

Special press court tries its first case

By: Khaled Al-Hilaly

SANA'A, July 12 — Amid international cries for freedom of expression and rising concern for Yemen's press, the government's special "press court" held its first hearing for a journalist on Saturday.

The defendant is Sami Ghalib, editor-in-chief of Al-Nida newspaper. A special press prosecution has been investigating Ghalib for more than two years.

The court is to look into about 150 press-related cases forwarded by courts of first instance.

Journalists, lawyers and human right activists, however, have described the court as illegal, and as a government attempt to control the independent press.

The government decided to set up the special court in May to deal exclusively with press-related offenses following the media coverage of the unrest in the south of Yemen.

In December 2006, the former deputy Minister of Endowments Hassan Al-Ahdal requested the prosecutor investigate Ghalib, after his newspaper published a story in which private travel agencies accused the Hajj and Umrah sectors at the ministry of corruption.

"At the hearing, the judge started with the first legal procedures, which is the reading of the indictment," said Ghalib. "We demanded the charges against us to be clarified."

The prosecution charged Ghalib with "insult and humiliation." The judge asked prosecutors to reply to Ghalib's lawyers' demand to clarify the charges in writing by the next hearing on July 18.

Two weeks before the hearing, however, Ghalib was supportive of the principle behind the creation of the court, if not the timing.

"If the timing of the establishment of the special press court was at any other time than that in which newspapers were targeted by the government, the court would be welcomed by journalists," said Sami Ghalib, editor-in-chief of Al-Nida newspaper.

"I agree with the establishment of the court," said Ghalib, explaining how journalists used to be tried like criminals before regular courts, not as journalists.

At the beginning of June, the Ministry of Justice suggested assigning judges in the Aden, Taiz and Mukala governorates to deal with press-related offenses. Judge Mansour Shai, a Sana'a judge with degrees in Sharia and law, was appointed head the first court in Sana'a.

In response, twenty-one academic researchers from the United States, Finland, the Netherlands, the United

Kingdom, Germany, France and Italy sent an appeal to the Yemeni government to support free press, and express their concern about the recent crackdown on the Yemeni press.

The appeal was addressed to President Ali Abdullah Saleh, and sent to Yemeni embassies in Washington and Rome. It asked for the end of restrictions on the press and support for the free circulation of ideas, opinions, and information.

Researchers expressed their fear that the restrictions would harm not only the Yemeni press but also Yemen's international reputation. "While reports, articles and books used to testify to the comparatively free press of the Republic of Yemen," the appeal said, "We fear Yemen is losing this distinction among the countries of the Arabian Peninsula."

During May 2009, the researchers noticed a "sharp increase and intensification of confiscation of newspapers, restriction of access to printing facilities and distribution systems, lawsuits against publishers, detention of journalists, blocking of web sites, and use of force against press offices," the appeal noted.

They referred to the Yemeni independent press as "an essential source for historical, political, social and economic understanding of the country."

Yemeni Journalists Syndicate also strongly condemned the recent government actions against the press in an announcement issued on Saturday.

The syndicate condemned measures by the Political Security Organization (PSO) against Al-Watani, an independent newspaper distributor in Aden. It asked the PSO to release a detained driver of a distribution vehicle, and to stop seizing newspapers in Aden.

The syndicate said members have the right to sue the PSO and threatened that the organization will, "carry the full responsibility for the losses and damages resulting from the prevention of the newspaper circulation in the Aden."

Tawakkol Karman, the head of Women Journalists Without Chains (WJWC), agreed.

"The special press court is against all standards of establishing courts in the world," she said "It is targeting journalists."

WJWC has organized more than eight demonstrations in front of the cabinet offices in Sana'a, demanding a stop to what they call civil rights violations against journalists, and that the special press court is closed.

She said the new court was similar to the government's special court for terrorism. Meaning, the government is dealing with journalism like terrorism.

"The charges are even the same: 'threatening the country's security and stability.'"

By: Salma Ismail

SANA'A, July 12 — Every minute a little over 250 babies are born on Earth, and six of those babies are from Yemen, according to the World Health Organization's World Health Report.

This is something to ponder as the 20th World Population Day is marked worldwide under the theme "Responding to the Economic Crisis: Investing in Women is a Smart Choice" on Saturday.

As of today, the Earth's population is estimated by the United States Census Bureau to be 6.77 billion. Worldwide, since births outnumber deaths, the World Bank expects the world's population to reach about 9 billion by the year 2040.

Yemen's population is 21-23 million, according to the World Bank. It has doubled in size since 1990 and, with an annual growth rate of 3.5 percent, is set to almost double by 2025.

Despite the projected population for Yemen in 2050 now being 58 million, 1.5 million less than expected in 2007, according to the World Bank, Yemen's population is growing rapidly.

The small nation's population exceeds that of all six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) members - Qatar, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Oman, and Saudi Arabia - combined.

The infant mortality rate in Yemen is 58 for every 1,000 live births, according to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) 2008 State of the World Population Report.

The latest estimates in 2003 by the Yemeni Ministry of Public Health and Population were much lower at 37 for 1,000. The ministry's report is conducted every five years and the next report is due in 2009.

Yemeni children learn the importance of milk consumption

By: Yemen Times staff

SANA'A, July 12 — Tetra Pak Arabia, the leading food processing and packaging company and its customers recently organized a daylong World Milk Day event, at the Fun City in Sana'a.

The event was aimed at raising awareness about the importance of milk protected in long-life carton packages. It was open to children and families, all of whom participated in a range of fun activities and a variety of interactive games all centered on the topic of healthy and nutritious milk. In order to promote the habit of drinking milk, free samples of long-life milk was distributed on this occasion.

"This is the second year Tetra Pak Arabia and its customers have organized an event to celebrate World Milk Day in Yemen. At Tetra Pak, we believe it is our responsibility to raise aware-

Too many people... and counting

The UNFPA report estimates maternal mortality as a result of pregnancy, delivery and related complications in Yemen to be 430 deaths per 100,000 live births. This number is a substantial improvement from last year, when maternal mortality in the country stood at 570 for 100,000, according to the report.

The Ministry of Health and Population had put this number at 365 for 100,000 in 2003.

Alarming population projections have raised concerns over whether Yemen's resources will be enough to sustain future generations.

In addition to its well-known security problems, Yemen faces a number of economic woes. The most valuable resources in Yemen - oil and water - are rapidly running out.

Oil running out

The majority of Yemen's budget comes from oil exports. Yemen is a small oil producer that exports around 200,000 barrels per day, exactly 2 percent of the estimated 10 million barrels exported daily by Saudi Arabia.

In Yemen, income from oil production constitutes 70 to 75 percent of government revenue and about 90 percent of its exports.

However, the country's reserves are rapidly dwindling and Yemen is expected to become a net importer of oil within the next decade.

The World Bank predicts that Yemen's oil and even gas revenues will plummet over the next two years and fall to zero by 2017 as supplies run out. When this happens the country will fall into chaos as tribes scramble for resources.

A nation drying up

The World Bank has described Yemen

as "the single largest development challenge in the Middle East" — and this was before water-related problems.

With groundwater depleting fast and almost 90 percent of it used on agriculture, drinking water becomes an increasingly serious issue by the day.

Although Yemen has many authorities specialized in dealing with water management, such as the Ministry of Water and Environment and the National Water Resource Authority, the latter face many difficulties in implementing the law.

Such authorities have lacked the technical means, legal instruments and political will to regulate groundwater extraction.

Already, tribal conflicts over water resources in some governorates have been deadly. The water basin for the capital Sana'a alone is estimated to run out of water in as little as 15 years.

Education is the answer

Investments in education and health for women and girls have been linked to increases in productivity, agricultural yields, and national income, all of which contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), according to the UNFPA.

In Yemen, the gender gap in education is high. Two thirds of women in Yemen are illiterate and UNICEF is working with the government to enroll girls into school to receive a full education.

Persistent efforts have paid off, and the literacy rate for women aged 15-24 stands at 67 percent, according to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) The State of the World's Children 2009.

The country has made considerable strides in education. With incentives to encourage girls to attend school and

widespread illiteracy eradication classes, the average illiteracy rate has been reduced from 56 percent to 45.7 percent over the last 10 years.

Illiteracy among women is currently at 62.1 percent and 29.8 percent among men, according to the Ministry of Education.

Investing in women and girls

Many population experts believe the answer to slowing down population growth lies in improving the health of women and children in developing nations, like Yemen.

By reducing poverty and infant mortality, increasing women and girls' access to basic human rights like health care, education, economic opportunity, educating women about birth control options and ensuring access to voluntary family planning services, women will choose to limit family size.

"I call on all leaders to make the health and rights of women a political and development priority," says Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, UNFPA Executive Director.

"Investing in women and girls will set the stage not only for economic recovery, but also for long-term economic growth that reduces inequity and poverty."

There is no smarter investment in troubled times."

In his statement, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called on decision-makers to "protect women's ability to earn income, keep their daughters in school, and obtain reproductive health information and services, including voluntary family planning."

Despite progress there are more measures to be taken for the Yemen's population to grow in tandem with its economic achievements.



part of Tetra Pak Arabia's ongoing drive to raise awareness about the health benefits of packaged milk products in the region.

The company has also organized similar awareness raising activities in Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait and

Bahrain.

There are many countries have celebrated the first World Milk Day since 200. Taking place on the 1st June every year, the World Milk Day is promoted by Food & Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Recent gains in eradicating hunger and poverty endangered by economic and food crises, says UN report

SANA'A, July 12 — More than halfway to the 2015 deadline to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), major advances in the fight against poverty and hunger have begun to slow or even reverse as a result of the global economic and food crises, a progress report by the United Nations has found.

The assessment, launched today by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in Geneva, warns that, despite many successes, overall progress has been too slow for most of the targets to be met by 2015.

"We cannot allow an unfavorable economic climate to prevent us from realizing the commitments made in 2000," Mr. Ban states in the foreword to the Millennium Development Goals Report 2009. "The global community cannot turn its back on the poor and the vulnerable." He adds: "Now is the time to accelerate progress towards the MDGs. The goals are within reach, and even in the very poor countries, with strong political commitment and sufficient and sustained funding."

Globally, the picture is mixed:

- Gains in the eradication of hunger since the early 1990s—when the proportion of hungry people decreased from 20 percent in 1990-

92 to 16 percent in 2004-06 — was reversed in 2008, largely due to higher food prices. A decrease in international food prices in the second half of 2008 has since failed to translate into more affordable food for most people around the world.

- In the period 1990 to 2005, the number of people living on less than \$1.25 a day decreased from 1.8 billion to 1.4 billion (prior to the economic crisis and higher food prices). But major gains in the fight against extreme poverty are likely to stall, indicators show, although data are not yet available to reveal the full impact of the recent economic downturn. In 2009, an estimated 55 million to 90 million more people will be living in extreme poverty than anticipated before the crisis.
- More than one-quarter of children in developing regions are underweight for their age, and the meager progress on child nutrition from 1990 to 2007 is insufficient to meet the 2015 target. This will likely be eroded further by high food prices and economic turmoil.
- Global unemployment in 2009 could reach 6.1 to 7.0 per cent for men and 6.5 to 7.4 per cent for women, many of whom remain

trapped in insecure — often unpaid — jobs, holding back progress towards gender equality.

Furthermore, the report suggests that many global gains were due to a dramatic fall in poverty rates in East Asia. Elsewhere, progress has been slower. Sub-Saharan Africa counted 100 million more extremely poor people in 2005 than in 1990, and the poverty rate remained above 50 per cent.

The MDG Report also says that funding gaps are evident for programs needed to improve maternal health (MDG 5), the goal towards which least progress has been made so far. Most developing countries have experienced a major reduction in donor funding for family planning since the mid-1990s, on a per woman basis, despite the undeniable contribution of such programs to maternal and child health.

The ability of countries themselves to finance development programs may also be in jeopardy. Export revenues of developing countries fell in the last quarter of 2008, as the financial meltdown in high-income economies began to trickle down.

The debt service to export ratio of developing countries is likely to deteriorate further, especially for those countries that enjoyed increased export revenues for the last several years. At the

2005 Group of Eight summit at Gleneagles and at the General Assembly World Summit later that year, donors committed to increasing their aid. The majority of these commitments remain in force, but as the global economy contracts in 2009, as anticipated, the absolute amount of such commitments would diminish, since most are expressed as a percentage of national income. For many developing countries, lower levels of aid would not only impede further progress, but could reverse some of the gains already made, says the MDG Report.

Major advances before the economic crisis

The report portrays remarkable advances that many countries and regions had made before the economic landscape changed so radically in 2008:

- In the developing world, enrolment in primary education reached 88 per cent in 2007, up from 83 per cent in 2000.
- In sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia, enrolment increased by 15 percentage points and 11 percentage points, respectively, from 2000 to 2007.
- Deaths in children under five declined steadily worldwide — to around 9 million in 2007, down

from 12.6 million in 1990, despite population growth. Although child mortality rates remain highest in sub-Saharan Africa, there have been remarkable improvements in key interventions, including the distribution of insecticide-treated bed nets to reduce the toll of malaria — a major killer of children. As a result of 'second chance' immunizations, dramatic progress is also being made in the fight against measles.

- Worldwide, the number of people newly infected with HIV peaked in 1996 and has since declined, to 2.7 million in 2007. The estimated number of AIDS deaths also appears to have peaked, in 2005, at 2.2 million, and has since declined to 2 million in 2007, partly due to increased access to antiretroviral drugs in poorer countries. Still, the number of people living with HIV worldwide — estimated at 33 million in 2007 — continues to grow, largely because people infected with the virus are surviving longer.

Challenges

The report calls on governments and all stakeholders to revitalize efforts to provide productive and decent employment for all, including women and young people. It points out that employment

opportunities for women in Southern Asia, Northern Africa and Western Asia remain extremely low.

The target of eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 has already been missed.

The report urges governments to intensify efforts to get all children into school, especially those living in rural communities, and eliminate inequalities in education based on gender and ethnicity.

Greater political will must be mustered to reduce maternal mortality, especially in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia, according to the report. Rapid acceleration of progress is needed to bring improved sanitation — toilets or latrines — to the 1.4 billion people still lacking, or the 2015 sanitation target will be missed. And slum improvements are barely keeping pace with the rapid growth of developing country cities.

The UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Sha Zukang, described the report as the most comprehensive global MDG assessment to date. It is based, he said, on a set of data prepared by over 20 organizations both within and outside the United Nations system, including the World Bank and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Their News

Citizenship and the Issue of the State in Islam Thought

Within the series of The Human Rights studies, the Women Forum for Research and Training (WFRT) has published a new book entitled:

Citizenship and the Issue of the State in Islam Thought as the English version of the same

book in Arabic. The book holds NO. (17) of the series and is written by Dr. Abdul Karim Kassem, the professor of philosophy in Sana'a University.

This book has been distributed to several local and international institute, libraries, research centers, and NGOs. The book was also distributed last month to more than hundreds of partic-

ipants who were participating at a World conference in Brazil where WFRT had an opportunity to be there.

WFRT would like to announce that copies of the book are available for free for more research centers, NGOs, and libraries.

Global development awards and medals competition 2009

The Global Development Network (GDN) is now accepting submissions for the 2009 Global Development Awards and Medals Competition. The Competition offers cash prizes and travel expenses to all finalists to attend GDN's Annual Global Development Conference, held each year in a different country, to present their research proposals/papers and showcase an interesting on-project before an eminent jury for the final round. This year the final selection will be held in Prague, Czech Republic from January 16-18, 2010. The competition is generously funded by the Ministry of Finance, Government of Japan and other donors.

GDN's competition is one of the biggest annual contests in the field of development research, receiving the largest number of applications globally from researchers working on development issues. Submissions for new research proposals, completed research papers and proposals for scaling-up on-going development projects are now being

accepted under the categories listed below:

Japanese Award for Outstanding Research on Development: For applicants who have outstanding new research proposals that add a unique dimension to research on any of the three themes listed below

Prizes: First Prize: US \$30,000; Second Prize: US \$5,000

Medals for Research on Development: For excellent completed research papers on any of the three themes listed below

Prizes: First Prize: US \$10,000; Second prize: US \$5,000

Japanese Award for the Most Innovative Development Project: For exceptional on-going development projects that have given the maximum benefit to the local communities and need further financial assistance for scaling-up the project

Prizes: First Prize: US \$30,000; Second Prize: US\$ 5,000

The 2009 Global Development Awards and Medals Competition themes are: Globalization, Regulation and Development International Migration: Crossing Borders, Changing Lives?

Regional Integration- Convergence Big Time, or, an Opportunity Wasted? The competition is open to researchers and organizations from developing and transition countries. Submissions are welcome from all disciplines of social sciences.

Deadline: August 24, 2009 for development project; September 30, 2009 for research proposals/papers.

For more information please go to: <http://www.gdnet.org/cms.php?id=2009awards>

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On this site [<http://www.australian-scholarships.gov.au>] you will find information about each of the opportunities, including eligibility criteria, value of awards and key dates.

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Furnishing Yemen's first media library

MWF has been working to establish a media library that contains valuable books and references on media, general knowledge and rights in addition to a wide variety of studies and researches. It invites you to help to enrich Yemeni press by contributing to this library in order to enable journalists, media students and other interested people to develop their media knowledge and skills through your publications as well as through books that you may as well donate to this project.

It intends to dedicate a specific area for each participating institution or organization that has multiple publications (i.e. Saba News Agency section). Visits most welcome any time.



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Block 10 partners allocate additional \$850,000 for post-floods relief efforts

Nine months after the catastrophic floods that affected Wadi Hadramout Region and in addition to the immediate emergency aids provided during the floods, Total E&P Yemen and its Block 10 partners: Occidental, Sinochem, and Kufpec are pleased to allocate \$850,000 (Eight Hundred Fifty Thousands Dollars) in order to execute an Agricultural Rehabilitation Programme designed altogether with the local authorities in Hadramout. This allocation will be utilized to finance two projects: The first project is to help the affected people in Wadi Hadramout to retrieve their lands leveled and ready for cultivation as part of a tangible effort to alleviate the impact of the floods on the farmers. While finalizing the current efforts of cleaning and leveling the lands through the removal of thousands of dead palm trees, work has been started to restore and reinforce the irrigation system. In addition, a support programme to distribute cattle to those who have lost theirs during the floods will be organized.

The second project is to conduct a feasibility study that will help improve energy access for local population in Wadi Hadramout. This study



will result in significant approaches that will be advantageously applicable in diversifying new sources of energy in the region.

Mr. Martin Deffontaines, the General Manager of Total E&P Yemen stated on behalf of the B10 partners, 'I can say, with full confidence, that this financial support by Block 10 partners is based on our commitment to help the local communities and on the

strong ties we enjoy with them. I was admirably amazed by the courage of the local people in Wadi Hadramout who ably and unbelievably overcame the floods catastrophe. During and immediately after the floods, we assisted to meet emergency needs in the region. Today, we are happy to contribute more to the efforts aiming to improve the daily life of the local affected population.'

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مناقصه رفع كفاءة محطة المعالجة في صنعاء
قرض الصندوق العربي (٩٩/٣٨٣)

بالإشارة لإعلان طرح المناقصة بشأن أعلاه وبحسب طلب عدد من الشركات تعلن المؤسسة المحلية للمياه والصرف الصحي بأمانة العاصمة عن تمديد الموعد النهائي لتقديم العروض الى يوم ٢٦/٠٨/٢٠٠٩ الساعة (١:٢٠) الواحد والنصف ظهرا في عنوان المؤسسة المبين أدناه.

عنوان المؤسسة المحلية للمياه والصرف الصحي:

الحصبة - بجانب وزارة الصحة العامة والإسكان شارع الحصبة
صنعاء - الجمهورية اليمنية
هاتف + ٩٦٧١٢٣٠٦٥٦
فاكس + ٩٦٧١٢٣٠٦٥٦
بريد الالكتروني cdteam@y.net.ye

Bid Submission Postponement Announcement

Sana'a Water Supply & Sanitation Local Corporation
Sana'a Wastewater Networks Project
Sana'a Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade Tender
AFESD Loan No.383-99.

Reference to the previous announcement for the above mentioned Tender and as a response to the requests of some companies for extension

Sana'a Water and Sanitation Local Corporation now announces that the final Bid Submission Date for the Tender is postponed till 26th Aug. 2009 at (1:30) pm at the corporation address below mentioned.

SWSLC Address:

Al-Hasaba. Beside the Ministry of Public Health & Population
Al-Hasaba Street., Al-Hasaba.
Sana'a, Republic of Yemen
Phone + 967 1230656
Fax + 967 1230656
E-mail cdteam@y.net.ye

أجمل التعاني وأطيب التبركات نغديها لطالب الشاظر

إلياس جميل القباطي

بمناسبة النجاح وانتقاله الى الصف الرابع
واحرازه المركز الاول.. فآله ألف مبروك

والدتك واخوانك وخالاتك وجميع الال والاصدقاء

الهاتفون

أجمل التعاني وأطيب التبركات نغديها للأستاذ

أحمد عبد الولي الاصبحي

بمناسبة عقد القران وقرب الرفاق
.. فآله ألف مبروك

والدك / عبد الولي الاصبحي - اخوك / يوسف الاصبحي - الحاج / سعيد عبد الجبار - العقيد / عبد الجليل الاصبحي
وجميع الال والاصدقاء

أجمل التعاني وأطيب التبركات نغديها للأستاذ

محمد ثابت

بمناسبة زفاف ابنه
تميم

تتمنى له حياة زوجية سعيدة .. فآله ألف مبروك

م / عبد الحكيم مانع العلي (القائم بأعمال مدير دائرة التشغيل والصيانة - مضافة مارب)
م / اكرم السقايف - م / مالك الاصبحي - د / عزيز السقايف وجميع الال والاصدقاء

Director of the Widow Project, Samira Assabahi to the Yemen Times “My goal is to qualify widows for work”

By : Mahmoud Assamiee

A new ideal and humanitarian project to help widows has now been established by this creative and noble lady who is herself a widow. The project is called Milad Al-Amal Foundation Project for Humanitarian Services.

The project helps women who cannot support themselves after their husbands have died or gone missing. Assabahi has devoted herself to this project in order to help serve these poor women forgotten by society.

Assabahi finished high school at Assabieen Martyrs Schools in 1996. After graduating, she got married. She lived with her husband for only one month when he abruptly died. Finding herself a widow, she decided to continue her studies and enrolled in the Faculty of Law, Sana'a University. She received her degree in 2002, after which she got a diploma from the Program of Qualifying Young Female Leaders and then started her project.

The Yemen Times talked with Samira Assabahi to find out more about the Milad Al-Amal Foundation Project in the following interview.

Q: How did the idea of the project come to your mind?

A: The idea came from witnessing directly the suffering of widows I know. I have met many widows who have a very difficult life after losing their supporters. One of the widows I know was forced out of her home because she could not pay the rent for four months. This woman lived in a tent until my relative and I helped her to pay the landlord and return to her rented house. Because I am a widow, I feel the suffering of widows and I have directly experienced what widows need.

The other thing is that governmental bodies or other organizations are only taking care of children and are ignor-



“I hope I can establish a housing project for widows who cannot pay for an apartment or home of their own.”

ing the mothers. This is how I thought about establishing a project for widows.

Q: When did you establish the project and what are its aims?

A: I went to the Girls World Language Center to take some courses. I enrolled in the Qualifying Female Young Leaders Program and after two years of study I had to present a project in order to graduate. This is how the widow project got started. Because the project was new and worthwhile, I received YR 500,000 to launch it. So

the project was established with this money in June 2008.

The project aims at helping widows and those who are like widows who have lost their husbands. It aims to support these women by training them to manage small-sized projects to live on. The project also provides financial support for them.

Q: Who are the beneficiaries?

A: The project is open to all women who have lost their support, like those whose husbands have died, divorced women, women whose husbands are

imprisoned or lost, those who suffer from poverty without supporters and women who are supporters of children or support themselves.

Q: What are the achievements of the project up until now?

A: We have trained 30 women in sewing, preparing incense, educating them to read and write and how to prepare foods sold as goods. We have now 43 women who are being trained in sewing, home management, hairstyle techniques, memorizing the Holy Quran and literacy in general.

Q: Who supports this project? Where do the revenues come from?

A: The project is supporting itself. We take monthly fees from women who are not targeted by the project but come to learn. We take YR 200 a month for illiteracy courses, 500 for sewing courses and 200 for hairstyling lessons. We benefit from these fees to support widows and those who are like widows. So the revenues come from self support, the occasional donation and monthly fees from the members.

Q: Do you grant certificates to those who graduate?

A: Graduates are granted certificates upon completion of their specialized course. The period of the course lasts from one week to two months according to the nature of the course itself. For example, learning how to prepare incense and home management courses take one week while sewing courses take more than two months. Sewing is divided into several levels. Level one is training on preparing school uniforms and children's clothes, level two is women's dresses, level three is for preparing jeans and trousers and the fourth level is sewing men's jackets.

Q: What are your future aspirations to develop the project?

A: I wish I had money to loan women to set up their special projects. I hope also to create a sewing workshop, a sweets kitchen, a beauty salon and a computer center. I plan to have a show for our clothes products. I wish I could have an independently owned building for the project instead of renting. Finally, I hope I can establish a housing project for widows who cannot pay for an apartment or home of their own.

Q: Who works for your project?

A: The employees are all female and there are six of them: the manager, the training and programs' officer, the

financial officer, the head of the voluntary committee, the head of the sponsorship committee and the officer of the widows sector. The whole number of the cadre and members of the project are 16, four men and 12 women. They are all contributing to the project's revenues.

Q: How do you pay the wages of the trainers?

A: We pay them from these donations, fees and from monthly contributions of the members.

Q: What are the problems facing the project?

A: We face several problems. The main one concerns me directly. Because my mobile number is listed on the brochures, I receive frequent calls of harassment. Another major problem facing the project is that there are visitors who come to the building of the project asking investigative questions and accuse us of doing bad things. Some women stopped coming to training because of rumors by others that the work of the project is missionary and has secrets behind attracting women, particularly widows.

Q: What is the message you want to convey through the Yemen Times?

A: I hope that all donors and institutions pay attention to the project by providing financial assistance because the project serves a neglected category of people who are in desperate need of support. I also hope that charities and the government will support this project.

I would like to inform people that the Milad Al-Amel Foundation Project for Humanitarian Services is a very humanitarian project and is not affiliated with any political entity. I hope through the media to shed lights on such projects. I call women not to indulge themselves in problems but to think on being productive and not needy.



“Learning Through Playing”
“Summer Program”

OBJECTIVE

Manarat Summer offers children a learning experience with a difference that exercises both their mind and body. We aim to stretch and challenge your child's academic and creative abilities, while immersing them in an atmosphere of fun.

ACTIVITIES

- Swimming (B or I or A)
- Basket Ball
- Gymnastics
- Computer
- Art and Crafts
- Taekwondo
- Soccer
- Music / Drama
- Toys and games

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The summer program is open to MANARAT and non-MANARAT students, starting on the 4th of July and ending on the 5th of August 2009. The program will run from Saturday to Wednesday, from 8:30 a.m till 1:30 p.m.

*Children will also have the opportunity to embark on weekly educational and fun trips.

*Our summer program is divided into two categories ; The Early Years Program and the Activities / Enrichment Program.

We appreciate your interest in Manarat and warmly welcome you to visit us.
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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: yymn@sfd-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.

Elaghil Group launches the new Volvo XC60



Mr. Steve Beattie



Mr. Abdullah Ahmed Elaghil

Elaghil Group held on Tuesday 7th July, 2009 at Movenpick Hotel in Sana'a, the launch event of the new Volvo XC60. The event was attended by Mr. Steve Beattie, representative of Volvo Cars Corporation, and a large number of businessmen and well known high society individuals. At the beginning of the ceremony, Mr. Abdullah Ahmed Elaghil, Vice-Chairman of Elaghil Group of Companies, the honorable Consul of Sweden to Yemen, delivered a word welcoming all

attendees. «Today, we are offering the Yemeni consumers a new masterpiece from Volvo which is equipped for the first time worldwide with (City Safety), in which senses traffic stop in front of the car and stops it without any intervention from the driver,» said Mr. Elaghil. «In addition, the super system handles the situation when the driver is busy or distracted and stops the car automatically, which reduces traffic accidents in city streets, in addition to (Hill Descent Control)

that brakes the car in slopes and mountains. These safety features has been distinguishing Volvo cars for more than eighty years.» Elaghil added that the new XC60 contains a high level traction control, that maintains steadiness of the car even when it's gripped with only one tire, preventing it from sliding and enabling it to resume its normal position when three tires loose grip. After that, Mr. Steve Beattie, representative of Volvo Cars Corporation, delivered a word com-

mending efforts of Elaghil Group in marketing and promoting the various products of Volvo in Yemen. He pointed out that the XC60 meets needs and desires of consumers in Yemen. In addition, it confirms that Volvo desires to compete in the fields of quality, specifications and prices to attain satisfaction of consumers worldwide. Beattie further confirmed that Volvo was a bit affected as the other international automobile companies in the financial crisis,

but they are standing strong, that is why its new models are currently launched in the international markets. Then, several documentary movies were shown, on design, testing and specifications of the car particularly City Safety. Cars were revealed to the attendees who had the chance to witness the Volvo XC60 directly. Guests expressed their good impression about how amazing this new model is, besides the increased means of safety which is a crucial buying factor in these days.

- The New Volvo XC 60
- In Line 6 Cylinder Turbo Charged
- 3.0 ltr Engine
- 285 Bhp
- From 0 - 100 in 7.5 sec
- Six Speed Geartronic Transmission
- Fuel Tank 70 ltrs
- Active Bi Xenon Headlamps
- 18 «wheels
- Rear Park Assist
- Panoramic Roof
- Leather Twin Tone Seats

- Power Front Seats
- Navigation System
- Bluetooth Hands Free System
- High Performance Audio System,
- Eight Speaker, 6CD-MP3 Player
- Wood Trim
- City Safety
- Rain Sensor
- SIPS (Side Impact Protection System)
- Side Curtains
- Whiplash Protection



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 Email : elaghil@elaghil.com
 www.elaghil.com

Words of Wisdom



The problem is the helplessness people feel. Most people feel they have lost control, and even a sense of direction. They drift along with the current. They feel uncomfortable with the flow as they believe there is no one in charge.

This is because the Yemeni individual is used to an autocratic system in which things are predetermined and people are given exact roles to play.

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



OUR OPINION

The Supreme National Authority for Combating Corruption

Eleven people were selected to form an authority to fight corruption in Yemen, known as SNACC. At the time of establishment, the authority was not even given the minimum resources to function. It did not have an operating budget, any strategy or plans, or even premises from which to work.

Now one and a half years down the line, SNACC has an office, operational budgets mainly through donor-funded projects, and a draft strategy for combating corruption in Yemen.

During the one and half years of its existence, the authority's staff has received training courses on identifying and documenting corruption, filing corruption cases for prosecution, and lobbying civil society and media to fight corruption.

They have filed six cases to prosecute officials who have violated the law by misusing public funds or their authority for personal interest.

Collecting evidence and researching the case so as to prove corruption is very difficult in Yemen, and very new to Yemeni society. Despite a small number of cases making it to prosecution, the latter has not yet issued verdicts on a single one of them.

Media and civil society have been disappointed and accuse SNACC of being useless.

During interviews, members of the authority explain that the most difficult challenge is people's expectations. The authority is expected to be able to rid Yemen of corruption overnight, or at least catch corrupt people and put them behind bars, whereas this is -in fact- the job of the prosecution.

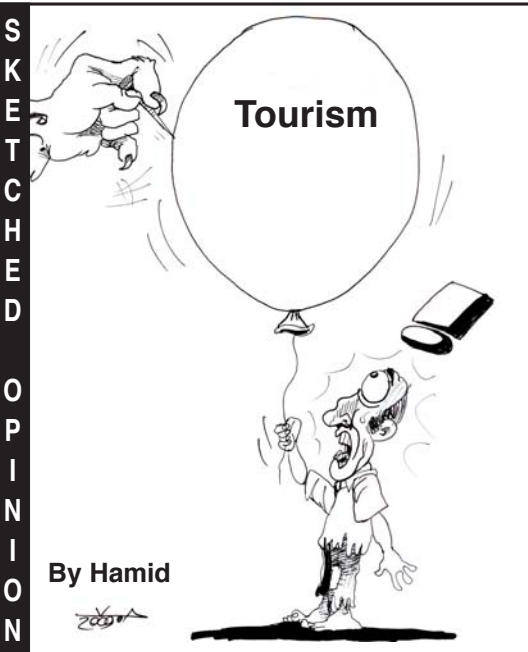
Fragmentation within civil society in the fight against corruption is also hurting the authority which is, in essence, an excellent idea to diminish corruption in Yemen. Instead of working together for the same goal, there is much duplication of efforts and even rivalry.

Not only that, but civil society must also prove that it is itself transparent and uncorrupt in its operations to pose as a legitimate entity to hold state organizations and officials accountable. Many media outlets, private sector companies, civil society organizations, state agencies or even international organizations are not themselves transparent.

The major problem for SNACC is the spread of corruption and its acceptance by all players as a normal trend rather than an exception.

And while civil society and media keep pointing fingers at the authority for not being able to catch the big whales - who are granted immunity from accountability by the law, they forget that to eliminate corruption in the country, we must start at home.

Nadia Al-Sakkaf



By Hamid

Education: everything is OK!! Or is it?

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

According to the school calendar planned by the Ministry of Education, the educational year 2008/2009 ended on Tuesday July 7, 2009. Everything has been finished except checking the exam papers of the 9th and 12th grades and declaring their final results. The year is over for the Ministry of Education and its fellow bodies as well as for the other concerned parties of students, families, society and the state as a whole.

However, is everything really over? Despite what the officials in different concerned bodies say about their assessment and evaluation of various aspects of the educational process, and whether it is right or wrong, complete or incomplete, and so forth, other non-governmental concerned bodies such as the students and their families should conduct their own evaluations. This is especially true since they are supposed to be concerned with education as much as the official bodies, possibly even more so.

When we assess or evaluate any process, we should have the objectives set up in front of us in order to check whether or not these objectives have been achieved. Otherwise, there is no way to measure our progress or find out our shortcomings. These objectives must be set up in a way that serves the interest and needs of different concerned parties and the nation in general. Unless our objectives are clear cut and specific, it will be difficult to achieve them or to make any progress in the education sector at all.

Thus, each of the concerned parties should have its own method of assessment and evaluation of the whole process according to the objectives that have been created. Once the scheduled time to be reviewed is over, the assessment and evaluation should take place under two main criteria: firstly, in terms of whether or not the objectives have been realized, and secondly, in terms of the nature and benefits of these objectives, as objectives need to be revised from time to time.

Of course these parties, as usual,

praise their own efforts while criticizing one another for shortcomings since each party believes it does its assigned task honestly and in the best way it can be done. Each one of them might have the right to do so simply because the objectives set up have been achieved, at least from their own point of view.

When we take a broader look at this point, it will become obvious why every party concerned with education has the right to celebrate the end of a school year. The first and foremost group is the students; they have the right to cheer up after taking their last exam at school. They enrolled in school, attended their classrooms everyday (although not all of them), studied hard at home (again not all of them), took their exams and will finally get their certificates soon. Hence, their objectives, or the objectives set up for them by others, have all been realized, and they can have fun and enjoy their summer holiday.

Parents and families have the right to enjoy the quiet life for a few months after a long period of worry, strain and hardship. They have been doing their best during the whole year and now they think they have achieved their goals. They paid for their students' schools, they sent them to school and supervised them when necessary, they helped them when necessary, they supervised them and they did their best to help them succeed and achieve their certificates. After all this hard work, the least they deserve is a quiet time to relax and feel praised for their efforts.

The society also has the right to be proud of its efforts since it now has millions of its members in schools and other educational institutes. Isn't it an achievement worth praising to have such huge numbers of students enrolled in different educational premises? Hasn't society achieved its objectives, and doesn't it have the right to celebrate its success?

What about the official bodies? The Ministry of Education and its officials have the same right to take a break after what they have been doing throughout the year. They also have the right to cite their numerous achievements and to be proud of the success they gained by realizing their objectives and carrying out their assigned tasks successfully.

They planned for the year to start and to finish at definite dates, and this what actually happened. They planned to print, copy and distribute tens of millions of books, and this of course happened. They planned to have hundreds of schools and other educational facilities open to the public, and this in fact was obvious. They designed new syllabi to be displayed in local, regional and international forums and conferences, and they were highly appreciated. In short, they have achieved all their objectives, and expect to be rewarded.

The government and its decision makers have the full right to relax as much as the students and other concerned bodies do. They drew up the policies and strategies, they planned and supervised and they inspired others to do their best for the welfare and well-being of the nation. Oh, how great they are!

Thus, all the concerned parties have done everything to have their objectives realized in order for the nation to develop and progress - at least from their own perspectives. However, one may wonder and raise many questions about those perspectives and objectives. Are they right or wrong? Do they need to be changed, or at least revised and amended? Can these objectives build up an educational system capable of raising the nation to face today world full of huge and diverse changes and developments? Is this all we should expect and look forward to? Is it ignorance or negligence? Is it carelessness or lack of awareness? Or what exactly is it?

The truth we all should acknowledge is that life is changing and developing rapidly, and we need to cope with these changes and developments. If we keep still, we will soon find ourselves isolated and far behind the others. We need, more than ever before, to revise our objectives and plans and to think of new strategies capable of making a positive shift in this respect. Education is the cornerstone of development, and is the fundamental pillar on which any progress is built. But since the different parties lack awareness of its importance, we guess that they can never be up to the task, and that is why EVERYTHING IS NOT OK!!

That is why we celebrate 7 July anniversary

None is able to erase the Yemeni people's knowledge of their own history of the national struggle for freedom, unity, democracy, security and stability.

Nor can anyone retract the people's right to celebrate their national celebrations, including the victory of July 7, 1994 in which Yemenis embodied the best aspects of solidarity in defending, maintaining and fixing the pillars of unity by their precious sacrifices. They have an unshakable belief in the fact that unity is the source of their historical depth, the pride of their glorious present and the vitality of their brightening future.

In addition, it is not wise or logical that some criticize the Yemeni people for feeling proud of the great and lofty accomplishments under the flag of unity. These achievements wouldn't have become one of the proofs of sustainability of the new Yemen without that victory of unification. The faithful people of this country fought for this unity by defeating the project of secession, burying its sources and turning the treasonable conspiracy against unity into a complete failure.

Those who planned such a conspiracy and attempted to carry it out aimed at turning the clock backward and returning the Yemeni homeland to its disintegrated past with its years of plights, bloody conflicts, executions and vortexes of violence that claimed the lives of thousands of Yemenis. The most violent of these incidents was the heinous massacres that took place on January 13, 1986. The

homeland is still paying for the silly acts that led to this moment.

From this sense, the July 7 anniversary takes its place in the hearts of all Yemenis through which they added a new victory to their national record.

It is not objective that some feel indignant toward the Yemeni people's celebration on the anniversary of this great day. For on this day, the roots of the tree of unity grew deeper and its trunk was strengthened to produce many developmental, economic, democratic, political and social changes.

The people who don't feel the value of this day are only those who are delusional. They didn't comprehend or learn from the lessons of July 7 to reconcile with their people and their homeland by reforming their views or by comprehending the visible signs about the Yemeni people. These signs confirm that the Yemeni people who defended their unity and paid the blood of their best sons to fix it are now ready to sacrifice whatever they have to maintain this unity. They will never lag behind at any moment to protect and maintain national unity which represents the source of their supremacy, pride and dignity.

All this confirms that there is no scope for bargaining or renouncing unity as it is considered a principle of an almost holy nature. Those who don't want to understand that the conspiracies of secession in 1994 failed and that their traitor veterans fell into garbage of history should realize that these new secessionists will end up in the same fate, if not worse. These new secessionists instigate acts of rioting

and sabotage and promote secessionist, racist and regional conflicts. They block roads, attack public and private property and attempt to spread chaos.

All these elements can do is to provoke a media uproar which will certainly vanish before the popular solidarity, the spirit of unity and the strong will of the Yemenis who have proved their competency in facing all difficulties and dangers.

It is better for those who are not on the right path to reconsider their stands and realize that Yemen's present and future is its unity. They should also realize that traitors and merchants of crises cannot stop the progress of history, nor can they turn back development, which is a law of life. This law can never be changed through minor projects that aim either to recover the tyrannical imamate or secede and recover the pre-revolution period.

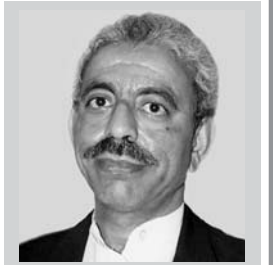
Such an attempt is impossible. They have to consider the present, aspire to a new and brighter future, and emerge from the mentality of the past. They have to realize that the Yemeni people will never allow them or anyone else to play with their national principles and accomplishments or harm their security merely for monetary gain.

Those who closed the book on conflicts, violence and sedition back in 1994 know well the facts and their plans and will be on the lookout for anyone who thinks of disturbing their life which is full of good, affection and tolerance.

Source: Al-Thawra editorial July 7

COMMON SENSE

In Yemen, "the rich get richer ..." How long can this mayhem continue?



By: Hassan Al-Haifi

The insistence of the governing regime in Sana'a to continue to deal with the various forms of opposition it is encountering, through the blood-thirsty military security apparatus of the regime being the only answer the government finds in dealing with the discontent being felt in the northern and southern governorates, defies explanation. After so many years in power, and so many trials and tribulations, President Ali Abdulla Saleh (now entering his fourth decade in power) and his most senior partners in the regime, who supposedly have gone out of their way to ensure the longevity of the presidency of Ali Abdulla Saleh, should start asking themselves to what do they owe this "lack of appreciation" by their ungrateful subjects? After all, aren't these officials working night and day looking after the interests of the Yemeni people? In the meanwhile, the icons of the regime have no qualms about how they take their share of the looting of public and even private property, which has mushroomed their wealth beyond any one's ability to measure such wealth, even if by the closest of staff to these icons of the regime. One is bound to be astounded by the ability of these unorthodox civil servants to manage so much personal wealth, while hardly finding enough time to tend to their public duties with the minimum reflection of any sense of responsibility they have for the welfare of this poor country of Yemen. As for the protection of the interests of the good citizens of this unfortunate land, that would not be within the context of the public service which they understand, as these icons have become the most likely perpetrators for which protection is needed. No one can deny that the visible assets these horrendously evil civil servants have collected are beyond anything that any of the most knowledgeable about public corruption would care to admit to knowing about, but if one also considers the laundered or invisible assets these people have squandered, the devil himself would claim Yemen's corruption to be the best that he has accomplished in this Earth, since God threw Adam out of paradise. This was attested to by several of Yemen's great late literary personalities, who were brave enough to echo their concerns about the plight of Yemen under what one of them called "the most corrupt regime in history" (Abdullah Baradoni), not to mention the pleadings of many of them who urged the President in many public occasions to "feed them from hunger and secure them from fear" (Mohammed Ali Al-Rabadi, who met his death early in life in obscure circumstances, in the Early Nineties of the last century soon after making such a statement), as Allah has bestowed upon Himself to do for mankind.

There have been many efforts to try to get the regime in Yemen to see the light that the current situation is slowly getting the country to the abyss of despair, poor economic performance and unequal access to natural and public resources, not to mention the rise of an ugly monopolistic commercial establishment that has been allowed to develop, which has closed the doors to any potential Yemeni citizen, who wishes to show some flair for commercial or financial enterprise (except of course for the elements of the regime, who have decided to make inroads into the world of "capital investment"). It is safe to assume that such inroads to private enterprise come about through horrendous laundering schemes of stolen public assets, or embezzlement, or sheer open business enterprises that have sought to deliver honest seekers of meager livelihoods out of the way. Such vehicles include "investments" in mass transit for example, which has driven several independent taxi drivers and truck drivers out of the ability to provide livelihoods for their families. (While no one is knocking the encouragement of the development of public mass transit by the private sector, this surely should not be in the form of "transit companies" privately owned and operated by senior officials, who are still in high senior positions of public service, not to mention their strong positions of influence, which are the primary means for enabling these dubious enterprises to operate.)

Having said that about these and other obviously suspicious enterprises, this observer has come to learn that the companies that "share" out the taxis to drivers who wish to operate the "company taxis" must pay the almost impossible sum of YR 5,000 per day to the company and the drivers must bear all the expenses etc., which would mean that the poor drivers would have to work from dawn to midnight to be able to eke out the funding needed to meet the formidable cost of living for their families. Some drivers have admitted to this observer that there are some days they are unable to achieve the needed revenue to meet these due daily payments, unless they include Friday, the Sabbath Day of the Moslems).

That is just one area in which senior officials from within the regime's closed family and tribal establishment have found niches for directing their "hard earned" capital towards the further exploitation of the people of Yemen in all their various walks of life. Then of course there are the glossy well organized "investment companies", such as petroleum service companies. These laundering enterprises work night and day to make sure that their monopolistic owners get their share of the meager oil wealth of Yemen.

Accordingly most citizens have given up hope a long time ago that the petroleum resources and other natural resources of the land would provide a useful capital base that would launch Yemen towards promising equitable economic and social development, which most economic experts suggest is possible if Yemen enjoyed proper and ethical management of these resources, which are now depleting faster than the public servant hordes can scavenge them.

Hassan Al-Haifi has been a Yemeni political economist and journalist for more than 20 years. He may be blogged at: <http://com-sen-fromyem.blogspot.com>

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Yemen Press Review



NewsYemen.net, an independent News Website
Wednesday, July 8, 2009

Top Story

• Violence flares up as government celebrates July 7

Reports from Aden, southern Yemen, say the security units have been put on high alert to prevent expected protests said would be organized by the southern movement to ask for breaking up unity between north and south, the website reported.

Policemen and policewomen are remarkable noticed in all entrances to check vehicles coming to the city, said reporter of NewsYemen in Aden.

The security forces imposed a security siege around Aden and locked accesses to the city to prevent people from other provinces join a rally organized by the southern movement to be held in al-Hashimi Square in Aden, lead member of the southern movement Nasser al-Khabji told

NewsYemen.

The Supreme Security Committee in Aden has urged people not to be deceived by outlaw protests which it said seek to disorder the public peace.

"We will not allow any unauthorized protests and actions that harm unity and security of people," said the committee.

At the same time, the authorities have announced it would celebrate July 7th which marks the day on which north defeated south in 1994 civil war.

Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) urged the government to be wise and halt celebrations on July 7th as that may lead to more violence. But officials, even those from south, have confirmed that celebrations on the July 7th will be a good message to those who call for dividing Yemen and return to the situation before 1990.

On a side note, the website reported that JMP warned against celebrating July 7th and said the GPC's idea to celebrate on July 7 is not wise, not logic and may lead to more escalation in south.

The GPC should serve the unity, not to incite calls for separation, said JMP's statement.

JMP calls for applying laws to anyone harms the national unity and those who used force against peaceful protests resulting in deaths and injuries.

The ruling party is preparing to celebrate July 7th, when the northern Yemen defeated the southern part in 1994's war of separation amid criticism from the opposition parties.

Member of the Parliament for the Yemeni Socialist Party, Nasser al-Khabji, who leads the southern movement in al-Dhale accused security authorities of arresting lead members in the southern movement to call off anti-government protesters scheduled for July 7 that will coincide with the government's celebrations on victory against southerners.

Al-Khabji said the southern movement would continue to protests inside and outside the country to get peaceful secession and to oust the regime which he said has destroyed the Yemeni unity.

Meanwhile, members of the Body for Defending Unity in Radfan in Lahj have resigned from the body "in protest to the government's ignorance about the legal demands of people in

Radfan and other areas of Lahj."

They said people in Lahj continue to suffer from deprivation and bad living conditions but the authority does not show any intention to reform the situations and to solve issues of people.



Al-Methaq.net, affiliated with the General People's Congress (Ruling Party)

Thursday, July 9, 2009

Top Story

• Massive demonstration in Abyan condemns separatist calls

Massive demonstration has taken to the streets of Abyan governorate south of Yemen, on Tuesday, the website reported. At the head of the march was the Governor of Abyan Ahmed Bin Ahmed Al-Maysary, assistant of the governor, and secretary general of the governorate. The demonstration was staged by segments of the civil society including youth and women.

The massive march, with the slogans

it raised, demanded to see a resolution against all those trying to impinge upon the Yemeni unity and the attempt of turning back the wheel of history. The participants in the massive demonstration have confirmed their sticking to the Yemeni unity, defending and safeguarding it as it is considered one of the national constants that the sons of Abyan would not accept to squander.

The participants also called on those calling for separation and disintegration to return to reason and to apologize to the people of Yemen for what they had done, confirming that the population of Abyan was among the first of those who defended the unity and would remain at the forefront lines that protect Yemen and its unity.

In his address to the demonstrators, the governor of Abyan affirmed adherence of the people of Abyan to the choice of unity which is the safety valve and stability of Yemen and he pledged to God, the homeland and the revolution and unity that the governorate of Abyan would remain as sincere guards for defending the Yemeni unity and its gains.

On a side note, the website reported

that the massive march that took to the streets in Aden involving local councils, civil society organizations and personalities of intellectuals, media men, scholars, the women expressed people's rejection of the callers for secessions, sabotage and anarchy. Demonstrators criticized advocates of separation, confirming their national unitary struggle and loyalty to the martyrs and their sacrifices as well as the loyalty to struggles of the fathers for the sake of defending Yemen's Unity.

The statement issued by the massive march reads that from Aden where the flag of the unity was hosted, people affirm that Aden would not deviate an inch from the gains that have been achieved, pledging to defend the unity for the sake of a better Yemen's and its people future. The march addressed those who are trading with themselves at the expense of their homeland that they have to return to reason.

It hailed the entire unionist Yemenis and the patriots to continue following up the process of development whatever the challenges were under the leadership of President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

Shrinking the gap: Our fears about the Middle East and our identity group

By: Barbara Landau and Dr. George Awad

TORONTO – This article is a rather unusual joint effort by myself and my friend, the late psychiatrist and analyst, Dr. George Awad.

I met George almost 40 years ago when we worked together in the Family Court Clinic in Toronto. We spent a lot of time talking about our families and children but what we didn't talk about at the time were our cultural identities: George, as a Palestinian, Lebanese, Arab and I as a Jew.

Many years later, we reconnected through an organization called "Shrink the Gap", a dialogue group of Jewish and Palestinian "shrinks"—mental health professionals—in Toronto. Our goal was to discuss the narratives and emotional issues related to the conflict within and between our various communities. Our hope was to create a bridge through a deeper understanding.

After meeting for several years, we presented papers together at a psychology conference about the subject of fear—our respective fears—in relation to the Middle East conflict. The choice of subject emerged from our discus-

sions about how the fears of our respective groups had not been adequately recognized as a root cause perpetuating the conflict.

Sadly, George died in June 2007, a few months after we presented. George was a gifted therapist, custody assessor, prolific writer and passionate advocate on behalf of Palestinians and peace. I miss George's passion, intellect and wonderful cooking—our monthly meetings were infused with fierce debate, interesting insights and heart-warming goodwill.

The following is the text of the paper George Awad delivered at the above-mentioned conference, which I would like to share here in honour of his memory:

"To understand the fear, one needs to understand the basic psychology of both groups. For Israelis and the larger Jewish community, the defining moment of their psychology is the Holocaust. Thus, their fear is annihilation fear.

For the Palestinians, the defining experience started with the 1948 Nakba (the disaster), when they were expelled en masse from their homeland and subsequently prevented from returning. I say Palestinian fear started with the

Nakba because this was just the beginning. Their fear took on additional dimensions as they experienced further traumas.

Following the Nakba, the Palestinians were dispersed through the region, dividing roughly into six groups: Israel, Gaza, West Bank, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. Each group needed to negotiate new relationships. The trauma of the Nakba gave rise to powerful collective fears, namely: loss of identity, loss of national cohesion, and loss of continuity.

Direct expressions of fears were suppressed in Arab and Palestinian communities and counter-phobic reactions replaced them. They developed the three Rs: Refusal to accept their loss, the goal of Revenge and desire to Return to their land. Such mechanisms offered concrete goals to work towards and indeed political, social and paramilitary organizations were set up to fulfil those goals. However, these processes also got in the way of being able to deal with and express the fears directly.

1967 was the second Nakba. Now three of the major Palestinian groups came under Israeli rule: Palestinian citizens of Israel, Palestinians living in

Gaza, and the Palestinians of the West Bank. The occupation gave rise to new fears: fear of losing more land, fear of losing autonomy and freedom, and fear of death.

It is hard for Westerners to understand the Palestinians' attachment to their land. Many Palestinians identify themselves with their "birth" village. This identity is handed down from generation to generation and remains strong even for those who were not born in the village or have never even visited it, or if it was one of the 400 plus Palestinian villages destroyed by Israel days after its residents were expelled.

After 1967, the Palestinians helplessly watched as Israeli settlements were built on their land. The primary goal of the settlements was to create "facts on the ground" and many of these were built strategically to surround Palestinian areas and prevent physical continuity. These days, Palestinians cannot move freely in the West Bank because of the military checkpoints. Those who experience these restrictions experience a fear associated with a loss of freedom and autonomy, which is one manifestation of claustrophobia.

More than any other fear, the one that stands out in recent years is fear of death. Palestinians were and are being killed by the Israelis. As a result, I think a form of annihilation fear has now developed although it is not the same as the genocidal annihilation fears that Jews experience. Tragically, the fears of both peoples are based on historical precedents."

These were George's words at the Ontario Psychological Association in 2007.

For George, trying to understand the psychological themes of the Middle East conflict was a passion. He was enormously frustrated by the downward spiral of the Middle East conflict and worried that he would not live to see a real peace, one that would bring hope, equality and justice to both peoples.

Nevertheless, George was committed to dialogue and no matter how heated our exchanges, we never went home mad at each other. Our personal caring and respect for each trumped our differences. We became role models for bridge-building and hope—something very hard to find! To quote the great thinker and anthropologist, Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group

of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

Dr. Barbara Landau is President of Cooperative Solutions and a psychologist, lawyer and mediator. Barbara participates in several Jewish-Muslim dialogue groups: Shrink the Gap, Together in Hope and the Canadian Association of Jews and Muslims. For more information please see her website: www.coop-solutions.ca. Dr. George Awad was the Director of the Toronto Family Court Service, an Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Toronto and involved with the Infant Psychiatry Program at the Hospital for Sick Children. He also had a thriving private practice. George was a founding member of Shrink the Gap. This article is part of a special series on the impact of fear in the Arab-Israeli conflict written for the Common Ground News Service (CGNews).

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Fear of the other, fear of the friend

By: Roi Ben-Yehuda

NEW YORK - Contrary to popular opinion, fear is not inherently a negative sentiment. The object of our fears may be negative (hence the confusion), but the emotion itself is indispensable.

Fear allows us to be mindful of real dangers that exist in the world. Without it, our ancestors wouldn't have been able to tell the difference between a rabbit and a tiger and we wouldn't be here today.

But fear can also be destructive. Politically, fear drives people to form xenophobic tribes, to become unquestioning automatons, and to hand off power to authoritarian leaders. From time immemorial, politicians have used fear in order to manipulate the masses.

In the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis, fear plays a significant role. In its positive dimension it inspires people to fight against injustice. People become peacemakers because they fear their children will

inherit the same heartbreaking and tragic world in which they live. In its negative dimension, fear perpetuates and exacerbates the conflict.

An obvious example of negative fear would be fear of the enemy—fear of the monster (imagined or real) that conflict creates. Fear of the enemy makes violent encounters rational, and non-violent encounters difficult and charged with mistrust.

Yet there is another type of fear that is less recognized but equally problematic: fear of the friend.

Stemming from the danger of being rejected or ostracised by one's own group, fear of the friend is the fear of standing up for your principles. It manifests itself in blind conformity and/or an inability to express one's opinion against the norms of the group. Sociologists call this phenomenon "groupthink": when a cohesive group seeks harmony at the expense of critical and constructive thought.

While Israelis and Palestinians are known to be opinionated, uniformity of

thought generally reigns over individuality during times of conflict. Throughout the second Intifada, for example, pro-peace Israelis found it very difficult to criticise the government without facing ridicule and aggression from fellow countrymen. There was tremendous pressure to parrot the official explanation of what went wrong, and to rationalise away any evidence to the contrary.

Likewise, Palestinians found it almost impossible to criticise militant groups and their tactics without being viewed as sell-outs, traitors or collaborators—which often put people in harm's way.

During the recent war in Gaza, the same censoring impulses were in effect both in Israel and the Palestinian territories.

Fear of the friend is a natural consequence of our need to belong to a group. Yet it often leads to faulty reasoning, dubious moral judgments and bad decisions. By suppressing constructive dissent—an invaluable tool

during times of crises—fear of the friend tends to be harmful to peace-making.

How to respond?

In dealing with fear of the friend, it is best to encourage individuals (especially the young) to think for themselves and speak their minds. It's also imperative to expose individuals to examples of moral courage—the antidote to groupthink—and encourage them to practice it. We must figure out how best to do this in our homes, schools, public squares, synagogues and mosques.

An inspiring example of moral courage recently came to me from a friend's 12-year-old daughter (who will be identified as Noa).

In a middle school for the arts in Israel, a 7th grade science teacher decided to end the year with a spontaneous lecture on why Jews and Arabs could never peacefully coexist. After he spoke, Noa raised her hand and bravely stated that she has a different

opinion—that Jews and Arabs can and must live in peace. A long and loud argument ensued over the nature of Arab/Muslim culture and who rightfully belongs in the country. The teacher and a number of students vociferously claimed that Arab culture is antithetical to Western civilisation and that the Jews had an overriding historical right to the land. Yet my friend's daughter did not relent. She pressed her case and even managed to awaken the conscience of two other students. The argument ended with an irate teacher recommending his irreverent student (and her supporters) to read some history before speaking.

When asked what compelled her to speak up against an authority figure and a number of classmates, Noa explained: "I thought what he was saying and doing was wrong. I do not accept that a teacher can say such a negative thing and influence the students. When people hear negative things like this they learn to become negative as well."

Noa responded to her teacher and fellow classmates because she realised the consequence of not doing so. Her conscience obligated her to boldly speak truth to power. Noa's action reminds us that to possess moral courage is not to be fearless, but rather, as the Muslim intellectual Irshad Manji once noted, it is to know that "some things are more important than fear".

Roi Ben-Yehuda is an Israeli writer based in the United States. He is a regular contributor to Ha'aretz and France 24. You can read his blog, RoiWord, at: <http://roiword.wordpress.com>. This article is part of a special series on the impact of fear in the Arab-Israeli conflict written for the Common Ground News Service (CGNews).

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Snuffing music, dance and film: The Taliban's cultural invasion

Local culture in the Swat Valley struggles to survive the Taliban

By: Shaheen Buner
The Media Line News Agency

On a cold night in January, 2008, a group of militants hammered at the door of a popular Pashto dancer, Shabana, in Mingora, a city in the Swat district of Northwestern Pakistan.

The militants pulled Shabana from her home and dragged her through the narrow alleys towards the Green Square, where they planned to publicly punish her and teach other singers and dancers a lesson.

Shabana's neighbors recount the cruelty of that night. "She will never dance again," the singer's mother cried, imploring the militants not to slit her throat as her daughter lay helpless. "We will leave this city and we will never return. For God sake, don't kill her!"

But Taliban are not known for their mercy, and the incident was not only about the life of one woman: the Taliban were on a mission to 'purge' society of the evils of singing and dancing - a tradition kept alive for generations by local artists in the city's famous Banr Bazar - and Shabana symbolized an artistic tradition the Taliban wanted to stamp out.

The next morning, city residents found Shabana's dead body strewn with bank notes and CDs of her music performances. Her throat had been slit and her body riddled with bullets, intended to drum home the no-nonsense message that sweet melodies and dance performances were no longer tolerated in Pakistan's newly-founded 'Taliban state'.

Swat valley has been a center for Pakistani arts and literature for centuries. Since Buddhist times, local artisans, poets and singers have contributed to the emotional, spiritual and intellectual development of the society in Swat valley.

"Music is an integral part of our society. Pashtuns have a rich musical and literary heritage," Usman Ulasayr, president of Swat Arts and Cultural Society, told The Media Line. "Even our religious tales are preserved in the form of poetry and our evenings are incomplete without musical gatherings."

Mian Gul Abdul Wadood, a former ruler of Swat, followed by his son Mianguil Abdul Haq Jehanzeb (1915-1969) not only encouraged local arts and literature but also allocated a piece of land to traditional singers and dancers in the hearts of the city. Such areas have

now become emblematic sites for Taliban militants seeking to attack artists and send waves of terror and fear ringing throughout the valley.

Shaukat Sharar, a Swat valley social scientist, says that local society began rapidly changing in September 2007, when Maulana Fazlullah, a cleric turned militant commander, vehemently discouraged music, dancing and all forms of entertainment in his broadcasts on a pirate FM radio station.

"The Yousafzai tribes inhabiting Swat harmoniously inter-mixed Buddhist and Islamic values with their own Pashtun traditions and customs, and formed a society based on peace, love and tolerance," Sharar maintained. "They excelled in handicrafts, wood carving, poetry, music and performing arts, and every year attracted thousands of tourists to their lush green valley to enjoy the serenity of its environment and the diversity of their socio-cultural lives."

Sharar explains that 30 years of political instability in Afghanistan encouraged extremist Wahhabi Islam to flourish in neighboring Pakistani tribal areas, and different Taliban groups gradually engulfed the whole of Northwestern Pakistan.

Neither the international community

nor the Pakistani authorities placed much importance on local arts and literature as a means of promoting peace and discouraging religious extremism.

"They were not aware of the worth of the foundation stones of Pashtun society," Sharar explains. "Pashtun Jirga played a historical role in peace building and conflict resolution; Pashtun Hujra (a traditional Pashtun socio-cultural club) provided the much-needed catharsis to Pashtun tribes after their day-long labor in their fields and mountains. Pashtun romanticism was expressed in Pashto folk tales and songs, and the strength and pride of Pashtun youth was demonstrated in Pashto traditional dances called Atan."

Taliban first attacked these liberal traditions," he said. "When the windows for natural human expression closed, extremist religious thought swept the whole population."

It is estimated that more than 800 music shops have been bombed in different parts of Northwestern Pakistan since 2006. Hundreds of singers, musicians, poets and dancers have fled Swat valley since the Taliban's clamp-down on music in the area. They are now living in Peshawar, Lahore, and Karachi. As their livelihoods have been taken

away from them, they are now confronted with serious financial crises.

Firoz Khan, a businessman managing a textile industry in Karachi, says that the lack of opportunity for female singers and dancers to express their talents in an acceptable manner has forced some of them into prostitution.

"I don't know what cause of religion Taliban served by forcing artists to leave their homes," Khan said.

Despite claims of impending action from the secular Pashtun Awami National Party in North West Frontier Province (NWFP), no concrete steps have been taken to protect singers and musicians from the Taliban onslaught, or to provide relief for the artists' families.

On 15 December 2008, unidentified militants targeted Sardar Yousafzai, another popular Pashtun singer, while he was driving his car with members of his orchestra in Malakand Agency. The bullets missed Sardar Yousafzai, but his colleague, the harmonium player Anwar Gul, was murdered in the attack.

"They want to kill me because I am a singer and I don't subscribe to their narrow version of Islam," Yousafzai said. "I promote peace, tolerance and love by my art and these values do not fit to their system based on violence and blood-

shed."

Currently Yousafzai is staying in Peshawar to avoid Taliban attacks and support his family back home. He is seriously concerned about the safety of his family but he can't afford to move them to a safer place.

Locals believe that by targeting singers and artists, the Taliban will close the doors of artistic expression and create an environment in which their own brand of religion will prosper. The markets in Mingora, Peshawar, Charsada and Mardan were flooded with Jihadi CDs when traditional singing and dancing came to a halt.

"The people who earlier dealt in music CDs and cassettes are now selling stuff that promotes religious bigotry and obscurantism," says Ali Akbar Khan, owner of a music market in Mingora.

Over 50,000 members of Pakistan's security forces are currently fighting Taliban militants in Swat valley, but locals say the war cannot be won unless the hearts and minds of the residents of Northwestern Pakistan are liberated from the fear generated by Taliban violence.

"It is high time we stop the flow of Jihadi literature to ensure peace and stability in the region," he said.

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- ¥ Ensuring the compliance of all the functions as per the ISO 9001:2000 standard.
- ¥ Preparing Audit schedules, Conducting Internal Audits, preparing audit reports, Writing Nonconformity reports.
- ¥ Measuring & monitoring the process performance.
- ¥ Initiate necessary corrective and preventive action.
- ¥ Creating ISO/Quality awareness for the associates by internal trainings

Qualifications and Experience Preferred

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- ¥ Minimum of 5 years experience in an oil company or 3+ years in Quality Assurance.
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- ¥ Strong knowledge in Quality Management Systems applicable to the oil field.
- ¥ Capable of analyzing data in order to support the development of strategies to effectively manage the action plans that will resolve the issues.
- ¥ Knowledge of ISO 9001:2008.
- ¥ Good IT skills including Microsoft applications

Deadline to receive CVs will be 24th 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

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4. Supervise the registration team and ensure steady capacity building;
5. Effective and timely analysis of the data to support the work of the Protection Officer;

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- University degree in Statistics, Social Science, Information Technology, and/or a related field
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Please forward your CV and a one-page cover letter via e-mail to DRCjobskenya@gmail.com, by 17th July 2009. Please write "Registration Officer" as the subject heading. CVs longer than four pages will not be considered.

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سميد قسم صالح الماوري

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ماجد عبد العزيز الماوري - ابراهيم صلاح - عمر صلاح

عمر عبد العزيز الماوري - احمد عبد العزيز الماوري

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- Direct experience with the management systems and processes used within large operational organizations
- Proven record delivering operational results which meet/exceed safety, production, and financial targets.
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- Multi-disciplinary team work
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Member of SNACC Ezzadin Al-Asbahi to the Yemen Times:

“Eliminating corruption in Yemen will not happen unless there is good governance...”

Ezzadin Saeed Al-Asbahi is the general director of the Human Rights Information & Training Center, established in 1995. HRICT is a non-governmental, non-for-profit, politically neutral organization. Al-Asbahi was selected as the civil society representative among the eleven members of the Supreme National Authority for Combating Corruption (SNACC). Nadia Al-Sakkaf interviewed him about his role in the authority and his views on corruption and civil society in Yemen.

People's expectations

When the Supreme Authority for Combating Corruption was announced, the public, including intellectuals and media, assumed that we would snap our fingers and corruption would disappear. Their disappointment and frustration is understood, but it does not help us perform. It increases our own frustration, especially because the authority has so many challenges already.

We started out without an office. We were hosted for a few months in a room in the parliament until we managed a place of our own. We don't have enough human or financial resources to operate, and we are always faced with laws that prevent us from investigating corruption cases.

This project is an excellent one, and vital for the country's development, but it needs support and patience.

The purpose of SNACC is to create an uncorrupt environment in Yemen. People think our job is to prosecute and put corrupt people behind bars. Actually, our work ends once we hand over the cases to the prosecution.

Since our establishment, we have handled many cases, but none has yet reached a verdict.

Media is an important partner, and we feel that we want to cooperate with media more than we are doing so now. Some of the shortcomings are our fault

because we have limited staff. And although we are open to public in general, it takes time to respond to inquires, especially if the information is not handy.

However, we get attacked viciously and accused of not doing our jobs by media almost on a regular basis. We have a quarterly report and also publish a narrative of what we have done in the last three months on our Web site. But we want to interact more with the media, so we will be holding an event soon to discuss how the media can help the authority fight corruption.

We recently had an expert from Jordan visit to help us communicate and integrate our work with civil society and media. As a result, we are going to improve the presentation of our reports and open channels of inter-activity. We are also going to renovate the Web site to make it more user-friendly and interactive.

Activities

Yesterday, we started talking about the role of media, and its partnership with the authority in fighting corruption. We will have another event soon with media and the judicial institutions, and then one with media and civil society and the Central Organization for Control & Auditing. We are also planning an event with civil society and the parliament.



Ezzadin Al-Asbahi

All these activities aim at improving the capacity of civil society and media in Yemen in a way that makes them effective partners in fighting corruption. Civil society organizations need to realize that for them to hold state institutions accountable, they must have their own transparent and internal accountability systems, making their organizations role-models of integrity and transparency.

Change is bound to happen, but we need to start with effective and honest civil society organizations and accountable media. The whole community will gradually get rid of corruption as a concept and as a practice. We need to encourage media to look down upon corrupt officials, rather than promoting or bragging about them. We are living in a time where the corrupt are displayed as the wise people, and decent honest people are seen as stupid. This understanding has to change. We need professional media, especially independent privately-owned TV and radio to do this.

Challenges

Other than people's expectations, there are legislative challenges that stop us from effectively doing our jobs. We have the issue of immunity for high level state officials, from deputy ministers and above. And, we have laws that require confidentiality of the corruption cases we report. This stops us from publicly exposing who is corrupt and what they have done. If a guilty verdict issued on cases we forward, it becomes public information.

But so far, no verdicts have been issued for our cases.

We need to rework the internal organizational charter of SNACC in order to give the organization more authority. We need to define how the members are selected. The creation of SNACC was a trial experience, and our job today is to create a system that works for teams to come.

I will never say that this project has

failed, even if there no progress in five years. It is a great idea, and although the method of implementation may fail, the project itself will not. Eventually, every noble cause prevails.

Private sector

Unfortunately, although we have a slot for the private sector among the eleven members of the authority, there is no real interaction. The private sector looks at us with suspicion, but I believe that with our persistent work we can prove that we are worth trusting.

The private sector has to realize that no matter how much it benefits from existing corruption like evading taxes or bribery to win tenders, it will benefit much more when law and order are established in the country and justice is served.

We need to take proactive steps towards the private sector and include it in the battle against corruption. Businesses are our partners, and have resources which we don't. We need them to assist us and serve the community.

Eliminating corruption in Yemen will not happen unless there is good governance, and good governance is not limited to state institutions, it includes private sector, civil society and media. Only then will our vision of good governance be complete.

Terrorism and political stability

Believe it or not, terrorism takes place when there is no independent accountable judicial system. In my opinion this is the main factor why Yemen is going

through the chaos it is going through today. If the rule of law prevailed over all, and everyone was equal in front of the law, then bad deeds would not go unpunished.

But judges do not have community respect and depend on the state for their incomes. They try to please the officials in whose hands lies his livelihood.

If these factors were different, wrongdoers would realize that there is a system that holds them accountable and so they would think more carefully before committing a crime.

What is happening now is that we have people above the law, people against the law, and people who are indifferent to the law. The first group is usually the influential officials who care for their personal interest above the public interest. The second group's interest is to harm the public, and the third have no interest in anything, they just want to live, and these are the majority of Yemenis.

The majority of Yemenis are not active players in their own country, they are like spectators who watch smaller yet much more powerful groups fight over the resources and power in the country. The majority of Yemenis have no faith in the state or the judicial system, so they don't take part in endorsing it, or condemning those who violate it. And this is why terrorism, for example, exists without fearing community wrath.

And a community like this is in dire threat of collapsing, rather than prospering. Civil society organizations play a role in maintaining and protecting the society from slipping into ruin. Civil society must revive morals and integrity, and encourage masses to fight corruption and terrorism.

We are living in an era where technology is advancing by the second. And we need to be able to reach out and communicate with the world, as a healthy society. This is not happening today and the image of Yemen and the Yemeni nation is more like a handicapped person.

The international community is a partner in creating Yemen's strategy and vision, and not just a bank for money. This is why it has the responsibility to help us form correct development strategies and policies. We need the international community to help build the capacities of Yemeni leaders and decision makers as well as civil society.

Many donor countries or organizations bring their own experts from abroad to help implement donor-led projects. This does not help the development of local capacity. We need the international community to give us a chance to learn and make mistakes.

This will help us maintain sustainable development, because projects will be led by local people for the benefit the local communities

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A center for new water thinking



Drop irrigation, here in a vineyard in Bani Hoshai, is less wasteful than the traditional flooding method, says the WEC.

By: Alice Hackman

In the rest of the Gulf region, the water crisis has been addressed by expensive seawater desalination plants but in Yemen, where oil and fast cash are less readily available, the key to ensuring adequate water supply is good management.

Since 2000, the Water and Environment Center (WEC) at the University of Sana'a has been tackling Yemen's water shortage head-on to ensure available water is used wisely, before starting to tap into new resources such as surrounding coastal waters.

Set up with Dutch funding, the Yemeni center brings together academics from different water-related disciplines, to better address an issue that, in Yemen, not only has drastic repercussions on education and health, but also on overall development.

"It is now clear that the water crisis is not purely a technical problem, but a multi-faceted socio-economic problem that requires a multidisciplinary approach," said Dr. Abdulla Babaqi, the center's director.

Groundwater levels have plummeted and water springs have dried up, but still demand increases as the country's population grows at the rapid rate of 3.7 percent a year. And the population will double, if the United Nations' projections are accurate, by 2025.

Struggling far below the world water poverty line, Yemenis consume only 130 square meters of water per year, less than 3 percent of the global average, according to the WEC, and home-grown Yemeni expertise is crucial to manage the situation.

Babaqi describes the center as one of "new water-thinking," stressing the need to bring all parties involved in the water sector together to successfully address the water issue for the country's development, in integrated water resource management.

He and his colleagues argue that the water crisis is too complex a challenge for a simple, quick-fix solution such as drilling more wells. Instead, scientists and leaders from all walks of life must work together to address the issue from all angles.

"Water is limited and drilling more doesn't solve depletion," he said, stressing the need to take advantage

of indigenous water knowledge such as rainwater harvesting and terracing to make the best of four months of rain annually.

Arguing that water shortages and the environmental issues must be tackled hand-in-hand, the center conducts research, offers consultancy services, and trains promising graduates to become the water experts of the future. But it also directly consults with water users.

Brainstorming with users

Far from an inaccessible team of academics, the WEC is not afraid to get involved. Its experts work with all layers of Yemeni society, from the employees at the local water and sanitation corporations to the users themselves.

In Dhamar, Taiz and Hadramout, for example, the WEC has started up three pilot projects to directly involve water users in hands-on monitoring of their own community's water resources to avoid depletion.

New golden rules are introduced to the water user groups: The rate of water extraction from the local aquifer must not exceed its rate of recharge through rainfall, and in agriculture wasteful irrigation methods should be replaced.

Instead of the traditional technique of flooding a field with water, the more modern drip, sprinkler and bubbler irrigation methods should have priority, as they reduce wasted water by ensuring each crop receives no more than the water it requires.

Up to 90 percent of Yemen's annual water consumption goes to agriculture, according to the WEC, which means that farmers and cultivators should be key players in any user-led sustainable water management.

Farmers are further encouraged to stop random well drilling, replace qat with other crops, and use crop patterns suitable to each crop's water requirements, said Dr. Naif Abu-Lohom, research and studies department head at the center.

Active members of the community, such as school teachers, religious leaders, well-owners and local council members are directly involved in these small water user groups to ensure new knowledge is disseminated to all of its members.

But if awareness ensures sustainable development in the water sector, so do marketing skills. WEC-led training in marketing with farmers ensures that they not only

reap "more crop per drop," but also collect the full economic benefits of their efforts.

"The farmers from the pilot areas of the Community Water Management project are suffering from poor marketing and storage of their products," explained Abu-Lohom. "These areas lack essential basic [facilities] to store their product when prices drop and keep it for another time."

Motivating water employees

Besides its pilot projects with water users, the WEC also conducts short confidence-boosting training courses with mechanics, electrical engineers, technicians and even the heads of local water and sanitation corporations.

"A lot of people are now taking responsibility in local corporations," said Dr. Fadhil Al-Nozaily, head of the training department, explaining that the training covers theoretical and practical, and aims to improve on what employees already know.

Field trips are organized to solve problems such as those in the design of a network, operation of a wastewater treatment plant or even groundwater pollution from a scientific point of view, explained Al-Nozaily.

Helping technicians run a smoother wastewater treatment plant, for example, is important because, in integrated water resource management, wastewater is a resource. Treated effectively, it can be used to irrigate crops, instead of dwindling groundwater.

"Wastewater is often a reliable water resource, with constant flows even in the dry season," wrote the World Health Organization in its 2006 publication, *Wastewater in Agriculture*.

"The use of wastewater in agriculture should figure more prominently in water resources management because it enables communities to reserve higher-quality water resources [like] groundwater or uncontaminated surface water for uses such as drinking-water supply," it said.

Even the sludge produced by the treatment can be used as a fertilizer, said Al-Nozaily, provided it is not issued from industries, and contains neither heavy metals nor toxic materials. When it is free of these, it is better than chemical fertilizer.

Home-grown water wizards

Yemen already has a handful of well-rounded water managers to oversee good water management, but if the water issue is to be addressed properly, Yemen needs to train a new generation of experts to continue what their mentors have started.

Ten years ago, no specialized institution existed for their education, apart from the university's Faculty of Engineering. But in 2006, the center welcomed its first class of students with relevant experience to its new diploma and master's program.

Its 2006, 2007 and 2008 the center enrolled students from backgrounds as varied as biology, geology, agriculture, irrigation and engineering. Some students already work in the different branches of Yemen's water sector, while others are yet to be employed.

"Anybody who graduates finds work, it's a real specialty in Arab countries," said Babaqi, explaining that until now only Jordan also offers a master's course in integrated water resource management, at the Water and Environment Research and Study Center at the University of Jordan.

The WEC aims to be a renowned regional center to attract scientists from Sudan, Eritrea and the Horn of Africa, said Babaqi.

The integrated water resource management curriculum, compiled in cooperation with two Dutch universities and Cairo University in Egypt, aims to bring graduates with different specializations together to study for a general diploma. It then gives the students space to conduct

their own research in the fourth semester.

Tuition for a master's degree in integrated water resource management costs USD 7,000 a year, but for bright students who excel in an interview, scholarships are available. Professors further assist by trying to involve the master's students in foreign projects, so that they can receive outside funding while they research.

Students have been involved in projects covering water quality in

Sana'a, rainwater harvesting of school rooftops in Dhamar, and water filters in Amran, according to Dr. Bilkis Zabara, assistant head of the training department at the center.

New decision tools

The WEC also brings in experts to ensure they receive state-of-the-art training in the latest decision-making tools for water management. One of these is the Geographical Information System or GIS, a new method that processes data according

to location.

"When you map something, you can see it visually," explained Zabara. "You can see the overexploitation of water, in which areas of Yemen. When you see it on a map, it's much easier to work out the links between the problems."

The GIS can be used to conduct an environmental impact assessment before or after a particular project. Armed with mapped-out data, students can visualize all aspects to solve water problems, said Zabara.

Grey drops could revive parched gardens in Old Sana'a



Grey water from one house's kitchen and the local mosque has revived a small section of Maqshama Al-Wushali (top left), but the rest of the garden remains dry.

Ali Naji, head gardener of the Al-Wushali garden in Old Sana'a, outlined the plot of land his family has cultivated for generations.

Spanning from a wild berry tree in the garden's center to its rocky border guarded by two stray dogs, what was once a lush expanse of green, providing his family with food and a source of daily income, is now barren wasteland.

"There's not much left of it," he said flatly. "It's completely dry."

It was not always so. In a country where Muslims pray up to five times a day, the 45 gardens of Old Sana'a, called maqshim, were traditionally each attached to a mosque, using its ablution water to grow vegetables, flowers and fragrant herbs.

Entrusted to the care of several families, the maqshim were awqaf [endowments] but benefited all, in times of peace and war. In 1905, when the city was under siege, goes local folklore, the gardens saved half of its inhabitants from starvation.

Since the 16th century, water was extracted from the local well, mostly using animals such as a bull or donkeys, and used in the mosque's bathrooms, before being returned to the gardens. The system was a precursor to today's grey water recycling.

Grey water is usually water from washing in the kitchen or bathroom. Like the more polluted wastewater, it is today an important alternative source of irrigation water when groundwater is running out.

"Since the wells attached to the mosques dried up, and ablution water was deviated into the sewage network, about 93 percent of the gardens are not cultivated," said Abdulkhaliq Al-Aqwa, member of the local council in Old Sana'a.

"They renovated Al-Sayla [road running through Old Sana'a] and so it doesn't store any rainwater,"

added Maji, saying that this other traditional water resource for the gardens used to store water for up to six days.

Grey water re-introduced

In 2007, Wadi MENA, an international water project in the Middle East and North Africa, and the WEC stepped in to save Al-Wushali, the garden where Maji's family once grew vegetables.

They showed gardeners how household water, like the traditionally-used ablution water, could also be used to revive their land.

Today, grey water from one house's kitchen and ablution water from the mosque are piped down to a specially-adapted sand filter that cleans it of organic matter. Once treated, it is pumped into a drip irrigation system that nourishes a small corner of the garden. In this verdant patch, grow marigolds, mushgur [aromatic leaves used for decoration], green peppers, and basil.

But still the rest of the garden remains a field of dust, dotted only with litter.

Only one family benefits from the filter and irrigation system, growing vegetables and aromatic herbs in this small section of their land, but none of the three other families - including Naji's - sow anything. The fight against drought is still not won.

"Before the project, the garden was dry, and now the garden is still dry, because the project was only implemented from one house," said Naji.

"If [the grey water] came from five to six houses, it would be better," he continued. "We invited the people from the other houses to attend a meeting, but they didn't come. There is no awareness."

"People are resigned to their fate,

so when the government doesn't respond, they don't bang on the next door," he explained.

The solution to activate the community, said Naji, is women. If they move from house to house explaining about the drought, with each woman in turn talking to her father and brothers, awareness will spread and the community might take action.

In the gardener's hands

"It was a pilot project," explained Dr Fadhil Al-Nozaily from the WEC, who helped set up the filter. "There was a long list of different gardens, but Al-Wushali was the most in need."

Wadi MENA and the WEC chose the garden because its well had dried up and the whole area was dry, said Al-Nozaily, but a further extension of the project is up to the gardeners.

"We sat with them, discussed with them - there was awareness, training," he said. "Now it is up to them, they have to do for themselves."

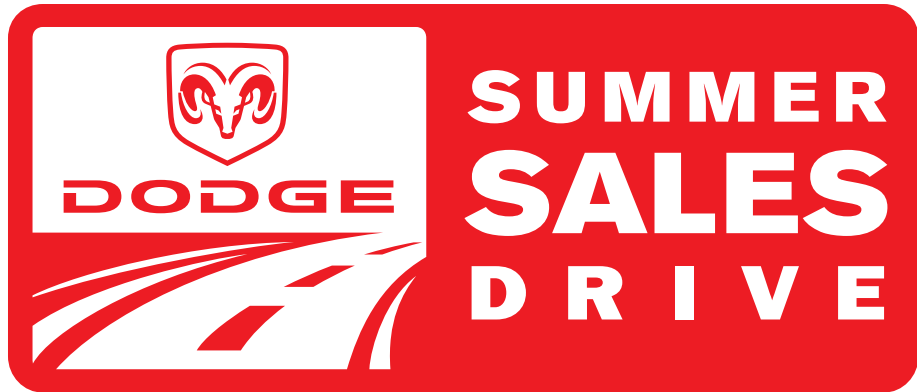
"We are looking for funds for replication," he added, but stressed that a new project would target a different garden.

In the meantime, the local council fights for the gardens' survival against drought, litter and determined real estate developers.

A new project to set up a rainwater collection system in Al-Sayla and encourage it to infiltrate into the groundwater has been forwarded to the cabinet, said local council member Al-Aqwa.

Before, the land brought food home, said Naji. You could feed your children, marry and even buy a bull, but now he has to work as a soldier to support his family.

"Now, if I tried to live from agriculture, I would die," he laughed.



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Keeping schoolchildren off the streets during summer

By: Ola Al-Shami

“I like working during the summer, because I get to be away from school for longer,” said 13-year-old Anwar, who travelled from his village in Kawkaban to sell odd items at the crossroads of Sana'a.

Anwar and many like him do not realize that these are important years in his development. Instead, children of school-age are increasingly drawn to the streets of Sana'a, and with it all its dangers.

According to IRIN, young street boys as young as eight have been lured into the cars of strangers for as little as a dollar, while others have been sexually abused by older boys living on the streets.

To address this issue, centers such as the Working Children Rehabilitation Center offer free vocational training and psychological care for children.

This has reduced the number of children on the streets during the school vacation, at least during the hours in which they study or train.

“Through our activities we decreased the working hours of those children, and train them to do work that is not heavy,” said Safia Al-Saydi, manager of the Working Children Rehabilitation Center.

Heavy work such as welding, carrying cement sacks, and working as a car mechanic is not suitable for small children, she said.

The United Nations' Children's Fund reported in 1994 that the number of children in the workforce was increasing by about 37.5 percent every year.

In 1999, one million children were working, of whom 421,000 had dropped out of school, according to the department that combats child labor at the Ministry of Social Affairs.

With few places to go or organized activities to consume their time, when school is out the numbers of children in the street temporarily bulge during the summer months.

In the three-month interval between

school bells, many unsupervised children of school-age end up playing in the street, especially in the afternoon when parents are working or chewing qat.

Constructive activities

Some parents try to bring them back into the house. “I can call them to come inside, but when they are inside they make everything dirty and untidy,” said a mother of two.

When discipline fails, thoughtful parents attempt to organize their children's free time.

“My children started to learn the Holy Quran in the mosque,” said Noria Al-Amrani, a mother of two. “But in the mosque children come from different backgrounds so my children picked up bad habits like cursing.”

“Now I keep them at home teach them Quran myself,” she said.

Children can spend an hour or more playing computer games, but parents limit their hours.

“I permit my children to spend only one hour playing computer games. They can also watch television,” said Al-Amrani.

Some parents, who are originally from the countryside, perceive the city as an inappropriate place for children to spend their vacation.

“I sent my daughter to the village to learn the good habits of the village from her aunts, said Mahmoud Mohammed, father of four, “My little boy might go with someone to the mosque to learn Quran.”

However, many children can still be found on streets mixing sand and water, and playing with rocks and marbles.

“We do not want to go back to classes. We want to play, watch television and forget everything about homework and notebooks,” said Ikram Ali Hussein, a schoolchild on holiday.

Summer holiday courses

Besides parents, different institutions offer opportunities constructive activities for children during the summer months.

“We have finished a workshop to show youth different ways of planning

and developing their lives,” said Marwan Al-Shaibani, project manager at non-governmental organization Youth Empowerment.

He explained that the activities were held in Al-Sonaina, Mosaik, Hael, Al-Safia and Al-Khafji in Sana'a because of these districts high rates of child labor and school drop-outs.

According to Al-Shaibani, the program also involves youth to draw on walls to make streets look better. The program gives youth a forum to discuss their social, economic or educational problems.

“In summer centers, we should not keep children in the traditional classrooms which they left or escaped,” added Al-Saydi, manager of the Working Children Rehabilitation Center.

Established in 2003, the Working Children Rehabilitation Center provides street children with the necessary notebooks, bags and uniforms to go to school during term time, but in summer it tries to hold more fun activities.

Instead of stuffing children into a classroom, the center organizes trips to the gym and museums, holds open discussions on a variety of topics and quizzes with prizes.

“We don't ask children to stop working, although we hope they will,” said Al-Saydi. “We only decrease their working hours and try to guide them to know more about their rights, for example avoiding heavy work and acquiring an education.”

The center has proven that its methods are successful, said Al-Saydi, and that the government should make it an official center, not merely a temporary program.

“[But] I'm afraid that the Working Children Rehabilitation Center will be ignored, and that we will end up closing down,” she said, explaining that the center was one of a kind in Sana'a.

In 2008, the Working Children Center was included on the capital's list of summer centers, which provided it with some governmental funding, but this year it may not and donor support is dwindling.



Summertime is a joyful time for children as they have no obligations to study. But this joy wears off quickly as they get bored with nothing to do most of the time other than play in the streets and occasional entertainment organized by concerned parents.

“We have not decided which centers will be on the list yet,” said Ameen Juma'an, head of the Local Council in response to fears of closing the center down. “We will follow the issue and of course we would like to have a much more successful experience than last year.”

Specially-tailored activities

Deaf and hard-of-hearing children were the stars of the show at the launch of the Educational and Vocational Rehabilitation for People with Special Needs Center's summer program in Al-Saba'een Park at the end of June.

“They need special treatment and even special activities to build their capacities so we encouraged hobbies like drawing, learning things through sign language and so on,” said Ahmed Al-Ezzi, the executive manager of the center.

The celebration included dancing and

a mimed play with sign language from the actors and spoken commentary from the stage's wings.

“The students were extremely motivated to learn theatrical skills that could be understood and appreciated,” added Al-Ezzi.

“I have two grandsons who can't hear, but in this center they are great at understanding each other and helping them express themselves in sign language,” said Om Hadi.

Summer cinema project

As they are waiting for their friends to finish their exams, the disabled children at the Arab Human Rights Foundation prepare themselves to make a film that shows how working children are treated.

The film is supposed to present the difficulties working children face and the appropriate solutions, like education. It also sheds light on parents' role in encouraging their children to complete

their education.

“I prefer not to tell so many details about the film until after the children finish it,” said Rajaa Al-Masabi, Chairwoman of the Arab Human Rights Foundation.

Speaking software courses

About 60 blind students in Al-Aman Organization for Blind Women's Care in Sana'a have registered for summer self-development courses.

“Our plans are to involve them in society through visits to companies and other summer camps to share ideas,” said Fatima Al-Akhlil, the head of the organization.

In Taiz, 45 blind women registered for speaking software and self-development courses at the Al-Aman Center there.

Summer activities for blind students include visits to historical and natural sites where guides provide them with a description of the places they visit

Yemeni poets behind Gitmo's bars

By: Amel Al-ariqi

Adnan Farhan Abdul Latif, 28, was in Pakistan looking for medical treatment – he had an injury from an accident in 1994, and was looking around the world for affordable treatment. In 2004, Pakistani forces detained him and turned him over to the United States for a \$5,000 bounty, after which he became a Guantanamo detainee.

Latif spent his first weeks at Camp X-Ray in an open-air cage, exposed to the tropical sun, without shade or shelter from the wind that buffeted him with sand and pebbles. His only amenities were a bucket for water and another for urine and feces.

He has also been exposed to IRF, a term used to describe “immediate reaction force.”

According to Latif's American lawyer, a group of soldiers wearing body armor rushed into his prison and beat him. After the beating, one of his eyes was swollen shut, the other was black and blue, and he had contusions all over his body. Once he was beaten and sprayed with pepper spray, apparently, he stated, for having stepped over a line painted on the floor of his cell while his lunch was being passed through the food slot of his door.

American lawyer Marc Falkoff described Latif as a small, thin Yemeni man with a scraggly beard. He recalled, “I first met Adnan Farhan Abdul Latif soon after I filed a habeas corpus petition on his behalf in late 2004. We were sitting in an interview cell, really a retrofitted storage container, at Camp Echo in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Across the table, Latif sat with his arms crossed and his head down. The guards had removed his handcuffs, but when he shifted his weight his leg irons clanged and echoed in the bare room. The irons were chained



to an eyebolt on the floor. Guards were stationed outside the door, and a video camera was visible in the corner.”

Early this year, Latif began a hunger

Adnan Farhan Abdul Latif

strike, which the military countered by force-feeding him liquid nutrients, inserting a tube up his nose and into his stomach.

Hunger striking wasn't the only method that Latif used to express his pain, and his protests against the mistreatment that Guantanamo prisoners receive. He transferred his suffering to poetry, for example writing:

*They are artists of torture,
They are artists of pain and fatigue,
They are artists of insults
and humiliation.*

*Where is the world to save us
from torture?*

*Where is the world to save us
from the fire and sadness?
Where is the world to save
the hunger strikers?*

Latif's “Hunger Strike Poem,” one of a collection of 22 poems written in the cages of Guantanamo, was published with great difficulty in August 2007. Six of the seventeen poets have been released to their home countries, but most, including Latif, are now in their sixth year of captivity in conditions

harsher than “super maximum” security in U.S. prisons.

The collection, translated from Arabic, was compiled by Falkoff, who got a Ph.D. in English before he went to law school, and he dedicated the book to his clients, describing them in the inscription as “my friends inside the wire.”

Writing poetry was both difficult and dangerous for the prisoners, who weren't given pens or paper until 2003. Some of the poems written by inmates were first scrawled in toothpaste on Styrofoam cups or etched into the cups with small stones, since in their first year of captivity the prisoners were not allowed to use pen and paper.

Any poem found by prison guards was confiscated and usually destroyed, the former prisoners say. According to Falkoff, most of the poetry he is aware of was written by prisoners who had not written poetry before being arrested.

U.S. authorities explained why the military has been slow to declassify the poems in a June 2006 letter to one of Falkoff's colleagues, arguing that inmates could use the works to pass coded messages to other militants outside.

The letter told defense lawyers to translate any poems they wanted into English to release publicly, and then submit the translations to the government for review.

Hundreds of poems remain suppressed by the military and will likely never be seen by the public. In addition, most of the poems that have been cleared are in English only, because the Pentagon believes that their original Arabic or Pashto versions represent an enhanced security risk. But the military relaxed the ban recently and cleared 22 poems by 17 prisoners for public release.

After seeing some of the poems published in a book forum, an editor at the University of Iowa Press approached Falkoff and asked him if he had thought about putting a manuscript together. As a

result, Poems from Guantánamo was published in August.

The strict security arrangements governing anything written by Guantanamo Bay inmates meant that Falkoff had to use linguists with secret-level security clearances rather than translators who specialize in poetry.

The resulting translations, Mr. Falkoff writes in the book, “cannot do justice to the subtlety and cadence of the originals.”

In addition, Falkoff and the publishers have been harassed for publishing a book of poetry by “terrorists.”

However, “Poems from Guantánamo” received mostly positive reviews, and is in its second print run after selling out its first printing of 5,000 copies. Robert Pinsky, known in the U.S. as the nation's poet laureate from 1997 to 2000, wrote: “They deserve, above all, not admiration or belief or sympathy, but attention. Attention to them is urgent for us.”

Among the more thoughtful reviews was one by Meghan O'Rourke, Slate's literary editor and the author of Halflife, though even she found that the poems are less interesting as works of art than in the way they “restore individuality to those who have been dehumanized and vilified in the eyes of the public.”

“Guantánamo was truly a black hole from which no information—and certainly not the voices of the detainees—could escape,” wrote Falkoff in the book's acknowledgements.

All of the detainees were decreed “enemy combatants” by the U.S. government, and were described as “among the most dangerous, best-trained, most vicious killers on the face of the Earth” by former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. Though several hundred have since been released, the rest (about 340) have spent the past six years—more than 2,000 days and nights—in the maximum-security detention center at Guantánamo Bay. Only a few—and none of Falkoff's clients—have been given a

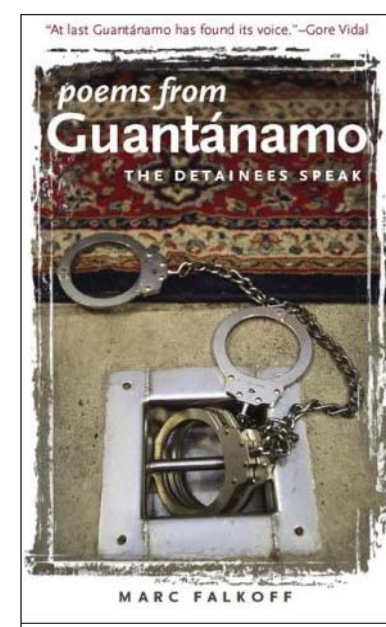
trial or charged with a specific crime. According to the military's own documents, only 8 percent of the prisoners are accused of being al-Qaeda, and only 5 percent were captured by U.S. forces on the battlefields of Afghanistan.

Last June, in an article in the Wall Street Journal, Defense Department spokesman Cmdr. J. D. Gordon commented on the collection by saying, “While a few detainees at Guantanamo Bay have made efforts to author what they claim to be poetry, given the nature of their writings they have seemingly not done so for the sake of art. They have attempted to use this medium as merely another tool in their battle of ideas against Western democracies.” Gordon had not, at the time, read the poems.

Falkoff, however, commented on The Pentagon's reaction to the publication of Poems as “predictable.”

“Perhaps the Pentagon's anxiety is justified, for the poems offer the world a glimpse of the profound psychological toll that Guantanamo has taken on the prisoners. They give voice to men whom the U.S. government has detained for more than five years without charge, trial or even the most basic protections of the Geneva Conventions. The prisoners remain entirely cut off from the world: military censors excise all references to current events from the occasional letters allowed from family members, and lawyers may not tell prisoners any personal or general news unless it directly relates to their cases. Indeed, dozens of prisoners have attempted suicide by hanging, by hoarding medicine and then overdosing, or by slashing their wrists.

The military, in typical Orwellian fashion, has described these suicide attempts as incidents of “manipulative self-injurious behavior.” said Falkoff, who added that many men at Guantanamo turned to writing poetry as a way to maintain their sanity, to memorialize their suffering and to preserve their humanity through acts of creation.



He noted, “The first [poem] I saw was sent to me by Abdulsalam Ali Abdulrahman Al-Hela, a Yemeni businessman from Sana'a, who had written his verses in Arabic after extended periods in an isolation cell. The poem is a cry against the injustice of arbitrary detention and at the same time a hymn to the comforts of religious faith. Soon after reading it, I learned of a poem by Latif called “The Shout of Death.” (Both of these poems remain classified.) After querying other lawyers, I realized that Guantanamo was filled with amateur poets.”

“Despite these and many other hurdles, 22 poems have now been published, and the voices of the prisoners in Guantanamo may now be heard. As the courts move sluggishly toward granting the prisoners fair and open hearings, and as politicians bicker about whether to extend the protections of the Geneva Conventions to the detainees, the prisoners' own words may now become part of the dialogue. Perhaps their poems will prick the conscience of a nation.” He concluded

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Children find a voice for their issues through animation

Twenty six children between the ages of 12 and 18 assembled for five days at the Girl Guides Association training center to learn about children's rights and how to express their issues through drawing and animation.

By: Nadia Al-Sakkaf

The boy was fourteen years old. He was not good in school and kept failing classes. His father was a strict and violent man who punished the boy severely. When the grade results came and the boy realized he had failed for the third time, he hid his report card under the living room sofa and buried himself in his bed in fear of his father's wrath. When his father came in later and noticed the card, he went mad with anger and hit the boy who cried and promised he would leave the house and never return. He stormed out of the house and as he walked the streets he found an older acquaintance that had a bad reputation. The two boys walked together until they saw some goods on a cart that had been left unattended by its owner when he went inside the mosque to pray. The older boy instructed the other to steal the goods. He was caught and handed over to the juvenile court on theft charges.

This was the scenario the protection

committee of eight children created for the animation clip they produced as part of the children's rights training last week.

"We do not interfere in the story no matter how irrational and despite the gaps in structure. We only show them how to create two dimensional images of the story's characters," said Diaa Malab, a Save the Children regional communication officer who had come from Beirut to train children on self expression through animation. "We help them with the distances and sizes, and then we help them make animated short films, or what we call 'spots,' with the shapes they created," she added.

The children voiced the dialogues while they moved the shapes, then during production, cut the parts where their hands were visible. The end product was a simple animation describing the stories.

Mohammed Asda is a fourteen year old boy who voiced the part of the main character in the protection committee story. "He is my age. I have not seen violence as such, but I have heard stories of boys and girls who become depressed when their



The trainer Diaa Malaeb showing the teens how to sketch the scenarios before cutting them into shapes.

parents don't treat them kindly. We want to tell the adults and people responsible for children's welfare that children have the right to be protected from violence and abuse."

The invented story is not very far from reality, as Ala Al-Amri, another participant in the protection committee, explained. He said in his own neighborhood there was a boy named Rif at whose father was abusive and told him that if he got a bad grade he would kill him. When results came out, the boy ran away from home leaving a note behind saying "I am going to leave the whole world for you and finally find peace."

"This happened more than two months ago," related Eftekar Al-Shamiri, a facilitator in the workshop and a project officer with Save the Children in Yemen. "The boy was in the sixth grade and his father regretted his behavior deeply. We reported it to the police and posted his pictures on buses and public places, but up till now he is nowhere to be found."

The animation program is a regional program that was previously implemented in Palestine, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Tunisia and now Yemen. Save the Children had created similar animation projects with disadvantaged groups in Yemen back in 2006 in conjunction with the disability association Al-Tahadi and with Iraqi refugees in Yemen. The films were supposed to be broadcasted on Yemen TV yet only the disability animation was shown. The other was termed too controversial and is still waiting to be broadcasted by the Yemen TV authority.

"The point behind this project is to enable children to express themselves without having to go face to face with others," said Fatima Al-Ajel, communications and advocacy officer at Save the Children Sweden-Yemen Program. "They can feel safe representing their own issues through fictional characters while in essence they are talking about themselves. We also teach them about the International Child Rights Convention, what rights they have as children and how to demand these rights."

The right to participate and the right to

education

The second group of ten participants decided they wanted their story to be about the right to participate in decision making. They chose the story of a girl who was married off at a young age without her consent.

"She was only fourteen years old and was happily coming home to show off her high grades to her parents when her father told her matter-of-factly that she is getting married soon," narrated Suhail Abu Esba. "She cried and objected but her point of view was not important to them. She was forced into marriage because the groom was rich. In their first days together the husband was hitting her and kept telling her how he bought her with his money like an object. She was miserable."

The idea came to the group from their teammate Abdulkarim Al-Ja'adi who had seen this happen to his neighbor's daughter. "I think he is divorced now, but I remember that the girl was so unhappy to be married and that she had been good in school," he said.

The idea most emphasized by the group was that children should be given the right to have a say in general and especially regarding their own issues. "People don't consider us as complete human beings with thoughts and ideas and opinions. They just say, oh, they are kids what do they know... we do know, we know a lot, and we want our right to have a say," passionately insisted 12 year-old Wiam Naser Al-Duba'e as she jumped excitedly. Wiam was the youngest participant in the training.

The third group focused on the right to education. They were lucky to have Fadi Al-Harb in their group with a talent for drawing. "It doesn't really matter if the children can draw or not because it is not a competition and we are not looking to produce animation as such," said Diaa Malab. "We are helping the children find a way to express themselves as well as create an advocacy tool to form public opinion and laws promoting children's rights."

The story from the education committee was about a boy who liked to study but his father wanted him to work as a mechanic in the family's car workshop. One day while the boy was sweating and his hands were full of car grease, a paper

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Participants creating the scenery by cutting colored paper into shapes.



Making the shapes move while the camera is recording before adding the voice and adjusting the montage.

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was blown into the workshop by the wind. The paper was article 28 of the international convention for child rights which read:

"States' parties recognize the right of the child to education and make primary education compulsory and available free to all; encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means; states' parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity. States' parties shall promote and encourage international cooperation in matters relating to education, in particular with a view to contributing to the elimination of ignorance and illiteracy..."

Lila Al-Kumaim, 13, explained the scenario and the dramatic end with the boy looking at a difficult dirt road ahead of him, symbolizing his challenging journey as a child with no rights into a gloomy future.

"Now that we learned how to express ourselves through drawing and animation we will teach others and make them come here to the center," she said.

Nujood Ja'adan, 16, explained that because of her disability her family discouraged her from continuing her education after the third grade. "They said it would be cumbersome to go to school and a waste of time for a girl like me. Now that I am older I fought their decision and I am back at school. I have wasted valuable years but what matters now is that I am building my abilities and am aware of my rights and how to demand them," she said.

Generation for change

The 26 participants decided that they would come back again to the center and create new animations, especially because Save the Children is leaving the equipment in the care of the Girl Guides Association. They promised to spread the world around, and through small booklets they have been given describing their rights as children from the International Child Rights Convention, they promised to convey these rights to their friends and family.

"I tell children about their rights, and when they face challenges such as oppressive parents or circumstances that prevent them from being educated, I encourage

them not to give up," said Maryam Al-Razam, 15.

"My father and grandfather see things very differently from the way I see them today. Each generation has its own conceptions and priorities. Education for our generation is an issue of survival and not a luxury like in my grandfather's time," said Fadi Al-Harb, 18.

"Ignorance is overwhelming many of our parents. They mean well, but they don't know how much they are hurting us

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To read more about this project or to see the animations go to http://mena.savethechildren.se/Middle_East_and_North_Africa/Activities/Short-Films-Spots
Or <http://www.scsmena.org/download-spots.htm>

by not giving us our rights. I forgave my parents but I can't forget that I am 16 and still in the fourth grade," explained Nujood Ja'adan. The trainer Diaa Malaeb was very impressed with the participating children's enthusiasm and ability to work together so closely although they just came to know each other during the workshop.

"Even during the scenario explaining a particular right, the children indirectly emphasized other rights. For example, the child's right to a fair trial in a specialized court was brought up as well as their right to explain themselves in front of a judge as in the protection group's story," explained Malaeb.

Although the training was only for five days and concluded last Thursday, in essence it is endless because the participants can visit the center and use the material to create countless animations.

"We told them that they can bring their friends and teach them how to create animations," said Fatima Al-Ajel. "We are sure that this group will be the start of a larger one that will spread across the country. We chose the 26 participants from our partner organizations with certain criteria such as an interactive nature and an ability or interest in drawing. These children will now become trainers for other, and definitely agents for change," she concluded.