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**Inside:** **3** Yemeni coffee needs Yemeni cuppers  
 **5** Co-education improves student's learning  
 **8** Yemen updates labor statistics

## Families behind 70% of child abuses in Yemen

**By: Shatha Al-Harazi**  
SANA'A, Dec. 8 – A two year-old child was taken to Al-Jumhuri Hospital on Tuesday after being beaten violently by her father. The hospital's administration didn't inform the police.  
"Tuesday was a national holiday, therefore the hospital staff didn't care about her. I had to fight and shout so they would pay some attention," said Ammar, the man who took the child to hospital.  
"I was taking my son to a local hospital in the neighborhood when I saw the girl in very bad shape. Her grandfather, grandmother and uncle had brought her to the hospital, but they were about to leave without treating her because they didn't have enough money," Ammar told the Yemen Times. "I took my wife and son home, got some money, then took the girl to Al-Jumhuri Hospital. I also informed the police, but the father had run away."  
The girl's body had signs of torture, including broken bones and needle puncture wounds.  
"A team from the Organization for Childhood Protection (SEYAJ) went

to the hospital to follow the situation and make sure that the child was protected and received appropriate health care," said Ahmed Al-Qurashi, head of SEYAJ.  
"Hitting a child as punishment is a common part of raising a child in Yemen. A misunderstanding of the civil ways of nurturing is the reason behind this. The society believes that physical punishment is a means of nurturing children and this is not the first case of its kind that we have received," explained Al-Qurashi.  
Perpetrators of abuse are most often step-mothers and step-fathers, as they have a motivation of revenge against their spouse's former partners. The next most common perpetrators are the fathers, but rarely the mothers, said Al-Qurashi.  
"Seventy percent of the violence against children in Yemen is committed by the family and considered as individual crimes, especially in those families who facing separation," he said.  
The most common form of crimes against children in Yemen is physical abuse, followed by sexual abuse, and murder and attempted murder.

"The judicial system doesn't deter fathers from abusing their children due to a misunderstanding of the Islamic hadith that says that fathers aren't executed for murdering their child. The hadith has been interpreted by scholars to include the word 'murder'," said Al-Qurashi.  
This hadith is controversial. It is widely known among Islamic scholars, but many of them said it's a weak hadith and there are questions about its credibility as it contrasts with many Islamic laws that state "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth". Under these other laws, the murder of a child could be repaid by the killing of the murderer.  
"The Islamic way in determining penalties is to make a comprehensive study of the case. So if in this case the hadith is true, it doesn't prevent the application of other penalties upon [abusive] fathers. So this hadith can't be taken as an excuse, we need to collect other scripts whether they be ones about parents or humanitarian treatment," said Qaid Al-Walidi, an Islamic scholar and jurisprudence professor at Al-Eman University. "Discipline of a child is not unlimited, in fact, everything in Islam

has limits and borders, which means it's not the father's right to kill his child, and the issue is related to many other rights," added Al-Walidi.  
"Once we sued a father who raped his four daughters repeatedly. He was convicted for 15 years in prison. We appealed the sentence, and he was convicted to be executed, and that was a huge success for us," said Al-Qurashi.  
Another hadith says that Islam directed parents to treat their children with fear: "Fear Allah and treat your children with equal justice," reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim, two historical tellers of the hadith who are deeply respected.  
The Qur'an states that a child has a right to life. That neither the father nor the mother have the right to take the life of the child, whether a boy or a girl. Allah says, "And do not kill your children out of fear of poverty; We shall provide for them and for you. Truly, the killing of them is a great sin." (17:31).  
The Qur'an also speaks against the killing of a child for fear of poverty or lack of provision.  
That is why, when the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was asked, "What is



These messages were written by children for a campaign about violence against children. The Arabic sentences say, 'Stop hurting me', 'Promote children's rights', 'My childhood is precious', 'Yes for protection, no to abuse', 'No to violence against children' and 'I'm the child, where is the mercy'.

the greatest sin?" he replied, "To ascribe divinity to someone other than Allah, when He is the One Who created you." "What next?" he was asked. "To kill your child out of fear that it will share your food, he replied," reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.  
Many reasons were given by SEYAJ for violence against children, including the low level of awareness about children's rights, and the high level of poverty and unemployment. "These reasons make the fathers or abusers empty their psychological problems onto the children," said Al-Qurashi.

## Deputy PM to answer Parliament's questions on WikiLeaks

**By Iona Craig and Ali Saeed**  
SANA'A, Dec. 8 – Deputy Prime Minister for Security and Defense Affairs, Rashad Al-Alimi, failed to turn up in parliament yesterday for his anticipated questioning by MPs over accusations that he lied to the legislature.  
In the first reported case of a parliamentarian in the Arab world being called to account over revelations in the WikiLeaks cables, Al-Alimi was due to face questioning in parliament.

Yemen's parliament summoned the senior defence minister to answer comments, contained in a leaked diplomatic cable, that he lied to MPs about US missile strikes, responsible for killing 35 civilians in December 2009.  
"If it's true that Rashad Al-Alimi, as quoted in the WikiLeaks cable, lied to parliament, then he should apologize to the parliament and resign," said signature of the petition and MP for opposition party Islah, Mansour Al-Zindani.

But, in the Wednesday session, MPs were surprised that Al-Alimi did not show up and instead sent a letter to the parliament promising to appear on Saturday.  
Aydoros Al-Naqib from the opposition Socialist Party said at yesterday's session that MPs should suspend their activities until Al-Alimi appears.  
"You should stop your duty until Al-Alimi shows up and answers our questions," Al-Naqib told the MPs.  
Al-Rami's summoning followed a presentation to parliament on Sunday of a cross-party petition, signed by 50 MPs. The Parliament voted unanimously for the deputy prime minister to explain himself to the 301 elected members, according to Al-Zindani.  
The cable in question recorded a meeting between US Centcom chief, General Petraeus and Yemen's President Ali Abdullah Saleh, on January 2 2010 just weeks after missile strikes in December 2009. The cruise missile attacks on a suspected Al-Qaeda camp at

Al-Majalah, in the southern governorate of Abyan, on December 17, killed 14 women and 21 children. Petraeus congratulated Saleh in the meeting for successful operations against Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).  
Saleh told Petraeus, "We'll continue saying the bombs are ours, not yours," prompting Al-Alimi to joke that he had just "lied" by telling parliament that the bombs in the recent strikes were carried out by Yemeni forces, according to the leaked US embassy document.  
Al-Naqib described Al-Alimi's lie to parliament as a third crime, in line with the killing of women and children in the December strikes and the breach of national sovereignty by US drones.  
In an official response, published by state news agency Saba on December 1, the Foreign Ministry described the leaked cables as "inaccurate" and said that the documents "did not convey what really occurred in the meetings."  
The unnamed official added: "Such information does not matter to the Republic of Yemen. Yemen has been suffering from media attacks including lies and fabrications about its affairs, with the media just seeking to distort Yemen's position and image."

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# Aden looking to maintain Gulf Cup momentum

By: Tom Finn

ADEN, Dec. 7 – Kuwait won the Gulf Cup on Sunday, beating Saudi Arabia 1-0 in extra time in front of a record-breaking crowd of 22 May Stadium in Aden.

Striker Waleed Aly scored in the 95th minute to give Kuwait its record 10th Gulf Cup title. Saudi Arabia was going for its fourth Gulf Cup victory, but was thwarted by a miserly Kuwait defense that conceded only two goals all tournament.

Despite their team's dismal performance, crashing out in the first round, Yemeni officials are already championing the tournament as a major success for the country.

Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh, who attended the final, called the staging of the tournament "a political and moral victory for Yemen."

Journalists from the Gulf region have produced glowing accounts of the tournament and of their warm reception in Aden. In an article for the Saudi newspaper Al-Watan, journalist Abdullah Al-Farraj described how Yemenis "terrorized" him with their welcome.

"Before our arrival, we heard and read about terrorism, but you terrorized us with your welcome and the smiles on your faces," the article read.

Yemen's success did not come cheaply or easily. President Saleh spent months lobbying hesitant Arab leaders to send their teams to Yemen.

Foreign leaders were so nervous about sending teams to Abyan that the Yemeni authorities had to arrange two exhibition matches in the new Abyan stadium, televised live, to help persuade the teams to come.

Yemeni officials spent USD 600 million on the event and sent 30,000 police officers and soldiers to secure the tournament's sites. The government

helped with the construction of six new 5-star hotels in the port city of Aden, and renovated more than 100 older hotels to host the 500,000 fans who attended the Gulf Cup. To avoid empty stadiums, tickets were free and visitors were bused to the matches.

"The games have activated the economy, hotels are full, restaurants are full, honey sellers are selling their honey, and exchange shops are selling their rials," Dr. Abdul Galil Al-Shaibi, head of Aden's Free Zone told the Yemen Times.

"The Gulf games gave us the opportunity to show that things can happen here and they can happen safely," he added.

Hosting the games in the provinces of Aden and Abyan may have seemed like a strange choice. The two regions are home to both a growing Al-Qaeda insurgency and the separatist Southern Movement.

The separatist's main complaint is that since unification the south has been treated as an unwanted stepchild by the more powerful northerners. Provinces like Aden and Abyan have had little investment. Thousands of southerners lost their public sector jobs when their government was merged into the Sana'a-based central administration in 1990.

The Yemeni Centre for Civil Rights announced recently a public opinion poll which found that an overwhelming majority of southern Yemenis favour independence. Over 70 percent of Yemenis living in the territory of the former People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) favour secession from the unified Yemen state.

There were widespread concerns that the separatists might try to harness some of the international attention drawn by the cup by staging attacks. But a massive security presence largely prevented



any trouble. Apart from one attack last Sunday, that killed a soldier in a town 170 km northeast of Aden, there has been little violence. "All the fears about security have been unfounded," said Foreign Minister Abubakr Al-Qirbi.

"The Gulf Cup was an important showcase for Yemen, not just from a sporting standpoint but also from a tourism perspective," Abduljabbar Al-Salawi, assistant deputy minister for tourism told the Yemen Times.

"We have been delighted to welcome large contingents of supporters from our neighbouring Gulf states. They form the largest demographic of

tourists and business visitors to our country, and we hope they will extol the virtues of Aden as a unique tourist destination," he said.

Despite the tournament's success, some locals are worried that as the fans leave so too will the new investments and jobs.

"We need to think what comes after the games. How do we maintain the momentum?" said Mohammed Al-Qirbi, an employee at the Mercure Hotel in Aden.

"It's all well and good building new hotels, but not if their rooms lie empty once everyone leaves."

## Southern movement renews activities

By: Mohammed bin Sallam

SANA'A, Dec. 8 – Southern governorates including Lahj and Al-Dhale' witnessed a two-day general strike on Monday and Tuesday. The strike paralyzed traffic movement and work in many schools and public facilities in the south.

The Supreme Council for the Peaceful Southern Movement, an umbrella for the multiple southern movements, called for a strike earlier this month to be carried out on the first Monday of every month.

If the movement did not receive adequate response from the government they warned the

strike would escalate to once a week.

The strike was most visible in the cities of Al-Dhale', Al-Habeelain, Halmain, Al-Malah and Jabal Jabr. Other towns witnessed a partial strike and in most southern cities the strike took place between seven and ten o'clock in the morning.

Despite the spread of the protest no violence was reported.

In a separate move thousands of southern movement supporters participated in a demonstration in Radfan town, Lahj on Tuesday demanding the release of more than one thousand Southern Movement detainees held in state security prisons. They also condemned what they

termed as the "militarizing of the southern governorates" referring to the heavy presence of security.

The National Organization for Defending Rights and Freedoms known as HOOD demanded the release of 18 political prisoners, currently detained in Lahj prison.

Lawyer Khattab Al-Ahdal head of the HOOD office in Lahj said that the detainees were being held without charge. "This is unconstitutional and against the international convention for human rights. I demand they are released immediately or charged according to the law."

Head of Lahj prosecution Fadhl Abdullah Ali

issued a memo about the detainees last month, in which he demanded the PSO forward any legal documents against them. But no progress has been made.

HOOD added that several new detainees were arrested at the beginning of the Gulf Cup football tournament. He also demanded they be charged or released.

During a speech at Badr military camp in Sana'a on Monday, President Saleh warned the southern movement that they will see "tougher times and military operational units will be established in both Sa'ada and the south to ensure that state rule prevailed over all."

## Responsive governance training to reduce instability

By: Ali Saeed

SANA'A, Dec. 7 – Training to combat corruption, and build transparency and accountability in government started this week for 13 civil society organizations (CSOs).

The US Agency for International Development (USAID) hosted the workshops for CSOs as part of a four-year Responsive Governance Program (RGP) in Yemen. The program aims to assist Yemeni government institutions to be more responsive to citizen's needs and demands in order to strengthen stability in the country, Abdul Karim Al-Aug, deputy chief of the program told the Yemen Times.

"When people see the government does not provide them with basic services such as health, water, roads and education, this drives instability," said Al-Aug.

The program is part of an agreement between the US government and the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC) and forms part of the USAID strategy agreed with Yemen for 2008-2011.

"A key objective of RGP is to involve citizens in the government decision-making process through a series of public dialogue forums to identify citizens' key concerns and engage

the government on these issues," according to a statement by USAID. "Conducting the public forums is part of a national effort that will solicit and channel citizen input to appropriate government bodies and into the public policy process."

Counterpart International, an American non-profit organization, is the prime partner with USAID in the program.

Two other sub-organizations are also implementing the program, the US-based National Democratic Institute (NDI) which supports democratic institutes worldwide, and the Research Triangle Institute which is a non-profit research organization that provides technical solutions and research to governments and businesses worldwide.

The first of three focus areas for the RGP is policy formulation and capacity assessment, that is, assessing the capacity of government institutions that are responsible for drafting national policies and programs.

The program looks at key ministries including the Ministry of Planning, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Local Administration and the Ministry of Water.

"We assess them to identify gaps. Then we draft action plans on how to improve the process

of developing national policies," Al-Aug said.

The second part deals with issues of transparency, accountability, and anti-corruption and is led by the Supreme National Authority for Combating Corruption (SNACC) and the High Tender Board. There is the possibility of expanding the remit to the Judiciary.

The project works with NGOs that are involved in transparency, accountability and anti-corruption efforts such as the Yemen Coalition for Anti-Corruption, which includes 30 anti-corruption NGOs. Parliament is also involved with the anti-corruption part of the program through parliamentary committees.

The third section of the good governance program involves the CSOs.

"We emphasize the importance of strengthening CSOs because it is an international trend that goes outside the government structure, and it goes to people directly through NGOs which are considered to represent people," explained Al-Aug.

"In this part of the program, we work on different training workshops to enhance CSOs institutional structures. 13 CSOs were selected from 90 NGOs that applied for the grant to cover the eight governorates of Aden, Shabwa, Abyan, Lahj, Al-Dhale', Marib, Al-Jawf and

Amran plus the capital Sana'a."

Targeted governorates were selected by mutual decision with USAID and Yemen according to population density, prevalence of poverty and level of instability.

"The program is ongoing and we have almost completed the assessment of nine ministries," he added.

At the end of December, 26 general public dialogue forums (PDFs) will be implemented in the nine governorates. All social categories will be invited to these forums including government officials, local councils, MPs, religious leaders, tribal leaders and teachers, according to Al-Aug. Women are also included in the PDFs, but will be separate.

Issues raised in the forums will then be analyzed and presented to a national conference.

"The program aims to assess Yemeni institutions to be more responsive to the demands and grievances of the people," the deputy chief of the program said.

However Dr. Abdullah Al-Faqih, professor of political science at the University of Sana'a told the Yemen Times that such a program will not be sufficient to solve all the problems in Yemen.

"The problems in Yemen are not only responsive governance," Al-Faqih said.

## Yemen's volunteers celebrate

By: Mahmood Al-Matari

SANA'A, Dec. 6 – International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development (IVD), celebrated around the world, was marked in Yemen on Sunday by the United Nations with children at the Al-Rahma foundation in Sana'a.

IVD was adopted by the UN in Dec. 1985. For 25 years, governments, the UN system and civil society organizations have joined volunteers around the world to celebrate the day on Dec. 5. The day offers an opportunity for volunteer organizations and individual volunteers to make visible their contributions – at local, national and international levels, according to the UN.

"On Sunday we celebrated International Volunteer Day with 40 children at the Al-Rahma Foundation orphanage for children and with 27 volunteers from the UN who took part in the celebration," Lulwa Al-Kilani, UN Volunteer (UNV) program officer, told the Yemen Times. "The celebration contained many activities for the children, like drawing, education, and learning many other things from the volunteers."

The foundation, which has several care centres around the country, has 35 volunteers, 15 of which are from Yemen. Al-Rahma helps foreign volunteers by providing accommodation and basic expenses.

UNV promotes volunteerism worldwide and mobilizes volunteers for development projects. UNV has engaged more than 50,000 UN Volunteers to work on a wide range of projects in developing countries.

"We have plans to make a committee to activate volunteers, connecting other organizations to work with us, and receive new volunteers," said Al-Kilani.

D. Esam Al-Dine Awadh, civil society organization officer for the Charitable Society for Social Welfare (CSSW), has increased its volunteers over the last three years. In 2007 there were 12,000, but now there are 14,000 volunteers working for the organization all around Yemen.

"We promote volunteering in Yemeni society because we know it is really important for everyone and for the welfare of society. We honor the volunteers in celebrations to encourage them

to do better work for their communities," said Awadh. "The volunteers help in different things like health, education, social surveys, helping poor families and orphans, and many other things."

"I was treated from onchocerciasis [River Blindness] by help from volunteers who came to my village ten years ago. Before that time I didn't know about the volunteers and how they helped people," said Mohamed Al-Sadi, a school manager in Al-Mahwit city and a volunteer. "Volunteering is really important for people's lives and I have worked as a volunteer since 2000. We distribute treatment for sick people in villages."



On Sunday International Volunteer Day was celebrated with 40 children at the Al-Rahma Foundation orphanage for children and with 27 volunteers from the UN.

"I wanted to reduce the number of sick people in my village and we really did," said Ibrahim Al-Mahdi, a mathematics teacher and a volunteer. "I and other volunteers are proud of what we've done for people. I've worked as a volunteer since 2002 and I want to finish what I've started."

## In Brief

### Yemen's accession to the Gulf Council Production Program

The Supreme Council of the GCC States approved on Tuesday Yemen's accession to the GCC Joint Program Production Institution (GCCJPI). At the conclusion of their summit in Abu Dhabi, UAE, the GCC countries' leaders confirmed their support for the unity, security and stability of Yemen, praising Qatar's initiative to promote dialogue and national reconciliation in Yemen. The Council expressed its hope that the coming ministerial meeting of the Friends of Yemen group, scheduled to be held in Saudi Arabia next February, would result in more support for Yemen to achieve security and stability.

The council is to intensify efforts to strengthen cooperation between the GCC States and Yemen, according to a report of the GCC's Secretary-General. This is to further the interests of both sides, and to implement projects and development programs that have been agreed during the Fifth Joint Ministerial Meeting of Foreign Ministers of the GCC countries and Yemen, which was held in Bahrain in June 2010. The GCC Supreme Council also congratulated Yemen on the successful hosting and organization of the 20th Gulf Football Cup tournament.

### HAJJA

#### Program for training children

The Social Welfare Fund (SWF) and Alternatives to Combat Child Labor through Education and Sustainable Services (ACCESS-Plus) signed in Hajja on Monday a Memorandum of Understanding for training children. The memo stipulates that the priority of vocational training in ACCESS programs would be given to children of social security beneficiaries, while SWF would support children who were not included under the social security cases. Hajja Governor, Farid Mujawar, affirmed the importance of the charitable initiative, hailing the efforts and activities of the humanitarian program.

### HADRAMOUT

#### Penal court sentences three Al-Qaeda in custody

The Specialized Penal Court passed on Monday sentences from four to ten years to three people accused of forming an armed group belonging to Al-Qaeda. In the court hearing chaired by Judge Abdo Al-Awadhi, the court sentenced Saleh Abdul-Kaleq Bin Ali Jaber, to ten years in prison starting from the date of imprisonment. The court also sentenced Mohammed Ahmed Saeed Ba-Tarfi to six years in prison starting from the date of imprisonment, while Omar Bark Bin Masoud was sentenced to four years in prison. The court decided to confiscate the seizures related to the three which contained 20 explosives, fuses and gunpowder.

### SANA'A

#### Children's Parliament resumes sessions

The Children's Parliament resumed in Sana'a on Monday, holding its sessions under the slogan "Children's Situation under Armed Conflicts". Members from the Children's Parliament were briefed by Defense Ministry representatives on the role the ministry plays in not involving children in armed conflicts. UNICEF and UAE Red Crescent representatives acquainted the Children's Parliament members on their roles in rehabilitating displaced children, raising children's awareness on ways of protecting themselves, and on what required services they provide in displaced persons' camps.

### ADEN

#### Yemeni Coastguard headquarters transferred to Aden

Two republican decrees were issued on Monday to transfer the headquarters of the Maritime Affairs Authority (MAA) and the Yemeni Coastguard Authority (YCA) to Aden governorate. Decree No. 223 for 2010 was issued amending article (3) of Decree No. 352 for 2001 pertaining to the establishment of the MMA and stipulates the transfer of the headquarters from the capital Sana'a to Aden governorate. Decree No. 224 for 2010 amends article (1) of Decree No. 1 for 2002 concerning the establishment of the YCA and stipulates the transfer of its headquarters to Aden governorate.



# Yemeni coffee needs Yemeni cuppers

By: Malak Shaher

SANA'A, Dec. 9 - A large group of young men and women sat in front of 26 plastic cups of water, mixed with different ingredients. The task was to test their genetic abilities in identifying the different flavors.

This tasting exercise was the first of its kind in Yemen. Of the 80 participants, only 25 passed this test. The successful candidates will eventually become Yemen's first batch of coffee cuppers.

Coffee cupping is the technical process through which coffee is graded

based on its quality and origins.

Small and Micro Enterprise Promotion Service Agency (SMEPS), affiliated to the government's Social Fund for Development was behind the tasting experience.

SMEPS carried out the cupping training as a first step of a year-long process to create young Yemeni coffee cuppers, certified by the International Speciality Coffee Institute.

"The trainees do not need have any prior experience in coffee cupping but we preferred to select people who already have experience in coffee," said Mervat Haidar, senior project officer at

SMEPS.

Ismail Faez, 23, was excited to be part of the training. As he immersed himself in the different varieties of mixtures, trying out his tastebuds, he acknowledged that this training will help him perform his job better as he works in a coffee shop.

"The most important thing is that they should have a 'genetic' ability to taste the faintest coffee flavor," said cupping trainer Manuel Diaz.

Diaz is from Mexico and has over 20 years experience in the coffee industry.

"With this training we can have local experts who are able to grade the coffee produced locally and hence control the pricing and originality," explained Haidar.

Currently, when Yemeni companies need to export coffee, they have to send samples to the clients who grade the coffee and determine its price.

Iglal Al-Baqiri, 28, works as a sales agent for Al-Ezzi coffee company. She was also a participant in the training and was 100 percent sure that this is what is needed to boost the coffee market in Yemen.

"As Yemenis, we have been famous for our coffee for ages. We have to have local cuppers to identify the grade and price," said Haidar.

"Therefore Yemeni coffee needs Yemeni cuppers."

This training is one of many steps SMEPS is carrying out to revive Yemen's reputation as the homeland of coffee, especially since it is the only country in the world which grows 100 percent of the sun-dried natural Arabica coffee.



YT Photo by Malak Shaher

Amira Al-Hakimi filling in the forms in which 26 types of water mixtures were identified. Amira made it to the next round.



Trainer Manuel Diaz collecting the sample forms from the cupping participants. Diaz is from Mexico and has over 20 years of experience in the coffee industry.

Next week, Yemen will host the second International Arabica Naturals Conference following the first one held in Mexico three years ago.

"The conference and the cupping training are two parts of a larger project, which also includes a study on coffee productivity in Yemen," said Wesam Qaid, director of SMEPS.

The productivity study includes examining the productivity of certain types of Yemeni coffee and finding ways to improve it.

### Coffee cupping

The cupping processes involve defining the coffee quality by tasting it, smelling

it and observing the color and shape of the coffee beans. Coffee tasters, or cuppers, have to be able to recognize the slightest differences between coffee types in flavor, smell, color, texture and appearance.

A professional cupper can determine age, quality, roasting and the place of production of the coffee.

In Yemen, coffee is grown between 900 and 2000 meters above sea level. The Yemeni coffee boasts a superior lingering taste and an exceptional resistance which is rated 93 out of 100, according to experts from the International Coffee Organization (ICO).

In Yemen, there are over 15 coffee

types, which differ depending on where they are grown and the appearance of the coffee beans.

The different types of Yemeni coffee take their names either from where they are grown, such as Al-Matari or Al-Harazi, or from the shape of the coffee beans such as Al-Tofahi (apple-like).

The first coffee type known to the world was the Mocha coffee which was exported from Mocha port in Hodeida, a city by the Red Sea.

## Their News

### Emad Al-Saqqaf recognized as Arab Media Pioneer

Among a group of pioneers in journalism, arts, literature and innovation from 18 Arab countries Emad Al-Saqqaf editor in chief of the Family and Development Magazine and head of Yemen Times Taiz bureau was recognized as a 2010 pioneer.

The prize giving took place in Doha on November 30, 2010 during the Arab Pioneers and Innovators Forum at Qatar National Theater.

"I am proud to be recognized among a respectable group of high level people from around the Arab World. It only motivates me to work harder and contribute more to the community," said Al-Saqqaf.

The Arab Pioneers and Innovators Festival and Forum is held annually under the auspices of the Arab League in a different Arab city.

This year it was held in Doha under the auspices of Prince Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, who was represented by Culture Minister Dr. Kuwari.

In the honorary celebration, Dr. Nancy Bakir delivered a speech on behalf of Arab League Secretary General Amr Moussa in which she stressed that the Arab League charter calls for the cooperation between Arab countries in different fields.



"It also encourages cooperation in the field of culture and development," she added. "This festival is a cooperation charter between pioneers and innovators."

The festival's Founder and Secretary General Abdou Mohammad Blan addressed the participants on the importance of cooperation among pioneers as well as between them and the relevant official bodies.

He cited the example of the Qatari Ministry of Culture and the full support it has given to ensure the success of this festival.

### Yemenia launches Nairobi and Dar Al-Salam routes



Yemen's national airlines Yemenia has launched this week two new flight routes to Kenyan capital Nairobi and one of Tanzania's main cities Dar Al-Salam. This launch is in effect reconvening the flights that were disconnected in 2005 due to weak economic feasibility to these two destinations.

"There is new demand for the flights and this has made us reconvene the flights," said Yemenia spokes person. This demand is caused by increased tourism influx from Europe to Africa. In addition to increase in economic activities from Africa to other regions of the world.

"Having a large Yemeni community in Kenya helps as they would like to visit home and we provide them direct routes," read a Yemenia press release.

Yemenia reevaluates its destinations continuously and tries to provide its customers with best travel services. The airline carries out studies regularly to explore expansion possibilities and adding new cities to its 35 destinations.

### Economic activities

Yemenia increased its sales per-

centage by 40 percent in the third quarter of 2010. The Internet Based E-commerce has also increased by 115 percent and agents sales increased by five percent.

Passenger movement increased since the beginning of the year and until September by 12 percent.

Moreover, the Cargo Spot system which is the new system launched for cargo has made excellent sales percentages. As for pilgrims, Yemenia says that it has reached its goal this year which is a 50 percent increase than last year of a total of 18,200 pilgrims.

A new cooperation is currently taking place with Arabia Felix Airways for a co-sharing agreement and this has helped increase the sales in this year.

Yemenia during this year trained 651 trainees and this is a 27 percent increase since last year. The airlines management has also introduced a new training policy to improve the quality of its staff.



### Qatar Airways announces 100th destination

Qatar Airways announced its 100th destination, a milestone for one of the world's fastest growing airlines. In a span of just 13 years, starting with only four aircraft to currently 91, soaring from 13 destinations to 94, the carrier has experienced double digit growth year on year. The airline is ranked the third best in the world, and holds a string of accolades cementing its status as a high quality and service-oriented global 5-star carrier.

The latest route will start four-times-weekly flights to Aleppo, Syria, starting from 6 April 2011. Named as a UNESCO World Heritage site and one of the oldest cities in the world, Aleppo will be the airline's second destination in Syria, after Damascus, where the carrier has been flying since 1998.

Qatar Airways is the first Gulf-based, international carrier to commence operations to Aleppo. The highly anticipated route will provide access to a global network spanning six continents from the airline's hub in Doha. A key benefit of the route is the link it provides to Syrian communities around the world, in addition to a variety of leisure and business cities.

The latest destination will enhance trade and boost economic ties with Syria's trading partners. Tourism will also see a strong surge, as visitors to the country have doubled since 1990 and will only continue to grow with the newly announced route.

The three-hour journey from Doha - Aleppo will be operated with an A320 in a two-class configuration featuring 12 seats in First Class and up to 132 seats in Economy. Aleppo will be the airline's fifth new route in its global expansion in 2011, following Budapest (January 17), Bu-



charest (January 17), Brussels (January 31) and Stuttgart (March 6).

Qatar Airways Chief Executive Officer Akbar Al Baker said: "Qatar Airways is delighted to commemorate our 100th destination by announcing our latest route to a city in our home region. As one of the oldest cities in the world, Aleppo is of strategic importance, providing links between east and west via Doha for business and leisure purposes."

The travel market in the Middle East is experiencing significant growth and one which Al Baker stressed Qatar Airways is well placed to take advantage of. With the addition of the new Boeing 787 aircraft, which will join the carrier's fleet in late 2011 and be deployed on regional routes, capacity and frequency will only continue to grow.

"IATA pegged growth in the Middle East region at over 23 per cent in 2010 compared to last year. Our award-winning service and young and modern fleet will only propel our position as a leading global carrier," he added.

Qatar Airways flies to a number of key leisure and business destinations including Delhi, London, New York, Washington, Houston, Melbourne, Sao Paulo and Buenos Aires.

### Aden Ports new USD2.8 million investment project

Aden Sea Ports management has finalized an agreement for a new boat for marine survey at a cost of USD 2.8 million by the first half of next year.

The boat is according to the latest technology and is equipped with high tech machinery in the hydrographic field.

Executive director of the ports establishment engineer Mohammed Abdullah Mubarak said that the boat is currently being constructed of fiberglass by a Dutch company. It will be 13 meters long and 6 meters wide and two meters deep and can run at 23 notes. The boat's fuel tank is two thousand liters and has water storage of 300 liters.

"The main purpose of this new investment is to survey the sea's natural phenomena such as the tide and to remove

oil stains and to investigate any strange movements in the sea," he said.

The ports authority has recently started off a new training scheme for its staff on a recent addition to its fleet a boat named Danafa. Through this boat maintenance of the 38 off-shore lighthouses can take place through lifting the lighthouses into the boat, repairing them and then placing them back in the sea. Danafa was constructed in Abu Dhabi and it took three years to make it. It is 19 meters long and 9 meters wide and can be used for other tasks such as rescuing sinking boats and this is why it is equipped with an additional crane that can lift up to 20 tons.



# كل عام وانتم بخير

يتقدم السيد / نوربرت جروشني

المدير العام لشركة أو أم في اليمن وكافة الموظفين  
بأجل التهاني لفخامة رئيس الجمهورية اليمنية

**علي عبد الله صالح**

وكافة أبناء الشعب اليمني بمرور 43 عاما لعيد الجلاء الثلاثون من نوفمبر  
وكذلك بمناسبة حلول العام الهجري الجديد 1432 متمنين لليمن الاستقرار والنجاح

وكل عام والجميع بخير

The General Manager of OMV-Yemen

**Mr. Norbert Groeschner**

and all OMV-Yemen staff are pleased to present their warmest congratulations to

**H.E. Ali Abdullah Saleh**

President of the Republic of Yemen  
and to the Yemeni people on celebrating passing 43 years of  
the Independence Day on November 30th,  
also on the occasion of the new Hijra Year 1432  
Wishing Yemen more progress and success,

**Many Happy Returns**



## JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

Oxfam, an international NGO working with others to find lasting solutions to poverty and suffering, has been working in Yemen since 1983. Oxfam announces the following vacancy for its Programme

### Finance Assistant – Based in Haradh

Starting gross salary per annum pro rata: \$10,471  
Contract Ends: 31 May 2011

You will be responsible for the overall aspects of cash management including monthly cash forecast and verify all payment requests and ensure completeness and accurateness of supporting documents and release payments on timely manner. You will input transaction in cashbooks and upload them into Oxfam's financial system on weekly basis and ensure proper filling system is in place.

We are looking for someone with at least degree in finance related subject or professional accountancy qualification, and two years financial and accounting experience in a similar role. The ideal candidate will have demonstrated communication skills and the ability to work well with others and as part of a team. You will have excellent oral and written communication skills in both English and Arabic and sound computer skills.

### To apply

If you believe that you have the qualifications and skills to excel in either of these positions, please send a copy of your CV and a cover letter, clearly stating the job you are applying for, to [yemenjobs@oxfam.org.uk](mailto:yemenjobs@oxfam.org.uk) or send a fax to 01 450170.

Closing date for applications is 19<sup>th</sup> December 2010

## Community Livelihoods Project

The Community Livelihoods Project (CLP), a leading development Project in Yemen, is seeking qualified candidates for the below positions for its Regional Office in Aden.

- Office Manager
- Procurement Specialist
- Procurement Assistant
- Health Specialists
- Education Specialists
- Governance and Civil Society Officer
- Community Mobilization Specialist
- Entrepreneurship Officer
- Livelihoods Manager
- Regional Engineers
- Agriculture Specialist
- Monitoring & Evaluation Officers
- Grants Manager
- Grants Assistant
- Finance Officer
- Finance Assistant
- Administrative Assistant
- IT Officer
- Logistics Officer
- Drivers

Qualified candidates are encouraged to submit resumes and a cover letter clearly indicating the position they are applying for to [recruitment@crea-clp.com](mailto:recruitment@crea-clp.com) NO LATER than December 22nd, 2010.



# Tourists feel safe in Yemen despite its 'terrorist' reputation

By: Ali Saeed

When Sarah Webb told friends in Britain she was going to Yemen they all expressed concern for her safety – most of them told her not to go.

The 54-year-old social worker left the UK for a holiday in Yemen just as the international media was portraying Yemen as a haven for terrorists. This was in relation to the parcel bomb plot at the end of October, an operation which Al-Qaeda's wing in Yemen later claimed responsibility for.

Despite British Foreign Office travel advice to its citizens "against all but essential travel to Yemen, including Sana'a and Aden due to the threat of terrorism, kidnapping and tribal violence," Webb decided to challenge the media headlines. She wanted to see and learn about Yemen's culture. Her experience of the country was a stark contrast to the Yemen depicted in the British press.

"I would be less likely to come to serious harm visiting Yemen, than crossing the road in London," said Webb after her ten-day stay.

Yemen has a lot of diversified tourist attractions including beautiful landscapes, historical architecture and traditional culture. But recent security problems, particularly from Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), have hit the headlines around the world. Yemen has gained a bad reputation.

Kidnapping of foreigners has been the biggest threat. Although tribesmen

have been responsible for most of the kidnappings in Yemen between 1999 and 2009, the influx of Al-Qaeda into the country has increased the risk. The number of incidents increased from 2008 to 2009.

As a result, tourist numbers have fallen. The number of visitors from Europe, the Americas and Australia did not exceed 70,000 in 2009. Although figures of half a million had been predicted, according to a 2010 study on the effects of terrorism on Yemen's tourism sector by Dr. Yousuf Saeed, professor of economics at the University of Aden.

As a result of kidnappings, tribal violence, separatist unrest in the south, the Houthi rebellion in the north and the AQAP, large areas of the country are off limits for tourists. Famous sites such as Yemen's Shihara Bridge in Hajja governorate are no-go areas. Tourists are restricted to the major cities and the surrounding areas of Sana'a, Aden, Taiz and Hodeida. Visitors to Hadramout must have an armed police escort.

French traveler, Charlotte Velut, has been to Yemen three times and travelled around the country. She told the Yemen Times that media coverage of Yemen, showing the country as a dangerous place, was false.

"It is untrue and far from reality," she said. "It can be dangerous in some places where the police warn people not to go, so you don't go there."

Thanos Petouris, a Greek PhD student who stayed in the country for more than two years as an English teacher, told the Yemen Times that he

saw a different picture of the country.

"Wherever you turn your head, you find another image. Yemen is a very photogenic country and it is very diverse," said Petouris.

"Hadramout's architecture, culture and the people are different from Aden which is different from Sana'a. So it is exciting that you can travel from one place to another and see so many different cultures and people."

Webb said that she made the right decision to travel to Yemen and discover a country that she had frequently heard and read about, in a negative light, in the British press. She said that during her stay in Yemen she never felt afraid and she found people very welcoming.

"I found Yemeni people to be the friendliest of all the 20 countries I have visited throughout the world. Every day when walking around the streets of old Sana'a, I was greeted repeatedly with, 'Welcome to Yemen', by complete strangers of all ages and groups," said Webb.

"This was followed with, 'How are you?' We were often the only tourists on the streets but I was never hassled. I never felt afraid, even as a Western woman on my own at times, in dark unknown streets."

Contrary to many foreigners' impressions of Yemen as one of the most dangerous places in the world, similar to Afghanistan or Iraq, Webb's experience was completely different.

"I had no sense of danger at all, just difference and the unknown. I have experienced more hassle problems as a woman tourist in other countries of the world," she said.

Webb said that all the places that she visited were safe and she travelled to different parts of Sana'a, Aden in the South, and mountain villages in northern Yemen.

"All safe, no trouble or problems at all. A few brief army checkpoints en route to remote mountain villages; just a couple of men checking our documents, usually smiling and polite," she said.

Back in Britain, Webb now talks enthusiastically about Yemen, encouraging all of her friends to visit.

"Back in the UK, I tell all my friends and colleagues that they should visit Yemen," she said.

"It has a massive history with direct access everywhere. Buildings over 1,000 years old, completely un-spoilt, great for a history lesson."

Many Yemenis though complained to her about Al-Qaeda and the bad reputation that it leaves Yemen with. After her first experience in Yemen, Webb hopes to return in the future now that she's confident that the country is not as dangerous as the Western media portrays.

"I would certainly visit Yemen again, without hesitation," she said.

Webb is not alone in her experience as a foreign visitor to Yemen. Asmir Cadoic, from Montenegro, travelled



Shibam city in Hadramout used to be one of Yemen's main tourist attractions. Few tourists now visit the area, where foreigners are required to have an armed escort.

to Yemen for his first time in January 2008 to study Arabic and Islam. He told the Yemen Times that the media reporting on Yemen regarding security was exaggerated.

"I walk the streets of Sana'a at 3am and I play football at 11pm with friends and I've never felt scared and never confronted any problems," said Cadoic.

Alen Kurdovis, a medical student from Bosnia, travelled to Yemen in 2007 to study medicine at the University of Science and Technology and

said he felt safer in Yemen than in Europe.

Kurdovis travelled to Yemen when there was virtually no global media coverage about the country.

"I heard only good things about Yemen when I left Bosnia," he said.

He said that he had travelled to Taiz and Aden without problems. But he has seen the change in how the country has been portrayed by the world's press.

"The media's portrayal of Yemen is not reflected in my experience of the country," he said.

# Co-education improves student's learning

By: Mahmood Al-Matari

Co-education remains limited in Yemen but it has been the policy of the Yemen American Language Institute (YALI) since 1975.

Suhayr Hussain Al-Amri is a graduate from Sana'a University's art college and has been YALI's administration director for the past two years. She shared her views regarding co-education with the Yemen Times.

**What is your opinion about co-education?**

It is natural and advantageous for the students. It is important for education. I studied at co-educational institutions.

**Has YALI adopted a co-educational system since it was established in 1975?**

Yes, it has always been based on this system.

**Is co-education an important factor**

**in teaching English?**

Definitely. Not only in learning English, but for all other subjects. It contributes to the improvement of the educational, functional and cultural level of students. It provides a variety of students in the classroom.

**Does co-education contradict Yemeni norms?**

No, it does not go against Yemeni norms because it is for the sake of knowledge and education. At YALI we maintain Yemeni norms and never work against them.

**What do students think about co-education? Do their ideas about co-education change after experiencing it in the classroom?**

Points of view vary from one student to another. After experiencing the co-educational way of learning, many students have changed their opinions about it for the better. It is the policy of this institute to impose co-education. With the passage of time the students adapt to it and this is obviously noticed through observing them at different levels of the English course.

There were also 15 Yemeni imams

who received scholarships from the US embassy to study at YALI and they did not have any problems with co-education.

**What are the female students' reactions when they first join YALI? Have they ever asked for a special course only for females and how would you respond to such a request?**

It's rare that girls have this request, simply because it is against our principles. All those who join YALI have an idea about our co-education system. We've never had courses for males and females only.

**Are there disadvantages of co-education for the students and are males or females most affected?**

Educationally speaking, neither is affected. It's a benefit for all. The only harm that can be caused is that the girl finds it a bit difficult to deal with male students.

**Have you ever done a survey with students to see whether they like co-education or not?**

That will never happen because co-education is this institute's policy.



Yemeni education is usually separate for men and women.

**Are you concerned about the consequences of co-education, such as moral problems, and how this would impact on YALI's reputation?**

Those who join this institute are adults older than 18 years old. They are aware of the limitations that the institute has established. In case it happens, we observe the students to ensure that moral

problems do not happen again. We deal seriously with such problems.

**Do you encourage co-education at public schools?**

It is too difficult to apply it to the public education system. It will remain like this even after many years of trying. Public schools don't have the ability to implement co-education the right way.



Co-education institutions can offer students a greater learning experience.

## Stories from Real Life

By: Nawal Zaid  
For the Yemen Times

### Obsessive friendship

#### Possessive friendship

Amat Al-Kareem and Noor are best friends. They speak on the phone everyday for hours and visit each other daily as they live in the same street. They are of similar ages. Amat is 23 and Noor is 24. But Amat did not study beyond the 10th grade, while Noor is a university student.

Their friendship started when Amat started taking English classes from Noor. She almost fell in love with her, and Noor was kind and modest despite the large financial difference between their families.

When Noor talked to other friends, the friendship between Amat and Noor took a wrong turn and they started fighting. "I want

her to be my friend only," says Amat. Sometimes she becomes aggressive and starts throwing things around if she feels Noor is becoming distant.

In order to avoid a scene and not to hurt her friend's feelings, Noor obliges and carries on in this possessive friendship.

#### She copies her friends' every move

Fatin is a married woman with two children. She has a low education as she dropped out of school at the basic level of study to get married. She is now 27 years old, and has dedicated her life to her husband and

children.

She feels that her self worth comes from the relations she has within society, from who she knows and who befriends her. This is why she tries to make as many friendships with other women as possible, and keeps pretending she is from the same social, financial or cultural background as her friends in order to fit in.

She stays on the phone talking to her friends for hours, and buys them gifts using her husband's money. She even bought a new phone which she uses only to talk to her friends. If any of the friends severs the relationship, Fatin looks for a new replacement friend and starts a new relationship in the same way.

Many times while imitating her friends she feels as if she is someone else. This has made

her act strangely within her family. Her husband thinks she has a psychological disorder, but has not taken her to a doctor in fear of what people will say.

#### A threat to kill

Yasmin is a 30 year old unmarried Yemeni woman with a high school education. She lives with her family. Yasmin's best friend is Hala who is a university student.

Yasmin is obsessed with her friend and follows her everywhere as much as she can. When Hala comes back from university, Yasmin is automatically by her side. She receives

her with kisses and hugs and asks her how her day was.

Hala sometimes feels annoyed and suffocated by this attention. This extraordinary love has driven other friends of Hala away, and has put her in an awkward situation when it comes to potential husbands.

Yasmin threatens that if Hala becomes engaged, she will kill the groom-to-be.

The two families came to know of this obsessive friendship and many times Yasmin's father has locked her in their house so she cannot go to meet Hala. But somehow, she has always found a way to escape and run to her friend's house where she stays for hours on end.

Yasmin does not care about her health, well being or her parent's threats. All she wants is to be with Hala.



## Is Yemen's Cable a Breaking Point?

Contrary to the demonization of WikiLeaks, some of its anecdotes could be viewed as blessings in disguise. Before switching to their "threatening international diplomacy" card, U.S. officials took turns slamming the whistle-blowing outfit for endangering U.S. soldiers, intelligence agents, and their local contacts.

But Arab calls for an Iranian strike have been twisted by Israel to the point where Gulf states might decide to cool regional tensions. And the rendezvous with Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh and U.S. General David Petraeus holds the potential to save lives by corralling a hasty U.S. strategy.

That is, if the "revelation" of "secret" U.S. air-strikes means anything to Yemenis.

Exactly how much significance Saleh and Petraeus's meeting contains has emerged as a key question in U.S. counterinsurgency. One leak usually doesn't sink a war by itself, but they do produce constraints on policy-makers. Karl Eikenberry, the US Ambassador to Afghanistan, stunted President Barack Obama's rapid Pentagon buildup with a last minute alarm on President Hamid Karzai's credibility. The Yemeni leak has been subjected to intense focus because it holds the same potential to grind down U.S. escalation.

Fully predicting the cable's ramifications is impossible. Predicting that current U.S. operations will fail to achieve their objective of neutralizing al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) isn't.

Reality is manipulated by expectations, and in this regard the Obama administration has caught a break. As air-strikes pounded Yemen's mountainous territory in December 2009 and into January, the Saleh government claimed responsibility while denying direct U.S. involvement.

Few believed these initial assertions. Once several strikes were revealed to have missed their mark, killing a number of civilians instead, Yemeni authorities passed the bag back to Washington, where the standard denial proceeded.

It's now known that Saleh and Petraeus sealed their arrangement in January, but this "discovery" was like mapping a black hole after viewing the distortion on stars in front of it. This policy has already been tested in Pakistan. Another errant strike in May would kill a deputy provincial governor, once more pointing Sana'a and Washington's fingers at each other. U.S. officials supposedly don't even believe the Yemeni official was killed, and that Saleh used the incident to push back against U.S. encroachment.

Because this arrangement has gone swimmingly, the two governments are in the process of expanding U.S. support into counter-terrorism bases - and wrestling over how much direct force is too much.

Though all the more annoyed by Washington's duplicity, those opposed to these shadow wars can't be shocked by the latest events. The disenchantment experienced by outsiders is similar to the atmosphere inside Yemen, where few citizens were surprised by Saleh's double-games. This is a population habituated to misinformation.

There are no illusions of U.S. involvement, whether in Sana'a or in the mountains where Reaper drones actively patrol.

As a result Saleh's taste for bootleg whiskey, illegal under Sharia, is considered more damaging than his obedience to Washington. However, the combination of Saleh's transgressions is his real problem, and by extension Washington's. It must be assumed that AQAP's next Inspire magazine will capitalize on WikiLeaks, propaganda savvy as the group is. This material is tailor-made for painting Saleh

as an apostate - a corrupt leader who must be replaced with a true Islamic authority (which AQAP mistakenly believes it is).

AQAP is also searching for additional justification now that it commenced attacking the Shia Houthis, who remain at tentative war with the Yemeni government. Having accused Shiites of blasphemy, AQAP could be gambling on Iraq's error of artificial sectarian conflict. But this also appears to be a direct assault on Saleh, himself a Shiite.

Even Petraeus has reportedly doubted Saleh's credibility. One can empathize on the level of practicality, but continuing a dubious strategy won't produce tangible benefits either. Policy must evolve, not escalate in the same rut. Saleh's main request for Petraeus, still leading Central Command (CENTCOM) at the time, was delivered without subtlety: "Helicopters, Helicopters, Helicopters." Petraeus initially refrained, fearing that Saleh would use them against the Houthis (and possibly blaming the U.S. for anything that went wrong), until the Yemeni president swore to use them only against AQAP.

CENTCOM did ask Congress for \$83 million in Hueys and Russian Mi-17 helicopters last September. There have been no reports of air-strikes since May, but the drive for new bases is fueled by the need to gather intelligence for future strikes.

Whether or not the leaked cable slows U.S. policy in Yemen or brings it to a halt remains to be seen. It's impossible for Washington to uproot itself now, too deep in this small war despite Robert Gates's avoidance of the term. Conversely, no effect whatsoever is improbable. AQAP should feel a recruiting bump, but its primary damage will be inflicted by amplifying its message through WikiLeaks.

No matter what U.S. and Yemeni officials say about air-strikes, cruise missiles, bases, and "elite" counter-terrorist units,

the same motto now binds them together: "We'll keep saying your guys are our guys."

A hostile environment has just become more hostile, a weak president even easier to denounce, and Washington's shadowy activity exposed in full view. A zero-sum competition is being waged over message. As AQAP justifies its own religious and political propaganda, America's message is barely audible under the hail of military speak, droning out attempts to de-escalate the conflict. Last week Daniel Benjamin, the State Department's top counter-terrorism official, and Gerald Feisterstein, the U.S. Ambassador to Yemen, tried to sell U.S. policy as caring foremost about the state's political and economic institutions.

They sounded as unbelievable as they do after the leak.

Wikileaks can serve as an alarm to the White House if it's as wise as it thinks. Though expressing reservations about the Pentagon's buildup, the Obama administration is empty of alternatives as AQAP blatantly announces its next strike. Unfortunately answers for Yemen's decaying political and economic system are rare. The \$1.2 billion in military aid floated by the White House pales to the \$10 billion in humanitarian aid requested by Yemeni Foreign Minister Abu Bakr al-Kurbi. And that's just the first payment.

A hot war may have already broken out in Yemen if the Pentagon had its way, so there is some pullback from the White House. But not nearly enough if "secret" bases are "toned down." Non-military operations remain a secondary priority. Supporting Saleh was risky enough before the latest controversy - it's becoming suicidal.

There's more than one way to break U.S. policy in Yemen. If public opinion doesn't lead to reform, Washington could end up breaking itself.

## COMMON SENSE

### Call the Plumber: "Wikileaks" is Not Spilling it All

It is no mystery to the observer of world events that great strides in human governance and the relationship between governments and their constituencies has found good grounds in which to be firmly implanted. Of course how such liberties are utilized and perhaps interpreted remains the subject of continued debate, even within the most liberal of societies and there are many who will suggest such freedoms have become unduly exploited to serve unholy or even shameful causes or enterprises. In this context the place where the line is to be drawn between meaningful freedom of expression and the upholding of sleazy and evil projects has yet to be defined. Should these freedoms succumb to limitations or be given broad spans for adaptation to suit just about any cause or project? There are unlimited and various implications in the arguments for and against building walls that set the course for the allowable liberties in self expression, and on the heights that such walls should have, and even on deciding if such walls should be allowed to exist at all for that matter.

With the coming of the internet and a fabulous interconnected world of communications, where the most objectionable regimes for stymieing freedom of speech and for the denial of the right to know are easy prey for challenge by any well versed people in electronic data systems. The internet could allow the latter to challenge such regimes as dangerous elements of an Orwellian world, where individuals become meaningless numbers that are controlled and directed to succumb to the dictates of an institutional narrowing of human interests to those of the powerful and the wealthy, etc. Others could take a position that cyberspace also opens up new horizons for criminal conduct, as well, which has been corroborated on more than one occasion, but then technological progress in all applications was never and will never be abuse proof.

Mr. Julian Assange has been catapulted to cyberspace on a clearly well organized and monumental campaign of public exposure to information never before available to the general public, even by the most muckraking of traditional journalism institutions or individual journalists. Apparently equipped with highly sophisticated technical knowhow and institutional support of his own building/and or external backing, Mr. Assange has, through all the large volume exposes which he has recently released (mega leaks, a term suggested by Andy Greenberg, which Assange readily accepted to coin in this link <http://blogs.forbes.com/andygreenberg/2010/11/29/interview-with-wikileaks-julian-assange/6/>) suggested that any electronically stored information is now easily attainable. Indeed, there is some grounds for jubilation in that lies and distortions are no longer defenseless against genuine muckraking crusaders.

But, there are many who have expressed some reasons for worry about some of the motivations behind such energetic and obviously unabashed exposure of connivance on the part of Government and corporate conduct. This worry is enhanced by the clear revelations of correspondences only emanating from Arab rulers and officials (most of which incidentally did not really surprise diligent observers of the Middle East scene). Nevertheless, they did help remove the doubt of quite a few other observers, who would still had some hope that Arab leaders would never go against the national interests and the sensitivities on to which their constituents firmly hold, albeit with a high grain of skepticism (let alone applaud the killing of their fellow citizens and the violation of the national sovereignty of their dominions, as wikileaks seems to suggest). Having said that, it is with great dissatisfaction that Mr. Assange's voluminous revelations never touch Israel, or American policy vis a vis Israel. It is not clear, if Mr. Assange is holding this matter back to be handled later as a separate issue altogether due to the complexity of the issues involved and the intricate and delicate positions of the role players (US warns Israel about WikiLeaks documents - <http://www.jpost.com/DiplomacyAndPolitics/Article.aspx?id=196889>) or for some other inexplicable reasons. Many other official and unofficial critics have voiced similar displeasure and even raised suspicions as to the possibility that Mr. Assange is actually serving the interest of Israel and its supporters, for the possible advancement of expansion of the war theater in the region to encompass Iran. These critics argue that there was a similar effort in different format launched prior to the War in Iraq and similarly in Afghanistan (including the 9/11 Conspiracy theories and the even more dubiously ridiculous "Weapons of Mass Destruction" rationale for the destruction of Iraq), an effort which unquestionably had tremendous backing and support from Israel and the International Zionist Establishment and was the subject of a lot of background work from the US Lobby for Israel (AIPAC and friends). The criticism pointed at Mr. Assange in this respect would definitely need some persuasive answers, if observers of events in the region are to vouch for the genuineness of the motivations behind Mr. Assange's otherwise sensational efforts. In fact, the Israelis were the only ones who applauded the leaks (<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/140889>). There was one revelation in this context though: ([http://www.huffingtonpost.com/josh-ruebner/wikileaks-israels-securit\\_b\\_790100.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/josh-ruebner/wikileaks-israels-securit_b_790100.html)): "In an explosive "http://cablegate.wikileaks.org/cable/2009/11/09TELAVIV2482.html" WikiLeaks revelation, Maj. Gen. Amos Gilad, the head of the Political Military Bureau of Israel's Ministry of Defense, while discussing Israeli requests for U.S. military aid, "acknowledged the sometimes difficult position the U.S. finds itself in given its global interests, and conceded that Israel's security focus is so narrow that its QME [Qualitative Military Edge] concerns often clash with broader American security interests in the region," according to the State Department. Nothing new, or sensational, but rather apologetic for Israel! There are, for sure, a lot more explosive revelations that one is bound to expect from such a very intertwining and sometimes ominously perplexing relationship. Wikileaks must therefore deliver!

Hassan Al-Haifi has been a Yemeni political economist and journalist for more than 20 years. His blog may be read at: <http://com-senfromyem.blogspot.com>



By: Hassan Al-Haifi

## Yemen: Can Soccer Solve a Separatist Problem?

By: Bobby Ghosh / Aden

Countries hosting major soccer tournaments usually hope that home-field advantage and passionate local support will spur the national team to punch above their weight — and perhaps even miraculously defy the odds by winning. For Yemen, the 20th Gulf Cup of Nations is freighted with far greater expectations.

The government of President Ali Abdullah Saleh is hoping the tournament, which enters its semi-finals stage on Thursday, will help heal a longstanding national wound, repair the country's image in the eyes of the world, and persuade potential investors and tourists that Yemen is a good destination for their dollars. (See pictures of Yemen's northern insurgency crisis.)

(There's not much point hoping for sporting glory: the home team lost all three

of its games and has already been eliminated.)

So far, so fabulous. The Gulf Cup, featuring eight teams from Arab nations, has been a roaring success. The two host provinces, Aden and Abyan, are enjoying the fruits of an estimated \$1 billion of investment, tens of thousands of visitors and the heady atmosphere you'd expect from the biggest sporting event ever to be staged in Yemen. Soccer-related posters and banners are everywhere, and it seems half the male population is wearing team jerseys.

Saleh's gamble appears to be paying off. The president chose to hold the tournament in the southern provinces despite those being plagued by an on-and-off separatist insurgency. Aden and Abyan are the heart of what had been socialist South Yemen, before it united with the northern Yemeni Arab Republic in 1990. Unification has not been entirely smooth: the two regions fought a war in 1994, with the north pre-

vailing. Southern separatists continue to mount violent attacks on security forces and state infrastructure. (Watch TIME's video "Road Tripping in Yemen.")

The separatists' main grouse is that since unification the south has been treated as a stepchild by the more powerful northerners: provinces like Aden and Abyan got little investment. Thousands of southerners lost their public sector jobs when their government was merged into the Sana'a-based central administration. So Saleh sought to mollify the south by having it host the Cup, with its attendant bounty of investment and jobs.

Fears were that separatists might use the international attention drawn by the cup to stage big attacks, but a massive security presence has largely prevented that. Apart from one attack last Sunday that killed a soldier in a town 170 km northeast of Aden, there has been little violence. "All the fears about security have been unfounded," says Foreign Minister Abubakr al-Qirbi.

Even the President's critics have been caught up in the excitement. "It's a beautiful experience for Yemen," says Nadia al-Sakkaf, editor of the independent Yemen Times newspaper. "It's a good move [by Saleh]." Opposition leader Ansaf Mayo, leader of the Islamist Islah party and an Aden native, acknowledges that "the Power" (his term for the Saleh government) is finally giving the ancient port city the attention it deserves. "We feel the momentum generated by the Cup will restore the city's importance," he says.

Nobody's suggesting the south is now satisfied with its lot in the unified country, but the success of the tournament has, at least for the time

being, taken the wind out of the separatists' sails. And a respite in the south gives Saleh the chance to focus on two other raging conflicts: the rebellion by a northern Shi'ite sub-sect known as the Houthis, as well as the growing ambition of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, or AQAP. The president is coming under increasing pressure from the U.S. and Europe to stamp out AQAP, but many Yemenis think the Houthis are a more pressing threat to their country. (See how Al-Qaeda is becoming more lethal in Yemen.)

The relative absence of violence around the Cup is a boost for the reputation of Saleh's security forces, which haven't always enjoyed a reputation for efficiency and discipline. U.S.-trained counterterrorism forces are at large in Aden, to prevent AQAP from hijacking the tournament. Some locals chafe at the overwhelming security presence and the inconvenience of too many checkpoints, but their complaints are being drowned out by the goodwill generated by the Cup.

Making that goodwill last will be a challenge, however. Many locals worry that when the circus leaves town, so too will the investments and jobs. "If all the new hotels are empty after the Cup is over, then people will soon forget how much fun it was," warns Ramadan Mohammed, who works in the oil industry. "The South's problems can't be solved with two weeks of [soccer]."

Tourism minister Nabil al-Fakih is already feeling the pressure to keep visitors and investors coming after the tournament. Thanks to AQAP and the dire travel advisories by the U.S. and European government, he's not expecting very many Westerners. "It's very difficult to improve our image in the West," he says. But the Cup has given Aden plenty of exposure in the Arab world. "Arabs are not so sensitive [as Westerners are] and they understand our product," says al-Fakih. Among the south's attractions, he says, are historical and archeological sites, trekking and swimming opportunities, and fully clothed beaches.

The Cup, al-Fakih says, "gives us a chance to start again with a clean slate." Too bad the national team finished dead last.

## SKETCHED OPINION

By: Hamid



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Tel: +967 (1) 268-661  
Fax: +967 (1) 268-276  
P.O. Box 2579, Sana'a, Yemen  
Letters: [ytditor@gmail.com](mailto:ytditor@gmail.com)

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

**CEO**  
Khair Aldin Al Nsour

**Editors**  
Yazeed Kamaldien  
Iona Craig  
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**Senior Reporter**  
Mohamed bin Sallam

**Head of Design Dept.**  
Ramzy Alawi Al-Saqqaf

**Editorial Staff**  
Ali Saeed  
Malak Shaher  
Sadeq Al-Wesabi  
Shatha Al-Harazi

### Offices

**Aden Bureau:**  
Ridhwan Alawi Ahmed  
Tel: +967 (2) 347-057, 346596  
Fax: +967 (2) 347056  
Email: [ytden@y.net.ye](mailto:ytden@y.net.ye)

**Taiz Bureau:**  
Imad Ahmed Al-Saqqaf  
Tel: +967 (4) 217-156,  
Telefax: +967 (4) 217157  
P.O.Box: 5086, Taiz  
Email: [ytaiz@y.net.ye](mailto:ytaiz@y.net.ye)

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HELSINKI, Dec. 7, 2010 -- People visit the Christmas market in Helsinki, Finland. The annual Christmas market opened on Tuesday amid heavy snowfall. (Xinhua/Zhao Changchun)



NANCHANG, Dec. 7, 2010 (Xinhua) -- A part of dried riverbed of the Ganjiang River is seen in Nanchang, east China's Jiangxi Province, Dec. 7, 2010. Water levels of main rivers and lakes in Jiangxi continuously dropped due to the rainfall decrease which happened since late October. About 230 thousand residents in the range of the province, especially in the cities along the Ganjiang River such as Nanchang, Fengcheng, Zhangshu, are suffering from the lack of drinking water. (Xinhua/Zhou Ke)



VARANASI, Dec. 7, 2010 (Xinhua) -- A man injured in the bomb explosion rests at a hospital in Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, India, Dec. 7, 2010. At least one person was killed and many others injured in a powerful blast in the northern Indian holy city Varanasi Tuesday evening, reported local media. (Xinhua/Stringer)



GENEVA, Dec. 7, 2010 -- Iranian chief nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili attends a press conference after the talks on the Iranian nuclear issue in Geneva, Switzerland. The two-day Geneva talks between Iran and the five United Nations Security Council permanent members plus Germany ended on Tuesday. The next round would be held in Istanbul by the end of next month. (Xinhua/Yu Yang)



KARACHI, Dec. 7, 2010 (Xinhua) -- Pakistani soldiers stand guard during a search operation in southern Pakistan's Karachi on Dec. 7, 2010. Four suspected terrorists including a Tehrik-e-Taliban (TTP) commander were arrested during the search operation on Tuesday. (Xinhua/Masroor)



NAIROBI, Dec. 7, 2010 -- Dancers from a coastal province in Kenya dance during the Kenya Music and Cultural Festival in the capital city of Nairobi. The Festival included indigenous forms of music, dance, poetry and traditional games. (Xinhua/Zhao Yingquan)



BRUSSELS, Dec. 7, 2010 (Xinhua) -- Russian President Dmitry Medvedev arrives for EU-Russia Summit at EU headquarters in Brussels, capital of Belgium on Dec. 7, 2010. European Union (EU) and Russia would hold their 26th summit next week to discuss issues of common interests, the European Commission said here on Friday. (Xinhua/Thierry Monasse)



ATHENS, Dec. 7, 2010 -- Demonstrators protest against the Greek government and IMF policies during a rally in the centre of Athens, Greece, on Dec. 7, 2010. The demonstration was organized by labor unions and Left-wing parties as IMF Managing Director Dominique Strauss-Kahn visited Athens on Tuesday for a series of talks with Greek officials on the progress of the ailing Greek economy. (Xinhua/Marios Lolos)



CANCUN (MEXICO), Dec. 8, 2010 -- Mexican Foreign Minister Patricia Espinosa (Center Back), who also chairs the United Nations climate change conference, meets with ministers from the so-called BASIC countries -- Brazil, South Africa, India and China, in Cancun, Mexico. The BASIC said on Monday that they would not support a deal until a second commitment period for the Kyoto Protocol had been settled, a fast-track climate change fund had materialized and a basic agreement had been reached on technology transfer. The United Nations climate change conference entered the high-level stage here on Tuesday. (Xinhua/Bao Feifei)



MUMBAI, Dec. 7, 2010 -- French President Nicolas Sarkozy and his wife Carla Bruni-Sarkozy attend a wreath-laying ceremony at the Gymkhana police memorial commemorating the terrorist attacks in November 2008, in Mumbai, India. (Xinhua/Stringer)



XIAOYI, Dec. 7, 2010 -- Policemen control a "suspect" during an anti-terrorism drill in Luliang City of north China's Shanxi Province. More than 200 policemen, firemen and medics participated in the anti-terrorism drill on Tuesday. (Xinhua/Yan Shuanhai)



## Yemen updates labor statistics



There are about five million workers employed in building, construction and other informal sectors that the government does not monitor.

By: Ali Saeed

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor plans to update Yemen's labor market data via a new survey early next year.

Dr. Fadhil Muthana, general director of the ministry's Labor Market Information Analysis Unit, told the Yemen Times that the country's current labor market data was outdated. It dated back to 1999 and 2003.

Dr. Raidan Al-Saqqa, a representative of the International Labor Organization (ILO) in Yemen, said that Yemen needed to pay attention to its labor market information in order to meet its economic priorities.

Yemen's cabinet announced last month that it has finalized ten priorities to revive the economy, one of which is to provide job opportunities for Yemenis in Gulf countries.

The two available surveys of the labor market in Yemen are the 1999 Labor Force Survey and the 2003 Manpower Demand Survey. According to the 1999 Labor Force Survey, there were almost 4.15 million people in Yemen employed in different professional jobs in the private and public sectors.

Other labor market statistics about Yemen were from the Central Statistics Organization (CSO) and were based on the 2004 Population Census and the 2005 Family Budget Survey, said Al-Saqqa.

Saba News agency last week quoted Ahmed Luqman, general manager of the Arab Labor Organization, saying that updated data was needed for good decision making.

"The labor market survey is needed to have accurate data and it is impossible to just rely on population statistics as such indicators will not help de-

cision makers to take good decisions regarding the labor sector," he said.

Last week, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor in cooperation with the Arab Labor Organization organized a training workshop on labor market survey skills for its directors in various governorates. Minister of Social Affairs and Labor, Amat Al-Razaq Humad, said during the opening ceremony of the workshop that labor market statistics was her top priority in the immediate future.

Al-Saqqa said that it is estimated that there are ten million Yemeni workers in the country but the government only recognizes five million of them who are qualified.

"The other five million workers that the government does not care about are informal workers who are in building, construction and other informal professions," said Al-Saqqa.

"Information on the situation of informal workers is completely unavailable. Who are they? Are they school drop-outs? Are they literate? Where are they? What work can they do? None of this is available."

The available labor force in Yemen is on the rise without an equal economic growth rate, according to the Arab Labor Organization. The organization said that by 2020, Yemen's population is expected to reach 35 million people, with 48.6 percent of them being in the labor force. That will be a workforce of over 17 million people.

"That means responsibilities on the Yemeni government are increasing to secure social, education and health services for them," said the organization.

It said that such increases in social services can be faced through providing more job opportunities for the labor force.

## Single educated Yemeni women hard at work to secure opportunities

By: Malak Shaher

For Abeer Abdulla, a university student in her early twenties, completing her education and finding a job are more important than getting married.

The dream of the majority of young women in Yemen, especially those who are educated, has shifted from getting married to getting a job.

This has increased the number of women in the labor force. Now, 63 percent of women in urban areas are either already working, or plan to in the future, according to a survey conducted by the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES).

The survey data was collected from 1,993 women and 508 men in June and July 2010.

"I want to be financially independent. For me education and work are more important than marriage," said Abeer Ahmad.

"Most of the time when a woman gets married in Yemen, she is asked by her husband to stop studying if she is a student, or stop working if she is an employee."

While few women in Yemen participate in the workforce, more are interested in pursuing a career and this is particularly true among younger women. Women who study at university and engage in paid work are more likely to have the freedom to leave home, have greater financial security and access to credit, according to the survey.

The study mentioned that labor force participation among Yemeni women, both educated and uneducated, is extremely low, particularly when compared to men.

According to the Head of the Human Resources Department at the



More young women in Yemen are enrolling at universities and getting job opportunities. Female students at universities are up from 20 percent in 1990 to 37.5 percent in 2010.

Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Abdulla Hazza', women constituted 10.2 percent of the paid workforce in 2010. This is up from 9.6 percent in 2004, and 7 percent in 1999.

The survey by IWPR and IFES pointed out that participation in the workforce is higher among more educated women. Around 21 percent of women with high school and 48 percent of women with a university degree are working in the public or private sector.

Despite cultural traditions that restrict women entering the workforce in Yemen, factors such as income, access to educational facilities, and marital status may also influence a women's choice to work. Around 38 percent of women in rural areas who were included in the survey intended to pursue a career.

"Women in Yemen are working hard to gain opportunities, along with men, to help their families and communities," said Jane Henrici,

study director from the IWPR. "More Yemeni women are getting formal education than in the past, and this seems to help with other opportunities."

Female students represented 37.5 percent of students at universities in 2008, up from 20.5 percent in 1990, according to UNDP's 2010 Millennium Development Goals Report.

Women with a higher level of education also tend to have greater access to health care. Around 51 percent of women with lower than a primary school education have access to health care. In contrast, 67 percent of women with a university degree or higher have access to health care.

IWPR and IFES conducted the survey research as part of a project on 'The Status of Women in the Middle East and North Africa' with funding from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

## Billion dollar boost for Aden

Yemen's largest company Hayel Saeed Anam Group of Companies (HSA) is currently in the final stages of negotiating a new USD1-billion contract with the Aden Free Zone (AFZ). It's a significant deal that could create thousands of local jobs. And it's a landmark for AFZ which has since 1991 designated a 32,500-hectare area where companies trade without being subjected to the usual rules of taxation in Yemen.

AFZ offers investors a number of privileges and guarantees. In this duty free zone companies are exempt from taxes on trade, industrial and income taxes applied. This exemption extends to 15 years and can be extended by ten years.

The Yemen Times met with AFZ's chairman, Dr. Abdul Galil Al-Shaibi, to unpack the HSA deal and his vision for the future.

By: Tom Finn

### What's the basic idea of the Aden Free Zone?

It is to facilitate the investment process for the investor from the time he arrives at the airport. We make sure that everything that the investor needs is dealt with underneath one roof so that he doesn't have to go from one government department to another.

We register the investor here, identify a piece of land for him and then we make sure that we take him through the master planning process to get the project underway. It's this facilitation that makes the process of investment easier.

Aden Free Zone means that it's a business area free of taxes and there are no customs fees or income taxes for foreign workers. There are a number of such incentives which encourage companies to

come and work inside and not outside where they have to pay local taxes.

Our main source of income is from the rental of land. We own 32,000 hectares of land which is about one third of the land in Aden [city]. We also receive some funding from the Yemeni government but 80% is from land rental. I'm hoping that by 2012 we'll be independent of the government altogether.

### What are some of the Aden Free Zone's upcoming projects?

For the past three years, the AFZ has experienced economic activation and development. Our projects have increased significantly and our project approval has risen by 300%. We've set up 32 light industries amounting to USD249-million and 15 warehouse projects amounting to USD20-million. We have also built 16 residential

areas totalling USD453-million.

We are now moving towards finalizing the biggest project in the AFZ's history. It's a developmental project with the Hayel Saeed Anam Group of Companies (HSA) which is the biggest company in Yemen.

This project is split into three sectors: warehousing, light industries and residential. The total investment is around USD1-



Aden Free Zone SATELLITE MAP (Pic Supplied)

billion. It could create up to 20,000 jobs in Aden. That would transform the local economy and create a significant number of jobs indirectly. Aden could become a logistical hub for trade internationally.

### When will you finalize this contract?

The contract has been drawn up and we've agreed on the investment, the laws and the lease for the land. We're in the final stages.

Soon there's going to be a new warehouse city, a new light industry city and a commercial residential city. The warehouse will be a logistical centre, and we're hoping that the number of containers coming

to Yemen will increase dramatically. That will obviously have a good connection with HSA's warehouse base. If we've got both the port and the logistical hub working together, then obviously you've got something similar to what's happening in Dubai and Djibouti.

The light industry is simple. We've got a big domestic market of 25 million people in Yemen. There's a big international market in East Africa waiting to be served by the port, so we could make things from plastics, to aluminum, to screwdrivers and feed the domestic market instead of buying imports from outside.

We import 85% of our goods. By producing goods in Yemen we can keep foreign currency inside the country and that strengthens the Yemeni Rial. So economically there is an argument for producing goods in the country.

I've been working on this since I arrived in Yemen, nearly two and half years ago, and this project can move things forward in Aden.

### What's been stopping AFZ from becoming successful already?

The lack of economic development. But this new project would tackle the neglect of the

past and meet the aspirations of the future. Prior to 2008 the AFZ was certainly not achieving its potential. For a long time it was seen as simply another government agency and nothing else. It was slow and there was very little investor confidence.

### There's been negativity about Dubai World running the port of Aden. What's your opinion about this?

There have been a lot of negative opinions but I'm still optimistic. I think Dubai has a brilliant port and location; probably one of the best in the world, but they're not doing as well as expected.

We're keeping them on their toes. We're going to make sure that they do what they



Aden Free Zone chairman Dr. Abdul Galil Al-Shaibi.

have agreed to do. If they don't, the port will still be here and we can still go forward with another operator.

At the end of the day they're an operator and if they don't pull their socks up we can just as well do the work with someone else.

### What advantages does Aden have as a port city?

You have a natural port here in Aden, run by Dubai World, plus you have another port in Mualla. It also has an international airport. Aden has the elements which could make it a truly international city for business and transportation.

### How important has the Gulf Cup held in Aden been to Yemen?

The event was an excellent opportunity for Aden to project itself to the outside world in a positive way. For too long we've had too many negative news reports about Yemen.

This event provided the opportunity to show that things can happen here and that they can happen safely. We've [Yemen] had over 21,000 people at this event from the Gulf, according to official statistics from the ministry of interior. We've had over 80,000 people enjoying the games in Abyan and Aden.

The games activated the economy,

hotels were full, honey traders sold their honey, foreign exchange shops sold their Yemeni Rials and restaurants were full.

I think that's excellent but we need to think about what now comes after the games. How do we maintain the momentum? These are questions we need to ask ourselves.

The games also brought people together; north and south, east and west. People were united by sport. They seemed to have put politics aside and supported their national team.

For a while the politics and division changed to the politics of unity. Sports play an important role in getting people together. It happened in South Africa with the Soccer World Cup, the Commonwealth Games in India and in Yemen with the Gulf Cup.

### Are you optimistic about the future of the AFZ?

I'm very optimistic. By the end of 2012 I think you'll see a lot of employment in Aden, even in the next few months. We've got a new hotel complex worth USD20-million, a large company is being established, we have gas cylinders and steel works developing, a power house, a fiber-glass factory being built and an aluminum factory being built. Things are moving forward.



Building the Aden Free Zone.



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## The 39<sup>th</sup> National Day Report

As the seven-member federation of the United Arab Emirates celebrates on 2nd December the 39th anniversary of its establishment in 1971, it can look back on a year of continued achievement, both at home and in terms of its relationships with the rest of the world. At a political level, the death in late October of His Highness Sheikh Saqr bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, a member of the UAE's Federal Supreme Council and Ruler of Ra's al-Khaimah, represented the passing of the last of those who, led by the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, founded the state. Today, under the leadership of President His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the Government of the UAE, headed by the Vice President and Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, and supported by the other members of the Federal Supreme Council, a new phase of the country's development has commenced.

### Economic Development

Plans for the country's future growth have been laid out in a number of key documents, of which the most immediately relevant is the UAE Government Strategy 2011-2013, which was agreed following extensive consultations between Government ministries and other departments. This will prove to be a major building block in the achievement of the UAE Vision 2021.



Education

A continued focus has been placed on education, it being a firm belief of Government that 'the real wealth' of the nation is its people. The number of government schools has risen from 1,256 in the 2007-2008 academic year to 1,350 in the 2008-2009 academic year, with the number of students increasing from over 600,000 to more than 700,000. Higher education has also grown rapidly, with the number of accredited universities and institutes, both government and private, having reached 64 – a

remarkable total when one recalls that the UAE's first university only opened in 1977.

### Labor

Unlike most countries, the UAE is largely dependent on an expatriate, immigrant labour force, which is estimated to account for up to 90 per cent of the total workforce. This presents a particular challenge for Government, since, while seeking to protect the fundamental characteristics of Emirati society, it is also necessary to ensure that the foreign labour force is treated in such a way as to ensure that they are guaranteed a decent living.

### Women

More significant, however, has been the increasing role played by Emirati women in all aspects of national life. Not only are there nine women members of the FNC, or 22.3 per cent of the total, but there are also four women in the UAE Cabinet, the highest number anywhere in the Arab world, as well as three ambassadors, a consul-general. Women can be found today in a variety of roles in the judiciary, in civil and military aviation and in the armed forces and police, as well as in more traditional roles in, for example, the health and education sectors. In the Government sector, women occupy two thirds of the positions, many being in top decision-making posts.



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# Students talk politics for peace

By: Iona Craig

From Hawaii and West Virginia to Aden and Sana'a, young Yemenis and US students are taking part in a cultural exchange to create lasting links, peace and understanding between the two nations.

The Yemen Peace Project (YPP), launched in January, is a discussion forum for young Yemenis and Americans. Founder Will Picard, 28, is a US citizen and graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, where he majored in Modern Middle Eastern Studies and Southwest Asian Conflict Studies. Picard was motivated to start the project following the Dec. 2009 US involvement in bombings in Abyan on a suspected Al-Qaeda training camp, in which many women and children were killed.

"Although the Yemeni government later apologized for these deaths, the US never has. In fact, in late Dec. and early Jan. 2010, President Obama and many American analysts were calling these strikes a major success and promising more such actions to come," Picard told the Yemen Times. "Reading about these events in the papers, I felt an urgent need to do something to address the growing militarization of US policy toward Yemen. I knew that military action would

only bring violence," Al-Thoubhani told the Yemen Times. "With this project we can show [America] that peace is the way forward. We, through discourse and improving understanding of our country, can protect Yemen from conflict and ensure peace for the young people of Yemen."

The project is centered around an online discussion forum called Pens for Peace and also uses the social networking site Twitter as well as a Facebook group with 250 plus members to engage its members.

Ahmed Al-Thoubhani, who joined the project after meeting its directors in Sana'a earlier this year, is one of around 90 Yemeni students currently involved in YPP.

"Al-Qaeda thinks it is protecting Yemen from the US, like in Afghanistan. But it only brings violence," Al-Thoubhani told the Yemen Times. "With this project we can show [America] that peace is the way forward. We, through discourse and improving understanding of our country, can protect Yemen from conflict and ensure peace for the young people of Yemen."

Inspired by Tim Mackintosh-Smith's fascination with Yemen, a British author who has lived there for 25 years, Aliya Naim became involved in the project as a director. "As an American I love my country, and I would like someday to be proud of the way we conduct ourselves abroad," says Naim. "That day seems a pretty long way off, to be honest, but my hope is that by fostering discussion and relationships between Americans and Yemenis, we can all help make it a little bit closer."

The main topics of conversation are US foreign policy in Yemen, Al-Qaeda, the

country's instability and other political issues. But the first thing that usually comes up in online chats with American students is geography. "They often know about the politics, terrorism and Al-Qaeda. But the first question they ask is: 'Where is Yemen?'" explained Al-Thoubhani with a smile.

The project aims to educate the American public about social, humanitarian, and political conditions in Yemen via direct interaction with Yemenis and to create personal connections between Americans and Yemeni citizens. Picard's hope is that this will build public opinion in the US and mobilize Americans into acting for peace in Yemen and against US military action.

"The original goal was to 'humanize' the violence in Yemen by trying to teach Americans about Yemen and facilitate communication between Yemenis and Americans. I think that Americans in particular tend to stand idly by while their government wages wars because they are taught not to recognize the humanity of people in foreign lands," explained Picard. "For most Americans, Yemen is an abstraction, not a real country with real people and real problems. We wanted to teach people in this country about Yemen in order to make Americans think twice about supporting their government's violent and destructive policies."

Yemeni students have been very enthusiastic about getting involved in the project, however, some have reservations chatting online freely about sensitive security and political issues in Yemen, ac-



Yemen Peace Project founder Will Picard (left) met young Yemenis in Sana'a in July. The students became the core of the Yemeni membership. Photo supplied by Will Picard.

ording to Al-Thoubhani. For the security of all the young people participating in the forum, it is only accessible upon request to the website's administrators.

Plans are also under way for a video exchange. "We want to make videos too. Then they can see the location of Yemen and the culture," said Al-Thoubhani, currently an intern with the American non-profit organization, Amideast. "We can show Yemen's strengths and weaknesses."

Young Yemenis, already involved in the project, are not just based in Sana'a. Students in Aden are also taking part along with Yemeni students who have travelled abroad to study in Germany and France.

The project receives no outside financial support, but plans to seek funding

from philanthropic organizations as the program expands. In the future, YPP aims to build contacts with other groups and organizations with similar concerns and begin lobbying the US government.

"The most important job now is to get more students involved. To build the discussion and make relationships," said Al-Thoubhani.

"Mostly, Yemenis want to live in peace. They want to have enough for their families and their neighbors, and to share with the poor," said project director Tiffany Auraray in a recent blog post. "Not so different from America, is it?"

You can find out more about the Yemen Peace Project and join in the Pens for Peace conversation at [www.yemen-peaceproject.org](http://www.yemen-peaceproject.org)



The Yemen Peace Project was founded after husband and wife team, Will Picard (right) and Dana Moss (left) spent two months as students in Sana'a in 2009. Photo supplied by Will Picard.

# Spiritual travels in Ethiopia's old town Harar

By: Yazeed Kamaldien

Antonius will be your name, the fragile Sister Angelica with the watery eyes said to me as we parted ways, visibly pleased in her belief that she was doing the work of God by attempting to convert me to Christianity.

By account of this little old lady's soft hands, with their gentle touch, one

grounds located in the old walled town Harar, a historical Islamic stronghold in eastern Ethiopia, I was approached by a young woman with enlivened eyes. She wanted to know my name. The tour guide, Tewdros Getahun a.k.a. Tedy, did the introductions. Tedy seemed to know every girl in Harar, which isn't impossible when you're 19 and grew up surrounded by the rest of your small town's estimated 91,000 residents. Our chatter was small-town-pleasant; we

tranquil mosque, the road wended towards the centre of town where locals were getting drunk at less-than-favourable bars while the sun was making way for the night sky. All these moments in less than an hour, I thought, wondering how this town became infested with scores of tangible contradictions. Perhaps that's what makes Harar feel different to most places.

This is a rare part of our world; here it seems time forgot to exist and as if Ethiopian authorities abandoned this former trade centre. Widespread poverty on the streets is blinding and everything seems to be standing still. Yet in its heyday, when Harar was under Islamic leadership and independent from the rest of Ethiopia between 969 and 1886, it was a trade magnet. Its first leader and spiritual guide was the Emir Abadir from Arabia. Lying near the Red Sea resulted in the settlement of nearby Yemenites who inter-married with the Ethiopian population.

Harar established trade links with nations like India and China long before there was an Indian restaurant and Chinatown in every major world city. Its reputation also grew as a base for Islamic teaching in this part of Africa. Bearing testimony are the 88 mosques inside the one-square-kilometre walled town. Some have even called Harar the fourth holiest Islamic town, after the Middle Eastern centres of worship in Saudi Arabia, and Jerusalem which houses the Dome of the Rock.

By the mid-1500s the Muslim leadership built walls around Harar to keep out expanding tribes from other parts of Ethiopia and to fend off possible conflicts. But come 1887, Ethiopia swallowed Harar under its Emperor Menelik. The town's walls weren't destroyed but opening up saw an influx of new influences and around it sprawled what is remains referred to as the 'new town'. Despite this, Harar's old town still displays untouched alleyways, totaling 386, leading one on a visually enriching and time tripping route.

French poet Arthur

Rimbaud spent some of the last months of his life in Harar before being buried in 1891. It's easy to see why he made Harar his home. This



Harar street scene. Source: [www.traveladventures.org](http://www.traveladventures.org)



Feeding hyenas in harar. Source: [www.crowntour.com.et](http://www.crowntour.com.et)

could hardly imagine her having any crusader-like ambitions. Seconds later, outside the St Mary Catholic Church

took some photos and then passed the Jamia Mosque, set slightly opposite the nun's sanctuary. From the lively yet

place grows somewhat somberly silent after sunset and has a way of infiltrating under one's skin. Culturally, it's a treasure chest with inhabitants as easy-going as late Sunday afternoons. Despite what might seem like a hole for the world's forgotten, Harar elicits no shortage of inspiration for those who seek nourishment of the soul instead of simply the senses.

The three-storey wooden house where Rimbaud supposedly resided is now a museum, following intervention from the Ethiopian government to renovate it. "Eight families lived here," spoke the museum's guide in heavy tobacco-stained perfect English. "It opened as a museum in 2000. The guest house is for French students who visit for two weeks every year."

Harar has a sister-city agreement with Charleville in France where Rimbaud was born in 1845. Small, colourful glass has been inserted into the museum's wooden window panes. The walls were painted breezy blues. One the top floor, which offers 360 views of Harar, murals showcase Ethiopian faces.

When I visited, the first floor exhibited the work of a French photographer, capturing evocative scenes from the sister-cities. This floor also has a mostly French-language exhibition about Rimbaud and photos from the early 1900s of Harar. They're evidence that not much has changed inside the old town.

Back downstairs on ground floor the museum guide opened a glass door that

revealed a library of books about Rimbaud as well as Harar. Two hours after browsing the tiny museum I was ready for yet more history lessons. As Tedy and I traversed through the old marketplace my eye caught three small girls seeking shade under a black umbrella. They were selling red onions. I doubted if they'd say yes to being photographed and Tedy suggested that I purchase lollipops for a bribe.

Two of the girls didn't mind being photographed. They would gladly accept the lollipops. But one of the girls forcefully opposed. She took to her feet and closed the umbrella. She had been told that foreigners with cameras would most likely sell their photos to maga-

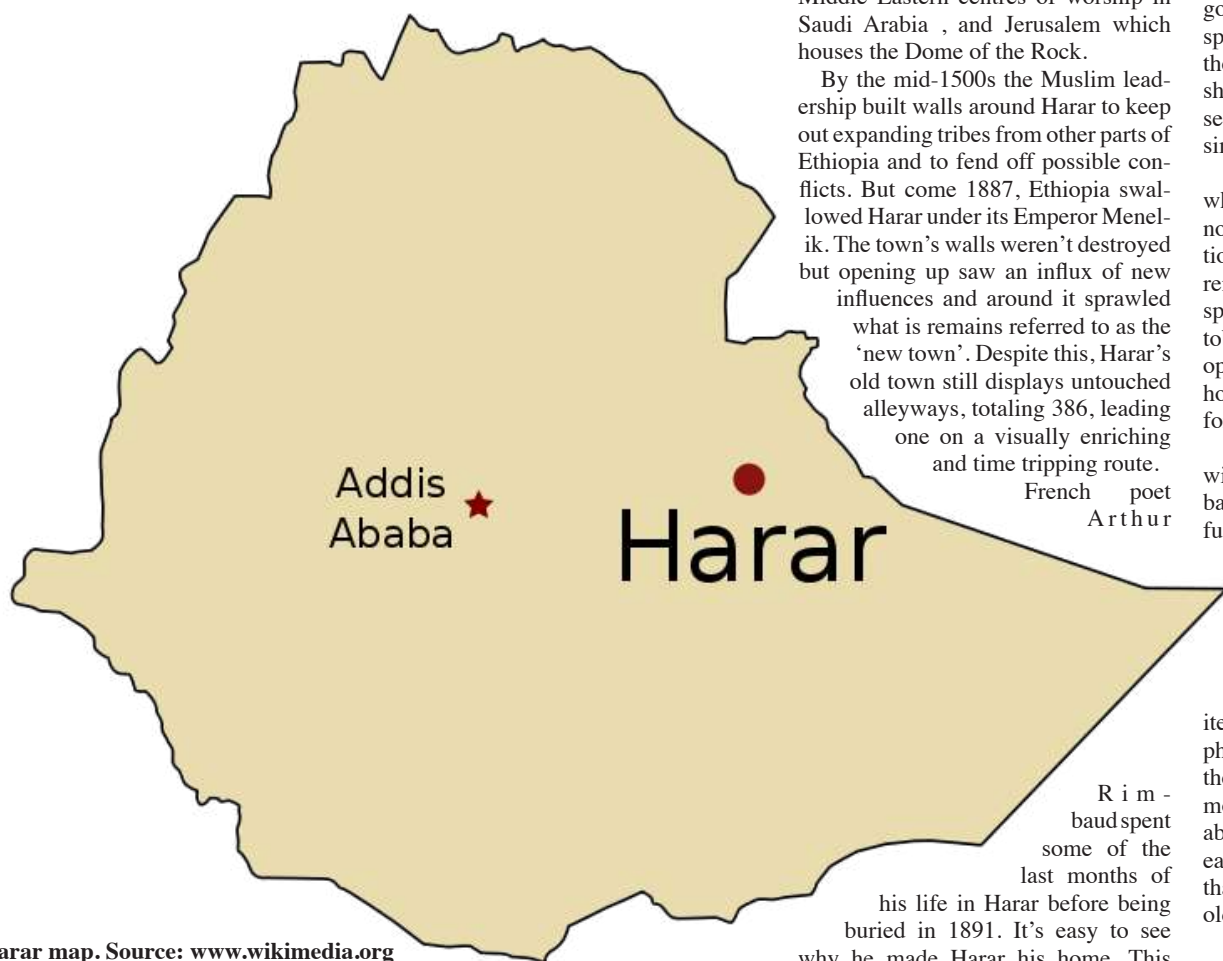
zines or newspapers. And so she had also learnt to demand cash if a tourist asks to take her photo.

"He's going to tell people in his country that this is what we look like," she argued to her two friends. "We sit here for money. You should pay us," she turned boldly to my face.

I wasn't up for unwanted attention, although none of the adults around interfered. So I agreed to pay her for the photo. I always walk away from a situation like this but I had already gotten too far in this debate. The young girl, who seemed no older than ten, wanted no less than one Ethiopian Birr, which converts roughly to seventy South African cents. I parted with the lollipops



Harar old town main gate. Source: Yazeed Kamaldien



Harar map. Source: [www.wikimedia.org](http://www.wikimedia.org)







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Adnan Mohammed, Othman Muthana and Ahmed Ali, three other university students, say skinny jeans are not only in fashion, but they are more comfortable to wear than other jeans.

# Yemeni youths ride the skinny jeans trend

Story and Photos by: Safiya Al-Jabry

Just a couple of years ago, many youth in Yemen were drooling over

bell bottomed jeans and trousers which were the 'born again' fashion of the '70s and '80s.

Nowadays, skinny jeans with funky bright T-shirts which match the color of their sneakers are perfect outfits for most youth in Sana'a.

Skinny jeans date back to the birth of rock 'n roll in the '50s when American singer Elvis Presley pulled off the look. With his slim-fitting jeans and his spinning dance moves, he amazed his fans and gave birth to a look that has since then been in and out of fashion.

The fashion world records 2006 as the year when the skinny jeans trend was re-born in Europe. Since then, skinny jeans - also called skinnies - are everywhere. At local men's clothing shops in Hadda Street, in Sana'a, almost all jeans displayed are skinnies.

"There are different types of skinny jeans depending on the width of the cut of the leggings. Some jeans are as thin as 5-inches. We sell 5-inches, 6-inches and 8-inches. Most of the customers refer to the 8-inched ones as straight-cut jeans and not skinny," said the owner of one local shop.

Even though most guys say the jeans

are difficult to wear and it is hard for them to pull off the look, they still wear them just to look cool.

Abdul Rahman Al-Ruweihy usually wears the most colorful shirts and sneakers to match his cool skinnies.

"I have around 10 skinnies. Some of the jeans I buy are perfect for my taste. I have to tighten others to fit my taste though. I wear skinnies because they are in fashion," said Al-Ruweihy.

Adnan Mohammed, Othman Muthana and Ahmed Ali, three university students, said that skinny jeans are not only in fashion, but they are more comfortable to wear than other jeans.

The media machine has promoted this new trend to people all over and has influenced them to buy



Abdul Rahman Al-Ruweihy, a 22 year old university student, is considered an icon at his university for wearing skinnies.

He said that he had about eight pairs of skinnies in his closet. For him, it's always about fashion.

"I just love going with the fashion because it makes me feel fresh," he said.

However, not everyone believes in following the fashion hype. Some believe in finding their own sense of style and being comfortable in their own skin. They don't believe in being defined by the latest trends, be it jeans, T-shirts or even hair styles.

Taha Mothana, a 24-year-old student, said that skinnies are too uncomfortable for him.

"How can I walk in them?" he asked jokingly. "Yemeni youth are mostly influenced by Gulf countries like Saudi Arabia. They see the latest fashion in these countries and follow them."

Other teenagers, Ahmed Najib, Abdulwahab Hajjaj and Moatassem Salim agreed with Mothana. They are among the few students at their university who wear baggy jeans and are opposed to the idea of wearing skinnies. Najib considers skinny jeans suitable for women and not men.

And this is fashion; it repeats itself. A few years from now, skinnies would probably have faded out. A new trend would have risen. Who knows, maybe the new fashion will be the '30s hats and three-piece suits.



Owner of Wear Me Fashions in Yemen Mall says that about 80 to 90 percent of the customers who buy skinnies are male teenagers.

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