub named "twofour 5," in direct competition with Dubai's Media City. The zone was launched late in 2008 with partnerships being formed with, among others, CNN, Thompson, Reuters, BBC and Harper Collins.

Although many of these global players already have operations set up in Dubai, reports suggest that staffing and investment will be more substantial in the UAE capital.

## The secrets behind why villagers fail

By: Suleiman Raise Bauzer  
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Nader is twenty years old, an intelligent boy from the village who is currently a freshman at a university in the city. He moved from his village to the city in order to study at the university and dreams to become a professional accountant. He also dreams to be the first from his village to graduate from college.

A few days after the first semester exams were over and the results were revealed, Nader was shocked to see his name among the students who must repeat the exams. His teachers, colleagues, family members, and all the people from

his small village were amazed at his failure because he was known as a clever student and was very active in the classroom. Moreover, he received an 'excellent' in all other subjects except the subject he failed: English.

More specifically, the subject was English language as a sub-major subject in accountant specialization. Most students did well in that subject, even the weak ones. Many students were curious and wanted to know the secret behind Nader's failure, since a student like him was so clever in all the other classes. All the people in the village also wanted to know the mysterious secret behind Nader's failure, as well as the secret behind all village students' failures throughout the last decades. They wanted to know why not a

single villager continued his studies or was able to finish a bachelor's degree. In fact, village students know the real secrets but they conceal them so as not to be blamed or scorned by the others.

Now, not because I am a student from the village but because I am an expert at knowing the truth and the mysteries of these villagers, I will reveal the secrets to you.

The first reason is that village students originally study the English language from teachers who don't specialize in English, or they don't study it at all. The result, as we have discovered, is abject failure at university. Since Nader failed English but received excellent marks in other subjects, this means that the masters of the schools in the villages rig the tests and the results

these exams, showing that students have learned English when in fact they have not. The second reason is that the students cram for the English test in high school with a little help from teachers who are not well versed in English. The school managers help them cheat in these exams in order to send them away to university. The students then join the universities without knowing anything in English and become innocent victims of failure, forcing them to quit school since universities require knowledge of English for every single major, especially the good ones.

That's why the mystery hasn't been solved yet and why fathers keep on wondering about the fate of their poor village sons and daughters who enter the universities.

## Reality of Examinations

By: Abdullah Saeed Swidan  
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What does 'examination' mean? Normally it is a method used to make students remember what they have studied and to measure their understanding by giving them questions ranging from easy to difficult. Examinations also give students the opportunity to prove that they can graduate to another level in school or at univer-

sity. Unfortunately, these days the word 'examination' takes on another meaning because of the misuse of exams by teachers or managers.

The teacher sometimes makes examinations extremely difficult only so that he or she can fail the students. Why? First of all, the huge number of students in a class makes the teacher want to minimize the number so that it can be easy for him or her to correct students' papers quickly. Secondly, the teacher becomes angry with some students and gives difficult exams in order to fail them, not caring about the other students in the class. The third reason is that some teachers

give difficult exams only because they want to prove that they are very good.

The principals should keep an eye on this problem because a lot of students drop out of school and some of them stop studying while they are in the university. Why? Because these students could not pass the exams. When they take them for a second time, they could not pass these either. These students feel hopeless because of what happened to them and they think that they have to stop wasting their time in school and look for a job.

Tell me, would you believe it if some one told you that a student

stopped studying right before he or she was going to finish third secondary school, or the week before he or she was going to graduate from college? You may not believe this, but it is true; it happens here in our country. It happens just because the teacher wants to prove him- or herself or to show off. I hope from the bottom of my heart that teachers will choose the right path and stop this kind of treatment. I hope that they use the real meaning of the word 'examination' and help the students, not by cheating of course, but by showing them the right way to study and by advising them and giving them hope to learn.

## The begging phenomenon caught between the truth and a lie

By: Salim Aqeel Al-Kelali  
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The phenomenon of begging nowadays ranks as one of many issues in Yemen that shouldn't be ignored. This is because of the negative effects it has on our society as a result of the terrible spread of beggars in our country. We should try to give them jobs so that these poverty ridden people can earn some money and a sense of self-worth instead of begging every day.

To be honest, this doesn't mean that people don't need others' assistance or help to cover the necessary needs which he or she is unable to achieve through work alone, for people differ in their lives and needs on the scale between

wealth and poverty. As Muslims, we are given instructions by God to assist and help one another to satisfy God and to live well during this temporary life. The problem, however, is that some liars pretend to be in real destitution, exploiting the sensitive and sentimental feeling of givers towards the paupers. This unintentionally creates intense feelings of mistrust and doubt in the beggars, feelings that increase when the liars are seen somewhere playing with the money given.

There are several results when a liar is caught in the act of begging. The first result is the loss of trust in beggars. The giver is unable to differentiate between the truthful person and the liar, and decides that it's a waste of money giving to any of them. The second result is the loss of the only source of income for those beggars truly in need, which intensifies their poverty and greatly

increases the gap between rich and poor. The third result is religious, as it damages the union of feelings between Muslims that our Prophet Muhammad talked about when he said, "The Muslims in their mutual love, kindness, and compassion are like the human body. When one of its parts is in agony, the entire body feels the pain, both in sleeplessness and fever..." Givers are beginning to callously ignore the pain of the destitute in our society.

People today are wondering: What's behind the terrible spread of this phenomenon? Why has it become a daily habit to see beggars on the streets? Is it because of the absence of religious instructions and good conscience which made people unable to distinguish between right and wrong, ignoring and neglecting moral values? It because of the effortless gaining of money that begging affords that encouraged the

liars to beg? Or is it because of bad habits such as chewing qat, taking drugs, and so forth, which led some beggars to do whatever possible, regardless of if it's good or not? Or is it because of the lack of work? Why?!!

The truth of the matter is that we don't know the main reason behind the phenomenon of begging. The question then becomes: How can we face this phenomenon? In my opinion, it's by firstly looking and analyzing the causes of it. Just because we don't know doesn't mean we can't work to find out. Secondly, we must find the best solutions for it. We can cure the disease if we find out what caused it in the first place.

The only one who is able to answer these questions and implement solutions is the government, because of the power it has. Otherwise it's true that 'When the cat's away, the mice will play!'

### My Cage

Ali Al-Onqobi  
Onqobi1970@yahoo.com

Corruption in my cage becomes an art,  
School by itself joined by the smart.  
Nothing can be stopped or driven apart,  
They get their ways, breaking every good heart.  
Ill-gotten gain and wrong have been rooted.  
Have forgery and bias by authority been supported?  
Has by hypocrites and opportunists the cage haunted?  
Or by the defamed and hacks chaos been planted?  
When shall those sick conscience wake,  
Or every good, living in the cage raze,  
And to the starting fire they hopefully make?  
Or helplessly, their wet wings will never shake.  
Nay, we believe, our life is only for fair,  
Our Lord forbids us to let despair,  
And to give the offender much care.  
We are a folk, innately adoring dare.  
Sooner or later, our wronged cage will shine,  
And his dignity will never ever decline.

### Human Nature

Ali Al-Onqobi  
Onqobi1970@yahoo.com

When are you going to give up your rash deed?  
Or the Outcast has haunted your mind indeed?  
Your good side intends to leave it forever,  
Your bad side whispers "Do that never."  
Both sides spare no effort to win the battle,  
Hostility goes on; it becomes an old tattle.  
They struggle to raise you or to destroy,  
Each hitches you as if you were a tiny toy.  
The good one says: To Allah do repent",  
And fear His fire, anger, and punishment.  
The other claims, "Nice to grasp whatever,  
And His mercy will never make you suffer."  
One tries to lead you to paradise there,  
The other fabricates a false heaven here.

### A Court Poem

Ali Al-Onqobi  
Onqobi1970@yahoo.com

You, who have in partial heart a place,  
Crowding there peacefully as a lovely vase.  
No angel may own as your charming grace,  
That dominates my thought occupying the ace.  
Extremely, your absence has fired the case,  
Sweetly, your shadow follows me as a chase.  
My heart leaps up glancing at your pretty face.  
Your appearance eclipses all women's race.  
Oh beloved! You have left no strait space,  
For girls to try to approach a further pace.

### Her Majesty

Ali Al-Onqobi  
Onqobi1970@yahoo.com

She brings with her every wrong and chaos,  
With her coming, spread tyranny and bias.  
She stands by the criminal swinging the right,  
And encourages the cruel to raid and fight.  
Upon the wronged head, missiles are landed,  
Who dares to wrong her! She is the State guarded.  
For her, no place for conscience but ruff,  
She vows to Bush peace with outlandish buff.  
A gentle fleshy pigeon is no more needed,  
Such bird, in the technology time, is rejected.  
She replaces them with a hard insensible wing,  
Providing them with sharp, fearful sparkling.  
To sprinkle its mercy upon the Poor's slums;  
Lives, trees and houses are eradicated by bums.  
The criminals' rages are always excused,  
Their deeds are merely for self-defense used.  
Victim's self-defense must be ceased.

## Through The Mind's Eye

By: Maged Thabet Al-kholidy  
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## Should we celebrate Mother's Day?

Should we devote only one day a year to our mothers, or should we devote all the days of the year to them? Mother's Day is celebrated in almost all the countries of the world, and in Yemen it took place last Saturday.

It is nice that mothers have a special day. But what about the other days of the year? Why not celebrate our mothers every day of the year? What I want to say is that, we can celebrate Mother's Day, but we should not forget our mothers during the other days of the year.

A mother is supposed to be the dearest person to her daughters and sons. But some, especially children and adolescents, wait for the Mother's Day to express their love for them. Although this makes mothers happy, it is their right to expect such demonstrations of affection not just on one day but throughout the whole year.

The instructions of Islam are clear enough regarding the relationship between children and their mothers. The Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) stressed the respect and obedience that everyone owes their mother when he said, "Your mother, your mother, and your mother," when an Arab asked him about one's dearest person. Actually, it seems as if the prophet asks everyone to devote their whole life to their mother.

Devoting the one's whole life to one's mother does not mean here to remain to abandon all worldly pursuits for her lap and the expression of one's love for her, but to pay her attention, look after her health and provide for her.

Only one day for mothers, while the rest of the year they are forgotten! Is this a new fashion? As for the origin of this custom reveals that we, as Arabs and Muslims, have adopted it from our "dear friends," the westerners. And as usual, it has been adopted blindly, without knowing its origin or the reasons behind.

Westerners may have chosen to celebrate such an occasion, since they have the right to leave mothers,

fathers, and the homes at the age of 18. Outside home, far away from the family restrictions, they start their own lives. Mother's Day just reminds them that they have mothers and it is somehow like a social duty to pay a short visit or to send a gift to their mothers. Why they have not dedicated a day to their fathers or even combined both occasions in one under the name "Parents' Day" to save time, I do not know.

An occasion originally for westerners, Mother's Day has nevertheless become an indication of "modernity," as some claim, in many Islamic societies. It is somehow acceptable. But it would be a catastrophe if we starting following westerners in ignoring our mothers for the whole year, except on the "Mother's Day".

We should keep our eyes open so that family relations remain strong and remain unshaken by such customs which are not acceptable from a religious point of view.

It doesn't matter much if we celebrate Mothers Day since it makes mothers feel happy. But since a mother's happiness is a religious duty, why not dedicate the whole year to mothers. It really is our duty to fill their lives with happiness and joy. Who else will care about them during the other days of the year?

Following others' customs, in brief, must be limited to the religious boundaries of Islam and to our social norms. We can celebrate Mother's Day, not once a year, but everyday. This is what Islam orders and society recommends.

In short, we can celebrate Mother's Day, but we can do everything that pleases them during the whole year too. And such a Mother's Day, however, must not negatively shake our relations with mothers, rather a means by which to make strengthen our relations.

Maged Thabet Al-kholidy is a writer from Taiz, currently doing his M.A. at English Dep, Taiz Uni. He is an ex-editor of English Journal of the University.

### Short story

## The woodpile

By: Mohammed Al-Kaladi

The weather was somewhat windy and cold. The sun's rays were disappearing from the roof of the house and the hills nearby. A woman has already hoisted her last wood bundle onto the top of a large stack, completing the shape of a woodpile: her own woodpile. Though she lives with her husband's family, she had to make her own woodpile, as her mother-in-law did before her.

She then began gazing at the wood bundles and counting them with a feeling of pride and happiness. This woman is still a bride because she was married only a month and a half ago. Even the remains of wedding henna are still painted on her palms. But she had to work since the day after her wedding to prove her abilities as a successful housewife, particularly before her husband's family. Collecting wood pieces was her first challenge.

In such a harsh environment, newly married couples have no honeymoon or a chance to enjoy themselves. The man has to work on the farm and woman has to collect wood, bring water, clean the house, cook, and so on. All the women of her village have to pass through such a system, and of course she is no exception.

The words her mother-in-law said to her when she was showing her the place where she has to put the wood bundles were still on her mind. She said, "My dear, the woodpile is your image before others. If your wood pieces are good, you will be considered a true housewife. If they are not, it will be a sign of your weakness in housework and as a bad wife." She couldn't sleep that night. The matter had become a challenge for her and she had to be stronger than that challenge. So she strongly began doing her best in collecting wood pieces from the nearby hills and valleys and shaping them into bundles. She also took care to get the best quality of wood.

What makes her happy today is that she finished the shape of her own woodpile. A feeling of happiness filled her heart while she touched her bundles with her soft hands. For her the matter is bigger than collecting wood and forming a pile; she feels that she already laid down the foundation for her new family.

While she was diving in the ocean of her imagination, thinking of her new life, the voice of her mother-in-law calling her cut through her thoughts. She jumped up running to her mother-in-law, replying, "Yes, I am coming. I was just at the woodpile."

The End

**باسم محمد عبده الشيباني**  
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للتواصل: شوقي أمين أحمد يوسف 71336.610

متخصص في العلاقات الإنسانية والتنمية الذاتية فلسطيني الجنسية أبحث عن العمل للتواصل: 7338.3194

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ليسانس في الأدب الإنجليزي - جامعة تعز - تقدير جيد جداً - دبلوم محاسبة - المعهد الوطني - تعز - للتواصل: 720977001

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المستشفى الجمهوري ت: 01-27528/17  
مستشفى حدة الأهلي ت: 01-21241  
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## الانظمة تهتمك

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فندق ريلاكس إن ت: 01-449871  
فندق واجحة الخليج السياحي ت: 01-212350-612350

## البنوك

بنك اليمن والخليج فاكس: 26.824 ت: 26.824-1-66.824  
فرع عدن ت: 237829-2 فاكس/237829-2  
بنك التضامن الإسلامي ت: 01-711111  
البنك التجاري ت: 37722 ت: فاكس 37721  
مصرف اليمن البحرين الشامل ت: 37870-37870-2 فاكس: 37870-37870-2  
بنك اليمن الدولي ت: 01-270000  
البنك العربي ت: 01-270000  
بنك التسليف الزراعي ت: 01-033813  
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معهد بالي ت: 440827/375-440827 فاكس: 440827-375  
معهد اللغة الألمانية ت: 201950  
المعهد البريطاني للغات والكمبيوتر ت: 612222  
فاكس: 014700

معهد كاروكوس ت: 022222 فاكس: 022222  
معهد أوكيناوا ت: 01-212350 فاكس: 612222

## تأجير سيارات

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يورب كار ت: 77-051 فاكس: 77-044  
هيرتز لتأجير السيارات صنعا ت: 01-44039-1  
فرع شيراتون ت: 050980  
عدن ت: 01-242220

## مدارس

مدرسة رينيو ت: 414-36/424-433 فاكس: 414  
مدارس صنعا الدولية ت: 270191/4 فاكس: 270193  
مدرسة التريكة الدولية ت: 440808/9  
مدرسة المعاهد اليمنية ت: 201109

## سفرات

النسيم للسفرات ت: 77-70  
العالمية للسفرات والسياحة ت: 441109/10

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# Find your lost phone at Bab Al-Yemen

By: Saddam Al-Ashmori  
For the Yemen Times

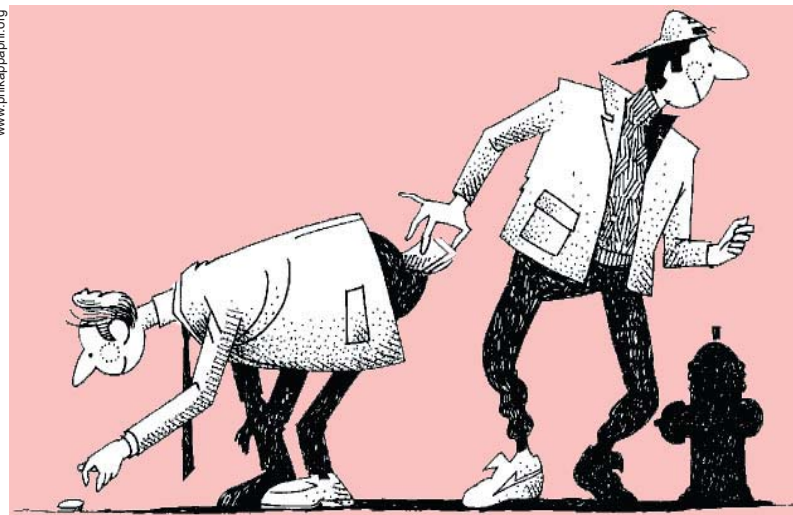
After enjoying a scrumptious lunch at his favorite restaurant, Khalid momentarily left his table to wash his hands. When he came back, his cell phone was gone. He frantically searched his pockets before asking the waiters if they knew where it was. He looked everywhere, but it was nowhere to be found.

The chances that you will find your cell phone at the second-hand market outside Bab Al-Yemen, the century-old door to the Old City of Sana'a, are very high.

The area has verged on becoming a "big black market" where street vendors sell all sorts of things, including used cell phones and watches among other precious items. Of course, most of them stolen.

The market is an open field for thieves to practice their trade and buyers to find a good deal. Trade thrives, largely due to a lack of monitoring by the authorities, many of whom are probably unaware of what is going on at the entrance to the historical site.

"I went to several shops in search of my stolen cell phone," said Mohammed Al-Ashwal. "Everyone I asked suggest-



ed I go to Bab Al-Yemen to find it. When I arrived, I found it with one of the street vendors. I took him to the police station."

Although Mohammed possessed documents that prove that he owned the phone, so did the street vendor: "I could not argue my case," he added.

"Professional pickpocket gangs that steal cell phones have established a special market for their second-hand items on the main street of Bab Al-Yemen," added Ahmed, who sells textiles at a nearby shop.

The trend of cell phones thefts in

Yemen is on the rise: "Professional pickpockets spread in crowded places such as markets," said Ali Al-Jahdari. "I have lost two cell phones, the second in the Hadda qat market. I informed the security but they did nothing."

People believe that cell phone thefts are carried out by gangs that operate in crowded places including markets, bus stations, and crowded streets and even in buses.

"Stealing cell phones has become a big phenomenon carried out by organized gangs," said Ali Sawed, a qat seller in Sana'a. "We usually see a gang of four to seven individuals enter the market and focus on a cell phone, particularly if it is an expensive model."

"They distract the man who has the phone by creating a commotion while they are buying qat," he explained. "Each one of them plays his specific role."

An anonymous source in Bab Al-Hurreya Police Station of Bab Al-Yemen said cell phone theft has increased in all governorates of Yemen.

"Here in this police station, we receive notifications about cell phone

thefts every day," he said. "This phenomenon has broadened to encompass armed robbery of phones and other property, particularly inside public transport."

"Some bus drivers cooperate with pickpockets to steal people's property," he added. "The problem is that some people who come to notify us about such events can't even give us the license plate numbers of the buses so we can track them down."

"Sometimes, we arrest street vendors with stolen cell phones," said the source. "We discover that they are not involved in thefts, but buy these phones from other shops where they are very cheap."

"Even the buyers participate in the spread of this phenomenon as they buy used phones without checking documents of property or identification card of the seller," he added.

Pickpockets and other thieves, especially those working in gangs, sometimes distract their victims either by asking for directions, or "accidentally" bumping into their victim.

With an array of skills, the most important of which is speed, they steal without people without them noticing. For example, two members of a gang might stage a fight, while the third member takes advantage of distracted crowd.

Worldwide there are all sorts of pickpockets, working at various skill levels. The lowest is made of simple opportunists. They don't employ any special

technique, rather seek out people with their guard down.

Just like Khalid, when all he went to do was wash his hands.

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**4U**

Pickpockets will always invent new tricks, so it's very difficult to avoid an encounter with one altogether. But you can control the damage by keeping copies of all your identity papers and bank cards somewhere safe, to be used if the originals are stolen.

If your wallet is stolen with your bank cards in it, immediately notify your bank to cancel your credit or debit cards, and arrange to be issued new ones.

If you are traveling, keep copies of all important documents, including your passport, in your hotel room and with a friend at home. If worst comes to the worst, your friend can send you the copies by fax. Prepare an emergency list of numbers, including your country's embassy or consulate, and keep it somewhere safe.

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