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## Yemen escapes Worst of the Worst list of not free countries

By: Nadia Al-Sakkaf and Freedom House

SANA'A, May 6 — Maintaining the same position as last year in the Freedom House annual survey on the state of global political rights and civil liberties, Yemen has escaped the list of 42 countries designated as "not free."

Each year 193 countries are judged based on events from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31. As last year Yemen is described as "partially free" with a rating of five for both political rights and civil liberties rates, and an average combined rating of five based on a 1 to 7 scale, with 1 representing the most free and 7 the least free.

"We are publishing this report to assist policymakers, human rights organizations, democracy advocates, and others who are working to advance freedom around the world. We also hope that the report will be useful to the work of the United Nations Human Rights Council," announced the team behind the report.

Of the 51 "not free" territories and countries, 17 countries and four territories were selected as Worst of the Worst due to systematic and pervasive human rights violations. With an average combined political rights and civil liberties ratings of 6.5 or 7, these countries comprise 10 percent of the world's nations and 24 percent of the world's population. Six of those 17 countries are Arab: Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Saudi Arabia and Syria.

None of the Arab countries were categorized as free, while only seven countries including Yemen were

defined as partially free: Djibouti, Jordan, Lebanon, Bahrain, Morocco and Kuwait. The remaining 13 countries in addition to the Palestinian territories were defined as not free.

According to the report, at the beginning of 2009, of the 193 countries in the world, 89 countries -46 percent- are free and can be said to respect a broad array of basic human rights and political freedoms. An additional 62 countries -32 percent- are partly free, with some abridgments of basic rights and weak enforcement of the rule of law.

In all, some 3 billion people -46 percent of the world's population-live in free states in which a broad array of political rights are protected.

"The fundamental violations of rights presented in this report are all the more alarming because they stand in sharp contrast to the significant expansion of human liberty over the last three decades. In that period, dozens of states have shed tyranny and embraced democratic rule and respect for basic civil liberties," said Jennifer Windsor, executive director at Freedom House.

The survey rates each country and territory on a seven-point scale for both political rights and civil liberties, with 1 representing the most free and 7 the least free, and then assigns each country and territory a broad category status of free (for countries whose ratings average 1.0 to 2.5), partly free (3.0 to 5.0), or not free (5.5 to 7.0).

The ratings process is based on a checklist of 10 political rights and 15 civil liberties questions. The political rights check list includes questions

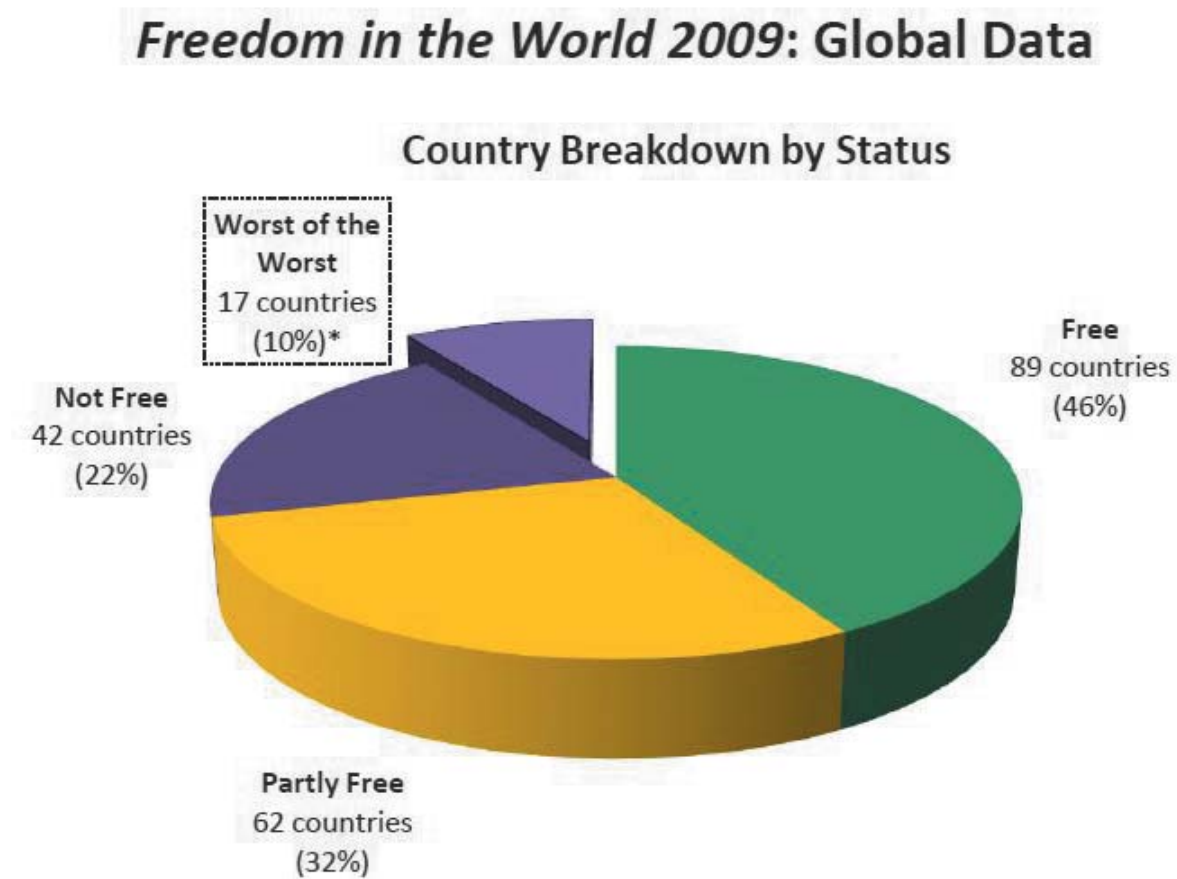
about the electoral process, political pluralism and participation, functioning of the government and other discretionary political rights questions. The civil liberties checklist includes questions about freedom of expression and belief, associational and organizational rights, rule of law, and personal autonomy and individual rights.

"The Freedom in the World ratings are not merely assessments of the conduct of governments, but are intended to reflect the reality of daily life," reads the report. "Freedom can be affected by state actions as well as by non-state actors. Thus, terrorist movements or armed groups use violent methods which can dramatically restrict essential freedoms within a society. Conversely, the existence of non-state activists or journalists who act courageously and independently despite state restrictions can positively impact the ability of the population to exercise its freedoms."

Consequently, Freedom House and UN Watch strongly urge United Nations members to block seven countries from obtaining seats on the Human Rights Council, including China, Cuba and Saudi Arabia rated among the world's most repressive regimes.

The non government organizations released a report in New York this week that indicates that nearly two-thirds of the 20 countries running for seats in next week's election either have poor or questionable human rights records.

The study found seven countries not qualified: Azerbaijan, Cameroon,



China, Cuba, Djibouti, Russia and Saudi Arabia. The governments of three of those countries—China, Cuba and Saudi Arabia—rank among the world's most repressive regimes, suppressing nearly all fundamental political rights and civil liberties, according to Freedom House's Worst of the Worst report. An additional six countries have questionable or mixed human rights records: Bangladesh, Jordan, Kenya,

Kyrgyzstan, Nigeria and Senegal.

The report raised further concern that a majority of the candidates may gain seats on the influential council despite their records, because of a lack of competition from democratic states. However, each candidate must first secure an absolute majority of the General Assembly, or 97 votes, to win a seat.

"General Assembly members who care about human rights must not resign themselves to approving these noncompetitive slates," said Paula Schriefer, Freedom House advocacy director. "We urge member states to restore credibility to the council by rejecting those nations that do not uphold basic standards for human rights."

On May 12, the UN General Assembly is expected to elect 18 new countries to the Human Rights Council, more than a third of its total

membership. Each regional group is apportioned a specific number of seats. However, in three of the five regional groups—Asia, Latin America and the Western European and Others group—the number of countries running does not exceed the number of open seats.

The General Assembly is instructed to elect council members based on their ability to "uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights" and their ability to "fully cooperate" with the council.

As a result, UN Watch and Freedom House evaluated each of the 20 candidates based on its record of human rights protection at home and its record of human rights promotion at the UN.

The evaluation included the countries' rankings in Freedom House and UN Watch analyses, as well as reports from Reporters San Frontières, The Economist Democracy Index and the Democracy Coalition Project.

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## Good intentions not enough to gain southern movement's trust

By: Ali Saeed

SANA'A, May 6 — Although only four days have passed since the formation of the mediation committee to resolve conflict in the south leaders of the southern movement are not optimistic regarding its use.

"Unless and until the new military check points are removed, I don't think this mediation committee will get us anywhere," said Naser AL-Khabji leader of the movement in Radfan, Lahj governorate.

Yet, state officials are more optimistic especially that the situation on the ground is relatively calm with no more violence.

"The committee has not reached an agreement yet, but we are hoping it will do soon," said Ali Mater, Secretary General of the Local Council in Lahj governorate.

The committee was formed according to the president's instructions last Sunday after a weeklong violent demonstration resulted the death of two civilians and five soldiers in Lahj and Dhale governorates.

Simultaneously an unusual General People's Congress annual conference concluded on Wednesday May 6 with a strong message on the importance of Yemeni Unity and its protection. Opposition figures were invited to the inauguration ceremony, which included folklore dance from both southern and northern governorates hand in hand.

"Let us discuss our differences under the umbrella of democracy," said the President at the conference inauguration on Tuesday. The president directly addressed the Southern Movement leaders saying they should "come to understand each other without blocking roads, frightening passers-by or creating a culture of hatred."

However, Sultan Al-Atwani, Chairman of the opposition High Council for Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) commented during the conference that it is the responsibility of the



Celebration at the inauguration session of the General People's Congress including folklore dances from across the country.

government to rectify the situation in the south especially that "bad economic policies are the reason that got the country this low." Yet he encouraged for dialogue and institute on using institutional and legal ways for protest. "We in the JMP stand with every legal, constitutional and national demand for the sons of the southern and eastern governorates. At the same time, we are against every act that does not resolve the crisis."

During the conference, the president explained repetitively that the government is careful not to instigate wars. "We have never been warmongers. We have experience from the 26 September revolution up until now, and we know what the price of war is. The price of war is innocent blood, economic collapse and the destruction of public establishments."

However, representatives of the southern movement in Lahj said that they realize that no matter how good the mediation committee is, if it is not backed by strong political will to implement its recommendations it will be a failure similar to previous mediation committees on other conflicts around the country.

"The situation is still tense and the committee cannot reach to a unified decision especially since its members being civilians, politicians and military people have very different backgrounds and orientations," said Al-Khabji.

## No blackouts during holidays

By: Mahmoud Assamiee

SANA'A, May 6 — Citizens living in Sana'a enjoyed last weekend and Labor Day vacation with no power cuts, contrary to usual blackouts during work-days.

The demand for electricity increases in summer due to the great consumption of power for air conditioning said officials at Sana'a Electricity Control (SEC).

In addition to the increase in demand on electricity because of summer heat, the construction of expanding residential areas in the third and fourth zones of Sana'a are causing more pressure on the already exhausted network.

"In general, we are looking forward to when Mareb Gas Station will start working a few months from now," explained engineer Muneer Abdulsamad Al-Aghbari of the Forth Zone Emergency Station. "The current situation is difficult because some of the power stations running on diesel in other governorates, especially in Hodeida, are either under maintenance or broken down and so there is a deficit or shortage that needs to be covered."

Apparently the deficit could reach up to 40 or 50 megawatts. Half of this has to come from Sana'a, being the largest power consuming governorate in Yemen, while the other half is distributed across the country.

"In the past, we used to get notifications from the Electricity National Central Control if there was a 10-20 megawatt electricity shortage," said Head of Emergency Section at SEC Mohammad Musa'ed. "Nowadays, we receive daily information on shortages of electricity close to 50 megawatts in Sana'a."

When the shortage is reported, the central power control station sends an alert to the branch stations that in turn send alerts to the connecting stations ordering blackouts in certain areas. The sum of the saved electricity due to blackouts needs to cover half of the deficit.

"After we get orders of the shortage and there is a lot of pressure on the electricity network, we distribute the short-

age around the entire governorate by disconnecting power to all areas consecutively," said Musa'ed, creating rolling blackouts around the governorate.

For the increased shortages, hours of daily blackouts have been increased from two to four hours. "I have a program distributing 12 hours of rolling blackouts to all the governorate's areas, by one hour for every area one time a day. But sometimes we are forced to disconnect the electricity more than one time," said an engineer under condition of anonymity.

The governorate is divided into five main zones. Four of the zones constitute the main part of Sana'a while the fifth zone covers Sana'a's suburbs that have the least demand on electricity. Zones number three and four are the most power consuming areas in the governorate because of the population expansion and the continuous construction in these areas which cause stress on the network.

Musa'ed agreed that other causes are the increase of workshops and small factories which need high amounts of electricity for operation as well as poor electricity management by people.

"People themselves are responsible for managing the use of electricity. You can find families using lamps during the day with no need and you can also see them leaving the TV switched on from early morning till bedtime at night," said Musa'ed.

He also revealed that rich people and Yemeni officials consume the greater part of electricity. "They consume more than their need," Musa'ed stated.

"You can see big lamps that need more power are on walls of officials' villas during the daylight hours, let alone the great consumption inside," said another person working with Musa'ed.

Workshop owners are cursing the daily electricity cuts because of the great losses they incur due to the blackouts. "Nowadays, we have electricity blackouts four to five times a day causing trouble for my work and stopping my workers from doing anything productive," said Abdurrahman Othman, a shop owner who has nearly 22 workers.

Locals in southern governorates such as Lahj, Dhale and Abyan have witnessed a relatively calm few days compared to last week.

Abdullah Al-Asadi a soldier at Al-Habilain area in Radfan explained that life has returned almost back to normal except for a few gun shots fired at random by unknown people.

Head of the committee to resolve the conflict Abdulqadir Hilal who is currently apologized from commenting at the proceedings of the negotiations.

"The committee is still doing its best in Radfan to reach an agreement with the different bodies, and the results of the dialogue will be announced when they are done," stated Ali Mater, Secretary General of the Local Council in Lahj governorate.

Moreover, comments from the central level indicate that negotiation is the way forward as president Saleh insisted during the conference, "If there is any problem in any governorate, whether southern, northern, eastern or western, all problems can be resolved by dialogue and understanding, but it is very necessary to keep the peace and safety in all the governorates."

Agreeing with this notion was the opposition leader Al-Atwani, "Our duty today in the authority and in the opposition is to embody the meaning of partnership in defending the nation from any potential crisis that threatens all of us and doesn't exempt anyone."

Others bought dynamos to overcome losses caused by electricity. "I bought a dynamo with an output of 25 kilo watt costing me YR 700,000 to avoid losses caused by repeated electricity blackouts," said Abdul-Aziz al-Hakimi, the owner of several carpentry workshops with nearly 25 employees.

Concerning the rights of people to be notified about when electricity blackouts will take place, Musa'ed says it is very difficult to organize the process of electricity blackouts because the shortage is not only great but also is increasing.

"We can organize the process of electric blackouts and notify people about the timing of the blackouts, but this needs great efforts and coordination between us and the media outlets," said an official at Sana'a's Electricity Control who spoke under condition of anonymity because they have orders not to speak to media. "This process also will cost a lot of money, which is why people's right to be notified about electricity blackouts is generally ignored."

Last Tuesday, President Ali Abdullah Saleh chaired a cabinet's meeting and directed the government to speed up the completion of the Mareb Electric Gas Station (1) that will have a total output of 341 megawatts within a period that will not exceed three months.

He also directed the government to finish measures of the other Mareb (2) and Mareb (3) power station projects that will have an output of 800 megawatts in order to cover people's electricity needs. The president further directed the government to call investors to invest in the power field.

According to the General Manager of the General Corporation for Electricity Abdul-Mumen Mutahar, the current output of public electricity in the country is 1,350 megawatts with a power shortage of 150 megawatts.

In relevant news, al-ishtaki.net reported that the Al-Jawf power station is going to stop operation due to a lack of diesel in the governorate. Armed men from the Jahm Tribe are blocking the road leading to the governorate due to a car hijacking by the Dahm tribe, said locals.

## Ministry of Information prevents seven newspapers from distribution

By: Mohammad Bin Sallam

SANA'A, May 6 — The Yemen's Ministry of Information has ordered the publication of six Yemeni newspapers be removed from kiosks and bookshops.

The Ministry's action came after it issued a decree on Monday to suspend the publication of any paper with coverage "harming national unity and Yemen's unity," a reference to the coverage of the ongoing conflict in the country's southern region.

Yemen Times obtained a copy of handwritten directive by the Ministry of Information's Press General Director Ibrahim Abdul-Habib to seize the six newspapers: Al-Mustaqilla, Al-Masdar, Al-Watani, Al-Diyar, Al-Nida' and Al-Share' from kiosks and bookshops in the capital Sana'a. The directive is dated 4-5-2009.

In additions, security forces in Aden have surrounded Al-Ayyam since Monday and prevented the distribution of all 70,000 copies of the paper, under the pretext of harming Yemen's Unity and provoking rebellion.

Yemeni Journalists Syndicate's First Deputy Saeed Thabit told Yemen

Times that banning distribution of the newspapers is considered massacre of the Yemeni press and direct targeting of the unity's pillars of democracy and freedom of speech.

"The measures taken by Ministry of Information are a clear violation to constitution and deadly hit to relations between the authority and the press," said Thabit.

He called on the government to stop these unlawful measures coinciding with the World Press Freedom Day, expressing solidarity with all targeted newspapers, and called on all journalists to form a front to defend freedom of the press.

For his part, Sami Ghalib editor-in-chief of the suspended Al-Nida' expressed his sorrow at the government's measures: "When tensions mount in Yemen and in any non-democratic country, authorities always blame the press, saying that it created the crisis. Such criticism reveals the government's failure to resolve such crises."

"There was inciting speech against the press by the President last week," he added. "The Ministry of

Information considered the order to shut down and seized seven newspapers to be a presidential directive. This is a very dangerous tendency because the ministry is accusing these newspapers of instigating separation."

He concluded that, "Yemeni unity has been transformed into a mere pretext used by some to target newspapers and abolish freedom of speech, even though they write ordinary news which has nothing to do with unity; what is happening is personal issue with newspapers and journalists."

The Yemeni Journalists Syndicate expressed its extreme anxiety at the ministry's measures and considered these acts to be dangerous violations and severe aggressions. They were, he said, a shock to the Yemeni press and raised fear among all.

The syndicate warned of the danger of using crises as justifications to abolish freedoms and crack down on journalists, and called on civil society organizations and all political and social movements to unite to defend what is left of democracy against continuous targeting and the threat posed by the ministry.

## American court orders the release of a Yemeni Gitmo detainee

By: Khaled Al-Hilaly

SANA'A, May 5 — An American federal judge ordered on Monday the release of a Yemeni detainee from Guantanamo Bay after spending seven years in detention.

U.S. District Judge Gladys Kessler gave the government until June 15 to report back on the status of his release.

Alla Bin Ali Ahmed, a 26-year-old who is listed as Ali Bin Ali Aleh, was held in Guantanamo Bay as detainee number 692.

Ahmed is originally from Aden who had traveled to Faisalabad, Pakistan in October 2001. He stayed in a guest-house run by an Al-Qaida operative in Faisalabad for approximately four months and was captured by Pakistani security forces in March 2002. He was identified as an Al-Qaida associate according to the unclassified documents from the American Department of Defense.

Ahmed denied being a member of the Taliban or Al-Qaida and claimed he didn't receive any training while living in Pakistan. He stated that he only traveled to Pakistan to pursue higher edu-



Despite president's promise to return all the 97 Yemenis detained in Guantanamo by May this year, Ahmed is the first detainee likely to return so far.

cation, especially to study the Salafiah doctrine, the orthodox reform movement revitalizing the traditions held by the first Muslims.

Yemeni detainees are currently the largest group among approximately 250 men that have been held for years without being charged at Guantanamo Bay. At the beginning of this year, US President Barack Obama ordered the closure of the prison within one year, but Washington still wants to ensure

that those freed will not end up rejoining terrorist groups and intends to provide them with repatriation programs.

Mohi Al-Dhaby, Deputy Prime Minister at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has previously stated to Yemen Times that a rehabilitation center needs great funding and the issue of rehabilitating the returnees is not a domestic concern, but an international affair.

"They are Yemenis. They should come back to their country," he said.

## Police releases underage Yemeni girls involved in "immoral practice"

SANA'A, May 6 — As part of a two-week campaign aiming to rid the streets of Sana'a of immoral practices, the Criminal Investigation Unit in Sana'a has arrested up to 11 underage Yemeni girls for their alleged involvement in "moral crimes."

Many other park and club owners as well as concert organizers, of Yemeni, Saudi and Ethiopian nationality, were also arrested for immoral behavior. Most were released within 24 hours.

The campaign, under the slogan "Yes for cultural and historical tourism, no to prostitution tourism," which targeted parks, hotels, motels, resorts, and CD stores in Sana'a, started in mid April and concluded on May 4.

According to Abdullah Ali Jamil, head of Yemeni Organization for Knowledge and Cultural Dissemination, the police caught 23 Yemeni girls, 11 of whom were teenagers. "Some of these girls escaped from home, and others already had a criminal record for crimes like robbery, before they were arrested in these places."

"It was a shock to find underage Yemeni girls involved in such a practice, and working in such places," said Jamil, who was the first to raise a complaint to the Ministry of Interior, saying that there are a large number of unlicensed public and secret parks as well as dance clubs, described by the complaint as debaucheries, which "suddenly appeared in the capital."

"Some young reporters were following a story about chewing qat among Yemeni women, for one of the organization's publication called Youth Today. This story exposed a number of closed suspicious places where men and women secretly gathered. So I decided to inform the Ministry of Interior to follow up the issue," said Jamil, adding "but we never thought that we would find underage Yemeni girls there."

Jamil gave the example of a police raid on a hotel called Al-Sham Plaza, where 17 Saudis, between 24-40 years old, were arrested at around 9pm on Thursday while they were drunk and in possession of hashish and unidentified narcotic materials.

"The police also found nine Yemeni girls with them, two of them are 12-14 years old girls," he added.

A press release from the organization, which described the campaign as "the biggest moral campaign so far in Sana'a," said that the officials of Criminal Investigation, cooperating with 15 policewomen closed down and sealed with red wax, many establishments including the dance club in the Holiday Inn on Taiz Street and the clubs in Farah Land Park.

Some restaurants were engaged in unlawful practices. Moreover, the police arrested three concert organizers, a drug dealer, and 23 hotel and park owners of Yemeni, Ethiopian and Iraqi nationalities.

"However many of these girls, as

well as the men of other nationalities, were released due to interference to prevent the accused from being prosecuted over moral accusations," said Jamil, wondering about the reasons behind the police's discretion, who decided to handed over the girls to their families and close their cases.

It isn't clear what exactly the "moral crimes" are, as police officials refused to comment.

According to the Yemeni Law of Crimes and Punishment, obscenity and outrageous behavior is any action against public morals, including striptease. The Yemeni law also criminalizes prostitution and drinking alcohol.

A source in Ministry of Interior who asked not to be identified, said that it's difficult to disclose of the number of girls who are involved in "immoral practices" as their families never report their disappearance due to the social stigma which threatens their "family honor."

"Sometimes we [the police] know about the disappearance case just when we arrest the girl," he said.

"The majority of Yemenis, including police officials assume that the 'missing girl' is a girl who escapes her family and is involved in immoral practices."

There are few people who will consider such girls to be victims of blackmailing or kidnapping. So many families prefer not to report their daughters' disappearance."

In Brief

**Over 1875 Somalis reach Yemeni coasts in April**

Security authorities in the coastal governorates have reported that about 1875 Somali refugees reached the Yemeni coasts last April.

The reports showed that the refugees include 454 women and 71 children refugees from Somalia who have arrived at the coasts of Taiz, Shabwa, Hadramout and Abyan governorates, the Interior Ministry said.

It is worth mentioning that the number of Somalis who arrived in Yemen from January to April 2009 had reached 9000 refugees, according to initial statistics.

**751 people died in traffic accidents during 1st quarter of 2009**

Some 751 persons including 94 women died due to traffic accidents taken place during the first quarter of 2009 across the country, 26sep.net reported on Monday.

Statistics of the traffic department showed that these accidents resulted in injuring 4604 persons and material losses at YR 934 million.

During the same period, the department registered 232, 244 traffic breaches.

**SANA A**

**PM: Government works to improve economy**

Prime Minister Ali Mujawar said that the government is working to improve the economic growth of the nation and continuing reforms agenda.

In his speech to the second round of the 7th conference of the General People Congress party (GPC), Mujawar pointed out to the achievements of the government for period from December 2005 to April 2009 within the objectives of third five-year plan for development and poverty reduction.

He said that these achievements done because of gathering efforts and transparency in the state corporations under the continuing support of the

political leadership represented by President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

However, the prime minister indicated to challenges which have faced the nation, decrease of the oil production of the country, increase in prices of the basic goods, the issue of military retirees, disaster of flooding in Hadramout and al-Maharah and global financial crisis as well as terror attacks, kidnapping the tourists, piracy in Aden Gulf and Arabian Sea.

Such challenges and their impacts should be studied seriously by all government corporations and local councils as well as civil society organizations and political parties, he said.

He pointed out to the achievements in fields of roads, water, health, education and investment during the previous period.

The prime minister confirmed commitment of the government to carry out all tasks in spite of attempts that target the unity and the republican system of the nation.

**UAE Red Crescent delegation arrive**

A delegation of the UAE Red Crescent led by member of the board of directors Ali Saif al-Naseri arrived here in a few-day visit to Yemen.

Speaking to Saba, al-Naseri said that the visit came to carry out the directives of President of the United Arab Emirates Khalifa Bin Zayed al-Nahyan to construct 1000 housing units for the people, who have lost their houses during the floods and heavy rain hit Hadramout and Mahrah governorates last year.

A related understanding memo will be signed between the government and UAE Red Crescent during the visit, he said.

**U.S. renews support to Yemen's unity**

The United States renewed on Tuesday its support to Yemen and its unity, security and stability.

During his meeting with President Ali Abdullah Saleh, the U.S. ambassador Stephen Seche asserted that "The

United States is always with a united, stabilized and democratic Yemen"

Yemen's unification is an important factor for the security and stability in the region, he said

The meeting dealt with a number of issues concerning the bilateral ties and the joint cooperation fields between the two friendly countries

**LAHJ**

**Workshop on health surveillance in Lahj launched**

A workshop on health surveillance, organized by Statistics Management of the Public Health office in Lahj with support from the European Union, was launched here on Monday .

In the three-day workshop, 40 participants from different districts in the province will receive theoretical and practical lectures on controlling, assessing and verifying the data, statistics and information in fields of vaccination, productive health and primary health care.

The participants, in their turn, will supervise the training courses that will be organized in the districts for all health workers for improving health information system.

The Public Health Office's Director General Dr. Omar Zain indicated that the workshop's significance because it deals with a number of health issues related to the society health.

**Yemen, UNICEF HIV infection awareness meeting launched**

National Program to Combat AIDS in coordination with UNICEF organization held Monday the awareness meeting on the transmission of HIV infection from mothers to children for 20 health cadres in the Capital Secretariat.

The meeting dealt with the definition of AIDS, epidemiological situation nationally, regionally and globally and support leadership in the health facilities to provide health services to prevent HIV transmission from mothers to children.

During the meeting, director general

of the National Program to Combat AIDS Abdul-Hamid al-Suhaibi indicated the number of registered cases until the end of 2008 in the national program is 2564 cases including 863 women and 80 children.

**AMRAN**

**Amran's water basin depletion discussed**

A workshop organized by GTZ organization discussed here on Monday how to protect Amran's water basin from aimless use and depletion .

The workshop included discussion papers related to the total issues of water and the role of water partners in water conservation through putting an end to the random well drilling in the basin.

In the workshop, Undersecretary of Water and Environment Ministry Mohammed al-Hamdi along with Assistant-Undersecretary of the governorate Bakir Ali affirmed the importance of holding an intensive workshop to produce water issues as a main issue concerning all society people.

The two officials also affirmed the role of official and public bodies and civil organizations in raising awareness of preventing water depletion, indicating mechanisms and ways of reducing the unfair uses of water through using modern irrigation means.

They pointed out the joint concepts between the two laws of water and local authority and their relations in taking all actions so as to serve all goals of water law and its implications.

**TAIZ**

**Awareness campaign for combating cancer launched**

The Anti-Cancer National Foundation launched on Monday in Taiz province the second stage of the awareness campaign for combating cancer.

The campaign, which is held under the title "Early Detection...Saving Life" aims at defining the disease and its causes and prevention methods

A number of awareness lectures will be delivered for twenty days for 600,000 students targeting about 40 schools and Taiz University.

**ADEN**

**37 women benefit from ASEFF loans**

Aden Small Enterprises Financing Foundation (ASEFF) has loaned 37 women from Aden and Lahj governorates which estimate at YR719,000 to finance a number of small projects.

These loans are allocated for financing several projects such as candy shops, coiffure and sewing projects.

**CSOs network established**

A network of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) was established on Monday to work in fields of development and poverty alleviation at Aden governorate.

During the meeting held at the Safe Childhood Centre, the administrative body of the network was elected, consisting of nine members and headed by Mokhtar Ali al-Wasabi.

The meeting included a number of civil society organizations in partnership with Oxfam organization.

The Network seeks to implement the program of good governance in the basic education sector in collaboration with the Local Council and Oxfam.

**HODEIDAH**

**Port receives 13 ships, tankers during five days**

Port received during the last five days thirteen ships and oil tankers onboard 55,849,000 tons of petroleum products, woods, containers and cars.

According to a report by the port, 42,562 tons of oil and diesel and 491 cars were unloaded at the port. Three ships loaded 7,565,000 tons of woods while four other ships carried about 1,437 goods of containers.

Mocha Port has received 5,340 tons of diesel and 4,953 tons of diesel while one ship unloaded 9,875 sheep and cows, the report indicated.

On the other hand, Saleef Port has received 64,176,000 tons of corn.

**DHALEA**

**One killed, four others wounded in bomb explosion**

One person died and four others were injured including two of security forces due to bomb explosion in Dhale' governorate, southern Yemen, police said.

One of wanted outlaw element has detonated hand grenade in the middle of the market while security forces were trying to stop an illegal protest in the governorate.

The explosion killed the citizen Naser Ali Al-baidani, 27, deputy security director of the province said. He indicated that the other persons have been seriously injured and then hospitalized.

He affirmed that the forces will hunt down and punish those who are responsible on this criminal and cruel act, praising the citizens' stand against such acts.

**HADRAMOUT**

**Oxfam continues rural water rehabilitation projects**

Oxfam has continued the rehabilitation work of the networks of rural water projects in the rain-hit areas in October 2008, at an amount of 300 euros thousand.

Director of the project Mohammad Ali declared in a statement to Saba that the process of rehabilitation projects had included the replacement and rehabilitation of 3,357 meters of pipes in Ayn Valley, 9,000 meters in the water system of Adem Valley, 2,160 meters in Sair Valley and others.

The intervention of Oxfam in the rehabilitation projects of rural water is the result of the evaluation reports submitted by a technical team who visited the rain-affected areas, he said.

He also noted that the situation in the affected areas in Yemen is much better in comparison with areas exposed to similar disasters in Africa and South-East Asia.

Their News

**WEF Appoints Representative to Prague Multimedia News Lab**

The World Editors Forum has appointed journalism teacher and consultant Jean-Pierre Tailleux as its representative to help develop the Prague-based International Multimedia News Lab, a new initiative of PPF Media.

WEF, the organization within the World Association of Newspapers (WAN) for senior newsroom executives, also welcomed AteX as a strategic partner to the Prague Multimedia News Lab, which is intended to become a centerpiece of media industry education and training in Central and Eastern Europe and in the Commonwealth of Independent States. The centre is expected to start its activities later this month.

WEF is providing advisory and consulting services for news laboratory. Mr Tailleux, who has extensive international media experience, is to work in Prague as a representative of the PPF-WEF research centre, which is focused on the media evolution in Central and Eastern Europe.

PPF Media recently announced that a new strategic partner has joined the Prague Multimedia News Lab project: AteX, the media industry's leading supplier of software systems and services, which will provide training versions of its content management system, as well as its advisory services, for News Lab seminars. AteX is also a strategic business partner of WAN.

Roman Gallo, PPF director for media strategies, said: "We are delighted to invite Jean-Pierre Tailleux in our team of professionals and we wish him every success in his comprehensive research activity focused on new media trends in the CEE and CIS regions. We are also pleased that AteX Media will join the pool of the Prague Multimedia News Lab partners, alongside with World Association of Newspapers. We are proud to attract such a partner with the most advanced technical and software solutions for editorial systems and content management to be used in our training programs.

The Paris-based World Editors Forum (<http://www.worldeditorsforum.org>) is the organization of the World Association of Newspapers that represents editors-in-chief and other senior news executives. WAN, the global organization for the newspaper industry, represents 18,000 newspapers; its membership includes 76 national newspaper

associations, newspapers and newspaper executives in 122 countries, 12 news agencies and ten regional and worldwide press groups.

**Migrants Need to be Included in National Responses to Influenza A**

Governments need to include migrant communities in national response plans if measures to counter any possible pandemic of Influenza A (H1N1) are to be fully successful, says IOM.

Many governments had developed influenza and pandemic preparedness plans before the current outbreak which, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), has so far resulted in 331 confirmed cases in 11 countries. However, the needs of migrant populations had often not been taken into consideration. These now need to be so and urgently, if a global public health crisis is to be averted.

Migrants cover a widely diverse range of people including also irregular migrants, asylum-seekers, refugees, internally displaced people. The social exclusion or marginalization of some of these groups due to a lack of legal status and/or poverty often limits or prevents their access to health services. With the WHO alert raised to level 5 to indicate imminent pandemic, irregular migrants are especially vulnerable.

"The rapid spread of the H1N1 virus is testimony to the critical relation between human mobility and health. With migrants representing significant numbers within national populations and with the contagious nature of Influenza A which doesn't discriminate between nationals and non-nationals, it is in the public health interest of every community to ensure all people have access to clear information, treatment and care," says Jacqueline Weekers, Senior Migration Health Policy Advisor at IOM.

"Efforts should also be made to allay fears of irregular migrants who fall sick that they may be deported or face other repercussions if they seek medical assistance," Weekers adds. "All barriers to access need to be removed in such a situation."

Health information should be made available in linguistically and culturally appropriate formats, particularly among the largest migrant groups and at relevant locations, such as places of worship and community centres, to reach migrants. Focus should also be put on strengthening the capacities of and

within migrant communities to respond to a pandemic.

IOM fully supports WHO Director General Margaret Chan in her statement that the "international community should treat this as a window of opportunity ..... for global solidarity as we look for responses and solutions that benefit all countries, all of humanity. After all, it really is all of humanity that is under threat during a pandemic".

On its side, IOM is working in partnership with its 125 member states, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector to address the pandemic preparedness needs of migrants.

**Italy :CALL FOR PHD APPLICATIONS IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

The Politecnico di Milano (technical university) offers 58 PhD positions within the Information Technology (IT) PhD Program of the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department (DEI). The duration of the program is 3 years and admission is on a competitive basis. Most of the positions are supported by a scholarship with competitive salary and additional support for lodging is provided to foreign students.

Applicants must hold a master degree but also students that graduate in Italian universities by December 2009 can apply. Applications from foreign students and students from other Italian universities are especially encouraged.

The IT PhD Program offers young students graduated in scientific disciplines an international and stimulating environment for advanced training and research activities in the fields of Computer Science, Electronics, Systems and Control, Communications and Networks, with an emphasis on multidisciplinary approaches. The joint projects with renowned international research institutions make it easier to enter the world of international research, thanks to interaction with scientific personalities and visiting periods in laboratories worldwide. The industrial joint projects in applied research allow PhD students to become acquainted to the activities of today's most technologically advanced companies, thus gaining the knowledge necessary to a more conscious choice between a career in industry or in academia. More information is available at the web site of the IT PhD program ([www.dei.polimi.it/ricerca/dottorato](http://www.dei.polimi.it/ricerca/dottorato)).

The official call for applications is published by the end of February 2009 on the PhD school web site (<http://pcsi-wa12.rett.polimi.it/~phdweb/>).

Application deadline is 11th May, 2009 (check the call for the exact date). The PhD Program starts on January 1st, 2010. Please refer to the official call for details on the application procedure and requirements. The selection process is based on the CV, a motivation letter and recommendation letters. A phone interview may be also required. Preliminary contacts among applicants and faculty members of the DEI are highly encouraged. Please take a look at the list of professors of the department and their personal web pages, and to the research labs.

A list of PhD thesis proposals is also available (please consider that additional proposals can be obtained contacting directly faculty members). This should help applicants in selecting one or more potential research topics for the PhD. [www.dei.polimi.it](http://www.dei.polimi.it)

The Politecnico di Milano is a science and technology university producing engineers, architects and industrial designers through a variety of innovative specializing courses, with great attention being devoted to all sides of education. The Politecnico di Milano was established in 1863 and is now ranked as one of the most outstanding European technical universities.

The "Dipartimento di Elettronica e Informazione" (DEI) is one of the largest European ICT departments in Europe, both for its size and for the quality of its research. With over 600 members, researchers, collaborators, PhD students, technical and administrative staff, the Department is a vital institution capable of promoting education, fundamental and applied research, and technology transfer to companies. The quality of the research work is demonstrated by the broad network of partnerships with the best international institutions, which makes the Department one of the fundamental players in the worldwide scenario of scientific and technological innovation.

The orientation towards the future goes together with a tradition of excellence matured in over 60 years of activity. The result is an environment favorable to the growth of talented people, to the creation of new ideas and enterprises, to the collaboration with private companies and public institutions. DEI:

PhD Program secretary: Dr. Danila Ferrara ([ferrara@elet.polimi.it](mailto:ferrara@elet.polimi.it))

**EPSRC PhD Plus Fellowships Session 2009/10**

The University of Leeds is offering up to 5 prestigious EPSRC Postdoctoral Fellowships, which are available to excellent scientists and engineers wishing to establish a career in research. The aim of this scheme is to increase the impact of the PhD in terms of publications, knowledge transfer and outreach activities as a first step into an independent research career.

These Fellowships (starting no later than 1 October 2009) are available for a maximum of 12 months.

As the programme is offering the first step into a research career, candidates must have submitted a PhD (the viva does not need to have taken place) by 30 September 2009. Applicants who have been offered or already have a permanent position are considered to have already achieved the aims of the programme and therefore will not be eligible. The programme is designed to offer support and be flexible.

**Areas of Research**

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**Value of the Fellowship**

Salaries will be on Grade 6 (Spine 23-29) £24,152 - £28,839 or Grade 7 (Spine 30-36) £29,704 - £35,469. A fellowship grant of up to £15,000 is also available to be used to increase the impact of the PhD.

Further information on the scheme and an application form are available can be downloaded from:

PhD Plus Fellowship Application Form (Attached to this e-mail)

Further Particulars (Attached to this e-mail)

Reference Form (Attached to this e-mail)

Supporting Statement (Attached to this e-mail)

Completed application forms, together with a detailed CV (including full academic history, research and publications to date) should be returned to [scholarships@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:scholarships@leeds.ac.uk) by 1 June 2009.

Interviews are likely to be held in June/July 2009.

**The Embassy of Turkey in Sana'a announces for job opening of**

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# Teachers are the key to better education in Yemen

By: Ola Al-Shami

While most citizens of the world are struggling to preserve their national identities and are protecting their cultures from foreign influence, people everywhere are starting to agree on the importance of children learning English, or, for English speaking nations, the importance of learning a second language. In Yemen, citizens are increasingly realizing the significance of a good English foundation and being bilingual in order to compete in a globalized world. There is no doubt that well qualified, well trained teachers are key to achieving this goal.

The development of English as a global language is one of the most remarkable phenomena of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. English has become sufficiently universal to the point where it can be used as a global medium for communication between speakers of many languages.

In the last few years, governments across the world have embarked on ambitious educational reforms which will integrate English more deeply into the education curriculum. English will cease to be a foreign language for many of the world's citizens as it becomes a basic skill learned by primary school children alongside other 21st century skills in information technology.

Although there are 11,930 English teachers in Yemen, over 70 percent are post-secondary school graduates in dire need for better training. "We benefit a lot when we attend any training courses. By using new techniques your teaching becomes ideal," said Lubna Mohammed, an English teacher at Ma'een School.

Over the past few years, projects from several international non-government organizations with support from the Ministry of Education have started on a number of projects to improve learning English in Yemen. These projects build the abilities of teachers and train them to teach English using interactive and cre-

ative methods.

The British Council is currently training English as a Foreign Language (EFL) public school teachers. "We try to change the traditional teaching style from Arabic to English, which is based on translation, by adopting a communicative environment," said Julie Cave Smith, the British Council English Projects Manager for Yemen. She added that teachers can teach and use language inside classrooms actively even with limited resources.

Transferring and following up on English teachers will guarantee the effectiveness of the training programs and workshops. "We trained about 25 teachers from different areas in Ibb, Sana'a, Taiz and others, and we supervised those who will then transfer what they learned to their teachers in their own areas" said Smith. "Trainee teachers will deliver training practically to their schools and will consequently become trainers themselves," she added.

"We as teachers should know how to increase students' competence when teaching English through increasing their communicative abilities," said Amal Al-Matari, an English teacher at Aisha School for girls.

## Challenges in training English teachers

"Training English teachers is somewhat difficult because of the lack of training halls. There are some programs that are not accredited from the Training and Qualifying Section at the Office of Education," said Ali Al-Jadhri, Deputy Director of Training at the Office of Education. He added that the teachers are very important for improving English language in Yemen. "Their weak teaching methods resulted in incompetent language learners."

"Limited basic resources, the large size of classes, and the fact that most teachers have little or no qualifications in some schools, particularly in rural areas, all contribute to the problem of learning English," said Prof. Abdullah Lamlas, an official in the Training Section at the



Very few schools provide the pupils with interesting interactive education. As a result of which, the outcomes from the Yemeni educational system do not satisfy the market demand.

Ministry of Education.

The volatile security situation and political instability have also affected the country's education. Many projects are receiving less priority largely due to the threats that are happening in a number of governorates. "We were planning to host an expert in the coming months, but because of the security situation here he was not able to come," Smith said.

Despite the challenges, several national and international institutions are trying to implement new teaching and learning methodologies in the field of English acquisition. There are even some Yemeni teachers who attended general teacher training in the UK, which was expensive as stated by the 2007 country survey made by the British Council.

However, sometimes the teachers' education level is one of the obstacles faced by the British Council and the training section at the Ministry of Education. "We plan to train teachers with certain things in order to develop their capacities, but sometimes we do not achieve much because some trainees lack essentials skills in teaching," Smith stated.

Students have different reactions towards English teaching and learning in Yemen. "There are no effective methods for teaching English. If doesn't matter if we studied English from grade three or four or seven because it will all have the same result. This is because teachers' methods depend almost exclusively on memorization and repetition," said Ghadeer Hussein, a graduate from Al-Thawra school for girls. She also complained about the lack of facilities that help student comprehend and practice language. "There are no learning facilities and I have never listened to cassettes or seen a recorder in the classroom."

Teachers are arguing that the weakness of their students leads them to translate while they are teaching. "Location of the school is important. For example, the students in old Sana'a are not motivated to learn, especially girls who get married early," Amal Al-Solwi added.

## Communication not translation

Most teachers using translation in class make no efforts in preparing their lessons because they only go to class and trans-

late the lesson texts and vocabularies. This method creates students who are competent in translation but face communication problems when they are exposed to real life situations.

Currently, there are some training courses provided by the Ministry of Education as well as by donors programs and projects. "The in-service training of teachers, headmasters and supervisors will increase the quality of education and improve the communicative learning environment too," Al-Jabr Al-Murieh said.

English student Nada Taher commented on this by saying, "A good teacher taught us when I was in grade eleven at Al-Thawra School, but most of the students opposed him because he was assigning us to write stories and jokes and explain them in English."

Despite the poor methodology, English learning is often accompanied with translation. "It is a new language. How do our teachers expect us to understand it without translation?" asked Arwa Al-Matari, a student in the eighth grade Sam School for girls.

Even English students at the University complain about the traditional and boring way of teaching in universities. "In the English department, we are supposed to listen as much as we can, especially during spoken lectures, and every thing is traditional," said Hayan Mahmoud, a student in the Department of English at Arhab College. "This gives us no chance to practice speaking English ourselves."

Education in rural areas suffers from a lack of quality and also lacks an adequate number of qualified teachers. "Officially there are only eleven teachers in this school, but not all of them attend because there is no administration or self accountability," said Mohsen Ahssan, a teacher at Al-Hussein School at Khawlan district.

He added that teachers need to be equipped with interactive teaching methods in order to attract children who would normally be working on a farm instead of attending school.

"Training will help create awareness among us. I would do away with old teaching methods and willingly accept changes that could help my students become more competent," said Mohammed Ahmed, an English teacher at the 30 of November School.

In the future, monolingual English-speaking graduates will find it difficult to compete, even in their own countries, with job applicants from other countries who speak several languages fluently, who are more internationally mobile, and are more experienced in intercultural communication. Universities across the world are now able to attract international students who might otherwise have gone to English-speaking countries by teaching their courses through the medium of English.

Even if students never have a cross-linguistic or cross-cultural encounter, there are cognitive and academic benefits to language study. Research studies have noted the cognitive correlations of early bilingualism; studies of early foreign language learning have shown that bilingual students may out-perform comparison groups on measures of reading and math.

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## VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) invites Yemeni Nationals to apply for the following position with its project **Advisory Support Services to the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MoPIC)**



- 1- **Post Title: National Expert in Planning and Policy Development**  
**Duration: one year (renewable)**  
**Duty Station: Sana'a (MoPIC)**

### Responsibilities:

- Assist the international expert to undertake production of strategic papers for the banking sector and financial sustainability.
- Conduct assessment studies on the problems of the banking sector.
- Prepare working papers on the financial market.
- Make proposals and reform policies in the banking sector.
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- Study the structural composition of the general budget of the state.
- Study the development in the domestic and the external public debt.
- Help in managing and administer the day-by-day operations to ensure the effective implementation of the activities of above mentioned project
- Undertake any other related tasks at the request of the project management

### Qualification:

- At least 5 years working experience either in the banking sector or organizations dealing with economic, monetary and fiscal policies.
- Hold a university degree in economics, finance or any social science field.
- Proficiency in English and Arabic Languages (spoken and written).
- Excellent communication skills.
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- 2- **Post Title: Executive Secretary**  
**Duration: one year (renewable)**  
**Duty Station: Sana'a (MoPIC)**

### Responsibilities:

- Prepare correspondence and offer documents as required on general administrative or specialized tasks, maintain a log on incoming/outgoing correspondence;
- Provide translation and interpretation when necessary (Arabic/English);
- Maintain appropriate inventory records of office material and equipment and prepare the corresponding reports.
- Assist in the logistics preparation and implementation of training, workshops, meetings and other awareness activities (exhibitions, fairs) pertaining to the Programme.
- Keep records and maintain general office files and keep information and reference in a manner that allows easy retrieval.
- Assist in assembling briefing material, documentation and correspondence for the use in official meetings or missions;
- Provide secretarial assistance to the Minister of Planning and Deputy Minister of Planning in charge of macroeconomics as the national project counterparts.
- Undertake other office duties which may be requested by the project

### Qualification:

- Post secondary training in secretarial skills, business administration or other relevant areas;
- Organized and pay attention to detail;
- Flexibility and willingness to learn;
- Good computer skills in both English and Arabic;
- Good knowledge of the Internet;
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills;
- Excellent oral and written communication skills in English and Arabic;
- Previous experience in working with UNDP projects is an asset.

Interested candidates are requested to visit our website at: <http://www.undp.org.ye> for detailed term of reference of the position and may submit their applications indicating the title of the post applied for by mail to Human Resources Unit and response will only be made to short listed candidates.

UNDP, P.O.Box 551 Sana'a E-mail: [hr.ye@undp.org](mailto:hr.ye@undp.org)

The deadline for receiving applications is Tuesday, 12 May 2009.

UNDP is an equal opportunity organization and qualified female candidates are strongly encouraged to apply.

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

### Shipping Agent

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#### Required Qualifications:

**Education:** Completion of secondary school.

**Work Experience:** One to three years of progressively responsible experience in customs work or a closely related field.

**Language Proficiency:** Fluent Arabic and a strong working ability in spoken and written English.

**Knowledge:** Good working knowledge of Yemen clearance regulations and customs procedures.

**Skills and Abilities:** Must be able to work well and efficiently with Yemen Government officials. Must be able to type in Arabic and English (40/wpm).

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

**How to apply:** All interested nationals should complete OF-612 or submit a current C.V. and a letter of application (with awards, recommendation letters, copies of degrees earned) that addresses the qualifications and requirements of the position as listed above and contact the Embassy Human Resources Office, American Embassy, Dhahr Himyar Street, Sana'a or e-mail [hrosanaa@state.gov](mailto:hrosanaa@state.gov) no later than the May 18, 2009

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- ¥ Tact and Discretion
- ¥ Very Good communication skills

Applications should be submitted no later than May 15, 2009 to:

MALI, 44 Djibouti St., Hadda, Sana'a  
 Ph: ++ 967 1 446103  
 Fax: ++ 967 1 449269  
 email: [registration@mali.com.ye](mailto:registration@mali.com.ye)

# “If you desire peace, cultivate justice”

**In awarding the Nobel Peace Prize to the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 1969, the Nobel Committee referred to the motto enshrined in the foundations of the ILO's original building in Geneva, “Si vis pacem, cole justitiam” - “If you desire peace, cultivate justice.” As we mark the centenary of the Nobel Peace Prize, it is worth recalling what inspired these words and why they remain relevant.**

**By Juan Somavia  
Director-General of the  
International Labour Organization**

## ILO History

The ILO has lived through one of the most turbulent centuries in human history. Delivering the Nobel Lecture in Oslo on 11 December 1969, the Director-General of the ILO, David Morse said “there are still dangerous explosives in the hidden depths of the community...the defusing of these explosives, and the building of a truly peaceful world order based on social justice, is the task of the ILO.” Established in 1919 as part of the Treaty of Versailles, the ILO's Constitution begins with the affirmation “that universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice”. The ILO was founded to promote the fundamental rights of workers, to promote remunerative employment, to provide social protection and to improve conditions of work through social dialogue. It is the only public international organization, and the only one in the United Nations system, which is tripartite, where workers and employers enjoy equal rights with governments in representation and decision-making.

The ILO lived through the Great Depression and was the only part of the League of Nations system which survived the Second World War. The experience of war compelled the Organization to reaffirm its principles for the post-war world. This resulted in the adoption of the Declaration of Philadelphia in 1944 which now forms part of the Constitution of the ILO. The key significance of the Philadelphia Declaration was that it placed the human being at the centre of development and expanded the mandate of the Organization to embrace the realm of economic and financial policy. It firmly established the notion that economic and social policies were interdependent. In the words of the Declaration, “All human beings, irrespective of race, creed or sex, have the right to pursue both their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity....It is the responsibility of the International Labour Organization to examine and consider all international and financial policies and measures in the light of this fundamental objective.”

In the decades following the Second World War, the ILO moved swiftly and creatively to navigate its passage through a period of ideological confrontation and decolonization. It was during this period that the ILO concretized its global commitment to build peace through orderly social change within countries, as a prerequisite for peace between countries. That goal remains perennially relevant.

By any measure, the ILO has been highly successful by providing a framework of law, institutions and public advocacy to bring social progress to many nations, particularly in the industrialized countries, where social change since 1919 has been remarkable. The ILO also helped to underpin the social and political stability of the post-war world by creating a structure of international law upon which national laws could be based, and by the development of institutions for voice and social dialogue. During the cold war, the Organization maintained its universality while insisting uncompromisingly on its basic values and the manner in which they were to be implemented. All this was no less than building the social infrastructure for peace. ILO standards provided a basis for orderly social change and its technical programmes contributed to social stability

and eased the traumas of poverty and unemployment.

## Responding to Globalization

With the end of the cold war and the acceleration of globalization, the Organization is once again displaying its capacity for adaptation and renewal by crafting a response to address the widespread anxiety over the effects of globalization.

Many aspects of the world at the beginning of the 21st century resemble those at the beginning of the 20th century. In terms of development, opportunity and technology, the relative gaps between the haves and have-nots still exist: 1.2 billion people live in poverty and 1 billion are unemployed or underemployed. Half the world's population lives on less than 2 dollars a day.

While some believe that globalization is the source of wealth and welfare, others think that globalization is the source of persistent inequality and social exclusion. For too many people the world seems full of opportunities but they do not see how to connect their lives to the opportunities available. Growing insecurity and a sense that the rules of the game are unfair give rise to silent frustrations in the hearts of many individuals and their families. Questions of legitimacy and sustainability have led to increasingly acrimonious exchanges, most visible in the protests that regularly accompany major meetings of the international financial and trade institutions.

Clearly the present model of globalization is losing support. What is needed is globalization with equity. The ILO is helping to craft a model of glob-

## Decent Work

The goal of decent work connects with people's hopes to obtain productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. It is about jobs and future prospects; about working conditions; about balancing work and family life, putting children through school or getting them out of child labour. It is about gender equality, equal recognition, and enabling women to make choices and take control of their lives. It is about your personal abilities to compete in the market place, keep up with new technological skills and remain healthy. It is about not being discriminated against; it is about having a voice in your workplace and your community. In the most extreme situations it is about moving from subsistence to existence. For many, it is the primary route out of poverty. For many others, it is about realizing personal aspirations in their daily existence and about solidarity with others. And everywhere, and for everybody, decent work is about securing human dignity.

How can the goal of decent work be achieved? The ILO sees it as the synthesis of four strategic objectives. Achieving universal respect for fundamental principles and rights at work; the creation of greater employment and income opportunities for women and men; extending social protection and promoting social dialogue. These objectives are closely intertwined. Respect for fundamental principles and rights is a precondition for the construction of a socially legitimate and equitable labour market; and social dialogue the means by which workers and employers achieve this. Employment creation is the essential instrument for raising living standards and widening access to incomes. Social protection is the means to provide security of income and of the working environment.

Promoting gender equality in the world of work is central to the work of the ILO. While poverty affects both men and women, there are gender-based differences in the processes that make them poor. In the world of work, women earn less, are more often unem-

attempt to reproduce labour conditions of advanced countries in least developed countries. Instead, it responds to shared expectations of citizens around the world, that every country set its own goals with due regard to national circumstances and realities.

Today, there is a massive decent work deficit expressed in the absence of sufficient employment opportunities, inadequate social protection, the denial of rights at work and failures in social dialogue. The objective of the ILO is to reduce this deficit, and we do it in a number of ways.

## Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work

The ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work marked a reaffirmation by member States to “respect, to promote and to realize in good faith” the right to freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, and to the elimination of all form of forced or compulsory labour, the effective abolition of child labour and the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation. These rights are valid in all countries - at whatever stage of development - whether the sweatshops and “inner cities” of the North, or the shanty towns and export processing zones of the South. They are universal enabling rights. The most fundamental of these rights is the right to voice - to organize and be heard, to be able to defend your interests and to collective bargaining. It is the foundation on which other rights can be fully exercised.

The Declaration places an obligation on all member countries of the ILO to respect the fundamental principles involved, whether or not they have ratified the relevant ILO Conventions. The Declaration stresses that labour standards should not be used for protectionist trade purposes. It is promotional in nature and provides information about economic and social development needs relating to these rights and principles, thereby assisting in the design of technical cooperation programmes.

Protecting children is one of the essential elements in pursuit of social justice and universal peace. Child labour works against investment in human capability, against the provision of decent and dignified work and against the reduction of poverty. In its worst forms, it robs children of their health, their education and even their lives. The ILO estimates that 250 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 are at work. In June 1999 a new Convention concerning the worst forms of child labour was adopted which has enjoyed the most rapid rate of ratification in ILO history. A growing number of countries are seeking assistance from the ILO's International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). IPEC goes beyond trying to stop children from working. It tries to promote development by providing adequate educational alternatives to children, and access to income and security for the parents.

How does the ILO promote workers' rights? To begin with, a major responsibility of the ILO is to legislate international labour standards. The tripartite support of workers, employers and governments gives them an unparalleled social legitimacy. When ratified by national Parliaments, they become national law. The ILO has an independent supervisory system that monitors the implementation of these standards in a transparent and systematic way. National law gives ILO Conventions local enforcement power. At the national level, there may be labour courts, mediation systems or other institutions to support putting standards into practice. Strong labour inspection systems have not only a policing, but also an educational role, which technical cooperation can help to strengthen.

## Decent Employment and Income Opportunity

In order for work to be decent, there must first be work. The ILO is playing its part as the lead agency in the field of employment and enterprise creation at the national level, as well as in joint activities with international financial

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institutions and other UN agencies.

The World Employment Report is the ILO's flagship publication in the employment field. Key Indicators of the Labour Market, another wide-ranging reference tool, provides the reader with concise explanations and analysis of data on the world's labour markets. Country employment reviews help member States give substance to their commitment to full, productive and freely chosen employment through an appropriate choice of economic and social policies. While most countries now prioritize skills development, investment in human resource development by both private and public sectors remains inadequate. The ILO deals with these issues through a programme on knowledge, skills and employability.

Sustained growth of enterprises is essential to employment creation and economic growth in open economies. The ILO has developed a wide range of enterprise-related programmes, with particular emphasis on entrepreneurship development, management training and small enterprise promotion. In terms of generating jobs, the ILO's main emphasis is on the promotion of small enterprises and the upgrading of micro-enterprises in the informal sector which generate most new jobs worldwide.

## Social Protection for All

Access to an adequate level of social protection is recognized in the ILO's Declaration of Philadelphia and a number of international labour standards as a basic right of all individuals. Yet in many countries reality falls short of the ideals of the Declaration. About 80% of the world's population is excluded from any type of formal social security protection. The ILO recognizes that while excessive security can induce passivity, adequate economic and social security is essential for productive work and human dignity.

Work-related accidents and diseases are a serious problem in both developed and developing countries. The ILO estimates that workers suffer 250 million accidents a year. ILO action in the field of occupational safety and health pursues a two-pronged approach. It creates alliances and partnerships with governments, social partners, NGO's and human rights groups in advocacy campaigns. The ILO also supports action at the national level through direct technical assistance, with particular focus on hazardous occupations.

Adequate working conditions are central to the achievement of long-term sustainable growth, good living standards and social harmony. Major ILO activities cover labour inspection, fighting substance abuse at work, maternity protection, violence at work, changes in working time arrangements and organization of work. Some 90 million people now work and live outside their country and nationality, and their numbers are growing rapidly in some regions on account of worsening economic imbalances. The ILO works to protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of migrants for employment. Of particular concern are women migrants who are often in low-skilled occupations and vulnerable to exploitation.

## Strengthening Tripartism and Social Dialogue

Achieving the objectives of decent

work for all requires strong social partners and effective social dialogue and tripartism. Tripartism is the distinguishing characteristic of the ILO among other international organizations. Fair terms of employment, decent working conditions, economic and social development can only be achieved with a broad based effort and the consent of workers, employers and governments. The ILO helps them to establish sound labour relations, adapt labour laws to meet changing economic and social needs and improve labour administration. The ILO assists workers' and employers' organizations to reach out to new constituencies, especially women and youth, and to improve the quality of services they offer to their members.

## A Social Pillar for the Global Economy

The ILO is working with others in the international community, national governments, and workers and employers groups, to create a system of common values and policies so that more countries and individuals are able to benefit from opportunities in the global economy.

This requires greater policy integration at the level of different institutions and the development community, and placing employment at the core of development and poverty eradication policies. For example, the ILO is working with the Bretton Woods institutions to build the goals of employment and decent work into country-level poverty reduction strategies. We are a part of the United Nations Policy Network on Youth Employment, a partnership between the United Nations, the World Bank and the ILO to determine what works in combatting youth unemployment. And we work with UNCTAD on making employment part of the strategy for the least developed countries.

The global economy can deliver decent jobs and enhance security as a foundation of sustainable development. Many of the factors which need to be tackled lie in the global economy, such as trade, capital flows and cross-border production systems. Promoting decent work also means changing the way the global economy works, so that its benefits reach more and more people.

Cultivating justice and achieving peace in a globalizing world will need a greater sense of common purpose to shared goals at the international and national levels. It requires integrated thinking to address the integrated problems of society and the economy. It means guiding policy-making with a moral compass, ensuring that decisions are based on universally shared principles of equity and equality, without losing sight of the need for sustained economic growth. It is about linking justice and economic progress in practical ways.

While many international instruments and institutions already exist, no single institution can generate social progress in the global economy on its own. The ILO's Decent Work Agenda is a realistic means to combine social progress and economic efficiency. It is a blueprint without borders, leading us in the direction of greater equity, security and stability. The ILO intends to make it an important contribution in the worldwide movement to globalize social justice and secure peace.

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alization that benefits the poor and excluded, and which reduces uncertainty and increases opportunities for all.

To begin with, we should look at globalization through the eyes of people and be capable of responding to their hopes and needs. The essence of what people want remains constant, across cultures and levels of development. Everybody seeks a fair chance to prosper in life by their own endeavours. They also want a second chance when they take risks and fail. Under these circumstances, it is clear that the kind of future people want is one that can deliver opportunities for decent work in a sustainable environment.

Even in the midst of globalization, the meaning of work in people's lives has not changed. Work is a defining feature of human existence. It is the means of sustaining life and of meeting basic needs. It is also the activity through which individuals affirm their own identity, both to themselves and to those around them. It is crucial to individual choice, to the welfare of families and to the stability of societies.

ployed, and largely restricted to low-skilled, part-time, informal, unregulated and unstable jobs. Women tend to receive inadequate social protection, or none at all. And in most circumstances, breaking out of poverty is more difficult for women than for men. A gender perspective is therefore an imperative for the ILO, not merely for reasons of equity and fairness, but also because it is part of the very substance of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda.

The Decent Work Agenda is also an integrated vision of development. The ILO has consistently maintained that economic and social development are two aspects of the same process which sustain and reinforce each other. Decent work promotes employment, participation and social equity - the foundations of the development process. At the ILO, we seek to mainstream development into all our activities with a specific focus on the problems of the working poor, for it is among the workers in the informal economy that the problems of poverty and social exclusion are greatest.

The Decent Work Agenda does not

## 'Terrorism' Industry on the Yemen-Saudi border!

By: Nasser Ghaleb Al-Qahtani

The news published by Financial Times newspaper on April 24, 2009 indicated that Al-Qaeda is planning to attack Saudi Arabia according to General Mansour Al-Turkey, spokesman for the Saudi Ministry of Interior. The Al-Qaeda organization in Yemen changed its name this year to become "Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula" in order to attract Saudi extremists as well as armed Yemenis and place them under one umbrella.

The newspaper clarified that the organization distributed a video threatening to conduct attacks against Saudi Arabia. As a result, the Saudi government issued a list of 83 wanted criminals that included two Yemeni nationals wanted by security. It revealed the threat that Al-Qaeda in Yemen constitutes not only against Saudi Arabia but also against other neighboring countries.

Cells of Al-Qaeda have been organizing themselves for many years, according to press reports. The appearance of Hussein Badr Al-Din Al-Houthi and his supporters in the northern mountains of Yemen who continue to fight against the government even after Al-Houthi's death have only made the situation on the Saudi border

worse. It is yet to be seen whether or not the Yemeni government truly understands the ramifications of this dangerous rebellion, particularly in Yemeni areas situated near the Saudi border where activities of Al-Qaeda in Yemen were and are still being conducted.

No doubt that statements and warnings of the Saudi Ministry of Interior came from a reliable source. In fact, these warnings were based on reports on Al-Qaeda's movements and actions in the border region with Yemen. As a result, Al-Qaeda cells in Yemen were specifically targeted with regards to Al-Qaeda's intension to target Saudi interests in India, particularly Saudi planes at the Mumbai airport, the Saudi consulate and Saudi Airways Office in India.

Pakistani authorities received similar threats from Al-Qaeda, which embarrassed Yemeni authorities due to the increase of Al-Qaeda's activities in Yemen during the past years. A press release issued by Al-Qaeda in Yemen published recently pointed out that the new vice-leader of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula is Abu Sayyaf Al-Shehri, the man who was formerly imprisoned in Guantanamo Bay and released in 2007. Al-Shehri came back to Saudi Arabia, his original home, and then travelled to Yemen a month ago.

The statement published by internet

websites said that Abu Sayyaf is the name used for Al-Shehri by members of Al-Qaeda. Jihadists use alternatives or nicknames for the first names of people who are affiliated with their terrorist cells in an effort to make capture of various terrorists increasingly difficult for authorities. Al-Shehri had gone through a rehabilitation program in a center specialized for former jihadists in Saudi Arabia before his return to Al-Qaeda in Yemen was disclosed.

The danger of terrorism that Al-Qaeda in Yemen poses is extremely severe. It needs strict treatment, particularly with the increase of the latest threats which prompted Saudi security authorities to move swiftly to face this potential danger. They increased the preparation, training and qualification of guards at construction locations throughout Saudi Arabia, particularly at oil locations where at least 30,000 security members are deployed in vital locations.

In addition, Yemeni and Saudi security apparatuses tracked down the locations of Al-Qaeda activities in Yemen and their criminal sites, particularly in some areas located near the Yemen-Saudi border.

I learned from official sources in Yemen that Yemeni official reports revealed that Al-Qaeda aims to attract youth from Yemeni villages where people suffer from poor living stan-

dards. Al-Qaeda exploits their weakness and 'humiliation' they feel over their poverty level to engage them in terrorist activities of Al-Qaeda that target foreign tourists.

I also know that in 2006 Al-Qaeda activities in Yemen resumed after Nasser Al-Wihaishi, a former head of the organization, escaped from prison in Sana'a along with a group of Al-Qaeda members.

I don't know whether the 1500 kilometer electrical fence that Saudi Arabia and Yemen are determined to set up will curtail the infiltration of terrorists or not. However, the most important issue that should be taken into account is the rehabilitation of residents of border villages, particularly in the Yemeni towns and cities of Sa'ada, Dhamar, Mareb, and Hodeida, as well as villages in the rural areas of the northern governorates and other areas, in order to face any potential ideological danger. These residents should be made aware of the evil of terrorism in order to reject supplying these terrorists with villagers. They should be taught about resisting the urge to join networks of Al-Qaeda and its latent cells located inside villages and caves that are scattered throughout the Yemeni countryside.

Source: Alarabeya.net

## COMMON SENSE

### Secession is unforgivable and out of the question North and South Yemen again? No way!

For many of the gripes that many outspoken Yemenis, who mistakenly claim to be echoing the grievances of our fellow Yemenis in the Southern and Eastern Governorates of the REPUBLIC OF YEMEN, this observer is inclined to suggest very strongly that the latter's claim is neither true or legitimate. This suggestion is reinforced by the audacity of these claimants to demand for the reestablishment of an "independent South Yemen". In fact this observer is of a strong belief that such calls are not laced with good intentions and are actually a product of an unholly and unforgivable assertion that South Yemen is an autonomous regional geographical entity that has been in existence even before Adam set forth on this planet. Moreover these claimants will go further and state that this independence is also justified by the not so easily discernible attribute of a "Southern" identity. One could probably state this would be more so in the United States (at least before the American Civil War, which lasted from 1861 - 1865).

Throughout the history of Yemen, there has never been a North - South divide of any caliber existing, whether geographically, demographically or even politically. The "South Arabian Federation" was a British last ditch effort to save their hold on the Crown Colony, which was never recognized by the populations, while the British themselves were quick to recognize the right of the Imam of Yemen to keep a viceroy in Aden, to confirm his sovereign authority over all of Yemen. This was also in lieu of the North of Yemen maintaining a status quo of the British presence in Aden, which should not compromise on the holistic sovereignty of the country. This tacit unity of Yemen was the overriding reason that made the Yemen Arab Republic (the inheritor of Imamic rule in Yemen in 1962, the strong instigator of the fight against the British which eventually led to the independence of the South in 1967. With the Yemen Arab Republic fatigued from a war against the royalists, who were trying to reinstate the Imamate and with supporting the rebellion in the South against the British, the Government in Sana'a could not enforce the unity of Yemen at the time and some of the leaders of the Southern rebellion had opted to align themselves with Moscow and the Government in Aden became more radically leftist than Che Guevara during the tense years of the Cold War. If that might be the cause for the claim for this unique identity, then it is surely not what the people of Yemen look to with favor, whether in the Northern and Western Governorates or the Southern and Eastern Governorates. Even then, our Southern brothers were energetically supporting a leftist insurrection in the North, with the eventual hope of uniting all of Yemen under the hammer and sickle. I am sure our brothers in the South calling for the independence of their "homeland" do still recall this ugly insurrection, where hundreds of thousands of land mines still pose a threat to many innocent civilians in the Central and Highlands of Yemen.

Thus, it is impossible to see how these no so loyal Yemenis can claim to have their own identity, when they know full well that Yemenis throughout Yemen identify with each other without difficulty, whether they come from Al-Mahara or Sa'ada, Hadhramaut or Ta'ez, Kamaran or Socotra. This is clearly discernible in the areas where large numbers of Yemeni emigrants reside, who collectively regard themselves as a Yemeni community. On the other hand, our seekers of their own separate statehood in the South should start looking at their country more deeply. How many Yemenis have migrated within the country over the centuries? Thus you have the Saqqafs, Adimis and others emanating from Hadhramaut having settled in the Ta'ez area (Al-Hadharem). The Abu Luhoums and even the Zindanis migrated from the far North to the middle part of the country. You had sultans in many of the areas of the southern governorates, who actually emanate from the North such as the Abdillis, the Fadhlis and the Kathiris, and they were readily accepted as de facto rulers of the regions under their authority (in the Yafi'a, Hadhramaut/Shabwa and Abyan. The Abdillis originate from Arhab and the Kathiris originate from Anis and the Fadhlis originate from Dhamar. We should also not forget that during the partition period, the governments of Aden and Sana'a both had elements that were mixed of originally southern and northern habitat.

As for the claim on the oppression of the regime, that is not a monopoly of our southern brothers at all, but really a uniform state of being, of which all of Yemen is crying out to be relieved from. There is no reason why the struggle against injustice can not be more effective if all the victims of this injustice, north and south, work together to achieve the liberation of all Yemenis from the oppression that all of Yemen is facing currently. This is not just a southern issue; it is an issue that involves all of Yemen.

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



By: Hassan Al-Haifi

## Changing the Arab Gulf, verse by verse

By: Nashwa Al Ruwaini

Three years ago, when I devised the format for the latest media craze in the Gulf, Millions' Poet, it was with little more in mind than creating an entertaining and original youth-focused television show.

Now in its third season and with more than 15 million viewers each week, the show has become the most prestigious poetry competition in the Arab Gulf and a platform for young male and female poets to voice their thoughts before a wide audience. Most unexpectedly, it has also helped change regional attitudes toward women.

Televised, this 16-week live poetry competition could easily be mistaken for American Idol or Pop Idol, but with poetry instead of pop music. It engages 48 aspiring poets from around the Gulf, a panel of five celebrity judges and millions of viewers across the Arabic-speaking world in a competition to win five million dirhams (over \$1.3 mil-

lion) and a coveted title.

Convincing today's youths that poetry, a pastime deeply rooted in the ancient heritage of the Gulf, can be "cool," was no easy feat. And the show's impact on the societies of the Gulf region, surprisingly, has gone even further.

When the Millions' Poet competition was launched in 2006 with a 6-week long tour around the Gulf, we auditioned thousands of young poets, but less than five percent of them were women. This turnout was understandable, considering that it's frowned upon for women to appear on camera, "exposing" themselves to millions of prying eyes.

As the show has steadily gained popularity, however, the number of women competitors has also risen. Today, approximately one in every four people auditioning for the show is a woman.

And this is causing a stir.

Aydah Al Jahani, a young Saudi poetess adorned in the niqab, an outfit that covers not only the body but also the

face, faced the wrath of her family and tribe for entering the third - and most recent - season of the competition. Upon hearing the news, her family pleaded with her to withdraw.

However, Aydah - a battling force for women's rights in the region - pushed forward in the competition despite the lack of support from her relatives. Thanks to public voting via SMS and praise for her poetic skills from the judges, Aydah continued on to the second round of the competition. It was then that her family and tribe realised that this competition was beneficial to their collective success, and brought no harm to their honour.

Aydah's story was splashed all over the news. Soon thereafter, the effects of her struggle could be seen in the audience, where the number of women had increased to approximately half. And although she did not ultimately win the title of "Millions' Poet", she received much moral support from both her male and female counterparts, as well as from viewers.

Like Aydah, I have strived to break

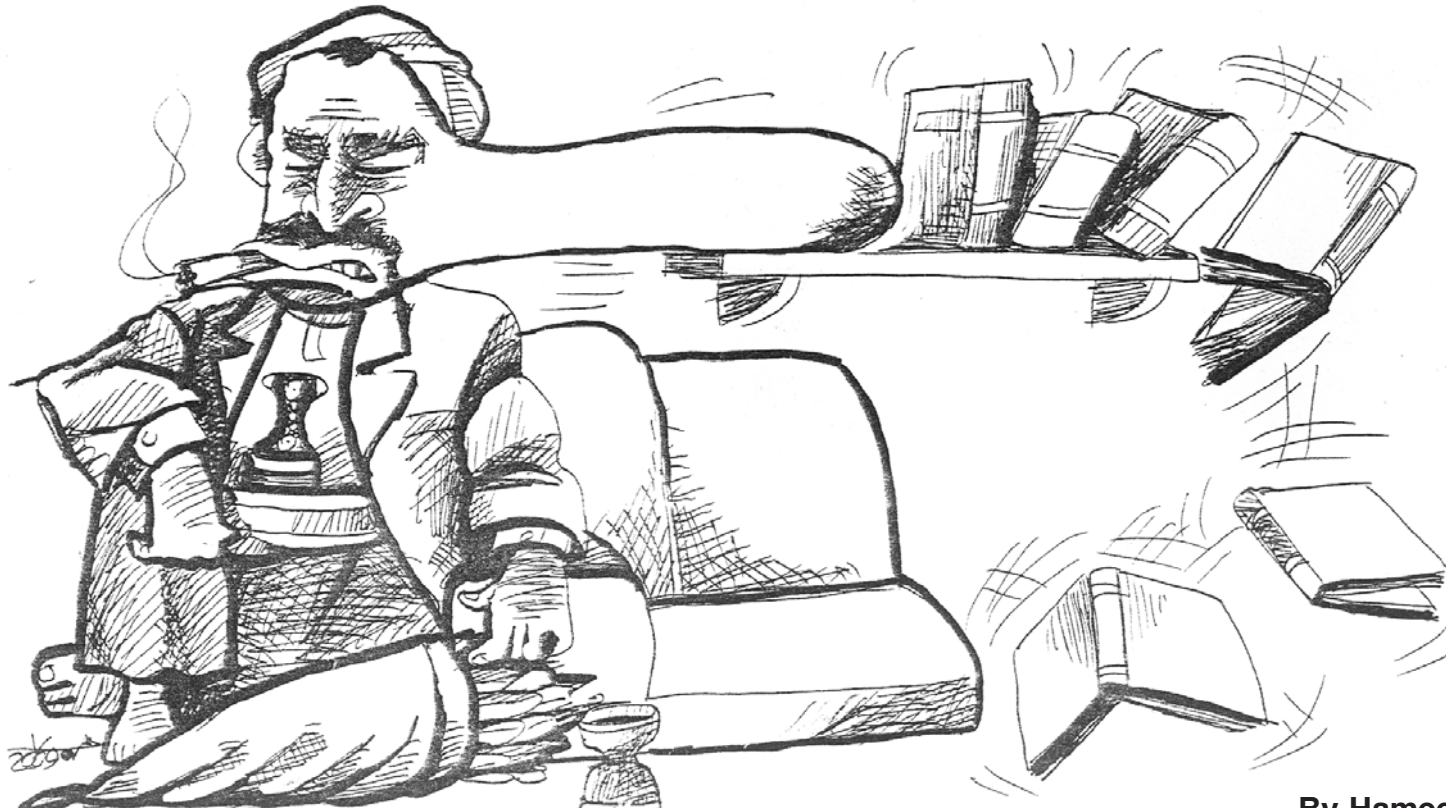
down gender barriers in society. I have worked in media for 20 years and host my own talk show on Dubai TV, tackling some of the most taboo issues in the Arab world. I am thankful that my viewers around the region think of me as a mother or a sister to them, someone who can help them overcome their struggles.

While the road might be long, the region is changing for the better. It will take time. But we need people to realise that they can use the media - even entertainment media - to facilitate and instigate this change.

Already, we can see it working.

Nashwa Al Ruwaini is the chief executive officer of Pyramedia, a co-founder and board member of the Middle East International Film Festival in Abu Dhabi, a talk show host on Dubai TV and creator of Millions' Poet. This article first appeared in The Philadelphia Inquirer and was written for the Common Ground News Service (CGNews).

SKETCHED OPINION



By Hameed

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# Right to convert spotlighted again in Egypt

This feature tells the story of 21-year-old Egyptian Samar Mohamed, who has been hiding from the police and her family ever since she converted to Coptic Christianity in order to marry Tharwat Riad. Under Shari'a (Islamic) law, Muslim women are forbidden from marrying non-Muslims or converting from the faith. Samar has undergone police torture and abuse from her family in a story which speaks to the growing tensions between the minority Coptic population and Muslims in Egypt.

By: Joseph Mayton  
The Media Line News Agency

Conversion is always a contentious issue in Egypt. Twenty-one-year-old Samar Mohamed's conversion to Coptic Christianity in order to marry Tharwat Riad has left her on the run from police and her family.

The case has once again sparked tensions between the minority Coptic population and Muslims across the country.

Now, Riad and his wife, who has changed her name to Rahel, are on the run from Egyptian authorities and are currently in hiding outside Cairo.

Their story began a couple of weeks ago when Mohamed, who works at a local hair salon in the middle-class Shobra area of Cairo, was stopped by police on the street and whisked away to the local police station for question-

ing over her marriage to Riad.

Upon entering the police station, the officers began demanding information on her husband's whereabouts, which she refused to reveal.

According to Riad, who spoke with The Media Line (TML) shortly after the initial incident, his wife was abused in order to extract information from her before she was taken to her family's house and was accused of having married 38-year-old Riad when she was a minor.

"I want my wife back, no matter what the price is," Riad said before the couple's successful escape last Tuesday.

Controversy has erupted over the couple's marriage, including their alleged ages at the time. Police accuse the woman of being under 18 at the time she signed an Urfi marriage contract three years ago. Riad denies the charge, saying Mohamed was 18 and of legal age at the time.

An Urfi marriage is commonly used in the Arab world as a means of getting around state legislation in order to have sexual relations. In Riad and Mohamed's situation, it was the only possible means for the two to be wed because under Egyptian law a Muslim woman cannot marry a Christian man.

According to Riad and his legal adviser Naguib Gobrael, Mohamed converted at an unspecified church in order to marry a Christian man.

Under Shari'a (Islamic) law, Muslim women are forbidden from marrying non-Muslims. Riad dismisses this accusation, arguing that his wife had been the one to convert and that she was Christian at the time.

However, Muslims in Egypt are not allowed to convert from Islam. Christian men can, and often do, convert to Islam on paper in order to marry Muslims in the country. Had Riad converted to Islam, a proper marriage license would have been possible.

Speaking through her husband, Mohamed told TML that she was taken to the Shobra police station where officers abused and electrocuted her and threatened to rape her if she did not tell them her husband's whereabouts, which she refused.

Police then transferred her to her family's home in accordance with the law. Any minor who gets married is removed from her husband and im-

mediately taken to her parents' house.

According to Riad, Mohamed claims that her family abused her upon her arrival and tried to erase the cross tattoo she had on her wrist – a mark common among Egypt's Coptic community.

Riad and Mohamed's family were neighbors before the two fell in love and fled the neighborhood three years ago. They were married in secret after Mohamed converted.

Last Tuesday, she and her husband escaped together from her parents' home and have since been on the run. TML attempted to contact them, but their mobile phones were switched off.

The case has led many to question Egypt's laws regarding conversion, which remain stringent.

George Ishaq, a Kefaya (Enough) opposition leader and prominent Copt, says there are a number of solutions to the ongoing problems facing the country's religious groups.

He says that whenever he meets a group of Copts he tells them to stop complaining about the discrimination they receive at the hands of the government and "start to move." This, Ishaq argues, is the best means of creating a society that will breathe life into the stale religious dialogue that is persisting in Egypt.

"Copts and Christians need to get out there and make the country a part

of their life. They cannot live separated from society like what happens in Lebanon because that leads to tension and violence. To say that Copts are the only people under threat is to avoid the truth," he says.

"We live in a country where the government doesn't give anyone their rights, so people need to be realistic."

Ironically, Riad does not shy away from the fact that at his church he volunteered for many years helping Christian girls who had converted to Islam as part of the church's "bring them back" efforts.

"Some of them did it to get divorced or for financial reasons, but most of all they do it because they fall in love with a Muslim man," he says, while admitting that the church often offers monetary compensation to the girls in order to bring them back.

An Egyptian court is expected to hear the case of Maher Al Gohary, 56, who claims to have converted to Christianity over 30 years ago and now wants to have "Muslim" changed to "Christian" on his ID card. He filed his case in August last year and is appealing an earlier court's denial.

The case will be a litmus test for the Egyptian judiciary which continues to walk a fine line between the increasingly conservative Islamists and Copts and the liberal activists who continue to stream onto the streets in anti-gov-

ernment demonstrations.

Gohary is trying to follow in the footsteps of Mohamed Hegazy, who filed a similar case in August 2007, but was later denied the ability to change his ID card because the court ruled that it was "against Islamic law for a Muslim to leave Islam."

"He can believe whatever he wants in his heart, but on paper he can't convert," the judge told the administrative court, according to a member of Hegazy's legal team.

Gohary, who has already changed his name to Peter, says he converted to Christianity 34 years ago when he was attending the police academy in Cairo, but later dropped out of the academy because he was scared.

Judges often base their decisions on religious freedoms on Article II of the Egyptian constitution, which states that Islamic law is the source of national laws.

The judge in the Hegazy case said that "according to Islamic law, Islam is the final and most complete religion and therefore Muslims already practice full freedom of religion and cannot move to an older belief," such as Christianity or Judaism.

If Gohary is victorious and allowed to have his ID stamped Christian, then couples like Mohamed and Riad will be allowed to live peacefully within society.

# Let humanity and nature coexist

By: Shobha Shukla

While the rest of the country seemed to be drawn in the vortex of mud slinging and shoe throwing, as the lead in to the on going Lok Sabha elections, a group of common citizens was deliberating the more serious issue of the dangers of nuclear power. Several eminent social activists, doctors, academicians, and other members of civil society took part in a symposium, organized on 26th April in Lucknow, to mark Chernobyl Day. This brainstorming session had a very positive outcome and resulted in many eye opening revelations.

Magsaysay Awardee (2002) and member, National Presidium, Lok Rajniti Manch (People's Politics Front) Dr Sandeep Pandey, retired Inspector General of Police and Lok Rajniti Manch's candidate from Lucknow for Lok Sabha elections this year SR Darapuri, leader of Prakriti Manav Kendrit Andolan Gurudayal Singh Sheetal, a medical expert from Endocrine and Nuclear Medicine unit of Chhatrapati Shahuji Maharaj Medical University (CSMMU) who is also the World Health Organization (WHO) Director General's Awardee

(2005) Professor (Dr) Rama Kant, and Aftatoon Desai, State President of Samajwadi Jan Parishad, were among the key resource people addressing the seminar on Chernobyl Day.

The disaster which took place at Chernobyl Power Plant (situated in Ukraine), twenty three years ago, unleashed a radioactive fury which was 400 times more powerful than the Hiroshima bombing, and whose effects could be felt as far as Ireland. This accident raised serious doubts, world wide, about the suitability of nuclear power to meet our energy needs.

There is enough scientific and medical evidence to show that nuclear energy is neither clean, nor safe, nor cheap. Yet, its protagonists (mainly governments and political parties) harp upon these very virtues of nuclear energy. The harmful radiations, emitted during the process of nuclear fission, cannot be eliminated and neither can the environment (including human beings) be protected fully from them, despite the best possible precautions taken. Several nuclear power plant disasters in the past took place despite high standard safety norms. And, perhaps, this prompted those countries to refrain from constructing more such plants.

In a country like India, the entire approach to security and safety is

generally directed towards protecting the political and corporate big wigs. Yet, to date about 130 mishaps, (due to flouting of safety norms), from the 15 nuclear plants operating in India, have been reported by the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board. The nuclear power plant at Narora has released radioactive waste which has been detected in river waters near Varanasi.

The situation in the mining areas of nuclear energy fuel is worse. As our entire Uranium supply comes from the tribal regions of Jharkhand and Meghalaya, there is a total disregard of international safety norms. In Jharkhand there are three productive mines within a radius of 5 kilometres. After extracting Uranium, the 85% radioactive products left behind, are made into slurry and pumped to tailing dams, which have no protective linings to prevent its seepage into under ground water. So, contaminated water reaches far and wide. Careless dumping of radioactive waste has adversely affected the environment. A large number of villagers in the surrounding areas have developed disorders related to ionized radiations. Incidences of deformities at birth, miscarriages, still births, fatigue, depression and even mental illness are very high. Radioactive waste has also entered the food chain in the region. Mutant

varieties of fruit and paddy have been observed. Despite a public outcry, nothing seems to have been done to mitigate the sufferings of the tribal people. Perhaps, in the eyes of the government, they are not worth caring for.

Yet, the urge to be in the league of super powers is so strong that our political parties gloat over our possession of the atom bomb as well as over the recently signed Indo US Nuclear Treaty. Both these are steps towards increasing our nuclear superiority and exposing our unsuspecting public to greater health hazards.

India's 15 nuclear reactors, spread over 6 states, are barely able to meet 3% of the country's energy needs by producing 3360 mega watts of energy. The most optimistic projections aim to raise this figure to 9% in the future. Setting up a nuclear reactor is very capital intensive and so is its maintenance. Moreover, the life of a nuclear reactor is around 30 years, after which it has to be dismantled, the cost of which is exorbitant too. Thus, developing nuclear energy is a slow, expensive and uncertain proposition, fraught with dangers.

The real solution to our energy needs lies in opting for energy resources that have a low impact on our environment,

are cost effective and are easily available. Besides, we need to control our greed and conserve energy rather than use it blatantly.

Renewable energy has the true potential to bring energy sufficiency to India. Nature has blessed our land with lots of sunlight, wind power and tidal power. We need to engage in 'nature centric activities' (rather than just human centric) and use its bounties, without exploiting or denuding it. There is an urgent need for the government to support research for better utilization of solar energy, wind energy, tidal energy, and biomass energy; rather than endorse politically motivated deals, like the Indo US Nuclear Treaty, which can never benefit the common citizen. In fact wind power is currently generating 3740 mega watts of energy in the country (as opposed to 3360 megawatts produced by nuclear power plants), and is a far better option than nuclear power. Also, given India's poor track record of resettlement, it would make more sense to develop small hydro electric projects, rather than build huge dams.

All right minded citizens need to contemplate on these issues and reject the Atom Bomb as well as the Atomic Energy. Both of them are extremely unsafe devices and have dangerous effects. The world is awakening to the

necessity of total nuclear disarmament and weaning away from nuclear power plants. Social organizations are campaigning globally to save us from their deadly impacts. In fact, 114 countries (India is NOT one of them) have signed a pact to be 'nuclear free zones'.

It is time that civil society becomes an integral part of the government's decision making process, and short term populist measures (like doling out freebies just before election time) are replaced by long enduring sensible ones. It is time that political parties formulate their manifestos after having meaningful dialogues with various sections of civil society, rather than blow their trumpet of partisan interests. Only then will the government policies/treaties benefit the lowliest of the lowly, and not merely fill the coffers of the ruling junta.

Let us accept peaceful coexistence as the way of life, where no one predates upon nature and upon each other; where there is enough for all and there is no vulgar display of ones' physical, financial and social superiority. Amen!

*The author writes extensively in English and Hindi media. She serves as Editor of Citizen News Service (CNS), email: shobha@citizen-news.org, website: www.citizen-news.org*

# Why does Angela Merkel hesitate?

By: Hans-Werner Sinn

"Where is Angela?" is the question Economist asked when Nicolas Sarkozy, Gordon Brown, and José Manuel Barroso met to prepare a European economic stimulus plan without Chancellor Merkel being present. Indeed, Germany is currently the spoiler in the competition to provide billions to prevent a breakdown of the world economy. Why is Germany so hesitant when it comes to economic stimulus programs?

One popular theory is that, given the supply-side orientation of German economists, there is little sympathy for Keynesian, demand-oriented prescriptions. But no German economist has come out against an economic stimulus program, and many favor one. Whereas Keynesian theory has largely disappeared from economic textbooks in the United States, it continues to be taught everywhere in Germany. German economists, in contrast to their American

colleagues, never abandoned Keynesian policies as a means to combat demand deficits. Moreover, German politicians rarely heed the advice of German economists.

A second hypothesis is closer to the truth: the decline of economic activity in Germany thus far has not been as strong as in other countries. Germany did not have a real-estate bubble that threatened to burst, as did Great Britain, Ireland, Spain, and France. Germany has only been indirectly affected – by the decline in worldwide demand for German products – which explains an important timing difference in the business cycle.

Whereas unemployment in the US has been rising for one and a half years, Germany currently is enjoying its lowest unemployment rate in 16 years. The German construction industry and retailing are still stable, as the latest survey of the Ifo Institute shows, and the whole world is profiting from this stability, as Germany is the second largest importer of goods and services after the US. While US imports are declining sharply, German imports are holding up –without any economic

stimulus plan. This is why many Germans wonder whether the foreign criticism is fair.

To be sure, the world recession will hit Germany with full force. The Ifo Institute has forecast that GDP will contract by 2.2% in 2009. But the contraction will be primarily because of declining exports, a large portion of which consists of investment goods, as well as the drop in domestic equipment investment.

These are areas where there is not much that the state can do to help. It can cut taxes to stimulate consumption and it can invest in construction, but these sectors currently need little help, except perhaps for the automobile industry. This could, of course, quickly change. When the second-round effects hit the domestic sector in the course of 2009, a stimulus program will be needed. From the German perspective, the best timing for such a program would be the autumn of next year. If the money is spent now, the economy in some sectors could overheat, helping no one.

Paul Krugman, who has aimed massive criticism at Germany's govern-

ment, should keep this in mind. Krugman is an excellent economist. He is right in principle in demanding a major economic stimulus package from the German government that goes beyond the €35 billion already planned. But he should not ignore the time lags between the American and the German economic cycles. Germany should prepare its economic stimulus program now and implement it when the time comes.

A third hypothesis to explain Germany's hesitancy is suspicion of the European Union's redistribution machinery. When Sarkozy and other EU leaders demand Germany's participation in an economic stimulus and rescue package, one reason is that they expect Germany to again bear the lion's share of the costs. For example, of the €5 billion extension of the Cohesion Funds approved by the European Parliament in December 2007, Germany received nothing, but it bears 20% of the costs.

Germans have always been enthusiastic proponents of the EU, not least because they hoped that a European identity would help compensate for

their damaged national identity. So, whenever it came to restructuring the EU, they always accepted a level of influence that was small relative to their country's size. Although Germany's share of the EU population is 17%, it receives 13% of the voting rights in the EU Parliament. Its share in the more important Council of Ministers is only 8%, the same as that of the French, whose population share is 13%.

Former French President Jacques Chirac did not hesitate to justify this imbalance with a reference to World War II, which the Germans accepted. But their enthusiasm has limits. After all, aside from political under-representation, Germany's annual contribution to the EU budget (most recently €7.4 billion) makes the country by far the largest net contributor. Germany finances 20% of the EU budget but receives only 12% of EU spending. Willingness could be exhausted if the EU budget is further expanded without reducing Germany's net contribution and narrowing the gap between its financing and voting rights.

For these reasons, German reserva-

tions also extend to the European economic government that Sarkozy advocates, and that, again, would be financed more than proportionately with German money. Sarkozy regards an EU economic government as a way to preserve his leadership in the EU beyond France's Council presidency, which is now ending. Although the Czech Republic will assume the EU presidency in January, this has not prevented the French President from convening a new EU summit under Sarkozy's leadership in the first half of 2009.

This affront will put not only Czech tolerance to the test, but also that of Merkel. In the end, she will probably give in to Sarkozy's wishes in order to avoid endangering her chances of reelection in September because of a conflict with the French. But she will surely do so with clenched fists.

*Hans-Werner Sinn is Professor of Economics and Finance, University of Munich, and President of the Ifo Institute.*

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## Investment Guru traveler and author Jim Rogers to Yemen Times:

# “If we don’t have people going towards farming and prices are going up, we are not going to have any food at any price”

**J**im Rogers is a Wall Street legend, who in 1970 co-founded the historical Quantum Fund with George Soros, during 10 years the portfolio gained more than 4200%. He then retired at the age of 37. Setting Guinness World Records Jim Rogers travelled the world once in 1988 in a motorcycle and another time in 1999 a custom made Mercedes Benz. Jim Rogers lectured at the University of Columbia as a visiting professor. He has authored five books most of them are international best sellers. Jim Rogers is a regular commentator to world news channels such as CNN, CNBC, Bloomberg and others. He is a regular speaker in international conference. Believing the future hold great favors for South East Asia especially China, Jim Rogers sold his New York Mansion and moved to Singapore in 2007. He has two daughters the eldest is Happy who is about 4 years old and already speaks Mandarin.



Interviewed by Jamal Nassar  
For the Yemen Times  
tojamalnassar@yahoo.com  
www.JamalNassar.blogspot.com

**Your latest book “Crystal Ball” in Mandarin only! Could you give us a little insight into the book and why you are not publishing it in English?**  
Well, there was a Chinese journalist who has been doing a huge study of my life it turns out, and she contacted me and said she would like to do a biography and would I agree and would I cooperate, and I said yes. That’s why it’s done in Chinese. I don’t know if it’s going to be in English or not, it’s not my book, she wrote it. It was written by a Chinese journalist for Chinese audience. It may well be in English someday, I am not translating it, I haven’t even read the book so I don’t know what it says. This is a book about me, not by me.

**President Barack Obama received further political boost three days ago when the House of Representatives approved a \$3.4 trillion budget outline that endorses much of Mr Obama’s agenda. What do you think this gigantic increase will lead to? And who would benefit most from it?**  
It’s not good for America it’s not good for the world. It’s not going to work, they are spending a lot of money on make work projects rather than building long term competitiveness of America. America does not have that kind of money, they are going to have to borrow it, print it or tax it, none of which will be good for the American economy in the long run or for the world.

So no, this is just making the situation worst rather than better, many of the Asian countries starting to spend money, but many of them have big

reserves which they’ve built up for a rainy day, and now it’s rainy so they are starting to spend their reserve, many of them are spending it on wise ways to be good for the long term competitiveness of the nation. America is not.

**Going back to the Gulf, you have been there recently, where the common Gulf currency was discussed, do you see any further losses if the launch of this common currency is delayed?**

Well, the fewer currencies the better normally, if there is a sound, logical, economic reason for it. It is a lot more efficient, it is a lot cheaper and a lot more competitive. So the sooner the better as long as it is done in a sound way.

Will it work? I don’t know, but I know it’s a very good idea for those countries and I hope they can pull it off sooner rather than later.

**By studying history we may project realistic forecast of the future, what is your take on this financial predicament? And when you expect it to reach rock bottom? How long would that be?**

I don’t think we’ve hit rock bottom yet, we will have rallies along the way, and nothing goes straight down every day or every month or every year even, If you go back to the 1930’s there were few rallies along the way, even though things did not get better for a long time.

I don’t know when this problem will end, I am afraid it’s going to last for several years mainly because some governments the US and the UK are making a mistake after mistake after mistake, in the 1930’s many governments made mistakes so we had the great depression and the second world war.

The way they are going now, this is

going to last for a long time, they are making the same mistakes the Japanese made in the 1990’s by probing up the zombie companies and zombie banks and you are going to see just like in Japan it didn’t work and this is not going to work either.

**I quote you “farmers worldwide are about to make fortunes and will have a fabulous next 20 or 30 years. We should all become farmers” what if that happens?**

**Wouldn’t that create another shortage of other materials and upsurge in price of farms around the world which will make it more expensive to produce effectively and efficiently? Would this become a real concern if larger pool of people started going towards farming at the same time?**

Well if we don’t have people going towards farming and prices are going up, we are not going to have any food at any price.

I don’t understand farming have been a terrible business, that’s why the inventories of food are the lowest they’ve been in decades.

Are you going to become a farmer, and go to the field every day, for long hours? No, most people will not. So if you don’t have prices going up, they are going to have no food.

Remember last year we started having great food shortages, that’s going to get worse. Do you think that politicians are going to go to the field and raise rice and wheat for no money? No, are you going to go to the field and raise rice and wheat for no money? I hope you are so the rest of us won’t have to, otherwise the only way we are going to solve this problem is just to have higher prices and let people make more money.

Through major failures in troubled

regions, you believe the United Nations should be abolished, from your experience, any recent incidents make you believe so even more?

Yes, I have not seen the UN as a fabulous concept, but just like the League of Nations before it. The League of Nations never really did anything, didn’t prevent war, and so far the UN has not prevented any war that I am aware of.

It has come in and helped stabilize some situations but normally it makes things worse it don’t make things better, so the world spends gigantic amounts of money on the UN and we get very very little returns for it.

I think it makes things worse, rather than make them better.

From your traveling experience, do people have to travel half as much to find some lucrative investment opportunities? Wouldn’t it be safer to trade through agents & brokers? Or other ways.

That’s a very good way to find opportunities, any way you can find opportunity do it, you don’t have to travel around the world, you don’t have to cross countries to find investment opportunities, but if you do it, I assure you, you are going to learn more about the world and more about the companies and you will probably find investment opportunities long before other people do. If you can do it watching television 14 hours a day do it, anything that works.

Investors watch for high risk ventures during such crisis, what would be your advice to investors at this time and the coming few years? Should we just stick with real assets and avoiding taking any risk!

Everything in the investment world is a risk, there is no such thing as a low risk and high risk if you ask me, and if you buy the right things at the right price you are going to make money.

As far as I am concerned the best place to invest where the fundamentals are improving are in real assets whether its mining or agriculture or energy, you know many farmers can not get loans for fertilizers even though we have very low inventories of food, no body can get a loan to open a mine, so you going to see no mine open for a long time.

The supply of everything is going down at a time when governments are printing money all over the world. Money printing has always lead to higher prices, and it will this time too. If the world economy is to get better, commodities will lead the recovery, if the world economy is not getting better,

commodities are still the best place to be because the supply of everything is going down and governments are printing money.

**Beside oil and gas in the Middle East, do you see other investment opportunities there?**

I find agriculture better than oil and gas, I find many things better than oil and gas, I own oil and gas, and there are many good opportunities in the world.

**You said “Diversification is Garbage” Now what is your advice to young fund managers who would want to put all their eggs in one basket, and yet they are afraid to take the fall if it happens?**

That’s why diversification was invented, so young fund managers don’t have to be held accountable if things go wrong, and if you want to get rich, you are not going to be rich diversifying.

The only way to get rich is by buying the right things at the right cost. Yes some people would rather diversify in order to keep their money, but I was talking about people who are interested in making money. If you are going to make money diversification is not going to make you rich, it may help protect you if are already rich, and no body is going to get rich by diversifying.

**Business degrees have been marketed & consumed around the world by all types of business schools! Do you think a young person should put off his business degree plans aside and go for some traveling or real business venture experience? Has a business degree become useless at this time?**

Well, I don’t find business degrees to be useful at all, I think between getting a business degree and between traveling and seeing the world on your own, you are going to learn much much much more doing traveling and seeing the world.

But there are other things, you could start your own business, I mean the amount of money you spend going to business school, start your own business with that money, even if you go bankrupt, you’re going to learn more failing at your own business than you are in business school.

So I find other alternatives to business school, yes.

**Speaking of schools, do you still lecture in Columbia University as a visiting professor?**

I have moved to Singapore now, so no, I don’t lecture at Columbia, I had a

wonderful time there, I loved it, but I live in Singapore now.

I don’t lecture anywhere, I got two little girls I spend my time with them.

**I read that you & your wife Paige volunteer for some teaching in Singapore?**

Yes, my wife volunteers helping students with English at a local primary school, I have been to the primary school and helped with something’s, my wife spend much more time than I have, although yes I have been there too.

**A year and half have passed, how do you find life in Singapore so far?**

We are very happy in Singapore, been here nearly two years now, we are glad we made a decision to come to Singapore, my daughter loves her school so everything seems to be working so far.

**That is great, I did come to Singapore two weeks back and I hoped to meet you, but unfortunately I did not have the chance to. Thank you for your time.**

I do hope we meet some day. By the way, I just published a new book, speaking of my little girls, my new book is called “A gift to my children” and there are many of the things I have learned in life and about how they should live their lives, I came to parenthood late so I got a lot more of live experience that I am hoping to teach these two little girls. I wasn’t 20 when I had children.

So this book which is out in many languages is out including English, I hope it will help them and other parents around the world.

### Books by Jim Rogers

- Investment Biker: Around the World with Jim Rogers - 1995
- Adventure Capitalist: The Ultimate Road Trip - 2003
- Hot Commodities: How Anyone Can Invest Profitably in the World’s Best Market - 2004
- A Bull in China: Investing Profitably in the World’s Greatest Market - 2007
- A Gift to My Children: A Father’s Lessons For Life And Investing - 2009

## Should Khat be banned? The development impact

By: Degol Hailu, Policy Specialist, UNDP, Caribbean International Poverty Centre

**T**he global trade in khat is controversial. The United States and most countries in Europe have banned it, considering it a psychotropic substance. But it contributes significantly to farmers’ livelihood in Eastern Africa.

Though public officials in the region denounce its consumption, they benefit from the foreign exchange and tax revenues that it generates. So, how should this contradiction be resolved?

In Ethiopia, during 1990-2004 over US\$ 413 million was earned from exporting 86,625 metric tons of khat. Accounting for up to 15 per cent of the total value of exports, it has become the second largest earner of foreign exchange. Two thirds of all khat, much of it exported, is produced in eastern Ethiopia (see the Figure). During 1980-2002, the Government collected 10.7 billion birr in revenue from taxing domestic and export trade in khat. Why do Ethiopian farmers cultivate khat? Examining recent history provides an explanation. In the early 1990s, the Government introduced the strategy known as Agricultural Development-

Led Industrialization (ADLI). It was designed to increase land productivity through various means, e.g., construction of rural roads, access to fertilizer, subsidized credit, improved seeds and water management. ADLI led to increased use of fertilizers and pesticides and an almost 50 per cent increase in cultivated area.

Production of major crops increased from 64 million kg before ADLI to 85 million kg afterwards. However, output prices have been falling in recent years. There have been several reasons: a slow process of urbanization, limited agro-processing activities and weak export markets. The terms of trade have moved against agriculture because input prices have grown faster than output prices. Consequently, while agricultural value added per worker in the non-khat sector was 310 birr in the 1980s, it declined to 266 birr during the period 1990/91-2002/03.

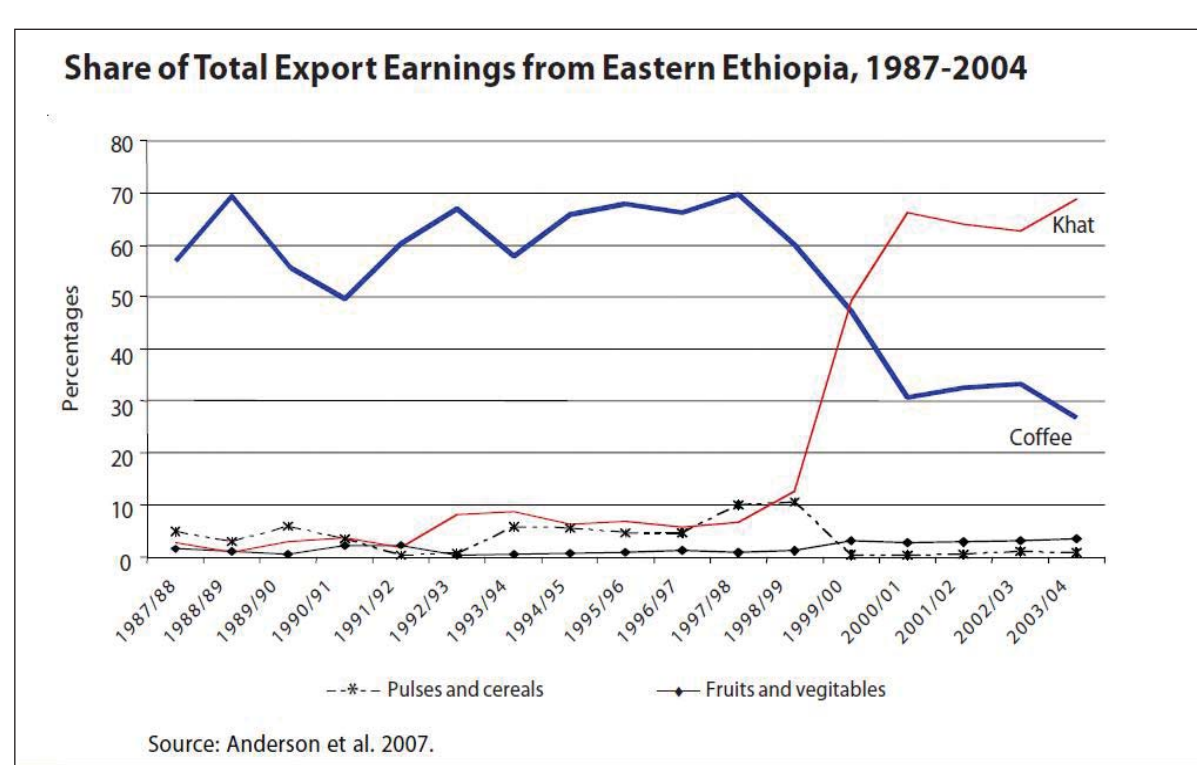
Earnings from coffee dropped from 2.1 billion birr in 1999 to 1.9 billion birr in 2004. Its price per pound declined from US\$ 123.4 in 1995 to US\$ 26.9 in 2002. Earnings from pulses and cereals have also declined while those from fruits and vegetables have remained low (see the Figure). While farmers accumulated debts during the years of high prices, they have struggled to repay

them now that prices have collapsed.

In response, farmers have increased the cultivation of khat. The plant has many advantages: it is resistant to many crop diseases, grows in marginal land, requires low labor inputs and can produce up to four harvests per year. Thus, its net return per acre is often greater than that from coffee. While khat accounts for only 13 per cent of total cultivated land, it contributes 30-50 per cent of farmers’ total cash income per year.

Ethiopian farmers have responded to growing consumption of khat, which cuts across age, gender, religious, income and geographical boundaries. Mass consumerism is increasing in the neighboring countries of Djibouti, Kenya and Somalia and as far away as Yemen and Uganda. Members of the Diaspora—Ethiopians, Somalis and Yemenis in Europe and North America—still consume khat and have become a major source of foreign exchange earnings.

However, few anti-khat campaigners acknowledge the importance of khat to the economies of Eastern Africa. The International Narcotics Control Board is leading the campaign to ban khat. In contrast, the World Health Organization has not yet found justification for restricting the availability and use of



khat.

Since the evidence on the health consequences of khat remains inconclusive, a more feasible option than banning khat is to establish a system of regulating its production, distribution and consumption that takes into account its critical contribution to farmers’ livelihoods.

This option would involve licensing khat retailers, setting age limits for consumption and establishing a system of quality control for the product.

Prohibiting the cultivation of khat, by contrast, would threaten the livelihoods of many farmers and traders, and likely drive many of them deeper into illegal

activity or into poverty. Criminalizing those who have to rely on khat production for their survival is not the answer. The discussion of khat needs to be placed within a development framework instead of being dominated by a mindset that stresses illicit ‘substance abuse’.



## إعلان

يسر شركتا كنيديان نكسن بتروليم يمن، قطاع المسيلة "١٤"  
وكنيديان نكسن بتروليم شرق الحجر المحدودة، قطاع "٥١"  
أن تعلن بأن

**السيد / فيل ملفورد**

قد عين ابتداءً من الأول من شهر مايو ٢٠٠٩م بوظيفة الرئيس والمدير العام  
لشركتي كنيديان نكسن بتروليم يمن، قطاع المسيلة "١٤"  
وكنيديان نكسن بتروليم شرق الحجر المحدودة، قطاع "٥١"  
في الجمهورية اليمنية.

## ANNOUNCEMENT

CANADIAN NEXEN PETROLEUM YEMEN, MASILA BLOCK "14" AND  
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ARE PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT

**MR. PHIL MILFORD**

HAS BEEN APPOINTED AS PRESIDENT AND GENERAL MANAGER OF  
CANADIAN NEXEN PETROLEUM YEMEN, MASILA BLOCK "14" AND  
CANADIAN NEXEN PETROLEUM EAST AL HAJR LTD., BLOCK "51",  
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## The truth of life in this world

Compiled by: Rashad Al-Magrebi  
RashadHSE@gmail.com

Once a man saw in his dream that a Lion was chasing him! The man ran to a tree, climbed up it and sat on a branch. He looked down and saw that the lion was still there waiting for him.

The man then looked to his side where the branch he was sitting on was attached to the tree and saw that two rats were circling around and eating the branch. One rat was black and the other one was white. The branch would fall on the ground very soon.

The man then looked below again with fear and discovered that a big black snake had come and settled directly under him.

The snake opened its mouth right under the man so that he would fall into it.

The man then looked up to see if there was anything that he could hold on to. He saw another branch with a honeycomb. Drops of honey were falling from it. The man wanted to taste one of the drops. He stuck his tongue out and tasted one of the fallen drops of honey. The honey tasted amazing. He wanted to taste another drop.

As he did, he got lost into the sweetness of the honey. He forgot about the two Rats eating his branch away, the lion on the ground and the snake sitting right under him. After a while, he woke up from his sleep.

To get the meaning behind this dream, the man went to a pious scholar of Islam. The scholar said: "The lion you saw is your death. It always chases you and goes wherever you go."

"The two rats, one black and one white, are the night and the day. The black one is the night and the white one

is the day.

They circle around, coming one after another, to eat your time as they take you closer to death."

"The big black Snake with a dark mouth is your Grave. It's there, just waiting for you to fall into it. The honeycomb is this world and the sweet honey is the luxuries of this world. We like to taste a drop of the luxuries of this world but it's very sweet. We taste another drop and yet another. We get lost into it and we forget about our time, we forget about our death and we forget about our graves."

Imam Ali says: "You are the game that death hunts. If you stand still it will seize (catch) you. If you run (flee) away it will overtake you."

"What is the life of this world but play and amusement? But best is the home in the hereafter, for those who are righteous. Will ye not then understand?" (Qur'an 6:32)

## Professional journalism

By: Jon Speller, New York,  
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Many readers of YEMEN TIMES take very understandable umbrage at the decision of the United States to not participate in the Geneva Conference on Human Rights.

Although many influences undoubtedly influenced that decision, anyone who really understands our American national psyche readily sees that the paramount reason for US non-attendance is related to the US Constitutional commitment to Freedom of Press and Freedom of Speech. One has to understand America's history of opposing any official prior censorship of the Press. But "Liberty" is not a synonym for "license," and the malicious defamation of the Prophet Muhammad

(peace be upon him) in the Danish media cartoon is an example of "license" - not true "liberty," totally repugnant to all decent people everywhere.

But most Americans, including myself as a 72 year old American patriot, would oppose granting to our Government censorship rights. Responsible professional journalism standards, such as those evidenced in YEMEN TIMES in Yemen, do not allow any defamatory maliciousness towards any religion, independent of any governmental positions.

There is nothing to prevent religious figures of all faiths and Human Rights advocates from urging the non-purchase of specific newspapers or non-purchase of products advertised therein as a protest against specific incidents of gross anti-religious bias and bigotry such as the cartoon matter clearly and specifically displayed. That form of non-violent protest would be

but an expression of free public opinion opposing "license", not a support for official prior censorship by governments that could abridge individual liberty.

Certainly, our states manly US President Barack Obama, who is very committed to a new American relationship with Islamic countries, personally recognizes the profound "Freedom of the Press" issue as of greatest importance as a matter of principle, for without that freedom, the fulfillment of the urging of the manumission of slaves by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)

would never have taken place in the United States, nor would have the Civil Rights struggle against spiritually wrong and scientifically false racism in the US been possible, and nor would support for the principle of self-determination of nations by the United States ever have been possible. God bless Yemen.

## A journalist or A writer...

By: Enas Al-Radami  
enasradami@gmail.com

Being a journalist is something I have never thought about. I basically wanted to be an artist, but it seems that my circumstances didn't help me well enough to be what I have always wanted to be. Realizing that people don't get everything they want in this life, I decided to think about my future more seriously. I studied English for more than five years and devoted a lot of time and

effort to master the language. Therefore, I practiced English by reading or even writing about anything which could help me keep what I learned. Having searched for a job, I felt that any job I would apply for must be related to my specialization. Nevertheless, I doubted that I would find the proper job for me and my wishes.

I was interested in writing more than anything else, so I began writing about social issues and women in general. I believed in women as being kind, gentle creatures, even though not everyone

would agree with me. I totally focused on women's problems and how they strive to live in a cruel society that commonly judges women for their appearance only. I admit to feeling oppressed just observing a woman suffering from bad treatment and oppression. However, there are still some individuals who believe in woman and respect her despite her low status in the community.

Women can do many things, but they need help and support to achieve their goals and fulfill at least some of their dreams.

## The Great Mission

By: Budoor Saleh AL-Ayaan  
Email: ms-budoor@hotmail.com

When people invented the airplane, they gave themselves the mission of fast and easy travel, turning the world into one small village. Many other people gave themselves similar missions to simplify and improve our lives through other kinds of technology. What I mean is that everything and everyone has their own mission in this life.

We as human beings could assign these missions to other people. On the other hand, as people we have different missions to do. A father's mission is to care for his family, a mother's mission is to make sure that her family is happy and its members are close to each other, a teacher's mission is to involve his/her students in the process of learning, and so forth. Everyone is involved in the mission he/she is meant to do. But do we as human beings have one mission which we share together? Dear readers, take a moment to think deeply about an answer to this question, and then keep reading....

When our father Adam came to earth, Our Creator sent him here to accomplish a great mission. Though all the angels objected to the creation of Adam, the Almighty reminded them of

His power and how perfect He made them because He is the only One who can. He asked the angels whether they know all His names, but they couldn't answer. Such a question was beyond their knowledge, the knowledge He gave them that had previously allowed them to be better than the rest of the creatures He created. The only one who was able to answer God's question was our father Adam, which greatly shocked all the angels. The result was that Allah ordered the angels and jinn to prostrate in front of Him to assure their obedience to Him and to Adam as well.

The angels objected, stating that Allah created them to worship Him. Angels are created from light, and if He created another creature lower than their level, this new creation will not be able to worship Allah as well as the angels can. Any new creation is capable of murder, of committing a lot of other sins, and doing other things the angels considered destructive. But Allah the Greatest proved that as He created them and gave them everything, He will create another creature that will be better than them though the angels were created by the high quality substance of light.

Allah created us and honored us by giving us this human mind, which until now scientists cannot understand, keeping them confused. Allah is the one who subjugated all other creatures

and made mankind superior. The only mission He created us for is to worship Him, and not by secluding ourselves to pray all the time with nothing to do, but to worship him during the five daily prayers. The Almighty appreciates every effort we make in order to please Him. Because He cares about us, He sent us prophets and messengers to awaken those who forgot the great mission they were created for and to keep us on the right track. The only one working against this mission is the only enemy of humanity, 'Satan,' who promised Allah not to leave any human in peace without attempting to seduce him/her.

The Holy Qur'an has saved the whole story of Adam in Sura Al-Baqr, verses 31 and 32: "And He taught Adam all the names, then showed them to the angels, saying: Inform me of the names of these, if ye are truthful. They said: Be glorified! We have no knowledge saying that which thou hast taught us. Lo! Thou, only Thou art the Knower, the Wise."

Dear readers, I have told you a little about a long story which has been ongoing until now. The story will end when life ends. All this was mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, the book of Islam. Every believer is able to find every answer in Islam as it is a sum of all religions, the last great monotheistic religion and the only one saved from corruption.

## Through The Mind's Eye

By: Maged Thabet Al-Kholidy  
maged\_thabet@hotmail.com



## Public hospitals: A blessing or a curse?

In emergency cases such as car accidents, injured persons are immediately taken to the nearest hospital to have their lives saved. In almost all private and public hospitals, there are specialized departments called 'Emergency Departments' which are supposed to be well equipped and staffed for this purpose.

Some will say that humans' lives are in God's hand and that hospitals can do nothing for them. If this is the logic, then there is no need for hospitals, doctors or medicine, since all these are useless in view of God's existence. However, the aim here is not a religious discussion, but one about people's lives in public hospitals.

It was about 7 o'clock in the morning last Saturday, a public holiday on the occasion of Labor Day, when a car accident immediately killed two persons and left another five injured, one of them seriously.

It took time to take the injured persons to the hospital. We thought of nothing except transporting the emergency cases to hospital, where they would be treated to save their lives and avoid any negative consequences. This was our expectation, but the moment we reached there, we, or at least I, found nothing indicating it was emergency department except the sign hanging at the gate.

A single female doctor and two nurses comprised the entire staff of the whole department. All of them were busy with something else, not with patients or injured persons, but with having breakfast or drinking tea. While we carried in the injured, bleeding and with broken bones, and searched for vacant beds, the staff was still busy doing something else.

I called them, shouted at them to

come to tend to the injured persons, especially the one who was in serious danger. Believe me, dear readers, they did not respond until my friend paid YR 1,000 for each of them.

The doctor who eventually came to take care of the seriously injured person said he should take some medication to stabilize his case. But about twenty minutes later, some other injured persons were brought in.

I was surprised to see the staff leave my injured persons to tend to the others who gave them some money. Believe it or not, dear readers, my friend actually heard the staff whispering to each other, "We are lucky today."

After waiting then shouting at the staff, we realized that the new emergency case was being given the same advice. All they did were simple things, and confirmed that his case was very bad. They said that he needed to be checked by specialized doctors who could not come in until the next day. The next day obviously meant about 24 hours later, and how such a person would live for 24 hours in that condition?

I consulted my friends, realizing that the seriously injured person we had brought in would die if no serious measures were taken. We decided to take him to another hospital. But when we talked to the doctor there, she said, "Sadly, you cannot move him because his case is serious and he may die before you reach the other hospital."

We did not know what to do. The doctor said the only solution would be to take him to the intensive care unit. Taking him there was not an easy task, because of the paperwork and fees we had to pay to get there. In that unit, we expected that modern medical instruments and good care awaited him.

Instead, he was received by indif-

ference and ignorance.

The doctor asked us to leave the patient to wait for the doctors, who would probably not arrive until the next day. They asked for more medicine and more blood. We immediately provided everything required, and then we only had to wait. We counted every minute, praying God, not knowing what to do.

Noon came, and there was nothing new. Evening also came with no new news. At midnight, one of the staff informed us that our friend has passed away.

With such a bad news, we accepted God's destiny. But we were all cursed the hospital's services. We decided to wait for the morning to take our friend's corpse for burial. Again, the staff created obstacles until we paid the money.

At the hospital gate, we realized that our friend's death was not caused by the car accident, but by 18 hours of indifference, ignorance and irresponsibility from the hospital and its staff.

This is a true story, dear readers, of a public hospital in which people's lives are cheap. We know that such hospitals were established to be a blessing, but what happened to me and the daily complaints of others prove that they are a curse.

To whom we shall complain: to the hospital management, the office of public health in the city, or to the Ministry of Health? I hope anyone of them can reply to show at least a little sense of responsibility in this representative case.

Maged Thabet Al-Kholidy is a contributing opinions writer from Taiz. He holds a Master Degree of Arts in English and is the former editor of Taiz University's English language magazine.

## When We Read 'Destruction' as 'Peace'

By: Mayasa Ali  
<mayasa\_a@yahoo.com>

I was reading the newspaper when a remarkable title attracted my attention: "For a Comprehensive Peace." My eyes uncontrollably read the words written about the subject, as though the article was a speech given by a lecturer and I was a helpless listener forced into repeating the words of the speech. Much like a parrot in fact, who can do nothing except repetition.

I threw the newspaper aside to think about the 'peace' the article talked

about. Is it the peace bought and paid for by the blood of the innocents? Or is it the peace that reigns over the debris of countries that have been taken from their owners, their people forced into being slaves crushed under the feet of the aggressors - sorry, the peace makers - begging for food and water?

'Peace' is the word used by aggressive armies to destroy safe countries. It's the tissue by which soldiers wipe the muzzles of their guns after killing little children. It's the dishonest smile behind which killers hide their teeth they sink into the innocent citizens of the country they're occupying.

I moved towards the window to watch the sun slip silently behind the mountains. It leaves us every day as we cheat ourselves every day, rather every moment, by reading the word 'destruction' as 'peace.' What kind of magic is it that makes our eyes and minds read the words as our aggressors want us to, and not the words and deeds as they actually are?!

When will we stop waiting for peace to come out of the muzzles of guns pointed towards our chests?!

I closed the window and returned to the newspaper, trying to read the words as they are and not as the others want me to do.

## A Song about Yemen

By: Monassar Mohsin Al-sabahi  
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All should sing and sing,  
No country better than mine,  
Which looks like a heaven,

From gulf to the ocean,  
My lovely, native land,  
I step on, on, and stand,  
Over its magic, pure soil,  
The place of birth and toil  
From Sana'a to Aden,

How charming is Yemen,  
Pretty beaches, golden sand,  
Go long hand in hand,  
Making my heart boil,  
To love home I dwell.

## Regarding the Pope's visit to Jordan this week

Paul Kokoski  
pkokoski@mountaincable.net

With deep joy I offer Pope Benedict XVI my fervent good wishes on the happy event of his pilgrimage of faith to Jordan.

The Holy Father is an inspiration and a model witness to the life of Christ; a Shepherd of Truth constantly guarding his flock so that Christ might find faith on earth when He returns. Immersed in profound humility and

immense love for both God and man he has always been a source of strength, encouragement, confidence, optimism and enlightenment not only to Catholics but to all men of good will.

A champion of the poor and ardent exponent of Christian unity, the German Pontiff has also been, in many and such capacities as teaching, governing and sanctifying, both a beacon of light and salt of the earth. He never ceases to offer fresh hope for defeating the forces of tyranny, cynicism and moral relativism hovering like a dark cloud on the horizon.

Successor of Peter and Vicar of Christ, he is the world's most influential and uncompromising defender of the dignity of human life. His tenacious pleas for the development of a "culture of life" and parallel denunciations of the "culture of death" have been instrumental in rallying opposition to the immorality of war, terrorism, abortion, euthanasia, divorce, contraception, homosexuality and embryonic-tissue research.

May the Lord of all graces and Giver of every gift bless Pope Benedict XVI during his historic visit to Jordan.

**Basem M.A. Alshaibani**  
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 مناسب للتواصل: ٧٧٠٥٢١٥٥٢ / ٧٧٠٥٢٣٩٧٠  
 خبرة ١٣ سنة، خارج وداخل اليمن في الاعمال الادارية، علاقات خارجية وعامة، مراسلات تجارية، ترجمة، تسويق عبر الانترنت، مهارات عالية جدا بمجال محركات البحث وال Microsoft Office، مهارة التحث باللغة الانجليزية كتابة ونطقا بطلاقة. أود الانضمام بفريق عمل في أي شركة تجارية او بمجال النفط، التواصل ٧٣٣٧٨٢٧٧٢، البريد الالكتروني: hehor@yahoo.com

• حسام - مصمم جرافيكس - خبرة ٧ سنوات - دبلوم إخراج صحفي من مركز أدوبي للفنون والتصميم - يريد العمل في شركة أو مطبعة أو صحيفة للتواصل: ٧١٢٥٠٦٧٦

• عبدالستار سيف - بكالوريوس تربية - دبلوم سكرتارية حاسوب - خبرة في مجال التدريس - خبر في إدارة المعاهد - يبحث عن عمل للتواصل: ٧٢٤٠٩٧١٢٢

• بكالوريوس محاسبة - جامعة صنعاء - دبلوم سكرتارية كمبيوتر - النظام المحاسبي (يمن سوفت) - خبرة في الانترنت والتنمية البشرية - خبرة في المراسلات التجارية والترجمة من العربية إلى الإنجليزية والعكس - يريد العمل لدى شركة أو منظمة أو سفارة في الفترة الصباحية فقط للتواصل: ٧٧٧٩٩١٢٤٨ - ٧٧٧٨٧٦٦٣٧

• خبرة واسعة في مجال التصميم الاعلاني والتصوير الرقمي للتواصل: ٧٧٧٠٨٨٠٠٦

• حافظ النويهي - بكالوريوس محاسبة - خبرة ست سنوات - خبرة على العديد من البرامج المحاسبية - خبرة في إدارة حسابات وكالات خطوط الطيران - دبلوم كمبيوتر - مستوى متوسط في اللغة الإنجليزية للتواصل: ٧٠٠٧٧٤٣٩٧

• سوداني الجنسية - خبرة سبعة عشرة سنة في إدارة التجارة الدولية - المناقصات - التسويق - المراسلات التجارية - دراسة الجدوى الاقتصادية للمشاريع للتواصل: ٧٣٣٦٢٨٤٢٥

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• للبيع: سيارة كرسيدا - موديل ٨٨م - شنتخة - اللون أبيض  
 للتواصل: ٧٧٠٨٢٤٦٢١

**وظائف شاغرة**

• مطلوب مدرسين للعمل في معهد لتعليم اللغة العربية لغير الناطقين بها. الشروط ١- بكالوريوس من كلية اللغات قسم ترجمة ٢- بكالوريوس من كلية التربية قسم لغة إنجليزية - بكالوريوس كلية التربية قسم اللغة العربية مع معرفة باللغة الإنجليزية للتواصل: ٢٧٨٢٠٩ / ٧٣٢٠٦٨٧١٤

**عقارات**

• للبيع: بيت - الموقع بين الزراعة والداخلي - بثلاثة طوابق والرابع (طيرمانه) بها حمام ومطبخ - الطرحه الأول حجر والثاني والثالث ياجور للتواصل: ٧٧٠٨٢٤٦٢١

• للإيجار: شقة في عدن - مدينة إنماء السكنية - نظام الفيلا (شقة طابقين)

**باحثون عن وظيفة**

• محمد أحمد سعيد - بكالوريوس تسويق وإدارة إتنا - دبلوم محاسبة - شهادة ICDL - خبرة ثلاث سنوات في المبيعات للتواصل: ٧٣٣٨٥٧٢٥٢

• هندي الجنسية - ماجستير إدارة أعمال - أكثر من ٨ سنوات خبرة في مجال تنمية الأعمال التجارية - يبحث عن عمل

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 المستشفى الجمهوري ت: ٠١/٢٧٤٣٨/٧٧  
 مستشفى حدة الأهلي ت: ٠١٠ ٤١٣٨١  
 المستشفى الألماني الحديث ت: ٠١٠ ٦٠٠٠٠/٠٢٠٠٠  
 فاكس: ٤١٨١١١  
 E-mail: felixpene@hotmail.com

**فنادق**

• فندق فرساي ت: ٠١-٤٥٥٩٧/٧  
 فندق شيراتون ت: ٠١-٢٣٧٥٠٠  
 فندق موفيك ت: ٠١-٥٤٦٦٦٦  
 فاكس: ٥٤٦٠٠٠  
 فندق سيا ت: ٠١-٣٣٣٧٣  
 فندق ريلكس ان ت: ٠١-٤٤٩٨٧١  
 فندق واجحة الخليج السياحي ت: ٠١-٦٠٢٣٥٠  
 ت: ٠١-٦٠٢٣٥٠

**مكاتب ترجمة**

• الشهاب للخدمات الترجمة (عربي-إنجليزي) (إنجليزي-عربي) تلفون: ٧٧٧٧٢٢٠٢ أو ٧٣٢٠٠٨١٦ - فاكس: ٧٣٢٠٠٦٥٧-٧٤٢٠٠٦٥٧  
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**معاهد**

• معهد يالي ت: ٤٤٨٠٣٧-٣٧  
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 المعهد البريطاني للغات والكمبيوتر ت: ٦٦٦٢٢٢  
 فاكس: ٥١٤٧٥٥

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 العالمية للسفرات والسياحة ت: ٤٤١١٥٨٩/٦٠

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• مطعم وخيابة الشيباني (باسم محمد عبده الشيباني) تلفون: ٦٦٦٢٧٥ - ٥٠٥٢٩٠ - فاكس: ٣٦٦١١٩

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# E-homework to spice up secondary education

By: Alice Hackman

A black and white graph of two lungs in a school-book is dull, but watch the animation of oxygen and carbon dioxide swiftly whoosh in and out of two healthy pink lungs in motion on the internet, and biology might all of a sudden seem much more thrilling.

To ensure that Yemeni children get the best out of their education to become qualified contributors to their country's development, the government and some Yemeni schools are making small steps towards transferring the national curriculum online.

e-homework or homework on the internet is not only more exciting for students with interactive animations and online quizzes to test their knowledge, but it also helps them assimilate the latest developments in technology to round off their education.

Yemen's first English-language school since the 1970s, the Mohammad Ali Othman School in Taiz recently became one of the first educational institutions in the country to set up an online database of curriculum-based homework for its pupils.

With the initiative of IT department head Saeed Ahmed, the school's website now offers e-homework with feedback and a resource bank of past exam papers for students to assess their level of knowledge before they walk into the examination hall.



Mohammad Ali Othman students explore their new e-learning database

said Abdurrahman Mohammad, 15, pupil in tenth grade at the school and aspiring doctor. "We can download everything from the internet, so there's no need to carry a lot of paper around."

The school's teachers are starting to prepare e-exercises specifically adapted to the school's unique blend of the Yemeni and British national curriculums, and in particular to better prepare their pupils for the English-language International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) they sit

more students are now passing their IGCSEs with flying colors.

Armed with these international diplomas, former Mohammad Ali Othman pupils, especially boys, have spread their wings and pursued higher studies abroad in the UK, Germany, Australia, Malaysia, India, Egypt, Dubai and Canada as well as in Yemen, according to the headmaster.

"In the UK they are using IT to enhance learning, and we want to push it in Yemen," he said, explaining that it may take time in a country in which, according to him, education is one of the least funded areas. "Somebody somewhere has got to start."

"The feedback is still not as effective as it should be because the teachers need more training, but this is something that has taken years and years in the UK," added the headmaster, whose e-learning project is supported by the British Council.

"[It is] a glimpse of what the future might look like in Yemen, when educators and learners embrace e-tools to seek and share knowledge and ideas," said Mohammad Noushad, head of the Biology department at the school.

## Tenth grade science on the net

While the Taiz school further develops its database of interactive teaching in all subjects online, the Ministry of Education with software company Intel has made a small step in making the country's tenth grade science curriculum available online.

Already successfully implemented in Libya, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, Intaleq [launch in Arabic] is an initiative to make learning science more exciting for Arabic-speaking secondary school students with access to the internet.

Supported by USAID, international organization the Education Development Center (EDC), and Al-Awn and Hael Saeed from the private sector, the project in Yemen aims, in a first step, to bring Maths, Chemistry, Physics and Biology live to the computer screens of tenth-graders in certain schools across the nation.

For the moment the pilot project is targeting five schools in Sana'a, Taiz, and Aden, and six schools in Mukalla who already have computers: "We will be providing them with internet for the length of the project," said Dr. Towfik Sufian, director of the project in Yemen. Participating teachers will be trained in using the new interactive portal as an educational tool in more student-centered learning, explained Sufian, whose team will assess the improvement in student understanding at the end of the project to decide whether to further develop the project in the country.

If success is proved, the interactive database might be extended to include eleventh and twelfth grade science, and to reach more schools across the country: "We are hoping to expand e-learning to as many schools as possible," said Sufian.

"Intaleq's overarching goal is improved acquisition of 21st century skills by Yemeni high school students, so that they are better equipped to find work, live productive lives and contribute to Yemen's development as a stable and prosperous democracy," wrote EDC of the project.

"Good education offers Yemeni citizens, particularly youth, a key antidote to the appeal of extremist ideologies that

rely on the uncritical acceptance of flawed reasoning and the despair that comes from extreme poverty and few prospects for economic advancement," according to EDC.

## Internet access vital for success

The Ministry of Education's new portal is open to all, but the country's aspiring chemical engineers will first have to first find a computer with internet before they can test their ability to recognize three dimensional molecules online.

In a country with less than 2 percent of the population subscribes to the internet, the various organizations working in educational development will have to ensure both e-learning programs and internet access are improved hand in hand.

While doing homework online may be an attractive solution for Yemen's high school pupils with internet access at home, for students from less privileged backgrounds in schools without computers, the government's new programs will hold no benefits.

Until internet is readily available, the government has produced a version of the curriculum on CD-Rom for grades ten to 12, according to Mohammad Abdalhafar, from the audiovisual and technical means department at the Ministry of Education.

"The student can easily use it to look for specific information," said Abdalhafar. "The ministry may provide it to schools or directly to the students."

All these projects are in their early

stages, but participants are optimistic: "I hope we can expand e-learning to the arts," said Sufian. "In history for example, you could have footage from historical films, rather than reading [facts] in books."

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"Task papers are not enough," said Ahmed, who explains that students can either access the website in one of the schools three IT labs or at home. "Now a student can know where he or she stands before he or she goes into the exams."

"We can discover not only computers, but also English Maths and Science,"

in tenth grade. "With the quizzes, you can assess how much you know," added Rima Abdulthawab, in tenth grade, sitting her IGCSEs this week. "And they have proverbs and quotes by famous people like Shakespeare."

"With e-learning, we have practical tasks to solve at home," said Rana Abdulthawab, also in tenth grade. "In IT, we have learnt how to use a database, Excel, Power Point and Word."

"But we would like more exercises in subjects like Maths and Science," added Sherif Majdi, another tenth grader at the school who would like to go to university to study Computer Engineering.

"In 2005, only five to six kids sat their IGCSEs and they passed very moderately, but this year we have 70 kids taking their IGCSEs in Chemistry, Physics, Biology, English, Arabic, IT and Maths," said Abdulla Ahmed, headmaster at the school, adding that more and

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For students studying in English or even preparing for their IGCSEs, surf the homework possibilities on [www.maoschoolyemen.com](http://www.maoschoolyemen.com)

For tenth grade students looking to put a little spice back into their science homework, check out the graphs and quizzes on [www.skoolyemen.com](http://www.skoolyemen.com)

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