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National Consultation Meeting demands regime reform

By: Mohammed Bin Sallam

SANA'A May 24 — A number of recommendations considered a basis for national dialogue on the country's urgent issues were outlined during the National Consultation Meeting, which concluded its activities on Thursday.

The country is undergoing a comprehensive crisis unprecedented in contemporary history due to practices and policies of the government which undermine the bases of national partnership and political partisan plurality, according to participants.

Power and resources of the country are exploited by individuals amid rampant nationwide corruption and chaos, participants said. The national crisis threatens the political entity of the country, social structure and national peace, they added.

They summarized the Yemeni crisis in the following.

First, the government failed to run the project of unity and did not deal with conditions and challenges that followed the war that broke out in 1994. It refused

any national political project aimed to eliminate impacts of the war and undermined bases of political plurality and multiple-party system as well as principles of the national partnership that constituted the basis of the peaceful unity achieved in 1990.

They confirmed that the government laid out tens of thousands of southern governorates' citizens, both military and civil employees with little regards to their rights. Additionally, the public sector was specialized through corruption which only benefited the influential whereas the majority remained jobless. Farmers were dismissed from their lands and government's plantations and lands were confiscated and re-distributed and illegally appropriated by a small group of elite.

Second, participants confirmed that Sa'ada repeated wars and the tragic impacts need comprehensive treatment, the affected people should be compensated and affected areas reconstructed. They stressed that procedures should be taken to tackle the situation to prevent any

potential breakout of a new war and violence. They advised that the Sa'ada issue should be included in the list of a comprehensive national dialogue in which Houthis be a party, pointing out that this issue shouldn't remain restricted to Houthis and the government but, rather, it should be addressed by all those concerned for the country's future.

Third, the democratic project and rules of the civil life were affected, liberties were violated, political parties and civil society organizations were split and press was intimidated, according to participants. They added that journalists are subjected to arrests, intimidation and imprisonment, rights were confiscated, peaceful political activities were suppressed and monitoring and legislative institutions were idled and became a tool in the hand of individual rule.

Fourth, the national role of the armed forces and security as institutions concerned with protecting democratic and political life was confiscated.

Fifth, economic indicators confirm that there is deterioration in the social and economic rights of citizens. People's rights to lead a decent life were violated



Yemen's declaration of unity on 22 May 1990, was celebrated with a massive military parade of 30,000 men and a cavalcade of military hardware. Saleh promised in his speech, government plans to reform constitution to develop the political and electoral system to attract foreign investment and give more powers to provincial rule.

by the government which neglected carrying out economic policies.

Participants said that citizens bear the

sequences of the failed and wrong economic policies whereas influential seized resources and revenues of the country and wasted public funds, further pointing out that the government deals with businessmen and investors in an opportunist

and discriminative methodology which reflects the government's bias toward its political objectives and narrow interests of its elite at the expense of the national interests.

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YEMEN: Marginalised community gets flood relief aid

SANA'A, May 24 — (IRIN) - Among the victims of the October 2008 floods in southeastern Yemen who have received aid from the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) are a marginalised community known as Akhdam ("servants").

About 100 Akhdam families (700 individuals) were among the most vulnerable people affected by the floods, according to Andrew Knight, UNHCR Yemen's external relations officer. They have received durable shelters from UNHCR.

The provision of such shelters for flood-victims in Hadhramaut and al-Mahrah governorates, southeastern Yemen, began about seven months after the floods, which left 80 dead and 25,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs), mostly in Hadhramaut Governorate, according to the government and a UN rapid assessment mission.

"The Akhdam were living in houses made of mud, sticks, stones, cardboard and plastic. But they were destroyed by the floods," Knight told IRIN.

He said the 100 two-room shelters had been built away from the flood path. They had also been equipped with appropriate sanitation facilities. The project was funded by the



Hundreds of families lost their homes during the October 2008 floods

Japanese government at a cost of US\$300,224 and implemented by a local NGO known as al-Dumir.

"The tragedy of the floods provided UNHCR with an opportunity to help and assist the people of Yemen in their hour of need which, in light of all the support that Yemenis have given to

refugees over the years, is really the least the UNHCR can do," Knight said.

Knight said a few of the 25,000 IDPs were living in tents provided by UNHCR, but most were living either with their relatives or in accommodation rented by local NGOs.

UNHCR had also distributed relief

items including mattresses, blankets, jerry cans, soap, tents, mosquito nets, sanitary napkins, plastic sheeting and kitchen sets.

Funded by the Canadian government and implemented by Oxfam (UK), UNHCR has also begun a livestock project for flood victims in Hadhramaut, targeting 400 women heads of household in the most affected areas. Families were provided with cash grants to help them buy goats, according to Knight.

New housing units

Meanwhile, government relief efforts are also under way: On 18 May some flood victims in Tarim District received government compensation payments.

Abdul-Qader Baharoon, executive director of the government's reconstruction fund, told IRIN around 1,800 new houses would be constructed in Hadhramaut and al-Mahrah. Of these, 1,000 would be built by the United Arab Emirates, he said, adding that a further 5,270 houses would be repaired.

According to an initial assessment by the World Bank, the floods in Hadhramaut and al-Mahrah caused US\$1 billion worth of damage.

Tarim, Capital of Islamic Culture 2010

By: Khaled Al-Hilaly

SANA'A, May 24 — The countdown has begun as the ancient town of Tarim in Hadramout prepares itself to become the Capital of Islamic Culture 2010. The Ministry of Culture is expected to declare its cultural program to celebrate the occasion soon.

Tarim was chosen as Capital of Islamic Culture 2010 by the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) at fourth Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers held in Algiers in December 2004.

Through its choice of a city of to head Islamic culture each year, the ISESCO aims to highlight its cultural contributions in disseminating Islamic culture and civilization.

Known as a moderate and wise center of Islamic culture, Tarim has long been famous as a beacon of knowledge in the south of the Arabian Peninsula. Students and clerics have flocked to the city's schools from around the world to study Islamic culture.

"Tarim is a city of knowledge and culture," said the governor of Hadramout, Salem Al-Khanbashi. "There are several mosques and palaces in Tarim that need restoration, and I hope this will happen soon. There is a committee whose job it is to prepare for this, but we haven't finalized the program yet."

This month the Cabinet approved the formation of a committee headed by Deputy Prime Minister of Internal Affairs and with the ministers of culture, finance, information, tourism, endowments, education and the governor of Hadramout to plan for next year.

Activities are to highlight the historical and cultural heritage of this



Islamic city, but a detailed program of them has not yet been released. To attract tourism and media attention in the Arab and Islamic world, money will need to be invested in the city's tourism infrastructure.

The city is famous for its over 365 mosques and prominent Islamic architecture. The most famous of these is the Mihdhar mosque, with the distinctive architecture of its 150 meter-high mud minaret.

Tarim still retains its importance in religious life and the dissemination of the call to Islam. Many clerics have graduated from Dar-Al-Mustafa which has become one of the most prominent features of the famous religious city. Students from East Asia, Africa, Europe, Gulf States and Syria have traveled to the city to study Sharia and Islamic studies.

The current Capital of Islamic Culture is Kairouan in Tunisia. As part of the year, the city has staged a wide range of exhibitions, seminars and musical and theater performances in Kairouan, other Tunisian cities and even outside Tunisia.

Last Year, the Capital of Islamic culture was Alexandria.

Putting the breaks on Gitmo closure

By Salma Ismail

SANA'A, May 24 — Following the U.S. Senate's overwhelming vote to refuse funding for the closure of the controversial Guantanamo Bay prison in Cuba, US President Barack Obama argued that the prison "likely created more terrorists around the world than it ever detained."

Obama used a historic backdrop in the National Archives, featuring the Constitution, Bill of Rights and Declaration of Independence to defend his decision to shut down the Cuban facility by January 2010. He said he knew when he ordered it closed; it would be a "difficult and complex" issue.

The 90 to six vote in the Senate is a clear sign to Obama that he may struggle to convince the Democratic-controlled Congress to agree with his plans to shut down the detention centre and move the 240 detainees. The majority not only refused to shut down the facility but also opposed the transfer of detainees to U.S. prisons.

"Yemeni detainees in Guantanamo are not terrorists, it is their right to come home," argues Ahmed Arman, a lawyer and executive secretary at the National Organization for Defending Rights and Freedoms, an NGO commonly known as HOOD.

Indicating that it is safe to send the remaining Yemeni Gitmo detainees home he adds, "The 14 Yemeni detainees that have previously been released from Guantanamo were innocent as are the others detained," he



adds. "They are in Yemen, where they belong, and have not been involved in any terrorism acts."

Of the 240 detainees at the facility, 100 are Yemenis.

Last month, Obama asked for USD 80 million for the Pentagon and the US justice department to close the facility at Guantanamo Bay by January 2010.

The Senate's vote came as FBI director Robert Mueller told Congress that he is concerned Guantanamo detainees could support terrorism if sent to the US.

Lawrence B. Wilkerson, the former chief of staff to Secretary of State Colin Powell, admitted earlier in the week in an internet posting entitled "Some Truths About Guantanamo Bay." That of the approximately 800 detainees held at Guantanamo Bay

since the controversial detention center opened, only "two dozen or so" were actually terrorists.

Brutal tactics, Obama said, "alienate us in the world. They serve as a recruitment tool for terrorists, and increase the will of our enemies to fight us. They risk the lives of our troops by making it less likely that others will surrender to them in battle, and more likely that Americans will be mistreated if they are captured."

"In short, they did not advance our war and counter-terrorism efforts. They undermined them," Obama said. "And that is why I ended them once and for all."

"We must leave these methods where they belong, in the past. They are not who we are. They are not America," he said.

Obama proposes to send some detainees home try others under revised tribunal rules with more due process and reserve indefinite detainees only for those who have been determined to pose a genuine threat to national security.

Yemen's Code of Criminal Procedures stipulates that individuals cannot be arrested unless apprehended in a criminal act or served with an arrest warrant. Detainees must be arraigned within 24 hours of arrest or be released. The law also states that a detainee may not be held longer than seven days without a court order.

According to Human Rights Watch, Yemen's "erratic" approach to fighting terrorism is coupled with a tenuous respect for the rule of law and significant human rights violations. Although the Yemeni government denies any abuses, it increasingly appears to be using counterterrorism tactics as a tool to silence journalists and political opponents. US Embassy officials say they have voiced disapproval of these practices to Yemeni officials.

In the first days of his administration, Obama won praise when he signed three executive orders, the first of which calls for shutting down the controversial Guantanamo Bay detention center "as soon as practicable, and no later than one year from now." for banning harsh interrogation methods and for ordering an end to secret CIA jails overseas.

Obama is expected to outline his plan for the 240 Guantanamo detainees on Thursday.

Over three tons of banned pesticides seized

By: Ali Saeed

SANA'A, May 24 — Over three tons of banned pesticides were seized and returned to their country of production by the Plant Protection Department, at the Alb crossing on the border with Saudi Arabia, north of Sa'ada, last week.

"The seized pesticides are banned by the Yemeni law," said Abdullah Al-Sayani, general director of the Plant Protection Department. "Most of them were dimethoate, mancozeb and granite, and the rest were little quantities of other pesticides."

They were imported from Belgium and entered Yemen through Saudi Arabia."

Al-Sayani said that the issue would be discussed next month by a Saudi-Yemeni technical committee including representatives from the Ministry of Industry and Trade, the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation and the Tax Authority from both countries. They will request Saudi authorities not to allow non-licensed pesticides to enter Yemen through Saudi Arabia.



Pesticides stored improperly may lead to biohazards affecting humans and plants.

"A 'banned pesticides inspector' seized the banned pesticides at the Alb crossing in cooperation with customs fees authority there," stated Al-Sayani. "There are now around 45 banned pesticides inspectors in Yemen to inspect border crossings and pesticides shops around the country," said the director.

These inspectors are authorized to write memos and report any shop that sells banned pesticides to the prosecution, he said. They carry out unannounced inspections in all pesticide shops in all governorates, and recently completed inspecting shops in Taiz.

"Inspections are ongoing, but we do not give shops any warning so that they cannot hide the banned pesticides before inspectors arrive," said Al-Sayani.

It is not the first time for Yemeni authorities to seize and return banned, since last year 57 tons and 710 kilograms were seized in Al-Bog'a in Sa'ada.

Although the law states that only 300 kinds of pesticides can enter the market, there were up to 1,124 kinds of pesticides on the Yemeni market up to the end of 2007 alone, according to official reports.

Experts have estimated that 70 percent of the pesticides used on qat are illegal and smuggled into the country. Qat farmers use pesticides and fertilizers to make the plant grow faster and reap the benefits of the significant income it generates.

Many medical reports have linked the increase in cancer patients in Yemen -estimated at 20,000 cases a year- to the overuse of pesticides, or use of internationally banned pesticides.

Continued from page 1

National Consultation Meeting demands regime reform

Sixth, the government fixed the disintegrating culture to face of the national project and played a negative role in national development. It encouraged corruption and undermined national bonds on behalf of a culture that promotes loyalty to the government.

Seventh, the government depended on an extremist initiative based on using force to face all forms of the national struggle and the different activities and peaceful demands. This resulted in another extremism supported by terrorism which depends also on force and violence, which made the government the biggest cause of crises and their aggravation.

In the same context, Faisal Bin Shamlan, the candidate of the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) for the presidential elections conducted in 2006, said during the meeting attended by over 1200 participants that there is a prevailing feeling in the southern government that unity and partnership came to an end. He pointed out that achieving unity was based on equal partnership, demanding that necessary reforms be taken to avoid separation of the two parts of the country.

For his part, Mohammed Ba Sendwa, the president's advisor, showed his concern about seriousness of this stage. He said that the crises that Yemen is currently witnessing are unprecedented.

Ba Sendwa confirmed that unity should be based on partnership and equal distribution of power and resources. "If we don't say this, we are useless and if the ruler doesn't hear it, then he is useless too," he added.

The JMP had already called on political powers, social dignitaries, civil society organizations, religious scholars and intellectuals as well as businessmen to hold a national consultation under the umbrella of unity and democracy to discuss all national issues, confirming that the national crisis can only deal with through group work and

national consensus.

The meeting announced forming a preparatory committee for the dialogue consisting of 90 members and formed committees of social groups to run the dialogue and prepare for a conference for the national dialogue.

Concerning demonstrations that took place last Thursday in Al-Sheikh Othman city in Aden on the occasion of

the 19th anniversary of Yemeni unity, hundreds of members of the National Consultation Meeting staged a sit-in following Friday prayers in the hall where the meeting was held in protest against killing and injuring dozens of people who participated in the demonstration.

Thousands of people who came from a number of governorates gathered at Al-Hashimi square in Aden to celebrate the 19th anniversary of unity but a number of demonstrators raised secessionist slogans and chanted against the regime, according to security authorities.

Security scattered the demonstrators using gunfire, which resulted in five citizens killed and around 30 injured, according to different sources. The security also detained around 750 demonstrators and sent dozens of them to Sana'a by military transportation planes, according to unconfirmed sources.

The sources said that security chased some demonstrators and arrested them and arrested a number of injured people who received treatment at Al-Naqib Private Hospital. Security sources in Aden said that gunfire targeted members of security from a house in the neighborhood while they were scattering demonstrators. Three soldiers were injured, according to security sources.

These confrontations coincided with the military parade carried out in Sana'a and attended by the president on the occasion of the Yemeni people's celebration on the 19th anniversary of the Yemeni unity achieved on May 22 1990.

In Brief

SANAA
Yemen, African (IOM) discuss refugees' issues
 Deputy of Aden governor Ahmed Salem Ali has discussed with regional director of International Organization for Migration (IOM) Ashraf Noor several topics and issues related of African refugees and the role of the organization for supporting them.
 The governor assured of the importance of activating the role of supporting the refugees. He indicated the leadership in Aden seeks to provide the infrastructure but he continues refugees are forming an obstacle before the local authority in the governorate, he added.
 For his part, Noor praised Yemen's role to include the refugees indicating the organization seeks to give an awareness campaign and training courses to educate workers in coastguards and immigration and passport Authority, he also praised the role of the Red Cross in refugees issues.
 He pointed to the establishment of small committee between the organization and the leadership in the governorate

to work on refugee's issues and how to deal with emigrants.
President Saleh attends military parade
 President Ali Abdullah Saleh attended on Thursday a military parade took place at the al-Sabayn Square in the capital Sana'a to mark the celebrations of the 19th anniversary of Yemen's Unity Day.
 Speaking to President Saleh and senior government officials who attended the parade, Defence Minister Ahmed Nasser said that Unity came to support Yemeni people, adding "since its creation on 22 May 1990, Yemen witnessed great changes at political, economic, social and cultural levels".
 Ahmed stressed that the military and security forces have always reflected the finest models in the realignment of national unity through boosting the principle of harmony and unity among the people of Yemen.
 The Minister pointed to that the army and security forces are the largest space for the people without discrimination or differentiation.

He explained that the military and security bodies re-received those who had been affected in the events before achieving the unity of the homeland, pointing out that the government was keen to improve the living conditions of military retirees and returning personnel to the army and security bodies.
 "The army and security forces will spare no effort in addressing those who try to prejudice the people, unity and national achievements", said the Yemeni Minister.
SHABWA
Alien object found in Yemen sea
 Fishermen in Shabwa province have found an unidentified spiral material object, one meter and half length and 8 inches width, planted in the sea between the coastal areas of Jellah and Balhaf.
 The Information Center of the Interior Ministry reported the find was a Chinese-made yellow set with an aerial and sixteen round holes at its top.
 The fishermen informed the police about the object, who in turn sent it to the capital of Sana'a to be checked by specialized experts.

An investigation was launched to explore facts about the unidentified object in the area.
ADEN
Aden Ortho Center offered services for around 2,326 cases in 2008
 Aden Orthopedic Center presented its services to more than 2,326 cases during last year.
 Deputy Chairman of the ortho workshop of the center Abdullah al-Dohim told Saba that the center offered the services for 44 victims of landmines and 8,011 sessions of natural treatments.
 Last April, Yemen National Mine Action Programme Director Mansoor al-Ezzi said that the number of mine victims in the country has reached 5400 people and it has been removed 165000 mines and fireballs since 1998.
 The problem of mines came after the 1994 war while the Programme continued its plans to clear more than 7410064523 square meters in all provinces of the country, hold 654 awareness courses and help 2033 mine victims.

Their News

New generation of Mercedes in Yemen

The United Engineering & Automobile Company Ltd., the (Mercedes Benz) agent in Yemen, celebrated on Monday May 18, at their main premises in Sana'a- the official launch of new Mercedes Benz generation of cars and trucks stars. The ceremony attended by over 3 thousand guests, including the distinguished society members, businessmen, interested parties and the diplomatic corps
 The third generation of Actress trucks and the Mercedes cars of class A of all categories and standards were also launched.
 At the beginning of the ceremony the company's Executive Manager, Ahmed al-Saidi introduced a documentary presentation which showed specifications and dimensions that the trucks and cars models possess.
 Meanwhile, a number of youth on motor bikes entered the display area, followed by the Mercedes cars and trucks, of actress model, accompanied by firework.

The guests examined the cars and the trucks. They were well received and won the satisfaction of all.
 The guests then went to the dining tent where they have a dinner in honor of the inauguration and valuable prizes were also distributed.
 The guests admired the celebration, expressing their contentment for the company's care towards the customers starting with the provision of access to the right information up to the post sales services.
 The United Engineering & Automobile Company Ltd. was established in 1988. It is one of Shair Trade Companies Group. It obtained the sole agency of the German Mercedes Benz, as well as the agency of the Korean Ssang Yong. It also owns one of biggest customers' service centers which is quipped with the latest technology and the most efficient engineers as well. The company contributed to Yemeni economic development through the Shahir Trade Company's STCO.

CAC Bank launches of the electronic banking
 Cooperative Agricultural Credit Bank (CAC Bank) held on Wednesday a press conference to announce the launch of its new service "E-Banking".
 In a statement to the media, said Professor Ahmed Mohamed Taki - Assistant Director-General for business and banking that this project provides banking services to VIP clients from companies and institutions, embassies and others.
 E-banking is an integrated banking system that gives customers the possibility of implementing many types of banking services at any time and any place, due to its distinguished and well-developed technology in the aspects of confidentiality and safety. Growth indicators and financial statements for the fiscal year 2008 of the bank have also been reviewed during the press conference.
 For his part, Abdel-Rahman Obad, director of the new service that the project gives the user a new password every time he or she logs into the system. It does not allow any user without giving the pass-

word.
 The bank adopts latest technology to prevent any outside party from intercepting the flow of data to and from the customer and the bank. A customer can follow up the progress of all its online banking service using the electronic filing to ensure proper operation without the need to contact the bank. Obad pointed out that there are many services provided by the project during the next period.
 Adding that new products are such as foreign transactions, letters of credit, local and international guarantees, all kinds of transactions (from one of the client accounts to another, adding credit into accounts, issuing checks), paying phone, power, water bills, in addition to reviewing account statements, credit limit and currency exchange rates and other services.
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The struggle to give a child a private education

By: Khaled Al-Hilaly

Despite the fact that they can hardly afford it, many middle class parents in Yemen fight to send their children to private school because they believe that discipline and the quality of education they offer is better. Seeking the best future for their children, middle class parents make the sacrifice to meet steep private schools fees.

Especially in the early grades, parents prefer private schools, because public schools are far from their homes and notorious for crowded classrooms. Contrary to these governmental schools, private schools boast good kindergartens, and teach the highly important subjects of English and computer skills from the early grades.

There are 651 private schools all over Yemen, half of which are in Sana'a, providing education to up to 230,000 students, according to the recent statistics from the Ministry of Education. Of these, up to 54 are schools that teach solely in English or have an English section, where fees are the highest.

But English is not the only factor that increases private school fees, which in Yemen range between USD 200-10,000 a year. Location can also influence schools rates, such as in Hadda, Sana'a, for example, where higher rent and wealthier inhabitants have prompted private schools to increase their fees.

"We chose private schools because there offer more security and discipline," said Um Amer, a mother of three children in private school for whom she pays about YR 80,000 or USD 400 each in school fees each year. "Whenever we find private school fees become a burden we return to public."

"Low living standards mean many people cut away from their food expenses to send their children to private schools," said Hamid Shater, head of the private education department at the Ministry of Education.

Many schools give parents a chance to pay the fees by monthly installment, and agree with schools principals on a paying schedule.

"I ask friends to lend me money to pay the monthly installment, and then I pay them back," said father of two -a boy and a girl- Fuad Hizam. "Whatever the obstacles to giving my children private schooling, I will work hard to overcome them."

To pay for his children's schooling, he works for a private company in addition to his governmental job in the morning. He is happy with the strategy of installment payment he agreed on with the principal of his children's school.

But pressure is on the parents to pay on time, because, say parents, a child cannot sit his final exams if his fees are not paid by the end of the school year. A teacher's salary also depends of the parents' regularity in paying, as private schools delay teachers' salaries for over two weeks because they receive school fees late.

Engineer Murad Al-Aghbari pays about YR 250,000 or USD 1,250 every year to give his four children a private education, almost twice his relatively high monthly salary of YR 150,000 or USD 750.

With all his large family's other expenses including rent, this means that when a member of his family is sick, he can't pay the school fees on time. Despite this, he perseveres because he believes the small classrooms and better student follow-up offered by private schools are worth it.

"Monthly, I pay whatever I can as an installment but by the final exams I have to complete the whole amount otherwise the school won't let my children sit their exams," he said.

"I have a son and a daughter who will start secondary school next year and I plan to send them to public schools," said Al-Aghbari. "In the secondary grades, the standards of

education is almost the same in the public and private systems."

"When they are in secondary, they will have enough private education and they can return to public schools and excel," agreed Hizam, who will also send his children to a public school after primary.

Under considerable pressure to pay fees, many parents in Yemen have opted to send their children to private school in primary, but not in secondary.

"Most private school students return to public school as soon as they reach secondary," said Shater. "The number of students in private secondary schools is limited."

Student enrolment in private education at secondary level declined by 28.8 percent from 2007 to 2008, according to a recent report by the Ministry of Education.

Parents avoid private secondary schools

Perhaps the main reason behind the low level of enrolment in private secondary schools is the high school fees. These directly reflect the school's expenses, including rent which can consume up to half a school's income, according to Shater.

Other factors that increase a school's expenses are necessary investment in state-of-the-art teaching laboratories and good teachers who demand high salaries.

But surprisingly, high fees are not the only deterrent to parents sending their children to private schools at secondary level. While some think that examiners discriminate against private school students in national final exams, others simply believe that private schools are no better than public schools at secondary level.

Some parents from sending their children, especially girls, to private secondary schools because they are coeducational and they believe that during adolescence, it is a risk to let male and female students study side by side. Of 651 private schools in the whole of Yemen, 50 are schools for boys, 41 for girls and up to 560 are co-educational, but no exact figures exist for secondary level only.

But further than this, out of 226 private schools offering secondary education all over the country, only 13 exclusively teach secondary level. Many of the others have not yet opened the secondary sections of their schools despite being registered as such.

Adolescents in private schools are notoriously difficult to discipline, say principals, but reasons behind their reluctance to provide secondary education are



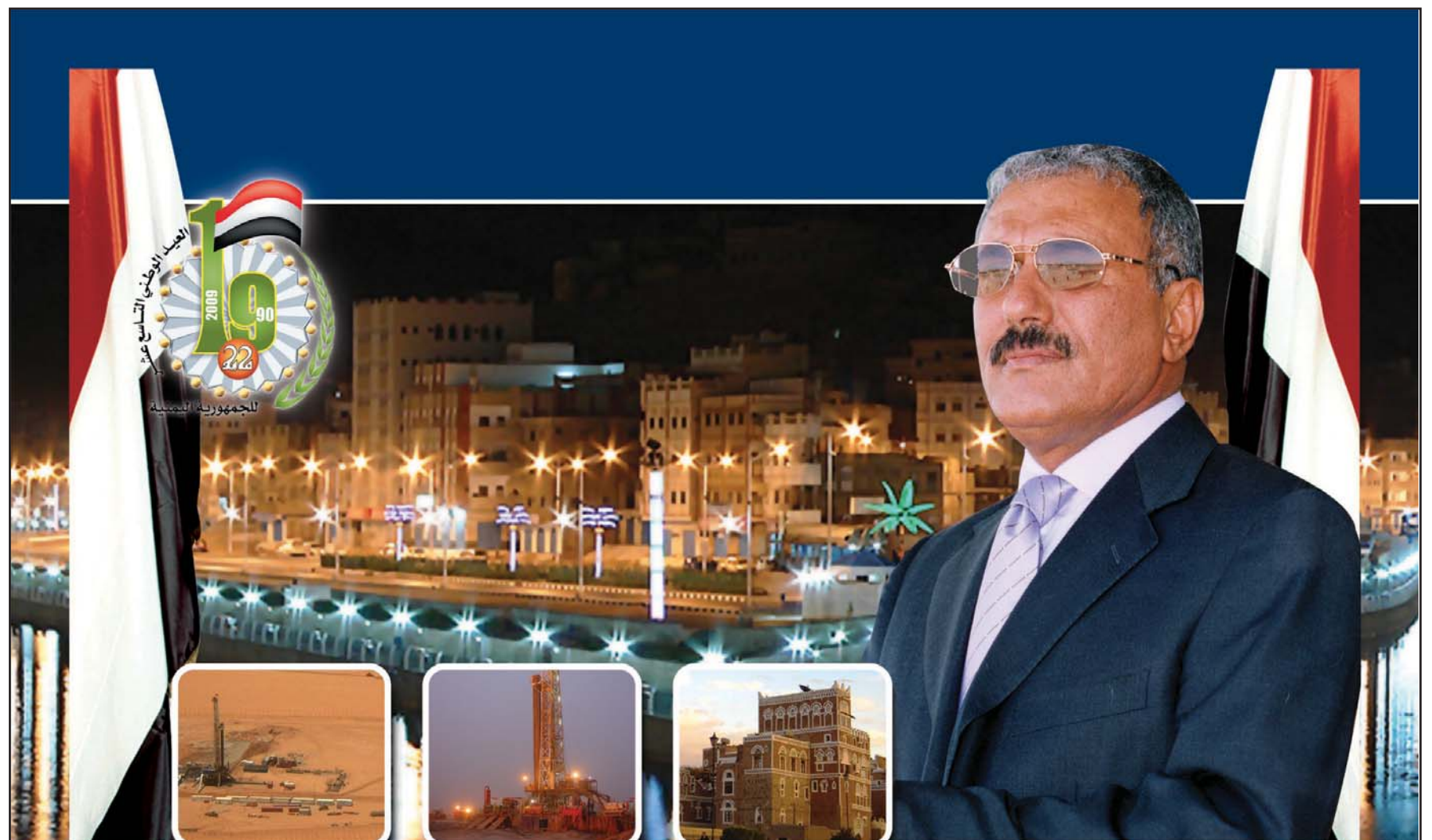
many.

Abdulatif Mabrouk, principal of Ekleel Al-Yemen School in Sana'a, launched secondary education at his private school over five years ago. He said the difficulty in finding capable teachers was an obstacle to opening secondary grades at his school.

"You need well-qualified administration and teaching staff to deal with secondary school students who need special treatment," he said, adding that they have overcome the coeducational problem by opening two sections, one for boys and one for girls, from fourth grade: "Our secondary classes have two sections."

Mabrouk said that the biggest challenges for the school are collecting fees from parents and keeping up with the increase in the school's rent. But parents not paying fees does not prevent students from sitting exams, following instructions from the Ministry of Education to prohibit this.

According to Mabrouk, this has made the mission of collecting fees from student's parents more difficult.



The Yemeni people made their history on the 22nd of May for the new generation and the unity of nation is a sign of power and right democracy. The celebration of **nineteenth anniversary of the National Day May 22nd** is a model for the progress of Yemen and its people from al-Mahra to Sa'ada.

On this special occasion we present our greatest congratulation to the defender of unity and builder of Yemen

H.E. Ali Abdullah Saleh, President of the Republic of Yemen

And to the government and Yemeni people
Wishing Yemen more progress and development

the team management and staff of OMV-Yemen represented

by General Manager - Dr. Elmar Collins



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د / المار كولنز - مدير عام شركة أو أم في يمن وكافة الموظفين

نتقدم

الشركة العربية اليمنية للأسمنت المحدودة

ممثلة برئيس مجلس إدارتها

الهندس / عبدالله أحمد سعيد بوشان

بعضاتس الشباني و التبريكات الى فخامة رئيس الجمهورية الأبح /

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والي كافة أبناء الشعب اليمني

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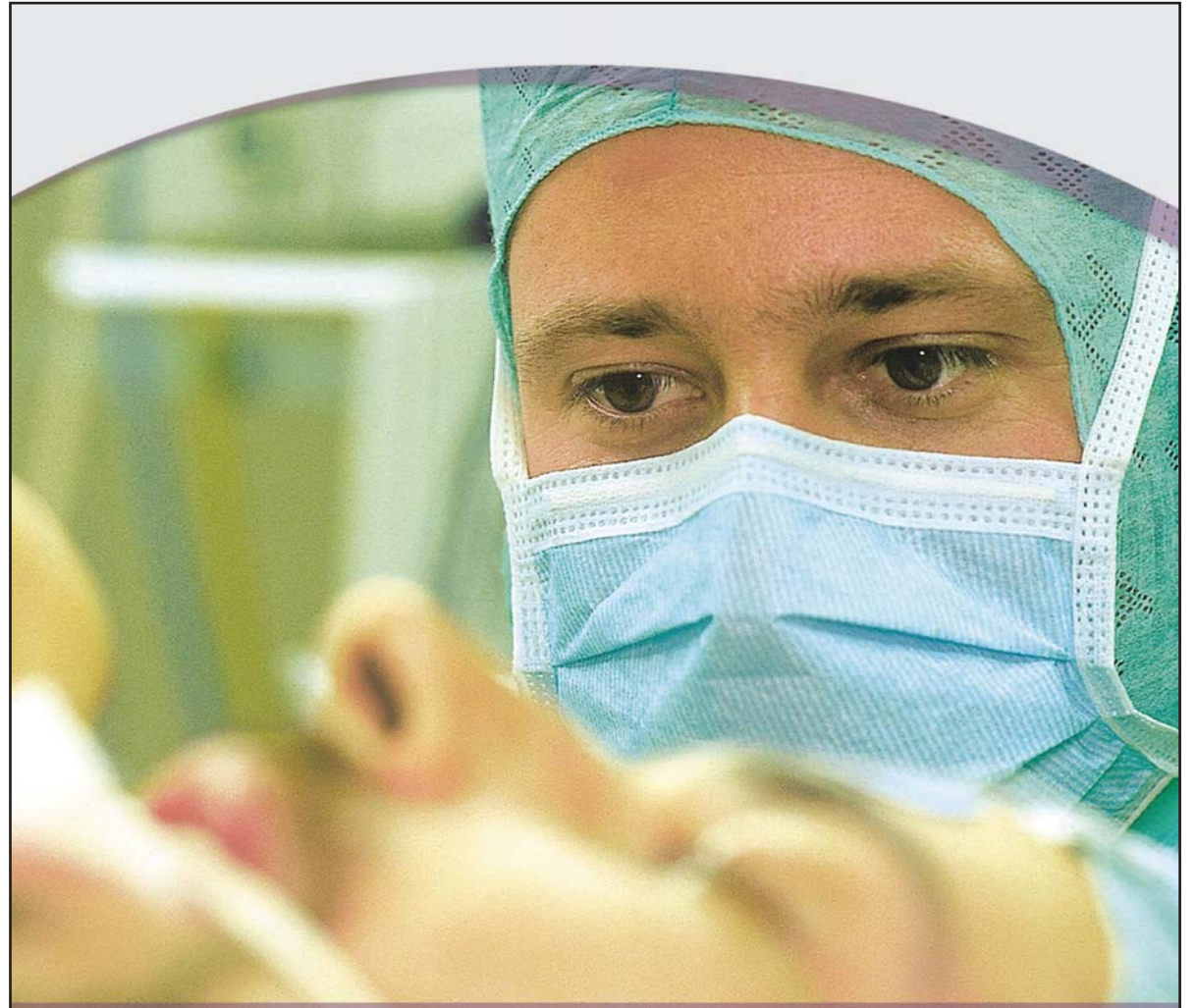
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Please send a copy of your CV latest by 10th June 2009.

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P O Box 15088, Sana'a, Republic of Yemen
Or Email: info@iryemen.org

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صدق (الله العظيم

بقلوب مؤمنة بقضاء الله وقدره تتقدم بخالص العزاء
وصادق المواساة إلى:

معالي السفير / محمد آدم محمد اسماعيل
سفير دولة السودان الشقيق

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أ / خير الدين محمد النصور المدير العام التنفيذي

وكافة طاقم ومنتسبي مؤسسة يمن تايمز للصحافة والطباعة والنشر

Tender Announcement

Republic of Yemen

Sana'a water supply & sanitation local corporation

Sana'a Wastewater Networks Project

Sana'a Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade

AFESD Loan No.383-99.

The Yemeni Government has received a loan (No 383/99) from Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD) toward the cost of Sana'a Wastewater network project/ Sana'a Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade. The loan covers part of the cost in (US Dollar) while the remaining part will be covered by Yemeni Government in Yemeni Rial (YR).

Sana'a Water and Sanitation Local Corporation (SWSLC) now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the implementation of Tech. measures for Sana'a WWTP upgrade of (65000 m3/d) on a lump sum fixed price Contract. The construction period is 720days while the maintenance & operation period is 365days. Bidding is open to all bidders meeting the post qualification requirements outlined in the bidding documents. The main requirements of which are: Audited balance sheets for the last (3) years. Minimum average annual turnover of USD (15 million), A 5 Million USD cash-flow requirement, Evidence of general experience for the last (10) years including (2) similar Projects each of (25) million USD and a minimum of one WWTP Project with digesters.

A brief description of the Project comprising: New inlet sewer pipe, Coarse screens, Pumping station, Buildings for screens, Grit chambers, Inflow measurement, Primary settling tanks, Gravity thickeners for primary sludge, Three anaerobic digesters with the digester building, Stabilized sludge thickeners, Two gas holders. Co-generation plant, Boiler station, Retention basin, Odor control filters, Site roads, Chambers, Pipe works, Boundary wall, Upgrading return sludge pumping station, With all external and Mechanical + Electrical Works and as outlined in bidding documents.

Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from and inspect the bidding documents at SWSLC office at the address below from 09:00a.m to 14:00 p.m. A complete set of bidding documents in English may be purchased by interested bidders on the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of 250USD till end of 15/july/2009.

Bids must be delivered to the address below by 11:00a.m on July /28 /2009. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of Two Hundred Thousand US Dollar (200,000) bank guarantee. Late bids will be rejected.

Bids will be opened in the presence of bidders representatives who choose to attend at the address below at 12:00a.m on July/28 /2009.

SWSLC Address:

Sana'a water supply & sanitation local corporation
Project Management Office
Al-Hasaba. Beside the Ministry of Public Health & Population
Al-Hasaba Street.
.Sana'a
Republic of Yemen
Phone + 967 1230656
Fax + 967 1230656
E-mail cdteam@y.net.ye

اعلان طرح مناقصة

الجمهورية اليمنية

المؤسسة المحلية للمياه والصرف الصحي بأمانة العاصمة

مشروع شبكات الصرف الصحي بصنعاء

قرض الصندوق العربي (٩٩/٣٨٣)

رفع كفاءة محطة معالجة الصرف الصحي لمدينة صنعاء.

حصلت الحكومة اليمنية على قرض رقم (٩٩/٣٨٣) من الصندوق العربي للإنماء الاقتصادي والاجتماعي لتغطية كلفة مشروع شبكات الصرف الصحي بصنعاء / رفع كفاءة محطة المعالجة لمدينة صنعاء ويغطي القرض جزءاً من كلفة المشروع بالدولار الأمريكي بينما تغطي الحكومة اليمنية الجزء المتبقي بالريال اليمني.

تدعو المؤسسة المحلية للمياه والصرف الصحي بأمانة العاصمة المقاولين الذين تنطبق عليهم شروط التأهيل لتقديم عرض بطرف مختوم للقيام بتنفيذ مشروع رفع كفاءة محطة المعالجة لمدينة صنعاء (بطاقة استيعابية ٦٥٠٠٠ م^٣/ يوم) على مبدأ التعاقد على سعر مقطوع ثابت علماً بأن مدة تنفيذ المشروع (٧٢٠ يوماً) ومدة الصيانة والتشغيل (٣٦٥ يوماً).

المناقصة مفتوحة لجميع المناقصين الذين تنطبق عليهم شروط التأهيل اللائحة والتي من ضمن اهم متطلباتها تقديم كشف حساب مالي لآخر ثلاث سنوات. معدل حجم العمل السنوي بحد أدنى ١٥ مليون دولار، سيولة نقدية بقيمة خمسة ملايين دولار، إثبات عن الخبرة العامة لآخر عشر سنوات متضمن مشروعين مماثلين كل منهما بقيمة (٢٥) مليون دولار و مشروع واحد على الأقل لمحطات معالجة باستخدام المخمرات.

وصف مختصر للمشروع: يتكون المشروع من خط صرف صحي جديد لمدخل المحطة، مصافي خشنة، محطة رفع، مصافي ناعمة، مبنى للمصافي، أحواض إزالة الرمال، جهاز قياس التدفق للمياه الداخلة للمحطة، أحواض ترسيب أولية، مكثفات للرواسب الأولية، مخمرات لا هوائية مع المباني التابعة لها، مكثفات للرواسب الثانوية، خزانات غاز، محطة توليد طاقة، محطة غلايات مياه، أجهزة إزالة الروائح، طرق وأعمال خطوط، سور حماية، تعديل محطة ضخ الحمأة الرجعة وجميع الأعمال الداخلية والخارجية وأعمال الميكانيك والكهرباء المبنية في وثائق العطاء.

يمكن للمقاولين الذين تنطبق عليهم شروط التأهيل والراغبين للدخول في المناقصة الحصول على معلومات إضافية والإطلاع على وثائق العطاء في مكاتب المؤسسة المحلية للمياه والصرف الصحي على عنوانهم المبين أدناه ما بين الساعة التاسعة صباحاً والثانية بعد الظهر ويمكنهم شراء نسخة كاملة عن وثائق العطاء باللغة الانجليزية بموجب تقديمهم طلب خطي للمؤسسة على العنوان المبين أدناه وذلك مقابل مبلغ غير مسترد قدره ٢٥٠ دولار أمريكي وذلك حتى نهاية دوام يوم ١٥ / يوليو / ٢٠٠٩.

تودع العروض في العنوان المبين أدناه بموعد أقصاه الساعة ١١ الحادية عشر من صباح يوم ٢٨ / يوليو / ٢٠٠٩ ويجب إرفاق كفاية دخول للمناقصة مع العرض المقدم بقيمة (٢٠٠٠٠٠٠ دولار) مائتي ألف دولار أمريكي كفاية بنكية ولن يتم قبول العروض التي تصل متأخرة عن الموعد المحدد.

سيتم فتح العروض بحضور ممثلين عن المتقدمين للعروض الراغبين في حضور جلسة فتح العروض في العنوان المبين أدناه وذلك في الساعة ١٢ الثانية عشر ظهراً يوم ٢٨ / يوليو / ٢٠٠٩.

عنوان المؤسسة المحلية للمياه والصرف الصحي:

الحصبة - بجانب وزارة الصحة العامة والإسكان.

صنعاء - الجمهورية اليمنية

مكتب إدارة المشروع

هاتف ٩٦٧١٢٣٠٦٥٦

+٩٦٧١٢٣٠٦٥٦ فاكس

بريد الالكتروني cdteam@y.net.ye

Unity celebrated

Signs of celebration were present all over the republic, especially in Sana'a, where a military parade took place last Thursday. Throughout the week, flags and posters of a united Yemen were hoisted everywhere. Cars were painted in the colors of the flag, while children took to the streets carrying symbols of the Yemeni unity. Even university students celebrated their graduation in a patriotic environment.



YT photo by Abdul Aziz Omar



YT photo by Abdul Aziz Omar



YT photo by Abdul Aziz Omar



YT photo by Amira Al-Sharif



YT photo by Amira Al-Sharif



YT photo by Amira Al-Sharif



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YT photo by Amira Al-Sharif



YT photo by Amira Al-Sharif

Words of Wisdom



Gentlemen, Yemen does not need more money! It needs a system. Yemen needs accountable officials, and it needs people with some decency in the way they work. If the IMP, World Bank and other organizations pump loans into Yemen, where will it go? More importantly, how will it be paid?

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



OUR OPINION

Kuwaiti elections and Yemeni women quota system

The first time Kuwaiti women ventured into parliamentary elections as candidates, they won four seats hands down. Yemeni women have been participating in all sorts of elections as candidates and the number of successful candidates in next to none.

Where did we go wrong?

Just in 2005 did Kuwait women gain the right to vote and run for office. A freedom house report on women's rights in the Middle East says Kuwaiti women have the second highest degree of freedom in the Gulf Arab states, just behind Bahrain. In addition to greater political rights for women, Kuwait also has the region's highest percentage of women in the workplace.

There is no quota system in Kuwait, nothing of the 30 or even 15 percent Yemeni women are demanding and politicians are dangling in front women's movements like a carrot on a stick. Yet in less than five years since they gained the right to vote and run in elections, Kuwaiti women have claimed eight percent of seats in parliament. In contrast, Yemeni women don't even hold 0.35 percent of seats in parliament after decades of political participation.

In the previous Kuwaiti parliamentary elections in 2006, up to 27 out of 249 candidates were women. Under the constitution, the emir shares legislative power with the 50-member National Assembly, which is elected to a four-year term by a limited popular vote involving only about 15 percent of the country's 900,000 citizens.

Most of the political women of Kuwait belong to a strong political party or are independent candidates who have a long history of public activities and are recognized for who they are by the state.

We in Yemen have both. We have strong women in strong political parties and we have active women with an admirable history of public service. Why do Yemeni women not win in elections? The answer to this is that they lack support from their parties or the country's male dominant public sphere altogether. The majority of Yemeni men simply don't respect women's rights and ability to be a public figure and to make decisions to represent the people. That is why Yemeni women think that they have to seek men's approval to participate, even if it means demanding a new law like the quota system.

We keep singing the song of the Queen Sheba and Queen Arwa in our history saying that Yemeni women have long taken their rights as leaders. But the truth is that Queen Sheba and Queen Arwa are the accomplishments of their time and not ours.

I am happy for the Kuwaiti women and wish them the best of luck. Maybe we ought to learn from their experience and seek their support.

Nadia Al-Sakkaf

The unity of Yemen needs change and sacrifice

Dr. Murad Alazzany
University Putra Malaysia

Without any doubt the unification of Yemen is a source of power and pride for all Yemenis and Muslims. It is even considered by many thinkers and politicians all over the Arab world as the first seed for the unification of the entire Arab and Muslim nation. Thus, it is a religious duty for all Yemenis to protect this unification and to exert great efforts to defend it. This is an inescapable duty, particularly in this era when the whole world is moving towards pluralism. Hence, we do not expect the Arab nation at this time to move towards more partition and separatism.

It is well known that the unification of Yemen happened under challenging circumstances and difficult times. It happened while the two previous parts of Yemen were facing dangers and menaces that threatened their socio-political structures and made both of them unsettled and unable to survive as countries with independent and respected sovereignty. However, as the two parts have many things in common, unification was their only choice and an inevitable fate. Due to this fact, the political leadership of both North and South Yemen declared unification in 1990.

However, due to some disagreements between the two political sides, a separation was declared unilaterally by the previous leadership of South Yemen in 1994. However, all Yemeni people, regardless of their political allegiance and geographical location, denounced that decree and rose up to fight for their unity. They showed the strongest determination and persistence to protect their unity. Because of their determination and their sacrifices, the unity remained strong till now.

A new danger looms again nowadays to threaten the unity of Yemenis. This threat is represented in the rioting and turmoil which is going on in many southern cities. This turmoil is encouraged by the previous politicians who used to rule the south and who now live abroad. They look at this turmoil as an endeavor to restore the southern part of Yemen which they think they have lost totally to the northern regime in Sana'a. This endeavor has received a wide wave of public support and sympathy in the southern part of Yemen. However, this wide wave of public support does not mean that the southerners yearn for the rule of the socialist regime which was bloody in nature. This regime oppressed them and confiscated their properties, political rights and even social freedoms. Rather, this support comes as a cumulative result of the wrong practices of the political leadership in Sana'a.

The ongoing rioting in the south is a natural reaction to the incurable corruption which penetrated all layers of the institutional and social life of Yemen. It is also a reaction to the deteriorating situation that impoverished people and burdened them with unaffordable responsibilities. It is a natural retaliation to the marginalization of the other, the neglect of the other's identity, the denial of his rights, and the complete ignoring of his outcries for a long time. It is also a reaction to the policies of the regime that rules the country through the traditional means of favoritism, patronage, nepotism, threats, and intimidation.

The wrong practices of the government coupled with the poverty of

people and the absence of justice pushed them to resort to rioting and turmoil as a means to express their dissatisfaction. These wrong practices pushed them to further abandon their Yemeni identity and to publicly chant the slogan of separation, believing that separation will offer them a prosperous and fair life which they once dreamed of under the umbrella of unity but never got. Their dreams were frittered away after 19 long years during which they saw nothing more than severe oppression, institutionalized discrimination, overt theft of public wealth and widespread looting of private properties. After 19 years, the southern people become convinced that such a regime can not bring them justice or ensure equal citizenship or rights for them as stated in the constitution of the united country.

The philosophy of the regime and its mechanism in ruling the country contributed greatly to unfairly enhance the social culture of the sheikh and *qabeely* (tribesman) as well as of powerful governmental officers and their *ra'ayah* (subjects). We can say that the regime also encouraged the idea of the superior northerner and the inferior southerner. This mechanism gives the sheikhs, high officers in the government and army leaders social privileges and immunity. Furthermore, the violations of the laws are permissible by the regime who impliedly declared them above the law. Such wrong practices are unquestionable. A class struggle was created within such a social mechanism and we have to admit that this kind of culture is totally alien to the southerners who fought the sultans and sheikhs and demolished their small kingdoms during the 70s. They even confiscated their properties and distributed them among the common poor people in a just way. The culture that was created by the ruling regime is what drove people to search for other choices and alternatives without considering their fatal consequences. At the same time, it convinced them that it is impossible for anyone to reach his own rights through peaceful means as the regime does not understand any language but that of violence and threats.

The solution for this national crisis is still available at the hands of the regime. However, as we are a part of this country, our national duty dedicates us to participate in any way to save the country from sinking into havoc. Thus, we have made some suggestions here and points which we hope our leadership will have time to listen to. Initially, we advise the political leadership to restrain its media channels and politicians from dividing the southern people into noble patriots and evil traitors who must be buried alive or killed. Such a strategy of classification endorses more hatred among people and it is usually the beginning of more havoc and turmoil that normally ends up dividing countries into even smaller territories. At the same time, the regime should be aware that the solution for this crisis is not in forming public committees to defend the unity. These committees will drive people to fight with each other and the consequences will be fatal. Any bloodshed or causality will destroy the social structure of the society, will complicate the situation and might put the whole country on the brink of civil war.

The regime, in the meantime, has to set up channels of dialogue with southerners and must show a wide understanding for their sufferings

and their demands. Dialogue at this time requires transparency and determination. It would be even better if it happened under the supervision of the Gulf Countries. Within this dialogue, the regime has to review the wrong practices that happened in the past and correct them by bringing a critical change to the whole society. This change is presented in giving more constitutional power to the civil institutions of the country which must provide a powerful authority to apply the law on all people without any discrimination. In this, institutions will play a great role to enhance the power of the law which has been absent from Yemen's public institutions for so long. Consequently, justice and prosperity will prevail and will be felt by all members of society. If justice prevails in a way that will make people, regardless of their geographical and political allegiance, equal in the eyes of the law, people will have no other choice but to participate in the development of the society as righteous citizens. People will love the unity and will never hesitate to fight against any danger that threatens it.

Again, the regime also has to lessen both the monarchy and the substantive centralization in administering the country. It should decentralize the political system to involve more people in decision making and policy making that concerns the welfare of the whole community. Marginalizing people would create feelings of alienation which may cause damage to the social structure of the country and to the people's sense of patriotism. In order to avoid that, the regime has to widen the system of 'Home Rule' and give it a wide range of authority in the administration of each city. Such a step will weaken the autocracy and will result in a wider participation in ruling the country. Besides, the election of the governors will

motivate them to understand the social problems of the public and to respond faster to them.

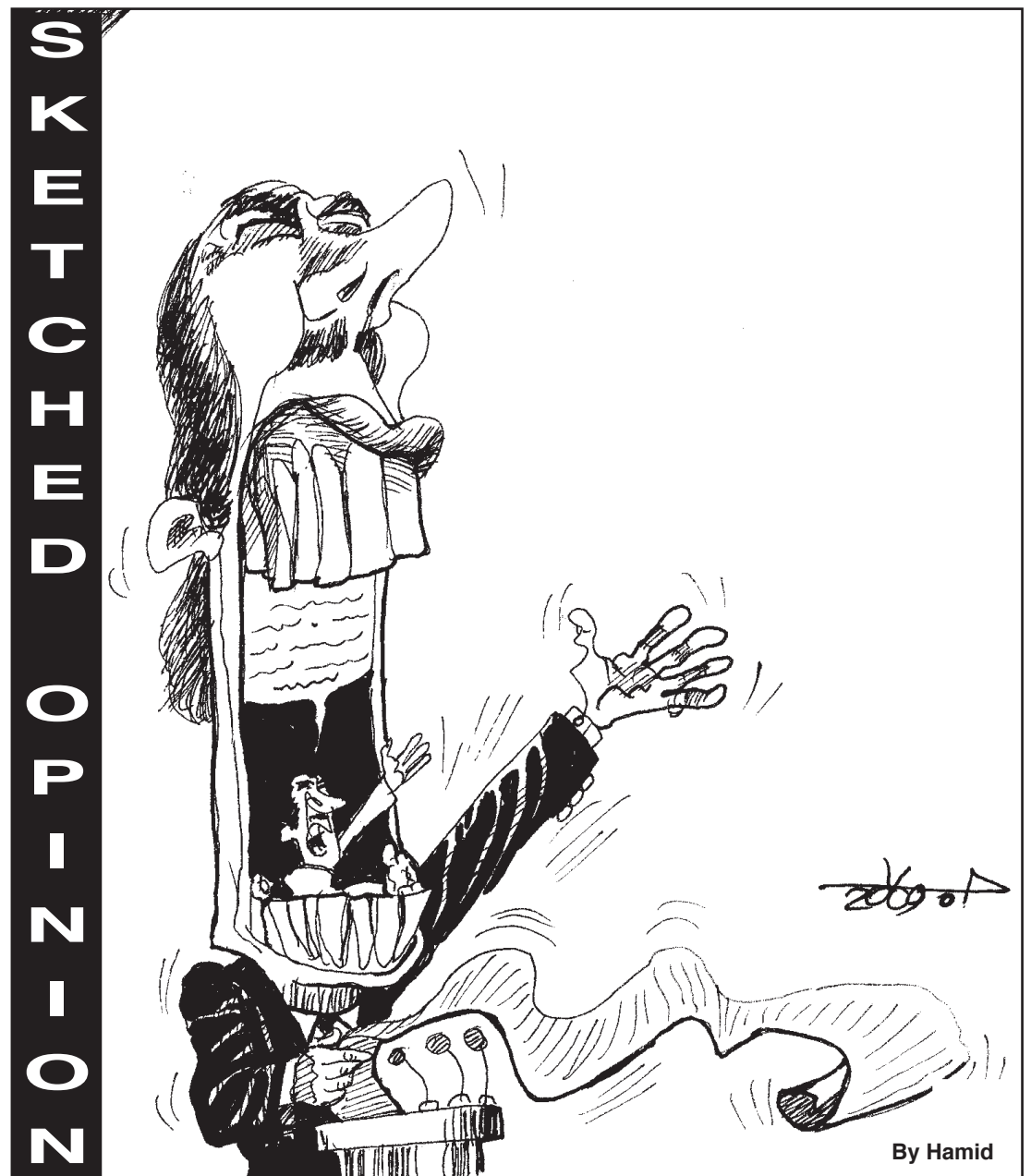
Without any doubt, the system of Home Rule will empower those who operate within the civil institutions of the society. At the same time, it will reduce the leverage of those who operate outside the civil institutions of society like the sheikhs, army leaders and businessmen. At the same time, it will prevent them from misusing their power to obtain more privileges and advantages. However, that does not mean that the regime has to ignore the demands of tribal communities or marginalize them. Rather, it has to exert a great effort to civilize their communities in order to make them more qualified in participating in the welfare of the society.

The regime has also to change its own philosophy which looks at people as cattle or sheep that need a shepherd to control and guide them. Such a philosophy unfairly creates greedy sheikhs and other individuals in every area in the country. It unfairly endows them with privileges to enjoy high social status, position and other advantages. It empowers them either by money or through political means to control the political allegiance of people and to ensure their loyalty to the regime. Such a philosophy weakened the social and civilized institutions of the country, marginalized their role in serving the public, and gave more power to influential individuals to oppress people and to disturb the social harmony of the society. Such a practice forces the public to seek new loyalties to influential people in order to resort to them whenever they clash with other influential entities or with the local government.

Our last word for the political leadership of the country is that the society needs huge reforms that must be imposed at all levels. These reforms, to be implanted successful-

ly, must be accompanied by huge sacrifices and determination. Influential people whose misuse their positions and power to undermine the legitimacy of unity and threaten its continuity must be excluded. Sacrificing such people is the least that can be done to protect unity and to avoid any future dangers that may threaten it. The regime must be fully aware that the public rejects a unity that unifies the land but not its people. They need a unity that respects individuals, a united country where in the eyes of the law all people are guaranteed equality in terms of rights and duties. The people need a unity that protects individuals from the authority of the sheikhs, ministers and army generals.

Before we end this article, we would like to remind our brothers in the south that they committed a big mistake when they let their protests turn from calling for rights into calling for separation. They have no right, no matter what the circumstances, to chant the slogan of separation. Even if their sufferings are severe, they must be aware that unity is the property of all Yemenis and never belonged to the president or any of his entourage or independents. They committed another mistake when they started to pair their brother northerners who live or work in the south with the regime and its wrong practices. Please brothers, do not let the culture of hatred blind your eyes to undermine your essential issues. Do not let hatred make you unable to distinguish between the regime and your brothers who share with you the bitterness of life and its sufferings. Do not go astray from focusing on your essential issues and from demanding your full rights. Nevertheless, you have to remember that the country is possessed by all and its welfare is the concern of every individual in society.



By Hamid

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Yemen Press Review



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Thursday, May 21, 2009

Top Story

- Prime Minister: Unity is the biggest national project in Yemen's history

Yemen Prime Minister Dr Ali Mohammed Mujawar reaffirmed earlier this week that the Yemeni unity has represented the greatest political reform process and biggest national reconciliatory project in the modern history of Yemen after the tragedies and sufferings Yemeni people experienced during the fragmentation period, the website reported.

In his speech delivered at a festival held in Shabwa in celebration of the 19th National Day of the Yemen Republic of 22 May, the prime minister pointed out the blessing of security, stability and safety prevailing the unity era under the leadership of President Ali Abdullah Sa'el.

He also referred to implications and national and human meanings associated with celebration of the national day of the reunification that ended for good the cycles of violence

and bloodshed, which once used to occur every five years and claimed lives of so many of the homeland's sons.

The official described the discordant voices that began to emerge in some villages as an attempt to provoke seditions and problems and to turn back to the time of separation and disintegration.

Dr Mujawar also said the unity era has been associated with development and democracy and added that what has been achieved in the short past period was not achieved throughout the periods preceding established of the Republic of Unified Yemen.

Governor of Shabwa province, located in the southeastern part of Yemen, Ali Hussein Al-Ahmedi said on Sunday that the governorate of Shabwa witnessed through the past period since the unity a big qualitative leap in different fields of local development and infrastructure projects.

Up to 2244 projects have been implemented with a total cost of YR30 billion, 959 million and 17 thousand and this year 134 development projects were opened and foundation stones were laid for another 227 projects, the governor went on to say.

In a mass festival on the occasion of the 19th Day of the Yemen Republic the governor pointed out that the annual celebrations of this great occasion come while the people

of Yemen are celebrating more national achievements that cover all walks of life.



Newsyemen.net, an independent news website
Wednesday, May 20, 2009

Top Story

- Amnesty International strongly denounces suppression of press freedom Yemen

Armed security forces used tear gas and shot at the offices of the Aden-based Arabic daily Al-Ayyam in Yemen on Wednesday. Two men including a security guard for Al-Ayyam were killed and another security guard injured, the website reported.

The attack took place after security forces besieged the offices of Al-Ayyam in an attempt to arrest Hisham Basharheel, Al-Ayyam's editor-in-chief, in connection with an incident in February 2008.

On Monday, security forces ordered Hisham Basharheel to hand himself over to the authorities in Sana'a within 48 hours. The order is apparently in connection with an incident in February 2008 when armed men shot at his home and security guards returned fire. One of

the attackers was killed and another injured.

Hisham Basharheel has not been charged in connection with the case. Those suspected were charged and are being tried for the killing.

Amnesty International is concerned that Hisham Bashraheel may have been targeted solely because of Al-Ayyam's coverage of the protests in the southern part of the country.

"Amnesty International recognizes the rights of governments to bring to justice anyone accused of a recognizably criminal offence. However, Amnesty International categorically opposes the targeting of anyone with the aim of suppressing freedom of the press," said Philip Luther, Deputy Director of Amnesty International's Middle East and North Africa Programme.

In another development, the editors in chief of Al-Masdar, Al-Nedaa, Ad-Diyar, and Al-Sharea weeklies were questioned on 13 May and charged with "undermining national unity". They were reported to have been released shortly after interrogation.

The government has previously accused the newspapers of expressing views favorable to the secession of the south in their coverage of protests in the southern part of the country in April and confiscated thousands copies of the newspapers.

Yahya Bamahfouz, editor in chief of Mukalla press, an Arabic news

website and Nasser Khamis were arrested in Hadramout, south-eastern Yemen, earlier this week for their writing about the Southern Movement. According to reports, Yahya Bamahfouz is being detained incommunicado at Political Security in Mualla.

The Yemeni government announced the formation of a press court on Monday. Amnesty International does not have full details of the court, but human rights activists in Yemen fear it to be a special court set up to target journalists and stifle press freedom further.

Amnesty International has, on a number of occasions, documented its concerns regarding restrictions on freedom of expression in Yemen, in particular the authorities' targeting of critics of the state using the vaguely worded charge of "undermining national unity".

Six local independent newspapers are still suspended by the Information Ministry alleging they spark sectarianism and harm the national unity despite local and foreign petitions.

First deputy chairman of the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate (YJS), Sa'ed Thabet Sa'ed, recalled the local and international organizations working in Yemen to help the syndicate face the government's "cruel" attack on independent media which he said passed away.

"I extend my condolences to

Yemenis and press freedom advocates all over the world on the death of free media in Yemen," said Thabet in a statement to NewsYemen.

Information Ministry says media is not suspended, but it lies and does not respect its agreement with the syndicate to free newspapers...it violates laws and deepens the culture of separation," said Thabet.

The Information Minister Hassan Al-Lawzi has recently suspended Al-Ayyam, Al-Masdar, Al-Nedaa, Al-Sharea, Al-Diyar, Al-Ahali and Al-Mustaqila and claimed they have published articles "harming the national unity." Al-Lawzi also sent a warning to private printers not to print the suspended newspapers.

The Minister Al-Lawzi said the press law allows him to take measures against any media outlet violating the law.

The Aden-based Al-Ayyam was only suspended but was also attacked by the security forces in order to arrest its chief editor.

Authorities said the chief editor Hisham Bashraheel was wanted over a criminal lawsuit before a court in the capital Sana'a, but Bashraheel said that was not true.

Hundreds of people in Al-Dhalea governorate, south Yemen have demonstrated in solidarity with Al-Ayyam and other newspapers. They set fire to the government's newspapers Al-Thawra and Al-Jomhuriya dailies.

Reconciliation in Iraq: Singular or plural

By: Mokhtar Lamani

It is inappropriate to consider the question of national reconciliation in Iraq without first recognizing the unique nature of the challenge. The best path to redemption in Iraq remains dialogue between those in power, those in opposition, the forces of the occupation, international donors and of the many different antagonists.

The problems that have faced Iraqis since 2003, between supporters and adversaries of a political process under occupation, have merged with other challenges, splintering Iraqi actors and causing an unprecedented fragmentation of Iraqi society.

What is needed therefore is not one

sole initiative but rather a plethora of Iraqi reconciliations. These reconciliations require the acceptance of an inclusive political process that guarantees the participation of all Iraqis and builds a nation based on the principle of equal citizenship and a guarantee a diverse and just society for all.

The fragmentation of the Iraqi political scene has evolved in a climate of complete mistrust and the near-absolute absence of serious dialogue between the different actors.

Further, the regional and international environment is not making the resolution of Iraq's problems any easier:

The new American administration, while not acknowledging the complete failure of its predecessor in Iraq, is beginning a new, more timid

approach that has not yet dared to suggest an alternative strategy for all Iraqis.

Iran, which has assured itself of a relatively free hand on the Iraqi chessboard, cannot rest on its laurels; its regional situation remains critical.

The alarming results of the Israeli election and internal Palestinian problems perpetuate tensions throughout the region, making any resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict unlikely.

Reconciliation in Iraq must be a voluntary act and cannot be imposed by any party.

It will not be realized without a decisive and courageous commitment from all parties to move past hatred and renounce violence in order to recognize each other.

All reconciliation conferences that

have been organized to date have been little more than red herrings. Some, such as the one that took place in Helsinki, have final documents signed only by Iraqi Members of Parliament: was it really necessary to travel all the way to Helsinki for such a document when the signatories see each other every day in the legislative assembly in Baghdad? Most of these documents continue to state "the impossibility of reconciling with those whose hands are stained with the blood of innocents" but we must ask ourselves: during the last 50 years in Iraq, whose hands are truly clean?

Political and institutional normalization must first advocate for a real "disarmament of the hearts" that will help Iraqis – all Iraqis – to understand that the stability and sustainability of their country must be

achieved by their agreement. This type of agreement, in view of the complicated regional environment, is the only true guarantee of internal Iraqi stability.

Successful reconstruction will not be realized through "victor's justice" or a political system built on ethnic or religious exclusion; it will only be accomplished as a result of a political process takes these three factors into account:

The effective protection of the civil liberties and political life of all Iraqis and the preservation of social cohesion while safeguarding fundamental rights and liberties.

All Iraqi people have suffered both before and after 2003, hence the absolute need for a democratization that brings the population into the decision-making process and fosters a

respect for pluralism and difference. Finally, it must be assured that abuse, mass graves, massacres and genocide are never allowed to take place again.

Finally, no political effort should try to have the people of Iraq and its beautiful mosaic think that these reconciliations are about embellishing, or even worse forgetting, the past or present; rather it is to ensure that these wounds do not remain open and themselves become sources of resentment and waste of the future.

Mokhtar Lamani is a Senior visiting fellow – CIGI – Canada, he is a former ambassador and special envoy of the Arab League to Iraq. He could be reached at mlamani@cigionline.org

A call for cultural competency in Jerusalem's medical services

By: Dr. Hagai Agmon-Snir

A few years ago, my mother underwent hip replacement surgery. Before she was discharged, the surgeon gave her quite a few instructions for the period following surgery. "If you don't follow the directions I gave you and you don't use the equipment," said the surgeon, "your leg won't function the way it's supposed to and the effects of the excellent and expensive surgery will be wasted." Today my mother traverses the country with her new hip and any memory of the fracture has been erased.

Lying next to my Jewish mother in the hospital were Palestinian mothers from East Jerusalem who had also fractured their hips and underwent hip replacement surgeries.

Most of them, like my mother, were covered by the Israeli national health insurance, which made them

luckier than their sisters from the West Bank and Gaza who are not entitled to these benefits. Yet there is good reason to suspect that, unlike my mother, many of them are limping today.

Research carried out in hospitals in Jerusalem shows that about half of the Arabic-speaking patients do not understand the instructions they are given for post-treatment care because they are given in Hebrew.

One third of Jerusalem's residents are Arabic-speaking Palestinians, both Muslim and Christian. In times of need, these residents will almost always choose to

go to hospitals in West Jerusalem. At some of these medical institutions more than half of the patients are Palestinian, yet none of them are provided interpretation services into Arabic or any other language.

Occasionally, medical staff improvise and ask an Arab hospital worker or a visitor who speaks both Hebrew and Arabic to interpret, making them privy to the patient's

personal medical details. It's not unheard of for the patient's child to act as an interpreter, telling his or her mother that the doctor recommends an abortion or that a suspicious lump was found in her breast.

In addition to the lack of language services, none of these establishments provide religious services to Muslims or Christians. Nurses complain about Muslim men washing their feet in sinks designated for hand washing.

The simple solution—low sinks for feet-washing before prayers—cannot be found at any of these places. On the other hand, Jews may receive visits from a rabbi, have meals provided by various religious organisations according to their specific Kashrut needs, or pray in an in-hospital synagogue.

Recently, the Jerusalem Intercultural Center hosted senior directors from the Coney Island Hospital in New York City. In compliance with law, signs at the hospital appear in five languages, and

anyone entering the hospital is entitled to receive hospital services in his or her own language.

Sometimes an interpreter is present in the room and other times (with more obscure languages) interpretation is provided through a phone service, called tele-interpretation.

The hospital has a synagogue, a Christian church, a mosque and a Hindu temple—in accordance with the needs of the communities that this hospital serves. Kosher food is provided for Jews and Halal food for Muslims. In the case of Indians and Pakistanis, the food is prepared and spiced in a way that is suitable for their palate.

Is this hospital anomalous? Not at all. In the past fifteen years the "cultural competency" approach has become widely practiced in health systems in North America, Australia and Europe. It has simply skipped over Israel, despite much evidence showing that medical services adjusted to culture, religion and

language improve the quality of care and the outcome of treatment. And, of course, such an approach is far more just and ethical as well.

Shocked by this state of affairs, the Jerusalem Inter-Cultural Center and the Jerusalem Foundation have launched an initiative to encourage cultural competency in Jerusalem.

The need, by the way, exists not only for the Palestinian population in the city, but also for the Jewish Ultra Orthodox community (which comprises about one quarter of the city's residents and has special religious requirements), as well as people from a variety of other backgrounds who speak languages like Amharic, Russian, French and Spanish.

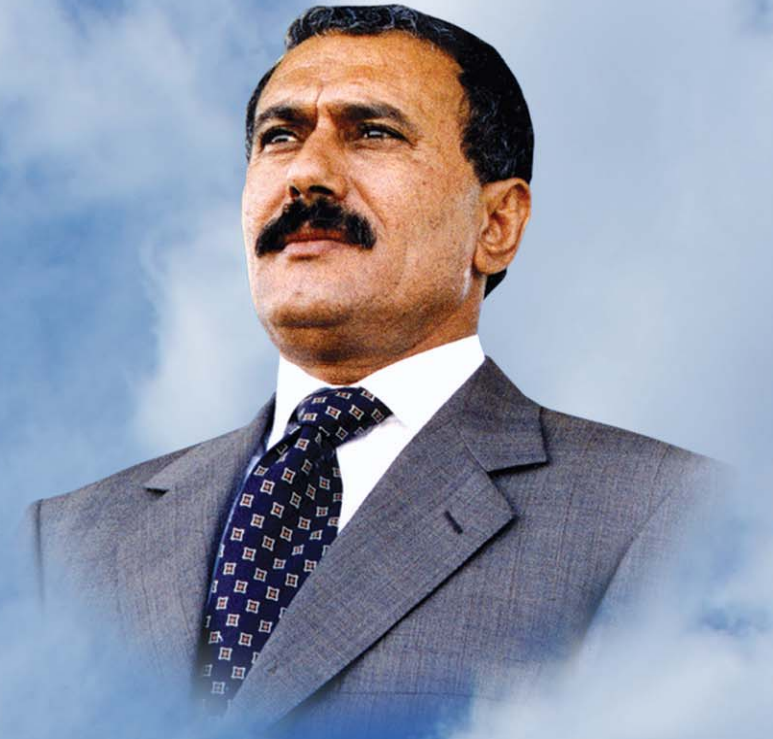
We are only at the beginning of the road, but already there are medical institutions, such as the Alyn hospital (for paediatric rehabilitation) and the Clalit health services, that are now building up cultural competency in their facilities.

We hope that by introducing

cultural competency into the medical services in Jerusalem we will help reduce the current inequality that exists in this field.

Moreover, we believe that this is a way to teach the people of this city the value of accepting the other, being considerate of those who are different from us and to encourage people to think in terms of human rights even in a city as fraught with tensions as Jerusalem.

Dr. Hagai Agmon-Snir is the director of the Jerusalem Intercultural Center (JICC, <http://JICC.org.il>) and can be reached at hagai@jicc.org.il. The project "Cultural Competency in Jerusalem" is sponsored by the Jerusalem Foundation. This article was written for the Common Ground News Service (CGNews) in conjunction with the Jerusalem Post. Source: Common Ground News Service (CGNews), 21 May 2009, www.commongroundnews.org. Copyright permission is granted for publication



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and all staff of
Korean National Oil Corporation
extend their cordial and sincere felicitations to
congratulate H. E President

Ali Abdullah Saleh

On the Occasion of the 19th anniversary
of Reunification Day
We wish Yemen the best of success
and progress towards building
a strong country

KNOC

وكافة العاملين في
الشركة الكورية الوطنية للنفط
بأحر التهاني وأطيب التبريكات
لضخامة الأخ الرئيس /

علي عبد الله صالح

وإلى كافة أبناء الشعب اليمني
بمناسبة الذكرى التاسع عشر للعيد الوطني ٢٢ مايو
متمنين لليمن السير قدما في طريق التقدم والنجاح
والإزدهار.
وكل عام وأنتم بخير





Hertz. The journey continues.

Hertz Yemen, the country's transportation experts, have recently held their 2009 Annual Ceremony for honoring "Outstanding Drivers of the Year". Mr. Alwan Saeed Al Shaibani, Chairman of the

Universal Group, along with Hertz management & staff attended the ceremony as well as representatives of major corporate clients.

During his speech, Mr.

Shaibani said, "Those drivers have proven remarkable efforts in providing high level of services to our clients, and have shown good records in terms of road safety and customer

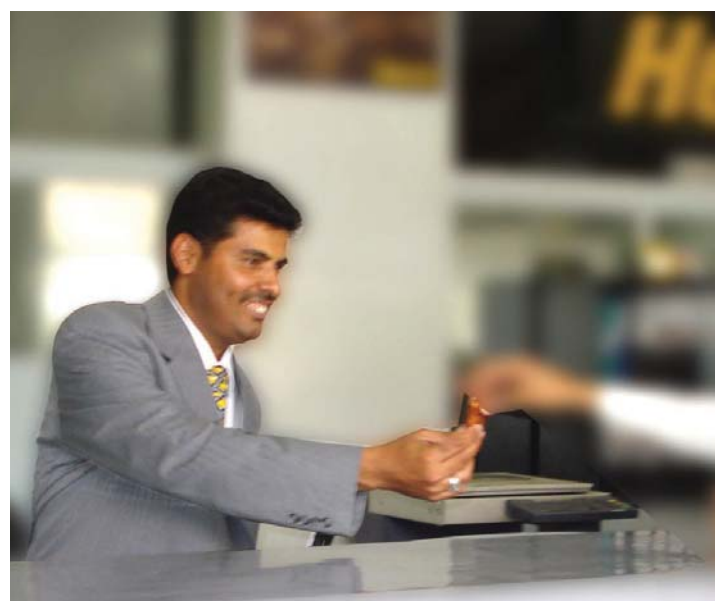
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Trained Chauffeurs, and fully insured fleet



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Food for Education: Feeding Yemeni girls to school

Daly Belgasmi, the World Food Program Regional Director for the Middle East, Central Asia and Eastern Europe, was in Yemen from May 15 to May 2, 2009. Among the activities he carried out during his week-long visit was the inauguration of a new United Nations office in Sa'ada, northern Yemen, which will be used to coordinate the efforts of various agencies to serve the country's refugees and victims recent floods. He is the highest ranking United Nations official yet to visit Sa'ada.

Belgasmi joined the United Nations World Food Programme September 1991, serving as Advisor in Sudan, Director in Djibouti, Yemen and Cameroon, and as Regional Director for Central Africa and Central Asia. His former position was Director of the WFP office in Geneva, Switzerland, which he held from August 2002-August 2008.

During his stay he also took a close look at the Food for Education Program in Yemen. As he returned to a girl's school in Shibam Kawkaban after ten years, he was greeted with poetry, song, laughter and smiles by the girls and teachers. He was amazed at how the culture changed: "The girls are so outspoken and welcoming of us. On my last visit, they actually ran indoors to hide."



Encouraging young girls to aspire to achieve, Belgasmi listened to each little schoolgirl tell him her dreams for the future. "Women are the largest factor for development," he said.

By: Salma Ismail

Little Hanan briefly stops to tie her shoelaces in a hurry as she walks to school. She knows that today she will come home with a sack of wheat, some vegetable oil and dates for her family - and hopefully good marks as she has been eagerly studying all week. She feels empowered and encouraged.

All across Yemen there are thousands of girls in primary and secondary schools that otherwise would have stayed at home to work, or been sent to the fields. With the World Food Program (WFP) Food for Education program they have been given the opportunity to learn.

Domestic production of wheat is expected to be increased to more than

dren a chance to learn and thrive. First thought up by Belgasmi for Yemen, the program has spread all over the world. Today the WFP feeds a school girl 20 million times every single day in four different continents. To feed 59 million hungry schoolchildren it would cost the world just \$3 billion a year, according to the WFP.

In Yemen, almost 95,000 girls in 1,306 schools are beneficiaries of the food for education program. Eradicating hunger, the United Nations' first Millennium Development Goal, is the key to development. While people are hungry, all other development activities are thwarted. The hungry can concentrate on little other than their next meal. Hungry mothers give birth to hungry children, who, if they live long

nificant increase in their enrolment and their parents are happy," he said. "Even fathers encourage their girls to come and study."

The WFP reports that pupils taking home food for their families - the take-home ration - as incentive for the parents to allow their daughters to attend school is also a mean of contributing to the poor families' food security. It reports that girls' enrolment in the supported schools has increased on average by 40 percent and the gender gap has been reduced, with an almost 80 percent passing rate.

"The first experience was here in Yemen when I was the country director from 1994-1997. At that time we were trying to convince the government how important it is to support girl's education and some people where enthusiastic while other were not at all impressed," Belgasmi relates.

"I remember when I visited this school in Kawkaban 14 years ago. When the girls first saw me entering the school they were shy and ran indoors," he continues. "Today, their numbers have increased, the culture has changed and that was evident in the way they welcomed us, in the past they tried to escape. They have kept their traditions including their dress, but now these girls compete to go to the higher classes and to university. This is the most beautiful gift and pleasure."

In the region and worldwide, how many countries have now embraced the Food for Education program?

I am covering around 12 countries in the region - the Middle East and North Africa and Algeria. We closed the program in Morocco and Tunisia and Sahrawi refugees in Kathmandu and East Europe.

It's a challenging region, very politically sensitive. When you look at countries like Iraq and Palestine and the level of poverty in Yemen, and the situation here, it's a cause for much concern. When I look at the funding that worries me, we are underfunded by 41 percent. This is critical. The world needs to provide us with more assistance.

This is a preventive matter today. Tomorrow it may be too late to secure food for those who are hungry. We are supporting 100 million people in the world and we have programs in over

70 countries. This is part of safety net activities to provide income to the families.

The wheat grain that you examined at the Kawkaban Girls' school was from Italy. Why can't it be bought from somewhere closer, so that you can save costs and be able to buy more?

We are the largest purchaser of food aid in the world. In Africa, we are purchasing from Sudan, when it's possible, and also distributing there. We are purchasing even in Yemen. [In 2008 the WFP purchased more than 2,000 tons of commodities in Yemen].

We try to promote local products because we know that provides additional revenue for the farmers. WFP is very committed. The situation today is changing, we used in the past to have 100 percent of our food in kind. Today it's almost 50-50.

Let me tell you a little me tell you what I saw in Hebron. I saw mothers come with aid coupons, the value being USD 50. They go to the selected shops by the WFP. She will go to the refrigerator to buy milk, eggs; she can buy what she needs for her family.

These products are coming from productive families [who] have an income, the shop has additional income, and the families receive an additional income with dignity and pride intact.

The WFP says that food aid has lim-

ited effect, unless it reaches the target population. In the school we visited, some of the beneficiaries were also the staff at the school. What is the WFP policy on that?

The program was designed in the past to provide food assistance to the teachers as well as the [students]. When it



Parents are motivated to send their children to school instead of keeping them at home to work or care for siblings. In the poorest parts of the world, a school feeding programme can double primary school enrolment.

was revised, it excluded the teachers. The government is now asking to provide food for the educators as well.

Based on feedback from the officials at the school, the distribution was not regular because of problems at the port in Hodeida.

Sometimes it does happen that the process of clearing the food [at the port] takes longer than is appropriate.

We did raise this issue with the government and they will support us. The government will hopefully facilitate the movement and transport of the food to the beneficiaries in the different governorates. We will improve that and we will be trying to look at a better pipeline for this country, because Yemen does need help more than any country in the world.

What about genetically modified wheat? Is it imported to Yemen?

We inform the government when we import modified grains. If they agree, we will import, if not, then we don't. Some countries do not agree, others don't mind.

Sometimes people complain of discrimination, based on political affiliation, by the government when it comes to deciding who the beneficiaries are. What does the WFP say?

We work without any political, religious or racial discrimination. We work for the Yemeni people. I will not accept that the government discriminates. It's the poverty and the need that we must respect. Political affiliation does not count for the WFP, and the government is cooperative on that.

In the region, where is the most urgent humanitarian crisis?

The most urgent humanitarian crises are in Yemen, Iraq, Palestine, the Iraqi



"This is excellent quality wheat," says Belgasmi as he and WFP Country Director Giancarlo Cirri inspect the wheat stored at the Kawkaban School for girls.

350,000 tons during the current year 2009, compared to 218,000 tons in the last agricultural season, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation. However Yemen has one of the highest child malnutrition rates as well. Up to 46 percent of children below five years are underweight and 12 percent are chronically malnourished, not able to live up to their physical and mental potential.

Food for Education programs are designed to give less fortunate chil-

enough, grow into hungry adults.

"When I grow up, I'm going to be a journalist," a wide-eyed Sara says. "I'm going to be a doctor," says Aisha with a shy smile. Children like Hanan, Sara and Aisha will usher Yemen into an era of prosperity and development, if they are kept in school and encouraged to pursue their education.

Principal of the Kawkaban Girl's School Hanan Abdul-Malik is grateful that the WFP is encouraging schoolgirls to stay in school: "There is a sig-



WFP-supported school feeding programs, like this one, often require the assistance of parents and local cooks who make meals that are familiar to their region. Pumpkin porridge in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, banana leaf rolls in Ghana, and "colada" - an enriched blended food - in Ecuador. In Yemen, the rations are designed to be taken home. In Yemen, the rations are designed to be taken home.

Feeding schoolgirls for Yemen's future

The WFP Food-for-Education project encourages families to enrol and keep their daughters in basic and secondary-level schools. It targets an annual average of 96,000 female students in 1,300 schools in poor and food-insecure districts with low education indicators. This five-year project, ending in 2011, will provide nearly 75,000 tons of food, costing USD 36.6 million.

Two ways to feed schoolchildren

In-school feeding is one way in which the programmes operate. Children are fed breakfast, lunch or both in school. These meals can be prepared in schools, in the community or be delivered from centralized kitchens. Some in-school feeding programmes provide complete meals and while others provide snacks.

The other way to feed school children is with take-home rations, and this is what happens in Yemen. In this scheme, entire families receive food if their children attend school. The rations are conditional upon school enrolment and attendance of children.

In some countries, in school meals are combined with take-home rations for particularly vulnerable students, such as girls or orphans, to generate greater impacts on school enrolment, retention rates, cognitive capacity, and nutrition. Food rations function like conditional cash transfers, their value compensating for the costs of sending the child to school.

Did you know?

¥ Studies show that it is more difficult for children to learn without adequate food and nutrition. There are 59 million primary school age children who attend school hungry across the developing world, with 23 million in Africa alone.

¥ Currently, 75 million school age children do not attend school. Poor households are often obliged to choose between sending their children to school or to the fields.

The family meal of today can take priority over the children's potential for tomorrow.

¥ A daily school meal provides a strong incentive to send children to school and keep them there. An adequate school meal boosts learning by allowing children to focus on their studies and not their stomachs.

¥ Just USD 0.25 will fill a cup with porridge, rice or beans and give a monthly ration to take home. With USD 50 a child can be fed for an entire school year.

¥ Eradicating hunger, the first Millennium Development Goal, is the key to development. While people are hungry, all other development activities are thwarted. The hungry can concentrate little other than their next meal. Hungry mothers give birth to hungry children, who, if they live long enough, grow into hungry adults.



Girls will usher Yemen into an era of prosperity and development, if they are kept in school and encouraged to pursue their education.

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VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

On behalf of the **United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS)** the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** invites Yemeni Nationals to apply for the following position.

Post Title: UN Staff Database /Integrated Security Clearance and Tracking (ISECT) Assistant
(two positions)

Duty Station: Sana'a

Responsibilities: Under direct supervision of the Head of Security Information and Operations Center the incumbent is required to perform the following duties:

- ✘ Review daily information from open media sources both local and international about events, security incidents that might affect UN staff either when in the office or on road mission.
- ✘ Receive and process security clearance requests through ISECT (UN External and Internal Travels) and update 24/7 Radio Rooms both in Sana'a and Aden.
- ✘ Establishes lines of communication with all Agency security focal points, and all other staff involved to ensure maximum coordination on UN staff tracking system.
- ✘ Accurately identify exact location/ grid reference of all incidents and pass information the SIOC supervisor.
- ✘ Establish and maintain UN DSS staff database.
- ✘ Perform any other tasks as assigned by the SIOC supervisor or the SA.

Qualification:

- ✘ University degree (Bachelor's degree or equivalent) in Computer Science, Information Systems or a related field.
- ✘ At least two year experience in database administration.
- ✘ Fluency in written and verbal English & Arabic is absolute requirement.
- ✘ Knowledge of IT security systems design and application is desirable.

Interested candidates are requested to visit our website at:

<http://www.undp.org.ye> for detailed terms 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)

The deadline for receiving applications is Wednesday, 10 June 2009

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

**VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT**

The **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** invites **Yemeni Nationals** to apply for the following position with its project **Disaster Management Programme**

1- Post Title: Geo-Technology/Public Information Associate

Duration: one year (renewable)

Duty Station: Sana'a

Responsibilities:

- Collect and organize data and develop databases relevant to the different aspects of disaster management and tasks required for this purpose;
- Maintain the programme web page in all aspects and ensure proper information linkages of the Programme and contribute to the resource mobilization efforts; closely coordinate with UNDP Communication Officer for this purpose in order to ensure project's visibility on UNDP information venues;
- Assist international project officer by proposing linkages of disaster management into the operation rooms of civil protection unit;
- Propose and implement activities to promote public awareness and access to the Disaster Management Unit information; produce materials and effectively coordinate with disaster management focal points, NGOs and other stake holders for this purpose;
- Provide technical input in setting-up early warning systems and assist in DMD serving as information hub prior to and in case of disasters.

Qualification:

- Bachelor of Science or equivalent experience in information technology, computer science, communication, geo-technology, geology or related field;
- At least three years of information technology and public information experience preferably in the field of disaster management;
- Excellent command of Arabic and English languages;
- Good computer and the Internet skills in both Arabic & English;
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills.

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.

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**VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT**

The **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** invites **Yemeni Nationals** to apply for the following position with its **Dispensary**

Position: Nurse

Duration: One year

Responsibilities:

- Attend the United Nations Dispensary on a full- time basis.
- Be on call during outside office hours when necessary.
- Maintain the United Nations Dispensary in good order and keeps the inventory of medical supplies and equipment up-to- date.
- In consultation with the United Nations Dispensary Physician maintain a 24-hour roster of available specialists for referral and treatment.
- Coordinate the work of the rest of the United Nations Dispensary personnel.
- Give first- aid and advice to the staff and their recognized dependents.
- Administer minor □ outpatient □ treatment and immunization requirements.
- Assist the United Nations Dispensary Physician when official medical examinations are undertaken at the United Nations Dispensary.
- Assist in maintaining records of all visits and treatment as well as records of all medical supplies in the United Nations Dispensary or facilities established outside of the United Nations Dispensary.
- Assist the United Nations Dispensary Physician to perform his duties.
- Maintain strict confidentiality regarding patients □ medical records.
- Perform any other duties as required.

Qualification

- Diploma in Nursing with more than 3 years of experience.
- Knowledge in computer in both English and Arabic.
- Basic Knowledge in English and Arabic.

Interested candidates are requested to visit our website at:

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Yemeni women copy Arab pop stars

By: Ola Al-Shami

Many Yemeni girls are fans of divas like Nancy Ajram, Haifa Wahby, and Elissa. Some express their admiration by imitating their way of dressing and adapting it into a new fashion to follow. In Yemen's conservative society, these trends are best shown off at private weddings or parties exclusively for women.

"Some Yemeni girls watch television and imitate what Nancy, Elissa and Haifa are wearing," said Taiseer Mofadhah, an English teacher.

Yet conservatism does not always stop Yemeni ladies from innovating

and showing off fashionable clothing outside the protected environment of the all-women celebrations: "Even for the black abayas [overcoat] that we wear when we leave the house, we imitate the fashions from the Gulf countries that have spread here in Yemen," added Mofadhah.

Away from the black abaya, pop stars even dictate what color is in vogue for each season. These singers' choices influence many Yemeni girls, especially those at university, and nowadays, pink and purple are extremely popular.

"I asked my friends what color to wear at my cousin's wedding and they all recommended purple," said Noria Al-Amrani, a university student.

"When I went to my cousin's wedding, it seemed that all the girls had planned and agreed to wear the same color. It was amazing."

There was a time where most girls wore yellow dresses, jeans and T-shirts. But colors change with the seasons, and purple is here to stay – at least for now.

"Most girls nowadays choose purple because Nancy wore a purple dress in her last concert which we watched on both Mazzika and Nagham television channels," added Al-Amrani.

Loose-fitting dresses are slowly giving way to closer-fitting gowns, but simplicity is still sought after: "The embroidered dresses' designs were the most popular fashion before, but now their popularity is decreasing to be

replaced by the most simple and tight body-hugging dress designs," said Kareema Mohammed, a dressmaker and clothes designer.

"Women's fashion changes from one time to another," said Mohammad Al-Matari, who sells material for dresses in Sana'a.

Gold is a girl's best friend

Despite changing times, gold is still incredibly popular: "Nancy, Haifa and Elissa are now the models for gold," said Al-Amrani. "When women saw Elissa wearing a golden necklace made of gold slices, many women start asking the gold makers to make the same necklace for them. You can see that most women wear a similar necklace in any wedding party."

Last year's most popular fabric was called sodfa, or coincidence, after singer Yara sang her popular song Sodfa. The fabric of the same name was the most demanded on the market, for both brides and their friends. But even sodfa only lasted for a year.

"When a demanded fabric becomes popular, we import the most demanded colors from outside and it becomes a fashion that women ask for. We can also ask our families to see what is popular among girls so we can provide it for the market," added Al-Matari.

However, there are some girls who like to wear modern clothes while adding Yemeni aspects to them: "Some girls bring a piece of cloth that has no embroidery on it and ask me to design it in such a way that it looks modern, but has some Yemeni characteristics," said Kareema Mohammed. "Sometimes we sew small red coral shapes on the front or on both sides of the dress."

While some girls follow what popular singers wear, others feel proud of presenting Yemeni-oriented modern clothes: "I know a friend who will trav-



el to London," said Al-Amrani. "She has chosen clothes and skirts made from Yemeni material which she bought from Bab Al-Yemen to give to her British friends."

It is not only the dresses or other indoor wear that Yemeni girls try to adorn with Yemeni features, but also the black abayas they wear to go out:

"My friend Amal takes some of her mother's old clothes and asks the dressmaker to put a piece here and there on her abaya to make it look more attractive," said Mofadhah.

She added that Amal feels very proud that she is from the old city of Sana'a, and likes to represent the beauty of this city in her clothing.



A painful education in the Middle East

Corporal punishment remains a widespread method of discipline in the Middle East. Sometimes there are deadly consequences.

By: Rachele Kliger
The Media Line News Agency

When 11-year-old Islam 'Amr Badr turned up to school on a winter morning last year in the northern Egyptian city of Alexandria, no one would have guessed that failing to do his math homework would cost him his life.

Math teacher Heitham Nabil 'Abd Al-Hamid, 23, took the young boy outside the classroom and hit him violently in the stomach, breaking four of his ribs. The boy fainted, and died later in hospital of heart failure.

The teacher was found guilty of manslaughter and sentenced to six years in jail. He insisted he only meant

to discipline the child.

Badr's sad story is exceptional in its severity, but the use of force on schoolchildren is not uncommon in this part of the world.

The practice of inflicting pain or humiliation on schoolchildren is widespread in many Middle Eastern countries and children's rights groups fear cases such as Badr's could be repeated if the problem is not addressed quickly.

Corporal punishment is believed by many to be an effective tool of discipline. Generations of remarkable people throughout history were educated by use of physical punishment and achieved great accomplishments.

Nowadays, the practice is banned in schools in most Western countries, as other methods of discipline are being incorporated and considered more effective and less harmful, both physically and psychologically.

But banning the practice in the Middle East has proved to be a difficult task. Child-rights activists are not only fighting an uphill battle against years of educational habits, but also against religious and cultural norms that are invoked to defend the practice.

Activists say common physical punishments meted out to schoolchildren in the MENA region include hitting a child with a stick, a ruler or a belt; enclosing a child in a room for a whole day without food or water; having children kneeling in a corner, and hitting them in the face.

There are even cases where children have lost an eye, or in more extreme cases, there has been physical abuse that has led to untimely death, as with 'Amr Badr.

The MENA region is fraught with violence, whether through wars among nations, civil wars or clan-based battles over religion, power or resources. Experts say this makes the societies themselves more violent, and perhaps pushes issues such as the banning of

corporal punishment down the list of national priorities.

Not Enforced at Home

While corporal punishment is banned in around half of the Arab countries (see table below), one of the problems in enforcing the prohibition is that it is often not banned in the home or within the community. This sends the child a mixed message as to what is considered an acceptable form of discipline, and also erodes the standing of the teacher in the classroom.

"Having legislation is important," says Jumaneh Zabaneh, regional program manager for education for the MENA region with Save the Children-Sweden, "but it's not at all an indicator as to whether it's happening or not."

Even in Middle East countries where corporal punishment in schools is prohibited by law, there are no efforts to put other disciplinary alternatives in place, she says.

Teachers often think that because corporal punishment is banned, it will directly result in low achievement in the classroom.

"They link poor performance with the fact that the government has introduced this law," Zabaneh says. "This is because the law is not accompanied by any capacity-building in alternative tools of discipline for the teachers. Either they hit the kids, or there's a complete mess in the classroom."

The result is often low-quality teaching, she says, because the teacher loses control over the classroom.

"They ask for support because they don't know how to do it in a different way."

In Lebanon, Save The Children personnel working with a focus group that included teachers from rural areas were sent a government memo asking them to refrain from hitting children.

"The following year the overall average of children in that region was the lowest in the country and teachers

blamed it on the decree," Zabaneh says.

In March, 1,500 delegates from the Arab world gathered in Riyadh for a regional conference on child protection. They agreed that corporal punishment in schools should be banned and children should be taught their rights in the classroom.

It was also recommended that corporal punishment should not only be prohibited in classrooms, but also discouraged in homes and communities.

But Zabaneh says that unlike the practice in most Western countries, Arab countries lack systems to protect children and teach them their rights, such as a hotline in case they are in distress.

"There are no national protection systems in general," Zabaneh says. "It comes as a decision at the school level, but it's not backed by any decision at home or in the community. The school is just one setting and you need to work on all fronts."

The introduction of legislation against corporal punishment in the Middle East is fairly new. In many cases the problems begin in teacher-training schools, where issues of disciplining children are not properly addressed.

An exception is Yemen, where the Ministry of Education has developed a manual on alternatives to corporal punishments which is currently being field tested.

Violent Societies

Countries embroiled in political conflicts tend to display more violence in schools, experts say.

A case in point is the Gaza Strip, a flashpoint of inter-Palestinian clashes and conflict with Israel.

Muhammad, an English teacher at a secondary school in Dir Al-Balah in the Gaza Strip, says corporal punishment is applied, but only for bad behavior, not as punishment for slow academic achievement.

"Especially in Gaza, children are a bit violent because of the political and economic situation. Families here are disappointed that this is reflected in

their children... there is a lot of violence among the children."

Muhammad says that when corporal punishment is used, it will usually involve a slap over the hands, but will not involve the child's head or body.

"As to me, I generally don't like physical punishment in schools, but sometimes you are obliged when a student causes harm to a peer and you need to punish him to end this," he says.

Parents of children who are physically punished in schools are usually understanding, Muhammad says, because they know it will make them study harder.

If the punishments are more severe than normal, the parents will sometimes complain, but when they come to the school and talk to the teachers, the parents will frequently see things from the teacher's perspective and end up apologizing, he says.

The exceptions are when a parent views a teacher as being affiliated with a rival political party, either Fatah or Hamas, and the parents will not accept their child being punished by a teacher opposed to their views.

One of the problems in banning corporal punishment in schools is that it can contradict entrenched religious and cultural norms in the region, which maintain that children should obey their parents and the elderly.

Employing Religion

Zabaneh says all three religions prevalent in the region – Islam, Christianity and Judaism – have texts that are often interpreted as encouraging physical punishment to children.

Dr. Muhammad Sarag, an expert on Islamic law at the American University in Cairo, says that according to Shari'a, Islamic law, a child committing an offense is not liable for punishment.

"There's a tradition ascribed to the prophet to this effect, so basically they cannot be held liable for their actions," he says.

As to punishment in schools, Sarag says Islamic principles need to be interpreted according to the culture and the setting, while still keeping the

interests of the child in mind.

"From an Islamic perspective, Muslims have to set a good example for their children," Mohsen Hareedy, acting managing editor of the Reading Islam website, told The Media Line.

"Islam looks at the use of corporal punishment as a form of discipline, and not a form of punishment or a show of resentment. If a parent uses physical discipline, it has to be a last resort, when all other means prove to be of no avail."

He adds that Muslims living in a non-Muslim context need to be aware of applying violence to their children, as the authorities may take their children away from them.

"The Prophet is reported to have said, 'teach your children to pray when they are seven; hit them, if they don't [pray], when they reach 10.' Therefore, physical discipline comes as the last resort and when it is applied, parents have to avoid the face, sensitive areas and private parts. They should be careful not to leave any marks or cause any pain."

Hareedy quoted the 14th-century Muslim sociologist Ibn Khaldoun, who said, "The one who was brought up by violence and submission... [will be] displeased, inactive and lazy. It will force him to lie and be cunning for fear of hands stretching to subdue him. It will teach him trickery and deception, which will become habits and will spoil his humanity."

Zabaneh said getting religious figures on board has been very beneficial for the campaign.

"In Yemen, we've used many imams to speak about it in mosques and elsewhere in the region in churches. Sometimes, speakers don't have religious status but they are religious and respected by the community, so we bring them to support what we're doing," he said.

Zabaneh said there was increased awareness in society, which has caused more civil society movements and international NGOs to work on the issue of corporal punishment and pressure governments to at least get more legislation in place.

Table summarizing legislation against corporal punishment in Arab and Muslim countries and regions*

Country/region	Prohibited in Homes	Prohibited at School
Algeria	No	Yes
Afghanistan	No	No
Bahrain	No	Yes
Comoros	No	No
Djibouti	No	[Yes] unconfirmed
Egypt	No	Yes
Iraq	No	Yes
Iran	No	Yes
Jordan	No	Yes
Kuwait	No	Yes
Lebanon	No	No
Libya	No	Yes
Mauritania	No	No
Morocco	No	No
Oman	No	Yes
Palestinian Authority	No	Yes—in UNRWA schools
Pakistan	No	No
Qatar	No	No
Saudi Arabia	No	No
Somalia	No	No
Sudan	No	Partial
Syria	No	No
Tunisia	No	No
UAE	No	Yes
Yemen	No	Yes

*Based on data compiled by the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, updated to March 2009.

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State set to unveil fast-food menu rules

By Jason Szep
Reuters Oddly Enough Reports

Massachusetts is expected to unveil the toughest restaurant menu labeling rules in the United States on Wednesday, requiring fast-food chains to list how many calories are in the food they sell in a bid to combat obesity.

The state's Public Health Council is expected to vote on Wednesday on regulations making fast-food chains list the calorie counts of their food on their menus or menu boards.

The regulations are expected to be more comprehensive than those in California, which in September became the first U.S. state with menu labeling rules for fast-food restaurant chains such as McDonald's Corp and Yum Brands' KFC.

The action comes at a time of rising obesity in the state and in the United States, and the regulations are intended to allow people

to make better-informed decisions about the food they eat.

More than half of the adults in Massachusetts are overweight or obese, according to a 2008 state report that also showed adult obesity more than doubling in 20 years. About 33 percent of Americans are overweight, while more than 34 percent are obese, according to U.S. government figures.

A restaurant calorie information rule took effect in New York City last year, and more than a dozen states are considering similar provisions.

Unlike California, the Massachusetts regulations will cover items at restaurant drive-through windows, where about 65 percent of fast food is purchased, said Judy Grant of the healthy food advocacy group ValueTheMeal.org, citing the most recent draft of the rules.

Massachusetts also will not override regulations in municipalities that impose even stricter labeling rules at fast-food restaurants, she added. In California, for example, menu



A meal consisting of a Quarter Pounder hamburger, french fries and soft-drink is pictured at a McDonald's restaurant in Los Angeles, California July 23, 2008.

labeling rules passed in San Francisco, Santa Clara and San Mateo counties were nullified by the state law.

The rising obesity rate is obviously important when you have a state that has created

such success around healthcare reform, Massachusetts Department of Public Health spokesman Tom Lyons said.

In 2006, Massachusetts passed a law that requires virtually everyone to have health insurance or face tax penalties. For those earning less than the federal poverty level of \$9,800 a year, coverage is free.

Some restaurant companies have objected to additional government regulations. In New York City, for example, some have fought the menu labeling rules with lawsuits.

Some chains instead support proposed legislation in the U.S. Congress known as the "Lean Act" that would require restaurants and grocery stores that serve prepared food to post calories on menus, menu boards or other similar ways.

Critics of that legislation say it would merely tuck calorie information at the back of menus or in a separate brochure. They say consumers need to know the nutritional value of meals because more people than ever are dining out.

There was some sense that we should model it on the very large restaurant markets of California and New York City, Lyons said. Many of the companies we will cover as part of the regulation will have already had to comply in those markets.



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Call for help for Pakistani refugees



In Jalala camp, displaced young girls and men queue separately for cooked food donated by private citizens and the Pakistani government.

More than 1.7 million people have been displaced in Pakistan's troubled North West Frontier Province. About 200,000 of those displaced are living in camps like Jaloza. The rest are living with friends or relatives or in communal buildings such as schools. A total of 17 relief camps have been set up in the area to house the displaced civilians.

These people need food, shelter, medicine among the many basic needs they have been deprived of because of the crises.

The United Nation High Commission for Refugees has set up a dedicated bank account to receive cash donations for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and a Relief Bank in Nowshera to receive and distribute in-kind contributions.

There are two ways people can contribute to the relief operations, for cash donations, deposit your contribution in our dedicated UNHCR IDP Relief Fund at any Standard Chartered Bank branch, Account: 08-7316410-02 - UNHCR - Private Sector, SWIFT CODE: SCBLPKXX.

The other way for contribution are urgently needed items for IDPs through Nowshera UNHCR/SRSP Relief Bank: Zaidi Colony (formerly Attock mills), (Opposite Khishko Chungy bus stop), Mardan Road, Nowshera. Warehouse contact: Sohail Baber 0300 8110150; Directions: Asad Ullah 03469218493.

It is in times like this that people need to come together in humanity. For more information on how to support contact Yemen Times focal point in Islamabad **Imran Khan** at mimraan.khaan@gmail.com, or **Yasir Ayaz Khan** from UNHCR Pakistan at: KHANYA@unhcr.org

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