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Nearly 100 Yemeni detainees pose biggest obstacle to closing prison US/Yemen: Break impasse on Yemeni returns from Guantanamo

By: Human Rights Watch

New York, APRIL 1 - The United States and Yemen should quickly move to develop a humane repatriation plan for the nearly 100 Yemeni prisoners being held at Guantanamo Bay, Human Rights Watch said in a report released today. Unless the impasse in repatriation negotiations is swiftly resolved, the Yemenis will remain the biggest obstacle to President Barack Obama's plan to close the detention facility.

"Many Yemenis are entering their eighth year without charge at Guantanamo," said Letta Tayler, terrorism and counterterrorism researcher at Human Rights Watch and author of the report. "The United States can't simply hold these men because it fears they might become dangerous in the future."

The 52-page report, "No Direction Home: Returns from Guantanamo to Yemen," criticizes US and Yemeni proposals to transfer the detainees to a detention center in Yemen where they could continue to be held indefinitely, ostensibly for rehabilitation. Based on two weeks of field research in Yemen and more than three dozen interviews, including with former Yemeni prisoners and US and Yemeni officials, the report also warns of the potential for mistreatment in other plans being considered for the detainees.

Human Rights Watch obtained a summary of the Yemeni government's rehabilitation plan for future Guantanamo returnees, which says the men would receive counseling, medical care and job training. However, the plan provides scant detail on how authorities would decide when the men were "rehabilitated."

During meetings with Human Rights Watch, senior Yemeni officials said some returned men could be detained in rehabilitation for a year or more. Yemeni officials also said they may restrict the men's movements upon release from the center. While insisting they would not seek unlawful detention, US officials expressed security concerns arising from returned detainees. One US Embassy official in Yemen said the proposed center should be "basically a prison facility with a programmatic aspect."

"The Yemenis' rehabilitation needs to be genuine, not a guise for continued detention without charge," said Tayler. "Moving them from one form of arbitrary detention to another is not a solution to Guantanamo."

About two-fifths of the estimated 241 detainees currently at Guantanamo are Yemeni, making them the largest national group remaining at the prison. While the

United States will likely prosecute a handful of them, talks with Yemen on repatriating the rest have stalled on several issues, including US fears they might "return to the fight," because al-Qaeda's presence in Yemen has been growing. In September 2008, al-Qaeda claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing at the US Embassy in the capital Sana'a that killed 18 people.

If Washington does not work to create a repatriation plan for the Yemeni detainees, it may try to transfer them to the United States and continue to detain them without charge, Human Rights Watch said. Another option, sending some Yemenis to a locked rehabilitation center in Saudi Arabia, could also pose potential risks. The report also details the mistreatment and neglect of the 14 Yemeni detainees from Guantanamo who have already been repatriated. Yemeni authorities jailed most of the men for a few months without charge. In the worst case, one man was held for two years and said interrogators tried to beat him into confessing he was a spy. Some of the returnees said they suffer from both psychological and physical problems emanating from years in US custody, yet despite their unlawful detention, none has received assistance from the United States or Yemen. Stigmatized as former "terror suspects," many cannot find jobs. The men are under constant surveillance, are banned from leaving Yemen, and must report monthly to authorities.

The report recommends that the United States fund a genuine rehabilitation effort for returned detainees that includes counseling, medical care, and job training. It also calls on Yemen to let detainees challenge any restrictions and allow independent, nongovernmental organizations to monitor the repatriation process.



Supporters and relatives of nearly 100 Yemenis held at Guantanamo Bay prison and two others held at Bagram air base in Afghanistan demand their release during a rally in Sana'a, Yemen, on February 9, 2008.

"Yemeni authorities should not assume these men are terrorists simply because the United States held them at Guantanamo," Tayler said. "If they feel

they must monitor the detainees or restrict their movement, they have to provide the men with a meaningful legal process to contest the measures."

and threats. I told them, 'If you're going to torture me, it won't be anything new. The Americans already put me through torture.'"

Many Yemenis are entering their eighth year without charge at Guantanamo. The United States can't simply hold these men because it fears they might become dangerous in the future.

Letta Tayler, Terrorism and Counterterrorism researcher

Human Rights Watch said that any accord between the United States and Yemen should also resolve the cases of two Yemenis whom the United States is holding without charge at Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan.

"The best way to prevent the returned Yemenis from becoming a threat is to help them reintegrate into their society and repair their lives," Tayler said.

Accounts from former detainees (pseudonyms used to protect them from possible reprisal):

"They [the Yemeni authorities] beat me with shoes. There were insults, bad words

- "Fahmi Muhammad," on being held for two years after his return in 2004.

"It's a catastrophe. I have lost a lot of things - my health, my kids' childhoods, my career, and many years of my life."

- "Malek al-Dhabi," on life since his return to Yemen in 2006.

"No one will hire me because I was at Guantanamo. ... There is a girl I am interested in, but I can't ask her father for her hand because I don't have bride money or a way to support her. Her father wouldn't dismiss me if I had a job."

- "Omar Fawza," on life since his return to Yemen in 2006.

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Why did Al-Qaeda target South Korea twice?

By: Aqeel Al-Halali
For the Yemen Times

SANA'A, APRIL 1 — Less than two months after the Al-Qaeda organizations in Yemen and Saudi Arabia merged to become "Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula" led by Nasser Al-Wihishi, it carried out two suicide bombings last month against foreigners and raised suspicions that it was able to penetrate security in Yemen.

Two suicide bombers less than 18 years-old blew themselves up using two explosive belts. The first one targeted four South Korean tourists in a mountainous area in Shibam, Hadramout, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Only two days after this incident, the second one targeted a procession of cars in Sana'a carrying a South Korean delegation which had come to investigate the first attack, but failed.

The Al-Qaeda attacks against tourists from an Asian country were met with surprise as South Korea is not concerned with the "War on Terror" led by the US and other European countries. South Korea announced last September the withdrawal of its troops deployed in Iraq since 2004.

Moneer Al-Mawri, a Yemeni journalist living in the U.S., told the Yemen Times that the Al-Qaeda attacks against the South Koreans have two potential reasons. Either the Al-Qaeda leadership wanted to send a message to South



South Korean girls wearing black cloths in a protest against the attacks in Yemen.

Korea not to participate in the coalition forces in Afghanistan, or Al-Qaeda reacted to the increasing missionary activities of Koreans in a number of Islamic countries.

But Abdul Elah Hider Shaya, a journalist who specializes in terrorism affairs, said that Al-Qaeda hasn't so far announced its responsibility for the two attacks. He pointed out that other jihadist cells that have no relation with Al-Qaeda may be behind the attacks.

Shaya told the Yemen Times that foreign tourists are considered targets for such cells in any country, although tight security has reduced their ability to target them. He considered that tourists in Yemen are of equal importance to mili-

tary and security sites that are considered strategic targets for those cells.

However Al-Mawri believes that the Al-Qaeda attacks against the South Koreans in Hadramout and Sana'a didn't occur by chance as Al-Qaeda plans to carry out dual operations in approximate times. Similarly, Al-Qaeda has already carried out twin attacks in other countries, once targeting the U.S. Embassies in both Kenya and Tanzania, and another targeting New York and Washington at the same time.

Al-Mari said that it is not strange that Al-Qaeda carries out two small operations in Shibam and Sana'a around the same time like the failed twin attacks on the oil industry in Al-Dhabba in

Hadramout and Safer in Marib.

Around 1,000 people demonstrated last Thursday in the South Korean capital Seoul to protest against the two attacks in Hadramout and Sana'a. The South Korean Foreign Affairs Ministry has urged its citizens to leave Yemen.

Yemen has announced an attractive sum of money for anyone giving information about individuals attracted into Al-Qaeda and currently being prepared to carry out terrorist attacks and acts of sabotage inside the country.

The Yemeni Ministry of Interior has announced a list of 12 wanted by security, most of whom are still in their twenties, confirming that "they were tempted by terrorist elements in Al-Qaeda obsessed with killing, destruction and destabilizing public tranquility," according to the state-run Saba news agency.

But the ministry's announcement about extremist elements in Al-Qaeda made an exception for some of the organization's leaders who have accepted dialogue with the government.

The omission has raised questions about the degree of the government's dedication to eradicating Al-Qaeda in Yemen, especially since the country has become a haven for many Al-Qaeda leaders to re-organize themselves following the organization's successive defeats it sustained in Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

In addition, in the eyes of Osama Bin Laden, leader of Al-Qaeda, "Yemen is

one of the best Arab and Islamic countries in terms of preserving tradition and belief." In addition, its mountainous topography and armed tribes constitute a fertile environment to continue to train fighters of different Islamic groups after their journeys to Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia. War on Al-Qaeda has been the hot topic of discussion between Yemen and the U.S. since 2007, when the latter accused Yemen of neglecting the "War on Terror" after press reports that Jamal Al-Badawi, one of the perpetrators of the 2000 attack on the USS Cole in Aden, was released from prison.

U.S. doubts in the Yemeni government's fight against terrorism further rose after the release of Al-Qaeda leader Jabr Al-Banna, wanted by both Sana'a and Washington for exploding oil constructions in Marib and Hadramout in 2006. Al-Banna was allowed out of court without security's permission, even though he was one of the Al-Qaeda detainees who escaped Political Security Prison in Sana'a in 2006.

President Ali Abdullah Saleh refuted these doubts when he announced in an interview with the New York Times last year that Yemen deals with the armed Islamists in two ways. The first is ensuring security for those who give themselves up, renounce to their misconceptions and cooperate with security apparatuses, and the second is using force against those who refuse to obey the government or continue to fight against

it. Al-Mawri considers that damage resulting from truce with ideological terrorists is greater than its benefits: "Yemeni leadership should stop cooperation with terrorists and work seriously to be a partner in fighting terrorism instead of teaming up with it," he said.

"The most dangerous aspect of the last attack is that Al-Qaeda knew about the exact movements of the South Korean delegation, the location of the delegation's car, and the time they would drive by Sana'a airport," he added. "This information indicates that either Al-Qaeda penetrated Yemeni security apparatuses or that the Yemeni government connives with terrorists to facilitate their operations to attain funds within the framework of the war on terror."

Al-Mawri added that the best option is to activate law, respect minds of people, and stop using terrorism to achieve temporary political objectives or illicit money. "Sana'a should submit terrorist elements to the international community if it wants to receive international support to fight terrorism," he said.

Shaya believes that attacks by armed Islamists will continue in Yemen until they destroy the local authority in the country.

He also said that attacks of these armed elements will not exclude countries that cooperate with the U.S. in fighting terrorism, rather their citizens will be targets for these armed Islamists.

Turbulent weather causes life and material loss

By: Ali Saeed

SANA'A, APRIL 1 — Two people died in the district of Maghreb Ans in the Dhamar governorate on Tuesday due to flash floods that resulted from heavy rains. Rain water flooded five wells, killed livestock and swept through agricultural lands.

Heavy rains also caused material losses: "The heavy rains ruined five buildings, created cracks in four others and swept 60 percent of the agricultural lands in the district," said Hamaid Abdulrazaq, General Secretary of the district.

In the neighboring village of Al-

Jahrn, mud brick buildings are still steep in flood water after the heavy rains.

The Civil Aviation and Meteorology Authority has warned citizens living in the mountainous governorates of heavy rains with hail and thunderstorms in the coming few days, with possible rock-slides and floods.

The center also recommended citizens be careful and take the necessary precautions in the governorates of Sa'ada, Hajja, Amran, Sana'a, Al-Mahwit, Dhamar, Raima, Ibb, Taiz, Al-Bayda, Lahj and Al-Dhale.

It indicated that rain will spread from the highlands to the lower areas of

Marib, Shabwa, Abyan, Hadramout and Al-Mahra.

Rasheed Al-Ariqi, head of the weather forecast unit at the meteorology service with the Civil Aviation and Meteorology Authority, confirmed that skies across the country are overcast and tending towards moderate rain. Thunderstorms are expected in the mountainous areas in the coming 48 hours.

"Yesterday, there was a thunderstorm in the district of Al-Sada in Ibb, and there might have been heavy rain and thunderstorms in other districts or governorate that our observing stations cannot reach," said Al-Ariqi.

In October last year, Yemen was affected by flash floods especially the eastern parts of Yemen in Hadramout, Shabwa, and Al-Mahra. About 700,000 persons—roughly half the population in the affected areas—lost their homes as a result of the floods. The extent of the damage was estimated at USD 1.638 million.

October's flash floods in Hadramout and Al-Mahra caused agricultural losses, with around 500,000 palm trees reported uprooted.

According to the Emergency Events Database, approximately 100,000 people are affected annually by natural disasters in Yemen.



Locals in Dhamar trying to rescue a man trapped in a car swept because of the heavy rain floods.

Women in the candidate selection process

By: Hakeem Azzadeen
For the Yemen Times

SANA'A, MARCH 31 — There are many barriers to women seeking leadership in almost all countries of the world, and it is no different for women in Yemen. In April 1993, the first round of parliamentary election took place since the unification of Yemen in May 22, 1990. The elected members of this first parliament were all men. The parliamentary elections in 1997 resulted in the selection of the first two women representatives to parliament. Only one of these two female representatives was re-elected to parliament following the 2003 parliamentary elections.

Despite nearly half of registered voters being women, only one female representative sits in the current parliament. The thirty-something female local councilors can't be justified rationally. Among other factors, the meager representation of women in parliament and local councils is mainly attributed to the low number of female candidates nominated to run in these elections by political parties.

It is unclear how many women will be elected to the next parliament. Importantly, no one can appraise precisely how many women will be the nominated as candidates to run in the elections by political parties. The primary hurdle to an ambitious Yemeni woman seeking a position of leadership rests in obtaining her political party's nomination to run as its candidate in the 2011 parliamentary elections. The participation or not of all parties in the next parliamentary elections is irrelevant here.

President Saleh has promised 15 percent of GPC candidates to be women in any elections, as gesture of appreciation of female members' contribution to the GPC and the importance of women's political participation. Similarly, the opposition party leaders brag that they constantly seek to nominate women as their candidates in any elections.

But, when elections are about to take place, political parties, government and opposition don't adhere to their promise to nominate women candidates. They end up nominating male candidates instead, or choose female candidates

only in a constituency where they know they will lose. Both sides then accuse each other of failing to support women. Political parties, government and opposition are either hesitant or reluctant to nominate women as party candidates in any elections.

Why is it difficult for women to obtain the nomination of political parties in Yemen? There are five major obstacles to women's nomination as political parties' candidates: the electoral system, the influence of culture, party organization and rules, the supply of women candidates and election campaigning.

A challenging electoral system

The Yemeni parliament consists of 301 seats representing 301 electoral constituencies. Because parliamentary elections are based on a single-constituency electoral system and the winner is determined based on first-come basis, it is very difficult for independent female candidates to win against male party candidates, especially in rural and semi-urban constituencies.

Although it is possible for female party candidates to compete and to win against independent male candidates in several urban cities of Yemen, political parties are either reluctant or hesitant to nominate women in the upcoming parliamentary elections. Political parties don't nominate women, either because the mentality is still that the party's chance of winning elections is higher with male candidates or because they see female candidates as liabilities.

Thus, the current electoral system represents a disadvantage for women in Yemen, unless they are nominated as candidates by their political parties, who fully support their electoral campaigns and—importantly—do not, behind doors, support male party members running as independent candidates.

In the absence of reserved seats for women in the law or constitutionally binding party quotas, party nomination quota remains the only option for women to have a chance to run for parliament. The nomination quota does not guarantee women candidates will win, but ensures that their chances of winning increase—if parties stand behind them in their campaign. This was evi-

dent in the 2006 local council elections when 35 out of 37 GPC female candidates won, as a result of their party's firm support during the election campaign period.

Culture holds women back

Yemeni cultural context influences the political environment in which women stand for election and their likelihood of winning. Women seeking to be elected are often discriminated against because of the perception that the world of politics is hostile and aggressive.

Moreover, politics remain a male domain because many voters still view men as better leaders than women. Men are generally the heads of households and are better equipped to deal with decision-making in socially traditional rural areas. Electors in rural and tribal areas vote based on tribal or religious affiliation, rather than political ideology or a specific platform.

These perceptions and backward customs have stood against women's progress in Yemen for many generations. They require massive efforts by women in political parties, women NGOs, and the political parties themselves to ensure a higher level of women's political participation.

In addition to the political, economic, and social problems Yemen faces, majority of Yemenis embrace customs and traditions which stand against women's political participation. The high illiteracy rates among men and women only add insult to injury.

Centralized decision-making

Political parties vary with regard to the number of women candidates they will nominate in any parliamentary elections. The nomination of female candidates by Yemeni political parties depends on several factors, such as whether the nomination process is centralized inside the party, which in Yemen it is. It also probably takes place during qat chewing sessions, attended by male members only.

The time of the nomination process is usually close to the campaigning period, and does not allow potential female candidates adequate time to lobby for the party's nomination. Moreover, competition between male and female mem-

bers is based on name recognition and visibility in community, which favors men over women. Finally, women candidates are often viewed by male leadership as liabilities. Thus, male members stand a better chance of being nominated.

If candidates and party policies are decided at the central level, it is difficult to understand the need to have an organizational structure inside the parties. Although each political party claims to have an organizational structure in place, it is seldom adhered to.

Having clear bureaucratic procedures by which candidates are chosen would be a distinct advantage to women. When the rules are unwritten, it becomes harder for women to break into the inner circle of power.

"In short supply"

An argument that is sometimes used by political parties everywhere is that there are not enough women willing to run in the elections, and that women lack the experience and confidence to stand in an electoral campaign. The high illiteracy rate among Yemeni women only fuels more arguments about their lack of qualifications.

There is no doubt in my mind that there are many qualified women to run as party candidates in the next parliamentary elections, yet because of the complexity of Yemeni society it would have been difficult, for example, to recruit 45 female candidates in a short period of time to meet the President's call for 15 per cent of GPC nominees to be women for the April elections.

Potential party and independent female candidates need to be first identified. This is something women's organizations can do. Active women's organization are critical in assisting potential women to come forward and publicly express their ambition to lead because they are more qualified to serve citizens than men. Women's organizations also play an important role in providing female candidates with experience in public settings, building their self-confidence and providing a support base.

Election campaigning

When campaigning for nomination,

women may face discrimination from both male and female voters during the campaigning in this usually male-dominated domain. For example, gender socialization and stereotyping remains a barrier for some women.

Men are able to campaign more effectively outside the party structure, and are more likely to have links to businesses and professional networks to provide them with financial resources and expertise. Without these valuable contacts, women can't afford the initial funds a candidate requires to launch a campaign to establish name recognition, gain exposure and organize a campaign team.

Active campaigning demands time and flexibility, which women with families can't afford. Female candidates may also not be able to campaign in areas they can't go to due to special constraints.

A host of obstacles

These obstacles may vary from one country to another in terms of their impact in the recruitment of women candidates or in the appointment of women to senior party and government posts by political parties.

The variation depends on the political regime and the level of democratic development in a country, the level of organization of women's sectors, the supply and availability of women candidates, the strength and organization of political parties, and the electoral system.

The more democratic and freely elected the political regime of a country it is, the better the environment in which women run for office.

The more citizens in a country are civilized and the more developed the country is, the more women can be assigned high posts in government and inside political parties. Yet in Yemen, a party woman seeking a position in leadership may not get the backup and votes of male and female members of the same party.

A potential woman candidate has to struggle hard to get family support and for relatives and neighbors to accept the idea of her being nominated. Certainly, she would not get the votes of other female voters in her constituency, espe-

cially those supporting other political parties, even without running candidates. A potential candidate may have to risk losing her family if she is determined to run for office against the will of her family.

The stronger and more internally democratic a political party is, the more chances there are for women members to be appointed to senior party posts. But the male dominance of political party leadership in Yemen makes it difficult for female members to have a say over who runs as the party's candidates in elections. Many political parties will not give up leverage to their female members to run as party candidates. Political parties continue to use women only as a political token or voters in Yemen.

Recommendations

While the proportional list is seen to be the most woman-friendly electoral system, it is crucial that a percentage of party candidates' list is determined in advance for women candidates should it become adopted as the electoral system in Yemen.

Active women organizations, party women members, and advocates and activists need to identify practical measures to overcome and minimize the obstacles standing against the women's nomination by political parties. International organizations and donors should support these efforts to ensure that Yemeni women have a chance to be elected to parliament.

Traditional cultural values work against the participation of women in the political process. To eliminate negative attitudes toward women in politics, joint efforts must be exerted by all interested groups in the political participation of women. Organized efforts should eradicate some of the negative customs that stand against women's progress and highlight the positive impact of women's political participation.

Political party leaderships should consider clear bureaucratic procedures by which to choose their candidates, to improve women's chances of being nominated. Because when the rules are unwritten, it is very hard for women to break into the inner circle of power.

In Brief

DHAMAR
Police arrest a suspect of collaborating with al-Qaeda
 Security bodies in Dhamar governorate arrested on Monday a suspect -named as A.A - of cooperating with al-Qaeda, Media Center of Interior Ministry said.
 The bodies said that the suspect facilitated a residence of al-Qaeda element Abdullah al-Harabi who was arrested in Taiz governorate recently. The suspect also is accused with cooperation with Saudis who are al-Qaeda suspects.
 It is worth mentioning that Yemen handed over to Saudi Arabia five men wanted by Saudi authorities in ties with al-Qaeda.
 The extradition is as part of a security agreement between the two neighboring countries.

AMRAN
Women lawful protection course concluded
 A three-day training course on women lawful protection organized by Yemen Women Union was concluded here on Monday.
 About 30 participants, who represented judiciary, prosecution, security bodies and other concerned bodies, received several lectures on experiences and conceptions relevant to the lawful protection for women, especially those are in prisons.
 Undersecretary of Amran government Yahya Ghuabar and Chairwoman of Yemen Women Union in the governorate Shams al-Rada'ei affirmed the significance of the course in introducing the concerned authorities to the knowledge and concepts related to women's rights and their protection from non-positive interferences.
 The two officials pointed out that women are important elements in the society and a major partner in the development process in the country.

SANA'A
Seminar on children protection program organized
 A seminar over enlightening about activities of the children protection program was organized on Monday by the Democracy School in Sana'a in partnership with coordination board of Yemeni non-government organization of children care.
 The one-day seminar aimed at enlightening representatives of local councils, ministry of education and ministry of human rights about goals of the program. Jamal al-Shami, head of the school reviewed key activities implemented by the school in filed of protecting children, saying that program carried out in cooperation with the European Union.
 The program will last for 14 months.
 The Democracy School is a non governmental organization established 2002 by the permission of the Ministry of Culture to promote democratic awareness within children and human and children rights.

Four police officers dismissed
 Police Penal Council dismissed on Monday four police officers and a soldier due to bad performance for their duties.
 In a meeting headed by the Deputy Minister of Interior Mohammed al-Qawsi, the council discussed several issues related to the punishing measures against violators in the police bodies.
First national conference on autism concluded
 The first national conference over spreading awareness on autism was concluded on Monday in Sana'a capital.
 Participants called on the fund of handicapped care fund to increase technical and material support for the Yemeni center of autism as it is single center concerned with autism.

They also called on the ministry of the social affairs and labor to support efforts of the civil societies to set up further centers across the country, asking for more cooperation between the ministry and the health ministry to take care of children affected with autism and integrate them in the society.
 The participants also urged the media outlets to shoulder their responsibility in putting a media plan to enlighten the society about the autism.
 In the closing session, the Minister of Social Affairs and labor Amt al-Razaq Homad affirmed importance of the conference to shed light on this issue and other aspects related with such disease.
 She said that the government concerns with handicapped people and offer support for their care, pointing out to the establishment of Higher National Committee for Handicapped People in the country.
 Participants from Lebanon, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Qatar, Iraq, Bahrain, Syria and Luxembourg are taking part in the conference.
 Autism is a brain development disorder characterized by impaired social interaction and communication, and by restricted and repetitive behavior. These signs all begin before a child is three years old.
Yemen extradites 5 wanted persons to Saudi Arabia
 Yemen extradited on Saturday five wanted Saudis to Saudi Arabia Kingdom, security sources told the military-run 26sep.net on Sunday.
 The five suspects have been arrested in Yemeni territories, and were wanted for terrorist and sabotage acts, the sources added.
 Extradition the suspects comes under the security cooperation and security deal signed between the two countries before-hand.

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 affected 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.
HODEIDAH
SEYAJ launches awareness campaign on child rights
 SEYAJ Organization for Childhood Protection launched on Monday in Hodeidah governorate awareness campaign on child rights.
 The child rights campaign aims to introduce 1,500 children in six schools to the humanitarian rights for the children, topped by education and health, which are guaranteed in the Yemeni constitution and international conventions.
 The campaign is organized by SEYAJ in coordination with Offices of Education and Yemen News Agency in the governorate.

TAIZ
Somali refugees reach Taiz coasts
 About 42 Somali refugees, including 12 women, have reached the coasts of Thubab district in Taiz province.
 Security sources said that the refugees were tired and in deplorable conditions.
 The security bodies at the district said that the Somalis have been gathered so that they are sent later by Yemen Red Crescent to the main camp of Refugees at Kharaz area in Lahj province.
 Meanwhile, 122 Somalis, including 40 women and four children, reached the Kharaz refugees camp.
 Around 9000 Somali refugees reached Yemeni coastlines from January 2009, according security sources in the Yemeni provinces. The influx of Somali refugees is adding to a host of financial and economic problems facing Yemen.
ADEN
About 1,300 European tourists arrive to Aden seaport
 Italian tourist ship "Europe" arrived on Sunday to Aden seaport carrying onboard 1,300 tourists from different European nationalities.
 Various tourist programs including visits to Aden Tanks, Sirah Castle and other tourist sites in Aden city has been prepared for the tourists.
 The program also includes visits to the capital of Sana'a and Ibb governorate.
HAJJAH
Access-plus program of combating child labor discussed
 Hajjah governor Farid Mujawar held tasks on Sunday with the director of the Access -plus program in the country over cooperation in field of combating child trafficking and labor in border regions.
 The program aims at presenting direct

services for children who are working in hunting, smuggling and agriculture in Harad, Abs, and Midi districts in Hajjah governorate to reenroll them again in schools and vocational institutes.
 Mujawar affirmed importance of the efforts exerted to combat phenomenon of child labors and smuggling acts in the border outlets, considering it as key humanitarian issue needs further cooperation of all concerned bodies.
 He voiced readiness of the governorate and local council to overcome all problems facing the program.
 For her part, the director of the program said that the program is belonging to American Labor Department funded by Gulf donors and European donors as well as working in partnership with the Yemeni government relevant bodies.
 She added that the program targets around 7,000 children in four governorates including 1,700 in Hajjah to integrate them in the society.
HADRAMOUT
Somali pirates kill Yemeni fisherman
 Security forces in Mukalla city of Hadramout governorate said that a fisherman body aboard a boat arrived on Sunday at the port of the governorate, the Security Information Center of Interior Ministry reported Sunday.
 The fisherman named Sahl Juma'an al-Sani, 45, has been killed few days ago in the Somali territorial waters by Somali pirates were trying to seize the boat. Al-Sani has been shot in his shoulder and subsequently died, the fisherman's friends told the center adding that two other fishermen were also injured.
 Security authorities in Mukalla city have begun investigations to unveil the case circumstances.
 Worth to mention is that Yemeni fishing boats have been attacked 50 times last year by Somali pirates.

Their News

UAE: Full Scholarships Available for Graduate Study at MASDAR Institute
 The MASDAR Institute of Science and Technology in Abu Dhabi is pleased to announce full scholarships to highly qualified graduate students from around the world. (6-10 scholarships are available to U.S. students).
 The MASDAR Institute is the centerpiece of the MASDAR Initiative, a landmark program by the government of Abu Dhabi to establish an entirely new economic sector dedicated to alternative and sustainable energy. The MASDAR Institute is a private, not-for-profit, independent, research-driven institute developed with the support and cooperation of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). MIT provides assistance in recruitment of faculty members and senior administrative staff and the provision of course curriculum, amongst other matters. The Institute is located inside the world's first carbon neutral, zero waste Masdar City which will be powered solely by alternative energy, mainly solar energy.
 The Institute offers Masters and (in 2011) PhD programs in science and engineering disciplines, with a focus on advanced energy and sustainable technologies. It welcomes and encourages applications from qualified students and provides scholarships to talented students who meet its high admission standards.
 Beginning September 2009, the MASDAR Institute will offer five 24-month Master of Science programs (coursework and thesis).

- MSc in Engineering Systems and Management
 - MSc in Information Technology
 - MSc in Materials Science and Engineering
 - MSc in Mechanical Engineering
 - MSc in Water and Environment
- Details of faculty profiles, current research, programs offered, course description, scholarships, and other information is available on the website at www.masdar.ac.ae.
 Any questions about the Institute and scholarships may be directed to Stephen Lee, Assistant Provost, at slee@masdar.ac.ae.

African 2009 youth summit
 "CHANGE: It's up to us" conference is organized by the Network of African Youths for Development to be held in NAIROBI, KENYA. The dates for this coming conference are November 2nd to the 7th, 2009.
 Conference participants will be selected according to the following three criteria:
 • Commitment to Youth-Led Development: You must prove through the information provided that you are active as a change agent in your community
 • Authenticity of documents provided

(NAYD will check wherever possible)
 • Clear ability to network: Youths coming to this summit will have to interact in many ways with other youths. Show us you have something to share
Arriving in Nairobi: All international delegates will be met by a friendly and helpful conference representative at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport and escorted to the conference facility. If you are arriving by bus, you will also be met at the corresponding bus or train station in Nairobi. It is highly recommended that delegates budget to stay at least a couple of extra nights in Nairobi before or after the conference. The accommodation is reasonably priced, there are many tours and safaris, and Kenya is full of sites that have to be experienced.
 NAYD will not be able to pay your travel to Nairobi but hope to lodge and feed you. Before completing the form please make sure you will be able to raise the necessary money by November.
 The following 8 themes will form the core of discussions during the conference period.
 1 Poverty Eradication
 2 Sustainable and Socio-economic Integration of Youth
 3 Health
 4 Human Rights and Peace
 5 Sustainable Development and Protection of the Environment
 6 Youth and Culture
 7 Girls, Young Women and Challenged (physically and mentally) Youths
 8 Climate Change

For information email applications2009@nayd.org. The deadline for the receipt of your completed application is April 30, 2009. If selected you will receive an email notification by the end of June 2009. You will then be provided with complete details regarding the reservation of your place at the conference and eventual arrival.

Arab editors invited to study tour on strategies for newsroom crisis
 During an exclusive study tour to some of the most important newspapers in the UK, Arab editors can get an insight into cost-effective integration strategies for the newsroom crisis. The study tour, which is organised by the World Editors Forum (WEF), takes place at the end of April and Arabic translation will be provided.
 Integrated newsrooms have taken the UK newspaper market, one of the world's most dynamic, by storm. National quality papers have led the charge with the regional press right on their heels, experimenting with multimedia journalism and transforming the newsroom culture to fit the digital age. In combination with these transformations, UK newspapers have conserved resources and minimized expenditure, continuing to provide their readers with top-quality journalism in

spite of the global financial crisis.
 In joining the World Editors Forum for the UK Nationals and Regionals Study Tour, you will discover how newspapers in the UK have remained innovative while saving money. The study tour takes place from 26 to 30 April in London and Manchester and includes visits to The Guardian, The Times of London and the BBC. Arabic translation will be available from 26 to 28 April, and can be extended to 30 April.
 You are encouraged to sign up soon as space is limited and participants will be accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Pricing:
 Standard price: EUR3,900
 WEF Members: EUR3,400
OPTIONAL PRICING:
 To accommodate different interests and budgets, the UK Nationals and Regionals Study Tour has been divided into Regional and National modules of 2 days each. You may decide to join WEF for only one of the 2-day modules:
 Standard price 1 module: EUR2,400
 WEF Member price 1 module: EUR2,100

The price includes all hotels, meals and transport within the United Kingdom during the duration of the study tour, (19h00 Sunday, 26 April to 15h30 Thursday, 30 April). Participants are responsible for their own transportation to and from the United Kingdom. The tour begins in London and ends in Manchester.
 If you have any questions, please contact John Burke, WEF Deputy Director at jburke@wan.asso.fr

Make Your Mark: Youth Led Development and the MDGs
 6th Annual Youth Assembly at the United Nations: August 5th - 7th, 2009.
 Registration closes on or before June 5, 2009, depending on limited availability!
 In Partnership with the United Nations Department of Public Information
 2009 Leadership Seminars:
 Transforming Information Into Action
 LS1: July 30 - August 3
 LS2: August 8 - August 12

A new feature of the YA: Support Opportunities for Youth Leaders
 Although the annual Youth Assembly at the United Nations is not yet able to support the travel and lodging for delegates, here are some support possibilities that we advise you to learn more about. Act soon, most of these opportunities have deadlines!
 From WWW.DoSomething.Org :
 (For questions regarding their grant programs or starting/running a not-for-profit, contact Jordyn Wells: jwells@dosomething.org
 • Do Something Awards Application Extended! The Do Something Awards (formerly the BR!CK

Awards) want to know if you have made a difference. If you have identified a problem, taken action, and created significant change, you could be eligible for up to \$100,000 in scholarships and grants. We believe in you and want to honor your world-changing work.
 • Apply at www.DoSomethingAwards.org until March 16
 • Increase Your Green Winners Announced Eight schools were selected to receive up to \$1,500 in environmental funding. Read all

Lufthansa boosts flight schedule for Yemen
 Airline connects Sana'a to Frankfurt four times a week; increased capacity provides more flexibility and travel choices for customers

Lufthansa German Airlines today announced that it has increased its flights from Sana'a to Frankfurt to a four times a week service connecting Yemen to Germany and onwards to a total of 107 destinations in Europe and 23 cities in the US, a route network matched by none other airline in the market.
 With the beginning of the summer schedule, Lufthansa passengers can avail of one additional flight being part of the Yemen schedule, departing on Saturdays from Sana'a to Frankfurt. The state-of-the-art aircraft operated is the Airbus A330-300 as well as the A340-300 with a three class onboard product.
 "We are proud to be able to offer our customers four flights a week. The departure on Saturdays complements our thrice weekly service, thus providing more flexibility and travel options to our customers", Lufthansa General Manager Yemen, Patrick Borg Hedley said.
 The Lufthansa flights from Sana'a to Frankfurt operate on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, taking off in Sana'a at 23.15 hrs (Monday), at 22.50 hrs (Wednesday) and at 22.40 hrs (Friday), arriving in Frankfurt the next morning at 08.10 hrs, 07.45 hrs and 07.35 hrs. On April 4th, the new Saturday service of Lufthansa will be inaugurated. The flight timings are: LH 653 departs Sana'a at 22.40 hrs and arrives in Frankfurt at 07.35 hrs in the morning. The return flight of this new service leaves Frankfurt at 10.25 hrs and arrives in Sana'a at 20.55 hrs (Saturday) on flight number LH 652.
 Despite the global financial situation, the demand for air traffic in the region is strong. "Being recognized as one of the leading international carriers for the corporate travellers, we see a lot of market potential and opportunities for us, which will further strengthen our market position",

about their award winning projects and sign up for updates on next year's competition
 • Learn more at <http://www.dosomething.org/increaseyourgreen> From The McCormick Foundation: New Media Women
 • The Institute for Interactive Journalism and the McCormick Foundation are seeking to fund three women-led projects that will rock the world of journalism.
 • They will fund individuals who have original ideas to create new Web sites, mobile news services or other

entrepreneurial initiatives that offer interactive opportunities to engage, inspire and improve news and information in a geographic community or a community of interest. He McCormick New Media Women Entrepreneurs program will give one-time funding of \$10,000 to women who have the vision, skills and experience to launch a new venture. These can be solo ideas or team projects spearheaded by women.
 For more info and to apply: http://www.newmediawomen.org/site/proposal_guidelines



Lufthansa

them, we invest for them and we work for them and our investments pay off. Last year, we set new records in passenger growth with 57 million customers and top marks achieved in our customer satisfaction index", Thierry Antinori, Executive Vice President Sales & Marketing, Lufthansa German Airlines, said during his recent visit to the Gulf region.
 Lufthansa continues to focus on the development of new products and new services and will continue to expand its role as Europe's most attractive airline. The current business climate does not represent a standstill at Lufthansa, but on the contrary. Major investments in the development of products and services will allow the airline to offer its customers true added value and greater comfort when travelling. Regardless of the present economic climate, Lufthansa will continue to invest in the product which stands for quality, safety, reliability and innovation.
 For Lufthansa, excellent service on board is equally important as on ground, which is reflected in the ongoing investment of the airline in its lounges and terminal facilities which speaks for itself. By 2013, Lufthansa will have invested around 150 million euros in the renovation and improvement of its lounges across the globe. New lounges in Frankfurt, Munich, New York and Mumbai have been recently opened.
 * subject to tax and service charge
 Lufthansa German Airlines
 Sana'a, Yemen
 Phone: +967 -1 - 219483



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Ever thought about tasting the best of what the world has to offer? You will be delighted to experience the New International Menu at Bilquis.

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Invitation for General Bid No. (7) for the year 2009

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

Purchasing, importing, licensing, testing, guaranteeing furniture and office equipment for the Eman Satellite Channel.

All the interested importers and specialized companies must apply with their written request for this bid during the official work time to the following address:

The TV and Radio General Corporation
 General Administration for Projects
 Tel: (01/ 230752)

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.

“Yemenia New Direct Flights”

Friday from Aden to Doha

Flight No #	Departure	From	To	Arrival
IY 824/5	09:35	Sana'a	Aden	10:20
	11:05	Aden	Doha	13:15
	14:15	Doha	Sana'a	16:25

Wednesday from Doha to Aden

Flight No #	Departure	From	To	Arrival
IY 824/5	14:30	Sana'a	Doha	16:40
	17:40	Doha	Aden	20:00
	20:45	Aden	Sana'a	21:30



Friday from Kuwait to Riyan

Flight No #	Departure	From	To	Arrival
IY 822/3	09:45	Sana'a	Kuwait	11:55
	12:55	Kuwait	Riyan	15:05
	16:00	Riyan	Sana'a	17:00

Wednesday from Riyan to Kuwait

Flight No #	Departure	From	To	Arrival
IY 822/3	14:30	Sana'a	Riyan	15:30
	16:30	Riyan	Kuwait	18:40
	19:40	Kuwait	Sana'a	21:50



For more inquiries, please call 01 454545, 01 250800, Yemenia offices or your agent.

www.yemenia.com

Tackling corruption with grace and wisdom

A day with Bilkis Abu Osba'

By: Mahmoud Assamiee

Dr. Bilkis Ahmad Abu Osba, vice chairwoman of the Supreme National Authority for Combating Corruption (SNACC), starts her day by bringing her 5 year-old son, Suhaib, to kindergarten. In the car on her way to work, she talks kindly to her driver and bodyguard.

She arrives at the anti-corruption authority at 9:15. At the front gate of the building, she greets everyone, some with a firm handshake. She treats them compassionately, enquiring after their health. As she enters the gate, it is clear that everyone here respects her.

One of the employees approaches her with his daughter with cotton wool in her nose: "Have you taken her to the hospital?" she asks, gently touching her head. "Take care of her."

Born in Ibb, Dr. Abu Osba completed her primary education in Taiz and graduated with a BA in Economy and Political Sciences from Sana'a University. She then traveled to Egypt, and in 2003 was awarded a PhD in Economy and Political Sciences from Cairo University.

She was briefly a professor of Political Sciences at Sana'a University, before she was appointed to vice chairwoman of the



Dr. Abu Osba is the only woman in the supreme national authority for combating corruption and one of its most active members.

new anti-corruption authority in 2007.

Before making her way to her office, Abu Osba visits most of the authority's offices. She greets every employee with a smile and kind words, and discusses their work with them.

On the fourth floor of the SNACC building, she greets her office's employees, discusses the day's agenda and asks them if anybody is waiting for her. She is seated herself behind her desk and turns on her computer to check her e-mails and the SNACC website.

Several job applicants have arrived to see her, and she receives them one by one. The director of her office hands her documents, which she reads carefully before signing. At 10:30 she has a brief meeting with her boss, head of the SNACC Ahmad Al-Anesi, to discuss the day's work. Her day is in full swing.

Her secretary leads four men into her office, who she greets kindly. They have come to see if she can help them employ their relatives. She deals with them intelligently and frankly. As with all other

requests of this nature, she replies: "We have 1,000 files of applicants for jobs in the authority, so we will add their files to those in our hands, and then we will see."

Next, she goes downstairs to chair a meeting with German Technical Cooperation's (GTZ) senior program advisor Habib Sharif and SNACC's head of the international cooperation sector Dr. Saadalden Talib. They discuss national strategy for combating corruption.

Her schedule is a busy one. After the meeting, she gives a lecture to a big group of youth representing different civil society organizations. She talks about the establishment of the authority, its components and its role in fighting corruption.

A dynamic speaker, she captivates her audience using her hands and tilting her head slightly to one side. She manages the lecture wisely, distributing her attention evenly between the projector, the audience and the officials sitting next to her.

Since SNACC was founded in 2007, it has fought institutional corruption by monitoring government officials' behavior and expenses. The authority is currently investigating 305 cases of corruption, and has referred five cases to court.

"Finish the lecture quickly!" rudely interrupts a young member of the audi-

ence. "We don't have time to stay here, we have other work."

She responds wisely and patiently, without showing any feelings of anger: "Let me give you a complete idea about the authority, and then enough time to ask your questions," she quietly responds.

There is always a pen in her right hand. When she is speaking to her guests, the sound of her pen can be heard: "tic, tic."

When she returns to her office, a television crew is waiting for her for an interview. "Are you the crew of Al-Saeeda Channel?" she inquires. "Yes," answers the announcer. "We would like to make an interview with you about the activity of the authority."

"Set up your equipment and connect your camera's wires, and I will be back," she says.

While they set up the cameras, she visits some of her colleagues in their offices. When she returns to her office, everything is ready. The presenter hands her a small microphone to clip on her black and white headscarf to start the interview.

"Before we start recording, what questions do you want to ask?" she asks. "We do not have many questions, we only three to five questions about the activities of the authority," responds the presenter. "Ok."

"Five, four, three, two, one, itla,"

counts down the director. As usual, Abu Osba starts speaking quietly, with a smile and waving her hands. She tilts her head gently to the right. "Tic, tic," goes her pen.

"Where is the doctor? I want to talk to her," interrupts a visitor, entering in the middle of the interview. He stops short, noticing the camera, and the Al-Saeeda director and Abu Osba's secretary ask him to wait until the interview is over.

"Nasr, tell them to close the door and not allow anybody to come in this time," she asks the director of her office quietly. "Five, four, three, two, one, itla," the director resumes. "Are there personalities hindering your work?" the presenter asks. "There has been great response from all bodies and we have received more than 1,000 financial disclosures from officials," she explains.

When the interview finishes at one o'clock, she has her breakfast. She does not bring it in to work with her, but orders it, like all the other employees, from the SNACC cafeteria.

After her late breakfast, she jumps into the car to attend a meeting at the Girls International Language Center to talk to youth from different civil society organizations. She will not finish her day's work or have lunch before four o'clock in the afternoon.

Drugs in Yemen – Part 1

The drug industry is one of the largest organized crimes in the world. Yemen, like other countries, is no exception when it comes to the gangs of dealing and smuggling drugs, and official statistics emphasize the rise in this industry.

Courtesy of the investigative reports department
SABA News Agency
Translated by Yemen Times Staff

Official institutions have managed to catch millions of pills and tons of marijuana and other different kinds of drugs. However, gangs consider Yemen a crossing point into other countries; not a proper place for drug dealing and selling.

Recently, the phenomenon of "pill addicts" increased. These addicts are a group of people who take pills that are prescribed as "psychotropic substances" which are considered by Yemeni law as drugs. Nevertheless, until now, there has been no center in Yemen for the treatment of drug addicts.

Drug mafia

Two people coming from Pakistan didn't know that the security services were stalking them, planning to know the kind of business they secretly run.

In one of the biggest joint missions between Yemeni and the Saudi security departments, drug law enforcement agents managed to spot a shipment of about 1200 kilograms of drug pills which arrived into Hadramout from the sea and was moved to one of the farms in Do'an.

The two Pakistanis took a big truck and went to the farm, and then headed toward Saudi Arabia. The drug law enforcement agents knew the truck's location and tracked it. The truck passed 50 police and military cross points without being inspected until it reached the Saudi border, where it was caught. A big drug network was captured in the two countries as a result.

In another operation, in one of Sana'a's streets, a drug delivery was supposed to take place between two people. Their phones were monitored, the details were known, and the proper time was determined, even though the two people involved had never met each other before. A drug law enforcement agent, undercover, introduced himself as one of them at the appointed time and place. The case was confirmed and the other man confessed. They were both detained with a large quantity of drugs.

Strange methods of transport

Drug gangs try to choose the best way to transport the drug loads; that is why they use strange ways that no one would notice.

Police departments managed to detain a gang who tried to smuggle a large amount of drugs hidden inside water heaters that were shipped into Yemen from Syria. The gang sent a person from Syria to Yemen to receive the shipment. Because he is not a large-scale trader, he managed to get a tax card from a Yemeni for a small amount of money.

The security department had suspicions when they found that some heaters

are heavier than the others. They had to take some of them apart by welding. To their surprise, they found out that the gang put the drugs inside the heaters. Afterwards, another amount of drugs arrived into Yemen the same way. In this operation, 5 million drug pills were caught.

During another drug bust, about 1700 kilograms of drugs were found hidden in a hollow inside of a ship. Drugs have also been found inside the parts and skeletons of cars and trucks that are used to transport goods from Yemen to the neighboring countries. A number of trucks were caught coming from neighboring countries loaded with second-hand tools, furniture, and clothes, returning empty to be used to as drug transports.

According to official records, a person designed a hiding place in his car that can contain up to 200 kilograms of drugs which he transported along with his family. In addition, drugs were found in the car doors and in the tires and in hidden places beside the children whom their father used go with in order not to be suspected.

The "pill addicts"

Psychotropic substances, which are internationally recognized and have serious psychological effects, are used medically as sedatives and hypnotics that help ease the nerves of patients. There are twelve different psychotropic substances listed in the Psychotropic Substances United Nations Agreement of 1971. One of them is dezbam, which is a drug that is spreading among the younger generation in Yemen who like to take it with qat. There are other types like restil and bultin which are common inside prisons.

A.J. is undergoing psychiatric treatment in Sana'a. He said, "I was a simple employee in a government institution. After few years, I got a good position that granted me a big income. I met a group of young men and women. Under the pressure of work they introduced me to dezbam. After a while I started overdosing on dezbam, and then it stopped working for me. I started having severe depression so I went to a psychiatrist, but he advised me to travel outside Yemen for treatment."

A barbershop owner said, "One of my relatives from Ibb had a grocery shop in one the slums in Aden. It was his source of income. Later, he met a group of guys called the 'pill addicts.' He complained that he couldn't sleep, so they gave him pills to take with qat. After few days he almost became insane looking for those people. He closed the shop most of the time and stopped caring for his family. He sold all he had and left his family to go Saudi Arabia, but he died on the way."

Addicts become murderers

M.A. is the owner of a pharmacy in the center of Sana'a. "My colleague refused to sell dezbam to people who used to buy it from him. They then shot him to death



Although sophisticated drug abuse of the more expensive kinds such as marijuana and heroine are not yet popular in Yemen, other less costly substances such as addictions to Hashish and prescription pills are increasing every day.

inside his own pharmacy," he said.

His fear of also being killed by an addicted gang makes him go out of his way to get what anyone asks for. One particular person comes to him every week and threatens him if he doesn't get what he wants.

The pharmacist said, "There was a guy who used to come to me to get a sedative shot, which is given to people who have psychological problems. One day he started coming with others, and I got plenty of money. When once I refused to give them the shot they threatened me and tried to harm me."

"There was a foreigner working in a city far from Sana'a. He used to come into Sana'a every week to take a shot also, so they're not too uncommon," he added.

The pharmacist wished that the Yemeni security system would be strong enough so that he can report these addicts. He said, "I am afraid that if I report them I will be killed."

Some pharmacists said that those who refuse to sell drugs to their customers are constantly threatened. They also said that some addicts bring psychological patients with them to the pharmacy and do anything to get pills.

Although the health ministry says that these kinds of medicines are monitored, one reporter managed during field work to buy various types of drugs such as dezbam, restil, and valium. 15 pharmacies among the 20 that the reporter visited refused to give me these pills without a doctor's prescription. Few volunteered to state that these drugs are banned without a prescription, and some looked down on the buyer with contempt. However, many of them suggested certain pharmacies, saying, "Its owner is well-known and has people who protect him. He sells the drugs with the ministry's knowledge of it." Some pharmacists accuse doctors of writing prescriptions for addicts who are not sick. There are also indications that many drug pills are sold in the rural areas and are taken with qat.

Exploitation and abuse

The General Health and Population

Ministry issued only a violation warrant when an amount of psychotropic substances was imported into Al-Jabla Hospital. "There was collusion involved when they were delivered to the hospital," ministry officials said. "After revising the hospital report, it was found that an amount of these substances was sold outside the hospital. We referred the case to the attorney general."

Dr. Taher Al-Maqalih from the Supreme Council of Medicines in the Health Ministry said, "Government supervision of psychotropic substances was absent in the past as a result of the lack of awareness of the seriousness of the random use of them. Also, because the importation of these drugs was limited, it didn't attract the attention of the officials. There are a lot of hospitals and pharmacies these days, so the restrictions became necessary, especially since there is a group of young people who became addicted to these psychotropic drugs and started using them with qat. There is also a large segment of school and university students who take them."

"Through the field survey of the import operations, it appeared that the psychotropic substances were abused and prescribed to people who became addicted to it," Dr. Al-Maqalih continued. "Derivatives of prazola reached the youth. Dezbam and restil are sedatives and hypnotics that should only be given to patients with psychiatric problems have become deep problems in our society. So, we quickly restricted the import of such substances. Since 2006 we have been performing a series of procedures to restrict the distribution of them after they enter Yemen."

Dr. Al-Maqalih confirmed that wholesalers in the past didn't distribute the drug substances properly. "That is why we issued a general order that bans selling the drugs to the wholesalers so that the treatment is delivered directly to the importer or from the local producer to the hospitals and pharmacies without a mediator," he said. "Wholesalers are not restricted to prescriptions in order to purchase these drugs, so we can't restrict their selling even though drugs are dis-

tributed to the addicts by means of these wholesalers.

"If we get back to the previous import and distribution way, we will find the following system of sales: from the importers and local manufacturers of the psychotropic substances to the wholesalers to the hospitals, dispensaries, pharmacies, drug stores, medical centers, the medical charity centers, defecent agents, and dealers," he stated. "The wholesalers distribute the drugs after they get them from the importer or the from the local manufacturers to the hospitals, dispensaries, pharmacies, drug stores, minor wholesalers, health centers, charities, private clinics, injections and surgeries clinics, addicts, different agents, drug dealers, and folk doctors. The other problem is that the doctors, pharmacists, and their assistants don't always issue the prescription properly so we can't track who is prescribing these drugs. In addition, the drug dealers and folk doctors made things worse, and that is when the problem became worse."

To avoid the problem, Dr. Taher Al-Maqalih said, "We issued a general order to the importers and local manufacturers in 2006 to deal directly with the pharmacies and hospitals only and not to deal with the wholesalers, in addition to other restrictions. The doctors and pharmacists should have restrictions as well; the most important one is to write prescriptions only for real patients and not the addicts, according to the organized general orders. We also took procedures that obliged the agent who sells the psychotropic substances to write warning sentences on their containers, such as that it is a monitored medicine, it can't be sold without a prescription, those who violate that will be punished, and so forth. Since 2006, we started to limit the abused substances such as dezbam, and we will continue to do so until we reach the desired stage, which is when the addict can't get any of these banned drugs," he said.

Dr. Al-Maqalih explained how these procedures limited the problem, saying, "The received amount of prazola, a crude dangerous substance, in 2006 was 9000 kilograms. In 2007, the amount was half of that. We starting importing the lighter substitute, which wasn't imported before 2006. If you notice dezbam, you will see that the received amount of it was about 54000 grams in 2006. This amount decreased to 8584 grams in 2007."

Dr. Al-Maqalih said that the drug and psychotropic substances law of 1993 is what regulates the import of the psychotropic substances. "Every year, amounts of drugs enter Yemen with a license signed by the health ministry. These substances are used naturally, industrially, and in scientific research. The problem starts after the imported amounts enter, meaning who has the right to use these substances, who sells and distributes them, and how."

"This year, reports of the import institutions are being conducted and we will define the problem, the distributed amount and for whom it was distributed," he continued. "But we admit that a part of these medicines that officially enter

Yemen are abused, not to mention what is smuggled. We are now trying with the importers, doctors, and pharmacists to control the phenomenon of abusing these medicines because after all they are medicines that can't be given without the doctors' supervision, unlike marijuana and heroin that have no medical use." He emphasized that the problem is with the importers. "There are drugs that were sold to the pharmacists by the importers, but actually we don't know the truth about to whom they were sold. Currently we are working the data to get to know that truth."

"Based on reports from the importers, the indicators say that there is an abuse of these medicines, but in 2009 the statistics of the agents will be confirmed directly and we will put an end to whoever violates the law," he said. "We will then move to the doctors and pharmacists and explain that the drug treatments can't be sold without a prescription and can't be given with a mixture of medicines, but must be on a separate prescription that has the pharmacy stamp, the pharmacist's name, the city, and the phone number on the prescription."

Al-Maqalih indicated that pharmacies' reports are being collected and that the ministry will distribute a general order to the importers to deal with committed pharmacies only, banning any dealing with violating pharmacies. He said, "If we review the drug law, we find that the punishment for an illegal dealer of psychotropic substances is execution or 25 years in prison, which the same as a marijuana dealer for instance. But such drugs can't be equalized with the psychotropic substances; addiction to psychotropic substances is not as heavy as drug addiction. The addict becomes useless and not a positive person in his society – he doesn't care for himself or his family. There should be specialized centers for treatment where addicts can go through withdrawal."

Dr. Al-Maqalih thinks that the drug law's details needs to be reviewed, and that drugs and psychotropic substances should not remain under the same law as it is the case today, but there should be a law for each as it is in other countries.

The international agreements consider there to be 61 types of substances on the drug list, 78 types of psychotropic substances, and 88 types of chemical substances.

"Psychiatrists should discuss this issue of a lack of drug treatment facilities," stated Dr. Al-Maqalih, "because when the state is absent the problem becomes huge, and those who are in prison because of addiction are there because of illegal drugs. It is better to face the problem because addiction has a direct relation with crimes that Yemeni society recently started witnessing such as murder, theft, and other crimes."

"We ourselves at the ministry haven't caught a pharmacist selling marijuana or kibtagon," he said. "We only once participated in a drug bust to which we were asked by the attorney general. Our role is to refer people who broke the law to the drug control and attorney general."

Iran Policies sophisticated yet blurred (part 1)

By: Dr. Murad Alazany
UPM University, Malaysia

As the Mullahs of Iran, led by Al-Khomeini, succeeded to overthrow the Shah of Iran in 1979, they declared the establishment of an Islamic republic of Iran. Subsequent to their success, they revealed aspirations to regional hegemony - both geostrategic and religious. They showed a determination to export the principles of what is claimed to be an Islamic revolution to the neighboring Arab Countries. Exporting the revolution was declared an essential and global need. In his first appearance following the revolution, Al-Khomeini declared the message of the revolution to be global, and not restricted to a specific time or place. "It is a human message, and it will move forward. It will conquer all the mountain tops of the world." Exporting the revolution, in fact, means promoting a messianic Shi'ite vision that stresses the imminent appearance of the last twelfth imam and the re-establishment of the Persian Empire.

Iranians in general, whether religious or not, never forget the glorious past of the Persian Empire. They grew aggrieved of Muslim Arabs whom they accuse of destroying that Empire and of marginalizing their culture. In the writing of many of their scholars and thinkers, including the Mullahs themselves, one can feel a sense of shame and sense of injury against Islam and Arabs among Iranians for the loss of that Empire. Being hunted by that past, the Iranians keep looking forward to any chance to re-establish and to restore the centuries of that Persian Empire. As a matter of fact, promoting the messianic Shi'ite vision is taken by the leaders of Iran as an endeavor to weaken the Sunni Islam and then to reestablish the Persian Empire. The mullahs of Iran regard the Sunni Islam as a radical apostate political sect that has taken over the Muslim holy places, and pointed a finger at Arab countries, particularly Saudi Arabia, as a real enemy since they patronize this ideology.

Soon after the revolution, the

Mullahs of Iran marked their attitudes towards the neighboring Sunni Arab countries with a religious and historical enmity. Stemming from this enmity, the first thing the Mullahs did when they got into power was taking practical actions to promote and export their Shi'ite ideology. They nominated themselves saviors of Muslims and protectors of the virtues of Islamic societies. They labelled the ruling regimes in the neighboring countries tyrant, corrupt and apostate. They encouraged the people in these countries to emancipate their principles and to revolt against these regimes. Iraq felt the threat of the Mullahs once they started to support the Shi'ite groups in Iraq and to encourage them to revolt against the ruling regime. Iraq, led by the late Saddam Hussein, took prompt actions in confronting the Iranian influence in the area. He waged a war against Iran which continued for 8 years and took the lives of almost three millions from both sides.

When Iraq won the war, the Iranian Mullahs realized how difficult it was for them either to penetrate Arab countries or to export the Shi'ite ideology. The war put a siege on their project, weakened them, paralyzed their political and religious agenda and stopped their expansion. It was reported that when Al-Khomeini signed the end of the war, he described it as he was swallowing a poison. After they lost their war against Iraq, the Mullahs of Iran realized a necessity to adopt new strategies to export their revolution to the neighboring countries. They were convinced that in order to succeed to establish their Persian Empire, they had to avoid any direct confrontation with Arabs. In effect, they resorted to a cold war in their confrontation with Arabs. In the light of this strategy, Iranian politicians made a silent but concerted effort to support the Shi'ite minorities in some Arab countries. Supporting the Shi'ite minorities was used as a tactical weapon to cause a rift and turmoil in Arab Countries. Causing turmoil and havoc in Arabic Countries was viewed by Iranian politicians as an important strategy to weaken Arabs and to accelerate their project of establishing a Persian Empire. This effort

resulted in the emergence of some Shi'ite groups like Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Shi'ite group in Bahrain and later Al-Houthi movement in Yemen.

The Iranian financial and military support for Hezbollah transformed it into a state within a state. It enabled Hezbollah to elaborate a network of social services for the Shi'ites of Lebanon and to build a military structure which is stronger than the government's armed forces. The same thing has happened with the Shi'ites in Bahrain, who are wreaking havoc in their country in an attempt to establish a Shi'ite state alongside the Sunni Bahraini kingdom. Thus, Hezbollah and the other Shi'ite groups became more or less spawns for Iran and one of the tools of its Persian colonisation. A senior Iranian official recently described Hezbollah as "one of the pillars of Iran's security strategy". These Shi'ite groups violated their loyalty to their homelands, and replaced it with loyalty to Iran whom they share with the same ideology. This helped Iran to gain more political influence to interfere in Arab internal affairs and to discuss any issue regarding the security of the Gulf.

However, Iran's religious-political influence throughout the Arab world became stronger soon after the invasion of Iraq by Americans. In fact, when Baghdad fell for the American forces, it was not the American forces that triumphed but the Khomeini's Islamic revolution. The American support for the new status of Shi'ites in Iraq paved the way for Iran to position herself as a regional military superpower. After the fall of Baghdad, Iran started to act as a powerful country which decides the future of Iraq. The revolutionary rhetoric flared up again as Iran became again ambitious to control the region by spreading its ideology. It interferes with the internal affairs of Iraq and Arabs by supporting the status of Shi'ites there, it even started to pose threats to its neighboring countries like Bahrain and Emirates. This new position of Iran is compounded by its determination to develop nuclear technology. The insistence of Iran to develop nuclear technology despite

international opposition helps her to win more supporters and admirers among the common Arabs who have started to look at her as a symbol of resistance against the West.

In order to further impress these supporters, the Iranian politicians adopt a strong political rhetoric which seems to be supportive to many Islamic issues and in correspondence with the positions of Muslim public. For instance, they use a strong rhetoric speech that seems to support the Palestinian issue. All the Iranian politicians including Khomeini used a rhetoric speech which is full of bellicose statements and combative words that challenge Israel and defy its hegemony. They declare Israel as a terrorist state and call for Israel's destruction and wiping it from the map. Ahmad Nejad has been always using these statements since his rise into power in 2005 without showing any respite.

These statements, however, are never realistic and will never be followed by real actions against Israel. Contrary to that, both Iran and Israel avoid any direct confrontation with each other. In practice, the two states have a great deal in common more than what any one of them will admit. Their strategic interests coincide in the area and both consider Arabs as an enemy. An Iranian revolutionary close to Khomeini, stated that the Iranians never wanted to get directly involved in the fights against Israel. A former Iranian deputy foreign minister also stated that decision-makers were very clever not to substitute or replace Israel as a direct threat to Iran because Arabs are.

In spite of the nature of these provocative remarks, the Israelis treated Iran as a potential regional ally. For instance, while Khomeini called for the destruction of Israel, the Israelis were lobbying Washington to sell weapons to Iran during its war with Iraq. In 1982, Ariel Sharon proudly announced on NBC that Israel would continue to sell arms to Iran - despite of the American ban on such sales. When Iran routinely introduced resolutions to expel Israel from the United Nations in 1985 - the Israelis responded by selling more arms to the Khomeini regime.

COMMON SENSE

Boring summits that need a big bang!

“We live in the great land of the Arab Nation” quipped



By: Hassan Al-Haifi

Furdous to her father as he sat slurping his afternoon tea. He always had the bad habit of drinking the tea that spilt into the saucer of the cup. His logic for that was that it gave the remaining tea in the cup a chance to cool down to an agreeable temperature. This, Furdous simply could not stand, even if it was being done by her father: “Dad, if I told you a thousand times this must stop - once and for all!”

Her father also knew how to quip and beat around the bush: “What? Stop the Arab Summits! That would be unforgivable my Dear little flower! Where else would Yemen have a chance to throw around its barrage of initiatives for peace, unity, war, solidarity and the liberation of the imprisoned chimpanzees of the Sana'a Zoo from the dreadfully boring video speeches of Ayman Zawahiri and the infamous Osama Bin Laden!”

Furdous again felt her father was getting out of hand with good manners to speaking of the icons of Al-Qaeda like that: “You can't really be serious about mocking the Great Sheikhs of the Underground Salafi Genre like that. You know the whole world stops still in anticipation of the worst to come when any of these two has a word or two to state.”

“Furdous, you know these two have not done anything that has advanced the cause of Islam or the Moslems of the world one bit. Personally, I think they are just puppets on strings being pulled by the Alliance of the Lowly of the Earth, who think that they can pull the legs of even the most educated people off the world, while these clowns speak with make up for the camera that would make Yves St. Laurent have a heart attack if he ever got a look at them on close up. Avon would have a profitable year if it could round up a good deal if only they could meet up with the studio that tapes these third class videos of the Dynamic Duo Bombardiers. Come on, Furdous, God forbid that any of my kids should ever find reason to admire these two clowns.” The father was not beating around the bush about the kind of religious missionaries his kids should revere.

Furdous' elder brother, Zechariah walked in at the right time, as his sister heard the most surprising words that she never thought her father would say, considering how devout he was to the faith of Islam and how he always asked his kids to follow in the footsteps of those scholars that are in the limelight of the Islamic media: “Dad, you are hitting my sister at her weak nerve. She just enrolled to one of these Salafi Institutes, even after I have warned her that you would not be too happy about that”.

“I say that this matter should be one of the highlighted topics of any summit held South and East of the Mediterranean Sea”, The mother said this as she was bringing some cakes and cookies, desperately trying to lure her husband and kids away from the popular Qat Session conducted by their socialite neighbor, Member of Parliament and Paramount Chief of the Hoochi Koochi Tribal Confederation, as her husband likes to call him in jest. The latter barely made it through Intermediate School and his neighbors simply find his extravagance quite undeserved by any merits.

The brother had a comment about the summits: “I think that they should hold the Summit Meetings in the Comoros Islands. If all the people on the island are as articulate as the Sultan of the Islands is, we would have gone two-thirds of the way towards defeating Israel in the international media. Why he makes Osama and his Deputy seem like talking Barbie Dolls with a lot more resonance and power in the rhetoric. If you ask me, who are the most articulate speakers in the Arab World? I can tell you it is the Sultan of Comoros Island, Hassan Nasr-Allah of Hizb-Allah Dr. Bashar Al-Asad and the Yemeni Delegate to the Arab World, Mr. Abdul Malik Mansour, the Former Minister of Culture of Yemen. If you go back a little bit, while closing your eyes sometimes to the grammar, you might also add the First Vice President of the Republic of Yemen, Ali Salim Al-Beidh, not to mention the late Member of Parliament, Mr. Yousef Al-Shihary”. I think that if a summit was held with just these people in attendance, they would come out with all the solutions that would enable the Arab Nation to confront all the perplexing issues faced by the people of this Holiest of all Holy Regions.

“I am sure that the latter would have no problems rejecting all the initiatives that do not have any real substance and would demand that anyone who suddenly walks away from any conferences will be forced to leave the place of the summit barefooted or with a shaven head and a return trip by camel” said Furdous.

The mother had the best suggestion: “Better yet, I would just put all the conference attendees on a spacecraft and send them off to Pluto to start looking for the Big Black Hole, which is said to be the origin of the Big Bang, out of which the Universe evolved. They might yet succeed there, since their mouths are big holes, which mostly breathe out a lot of hot gas any way, with or without initiatives”.

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

Salute to the Yemeni woman

By: Jamal Nassar
www.JamalNassar.blogspot.com

They all agreed it was a wise choice to let her go to college and select a field of study she liked. Since she was too smart, got high grades in high school but could not take the scholarship she was granted because not a single male in the family was willing to accompany her to study abroad.

It was only fair enough to let her stay in Yemen and let her go to a college nearby where everyone can watch over her, and be sure she is safe and not bothered.

When a visitor comes to her father asking for her hand in marriage, everyone the family is happy and ecstatic that a big burden is left of their shoulders and now it is passed to someone else.

The groom to be will most probably decide her faith, her family has been generous enough to let her finish school and proceed to college. If not, they would just order her to stay home till the date of the wedding. What is a woman meant to be beside a good housewife? If she can't be that she is good for nothing. It's a real shame.

The Yemeni woman is the most peaceful prisoner on her cells, she lives between four walls for a life time.

But can't any woman be a good housewife, a good mother, and also a good working citizen?

Is that too much of a demand for an average Yemeni woman?

As a matter of fact it's us the men who should be out there protesting for women rights. Yes indeed, we will be the first to gain benefit.

I am very surprised and truly astonished by the patience she has at home and sometime in school and work place.

The amount of cultural barriers that interfere in her daily life that orders her to be at home at any given time.

Too much ambition will destroy your future too strong personality will draw good guys away from you. And being in an office in a mixed environment is not preferred and sometimes not permissible at all.

What does the Yemeni woman have to do to live a normal life?

Going to work itself is hassle for working women. Starting from the pushy crowd in public transportation, to the meaningless street salutations, to having guys pay for her every single trip.

What will it take for our women to

live a normal life and be a productive part of society?

I wonder who is to blame!

In recent times the government have employed and continuing to employee women and empowering them through different training programs and workshops. International institutions and countries are giving priority to females over males when it comes to scholarships abroad.

Still our culture is not fully accepting women as a natural productive party. The exception does exist maybe in you and me, and sometime we also act strange when we are faced with some situations and decisions that we leave the unhealthy culture to rule.

Going back in time 1400 years ago women had more rights than they did now.

They worked at home, they worked outside, and they were an effective part of a healthy society.

Is it only few deformed mentalities that are imposing these negative clouds in our culture? Is there any logic in it?

If your mother is a housewife, your wife is a working partner, and your sister is a teacher, wouldn't you increase the chance of having well educated children who are mostly to have a better future than yours?

Inspired only we have to be to act normal and take the path that should be taken.

Courageous we ought to be to face those who deem every single female in our society a shame to be covered and hidden so deeply in the dark.

Alert we got to be to face those shameless individuals who do not believe in freedom, peace, and prosperity for all those who seek it whether males or females.

Educated we should be to enlighten those who live in the shadows of life.

Let's embrace reality by all means and be aware of the competitiveness this world is facing from Sidney to Alaska, from Morocco to Tajikistan.

It is time we start putting our six thinking hats on and find ways to be more productive and educated more than anytime else in history. For this to happen she has to be respected for her choice, her freedom, her capabilities and abilities.

A society can never flourish if women are not free and empowered.

The Yemeni woman is a prisoner without cuffs, a prisoner without jail, a fighter without a fight.

I salute the struggling courageous Yemeni mother, wife, daughter, and sister for whatever she chooses and aspires to be.

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\$5 million to find Lebanon's disappeared

Israel is still withholding information about the destiny of hundreds of people that disappeared during the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990). On March 16, the Beirut-based Horiah Foundation launched a \$5 million campaign to find out more about what has happened to the remains of the dead or missing. MENASSAT spoke with Horiah Foundation co-founder, Bassam Kontar, about the campaign.

By RANDA ABU SHAKRA

There are several lingering wounds that have been left unhealed since the end of the 1975-1990 Civil War in Lebanon. Among the more significant national issues is the issue of the missing resistance fighters that were either captured or killed in Israel.

A recent report in Al-Sharq Al-Awsat suggested that Israel has been burying the remains of dead fighters in secret cemeteries - "Cemeteries of Numbers."

Sources allege these cemeteries have numbers on metal plates instead of grave markers, indicating corresponding documentation for cataloging the people buried there - information presumably kept by Israel's security branch.

According to the December Al-Sharq Al-Awsat report, four cemeteries have been identified - near the Bridge of Banat Yaacoub, a military territory on the Lebanese-Syrian-Israeli borders; another in the closed military area between Jericho and Damiah bridge in Jordan Valley, as well as one in Revidim, also in the Jordan Valley, and Shahita in Wadi al-Hamam, in the northern city of Tabaraya.

On March 16, Lebanese organization the Horiah Foundation launched a campaign to help find the remains of these former fighters and turn "numbers into humans with an identity in order to bring them back home" - a daunting task without proper forensic and background information.

Which is what led to the Horiah Foundation's \$5 Million Campaign - www.5million.org - a program that offers a reward incentive to people who provide information that would lead to the retrieval of the dead and missing.

The Foundation's campaign is directed mainly at personnel working in the Israeli security forces, but the org also hopes the website will attract a response from people living close to the "secret cemeteries" or from former Israeli officials.

Horiah also works on documenting data collected from the families of the missing, in addition to collecting financial aid to pay the reward and establish a DNA testing laboratory.

To find out more about the \$5 Million Campaign, MENASSAT met with Bassam Kontar, one of the founders of Horiah and brother of former Israeli prisoner Samir Kontar - who was released in a prisoner exchange between Israel and Hezbollah in July 2008.

MENASSAT: What is the idea behind this project?

BASSAM KONTAR: "The idea (behind Horiah) is simply that our men are no less important than any country's citizens, including Israeli citizens."

"But our main goal is turning the missing from numbers to people and from statistics to human beings; this is why we are trying to creating a complete file about all the missing."

"We face the problem of inconsistent data from the victims families. Some have very little information, while others have extensive files on their loved ones."

MENASSAT: You set up a website to facilitate info exchange and to inform the public of your issues - but what is your target-audience? And what about confidentiality?

BASSAM KONTAR: "The website is really a means to reach the Israeli audience. People who, for example, have worked in the prisons or with the Israeli police or army."

"We also have a media plan to reach the greatest possible number of Israelis, through all means available: direct fax, e-mail, direct calls, SMS, and others."

"All we need now is to collect the data on the missing and then send the letters to the Israelis."

"But we reserve the right NOT to disclose our working strategy for collecting this information - for security reasons given it's sensitive for the people working to compile the data or for people giving up information, from inside and outside the Occupied Territories."

"In case someone responds to us, your question is how can we make sure of the veracity of his statements and then give him a financial reward?"

MENASSAT: Yes, how do you know what you're being told is correct?

BASSAM KONTAR: "All this is confidential and can't be disclosed, how can I tell it to the Israelis? If I do, they will use it against me. These are security matters, and won't succeed if we uncover them."

"The Foundation swore confidentiality, and we don't want to lose our credibility."

"What if someone cooperating with us doesn't give us all the information, but just gives clues, for fear of not getting the money?"

"Then, we study the clues to make sure they are valid, and then we can answer him and ask for more information."



Bassam Kontar

MENASSAT: You think you will succeed in getting correct information from inside Israel?

BASSAM KONTAR: "We can't be sure, but we can have hope. Everything is possible, and regardless, testing this process of information exchange about the missing was a must."

"If this mechanism existed before, it would have solved many problems."

"As for an Israeli audience, in theory, it's easy for them to give up basic information on the issue of the missing. But most of it requires confidentiality and will need special security measures so that higher-ranking military personnel would feel comfortable disclosing information."

"Even so, what's important here is to break the taboos in exchanging information about the missing because it is first and foremost a humanitarian matter."

"Take the case of the young Dalal Mughrabi (Editors note: Mughrabi was a 19-year Lebanese fighter killed in the 'Kamal Adwan Operation' on March 16, 1978. He and 11 other Palestinians and Lebanese took part in the raid.)"

"There's this famous picture of current Defense-minister Ehud Barak, a special forces commando in 1978, dragging the body of Mughrabi in the street."

"Although the world saw this picture, until today, Israel hasn't said if another man in his unit, Yehya Skaff, was dead or still detained in an Israeli prison."

"If any Israeli sends us tangible information about Skaff with real proof about his death, that person would earn the reward money - the actual amount of which has not been determined within the \$5 million."

MENASSAT: Isn't contacting Israelis considered a crime in Lebanese law?

BASSAM KONTAR: "We are an organization and we got our permit. We will abide by the Lebanese law, but the permit has nothing to do with collecting information."

"These matters are controlled by the law, and are not in the jurisdiction of the Interior Ministry which issued the oper-

ating permit for our organization. The law states that any organization established should not be an underground movement, and that's all."

"Interior minister Ziad Baroud knew how to apply the law, because he fought for this issue. Today, the law protects the freedom to establish organizations."

MENASSAT: What are the obstacles you face?

BASSAM KONTAR: "We would face many obstacles if the project remains restricted to Lebanon, mainly because Lebanon is in a state of war with Israel, and thus there is no legal way of communicating."

"This is why the organization is trying to get a permit from a European country. There are also the financial costs."

MENASSAT: How do you protect your website from being hacked, and how do you guarantee the privacy of the sources?

BASSAM KONTAR: "Many of the websites concerned with the detainees were previously hacked, which pushed us to pay thousands of dollars per week to get SSL service in order to prevent hacking."

"The company hosting \$5 Million Campaign said they have no problem in dealing with us as long as we don't break the law. They also assured us that they wouldn't bend to political pressures to shut us down."

MENASSAT: The amount of five million dollars is for every piece of information or the whole operation?

BASSAM KONTAR: "This amount will be distributed to all the sources that send us information. The \$5 million equals the total amount of money in the bank."

"We have dozens of files already."

"Even when the Israelis launched their website to obtain information about the remains of Israeli pilot Ron Arad (whose plane crashed in southern Lebanon in 1986; classified as missing in action) they offered a reward of \$10 million to be broken down in seven parts."

"If the Horiah Foundation gets information that would lead to gathering data on the fate of dozens of the missing, and after getting this information, concrete knowledge of the whereabouts of these missing fighters is discovered - we don't mind paying the whole amount then."

MENASSAT: How is your campaign similar to that of Ron Arad?

BASSAM KONTAR: "Our campaign learned a lot from the Israeli campaign to get definitive info on Ron Arad, and our idea isn't new."

"We noticed that that campaign was successful for the Israelis and we decided to use the concept."

"We don't know if anyone cooperated with the Israelis, but they were at least

able to raise a lot of controversy in the media and kept the issue of the missing Israeli in the Arab media for free."

"The Israelis say they received dozens of testimonies about Arad, some of which were important and were thoroughly studied. They also said they kept their sources anonymous. But if the information had been correct, the fate of Ron Arad would have been uncovered."

"Israel still doesn't know where he is."

MENASSAT: How will you collect the amount of \$5 million dollars?

BASSAM KONTAR: "We opened the direct contribution door through our website and other means."

"We have received many responses, for the prize and for the advertising campaign for the website."

"This doesn't mean that we should have waited to collect all the amount to launch the project. On the contrary, we started with our project, we set the prize and started collect the contributions."

"The final budget is not yet specified, but it consists of thousands of dollars. The permanent e-ads, for example, on google or hotmail or other websites cost \$10,000 at least per day."

"This is added to the cost of direct ads, the legal issues, the consultations

ment in the matter has been to established a ministerial committee to fill the applications of the families of the missing."

"Now. If we are able to collect the money, one of the first projects would be to start with the DNA bank the Lebanese government should have established a long time ago."

"The DNA tests cost a lot, and the Detainees committee, including the Committees of the Prisoners in Syria and the missing in the Lebanese civil war and all the families of the missing are demanding such a bank."

"Each DNA test costs about \$30,000, and all the data will be collected to compare it with any forensic data we find."

MENASSAT: Which associations are supporting you?

BASSAM KONTAR: "We don't get help from any associations, but many individuals have called Horiah to volunteer their services."

"Some rights groups have offered logistical support, such as the Detainees Committee, the National Committee for the Detainees, the Lebanese Committee for Prisoners and Detainees, and the Palestinian committees."



\$5 MILLION

Reward: Dalal Mughrabi, Yehya Skaff, Mohammed Faran, Mohsen Mousawi, Maher Kassir, Ali Morad, and others

A screenshot of the \$5 Million Campaign's website. © Horiah Foundation

and the remuneration of the lawyers. It is a complete project in which we directly and primarily depend on voluntary contributions, and the ideas of our youth volunteers."

MENASSAT: Who has offered to help Horiah Foundation in searching for the missing?

BASSAM KONTAR: "The international Red Cross offered help, but it's been of no use."

"The officials at the Red Cross have traditionally facilitated the search and return of the missing. Further, the Red Cross has the adequate material and equipment to do the forensic work."

"But this effort is special - It needs a DNA laboratory, and a specific method to collect forensic data and document it."

"The Lebanese government's involve-

MENASSAT: What is the reason behind the diplomatic representation in the press conference you had to launch the campaign on March 16?

BASSAM KONTAR: "The Yemeni diplomat attended because the corpses of some Yemeni martyrs are still lying in the Occupied Palestinian territories."

"And the Iranian ambassador was present because of the disappearance of four Iranian diplomats (abducted in Beirut in 1982)."

"We hope their countries would support our initiative, but we are not planning to work with embassies or report to any of them."

"We are transparent in this matter. This is a very sensitive and delicate matter, and we will make a declaration of all the financial contributions we get. We are far from being a commercial project."

American-Somali children leave U.S. for jihad in Somalia

The Media Line speaks with the parents of Somalis living in the United States who believe their teenage children have returned to Somalia in order to fight with the Islamist rebels against the Western-backed government.

By: Abdinasir Mohamed Guled
The Media Line News Agency

Dozens of Somali children have left the United States in secret to join the Islamist fight against the foreign forces in Somalia.

The largest group comes from Somali families in Minneapolis and Minnesota.

Halima Abdi, a mother of five from Minneapolis describes how one of her children went missing in the U.S. and then called her from Mogadishu.

Abdi says she was surprised when her son didn't come home after she sent him to school on November 2.

"I had returned from work and asked my other children where my son Mohamed Yasin was; but they said they hadn't seen him all day," Abdi says.

She reported the 14-year-old boy to the police as missing, but they could not find him.

After 10 days she gave up looking for him. One day, she says, a young boy

called their phone from Somalia, saying, "Mum, it's your son Mohamed; I came to Mogadishu to fight against the enemies of Somalia."

He hung up the phone without saying another word.

She says she was upset that her child went to the anarchic country and took up a gun to fight.

"The only thing I am expecting now is for him to die," she says tearfully.

Abdi blames the U.S. federal police for her young boy's disappearance - according to her, it is because of lack of good safeguards at airports.

"How can a very young boy be allowed to fly on a plane? The police are irresponsible," she says.

Asked about who encouraged her son to take off to Somalia, she says she knows but can't publicly accuse anyone, adding she has heard that several other young children have left for Somalia in a similar way.

Abdirizq, another Somali living in Minneapolis, says his 17-year-old nephew and two other young boys went to Somalia one day, and that others

have gone in the past.

"We don't know how those children will return home," he tells The Media Line (TML).

Some Somalis believe their disappeared children have died in Somalia, and that others have been wounded.

The strongest indication that American children have died in Somalia is the belief that they were used to carry out a string of coordinated suicide attacks in Somaliland and Puntland, in the north of the country.

The arrival of these children coincided with the invasion of the country by thousands of Ethiopian troops, who defeated a group called the Islamic Courts Union, which ruled the country for six months.

Abdinur Hussein, a Somali national who lives in Minnesota, the state with the largest Somali community in the U.S., believes that more than 500 youths might have gone to Somalia to fight alongside Islamist rebels.

However, some Somali parents in the U.S. consider reports of children leaving for Somalia to fight a jihad are exaggerated.

Fos 'Ali is a mother of eight, who says she does not believe these reports are accurate, as she hears them only from some American Somalis.

When children disappear, the parents

call the mosques in American cities asking where their children have gone, but they are mostly told, "We don't know," say Fos.

One of the Somali mosque leaders, Imam Hassan Mohamud, says the reports of missing children have placed a cloud over holding important religious feasts, and he had to postpone a large feast because he was busy answering calls and talking to other imams about the issue.

The mosques' leaders regularly receive calls accusing them of pushing the disappeared children into joining Islamist fighters in Somalia. Most of the accusations have been directed at the Abubakar Alsiddiq mosque in Minneapolis.

Speaking at a news conference at the mosque, imam Sheikh Abdurahman Ahmed told thousands of Somalis and their American neighbors that the accusations were baseless and it was shameful to accuse the imams of recruiting children to fight in Somalia.

"We teach people religion in our mosque, but it has nothing to do with what these people are framing us for doing," Ahmed said.

A Somali community member in the U.S., who declined to give his name, told TML that serious efforts were being made by the authorities to track

down children attempting to fly from U.S. airports to Somalia.

Many children have been prevented from boarding planes, as community members and U.S. intelligence officials fear they are joining jihadist groups in Somalia.

"There is a lot of attention from the FBI to stop the children from leaving for Jihad," he says, referring to extensive investigations and interrogations undertaken by the FBI and CIA in recent months since the issue of the disappearing children emerged.

While it is not known who pays the children's travel costs, some U.S. Somalis believe the Islamists in Somalia have recruitment representatives in the U.S. since the children could not join the jihad in Somalia without outside investment and support.

Somali males who have vanished in the U.S. have differing education levels and job prospects, says Dr. Abdullahi Abdi, a U.S.-based Somali educator.

Some are reportedly linked to Somali gangs, while others have been described as intelligent and studious. Some attended college and appeared to have good job prospects.

Some children have thought about joining gangs in the U.S. or leaving for Somalia to fight alongside the Islamists because they are susceptible to "brain-

washing," according to Abdi.

There are also concerns in Europe and other continents that children are leaving for jihad in Somalia.

Nearly all the Somali communities believe that the vanishing children join the A'shabab group in Somalia as some video recordings and interviews have been seen with foreigners, including Americans, in its ranks in training camps in Somalia.

A'shabab has previously confirmed it has foreigners in its number.

"We have foreign (brothers) fighting in our jihad and we will show them," said Sheikh Moqtar Robow Abumansur, the spokesman for A'shabab, which is on the U.S.'s designated list of terrorist groups.

The group opposed the presence in Somalia of Ethiopian troops. The Ethiopians left the country last month as part of the terms of a peace deal brokered between an Islamist opposition group and the Somali transitional government.

At the same time as Somalis in the United States are mystified by the synchronized disappearances of some of their children, some analysts in the region believe that the recruitment of children for jihad will only increase following the departure of the Ethiopian troops.

National Bank Of Yemen



البنك الأهلي اليمني

AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2008

The Central Bank of Yemen has approved to publish the Financial Statements of National Bank of Yemen ending at 31 December 2008 as per their letter No. (18089) dated 23/3/2009

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
For The Year Ended 31 December 2008

9 LOANS AND ADVANCES TO CUSTOMERS, NET OF PROVISION

	31 December 2008 YR'000	31 December 2007 YR'000
Loans and advances to customers in the private sector:		
Overdraft facilities	5,654,601	6,568,294
Short term loans	5,112,777	4,241,227
Total loans and advances to customers in the private sector	10,767,378	10,809,521
Provision for losses on non performing loans and advances (note 9-a)	(2,189,068)	(1,804,949)
Suspended interest (note 9-b)	(169,008)	(89,988)
Total provision for losses on non performing loans and advances and suspended interest	(2,358,076)	(1,894,937)
Net loans and advances to customers	8,409,302	8,914,584

Gross non-performing loans and advances as at 31 December 2008 amounted to YR 2,789,807 thousand (31 December 2007: YR 2,715,490 thousand). The breakup of the above amount is as follows:

	31 December 2008 YR'000	31 December 2007 YR'000
Substandard debts	469,331	694,150
Doubtful debts	336,241	602,038
Bad debts	1,984,235	1,419,302
Total gross non performing loans and advances	2,789,807	2,715,490

9-a Provision for Losses on Non-Performing Loans and Advances

In accordance with article no. 85 of the Banks Law No. 38 of 1998, which came into effect on 27 December 1998, and Article 9 - (j) of the Income Tax Law No. 31 of 1991 as amended by Republican Decree Law No. 12 of 1999, any provision for losses on loans and advances made by a bank in compliance with the regulations of the Central Bank of Yemen in this respect, are not subject to the provisions of any income tax law and are allowable as a deduction in arriving at the taxable income.

Details of movements in the provision for possible losses on loans and advances during year were as follows:

	31 December 2008			31 December 2007		
	Specific YR'000	General YR'000	Total YR'000	Specific YR'000	General YR'000	Total YR'000
Balance at 1 January	1,673,333	131,616	1,804,949	1,573,179	63,857	1,637,036
Revaluation of opening balances in foreign currencies	1,922	159	2,081	3,590	250	3,840
Amount utilized during the year	(2,152)	-	(2,152)	(7,406)	-	(7,406)
Adjusted opening balances	1,673,103	131,775	1,804,878	1,569,363	64,107	1,633,470
Amounts recovered of loans previously written off (note 23)	(409,893)	(61,866)	(471,759)	(731,251)	(12,005)	(743,256)
Provision for the year (note 25)	838,443	17,506	855,949	835,221	79,514	914,735
Charged to the income statement	428,550	(44,360)	384,190	103,970	67,509	171,479
Balance at end of year	2,101,653	87,415	2,189,068	1,673,333	131,616	1,804,949

Management has decided to provide for the general provision for performing loans and contingencies including watch loans at the rate of 2% (2007: 2%).

The Bank has, during the year, written-off fully provided loans and advances amounting to YR 2,152 thousands (2007: YR 7,406 thousands) against impairment provisions where all possible actions for recoveries have been exhausted and the Bank's management believes the possibility of recoveries is remote. The Bank's management, however, continues to pursue the recovery of these loans through all possible means and any future recovery from these written-off loans will be recognised in the income statement.

9-b Suspended Interest

This represents interest on non-performing loans and advances in accordance with the Central Bank of Yemen regulations and which is recognised as revenue only when collected.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
For The Year Ended 31 December 2008

9 LOANS AND ADVANCES TO CUSTOMERS, NET OF PROVISION (CONTINUED)

9-b Suspended Interest

	31 December 2008 YR'000	31 December 2007 YR'000
Balance at 1 January	89,988	53,381
Exchange differences for the year	373	(277)
Amounts written-off during the year	(917)	-
Recovered during the year	(5,900)	-
Suspended during the year	65,464	36,884
Balance at end of year	169,008	89,988

10 AVAILABLE FOR SALE INVESTMENTS, NET

These comprise investments, available for sale, in the following banks and financial institution:

	Ownership Percentage %	No. of shares of US\$ 50 each	31 December	
			2008 YR'000	2007 YR'000
Unquoted investments in shares of UBAF Group:				
UBAF - Curacao - A Shares of US \$1 each	0.788	29,944	17,982	17,982
UBAF - Curacao - B Shares of US \$1 each	0.782	4,693	2,818	2,818
UBAF - Curacao - C Shares of US \$1 each	1.221	10,565	6,344	6,344
Total investment in shares in UBAF Group		45,202	27,144	27,144
Other unquoted investments:				
ALUBAF Arab International Bank (BSC) - Bahrain (note 10-a)	0.344		61,073	2,067
Arab Financial Services Company - Bahrain (note 10-b)	0.167		21,388	21,487
Yemen Financial Services Company - Yemen (note 10-c)	10.000		62,165	61,917
Yemen Mobile Company for Telecommunication - Yemen (note 10-d)	0.139		61,200	61,200
Total other unquoted investments			205,826	146,671
Total available for sale investments			232,970	173,815
Provision for impairment (note 10-e)			(27,144)	(29,211)
Net book value of investments available for sale			205,826	144,604

10-a ALUBAF Arab International Bank (BSC) - Bahrain

During the year the ALUBAF Arab International Bank (BSC) - Bahrain has increased their share capital from USD 50,000 thousand to USD 100,000 and hence the Bank has increased its investment from USD 172 thousands to USD 344 thousands. The number of shares have increased to 6,880 (31 December 2007: 3,440). The fair value of the full investment in ALUBAF Arab International Bank (BSC) - Bahrain is based on the book value of shares as per the company's latest audited financial statement (i.e. for the year ended 31 December 2007) which amounted to US\$ 44.36 per share.

10-b Arab Financial Services Company - Bahrain

The fair value of the investment in Arab Financial Services Company - Bahrain is based on the book value of shares as per the company's latest audited financial statement (i.e. for the year ended 31 December 2007) which amounted to US\$ 10.69 per share (2007: US\$ 10.77 per share).

10-c Yemen Financial Services Company - Yemen

The Bank has contributed a sum of USD 310 thousands to the capital of Yemen Financial Services Company (Closed Yemeni Shareholding Company), which had been established in joint venture with a number of other local banks. The share capital of YFSC is USD 3 million.

10-d Yemen Mobile Company for Telecommunication - Yemen

The Bank has purchased 120,000 shares of YR 500 each for a sum of YR 60 million of Yemen Mobile Company for Telecommunication (Yemeni Shareholding Company). The total share capital of this Company is YR 43,262 million. The Bank paid YR 1,200,000 as acquisition costs which have been added to cost in accordance with IAS 39: Financial Instrument - Recognition and Measurement.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
For The Year Ended 31 December 2008

10 AVAILABLE FOR SALE INVESTMENTS, NET (CONTINUED)

10-e Provision for Impairment

Since no dividends were received from the investments in UBAF - Curacao during the last few years and no dividends are expected to be received in the coming years, a full impairment provision was taken for the balances of those investments because their net present value is nil.

11 DEBIT BALANCES AND OTHER ASSETS

	31 December 2008 YR'000	31 December 2007 YR'000
Prepaid expenses and other debit balances	10,940	4,149
Interest receivable	249,222	357,929
Capital costs of new branches under construction	199,093	256,855
Real estate properties acquired from customers, net of provision	162,674	123,604
AI Amal Bank for Microfinance - Yemen	10,000	10,000
AI Tadhamon Microfinance - Yemen	1,000	1,000
Customer acceptances	1,057,029	867,485
Sundry debit balances, net of provision	49,953	40,380
Total debit balances and other assets	1,739,911	1,681,402

The balance of real estate properties acquired from customers is net of a provision of YR 480 thousand (2007: YR 480 thousand). The valuation of these properties is in accordance with the instructions of the Central Bank of Yemen.

The shareholdings in AI Amal Bank for Microfinance - Yemen and AI Tadhamon Microfinance - Yemen have been included in the 'debit balance and other assets' rather than 'available for sale investments' as management is of the opinion that these amounts would be fully refundable in the future.

In accordance with IAS 39 (revised), acceptances are disclosed on the balance sheet under 'debit balances and other assets' and the corresponding liability is disclosed under 'credit balances and other liabilities'.

12 PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT, NET OF ACCUMULATED DEPRECIATION

	Freehold land and buildings YR'000	Leasehold improvements YR'000	Furniture & equipment YR'000	Motor vehicles YR'000	Swift & computers YR'000	Total YR'000
Cost or valuation:						
At 31 December 2007	1,687,358	64,962	291,257	110,054	173,661	2,327,292
Additions during the year	228,144	11,167	50,403	11,462	47,511	348,687
Disposal during the year	(8,421)	-	(507)	-	-	(8,928)
At 31 December 2008	1,907,081	76,129	341,153	121,516	221,172	2,667,051
Accumulated depreciation:						
At 31 December 2007	65,117	27,277	136,774	55,020	125,230	409,418
Charge for the year	12,839	6,755	26,082	17,592	18,188	81,456
On disposal for the year	(454)	-	(6)	-	-	(460)
At 31 December 2008	77,502	34,032	162,850	72,612	143,418	490,414
Book value:						
At 31 December 2008	1,829,579	42,097	178,303	48,904	77,754	2,176,637
At 31 December 2007	1,622,241	37,685	154,483	55,034	48,431	1,917,874

Property, plant and equipment depreciation is calculated on the basis of the rates set out in the Council of Ministers' Resolution no. 144 of 1999 in that regard. Freehold land, land leased from the Government and buildings on freehold and leasehold were revalued at their open market value for existing use on 1 December 1999, effective from 31 December 1999, by an independent professional real estate firm. In accordance with IAS 16, the cost and related accumulated depreciation as at 31 December 1999 were eliminated and the revalued amount has been considered to be the new gross book carrying amount.

NATIONAL BANK OF YEMEN

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
For The Year Ended 31 December 2008

13 DUE TO BANKS

	31 December 2008 YR'000	31 December 2007 YR'000
Current and demand accounts:		
Local banks	1,501,408	10,026
Foreign banks	575,219	562,832
Total due to banks	2,076,627	572,858

14 CUSTOMERS' DEPOSITS

	31 December 2008 YR'000	31 December 2007 YR'000
Current accounts	16,951,276	18,492,575
Savings accounts	26,456,386	25,198,933
Term deposits	37,961,229	28,156,993
Other deposit margins	419,636	582,159
Cash deposits for documentary letters of credit, guarantees and others	6,083,114	8,530,544
Total customers' deposits	87,871,641	80,961,204

15 CREDIT BALANCES AND OTHER LIABILITIES

	31 December 2008 YR'000	31 December 2007 YR'000
Accrued interest payable	876,076	704,133
Unclaimed balances (note 15-a)	193,442	197,038
Provision for employees' leave pay	59,541	43,213
Provision for off-balance sheet items (note 15-b)	114,485	281,403
Employees' share in profit	90,613	117,287
Other provision	28,000	-
Provision for contingent liabilities (note 34)	58,201	58,107
Customer acceptances	1,057,029	867,485
Sundry credit balances	258,609	319,232
Total credit balances and other liabilities	2,735,996	2,587,898

15-a Unclaimed Balances

This amount represents balances that are over 15 years old and have not been claimed by the beneficiaries. The increase in the amount is due to the revaluation of the balances in foreign currencies at the year end rate. Management regularly reviews the likelihood of these amounts being claimed and based on the outcome of such review, it considers the amount that should be transferred to the Ministry of Finance in accordance with the relevant article in the Banks Law No. 38 of 1998.

15-b Provision for Off-Balance Sheet Items

	31 December 2008 YR'000	31 December 2007 YR'000
Balance at 1 January	281,403	150,270
Revaluation of opening balance in foreign currencies	460	1,024
Provision charged during the year (note 25)	82,903	169,240
Provision written back during the year (note 23)	(250,281)	(39,131)
Balance at end of the year	114,485	281,403

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
For The Year Ended 31 December 2008

16 INCOME TAX PAYABLE

	31 December 2008 YR'000	31 December 2007 YR'000
Amounts due to the Tax Authority		
Balance at 1 January	1,260,109	917,415
Charged for the year in the income statement (note 16-a)	824,041	1,260,109
Total amounts due to the Tax Authority	2,084,150	2,177,524
Amount paid during the year	(1,260,109)	(917,415)
Total income tax payable	824,041	1,260,109

16-a Charge for the Year

The tax provision for the year has been calculated on the basis of 35% of the profit for the year.

16-b Prior Year Tax Assessments

The Bank received on 7 May 2008 the final tax clearance for the income tax liability for the financial year ended 31 December 2007.

17 EQUITY

17-a Authorized Capital

The authorized share capital amounting YR 10,000 million (2007: YR 10,000 million) consists of 10,000 thousand shares of YR 1,000 par value each (2007: of 10,000 thousand shares of YR 1,000 par value each).

17-b Declared and Paid Up Capital

The declared and paid up share capital amounting YR 8,500 million (2007: YR 7,500 million) consists of 8,500 thousand shares of YR 1,000 par value each (2007: 7,500 thousand shares of YR 1,000 par value each).

17-c Profit Distribution

In accordance with the provisions of the Public Corporations, Establishments and Companies Law No. 35 of 1991, the annual profit of the Bank shall be allocated as follows:

- 15% to statutory reserve;
- 15% to general reserve;
- 65% to the Government for its share of profit;
- 2% to employees' incentives; and
- 3% to employees' social fund.

17-d Surplus On Revaluation Of Property Reserve

The difference between the revalued amounts of the freehold land and the buildings and their book value as at 31 December 1999 had been credited to this account and included in equity.

17-e Cumulative Changes in Fair Value Reserve

In accordance with the provisions of IAS 39: Financial Instruments - Recognition and Measurement, the differences between the fair values and the book values of the "available for sale" investments are recognized in the cumulative changes in fair value until they are sold, collected, disposed off, or until they are determined to be impaired, at which time the cumulative gain or loss previously recognized is included in the income statement.

18 CONTRA ACCOUNTS AND OTHER COMMITMENTS, NET

Credit related commitments include commitments to extend credit, standby letters of credit and guarantees, which are designed to meet the requirements of the Bank's customers.

Commitments to extend credit represent contractual commitments to make loans and revolving credits. Commitments generally have fixed expiration dates or other termination clauses and require the payment of a fee. Since commitments may expire without being drawn upon, the total contract amounts do not necessarily represent future cash requirements.

Standby letters of credit and guarantees commit the Bank to make payments on behalf of customers' contingent upon the failure of the customer to perform under the terms of the contract.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
For The Year Ended 31 December 2008

18 CONTRA ACCOUNTS AND OTHER COMMITMENTS, NET (CONTINUED)

The commitments on behalf of customers for which there were corresponding customer liabilities, as of the balance sheet date, consisted of the following:

As at 31 December 2008	Gross commitments YR'000	Covered by margin YR'000	Net commitments YR'000
Documentary letters of credit	12,494,585	4,571,414	7,923,171
Letters of guarantee - customers	5,924,769	1,491,482	4,433,287
Letters of guarantee - correspondent banks	7,241,521	-	7,241,521
Credit cards	66,627	16,957	49,670
Cheques purchased	21,744	3,262	18,482
Total contra accounts and other commitments	25,749,246	6,083,115	19,666,131
As at 31 December 2007			
Documentary letters of credit	29,527,323	7,151,094	22,376,229
Letters of guarantee - customers	5,554,043	1,361,625	4,192,418
Letters of guarantee - correspondent banks	9,489,936		

National Bank Of Yemen



البنك الأهلي اليمني

AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2008

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
For The Year Ended 31 December 2008

21	COMMISSIONS AND FEE INCOME ON BANKING SERVICES	2008 YR '000	2007 YR '000
	Commissions on:		
	Documentary letters of credits	158,548	168,880
	Letters of guarantee	190,515	205,383
	Transfer of funds	33,852	31,466
	Acceptances	13,304	8,510
	Cheques	353,542	260,505
	Fees on:		
	Banking services	8,196	8,184
	Other services	47,157	41,639
	Total commissions and fee income on banking services	805,114	724,567
22	(LOSS) / GAIN ON FOREIGN CURRENCY TRANSACTIONS	2008 YR '000	2007 YR '000
	Revaluation differences on foreign currency transactions	(199,186)	31,281
	Gain on foreign exchange trading transactions	77,239	40,655
	Total ((loss) / gain on foreign currency transactions	(121,927)	71,936
23	OTHER OPERATING INCOME	2008 YR '000	2007 YR '000
	Provision for losses on loans no longer required (note 9-a)	471,759	743,256
	Provision for off-balance sheet items no longer required (note 15-b)	250,281	39,131
	Provision for other assets no longer required	40,000	2,111
	Provision for contingent liabilities no longer required	-	301,000
	Provision for available for sale investments no longer required (note 10 - e)	2,067	-
	Provision for outstanding reconciling item no longer required (BCCI- under liquidation)	2,395	2,637
	Sundry income	63,861	11,334
	Total other operating income	830,363	1,099,469
24	GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATION EXPENSES	2008 YR '000	2007 YR '000
	Salaries, wages and related costs	946,527	720,335
	Depreciation of property, plants and equipment (note 12)	81,456	67,832
	Rent	34,844	35,010
	Electricity and water	37,369	32,342
	Repairs and maintenance	31,523	29,512
	Telephone, telex and postage	26,615	25,333
	Transportation and allowances	34,806	31,262
	Promotions and publications	40,804	22,407
	Computer maintenance	192	11,697
	Training	17,514	24,863
	Taxes and government fees	74,735	1,649
	Donations	14,001	9,648
	Stationery and printing supplies	25,065	21,142
	Consultancy fees for programme for development and improvement of the Bank	61,420	87,758
	Other general and administration expenses	99,584	79,612
	Total general and administration expenses	1,526,855	1,200,402

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
For The Year Ended 31 December 2008

25	PROVISIONS	2008 YR '000	2007 YR '000
	Provision for losses on loans and advances (note 9 - a)	855,949	914,735
	Provision for off-balance sheet items (note 15 - b)	82,903	169,240
	Other provisions	30,619	21,445
	Total provisions	969,471	1,105,420
26	ZAKAT PAID	2008 YR '000	2007 YR '000
	Zakat paid	75,000	65,000
27	BASIC EARNINGS PER SHARE	2008 YR '000	2007 YR '000
	Profit for the year	1,530,362	2,340,203
	Weighted average number of shares	8,000,000	YR 6,500,000
	Basic earnings per share	YR 191	YR 360

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
For The Year Ended 31 December 2008

28	RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS	31 December 2008 YR '000	31 December 2007 YR '000
	Board members and parties related to them:		
	Loans and advances, gross	19,722	15,517
	Customers' deposits	12,761	19,124
	Interest income for the year	653	902
	Interest expense for the year	691	709

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
For The Year Ended 31 December 2008

29	MATURITIES OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES	As at 31 December 2008				
		Less than 3 months	From 3 to 6 months	From 6 months to 1 year	Over 1 year	Total
		YR'000	YR'000	YR'000	YR'000	YR'000
	ASSETS					
	Cash on hand and reserve balances with the Central Bank of Yemen	9,933,260	-	-	-	9,933,260
	Due from banks	23,391,895	769,090	289,120	1,162,462	25,612,567
	Treasury bills, net	45,748,869	-	531,180	-	46,280,049
	Certificates of deposit with the Central Bank of Yemen	10,350,000	-	-	-	10,350,000
	Loans and advances to customers, net of provision	2,304,100	521,750	2,497,732	3,085,720	8,409,302
	Available for sale Investments, net	-	-	-	205,826	205,826
	Total assets	91,728,124	1,290,840	3,318,032	4,454,008	100,791,004
	LIABILITIES					
	Due to banks	2,076,627	-	-	-	2,076,627
	Customers' deposits	57,951,751	12,174,394	17,618,272	127,224	87,871,641
	Total liabilities	60,028,378	12,174,394	17,618,272	127,224	89,948,268
	Net Gap	31,699,746	(10,883,554)	(4,300,240)	4,326,784	10,842,736
	As at 31 December 2007	Less than 3 months				
		YR'000	YR'000	YR'000	YR'000	YR'000
	ASSETS					
	Cash on hand and reserve balances with the Central Bank of Yemen	12,950,745	-	-	-	12,950,745
	Due from banks	23,588,848	2,673,410	398,580	79,804	26,740,642
	Treasury bills, net	29,277,279	-	4,145,848	-	33,423,127
	Certificates of deposit with the Central Bank of Yemen	9,350,000	-	-	-	9,350,000
	Loans and advances to customers, net of provision	2,289,069	1,470,377	2,045,873	3,129,265	8,914,584
	Available for sale Investments, net	-	-	-	144,604	144,604
	Total assets	77,435,941	4,143,787	6,590,301	3,353,673	91,523,702
	LIABILITIES					
	Due to banks	572,858	-	-	-	572,858
	Customers' deposits	49,606,505	9,486,539	20,399,413	1,466,747	80,961,204
	Total liabilities	50,181,363	9,486,539	20,399,413	1,466,747	81,534,062
	Net Gap	27,254,578	(5,342,752)	(13,809,112)	1,886,926	9,989,640

NATIONAL BANK OF YEMEN
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
For The Year Ended 31 December 2008

30	AVERAGE INTEREST RATES ON ASSETS AND LIABILITIES	As at 31 December 2008					
		Yemeni Riyal	US Dollar	Saudi Riyal	Sterling Pound	Euro	%
	ASSETS						
	Reserve balances with the Central Bank of Yemen	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Due from banks:						
	Current accounts	-	0.57	-	2.56	2.50	-
	Time deposits	-	0.75	2.85	3.20	2.68	-
	Treasury bills	14.96	-	-	-	-	-
	Certificates of deposit with the Central Bank of Yemen	14.86	-	-	-	-	-
	Loans and advances to customers, net of provision	17.50	8.50	-	-	-	-
	LIABILITIES						
	Customers' deposits	13.00	1.95	1.14	2.20	1.45	-
	As at 31 December 2007						
		Yemeni Riyal	US Dollar	Saudi Riyal	Sterling Pound	Euro	%
	ASSETS						
	Reserve balances with the Central Bank of Yemen	13.00	-	-	-	-	-
	Due from banks:						
	Current accounts	-	3.94	-	3.42	3.77	-
	Time deposits	-	4.86	3.41	6.10	3.85	-
	Treasury bills	15.88	-	-	-	-	-
	Certificates of deposit with the Central Bank of Yemen	15.88	-	-	-	-	-
	Loans and advances to customers, net of provision	17.00	7.50	-	-	-	-
	LIABILITIES						
	Customers' deposits	13.00	3.06	1.65	2.19	1.15	-

NATIONAL BANK OF YEMEN
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
For The Year Ended 31 December 2008

31	DISTRIBUTION OF ASSETS, LIABILITIES, CONTINGENT LIABILITIES AND COMMITMENTS BASED ON ECONOMIC SECTORS	As at 31 December 2008						
		Manufacturing YR'000	Agriculture YR'000	Trade YR'000	Services YR'000	Financing YR'000	Personal YR'000	Total YR'000
	ASSETS							
	Cash on hand and reserve balances with the Central Bank of Yemen	-	-	-	-	9,933,260	-	9,933,260
	Due from banks	-	-	-	-	25,612,567	-	25,612,567
	Treasury bills, net	-	-	-	-	46,280,049	-	46,280,049
	Certificates of deposit with the Central Bank of Yemen	-	-	-	-	10,350,000	-	10,350,000
	Loans and advances to customers, net of provision	730,332	4,450,826	22,623	35,479	3,170,042	-	8,409,302
	Available for sale Investments, net	-	-	-	205,826	-	-	205,826
	Total assets	730,332	4,450,826	22,623	92,417,181	3,170,042	-	100,791,004
	LIABILITIES							
	Due to banks	-	-	-	2,076,627	-	-	2,076,627
	Customers' deposits	755,770	145,156	9,907,497	4,098,002	635,080	72,330,136	87,871,641
	Total liabilities	755,770	145,156	9,907,497	4,098,002	2,711,707	72,330,136	89,948,268
	Contra accounts and other commitments	1,335,594	76,630	18,137,768	935,209	1,954,530	3,309,515	25,749,246
	As at 31 December 2007							
		Manufacturing YR'000	Agriculture YR'000	Trade YR'000	Services YR'000	Financing YR'000	Personal YR'000	Total YR'000
	ASSETS							
	Cash on hand and reserve balances with the Central Bank of Yemen	-	-	-	-	12,950,745	-	12,950,745
	Due from banks	-	-	-	-	26,740,642	-	26,740,642
	Treasury bills, net	-	-	-	-	33,423,127	-	33,423,127
	Certificates of deposit with the Central Bank of Yemen	-	-	-	-	9,350,000	-	9,350,000
	Loans and advances to customers, net of provision	42,725	6,556,716	105,854	49,546	2,159,743	-	8,914,584
	Available for sale Investments, net	-	-	-	144,604	-	-	144,604
	Total assets	42,725	6,556,716	105,854	82,658,664	2,159,743	-	91,523,702
	LIABILITIES							
	Due to banks	-	-	-	572,858	-	-	572,858
	Customers' deposits	1,780,145	126,630	9,337,496	2,279,290	1,268,061	66,169,582	80,961,204
	Total liabilities	1,780,145	126,630	9,337,496	2,279,290	1,840,919	66,169,582	81,534,062
	Contra accounts and other commitments	14,878,784	-	23,045,638	198,939	1,900,813	4,631,681	44,655,854

NATIONAL BANK OF YEMEN
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
For The Year Ended 31 December 2008

32	DISTRIBUTION OF ASSETS, LIABILITIES, CONTINGENT LIABILITIES AND COMMITMENTS BASED ON GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATIONS	As at 31 December 2008					
		Republic of Yemen YR'000	United States of America YR'000	Europe YR'000	Asia YR'000	Africa YR'000	Total YR'000
	ASSETS						
	Cash on hand and reserve balances with the Central Bank of Yemen	9,933,260	-	-	-	-	9,933,260
	Due from banks	4,510,644	2,601,576	10,714,485	7,780,434	5,428	25,612,567
	Treasury bills, net	46,280,049	-	-	-	-	46,280,049
	Certificates of deposit with Central Bank of Yemen	10,350,000	-	-	-	-	10,350,000
	Loans and advances to customers, net of provision	8,409,302	-	-	-	-	8,409,302
	Available for sale Investments, net	123,365	-	-	82,461	-	205,826
	Total assets	79,606,620	2,601,576	10,714,485	7,862,895	5,428	100,791,004
	LIABILITIES						
	Due to banks	1,501,408	-	-	575,219	-	2,076,627
	Customers' deposits	87,871,641	-	-	-	-	87,871,641
	Total liabilities	89,373,049	-	-	575,219	-	89,948,268
	As at 31 December 2007						
		Republic of Yemen YR'000	United States of America YR'000	Europe YR'000	Asia YR'000	Africa YR'000	Total YR'000
	ASSETS						
	Cash on hand and reserve balances with the Central Bank of Yemen	12,950,745	-	-	-	-	12,950,745
	Due from banks	6,721,900	3,707,555	13,152,401	3,098,103	60,683	26,740,642
	Treasury bills, net	33,423,127	-	-	-	-	33,423,127
	Certificates of deposit with Central Bank of Yemen	9,350,000	-	-	-	-	9,350,000
	Loans and advances to customers, net of provision	8,914,584	-	-	-	-	8,914,584
	Available for sale Investments, net	123,117	-	-	21,487	-	144,604
	Total assets	71,483,473	3				

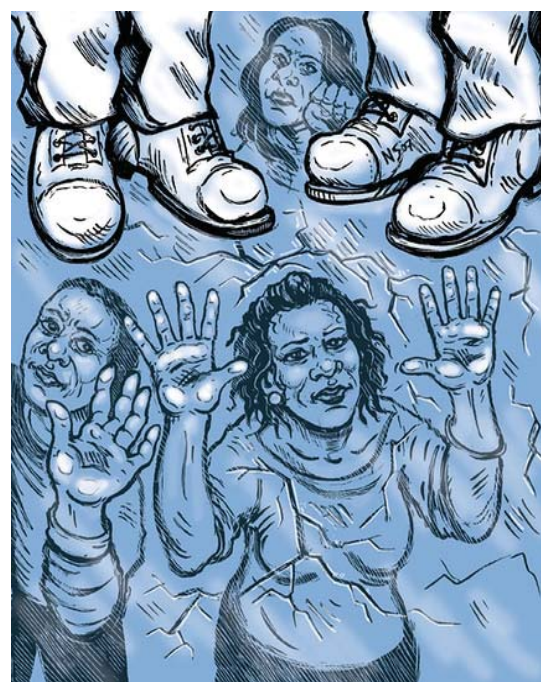
Breaking through the glass ceiling (part 1)

In recent years, Yemen has seen more women achieving high level positions in both public and private sectors. Some had to struggle hard before they were given a chance, despite the fact that they were more qualified than many of their male colleagues. And while all admit that these days are better for working women, the glass ceiling still very much exists.

By: Nadia Al-Sakkaf

Zainab Ali Al-Ashtal is one of the well known Yemeni women working in the banking sector. She has been working at the International Bank of Yemen since her graduation from Sana'a University in English Literature in 1982. Today, she is the assistant general manager for human resources which places her in direct contact with the bank's general manager who relies on her for human resource issues.

"I started from a secretarial position, going through most of the bank's departments. At one point I held the position of the Board of Directors' secretary. Then, in 2005, I became responsible for one of the bank's branches, giving me the privilege to be the first lady banker to manage a branch," she said.



Al-Ashtal believes that a successful working woman has to be well-rounded and contribute to the community's development – not just go to work. It took her more than 27 years to get where she is today, and the huge amount of knowledge and experience acquired deserves to be shared and passed on to others, especially aspiring Yemeni women.

This is why she also works as the public relations manager of the Yemen Business Women's Council, which was recently established.

However, most women working in

relatively high private sector positions graduated from foreign countries, which usually gives them an edge, especially in jobs that require English skills. Nagwan Al-Junaid is a Nexen scholar who obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Communications Studies from the University of Calgary in Canada. Today she works with Total E&P Yemen as Head of Internal Communications and Scholarship Programs. In March 2008 she was coordinating these two programs and was promoted in less than a year to become the head of the department because of her good performance.

"I think hard work pays off eventually," said Al-Junaid. "You need to be positive, curious, and a good listener. You are bound to meet a challenging boss – just work hard, be patient, and go above and beyond in your job. Do not just do the bare minimum, try to go beyond the required and keep a pleasant and a professional relationship with people around you," was her advice for Yemeni women who want to penetrate the male-dominated job market.

She adds that for most Yemeni women family constraints are a fact of life, but this should not deter women from getting into the public sphere. She admits that she was blessed with understanding and supportive parents who pushed her forward in what she called a "tricky country like Yemen."

However, even women coming from relatively conservative families have their chance at working in the public sphere, and if they really want it, they can reach high level positions. Amal El-Aghil works as the office manager of Dr. Nasser El-Aghil, director of the home equipment branch of the Aghil group. He is also her uncle, and she says that working in the family business is much more comfortable for women as opposed to working in outside companies.

"They respect you and know who you are, and the gossip which is quite common in companies does not affect females working in their family business as much," she said.

English and computer skills are the most important assets Amal advised



Zainab Ali Al-Ashtal.



Nagwan Al-Junaid



Nabiha Al-Haidary



Najla Al-Zubairi

women to gain so that they are able to move their way up through any organization.

Some women are opposed by their family members and are not allowed to work in international positions or even local jobs that require travelling. She advised ambitious women to have confidence and start their careers with less controversial jobs, such as teaching. When they prove to their family that they can handle the outside world, they can start looking for more ambitious jobs.

For women working in the government, the chance to reach high level positions is even more challenging. Bureaucracy, male dominance, and personal relationships play a strong role in preventing qualified women from taking decision-making positions in the public sector. Nabiha Al-Haidary had been working since 1991 at Saba News Agency, and five years ago she was promoted to general director of the Research and Information Department of the agency.

"I am living on my nerves. I know that if I make a big mistake or if a man even half as qualified as I am comes here, I fear that I will be replaced," she said.

However, she admitted that in the last five years there have been inclinations in the government sector to promote women because of international pressures. Sometimes, she said, the wrong woman is promoted because there are only a few qualified women available. This is why she advised women to learn and educate themselves and to use the tools that will enable them to be more professional.

"First qualify yourself, then learn your rights and your duties, and finally do a lot of shouting and demanding, and then you will get your fair chance," she said.

Zainab Ali Al-Ashtal agrees with this notion, as she defines success through four factors: educational qualification, work experience, leadership personality, and her family's encouragement. Each one of these factors played a main role in her own success.

"Being a woman in a business field, I have dealt with both genders and have never met any obstacles. I gain respect and learn from both my male and female colleagues, and I enjoy good relations with them as well as with the public. It goes without saying, if there is a sense of

how to deal with people, all complications will be eliminated," she said.

Part of why she has not had many problems in her work place is because of the International Bank of Yemen management's concentration on women's capabilities. She emphasized that because of this consideration, she was gradually promoted up the management ladder.

Based on her almost three decades of working in the public domain, Al-Ashtal says today's social and family constraints are much less than they used to be. "We can say that family constraints are almost missing nowadays as parents have come to recognize that they should give the right of education to their daughters as equally as their sons. Hence, women who have struggled for knowledge have achieved their rights of recognition."

Yet Nagwan Al-Junaid thinks otherwise. She believes that Yemeni women are perceived within a certain framework. "It is quite difficult to be 'you,' no matter what that might be, and to face the stubborn and limited framework that has been set for you," she said. "Yemeni women are pilots, journalists, doctors, lawyers, and sure enough, mothers, wives, and caregivers. The challenge is to make the Yemeni mentality pass beyond the traditional framework and to gladly embrace the reality that Yemeni women are becoming more visible and more competent at the workplace."

Najla Al-Zubairi stands out among many Yemeni women working in high level positions as she is the director of the Zubairi Company. It was her family's

support and her father's trust that made her the person to run the family business. But nevertheless, her good education was a crucial factor in her family's decision. "Being educated helped me to prove myself and move forward and gain my family and colleagues trust. It was a dream comes true to me since I was a kid who dreamt to be someone in life someday to serve my country and play a pivotal role in its economy."

Her history with the Zubairi Company dates back to her college years when she used to train during summer vacations. Although she studied electronics and communication engineering at Sana'a University, she started off working as a part-time employee in the accounting department. Soon she headed the finance department, and within four years she became the director of the whole company.

"Now I am completely responsible for company's management, strategies, executing plans, performance, and profitability of the company," she said.

Although Al-Zubairi comes from a Sana'ani family, she says it was her good fortune that she was able to break away from the typical upbringing of women in the old city of Sana'a where she was born and raised. She remembers when her grandmother took her to school in her early years, unlike many other girls in her area that were not as privileged. Today she is finishing her Masters in Business Administration from Sana'a University and the Maastricht School of Management (MSM).

Developing management skills is crucial for women who want to reach high level positions. Whether through studying or through years of experience,

as Al-Ashtal puts it, "you need to be a person who has experience in managing, administering, and making decisions. If you do, you can run any kind of business. Therefore, to become something in society, a woman should be armed with education and knowledge."

It is much easier to work in the family business like Amal Al-Agel and Najla Al-Zubairi, or to work in a business where the management supports women with good potential, like in the International Bank of Yemen. Working with international companies such as Total also makes a huge difference because the culture in such organizations usually encourages equal opportunities for women and men. But Yemeni society remains a conservative forbidding one for ambitious women.

"In our society, it is so difficult to have the same opportunities that men have. There is limited networking for women to involve themselves in the business environment like men have, and women have limited access to business information, especially in my field," said Najla Al-Zubairi. "This is why I advise women to have a dream and go for it, and to share their dreams with their families so their family would support them. They should also show their families how serious they are and how they are able to go for their dreams; that's how their families will believe them."

All of the women who have gained experience and are in relatively high positions have the dream of becoming their own boss and starting their own company. Al-Zubairi already runs the family business, although she would like to start her own. With the experience she has today, she thinks it would be easy to establish a new business, provided she has the required background information.

Nagwan Al-Junaid is waiting for the right idea, the right niche, and the right market before she invests in her own business. "It has to be something I truly believe in and have passion for. Why? The sky is the limit."

I think there is a whole a lot that one does not know about him/herself until they are thrown into different circumstances."

G20 Summit: Time to holler for the dollar?

By: Terry Lacey
For the Yemen Times

The London G20 Summit has to get a grip on the world economic crisis or it will get worse. The US says we need to pump money in and boost demand. Many EU and Southern countries prefer rigorous regulations to limit unbridled greed, rather than throwing apparently unlimited borrowed bucks down bottomless buckets.

April 1st is April Fools day when we can make jokes, often about serious matters.

So if you see an April 1st headline "US agrees to replace dollar with new international currency" or "IMF Managing Director resigns to make way for Chinese MD", or "UK drops Sterling and joins Euro", then you know this is not real! Not yet!!

But will the London Summit lead to serious changes or not?

China, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand have agreed to promote a new international reserve currency, to replace overdependence on the US dollar, after contacts between Asian central bankers and their political leaders.

Thomas Harr, a currency strategist at Standard Charter Plc Singapore has confirmed "Asian central banks have been diversifying out of US dollars for some time and they're concerned about

the sustainability of the US financial system". (Bloomberg and Jakarta Post 28.03.09)

Asian leaders are no longer sure of the US dollar. They are making bilateral local currency swap deals with each other to support trade rather than trusting the US dollar or international institutions.

The full impact of the US recession, bailout and stimulus package is yet to be felt. The huge scale of Western toxic assets and financial scams is still coming to light. The liquidity problem is not solved. The financial markets are not working properly. Global demand is still collapsing.

This is a crisis of confidence in the Western financial system, and particularly in the US dollar and its future as a reserve currency.

China, Indonesia and Asian countries are suggesting to build a new trading and reserve currency around Special Drawing Rights (SDRs), a currency unit based on a basket of currencies, which has been around for a long time, under the IMF umbrella.

The IMF web site says the US has blocked expansion of the role of SDRs for over a decade. But IMF Managing Director Dominique Strauss-Kahn says talks to replace the reserve role of the US dollar are "legitimate" and the SDR could do the job.

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao sees China already holding \$740 billion of US debts and President Obama increas-

ing US debts by another US\$2.5 trillion, to finance the bailout, compared to US\$1.6 trillion now held by Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States from high oil prices in the first half of 2008.

These are vast sums.

The big figures for the US are new debts. The big numbers for oil rich countries are cash in the bank. But in US dollars.

What about all the local people and expats in Asia and the Middle East holding dollars? Should they stay in dollars or not?

The dollar is doing a bit better right now, but what about inflationary risks, and other uncertainties as the full cost of the bailout hits home?

US President Barack Obama's top economic advisor, Lawrence Summers, has urged G20 leaders to focus on boosting world demand and take coordinated steps to pump more money into the global economy.

Summers admits "This notion that the economy is self-stabilising is usually right, but it is wrong a few times a century. And this is one of those times."

In other words this ship is still sinking unless we refloat it together. But how can we refloat it with dollars, if the dollar itself might go down?

Terry Lacey is a development economist who writes from Jakarta on modernization in the Muslim world, investment and trade relations with the EU and Islamic banking.

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Newspapers focus on print & advertising revenues in difficult times

Two of the key issues facing newspapers in the global financial crisis - how to maintain and enhance print and advertising revenues -- will be the subject of two back-to-back global press industry conferences to be held in Barcelona, Spain, in May. Although digital innovation is a primary area of newspaper industry development, print and advertising continue to fund these new ventures, as well as being the profit centers for the vast majority of newspaper companies, even in these tough times.

The new "Power of Print" conference and Expo, to be held on 27 and 28 May, and the annual World Newspaper Advertising Conference and Expo, to be held on the 28 and 29 May in the same venue, will showcase the best examples of revenue generating and cost-saving innovations at newspaper companies today.

Some highlights:

- The art of balancing print and digital, a presentation by Mikael Pentikäinen, President of Sanoma News in Finland,

who has introduced a "long tail" strategy at Sanoma House, the publishers of Helsingin Sanomat, the biggest daily in Finland. According to Mr Pentikäinen, the modern newspaper is like a portfolio of specialized magazines, but with one brand and style of content. Mr Pentikäinen will speak about the factors used to create such portfolios and, perhaps most importantly, how they create commercial value.

- The "Individuated" Newspaper - or the personal newspaper - may finally be within striking distance as user-content selection evolves, workflow

systems improve, digital printing develops and distributors grow accustomed to new practices, says Peter Vandevanter, Vice President for Targeted Products for MediaNews Group in the United States. The Individuated Newspaper would make possible very targeted advertising and begin to compete with direct mail advertising, a category which has grown tremendously in the last 10 years.

- Profiting from hyper-targeted print publications, a presentation by Martha Stone, Director of the WAN Shaping the Future of the Newspaper project, who will explain how three newspaper companies in Asia, the Americas and Europe, have successfully launched a variety of highly targeted products. Ms Stone will show how the companies conceived, developed and launched the products and involved editorial, advertising, marketing, circulation, production and printing departments. The research is a preview of the soon-to-be-published Power of Print report, a part of the SFN annual series of

strategic reports for WAN members.

-Printcasting: People-Powered Magazines, which will examine the "printcasting" experiment in print publishing that is fuelled by blogs and self-serve advertising. The project, conceived by Dan Pacheco, Founder of Printcasting.com, is operated by The Bakersfield Californian, which has 5 years of experience with niche-focused print and online products.

Printcasting makes it possible for anyone to create a printable PDF publication online, whether or not they have their own content. Local bloggers and news organizations make their content available for printcasts in exchange for a share of advertising revenue that is generated through a self-serve advertising tool.

- 10 Lessons from four age-specific youth-targeted newspapers in France from François Dufour, editor and founder of Playbac Presse, who has created four age-specific newspapers that have considerable attention among young people. According to Mr Dufour, young people want news of

interest to them and their age range, in colour and in a small format. They want to read for 10 minutes a day, almost every day. They like cartoons, humour, photos, headlines, infographics, and opinion. They want to be taken seriously, but not in a serious manner.

- Evaluating and Restructuring the Sales Department, a case study of the Manchester Evening News in the United Kingdom, which has reconstructed its commercial team and developed an excellent model for any publishing company that wants to reduce costs and increase efficiency. The MEN model is based on honest dialogue between managers and staff, a clear flow of information and clear understanding of performance, and rewards and motivation to guarantee success. The presentation will describe both the process and the outcomes.

- Concept to design to market: The road to successful product development, which will examine the new lifestyle publications developed by The Sydney Morning Herald and

The Sun-Herald that have brought in close to 5 million Australian dollars (2.54 million Euros) of new revenue in less than 12 months.

Far from being standard "advertorials" or special reports, these publications are high quality customised environments for select clients and are charged at a premium, says Kylie Davis, Managing Editor of the newspapers. She contends that customised editorial products are needed in today's market, and will describe the Fairfax approach, the editorial issues, how they were resolved, and the results.

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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JOB VACANCY

The Embassy of the United States of America announces for immediate job opening within its organization.

"Public Affairs Specialist"

The position is located in the Public Diplomacy Section under the direct supervision of the Public Affairs Officer. The incumbent assists in developing the country program plan by recommending specific projects which can contribute to the achievement of U.S. policy objectives in host country, establishes guidelines for directing activities in support of these plans, and monitors program implementation; assists in developing a list of key host country leaders and maintains personal contacts at the mid to high level; plans, supervises and monitors work of subordinates; coordinates programs.

Qualifications:

Education: University degree in political science, social science, international affairs, American studies, or liberal arts is required. A master's degree in any of these fields of study is also recommended.

Prior Work Experience: Four to six years of progressively responsible experience in cultural or informational media activities, public relations, relevant university teaching or related fields. If job-related experience is substituted for the education requirements, six to eight years of progressively responsible experience is required.

Language Proficiency: Level IV English (fluent) in both spoken and written English and Arabic.

Knowledge: Thorough knowledge of host country's political, media, economic, social and educational structure, institutions, political parties, and key figures in influential institutions; of public diplomacy programs; public relations techniques; and US public relations concerns as expressed in the Mission Strategic Plan goals and objectives.

Skills and Abilities: Ability to develop and maintain contacts at various levels in cultural, government, media and educational circles; excellent writing skills; proven communication and interpersonal skills; as incumbent is expected to use an extensive range of contacts with high level influential leaders in skillfully addressing public diplomacy issues; excellent management skills to prioritize and organize a complex work schedule to stay on top of ongoing programs while planning upcoming programs; developed training and supervisory skills; and ability in report drafting.

Grade/Salary: FSN-10 (Trainee Level) US\$ 14,877 Starting Salary plus US\$ 2,500 in benefits and allowances. After satisfactory completion of one years promotion to FSN-11 US\$ 18,850 p.a. plus \$2,500 in benefits and allowances.

Detailed Position Description is available at the <http://yemen.usembassy.gov/yemen/vacancies.html>

How to apply: Interested applicants should complete OF-612 or submit a current C.V. (with awards, recommendation letters, copies of degrees earned) that addresses the qualification requirements of the position as listed above and contact the Embassy Human Resources, American Embassy, Dhahr Himyar Street, Sanaa. Fax No. 303-182, no later than April 15, 2009.

* NOTE: ALL ORDINARILY RESIDENT APPLICANTS MUST BE RESIDING IN COUNTRY AND HAVE THE REQUIRED WORK AND RESIDENCY PERMITS TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR CONSIDERATION.



Invitation for Prequalification

Name of project: Improving Access to Quality Primary Education

Project location: Hajja Governorate

Funded by: Dubai Cares.

Over all Objective: The overall goal of this project is to help government of Yemen to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) for education and gender equity in primary school enrollment and completion. To reach this project goal an agreement has been signed between Ministry of Education and CARE International in Yemen on 20/09/2006.

Project components:

1. Building 100 schools within enrollment capacity (10 schools in Year 1, 30 schools in year 2, 3 and 4)
2. Capacity building
3. Girls Education Advocacy
4. 88 suitable drinking water interventions

The prequalification process will consists of a written questionnaire that all contractors/companies must submit if interested in bidding to confirm that they meet the contract's selection criteria. Once a contractor/company has achieved prequalification status, they will receive the contract documents and instructions for submitting their bids.

Care International in Yemen and its partner HYDRO Yemen invites applications from the reputed companies for the construction of 10 schools in Hajja governorate. The contractors should be registered with the Ministry of Infrastructure in not less than category 3. The contractors must have an excellent reputation, proven track record and experience in the following areas/lots.

Lot- 1) Construction of school buildings

Lot- 2) Soil testing (topography)

Interested companies/contractors can get a complete prequalification questionnaire and selection criteria (in English and Arabic) from 7th April 09 at the following address during office time 8:30am-3:30pm (Saturday-Wednesday, last day is 25th April 09)

Note: Completed prequalification questionnaire should be submitted in sealed envelopes and delivered to the address below by hand.

Deadline for receiving the applications is Saturday 30th April 2009 at 3.30pm.

CARE International in Yemen

Behind Mujahid Street, Arwa School Street

Sana'a

Tel: 243379, 504377

Incomplete or irrelevant information on the questionnaire will not be considered.

The prequalified pool of contractors/companies will be eligible to bid for the contract.

Yemen without Women: A unique island indeed!

By: Mohammed Abdulkareem
Alkameem2007@gmail.com

Part of our religion – the religion of Islam – lies in confirming the strong relation between the husband and the wife. However, this religious tie is constantly attacked, albeit subconsciously, by many people. These days we see that people are swearing oaths to support unimportant things which do not need such oaths at all. Dangerously, such oaths are sworn just by mentioning the so-called “haram talak,” meaning that the oath-swearer will divorce his wife if what he is swearing upon is untrue or doesn't end up happening. This results in nothing but damage to family relations in general and to both the husband and the wife in particular. Most importantly, all those who swear divorce oaths do not realize the danger of this phenomenon. Therefore, swearing “haram talak” attacks the family from two angles: the religious angle, and the conventional

angle. This behavior turns into an example for others to follow, both Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

If one goes deeper into the details about this problem, one finds that it is the result of the deterioration that comes from moving away from our domestic principles. It is also partially because, in recent years, foreign invasion left a fatal effect on some religious principles, making it unnecessary to cling on them. If those people do not swear by “haram talak,” they swear by other oaths which are unmentionable here.

Our history is illuminated with so many alternatives to swearing these kinds of oaths, leading to better behavior. We do not need to dare ourselves to make these kinds of dangerous oaths. If we do, we have to shoulder the responsibility when we say “haram talak” to support our own insights into life.

Tackling this issue from the point of habitualization, our society is already teaming with divorce – and swearing to divorce is not helping. Actually, saying

“haram talak” has become a societal habit. To demonstrate, in restaurants, when friends debate about what kind of meal to order, they swear the usual “haram talak” just to show their desire for a particular kind of food. Another extremely common example is found in the markets and lanes of qat selling. A customer does not feel satisfied about the price until the qat seller swears to divorce his wife if the price isn't a good one. The escalation of this widespread issue brings about moral deterioration and a collapse in the structure of society. What makes the problem worse is that Yemeni youths are, to a great extent, addicted to qat. They buy and sell qat every day. Thus, they are exposed to “haram talak” in the markets and parking lots on a daily basis, and so their minds are used to swearing these kinds of strong oaths over meaningless things from a very young age.

To put it differently, this way of swearing oaths is totally rejected in our religion of Islam. There is no room for us to stand and stare at the society col-

lapsing in front of our eyes. While we are all practicing divorce oaths, our society is coming to the point of failure. This failure lies in the notion that such people are actually divorcing their wives, but they do not realize that they do so. Their wives stay at home, not only because they are humiliated by these daily oaths but also because their marriage ties are loose, and even cut off in some cases. They swear but actually they do not care for their oaths; they ignore the consequences of these seemingly meaningless but actually very important words.

To conclude, everyone in society is responsible for his behavior, attitudes, and religious and domestic principles. We have to know that when we swear an oath, we should be trying to prove something great in society. Otherwise, we are damaging society and deliberately representing immorality. When one swears divorce oaths, one must know that he is either upholding society's structure or attacking it at its very foundations.

Men, women, and friendship...

Enas Al-Radami
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I would like to comment on Maged Alkholidy's article “How men deal with women” and Altaf Al-Hamadani's following article entitled “How women deal with men” regarding the way men and woman deal with each other and how these interactions are affected due to the different types of personalities. I will discuss whether or not men can have women as friends and how such a relationship might or might not be proper. I also would like dear readers to share their opinions with us.

In the modern era, we should be finally ready to face the truth of being prejudiced about societal roles for women. These thoughts have been in our collective consciousness for years. To speak the truth, women could feel sad for being the last to be educated, behind men. To discuss friendships between men and women, the word ‘friendship’ has many meanings. Some people abuse friendship – these people think negatively and completely forget respect. With these kinds of men, women could feel that they are being mistreated and misjudged, especially if they wanted nothing more than a good friendship. But the question remains: Is it really good if women and men

become friends?!

Irrespective of culture and traditions, let's talk about the limits that specify relations between men and women. Under no circumstances should a man exceed the limits of decency. Women also have to create limits when dealing with men; otherwise they might feel annoyed by misunderstandings created by men who have ill-favored intentions. Nevertheless, the problem of deciding the specific kind of relationship between men and women is still there. Part of the issue lies in the fact that media plays a big role in changing the standards of friendship.

Our religion of Islam was and still is the true solution for all these doubts

and accusations. If there was a religious base for each interaction between men and women, there would be respect and honor. Both sides could deal with each other due to their faith and belief system, and there would be no disrespect or mistreatment.

It is not hard to be well-behaved, and thinking positively will contribute to better treatment for everyone. If people think about the best way to treat others, it becomes clear how they could either choose the right way or the wrong one when dealing with the opposite sex. Things will go well if interactions between men and women are properly conducted with respect, seeking nothing more than this.

Are teachers donkeys?

By: Abduladheem Jabre
adheem_adheem@yahoo.com

The educational system is the backbone of any nation in the world. It is the only way to bring up smart generations that can adapt to modern circumstances and improve and develop social, economic, and political systems. The teachers themselves are considered to be the wheels of the educational system that are capable of leading students into a better tomorrow. But what we find in our society is that teachers are undertaking heavy burdens beyond their means. In fact, they are demanded to devote extraordinary efforts in planning lessons, explaining ideas, preparing exams, evaluating, giving guidance, helping in after-school activ-

ities, and so forth. What is more, all of these efforts are performed for class sizes of more than a hundred students. In addition, teachers teach a huge number of classes a day. They have to be engaged inside the school from the first period till the last one, and when a teacher asks to have some time off for an emergency, the principal of the school starts criticizing and commenting. The question that comes to mind is: Are teachers mere dynamic machines?

I asked one of my friends who studied in the UAE and has now become a teacher about the number of students they usually have in one class, and I was shocked when he said that they usually have twenty to twenty-five students. No way to compare twenty to a hundred because the difference is so obvious. Irrespective of what I men-

tioned previously, I would like to mention something more important regarding teachers' dignity. Some teachers are exposed to aggressions outside schools. What a shame when the students who have been educated on good manners inside classrooms turn into gangs against their teachers when the school day is over. This creates a tragic image that results in drawing an insulting reputation about teaching to the extent that someone would feel shy to say “I am a teacher!”

The tragic image is complete when we talk about the relationship between principals and teachers inside schools. Amazingly, principals treat the teachers as soldiers that must obey what they are asked to do, and the more pressure they force on teachers, the higher promotions these principals gain. Is there a teacher's law that main-

tains their rights and dignity against those wild students or those immoral principals? It seems that teachers have been turned into the lowest class in the society and are no longer proud of their reputations as teachers. As a result, the learning process is affected and the students suffer, the objectives of the curriculum specialists are not achieved as expected, students cannot communicate as determined in the objectives, and I am afraid of worse results in future.

What should be finally said is that there are certain procedures that must be taken into consideration in order to develop the educational system in our society. In this way, teachers can bring back their dignity, everybody will recognize the importance of teachers in life, and teachers do not become like donkeys.

The language of e-mail

Sameer Ahmed Al-Nuzaili
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The internet is one of the most remarkable things that human beings have ever made. In terms of its impact on society, it ranks with the printing press, railways, the telegraph, electric power, and television. Some equate it with earlier technologies that transformed the communications environment in which people live. Yet it is potentially more powerful than anything the world has ever seen because it harnesses the intellectual leverage of all mankind without being hobbled by the one-to-many nature of broadcast television.

The World Wide Web's inventor, Tim Berners, expressed how people should seize the new technology to empower themselves. He stated that people can now keep themselves informed about the truth of their own economic, political and cultural circumstances and are able to give themselves a voice that the entire world can hear, saying, “I could not have written a better mission statement for the World Wide Web than this.” Berners also said that the Web is more a social

creation than a technical one and that the dream of people-to-people communication through shared knowledge is now possible for groups of all sizes, interacting electronically with as much ease as they do now in person.”

The Internet is an association of computer networks with common standards which enable messages to be sent from any central computer (or host) on one network to any host on any other network. It developed in the 1960s in the USA as an experimental network which quickly grew to include military, federal, regional, university, business, and personal users. The internet is now the world's largest computer network, with over 100 million hosts connected in 2003, providing an increasing range of services and enabling unprecedented numbers of people to be in touch with each other through electronic mail (e-mail), discussion groups, and the provision of digital ‘pages’ on any topic. Functional information, such as electronic shopping, business data, advertisements, and bulletins, can be found alongside creative works, such as poems and scripts, with the availability of movies, TV programs, and other kinds of entertainment steadily growing.

Some commentators have likened the Internet to an amalgam of television, telephone, and conventional publishing, and the term *cyberspace* has been coined to capture the notion of a world of information present or possible in digital form. The word e-mail was originally coined as the use of computer systems to transfer messages between users – now the word is chiefly used to refer to messages sent between private mailboxes. Although e-mail takes up only a relatively small domain of Internet ‘space,’ in comparison with the billions of pages on the World Wide Web, it far exceeds the Web in terms of the number of daily individual transactions made.

Many e-mail messages, incoming and outgoing, greatly vary in length and style, and the diversity of e-mail contexts is immediately apparent. Indeed, can we even generalize about the language of e-mail at all? At one level, it is extremely easy to define the linguistic identity of e-mail as a variety of language; at another level, it is surprisingly difficult. The easy part lies in the fixed discourse structure of the message – a structure dictated by the mailer software which has become increasingly standardized over the past

twenty years. Just in the same way as we can analyze the functionally distinct elements that constitute a newspaper article in terms of headline, body copy, illustration, caption, and so forth, or a scientific paper in terms of title, authorship, abstract, introduction, methodology, and so on, so we can see in e-mails a fixed sequence of discourse elements. At the same time, it ought at least to be possible to identify what the parameters of disagreement are, to develop a sense of the range of linguistic features which any characterization of e-mail would have to include.

Language is at the heart of the Internet, for Net activity is interactivity. “The Net is really a system which links together a vast number of computers and the people who use them.” These are John Naughton's words, author of *A Brief History of the Future: Origins of the Internet*, and his italics.

In the end, what is truly remarkable about the internet is that so many people have learned so quickly to adapt their language to meet the demands of new situations and to exploit the potential of the new medium so creatively to form new areas of expression.

Through The Mind's Eye

By: Maged Thabet Al-kholidy
maged_thabet@hotmail.com



Who is to be blamed?

Security is one of the essential demands of any nation. In Yemen, it is one of the principles of the revolution, and always comes at the top of any list presented for political programs of any political party, cabinet, and even any candidate in the parliamentary or local council elections. When anyone reads about such programs, he/she feels that Yemen is a paradise of security. Looking at the reality on the ground in Yemen, he/she will realize that something is not matching with what is written. The recent security violations have caused me to ask myself: “Who is to be blamed for these security violations?”

I think the above question is also asked by many people when they hear about the recent incidents of murder and explosions. Actually, everyone asks him/herself only; nobody asks the other(s) because the matter is so sensitive. This is because it is about ‘security’ and everyone becomes afraid to ask about it, thinking and feeling that ‘the walls have ears’ – a feeling I have had many times myself. Though the same feelings and thoughts are still present with me, I wrote this article with a hope that ‘the walls do not have eyes to read English.’

One month ago, I visited the Hospital of Science and Technology University. There, I found a lot of posters as a form of protest against the failure to catch the murderers of Dr. Derhim Al-Qadasi who was murdered in the hospital by a group of armed tribesmen. On my way back home, the question of security loomed in my mind. I tried to guess the answer; I say only ‘guess’ so as not to present it as the final solution. I blamed the hospital security guards and the hospital management for allowing armed persons to get into the hospital, kill someone, and run away. At least they should have caught them!

To be frank with you, dear readers, I also blamed the Ministry of Culture and Tourism as well as the Ministry of Education. I blamed the Ministry of Culture and Tourism because it spreads culture in rural areas and cities alike. The absence of culture there has made the people behave poorly to say the least, as what happened with Dr. Al-Qadasi. For the same reason, I also blamed the Ministry of Education because it does not pay enough attention to these same areas. The insufficient educational care in Yemen can produce only people like those who murdered Dr. Al-Qadasi.

The attacks against the South Korean tourists in Shibam, Hadramout also reminded me of the same question about security. Again I blamed the Ministry of Culture and Tourism since it did not provide sufficient security procedures for these tourists. I also blamed it because it did not realize that such security violations affect the sector of tourism, which is its main concern. Actually, I was shocked when I heard that the South Korean team which came to investigate in the accident in Shibam, Hadramout was also attacked on its way to the Sana'a airport. In my opinion, this was not the fault of the Ministry of Tourism since the team of investigators came in coordination with the Ministry of Security, which had to have been the only institution that knew the team's program. Oh, sorry, I forgot that ‘the walls have ears,’ and blame the Ministry of Culture and Tourism also.

Just some days later, another incident took place at Sana'a University. Here, a security guard killed a student. In spite of the details about the shooting, I immediately started to think about the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, trying to find any link to this accident. In the beginning, and in an attempt to blame the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, I thought that the student was not from Yemen. However, all the media sources confirmed that he was from Yemeni parents. The details of the accident showed that there must be another ministry to be blamed, but I did not blame it because, again, ‘the walls have ears.’

Just two or so weeks later, another security violation took place in the Aldemna area in Taiz. The incident was not about the murder of a tourist or student or any other ordinary person, but the killing of the security manager of the Aldemna district himself. Actually murdering the security manager means that there is something wrong not just with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism or the Ministry of Education, but with another institution. I tried to find any other ministry to blame, but none of them have any links to this incident. The only ministry that has direct links with the killing is the Ministry of Security. So, ‘who is to be blamed?’

The recent outstanding security violations indicate that there is a big fault or fault lines in the security system here in Yemen. Through my simple thinking, I tried to find out where this fault lies. In the end, I realized that the security violations are not the responsibility of any ministry other than the ministry whose main concern is the security itself. I do not say ‘The Ministry of Security,’ but all of you should think about the matter to realize ‘who is to be blamed.’

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

Fragrance

By: Dr. Ram Sharma

I am not the time,
which will pass,
I am not the fate,
which will alter,
I am a fragrance,

which will take entry,
of the buds of your memory,
whether you accept me or not,
you will sing my song,
I shall mingle in your voice
if you look into the mirror,
I shall be there in your face

Song of tormented lover

By Monassar Mohssin Al-sabahi
monassar_moh2@yahoo.com
Rada'a faculty, Thamar university

That can be never fair,
To leave me,” my dear!
If there is little hope,
I beg you ,please stop!
I dear not stand for you,
And You'r not my foe.

Stay,stay, I am not a ghost,
Without you I am lost .
You have taken my soul,
I feel not alive at all .
I am no body in no place,
I see nothing but,your face.
I promise you ,and I swear,
I remember you everywhere.
I will love you till death,
Till I make the last breathe.

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Algerian media - between diversity and censorship

On the eve of the April 9 Algerian presidential elections MENASSAT offers this reading of Algeria's media landscape as seen through both political and historical lenses.



Algerian woman passing campaign posters in Algiers. © AP

By: Mahdi Idar

Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika launched his official campaign last week ahead of April 9 elections, and while it is expected to be a no-contest election, there is scant evidence of critical local media that is not in some way hampered by current government policies.

Critics of the regime question the idea of an election occurring in a media atmosphere that has traditionally been used to bolster a positive image of the state.

Past history

Algeria's media sector has undergone significant changes since its inde-



pendence in 1962, but up until 1989, one party dominated Algeria's political reality, the National Liberation Front (FLN).

In effect the FLN controlled the media and political landscape until mass popular protests in 1988 against the FLN forced former president Al-Shadli bin Jdid to ratify the constitution in 1989, paving the way for the rise of religious political parties like the FLN's main rival, the Islamic Salvation Front.

Political pressure was also put on the government to open up press freedoms. New press laws like 07/90 were passed in 1990, and new dailies sprung up to fill the void that had been taken up by pro-FLN newspapers.

Before 1990, there were six dailies in Algeria, four Arabic speaking: Al-Shaab (The People), Al-Nasr (Victory), Al-Joumhouriah (The Republic) and Al-Massa' (The Evening); two French, Al-Moujahed (The Struggler) and Horizon, funded by the government.

After 07/90, French-speaking el-Watan (the nation) was established (www.elwatan.com) as was Arabic-speaking journal el-Khabar (the

news) (www.elkhabar.com) - both independently financed papers quickly gained popularity for their impartial reporting of domestic events.

The honeymoon period didn't last long:

The Islamic Salvation Front won the first round of the country's first multi-party elections, and in early 1992, Algeria's military canceled the second round.

The new junta forced then president Bin Jdid out of office, and declared a "state of emergency" - suspending the constitution and outlawing all religiously affiliated political parties, like the ISF.

In 1992, the ISF took up arms to attempt to enforce their election win, beginning the 10-year Algerian Civil War that killed more than 160,000

people between 1992 and 2002.

The war polarized the country into two main camps aligned with the oppressive policies of the western-leaning military junta or the Arab and Islamic influenced parties fighting for power.

The war also forced Algeria's media into pro or anti-government camps.

Under the declared state of emergency, newspapers criticizing the regime were closed by the military junta, mainly to relay a positive image to the international community and domestically, to suppress any dissent.

Algerian journalists were particularly vulnerable during the civil war. Hundreds of journalists were victimized physically and professionally; some 77 journalists and media assistants were killed in Algeria between 1993 and 1996.

New media landscape...again

After the end of fighting in 2002, president Abdelaziz Bouteflika once again allowed private media institutions to enter the media sector, with limited press freedoms given Algeria was still considered in a state of emergency.

Issues of financial sustainability for the independent press quickly forced Algerian media owners to rely on advertisements to remain financially viable.

Ad space was paid for by a diverse group of public and private interests, including Islamic parties, and for a two-year period, Algeria appeared to experience a new media renaissance.

This also meant more dissenting voices in Algerian media, critical of the policies of president Bouteflika, particularly in the newspaper industry.

In May 2004, the government passed a law that forced public and private media to pass their advertisements by a regulatory body - the Publicity Agency - before publishing.

The arbitrary rules set up to regulate the ads severely curtailed the income of several independent and state-funded papers, forcing many to shut down.

From 1989 to 2004, press laws did little to affect Algeria's audiovisual media landscape because the industry was traditionally in the hands of the leading pro-government interests.

Now as president Bouteflika vies for a third presidential term, the issue of government control of the media is a top concern for domestic and international rights groups pressing for more deregulation of the media.

Indeed, the Algerian government strictly regulates audiovisual content under harsh press laws that are intolerant to criticism of president Bouteflika's regime - fostering the same one party domination that occurred between 1962 and 1989, rights groups say.

Press freedoms groups also accuse the state-run Algerian Press Agency (www.aps.dz) of similar one-party editorial policies.

The real victims

Journalists have been the most most affected by Algeria's media policies.

Beginning in 1992 when a state of emergency was declared and leading up to the modified Penal Code of July 2001 that define the "ethical" guidelines for journalists' work, the penalties levied against Algerian journalists have been severe when dissenting with government policies.

Press misdemeanors, especially defamation against the president and the officials, have led to hefty jail sentences and monetary fines.

Press rights groups like Reporters Without Borders (RSF) note that there are few redlines that the government has drawn to distinguish what is and what is not acceptable for reporters to cover.

According to RSF, government harassment in the workplace is common practice.

Further, reporters in Algeria barely make a living wage. Few make more

than \$300 dollars per month, and reporters are finding it increasingly difficult to continue their work without moonlighting for government media jobs.

Algerians look elsewhere

What is clear in the last days before the 2009 presidential elections is that Algerians are increasingly looking elsewhere for news about their own political developments.

Increasingly viewers are turning to international and Arab satellites given the lack of Algerian TV channels www.entv.dz, and Algerian online news consumers have practically abandoned Algerian official media.

Two new TV channels were recently launched, one concerned with Quranic issues and the second targeting Algeria's Amazigh population - channels that look to be appeasing interests groups in Algeria as a means of political cover for the government.

Meanwhile, the Algerian government and pro-government media outlets have already taken their fight to the internet, through a proliferation of news and current affairs websites - in both French and Arabic.

News sites like www.tsa-algerie.com are currently competing with the most popular Algerian newspaper sites for audience share.

It is worth noting that Reporters without Borders ranked Algeria as the 121 country out of 173 countries on the Press Freedom Scale.

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- Honeywell Field Process Solutions
- MALBRANQUE Tednor Petroleum Valves - Wellhead Equipment
- Turbine Overhauling
- SEKO Pumps & Dosing Systems

CALIBRATION & Maintenance Workshop For Flow meters
SGS Certified Calibration System