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Microcredit and microfinance the solution to Yemen's employment problem

By: Nadia Al-Sakkaf and Ismail Al-Ghaberi

SANA'A, June 10 — While the percentage of unemployment in Yemen varies from one source to another, official statistics indicate that it is no less than 16 percent. Independent sources such as NGOs and research centers emphasize that such a percentage is not realistic.

"The Ministry of Planning announced in 2004 that Yemen's unemployment rate is 37 percent, and then in 2006 Prime Minister Ba Jammal said this rate was reduced to 18 percent. But all these figures are below the realistic estimate of at least 35 percent, which means that one in three job seeking Yemenis is unemployed," said economist Taher Mujahid Al-Salehi from the Yemeni Research and Studies Center.

Meanwhile, in a recent official report the Yemeni government admitted the failure of its employment strategy to reduce unemployment to 12 percent by 2010.

The report, issued by the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, said that unemployment had remained at about 16 percent between 2006 and 2007.

According to the report, limited investment opportunity hampered efforts to create new jobs and meet labor market needs. The report pinned the plan's failure on the Yemeni economy's inability to provide new jobs for youth.

The lack of dynamic economic activity and the low level of qualification among the national labor force were designated as main obstacles to unemployment reduction in the country.

Yet according to Mohammed S. Al-Lai, CEO of Al-Amal Microfinance Bank, microcredit and microfinance are significant solutions to the unemployment problem in Yemen and poverty in general. "Although the bank only became fully operational in January this year, we received around 3000 applications for credit; so far we have accepted 1300 proposals, 35 percent of which were for women."

The planning ministry's report named investment as the means to accomplish the current unemployment reduction plan which ends in 2010. It also called for enhancing production and conducting qualitative training programs for the country's labor force.

The report demands employment offices be given the means to better advertise job vacancies and promote employment strategies.

However, according to Al-Lai, two interventions can help Yemen overcome its growing unemployment problem; one is to provide opportunities for entrepreneurs to create small businesses, such as microcredit loans, and the other is creating labor intensive projects such as infrastructure development and encouraging growth in the Yemeni banking sector.

Currently, there are only 17 banks in Yemen distributed throughout five governorates with 200 branches across the country. This sector at present provides jobs to only 2,000 employees and hence has great potential to expand.

"Bangladesh's success story in using microcredit to reduce unemployment is a great example to follow. In ten years it was able to reduce unemployment from 75 percent to around 35 percent today. 2006 Nobel Peace Prize winner economist Dr. Mohammad Yunus who founded the microcredit institution in Bangladesh 30 years ago promised that by using this policy, unemployment in Bangladesh will be further reduced to 15 percent in the next three years," added Al-Lai.

Not having clear labor statistics in various sectors or accurate percentages is a concern to many economists because it affects the success of national strategies. Although the Ministry of Planning reported 16 percent as the unemployment rate in 2007, the Central Statistics Organizations reported it the same year at 17 percent, while UN agencies such as the International Labor Organization (ILO) indicate that Yemen's unemployment in 2007 was no less than 18 percent. The variance in these numbers depends on the method of calculation and the accuracy of basic figures such as population, percentage of Yemenis who are of working age, percentage of Yemenis who are seeking jobs, and so forth. The official report indicated that unemployment among women had reached 46 percent, while 60 percent of women are working unpaid either on farms or at home doing domestic work.

According to Raidan Al-Saqqaq, ILO representative in Yemen, the Yemeni labor force is increasing annually by 3.3%, reflecting mainly the effect of the high population growth and the increasing readiness of Yemeni women to enter the labor market in recent years. On the other hand, the relative slow growth of labor demand reflects the limited job opportunities in the private sector as a result of the job-less growth taking



A Yemeni woman, beneficiary of an Oxfam-GB, supported a 2004 microcredit program operated by Khadija Association in Yareem. She was able to start her own small shop and is running it with the help of her children.

place in Yemen.

He added: "The challenges ahead are enormous, not only jobs are required to meet the employment needs of new entrants to the labor market every year, but those employment opportunities need to match a minimum expectation especially to the stockpile of unemployed youth with higher levels of educational attainment.

Every year Yemeni universities produce around 30,000 graduates, at least half of which are women. Many of these graduates register with the Civil Services Authority for government jobs. Some have been waiting for more than ten years and the list of waiting job seekers has currently reached 180,000 applicants.

Each year the national government employment policy accommodates around 10,000 recruits according to

specialization; 40 percent of the vacancies go to women. The private sector is doing worse in terms of employing women as it only employs 7 percent of working women across the country.

Overall statistics show that the job seeking population is around five million people. Only 800,000 of them are employed in the public sector, and according to the Wages Strategy 2005-2006 issued by the Parliament, an additional one million are employed in the army and civil security sectors, most of whom are men.

Labor in private agriculture businesses, including qat farms, is estimated at 2,300,000. This leaves 900,000 job seekers, which make the unemployment rate around 20 percent.

According to the Ministry of Planning, the rate of participation in economic activities did not exceed 39

percent in the last two years, and only 62 percent of the workforce has been to primary school.

The ministry's report indicated a lack of investment while the expansion of random economic activities has reached 43 percent.

"Yemen is an investment repelling environment; even Yemeni capital is leaving the country because of the corruption and the lack of an adequate justice system," said economist Al-Salehi. He added that decreasing oil investments worldwide due to the economic crisis has compounded the problem, especially since Yemen's economy depends heavily on the oil sector.

The partnership in Yemen between public and private sectors is not clear, according to Al-Salehi. The govern-

ment abandoned its role in providing job opportunities through capital investment and industry in order to concentrate on infrastructure, making space for the private sector to fill the gap.

Yet the private sector has not been able to fill this gap because of hesitation to invest in Yemen, mainly due to the fact that the country's infrastructure is not able to sustain large scale businesses in addition to dynamic global changes and security concerns.

And although microfinance could be seen as a safe way to invest money in Yemen while at the same time helping small businesses, the private sector in Yemen is still hesitant in fully supporting this initiative.

"The private sector does not fully comprehend the concept of microcredit. It sees it as a part of companies' social responsibility and hence providing money as grants rather than loans. Actually, the reason behind the delay in Al-Amal Bank's full operation is this confusion with the private sector. But we are working very well now with an amazing outreach in Sana'a and soon in Taiz and Ibb governorates," said Al-Lai.

He predicted that by 2013 Al-Amal Bank would have helped the creation of 100,000 small businesses in five governorates across the country.

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Military instructions succeed in releasing merchandize seized by terrorizing Sheikh

By: Ola Al-Shami

SA'ADA, June 10 – It took a military order from the Brigade Commander of the Military Camp in Sa'ada Yahya Mi'sar to force an influential sheikh who had attacked Yemeni merchants three times in 12 days capturing 13 trucks loaded with merchandize.

Although the sheikh, Massud Al-Dabian of Sa'ada, was not even questioned for his actions, the 13 merchants are happy that they got their goods back after 12 days of struggle and knocking on many doors including that of the governor and Sa'ada security chief.

"It was our last hope after being let down by the official institutions. We realize that it is not the job of the military camp commander to free our trucks but eventually he was the one who really did something about it," said victimized merchant, Mohammed Dabwan whose truck was seized among the first ten on May 30th.

According to the merchants, Al-Dabian was invited by the commander to discuss the issue over a qat session, which lasted for a few hours before Al-Dabian ordered his men to release of the trucks.

Just two days ago another privately-owned truck filled with merchandize belonging to Yemeni businessmen joined twelve others, after being seized by the influential sheikh in Sa'ada.

This was the third capture of its kind in the last one and half weeks as two trucks were caught last Sunday joining ten others that were on their way from Saudi Arabia.

The actions of this bandit sheikh deterred other Yemeni merchants from continuing their journey across the border to Yemen.

"Other businessmen had gone back to the border when they heard of the seizing sheikh rather than continue the same route and being captured, but now since

the release of trucks they have returned to the road so as to deliver their goods at their destination in Taiz" said victimized merchant, Mohammed Dabwan whose truck was seized among the first ten on May 30th.

The trucks came to the Khafji checkpoint in the Sa'ada governorate on a return trip from Saudi Arabia. They did not, however make it past Khafji area, Al-Dabian seized the trucks by force, ordering the drivers to surrender their passports and keys.

In an interview with the Yemen Times, Sa'ada officials had promised to use force if it is necessary to procure the vehicles.

"We gave him an ultimatum of one week because, although he is a local sheikh, he is also a member of the Yemeni military, and hence we hesitated before using force. But now he has gone too far," said Brigade Mohammed Al-Qahm, the head of Sa'ada Security.

However, the week passed without any intervention from the security or any other authority, which lead the complaining merchants to request army commander to interfere.

Al-Dabian's initial attack was on a caravan of ten trucks belonging to group of merchants who were driving their goods home from Saudi Arabia. Al-Dabian stopped them on Saturday, May 30, near Al-Khafji checkpoint and ordered the drivers out of their trucks at gunpoint, seizing their passports and keys. Then, with the help of the military, he transferred the trucks into the checkpoint yard, while the merchants stood helplessly.

The Sa'ada governor had ordered then the security forces to either negotiate or force the release of the trucks after being contacted by complaining merchants immediately following the incident.

"We camped that night in the governor's residence's front yard as a protest,

now all we have are promises," said Ahmed Saif Ali, one of the merchants whose truck was confiscated eight days ago.

After the governor gave his instructions, the merchants remained in Sa'ada and refused to go to their hometowns until the issue is resolved. Today they are already in their home town in Taiz thanks to the commander.

According to Mubarak Al-Unwah, a local correspondent, the checkpoint soldiers cooperated with the sheikh against the drivers because they were on his "payroll".

Dabwan said Al-Dabian seized the trucks in order to retaliate against a merchant from Taiz.

"Two years ago Al-Dabian sold his car to a Taizi person in exchange for a check, which he discovered to be fake. Unfortunately, he saw us as rivals for we belong to the same region of the fraudulent businessman."

The victims describe their situation as miserable and tragic, especially after their complaints to the Ministry of Interior.

"We got orders from the Ministry of Interior to the sheikh to release our trucks and possessions, but he refused to respond," said Ali. He added that they do not intend to go back to Taiz until their possessions are returned.

Since Sa'ada is a tribal region, the merchants resorted to contacting local sheikhs, hoping that they could help mediate with Al-Dabian. However, the local sheikhs explained to them that the government is their rival and Al-Dabian is a part of the military because their goods were confiscated at the checkpoint.

"They told us our only hope is to carry our guns and start a militant attack against the checkpoint where our vehicles are kept and get them by ourselves, but we decided to go through the legitimate channels," said Ali.

WB supports small CSOs in women and girl's education

By: Ali Saeed

SANA'A, June 9 – The World Bank (WB) Office in Yemen awarded grants on Tuesday to seven Civil Society Organizations that are working to improve education for women and girls.

The grant money totaled USD 46,000 and was shared between the winning CSOs, which were chosen from a pool of 71 applicants.

"The small grant program for CSOs in Yemen comes with the bank realization of the importance of the small NGOs contribution to development in the country," said Samra Shaibani, a communications officer at the WB Office in Yemen.

"The purpose of the fund is to support activities whose primary objective is public engagement, to strengthen the voices of diverse groups and promote the inclusion of a broad array of citizens' initiatives in development," said Benson Otnj, the WB office director in Yemen.

The small grant program started in 2004, and every year it looks at programs within specific aspect of development.

This year, it looked for programs focused on women and girl's education.

"This year's theme was on innovative ideas in girl's education. The ideas ranged between educating girls on social, cultural and health aspects, training on leadership skills, negotiation and self confidence, poverty reduction oriented skills, developing language and communication techniques, and training on economic press writing," explained the director.

Winners were selected by a committee from the WB based on the effectiveness, feasibility, organizational capacity, credibility,



The winning proposals were dedicated to women and girl's education.

importance and the geographic balance of the projects.

"The WB announced the small grant program at end of last December and the deadline for applying was in February this year," according to Shiabani.

Seven organizations received grants and four won the maximum amount allowed by the program, USD 7,000. They are Al-Shoroq Women's Social Association, the Center for Studies and Economic Media, SOUL Community Learning & Development Center, and the All Girls Society for Development.

The minimum grant for each organization is USD 5,000, and three organizations received between USD 5,500 and 6,500.

Aswan Center for Studies and Research was granted USD 6,500, Family Social Association won USD 6,000 and the Arab Foundation for Supporting Women and Juveniles was granted USD 5,500.

Each winning organization is required to use the full amount of the grant to fund its proposal, according to Shiabani.

Since 2004, the WB has granted

USD 257,000 to 25 CSOs in Yemen to support initiatives in health, poverty reduction, economic empowerment, skill development and education.

"Our winning proposal is to train women to be able to write essays and articles for the press and blogs. I'm very happy that I signed the contract today with the WB and hope to manage the proposal well," said Najah Al-Mujahed, Director of SOUL Community Learning & Development Center, and All Girls Society for Development.

"Our proposal is to train about 35 women from Bani Al-Hareth district in computer, secretarial, and organizational skills," said Arwa Jarallah, projects coordinator at the All Girls Society for Development. "I'm happy that my organization won the grant and I call on all the CSOs to cooperate together to achieve our shared goal, which is the development of the country."

The Center for Studies and Economic Media proposal is to train 60 female students from the Faculty of Media in Sana'a and Aden in economic media.

PYL calls for federalism as a workable solution to current turmoil

By: Mohammed Bin Sallam

SANA'A, June 10 – People of Yemen League (PYL), the oldest political party in Yemen, called for applying federalism in Yemen as a good option to solve the current turmoil in the country, most notably concerning the government's failure to control the Southern Movement.

Many reputed national figures warned that the situation may continue to worsen in several Yemeni governorates, particularly in Al-Dhalea and Lahj, urging the government to take quick actions to solve the crisis.

PYL Chairman Abdurrahman Al-Jefri warned the government against being slow in reforming dire situations in the country. "I fear that we will have a lot of regrets after six months if no serious reforms are undertaken," he said.

He opposed the notion that Yemen's

unification failed, commenting, "The regime that claims to be protecting the unity failed. It may drag the nation into unprecedented collapse."

During a press conference held by PYL, the party announced a new national initiative to ease the current turmoil. It called for adopting a federal system and equal citizenship based on a fair distribution of resources and power. It also called for practicing the right kind of democracy that achieves balance and real partnership among the various national groups in areas such as politics, economics and social interests.

The Yemeni Socialist Party initiative recommended the adoption of the federal system (also known as a compound state system) in order to accelerate the progress of comprehensive development via decentralization after all powers are transferred to local governments and authorities.

The initiative also called for approving the system of two elected legislative bodies known as the bicameral legislature to achieve real balance. It also called for proportional list representation in the parliamentary elections in order for the country to change into a single constituency while each local district will change into a single constituency via the Shoura Council and local elections.

According to the initiative, Yemen is recommended to adopt the presidential system so that both the president and vice president are elected directly by people at the same time, plus elections for an independent local and federal judiciary. It also called for establishing a federal civil service system and other independent systems at the local level, adding that media should be privatized in order for media outlets to be transferred into stock companies. This way their staff can possess 50 percent

of the shares while the remaining shares can be allocated for investors and public contribution.

Another recommendation suggested by the initiative focused on the development of armed and security forces in order to become professional national institutions, performing their job neutrally without engaging in domestic political conflicts. Yet another recommendation is the establishment of two security systems, one federal and the other local.

The PYL initiative suggested that Yemen's president invites political parties to a comprehensive national dialogue, chaired by the president himself. It also proposed that the conference should be attended by five representatives of each official party, four representatives from the Southern Movement, three from Houthi loyalists, another three from opposition abroad, plus ten representatives for

scholars and sheikhs with no political affiliation.

The proposed list of participants in the conference also included ten academics with no political affiliation and ten other representatives from civil community organizations to be selected through compromise.

The initiative proposed the attendance of representatives from the Arab League and Gulf Cooperation Council to help their Yemeni brothers in facilitating dialogue.

It also invited them to offer the necessary technical and material support to implement any potential recommendations.

PYL called on the government, the opposition, NGOs and all social groups to cooperate and reconcile with each other in order to rescue the country from its current turmoil.

On a side note, Yemeni Foreign Minister Abu Bakr Al-Qirbi declared

that his government released a public pardon for all individuals attempting to hurt the country's unity and stability.

Giving a speech at a meeting with his counterparts of other GCC states in Riyadh, Al-Qirbi said, "The Yemeni government issued a public pardon for all those individuals plotting to hurt Yemen. The government invited them to return to the right path and practice their political rights under the multi-party system, ensured by Constitution of the Republic of Yemen."

Al-Qirbi, however, didn't name those individuals covered by the pardon, nor did he indicate whether they are in jail or outside Yemen. He confirmed that the government understands the sufferings of its citizens as a result of financial, economic and administrative reforms coupled with a shortage of resources that have been exacerbated due the most recent global financial crisis.

Schools join the fight against corruption

By: Ali Saeed

SANA'A, June 7 – The Supreme National Authority for Combating Corruption (SNACC) has raised awareness in 20 of the capital's public schools about the dangers of corruption.

Launched at the end of last month, the nine-day program targeted 15,000 secondary school students from Sana'a, both girls and boys.

"The program aims to raise awareness among youth about the dangers of corruption in our life and society," stated Yaseen Abdu Saeed Numan, press officer at the authority.

During the program, around 8,000 awareness brochures were distributed to the participants to enable them to understand the Anti-Corruption Law, focusing on the authority's activities to combat financial and administrative fraud in Yemen.

"Enforcing morals begins from the Ministry of Education," said Ahmed Al-Ansi, head of the Authority.

Minister of Education Abdassalam Al-Jawfi explained that the ministry and the authority are cooperating to promote integrity in the next generation.

"School is the place to decrease future corruption through educating the next generations," said the minister. "It

is our responsibility to support the authority in achieving its national mission."

About 1,300 copies of the Anti-Corruption Law and 550 copies of the Arab Journal of Public Integrity and Management were distributed in the schools.

"The awareness program is an important step in enforcing the values of credibility and integrity among students, both male and female," said Mohammed Al-Fadhli, director of the Education Office in Sana'a.

SNACC and the Ministry of Education plan to continue the program and move it to include all the governorates in the country.

"To raise awareness among youth about the importance of combating corruption, we will continue to involve all public schools around the country," said Numan, press officer at the authority.

SNACC was established in 2007, following the 2006 Anti-Corruption Law no 39. Its main task is to fight institutional corruption by monitoring government officials' behavior and expenses.

The authority is currently investigating 305 cases of corruption, and has referred five cases to court. It is also investigating up to 5,235 financial disclosures it has received.

Journalists further protest 'illegal' press court

By: Khaled Al-Hilaly

SANA'A, June 9 - Journalists, lawyers and human right activists called for dissolving the new special press court during a symposium organized at the Yemeni Journalist Syndicate on the occasion of Yemeni Press Day last Tuesday.

"Yemen's constitution prohibits the establishment of exceptional courts," said Mohammad Naji Allaw, Chairman of the National Organization for Defending Rights and Freedoms, known as HOOD.

"Nowhere else in the world has a press court ever existed," he pointed out.

"In the special court for journalism related cases, the government will be able to choose any judge who is ready to do what the government asks," Allaw explained.

Allaw suggested to journalists to avoid dealing with the new court which he thinks was mainly established because the government discovered that journalists who were cleared from charges at courts turned into patriotic heroes, embarrassing the government.

"If formalists think the special press court is illegal, they can submit an appeal against it," said Dr. Abdullah Farawan, head of the Judicial Inspection branch at the Ministry of Justice.

Sami Ghalib, editor-in-chief of Al-Nida newspaper, was investigated two

weeks ago by the special press prosecution on Tuesday, June 9 because of his editorial "April 27: Militarocracy Day" published in issue 194 of Al-Nida. He was investigated along with three others of his staff: Abduaziz Al-Majidi, Shafia Al-Abd and Foad Musad.

Minister of Information Hassan Al-Lawzi denied any orders by his ministry to stop newspapers. He did however officially order publishers and publishing houses to put their names on the newspapers they publish.

Journalist Hamoud Munasar described the new court in his own words. "The government kept silent for a long time, and when it finally decided on something, it came out with an ungrateful decision." Munasar supported the call to avoid dealing with the press court.

Ali Al-Jaradi, whose newspaper Al-Ahali was confiscated in Taiz by security asked the Yemeni Journalist Syndicate to be more effective in accounting the establishment of a special press court.

Three challenges face journalism in Yemen: the judiciary which sometimes lacks integrity and independence, laws that restrict freedom of expression and the security behavior of attacking and kidnapping journalists, according to journalist Abdulbari Taher.

"This court is a historic mistake by the government," said MP Abdulrazaq Al-Hajri. "It harms the country and its



Journalists demonstrate last Tuesday in solidarity with independent newspapers confiscated since the beginning of May. The placard reads "We refuse the illegal press special court."

government."

The government's special press court has disappointed journalists and human rights activists both inside the country and around the world. It was approved by the Supreme Judicial

Council and established at the beginning of May at the suggestion of Minister of Justice Ghazi Shayef Al-Aghbari, who said the decision to establish it was "not politically motivated, but purely professional."

In Brief

Yemeni businessmen delegation returns home

A delegation of Chamber of Commerce and Industry headed by businessman Khaled Taha Mustafa has returned home after participating in the Turkey World Trade Bridge 2009 conference.

The conference was held in Istanbul city of Turkey in the beginning of June and attended by representatives of 150 Arab and foreign countries.

Mustafa said to Saba that the Yemeni delegation had held talks with a number of the participating delegations over the possibilities of economic and investment cooperation between Yemen and their countries.

"We review means of achieving common interests of Yemen and their countries", said Mustafa, pointing to his talks with Turkish businessmen focused on trade cooperation and means of boosting and improving the two countries' interests.

The delegation also got acquaintance with historic, archeological, tourist and industrial landmarks in Istanbul.

Yemen to partake in Int'l Exhibition for Tourism, Travel

Yemen is to partake in the International Exhibition for Tourism and Travel to be held in Hong Kong city, China, during June 12-15.

The Tourist Promotion Council's Executive Manager Ahmed al-Bail told

Saba that the participation comes within the promoting activities and programs for the Yemeni tourist product and expanding Yemen's broad participations in the international events concerning of tourism.

He indicated that Yemen's participating delegation would exhibit the characteristics of Yemeni tourist product via a

group of brochures, models, maps and introducing booklets.

Interesting in adventure tourism in Yemen emerged remarkably during Yemen's participation in Hong Kong Tourist Exhibition in 2007 after choosing Yemen as the best tourist destination for low-income families who search for adventure.

AMRAN

Yemen, IFAD discuss coffee, honey products cultivation

Director General of Agriculture and Irrigation Office in Amran governorate Khaled al-Haaj discussed here on Sunday with experts from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) work plan of the cultivation of coffee and honey products in Amran province.

During the meeting, Khaled al-Haaj briefed IFAD's delegation on some of the coffee areas in the governorate and the difficulties faced by the planting process.

The project of coffee and honey cultivation include improvement of irrigation systems, training farmers on ways of improving production, ways of dealing with the crop after harvest and providing them with modern systems for marketing products.

The project, at a cost of \$26 million, aims at supporting coffee-growing areas in Amran governorate and the cultivating in each of Sana'a, Dalei, Lahj, Hodeidah and Dhamar governorates.

TAIZ

Child sexual exploitation workshop launched

Al-Saeed Foundation for Science and Culture launched Sunday a workshop on the protection of children against sexual exploitation, organized by Democracy School.

The workshop will be held for three days with the participation of 30 representatives of law enforcement personnel, hospitals staff and police.

It aims to provide the participants with information on the mechanisms of child protection from abuse and sexual exploitation in nursing homes, police stations and hospitals.

At the opening of the workshop, director general of Taiz Security Yahia al-Haisami affirmed readiness to cooperate with civil society organizations in the protection of child rights against abuse and violence.

Chairman of Democracy School Gamal al-Shami said this workshop is

the second workshop at the provincial level which comes within the program of child protection from sexual and abuse and exploitation implemented by Democracy School in cooperation with the Comprehensive Development Group for North Africa and the Middle East.

Taiz launches special training course to evaluate projects

Social Development Fund organized here on Sunday a special training course to follow up and evaluate small enterprises with the participation of 28 representatives of the Fund branches in the districts.

For six days, the course aims to equip the participants with skills of analyzing problems and implementing programs to follow up and evaluate the logical designing as well as analyzing the participants, determining the priorities, planning timetables and how to prepare it and evaluate projects.

Branch General Director Qasem Shahrah made clear to Saba that the course comes out in the framework of special training programs to promote employees' capacities in the Fund on studying the feasibility of projects, besides evaluating the projects in the new

framework of the fund to move the family from dependency on the fund to a family producers.

MAHRAH

Omani official praises Mahrah development aspects

Director general of the National Heritage and Culture at Dhofar Governorate of Oman Said Qutten praised what have been achieved in Mahrah governorate in various aspects of life.

The Omani official, who is visiting Yemen currently to participate on the celebration of the 19th anniversary of Yemen unification, expressed his satisfaction with this visit during his meeting with Mahrah governor Ali Khawdam.

Mahrah governor affirmed that this visit reflects the depth of Yemeni-Omani relations and what have been achieved in the current stage of development between the two countries.

The Omani official also noted that such a visit is an opportunity to see the economic and architecture development in the province, in addition to the contribution to exchanging experiences in the artistic and cultural aspects.

There is cooperation in the cultural aspect of the two provinces during the coming period which will witness major cultural movement through the establishment of a lot of cultural activities and common heritage, he added.

ADEN

Yemen discusses agricultural cooperation with Oman

Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation Mansour al-Hawshabi held Sunday talks with the Omani ambassador to Sana'a Abdullah Hamad al-Badi on the aspect of bilateral cooperation between the two countries particularly in the field of agri-

culture and irrigation.

The talks dealt with the importance of enhancing relations between the two countries to serve their common interests, particularly in the area of trade, agricultural commodities and livestock.

During the meeting, they reviewed activities of both countries in the area of developing livestock including development of veterinary center in the ports of Yemen and Oman to reduce the spread of epidemics and protect animals from cross-border diseases, in addition to combating the smuggling of livestock.

Both sides affirmed the importance of coordination of livestock technicians and specialists between the two countries, particularly with regards to examination of the safety of animals to be free of diseases and coordination to hold a joint meeting of the veterinary professionals in both countries to talk about ways to protect the livestock sector and improve food security.

SOCOTRA

Indian cargo ship sinks off Yemen; Crew rescued

An Indian cargo ship with 450 tons of foodstuffs along with 12 cars and other materials onboard sunk in a gale in the Arabian Sea late on Saturday.

The crew members, all Indians, were rescued by another vessel, director of the island of Socotra Saad Salmin said.

The ship was on its way from the United Arab Emirates before it went down with its cargo about 70 nautical miles off Yemen's island.

The cargo onboard the ship was for two Yemeni migrant merchants having businesses in the United Arab Emirates.

In 2007, a freight ship sank in rough weather in the Gulf of Aden, killing seven crew members. Other 13 crew members were rescued.

Yemeni marine boats were dispatched to the sinking scene after the ship which sailed under Panama flag sent a distress call.

SAADA

Al-Alimi launches 3rd phase of Saada reconstruction

Deputy Prime Minister for Defense and Security Affairs and Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Rashad al-Alimi launched on Sunday a third phase of reconstructing affected regions in Saada governorate which is implemented by Saada reconstruction fund.

The phase includes offering compensation for 1,107 persons who their houses in Bani Muadh and al-Mahadh regions affected and 450 farms damaged in several regions due to rebellion of al-Houthi.

In the first phase, compensations at sum of YR 870 million have been paid for 946 persons who their housed damaged in Sahar, al-Safara, Razah and Qatabar regions. Around YR 1.2 billion has paid as compensations for owners of 1,340 in 24 villages and housing gathering in the governorate.

Al-Alimi highlighted efforts of the fund that achieved 50 percent of its works in the governorate, saying that the security and stability are main conditions for development and going ahead with efforts of reconstruction in the governorate.

On the other hand, the deputy prime minister opened 125 projects at amount of 1.7 billion in fields of education, health, roads, electricity, water, sports and youths.

He also laid down foundation stones for 69 projects at sum of YR 2.6 billion including community faculty at total cost of YR 753 million funded by the government

Their News

UNICEF CRC Video Contest-20th Anniversary

Deadline is 1 August 2009.

We want to see what you think about children's rights!

It's the 20th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In 1989, world leaders decided that children needed a special convention just for them because people under 18 years old often are neglected in the human rights debate. The leaders wanted to make sure that the world recognized that children have human rights too. As a result, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was developed. It is the world's most widely ratified human rights treaty. It spells out the basic human rights that children everywhere have: the right to survival; to develop to the fullest; to protection from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation; and to participate fully in family, cultural and social life.

Take a look at the file in this link; [http://www.unicef.org/voy/media/rights_leaflet(1).pdf] and think about what it means to you. Then make a video showing what child rights mean to you, whether it be in the world at large, your country or your community. Maybe there is an example of how children's rights are not being fulfilled. Or maybe you want to show a situation where children are getting the rights they deserve.

Tell us what you think.

Videos will be reviewed by a global panel of media professionals and youth and displayed on the main UNICEF website. The winning video will be used in the CRC's 20th anniversary celebration and made available for broadcast around the world for the 2010 The International Children's Day of Broadcasting.

Doctoral scholarships

The University of Trento announces the following scholarships at the Doctoral School in Information and Communication Technology

Announcement of selection: 25th cycle - academic year 2009/10
Information and communication technology
computer science area
number of positions: 57
number of grants: 47

Information and communication technology
telecommunications area
number of positions: 7
number of grants: 6

Information and communication technology
electronics area
number of positions: 8
number of grants: 7
Application's deadline to participate in the selection: 30th of June 2009

Scholarships are awarded after a comparative evaluation and on the basis of the list of applicants given in order of merit; all other conditions being equal, the economic situation of the candidate will be considered in accordance with the Decree of the President of the Italian Republic, 9th April 2001.

Kurt Schork Awards in International Journalism

The Kurt Schork Awards in International Journalism celebrate the best in freelance journalism and local reporters who show great courage and commitment to reporting on controversial issues in a developing country or nation in transition. The stories can focus on conflict, human rights concerns, cross-border issues, or any other issue of controversy in a particular country or region.

All submissions must demonstrate professionalism, meet international journalistic standards, and provide evidence that courage and determination played a role in generating the articles. Winners will be chosen by an international panel of judges.

Two Award Categories:

- * Local Reporter covering local stories,
- * Freelance Journalist covering international news.

Prize is \$5,000 USD for each category winner.

Deadline for applications is 22-June-09.

Eligibility
Local Reporter: Print journalists employed by a local news outlet and residing in a developing country or nation in transition (non OECD or EU countries), whose work has been published in a local publication are eligible. Although individual journalists are the primary focus, submissions from a team of journalists will also be considered.

Freelance Journalist: All freelance print journalists and those contracted by news organizations are eligible. A freelance journalist is an individual who is not employed by a news organization. They are self-employed, providing services, either on the basis of time or on the production of editorial materials as defined by individual contractual arrangements, and earn the majority of their income from journalism.

Eligible media: Entries are welcomed from all types of print-based media including newspapers and magazines and established on-line publications. Blogs and personal websites are not eligible.

For more information see:
http://www.ksmfund.org/submission.html

Ochberg Fellowship Guidelines, Journalists and Trauma

Reporting responsibly and credibly on violence and traumatic events—on

crime, family violence, natural disasters and accidents, war and genocide—are among the greatest challenges facing contemporary journalism.

The Dart Center Ochberg Fellowships were established by the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies and the Dart Center to build a cohort of journalists better prepared for this challenge.

The Dart Center provides six or more expense-paid fellowships to mid-career journalists who want to apply knowledge of emotional trauma to improving coverage of violent events.

Fellowships are open to print and broadcast reporters, photographers, editors and producers with at least five years of journalism experience. For funding reasons, the Ochberg Fellowships are currently limited to applicants from the areas of major Dart Center activity: the Americas, Europe, Australia and New Zealand.

Fellows will attend a two-day seminar, November 3 and 4, 2009 in Atlanta, GA on the role emotional trauma plays in coverage of violent events, and will have access to all events and speakers in the annual conference of the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies November 5-7, 2009

http://dartcenter.org/ochberg-fellowship-guidelines

Invitation for International Voluntary Work Camp 2009

The An-Najah National University, the Public Relations Department and its Zajel Program cordially invite you to be part of its International Voluntary Work camp; 2nd -18th August 2009. Please refer to this link to read more about our project; http://youth.zajel.org/summer_camps/camp2009.htm, which is taking place at our university in Nablus-Palestine during the period between 2nd -18th August 2009.

The international summer work camp will bring international and local students from around the world and people who are interested in helping to create a better world, share ideas, visions and goals.

We are targeting university students and individuals that address issues of particular concern for humanity and education. We strongly encourage highly motivated and serious young students to apply.

Your participation in our international summer work camp will give you an opportunity to interact with our university students, staff and faculty; this exchange will benefit both the local and international students who need such communication and sharing experiences. Email: youthexchange@najah.edu

Al-Jeel Al-Jadeed Group launches the first book sales fair in Sana'a

Al-Jeel Al-Jadeed Group (JJG) launched its first book sales fair in Al-Tahrir Square in Sana'a starting Saturday and lasting until 21 June. The launch was scheduled in this time to be on the sideline of the re-achieving the Yemeni Unity 19th anniversary.

The launch was attended by Dr. Fares Al-Saqaf director of the General Books Authority and Dr. Abdullah Abu Houria chief of the School Book Press Establishment. Representing JJG was Mr. Mohammed Abdullah Al-Anisi general manager who welcomed the gathering and explained that the purpose of this fair is to enable readers with all budgets to buy any of the 1500 different titles presented in the fair. "We hope to extend bridges of knowledge and culture among the Yemeni people whether intellectual groups of students or anyone willing to read," he said.

Al-Saqaf expressed his delight at the initiative confirming that such fairs are one of the important tools in



spreading awareness and educating masses. He commended on JJG's work in establishing a culture of knowledge.

Abu Houria also commended the initiative and added that despite having access to the digital world through the internet and computers and satellite channels, the book remains the best tool for delivering information and cultural knowledge in societies.

Similarly, the group also sponsored an event organized by the High

Motherhood and Childhood Council for free arts where children gathered last week in Kentaki playground on the occasion of the World Children's Day and 18 years since our country ratified the child rights convention.

Al-Jeel Al-Jadeed believes in the importance of education and strives through its strategic plans and future cultural activities to carry out annual book fairs to ensire a culture of reading in Yemen.

TOTAL proud to have sponsored the restoration of two bronze lion statues

As part of their social and cultural sponsoring programs in Yemen, the Total Foundation, the TOTAL Group, and its local subsidiary TOTAL E&P YEMEN have recently funded the restoration of two bronze lion statues. The two lions belong to the two ancient kingdoms of Sheba and Qataban in Yemen.

The restoration work was carried out in Paris, France, under a cooperation agreement between the Yemeni General Organization for Antiquities and Museums (GOAM) and the French Louvre Museum. The Cooperation



Agreement has resulted in a program started in 2007 and aimed to support the restoration and the study of Yemeni bronze antiques.

Within the framework of this agreement for scientific cooperation, the Louvre Museum has welcomed two Yemeni trainees in order to perfect their skills in restoration. The Louvre Museum also contributes to the training of staff in some Yemeni museums.

The two bronze lions were put on display in the Louvre Museum last Thursday, June 4, 2009 until October 5, 2009. After the post-restoration exhibition in Paris, the two bronze lions will be returned to Yemen for display in Yemeni museums.

This initiative is among others TOTAL has been engaging in. TOTAL funded in 2007 the restoration of the Bronze Man Statue which is currently on show in the National Museum in Sana'a.

"TOTAL is proud to have contributed to this unique project and will continue to participate actively in the development of the cultural relations



between Yemen and France, "said Martin Deffontaines, the General Manager of Total E&P Yemen.

Total in Yemen:

Present in Yemen for more than 20 years, Total is the operator of Block 10, East Shabwa, and holds several other participations in oil exploration and production blocks. Since 1997, the Group has been producing from Block 10 and peaked the milestone production of 100 million barrels early 2008. Total is also the technical leader of the largest-ever industrial Yemen LNG project with a participation of 39.6%.



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- Designs and implements process equipment / systems performance monitoring programs. Conducts tests, interprets and reports results.
- Designs and recommends improvements to process systems capacity, efficiency, process safety and environmental performance involving complex process changes or addition of new equipment. Prepares and presents recommendations.
- Manages or supports the initiation and recommendation of projects to optimize existing facilities, new projects to enhance the production capability and in the design and construction of these projects. Specific responsibilities include:
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 - liaison with other engineering disciplines
 - liaison with engineering consultants
 - preparation of engineering / construction documentation packages
 - monitoring and reporting on project budget and expenditures
 - ordering of materials and monitoring of delivery to meet project schedules
 - resolution of queries related to engineering and construction of projects working with vendor reps during equipment commissioning & start-up activities
 - prepares issues, evaluates and recommends award of Contracts. Evaluate third party design analysis for thoroughness and accuracy.
- Coordinates specialized process and systems studies with external consultants. Includes scoping the study, obtaining approval for the study, selecting and engaging the Consultant, managing the Consultant, coordinating site involvement, review and presentation of consultant recommendations.
- Supports Process Safety activities in the areas of maintaining process documentation current, PHA / HAZOP participation, and preparation of Operating Manuals.
- Prepares and maintains facilities process simulation models current.

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- Fluent in English
- Minimum of 6 years of experience in Process Engineering in an oil and gas production, processing or refining facility
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- Good Process modeling & simulation and Hydraulic modeling knowledge and experience
- Good leadership and problem solving skills
- Ability to handle multiple assignments and work as a self directed individual
- Valid Yemen driving license

❖ To Apply for this Job please apply to: recruiting_yemsana@nexeninc.com
❖ Applications **should be submitted NO later than 23rd, June 2009**. Faxed applications will not be considered.
❖ Only short listed candidates will be contacted.

Ethiopian exiled journalists in Yemen: determination towards change

By: Amel Ariqi

Daniel Gezahegn, and Tamerat Serbessa, the two Ethiopian exiled journalists in Yemen, have entered a new stage in their struggle. This time they plan to publish a monthly Amharic news paper targeting the Ethiopian community in Yemen.

Gezahegn, was the editor of Amharic newspaper, Moged, which was known for its hard line against the government and conducted investigations during the 2005 Ethiopian election. After the election, the ruling party, the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF) placed their names and photographs on a wanted list, along with 60 other Ethiopian journalists accused of criticizing the regime.

Like many journalists, Gezahegn and his friend were forced to flee their homeland to escape threats of violence, death, imprisonment or harassment. They left their families and children behind, and sought political asylum in Yemen in 2005.

They survived the hazardous voyage. They crossed the Gulf of Aden with smugglers, lived in extreme poverty, and roamed the streets of Aden seeking, and many times begging, for food and shelter. They used sign language because they couldn't speak Arabic. It was 18 months before they were relocated by the UNHCR in Sana'a.

Their struggles cemented their determination to demand better life, not just for themselves, but for all of the African refugees in Yemen who face poverty, malnutrition and

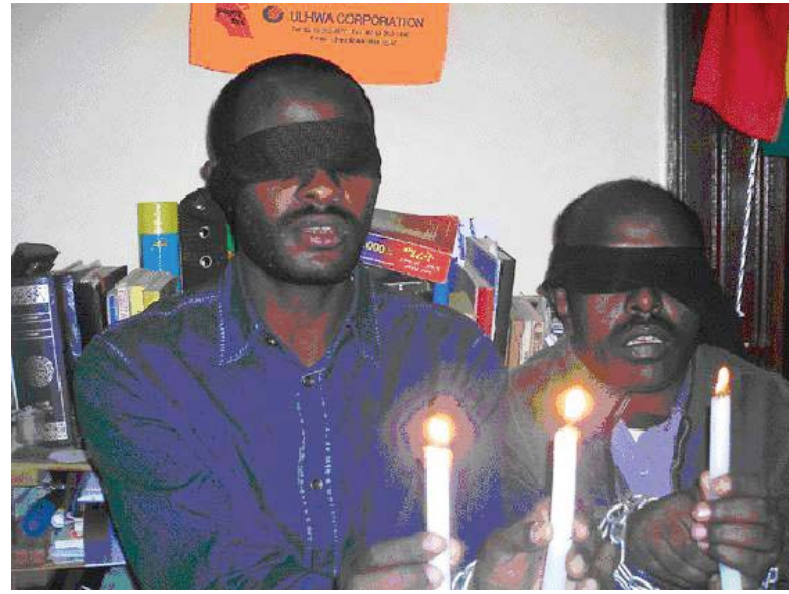
discrimination.

The pair also frequently participated in peaceful protests against the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees office in Sana'a, demanding more protection, and that the office facilitate their resettlement.

Realizing the importance of media to convey their message, Gezahegn gave interviews to local English media including the Yemen Times, Addis Dimts radio and Voice of America to inform the world of the plight of exiled Ethiopian journalists and refugees in Yemen.

Gezahegn said he was harassed by Yemeni security and UNHCR officials, and even by the Ethiopian Embassy security agents while working as an activist.

And although both journalists suffer from health problems- Serbessa is partially paralyzed and Gezahegn is diabetic- they continue to rebel against authority.



Daniel and his friend use all peaceful means to protest

government supporters in Sana'a. Mudesier is former Ethiopian Free Press vendor in Merkato's Merab hotel area, who was also arrested in Dedessa, and forced to leave Ethiopia for his safety.

The newspaper has also created a huge debate among Ethiopian community in Yemen, "In our first publication, pro-Ethiopian government Protestant and the Orthodox groups threatened us by telephone," said Gezahegn.

"On the other hand, some people tried to attack us because of our first issue had an interview with [an official from] an organization working to reveal and improve the lives of domestic African workers. He was explaining about the modern slavery situation," said Gezahegn, who added that modern slavery is a highly contentious issue.

"Though all these difficulties we are determining to continue publishing the newspaper. We are now planning to produce a documentary showing the Ethiopian refugees' daily life, revealing their tragedy since they began their dangerous journey with smugglers, and then their plight and suffering to get their rights as refugees in Yemen," Gezahegn said.

The first issue of GURAMAILE was printed in April, circulating 1,000 copies Sana'a.



"I planned to publish our newspaper to bridge the information education gap for the high number of Ethiopian refugees who speak Amharic language," said Gezahegn, pointing out that 99 percent of the available media in Yemen is in Arabic the other 2 percent is in English.

Last April, Gezahegn and Serbessa, with the help of exiled Ethiopian journalists in Yemen, the US, and Europe launched GURAMAILE, the first ever Ethiopian community newspaper in Yemen.

GURAMAILE, which is a synonym for the Yemeni word "naqsh," means "the making of hand decoration." Guramaile is also suggest that things are special by their different colors, like diverse peoples living together, Gezahegn explained.

The eight-page layout of the first issue was designed with the Photoshop program. According to Gezahegn, the newspaper is going to report on politics, arts, sports and other topics of interest to Ethiopian refugees in Yemen. Additionally, the newspaper plans to translate relevant UNHCR publications.

Gezahegn and his colleagues also plan to publish some pages in English to broaden their audience. "We are the voice of the voiceless people," he said.

"Our goal is first of all practicing the freedom of expression based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 19. Our goal is to fight for the refugees and the right to asylum

in Yemen, where refugees are experiencing discrimination," said Gezahegn.

He also criticized the UNHCR office in Yemen, saying that the office does nothing help refugees. "We want to stop the xenophobic sentiment," he added.

Gezahegn has appealed to the UNHCR for help obtaining a government license to publish a newspaper. On May 6, 2009 he wrote: "Dear/Sir Madame: I demand UNHCR Yemen Office issue me a supporting letter to get a work permit for me to work with my profession as a journalist.

I demand based on the convention of 1951 Article 17, 22, 14 and based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 19.

"I suffered for the last three years without any work because of not getting a durable solution from the office. The response for my solution have been a threat to cancel my mandate and warning by the protection officer. I am not afraid of the threats as I am not a terrorist, but just an innocent refugee.

"During my last years experience, I haven't used the list of articles which are listed on my mandate ID, such as Article 17 and 22. But now I demand my rights from the article 14, 1951 convention to work my artistic work to publish a news paper with my national language."

After the launch of GURAMAILE ,

the reaction of UNHCR was painful, according to Gezahegn. The office threatened to canceled his refugee mandate.

Working without license, and the threats from the UNHCR were not the only menaces they faced.

According to Gezahegn, GURAMAILE distributor Seid Mudesier has been harassed TPLF

Do you know?

- Over 101 Ethiopian journalists have been forced into exile after the post-2005 election crackdown in Ethiopia. Eleven are still facing serious difficulties in Kenya, Uganda, Yemen, Japan and India, said the Ethiopian Free Press Journalists Association.
- According to the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists, most of the exiled journalists in the world are living in extreme poverty, and some have been harassed by police who routinely threaten to send them to refugee camps or report them to officials in their home countries.
- These journalists came from 36 countries, including Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Colombia, Uzbekistan, Haiti, Afghanistan,

- Liberia, Rwanda, Gambia, Iran, Iraq, and Somalia.
- Some have taken menial jobs - car guards, gardeners, hawkers and farm workers - just to survive.
- In certain countries, every freethinking journalist is seen as a suspect by government officials, police, immigration, security and intelligence services. As a result, journalists who flee do so clandestinely, and tell people they are teachers, businesspeople or of another profession to avoid being detected, questioned and maybe arrested, said the CPJ.
- According to Reporters Without Borders, despite tangible evidence of threats and dangers, some journalists spend years living in refugee camps or hiding in cities where their safety is not guaranteed.

Children victims of greedy parents

By: Ali Saeed

When Khadija Mohammed heard a loud strange shriek, she dropped the plate she was carrying and ran to her daughter Saba's bedroom. She flung open the door to find her daughter lying on the floor in a strange position. Her husband was standing above her with a look of defiance on his face.

It was not the first time that Muntasir Lutf Ali Jaber physically abused his daughter, aiming to break her arms and legs so that he could use her to gain sympathy from unsuspecting well-doers when he uses her to beg on the streets of Hodeida.

Armed with medical reports and official documents from hospitals, the 27 year-old father took to the streets of Hodeida.

The heartless father is from Raima governorate, Al-Jabben district, Anafa village. He works as a soldier in the Coast Guard in Hodeida.

Khadija Mohammed, the mother of the child, complained that the father committed the crime last March when the child was just six months old.



Saba Was exposed to mistreatment by her father

No law to protect children of domestic violence

General prosecution is able to prosecute the father using the child rights law. However, this law is not enough since it doesn't stipulate this kind of violence, nor does it stipulate that the prosecution is even authorized to act against such an incident.

The mother went on to say that after the father did that they took Saba to Hodeida to fix the broken bones, but a few weeks later the father committed the same crime again.

"After that we headed to Al-Aqsa hospital in Hodeida, but they instructed us to go to the military hospital," said

Khadija with a gloomy voice.

"At the military hospital, the doctors refused to do anything for Saba after I informed them that her father abused the child. They requested official authorization from the prosecution first," said the mother.

"I begged for him many times to stop, but he insisted, saying 'she is my daughter and I'm free to do anything with her,'" added Khadija.

"When doctors at the military hospital in Hodeida asked for an official memo from the prosecution, the father ran away and I resorted to my uncle in Sana'a to report the issue to the Attorney General at the SEYAJ Organization for Protecting Childhood and the National Organization for Defending Rights and Freedoms, known as HOOD," said Khadija.

For his part, the Attorney General instructed the General Prosecutor at the North Capital Prosecution to hastily follow up the case according to the law.

According to a memo from the North Capital Prosecution, Saeed Ghabl, a detective working for prosecution, wrote a memo to the general manger of prosecutions administration at the Attorney General's office to charge a legal doctor to do the medical report for Saba.

Moreover, SEYAJ Organization wrote a letter to Al-Ahli Modern Hospital to do a proper examination and give medicine to the victim.

According to the medical report from Al-Ahli Modern Hospital which did an X-Ray for Saba, the tests revealed that the child suffered from a large break in the bone of the right arm, [up and down the bone], a large break in the bone of the right thigh, a break in the upper part of the left thigh bone, and a break in the big bone of the left leg.

The report scientifically proves that the child was physically abused.

"I have been married to him for three

years and he used to hit me many times. I ran away from him to my father's house, but people mediated on his behalf to my father in order to bring me back," she says.

"Child abuse is rampant, but it has recently increased and in some cases has led to death or permanent disability," stated Abdurrahman Al-Barman, a lawyer at HOOD.

"There are many children who have died from their fathers' torture or their step-mothers violence at home," added Al-Barman.

Al-Barman gave an example of that as Ghada and Yousif who died in 2006 due to physical abuse from their step-mothers. "I still remember many cases like that, as one father hit his son on his head until he died," said the lawyer.

"The problem behind child abuse in Yemen is that until now there has been no law protecting Yemeni children from domestic violence," explained Al-Barman.

The lawyer attributed the reasons behind the absence of such a law to social traditions that stand on the fathers' side whenever there is child abuse. However, when the violence comes from non-relatives of the child, both the community and the law stand against that.

Concerning Saba's case, Al-Barman said "We asked about the father's health condition and found that he is in good health and does not suffer from any psychological disorders, but what he committed was just to beg by showing medical reports of the child to wealthy businessmen to gain their sympathy.

"We demanded repeatedly in Yemen to issue a special law that protects the child from domestic violence, yet until now nothing took place," commented the lawyer.

"Yemen should do as Morocco did, where they have a special law that protects children from domestic violence

and enables human rights organizations to bring such cases to court," suggested Al-Barman.

Khadija, the victim's mother, appealed to the attorney general to keep the investigation of her issue in Sana'a and to not refer it to Raima governorate.

In Sana'a her uncle can support her, unlike in her village where her father is an old man and can not do anything for her. In addition, the husband's family is influential in the village and they can ignore the issue for their interests.

Khadija is also calling on all human rights organizations to stand with her to keep her child and herself from ongoing violence and abuse.

In other countries such as Europe, around 18 members of the EU in 2008 committed a full prohibition of corporal punishment and the rest pledged to do soon.

Some steps also have been taken in other parts of the world. In 2007, New Zealand became the first English-speaking country to prohibit all kinds of corporal punishment. Three Latin American countries, Uruguay, Chile and Venezuela also did so.

133 to 275 million children are exposed to domestic violence around the globe according to a study submitted to the UN General Secretary in the general assembly in 2006. 7.2 to 15.9 million of these abused children are in Western Asia, which Yemen is part of.

Al-Barman said that unfortunately there is nothing in Yemen's children's rights laws that authorize them to support such humanitarian issues, arguing for hasty legislation to protect the next generation.

Infants and small children who are exposed to domestic violence undergo extreme emotional stress that can harm their brains' development and can impair cognitive and sensory growth, according to a study by UNICEF entitled Impacts of Domestic Violence on

Children.

The study went on to say that a child who is exposed to violence in the home may have difficulty learning and limited social skills, and can exhibit violent, delinquent behavior and severe anxiety.

"Domestic violence against children in Yemen is not rampant, but some incidents have happened due to the environment people live in. The press blows it out of proportion," said Hussein Al-Zoomy, a Mosque preacher.

"These little incidents are not linked to Islam by any means. People who do it are doing it due to tradition, environment and cruel education," added Al-Zoomy.

About corporal punishment, Al-Zoomy explained that it is a means of education that the educator resorts to according to the time and the environment.

"The theory of corporal punishment cannot be removed, because even if it is not suitable for this period of time and environment, it may be a good instrument for another time and environment," said Al-Zoomy.

"The relationship between the family and the child in Islam based on respect, not on anxiety or dreadfulness," said Dr. Ayad Al-Ghariry, professor of Islamic studies at Al-Andalus University.

4U

If you would like to support Saab's mother you can do so through HOOD.

Any support, whether financial or moral, is welcome. Contact Abdurrahman Al-Barman at Tel: 00967-1-212518 or Mobile: 00967-711744982

Yemeni-American opinion on Obama speech

By: Munib Althary
malthary@hotmail.com
Ohio, USA

President Obama's speech in Cairo must have been an unprecedented action by a US president. It targeted an audience of 1.2 billion Muslims, 300 million Americans and many millions of others around the world. Ending the introduction to his speech with the common Islamic greeting "Al-Salam Alaikum" and acknowledging the impact of the Al Azhar on Islamic and world progress was vital to expressing his good intentions. Quoting the Holy Quran several times during the

speech also reflected his broad understanding of Islam, and was an effective tactic to reach the hearts and minds of his audience.

He also showed that the new administration is not like its predecessor, which usually described to Islam with the simple quote, "Islam is a religion of peace." In his address, he made it clear that his intention is to promote understanding between Islamic nations and the west. Reflecting on his own experiences by saying that he came from a family with generations of Muslims in it, and lived in a predominantly Muslim country showed his appreciation and understanding of Muslim life.

Acknowledging civilization's debt to

Muslims in the advancement of science, math, medicine, art and the promotion of peace was also a key to reaching the audience. Additionally, it was important for him to mention that the complex issues between Muslims and America will not be resolved by a single speech. The speech will be the beginning of a progressive understanding, he said, and he expressed his commitment to follow through with this goal.

This gesture has cleared up many misconceptions in America towards Muslims. More importantly, it has ended many misconceptions in the Muslim world about the US. As a Yemeni-American, it has always been

my duty to clarify these misconceptions and present Islam the way we all know it to be. Obama has done just that for a mass audience. By pressing on key issues dividing Muslims and America such as Guantanamo Bay, the Arab-Israeli conflict and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, he provided a simple introduction to his administration's intentions. He showed a commitment to promoting understanding through interfaith dialogue and increasing exchange scholarships, something the previous administration failed to do.

A very important subject of concern to all Muslims is the treatment of American-Muslims, which he did not fail to address. In the beginning of his

speech he mentioned a community of his own in Chicago, and how they found peace and prosperity in their Islamic faith. This demonstrates that he is in touch with Muslim-Americans. He also addressed a very important issue to Muslim-Americans here in the States, and that is restrictions on Islamic Charitable giving, especially after Sept. 11. Obama expressed a commitment to loosen up the restrictions that hinder many Muslims here from making their zakah.

Some in the US believe Obama was being overly-apologetic for America's actions, and there is also skepticism circulating in the Muslim/Arab world about how effective the speech was.

But his gesture should be commended, and the speech was worthy of respect. It will be an opening to a new era between America and the Muslim world. It will also encourage Americans to reach out to Muslim communities in US, and foster cultural understanding.

In America we say, "Actions speak louder than words." This phrase describes the common reaction to the speech from the Islamic world. Muslims should, as the Holy Quran teaches us, to meet a good gesture with a good gesture. It is up to the American administration to put the words to action and, if it does, I am sure it will find cooperation and appreciation in the Islamic world.

Security threats to Yemen create dilemma for United States

By: Munir Mawari

Many American political analysts think that the problem the new American administration faces in Yemen relates mainly to the fate of the 100 Yemeni detainees presently incarcerated in Guantanamo. Their homeland cannot guarantee that these individuals, if repatriated, will not become a renewed terrorist threat to America and others. In reality, Yemen's inability to deal effectively with this problem is just a small symptom of a much larger problem that faces President Obama and the West: Yemen's near future will undoubtedly witness a bloody resolution to the problem of the undemocratic nature of the present regime. The regional repercussions of this unavoidable event could be uncontrolled and widespread.

The regime that has held power in Yemen for over 30 years presents itself as democratic, yet Yemeni democracy has produced the same president in every election since July 17, 1978 (al-Hisbah, May 30, 2007). Although the constitution of Yemen sets a limit of two terms for a president, Ali Abdullah Saleh easily amends the constitution and resets the meter to start from zero every time his term reaches its end (Al-Hiwar, February 25). It now appears that Saleh is grooming his son to succeed him when his current term expires in 2013. There is a belief held by some in Yemen that the policies and actions of the president have contributed to the development of an effective armed

opposition (Aram, April 28). In consequence, President Saleh faces five major threats to his country's stability (Sawt-Al-Yaman, December 2008):

- The Secessionist movement in the South: Saleh's Yemen did not always include the socialist South, which was independent until 1990. After a political unification, the leader of the South, Ali Salem al-Bied, was subjected to a series of calculated acts on the part of Saleh designed to marginalize him and his constituency, and to basically create a vassal state in the South (Yemen Times, May 26, 2003). This met with resistance, to which Saleh's reaction was an invasion of the south under the slogan "Unity or Death!" (Aleshteraki.net, March 31, 2008). After many deaths, Saleh won that war and achieved unity through military occupation. In his haste to neutralize the remaining southern forces, he disbanded both the southern army and security forces, sending more than 60,000 men in arms packing and many jobless (Aleshteraki.net, April 6, 2008). This, of course, created a large reserve of anti-Saleh militants who were without positions but not without means. Over the course of the last 18 years, these people have reorganized themselves and now present a major threat to the "unity" of Yemen.

- The Houthi Insurgency in the North: The Zaydi Shiite "Believing Youth" movement of northern Yemen was originally an organization supported as well as exploited by Saleh, who used it as a check against the spread of the Salafist movement in the North. Others, more cynically, suggested it

was a means of occupying the energies of his cousin, Ali Muhsin al-Ahmar, the most powerful military man in Yemen (Al-Arabiya, April 7, 2007, Nashwanews, May 11). This organization, however, grew out of its intended role and assumed its own agenda, holding its own in five rounds of serious armed conflict against Saleh (Nashwanews, May 11). A sixth round is not an unlikely event at this point, but it could very well spread from the provincial environment to larger areas, including even the capital of San'a (Alahali, April 7). The insurgency is named after the late Shi'a cleric Hussein al-Houthi, who led the Believing Youth's first major military campaign against San'a in 2004.

- Al-Qaeda and other militant Jihadist groups: The recent announcement by al-Qaeda's leader in Yemen, Nasir al-Wuhayshi that he is throwing his support behind the secessionist movement in the South received little approval in the jihadi forums (Alboraq, May 2009). Some political analysts believe the statement is an indication that Saleh is "engaging in dangerous games with the terrorists" (Al-Majalis, January 28). Al-Wuhayshi (transferred to Yemen by Iran in 2003) was one of the 23 al-Qaeda prisoners who "escaped" from a well-guarded Yemeni jail in 2006 (al-Jazeera, January 26). Since a public pronouncement of political support like this is not common al-Qaeda practice, it appears to be a transparent and manipulative act designed to mislead someone. The secessionist movement being socialist and secular, there is no apparent reason for al-

Qaeda support to suddenly materialize.

Regional observers may conclude that none other than Saleh's political agents arranged the statement of support, using al-Qaeda operatives who owe him favors to create a political theater that can be presented to the West (al-Jazeera, May 14). The goal, of course, is to have the South aligned with inimical forces so they can be discredited by a gain in defensive allies for Saleh's regime. But this dangerous game could lead to actual war crimes being committed against Southern secessionist leaders, all in the name of "fighting terror" (Marebpress, May 3).

- Popular grievances and grassroots movements: The U.S. Justice Department recently indicted Latin Node Communications Company, an American contractor accused of bribing one of President Saleh's sons and members of the Ministry of Telecommunications (Yemen Post, May 20). Latin Node eventually entered a guilty plea. [1]

The news immediately plastered the front pages in Yemen, causing President Saleh to shut down eight independent newspapers, claiming they were guilty of "anti-unity" conduct. The origin of this retribution against the press is as follows: Saleh appointed a whole generation of his family members to high positions in the military and the government, placing them in control of the government's foreign investments committee (Bilakoyood, April 10; Al-Masdar, April 14). These individuals, including his son, Ahmad Ali Abdullah Saleh, were charged with profiting from cor-

rupt practices that used foreign investments for private gain by running fairly primitive "protection scams" where they were bribed to not do damage (Al-Masdar, April 28). While the president's son was cleared by the U.S. Justice Department, the general public in Yemen is not fooled by these corrupt practices, and as poverty levels and unemployment soar (both at 35% of the population) public resentment soars as well (Yemen Times, December 20, 2007; Yemen Post, April 25; May 7). The state of corruption in Yemen is not lost on the average citizen of Yemen who sees \$80,000 Rolls Royce and Porsche automobiles being driven around the capital by clerks and mid-level personnel while he or she is commonly found standing in the bread line (Alhadath Yemen, April 24). The result has been a generalized and ever present anger within the population that could be galvanized in a form of an uprising, should some precipitating event come along.

- Conflicts within the regime: Even within the regime, there are high-ranking members of the military or the ruling General People's Congress party who prefer their own candidacy for president to that of Saleh's son, Ahmad Ali Abdullah Saleh, leader of Yemen's Republican Guards and the Anti-Terrorism Special Forces. Many of these top officials are family members appointed by Saleh. Over the last decade a series of car accidents, helicopter crashes and illnesses have claimed the lives of many figures in Saleh's inner circle (Hadramut.net, March 3, 2006; Marebpress, April 30,

2008; Yemen Times, May 24). The frequency of fatal car crashes involving regime members and opposition figures (even in a country where 1,000 road fatalities a month is not uncommon) is a matter of public comment and has led to anxiety at the highest levels of the national leadership (Marebpress, April 30, 2008).

Conclusion:

The policies and actions of the Saleh Regime have, in the course of 31 years, led to a critical situation that can be resolved by the Yemeni people only if Saleh is not supported by outside forces. A factor that does not often find its way into the press in this country—that the ordinary Yemeni citizen is armed—is of enormous importance in assessing the near future of Yemen. Among a population of 22 million, there are between 40 to 50 million weapons (al-Sharq al-Awsat, January 9, 2007). No matter who supports or opposes Saleh, he still lives in the middle of an armed camp. Saleh's hope is that his son takes over for him, not simply to consolidate power within his family, but also to prevent the opening of countless files about the methods used to ensure his 31 years in control. In the meantime he may find that the many armed camps within Yemen are unwilling to agree to this plan.

Munir Mawari is a U.S.-based journalist of Yemeni origin and the former Washington correspondent of pan-Arab newspaper Asharq al-Awsat. This article was published in the Terrorism Monitor

SKETCHED OPINION



By Hamid

Civil Society Organizations the easiest way to material profit in Yemen

By: Fatima Al-Aghbari

During the last few years, the number of civil society organizations has increased, as they have appeared under different names according to supporters concerns. But this doesn't mean that they hold noble aims to benefit individuals or society.

On the contrary, some of those organizations in Yemen don't strive to achieve a good reputation or perform good work to last even after the organization comes to an end. Instead, they concern themselves with how to increase what is in their bank accounts, an issue that we all should question here.

What is ridiculous is that some of those organizations boldly call to eradicate the corruption that prevails inside state institutions, whereas they are corrupt themselves. Whether overtly or secretly, they set the record in committing financial and administrative cor-

ruption that should be registered in Guinness Book of Records.

This may prompt their supporters to reconsider their support they to projects that may not be as important as their exaggerated objectives suggest. Some of the projects may have already been carried out, but presented again in a new mould and with a different budget.

I wish that these supporters would open their eyes and work and put an end to the "organized corruption" that those organizations practice under the pretext of projects and by nominating the "person of conscience and trust" to represent the organization in the project. The representative's role is to completely supervise the way the organization deals with the money donated to support those projects. But these organizations care only about attracting supporters through written projects to collect dollars for their pockets.

The miserable situation and corruption prevailing in some - I am stressing the word "some" - civil society organi-

zations is one of the defects of civil society in Yemen, particularly given that people in the past believed that these organizations were the real weapon to fight corruption in state institutions.

Unfortunately, civil society organizations in Yemen today walk the path of business, impudently, trading in human rights, press freedom and women's rights. Others organizations work in fields other than those covered by their particular specialization. I believe that human rights, women rights and press issues are the most attractive to make supporters donate "green paper" to these corrupt organizations which obtain a lot of money, sometimes amounting to thousands of dollars.

Frankly, the corruption inside civil society organizations brings to light a question on how much money heads of civil society organizations have in Yemen, a question which should be underlined with 20 red lines.

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Fax: +967 (1) 268-276

P.O. Box 2579, Sana'a, Yemen

E-mail: yteditor@gmail.com

Letters: yteditor@gmail.com

Advertisement: ads@yementimes.com

Publisher & Editor-in-Chief
Nadia Abdulaziz Al-Sakkaf

CEO
Khaier Aldin Al Nsour

Managing Editor
Amel Al-Ariqi

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Mahmoud Assameie

Mariem Al-Yameni

Ola Al-Shami

Offices

Aden Bureau:

Ridhwan Alawi Ahmed

Tel: +967 (2) 347-057, 346596

Fax: +967 (2) 347056

Email: ytaden@y.net.ye

Taiz Bureau:

Imad Ahmed Al-Saqqaf

Tel: +967 (4) 217-156,

Telefax: +967 (4) 217157

P.O.Box: 5086, Taiz

Email: yttaiz@y.net.ye

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Obama ties Palestinian cause with Israel's security and Arab reform

By: Ghassan Michel Rubeiz

On June 4, in Cairo, President Obama started a promising dialogue with the Muslim world:

"So let there be no doubt: Islam is a part of America. And I believe that America holds within her the truth that regardless of race, religion, or station in life, all of us share common aspirations — to live in peace and security; to get an education and to work with dignity; to love our families, our communities, and our God. These things we share. This is the hope of all humanity."

President Obama reached his Middle East audience with subtle messages. To the Israelis, Obama hinted that if they wanted lasting security they must give Palestinians a state of their own. To the Palestinians, he cautioned that only with peaceful resistance could they achieve liberation. To the Arabs states, he communicated that their primary problem is not Palestine; it is deficits in reforms.

Obama reached his audience with cultural sensitivity. He did not offer new formulas. Instead, he laid out principles. As a guest to the Arab world, he stayed within the zone of comfort of

the host.

First on his mind, was the principle of appreciation of Islam. Second, was the urgency of the solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Third, he believes, Arabs should reform politically, if peace between Israel and Palestinians is to last.

The president explained that Americans need to recognize that Islam is a great civilization, that Muslims in the past transmitted art and science to the West and that Muslims respect peace based on justice.

The president explained that the war in Afghanistan was just: to combat violence and extreme ideology. He assumed that Muslims should be on America's side in fighting the enemies of freedom and peace worldwide.

Mindful of the political implications of a full apology, Obama hinted that the Iraq war could have been avoided: "Unlike Afghanistan, Iraq was a war of choice that provoked strong differences in my country and around the world."

While he defended the dethroning of Saddam Hussein, he implied that America could have avoided the war through diplomacy. The president reminded his audience that he is closing Guantanamo Bay, banning torture and withdrawing all US troops from Iraq by 2012.

On Iran, the president was brief and reconciliatory. While he cautioned against the building of nuclear

weapons, he encouraged Tehran to develop atomic energy in compliance with international standards. When he spoke about religious tolerance, he was wise to mention that he considers the Sunni-Shiite rift a problem. Obama indirectly acknowledged that some states (i.e. Israel) already have developed atomic weapons. It is this undeclared fact that made Obama's comments on Iran's defense ambitions vulnerable.

Having set the stage for reconciliation, Obama came to the Arab Israeli conflict with clarity and directness. He first explained that US relations with Israel are close and founded on firm grounds: history, suffering and reciprocity. "This bond is unbreakable", Obama stated.

Then the president compassionately acknowledged the pain of Palestinian displacement. Next came a surprise: Obama is the first president to compare the struggle of the Palestinians with the struggle of Black Americans. He mentioned the lessons learned in South Africa. He reached out to Hamas by recognizing its appeal to Palestinians. He rightly cautioned against the use of violence in the struggle: "Violence is a dead end".

The president reiterated his firm opposition to the building of Israeli settlements on Palestinian land and promised to push the peace process for a two-state solution. The following



promise received much applause: "And that is why I intend to personally pursue this outcome with all the patience and dedication that the task requires."

Having given a boost to the Palestinian cause, Obama turned to the Arab states and asked for reform: democracy in governance, the rights of women, religious freedom and economic development. In this part of the speech Obama was very measured. His

critics will point out that he was soft in addressing the oppression practiced by Arab regimes. His defense would argue that he is a guest of the Arab world. His mission is to improve relations, not to cross the privilege of hospitality. The Israelis would have liked Obama to connect Arab reform with Israel's security more forcefully. That would have been difficult in Cairo.

Obama's visit to Cairo was historic.

It lived up to expectations. It opened dialogue, started pressure on Israel and set the stage for possible new partnerships with the Muslim world.

Dr. Ghassan Michel Rubeiz is a Lebanese-American Middle East analyst with special interest in political sociology, social justice and democracy. He is a former professor of social work and psychology.

A paradigm to jump-start U.S. - Muslim relations

By: John Esposito
The Washington Post

In what has the potential to be a transformative historical moment, President Barack Obama called for "a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world; one based upon mutual interest and mutual respect." While acknowledging the ups and downs of Muslim-West relations, periods of co-existence and cooperation as well as conflict and religious wars, he challenged both America and Muslims globally not to fixate on differences but on building a new way forward based on our common humanity, shared values and interests.

Obama's address reveals his awareness of the findings of major polls, like the Gallup World Poll (see Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think) - that the deep differences that divide are about respect for Islam and the value of Muslim lives and about American foreign policy, not religion or a clash of civilizations. Obama demonstrated a

desire to address and redress political concerns and grievances in hot spots, ranging from Palestine and Iraq to Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran. He emphasized the need for diplomacy over military responses: his plans to pull out of Iraq and to use temporary military power in Afghanistan in coalition with some forty six countries. Most importantly, Obama promised aid for economic and educational development to assist Pakistanis and Afghans.

Equally important, the president was crystal clear in communicating his respect for Islam and Muslims, "partnership between America and Islam must be based on what Islam is, not what it isn't. And I consider it part of my responsibility as President of the United States to fight against negative stereotypes of Islam wherever they appear." He singled out Muslims past accomplishments as well as Islam's place in America: "Islam has always been a part of America's story.... And since our founding, American Muslims have enriched the United States. They have fought in our wars, served in government, stood for civil rights, started

businesses, taught at our Universities, excelled in our sports arenas, won Nobel Prizes, built our tallest building, and lit the Olympic Torch." While the president indicated an awareness of the problems of discrimination that some American Muslims have faced and still face, much more must be done to address the impact of Patriot Act and Secret Evidence on the civil liberties of Muslims and its devastating affect on families.

Obama was equally direct and candid with his Muslim audience, speaking out against crude stereotyping of America as a self-interested empire and addressed multiple issues: religious freedom, Christians in the Arab world, anti-Semitism, women's status, religious extremism, political authoritarianism and human rights. He balanced his critique and prescription with respect and the need for partnership, not unilateral action, in building a new way forward.

On perhaps the most difficult issue, Palestine - Israel, Obama identified the heart of the problem: the equal and competing claims and aspirations of

two peoples with very different narratives. He balanced his emphasis on America's unbreakable bond with Israel by recognizing the tragic plight of both Muslim and Christian Palestinian the pain of dislocation from their "homeland" and "occupation" with its daily humiliations. Characterizing the Palestinian situation as intolerable, he declared: "America will not turn our backs on the legitimate Palestinian aspiration for dignity, opportunity, and a state of their own."

But the real challenge will be moving both sides forward. To do this, the U.S. administration will need to acknowledge that not only the Palestinians but also Israelis are guilty of acts of illegitimate violence and terror. Just as there cannot be real peace unless the Palestinians recognize Israel's right to exist and be secure, there cannot be a peaceful and secure Palestine unless the current Israeli government retracts any notion of a "Greater Israel," recognizes U.N. resolutions regarding the return to pre-1967 borders. This means not just freezing but rolling back illegal settle-

ments.

A remarkable and potentially far reaching statement missed many, the strongest of an American president in many years, is Obama's recognition that Jerusalem belongs to all three Abrahamic faiths: "All of us have a responsibility to work for the day when the mothers of Israelis and Palestinians can see their children grow up without fear; when the Holy Land of three great faiths is the place of peace that God intended it to be; when Jerusalem is a secure and lasting home for Jews and Christians and Muslims."

Like previous American presidents, Obama faces a critical issue of how to work with authoritarian Arab and Muslim regimes while also supporting calls by secular and mainstream Islamist leaders in Egypt and across the Muslim world for greater power sharing. Obama underscored the responsibility of Arab and Muslim rulers and leaders for developing more democratic societies: giving people a say in how they are governed, confidence in the equal administration of justice, to have governments that don't

steal from them, and the freedom to live as they choose. He stressed that this is not because they are American ideas but fundamental human rights. How his administration's policies will reconcile support for Muslim autocrats with the democratic aspirations of their populations remains to be seen.

Obama's Cairo address, in what may prove to be an historic event, was a major step forward in changing the course of American-Muslim relations. It is a big a step on a path which, as he acknowledges, will take years and present challenges to multiple and diverse audiences. It spoke first and foremost to Muslim communities but also to all Americans. His message on the need for a new beginning, marked by recognizing not only our differences, past and present, but also our interdependence, shared values and common interests represents a new mindset and paradigm for U.S.-Muslim World relations.

John Esposito is Professor of religion, international affairs and Islamic studies.

Reconciliation, a new start for Cyprus

By: Stella Savvides

The United Democrats Women Organization since they have been established believe that such conferences bring together people from different countries, cultures and religions, but with the same concern for the future of our region and for the whole world for peace. We believe that women face the peace with a lot of concern for the benefit of all citizens of their country, but especially of our children, the young people to whom we are going to deliver the future of our country. As mothers we want our families to live in safety and peace. As responsible politicians we want to contribute to the reunification of our country.

We live in the Middle East area, an area that for many years now has a lot of problems. Palestine, Israel, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Cyprus, and some years back

the Gulf War.

Reconciliation is a very useful word these days for many countries and even for my country.

My Country, Cyprus is a small island in the Eastern corner of the Mediterranean Sea and since 1974 it is divided due to the Turkish invasion. We have more than 200,000 people refugees in their own country.

They are not allowed to go and live in their houses and use their properties because they are violated by the Turkish Troops.

Nicosia is the only divided capital in the world.

I think that many of you have visited Cyprus when you had your Annual conference in 2007.

We want our leaders to find a solution as soon as possible so the people of Cyprus Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot and all other Nationalities live secure in their country. Time is against our problem.

We have live separated Greek and Turkish Cypriots for a long time, and now it's very difficult to come together. Except those people who are now fifty and over all others they don't know and they don't remember Greek and Turkish Cypriots living together.

It is very important to try to open ways of communication that will bring the two communities closer together. This will make to understand that we share the same thoughts for our country and that we want to live together in a reunited Cyprus where all the people will have the same benefits in the great family of the European Union were we belong.

First of all we must try to have confidence and trust to each other. We must try to know each other. We need to make programs and events were both communities must participate. Both sites must make a lot of sacrifices, must forget the past and look at the future.

Now some of this is happening. But

they are not enough. We need more to be done. Our situation is still a little complicated. I live in the South part of the Republic of Cyprus, and if I want to visit the North part I must show my passport or my ID just like I am traveling in another country. If this will stop that will be a very good step for reconciliation. If the people are free to move around or even if they open some more passages so the people will be able to move easier that would be very good. This will bring the two communities together and when they will face the benefits they will have of been together in economy, trade and tourism, then they will understand what both sides have lost by live separated for thirty five years now.

For the new Generation we need to change our education program and give examples of the Greek and Turkish Cypriots living together.

We don't want to forget our history. We want to build on that, but build in a

correct way for both communities and learn from the mistakes we have done in the past. We must have in mind that all we are Cypriots, and Cyprus is our country and that we want to live in our country together.

We must bring young people together, by organizing games, exchange visits to their schools, try to know each other culture. Music is a very important thing. Bring people together. By organizing concerts, theatre, poets' evenings and games we bring young people together.

The future of our country is the young people. We must give them motivations and opportunities to know each other.

If the older people don't help for this in a positive way then we will not achieve anything.

We as women contribute to this by making by communal events. We participate in International conferences together and we ask for peace in our country.

Since last September we are operating the Multicultural women center were all women Greek NGOs and some Turkish Cypriot NGOs are members and where women from all communities and nationalities but especially Greek and Turkish Cypriot women can meet for a coffee or a drink and can exchange views about our future and about the things that they are worrying us.

We welcome the UN declaration for the 2009 to be a year of Reconciliation. It is really important, if the whole world understand what grate think Reconciliation and Dignity is for all the Nations and people. If they recognize this then there will be no Wars and there will be Peace that will last for ever all around the World.

Stella Savvides is the president of the United Democrats Women Organization and the multicultural women centre in Cyprus.



Safer celebrates its fourth Labor Day



Safer Exploration and Production Operations Company (SEPOC) celebrated on Wednesday May 13, 2009 at Movenpick Hotel the honoring of its outstanding employees on the occasion of the World Labor Day, first of May, under the auspices of Dr. Amat Arazzaq Ali Hummad, Minister of Social Affairs and Labor, Mr. Ahmed Abdullah Daris, Vice Minister of Oil and Minerals, Mr. Rashid Ba Rabba, Former Minister of Oil & Minerals and Member of Shura Council, including Mr. Abdul Aziz Al-Kumaim, Mr. Yahya Al-Kuhlani and a number of social figures.

Mohammed Hussein al-Haj, SEPOC's Executive General Manager, delivered a keynote speech, welcoming the attendees of the ceremony on behalf of the employees. "SEPOC is proud of the achievements made possible by its employees over the past four years," he said. As he commended the achievements of the Company's employees, he appreci-

ated the sponsorship of former Minister of Oil & Minerals Dr. Rashid Ba Rabba' and Ahmed Abdullah Daris, who made the necessary arrangements to help the Company start its operations during its early difficult times. Mr. Al-Haj noted that the group of employees being recognized today is just a small representative sample of the big SEPOC's employee

other areas in the country. Al-Haj pointed out that SEPOC intends to carry out the biggest geophysical survey ever this year, which will cover an area of 1600 square kilometers. However he said that they are facing some minor difficulties that cannot hamper the progress and are surmountable by means of the political leadership's support. Al-Haj praised the

company would achieve any success in a task that used to be carried out only by international oil companies. We are now proud that SEPOC practically confirmed within three years that we have a national company with skilled national staff who can compete not only at the local level, but at the regional and international levels as well," said Hummad. "We all

tensive training courses for its personnel both inside and outside the country. It is also conducting studies on its fields to further develop them and optimize their production; this is a practical way that should be modeled for developing the Yemeni oil sector," she added. Dr. Hummad went on to explain the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor's main respon-

launched the country's work program to be implemented in Yemen by the support of the ILO. It is the first document to be signed by the tripartite sides and will be binding on all of them. We put a high price on this agreement because it is having bearing on many of the employees' rights, national agreements, and laws." Hummad further noted that the Ministry



Eng. Kahlid Al-Madani, Engineering & Construction Manager, Received The Executive Manager's Award Given To The Department.



Mohammed Ali Mohammed Saad Production & Operation (Prod.)



Dr. Abdulla Abdo Fara Al-Adimi Hr & Training



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AHMED ABDULLA JAITHEN
PRODUCTION & OPERATIONS



HUSSAIN ABDULLA AL ZARA
PRODUCTION & OPERATIONS



SULTAN KANAF HAZZA
PRODUCTION & OPERATIONS

community. "To honor this small group of the company's employees who bore the difficulties since the Company's operation commencement is not enough; moreover, all employees, even if they have not been recognized, deserve a thank-you," Al-Haj added. Mr. Al-Haj confirmed that this recognition will continue to be an annual tradition. He praised the employees' hard work in all aspects of the Company's business including administration, training, preparation of technical staff, field studies and the rest of the Company's activities, hoping that the employees would keep up their unmatched quality work with the support of the Ministry of Oil and Minerals and the Petroleum Exploration & Production Authority (PEPA). Mr. Al-Haj stated that the Company has fully succeeded in laying the foundations for SEPOC to be deservedly the first and only national company in Yemen. He attributed the successful endeavors of the Company to HE President Ali Abdullah Saleh, under whose patronage the Company has been able to improve its performance. He said that the Company is planning to expand its operations outside Block (18) by exploring



AWADH SALEH AL-AQEELI
PRODUCTION & OPERATIONS



SALEH TALIB MUBARAK
PRODUCTION & OPERATIONS

Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor's contributions to solving employment problems, pointing out the Minister's personal role in dispute settlement. He expressed his gratitude to the Minister of Social Affairs and Labor, the Oil and Mineral Ministry leadership, and the Oil Labor Union for their role in helping the company to overcome their labor-related problems.

Dr. Amat Arazzaq Ali Hummad addressed the audience saying, "I am glad to be with you to take part in SEPOC's recognition of its employees." She added, "Earlier this month, we attended the great event on May 1st that was organized by the Yemeni General Association of Workers' Unions, which was personally sponsored and followed by H.E President Ali Abdullah Saleh who assigned the Prime Minister to attend it in honor of all Yemenis, the world, and the unknown laborers whose great efforts give us pleasant results." "Let me say a word about SEPOC as I recall my invitation to the event for honoring the company's employees on the occasion of discoveries and production in 2006, at a time when it was facing great challenges as everyone was wondering whether or not a 100 percent Yemeni



HAIDER MOHAMED AL -RAIMI
PRODUCTION & OPERATIONS



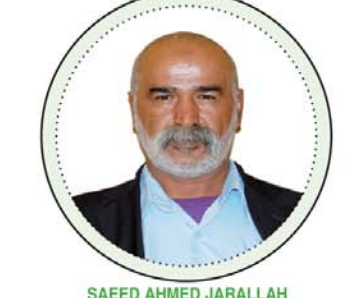
SALEH HASSAN BAJASH
PRODUCTION & OPERATIONS

know the 'brain drain' challenge faced by the company which is manifested in the immigration of our national qualified human resources. However, the company proved to be capable of achieving



NASSER AL-MAQRAHI

development in Yemen as shown by the Company's achievement report. It is really inspiring," she added. "We should bear in mind that any work that depends on training will eventually achieve fruitful results. I think that is what SEPOC has done by investing considerably in in-



SAEED AHMED JARALLAH
PRODUCTION & OPERATIONS



NAJJI ALI AL-HAMID
PRODUCTION & OPERATIONS

sibility which is based on the universal principle of labor unions; the three-party dialogue; the parties being the government, represented by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor; the employers, represented by companies and other employment entities; and the employees, represented by their respective unions. "These three parties have national, regional and international commitments as stated in the international and regional agreements and stipulated by our national laws," she explained. She gave an example of over thirty agreements, prepared by the International Labor Organization (ILO) and ratified by Yemen. She said that most of these agreements focus on the trade unions' freedom and dialogue as well as the child labor and the worker's health and safety especially that of working women. The Minister pinpointed global conventions ratified by Arab countries including Yemen which are in the interest of local employees. The Minister said, "On the other hand, the Ministry signed a document with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Trade Union which has been approved by Vice Prime Minister for Finance and International Co-operation. Through this agreement, we



ABDUL AZIZ HAMOOD AHAMED
ADMINISTRATION



HASSAN M. MURSHED
PIPELINE

is assigned to issue reports on the trade unions and civil society institutions as well as monitor the performance of such institutions. Hummad added that she feels that there are great challenges facing SEPOC, advising the Company's officials to live up to their responsibilities in tackling these problems, and to turn them into achievements, because when people face challenges they tend to think in a deeper way, and consequently perform creatively and innovatively. Hummad called on all community leaders to measure up to their commitments, condemning the unlawful unrest and acts of sabotage that have occurred recently and called for a firm stand against all acts of vandalism. "All of us should take a responsible stance facing those who think that they can change the reality of Yemeni unification which is an achievement praised by the whole world. We should stand in the face of all those who wish to harm it. We should work to preserve and protect it by doing our assigned duties and providing services and development to all areas of Yemen, the rural and the urban." The Minister concluded her speech by congratulating the recognized employees. She reminded the gathering, "It is an occasion to assess what we



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provided to these employees in order to improve their standard of living."

Creative hands

Mr. Ahmed Abdullah Daris, Vice Minister of Oil and Minerals, addressed the gathering saying, "It is a pleasure to have this event held while we are celebrating the happy anniversary of May 22nd Reunification Anniversary which is a great occasion for every Yemeni citizen." He seized the opportunity to congratulate the President and the political leadership. "It is a pleasure to be among the creative hands that have worked diligently since SEPOC assumed operation of Block (18) on the 15th of November 2005. Our national employees proved their ability to take responsibility and push SEPOC forward to be among the leading oil companies in the country," he said. Mr. Daris added, "This is the fourth consecutive recognition event since SEPOC assumed operation. Each year, a number of creative and hardworking people who demonstrated excellence and dedication are honored," noting that the recognition of these employees is a kind of honoring for the continuous work by all the Company's employees with no exception. Appreciating their efforts, the employees recognized today are not, however, the only distinguished ones; SEPOC is full

agreed to compensate those employees for their past service." He went on saying, "We also appreciate his approval of the job evaluation system which will do justice to the employees in this field." Mr. Al-Maqrahi pointed out the Company's distinguished steps in improving employee working conditions, which brought about an atmosphere of satisfaction. However, he criticized the suffering of the employees of some subcontractors who treat them unfairly by means of wage deduction, denial of holidays, and arbitrary dismissal. He called for establishing regulatory bylaws in the oil sector. He voiced his confidence in the Ministry of Oil and Minerals to issue this suggested bylaw, which has been long waited, pointing out his observation from his visit to Belhaf in Shabwah where some subcontractors employed foreign workers whose work can be done by Yemeni nationals. At the end of his speech, Al-Maqrahi condemned the disruptive actions committed in some governorates and emphasized the absolute commitment to unity. "We will stand against anyone who wants to put the clock back," he said.

Prominent achievements

Regarding the most prominent achievements, Eng. Saif Mohsen al-Sharif re-

turned to the posts they occupy to identify the gap between the skills they possess and the level at which they should be and set the proper training programs for bridging these gaps. He said that the Company restructured its functions so that the structure consists of five basic units, three of which are technical units. They are: the Exploration and Development, Production Operation, Export Operation. There are two supporting which are the Administrative and Financial. There is also the Corporate Performance Strategy. Some 1300 employees work for the Company, 93 percent of whom are Yemenis. Regarding the company's important achievements, Eng. Al-Sharif said that the biggest accomplishment is the completion of the full field development study for the five main fields in Block (18), and the preparation for the completion of three other studies that are scheduled to finish by the third quarter of this year. An exploration well in Basement has recently been drilled and it will be tested a few days later. He explained that 52 exploration and development wells were drilled since SEPOC assumed operation in Block (18). These drills resulted in producing 11 million barrels of oil costing \$120 million. He said that the return of these wells were \$880 million which means a net amount of \$750 million. The overall production of the Company in the period from the 15th of Nov 2005 to the end of March 2009 was about 76 million barrels of oil,

pared. When asked about the challenges the Company has faced in the past, and what it will face in the future, al-Sharif listed the most important challenges as follows: 1. The issue of dealing with the export of Yemeni LNG to decrease the effects of export on oil and (LNG) production. 2. The 3D seismic survey project acquisition, mentioned by the General Manager, for 1,600 square kilometers - the efforts of relevant entities such as the ministry and security authorities are needed for the success of this project. 3. The building of on-shore oil stores as a replacement for the floating terminal. 4. The introduction of the ERP system for Company management. 5. The issue of maintaining the Company's administrative and financial independence, through the Company's law which has been presented to the Ministry for approval. 6. Raising the efficiency of the Company's staff to have them reach the level of their colleagues in other oil industries. Eng. al-Sharif gave an overview of the Company's outlook for the future. He noted the SWAT Analysis which is a way for identifying the strengths and the weaknesses of the Company. Managers hold brainstorming sessions to list the strengths and the weaknesses, discussing ways for eliminating the weak points. Thus, they will be able to formulate a solid plan for the future. Al-Sharif also discussed the challenges facing the Company and the opportunities under the SWAT ANALYSIS system. Pursuant to this analysis, the company's vision and message, and its common values were formulated and hence, the company's strategic plans were set. The following is an outline of SEPOC's strategic plan: The Company's vision is to be the major oil and gas exploration Company. Effectively discover and extract hydrocarbon resources and maximize production in a safe and environmentally friendly manner. The company's employees should observe common values during their performance to achieve the company's objectives. These include trust, respect, transparency, integrity, accountability, professional distinction, and other shared values which have become common among the employees. Asked about the practical stages and steps for achieving the company's main objectives and vision, Al-Sharif replied that the Company has set up detailed perception. In general, SEPOC is now considered to be a company operating in



Abdul Gabar Qaid Alwan, Production & Operation (C.M.G)



Adel Ali Hamoud Al-Faqeh (Marine) FSO - Safer

of reliable and efficient administrative and technical staff, we witnessed their professionalism at the turn-in of operations in 2005." Mr. Daris presented his thanks to the Company's leadership, represented by Mohammed Hussein al-Hajj, directors, managers and supervisors for their praiseworthy work in operating the Block. He indicated the economic significance of SEPOC and revealed a wish and a will to optimize the Company's role in boosting the country's economy. He concluded his speech encouraging all employees to further exerting efforts to achieve the desired objectives and serve the interests of our homeland.

Nasser al-Maqrahi gave a speech on behalf of the General Federation of Yemeni Labors Unions, lauding the Minister of Oil and Minerals and his Vice Minister for their efforts to improve the employees of the oil and mineral sector, as well as the efforts of the Minister of Social Affairs and Labor which resulted in the agreement to reinstate the employees who spent six months without jobs during the period when the catering contract was awarded to the Yemeni Company for Supplies and Services. "We won't forget the role of Mohammed Hussein al-Hajj, the Company's Executive Manager, who

viewed the main achievements over the past three years in figures. He categorized them into three groups: the first one was the Company's achievements; the second displayed the Company's challenges; and the third outlined the Com-



ENG. SAIF MOHSEN AL-SHARIF

pany's plans, strategies, and its vision for the future. He elaborated the Company's efforts to formulate training mechanism that focuses on the Company's needs. He added that the Company will start this June, evaluating the actual technical skills of the Company's staff's compared

and the overall production of the Block since the beginning of discovery to date is 1.33 billion barrels of oil. According to Eng. al-Sharif, the Company's achievements are also manifested in the preparation of a program for the export of Yemeni liquefied natural gas (LNG) over the next 20 years, and a program for providing the gas for electricity station in Marib in its first and second stages, as well as the inauguration of the Yemeni LPG (LNG) pipeline. He said that the YLNG Upstream Project Phase I is now 97% complete in the KPU area, whereas the remaining rate will be finished within the short upcoming period, not exceeding the end of this month provided that the remaining materials arrive at their scheduled time. Al-Sharif explained the most important projects to be implemented by the Company, mentioning the three dimensional seismic survey which will cover 1600 square kilometers. The main objective of this survey is exploration and development. It will cover exploration areas of different geological formations and basement rocks as well as production fields such as Raidan and al-Shura. Work in this project has already started. The other strategic project is the establishment of oil storage tanks at Ras Isa as an alternative to the aged floating oil terminal. The preliminary arrangements for the engineering studies are now being pre-

oil and gas production in block 18 but it is planning to be an integrated national oil and gas company within six year's time. Al-Sharif explained the Company's vision for the next three years. He said, "SEPOC will carry out an extensive exploration program in Block (18), which will lead to the discovery of oil and gas in formations Alif, Lam in intra salt and basement rocks. The Company greatly depends on executing the first objective through the 3D seismic survey, which has already started. We will look for opportunities in Block (18) and other blocks outside block as well. We also need to make sure that the exportation of LNG goes in accordance with the state's commitment to Yemen LNG Co., minimizing the effect on oil and LBG production. There is also a plan to decrease the cost of the producing unit by about 30%. This is a challenging task but SEPOC has committed itself to cost reduction. There is also the objective of developing and implementing methods to ensure excellence and optimal efficiency; there are clear programs to achieve them as a part of the Company's strategic plan." Eng. Al-Sharif said that SEPOC is doing its best to develop its human resources by means of training programs tailored to hone their administrative and technical skills. He stressed that the Company is seeking to further improve its image internally and externally.



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African-American Muslims

The American values of Islam

There is no other country in the Western world with as many Muslim converts as in the USA. Particularly for socially disadvantaged African-Americans, mosques are places of family values and social responsibility. By Katrin Simon

"In Islam, there's no racism, no sexism," says Sakina*. "In Islam, I got dignity, as being black and being a woman." She tugs at the colourful cloth wrapped around her hair like a turban. That's why she converted to Islam at the age of 16, she says. Five years ago, Sakina was at high school in Brooklyn and still went by the name of Vivien, and all her friends were African-Americans from Christian families. Her grandmother went to church on Sundays.

Her mother, on the other hand, had to work most weekends, waiting tables to feed her three children. The young woman has never met her father; he disappeared when she was a baby. When Vivien met Jamal aged fifteen, she already had her own experiences with boys behind her: "They abused me. I was a stupid chick falling in love easily. And they only wanted skinny girls, white and blond."

Islam and the rules of the community

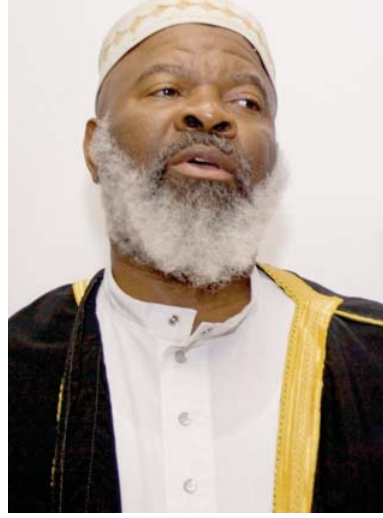


Like most mosques in the US, the Al-Taqwa Mosque in Brooklyn, New York, is an "ethnic mosque", attended mainly by Afro-American Muslims

Jamal* was different. Not just because he told her how beautiful she was even though she wasn't thin, even though her hair just wouldn't straighten, even though her skin was so dark.

The 20-year-old young man also told Vivien how he'd had to help out at a youth social project for a drugs offence. How he'd heard from other young African-American men there that they'd got their lives back under control. How Islam had helped them back on track – its rules, its community. Christianity, they'd told him, was only for whites, a religion for slave-owners who wanted to keep black men down.

Jamal's next stop was the Nation of Islam, which is very active in recruiting young African-American men, especially in ghettos and jails. Founded in 1930, the Nation of Islam (NOI) is an African-American grouping that claims Islam is the true religion of all black people, and interprets Christianity as an inherently racist, white religion. It came to prominence during the civil rights movement era, with Malcolm X as one of its star



Siraj Wahhaj, the Imam of Al-Taqwa mosque in Brooklyn. Wahhaj became a Sunni Muslim in 1975, urging US Muslims to come to orthodox Islam

preachers and the boxer Muhammad Ali raising its public profile.

Growing influence of Sunni Islam

For many Americans, the group's current chairman, the charismatic and controversial Louis Farrakhan – infamous for his numerous racist statements – is the prototype of the black Muslim. Yet the NOI is an extremely contentious organisation among other Muslims, many of whom regard it as heretic. The NOI has been in a state of decline for years, and Farrakhan too is old and sick, his leadership clearly weakened.

Like many former NOI members, Jamal gradually shifted to Sunni Islam, now regularly attending a mosque in the Brooklyn neighbourhood of Bedford-Stuyvesant by the name of Masjid at-Taqwa. The mosque's imam, Siraj Wahhaj, was also active in the NOI for several years as a young man before turning to Sunni Islam.

Wahhaj is now regarded as one of the best known and most charismatic imams in America, a man who is constantly travelling, with many of his speeches available online. Young people in particular – and by no means only African-American Muslims – admire his combination of political sermons, conservative morals and an almost evangelical style

of preaching.

Dominance of "ethnic mosques"

His mosque, though, is mainly attended by African-American Muslims. This is not unusual; the majority of American mosques are what are called "ethnic mosques", dominated by African-American, Pakistani or North African Muslims, for example.

The first time Jamal took Vivien along to the mosque, she was impressed by the verve of the Friday sermon. Imam Siraj spoke about American society's lack of morals. About broken families. Alcohol and drugs. About how it was above all poverty, criminality and racism that were destroying black families in particular.

At the time, Sakina says, she thought it was great that Imam Siraj spoke directly to the men in the mosque: "He was really screaming at them!" He told them to accept responsibility. Told them to be there for their families. Told them to get a job instead of hanging out on the streets with their friends. And that there was only one solution to rid them of all these evils: abiding by the rules of Islam. Where women had not only duties but rights too. Where men had not only rights but duties too. And he told them that the Koran forbade racism.

Equality for all believers

And then Imam Siraj told the story of Malcolm X. The story of a small-time gangster from Detroit who had found Islam in jail and became a better person. Who had renounced alcohol, criminality and promiscuity, first leading the Nation of Islam's temple in Manhattan and then finding the true Islam on his pilgrimage to Mecca. An Islam in which all believers are equal, no matter what their skin colour or gender.

Vivien recited the Shahada, the Muslim declaration of belief, in the mosque the very next Friday. From then on, she has called herself Sakina and is now one of a large and constantly growing group of African-Americans who have converted to Islam. The USA is the only country in the Western world where converts form the largest single group of Muslims. The precise figures are contentious, but the US government assumes there are some 6 million Muslims in America, more than a third of whom are African-American converts.



Boy saying the Shahada, the Islamic creed, in the Taqwa Mosque in Brooklyn, New York. According to estimates, about one third of US Muslims are African-American converts

Strengthening identities

Like Jamal, many of them are young men whose conversion gives their lives meaning after fractures in their biographies, helping them to get back on track. Or young women like Sakina, who have experienced feelings of debasement and disrespect for their own dignity as black women and hope a conversion will strengthen their identities, who are looking for security and stable family structures. The black churches, many converts and even critical Christians claim, no longer fulfil these roles sufficiently. Instead of taking care of the problems in the ghettos, the churches have formed a cosy establishment closest to the black middle class.

This vacuum is filled not only by groups like the Nation of Islam, but also by Sunni imams like Siraj Wahhaj. A worldview that combines patriarchal conservative values with critique of racist political structures – often enough legitimised by Christianity – is very attractive. Especially when it is presented through Islamic rhetoric and symbolism.

Brother Obama, American values and polygamy

It's not just since 11 September 2001 that African-Americans have been able to demonstrate maximum inner distance from the Christian-dominated white majority by converting to Islam. Only to

then actually return to rather American values in the name of their new faith.

Sakina and Jamal married shortly after Sakina's conversion. Jamal is now a social worker himself, working with exchange members. Sakina is studying at community college and wants to be a teacher. The couple have two daughters, who Sakina wants to be doctors or lawyers when they grow up. They were both actively involved in the Obama campaign during the election: "Although he's not against homosexual marriages and abortion – but hey, he's a brother. That's even more important!"

The only thing that worries Sakina is that Jamal recently mentioned taking a second wife. Polygamy, although officially banned in the USA, is not uncommon among African-American Muslims. "It's his Islamic right, I know. Still, immigrant Muslims ain't doing that neither!" Sakina feels this is one American custom she and Jamal really don't need to adopt: "Let's the Mormons doing that. We could better spend the money for the wedding traveling to Mecca."

* Qantara.de 2009. Names changed by the author.

Katrin Simon is currently working on her doctoral thesis on African-American Islam at the Free University Berlin, Germany.

Millions wait to return to their "Paradise"

Fighting between the Pakistani army and Taliban fighters in Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province has created the largest migration of people since the genocide in Rwanda. The Media Line's Shaheen Buner reports from Swat Valley on the millions of internally displaced refugees.

By: Shaheen Buner
The Media Line News Agency

[Swat Valley, Pakistan] On 20 May, Akbar Khan, a 70-year-old farmer in the Nawagai village of Swat in northwestern Pakistan, was returning from his orchards and rice fields when a group of Taliban fighters entered his village and occupied the main thoroughfare.

"There were hundreds of them," Khan said. "Their faces were covered and they were brandishing weapons. We had to flee. For 10 days I moved from place to place with the women and children of the family. I don't know why we are being punished in our own land."

Khan heads one of thousands of families who have been forced to leave their homes in recent clashes between Pakistani security forces and Taliban fighters in the Swat, Buner and Dir valleys in the North-West frontier of Pakistan. Most of the families have crossed the steep, zigzagging Malakand mountain paths by foot to reach the plains of Mardan and Sawabi, the trauma of war clearly visible on their faces.

Veiled in her traditional shawl, Ezat Begum, 32, said she was cooking an evening meal in her home in the Gwaratai village in Swat when an intense exchange of gunfire started. "I saw that my sister, who was living with me, was hit on the head and crashed to the ground. Our men were screaming. The children were terrified and weeping. I left my wounded sister behind and ran out of my home along with my children and Gul Panra (Rose Petal), my sister's 7-month daughter."

Together with the women of her neighborhood, Begum traveled barefoot to

Landakai. "I did not know the fate of my wounded sister or my husband. I had to reach a place where I could protect my children and Gul Panra. I spend two nights under a tree in Londkhar village and then a local took me to his home, where I'm now staying."

When asked whether her sister alive or dead, Ezat Begum burst into tears, saying she died of her wounds as no medicine was available and no one could go outside due to long spells of curfew. "The only reason that I am breathing is that I hope that my husband will return and take me back to our home," she said with despair.

The provincial government says the fighting has displaced over three million people since hostilities began in August 2008. Over 360,000 have fled Swat, Dir and Buner in the last month alone. 80% of them are now living with relatives and friends, while the remaining 20% have been forced to live in camps managed by government and non-governmental organizations, such as schools, buildings under construction and mud-houses in the rural areas of Mardan and Sawabi.

But not everyone has been able or willing to leave Swat. Some devastated families remain in the district with very meager resources on which to survive. Victims of the displacement complain that the government launched the military operation without a contingency plan. "First we were subjected to long spells of curfew and when we reached the verge of starvation, we were told to vacate our homes", complains Sardar Ali, 45, who recently fled his home in Mingora and is now staying with a friend in Mardan. Two peace deals and two military opera-

tions over the last three years have not been able to liberate them from the clutches of the militants.

A military-imposed ban on journalists in Swat means media exposure to the situation in the North-West Frontier Province has been limited. In an attempt to appeal for help, and to contact his relatives, Ali scaled the nearby mountains to receive a signal on his wireless telephone. "I saw dead bodies of children, women and militants in the streets of Engaro Dherai and Takhtaband. I tried to contact journalists and politicians by phone; I was crying but no-one came to our rescue. The military bombed the surrounding villages as all the people living there were terrorists," he said.

Since early April, all main routes to Mingora—the main town of the Swat district with a population of 700,000—have been dominated by Taliban militants. The military have responded with air strikes, shelling the surrounding areas indiscriminately in the hope of sending Taliban militants into hiding in the hills. The strikes have resulted in the deaths of civilians as well as militants, and have damaged homes. One shell hit Akbar Khan's house and destroyed its outer walls. Khan claims the clean-shaven, suit-wearing Wali (ruler) of Swat was a better Muslim than today's bearded, weapons-brandishing, self-proclaimed defenders of Islam, as he provided employment, justice and a decent life for his subjects.

Sajjad, a local social worker who is working for the welfare of the displaced people, told the Media Line that the majority are not registered with the UNHCR or the government as refugees. "The NGOs and authorities only visit camps located along the main highway. No one is concerned with the fate of the thousands of families who are living with host families in the villages. They are living in miserable conditions," he explained.

The displacement has compromised the deep-seated traditions of the Pashtun people, who follow tight codes of hospitality, honor, courage and revenge, as well as those of modesty.

In the make-shift camps at the outskirts of Takht Bhai Mardan, women have to walk a long way to wash-rooms in their Purdahs (veils), facing the risk of being seen by other men and, at night, being attacked. Women, children and elderly people stand in long queues for food and relief goods, desperate to bring something to their families waiting in the tents. "This badly harms the sense of dignity among displaced people," said Hazir Gul, manager of the Caravan organization, which services displaced people from Malakand region. "It is not in their tradition for women to stand in queues and mix with men. If the situation is not properly managed it could yield serious social and cultural complications," he added.

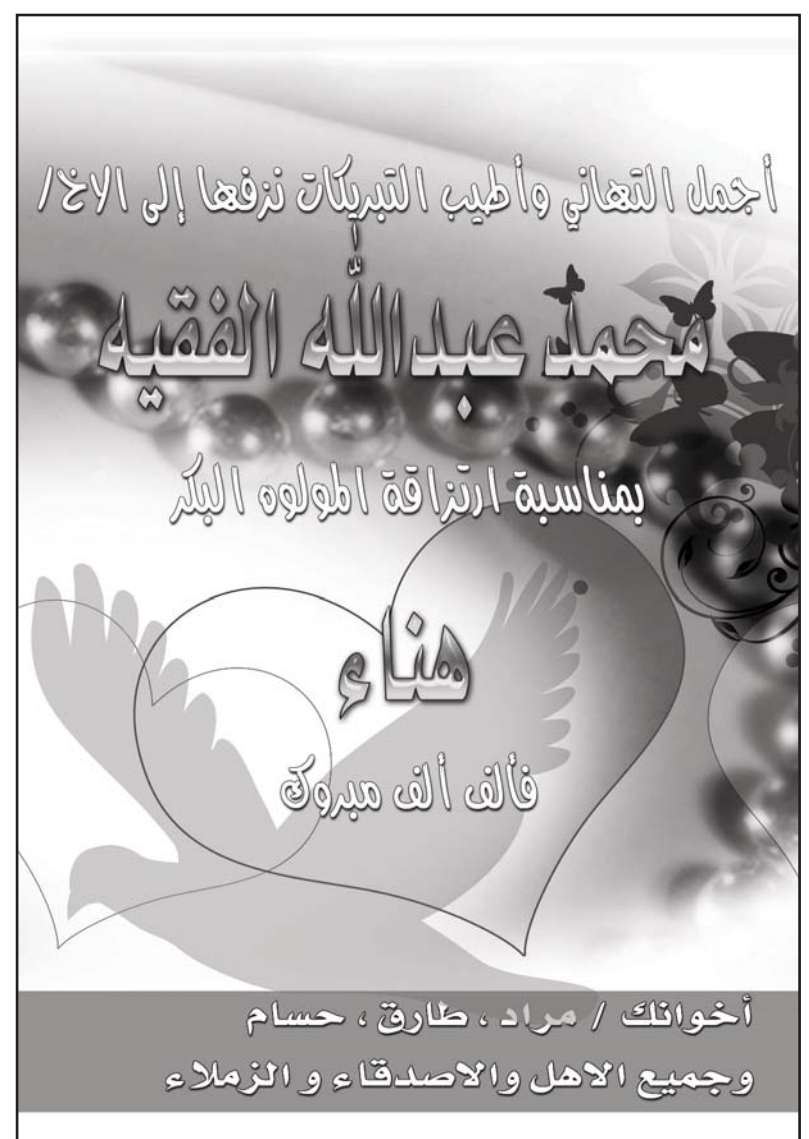
Health Officials say the unhygienic conditions in most of the camps have resulted in skin diseases and diarrhea. "These people belong to an area where pleasant weather prevails in the summer," says Dr. Ashfaq, a relief agency worker in Jalala, Mardan. "If the restoration of peace is delayed in their home towns, I fear the scorching heat in the camps will result in the deaths of women and children." The doctor believes that delays in receiving food, the fragile security situation in the region and uncertainty for their future may lead to serious psychological complications among the displaced.

The Swat valley differs considerably from Pakistan's rugged tribal areas in its nature and social fabric. The pleasant weather, fertile land and rich cultural heritage that have developed over the last few centuries mean that along with the loss of lives and property, the displaced people feel they have lost the glory of their culture and society.

Shaikat Sharar is a development specialist from Swat. He argues that the con-

flict has turned the entire society upside down, with millions of people passing through a critical period of their lives, having to bear hardships for the sake of peace in their homeland. "God forbid, if

the security forces fail to curb the militants this time," he said, "the whole of northwestern Pakistan will descend into chaos, confusion and a crisis of unparalleled proportions."





UNHCR
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

EXTERNAL VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Title of Post: National Livelihood Consultant
Post Number: N/A
Category / Level: (National Consultant)
Location: Sana'a

Entry on Duty: 1st July 2009
Duration: 6 Months (may be extended for 1 year)
Closing Date: 22nd June 2009

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

In line with the UNHCR policy of enhancing operational flexibility by having a workforce that takes full advantage of national capabilities and expertise in refugee hosting countries and countries of origin, a recruitment needs to be made of a National Livelihood Consultant who will work under the direct supervision of the Community Services Officer in the UNHCR Branch Office work in Sana'a, in close collaboration with the Social Development Fund and the Ministry of Vocational Training and High Education. The work involves regular monthly travel to Aden to discuss some findings, constraints in Aden and Kharaz Refugee Camp as well as the achievements at Sana'a level.

The National Livelihood Consultant has a key role in the implementation and consolidation of Refugee Livelihood Strategy in Sana'a. She/He should be proactive, always looking for new opportunities, convincing in donor mobilization and able to take initiatives. She/He will provide much needed local knowledge to develop the local livelihood assets and social infrastructure to develop and sustain Refugee Livelihoods.

The consultant, who should be a national of Yemen with substantial knowledge of local conditions, will perform in close cooperation with UNHCR Office in Yemen the following tasks while guided by the humanitarian principles and values of the United Nations, and adhering to the UN Code of Conduct:

Terms of Reference

1. Shall coordinate the implementation of programmes components/activities with national, international NGOs operating in the field of similar livelihood programmes in Yemen;
2. Shall establish and maintain linkages with national Government as main partner to ensure coordination and joint planning and information sharing for livelihood strategy;
3. Shall guide and monitor on going livelihood activities/programmes for refugees-in line of UNHCR policies, mainstreaming gender, age and diversity- in order to ensure their timely, and effective implementation;
4. Shall develop cooperation ties with selected services providers operating i.e. business training teams and bodies, business development services, and micro-finance institutions;
5. Should develop in conjunction with the Ministry and other actors expansion of vocational training opportunities for Yemeni and refugees in areas where the concentration of refugees is high;
6. Should develop with the social development funds and make proposal for integration of the various activities developed in favour of the refugees in the overall planning of the Social Development funds; &
7. Should monitor the vocational training activities in Sana'a and work closely with UNHCR livelihood officer in Aden.

QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Knowledge and Skills: At least a university degree in economics, socio-economic development, development planning, financial management or other related fields.

Desirable Qualifications & Competencies (optional):

- Good knowledge of the Social development Funds;
- Good knowledge of the Ministry of Vocational Training and High Education strategy; &
- Knowledge and exposure to the social and cultural values of the region concerned

Experience:

A minimum of 10 years of relevant professional job experience with proven experience record in conducting impact assessment, focus groups discussions, and needs assessment sessions

Others:

Good public relations network with private and public sector institutions; and good computer skills including excel, word and power point.

Languages: Fluency in English-Arabic languages, reading and writing

IMPORTANT:

Applications received after the above mentioned closing date will not be considered. All applications should be sent to:

**The Administration Officer,
UNHCR BO Sanaa
P.O. Box 12093
Sanaa.**

Tel. Contact: +967-1-469771/2
Fax: +967-1-469 770



In Cooperation with the Ministry of Culture, the Delegation of the European Commission is pleased to announce the launch of European Film Festival, which will be held from 6th to 15th of June 2009 at the Yemeni Cultural Center and show starts daily at 8:00 p.m.

Admission is Free

Schedule for the European Film Festival in Sana'a

Saturday 6 June 2009	Sana'a	The launch of the festival will be commenced by playing a movie from the Republic of Finland –Raja 1918-Border 1918	8:00 P.M
Sunday 7 June 2009	Sana'a	the Czech Republic- Sakali leta (Big Beat) Musical	8:00 P.M
Monday 8 June 2009	Sana'a	Federal Republic of Germany – The Adventure of Prince Ahmed	8:00 P.M
Tuesday 9 June 2009	Sana'a	Kingdom of Spain- Secretos del (Corazon Secrets of the Heart)	8:00 P.M
Wednesday 10 June 2009	Sana'a	Republic of France Indigenes (Days of Glory)	8:00 P.M
Thursday 11 June 2009	Sana'a	Republic of Italy La Tigre e La Neve (The Tiger and the Snow)	8:00 P.M
Saturday 13 June 2009	Sana'a	Kingdom of the Netherlands- Scheepsjongens van Bontekoe (Storm Bound)	8:00 P.M
Sunday 14 June 2009	Sana'a	Republic of Turkey- Organize isler (Organized Jobs)	8:00 P.M
Monday 15 June 2009	Sana'a	United Kingdom-The Escapist	8:00 P.M



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(Job Number Y110)

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Essential Job Duties

- Work with the rest of the HES team in the follow up remedial actions until they are completed.
- Learn to be proficient in performing gas tests for Confined Space Entry when asked to do so.
- Assist and learn to carry out safety equipment checks with the HES team.
- Perform Task Observation.
- Learn the Emergency procedures as to develop a safe and efficient working environment.
- Attend daily Safety meetings with other HES team members when asked to do so.
- Learn the objectives and procedures in an accident/incident investigation as requested by the HES team.
- Attend HES training as deemed necessary for your overall HES learning process as deemed by the HES supervisor.
- Assist in the HES training program in order to familiarize you with the concept and content of each training module.
- Perform other duties assigned by Supervisor.

Qualifications / Experience

- Additional production, drilling, and construction experience is desired
- Excellent interpersonal skills
- Fluent in English and Arabic languages. Written and spoken
- Team player who takes an active role in group responsibilities, is flexible, and responds well to change.
- Ability to complete tasks within specified timelines and work independently with minimal supervision.
- Commitment to maintaining high standards of personal integrity.
- 6 years experience in oil and gas related
- 24/7 support for urgent situations.
- Working conditions are normal in office environment at remote locations (CPF).

IT Coordinator

(Job Number Y094)

Support the IT team lead in the new work and server management at Sana'a and the CPF.

Essential Job Duties

- Handle Microsoft Active Directory and Exchange Administration
- Provide support of networking devices
- Support Sana'a and the CPF office telecommunications and phone system
- Trouble shoot PC's , hardware and software
- Daily prioritization of work and timely completion and closure of projects and service desk tickets
- Handle telecommunications projects effectively
- Maintain and monitor Data Backup
- Provide Desktop Support-Imaging and preparing PC's
- Act as a secondary cover for service desk responsibilities
- Maintenance of Oracle software, passwords, and related vendors
- Perform other duties assigned by the supervisor

Required Qualifications

- Work in IT infrastructures as Windows networking and phone systems.
- Excellent organizational and problem-solving skills--able to coordinate and prioritize numerous projects with competing priorities and produce accurate timely results.
- Highly effective and customer-oriented: works well and patiently with various people and personalities, and maintains composure while meeting demanding deadlines.
- Team player who takes an active role in group responsibilities, is flexible, and responds well to change.
- Ability to complete tasks within specified timelines and work independently with minimal supervision.
- Responsible, and able to handle confidential information with professionalism.
- Commitment to maintaining high standards of personal integrity.
- 3 years experience in oil and gas IT infrastructures.
- Able to travel in Business needs – Working conditions are normal in office. environment with frequent visits to the CPF.
- 24/7 support for urgent situations.

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Overall review of the electricity problem in Yemen

By: Mahmoud Assamiee

“Yemen's current energy production is 800

megawatts while the power shortage is estimated at 250 megawatts,” said Abdul-Mu'men Mutahar, General Manager of Electricity Corporation.

With the advent of summer and a rise of the number of workshops and business stores, demand for energy has increased across the country, posing an additional burden on already overworked power stations.

The energy problem has increased this year in an unprecedented way due to the increased demand for energy. This in turn is causing a massive power shortage throughout Yemen due to the heavy burden on the national power network.

“The electricity shortage in Sana'a alone currently ranges between 40 to 50 megawatts,” said Saeed Al-Qubati, senior engineer at the National Energy Control (NEC).

However, there are other governorates such as Hadramout, Shabawa, and Mahra that are not linked to the national network. These governorates receive their electricity through private electric generators, said another engineer at the NEC.

The real problem of Yemen

Local control centers across Yemen give central cities priority by reducing the hours of blackouts in the main cities and make up for this shortage by increasing power outages in the outskirts.

“We try to save electricity for central Sana'a by increasing the hours of electrical shortages outside the city, like at Bani Husheish,” said an official at Sana'a's electricity control center.

“Electricity is Yemen's real problem, not unrest or the southern movement. People lose their working hours because of increased blackouts that now reach up to six hours a day,” said Abdul-Aziz Al-Hakimi, a carpentry workshop owner who bought a 70 kilowatt generator for YR 800,000 in order to operate his machines.

Meanwhile, Taiz, a city which has a population of around three million people, is suffering even more from Yemen's electricity shortage. Taiz is supplied by only two electric stations: Juma'an Station, which yields 15 megawatts, and Usaifirah Station, which yields a mere ten megawatts. Ten additional megawatts of power for the city come from rented stations.

“Nowadays, there is neither electricity nor water here,” said a carpenter in Taiz who owns a large workshop with a great number of workers. “We have experienced massive losses as a result of power outages. Electricity blackouts have become unbearable.”

“The electricity here is off most of the time, both day and night,” said Majed al-Jaberi from Saber district,



Although Saudi population is comparative to Yemen's, Saudi Arabia has a massive electricity distribution network that extends to cities, towns and villages across the country. The Kingdom generates more than 26,300 MW of electricity, 2,800 MW of which is produced by the desalination plants. Compared to Yemen's 800 MW generated diesel power plants.

Taiz governorate. “Power outages have caused us problems and damaged our household appliances.”

Hot cities are excluded from blackouts while others suffer more

Due to the increased demand for power in hot areas or cities in which people need energy for air conditioning, these areas are excluded from electric blackouts. The electricity deficit is made up by doubling blackouts in other cooler cities.

“We have orders from the Minister of Electricity and Energy not to disconnect power to hot cities like Hodeida and Aden,” said Al-Qubati. “But if there is danger to the network as a result of keeping these cities in power, we are forced to disconnect them because I and my colleagues [at the NEC] are responsible for any damage inflicted on the network.”

Providing enough power to these cities means there are other cities or areas suffering from even more blackouts. These governorates are Amran, Taiz, and areas surrounding major cities.

“The same thing happens in Sana'a. To reduce the number of blackouts in Sana'a, we disconnect outside areas of the city for a long time, like at Bani Husheish, Al-Rahaba, and Bani Matar,” said the Head of the Emergency Section at Al-Qa'a Power Station.

Process of disconnecting power to cities

The NEC is in charge of distributing energy to all cities connected to the National Electric Network. Every governorate has local control over its electricity which is connected to the

national control.

If there is an energy shortage at the national station, the national control distributes this shortage over various cities according to need. For example, engineers at the NEC call Sana'a control if there is a power shortage and demand from officials there to disconnect 50 megawatts. These engineers continue to do the same thing with other controls in other cities.

Each city is divided into areas and these areas are divided into streets and cells. The control has a list of these areas and streets with a timetable to distribute hours of blackouts across the whole city.

Sana'a itself is divided across four areas and every area has several streets with each street having its own separate cell. For example Northern Assiteen Street is known as Cell 640 on Sana'a's power grid. This cell is on the left side of the street, while cell 641 is on the right side.

The first area in Sana'a is the Old City of Sana'a together with Al-Hasaba and its surroundings. The second area is Addaeiry, Northern Assiteen, Shamlan, Mathbah and Jader. The third region is Khawlan Street, Taiz Street, and Al-Bulaili, and the fourth region is Al Zubairi Street, Aser, Haddah, Assabieen, Bait Bows and Artel.

Types of power stations in the country

Electric stations comprising the National Electric Network are of three different kinds: steam stations, diesel stations and rented stations. All the stations together generate a total of 700 megawatts which represents the output of the whole national network.

The three steam stations are Ras Katheeb Station in Hodeida with an output of 102 megawatts, Mocha Station in Taiz with an output of 137 megawatts, and Al-Huswah Station in Lahj with 97 megawatts.

There are 13 diesel stations distributed across the country with a total output of 200 megawatts. The third type of power station, or rented stations, are also diesel. These are not stations exactly but big generators that are capable of producing a sizable amount of energy. Agrreko Power Company owns most of these generators.

Agrreko operates in seven cities

Agrreko British Company began service in Hodeida four years ago according to an agreement between the company and the government. This agreement took place during the 15th anniversary of Yemen's Reunification which was held in Hodeida in 2005.

The company then expanded service to include other six cities. The company supplies Hodeida with 50 megawatts, Sana'a 19, Aden 42, Dhamar 25, Taiz 25, Amran 31, Ibb 40 and Hajjah with four megawatts.

Rented generators exhaust the electricity budget

According to electric engineers, rented generators are exhausting the budget of the General Corporation for Electricity. Agrreko's generators are working only 12 hours a day in calm cities and 24 hours in Aden and Hodeida. “According to an agreement between the company and the corporation, the company is paid while its generators are stopped in case there is no diesel,” said an electric operator

engineer.

He explained that the General Corporation is responsible for providing the diesel to Agrreko, which is why the company is exhausting the corporation's budget. The Ministry of Electricity is going to end its contract with the company when Mareb gas station comes online.

Deteriorating generators

The current electricity network in Yemen is extremely old and out of date. Sometimes there is an area that suffers from a power outage for more than five hours because there is a fault in the generator.

Last Monday, electricity was off in the Northern Assiteen area of Sana'a for almost five consecutive hours. When people asked electric engineers about the cause of the problem, they were told that there is a fault in the 601 cell generator. This area witnesses more blackouts than any other area in the city.

“Power stations in the country are deteriorating. When you repair a fault here, you find another somewhere else in the country,” said one engineer. “Officials committed a mistake in the mid-1990s when they bought second hand power stations,” added another.

Two weeks ago, Al-Huswah 60 megawatt generator was taken from service for maintenance. This affected the whole network and power outages have since doubled.

Lost energy

Lost energy is electricity used by people who do not have access to power. Most people living in new developments such as Assunainah, Shamlan, Jameat Al-Eamone quarter, Mathbah, and Al-Matar area do not have access to electricity. They steal it by using wires from nearby electric towers that they then connect to their houses.

Because most of these areas are considered unplanned areas and constructed almost overnight, they are denied access to electricity and are not allowed to install electric organizers given to those who have new houses by the General Corporation for Electricity.

“Although I built my house six years ago, I could not get an electric organizer until now,” said Abdu Ali who has a new house in Assunainah area. “I get my electricity indirectly by linking a wire from the nearby electricity column to my house.”

Engineers believe lost energy is one of the reasons behind electrical shortages.

Debts reach YR billions

A recent report issued by the General Corporation for Electricity in late 2008 indicated that the debts of energy consumers to the corporation reached YR 22.1 billion.

These debts are distributed between various consumers; small consumers owe roughly YR 12 billion, government bodies owe YR 8 billion

and big consumers owe YR 1 billion.

The report indicated that the biggest debt was in the main city of Sana'a with YR 4.4 billion, followed by Aden at 4.1 billion, Hodeida 2.5 billion, Taiz 1.3 billion, Ibb 1.07 billion, Sana'a governorate 1.03 billion, and Lahj YR 1 billion.

Efforts to solve the electricity problem

The president and the government are not ignoring the electricity problem. They know what is happening and that people are suffering from repeated electricity blackouts.

Last October, while inaugurating the pipeline of a strategic gas project, President Saleh argued for the government to utilize its own rich resources of natural gas to build a power station using natural gas to generate electricity. He specifically pointed out the possibility of building power stations in Mareb, Balhaf and Dhamar.

Currently the work for constructing the first power station in Mareb, or Mareb one, is being finished and will be inaugurated by September. Engineers say the problem of blackouts will be brought to an end with the new station's operation.

Beside Mareb one there is Mareb two and Mareb three. All these stations will generate a total electric output of 1000 megawatts. According to government reports, efforts are also being exerted to build two power stations in Ma'aber, Dhamar governorate. Known as Ma'aber one and Ma'aber two, each of them has an output of 500 megawatts.

Mareb one was scheduled to enter service in early 2009, but due to problems between the government and the Iranian Parsian Energy Company, which was building transformer stations to receive electricity from Mareb, the opening of the station was delayed until September.

“There is pressure from the President on the Ministry of Energy and Electricity to operate Mareb one starting in Ramadan (next September),” said an electric engineer.

Mareb one is constructed by both the German Siemens Company and Iranian Parsian Power Company with a total cost of \$ 270 million, according to reports.

The poorest network in the region

Yemen's electrical network is the poorest in the region. Engineers and specialists believe that the electricity problem dates back to the early 1990s. The government managed to buy a new station, but the corrupt official bought a secondhand one.

During that period, officials exaggerated that they will connect electricity to neighboring countries like Djibouti.

“Our entire electrical output in Yemen would not be able to lighten Mecca alone, let alone Saudi Arabia,” said Al-Qubati. “Saudi meanwhile has a 1,000 megawatt electricity reserve.”

Capitals of Capital

By: Ian Bremmer

Recently, China's government announced that it wants Shanghai to become a global financial capital equal to London and New York by 2020. An ambitious goal, which may or may not be achieved. But China's aspirations also underscore a worrisome and increasingly pervasive new reality: political officials are making decisions normally left to markets on a scale not seen in decades.

Like the financial crisis itself, this trend is now global. Political leaders in dozens of countries are making decisions that will drive the performance of local (and global) markets for the foreseeable future.

In China, exports fell by more than 25% in February. Not to worry, said Premier Wen Jiabao: the Chinese government has “adequate ammunition” to add to its \$586 billion

stimulus package, a plan meant to create millions of jobs via enormous government investment in transportation, energy infrastructure, housing, and other large-scale projects.

In India, where government is more often considered a drag on commerce than a catalyst of growth, the decisions that move local markets are now more likely to come from bureaucrats in Delhi than from innovators in Mumbai. In fact, the Congress Party-led government, anxious to appear responsive to public demand for help during an election-year economic slowdown, has pushed forward three stimulus packages since December.

The bottom line: to find out how, when, and where assets will be allocated and wealth generated in dozens of countries across the developed and developing worlds these days, we must now look toward political, not financial, capitals.

This trend will spell trouble for

longer-term global economic growth. First, it's tough enough for leaders within the Chinese Communist Party elite to agree on economic-policy priorities.

The challenges facing US President Barack Obama as he tries to win support for risky and expensive policy options from quarrelsome Democrats and obstinate Republicans will create some tortured legislative compromises.

That pattern is being repeated elsewhere. In Russia, Ukraine, Hungary, Pakistan, Turkey, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, and other states, battles among domestic political factions will yield often-incoherent responses to pressing economic problems.

Second, if it's difficult to forge consensus within one country on how best to promote growth, imagine the same argument on a global scale. Most politicians craft policy to serve their local constituents and to protect their

personal political capital. Reinventing global growth runs a distant second.

In Washington, many Democrats will use these policy debates to capitalize on popular fury at Wall Street, while many Republicans look for an opening to capitalize on hoped-for public anger at the Democrats. Some within the Chinese Communist Party leadership will support plans to engineer a shift from export-led growth to a model based on domestic consumption. Others will try to direct state funding toward their personal investment projects. Factions within the Russian, Indian, Mexican, and South African governments have their own competing political priorities.

With so many political officials crafting crisis responses to solve local problems or to create local opportunities, how likely are they to agree on a unified international approach?

Our first glimpse of the trouble in

coordinating an international response to the financial crisis came last November, during the emergency G-20 summit in Washington. To get the G-8 to agree on priorities is a complicated enough; building consensus within the G-20 is exponentially more difficult, not simply because of the larger number of players involved, but because many of them don't agree on the most basic rules of the global economic game.

While the April G-20 summit in London produced more economic-policy agreement than expected, this was largely because the most divisive issue – the US and British demand for more global stimulus spending – was removed from the table beforehand. As a result, the smiling presidents and prime ministers could afford to be more diplomatic than Czech Prime Minister Mirek Topolánek, who, in his role as acting president of the European Union, had warned that Obama's economic plan would lead

others down a “road to hell.”

Topolánek wasn't at the G-20; his country is not a member. And, while British Prime Minister Gordon Brown agrees with Obama that the world's leading industrialized countries must stimulate their domestic economies as much as they can, Bank of England Governor Mervyn King has warned that Britain may already have taken on too much debt for another round of stimulus.

However frightening the global recession, a coordinated and coherent response to it by the world's political leaders remains highly uncertain at best. And the increasingly heavy influence of political factors on market performance will likely weigh on global growth for years to come.

Ian Bremmer is President of Eurasia Group and a Senior Fellow at the World Policy Institute.

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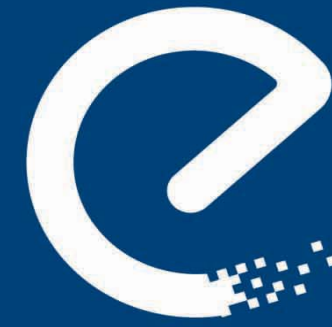
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A review of the article of Al-Kholidy: Is there love for the sake of love?

By: Faihaa AL-Taib

The idea of love, between two people or toward an individual, can be misused by some ill people. It is a precious feeling that not everyone experiences, and we love in different ways. Love can be a man's pure feelings towards a woman, parents' love towards their children, the love between two close male or female friends or the love of a homeland.

Some people, as Maged Thabet Al-Kholidy writes, claim love for personal interests. For example, a friend of mine received e-mails from someone who claims that he is in love with her. The e-mails contained abusive words and unrespectable expressions. Later, she discovered they were a prank played on her by a friend, and she was angry. The point is that love is not a joke to mock someone with.

Some men also claim love towards a girl to hunt her, as if love were a game. These men later get rid of the girl, after promising her that they are going to get married.

Similarly, some women claim love towards men for personal interests. Once these interests are satisfied, they leave the man. There are types of unreal love you may have heard about, or read about.

Al-Kholidy writes that "love the sake of love" is an answer to love that devoid of purity and credibility in our materialistic world. When two people deal with each other as siblings, they may find special qualities in each other and exchange gifts to show that they care to each other. Isn't this a clear sign of admiration?

Regrets happen when the man or woman does not tell the other person about his or her true feelings. Then if one gets married to someone else, the other celebrates the marriage. This is illogical because actually they are in love with each other. Feelings like this can remain secret, even though they can be seen by the blind.

In other cases, as Kholidy writes, couples who get married and discover the reality of love because there are not any personal interests or ill feelings. Such stories of love for the sake love are found in our society but I don't know how may. I do know one famous one though: The story of the Prophet Mohammed (P.B.U.H) and Lady Khadijah, the purist story love in the Islamic history.

Love is not found every where or any time; if you are lucky and came across it you should tell and be logical and sure of your feelings. Also you should make sure that the other party has the same feelings towards you as well as yours.

Unification: the property of whom, dear opportunists?

By: Hameed Hussein Al-audi
auditechno@yahoo.com

One of the most glorious days in our people's memories, and their lives in general, is the 22nd of May. On that day, we – as Yemenis – proved to be a nation deep-rooted in history and civilization. We achieved a great accomplishment in such a gloomy era, an era in which most of Arab and Muslim people – if not all – seemed to be hopeless and unable to do as much for their nations.

I am not going to tell a story about the glories of the unification or the hopes it inspired our people since its early buds. I am also not going to defend the unification – as it has been subject to so many threats – because such a great accomplishment has been deeply implanted in the land and the people, despite the current problems.

I am here to ask both parties, the regime and its opponents who are currently demanding separation: "Whose property is it, one of yours, of you both?"

Property? Yes. I have no doubt that both parties consider the unity property. Otherwise, why do they only think about it in terms of interest? Once interests are at risk, only then we hear about unity. Only then do we know

about those who pay with their lives, defending the unity. And only then do we hear and know lots of other things, mostly disgusting.

The unification, as the people's accomplishment, is neither the property of either party nor a gift that has been given to us by the parties. Of course, the parties think that is so, but they are misled to think this way.

To the regime I say: "Unity or Death" is an out-of-date saying to provoke people to defend the interests of corrupt. People are fed up with such slogans, and they have the right to be so. They can no longer accept the connection between the bliss of unification, its holiness and death, used by you to mobilize them against so-called threats and dangers.

The real dangers and threats are completely different from those being used by the regime. The absence of the state – represented by the absence of law – should be the first danger to talk about. It is the most serious and destructive threat and has led the country into a critical situation.

I need not to waste time citing different details, because they are the most obvious problems in our country. Absence of law, and all that is built upon law, should be the regime's top priority. Tackling this issue does not need people to pay with their lives. Rather, it needs the will of the regime

(if that will still exists) to do something for the hopeless people.

People have more important things to be concerned with than being provoked by old-fashioned words, words which can be understood as threats being served as if they were gifts from the regime. People need to be inspired with hope, and not threatened. They deserve something for their toil, the least of which would be the hope of a better life- which is the least of the regime's duty is to them.

I urge you, the regime, not to make such a silly – maybe evil – connection between the unification and death. Eventually you will get an unexpected reply from the hopeless people. It might be, "As long as you are praising the notion of death, go for it. You, but not us."

On the other hand, (and to be fair) let us turn to the other party:

Has the unity been a gift given by your leaders – and thus by you – to the people, and now you simply want it back? Was it a test, and thus subject to your assessment of success or failure? Do you think that it is acceptable or reasonable to have the country subject to such a mood? Who are you to decide our fate according to your personal interests?

As a Yemeni, I have the right to be in any part of my homeland: east, west, north or south. No one can deny this

right – neither you or anyone else.

And as a Yemeni, I can join you, hand in hand, to stand against those who deny your rights. But first never, never deny my rights – one of which is to live in a unified homeland. You should have in your minds that you do not have more rights than the others to any part of the country. If you have different opinion regarding this point, then, I am sorry to say this, you are no less than the regime in your evils.

What has the unity got to do with the mistakes committed by corrupted? There should be a difference between the country and the regime (or the government). No one has the right to hold the unity responsible for any improper acts – or even crimes. Please, try not to confuse, or to be confused. We do not have great deal of glories in our modern lives. We do not have much to be proud of. So, do you think unity is more than what we – as Yemenis – deserve? You do not have this right.

To both parties:

I shall conclude by saying that if you still have any good deeds for your country and for your people, the least of which should be to allow the people hopes and dreams. Maybe one day those dreams and hopes will materialize. I have no doubt that such a day will come. But I doubt that you, either party, will be here with us to celebrate that day.

Islamic Songs between Admiration and Disgrace

By: Suleiman Raise Bauzer
Al-aml-institute@hotmail.com

The nature of the mankind tends to do things regardless of if the actions are good or bad. But Islam creates borders for our lives, and each person is responsible for whatever he or she does. Our religion is flexible within these borders, but still some people take advantage.

All over the world bands falsely call themselves Enshad Groups (Islamic Group Songs). They misuse Islamic songs by adding clips and adapting them to a new style of music. Tarab, which is similar to Indian and European music. This is the same Arab Tarab prohibited by Allah. Moreover, by creating this music, these bands are using Islam for profit.

The worst part about these so-called Enshad groups is that they use some of the same music style and Islamic words

or verses as the original Enshad. They say they are praising the prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) and they may think this is true. But they are committing sins by using strange musical instruments that were never in the Sunna.

How it could be forgotten that all Enshad words or verses were meant to be praising, give a lesson, or a message calling to Islam in different languages?

The disgraceful exploitation by some groups doesn't fit the real love for our master and humiliates the religion.

In brief, the Islamic religion distinguishes itself from other religions by its flexibility and largess, but is still strict in some situations. Enshad can be used today if the aim is to do it properly. But using Enshad to make money, adding audio clips and attractive men and women to videos, and using strange instruments to market albums defies the borders of the Sunna. It is disgraceful.

Discipline and Determination

By: Hamad Al-Gerzy
gerifai@yahoo.com

Discipline is the mother of every goal, and it makes a society hard-working and respectful. From an Islamic point of view, everything was planned with discipline, which is why followers work hard to obey the command of their prophets and the orders of their Creator (Allah).

Discipline is fundamental to success. When you devote yourself to your studies you will achieve your best easily. You will advance without delay through determination and concentration.

Discipline and determination help us to be a better person in present and future. We should bear in mind that this does not only mean to follow rules and appear disciplined in front of others. True discipline and determination are also internal.

ple against government interests.

There must be dialogue with those who believe violence is a part of Islam in order to listen, and to give them a clear conception of what is right. In the course of time, they will return to their intact nature.

Also authority figures and religious leaders need to warn people of the consequences (in this life and the day after) of killing peaceful tourists who come to our country with permission from the government.

At the same time, our community is in dire need of passionate youth to contribute to their country by promoting the right conduct and forbidding indecency as Allah ordered.

are not aggressive.

People who support violence have superficial knowledge of Islam and do not present its doctrine. They are looking at through binoculars and should seek the wisdom of Islamic scholars. It seems clear that there are no scholars who favor violence, which does not personify Islamic teachings.

The real reasons for violent actions, however, should be studied. Recently we have been seeing people put in jail for long periods of time, some just accused because of their physical appearance, and released without hearing specific charges. Authorities may think this is an effective means of crime prevention, but it can rally peo-

Misusing the term "Defending Islam"

By: Adel Obaid al-Maary
adelzoos@hotmail.com

People who kill foreign tourists are usually misguided and brainwashed with violent views against whoever is non-Muslim. Also, they have a shallow knowledge of the religion. They become fanatic and want to kill whoever is not Muslim in the name of all Muslims. This presents a real danger to Islam, because the enemies of Islam are eagerly seeking to taint the reputation of Islam and make people afraid of it. It is prohibited in Islam to kill any non-Muslims who come into an Islamic country if they

from its own inhabitants. Closing newspapers, imprisoning journalists, prohibiting people to protest and using violent means to stop protests will not bring peace. Ironically, unity may bring more anarchy and less stability.

Also, calling people 'Houthis' or 'separatists' is racist and discriminatory, because labeling people as such takes away their identity as Yemenis who just happen to be sick and tired of the regime. But the government labels people to destroy their image publicly, in order to rally the public, and blame the country's economic, political, educational, and social problems on 'separatists' or 'Houthis.'

President Ali Abdullah Saleh's government's uses public funds and media

to conduct a brutal propaganda campaign designed to subjugate Yemenis to an ongoing farce. The message is: If you oppose the government, you are not Yemeni.

Songs, military parades and poetry, however, will not convince the people. But they may prove the point of the so-called separatists and Houthis. The government is not willing to progress and work for dramatic change for the lives of Yemenis. Rather, it prefers to show off, and sell our dreams and futures to the unknown.

I bet you, in response to this piece, I will be labeled a supporter of an Imamate, and separatist. My point will not get across, and the labeling machine will add one more name.

Is there any reward for good other than good ?

By: Mohammed Ahmed bin Shihab
alshihabi@hotmail.com

I have spent many years in this place, so it is no wonder I became an indivisible part of it. To me, this place is like air for a human being. It is like water for a fish. My days in this place were sometimes happy, and at other times, miserable. Life has many ups and downs. I worked hard to make this place look like a beautiful picture. I sacrificed all to exalt this place.

I have learned many things here. I have learned how to be patient.

Frequently, I was a victim of injustice. I did nothing, and stayed silent. When I asked for something within my rights, I would not get it. I would have to steal it, or take it by force. I knew that doing this would be bad for me, so I stayed quiet.

I saw some people in this place plot tricks against others, just to be great in the eyes of their leaders. You may find them laugh when they are before you, but they are different when they are behind you. Outwardly they are lambs, inwardly wolves. Do not be deceived by appearances.

I have met many friends from many different countries and ethnicities. They

all have different dispositions and moods, and need to be treated different from each other.

But I did not believe, even for a moment, that I would be driven away from this place that I loved from the depths of my heart. What made it worse was that I was expelled in a strange way, with no sins. I have never been guilty. Is there any reward for good other than good? Shall I be rewarded in this impudent way? Should they punish me instead of rewarding me?

The most important lesson I have learned is that there is no place or dignity for honest people in this place.

Overweight and Humor

By: Awad Marei Bin Zemah
Awad_151@hotmail.com

Fat is popular in the world these days. You can see that in every country. We could see this situation as a problem, but it might not be. Overweight people have a special quality that I can't find it in any other people.

Overweight people who have of

ability to make fun of themselves are often so funny, you can't find any one like them. They have been a great addition to my life. You can spend a lot of time with them without feeling bored. If you find yourself joyless, funny fat people will make you happy.

Why are they funny? Overweight people make fun of themselves to avoid their problems. It is a self-defense mechanism. They also have hearts clear of grudges or hate

and most are peaceful and kind. If you have a man or woman in your life like this, never forget your time together, and respect him or her before the relationship is lost.

Fat people don't want to be heavy. They tried to lose weight but couldn't. They dream every day and every minute of losing weight. If you are thin, you have to thank Allah. In the end "be peaceful you will get happy life."

Your tears oh my heart

By: Mayasa Ali
mayasa_a@yahoo.com

Sometimes I'm unable to describe the pain that is beating in my heart. It isn't a kind of weakness or inability, but it's a sort of shyness, as if the words feel ashamed to intervene in the feelings and sighs of the heart. And the heart needs privacy for its tears.

But hen the privacy of many nations is taken up, what kind of privacy should be given to this small heart? It is like a drop of water compared to these nations from the west and east of the earth.

What are you, my dearest heart, when a mom sees her beloved son losing his youth and strength, year after year, behind the bars of a dark cell? Neither sunshine, nor moonlight can reach him.

What are you when a family lost a house and priceless homeland inherited from one generation to another? What, when they were driven away as refugees, moving from one camp to another, or living strangers in another country with nothing to bequeath but a sad memory of a home robbed?

Oh my heart, can you tell me what are you when a kid opens his eyes to find himself lonely, without any family to take care of him? How can he live?

How will he grow? Where will he get the mercy and love that he needs? Who will teach him how to love his homeland and defend it? And where is that land to be loved? The land was lost among the negotiation vaults and peace tables.

Do you want some privacy for you tears and sighs, my dearest heart, while rivers of tears stream everywhere, and blood is spilled on the road for being Islamic blood, which has no right to live honorably like the other people?

I think the privacy you require is impossible because you are part of the people suffering. They beat inside you, and all your tears pour down for their sake.

A letter from daughter to her father... Dad could you stop smoking?

Haneen Ali AL- Mezgagy
omadnan2008@gmail.com

Dad could you stop smoking? You know how much I love you and I want you to be there for my graduation and wedding. I know that everyone will die, but I want you to do whatever you can to stay with me.

I want to see your shining smile in our home.

Dad, do you know that you kill me with each inhale you take and break my heart into small pieces when you smoke? Stop smoking and let me stay the rest of your life with you.

Cigarettes break us, because when you smoke, you go to another room. You stay with it, and leave me alone. Do

you love the cigarette more than me?

Dad, haven't you told me that you love me and you want to stay with me a long time? So, why are you still smoking?

Dad, I will not say stop smoking for yourself... but I will say stop smoking for me. I know that you care and love me more than yourself... so stop smoking, please.

Basem M.A. Alshaibani
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 امام مركز الصكيم التجاري
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Kitchen handicrafts: A brief history

By Nasser Abdulla Nasser Salah
For the Yemen Times

Culture, custom and tradition are definitive traits of all human civilizations. Many Yemenis strive to hand down their own cultural heritage to future generations. In Yemen, handicrafts that are still found today speak volumes about the country's rich cultural history.

Yemenis, particularly in rural areas, continue to be interested in traditional handicrafts. Today they are either still being used or are kept as memories of the past.

Many of the popular handicrafts which were regularly used around the house are in decline and have been replaced by a variety of modern national or foreign items that have filled the markets, like steel and plastic containers.

Yemen's various remarkable cultures bear testimony to the ancient civilizations that once dotted the land. As Aunt Rahma, an elderly shepherd woman, explained, Yemen is considered by many to be the cradle of ancient civilization, and as a result of such a rich history, many Yemenis stop at nothing to preserve their traditions.

The governorate of Shabwa, much like the rest of the country, has crafts that continue to flourish to the present day, especially kitchenware. The areas of As-S'aid and Wadi Yeshbum in particular used to produce a remarkable range of objects out of a kind of black stone known as 'borm' found in the mountain ranges of the governorate.

Shabwa was historically where the substances used to produce cookware were found in abundance. As a result, the people of Shabwa became experts

Shabwa. "Only a few are kept or used in some kitchens every now and then."

Another object commonly made in Shabwa are 'safun' or 'marha,' which are thick rectangular objects made from a special kind of grey or light brown stone. These stones were used with 'aly' which was a roller-pin made out of the same substance and was used for crushing wheat grains. These grains were usually cooked with soup, especially during Ramadan. These special stones were also useful for crushing chili pepper together with onion, coriander, tomatoes and cloves of garlic-

relish into a paste eaten with bread called 'shetni' in Aden or 'sahawaq' in Sana'a.

Another kitchen device made from stones commonly found in Shabwa was a kind of manual mill made from a stone called 'raha.' This mill was placed indoors and was used crushing everything from grains into flour, spices, rock salt, and coffee. It could be adjusted to crush things either into fine or coarse grains.

Most of the above items are no longer used today, but a few are still in existence and even continue to be used in some places.

The 'qoosra' is a thick stone bar which is used to crush spices, ginger roots, or cardamom seeds. They are crushed in a container known as 'malkad' or 'minhaz' depending on the region.

Out of a type of wood obtained from a tree called 'tamarisk,' three different types of vessels are made. One is the 'makhsar,' around which people sit in a circle and eat from. The other is the 'qadah' which is a medium sized container used for serving sheep or goat soup. The smallest one is called 'qas'ah' or 'mashraba' and is used for holding milk, yogurt, or 'haqeen,' a sour

at producing kitchen goods and as a direct result the blacksmiths of Shabwa are highly skilled in their trade to this day.

These blacksmiths continue to make many objects excellently sculpted from wood, stone or steel, such as incense burners, cooking pots and pans. An especially popular cooking pot is a round metal pan known as 'towa' and is used to cook a type of bread known as 'lahooh,' commonly known in the west as Ethiopian bread. Wooden containers include Qas'ah or Mashraba which is a cylindrical metal shape with one hole at the bottom through which the batter can be poured.

Other objects that were produced in the area are lamps known as 'Masraga' which are triangular shaped. A cotton wick is placed into one of its corners and is fed by sesame oil fuel which burns when lit.

"What a pity! Such things are no longer used or kept even as souvenirs for future generations," remarked uncle Abu-Baker Albany also known as Bin Sa'ada, a skilled builder in



milk left over after being cleared of butter. Sometimes shark soup mixed together with sesame oil is served in this dish.

A 'maqdah' or a type of Yemeni ladle is used for spooning soup out of a special soup pot called 'bormah' into smaller containers. Wooden measurement tools known as 'killa,' 'masra' and 'shatria' are used as standard measures for grains.

Ahmad Nasser Ba'adi, a 100-year-old farmer, emphasized the importance of the future of handicrafts. "If it weren't for the innovations of our forefathers and ancestors we could not have achieved so much in our handicrafts inventions," he said passionately. "They paved the way through suffering and pain. We pray to Allah to have mercy upon our fathers and grandfathers and place them in paradise among his faithful slave."

"We made good use of the knowledge they handed down to us and now we reap the rewards of their labor and ours," said Al-Mansoury Al-Wahal a handicraftsman from Shabwa. He asserted the value of the handicrafts to the extent that he remembered his fathers and grand-

fathers making and using them when they were alive. He said, "If were the youth to return to Shabwa, I would let him know what their forefathers accomplished."

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at producing kitchen goods and as a direct result the blacksmiths of Shabwa are highly skilled in their trade to this day.

These blacksmiths continue to make many objects excellently sculpted from wood, stone or steel, such as incense burners, cooking pots and pans. An especially popular cooking pot is a round metal pan known as 'towa' and is used to cook a type of bread known as 'lahooh,' commonly known in the west as Ethiopian bread. Wooden containers include Qas'ah or Mashraba which is a cylindrical metal shape with one hole at the bottom through which the batter can be poured.

Other objects that were produced in the area are lamps known as 'Masraga' which are triangular shaped. A cotton wick is placed into one of its corners and is fed by sesame oil fuel which burns when lit.

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