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Influential sides beat the drums of war

By: Mohamed Bin Sallam

SANA'A, March 29 — "Houthis receive indirect support from the Lebanese Hezbollah," stated President Ali Abdullah Saleh. "Support may not be offered by Hezbollah as a party or by its leadership, but by elements affiliated with this party."
"What I understand is that Houthis received expertise on how to make grenades, mines, and ammunition by experts and some elements affiliated to Hezbollah. In addition, some elements from the Houthis go to Lebanon," confirmed Saleh in an interview with London-based Al-Hayat newspaper published last Saturday.
He confirmed that Qatari mediation between the government and the Houthis is no longer valid. "Qatari mediation is over. Unfortunately, it encouraged Al-Houthi to exceed the limits of the Houthis and to consider themselves on equal footing with the government," said Saleh. "This was one of the negative side-effects that the Yemeni government committed."
In a related event, late last week Saudi TV broadcasted confessions of the Al-Qaeda member Mohammed Ateeq Al-Awfi, also known as, Abi Al-Hareth, which stated that Iranian and Libyan intelligence is coordinating with the Houthis in directing Al-Qaeda in Yemen. He further said that Al-Qaeda Organization in the Arabian Peninsula is planning from Yemen to launch attacks in Saudi Arabia against Saudi and US interests.
Responding to these accusations, the Abdul Malek Al-Houthi media office said that the allegations that Saudi media outlets published are false and baseless as they aim to connect them with Al-Qaeda without any evidence. The aim of these allegations is political in order to justify official the hostile stances that Saudi and

Yemeni regimes practice under the context of serving Zionist projects in the region, according to the media office.
"Our way of facing any aggression against us is completely different from operations that target innocents or exceed principles and serve the enemies of the nation," reported the Al-Houthi media office. "We do not have relations with any suspicious body or foreign regime."
Al-Houthi advised the Saudi regime to stop media instigations against the Yemeni people, to respect good neighborhood and Islamic fraternity, and to stop all acts that contribute to splitting the Islamic nation.
Al-Awfi confessed that intelligence from the Islamic countries of Libya and Iran leads individuals in Al-Qaeda under the name of the mujahedeen to target Yemen and Saudi Arabia. "We receive money from those intelligence members, individuals, and mujahedeen," said Al-Awfi. "Houthis came to us and offered money, but we refused. Some countries lead this small group in Yemen through a fictitious leadership other than our own."
Al-Qaeda organizations in Yemen and Saudi Arabia announced last month that they merged under one organization which they called Al-Qaeda Organization in the Arabian Peninsula under the leadership of Nasser Abdul Karim Al-Wehaishi, also known as Abu Basir.
Concerning the security situation in Sa'ada, local sources said that confrontations between Houthis and the military forces resumed yesterday morning in the Marran district, leaving 12 dead behind and another 12 wounded from both sides.
Abdul Malek Al-Houthi, the leader of the Houthis, has already called on the government to stop the oppressive aggression that it practices through artillery and rocket bombardment. He said that the aggression targeted schools, markets, public roads, and villages in

Marran last Friday.
In a press statement published in his online website, Al-Houthi warned, "This aggression may be the beginning of a sixth war which will split the country, waste resources, and serve foreigners."
"I call on the government to stop this oppressive criminal aggression that doesn't serve the country. Otherwise, we are obliged to defend ourselves and face this oppression," said Al-Houthi.
For his part, Saleh Habra, political spokesman for the Houthis, told the Yemen Times yesterday that the government, centered in mountainous areas of Lehman, Habish, and Al-Majram, shelled a number of areas in the Marran district with artillery and heavy weapons last Friday. He said that the bombardment targeted "schools, markets, and safe villages, resulting in the injuring of many women and children." He added that it killed livestock in those areas.
Habra considered military mobilization to be a step in the wrong direction as the government is leading the already tense situation toward the brink of disaster in order to launch a sixth war in the area. He accused the government of laying 1,600 new mines in areas near military sites. He said that military reinforcements and supplies arrived at the Al-Malahidh area.
"Government bodies released many jihadis from prison," said Habra. "They have been moved from Sa'ada and Al-Jawf governorates to carry out terrorist acts and to assassinate Houthi leaders."
Concerning the relief convoy from the Red Crescent Association that was seized by citizens loyal to the Houthis last week, Habra said, "The problem is that local councils in the governorate support the government. They distribute aid from organizations that call themselves 'humanitarian' to villages that were not affected during war and leave the devastat-



Army vehicle patrolling Sa'ada city just after announcing the war over in July 2007. Today there are signs it would flare all over again.

ated citizens suffering.
"The government directs the Red Crescent in a wrong way," said Habra. "In addition, the Red Crescent agreed to distribute its aid in 14 areas that were not affected by war. This is the Red Crescent. It is better for them to be honest and tell their leaders the facts, or they should conduct a survey of the affected areas," he added.
Concerning detainees, many media sources reported that the government released last week Abdul Karim Amir Al-Din Al-Houthi, the ex-negotiator of Houthis, who is also Abdul Malek Al-Houthi's cousin, his son, and another ten Sa'ada war detainees after spending over two years in prison. The sources said that eight detainees were released from Central Prison in Al-Hodeida, two from Al-Eslahia prison in Sa'ada, and two from the Political Security prison in Sana'a.

The same sources said that Abdul Salam Salah, one of the Houthis prominent leaders, was not among those who were released although he was included in the president's directives made early last week to release detainees.
Abdul Karim Al-Houthi is one of the leading figures of the Houthis. He was arrested in Sana'a while trying to release other detainees. The Doha agreement included that he and another three members from the Houthis head to Doha, but the agreement stalled.
Additionally, media sources reported that the situation in Sa'ada witnessed a dangerous development two days after the Cairo Center for Human Rights Studies demanded that an international committee investigate violations committed in Sa'ada during the war. These demands came during the discussion of rights of minorities in the Arab World that

was conducted in front of the UN Human Rights Commission.
The center said that the policy of exclusion that doesn't pay attention to religious, sectarian, and racial plurality in the Arab World opened doors for civil wars and armed conflicts that have killed over a million people in Iraq, Sudan, and Yemen. It said also that this policy increases methodological oppression on a sectarian basis in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen, or on racial basis in Syria.
The center said that evading punishment for the violations committed in the Arab World aggravated violations and increased conflicts and tensions. It further reported that the minority affiliated with the Zaidi sect in Yemen has been subject to violations due to four years of war against Houthis. It stressed that an international mission should be sent to Sa'ada to investigate these violations.

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College student's murderer on trial

By: Ali Saeed

SANA'A, MARCH 29 – Amidst unusually strict security measures, the West Capital Court in Sana'a started the trial today of Sana'a University security guard Shukri Al-Sabri from Taiz. The guard killed a first-year student who was studying commerce. The student, Saleh Al-Hooty, argued with the guard at the university gate because of permission to park his vehicle inside the campus on March 17.

According to the suspect's confessions as read out in court, Al-Sabri confessed that while he was checking the identity of the student, the student insulted him and drove into the university campus. The suspect then became nervous and while another security guard, Mohammed Al-Matary was reviewing the student's ID, the suspect shot the student's car. The bullet went through the rear windscreen and killed the student on the spot.

"I had intended to shoot the wheels of the vehicle to stop the student from entering the campus before I allowed him to enter, but the bullet killed him. I did not mean to kill him," said Al-Sabri during the police investigation prior to the trial.

Judge Hamaid Dabwan Haza'a headed the trial in the presence of the prosecution, the defense, the victim's family and neighbors, and the suspect himself.

The prosecution charged Al-Sabri with first degree murder, and after reading the prosecution memo, the judge asked the prisoner if he confessed or not. The prisoner replied 'null procedures,' accusing the court of conducting a wrongful trial.

The suspect stood silently behind the bars of the court's custody surrounded by security men from all direction.

The judge again asked if the charges against the suspect were true or false, to which the prisoner replied that he has a lawyer to defend him. Then the prosecution secretary read out the events of the incident, intending to prove the charges against the suspect.

During the investigation, Al-Sabri confessed to shooting at the car which was documented in memos at both the police station and the prosecution. The suspect confessed that on Tuesday 17 March, he was charged with guarding the university's main gate. At 8:00 AM, the student came to the university in a car with his brother. "I asked them to show the vehicle permission letter from the university to enter with the vehicle, but they refused," said the memo.

Moreover, the prosecution memo



Students protesting the murder of their colleague.

said that the suspect confessed that after firing a bullet from a Russian machinegun, he heard and saw Ali Al-Hooty, Saleh's brother, shouting, "You killed my brother, you killed my brother."

When Al-Sabri realized the student had died he surrendered himself to the security office at the university, who handed him over to the criminal investigation department and then to the attorney general's office.

According to the memos of the criminal investigation department, the suspect confessed that no one was at the western main gate of the university except him, the military adjutant Mohammed Al-Matary, and the two students.

He also confessed that no fire from any other machine gun occurred except his.

Another piece of evidence that was presented during the trial was the testimony of two witnesses: Jamal Al-Shabi, one of the professors at the Faculty of Agriculture, and Yasser Al-Badani, one of the security guards at the university.

The prosecution memo said that the suspect confessed that the testimony of the witnesses that described the incident was accurate.

During the narration of the case's evidence, the judge repeatedly had to quiet the three defense lawyers who spoke together at times. In addition to the three lawyers, a fourth who was present during the trial volunteered to defend the suspect, yet the judge refused his request.

Evidence from criminal forensics is also in play that proves that the bullet that killed the student is from the Russian machinegun that was with the suspect.

After facing Al-Sabri with these

charges and evidences, he still said 'null procedures' and repeated that he has a lawyer.

Lawyer of the victim, Abdulazeez Al-Samawi said that the suspect's statement 'null procedures' is considered an underlying confession after the previous confessions.

He asked the court not to pay heads to the suspect's reactions.

Although the victim's female relatives were not present in the all male court audience, it was visible that his father and relatives were quite solemn as they witnessed the trial.

The defense criticized that the court is not qualified to review this case and the suspect should be tried in a military court since he is a part of the state's security system. Moreover, the defense said that they were forced by the court to defend the suspect without taking copies of the case files and the prosecution memos.

The prosecution replied that this kind of criticism and defense is not acceptable since the case is not a military one in terms of place and persons.

The court adjourned until next Wednesday and ordered that the defense should have copies of the case files and that the prosecution should bring the witnesses in the next session.

Today a demonstration is expected to be carried out by Sana'a University students at the university campus demanding to disarm campus security and allow only civilian security to carry weapons. This will be the third demonstration since the incident thirteen days ago. The demonstrators demanded to sentence the murderer to a public execution at the university campus to prove that the authorities are serious about their students' safety. "How can we study if we are afraid," the demonstrators shouted in previous protests.

Al-Qaeda in Yemen run by capable states, former operative claims

SANA'A, MARCH 28 (SABA) – Mohammed Ateeq Al-Aufi Al-Harbi, an Al-Qaeda leader who was handed over to Saudis after he handed himself in to Yemeni authorities, said that Al-Qaeda in Yemen has links to Iranian intelligence services and Houthi rebels in Sa'ada.

In his confessions aired by the Al-Arabiya channel, Al-Aufi said that Al-Qaeda affiliates in Yemen are run by intelligence apparatuses of capable governments which administer them in the name of the Mujahedeen. These governments are targeting Yemen and Saudi Arabia.

"We receive money from these governments through Mujahedeen," he said, adding that "Houthis came to us once and offered us money and logistical support, and then I, in my capacity as a field commander of Al-Qaeda in Yemen, started to understand that our group is administered by countries and not by youth as we had learned."

"We realized there was a delusive administration for us," he added.

Al-Aufi revealed Al-Qaeda's new plans to attack foreign targets and oil facilities in Yemen and in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

"Al-Qaeda in Yemen became stronger after we, the Saudi Al-Qaeda branches, came into Yemen and merged with our colleagues here," he said.

"Al-Qaeda in Yemen was not effective but when Saudi Al-Qaeda members arrived in the country a real Al-Qaeda network started to take shape," he noted. "After the merge we formed a shoura council and named a leader, a deputy leader, military leaders, and media officers."

"I led about 250 followers that were organized in military brigades operating according to war plans," Al-Aufi stated.

Al-Qaeda in Yemen recently took shape through the recent merger of members in Yemen and Saudi Arabia under the name of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. They declared a new leadership, choosing Nasser al-Wuhaishi as leader, and started to implement their strategy of



Mohammed Ateeq Al-Aufi Al-Harbi

disseminating misinformation and carrying out terrorist attacks in the two countries.

They take advantage of strategic mountain locations at which new members can join the group to fight as guerrillas.

Among his confessions, Al-Aufi said his surrender came after he differed with the new leadership over expiatory fatwas against people and countries. He urged the rest of the members to come back to the right path and give themselves up to authorities.

On February 17, Yemen extradited Al-Aufi to Saudi authorities, twenty days after he surrendered to Yemeni authorities in Shabwa province.

Yemen and Saudi Arabia inked an extradition deal in 2003 and vowed to boost coordination and security cooperation to defeat Al-Qaeda cells in the two countries.

More Al-Qaeda members captured during the last few days, security apparatuses arrested ten Al-Qaeda suspects within a terrorist cell known as 'Qasem al-Raimi,' official security sources told the state-run 26sep.net.

The sources said that most of those arrested are young men who were recruited by Al-Qaeda to carry out suicide bombings and other attacks.

The security hunt for these terrorist cells and other Al-Qaeda suspects, especially in the Osailan area in the

eastern province of Shabwa, is based on information that security apparatuses received from the arrested Al-Qaeda elements. It is also based on important information revealed by two Saudi al-Qaeda elements, Mohammed Al-Aufi and Abdullah Al-Harbi, who were recently seized by Yemeni security authorities and extradited to Saudi authorities, the sources added.

The confessions of the young arrested Al-Qaeda members revealed the recruiting style used by Al-Qaeda under slogans of jihad in Somalia and Iraq. However, the young men ended up being taken to Mareb province and subjected to brainwashing sessions in order to prepare them for suicide operations with explosive belts or car bombs. They were also trained on the usage of weapons in some desert and mountainous areas in the provinces of Mareb and Abyan, the security sources said.

The sources added that some of the recruited youth expressed their refusal to carry out suicide attacks once they discover Al-Qaeda's slogans are false. As a result, they are subjected to psychological pressure and torture until they yield to Al-Qaeda's wishes.

Yemeni security forces are preparing to announce a list of names and photos of wanted elements in Yemen and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as well as rewards for information leading to the capture of these terrorists.

New guidelines for improving the quality of higher education

By: Ola Al-Shami

SANA'A, MARCH 28 – The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research has recently created new guidelines for private universities to ensure their credibility via official accreditation. Private universities must meet determined standards to be accredited by the ministry.

"According to ministry procedures, a private, national or foreign university cannot start working with less than USD 2 million, but this is an exaggerated number and in reality this number varies according to circumstances" said Kassim Al-Shargabi, an assistant teacher at the Khamer College and dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Modern Sciences.

This is why, after some thought, the Ministry of Higher Education has issued a decision to build the Supreme Council for Academic Assurance.

"The Supreme Council for Academic Assurance will closely look at curricula and academic affairs," said Dr. Nadhim Saeed, Deputy of Educational Affairs in the Faculty of Education at the University of Sana'a.

"The Ministry of Higher Education has determined standards to developing curricula, and academic research," he explained. "These standards are internationally validated which will ensure the accreditation of our universities."

A new private university cannot be accredited within the first months of its existence: "After fulfilling the financial

considerations, the new university will be under observation to verify its credibility in achieving the scientific and educational goals," said Al-Shargabi.

The explosion in university enrollment over the last few years has created numerous problems, including overcrowded classrooms, insufficient staff, deteriorating infrastructure, inadequate educational materials, and a low level of absorption of graduates into the labor force.

These developments threaten the degree of accreditation in several disciplines.

In Yemen, two bodies are responsible for accreditation of any university or learning institution.

"When a graduate from a foreign university wants to pursue his education in Yemen, he has to validate his certificate at the Office of Higher Education, and if he wants to get a job his certificate must be accredited from the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research" said Ali Al-Hobaishi general director of the Office of the Vice Rector of Graduate Studies and Scientific Research at Sana'a University.

The Office of Higher Education has procedures if a student wants to have his degree accredited in Yemen: "We have a guide for all the accredited universities available in all over the world. If the graduate's certificate was accredited internationally then we accept his application for higher studies," explained Al-Hobaishi.

The rise in the amount of undergrad-

uates and the increasing numbers of universities in Yemen have raised the need for insuring the quality and accrediting work in these educational bodies.

"The quality and accreditation of any university's work cannot be completed before the required hours of teaching are over, the teachers are well-qualified and follow communicative approaches in their teaching," said Al-Shargabi.

The requirements for accreditation vary from one major to another one: "For a degree in medicine to be accredited, it must involve in a practical period in a hospital to guarantee the ability of its graduates as doctors," said Abdullatif Haidar, a consultant with the Ministry of Higher Education. "As for engineering students, there must be a certain amount of time spent in a laboratory and so on."

Many workshops have been held to enlarge on the idea of quality assurance, accreditation policies, as well as research and curriculum development. These are a starting point for networking and cooperation among the rectors of various Yemeni universities.

These meetings follow a discursive approach, through which experts from different levels of higher education institutions, coordinated by a quality assurance expert, discuss how to best implement quality assurance strategies.

The work involves a report which will contribute to formulating a quality plan for the years to come and might also provide input for external quality assessment or accreditation in Yemen.

Abyan takes action on World Water Day



Locals in Abyan removing trees to clear the floods path way in order to prevent flash floods in the area.

By: Mahmoud Assamiee

ABYAN, MARCH 28 – Instead of commemorating World Water Day with speeches and empty promises, the governorate of Abyan took action and carried out an awareness campaign to clean up the district's water channels on Sunday.

Armed with cleaning equipment, students, members of local councils, members of Abyan's Basin Committee, members of the National Water Resources Authority (NWRA) and officials in the governorate took to Gasr Assini.

The activity was organized by the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and funded by Integrated Water Resources Management Project (IWRMP) in cooperation with the governorate officials and Abyan Basin Committee, with the goal of creating awareness of the need to clean irrigation channels.

Before the activity, the districts'

water channels were not only full of plastic and metal garbage, but also trees grown in the road of the irrigation system. These materials obstruct the irrigation system and clog water channels.

"This project will gradually clean all sediment and garbage in the wider area of Abyan to avoid floods and damages similar to what happened in Hadramout last October," said Michael Klinger a hydro geologist and the project team leader.

"There are many trees in the area posing obstacles and closing channels that extend from Wadi Banna which flows into Delta Abyan and on to the Arabian Sea," said Naser Al-Yazidi, senior expert with the GTZ.

The one-day campaign which cost around YR 1 million is the first of its kind in the area.

Manager of the Yemeni Water Resources Authority's (NWRA) Executive Unit Khaled Al-Abidid said that the aim of the campaign was to attract attention of the local authority in

the governorate to the situation of agricultural irrigation in Wadi Hassan and Wadi Banna as a consequence of the lack of maintenance of these channels.

"The idea to celebrate Water Day like this was from the German experts in IWRMP," said Al-Abidid adding that agricultural areas have been damaged by the blockage of agricultural channels.

"The Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation is responsible for the maintenance of these channels, so we wanted to warn this ministry of the existing danger via this campaign," he said. "If these trees and sediment stay in the channels, there will be a flood catastrophe in Abyan."

From June 2008, the Resources Management Project operated in three governorates, Abyan, Sa'ada and Amran. The Abyan Basin Committee was established in March 2008 and has issued more than 16 decisions, among them the latest decision to clean up irrigation channels.

In Brief

ADEN
559 trade names registered at trade and industry office in Aden

The registered trade names at Trade and Industry Office in Aden province reached last year 559 from different occupations, specializations, individuals and corporations.

Statistics issued from the office indicated that the registered names have met all the conditions and the required documentations as well as completed the requirements concerned with the occupation laws and the discipline agreed upon them.

The statistics also indicated that the registered and renewed record names at Trade and Industry Office reached 686 last year.

Awareness course on AIDS risks concluded in Aden

An awareness course on protection from HIV/AIDS risks was concluded on Saturday in Dar Sa'ad district in Aden governorate.

About 32 women from 5 developmental associations have received in six days lectures on AIDS risks, transmission ways, and protection means, as well as the aspects of family and personal awareness among the society.

The course was organized by Social Welfare Fund in collaboration with Anti-AIDS Program of World Health Organization.

SA'ADA
Workshop on assessment of humanitarian assistance in Saada concluded

A workshop on joint assessment for organizations and societies working in field of humanitarian assistance in Saada governorate was concluded on Thursday.

The workshop was organized by United Nation High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) with participation of 32 participants who represented the education, health and planning offices and other organizations in the governorate.

The participants, in the workshop, received lectures over humanitarian work and means of assessing it as well as ways of presenting the assistance and improving conditions of displaced-people camps.

Furthermore, the workshop also aimed at introducing the participants to commu-

nications channels with others, mechanisms of cooperation and coordination with the concerned parts in the government, organizations, and charities which work in the charitable field.

TAIZ
140 Somali refugees arrive at Baroum, Thubab coasts

Around 140 Somali refugees have arrived in Yemen at Baroum and Thubab coasts.

Security Information Center has stated that security forces had collected those Somali refugees and handed them over to the UNHCR office in Shabwa to be sent later to the main refugees camp in Kharaz district in Lahj governorate.

Yemen launched last week in Sana'a the process of registering refugees and providing them with refuge documents and unified IDs.

SANA'A
Yemeni 2nd ear, nose, throat scientific conference to be held soon

The 2nd Yemeni Scientific Conference for Ear, Nose and Throat Diseases is to be held next April 7-9 in Sana'a with the participation of 180 consultant physicians from Yemen, Germany, Italy, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Sudan and Jordan.

Chairman of Yemeni Association for Ear, Nose and Throat Physicians Dr. Mohamed al-Khatib said to Saba the participants will deal with 30 scientific papers including 12 Yemeni researches being presented for the first time.

The participants will receive lectures during the conference on the latest developments of the microsurgery in the ear, nose and sinusitis surgeries as well as the early diagnosis of larynx cancer and methods of curing it via laser, al-Khatib added.

The conference will positively impact on the performance level of Yemeni physicians, especially that those diseases are most common in Yemen.

Democracy School to launch child protection against discrimination, violence

Democracy School in partnership with Coordination Authority for Yemeni Non-Government organizations will launch next Monday Child Protection Program against Discrimination and Violence.

Programs director in Democracy School Elhaam al-Kabsi said the project aims to protect children from discrimination and violence and is funded by the European Union at cost \$104,000.

Al-Kabsi pointed out that the project included the two main activities; the first one is to protect children from discrimination and violence, particularly marginalized groups in each of the Capital Secretariat, Taiz, Hodeidah, Hadramout, Hajjah and Aden provinces.

She added the second one of the project is to train of trainers on the child protection methods in the targeting provinces, pointing out these activities include raising awareness in the areas of health, environment and children rights.

Arab delegation led by Yemen heads for Sudan

An Arab delegation led by Parliament Member and chairman of Arab Parliament Mansour al-Zandani headed for Sudan for a few-day visit in which they will show solidarity with Sudan and condemn decision of the International Criminal Court (ICC) against the Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir.

Upon his departure, al-Zandani said to Saba that the Arab Parliament is against accusations of the International Criminal Court (ICC) against Al-Bashir, considering this decision as an interference in the internal affairs of Sudan and affecting the security and stability in Sudan.

Arab Parliament will also head for Brussels to meet European parliamentarians to show Arab rejection stand of the warrant of arrest against Al-Bashir, al-Zandani added.

Yemeni union for transparency, combating corruption announced

Including a number of civil society organizations, syndicates and associations, the Yemeni Union for Transparency and Combating Corruption has been announced to improve contribution of civil participation in combating corruption.

The union aims at engaging all civil society organizations, political parties and youth and women sectors in the government's efforts in fighting against corruption.

A statement issued by the union highlighted that the corruption is a threatening phenomenon which has negatively effect-

ed the development in the country.

The union establishment was in response to an invitation from the Democracy Society Forum in collaboration with the Supreme National Authority of Combating Corruption (SNACC) and supported by the National Democracy Institute.

The union is looking for a real role in the country in which it will try to improve the national legislation to combat corruption.

European-funded fish projects implementation reviewed

The Steering Committee of the Fifth Fish Project reviewed on Saturday the implementation of the European-funded projects under the fifth fish project at a cost of \$5.5 million.

The meeting of the committee chaired by Minister of Fisheries Wealth Mohammed Shamlan dealt with reports submitted by the international experts of the project on level of accomplishment of fishing information network project, fish storage products quality, infrastructure projects as well as fishing associations' activities.

The Minister affirmed necessity of training the fishing cooperative societies' cadres on the proper ways of fishing and maintaining fish as well as introducing them to the lawful regulations of fishing work.

The Ministry will offer all kinds of support to succeeding the project, which aims to develop the basic infrastructure of the fishing sector, said Shamlan, praising the European support to Yemen, particularly in fisheries wealth sector.

Income tax law amendment to be discussed: PM

Prime Minister Ali Mujawar affirmed here on Saturday an amendment of the income tax law is scheduled to be discussed by the cabinet during the forthcoming weeks for decreasing the current tax.

Opening the second round of the Yemeni Confederation of Labor Unions (YCLU)'s Central Council held in Sana'a during March 28 - 29, Mujawar confirmed the government's willingness to promote the living conditions of employees and laborers as well as increasing means of training for them.

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He demonstrated that Al-Saleh Housing Project for low-income people, which started by implementing its first phase for 6000 housing units at a total cost of YR 25 billion, will contribute to limit the housing problem and will provide work opportunities in different areas relevant to constructions.

The Premier reviewed the government's achievements in enhancing the institutional and legislative construction, judgment independency, financial and administrative reforms and re-structure.

He affirmed the government's support to reinforce the partnership with the YCLU, indicating that the government closely observes the federation's efforts to reorganize its internal conditions and to raise its actual role in serving development and improving laborers' living lev-

els. Mujawar also indicated the global financial crisis' negative impacts and oil prices plummeting, which largely affected the state's general budget that mainly depends on oil revenues for about 70%, affirming that forced the government to revise the budget's items without prejudicing wages or investment program.

The Premier directed Minister of Finance to return the amounts already declined from the federation's budget, noting the national and struggle role of the labor movement in different circumstances and stages.

He urged laborers to take their national responsibility through backing up the state's efforts to fighting against extremism and terrorism and all bad acts affecting security and safety of the country, society, development and investment.

Their News

British Council to unveil plans to expand connecting classrooms in the Middle East

Plans to expand the British Council's successful Connecting Classrooms programme in the Middle East will be unveiled at a regional conference on Internationalism in Education for 150 education professionals from around the region on 31 March and 1 April.

17 local delegates from several schools and the Ministry of Education will represent 'Yemen' at the Conference.

Delegates at the Conference being held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Kuwait will share experiences, celebrate successful school partnerships under the Connecting Classrooms Programme and focus on plans for the future of the Programme in the region. They represent Ministries of Education, those responsible for developing school curricula, education professionals, school principals and teachers.

There are now more than 200 schools in the Middle East and the UK working in 85 Connecting Classroom partnerships since the Programme was introduced in 2006 to build greater understanding and trust between the different cultures.

During the two-day conference,



which will be opened by Dr. Abdullatif A. Al-Bajjan- Secretary General- Kuwait National Commission for UNESCO, keynote addresses will be given by David Gardner, Programme Manager, Curriculum Guidance and Support at the UK's Qualifications & Curriculum Authority (QCA) on creating global citizens in the 21st Century and Mr. Ali Bubbshait, Educational Consultant, Gulf Arab States Educational Research Centre (GASERC), who will speak on Education in the Gulf Arab States in the 21 Century.

Discussion groups will give delegates the opportunity to hear about other British Council Connecting Classrooms projects taking place in countries around the world, identify common issues and examine future plans for Connecting Classrooms in the Middle East.

Amy Cottage, Regional Manager,

Schools said:

'The vision of the Connecting Classrooms programme is that young people and adults in the UK and around the world will have the skills and understanding to contribute positively, in life and work, to a global society.'

'We look forward to celebrating the successes of Connecting Classrooms partnerships between schools in the UK and the Middle East at this regional conference on Internationalism in Education.'

'But, as importantly, it is an opportunity to explore with our partners common issues affecting schools in the UK and the Middle East and to look forward to the future for Connecting Classrooms as we work to strengthen its impact and reach in the Middle East.'

'Connecting Classrooms provides a fantastic opportunity for young people in the Middle East to develop a shared

understanding of each other's cultures so that they can play an active role as the global citizens of tomorrow.'

'The British Council has world-recognised expertise in the field of international education built up over 75 years so we are delighted to be organising what I anticipate will be an interesting and stimulating conference.'

Connecting Classrooms is a global British Council school partnership programme. It focuses on young people and through the development of sustainable partnerships builds an international dimension into education. This helps young people develop skills and understanding to enable them to become active global citizens.

'This is an exciting time for schools in the Middle East and the UK to seize the opportunity to build a greater international dimension into their education curriculum.'

For further information contact: Carolyn Braley, Regional Communications Manager - Middle East, tel: +00 973 1726 6166 ext 257 /mobile +00 973 39921206 / email: carolyn.braley@britishcouncil.org.uk

Grim Prospects: Deep recession, bigger losses

Geneva — The International Air Transport Association (IATA) announced a revised outlook for the global air transport industry with losses of US\$4.7 billion in 2009. This is significantly worse than IATA's December forecast for a US\$2.5 billion loss in 2009, reflecting the rapid deterioration of the global economic conditions.

Industry revenues are expected to fall by 12.0% (US\$62 billion) to US\$467 billion. By comparison, the previous revenue decline, after the events of 11 September 2001, saw industry revenues fall by US\$23 billion over the period of 2000 to 2002 (approximately 7.0%).

'The state of the airline industry today is grim. Demand has deteriorated much more rapidly with the economic slowdown than could have been anticipated even a few months ago. Our loss forecast for 2009 is now US\$4.7 billion. Combined with an industry debt of US\$170 billion, the pressure on the industry balance sheet is extreme,' said Giovanni Bisignani, IATA's Director General and CEO.

Demand is projected to fall sharply with passenger traffic expected to contract by 5.7% over the year. Revenue implications of this fall will be exaggerated by an even sharper fall in premium

traffic. Cargo demand is expected to decline by 13.0%. Both are significantly worse than the December forecast of a 3.0% drop in passenger demand and a 5.0% fall in cargo demand. Yields are expected to drop by 4.3%.

Falling fuel prices are helping to curb even larger losses. With an expected fuel price of US\$50 per barrel (Brent oil), the industry's fuel bill is expected to drop to 25% of operating costs (compared to 32% in 2008 when oil averaged US\$99 per barrel). Combined with lower demand, total expenditure on fuel will fall to US\$116 billion (compared to US\$168 billion in 2008).

'Fuel is the only good news. But the relief of lower fuel prices is overshadowed by falling demand and plummeting revenues. The industry is in intensive care. Airlines face two immediate fundamental challenges: conserving cash and carefully matching capacity to demand,' said Bisignani.

IATA also revised its forecast losses for 2008 from US\$5.0 billion to US\$8.5 billion.

The fourth quarter of 2008 was particularly difficult as carriers reported large hedging-related losses and a very sharp fall in premium travel and cargo traffic.

Other conference presentations include: - How Vocento, one of the leading media groups in Spain, has exploited its strong local brands to create a powerful, national advertising medium and is increasing its print and digital audiences and advertising revenue despite the financial downturn. The presentation will be made by Juan Luis Moreno, the Internet Strategy Director for Vocento.

- An examination of how advertising agencies are dealing with the challenges of a fragmenting media market and the increasing demands of clients for cost-effective success metrics. Juan Bascones Gleave, the Chief Media Investments

Full details of the conference, which will run concurrently with the new Power of Print conference, can be found (<http://www.wan-press.org/advertising2009/home.php>).

The Paris-based WAN, the global organisation for the newspaper industry, defends and promotes press freedom and the professional and business interests of newspapers world-wide. Representing 18,000 newspapers, its membership includes 77 national newspaper associations, newspaper companies and individual newspaper executives in 102 countries, 12 news agencies and 11 regional and world-wide press groups.



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Families interested in enrolling their children in the school, should contact the Head Teacher at telephone 203 950, e-mail administrator@sbsyemen.org, or visit the school.



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Female prisoners: Guilty to death

Kawkab al-Thaibani
For the Yemen Times

Khalid and Sara hailed a taxi and got in together. Little did they know this innocent act would alter their lives forever. Before they reached their destination, both were arrested by the police quite simply because they were alone in the vehicle.

They were taken to the police station. Khalid's family, friends, relatives and neighbors rushed to court to attest to his good character and to bear witness to his "righteous" behavior, but Sara's family did not.

Khalid was subsequently released, but Sara was not. Her family abandoned her because in Yemen if a woman is arrested, she is stigmatized as "loose." The prosecution found both of them not guilty, but Sara remained in prison because she had nowhere else to go. Her family had simply forsaken her. Although both were arrested for the same "crime," Sara was treated with scorn simply for being a woman.

This true story was narrated by lawyer and head of the Sageen non-governmental organization for prisoners Abdurahman Barman at a recent seminar on the situation of female prisoners in Yemen.

"Women prisoners are guilty until death, they don't need to wait for the verdict because the judge, prosecution and society have already sentenced her as guilty," said Barman discussing the violations against female prisoners.

During his career as a lawyer, he has

told due to his verbal offenses of the President Ali Abdullah Saleh and the General People's Congress Party and a member of the Sageen Organization said that he saw and heard officers cursing some of the women in prison with extremely foul language.

Al-Qarni related a discussion he had with a prosecutor about a female prisoner who had a miscarriage and then got pregnant again, while in prison.

"When I asked him about this woman and justice, he replied, 'This is justice, she had a baby and lost it, so we compensated her,'" he recounted.

"We rebelled against monarchy and colonization not because of them as entities or persons, but for our freedom," he continued. "But now Yemenis are treated worse than the time of the monarchy and colonization."

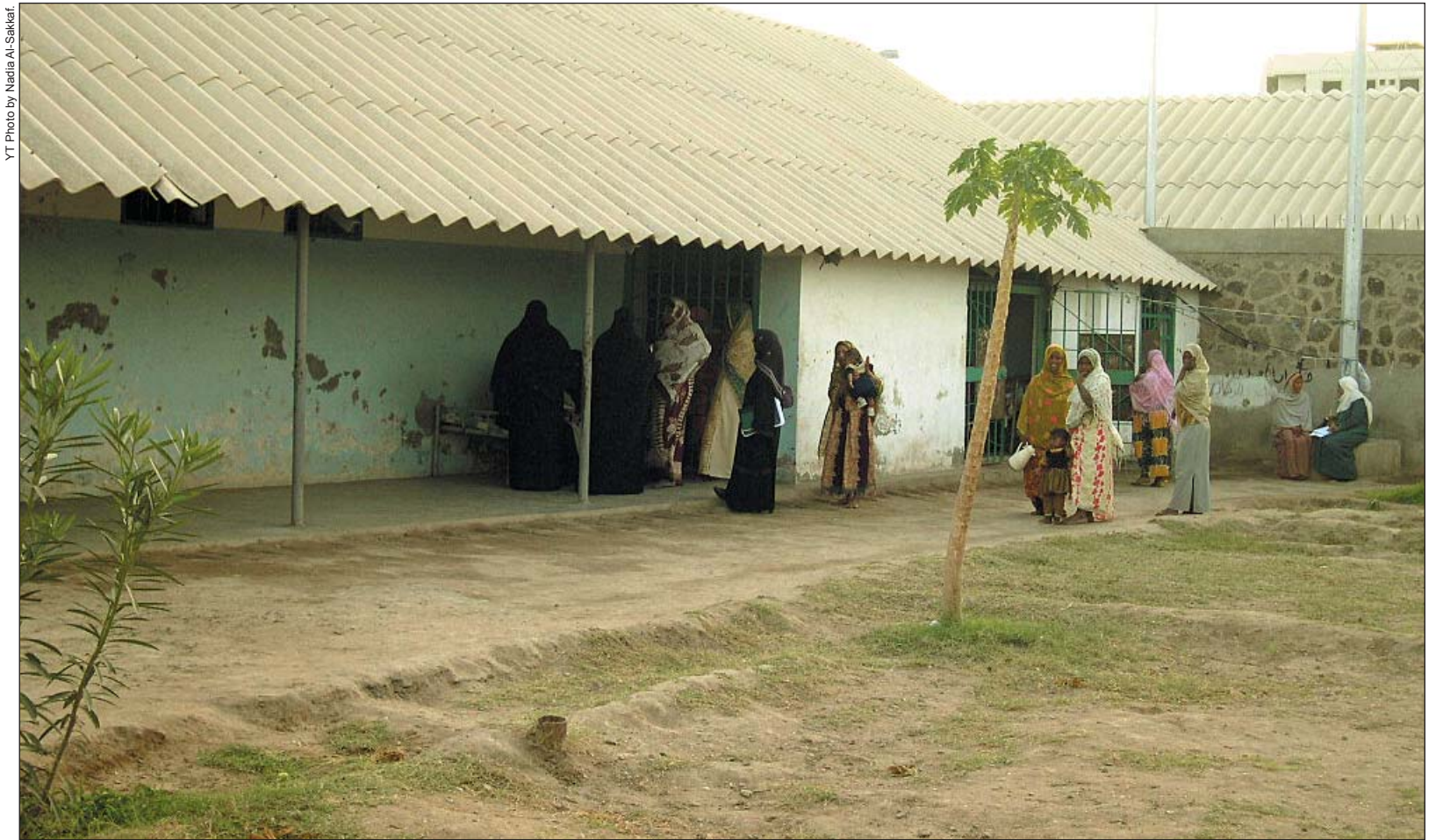
"Society is one of the major obstacles to the reintegration of female prisoners into society after prison, and this is due the profound disrespect to women," said Mohamed Naji Allawo, head of HOOD, a human rights organization.

He recalled another story of a woman who was arrested for staying with a man alone. After they were released, the woman decided to go back to the prison, because she had nowhere to go after having been renounced by her family.

Barman said that the whole society perceives the female prisoner as nothing but "a walking sin."

Violations against female prisoners

Complaints of rape, torture and verbal abuse are some violations recorded



A social expert talking with an inmate (right most) of Al-Mansoura women's prison in Aden, while other women prisoners idle around with their children in the prison yard.

Barman added that he worked with another woman who was forced to sell her newborn baby for USD 500 to the father. He paid her only USD 70 and when she wailed for her daughter the next day, prisoner guards gave her USD 30.

"The baby girl's name is Muntaha, another female prisoner told me that she was witness to the selling," he added.

Lack of healthcare is another dilemma. Al-Qarni said that when he was in prison he heard screams in the women's prison next to him. When he asked them what the problem was, they said that a woman is giving birth without any help whatsoever.

In 2008, two women gave birth inside the guards' room because of the late response to their need to give birth, said Barman.

"They gave birth with their hands and feet handcuffed. If a pregnant prisoner is admitted to a hospital, the handcuffs will be on her hand," he said. "Imagine in a country like Yemen, how she would be treated."

Female prisoners are also forced to work for the female guards, washing their clothes or blankets which they bring for their homes.

"We will further research this issue to reveal this ill-treatment," said Barman.

"The issue of female prisoners is a national one," agreed Amal al-Basha, head of Sisters' Arabic Forum.

Abdulkarim Al-Khaiwani, a journalist, said that he paid a visit to the

women's prison to clear the accusations against the central jail, and how women are treated.

"But the prison authorities refused to let me talk to the prisoners, which proved these accusations," he said.

But even the female prisoners basic rights are being ignored. This year the government has decreased its public budget by half, affecting a number of governmental facilities, including prisons.

HOOD and Sageen have sent a letter to President Ali Abdullah Saleh to review this decision because it will further aggravate prisoners' already poor nutrition.

Al-Qarni laughed sarcastically when he recalled how horrible prison meals are. He said it took him two weeks to realize that what he has been eating was beans.

"When I was in prison, I saw a man brutally beaten because he protested against being given chicken every 16 days," he said.

Barman added that each woman eats a chicken once only in 16 days, but that now after the minimizing expenditures, matters will become worse.

In response to human rights activists claims, Colonel Mutahar Ali Naji has said claims that women in prison are subject to mistreatment are baseless, and called those who advanced them liars.

"Any journalist is more than welcome to visit the prison to see the services we provide," he said. "They must have said that while they were high on

cat," he added.

Ghinwa Hanash, an a former female prisoner charged for attempted murder, who was invited to speak by Al-Khaiwani, spoke with reservation to the audience.

"I was a prisoner but this does not mean that I cannot restart my life," she

said, to which the audience cheered in encouragement.

But she refused to elaborate, in particular about what happens to women in prison.

"If I talk about what is going on there, I will go back to prison," she said.



A woman former prisoner speaking about her story in Sana'a women's prison during the seminar.

met many women in prison most of whom have been victims of sexual, physical and verbal abuse while in confinement.

Society oppresses female prisoners

Activists from many human rights organizations believe that women inmates are threatened with rape.

Fahd al-Qarni, a well-known comedian and former prisoner, held in cus-

against female inmates recorded by human rights organizations.

Barman said that he worked on a case where a woman became pregnant inside prison because she was raped by a guard to make her confess to a crime she did not commit.

"Most of the time they threatened the prisoners with rape to get them to say whatever they [the prison guards] want," he explained.

Paving the way for quality assurance in vocational training

By: Khaled Al-Hilaly

Preparing for the practical implementing of new reforms in the Yemeni technical and vocational education system, officials at the Ministry of Vocational Training attended a two-day awareness workshop to learn about the importance of quality assurance and evaluation.

"From the workshops, ministry staff was told that quality is not measured by written exams, but by the practical implementation of standards," said Deputy Minister for Quality Standards Ibtahaj Al-Kamal. "We will choose two areas of specialization on which to start implementing quality assurance."

"The aim of this workshop is to uplift and change the mentality of the ministry in seeing how quality assurance is very important in their day-to-day work, not only with regards to the ministry but also to the curriculum, institutions and graduates," said Nawaf Shamsan, assistant director at the British Council.

"The whole idea is to bring together managers from all divisions of the ministry and to show them how to approach quality assurance," he said.

"By the end of the workshop, we should be able to broaden their idea of quality assurance and hopefully have them move a step further and improve the quality of the overall vocational

educational training system in Yemen," he continued. "The British Council would like the Ministry of Vocational Training to know that it will always be a good hand for them and supporting them to make change in the ministry."

"We have the proper experience and expertise that does enable us to make sure that we can really make change in the ministry and for the overall vocational system in Yemen," Shamsan said.

"We will continue to support the ministry in making positive change to the vocational education system and in return we do hope that they would always be on the top of our expectations in achieving and implementing all of the training courses and workshops," he added. "Change can only be done within and this should be done within the ministry."

"Yemen is the only country in area with [local] workforce," said Dr. Naji Al-Mahdi, a vocational training expert who was invited by the British council to talk about the quality assurance for technical education and vocational training for the ministry personnel.

"The ministry can do a lot with the available abilities and resources, they only need full-scale well and faith that they can do and change," Al-Mahdi added.

Al-Mahdi referred to the absence of clear criteria and standards to assure quality in training at the Ministry of



Students at the metals section of the Technical Institute in Sana'a learning to operate the metals cutting machine.

Vocational Training and the lack of connection between vocational and academic education as the main problems facing Yemeni vocational education.

Last month, the British Council and the Ministry of Vocational Training have started with "skills for employability," as a first step to support technical and vocational education in the country.

The next step is to link two or three Yemeni vocational education institu-

tions will be linked with institutions which have the same focus in the UK.

"This will make them share experiences and information as well as making visits to share and reflect the work they do," Shamsan said. "Institutional partnerships aim to uplift and increase the level of the [Yemeni] institution to partner with the institution in the UK."

"These twinned institutions will be models for all other [Yemeni] institutions, who can copy what they will have learnt from them," he concluded.



Request for Training Services

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) wishes to contract a local Trainer (Individual/organization) to conduct two training workshops on Leadership and Management Skills and Communication and Networking.


Interested Trainers should request full information from IFES office by phone: 421634 or email alothari@yemen.net.ye within a maximum one week from the date of this ad.

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The TV and Radio General Corporation declared its interest in inviting for general bid number (7) for the year 2009 for:

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Cost for buying the bid documents (YR 5000) non refundable.
The deadline of selling the documents is: 22/4/2009.

The bids must be presented in a red wax sealed envelopes t the bids and tenders committee's secretariat at the corporation. The names of the bidding company and of the project along with the tender number and the bidder's name must be written on the envelop, which should contain the following documents:

1. An unconditional bank guarantee of (US 1,300\$) valid for 120 days as of the date of bid opening or a cashable check.
2. A copy of valid tax certificate for the year 2009 (feign bidders with no existing business activities in Yemen may furnish a copy of equivalent VAT registration document from their home countries).
3. A copy f valid insurance certificate for the year 2009 (insurance certificate is required only from firms with employees in Yemen who are entitled to benefit from the Public Enterprise for Social Security in Yemen).
4. A copy of valid registration and classification for the year 2009.
5. A copy of valid Zakat certificate for the year 2009.
6. A copy of valid commercial registration valid for the year 2009.
7. A copy of valid profession license certificate for the year 2009.
8. A copy of valid sales tax registration certificate for the year 2009.

The deadline for receiving the proposals is at 11:00 am on Tuesday 28/4/2009 at the corporation's main premises.

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VACANCIES

For the Basic Education Development Project (IDA Credits & Multi-Donors Trust Funds)

The Project Administration Unit of the Basic Education Development Project (PAU BEDP) at the MOE now seeks applicants for the following positions:

(1) The Administrative Assistant would:

- Provide secretarial and operational assistance to professional staff
- Ensure quality of outgoing correspondence and other related documents.
- Manage the filing system and record management.
- Manage the leave and attendance system and schedule appointments.
- Handle the logistics of conferences and workshops.

Qualifications:

- A Bachelor's degree with at least 3 years experience in office logistic management.
- Good interpersonal skills and excellent communication skills.
- Computer knowledge and familiarity with MS-Office applications.
- Proficiency in speaking and writing Arabic and English.

(2) The Procurement Assistant would:

- Work with PAU Staff and if necessary with the field offices on the procurement matters
- Make himself proficient regarding World Bank's /IDA's guidelines for the procurement of goods, works, and other services under International Competitive Bidding (ICB), National competitive Bidding (NCB), Shopping and Direct purchase procedures.
- Be able to prepare bidding documents for the procurement of goods and works based on the sample Bidding Documents and other documents prepared by the World Bank.
- Familiarize himself with the standard sample documents prepared by the World Bank for hiring consultants and prepare the draft contracts based on sample contract documents prepared by the World Bank.
- Fully understand the Procurement Plan prepared for BEDP and shall be able to update it as needed under the guidelines of the procurement officer.
- Prepare procurement reports, documents for submission to the project director, and also for getting clearance / No Objection for the World Bank /IDAs.
- Be responsible for preparing, weekly, monthly, bi-annually, annually procurement report as directed by the head of the procurement unit and project director.
- Work closely as a team player along with members of the procurement unit.
- Perform any other duties assigned by the head of the procurement unit.

Qualifications:

- Formal academic qualifications (a minimum of a Bachelor degree in Administration, Engineering or

- equivalent).
- Strong writing and speaking skills in English and Arabic.
- Strong interpersonal and skills.
- Proactive personality
- Capability to use computers and software application.
- A minimum 3 years experience in business /procurement work would be desirable.

(3) The Coordinator would:

The Basic Education Coordinator will work under the general direction of the Project Director to achieve the following:

- Ensure that fiduciary requirements are met (financial reports, progress reports, indicators, etc.);
- Supervise program activities, with a focus on strategic aspects (indicators, monitoring and evaluation);
- Ensuring regular update of financial data;
- Liaising with the different units of the MoE at the central and the sub-national levels (Governorates and Districts) involved in project implementation to ensure that the subcomponents they are responsible for is implemented effectively, and according to agreed annual work plans in terms of objectives, procedures, and costs;
- Assist in consolidating and transmitting program progress reports to IDA and Development Partners (DPs) as indicated in the bilateral agreements;
- Assist in organizing regular meetings with the Project Steering Committee to share information on program progress, issues, and solutions;
- Run day-to-day activities; and
- Perform any other project-related duties requested by the Director.

Qualifications:

- Formal academic qualifications (a minimum of a Bachelor Degree) preferably in education;
- Minimum of 10 years of relevant experience with a minimum of 2 years experience in coordination;
- Understanding of policy development and ability to undertake policy discussion with senior government officials and IDA and donors staff;
- Strong communication skills;
- Ability for effective interaction and communication with stakeholders, management and staff, as well as with local and international consultants;
- Familiarity with IDA-financed projects will be an advantage;
- Strong oral and written capabilities in both Arabic and English;
- Capability to use computers and software applications.

All applications along with a detailed resume and supporting documents should be submitted by **Wednesday April 29, 2009** at the following address:

Basic Education Development Project
60M Southern Road, Bait Meyad
Tel: 01-619160 / Fax 01-619219

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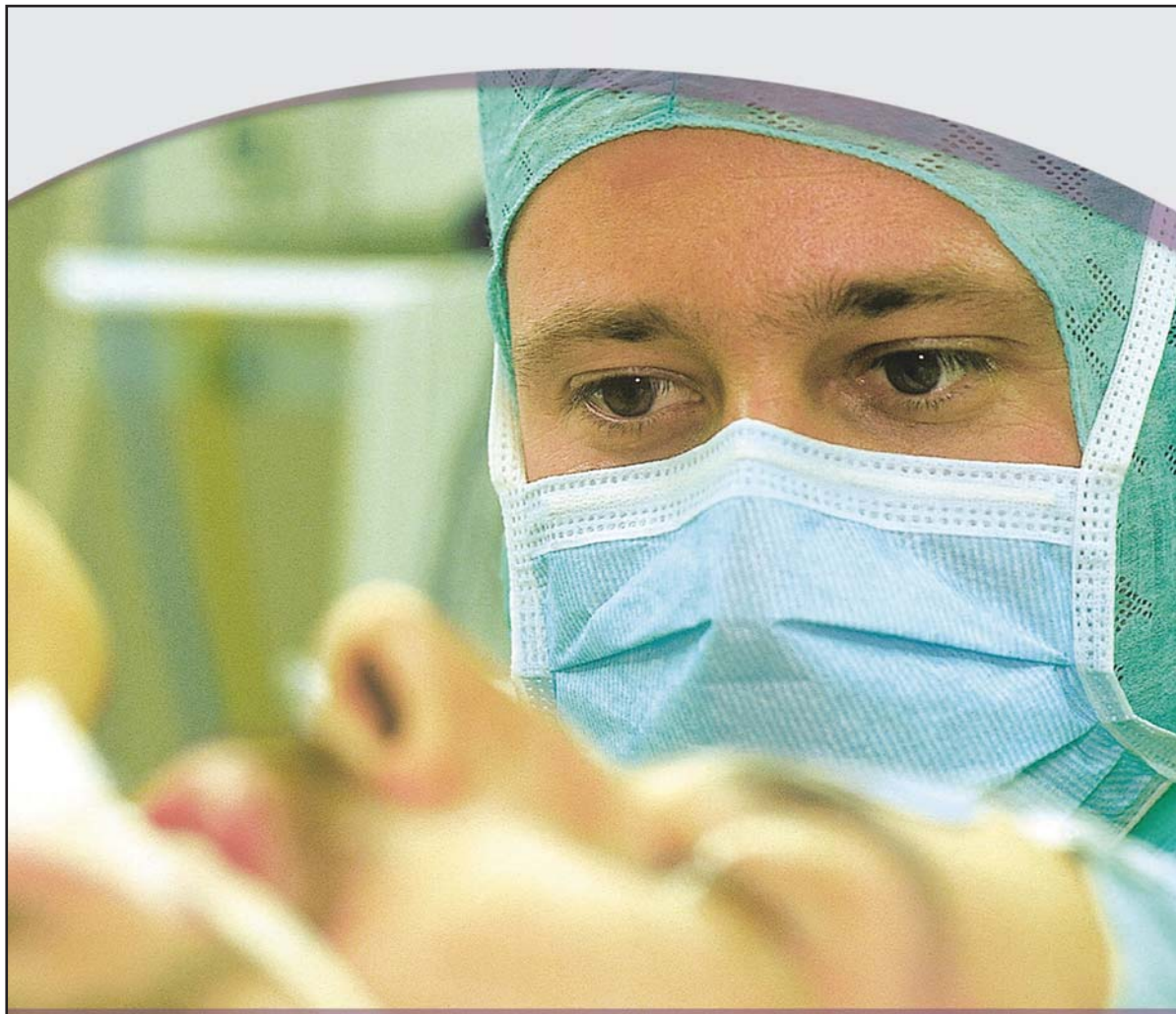
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Words of Wisdom



One of the key differences between a dictatorship and a democratic system is the role of the media in general, and that of the official media, in particular. If those individuals in charge of the media feel they are more responsible towards the public than towards the politicians, and perform their job on that basis, then that is a sign of a democratic structure.

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



OUR OPINION

United United Nations

Last week several UN agencies signed a joint agreement to support the community of Bait Al-Faqih district in Hodieda governorate. The agreement had a pioneering concept named "Basic Development Needs", where five UN agencies: World Food Program, World Health Organization, International Labor Organization, UNICEF, and UNFPA collaborating with the Social Fund for Development and the local government towards the long-term objective of reducing morbidity and mortality rates and improve the health status and quality of life of the 74,000 residents of Bait-Al-Faqih.

This initiative is pioneering in several ways, as this is the first truly joint United Nations program in Yemen where several UN agencies are working hand-in-hand in a holistic manner on a grassroots level, furthermore, the UN agencies has built the capacity of the Bait Al-Faqih local council to be put in the driver's seat for Basic Development Needs program, as well as empowered the local council to steer the activities through a bottom-up approach where community participation, local government buy-in, and coordination through a program steering committee formed mainly of local beneficiaries and headed by a woman. The implementation of the program, however, will be supervised by the Ministry of Public Health and Population which is very supportive of the initiative.

This approach to development is a first in Yemen, not only because of the collaboration of several donor organizations in the initiative, but due to the successful build up of the local governance and administrative systems to become in such a position where it can implement comprehensive and multi-layered development programs, amounting to over \$ 7 million as in the case of Bait Al-Faqih.

Yemen is a development basket case, where development needs are urgent and are desperately sought after by the largest percentage of the population especially in rural areas, however, we rarely hear of such success stories where needs are addressed in such a comprehensive manner, starting the focus from the basic healthcare needs all the way to promoting girls education, gender sensitization, skill development, and, more importantly, building the management and administration capacity of locals, to raise, maintain, and revolve funds towards the sustainability of the program and the potential future expansion.

Yemen is watching the milestones taken place in Bait Al-Faqih, and we applaud the courage and hard work exerted towards making this initiative a reality.

This approach is an example that ought to be followed by other donors in Yemen, and we look forward to the fruitful outputs from this program in the future.

Nadia Al-Sakkaf

When law is neglected and tribes rule

By: Ali Al-Shatibi

Student Al-Hooti was shot by a soldier who was guarding the west gate of Sana'a University. This incident created outrage, not because the victim was a student, but rather because his murderer belongs to the military corps that was entrusted to guard the gate of the largest academic facility in Yemen.

The incident has led to statements, reports and manifestations of discontent. The university rector's car was smashed and he received death threats demanding he hand over the killer to the Hamdan tribe to be executed to satisfy the victims family and tribe.

I am not defending either the murderer of Al-Hooti or Sana'a University, but found the incident to be an opportunity to discuss an important issue related to Al-Qadasi, Al-Houthi, Mutahhar Al-Masri's group, as well as Shar'ab and Dhamar citizens. We don't realize that we are angling towards new means to take hold of just rights, means that don't suit Yemeni society which is led toward fanaticism, regionalism and sectarianism. Society believes that law and order will never be as effective as it is under the tribe which holds the power to defend the rights of all people under its authority.

This reasoning is not new, as everybody knows. Everybody also knows that the government neglected applying the law to recover Al-Odaini, the child who was kidnapped by the Bani Dhabian tribe. It was indifferent towards the kidnapping of Hanan, a small girl and neglected the issue of Al-Hamidi who was killed by a group of people belonging to Sanhan area. All these acts have prompted the victims to resort to tribal laws to protect their sons, instead of courts and the rule of law.

Al-Hooti's killing at Sana'a University has forced me to remind people of the series of incidents in which many have resorted to tribal law in the absence of another law to arbitrate all citizens' issues. This is because law is the only way to protect all people and provides an alternative to the tribal sheikh's gun

and group of volunteers to carry out his law against the criminal who is usually supported by another tribal sheikh. The two tribes resolution of the issue will depend on the nature of the tribe, its relations with decision-makers, its weapons and number of fighters.

The tribe's judgment is circulated among all inhabitants of the area protecting the criminal or the victim, which leads to a conflict between two tribes each of which has its own legislations, judgment and justifications applied to react.

In this case, the government's law becomes a heavy burden, lacking effectiveness. It is neglected by legislators and protectors who are indifferent to the fact that it has become no more than a target for media criticism.

Consequently, they broaden the scope for tribal legislations to play the role of both the judge and executioner. They sometimes even ensure tribal dominance, as happened when Al-Hada tribesmen responded to the "call of tribalism" to invade the area of Shar'ab and free Al-Qawsi instead of letting the government or military do it.

As a result, war hovered over Taiz and news was circulated that new conquerors were stationed near the governorate. The bodies responsible for providing protection and security for people stood by to observe the tribal surge to Taiz.

Thus, the government's law is slaughtered without anyone to lament its death, in a country of laws that legalize practices that harm the security of the country and deliberately condone many issues that victimize hundreds of innocent people. The latest murder of Al-Hooti is one of many other issues that shouldn't escape the law. Attempts to circumvent it only reinforce a new entry to the record of violations that serve only those who bet that Yemen will enter a tunnel of civil war.

Although we should remain cautious about what is to come next, we should have some hope that our rights be protected, law maintained and reactivated it away from partisan entrenchment, personal bets, and lack of awareness of the rule of law.

We should be more aware of how to deal with issues of justice and let the government's law rule. We should rid ourselves of the policy of intervention and imposing judgments that are completely away from its course.

Every active member of Yemeni society, regardless of their affiliation, should support the rule of law as the only source to deal with legal issues without the gun that brings about only devastation of our society.

This leads us to question the tribal law that has become prevalent during the past years. In addition to the Sanhan, Hashid, Bakil and Arhab cases, the Hamdan tribe's law has threatened to carry out its judgment after the murder of Al-Hooti.

Does our political system support martial laws? Do the Minister of the Interior, the Attorney General and the Chairman of the Supreme Judiciary Council realize that neglecting and condoning issues of impulsive tribal law are a disastrous alternative?

Negligence here is equal to participation. When they don't arrest criminals they participate in crimes. Minister of the Interior! The murderers of Al-Qadasi, Al-Hamidi and the Sheikh of Shar'ab are still at large. Kidnappers, thieves and corrupt individuals still enjoy five-star protection, out of reach of the judiciary. Resorting to martial law is neither in favor of society nor in favor of the regime. Our tribal law may achieve the judgments that we couldn't attain through the formal courts, but at what price? This question is directed to leaders of the country. We are not against the right of Al-Hooti's father to see the murderer of his son brought to justice. We are not against the military, but we do believe that it should stay out of legal issues.

In the end, tribal law doesn't protect anyone. The president may be the protector of the Sanhan tribe and Al-Ahmer is a member of the Hashed tribe.

In Bakil, Arhab and Hamdan, the law is the gun. In civilized governorates and districts, law is still a sword that protects only the oppressors.

Source: Nabanews.net

The Southern issue... partisan instrument or front for political blackmail?

By: Ali Mohamed Al-Khamisi

Since the so-called Southern issue came to the surface, many observers of the Yemeni political situation both inside and outside the country questioned this new intrusion in the Yemeni political field. Overnight this issue turned from opportunistic ideas into a concern over regionalism featuring an already rejected intention to secede from Yemen. Some opposition parties exploited this as an opportunity for political blackmail.

Moreover, these parties exceeded the known forms of blackmail and exploited other loathsome forms of partisanship that leads to destructive internal feuds. Consequently, enemies both inside and outside the country were given a golden opportunity, intentionally or otherwise, to create a real crack in national unity and achieve their major objective that will never come true. This objective is to tear and divide Yemen into several entities that will fight against each other as happened in Somalia or in other countries that collapsed, split, and turned history backward. This is what the president made clear during his last speech delivered before the Yemeni Journalist Syndicate.

Attempts to lead Yemen down Somalia's path are real and show that many enemies of the country and its people aim to destabilize Yemen. Yemeni unity is a cause that all powers and political parties in the country should support; they should not touch or disturb it for any reason. This is only if all involved are concerned with the supreme interest of the country represented by national unity, development, security, stability, and social peace. We hope that they care for all of these things, even if some of them exploited the Southern issue for political blackmail. However, they will come back to the right path, as Yemeni people love the soil of their country. They will never neglect the country regardless of the difficulties or pressure that surrounds it.

This doesn't mean that betrayal doesn't exist. Unfortunately, some Yemenis do want to betray their country and their people, but this is rare and has never affected the country as a whole.

Coming back to the main topic, we notice that some members of opposition parties, those who are abroad after they lost their interests

and personal privileges or those who plot against the country, talk irresponsibly nowadays and urgently demand that the government confess the true danger of the so-called Southern issue. We should stop these destructive demands that are falsely covered in the guise of human rights.

The disaster is that some of these people demand the government to confess this issue in a way that splits the country. These demands are based on disgusting regional viewpoints and sometimes on the obvious secessionist viewpoint that is supported by enemies of the country. They falsely consider that Yemeni unity that was achieved on May 22, 1990 - 18 years ago, when really we have been one Yemen all along. They say that now, based on political consensus, national unity is suffering from a 'dilemma.' Consequently, secession is actually a step backward, according to their twisted logic.

Those people participated in one way or another in the attempt to carry out secession in the summer of 1994; an attempt that failed both militarily and politically, despite their war crimes and lavish financial support from enemies of the country abroad. Having failed, they are attempting today to mislead some of their naive supporters that a Southern issue will solve all their problems. They say that these problems will never be solved until they achieve complete independence from the north. This is as if to say that people in the southern governorates are suffering from oppression and exclusion while their brothers in the northern governorates are happy with eternal luxury, sustainable development, and welfare programs!

Therefore, they think that human rights issues that these people use to mislead others are not related to both the south and the north. They believe that the north has no relation with these human rights issues. Citizens of the north are enjoying welfare and a permanent decent life, or they are only 'Dihbashis' who accept any situation, life, or standard of living according to some viewpoints. They forgot that citizens of the south enjoyed a better economic situation before unity. However, they are more aware of what is planned against the country. Therefore, none of them called for secession, for they realize that unity is not the reason behind poverty and oppression. They also realize that unity is not the cause of unemployment

that is currently spreading nationwide. Unity is an historical fact and a fate that people of the whole country believe in. Moreover, they consider it the greatest victory in the contemporary history of Yemen. The fact is that the Yemeni people are one entity; the Southern issue is actually over and will never come back, even though some people occasionally attempt to provoke it through media. We don't exaggerate when we say that people in the southern governorates love and care about unity more than others. The reason is simply that they suffered from miserable conditions caused by political splits or cruel regimes during the period before unity, during which time their ancestors struggled to achieve.

Oppression, poverty, unemployment, and corruption are phenomena and problems that every society worldwide suffers from throughout the history of mankind. Societies differ from each other only in terms of the level and degree of these phenomena. Therefore, countries work to reduce and limit the size of these problems, but they cannot eradicate them completely in their societies, even if they are among the richest worldwide.

We find very often that societies that are politically and socially stable and those that maintain the solidarity of their national unity are the most able to overcome these problems, as their main concern is to preserve social peace and reinforce bonds of national unity. These, in turn, bring about security, stability, and consequently, sustainable development, without which all societies lose any other issues they demand.

Opportunistic issues are very often featured in the guise of human rights issues in order to achieve deception and camouflage. As a result, we cannot but call them issues that aim to achieve evil. This is because the fate of issues that deviate from the public social framework and turn into special interest issues - whether opportunistic, regional, or racial - always turns into a complete fiasco, as they only recognize the rights of an area or group and ignore rights of the society as a whole. Moreover, the society will never accept such issues or demands which harm it more than it benefits. This is exactly what we notice in this issue that its supporters call the 'Southern issue,' and that some parties, bodies, and individuals use as a means to achieve political blackmail.

Source: Nabanews.net

SILVER LINING

Al-Qaeda and Security: Who is infiltrating the other?!

The recent terrorist attacks against the Korean nationals in Hadramaut and Sana'a have demonstrated how serious al-Qaeda is in challenging the security. The suicide bombing some meters away from al-Dailami air force base shows that al-Qaeda is infiltrating the security agencies. It is difficult for an 18-year old suicide bomber to attack the Korean investigation team into Seiyoun attack on Korean tourists without having accurate information on the Korean convoy movement. It is nothing but infiltration of the security, the painful reality that deputy prime minister for defense and security Rashad al-Alimi divulged to the parliament in a close session set for questioning the government on these recent terrorist operations. Al-Alimi later denied that he said so, but this needs no evidence.

It is a genuine challenge on the part of al-Qaeda to the Yemeni security authorities and the political system at large as these militants are capable of penetrating the security apparatuses. By such attacks in Sana'a and against a foreign delegation, al-Qaeda militants are shrugging their shoulders in pride of their ability to infiltrate the security authorities.

It is also a signal by which al-Qaeda would like to show it is still strong and able to strike despite security arrest campaigns, trials, killing and resignation of its militants. It might be also a response to security infiltration of some of its militants. It is kicking off the operations under the joint Yemeni-Saudi leadership following announcement of the merging of the two organizations in the two countries last January.

Such suicide bombings also demonstrate that al-Qaeda has managed to brainwash scores of young militants to carry out such operations. According to the interior ministry, the perpetrators of the recent attacks are eighteen years old. This is very serious as it means this terrorist organization will offer an option for frustrated youngsters hit by poverty and lack of job opportunities. The political, social and economic hardships serve al-Qaeda objectives in recruiting young militants, providing them with explosive vests to blow themselves up regardless of the consequences. In other words, al-Qaeda leader Hamza al-Quaiti who was killed in confrontation with security in Tarim and the military leader of the new merged al-Qaeda Kasim al-Raimi have succeeded in the last few years in recruiting many young fighters.

The interior ministry said last week it arrested six militants who were among others plotting to carry out 12 attacks against oil facilities, interests for some countries as well as tourists. In fact, carrying out two consecutive attacks in almost four days means that danger is looming unless action is taken to control these militants. These militants have found in Mareb, Shabwa, al-Jawf and even Hadramaut in particular a haven for plotting their attacks.

All these incidents show Yemen's need for a strategic vision to address terrorism, involving many stakeholders. There should be a transparent plan on how to fight against roots of terrorism on political, security, economic, social, religious and other aspects.

The dialogue is in principle good, but the government has not got a plan for intellectual committee in charge of conducting dialogue with extremists. The results of the committee have not been that fruitful as the notion of dialogue was not taken seriously and turned into a means of propagating the regime, beautifying its image abroad. It was not taken as a national project with a primary aim which is to salvage Yemen and its people. It is not reasonable to conduct dialogue with people in jails and convince them to relinquish their extremist views while there are mosques and religious education centers that promote extremist views and generate such suicide bombers. It should be a complete package.

Our clerics have broken hell loose about the minimizing the age of marriage by 17 years old. Sheikh Abdulmajeed al-Zindani has mobilized clerics from all over the country to come to Sana'a to oppose the parliament vote concerning marriage age. Those clerics led by al-Zindani busy with marrying child females have got no clear stand from terrorism and its devastating impacts on Yemen's economy and stability at large. These clerics could use their energy in confronting the religion of suicide bombings we are facing now.

In short, unless the whole institutions of the society including the clergy are mobilized to address terrorism, government fragmented efforts will not fulfill their objectives. It is going to be difficult to challenge al-Qaeda terrorism without a smart strategy.

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Yemen Press Review



Al-Sahwa.net, affiliated with the Islah Party
Thursday, March 26, 2009

Top Stories

• Al-Qaeda penetrates Yemen security services

Yemen plagued by string of very complicated problems ranging from hard poverty, high rates of unemployment, illiteracy and high population growth, has recently witnessed a spike of terror attacks which could sharply affect its flagging economy which largely depends on diminishing oil revenues, as well as its fledging tourist industry, the website reported in one of its main stories.

In the wake of two explosions that targeted South Korean tourists, Yemen's parliament summoned on Monday the Deputy Prime Minister for Security and Defense affairs Rashad Al-Alimi, who admitted that Al-Qaeda managed to penetrate security services.

"We found out security elements affiliated with Al-Qaeda" affirmed Al-Alimi on Monday during a closed meeting.

In response to accusations that the authorities adopted jihadi organiza-

tions, Al-Alimi vehemently denied such charges, saying it is unjustifiable to use such allegations to settle political accounts.

"Al-Qaeda faced pressure in some countries such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq and Saudi Arabia, thus some extremists returned to their homes including Yemen," the senior official went on to say.

However, Al-Alimi exalted what he considered security alert throughout the state, hinting that security forces work sometimes in tough conditions and do their best to avoid any confrontations which could result in serious consequences and cause numerous victims.

He underscored that 18 out of 23 detainees who had escaped a high-security prison in Sana'a two years ago have been exterminated.

As for the most recent terror bombs which targeted South Koreans, he said that security forces previously knew that 22 Al-Qaeda members had met in Baihan district and eight of those who were to carry out terror operations including plans to assassinate 20 Yemeni officials and target embassies and foreign interests were arrested.

Al-Alimi urged parliament to help security forces pursue terrorists who are hiding in some tribal areas, particularly the remotest provinces of Mareb and Shabwa.

While String of attacks have targeted embassies, tourists, and western interests since 2000 when the USS

Cole was bombed in the port of Aden, Al-Qaeda leaders in Yemen had recently called for targeting foreigners inside the state which on the brink of becoming a failed state, as experts warn.

Yemeni government which became in the wake of Sept. 11 attacks a key ally with the United States in combating terrorism have killed and arrested a number of Al-Qaeda members who in turn vowed retaliation on the Yemeni government and western countries.

In recent times, Al-Qaeda operatives have infiltrated to Yemen from the oil-rich neighboring state of Saudi Arabia, which cracked down on terrorist cells and forced them to flee its territory.



Newsyemen.net, an independent news website
Wednesday, March 25, 2009

Top Stories

• Parliament summons government for questioning over poor security

Yemeni Parliament has decided last week to summon the government for questioning over the poor security situation in the country following latest suicide attacks in Hadramout and Sana'a, the website reported..

Members of the Parliament affiliated with different parties criticized on

Saturday the "weak security situation in the country" and called for more security attention to prevent crime before it happens.

Head of the ruling party's bloc Sultan Al-Barakani said the latest suicide attack on an official S. Korean delegation en rout to Sana'a International Airport last Wednesday has a sign of poor security performance.

"How could terrorists know about the movement of S. Korean delegation?" Al-Barakani asked.

Other MPs called on the government to review its policy in tackling terrorist issues and to seriously deal with terrorist groups.

In March 15, 2009, an 18-year suicide bomber killed four South Korean tourists and a local guide and injured six others.

In March 18, 2009, another teen suicide attacker targeted a convoy of South Korean investigators who have come to Yemen to investigate into the first attack.

Two terrorist attacks in one week embarrassed the government which has immediately announced unspecified reward for information that may lead to 12 Al-Qaeda suspects, confirming that global Al-Qaeda is recruiting young people to use them in such attacks.

Thousands of South Korean protesters received last week end the bodies of four S. Korean tourists killed in a suicide attack in Hadramout last

Sunday. The protestors also burnt pictures of Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden and North Korea President Kim Jong-il, according to S. Korean press reports.

Yemen seeks an alliance with S. Korea to fight terror. Official media reported that Foreign Minister Abu Bakr Al-Qirbi discussed with the S. Korean ambassador to Yemen last week possible S. Korean support to Yemen to crack down on terrorist groups.

The Yemeni security services are on high alert more than before after recent terrorist attacks on South Korean in Hadramout and Sana'a. The search is not limited to main cities but extended to remote tribal regions.

Interior Ministry's website reported on Sunday that the security forces had launched al-Qaeda hunt by using helicopters in some tribal regions of Hadramout, Mareb and Shabwa.

The helicopters hunt comes few days after some Yemeni news reports quoted a U.S news source as saying that the US army is planning to carry out military operations in some Yemeni tribal areas in Mareb, Shabwa, Al-Jawf and Hadramout in addition to the coastal line between Yemen and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Tribes of Mareb and Al-Jawf warned of such foreign interference in Yemen's affairs and said that such may put US and foreign interests at risk. An official source denied such reports on possible US military intervention to

hunt down Al-Qaeda in Yemen.



26September.net, affiliated with Yemeni Army
Thursday, March 26, 2009

Top Stories

• Security authorities arrests man over Saudi Embassy threat

A security source revealed the identity of the individual who made threats to the Saudi embassy in Sana'a a few days ago, demanding the release of a captured al-Qaeda element, the website reported.

according to the website, The source disclosed the name of the suspect as Yousef Abdu Yahya Bous, with nickname "Abu Hudhayfah".

The suspect is originally from Hajja province and was arrested in Taiz province following his threats to the Saudi embassy on Thursday evening, March 19, demanding the release of Abdullah Al-Harbi, "a high-profile al-Qaeda member who had been arrested earlier in Taiz province.

The investigation is under way so as to refer the suspect to Judiciary later on. Al-Harbi was wanted by security authorities in Yemen and Saudi Arabia and has been arrested on March 14 after a hunt operation and information obtained by security forces in Yemen.

The Panthers of Identity Politics

By: Chris Patten

I was in Jordan, that beautiful oasis of calm and moderation in a difficult and dangerous neighborhood, when I first heard the news about the murder of two British soldiers and a Catholic policeman by dissident republican terrorists in Northern Ireland.

We had looked out across what Christians call the Holy Land from the Jordanian hills. What struck me, thinking back to the days I once spent in Northern Ireland, was how both there and here the crucible of so much struggle, bitterness, and bloodshed is very small. There is an intimacy about the geography of Northern Ireland, Gaza, and the West Bank that makes the violence seem all the more inexplicable and obscene.

Is this violence made inevitable by the clash of cultures, religions, and ethnicities? Is it programmed into DNA by history, language, and our different ways of meeting our

spiritual yearnings?

It was my good fortune to be reading in Jordan a book called *On Identity* by Amin Maalouf. It is a brilliant assault on what the author, who is Lebanese, French, Arab and Christian, calls "the panthers" of identity politics. Maalouf hopes that one day he can call all of the Middle East his homeland, and that his grandson will find his book a strange memento of a time when these arguments had to be put forward.

What is true of identity politics in the Middle East, and in shaping America's and Europe's relationship with the Islamic world, is equally true about Northern Ireland. Or at least it was as true.

I spent part of my life working on the problems of terrorism in Northern Ireland, first as a minister in the early 1980's and, later, chairing the commission that drew up reform for policing and security in the Province as part of the Belfast Peace Agreement. For centuries, the Protestant and Catholic tribes had

intermittently clashed, and over a period of three decades – a time euphemistically known as "the Troubles" – terrorism had claimed more than 3,000 lives and tens of thousands of injuries.

This was an identity clash that had nothing to do with the essential messages of Christianity. But it was bleakly horrific. I recall that the first time I visited a hospital in Belfast, the young nurses in the Accident and Emergency Unit had to describe patiently to me the difference between a Protestant and a Catholic kneecapping. This was not a matter of theology or even liturgy. But the Catholics used a shotgun for this brutal punishment, and the Protestants an electric drill.

"That is all for the history books," we thought, until the recent murders. The Belfast peace agreement of 1998 has secured more than 10 years of peace. At its heart lay a simple proposition: the republicans, who called for and bombed for a United Ireland – hammering together the

predominantly Protestant North and the overwhelmingly Catholic South – accepted that constitutional change could come only through the ballot box.

We talked the terrorist IRA and their political wing into the political process and the sharing of power. In return, the Protestant majority in the north accepted that republicans should not have to accept the symbols of a state to which they felt no loyalty. Moreover, the police and security forces were to be reorganized so that they were seen to represent the whole community, not primarily its Protestant majority.

Interestingly, the issue of police reform was the only one that the political parties could not resolve by themselves. So I was called in, together with a group of experts on policing, to sort it out.

The result of that deal has been years of peace. It is not perfect. Some of the compromises that democrats must occasionally make with one-time terrorists are difficult to

stomach. But the outcome has been the return of normality to the one and a half million people of Northern Ireland.

I do not take an apocalyptic view of what recently happened – tragic though it is for the bereaved families. It is an anarchic spasm of violence by a tiny minority. In a way, it underlines the importance of what has been achieved in Northern Ireland.

First, virtually the whole of Ireland is united against what has happened. Second, the violence has strengthened the political process, with one-time IRA leaders standing shoulder to shoulder with the police to condemn the murders. Third, the reformed police service itself has been widely seen as the protector of the whole community, and young Catholics have been encouraged to join it by their priests and bishops. It is now more, not less, able to deal with terrorism.

So did I think of lessons to be learned in the Middle East as I drove from one end of Jordan to the other?

Perhaps there are two. Obviously, there will be no peace in Palestine unless we start to talk to Hamas – a point that President Barack Obama's special envoy to the region, Senator George Mitchell, will surely appreciate after his experiences as a successful mediator in Northern Ireland.

And, second, we should abandon outdated and wrong-headed notions of identity. That is perhaps an easy point to recognize for this author, the Catholic grandson of Irish potato famine emigrants who, nevertheless, became a British minister and Britain's last colonial governor.

Chris Patten is a former EU Commissioner for External Relations, Chairman of the British Conservative Party, and was the last British Governor of Hong Kong. He is currently Chancellor of Oxford University and a member of the British House of Lords. Copyright: Project Syndicate, 2009. www.project-syndicate.org

The Transition to Sustainability

By: Jeffrey D. Sachs

The global economic crisis will be with us for a generation, not just a year or two, because it is really a transition to sustainability. The scarcity of primary commodities and damage from climate change in recent years contributed to the destabilization of the world economy that gave rise to the current crisis. Soaring food and fuel prices and major natural disasters played an important role in undermining financial markets, household purchasing power, and even political stability.

Viewed in this way, an essential policy that developed and developing countries should pursue in overcoming the crisis is to build infrastructure suitable for the twenty-first century. This includes an efficient electricity grid fed by renewable energy; fiber and wireless networks that carry telephony and broadband Internet; water, irrigation, and sewerage systems that efficiently use

and recycle fresh water; urban and inter-city public transit systems; safer highways; and networks of protected natural areas that conserve biodiversity and the habitats of threatened species.

These investments are needed in the short term to offset the decline in worldwide consumption spending that underlies the global recession. More importantly, they are needed in the long term, because a world crowded with 6.8 billion people (and rising) simply cannot sustain economic growth unless it adopts sustainable technologies that economize on scarce natural resources.

In practice, the global crisis means that sustainable investments are being curtailed rather than expanded in the developing world. As access to international bank loans, bond flotations, and foreign direct investment is lost, infrastructure projects talked about in the past are now being shelved, threatening the political and economic stability of dozens of developing countries.

In fact, every part of the world has a huge backlog of vital infrastructure

investments. It is time for a concerted global effort to bring those projects on line. This is not easy to do. Most infrastructure investment requires public-sector leadership to forge partnerships with the private sector. Typically, the public sector must enter into contractual agreements with private firms not only to build the infrastructure, but also to operate it as a regulated monopoly or on a concession basis.

Governments generally lack the needed technical capacity to design such projects, opening up possibilities of favoritism and corruption when major contracts are awarded. Such charges are likely to be hurled at governments even when they are not true, though all too often they are.

Still, the backlog of such projects is now wreaking havoc with the world economy. The world's major cities are clogged with traffic jams and pollution. The atmosphere is filling with greenhouse gases from heavy use of fossil fuels. Water scarcity is hitting virtually every major economic center, from North America to Europe, Africa, India, and China.

Governments should thus strengthen their ministries of infrastructure (including power, roads, water and sanitation, and information and communication technologies), as well as their national development banks, so that they can properly design long-term infrastructure projects and programs. The ability to offset the crisis in a constructive manner through expanded public-private partnerships will determine the subsequent success of countries and regions. Interestingly, the US is about to create a National Infrastructure Bank for the first time.

Nevertheless, American and European economic advisers generally believe that a short sharp stimulus will be enough to restore economic growth. This is wrong. What will be needed is an overhaul of the world economy towards sustainability.

Moreover, policymakers in the rich world believe that they can continue to neglect the developing world, or leave it to its fate in global markets. This is also a recipe for global failure, and even future conflict. Developed

countries will have to do far more to help poor countries through the transition to sustainability. Whereas most of the "stimulus" legislation to date has been short-term and inward-looking, increased funding for sustainable infrastructure in poor countries would provide a powerful boost to rich-world economies.

Developed countries should agree to channel considerable savings to developing countries to finance the scale-up of sustainable investments. This can be done directly on a bilateral basis, for example, through long-term loans from developed countries' export-credit agencies. It can also be done multilaterally, by raising the infrastructure investment flows from the World Bank and the regional development banks (including the Inter-American Development Bank, European Investment Bank, African Development Bank, and Asian Development Bank). Both channels should be used.

Developed countries also fail to recognize that without much greater financing of sustainable infrastructure

in the developing world – especially sustainable power generation and transmission – a global agreement on climate change later this year (or any time soon) will be impossible. The rich world somehow expects poor countries to restrict their use of fossil fuels without any significant help in financing new and sustainable sources of energy. In almost all of the rich-country proposals about targets, limits, commitments, and permits for greenhouse gases, there is hardly a word about helping poor countries to finance the transition to sustainable technologies.

The G-20 meeting in London on April 2 offers hope for a true global effort to repair the failing world economy. This is the time and place to launch the global drive toward sustainability. If we fail to meet the challenge, the global crisis will endanger the world for years to come.

Jeffrey D. Sachs is Professor of Economics and Director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University. Copyright: Project Syndicate, 2009. www.project-syndicate.org



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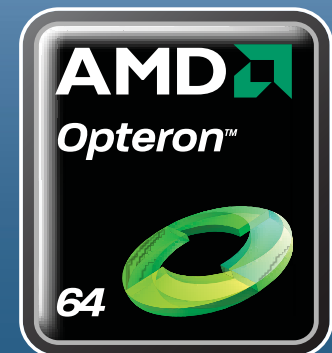
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Jailing of Iraqi shoe thrower sparks continued online debate

The 3-year jail term given to Iraqi TV-journalist Muntazar Al-Zaidi for throwing his shoes at former US-President George W Bush at press conference in Baghdad last year has generated massive debate on social networking sites and in online forums. While many are rallying in support of Al-Zaidi, others maintain that Al-Zaidi's shoe toss was an insult to journalism.

By: Alexandra Sandels
MENASSAT

Although it has been over one-week since Iraqi journalist Muntazar Al-Zaidi was sentenced to three years in prison for throwing his shoe at former US president George W. Bush last year—the online fallout has continued to rage.

Even before his March 12 sentence, Al-Zaidi's act of defiance had the virtual and real world buzzing.

Al-Zaidi's act inspired a computer game, "Sock and Awe", and in the Iraqi city of Tikrit, Saddam Hussein's hometown, a 3-meter high copper statue in the shape of Al-Zaidi's shoe was erected for less than 48-hours before it was taken down.

Since his sentence, the popular social networking site Facebook, has added hundreds of thousands of Al-Zaidi fans from well beyond the Arab region in multiple virtual campaigns to have Al-Zaidi released from prison.

At the University of Auckland-administered Facebook group in New Zealand, one American fan writes, "Give him a medal not jail time! He did what millions of others wanted to do but couldn't get access to....Their (the Bush administration) actions have caused the rest of the world to think we (Americans) all are soulless greed-mongers like them."

With countless Al-Zaidi support groups on Facebook, his largest fan base on Facebook is the near 120,000 strong group "I'm a fan of the great hero who hit Bush with his shoes in Baghdad!"

The group has generated more than 5,000 comments, but as was the case before Al-Zaidi was sentenced, not all of the comments have been positive.

Texas-based "Hanieh" wrote on "I'm a fan's" comment section, what Al-Zaidi did was "disrespectful."

"No matter who it was, Bush or not. He couldn't even control himself. I'm not a Bush fan, actually I am the opposite, but I have respect for my former president," Hanieh wrote.

Another commentator, "James", said he thought Al-Zaidi's sentence was appropriate, and questioned the fallout of such an act had former dictator Saddam Hussein had been in power.

"He is lucky he wasn't shot by the Secret Service who could not reasonably be expected to assume he was only throwing a shoe. Ask yourself what would have happened if this man had thrown a shoe at Saddam Hussein...?" he wrote.

Ari Vais, administrator of the Facebook page, "Free the Iraqi shoe throwing journalist!" said he was taught the value of free speech during the Cold War.

The 39-year old New York resident told CNN, "I was born in the Soviet Union, where dissent like this was cracked down on severely. We came to America when I was a boy because we knew that people should be free."

Al-Zaidi's shoe stunt was a reflection of the democracy Bush sought to spread, Vais said.

Blogsphere and copy cats

But the blogsphere had been the main battleground for public opinion on the matter since Al-Zaidi was arrested in December, and clearly bloggers have used Al-Zaidi's 3-year sentence to continue to rail against the former Bush administration's policies.

Blogger Tim Redmond wrote on the San Francisco Bay Guardian blog, "After all that Bush has done in Iraq — after all the Iraqis killed and maimed, after the devastation that country has seen — it's hard to blame the guy (Al-Zaidi)."

The NY-Times Baghdad bureau blog has been a rich source of information for Al-Zaidi's case, featuring a section "best of readers comments" on Al-Zaidi.

Without question, the consensus on the blogsphere was overwhelmingly against Al-Zaidi's sentence.

A few days after the Al-Zaidi sentence, one blogger, Sam Hayden wrote, "This to my mind is a

disgracefully harsh sentence. If Iraq wants to be seen as a mature democracy, this overreaction to a very mildly violent political protest is not going to help its cause."

Hayden continued, "Protests in this vein happen regularly in democratic societies: in the 1970s Richard Nixon was egged in Ireland by an anti-war protestor; a few years back here in the UK, John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister at the time, had an egg thrown at him by a farmer. His response? He punched the protestor and got into a scuffle."

Indeed, Al-Zaidi's highly publicized show throw has inspired several copy cat incidents since last December.

In February, a protestor hurled a shoe at Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao as he gave a speech at Cambridge University in the UK. The protestor is facing a maximum of 6-months jail time and is walking free on bail.

On March 9, a man threw his shoe at Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad while the premier's convoy was driving towards a soccer stadium in the Iranian city of Urmia where he was due to give a speech ahead of the 2009 Iranian Presidential Elections.

The shoe actually landed inside the open top car, but did not hit Ahmadinejad. Security reportedly



Monument to Muntazar Al-Zaidi in Tikrit (right) An inscription on the \$5,000 monument read: "Muntazar: fasting until the sword breaks its fast with blood; silent until our mouths speak the truth."

failed to locate the shoe thrower.

Meanwhile, those looking to show their support for Muntazar Al-Zaidi while out jogging or drinking their

morning coffee, American and Canadian site creators for Free Al-Zaidi offer "Free Al-Zaidi" mugs, t-shirts, and bags for purchase.



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Turkish doctors to heal Yemeni children's hearts

By: Mahmoud Assamiee
and Yemen Times Staff

Hafsa Al-Maqrati is a three-year old girl who has been suffering from a severe heart problem since she was just one year old. Rescue came in the form of a group of 15 Turkish cardiac doctors and heart specialists who visited Yemen last week and conducted pro-bono open heart surgeries for Yemeni children.

Hafsa's parents came to know about this opportunity through direct calls to registered patients placed by Al-Thawra Hospital who partnered with the Turkish doctors.

The doctors were sent by the Turkish Health Ministry to save Yemeni children's hearts.

The only specialized heart center that conducts difficult surgeries in Yemen is located in Al-Thawra Hospital, and yet it needs a lot of funding and attention to be able to cover the need in Yemen, especially with regards to children with heart problems.

More than 125 cases that needed

urgent help came from many parts all over the country. Sadly, fifty of those children were too late and the doctors could do nothing for them.

"The most difficult part in treating children with heart conditions is that they have to be diagnosed and treated prior to a certain age according to the diseases they have. Knowing that these little children are doomed to die broke our hearts, and we realized that we need to arrange for further help for Yemeni children," said Mr. Kamuran Ozden, head of the delegation.

During the delegation's visit they conducted 12 open heart surgeries out of a total of 25 that needed urgent intervention. Thirteen of the untreated cases will have to find some sort of medication through the Yemeni government immediately or they too will lose their chance of recovery, similar to the cases that were diagnosed too late.

The Yemeni Ministry of Health and the Turkish government signed cooperation agreements that will help improve health services in Yemen. Turkey granted 15 scholarships for Yemeni doctors to train them on open

heart surgeries for children and will provide 25 medical grants for Yemeni patients to be treated in Turkey.

Anwar Naser is a two-year old girl from Abyan. Her parents brought her all the way to Sana'a in the hopes that she will get her chance at survival. She has three different problems and the Turkish doctors said she will need to undergo three different operations. Sadly, she was one of those children who returned home with no treatment.

Dr. Abdullah Ardan, a member of the Turkish Medical Team, said, "We come here because of collaboration between the Turkish Ministry of Health and the Yemeni Ministry of Health to carry out heart operations for children at Al-Thawra Hospital and diagnostic catheterizations for children at Al-Kuwait Hospital."

A health delegation visited Yemen last October and the Yemeni Health Minister had been to Turkey recently. Such exchanges were the main drive behind the children's hearts delegation's visit. The Turkish Health Minister is also due to visit Yemen soon as a follow-up on this cooperation.

Ardan revealed that there are many Yemeni heart patient children who need help, and unfortunately, the team could not carry out many catheterizations and operations. "Although we arrived on Sunday March 22, we could only see 100 cases, and hence operate on only 12 patients instead of the anticipated number which was at least double this size," he said.

Akram Al-Junaid, director of the Junaid Hospital and coordinator for the Turkish team, said that many other cardiac and heart delegations had been to Yemen but none with the sole focus on children and to build a skilled Yemeni team.

"The Turkish delegation was assisted by Yemeni heart doctors who learned from this experience," Akram said. "We are trying to establish a specialized unit for children's open heart surgeries in Yemen and our aim is to take Yemeni complete teams of sur-



Turkish doctors operating at Al-Thawra Heart Center on a Yemeni child who has a heart condition.

geons, anesthetists, and nurses to hospitals in Turkey, such as Siyami Ersik Hospital, for short courses to upgrade their abilities and make them capable of performing such major operations as a team in the future by themselves. It is always better to teach a person how to fish instead of just giving fish away."

"This is the first working visit of any Turkish medical team," said Dr. Aziz Azzindani, head of the Cardiac Center at Al-Thawra Hospital. He revealed that the center recruits medical teams from abroad nearly every month to carry out complicated heart surgeries for children.

"Carrying out heart surgeries on children is very difficult and needs

physicians of the highest medical degree," he said, adding that not only Yemen but the region as a whole lacks highly qualified doctors in this field.

Many children did not get the opportunity to be examined. Azzindani explained that "we only called those patients registered in our records even though we know there are many cases out there. However, the team cannot examine them all." People who heard about the visiting team and brought their children for treatment were also listed; however, he said priority was given to the most urgent cases.

Before their departure, the Turkish medical teams were hosted by the Turkish embassy for a reception, dur-

ing which they expressed their appreciation to be given the opportunity to help Yemeni children. They also thanked the Yemeni Minister of Health HE Dr. Abdulkarem Rase', the director of the heart center at Al-Thawra Hospital Dr. Ahmad Alansi, and Akram Al-Junaid, director of Al-Junaid Hospital.

"We thank the Yemeni people for their hospitality, as we really felt at home. You should remember that many Turkish families have an ancestor who is buried in Yemen and this shows how close the ties between our two countries are," said Dr. Prof. Ibrahim Yekeler, head of the Turkish medical delegation.



Hundreds of families brought their children hoping to get a chance at a healthy living through services of the Turkish medical team.

Dhamar midwives take load of public hospitals' shoulders

By: Almgidaj Mojalli

After giving birth to her eleventh children, 34 year-old Ameena Al-Falahi decided her family was big enough. As she knows that it is neither healthy nor easy to bring up so many children, she decided to use a contraceptive for the first time in her life.

The form of birth control she chose is the intrauterine device or IUD, which is a small T-shaped placed in a women's uterus to prevent pregnancy. With it, she hopes to better provide for her family's future.

"I was not worried that my children would die of hunger, but there are just so many other expense with such a large amount of children," said Al-Falahi.

Before she decided to use the IUD, Al-Falahi suffered from general weakness, inflammations in the uterus, and fatigue due to constant pregnancy.

"Many people in my village advised me against using birth control because of its negative consequences," she said. "Others said that it is shameful, but in the end I still decided to use it."

There are many women like Ameena who want to pay more attention to their reproductive health but do not always have the knowledge or the means to do so.

To raise awareness of the benefits of family planning, a reproductive health project this month distributed 41 medical kits for 41 midwives from various districts in the Dhamar governorate.

The medical kits contain the required equipment to insert and remove an IUD, one copper IUD and a packet containing 20 surgical gloves.

The distribution followed an intensive training course on the method of inserting and removing an IUD in February 2008 because, although its removal is very easy, only qualified personnel are allowed to do so.

As IUDs are the cheapest form of

contraceptive in the long term, they are being widely promoted as a method of birth control in Yemen. Over the IUD's lifetime, usually five to ten years, total risk for becoming pregnant ranges from 1-4 percent.

The copper IUD does not affect ovulation or the menstrual cycle, according to the E Medicine website. It prevents sperm from being able to go into the egg by immobilizing the sperm on the way to the fallopian tubes. If an egg does become fertilized, implantation on the wall of the uterus is prevented because copper changes the lining of the uterus.

The project, called Social Marketing Project for Reproduction Health Services, is run by Marie Stopes International and funded by the German Development Bank which provided EU 4.5 million for 2006 to 2009.

"The government can't ensure all required reproductive health services in all governorates," said Dr. Ashraf Badr, director of the project.

"There are 13,000 villages in Yemen and only 4,000 health care units," he continued. "So they decided to involve the private sector and midwives to reduce pressure."

Up to 34 percent of women in the urban areas use birth control, in contrast of 14 percent of rural areas, according to a recent Marie Stopes study. Contraceptive pills are the most commonly used contraceptives at 13 percent, followed by the IUD with 6 percent and injections with 4 percent.

Seven percent of married women use traditional methods of contraception such as abstinence, withdrawal and breastfeeding.

Mujahed Al-Ansi, the General Secretary of the Local Councils in Dhamar, urged the midwives and mosque preachers to spread awareness among people about the necessity of using birth control. "We have to realize that there is a population explosion and take action."



Midwives receive their reproductive health medical kit during the graduation ceremony.

"We have started with the midwives in the hospitals and health care centers with adequate medical equipment," Abdulsalam Al-Ahsab, manager of the Public Health and Population Office said. "The next step will be to expand to other health care units and centers after we have provided them with all the equipment required for using IUDs."

Al-Ahsab added that the Public Health and Population Office in Dhamar trained 20 midwives besides the 41 midwives who were trained by the Social Marketing Project.

"We also aim to spread awareness among midwives on how to insert an IUD and offer it to the largest possible amount of people," Al-Ahsab explained.

The seventy-five percent of the governorate's population which lives in rural areas is the project's main target group. There are 263 health care utilities consisting of public hospitals and health care centers.

Many midwives from different districts in Dhamar have said that they

tried to offer the IUD to the women in their districts, but lacked the expensive medical instruments required to do so.

Hayat Ahmed, midwife from Yafa in Dhamar, stated that she and her classmates received training on reproductive health services in 2008, but that the lack of medical equipment had impeded them from putting their new skills into practice.

"Now that we have the proper equipment and training, we can help the women," stated Ahmed.

Jamilah Al-Ofairi, midwife from Magrib Ans, noted that the women in her district are aware of the necessity of using birth control methods like the IUD. "Now I can insert an IUD for the women of my village in their own homes, and reduce the pressure on city hospitals and health care units," said Al-Ofairi.

Reproductive health in country

The project also distributed 90 medical kits for 90 midwives from the governorates of Sana'a, Amran, Al-Mahwet and Marib.

"We have been funding the project since 2006," said a health program officer. "The funding was going to end in 2009 according to the agreement between the bank and Marie Stopes International, but when we noticed the success of the project, we decided to extend the fund for one year more."

Jamila Al-Ra'abi, Deputy Minister of Public Health and Population stated that there are only about 3,500 midwives in Yemen who cannot meet the demands of the country's 135,000 districts.

The project aims to train and qualify medical practitioners to offer reproductive health services and give advice on all matters related to reproduction. The project started in the beginning of 2008 with seven governorates and expanded its activities to cover 14 governorates including Dhamar by the end of the same year.

"We started the project in Yemen in February 2008 by training 23 midwives, and by the end of 2008 we had trained 320 midwives," Badr said.

The project aims to distribute contraceptives to the private sector all over the country, and spread awareness about the benefits of family planning among the governorates through the cinema, television, radio and theater.

The midwives trained in the new project offer advice to women on how to care for themselves and their babies during pregnancy and after birth. Also, they spread awareness about family planning and birth control methods.

"Before we trained on inserting and taking out IUDs, I was working on midwifery and I helped many women either in midwifery or in spreading awareness on the necessity of using birth control methods," said midwife Russia Al-Talabi.

"Midwives in remote districts play a very important role in reducing the rate of the maternal and child deaths rates," said Jamila Al-Ra'abi, the Deputy Minister of the Public Health and Population. "We have to pay more

attention to the type of training the midwives receive and this is where we concentrate our efforts."

"When we went through the job explanation of the midwives, we noticed that we need to add some duties to their work," she said. "We concentrated on postnatal care and this is very important for the mother and the infant."

Al-Ra'abi noted that, through midwives' assistance, it is easy to control birth which will serve to reduce the deaths rate among mothers and children to help control the increasing number of the population.

In terms of the role of the Ministry of Health, Al-Ra'abi mentioned that, following a governmental decision, delivery and advice are free of charge in public hospitals and what people pay is aid for the hospitals.

But many people say that the hospitals offer nothing for free and the "symbolic fees" can reach hundreds of dollars in the public hospitals.

"I spent more than YR 6,000 for the midwife at Al-Thawrah hospital," Mohammed Amer commented. "Nothing is free in this country."

According to UNICEF reports, the rate of the maternal and child mortality is high in Yemen. The rate of maternal mortality reaches 365 mothers for 100,000 births and 37 infants die for each 1,000 deliveries.

UNICEF's latest report ranks Yemen 48 out of 189 countries in the world with regard to the rate of maternal deaths. The report mentioned that only 36 percent of the births in Yemen are attended by skillful health personnel.

This is why it is especially important to improve reproductive health services and raise awareness about hygienic health care for mothers and babies.

According to the statistics of the National Council for Population, government expenses on health reached 4 percent of the budget in 2003. This means that YR1,611 or USD 8.06 is spent per year on every Yemeni.



ANNOUNCEMENT FOR 2 ENGINEERING POSITIONS

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- Experienced in the management of a team of 5 to 10 persons.
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Security unit to protect tourists

By: Khaled Al-Hilaly

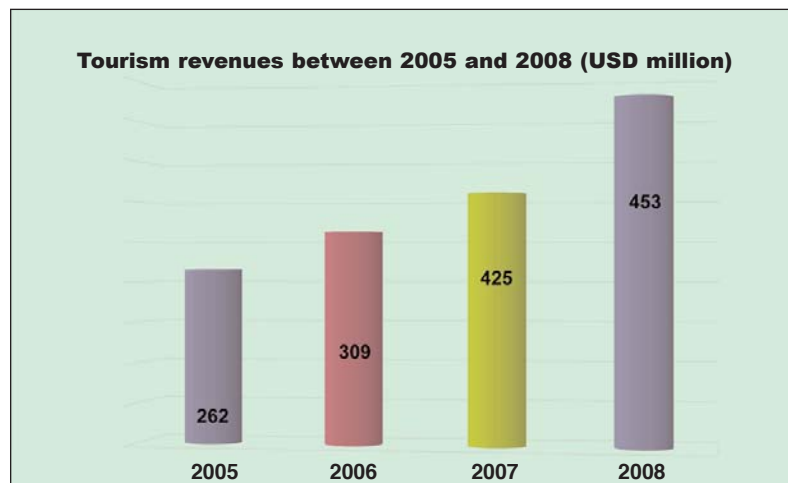
A security unit to protect tourism and an electronic tourist guide were established this month by the Ministry of Tourism in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior. The two initiatives came as a tool to improve the quality of tourism and to correct the country's image abroad, especially after the recent attack on Korean tourists in Hadramout. "Securing tourists is the responsibility of the tourism security unit, although the entire society is responsible," said Interior Minister Mutahar Rashad Al-Masri.

Last year there were 3,654 security missions composed of bodyguards accompanying tourists during their travel throughout Yemen, mainly to rural areas. During the first two months of this year there were 221 bodyguard missions.

The tourism security unit was established in 2007 and is affiliated with the Central Security Forces. The unit protects tourists and tourist sites and also works on the basis of a plan of tourist traffic from the Ministry of Tourism and the Tourist Police.

Through this initiative, police and security cars will be patrolling tourist sites and areas frequently visited by tourists around the country along with tailored security for tourist groups visiting risky areas.

"The tourism security unit is the security body that is responsible for securing



tourists in cities, tourism sites, and on roads," said Major Khalid Zayed, an employee at the tourism security unit. "It is an important component of tourism development. As there will be fixed and mobile tourism security unit teams, tourists' attackers or kidnappers will not be able to do anything.

"There are necessary qualifications to be a tourism policeman; he has to be able to speak a foreign language, he must have a good appearance, and he must be aware of tourism concepts. At present, the main troops of the tourism security unit are receiving training in special courses to be ready for work. They are learning how to deal with tourists and how to overcome obstacles they may face," he stated.

Previously, untrained security personnel would accompany tourists on their travelling and at various occasions

caused the tourists some annoyance because of their lack of communication skills and their dependence on the tourists for food.

This new unit is expected to be better equipped to dealing with tourists in a more acceptable manner.

About 400,000 tourists and 690,000 Yemeni immigrants visited Yemen last year and the revenue from tourism was 460 million dollars. The workforce in tourism is 74,000 employees; 94,000 other employees are working indirectly in the industry.

Similarly, the ministry of tourism started the electronic tourist guide for ten Yemeni governorates: Sana'a, Aden, Taiz, Ibb, Hudaida, Hadramout, Al-Mahwit, Shabwah, Marib, and Lahj. The ministry will include the rest of the governorates and Socotra Island in the next phase of the project.



With this new specialized security unit, tourists should feel safer in Yemen.

The DVD will be available at the international tourism exhibition, at all the tourism agencies in the country, and at post offices in the cities.

A short version of the guide is available on the Tourism Promotion Council's website, www.yemen-tourism.com

"Although the electronic tourist guide doesn't cover all the governorates, it is a good step by the Ministry of Culture and it will help to promote tourism in Yemen," said Mahmoud Al-Shaibani, general manager of Universal Tourism.

Mohammed Baz'ee, head of Cameleers Tours tourist agency, is optimistic about the new unit: "I hope the TSU individuals will be distinguished and help in developing tourism," he said.

"There was more than one security body responsible for securing tourists in their tours around the country, but now only the TSU will be in charge of that," said Ahmad Al-Bail, head of the Yemen tourism promotion board. "The staff will be well trained, educated, and know a foreign language. Additionally, the unit

is equipped with about thirty vehicles."

Regarding the electronic tourist guide, Al-Bail explained that the ministry has contracted with the 3D Media Company to produce a DVD in Arabic, English, and French. It includes all information that tourists need, such as the locations of hotels and banks. It also includes maps photos and videos.

As a result of the last tourism attack on the Korean tourists in Hadramout, tourism has declined less than one percent regarding the number of tourists coming to the country.

Smoking medics to quit for a healthier society

By: Alice Hackman

Bilal Al-Khawli first started smoking when he was 16. Five years on, he smokes ten cigarettes a day. A second year undergraduate at the University of Sana'a, he lights most of them up between lectures in the cafeteria of the Faculty of Medicine.

Although Al-Khawli is studying to become a doctor, he says quitting the bad habit is hard because he's addicted. He's acutely aware of the irony of a self-destructive medic student, but can't get past the two-month mark without the buzz of nicotine.

But his chance to give up may have come this week. Students from the University of Sana'a have teamed up supported by the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization (WHO) to create, at least for seven days, a "university without smoking."

The idea might seem surprising as smoking has been banned in universities for almost four years now, but the April 2005 law has still not been implemented and a small proportion of mostly male students continue to pollute their lungs and the faculty's air with clouds of tar and nicotine.

Last Saturday, the faculty's Change Makers, a small group of student activists, and the Youth Media Forum launched a week's activities to put students like Al-Khawli back on the straight path to become credible sources of health advice to Yemen's future generations.

"Most of the smokers here are

studying medicine," laughs Sana Ahmed, a graduate from the Faculty of Medicine who attended the opening and is now training in a laboratory. "Nobody can blame them, I suppose, with over six years study, but it's not good."

"Smoking is stupid," she adds. "To start with, it gives you yellow teeth, and then come the lungs - What's the point?"

Ahmed does not smoke, although she once tried shisha and it made her head spin. She believes that her generation it is more aware of the ill-effects of smoking tobacco than that of her mother, for example, for who smoking has always been a social activity.

"We tried to talk to her, but it's difficult to change customs. In wedding parties, she has to sit with friends and it's shameful if she doesn't smoke with them."

"People understand more about the consequences in the Faculty of Medicine than anywhere else, but they still smoke," agrees Muad Al-Sahani, a second year student of medicine. "Doctors are supposed to be role models!"

"My father used to smoke shisha, but I showed him pictures from the internet of lung cancer and liver cancer," he says, stressing the expected role of doctors in reducing unhealthy behavior among their peers. "Now he has stopped."

Universities are not the only place where anti-smoking laws need to be implemented, he says. In particular, the law-enforcement might help to stop people being forced into passive



A no-smoking poster outside the Faculty of Medicine's ground floor cafeteria, a rallying point for its remaining smokers. Poster reads "Instead of wasting your health and life on cigarettes, how about giving some money to the poor?"

smoking on public transport: "If someone smokes on the bus, we tell him to stop, but the policeman sitting there with us does nothing!"

"Law needs to be implemented in our faculty, it cannot remain ink on paper," said Faisal Wahib, one of the faculty's students fighting for an effective smoking ban.

A social habit

But smoker Bashar Al-Hawbani says the habit is difficult to kick because, as in many other countries, it is a social act. In Yemen, cigarettes go hand-in-hand with qat.

"I smoke three to four cigarettes every day with qat," says Bashar Al-Hawbani, who studies pharmacology in his first year. "I also smoke a lot more during exams -to get the blood circulating."

Peer pressure is another factor: Mohammed Al-Zumair doesn't like shisha because it makes him feel dizzy, yet he still inhales its lethal fumes once a month when he goes out with friends. Through repetition, sticky orange and grape ma'asal -a hundred times worse for you health than a single cigarette, according to the WHO- have become his favorite flavors.

Hisham Yahya, third year pharmacology student, used to smoke shisha on a daily basis but quit because it

made him cough and gave him chest pain. His doctor told him to stop, and he obeyed.

Medicine students should follow his example and quit smoking before it is too late. If they don't, they could end up like 35 year-old lab supervisor Abdusamer Al-Salahi who has been smoking and chewing qat for the last seven years. He now smokes one and a half to two packets a day, which costs him a daily YR 300 which he does not spend on his family.

He is also at risk of lung cancer, thorax cancer, stomach cancer and bladder cancer, as well as atherosclerosis or inflammation of arterial blood vessels, according to Prof. Ahmad Al-Akwa, assistant professor of medical biochemistry at the university and author of a book entitled "Smoking, it's Effects and How to Quit," soon to be launched onto the Yemeni market.

Smoking causes the death of up to five million people a year and will kill another 170 million by 2030, Dr. Mohammad Al-Khawli, head of the national tobacco control campaign at the Ministry of Public Health and Population, told students on Saturday.

Helping them quit

To help students draw a cross on the habit, at least on university grounds, the faculty's administration is thinking

board has thought up: a 24-hour lock up.

If the faculty's administration wants to be taken seriously, so do the students. But rather than preach at their classmates, they want to help them quit.

"It's easy for the plane to take off, all it needs is the decision," says one of the giant "My life is better without smoking" banners adorning the faculty's hallways for the week. "You can take off too."

"Quitting is all about will and self-discipline," explains Firas Shamsan, Youth Media Forum leader and brainchild behind the campaign's many posters. "Muhammed Al-Sayid, the Al-Jazeera correspondent quit with us, and many others have done it too."

The alternative is to increase the price of cigarettes in the shops, as recent studies have shown a clear link between the increase of taxes on cigarettes and the decrease of tobacco consumption.

"Even children as young as six can buy cigarettes from the local shop," complains Zaina Ali, Change Maker and fourth year student in pharmacology.

"There is a plan to amend the law to increase taxes on tobacco," says head of the national tobacco control campaign Dr. Al-Khawli.

"If cigarettes cost more, I would probably quit," says Al-Hawbani.



Medic students complain that the police do not support the smoking ban in public transport.



A dummy illustrates the ill-effects smoking inside the faculty's halls.

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