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Demonstration in Sana'a over Yemenia Air crash

By: Salma Ismail

SANA'A, July 8 — A peaceful protest took place today in front of the French Embassy to mourn the victims of Yemenia Air flight No. IY626, and to demand more access to the crash site.

Fahd Al-Ariki, director of Yemenia Air in Sana'a said, "What we are protesting is the inaccurate response and hurried statement by the French Minister." He said that the minister's statements regarding the crash falsely led people to believe that Yemenia Air was careless with its passengers' safety.

"The airplane and its passengers may be worth nothing for some in France- like any of the other airplane accidents in the world," said a statement to the French Embassy from Yemenia Chief of Aviation Engineers Mohamed Mar Mo'mien. "It may be seen like a deal for insurance companies and lawyers, or lead to political or financial problem if it appears that the plane was mistakenly taken down by French military forces ocean."

Civil society organizations, Yemenia Air employees and members of the Union of Pilots and Engineers gathered in the blazing sun to voice their dissatisfaction with the portrayal of Yemenia Air as a careless and hazardous company.

Many accused France of attempting to cover up what really happened, while others called on French President Nicolas Sarkozy to provide answers.

Patrick Bouzan, the French Charge d'Affairs in Sana'a, who said he met with a delegation of protestors said, "The operations are ongoing and we need not jump to conclusions," adding, "We are handling things with the widest possible transparency."

A 50-year safety record

Less than a day after the crash, Yemenia Air's safety record was questioned by France's transport minister, Dominique

Bussereau, following which media sources went into a frenzy attacking the Yemenia Air's reputation and safety record.

"This is our first accident in over 50 years," stressed Al-Ariki. "We have an excellent safety record and the airline is internationally respected. French embassy staff fly with Yemenia Air."

Responding to allegations that the airline did not have seatbelts, and that passengers from Sana'a to Moroni were transported "like cattle" and sometimes had to stand during the flight he said, "This isn't a car, it's an Airbus and it comes with seatbelts. It's unreasonable that we [Yemenia Air] would remove the seatbelts," he said.

"There's no place on Earth where passengers are allowed to fly without seatbelts, certainly not Yemen," said a Moroccan flight attendant with Yemenia Air.

On Friday, France warned Yemenia Airways that its name was in line for a "blacklist."

"This company is under strict surveillance," Bussereau told RTL Radio. "If it does not want to go on the black list, it will have to make big efforts, very big efforts."

"Two days prior to the crash the same plane was in London," said Al-Ariki.

Attempted "cover-up"

According to the Asharq Al-Awsat online newspaper, a Comoran said that the plane could have been shot down by French forces in the region.

A number of news sources have been quoting high ranking officials as saying that a French missile could have been the reason the plane went down.

"Although it could be a possibility, it is too early to say what the reason is," Al-Ariki said. "Bodies have been found very far from the crash site, near Tanzania, which could mean that the plane exploded in the air. However, we need to investigate."



Protesters outside the French Embassy Wednesday morning hold a sign that says, "Where is the black box?"

A Yemenia employee said, "There's a conspiracy by France and Airbus to cover up what really happened." Another engineer with the airline added, "If the plane plunged into sea it would break into many pieces," and asked why no pieces have been found.

"The theory that the plane was shot down by a missile correlates with what the sole survivor said," says Yousef Al-Hiwati another protestor who works with the airline. "She initially said she heard an explosion."

"If the plane was in distress, the pilot and crew would have activated the emergency response system. It happened suddenly and that's why even the little girl was found with no oxygen mask or lifejacket," added another Yemenia Air employee.

"From the beginning they have been trying to portray Yemenia Air as unsafe and hazardous," said Shaheera, a Yemenia Air employee of 30 years.

Focusing efforts

Yemen's Minister Khaled Al-Wazir said at a press conference last week that it was too early to say that the plane's condition was the cause of the accident.

"We are focusing our efforts on the human loss and not the financial losses incurred as a result of the tragic accident," he said.

The crash was the second major air disaster in a month, following the June 1 crash of the Air France Airbus A330 in the Atlantic Ocean while en route from Rio de Janeiro to Paris, killing 228 people. The black boxes on that aircraft have also not been found.

Protestors were angry that the French authorities allegedly prevented Yemeni divers from entering a large area where the Airbus 310 wreckage is expected to be.

The protests come just days after signals from a black box belonging to



Tunisian, Egyptian, Moroccan and Yemeni flight attendants hold pictures of colleagues who were victims of the crash that killed 153 people and left a sole survivor.

the Yemeni Air flight No. IY626 that crashed into the sea on June 30 had been picked up by submarines, according to investigators.

The black boxes, which are usually orange in color, are equipped with batteries that are supposed to power their signal transmissions for about 30 days.

A Yemeni diver group from the Special Forces headed last week for the Comorian capital, Moroni to participate in the search and rescue operations for the remaining passengers.

"A signal was picked up from two acoustic transmitters from the plane's flight data recorders during a sea search to locate the data recorders," the French air accident investigation agency, known as the BEA, said in a statement.

The black boxes are believed to be lying between 1,600 to 4,000 feet (500 to 1,200 metres) under the surface of the ocean," French military spokesman

Christophe Prazuck said Monday.

The Yemenia Airways Airbus 310 crashed into the Indian Ocean early Tuesday, carrying 142 passengers and 11 crew members. It originated in Yemen's capital, Sana'a, and went down just miles from Moroni, the capital of the Comoros Islands.

Within two hours of the crash, Yemen formed a committee made up of specialists.

"We are working closely with our French and Comoran counterparts," Al-Wazir added.

"There is no need to provide false information and speculation about technical problems, and jump to conclusions before investigations reveal the cause of the crash," he added. "The flight's path was normal according to initial investigation until it reached the Moroni airport tower."

He also said the search operation was hindered by bad weather.

WFP makes urgent appeal for food aid to Yemen

By: Khaled Al-Hilaly

SANA'A, July 8 — The World Food Program has appealed to partners for urgent additional support to help it address what it calls "critical levels of hunger and malnutrition in Yemen."

The United Nations food agency declared on Tuesday a dramatic short-fall of about 42 percent from the total USD 55 million it needs to feed more than 1.6 million vulnerable Yemenis this year.

"Volatile food and fuel prices combined with conflict and natural disasters over the past years have severely affected the country, leaving more than one in three Yemenis suffering from chronic hunger," said WFP Representative in Yemen Gian Carlo

Cirri. "Starting October 2009, the WFP will not have the resources to continue assisting more than 815,000 of the most vulnerable people," said the WFP.

These most vulnerable include families displaced by the conflict in Sa'ada, those affected by last year's floods in eastern Yemen, and by high food prices, it said.

"There is an urgent need for increased support so that the WFP can continue to honor its commitments to Yemen's most vulnerable people, especially at a time when the current global financial crisis is further compounding the situation," he said.

With the current challenge to help even the country's most in need, the WFP has said that it does not have enough funding to continue implementing its Food for Education and Food for Health programs in Yemen.

In an attempt to help development in education and health, both programs have in the last years provided food as incentive for poor families to send their girls to school and regularly visit a health center for medical check-ups.

Both target an annual average of 850,000 people and, according to the WFP, the pioneering Yemeni Food for Education program has triggered a 60 percent jump in female enrolment in

WFP-assisted schools.

"We are appealing to the donor community to help us keep increasing enrollment rates of girls in school and continue to provide essential safety nets for rural families in Yemen," said Minister of Education Abdulsalam Al-Jawfi.

Future looks bleak

Abdulkareem Al-Eryani, former prime minister of Yemen, warned the international community last month that Yemen may suffer from famine next year.

"The economic situation is very difficult," he said to Reuters.

Although, at the end of last month, the Central Bank of Yemen pumped USD 117 million into the exchange market to support the national currency against foreign currencies, exchange shops reported this week an increase in the dollar exchange rate exceeding YR 200 to YR 204.

A recent Central Bank of Yemen report has shown a decline in oil revenues during the first five months of 2009 reaching USD 483.2 million, USD 1.620 billion less than revenues during the same period in 2008.

Although Yemen is a small oil producer compared to other countries in the region with only around 200,000 barrels per day, oil revenues represent 70 percent of the country's annual income, according to the government.

In Yemen, 30 percent of the public budget is spent on oil subsidies to help Yemenis afford the commodity, and 60 percent on the salaries of government employees.

This leaves only 10 percent of the public budget for health and education, two essential sectors for the country's development.

In 2016, economists expect Yemen to start importing oil from abroad to supplement its dwindling resources, and in 2018 to stop producing oil altogether.

This blow to the country's revenues is predicted alongside a demographic explosion—the UN projects a doubling in population by 2025— and the already pressing water shortage across the country.

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July 7 celebration turns violent



Hundreds of protesters took to the streets chanting anti-government slogans and calling for the south to break away,

By: Foad Mussed

SANA'A, July 8 — The Yemeni government and leaders of the Southern Movement held competing demonstrations last Thursday to mark the 15 year anniversary of what the Yemeni government calls reunification, also known as the end of the country's civil war.

While pro-government rallies were launched in many governorates, including the capital Sana'a, army checkpoints were set up around Aden. Security units were reportedly put on high alert to prevent anti-government protests in Aden which was the capital of the southern government before unification in 1990.

The police have been deployed in force in and around Aden since Monday to snuff out any anti-government demonstrations. The

government also recently launched an arrest campaign, bringing the number of people detained since July 1 to around 500, said opposition leaders.

Despite the high alert, many southern cities witnessed violent actions, particularly when police tried to break up the protesters who poured into the streets chanting anti-government slogans.

On Tuesday in Lahj, Abyan and Al-Dhale governorates, hundreds of protesters took to the streets chanting anti-government slogans and calling for the south to break away, witnesses said. The protests blocked roads with burning car wheels and pelted the police with stones. The police fired tear gas in response.

While the government did not announce any loss of life during the clashes on July 7, international and local media reported two protesters

killed and six people injured, including three policemen.

As of press time, Al-Dhale was still witnessing an unstable security state according to Yemen Times reporter Foad Mussed, who confirmed that Yemeni security has pulled out the city. Protestors are still surrounding some neighborhoods, blocking roads, burning wheels, and causing riots.

At least 18 people have been killed, five of them policemen, since the protests erupted in late April.

During the past three years there have been sporadic clashes between police and protesters in the southern governorates when former soldiers from the south demanded higher pension payments. The demands expanded to become a larger complaint against the negative economic situation and political marginalization of the south.

In 2007, President Saleh formed a series of committees to look into various claims of political and economic marginalization in the south.

The committees recommended firing 15 senior officials but no action was taken by the president.

Demonstrations have since spread to other areas of the south. A number of people have been killed in political violence and hundreds have been arrested as a result.

There is now a rapidly growing movement openly calling for southern independence, saying that any true partnership created as a result of unification in 1990 was destroyed by the 1994 civil war.

Authorities have put some of the movement's leaders on trial on charges of fomenting sectarian division and hatred and inciting people to break the law.

Triumphs against child abusers

By: Nadia Al-Sakkaf

SANA'A, July 8 — The four girls were between 9 and 14 years old. All of them had been raped by their father repeatedly.

When the girls reported the abuse to their uncle, he sought the help of The Seyaj Organization for Protecting Childhood. The organization appointed a lawyer from its legal aid unit for abused children who handled the case free of charge. After four months in court, and a confession from the accused, the father was sentenced 15 years in prison.

The girls were offered psychological counseling through an agreement Seyaj had made with Al-Risala Mental Hospital. The two organizations want to provide traumatized victims with therapy to help them overcome abuse and become normal productive members of society.

However, their uncle, who is their guardian, refused. He said that he does not need any more public attention because he wants to protect the girls from social shame.

According to Ahmed Al-Qurashi, the director of Seyaj, Al-Risala hospital is providing this service for free as a part of its responsibility to the community. The anonymity of the victims is secured through closed sessions. But many families, unaware of the importance of post-trauma treatment, shy away from such provisions because of cultural constraints.

Al-Qurashi called on other institutions and donors to pay attention to the plight of abused children's legal rights, and how to help them through the recovery process.

On the same day this verdict was issued, the court also sentenced a man who raped and killed an 8-year-old boy over six months ago to death.

Another victory won for Seyaj by volunteer lawyer Hizam Al-Muraisi against child abusers was a verdict issued on July 1st against a man who raped an 11-year-old boy. The rapist was given a seven-year sentence and a fine YR 4 million, about USD 20,000. He also had to pay YR 300,000 USD 1,500 for legal expenses.

The verdict against the abusers of a 14-year-old Hadramout boy authorities call N. S. was not as strong. The boy, who is mentally disabled, had been raped by six men in his area repeatedly throughout his childhood. The men thought they would get away with it because the boy was disabled.

Seyaj took the case and assigned a volunteer lawyer to represent the boy. Last week, after more than six sessions, the Daw'an Primary Court ruled against the men. The verdict came down on June 29, ordering a nine-month sentence for each of the three accused.

It also awarded a compensation of YR 100,000, around USD 500, to the victim's family and YR 70,000 for legal fees.

And while Seyaj commended the ruling of Judge Taha Al-Haddar, the organization is appealing the sentence because, as the boy's lawyer Faisal Al-Majeedy said, "This sentence does not even come close to what the culprits should have received for their grave act."

Al-Qurashi also said three of the accused were not tried for the crime.

4U

If you want to report a child abuse crime or volunteer to help the abuse support unit, call 01-257505 or email info@seyaj.org.

"The issue that helped this case is that three of the abusers confessed," he said. "The other three denied it so they were not tried. Had the first three not confessed, I doubt we would have been able to achieve this breakthrough."

The organization has a hotline people can call to report abuse cases or to seek help. The Hadramout case was reported to Seyaj by the victim's relatives in Saudi Arabia.

But, Al-Qurashi said, the organization struggles to meet the needs of victims. "We have volunteer lawyers in various areas but we are still looking for more," he said. "During the Hadramout rape case, we had to fly one of our lawyers all the way to the Hadramout every time there was a session. The costs were covered solely by the organization and it was very hard to do."

Al-Majeedy is also the head of the legal unit and media spokesperson for the Yemeni Lawyers Syndicate. He and his team of 35 lawyers are following 21 child abuse cases around the country, but their work is difficult because police do not collect forensic evidence and the attorneys' resources are limited.

The Yemeni judiciary system is also not capable of dealing with the number and types of crimes being reported, according to Al-Qurashi. Each prosecutor is responsible for at least three districts, covering an average population 300,000.

Priority is given to murder cases and tribal conflicts, not child abuse. Sexual crimes against children are considered taboo in most communities, and local authorities do not present clear answers to questions raised about these kinds of incidents.

"We can get a medical report saying that this child was raped or beaten but we can't say who did it," said Al-Qurashi. "There is no application of DNA tests and not much investigative work is done to discover who did it, or what the evidence is. This is why we have to fight very hard to get a conviction because the word of a child simply does not count in this legal system."

Many child abuse and sexual crimes are also covered up by society. If these cases happen to reach the judicial system, they are postponed while the state and the people try to find a solution outside of the legal system.

Al-Qurashi said that sexual abuse cases should not have a statute of limitations, or be allowed to be resolved outside of courts because it is not just the victim that has the right to justice. The public also has the right to see sexual predators punished, because their crimes harm the entire community.

Yet the social structure of Yemen still finds a way to cover up sexual crimes against children.

Houthis wonder about fate of the amnesty

By: Mohammed Bin Sallam

SANA'A, July 8 — Houthi leaders are wondering about fate of the amnesty that President Ali Abdullah Saleh issued between the Houthis and the government army in Sa'ada. The amnesty was issued at the end of the fifth war in the middle of last July.

The Houthis stressed their demands to apply the amnesty to all Houthi supporters being tried in the Criminal Specialized Court.

They considered the verdicts recently issued to be political and that they aim to exert pressure on the Houthis to offer more concessions to the government.

Sheikh Saleh Habra, political spokesman for the Houthis, told the Yemen Times over the phone that President Saleh issued an amnesty last July for all people accused of supporting the Houthis. "But we don't know why this presidential resolution hasn't been applied yet and why the 1,200 detainees haven't been released from the government's prisons," wondered Habra.

"Many charges were fabricated against those who were transferred to

the court. In addition, the trials were not just," Habra added. "Many detainees are innocent and don't have any relations with the Houthis. Consequently, we demand that these trials stop on the basis of that amnesty and that provocations and recent military mobilizations are put to a halt. These procedures make us suspect that the government is mobilizing for war and doesn't want peace and security in the country."

This statement came after verdicts were issued against 22 people, 10 of whom were sentenced to death while the other 12 were sentenced to 5 to 10 years in prison. The charges were for carrying out acts of sabotage and killing government soldiers in Bani Hushaish located northeast of Sana'a during the fifth war.

On a related note, the Yemeni Organization for Defending Rights and Democratic Freedoms staged their 17th sit-in in front of the Cabinet last Tuesday in coordination with Sa'ada detainees' families. Protestors raised signs demanding that their relatives who have been detained for years without being tried be released from prisons as an execution of the presidential

amnesty.

They further demanded that the law be applied to their relatives while rejecting all arrests that took place on the basis of family or sectarian affiliation.

They particularly rejected the idea of arresting people in their houses and on the streets of Sana'a, some saying that such actions contradict the law and the constitution.

Protestors also criticized the government which they said shirks its responsibility toward their demands, confirming that their sit-ins will continue every Tuesday in front of the cabinet until all detainees from the Sa'ada war are released. Tuesdays are when the members of the cabinet hold their weekly meetings.

"Why does the government continue detaining people although the war in Sa'ada was declared over?" asked the protesters. "Some detainees have been detained for years without charges or judicial orders."

Sa'ada is cautiously witnessing a current calm in the area as there has been no recent military escalation. The exception to this is the continuation of military mobilization that the govern-

ment has been conducting for over two months, as the army has started stationing soldiers in the area and constructing defensive ditches.

Regarding humanitarian issues, UNHCR conformed that one of its stores burned last Wednesday in the Al-Malahidh area located near the Yemeni-Saudi border.

Leen Al-Mujahed who works for UNHCR Public Information told the Yemen Times that "the materials burned by the fire were stored at 22 May Public School." She added that these materials were not food but tents, blankets and mattresses. She said that the primary result of investigations showed that the cause of the fire was an electrical short and that the commission lost 300 tents and 850 mattresses which cost a total of YR 10 million.

The same day the store burned, the UNHCR, WFP and WHO had started to distribute tents, mattresses, blankets, cooking utensils, and food among 119 families. These families had been displaced during confrontations that took place last month between the Houthis and the government army in a number of districts as well as due to fears that a sixth war may break out.

Yemeni newspapers lag behind news websites

By: Yemen Times Staff

SANA'A, July 8 — News websites are surpassing traditional print media in Yemen on many levels according to the participants in an Al-Afif seminar held yesterday in Sana'a.

Yemeni newspapers are lagging behind in the use of technology, and media will have to accelerate its pace of development if it wants to survive the current digital revolution, according to panelists Abdulrahman Baggash of Al-Thawra daily, Walid Al-Saqaf of Yemen Portal and Jabr Saber of Mareb Press.

Baggash confessed that his newspaper, which is the most widely-read offi-

cial daily in Yemen, is itself suffering from a resource shortage and has started training its employees in today's technology, particularly Internet.

However, he feared that the spread of blogs and news websites would increase the possibility of defaming individuals that, according to him, often go unpunished due to the lack of a law regulating websites in the country.

Walid Al-Saqaf, on the other hand, expressed strong opposition to calls to establish a law regulating websites in the country, as such a law could "be used to crush what remains of the freedom margin websites enjoy."

He also referred to the ongoing ban

of his website <http://yemenportal.net> by the authorities in Yemen and called on them to unblock it, particularly as it is a search engine and aggregator collecting hundreds of thousands of articles dealing with Yemen.

"The authorities need to understand that blocking websites is an attack on our human rights as individuals wishing to access information and express opinions," he said. "Furthermore, there are ways to circumvent the ban and hence, the effectiveness of such a ban is questioned."

Jabr Saber, the secretary editor of Marib Press, among the most prominent Yemeni news websites, gave a overview of the evolution of news

websites in the Arab world and called for establishing a law that would regulate rather than curtail online journalism.

"So far, there is no law protecting us as news websites and online journalists. We want to be recognized as traditional journalists," he said.

The panelists noted that the question on whether there should be a law regulating news websites remains one of those most hotly debated by the journalism community in Yemen.

Those in opposition to such a law refer to previous experiences in which governments used laws, such as the law of press and publication, to limit freedoms instead of expanding them.

For example, many articles in the law include prohibitions related to criticizing the person of the president, national unity, the military forces, neighboring or friendly heads of state, etc.

Among the issues also raised in the seminar were the cultural and political taboos that create a sense of fear in society.

Some of those taboos were demonstrated in a video production by researcher Sawsan Al-Awlaqi. Among the clips produced by Al-Awlaqi was a particular video pointing to some prohibitions that newspaper founders have to deal with once they get their newspaper's license.

Participants noted that, because

websites are able to report more freely on such taboo issues, they are more appealing for journalists. This results in a new challenge to the authorities who are trying to suppress critical websites through bans, occasional harassment, or the detention of online journalists.

There was a general consensus among panelists that new media, particularly the Internet, will become the dominant source of information in the future and hence, if journalists working in traditional media want to be competitive, they will have to learn to use new technologies and, in some ways, become cyber journalists as well.

In Brief

SANAA
Child Parliament to hold session on marriage
 Child Parliament will hold on Monday in Sana'a the 5th session under the title of marriage age and responsibility of legislators, according to NewsYemen.
 During the session, members of Parliament will discuss with Ministries of Education, Public Health and Population, Justice Local Administration their roles in issuing laws to fix marriage age.
 The Parliament will also discuss with the UNICEF, Women National Committee, Yemeni Women Union and Democracy School their roles in backing the law issuance and other child rights laws.

2nd phase of technical education development project discussed
 Yemen and World Bank (WB) discussed here on Monday work progress in the second phase of the Technical Education Development Project funded by WB at a total cost of \$15 million.

The meeting gathered Minister of Technical Education and Vocational Training Ibrahim Hajri and Director of Education Sector in WB Mukim Temirov reviewed the current condition of the project and the problems the project faces which represent in taking no advantage from the WB's loan in executing the project's activities.

Man executed for killing a child
 Yahya Hussein al-Raghoah was executed on Monday by firing squad for raping and killing an 11-year child, Hamdi Ahmed in Sana'a capital last December, 2008.
 Gathering of people and the victim's family attended the implementation of the execution.
 The appeal court upheld a sentence of

the panel court which stated to send the al-Raghoah death in public.
 The crime had become a public issue.

Yemen wants oil contractors to contribute to boosting gas
 Yemen plans to amend agreements with petroleum companies, a move which is aimed to develop gas and evaporated gas in the country.
 With the move, Yemen could ensure that petroleum contractors can help develop gas available at its oil fields.
 The National Authority for Oil Exploration and Production said it is currently discussing with the Occidental Petroleum Corporation, trying to convince the global Company to develop gas fields at Yemen oil fields it is operating.
 Certainly there is gas at some oil fields, therefore any company, that announce

Yemen hands down death sentence against seven subversives
 Yemen handed down Monday death sentence against seven nationals after convicting them of forming an armed gang and committing subversive acts in the Bani Hushaish district in Sana'a last year.
 The State Penal Court also sentenced five others to 12-15 years in prison.
 The group members, of a fourth group tried over supporting the Houthi rebels, were convicted of forming an armed gang and attacking troops and the people's interests.
 Indictments against the group included that the group members had light, medium and heavy weapons along with ammunitions with which they violated laws and killed children, women, men and soldiers.
 The group was among other gangs captured by the security forces during clashes with the security forces last year when

battles with the Houthi rebels stretched to the district.
 Other groups went on trials since April.
 In May, the court heard confessions of the first and fourth groups when six members said they had used Israeli weapons to fight troops.

Report on condition of education in Yemen discussed
 In cooperation with World Bank, Ministry of Planning & International Cooperation organized a workshop to show outcomes of a report about condition of the education in Yemen.
 Ministers of education, technical education and technical training and social affairs and labor delivered speeches in which they highlighted efforts exerted to prepare the report to tackle challenges facing education in Yemen.
 They called for adopting a joint strategy to review the education system in Yemen to fit with the current economic development and need of the regional and local labors.
 Deputy Minister of Planning and International Cooperation for Development Plans Mutahar al-Absi reviewed contents of the report that show obstacles and problems facing the education in the country.
 Director of the WB Office in Yemen said that the report comes within a partnership between the bank and the Yemeni government to improve the capacities of the education in the nation.
 He said that the report discussed the current situation of the education in the basic, secondary and higher education as well as technical education.

Yemen, EU discuss health cooperation
 Yemen and European Commission discussed here on Monday mutual cooperation aspects in health fields.
 Minister of Public Health and Population Abdul-Karim Rase'a held talks with Bilateral Cooperation Director in EC Philip Jack the implementation level of health EU-funded programs, especially project of reproductive health and population being carried out since the beginning of the current year in governorates of Lahj, Taiz and Hodeidah.
 Rase'a affirmed the importance of availing from the quick-results methodology in executing the health programs in the three governorates.

ADEN
Child abuse protection course concluded
 A training course on protection of children from abuse and violence was concluded on Monday in Aden.
 The three-day course was organized by Child Care Organization with the participation of 20 cadres in which they got acquainted with knowledge on abuse concepts and strategy of child protection.
 Chairman of Child Protection Program in the organization Ayisha Sayid confirmed, in her speech, the importance of such training programs which aim at improving skills of partners and employees of the organization.
 The organization is working with civil society organizations to reduce child abuse phenomenon, Ayisha said.
 s refusal to the move, will prompt Yemen to contract another company more relaxed to help Yemen boost gas industry.
 The move may also help Yemen to attract other giant oil companies, which would be offered more investment overtures.
 Yemen also thinks the move will help transform development from words to action, at a time when its fragile economy

is struggling amid the global economic downturn.
 The two sides affirmed the importance of availing from the loan in improving abilities of vocational training institutions of the ministry through approving advanced training programs to meet the labor market's demands.
 They stressed on the necessity of reforming the Vocational Training Fund, developing its mechanisms and its capabilities so as to improve education quality and to meet labor market's needs at the local and regional levels.
 The project consists of three components divided into three phases, whereas the first phase represented in the planning, monitoring and assessment in the ministry and the project's management unit, the second phase is related to designing and delivering new advanced technical programs and the third phase is concerned with reforming and developing the Vocation Training Fund via reorganizing it and reviewing its current regulations.
Indian military ship arrives in Aden seaport
 An Indian military ship "Gauda Fairy" arrived on Sunday in Aden harbor for a few days visit to Yemen.
 This visit came within the military cooperation between Yemen and India, practically in fighting against piracy and to secure the international ships lanes in the Gulf of Aden and Arabian Sea .
TAIZ
Fresh attack on Yemeni tanker foiled
 Yemeni marine forces have thwarted an attempted pirate attack on a national oil tanker in the Red Sea, days after the forces foiled an attack against two oil tankers in the Bab el-Mandab strait in the

Red Sea.
 Pirates tried to take over the tanker and marines intervened on time, clashing with the pirates who escaped out of Yemen's territorial waters, according to Coast Defense.
 The tanker continued its voyage to Hodeida safely, a source at the Coast Defense added.
 On Saturday, two pirate boats intercepted two Yemeni oil tankers trying to hijack them and Yemeni marine troops intervened and battled the pirates who run away.
 Last month, a Yemeni oil tanker escaped a pirate attack off the Makha port in the Red Sea.
 Somali pirates intercepted the tanker and the crew managed to flee them.
 Informed sources said that the pirates pursued the tanker, but it sent a distress call to the Coast Guards in the area who immediately offered help.

The tanker arrived in the port safely.
 In April, three Somali pirates were killed and 12 others were seized after Yemeni marine forces rescued oil tankers which were attacked off the pirate-plagued Gulf of Aden.
 Yemen has received a number of pirates who were arrested by international forces patrolling the Indian Ocean on anti-piracy mission.
 Some pirates have gone on trials.
 Last week, 22 African people appeared in an Aden court, with prosecutors accusing some of the group carrying pirate attacks and others of attempting piracy in the region.
 Many world countries have recently expressed their concern about soaring piracy off Somali, prompting action by the countries which sent anti-piracy task-forces to the region.

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Their News

International Photo Contest Theme: Father and Daughter Together in Education

The Father and Daughter Alliance (FADA) is an international movement of family men/fathers mobilizing traditional fathers around the world so they can enroll their daughters in primary/elementary school (instead of the girls just fetching water all day, or worse getting abused and trafficked). FADA is working in India and will also work in Afghanistan, Benin, Guatemala and Yemen.

Summary of this International Photo Contest: The theme is Father and Daughter Together in Education. Anyone is eligible anywhere in the world (see specific rules below). Use your cell phone, disposable camera, professional, amateur, youth, all are welcome. Photos should be submitted by e-mail only (no prints will be accepted) to BAdams@FatherAndDaughter.org. Photos from only 25 countries will be accepted (see list of countries below), where in some cases there are 3 to 4 girls outside school per boy. First Prize is US\$300, Second Prize US\$200, and Third Prize is US\$100. Deadline for submissions is July 15, 2009. Winners will be notified by August 31, 2009.

RULES:
 Theme: The photographs need to depict a father and his daughter(s) in an educational setting or a situation related to learning, books, school or the like in line with the title of this International Photo Contest which is "Father and Daughter: Together in Education." The specifics of the photo are left of course to the creativity and ingenuity of the person taking the photograph.

Focus Countries: Only photographs related to the following 25 countries will be accepted into this contest. These countries are lagging in regards to girls' education, with many of these countries having 3 to 4 girls per boy out of school, as reported by UNESCO (see chart below). The 25 countries are: Afghanistan, Chad, Niger, Yemen, Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, Benin, Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Guinea, Mozambique, Togo, Burundi, Ethiopia, Morocco, Guatemala, Cambodia, India, Nepal, Senegal, Ghana, Uganda, Mauritania, Malawi, and Gambia.

- 1) Individuals and organizations in any of these 25 countries can submit photographs electronically directly to the contact person at the e-mail address provided below.
- 2) Individuals and organizations in the United States, Europe, and other regions of the world not included among the 25 countries and interested in participating in this contest will need to submit photographs related to those 25 countries in line with the theme of this contest. Or they may contact individuals and/or organizations in any of the 25 countries and

submit photographs as a joint effort. Credit for the photograph may be shared between those doing the joint submission.

Eligibility: Anyone 13 and older is eligible to submit photographs to this contest. Those younger than 13 years of age can submit photographs with the help and consent of their parents. Employees and directors of the Father and Daughter Alliance (FADA), their immediate families and individuals living in the same household as such employees are not eligible. To make this contest available to a wide range of individuals and organizations around the world, there is no entry fee. FADA reserves the right to verify, in its sole judgment, winner eligibility.

Jury: The jury is composed by individuals with expertise in the subject matter as well as communications and photography, representing different geographic regions and professions, including Dr. Arvind Singhal, Professor of Communication at the University of Texas, El Paso and Khaled al-Hammadi, Sana'a Correspondent and Photo Journalist with Agence France-Presse in Yemen. The judges' decisions will be final.

Prizes: First Prize will receive US\$300. Second Prize US\$200 and Third Prize US\$100. There may be Honorary Mentions at the discretion of the judges (with no monetary compensation). A special effort will be made to publish the winning photographs with a major magazine. There may also be a special slide show of the photographs in the Huffington Post (a major Internet Newspaper).

Deadline: All photographs must be submitted electronically (by e-mail) by July 15, 2009. Winners will be decided and notified by August 31, 2009.

Conditions: Photographs should be submitted as taken originally, that is unmodified or unaltered.

1) Photographs need to be submitted electronically by e-mailing them to BAdams@FatherAndDaughter.org. No prints/paper will be accepted. If the person taking the photo does not have the capability to submit photos by e-mail he or she may need to contact an institution such as a local school, or a NGO or a local newspaper and get their help, use creativity and imagination! Photographs will then be posted in an especially designated platform on Flickr for review by the jury. Photographs will not be returned.

2) Up to 3 photographs per person (or joint submission) will be accepted.

3) The individual or organization submitting the photograph to the contest will be the point of contact for any contest-related communications. Entrants must not infringe on the rights of any other photographer or person.

4) When submitting a photograph, please include place in which the photo-

graph was taken, who took the photograph, and a brief explanation of what the photograph is about. Also include a note on what kind of camera was used (all cameras are acceptable, including disposable cameras, pictures taken with cell phones, film or digital and the like, professional, amateur or youth).

5) Those submitting photographs should include their full name, occupation, address, e-mail address, and telephone number.

6) Any photograph used by FADA shall carry the photographer's credit line and the photographer retains copyright of the photograph. However, FADA as the contest organizer may use the photographs in any media sponsor publication. All entrants understand that any image submitted to the competition may be used by FADA for marketing and promotional purposes including in any media such as exhibitions, website, blogs, Flickr, articles, e-mails, electronic book, print and digital media directly related to the FADA competition, though there will not be monetary compensation for this use.

7) The organizers reserve the right to modify or cancel this contest based on response and other factors. By entering, participants warrant that his or her entry materials are original, do not infringe on any third party's rights, and that participant has obtained any necessary permissions from any third party if a third party or third party's property appears in the photograph. By entering, participants release and hold harmless FADA and each of their directors, officers, employees, attorneys, agents and representatives from any and all liability for any injuries, loss, claim, action, demand or damage of any kind arising from or related to this contest, any prize won, any use of the entry materials by FADA, the warranties participants make, any misuse or malfunction of any prize awarded, participation in any contest-related activity, or participation in this contest. FADA and the organizers are not responsible for lost, damaged, late or misdirected photographs, or for uploading connections, garbled transmissions, unauthorized intervention or technical malfunctions.

Job Vacancy Announcement

We are a leading company based in Sana'a. We are looking for experienced and qualified Yemeni nationals, who would like to join our high professional team. The position is based in the field and will be on rotation.

1- Work-Over Supervisor

- ¥ Responsible for the day-to-day on site planning, rig start-up and execution of completion and workover activities.
- ¥ Supervise the workover contractor and service personnel to ensure all work performed conform to safety, quality and highest value requirements and in accordance with the well program.
- ¥ Analyze the instantaneous workover and completion data.
- ¥ Responsible for the implementation of all relevant contracts on the rig site and their variations.
- ¥ Provides sufficient, accurate and timely data to office-based Well Delivery Team members.
- ¥ Co-ordinates the timely supply of required equipment, consumables and specialist services to ensure uninterrupted continuation of operations.

Qualifications and Experience Preferred

- ¥ Should be Yemeni Nationality
- ¥ Well-control certified
- ¥ Must have prior experience in this specialist field
- ¥ Bachelor degree or equivalent.
- ¥ 5+ years work experience
- ¥ Good oral and written skills in both English & Arabic languages
- ¥ Multi-disciplinary team work
- ¥ Excellent communication skills
- ¥ Good IT skills including Microsoft applications

Deadline to receive CVs will be 28th July 2009. Interested candidates are requested to submit their CVs and applications by mail to Human Resources Department, by email to:hr.recruitment.dept@gmail.com

Immediate Vacancy

Tanmia for Oil & Construction Ltd. is looking for an **HR& Admin Manager** to join their professional team in Yemen

Requirements:

- ¥ B.A. Degree in Business Administration or any other related field.
- ¥ 08-10 years of experience in Oil & Construction Services.
- ¥ Excellent English Language (Spoken & Written).
- ¥ Excellent Computer Skills (MS Office+Internet).

Yemeni Nationality Only

If you meet the above requirements please send your CVs to the following Email: Note that the deadline for submitting the CVs is July 16. a.sally@tanmialtd.com



Invitation for National Consultant

Oxfam (GB), Yemen office, is planning to conduct a mid-term evaluation for the project Good Governance in the implementation and monitoring of the Third Five Years Plan (3rd F.Y.P. 2006-2010), funded by the Netherlands Government. This project targets national, governorate & district levels in the governorates of Aden, Hadramout, & Hodaida.. The primary purpose of the evaluation is to assess project's progress against its planned objectives and goal and to consider future direction of the project.

What we're looking for

The Oxfam GB- Yemen programme invites competent individuals and/or relevant consultancy firms to apply; therefore a detailed resume showing their technical, managerial, institutional and demonstrated experience will need to be submitted.

The role

The consultant will be responsible for the planning and implementing of field work, including timely completion and submission of the final report (English and Arabic), according to the specific terms of reference & under the overall supervision of the Good Governance Project Manager

To apply

The applicants should submit their resume to e-mail yemenjobs@oxfam.org.uk or Fax: +967-1-450170. Only those short-listed will be forwarded with terms of reference as part of request for proposal.

Closing date: 17/ Jul/2009

السنايبل

دقيق أبيض

طازج من المصنع
الى المستهلك

السنايبل دقيق أبيض
مؤسسة عالمية

طازج من المصنع الى المستهلك

مدمع بالحديد والفولات
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الشركة اليمنية للمطاحن وصوامع الغلال

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SHARK ENERGY DRINK

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تبدأ المسابقة من ٢٠٠٩/٦/١٥ ولمدة شهرين وحتى نفاذ الجوائز النقدية المحددة
إستلام الجوائز من مراكز الإستبدال أو فروع الشركة متكو

تعز: تلفون: ٥٧- / ٢٤٨٨٩٤ صنعاء: تلفون: ٢١٥١٤٥-٢٠٤٢٢٧ عدن: تلفون: ٢٥٠٨٥٩ / ٢٥٠٩٤٨ الحديدة: تلفون: ٢٢٠٨٢٥-٢٢٠٨٤٩ إب: تلفون: ٤١٧٧٢٢/٤
المكلا: تلفون: ٣١٤٢٦٩ سينون: تلفون: ٤٠٥٢٦٦

Congratulations!

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Congratulations to our first Open University Malaysia (OUM) graduates
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Elham Mohsen Mohammed Al- Gohaly
Fabio Joseph El Cid
Fadi Jaffar Abdulla Shawtah

Fatima Othman Ghanem Al Hammadi
Khaled Hamad Khairan
Mazen Abdul Jabbar Abdullah Saad
Mohammed Saleh Abdullah Aboluhom
Rafeeq Ali Ahmed Al- Radee
Sarah Abdulkarim Yahya Rasa'a
Sharar Muhammad Mahyub

Master of Information Technology (MIT)

Abdulaziz Ali Saleh Al-Ashbi
Abdulaziz Hadi Saleh Aborujilah
Abdulsalam Kaed Ahmed Humoud
Ahmad Salem Hail Mahtodh
Hajar Hussein Ahmed Jahaf
Jamallah Mohamed Hussein Ali Zawia

Join us for August intake! Registration for all programs is open now.
For further information, please contact us at : 00967 1373250 (Girls Branch) 00967 1374011 (Boys Branch)

International College
UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY YEMEN
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INCEIF

ABCs of marriage procedures in Yemen

People who oversee marriage contracts have to be endorsed by the Ministry of Justice. They are supposed to receive some kind of education to be authorized to conduct marriages. But once endorsed, the person has little or no direct supervision. The Yemen Times investigates marriage procedures, and how violations can occur because of the haphazard way marriages are conducted in Yemen.

By: Mahmoud Assamiee and
Mohammed bin Sallam

According to the Islamic jurisprudence marriage can be only be legal if the bride has the approval of her guardian, and the acceptance of the bridegroom. Similarly, the marriage contract is not valid if there are not two witnesses.

The bride's guardian can be her father, brother, uncle, cousin or another close relative. If a woman without relatives wishes to marry, she must go to court and find a judge to represent her guardian.

She can also appeal to the court for legal emancipation and guardianship if her wishes to marry are rejected by her family.

The writer of a marriage contract, usually referred to as al-ameen al-shar'ie (the legal bookkeeper), is not authorized if the bride has no guardian.

Therefore, what is known as "Azzawaj al-Urfi" or the "Secret Marriage" through which a man and woman marry without the approval of a guardian, and keep it a secret while living their ordinary life among their families is illegal.

"I do not write a marriage contract in such kind of marriage because it is illegal," said Sheikh Naser Al-Haimi, writer of marriage contracts and the preacher of Al-Hasanat Mosque in Maecen District, in the Northern Assiteen area.

He cited the Hadith of the Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H) as saying, "If any woman marries herself to a man without approval of her guardian, her marriage is unlawful, unlawful, unlawful."

Inspecting identities before writing contract

When a guardian approaches marriage officials with a bridegroom, the official asks for the entire party's identity cards including that of the bride, who is usually not present among the men.

"After checking the identities, I go to the bride to make sure if she is the owner of the card I have seen," said Al-Haimi. He then asks the bride if she agrees to this marriage.

"I must hear her acceptance directly, loud and clear. If I don't hear her acceptance I do not issue the contract," added Al-Haimi.

Al-Haimi, however, does not check the identities of people he knows personally. "In some cases, especially people I know, I do not ask for ID cards. When the wedding party is being held, I do not go to the bride to check her identity or to ensure her agreement to the wedding, because I already know her family, the bridegroom and his family."

If government-issued cards are not available, officials require alternate proof of identification. "If these people do not have ID cards, I ask them for a recommendation from the neighborhood's official (al-aqel al-hara), to affirm he knows these people and their demand is authentic," said Ahmad Yousof, a marriage official in Taiz city and Haura village.

If there are any changes in laws, for example a minimum age for marriage, enforcement is the responsibility of local courts. There are no formal training or refreshment courses.

Writing the marriage contract

Before issuing any marriage contract, al-ameen al-shar'ie joins the hands of the bride's guardian and the bridegroom. He covers them with a small napkin, usually white, and puts his hand over their covered hands. He then begins the ceremony by reciting verses from the Quran that talk about marriage's blessings.

Then al-ameen instructs the father or the guardian of the bride to repeat these words: "I marry to you my daughter (naming her) or my sister (naming her) according to teachings of Allah's book



Aml Suliman

and the Sunna of Allah's messenger on the dowry we accepted which is worth (must be mentioned in number)."

Then he returns to the bridegroom and tells him to repeat these words: "I accepted the marriage contract according to Allah's book and the Sunna of Allah's messenger and according to the mentioned dowry (must be mentioned in number)."

The Dowry

Islam does not mandate the value of the dowry that is given to the bride. So dowry traditions differ in the Islamic world from one country to another, and even from one area to another within a country.

The families agree on the value of the dowry either before they write the marriage contract or during the process.

"The dowry is not defined in this country. I write marriage contracts with different dowries. I wrote a marriage contract in which the dowry was defined with YR 1.5 million, and then another that had no dowry," said Yousof.

According to Al-Haimi, the dowry is based on regional traditions. There is, for example, a complete dowry in which the bridegroom gives the family of the bride a sum of money and does not pay any other wedding expenses. This kind of dowry can reach more than YR 500,000. The money is often used for clothes and jewelry for the bride and for wedding expenses.

Peculiarities in the marriage procedures in Yemen

Although marriages can violate Islam and law, there are no clear means for enforcement. For example, if a woman comes with a hired guardian and two witnesses, marriage officials ask only for the ID cards, or in some cases a recommendation from a Aqel Al-Hara. He has no other means to investigate the case.

"If they come to me with their ID cards and their papers, I write the marriage contract and leave it to their consciences," said Yousof who said that he is not accountable for hidden information that violates the law.

"I always write marriage contracts for the people I know, and if there are unknown people with no ID cards, I ask for recommendation from al-aqel al-hara," he added.

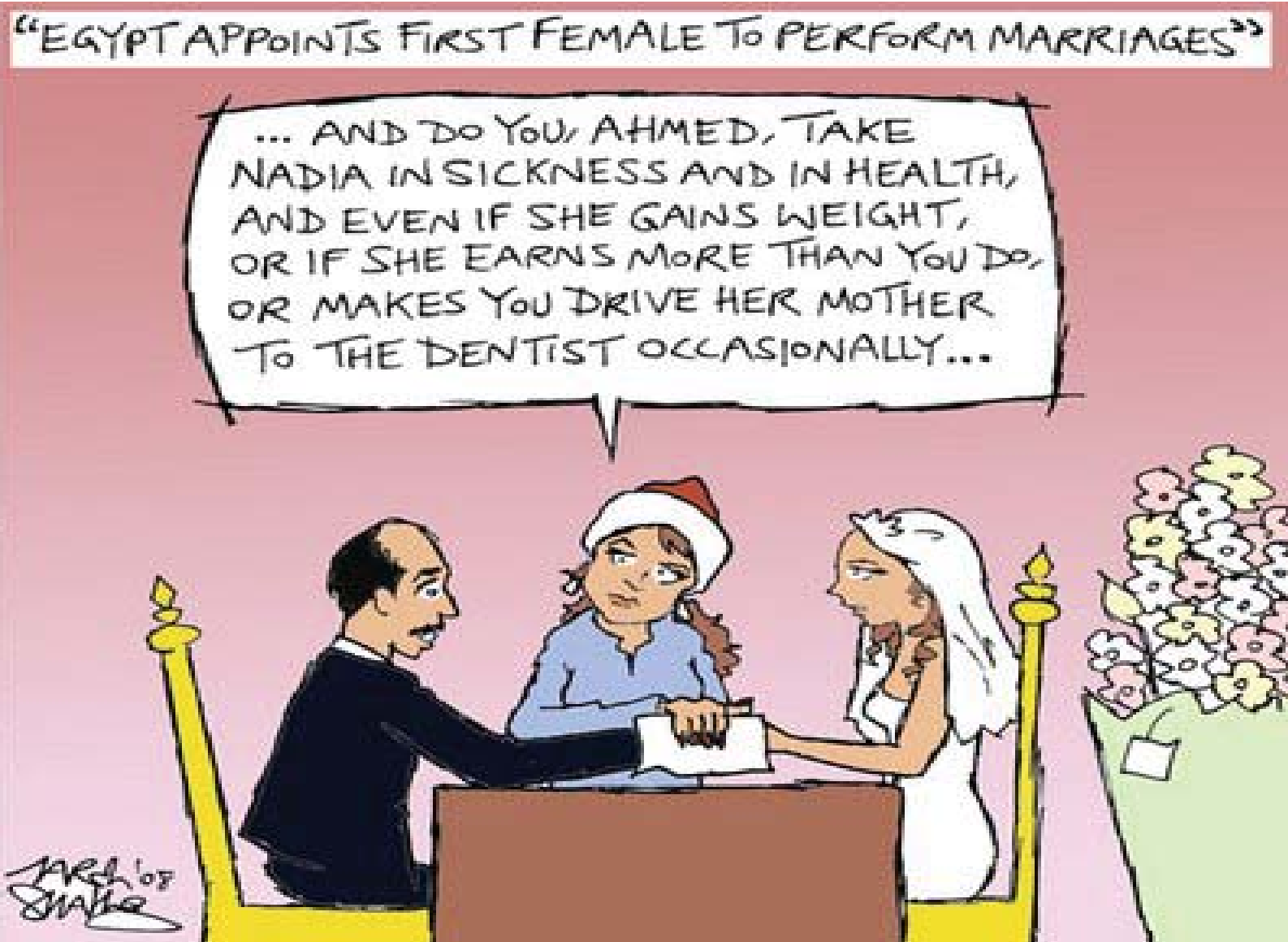
The contract however does not necessarily need to be signed by the couple. It can be signed by proxies for the husband and the wife's guardian, or even a proxy for her guardian. It is therefore possible to marry a couple without the presence of either the bride or the groom.

Farooq Othman, an ameen in Taiz, wrote a marriage contract for an absent couple that was approved by a court. On the contract are the signatures of the proxy of the bridegroom and the proxy of the bride's guardian. And although it is signed by only one witness, the contract says there are several others present.

Some marriage officials insist on seeing the dowry expressed in numbers in the contract, especially in Sana'a, and others do not think it is important.

"The dowry must be mentioned in number in marriage contract. I insist on knowing if the amount of the dowry is acceptable, otherwise I interfere," said al-Haimi.

Yousof disagreed with al-Haimi. "I leave this matter to the contract's parties without interfering. If it is mentioned, I write the number of the dowry. If not, I write only what has been agreed upon,"



In February 2008 Aml Suliman Afifi with Masters in Law was appointed as the Islamic world's first women authorized to conduct marriage contracts. She competed with another ten men for the license and a prominent religious leader in Egypt issued a statement that a woman conducting marriages is perfectly valid in Islam.

said Yousof.

The contract mentioned above does not include a numerical value for the dowry. Instead, it includes only the clause "the agreed upon dowry." This dowry is called "the beforehand dowry."

However, marriage officials agree that it is important to write the sum of money called "the deferred sum." This is sum of money to be paid if the couple divorces.

"Some people came to me to write a marriage contract. The bridegroom and the bride's

guardian already agreed to define the deferred sum as YR 1 million. I hesitated to write the contract because the amount was very big," said al-Haimi.

"The parties convinced me that the bridegroom was rich and already married. The bride's family put this condition for fear he would leave the bride. After I was convinced that the man who wanted to marry was good, I wrote the contract, making the sum YR 800,000."

Court's supervision

The Head of the Marriage Officials Unit in Sana'a's Western Court, Ebrahim Assalahi, said marriage officials must be over 25 years and under 75, educated, wise, have knowledge on legal issues, religious, appreciated by his community and have no criminal record.

The law does not say the person conducting a marriage must be a man. However, he said it is difficult to woman to occupy this job because of the nature of the work.

Marriage official have several other duties besides writing marriage contracts, he said. He is authorized to write legal documents like real estates sales agreements and other contracts.

These types of agreements are usually between men in Yemen. According to Assalahi, it is difficult for women to spend considerable amounts of time negotiating with men.

Marriage officials are elected and then approved and licensed by provincial courts.

The courts are then responsible for overseeing the marriage officials, whose work is reviewed and documented every three months.

Officials' licenses are also renewed every two years by a court. Assalahi said documents are currently archived in boxes, but the government is considering moving to electronic archiving.

Al-ameen has no way of knowing if a couple is eligible for marriage. A man could already have four wives, or a

woman could already be married in a different area. Assalahi admitted that the regulations do not take account couples who want to get married in an illegal way.

"We only treat with such measures apparently, if the documents and ID

cards of all parties are correct, the contract is written and considered correct."

But, he said illegal marriages are a crime and they will be prosecuted in a court if they are discovered.

Al-ameen does not take a salary from the state, however, he is entitled to a

commission for his services. He is authorized to take 1.5 percent of any negotiated sales worth less than YR 300,000, and the percentage is larger for larger sales. But for marriage contracts he accepts whatever the parties offer him. The sum, he said, is consid-

REPUBLIC OF YEMEN
THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND POPULATION
YEMEN-HEALTH POPULATION PROJECT (Y-HPP)
REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR INDIVIDUAL LOCAL
CONSULTANCY SERVICES

to conduct
Preliminary Cost Analysis of Health Facilities in Aden
Governorate (RFP#4)

The Government of Republic of Yemen has received a grant (PHRD No. TF093103) from Japan, and intends to apply part of the proceeds of this grant to payments under the contract to conduct preliminary cost analysis for all MOPHP primary care facilities in Aden governorate.

Objective of the Assignment

- An integral part of the Health and Population Project will support the preparation of comprehensive Governorate Health Coverage rightsizing Plans (HCRPs) to address the priority health care needs of the population efficiently within the envelope of available resources. The HCRPs will be used to prepare investment strategies for cost-effective and sustainable primary health care systems in Aden Governorate.
- The objective of this assignment is to assist an international consultant with the preparation of a rapid engineering assessment of the existing health facilities in Aden governorate and develop preliminary cost estimates for the infrastructure upgrading of these facilities to provide services of acceptable quality, including the cost implication of the implementation of the environmental safeguards requirements within the Yemen health sector context. The output of this assignment will feed into the preparation of the Governorate HCRPs.

The Ministry of Public Health & Population (MOPHP), through the Grant Management Unit (GMU) now invites Local Individual Consultants to indicate their interest in providing the consultancy services.

Qualification Requirements

- At least University degree in Planning, Architecture and/or engineering-disciplines;
- Good experience in public building design and project implementation;
- Experience in engineering cost analysis for health facilities
- Mainly established inside the related governorate.

Interested consultants must provide information indicating that he is qualified to perform the services.

Consultants will be selected in accordance with the procedures set out in the World Bank's *Guidelines: Selection and Employment of Consultants by World Bank Borrowers. May 2004 revised October 2006*.

Interested consultants may obtain further information at the address below during office hours from 9:00 to 14:00 hours.

Expression of interests must be delivered to the address below by 5th August 2009.

Ministry of Public Health and Population
Grant Management Unit
4th Floor — Al-Hassaba — Sana'a
Tel: +967-1-252224
Fax: +967-1-251622
E-mail: mohamedf@mophp-hrsp.org

The three knights

By: Mahmoud Yaseen

None of the three main parties in Yemen can work alone with regards to solving the three major problems currently threatening the state: the south, Sa'ada and Al-Qaeda.

The Socialist Party is connected to the south first and foremost. It brought the south to unity in 1990 and was defeated on unity's behalf in 1994. The root of the Muslim Brotherhood's jihadist ideology is consistent with Al-Qaeda as the latter is considered the failed attempt of the Muslims Brotherhood to change and work through a political party. The ideology of jihad wasn't included in the Islah Party's political aim and came to be restricted to Al-Qaeda.

The president is connected with each one of the three threats to the nation. As he is on a level that is more representative of the central area and state, he is closer to the problem of Sa'ada. The issue is simply that the way the three parties work and they way they are close to each other led to these issues of Sa'ada, the south and Al-Qaeda. This is their legacy, which is quite similar to a family's revenge on other families. The wise person cannot be left alone to bear the weight of the financial heritage, real estate and weapons which were seized.

Can the Islah Party calm Al-Qaeda and achieve reconciliation with religious people who were originally affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood but stopped at 'kill them where you find them?' The development of the Islah party is not a sin that makes the top leaders of Al-Qaeda Islahi officials. Actually, the Islah party can do nothing to solve Al-Qaeda by itself. The argument between religious people now is that Al-Qaeda supporters consider the Islahs who took the path of elections and joined the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) 'fallers on path of the call.' The Islahs cannot do anything with regards to Sa'ada either, unlike the Socialist Party which is more capable of influencing and dealing with the root of the problem, a problem that it somehow caused.

I remember that Dr. Yaseen Saeed N'uman called me once in the evening, confirming that what I said in an interview with Al-Shar'e Newspaper

was right. In the interview, I said that the Socialist Party and its role in the southern issue should be to be part of seeking a solution and not part of negotiations. The idea that the southern people will not listen to the Socialist Party is not accurate. I am not about to prove the opposite by reviewing some particular things, but the political mentality of the south still makes a connection between the fate of its anger and the Socialist Party. The party may join the Southern Movement, and if this happens that mentality will accept that the party is leading the movement.

The idea is that these threats are the result of all three main parties together. I remember that some leading figures blessed Al-Qaeda in protest against the Islah Party following their alliance with the Socialist Party, the so-called 'Aden atheists.' This issue is reciprocal. Islah involved us in a political legacy and made us always in need of it on different levels.

The solution now is for the three to work together to face these threats that may undermine the state. They must work towards this instead of spending their energy manufacturing political intrigues against each other.

Journalists wrote that the opposition lacks a project related to development, as the opposition focuses on political change. It seems that the opposition is right in selecting the subject that best suits its abilities. At the same time, the personality of the opposition suits the nature of the current problem in Yemen which is originally based on history and the rights of the population. It remembers its connection and organizational abilities to act when it finds a problem of this kind to work on.

All of the parties, including the president, have the readiness and experience as well as the tools of action with regards to the rights of the population and returning to a proportional system.

Unemployment, indicators of development, education and building a new style of thinking are a group of confusing issues which remind all the parties of the word 'development,' for example. The situation in the south, Sa'ada and Al-Qaeda are all bigger problems however, and they realize this clearly.

In addition, this situation is the

reality of the Yemeni elites who all agree on protecting the original country. This reality is clear and doesn't condition economic research from the parties or research centers. It just conditions the tools available in the hands of the three parties when they work together.

The homeland, unity, security and stability as well as the idea that 'God's hands support the group working together' are all cheap tools available to the political parties. We are not looking here to deceive any of the parties. The reality is that they created a group of threats which no one can tackle them except themselves. Only they can work together to solve them. Yemenis concede political development voluntarily and renounce the creation of new elites whose leaders are engineers, book authors, students at Sana'a University and people who concentrate on economy, production and knowledge.

Mohamed Hasanin Haikal mentioned in one of his books that a former US president called on centers of research and their leaders to participate in US decision making, saying, "Bring me the intellectuals." Haikal called this process a "historical reconciliation between politics and thought."

The president's call to sheikhs, dignitaries and general secretaries is repeated whenever there is a problem. However, the problem has become anthropological and solutions end up being delayed through improvising and recognizing the principle of 'the right to make reconciliation.' Yemenis granted this right unanimously and renounced the anger of individuals and groups. This is not because they considered it related to civil rights that emerged from a lack of justice. Rather, they considered it as a right of everybody to make a 'tail' for themselves, according to the colloquial expression.

I believe that the three parties will achieve progress against the three threats by working together. As they come to know the problems well, they will help to solve them but will never undo them completely, or else they will lose their job. General secretaries will go to the presidential palace but none of them will think of bringing any of the intellectuals with them.

Source: Al-Neda newspaper

Two disasters: the ruling and the awaiting

By: Abdul Bari Taher

Yemen is living in an extremely difficult and complicated situation. Some of the difficulties facing Yemen are objective, remaining outside of the collective will. Others are related to political practices and the initiative of the ruler; these difficulties are based on dominance and individuality. All of this is negatively reflected on the country's economic, social and cultural policies.

In spite of the pretention that the ruler accepts political plurality and a multi-party system as well as limited press freedom, this plurality is fragile and diseased. It doesn't allow any transfer of power in the elections of syndicates, unions or effective and influential mass organizations such as those that include laborers, women, students, intellectuals, journalists, teachers, doctors, engineers and so forth.

The current state of press freedom is more problematic than political and partisan plurality. Currently the media acts a false witness and doesn't contribute to the development of political and intellectual life. Furthermore, what is published is distributed to an illiterate society in the sense that not only are some people unable to read, but those that can read fail to grasp the meaning of the text. Illiteracy is as high as 60 percent among men and 70 percent among women in Yemen in the countryside. But the form of illiteracy known as 'knowledge illiteracy,' including technical knowledge, is the major feature of both urban and rural Yemeni society. Although on the surface both kinds of illiteracy are in the process of being eradicated in Yemen, the initiative of the ruler has long been to continue and even encourage illiteracy in the country, making sure people are kept in the dark.

Since the early 1970s, the state has been aiming to corrupt education here in Yemen. This was done through politicizing and ideologizing education, cancelling technical and scientific subjects and turning schools into co-ed schools. Hundreds of public schools were transformed into religious institutes that teach Salafia Wahabi trends and curriculums were rewritten in order to foster this extremist trend. Hundreds of thousands of Salafia institutes' graduates were supported by the state to fight in Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina and then in Iraq.

The ruler was able to expand his alliance through sectarian education. He supported the Dammaj Institute in Sa'ada and the establishment of Al-Eman University as well as conservative Salafia schools in Ma'abar, Mareb, Hodeida and Hadramout. These schools constituted the political and ideological background for an Islamic-tribal alliance which contributed to the spread of political murders, repeated kidnappings and attacks against tourists.

The civil war in 1994 represented the zenith of the evil triple alliance of soldiers, tribes and Salafia movements. Despite the controversy and conflict that occasionally takes place between the government and these movements, the connection between the two has never been cut. The repeated wars in Sa'ada since 2004 expressed the doctrinal Zaidi reaction to the national dependence on the Salafia Wahabi movement.

It was a backlash against the leftist national trends of socialism, the Nasserite party, the Union Congregation and parts of Al-B'ath. If

the Salafia trends were the reason behind the emergence of a Zaidi sect known as the Houthis, these trends have become an intellectual, political and even military tool used against the Houthis in the ongoing Sa'ada war.

The current state of Yemen holds that those in power can remain in power and rule individually only through war. It is thus careful to continue fanning the sparks of war in more than one area of the country. It funds one war here and another there but it doesn't allow for civil protests nor gives space to press freedom and democracy. From time to time, it deepens its alliance with jihadi movements in the tribes and with political Islamic movements as well.

The civil war in 1994 forced Yemen into a series of endless wars. The ruler, party or victorious parties in each war look at war as the magic stick that it resorts to in order to solve any problem challenging it. Demands of the southern protests and civilians against degrading their citizenship, appropriating their lands illegally, laying off hundreds of people and discrimination in jobs are met only with fire and militarizing the protestors' areas. According to military and tribal reasoning, war is solved only through war. Force is the sole successful remedy for all political pains, economic crises, high price hikes, issues of insecurity, an absence of peace and stability and the spread of corruption in state systems.

The government reaction to the Sa'ada war that has been ongoing since 1994 was to turn it into an issue of tribal revenge, involving doctrinal and racial hostilities. This action turned it into a civil war in every sense of the word.

The government prompts Imams to issue fatwas of infidelity that impose war against the people of the south as it did during 1994. It encourages Salafia leaders to hold conferences to face both protests in the south and war in Sa'ada. Meanwhile, the government threatens civil society, including opposition parties, which these Salafia movements deem atheist.

The government is unable to answer any questions concerning the current economic, social and political crises. At the same time, it uses force against any demands for political or human rights that can be solved only through dialogue, partnership, equality and justice.

Justice is not restricted only to the corrupt and tyrannical government; rather, it includes the political elites in all the political parties.

The leaders of these parties are not connected with their people's suffering and concerns. Since the political parties were established, they have been accustomed to bargaining in secret rooms to attain crumbs and partial solutions that lead to an expansion of crises instead of finding solutions.

The failure of the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) to pay field visits and lead peaceful civil protests opened the doors of conflict for the many warmongers in the ruling party. This has led to the extension of the Sa'ada war with all its tribal, racial and doctrinal dimensions. It has also led to the continuation of protests in the south, which ultimately only takes the conflict and demands away from the true will of the people.

The people in the south are ambitious to participate in solving political and living standard problems. Their demands to return to a democratic civil regime in which people arbitrate through competence, eligibility and real freedom of choice are real and could actually work. However, the

stubbornness of the corrupt and tyrannical government and the failure of the opposition parties to lead people only caused the movement to disintegrate and collapse.

Closing down eight newspapers based on an administrative decision is one of the aspects of our shrinking press freedoms. This sort of action only leads the way to murder, kidnapping and destruction of the country.

The government insists on maintaining the disasters of its war in the south, such as the illegal appropriation of people's lands, cancelling partnerships with the south, undoing interests in both the south and north, wasting wealth and revenues and militarizing everything.

The state's reliance on military force is disappointing. It should realize by now that the country refuses violence; the memory of war is fatal and suffering is big. The solution can be only tolerance, dialogue, and the participation of all social, political and intellectual groups in power and management of public affairs. Overall, solutions must check people's pain and society's suffering.

During the president's last visit to Moscow, the media reported that he bought weapons for USD one billion. And he is the leader of a country where its capital city falls into darkness several times every day due to blackouts. The whole country lacks potable water and over half the population lives below poverty line. In addition, the state is accused of encouraging sedition and fighting throughout the country. The so-called committees of defending unity are nothing more than a tool of sedition and may lead Yemen into a civil war similar to the situation in Algeria, Somalia and Afghanistan. This is what our current bad governance promises us.

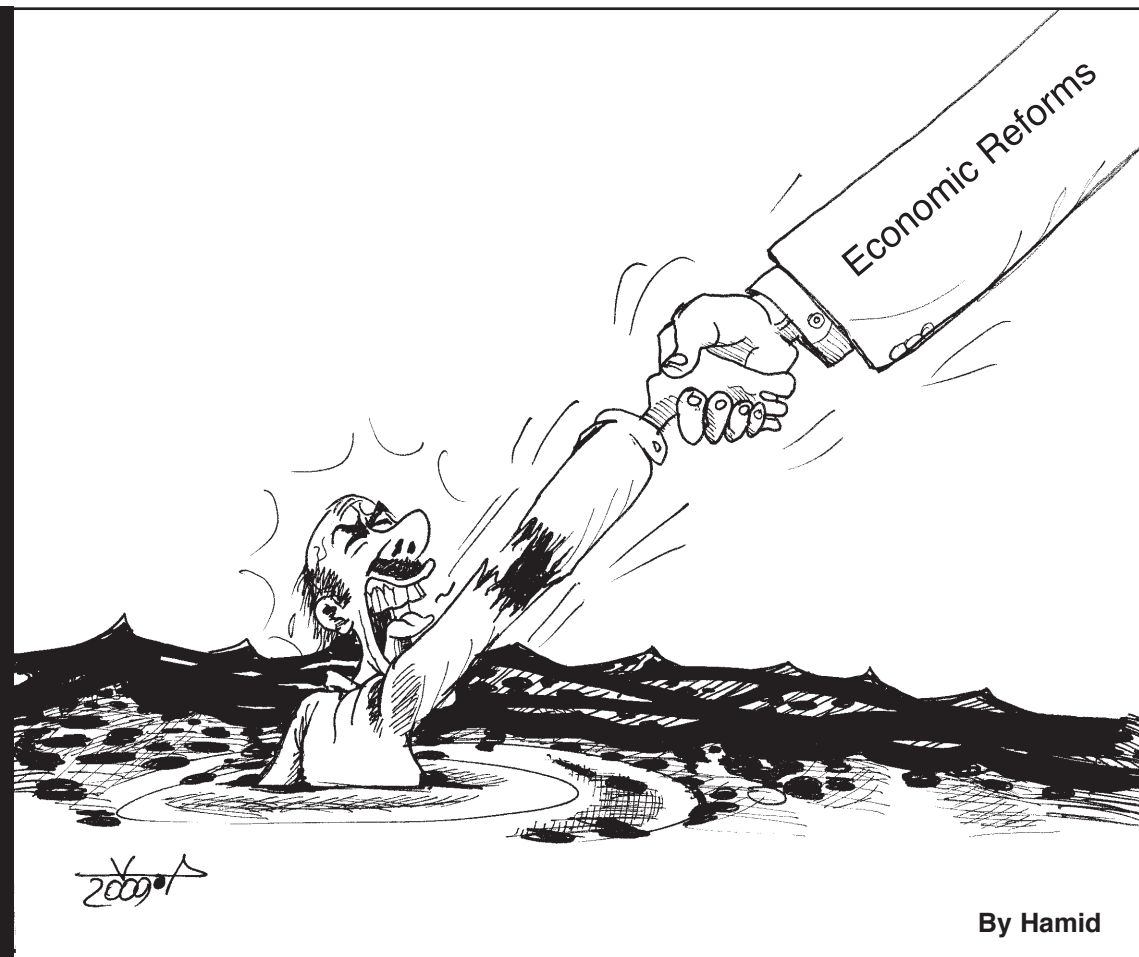
The regime that takes its legitimacy from dominance and depends on force to remain in power will inevitably come to an end. For this end to come about, it needs only the popular will for repeated democratic peaceful protests.

Silence against the closing of eight independent newspapers and the issuance of verbal condemnation alone is only saddening. By closing down eight newspapers, the ruler tore out the final page in the book of political and partisan plurality and the freedom of opinion and expression.

The state doesn't want any voice of protest against the crimes of using arms against civil protestors in the south. It doesn't want anyone to protest against confiscating rights guaranteed by the constitution, law, international declaration and international charters and covenants. It wants the crime of killing the German women and children in Sa'ada to depend only on its version of these events. Furthermore, it doesn't want anyone to talk about or point to corruption and tyranny. Perhaps this issue will destroy us all.

The voices of parties and civil society organizations have grown quiet with the exception of two small symposiums: the Sisters Forum and Women Journalists Without Chains. This has been due to the efforts of Tawakkul Kurman and Amal Al-Basha, two female activists. The role of the Yemeni Journalists' Syndicate and owners of the confiscated newspapers has become absent which makes it increasingly difficult for their supporters. Suppressing press freedoms even went so far as to include many websites, particularly those belonging to confiscated newspapers and Al-Tagheer website run by the skilful active journalist Arafat Mudabish, may he recover soon.

SKETCHED OPINION



By Hamid

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Pink Power: The ladies of Beirut are on the move

Banet Taxi—“Girls’ Taxi” in Arabic—is a taxi service for women by women in Beirut and with cars that are bright pink advertise is cheap.

**By: Don Duncan
The Media Line News Agency**

The dilapidated thirty-year-old Mercedes Benz that Ibrahim Heisham drives around Beirut is as good a Lebanese icon as any. For two dollars, Ibrahim, who has been a taxi driver for 35 years, will take you in his rickety, smoky, threadbare taxi to anywhere in the city. “This is a strong car,” he says, taking a deep drag of his cigarette with one hand and wrenching the steering wheel to take a sharp left turn with the other. The wheels of his taxi emit cat-like squeal all too familiar to patrons of Beirut’s public taxis. It may not be an elegant ride, but Ibrahim has full faith in his vehicle’s mechanical abilities. “It’s got good iron, a good engine and good movement,” he says, defensively. But for some years now, Beirutis have come to expect more from their taxis. Many customers are willing to fork out up to five times Ibrahim’s fare to ride in a newer car complete with air-conditioning, pristine seating and a driver who doesn’t smoke.

“Before I had many customers, foreign customers,” says Ibrahim, a little crestfallen. “But these days, nobody calls me and it’s because of my car.” Beirut’s old-school drivers and their older-school taxis are fast becoming a minority – a romantic memory of times past rather than the defining core of the city’s chaotic public transportation system. What’s more, in the last few months another new rival has entered the scene – and it’s hot pink. Banet Taxi—“Girls’ Taxi” in Arabic—is a taxi service for women by women and the cars are unmistakable in color: candy floss pink. Inspired by the success of a similar taxi service in Dubai and a women-only metro service in Cairo, Banet Taxi has waged a silent “Pink Revolution” in Beirut since it was launched in March. “Sometimes men are just a little hard to handle,” says Lamia Samaha from her seat at the back of the Banet Taxi as it rolls down the mountainside into Beirut. “I feel at ease here because I am accompanied by a woman driver. I also like it for my daughter. She is 15 and I send her with Banet, especially in the evening time.” Banet Taxi started with three cars

and now, three months since its launch, it has quadrupled its fleet. The company’s founder, Nawal Fakhri, says their success owes to two crucial components: a huge, unfulfilled need for such a service in Lebanon, and the undeniable effects of word-of-mouth. The cruising Pink Ladies and their rather noticeable cars tend to elicit attention as they wind their way through the streets of the city, and if there are any women who haven’t been told about it by their friends, they can’t help but notice the new form of transport designed just for them. The concept has placed the new business directly into the limelight. “It’s been phenomenal,” says Fakhri from her headquarters just outside Beirut. “Everyone says so. That even three months after we started, it is still the topic of conversation for many, many people.” With such a vibrant PR buzz, Fakhri spends almost no money on advertising. She has ploughed her money, some \$200,000 in start-up capital, into a growing fleet of brand new cars, all sprayed pink and driven by a crew of drivers decked out in sharp white shirts, pink ties and an obligatory pink flower in their hair. But for Fakhri, her company is not only about providing a new option for women passengers to get around. “I am creating a field of work for

women over 30 in Lebanon,” she says. “When I advertised for drivers, I got hundreds of calls. There are many women over 30 out there who would love a steady wage and a full-time job driving.” Fakhri says her business has increased tenfold in the three months since the launch. But she is bracing herself for even more growth: after the smooth run in Lebanon’s general elections earlier this month and the victory of the pro-Western government majority, Lebanon’s projected \$1.7bn summer tourism season seems assured. The taxi initiative, the first of its kind in Lebanon, has won the backing of the tourism ministry keen to cater to a growing clientele of wealthy female tourists from conservative Muslim countries in the Gulf region. 30% of Lebanon’s summer visitors are conservative Muslims from the Gulf States. Emirati, Qatari and Saudi women, forbidden to travel with any man other than their husbands, are prime potential clients for Banet Taxi. Fakhri expects to double her fleet over the summer but is aware that tourists go home. “I am not building a business on tourism because Lebanon is not a stable country. You can’t depend on the tourist dollar,” says Fakhri. “But it is indeed a bonus. If the women from the Gulf come here, it’s very good for me.”

But the signs are that even when the tourist season subsides, domestic demand for a women-only taxi service has much growth potential. Lebanon has no shortage of women who are skittish about taking taxis alone, especially at night. Yasmine Hajjar, a Lebanese woman in her twenties, took a public taxi at 10:30 one night, realized the doors were locked and the taxi was going the wrong way. Her stomach sank. She took out the pocket knife her father had given her for her fifteenth birthday, “just in case”, and used it for the first time. “I put the knife at the side of his neck and I said, ‘drop me off because I’m not going anywhere with you.’” “That was the point I was glad my dad had given me a knife, even though I am totally opposed to physical violence,” she said. She has since taken self-defence classes, although she is still very hesitant about taking taxis after nightfall. “I think Banet is really good, especially if you’re going to take a cab at night. It’s the safest way to go,” she says. Hajjar says that harassment of women on public transport is rife. Most of her friends have a story to tell of an episode in a taxi that disturbed them. Still, official reports of harassment in public transport in Lebanon are low to non-existent.

“I doubt that anyone would report being harassed in a taxi,” says Lina Abou Habib, director of Beirut’s social justice NGO The Collective for Research and Training on Development Action (CRTD-A). “There is a whole stigma here of talking about yourself as someone who has been abused.” Critics of the pink taxi service say it takes Women’s Lib in Lebanon in the wrong direction—down the path of segregation. But Abou Habib believes it is a necessary stepping stone to eventual gender equality. “As a feminist, I do not believe in segregation, but as a feminist I think ... everyone has the right to a safe space. And if the price is segregation, whether in the short term or medium, I think it’s something to be considered.” What is certain is that in the short to medium term, pink will become a ubiquitous color on the streets of Beirut, an idea even Ibrahim Heisham in his threadbare cab is coming around to. “Yeah it’s a good idea,” he admits. “And you know, I think women are actually good drivers,” he adds, debunking a myth held by other taxi drivers of his ilk in Beirut. He takes a final puff on his dying cigarette. “Sometimes,” he says with a cheeky grin, “they are even better drivers than men.”

Inner strife: How Somalia’s war has ruptured a family

**By: Abdinasir Mohamed Guled
The Media Line News Agency**

Sitting on a mat outside her home in Mogadishu, Jawahir Gheddi, mother of eight, tells a heartbreaking tale of how the ongoing war in Somalia has created rifts not only between the government and the insurgent Islamic militants, but also between members of her own family. Gheddi says she is a ‘partial’ supporter of Al Shabaab, the Islamic militant group who is currently fighting the Somali government and its allies, the Ethiopian forces. While Gheddi and her three sons—one of whom is a fighter in the militant group—support the war against the government, she finds it hard to condone some of the insurgent’s recent actions, such as the mortar shelling of government bases in which civilians were killed. She believes that “the opposition needs to focus on the war against the government and foreign forces, not by attacking other people.” “We support the fighting against the so-called government and the foreign forces because they won’t bring a solution to our country,” Gheddi adds, sipping tea under a tree near her house as two of her sons play ball nearby. “Look at what the Ethiopians did in our country.” Mrs Gheddi’s family left Kismayu, a town in the south of the country, two

years ago in order to live with her husband, Mohammed, who was working in Mogadishu. The situation in the war-torn country means she no longer lives with Mohammed, however: Mohammed backs the government in the war and decries the actions of the insurgents – an opinion shared by his four daughters and one of his sons. This divergence of opinion means that the members of his family no longer see eye to eye. More worryingly, Mohammed has recently fled his home as he fears his sons want to kill him. Mohammed, a wealthy business man, moved to a government stronghold more than four months ago after he received death threats from the insurgents. His son was killed in the fighting outside Mogadishu on 21 March and Mohammed has concerns for the future of his wife and seven remaining children, wondering whether his family will ever reconcile. For now, his daughters and sons who share his view and back the government have not had to leave the family home. “Personally, I would love peace to come soon. I want peace for my children—right away,” he says, sitting in a teashop near his new home. Mohammed and Jawahir don’t only disagree about the political situation in Somalia; they also hold different opinions about the death of their son. Mrs. Gheddi doesn’t mourn her

son’s death as she believes he died in Jihad against the enemy of Islam and her people. Instead she has an unwavering, unremorseful faith that “he died in the right way and will be in paradise.” Mohammed doesn’t grieve for his son either, but for a different reason: he was afraid of him, and disappointed that his son went against him. “He rejected my words and he died in a wrong way,” Mohammed believes. Fearing your own children is a tragic and frightening situation to be in and, as Mohammed testifies, can lead to deeper disagreements and an even bigger chasm developing within an already strained unit. When Mohammed’s wife called him on his mobile phone to ask him to attend his son’s funeral, Mohammed refused for security reasons. But he hasn’t given up hope: in an attempt to reconcile his family, Mohammed asked the opposition group to lay down their arms and join the government, but as time has dragged on, Mohammed’s hopes are fading. Somalia’s rebel groups have splintered and seized nearly all of the country’s regions. They are expanding into areas close to the presidential palace and the president’s home, and have now taken control of most of Mogadishu, except for a few small pockets that are still being controlled by the government with the help of EU peacekeepers.

Somalia’s government has said it will continue its military campaign against the rebels. “I think this is the best solution,” Mohammed says, “the government is right.” But the government is progressively weakening: on Saturday, Somali parliament speaker Sheikh Aden Muhammad Nour called for its neighboring countries to come to its immediate and urgent aid by sending its military forces to intervene. Whether its African neighbors—or other world nations—will come to Somalia’s defense remains to be seen, but for millions in Somalia, the immediate crises of lack of food and huge displacement continue. Meanwhile, in Mogadishu, despite the confrontation within its own walls, Mohammed and his wife still try to meet. Jawahir says her husband doesn’t come to their home but they meet from time to time in areas that are safe for him to go to. She visits these places rather than visiting him in his house, as she’s frightened for her safety as well as his. Ideally, the hopeful father would like to relocate his children and their mother to the relatively safer area he currently lives in, but that depends solely on his wife’s nod of approval. “I would like my wife to change her mind but she tells me that she couldn’t,” Mohammed adds. “I don’t know why. She says my sons are in the group. If peace doesn’t happen soon,

I’ll make my own decision to meet family.” He insists that he loves his family, “but violent views are not welcome.” If the situation is prolonged, will the couple’s marriage be in jeopardy? Mrs. Gheddi thinks not. She doubts her husband’s absence will cause him to take another wife. “He may get hitched with another woman but I don’t think he will, because I’ve grown children for him,” she says bobbing her head and smiling. Gheddi says she might change her mind about the situation in the coming months if the violence continues. Asked if she would retract her support of Al Shabaab and form the opinion as her husband, she says throatily, “Maybe, maybe not.” The Media Line spoke to one of the sons of the family, who preferred not to give his name but called himself Ali. He identified himself as the Al Shabaab fighter, and said, “This is a right Jihad against the enemy of Allah. This is what I want to succeed or die for.” He said he would stop fighting if the foreign forces left the country, adding that “ever-continued fighting with no aim is impossible.” Analysts believe foreigners are boosting the opposition’s ranks, and this has caused concern that Somalia will become a haven for terrorist groups. The director of the CIA announced recently that foreigners fleeing Pakistan and Afghanistan were

entering Somalia to aid the rebels in overthrowing the Somali government, and Somalia’s President Sheikh Sharif said at a news conference recently that foreign fighters had invaded his country. Sharif’s government is the 15th to attempt to set up central rule in Somalia, which has been in anarchy for 18 years. Somalis are suspicious of the government for not doing enough to fight the expanding opposition groups and those trying to undermine its survival, and analysts believe the government may soon be destroyed due to lack of public support, as its predecessor was. The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) says they have no mandate to fight the insurgents, and some three million people – half the population – are in need of food aid after years of fighting. Whatever the outcome will be in the country, the Gheddi family members want the fighting to stop so they can reunite and continue their lives together. Fatima, one of the daughters of the family, says they face a non-existent life if their father is away from home, and believes her father’s opinion is the most righteous one. “My father is right to support peace,” she says sadly, carrying the vegetables home one early morning. “My mom’s view cannot be denied, but we want to reunite and have our quiet life again soon.”

Repairing the dilapidated Syria-US relationship

**Thomas A. Dine
and Sonya Reines-Djivanides**

Like a dilapidated house, the US-Syria relationship has been in need of repair and renovation for years. Since President Obama’s 20 January inauguration call for engagement with “adversaries”, slow but steady and serious work by both sides has begun to restore the structure and substance of the ramshackle relationship. It is old news that bilateral relations had crumbled, lacking the essential cement of mutual respect and trust. For instance, a March 2009 Gallup poll surveying Syrian public opinion found that 64% of respondents had an unfavourable view of the United States and 71% disapproved of America’s leadership. Comparable results could be expected from a sur-

vey of the American public’s views towards Syria. If we were to take a poll today, however, it would likely show a shift in perspectives. An interest in working towards common goals has been expressed by both governments – small steps toward repairing the house’s broken windows and doors. Both countries have taken these steps. Pejorative terminology in Syria’s diplomacy has been dropped and calls from Washington for regime change have disappeared. Instead President Bashar al-Assad and Foreign Minister Walid Mouallem have called for a new start. The Obama team has acknowledged Syria’s importance and its part in forging a region devoid of brutal and costly conflicts. Jeffrey Feltman, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs and Dan Shapiro of the National Security

Council have visited Damascus twice, a US Central Command military delegation met with counterparts in Syria to discuss security matters concerning Iraq and Mouallem and Hillary Clinton, US Secretary of State, had a productive phone call designed to pave the way for further bilateral engagements. And now in a long-awaited move, the United States has announced it will be sending an ambassador to Damascus, a position purposely left vacant for four long years. The prospects for rebuilding a functional relationship are looking up. Damascus will see this appointment as strengthening the foundation of the relationship. But this is only the beginning of a series of diplomatic steps required to rebuild the house. While the US and Syria strongly disagree on how to address many of

the challenges before them, they also have defined areas of common interest. One of these is Iraq. Trilateral counter-terrorism cooperation between Syria, the United States and Iraq on border security is a critical area of cooperation. The Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) provides for the withdrawal of American armed forces, but it does not cover many important issues that only US engagement of Iraq’s neighbours, beginning with Syria, can resolve. Syria has not been shy about its desire for a peaceful Iraq, with a stable and secure central government. What Syria most fears is a country with a weak central government and sectarian civil conflict on its western flank. Syria could help the United States find a constructive military exit from Iraq. And the United States could support enhanced economic

cooperation between Iraq and Syria. Meanwhile, through Special Envoy George Mitchell, the United States is changing its hands-off policy toward Syrian-Israeli negotiations, mediated by the Turkish government over the last year and a half. Indeed US policy makers are finding ways to work with Turkey to help facilitate an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights and create a new demilitarised space in return for peace and normalisation between the two countries. Moving forward, it will be important for Damascus and Washington to acknowledge positive developments when they take place, instead of repeating the pattern of making non-negotiable demands. The Obama administration’s process of engagement alone will not restore the crumbling building. Positive steps will wax and wane, in need of reinforcements. But mutual

constructive engagement is the only way forward. In this regard, Syria cannot ignore American requests to invoke positive change in the region. It will take time to restore the essence of the relationship, commencing with trust and then pursuing a two-way engagement process. Let the rehabilitation and restructuring continue, brick by brick. * Thomas A. Dine is senior advisor of Search for Common Ground’s US-Syria Program. Sonya Reines-Djivanides is director of the Track II Mediation Unit at Search for Common Ground. This article was written for the Common Ground News Service (CGNews). Source: Common Ground News Service (CGNews), 7 July 2009, www.commongroundnews.org. Copyright permission is granted for publication.

Vocational training to empower Yemeni women



Few Yemeni women enroll in specializations traditionally associated to men, such as desk top publishing, computer programming, and photographing



By: Amel Al-Ariqi

Being an electric engineer was not enough for Rina. She furthered her profession by studying photography until she became a teacher of videography at the Technical and Industrial Institute in Al Mu'alla, Aden.

"This specialization is new in our centre, the curriculum is good, it suits market demand and I strongly believe there are a lot of job opportunities out there for girls who want to be photographers," she said.

Rina is among few young Yemeni women who enrolled in specializations traditionally associated to men, such as desk top publishing, computer programming or construction.

Society is still not aware that these new fields of study are most needed in the labor market. Fathers and mothers are still holding onto the idea that their daughters should guarantee themselves a good future by going to universities, even though realistically there are a lot of university graduates who do."

"They blame the government for not creating jobs, they don't think that their sons or daughters would have found a job had they studied in another field of education or training," she explained, referring to the misconception that most Yemenis have of vocational work or training.

"The main issue with technical Education and vocational training is considered as a manual labor and heavy work with physically exhausting and with low income. That is what Vocational training means in the mind of majority of people in Yemen."

Next to no Yemeni women at all are currently enrolled in technical centers focusing on industrial training such as carpentry, electricity, and construction.

Instead, they enroll for training at centers that offer more traditionally women-orientated skills such as sewing, embroidery, handicrafts and hairdressing. But this niche is already oversaturated, and is starting to have limited returns in terms of women participating in income-generating activities.

A few women such as Rina have gone forth and signed up for training in non-traditional specializations. In the academic year 2008-2009, women signed up for courses in institutes across Yemen, according to the Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational Training.

In order of preference, they chose courses in computer programming, office management; accounting, early childcare, marketing, management, photography, desk top publishing, interior design, PC maintenance, telecom engineering, engineering

construction and building construction, according to the ministry.

According to the Department of Women Workers at the ministry that collected the data, participation in these traditionally male-dominated specializations ranged from 256 enrolments in computer programming down to just three enrolments in construction.

The same study showed that women mostly enroll in technical training in the governorates of Aden, Hadramout, Hodeida, Taiz, Ibb, Dhamar, and Sana'a, with the highest and most diversified participation found in the governorate of Taiz.

The study noted that despite Sana'a being the capital, women from the governorate traditionally enroll in the same vocational training courses.

The highest rate of female enrolment were recorded in commercial institutes for courses in secretarial, administration and accounting, or traditional skills such as sewing, ceramics, and hairdressing.

An increased and diversified participation is noticed in community colleges in courses such as information technology, graphic design and internet technology.

And despite its past historical experience of women breaking into non-traditional fields such as carpentry, electricians, and mechanics during its socialist period, Aden resembles Sana'a when it comes to women's participation in the educational sector.

Limited female enrolment

Despite women's participation in the sector having increased from 5 to about 13 percent between 2003 and 2007 according to the government, the proportion of young women in this type of educational system remains limited.

A recent policy brief issued by International Labour Organisation (ILO) revealed that young Yemeni women are more disadvantaged than their male counterparts in breaking into employment.

Female employment in Yemen has been bound by a number of factors that include low educational levels, early marriage, high fertility rates and negative cultural perceptions associated with "women workers," it said in its report.

The ILO argues that improving access to vocational training will supply young women with adequate skills to break into the Yemeni labor market, and keep them away from informal employment which they often fall into because they are under-qualified.

A hole in the market

Yemen's population has doubled in size since 1990 and with an annual growth rate of 3.5 percent is set to

almost double by 2025. Close to 190,000 young people enter the labor market each year, a figure which is significantly outpacing labor demand.

Yemen's predominantly young population is increasingly more vulnerable to unemployment. But, surprisingly perhaps, unemployment was higher among persons with higher education than among those with basic and primary education, according to the 2004 Population Housing and Establishment Census.

Up to 75 percent of the unemployed were first time job seekers, said the census.

The limited ability of the formal education system to prepare young people for the labor market is leading to a chronic 'skills shortage' in Yemen, according to the ILO.

Specific skills lacking in Yemen mentioned by business leaders in Yemen were leadership or management skills, followed by insufficiency in foreign languages, lack of computer skills and ignorance in the use of equipment.

Yet against this background, technical education and vocational training in Yemen, a sector with the critical role of delivering skilled youth to the labour market, absorbs only 0.2 percent of the bulging young population in Yemen.

There are currently 67 operational centers across Yemen and 219 private institutes that are licensed by the Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational Training.

Outside the formal technical education and vocational training system, there are also a significant number of non governmental organizations that target specific types of youth groups, i.e. young women, rural youth, and graduates, mostly focusing on providing life skills, such as leadership and networking skills, civic engagement, and youth leadership.

'Second-rate education'

Despite vocational being offered in all these centers, a socio-cultural bias against technical education and vocational training in Yemen persists. The dominating stereotype is that the sector is an institution associated with 'drop-outs' and an educational system that is 'second-class.'

The ILO study also noted that the Yemeni technical education and vocational training system is mostly supply, not demand, driven. It does have enough linkages to the private sector, and almost no linkages with employment institutions or with the secondary school systems.

This is consistent with the perception in Yemen -especially amidst the private sector and the business community- that the formal technical education and vocational training system needs to produce high quality graduates with more relevance skills to labor market

needs.

The study outlined the lack of systematic monitoring to trace the progress of young technical education or vocational training graduates, as well as reliable statistics on the performance of these or labor market demand.

Obstacles to breaking in

"When I take the bus and I am asked by a woman next to me what I do, and tell them I study at the Hotel and Tourism Institute, she becomes cold and distant," said Nawal, who studies at the National Hotel and Tourism Institute (NAHOTI) in Sana'a.

As in Nawal's case, the challenge for women entering the technical education and vocational training sector is the negative perceptions associated with it in general, and specific misconceptions about women entering this sector.

"In comparison to their male counterparts, young women in Yemen are doubly disadvantaged in entering this sector due to the traditional perception that technical education and vocational training provides second class education, and a system that is dominated by men," reported the ILO.

The ILO however dismisses cultural hindrances as the most important factor behind lack of women's enrolment, rather stressing the need to raise awareness about the sector.

"In comparison to men, women are generally more restricted to the private sphere and have therefore less of a chance to know about vocational training opportunities," said its report, however noting that limited capacity in most technical education and vocational teaching institutions meant that awareness campaigns were not common.

The study further noted that mixed classes in mixed vocational and technical institutes where the majority of students are young men such as industrial institutes are clearly inhibiting the entry of young women.

Handicrafts not lucrative

Especially in rural areas, young women from poorer backgrounds with traditionally feminine specializations, such as sewing, embroidery, and handicrafts, generate less income, said the report.

According to the study, with increasing levels of poverty in Yemen, more women are entering these centers in order to provide additional income. However, the basic skills training, they receive are often not enough to master a trade. The products are often of low quality and no connections to the market.

Despite the reality, many women continue to favor these types of skills because the work can be conducted from home, a plus for women with

stricter mobility restrictions as, for example, specifically poorer women from urban areas.

As employment offices in Yemen are structurally weak with little linkage with either the technical education and vocational training system or the private sector, the majority of hiring in Yemen is done through personal networking, said the study.

This method of job search has a negative repercussion on young women who are mostly restricted to the private sphere.

Women therefore find it tough to break into the labor market following the specializations and often end up working as either teachers in other traditional skill center ngos where money incentive is little, or setting up of small businesses where income is little due to lack of knowledge on project management and business start ups.

Revamping the sector

The ILO Participatory Gender Audit, a tool used to assess the gender sensitivity of institutions, recommended improving the image of technical education and vocational training to encourage the enrolment of more young women in its classes.

It suggested the government launch a media campaign featuring both young men and women graduates, with the latter not only sewing and embroidering as would be expected of them, but also working in less traditional fields such as multimedia or desk top publishing.

It recommended the Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational Training follow the campaign up by ensuring its brochures and website also represent women beside men as successful agents of the new skill acquired.

This would mean women handling electronic controls, not just sitting on desks, for example.

The ILO called for launching a large-scale systematic secondary school awareness campaign to reach not only young girls, but also their parents, and introducing non-mixed classes in industrial institutes with a majority of male students.

Curricula should be strengthened with training in life skills, such as leadership, negotiation, initiative, confidence and applying for jobs, as well as basic guidelines in how to start up an independent business. These packages can also be adapted and specifically target traditional centers with women from poorer backgrounds, it noted.

Progress should be evaluated using a gender sensitive monitoring and evaluation system in the sector, it added.

The international labor organization finally recommended strengthening coordination between the Ministry of Technical Education

and Vocational Training and organizations promoting women's employment, such as the Business Women Committee, the National Women Committee, the Directorate General of Women Workers at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Productive Family Centre at the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs.

Government efforts

The Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational Training has reduced fees for women in order to attract more women in technical education and vocational training. It has also established the Department of Women and Qualitative Training that is in charge of addressing women, the disabled and the socially marginalized.

However, this step has been seen as an approach tends to further marginalize and exclude women by treating them as separate targets, as opposed to equal beneficiaries as young men.

Moreover, efforts have been made by the ministry and the donor community to identify niches and offer attractive courses where women can tap into. Two such courses were identified by the EU, photography and desk-top publishing, a successful initiative that is both relevant to the labor market and suitable to Yemeni social norms.

Since 2004, the ministry is striving through a strategic plan to shift the sector to cater to the labor market's demand, and improve equity in access to technical education and vocational training opportunities.

The plan calls for more courses, development of linkages with the labor market, management decentralization, and improving training centers' responsiveness to employment demand.

Increased participation of women in the system is also stressed in the plan, although to date there is no specific baseline or target for women's participation and no cross-cutting policy adopting a 'gender equality perspective' for equal representation of women and men in the sector.

The strategy's focus is rather on targeting women in the training sector as a separate targeted group along with school drop outs, people with disabilities, and those seeking to establish micro-enterprises.

"Even if woman wants to develop [her skills], there still needs to be help and support from surrounding society" said Filistin, a trainee at the National and Tourism institute.

"Slowly, I believe there can be a change in Yemen, when it comes to women's advancement," she said. "Change will be a balance between gradual societal change and women's own will for self development ... it needs time."

VACANCIES ANNOUNCEMENT

National Microfinance Network Project

The Social Fund for Development (SFD) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) jointly initiated a project to establish the first member based National Microfinance Network in country. The Network will act as a secretariat for the Microfinance Institutions in Yemen, creating a platform for member institutions to strengthen themselves as capable and viable institutions enabling them to reach the poor of the Republic of Yemen in the most effective and efficient manner. SFD being implementing agency of the project is looking for capable individuals, who are resident of Yemen, to fill up following positions of the project, based in Sana'a.

1. Research & Development Executive

(1 Post, Gender: Any, preference will be given to female candidates)

To successfully achieve the objectives of capacity building and increasing transparency in the sector, under the overall leadership of the Managing Director of the Network, Research & Development Executive will be responsible for: -

Specific Responsibilities:

- Technical assistance to member MFIs:
 - Conduct market research and support MFIs staff and management in product development;
 - Stay current and networked around innovations and new initiatives on microfinance in the world;
 - Develop a database of service providers (individuals and companies) in the microfinance sector;
 - Facilitate members requirements of specific information on industry;
 - Facilitate members on new initiatives and interventions on products, systems, internal controls etc.
- Training and capacity building:
 - Conduct research to support development of training modules and curriculum for diploma and certificate programs;
 - Assist the process of customization of training modules;
 - Write case studies and conduct impact assessment of training initiatives;
 - Ensure that networks training services are update and as per current industry trends and standards.
- Increasing transparency in the sector:
 - Conduct research for development of data collection tools;
 - In collaboration with consultants develop data collection tools to analyze the industry performance;
 - Develop industry benchmarks and regularly publish industry indicators;
 - Publish for internal (manuals; technical reports) and external (studies for the microfinance field) purposes;
 - Support the development of networks website and information exchange centre;
 - Conduct research to assess the industry information requirements;
 - Ensure regular update of network's website;
- Develop new areas of research and development and maintain relationships with networks, universities and other research institutions;

Skills/qualifications/experience:

- Bachelor Degree (Masters preferred) in Economics, Marketing or other Social sciences;
- Significant experience in microfinance market research, product development and/or research on impact and client satisfaction evaluation;
- Experience in using a variety of research methodologies — qualitative and quantitative and publishing peer-reviewed papers;
- Experience in publications;
- Excellent writing and speaking communication skills in English and Arabic;
- Excellent computer skills, knowledge of data analysis and statistics software;
- Ability to think out-of-the-box and develop innovative solutions;
- Willingness to travel to rural Yemen;
- Ability to work independently within tasks assigned, and as part of a team in terms of collaborative climate and dedication to deliver results;
- Proficient computer skills in MS Office applications including MS Word, MS Power Point and MS Excel;
- Demonstrated high professional and ethical standards;
- Knowledge of microfinance operations and best practices, familiarity with standard reporting metrics will be a plus;
- Ability to manage multiple projects within a dynamic environment with a high level of urgency without compromising productivity;
- Ability to build and maintain excellent working relationships with the top and lower level management of member MFIs in order to facilitate feedback and enhance implementation;

2. Training Executive

(1 Post, Gender: Any, preference will be given to female candidates)

One of the major objectives of the National Microfinance Network project is provision of demand based, quality training courses that meet the needs and priorities of the members institutions operating in the country. To achieve this objective under the overall leadership of the Managing Director of the Network Training Executive will be responsible for: -

Specific Responsibilities:

- Organize, coordinate and conduct training events and administer on-going on-job training programs;
- In support with consultant conduct training and technical needs assessment of member MFIs;
- Liaison with trainers/facilitators and resource persons;
- Prepare annual training calendar for training events;
- Specialize in designing and delivering training and technical assistance to member MFIs;
- Collaborate with national and international service providers to offer best methodology, curriculum and modules;
- Arrange translation of existing training modules/materials from English to Arabic;
- Customize available training curricula to local context based on the results of training need assessment;
- Conduct regular field visits to evaluate impact of trainings provided and performance of training facilitators;
- Contribute to ongoing development of training material on microfinance:
 - Participate in brain storming sessions;
 - Draft lessons for training modules;
 - Field checks/material evaluation/pre-tests;
 - Coordinate with consultants.
- Contribute to workshops & training sessions:
 - Assume lead roles in local workshops & training of trainers;
 - Take lead in logistics and administrative arrangements of events in collaboration with administration staff;
 - Contribute to training materials, preparation and documentation of workshops, provide technical handouts.
- Take lead in implementation of certificate and diploma program in microfinance;
- Serve as a coordinator of curriculum development committee whose members include practitioners and educationists;
- Attend meetings with donors and other service providers as training resource person of the network and ensure technical support to members;

- Financial planning, management and reporting:
 - Develop annual plans and budgets for the training units;
 - Prepare regular reports of training and technical assistance activities for submission to Network management, partners and donors.

Qualifications/skills and Experience:

- Bachelor degree in a relevant field, preferably social development, social work, sociology, rural development or related subjects;
- Excellent writing and speaking communication skills in English and Arabic;
- At least 2 years experience in staff training or event management;
- Knowledge and experience of developing training programs and training materials will be preferred;
- Ability to think out-of-the-box and develop innovative solutions;
- Willingness to travel to rural Yemen;
- Ability to work independently within tasks assigned, and as part of a team in terms of collaborative climate and dedication to deliver results;
- Proficient computer skills in MS Office applications including MS Word, MS Power Point and MS Excel;
- Demonstrated high professional and ethical standards;
- Knowledge of microfinance operations and best practices, familiarity with standard reporting metrics will be a plus;
- Ability to manage multiple projects within a dynamic environment with a high level of urgency without compromising productivity;
- Ability to build and maintain excellent working relationships with the top and lower level management of member MFIs in order to facilitate feedback and enhance implementation;
- Demonstrated networking and negotiation skills;

3. Finance Assistant

(1 Post, Gender: Any, preference will be given to female candidates)

To assist the Managing Director of the Network in accounting and bookkeeping matters Finance Assistant will be responsible for: -

Specific Responsibilities:

- Monitor and record of all receipts/expenses and prepare reports on periodic basis;
- Day-to-day book keeping of all expenses;
- Monitor budget variance and prepare reports of approved and actual expenses on monthly basis;
- Process monthly payroll and payments to third parties including consultants and service providers;
- Ensure timely deposit of all Govt. liabilities including taxes, utility bills etc.
- Maintain petty cash and prepare daily cash closing statement;
- Liaison with banks and prepare bank reconciliation statements on monthly basis;
- Prepare monthly financial reports including income statement and balance sheet and ensure its timely submission to donors;
- Assist the management in preparation of annual budgets;
- Ensure compliance of finance and accounting policies of the Network, accounting policies and procedures of donors in all spending;
- Maintain fixed asset register and inventory of all office supplies;
- Make sure that all financial records and backup documentation is ready for internal and external audits;
- Work closely with internal and external auditors;

Skills/qualifications/experience:

- Bachelor Degree (Masters preferred) in Accounting, Finance or Economics;
- At least 1 — 2 years experience of accounting and bookkeeping required;
- Experience in reporting and coordinating audits;
- Excellent writing and speaking communication skills in English and Arabic;
- Excellent computer skills, knowledge of accounting software will be a plus. High proficiency in MS Excel required;
- Ability to work independently within tasks assigned, and as part of a team in terms of collaborative climate and dedication to deliver results;
- Demonstrated high professional and ethical standards;
- Ability to manage multiple projects within a dynamic environment with a high level of urgency without compromising productivity;

4. Human Resource (HR) & Procurement Assistant

(1 Post, Gender: Any, preference will be given to female candidates)

HR & Procurement Assistant will report to the Managing Director of the Network and will be responsible for: -

Specific Responsibilities:

- Human resource:
 - Ensure implementation of human resource policies and procedures;
 - Training and orientation of new staff;
 - Ensure periodic performance evaluation of staff;
 - Maintain personal files of all staff of the Network;
 - Maintain record of leaves and benefits of all staff;
 - Assist management in recruitment of staff;
 - Assist the management in development and implementation of strategies and systems to ensure the placement of right human resources at right places and maximum efficiency and productivity of staff;
 - Ensure compliance of HR policies and labor laws of Republic of Yemen.
- Procurement and logistics:
 - Perform all day-to-day procurement and ensure compliance of procurement policies and procedures;
 - Ensure transparency and quality during all procurement processes;
 - Maintain the office building in workable condition and ensure timely repair and maintenance;
 - Responsible for repair and maintenance of all office equipments including vehicle;
 - Ensure smooth supply of utilities, internet and phone to office;
 - Responsible for all logistic arrangements of trainings, workshops and conferences including refreshment, lunch, stationery and all related supplies;
 - Responsible for boarding and lodging arrangements of participants of conferences, workshops and trainings including consultants and service providers;
 - Responsible for all national and international travel arrangements including visas, work permits etc. for foreign nationals working for the network;

- Responsible for safety and security of office premises and all office equipments and other assets;

Skills/qualifications/experience:

- Bachelor Degree (Masters preferred) in Accounting, Human resource, business administration or social sciences;
- At least 1 — 2 years experience of human resource and administration;
- Experience in managing events and procurement of supplies;
- Excellent writing and speaking communication skills in English and Arabic;
- Excellent computer skills including MS Office. High proficiency in MS Excel required;
- Ability to work independently within tasks assigned, and as part of a team in terms of collaborative climate and dedication to deliver results;
- Demonstrated high professional and ethical standards;
- Ability to manage multiple projects within a dynamic environment with a high level of urgency without compromising productivity;

5. MIS Officer

(1 Post, Gender: Any, preference will be given to female candidates)

MIS Officer will report to the Managing Director of the Network and will be responsible for: -

Specific Responsibilities:

- Responsible for development of website and information exchange centre;
- Responsible for development of data base of all relevant information required by members of the network;
- Keep the website updated on daily basis;
- Upload all data and material on the website;
- Responsible for all day-to-day trouble shooting related to computers hardware and software;
- Maintain regular backups of all computers and emails of all official computers;
- Maintain inventory of all communication and IT related equipments;
- Facilitate all network staff by keeping all IT and communication related office equipments up to date and operational;
- Ensure safety and security of all data from all viruses, spywares other threats;
- Ensure 24X7 operational internet and network in the office;

Skills/qualifications/experience:

- Bachelor Degree in the field of computer sciences;
- At least 1 — 2 years experience of website development and IT trouble shooting;
- Proficient programming skills in ORACLE required;
- Excellent writing and speaking communication skills in English and Arabic;
- Ability to work independently within tasks assigned, and as part of a team in terms of collaborative climate and dedication to deliver results;
- Demonstrated high professional and ethical standards;
- Ability to manage multiple projects within a dynamic environment with a high level of urgency without compromising productivity;

6. Translator

(1 Post, Gender: Any, preference will be given to female candidates)

Translator will report to the Research & Development Executive and will be responsible for: -

Specific Responsibilities:

- Translation of written materials provided by the management, training and research units from English to Arabic and from Arabic to English;
- Translation of communications during meetings from English to Arabic and vice versa;
- Translation for the network website

Skills/qualifications/experience:

- Bachelor Degree in any field preferably in social sciences;
- At least 1 — 2 years experience of translation services;
- Excellent writing and speaking communication skills in English and Arabic;
- Ability to work independently within tasks assigned, and as part of a team in terms of collaborative climate and dedication to deliver results;
- Demonstrated high professional and ethical standards;
- Ability to manage multiple tasks within a dynamic environment with a high level of urgency without compromising productivity;

7. Receptionist

(1 Post, Gender: Female)

Receptionist will report to the Managing Director and will be responsible for: -

Specific Responsibilities:

- Serve as front desk officer and facilitate all visitors;
- Keep record of all visitors;
- Facilitate and keep record of all internal and external appointments of the Network team members;
- Serve as Telephone operator and facilitate telephonic communication of the Network;
- Keep record of all important callers, calling in absence of the Network staff;
- Coordinate with network members and other stakeholders for necessary appointments and invitations of the events including but not limited to training events, conferences and workshops;
- Maintain attendance of participants of all events;
- Respond to info queries and provide basic necessary information about network and microfinance industry;
- Maintain dispatch register and ensure smooth incoming and outgoing letters and couriers;
- Maintain record of all incoming and outgoing facsimile communication;
- Maintain files of incoming and outgoing letters and communication;

Skills/qualifications/experience:

- Bachelor Degree in any field preferably in social sciences;
- At least 1 — 2 years experience as receptionist;
- Excellent writing and speaking communication skills in English and Arabic;
- Ability to work independently within tasks assigned, and as part of a team in terms of collaborative climate and dedication to deliver results;
- Demonstrated high professional and ethical standards;
- Ability to manage multiple tasks within a dynamic environment with a high level of urgency without compromising productivity;

Submission guideline:

The application should comprise of a **one page cover letter clearly stating the position applying for** and explaining the applicants' interest and suitability for the position, indicating earliest joining date if selected, and a **CV**. Interested candidates should submit their application by email to: yvn@sfy-yemen.org before the deadline of **30th July 2009**. Applications received after the closing date will not be considered. Only short-listed candidates will be contacted for interviews.

Other information:

All positions will be subject to a comprehensive term of reference and this document will serve as the official task and duties for the above mentioned positions.

Short Story: The Hungry Jaws Series

The taxi driver

By: kais Aliriani

In the last two decades or so the talk about corruption has increased along with the increase of corruption itself. Every day, every one of us is facing different challenges, and those of us who believe that corruption is unjust are suffering from it. Whether you like it or not, you will have to see it, and even sometimes participate in it.

The following is a picture of life in Yemen.

It was the beginning of a new day in Sana'a. The sun did not rise early as usual. It was hiding behind clouds of dust. The wind was blowing, bringing more dust. I just hoped that this would be a nice day. I was determined to accomplish many things, and put more effort towards finishing some urgent work.

I ate my normal breakfast. After that I decided to drop my wife in Bab Al-Yemen, where she wanted to buy few things, something unusual for us to do. We arrived, and she insisted that I park the car and accompany her for a few minutes. I was looking for a parking space; I found a space beside a truck. I parked parallel to it, and we left the car.

After about ten minutes, we went out of the shop. I could not find the car! I was confused. Where is my car? Was it stolen? My car is a small one, only big cars are stolen in Yemen! I went in the shop by where the car had been parked, asking, "Did you see my car? It was parked here, in front of your store."

I noticed about five people behind the front table. They were busy, trying to get their share and feed their jaws from a common plate. Only one guy was sitting in front of the table, so I repeated

my questions, turning towards him. "Yes, is it a Mercedes? The traffic police came, they were shouting on the mike, then they towed it," the man said.

"Oh, and where do you think it is now? How can I find it?" I asked.

"Look further down the street. If you don't find it, go to the Firza - the place where taxis usually park. The traffic police has a yard for cars," the man said.

I ran without even thanking the guy. I talked to my wife quickly, telling her to go finish her business, and I will go search for the car.

I looked for a taxi. After a few of them passed, while I was not sure what to do, I finally stopped one. I asked the young driver if he knew where the police yard is, and he said he didn't. He wanted to leave. Hesitating, I ran after him asking him to stop. "We will ask and find it, my car was towed and they said it is in the yard," I said while getting in the car.

On our way to the yard we saw a police station. The driver said, "Maybe it is this?" I noticed that the entrance was heavily guarded. I said, "No." Then we noticed the taxi cars on the left, and we found two traffic policemen. After asking them, they directed us the Martyrs' Park, or Al-Shohada. I noticed that the park had NO trees.

After turning onto a bumpy dirt road, we found the place. On the way the taxi driver asked me, "Do you know how much you will have to pay?"

"I don't know," I replied.

We stopped and I asked the taxi to wait till I made sure that my car was there. I went in. Two men immediately looked at me and asked, "Is it the Mercedes, or the bus?" "The Mercedes," I replied, after which I identified it.

A fat man was sitting inside a small

bus, called a debab. He looked at me while I was searching for an office. He said, "Go and get your driver's license and car license copied, and come to get the receipt." I went out searching for the taxi which I left at the door. I wanted to pay him. I found him, and walked towards his door.

"How much?" I asked.

"I swear you will not pay a single riyal," he replied while closing the window glass.

I moved closer. "No, please tell me how much I owe you," I insisted.

He had already closed the window, and he was driving away. I watched his lips saying, "I swear you will not pay a single riyal."

I had to go back to the yard. The gate-man was kind of smiling, the other men too. I said, "Please let me go. Just tell me how much the fine is, I need to go."

A man dressed in a police traffic uniform said, "You have to photocopy your car license and get the signature of Al-Omaisi."

"Who is Al-Omaisi? Where is he?" I asked.

"He is outside, probably near the graveyard," the policeman replied.

I was directed by the gate-man to copy the car license at a shop close to the yard, only to find that his machine was not working.

I went back to the yard impatiently. "Please let me go, the machine is not working," I said. The fat man in the bus was still sitting there in the driver's seat, and the policeman was now sitting behind him in the same bus.

"The receipt is for 3,000 riyals," the fat man said.

"But I don't have that much money," I replied. "The car was parked beside

other cars, and there is no sign, so how would I know. Plus this is my first time in this place...."

"Ok, how much do you have?" the uniformed policeman said.

"I have 3,000 riyals, that's all," I replied while pulling the money out of my pocket.

"Ok, the receipt is for 3,000 riyals, plus you have to pay for the towing costs. How much can you pay?"

Without thinking, I took out 2,000 riyals and said, "I have to keep some money in my pocket." The man in uniform said, "OK, but you have to pay the gateman 200 riyals." After giving me back the change from his own pocket, the gateman directed another person to let me go.

I finally got in the car and drove away quickly, as if I had been a hostage.

Corruption is here, it is easy to see, and the game is easy. First, remove all road signs. And even if signs exist, they can easily be ignored. Let a gang tow cars away without notice. Don't let people know where to find their cars either, let them suffer for awhile. Even use the Martyrs' Park as a car yard, since it is more profitable.

Hungry jaws will remain hungry. It does not matter how much salary they receive. They will not be honest just because you increased their salary 50 or 100 or even 300 percent. It is a discipline. Men are not men anymore, women are not women any more; they are just hungry jaws.

Finally, thank you taxi driver, thank you because you proved to me that there are still people who are real human beings. They feel that you are in trouble, and try to assist you. I really admire what you did and hope we all can be like you.

Through
The Mind's EyeBy: Maged Thabet Al-kholidy
majed_thabet@hotmail.com

Dear youth, why emigrate?

Every human has a place to live, but nowhere is like home. Some people like to live far from their own countries, while others much prefer to live in their motherland where they can freely enjoy the value of their dignity.

However, this does not mean that those who leave their countries are denying their origins or forsaking their nation. Undoubtedly, something else a little more serious is behind the phenomenon.

Emigration has become common, especially among youth who leave their families, studies and sometimes low-income jobs to travel abroad to earn and save up money, to study or to enjoy life abroad. Some of them cling on to the idea of returning home, whereas others reject this idea, claiming to leave the country forever.

Those who travel abroad are generally seen by others as doing something good for their country. However, those who seek to live abroad forever are not doing anything for their homeland.

Thus, emigration must be for specific purposes. What happens nowadays to many young men is not acceptable at all. They travel abroad, but they achieve nothing there, so they are doomed to traveling back and forth uselessly.

To make the idea clearer, some young men travel to other countries, claiming that they will save up enough money to start up their lives in the homeland when they return. They plan to put aside the amount necessary to marry, for example. They do this, but the plan is not followed through, and suddenly they realize that time has passed without them achieving anything.

Worse still, they sometimes borrow money to travel abroad once more to save up whatever they will spend on their next return home. Several years may pass in which everything remains the same, or maybe even worse, as they only travel back and forth without gain.

What is the use of such emigration when it ensures no better tomorrow, neither for the expatriates themselves nor for their nation as a whole?

In many cases, hard times come upon such people, forcing them to leave their homeland, although some do not like to. They live far away in a strange environment that forces them daily to drink the bitter cup of homesickness. Painful are the days when they remember families, relatives and the sweet moments spent in their country.

However, the real pain is when they realize that they pay the price every day and without benefit as nothing changes in their lives. Surely, they must have strong hopes to return, but they also have a duty to themselves, their children and their nation. They should seriously undertake to solve some -if not all- of the obstacles that forced them to leave their country and shape themselves a better future.

In fact, if bad circumstances had been solved wisely, the word "emigration" would find no place in the dictionary of such people and the homeland would be the best place to live for them.

Dear expatriates and youth, it is now your duty to walk forth hand in hand to discover the reasons for this phenomenon, and do your best to shatter its impulse. Shape your own circumstances in such a way to ensure stability to you and future generations.

It is better to balance the equation of expatriation - its positive and negative impacts - not by emotions or prejudice, but through the mind's eye.

Maged Thabet Al-Kholidy is a contributing opinion writer from Taiz. He holds an MA in English, and is the former editor of Taiz University's English-language magazine.

Response to Mr. Micah Brown

By: Naji Gazali

Every accomplishment our government has claimed is due to the genius and creativity of the president. Every failure and misery it produces on the other hand is blamed on coincidence or bad weather! Lately and without any hesitation, the separatists and the Houthis are blamed for the government's problems.

Sometimes I wonder if having these forces working against the government is benefiting the government more than advancing their own causes. The government always shows the public that they are in consistent in their fight against nature, famine, separatists, the Houthis and whoever else dares to criticize them.

When the government gets nice and feels that it can no longer use their usual tactics and trickery, they pretend to be transparent by creating an agency to investigate corruption and abuse. They hire a respected public figure to head such an agency, but in the end the guilty party never gets slapped with jail time or fines. In fact, have we ever heard of an

arrest made against anyone due to corruption?

I am baffled how the corrupt people are going to be punished when the idea of fighting corruption is just an act that consumes funds and wastes paper. Reports, after all, never seem to get any further than the desk drawer of the head of the anti-corruption agency. To analyze the effectiveness of such an agency, one must understand that most agencies are created by corrupt people themselves, even agencies that are supposed to fight corruption, and only serve conceal the identities of the real perpetrators.

We must have checks and balances in our government like the rest of the world has, where each branch is making sure the other is working properly. This is a much better system than all employees working for only one branch, not daring to say anything against it. For example, the executive branch, or the presidency, makes sure the judges are doing their job properly, and the legislative branch, or the parliament, can pass any law that it wants instead of creating laws that serve only special interest groups.

If you haven't noticed, elections are certainly manipulated. How else in

God's name have we continued to elect the same president for 3 decades now, not as a monarch but rather as an elected official! Go figure!

We must have a separation of powers, not in name only but real separation that is reflected in the behavior of each branch of government. This will make each branch and each employee pay attention to their own actions, fearing impeachment or any other legal consequence. Absolute control on the other hand will merely create anarchy; only God should have such absolute control over us.

People will say I am dreaming by comparing Yemen to civilized nations, citing that we the people are not ready for such a government. They will say that our government resembles us anyway, referring to the saying "as you are, you will be governed." I disagree completely with this saying and believe that if I actually had any control over who is presiding over us, I would have voted the current authority out a long time ago.

For those who think it is not the time to ask for transparency and accountability in the government

because the union will be jeopardized, I ask them: Would you allow your family to go astray, making mistakes right and left? Would you wait for the situation to get better by itself, fearing the disintegration of your family in the meantime? I bet you would not wait one single second.

We are created to be free and no one deserves to be followed unless he or she treats us with respect and dignity, working for us, the people. Leadership is a duty and not a privilege. Until then, will we see a new agency to investigate the Yemeni airline crash, or will natural elements be incriminated, as has been the case in the past?

Between children and television

By: Mubeen Esam
Mibo_time@yahoo.com

I would like to bring up a serious point in life: our children. No doubt they will establish the future, but what kind of future will it be? Will it be good or bad? Before I get to the heart of the matter, let me provide a picture of how children develop.

As we know, the mental capacities of children are the result of heredity as well as the interaction between the child and the surrounding environment. Parents do their best to foster their children and educate them, and their nurturing can change the child's behavior for better or worse. One of the largest factors in a child's life is the way the mother or father builds the child's psychological structure, making them feel loved and safe. This isn't easy; raising a child is a difficult process because the parents must constantly perceive how to treat their child and make note of what is influencing him or her. The early years of a child's life are a paramount phase in forming the child's personality, and children under 10 years are like sponges that soak up everything around them.

This is where the relationship between children and television comes into play. A recent scientific study from UNESCO indicated that Arab children under 18 years old spend around 22,000 hours watching TV while spending around 14,000 hours at school. Since the beginning of the 21st century this

rate has increased. Currently the average child spends three hours and twenty minutes to five hours and fifty minutes a day watching TV as a result of the high number of TV channels. Watching TV for this amount of time without surveillance helps to create bad behavior in children. Such behavior can include contempt for authority, selfishness, unwillingness to help, mindless imitation of TV personalities in clothes, food, drink or social communication, a lack of social sense and an absence of sincerity. Thus the television becomes a main part in children's lives and a friend whom they have chosen for themselves. There are even some children who regard TV as a member of the family.

Undoubtedly our Arab children watch violent cartoons and spend a lot of time with them. This particularly affects children under 10 years old because, under the influence of such cartoons, they deal with their little brothers, sisters or friends violently. The hatred, the violence, the stubbornness and bad words such as idiot, stupid, trashy, and so on are implanted in the child through such TV shows and films.

Regrettably a lot of channels try to westernize Arab and Islamic societies. They lower the educational and moral virtues of the Arab nations and disturb children's minds by instilling wrong principles in children through their ignoble cartoon programs. Such programs have three wicked aspects. The first one is that a lot of foreign

programs are based on science fiction that is baseless and far from reality. The second is that these programs introduce negative education through disgraceful clothing, love stories, and presenting early love relationships between the two genders. The last wicked aspect is that these programs weaken the literary Arabic language which is the backbone of Islamic culture and education by using disturbing dialects.

Children in their first years watch and see more than they speak or think. Thus it helps to monitor the figures and pictures children take into their unconscious, as children will inevitably imitate them.

I hope those who are in charge act as advisors for today's children. By this I mean the parents, the big brothers or sisters, the directors of TV channels, the minister of education, and the secretary-general of the confederation of Arab nations. I call on them to play a dynamic role against such detrimental cartoons by strengthening the educational and social roles of children's TV. It seems today that cartoons are considered to be a money-making industry irrespective of the consequences of their output. We should create a better balance among education, nurture, culture and entertainment to achieve good social upbringing for children.

In the end, I advise you to choose suitable cartoons for your children and little brothers and sisters to watch in order not to devastate the child's mind and behavior.

Most beautiful thing about you

By: Saleh Ahmed Al-Tam
saleh200945@yahoo.com

Do you know what the best thing about you is?
You sweeten anything that you that you lay your eyes upon
The moon cannot compare to you
Come on I'll tell you the best thing about you
And you'll understand what I mean and what's in my head
You have what I've dreamed of so many night

Let's go, god willing I will die in your love

God willing this love is too much for me
What more could god give me than this?

There is no one as innocent as you
And there is no one to me more precious
You're my everything no lie
Your eyes are my heart, mind, soul and years
I will not retrun everything of yours from my years
And until the very last day I will buy you (it's a good thing)

Words of wisdom

Collected by: Saleh Ahmed Al-Tam
Saleh200945@yahoo.com

- If you are patient in one moment of anger, you will avoid 100 days of sorrow.
- If you chase two rabbits, you will not catch either one.
- Better the devil you know than the devil you don't know.
- Beauty is the wisdom of women. Wisdom is the beauty of men.
- Actions speak louder than words.
- The man is the head of the family; the woman is the neck that turns the head.

- Men make houses, women make homes.
- People who live in glass houses should not throw stones.
- Walls have ears.
- When poverty comes in the door, love goes out the window.
- A friend to all is a friend to none.
- A smooth sea never made a skilled mariner.
- An apple a day keeps the doctor away.
- An onion a day keeps everyone away.
- Absence makes the heart grow fonder.
- In times of prosperity friends are plentiful.
- Health is better than wealth.

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 فاكس: ٢٠٣٣٦٦
 سيئون ت: ٤٠٧٢١٩
 فاكس: ٤٠٧٢١٩
 تعز ت: ٣٦٠٥٠٠
 فاكس: ٣٦٠٥٠٠
 يلحاف ت: ٧٧٧٨٦٦٠
 فاكس: ٧٧٧٨٦٦٠
 سقطرى ت: ٦٦٠٤٩٨

اجمل التهفاني والشريكيات نرفقها
تلاخ / علي محمد الأدمي
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قالف ألف صبوت
المهنشون
عبد المنعم الأدمي - ياسين الأصبحي - فتحى الأصبحي
عبدالله البشري - صدامر الأدمي

وظائف شاغرة
 مطلوب عدد ١٠ مدرسين لغة إنجليزية حاصلين على شهادة بكالوريوس في اللغة الإنجليزية وعدد ٤ سكرتيرات حاصلات على الثانوية العامة على الأقل . يرجى إرسال السيرة الذاتية إلي العنوان الإلكتروني التالي
 eti-teachers@hotmail.com

عقارات
 • للإيجار: شقة مفروشة - الدور الثالث مكون من ٣ غرف ومجلس غرف ومجلس وصاله وعدد ٢ كمبيوترات - تصلح أن تكون مكتب سفريات أو فرع شركة أو منظمة للتواصل: ٧١٢٠٠٤٠٩٢
 • عمارة للإيجار بالكامل أو شقق أربعة أدوار + البدروم مع موقفين للسيارات
 للتواصل: ٧١٢٦٥٩٩٧٧٠٧٠٣٠٣٠٣٧-
 ٧١٢٦٥٩٩٧٧٠٧٠٣٠٣٠٣٧-

باحثون عن وظيفة
 • خبرة خارج وداخل اليمن في الاعمال الادارية، علاقات خارجية ، مراسلات تجارية، ترجمة، تسويق عبر الانترنت، مهارات عالية جدا بمجال محركات البحث و Microsoft Office، مهارة التحدث باللغة الانجليزية كتابة ونطقا بطلاقة. أود الانضمام بفرق عمل في أي شركة تجارية او عمل إداري بمجال النفط للتواصل ٧٣٣٧٨٢٧٧٣

• بكالوريوس محاسبة -تقدير جيد جداً - من أوائل الدفعة - خبرة في مجال الحسابات والمراجعة والإدارة المالية في شركات بتولية - نظام محاسبي المتكامل (يمن سوفت) - قدرة على التعامل مع الحاسب الآلي ومراسلات عبر الإنترنت - دورة في أساسيات التسويق - يرغب في العمل في مجال تخصصه
 للتواصل: ٧٣٣٩١٣٢٠٩

• عبدالرحمن العامري - بكالوريوس لغة إنجليزية - يجيد التعامل مع الحاسوب والإنترنت - يرغب في العمل في أي شركة أو مدرسة خاصة أو إعطاء زروس خصوصية - يجيد فن المراسلات الخارجية والإنترنت
 للتواصل: ٧١٢٢٠٧٧٣٠ - ٧١٦٠٧١٤٠
 • مالك عبدالكريم - بكالوريوس محاسبة - دبلوم لغة إنجليزية - دورات صيانة كمبيوتر سوفت وير وهارد وير - دورات في قاعدة البيانات والبرمجة والتصاميم الاعلانية - النظام المحاسبي يمن سوفت - معرفة عالية بالبرامج التطبيقية - دورات

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تفاصيل الاعلان: _____
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قص هذا الكوبون وارسله إلى صحيفة يمن تايمز على فاكس ٣٦٨٣٧٦ او على صندوق بريد ٢٥٧٩ - صنعاء لمزيد من المعلومات اتصل ب (ت ٢٦٨٦٦١/٢/٣)

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Yemeni artists show images of past while they reach to future



Hand-made painted glass depicts images of Yemen's ancient heritage and modern sense of style.



According to director Bushra Abdullah Ishaq, the exhibit is the sixth of its kind. Former students also show and sell their work independently, she said.

By: Heather Murdock

Ishraq Aqlan crouched near a table of hand-painted glass cubes and miniature qamariyas, and aimed her digital camera. It was the first time she had publicly displayed her art work, and she was excited.

Aqlan recently completed a course in glass painting, and she is one of five women whose work is shown at the Sana'a exhibition. For art enthusiasts, the show features painted glass wall hangings, vases, and imagery of traditional Yemeni ornaments and architecture.

But for the artists and their supporters, it is an example of a small, but growing, number of voices in Yemen trying to amend the disparity between the opportunities available to men and women.

Aqlan and her colleagues are graduates of the Impact Institute for Women Development, a Sana'a organization created to provide professional and artistic training for women.

The artists' work is for sale, and the profits are split between the students and the school.

Aqlan said she enjoyed spending two hours a day for the past month cre-



The French Cultural Center hosted the exhibit that drew dozens of visitors on Monday morning.

two children at home, she may continue to create and sell artwork after the show.

"If I have time, why not?"

The training also provides a venue for women network, according to Ahmed A. Bin-Mubarak, who directs the Center for Business Administration, which also provides business education, and is married to Aqlan.

"It empowers them, and gives an opportunity for discussion," he said.

Impact Executive Director, Bushra Abdullah Ishaq said her organization is designed to help bring women in to the workforce. Her school offers courses in English, business management and computer skills, as well as glass painting.

Art students are encouraged to show and sell their work independently after they complete the course, and many do, she said.

"They are going to use these skills to move to the next level of life," she added.

And while the course costs USD 150 per student, Ishaq said that the school provides scholarships for qualified applicants that cannot afford the tuition.

But despite efforts to provide women with opportunities, according to the Women National Committee's (WNC) June 2009 report, there is still a huge gender gap in education and professional development in Yemen.

Women are twice as likely to be illiterate than men, and about three quarters do not participate in the economy, according to the WNC. Only one representative in the 301-member national parliament is a woman.

Less than 15 percent of the students

ating glass paintings and sculptures, but she seemed surprised at the financial benefit.

"Already, I'm taking orders," she said.

And although Aqlan is busy with

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at vocational, technical and community colleges are women. And, almost three-quarters of university students are men.

But according to the WNC, women's education programs are can effect positive change in a more dramatic way than general education programs.

It cites a World Bank Poverty

Assessment report that says, "The outcome of females' education supersedes that of males, particularly among females that completed their high school education or technical education and vocational training."

The exhibit will be on display through July 16 at the French Cultural Center.

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