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## Young woman 'forced' to marry sheikh

By: Malak Shaher

SANA'A, Jan. 23 – Rania Al-Aitary, the young woman who sued her father because he prohibited her from marrying the man she loved, has been forced to marry a sheikh from Hajja governorate on Friday.

This is according to the 21-year-old's former lawyer Yahya Al-Asnaj.

"She was forced to change her mind and accept marrying someone she did not approve of," said Al-Asnaj.

He also accused Muhammad Qardo, a lawyer that the court appointed to replace him, of not acting in Al-Aitary's interest.

"Qardo was not assigned to protect Al-Aitary, but rather to help her uncles regain their influence on her after she sought help from the court," he said.

But Qardo meanwhile told the Yemen Times that the brother of Ala'a Hajj, the man that Al-Aitary wanted to marry, had acted illegally. He accused Muhammad Hajj, an anesthesia specialist, of "covering her (Al-Aitary) nose" with a fabric to anesthetize her and force her to seek help at the tribal leader's house.

"She was told that her father was at the hospital and when she went there Hajj anesthetized her and she was brought to the house of (Sheikh Othman) Al-Muhajjab, the tribal leader," said Qardo.

Mohammad Hajj told the Yemen Times that he only wanted to help the two young people to get married and that he would not do any harm to Al-Aitary.

"This is the first time I hear about such an allegation. There's no way that I anesthetized her. When Al-Aitary went to Al-Muhajjab's house, I was in Haradh," he said.

Hajj said that Al-Aitary went to Al-Muhajjab's house in Hajja the day before Eid Al-Adha in November last year, and that he was on a medical mission at Al-Noor Hospital in Al-Zaydia, two hours from Hajja.

Asa'ad Omar from the Yemeni Observatory for Human Rights told the Yemen Times that he saw Al-Aitary with other journalists when she went to Al-Muhajjab's house last November. He said that he saw her saying, "I want to marry Hajj or else I want to die."

Qardo said that despite the fact that now Al-Aitary was "happy" at her husband's house, he would continue with a case against Muhammad Hajj for allegedly anesthetizing Al-Aitary to get her to the tribal leader's house.

Al-Aitary's case is viewed by many as an example of how tribal customs in Hajja governorate, north of Sana'a, can hinder the marriage of two people who love each other. These tribal customs prevented Al-Aitary from marrying Ala'a Hajj, who was seen by some in her family as inferior to her.

Continued on Page 2

## Protests set to continue in Yemen



Yemeni women carry pictures of political activist Tawakkol Karman who was arrested yesterday. Hundreds joined anti-government protests yesterday in the Yemeni capital Sana'a under tight security.

By: Sadeq Al-Wesabi

SANA'A, Jan. 23 – Hundreds of Yemeni protesters yesterday faced heavy security when they took to the streets demanding the release of citizens arrested during anti-government protests within the last week.

They also continued their demands for a regime change and that President Ali Abdullah Saleh steps down.

The protest started at the office of the Yemeni Journalists' Syndicate, passed Sana'a University and proceeded to the General Prosecutor's Office where they

demanding the release of imprisoned protesters.

"Overthrowing the president is inevitable," the protesters chanted as they marched.

The Yemeni Interior Ministry last week declared that protest organizers should inform them in writing three days before holding protests or face arrest. Despite this, yesterday's protest was spontaneous and had a crowd of at least 500 people.

Among the crowd were women, men, students and children. They carried pictures of activists and protesters

who were arrested in recent days.

Salah Al-Mekhlafi told the Yemen Times during the protest that "Yemenis must protest against corruption".

"It's our duty as the youth to overthrow the oppressive regime," he said.

Abdulkareem Al-Khayati said that "ordinary people" were more active and honest than political parties.

Continued on Page 2

## 30 journalists, activists arrested

By: Shatha Al-Harazi and Tom Finn

SANA'A, Jan. 23 – Authorities at the Interior Ministry yesterday confirmed that they would investigate the manner in which political activist Tawakkol Karman was arrested this week.

This was in response to the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate (YJS) and other human rights groups, who went to the General Prosecutor's office yesterday, and claimed that Karman was "kidnapped". The Yemen Times witnessed the meeting at the General Prosecutor's office.

But this came only after another group about 30 journalists and human rights activists were arrested earlier yesterday when they went to the General Prosecutor to appeal for Karman's release.

Various sources told the Yemen Times that Karman was arrested at 1am yesterday while she was driving to her house with her husband. Three police cars stopped them and she was apparently taken to the Central Prison.

Karman is head of the organization Women Journalists Without Chains and is also a member of the central committee of the Al-Islah opposition party in Yemen. She was a leader of the past two week's ongoing anti-government demonstrations. Authorities accused her of leading demonstrations without informing them or gaining permission. According to Yemeni law any person who wants to demonstrate should inform the Interior Minister about an event three days in advance. They should also explain the reason for the demonstration. The authority has the right to stop the demonstration if it considers it to be dangerous for the country's security.

Continued on Page 2

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# Opposition 'not interested' in elections

By: Nadia Al-Sakkaf

SANA'A, Jan. 23 – Ignoring the deadline given by the Supreme Commission for Elections and Referendum (SCER) to opposition parties for their participation in monitoring the elections, the opposition sent a clear sign that they are "not interested".

"Impossible!" said Dr. Saif Sael, assistant general-secretary of the Yemeni Socialist Party, which is a member party of the opposition coalition the Joint Meeting Parties, on having representatives in the electoral committees.

"We don't even recognize these elections, let alone have people participating in its preparation or monitoring," said Sael.

"We will not be part of it whether officially or any other way."

SCER had given until last Sunday for opposition parties to submit names of their representatives to be included in the main, supervisory and branch committees managing

the elections.

"We have alternatives. We have given them [opposition parties] the chance to have representatives in these committees, but they chose not to be involved," said Judge Mohammed Al-Hakimi, chair of SCER.

The alternatives he mentioned were teachers and state employees recommended by the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Civil Services.

One of the main points of dispute between the opposition and the ruling party is the voters lists which were updated last in 2008. The opposition insists on having new lists that would include eligible voters, i.e. Yemenis who have turned 18 since 2008. These are estimated at around 1.5 million Yemenis, who will not be allowed to vote in the coming elections if they happen on time.

"You must understand that we are bound by law to use the lists from 2008. If we were to update the voters lists we would have to change

the law and only the parliament has the right to do that, let alone that there is not enough time to do any of this if we were to have the elections in April," said Judge Sharaf Al-Deen Al-Mahbashi, head of the legal affairs at SCER.

With support from donors, the only process the elections commission can do is remove repeated names, minors and deceased voters.

Moreover, SCER is currently implementing an electronic database system for all local and international observers of the elections and their roles during the electoral process. The observers accordingly will be issued ID cards to facilitate their monitoring work.

Additionally, the commission earlier this month had completed reviewing all 19 electoral and referendum manuals in order to be used in the elections. Currently there is an open tender to choose the company that will be responsible for printing and publication of the electoral manuals and other awareness materials.



Yemenis queuing to vote in the 2006 presidential and local council elections, which observers called the most free and fair elections Yemen has witnessed in its recent history.

# UN increases assistance in Yemen

By: Nadia Al-Sakkaf

SANA'A, Jan. 23 – Between the years 2012 and 2015 the United Nations has pledged to support Yemen with just over USD395-million in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), at an average of more than USD98.7-million per year.

This is an increase from the previous assistance between 2007 and 2011 of USD274-million and an average of USD54.8-million annually.

According to the UN press statement on Sunday, this time the UNDAF will have a duration of four years instead of the usual five years in order to align the UNDAF cycle with the Fourth Development Plan for Poverty Reduction 2011 to 2015.

The UNDAF is the strategic program framework that describes the collective response of the UN system to Yemen's development priorities.

Considering that 2015 is the end date of the Fourth Development Plan for Poverty Reduction and of the new UNDAF, and that this coincides with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) deadline, this UNDAF focuses on supporting the efforts of the Government and the people of Yemen to accelerate progress towards achieving the MDGs.

The new UNDAF highlights four

main priority areas of focus are inclusive and diversified economic growth; sustainable and equitable access to quality basic social services; women and youth empowerment and good governance and social cohesion.

## UNDP high level mission to Yemen

The signing of the UN development assistance to Yemen was attended by Helen Clark, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Administrator and United Nations Development Group (UNDG) Chair, who is currently in Yemen on a six-day visit.

Clark will spend some of her time in Sana'a City, and her trip includes two field visits, one to Soqatra Island and the second to Thula town outside Sana'a.

"It is a good sign that the first meeting I have in Yemen is with such delightful strong women," said Clark to the Yemeni women gathering whom she met on her first day in Sana'a. To her, investing in women is key to any development, especially since women are half of any society.

Clark is accompanied on her visit by Yemen's own Amat Al-Alim Alsowa, UNDP Regional Director for Arab States, and former Minister of Yemen Rights in Yemen.

Clark's trip to Socotra compensated the people behind the Rosh community

bio-diversity initiative for their disappointment at not being able to travel to the USA to receive their Equator Prize.

"They say if the mountain won't come to Mohammad, Mohammad must go to the mountain. So here I am coming to you to present this award," said Clark as she handed the award to the Rosh Protected Area Community.

The Equator Initiative, a United Nations-led partnership that supports local and indigenous efforts in biodiversity conservation and poverty alleviation, recently announced the twenty-five winners of the Equator Prize 2010, following an extensive technical review process.

Clark emphasized the need to celebrate such efforts that prove that development progress can come hand-in-hand with the conservation of our eco-systems and biodiversity.

Another project signed during Clark's visit is the UNDP 4-year Integrated Social Cohesion and Development Project (ISCD).

With a total budget of more than USD8.5-million, the project aspires to promote social cohesion concepts and culture among all segments of society, and to prevent conflict through community driven development approaches.

The project will be implemented with the Government of Yemen, represented by the Ministry of Local Administra-



Helen Clark presents the Equator Prize 2010 to the representative of the Rosh Protected Area Community initiative.

tion, and UN agencies, INGOs, NGOs and others.

Another project announced is the UNDP Community Driven Early Recovery in Sa'ada Project. With a total budget of USD4.2-million, this 3-year

project aims at contributing to the Government's plans to stabilize the situation in Sa'ada.

This project is a response to the community's needs and aims at empowering Internally Displaced Persons

(IDPs), orphans, the disabled, women and youth of Sa'ada to identify their priorities, and design, implement and monitor their projects.

## Continued from Page 1

### Young woman 'forced' to marry sheikh

Hajj is a 24-year-old university student who was planning to marry Al-Aitary. But because his ancestors were butchers he is considered as being from an inferior class. Al-Aitary is from a higher class and her father did not want her to marry Hajj.

In late November last year, Al-Aitary appealed to Al-Muhajjab to help her appeal against her father's demands.

Ala'a Hajj said that Al-Aitary's uncle influenced her parents who initially approved of her marrying him. He said that her parents were later forced to change their mind as Hajj was from an inferior class.

Al-Asnaj also said that Al-Aitary's father initially agreed to her marrying Hajj. But he changed his mind after Al-Aitary's uncles allegedly beat him.

Al-Aitary sought help from the Qufi Shamar Primary Court while she was under protection at Al-Muhajjab's house. However, when her court case started, the judge – allegedly as a result of tribal threats – abandoned the case. Al-Aitary was sent to jail for her safety and she re-

mained imprisoned for 20 days.

The court also replaced Al-Asnaj with a new lawyer, Muhammad Qardo', during her trial.

### Protests set to continue in Yemen

The arrests of protesters have continued despite the fact that Yemen signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in February 1987 which states in Article 21 that the "right of peaceful assembly shall be recognized". It further states that, "no restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those imposed in conformity with the law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order, the protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others".

Karman had publicly said that Yemeni security had warned her two days before her arrest that she would be detained if she continued with demonstrations.

Among those who were arrested yesterday was Khaled Al-Ansi, the general executive of the National Organization for Defending Rights and Freedoms. An hour before his arrest, Al-Ansi spoke to the Yemen Times about Karman's arrest.

"They arrested her because she represents the free voice of Yemenis as she tries to transfer the Tunisian's message to Yemeni youth. She led a new youth movement in its second week now against the regime," he said.

"Her arrest is a stupid step that will lead to more public anger. She was taken to the Central Prison, instead of the Political Security Prison which journalists and activists usually are held in, so that the government can avoid public anger as she is a woman," said Al-Ansi.

Abdullah Al-Sufi, a cameraman with Al-Arabia news channel, was also among those arrested. He told the Yemen Times that after they were arrested, the General Prosecutor Rezq Al-Olofi said that Al-Sufi and other cameramen should be released. Television cameras of Al-Arabia and Al-Jazeera news channels were confiscated.

"They released me but they took my colleague Mujeeb Souleh," said Al-Sufi. Ali Al-Dailami, head of the Yemeni Organization for Defending Rights and Freedoms, was also among those arrested.

Abdulkareem Al-Khewani, a journalist who was arrested repeatedly in the past because of his articles that claimed President Ali Abdullah Saleh thought that Yemen was a monarchy, said that the government wanted to gain legitimacy by arresting activists.

"The regime thinks it can avoid public anger by taking a defensive step and attacking activists. The Yemeni regime is

broken and thinks it can earn legitimacy by arresting activists," he said.

### 30 journalists, activists arrested

"Ordinary people spontaneously organized this protest. The heavy security is evidence that Yemen has no democracy and freedom of expression. This is the last gasp of the regime," he said.

The independent parliamentarian, Ahmed Saif Hashed, told the Yemen Times during the protest that one of his two companions was arrested yesterday for participating in a protest.

"Popular revolt will come soon. A military crackdown on protesters will escalate the bad situation. Yemenis are insisting on escalating protests," he said.

"The riot police suppressed us repeatedly during the march. The crackdown will increase by the police but the protests will not stop."

Hashed criticized the absence of opposition parties, indicating that these parties only organized "useless festivals".

Belal Noman, 22, told the Yemen

Times that bad economic conditions compelled him to participate in the protest.

"The police crackdown is not acceptable because we have the right to protest. They must be here to protect us and not to suppress us," he said.

A student, Salman Al-Humaidy, said that students and youth were alert and wanted to protect their rights.

"The regime wants to hold back these peaceful protests but they cannot because students want to change the regime," he said.

Mohammad Saeed Al-Sharabi, a student at Sana'a University, was held by police for three hours yesterday.

"Two policemen forcibly arrested me, beat me on my feet and confiscated my mobile phone early in the morning while I was standing with my friend," Al-Sharabi told the Yemen Times.

He said that the police recognized him because he participated in protests that started last week at Sana'a University.

"They have no right to arrest me. I have the right to be in any place in my country. Deploying heavy security to suppress the protesters is evidence that the regime is afraid of these protesters," he said.

# Somali refugees speak up about police harassment

By: Ali Saeed

SANA'A, Jan. 23 – A group of Somali refugees have accused the Sana'a police of allegedly harassing them and accusing them of stealing spare car parts.

Mohammad Hassan Abdo, a Somali refugee who came to Yemen four years ago, told the Yemen Times this week that police have arrested him many times in the Sana'a streets where he works as a car washer.

"In Yemen, I have refugee status and my job is to be a car washer. Whenever

the police inspect the area for thieves, where I wash cars, they come to me and send me to jail for two to three days," claimed Abdo.

He said that he has been sent to jail more than six times and the most recent time he was sent to jail was two months ago.

"In the prison, the police beat us for three or four days because they want to find the real thieves. I receive no food, except the food that I share with some Yemeni prisoners brought to them from their families. When they are released I



Abdo Rasheed (left) and Mohamed Hassan Abdo (right).

stayed for long hours without anything to eat or drink," said Abdo.

Abdo said that he fled to Yemen due to ongoing violence in Somalia where his father was killed in Mogadishu by an "Islamic insurgent group," and his brother drowned in the sea when he tried to flee from Somalia to Yemen.

Abdo said that after three days in prison, refugees were not charged by police nor were they transferred to a court for prosecution. As they were innocent, they were simply released.

"After three days in prison, the police officer asked me to clean the trash around the police station and let me go without granting me a letter that I was innocent or convicted. They take all Somali car washers and send them to prison accusing them of being thieves," he explained.

He said that the police regularly arrested between six and 12 Somali refugees at a time.

Abdo Rasheed, 28, another Somali refugee who came to Yemen four years ago, also confirmed to the Yemen Times that he had experienced similar problems with Yemeni police in Sana'a.

"A Yemeni man accused me of knowing another Somali refugee who stole a car battery, and I was sent to the police station in Sana'a. In fact, I do not know this other refugee," said Rasheed.

"When the policeman interrogated me about the Somali person who stole the car battery, I told him that I do not know that guy and the police beat me very badly and broke one of my teeth."

Dr. Mohamed Al-Qaedi, a press officer at the Ministry of Interior, told the Yemen Times that it was untrue that Sana'a police arrested Somali refugees without laying any charges against them.

"It is completely untrue. Yemen is open to them," he said.

He explained that some Somali refugees, who do not regularly work in a fixed place in Sana'a, were arrested for theft.

Abdo said that Somali refugees needed protection and help from organizations such as the UN Refugee Agency. He said that he wanted the agency to resettle him in another country.

Cagri Hurmuzlu, external relations officer at the UN Refugee Agency in Sana'a, told the Yemen Times in a recent interview that the agency only granted refugee resettlement when the refugee met the required criteria.

Mosa Al-Namrani, a human rights activist at the National Organization for Defending Rights and Freedoms (HOOD), told the Yemen Times that his organization had not met with any Somali refugees who had experienced police harassment.

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Based in Yemen, the County Coordinator is responsible for

- Providing research on up-to-date country specific best practice information from local and national research institutions in relation to their country of focus;
- Building collaborative relationships with institutions, organizations and associations and disseminating information prepared in the Cairo office to country networks about regional knowledge in priority sector areas;
- Overseeing all logistics for national level workshops, and working with the Cairo office for knowledge sharing, marketing and communications, expenditures and budgets, and publication and information dissemination;
- Contributing to annotated bibliographies, technical publication series and research highlights, and contribute up-to-date content to the Program's Portal site.

### Qualifications:

Masters preferred or an equivalent combination of education and experience. At minimum of three years experience in a related research or development field, four to five years preferred. Strong organization, logistics, and networking skills required. Demonstrated experience with computerized information services, especially online databases and strong internet searching skills required. Previously established relationships and knowledge of Middle Eastern research institutions is preferred. Knowledge of USAID programming in the MENA region and experience in one of the priority sector areas highly preferred. Fluency in spoken and written Arabic and English required. Candidate may need to work from home and must be broadband connected.

A detailed description for the position with required qualifications and skills can be found at <http://itic.aed.org>. Please submit your CV and Letter of Interest in English to [iticinfo@aed.org](mailto:iticinfo@aed.org). Please include "Country Coordinator-Yemen" in the title field of the email.

Interested candidates should not contact staff at USAID or any other AED-administered project in Yemen for information about this position.

For additional information regarding AED, please visit <http://www.aed.org>.

The deadline for applications is 31 January, 2011.

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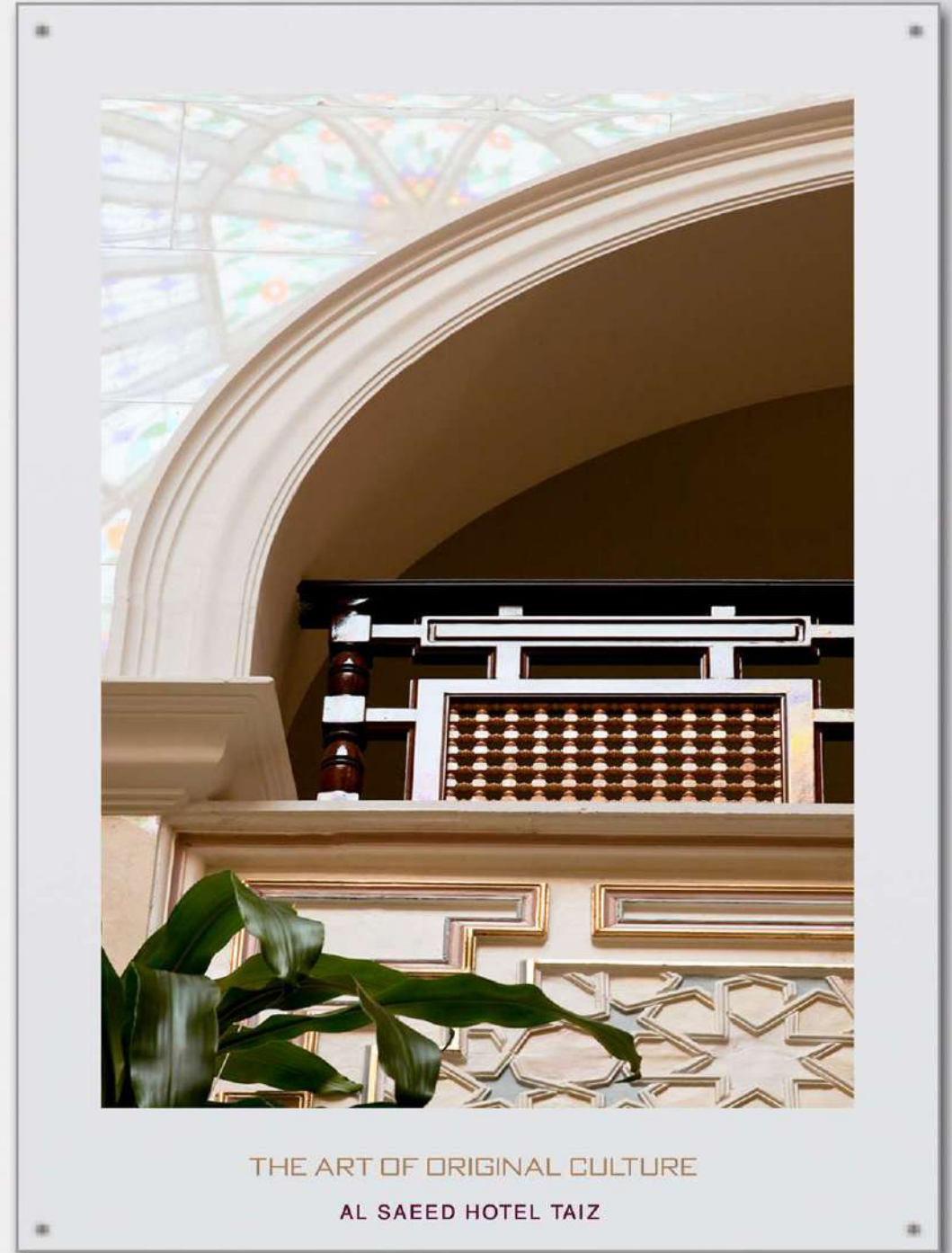
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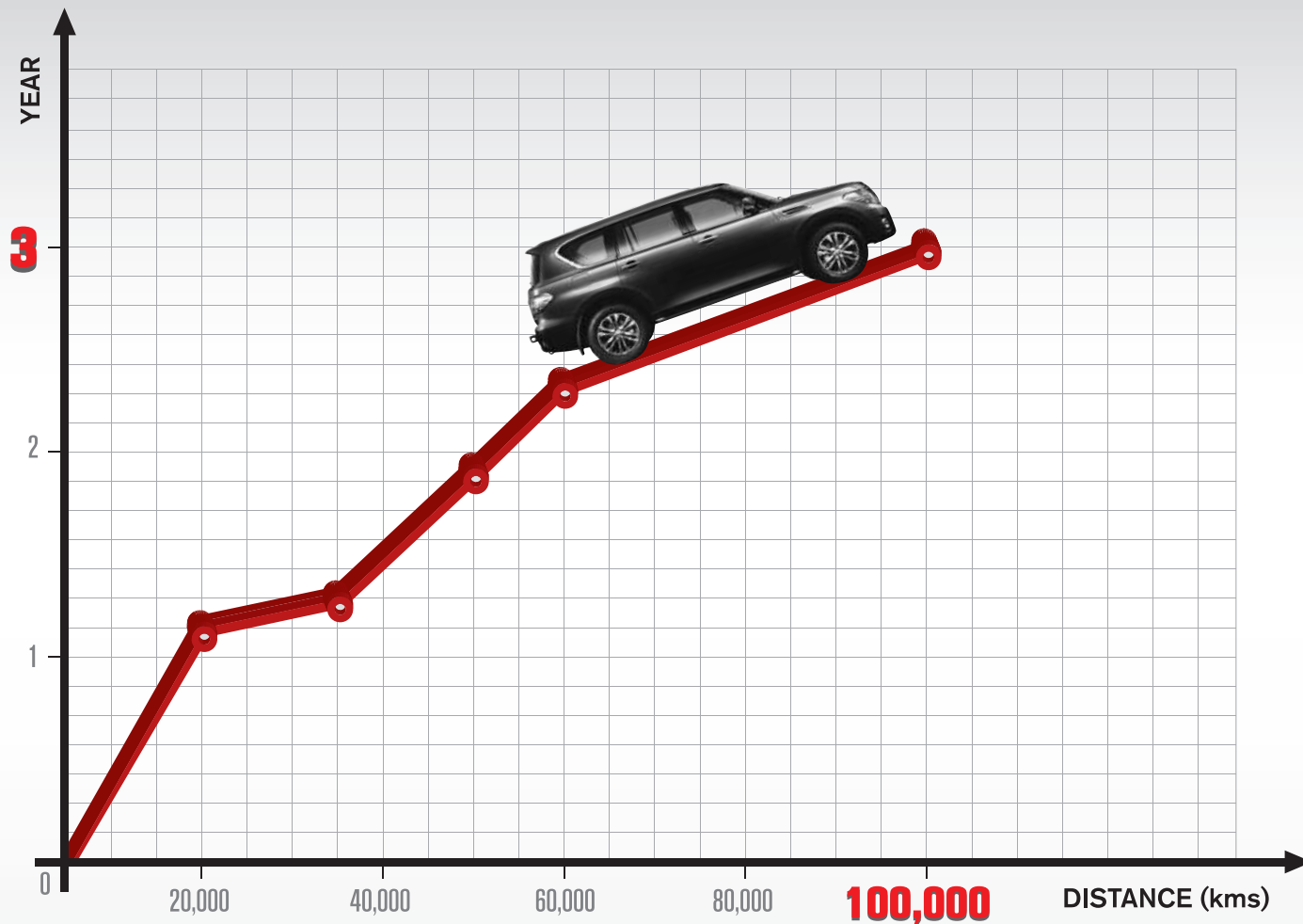
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# Prisoners jailed for longer than required

By: Shatha Al-Harazi

Haitham was living with his uncle in Haima district to continue his studies when he had a fight with another child and unintentionally killed him. Haitham was 14 years old when he was taken to the Juvenile Department in the Central Prison. The tribal judgment set the blood money that Haitham should pay the dead child's family at YR 9 mil-

lion. As his family can't afford to pay that amount of money, Haitham has remained in prison for more than three years longer than his actual sentence. Haitham is not the only one facing an unknown future in the Central Prison after completing his sentence.

Around 350 people are kept in the Central Prison longer than their sentence. Some of them stay for more than eight years longer than their actual sentence. These people are called 'Moa'sreen', which means people who



The Central Prison in Sana'a holds 2,500 prisoners.

are facing difficulties in paying back loans or blood money.

In the Central Prison in Sana'a the total number of prisoner is 2500. Fourteen percent of them are imprisoned for longer than their sentence. This number includes juveniles who were accused of murder or assaults that need to be paid for. In the Juveniles Department there are 65 children, all male. Twenty-six of them are imprisoned for 'private rights', the legal term for cases that are related to money and property.

When it comes to private rights cases, the penalty has two aspects. The first is the public right which is the prison period. The second is the private right which means paying back the money to the relevant people. When the prisoner has fulfilled their public right sentence, they still can't be released until paying back the amount stated in the private right case.

According to Colonel Motahar Ali Naji, general manager of the Central Prison in Sana'a, some prisoners have to pay a large amount of money to be released. Ali Al-Homisi, the owner of Al-Qadisa car show, has been asked to pay YR240-million. Another prisoner has been asked to pay USD300,000.

Every year some of these prisoners are released through donations from businessmen and the president. The priority as to which prisoners have their fines paid go to those who have spent the longest period in prison, according to Naji. However, for those who have large amounts of money owing, it is still a problem to get donations and help.

Naji told the Yemen Times that its moa'sreen is a continual problem. Every day they release two or three and receive the same number. "This problem never ends as the people of this country likes to commit fraud," said Naji.

Naji told the Yemen Times that the judiciary system in Yemen is "rubbish" as the current system encourages people to think that they will have donations to pay the private rights and they can get away with their crimes. "It should be who kills someone has to be killed."

"There was a case of man who murdered someone and when he was in front of the prosecution he said he would kill again and Ali Abdulleh Saleh will pay the blood money" explained Naji. "We are facing a big problem with people who think they can murder and the state has to pay for them."



Colonel Motahar Ali Naji is the general manager of the Central Prison in Sana'a.

Abd Al-Rahman Barman, the head of Sjeen Organization for Defending Prisoners Rights, explained that private rights cases are civil cases and can't be transferred to the Central Prison. The Central Prison is only to receive criminal cases. Only in one situation can a civil case be accepted to the Central Prison, which is when the accused is proven to have money and doesn't want to pay it back.

Along with the 350 prisoners there are seven women who are being kept longer than their sentence. Some of them are sentenced for murdering their husbands and have been kept in prison for the blood money.

"The president paid for two of those women. One of them had to pay YR 5 million, and the other had to pay YR

1,700,000. The state paid part of the money and obliged the women to find other sources to pay the rest of the money," said Naji.

Ali Al-Dailami, a head of the Yemeni Organization for Defending Rights and Freedoms, believes the release priorities are wrong. "Instead of releasing those who have spent the longest period, they should release the juveniles," said Al-Dailami. "Keeping the juveniles in the Central Prison is a huge problem itself, so keeping them even longer forces them be raised in a criminal environment."

Al-Dailami asks for amendments to the law to address this situation, such that consideration can be given to prisoners who are under tough circumstances.

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# Laggards in the lab, Arab world starts to get serious about science

By: David Rosenberg  
The Media Line

The four young finalists are lined up on stage, standing stiffly and exchanging nervous smiles with the audience and with each other, as the votes of the jury and then television viewers are tallied to the breathless commentary of an emcee and dramatic music. Farouk El-Baz, the head juror comes up on stage and to applause declares, "This proves that we Arabs, given the opportunities, can reach the highest heights."

The emcee opens the sealed envelope. Ahmad Al-Ghazi, a Saudi, places fourth, taking home a \$50,000 cash prize. Hind Hobeika, from Lebanon and the only female finalist, takes third and a \$100,000 check. Now, the music reaches a dramatic crescendo as the emcee skips directly to the winner. It's 26-year-old Kuwaiti Sadek Qassim, who pumps his arm in a clenched fist of victory as friends and family surround him with hugs and kisses.

Qassim, Hobeika and Al-Ghazi didn't do a cover of a popular hit or a successful turn with a celebrity on the dance floor. Nor is El-Baz a music-industry executive or a celebrity chef. He's an Egyptian-American scientist, widely known for his work at the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Qassim took home a cool \$300,000 for inventing an automated multi-functional oil samples lab tester.

And, Stars of Science, the competitive reality show that concluded its second season at the end of November, is television with a mission. Produced and funded by Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development and broadcast across the Middle East, its aim is to make science sexy for young Arabs.

"The program was very successful. Applications more than doubled for the second season," Ali Hariri, the show's Beirut-based production supervisor told The Media Line. "Young people are very interested in this type of show. Many of them have scientific potential, especially in the Gulf states. You can see the enthusiastic reactions in the talk-backs on the website."



A high-tech robotic dance performance emphasized Abdallah Abou Zeids product, made specifically for robotic rotational joints.

The foundation has its work cut out for it. As the U.S. and Europe transition into post-industrial knowledge-based economies, with Asia following closely behind, the Arab world is way behind by every measure of science and innovation. It lacks scientists and top-notch universities and devotes little money or attention to research and development. The best minds emigrate to greener pastures in the West.

The Arab world spent just 0.2% of its gross domestic product on research and development in 2007, the same level as in 2002 and half the rate in Africa, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) 2010 Science Report. By comparison, Europe spent 1.6% of GDP on R&D in 2007 and China 1.4%.

There are some 123,000 scientists and researchers in the Arab world, but there are fewer per million of the population than in the developing world as a whole. Even with huge amounts of money being pumped into projects like Saudi Arabia's King Abdul Aziz University for Science and Technology, the amount spent per researcher was a paltry \$38,400 in 2007. China spent almost twice that and Europe almost four times as much, even after taking account differences in costs, UNESCO estimates.

Only one of the world's top 100 most frequently cited scientists comes from the Arab world, while the region has produced a single Nobel laureate – Egyptian Ahmed Zewail, who won the chemistry prize in 1999 while working at California Institute of Technology.

"Arab leaders and policy makers don't believe in science as the way to development. They think we can own the technology by buying it," Wasim Maziak, a professor of epidemiology and biostatistics at University of Memphis, told The Media Line by e-mail. "The social environment lacks democratic institutions and the free atmosphere needed for scientific inquiry to flourish and be protected."

Born and raised in Syria, Maziak said he was determined to practice science in his home country. In 2002, he founded the Syria Center for Tobacco Studies. But four years later, at age 46, he gave up and relocated in the U.S. "I couldn't combine the two components of my dream, so I had to leave," he said.

Indeed, one of the objectives of Stars of Science is to fight brain drain, Tariq Al-Sada, an official with the Qatar Foundation, told The Media Line. "We don't want people to come up with inventions and then emigrate," he said. "The Sudanese inventor who won second

place last season returned to work in a scientific center in Sudan."

The Arab world can't afford to ignore science and technology. While the oil-rich states of the Gulf are living off energy for now, their leaders are preparing for the day when reserves run out. More immediately, they need to create high-paying, rewarding jobs for their rapidly growing populations, said Ranjit Rajan, a Dubai-based research director for International Data Corporation (IDC), a technology-market intelligence firm. That means developing high technology and other knowledge-intensive industries, he said.

Nor can poorer economies afford to ignore science, Rajan said. Saudi Arabia, for instance, isn't producing enough graduates with information technology (IT) skills to supply the domestic market – he estimates that the kingdom's IT industry will be short some 30,000 professionals by 2014 – and the shortfall will have to be filled by expatriates from places like Egypt, he said.

Most governments in the Arab world have no national policy for science or technology, but in the Gulf, oil billions are being used to jump start world-class research institutes and lure elite universities and scientists from the U.S. and Europe.

Qatar, which hosts Stars of Science, launched a five-year program in 2006 to increase R&D spending to 2.8% of GDP from 0.33%. Its 14-square kilometer (five-square mile) Education City hosts engineering programs from Texas A&M University and Carnegie Mellon.

Abu Dhabi has slated \$1.3 billion in funds for research and development through 2018 under a strategic plan for higher education announced last June. The Sorbonne and New York University have set up branches in the emirate, with the hope that they will evolve from teaching undergraduates to full-fledged research universities.

But the most ambitious plans are being pursued by Saudi Arabia. The government has stepped up science and technology spending in the last two years, with annual allocations set to grow to more than \$1.6 billion annual over the next few years from \$530 million in 2008 and \$160 million a year on average in the two decades before that.

The King Abdulla University for Science and Technology opened in September 2009 with a \$10 billion endowment and English as the language of instruction. The government has a letter of intent with Georgia Institute of Technology of the U.S. to build the first institution to offer foreign-accredited, postgraduate research degrees inside the kingdom. The King Abdullah Foreign Scholarships Program has sent about 85,000 Saudi students to study at leading overseas universities.

But scientific excellence requires more than deep pockets, warned Maziak of the University of Memphis. In any case, said IDC's Rajan, it will take time for improved educational systems to begin producing the quantity and quality of graduates needed by knowledge-intensive industries. It will take even longer to change attitudes that hinder innovate thinking, he added.

"Besides all the technical skills, there's also a problem with soft skills," Rajan, told The Media Line. "There's a problem with English language, there's a problem in gaps in problem solving, so it's not just a matter of quantity but

quality as well."

Nor is academic science alone going to address the Arab world's need to create employment and non-oil growth. Getting R&D out of the laboratories and into new, innovative products is just as critical.

But private business in the Arab world spends almost nothing on developing new products and processes, said Wagdy Sawahel, a Cairo-based science policy adviser and founder of the sciencedev.net website. They account for just 1% of total R&D spending in the region, with universities making up 30% and government a whopping 69%. In developed economies, the weightings are almost exactly the opposite, with business making up 70%, he told The Media Line in e-mailed remarks.

"The shortcomings of science education in the Arab countries have been highlighted by the lack of entrepreneurship and innovation," Sawahel said. "For innovation to take root, the golden triangle of academic institutions, government and the private sector must cooperate."

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City	Venue	Date	Time
Sana'a	Cultural Centre, Edha'ah(Radio) Street	26.01.2011 (Wednesday)	7.00 PM
Taiz	Cultural Centre Hall	27.01.2011 (Thursday)	7.00 PM
Aden	Palestine Hall	28.01.2011 (Friday)	7.00 PM

**All are welcome.**

**VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT**

The **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** invites **Yemeni Nationals** to apply for the following position with Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

**Post Title: Humanitarian Affairs Assistant (G5)**  
**Duration: one year**  
**Duty Station: Haradh Office**  
**Responsibilities:**

Monitor, assesses, report and analysis of general protection Issues and specific issues as identified by the Haradh Sub-office

- Monitors all local sources of protection related information including media, agency reports and through regular contact with governmental and civilian institutions and key informants.
- Triangulation and verification of information including prioritizing and undertaking field trips, meeting with the affected population and representatives of the local communities/authorities.
- Contribute to the drafting of internal and external reports as identified by the Field Unit and the head of the sub-office
- Analyse trends, identify emerging areas of concern and ensure that necessary responses are integrated into the Field Coordination Unit.

**Supports monitoring and assessment of Humanitarian developments**

- Assists the HAO in the development of trend analysis of political, social, economic and security developments.
- Supports in monitoring any access related matters and the impact on the local people and the humanitarian workers.
- Participates in regular field assessments to gather and verify information needed to understand the impact of displacement in specific groups. ?
- Supports joint assessments with other UN and INGOs when needed or requested.

**Supports field coordination and humanitarian action**

- Prepares for coordination meetings at the local level to identify humanitarian issues and seek for response mechanism jointly with other stakeholders, including invitations, logistics, minutes of meetings and information dissemination
- Liaises with the local authorities when requested by the HAO and Field Unit
- Support the HAO to transfer information on IDPs registration, returnees to the Information Management Unit to Support the consistency and accuracy of their mapping.
- Assist in drafting minutes of meetings, data entry, field trip reports, records of completed assignments and any other records as necessary

**Qualifications:**

- Secondary School. University degree is desirable but not a requirement.
- Minimum of five (5) years of relevant national or international experience.
- Fluency in Arabic and English both spoken and written required.
- Excellent computer skills, in both English and Arabic.

Monthly Salary for this post is approximately \$1,000

**Only Online Applications will be accepted**

For further details on the job description and online application, please visit our website at <http://jobs.undp.org>

**Response will only be made to short listed candidates**  
**The deadline for receiving applications is Teusday, February 08, 2011**

**VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT**

The **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** invites **Yemeni Nationals** to apply for the following position with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

**Post Title: Programme Assistant**  
**Duration: one year**  
**Duty Station: Sana'a**  
**Responsibilities:**

- Assist in all financial and procurement aspects of running the Programme including managing and organizing accounts, petty cash, follow up of procurement, correspondence and translation;
- Draft articles, publications, speeches, letters, memos and other documents ;
- Prepare progress and financial reports, review payment requests, prepare requisition orders, etc;
- Maintain an up-to-date filing system for personnel and programme activities and projects documents;
- Schedule appointments and coordinate for meetings. As well as recoding meetings by taking notes, preparing minutes and recording decision points generated;
- Arrange the travel and field trips and arrange for flight and hotel booking;
- Assist in developing the Programme webpage and maintain it up to date;
- Deputies the CPO in his/her absence to attained meetings;
- Assist the CPO in the following tasks:
- Assist in workshop preparation and organization;
- Participate with IFAD CPO in UNDAF sub-group meetings;
- Assist in distributing IFAD publications to projects and partners;
- Participate in all project activities and carry any other duties designated by the CPO.

**Qualifications:**

- Secondary School. University degree is desirable but not a requirement, preferably in social sciences.
- At least 4 years of relevant experience in office management, including reporting.
- Previous working experience with IFAD projects and UN agencies is an advantage.
- Fluency in both written and spoken English and Arabic; Good communications and interpersonal skills are essential.

Monthly Salary for this post is approximately \$1,000

**Only Online Applications will be accepted**

For further details on the job description and online application, please visit our website at <http://jobs.undp.org>

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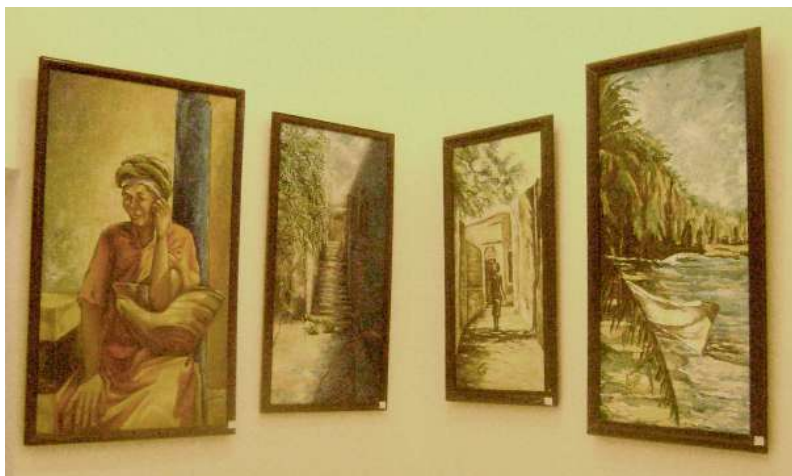
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# New art gallery shows Yemeni works



Arts works on show at the latest exhibition of Yemeni contemporary artists.

Story and Photos by: Ola Al-Shami

A Yemeni contemporary art exhibition, the first of its kind and containing 79 paintings, was launched at the Ministry of Culture hall on January 16.

Mohammed Al-Muflehi, Yemen's minister of culture, said that art galleries are on the rise in Yemen.

"In the recent years, the art gallery has become present in the Yemen and

Arab cultural arena. Adding to this is the Sana'a International Forum focusing on art galleries and an annual competition for young artists that awards young artists some prizes," said Al-Muflehi.

He said that the Ministry of Culture this year also inaugurated Sana'a Gallery for Plastic Arts which is considered the first gallery dedicated to various artistic exhibitions. The first is the inaugural Contemporary Plastic Art Exhibition. This exhibition presents a

This painted portrait of an elderly man by Adnan Jumman is among the 79 artworks on show at a new gallery in Sana'a.

unique group of Yemeni artists from various generations.

Al-Muflehi said that this was the first step to achieve many of the ministry's objectives, including establishing an appropriate exhibition hall to market the works of Yemeni artists. The ministry also aimed to connect artists with fans and collectors of art.

Al-Muflehi said that the ministry appreciated the efforts of TOTAL E&P Yemen for financing this project. Hatem Nuseibeh, the company's managing director in Sana'a, said that it was a "great honor for TOTAL to be associated with the opening of the gallery".

"It is a great achievement for culture in Yemen and highlights the importance of art today as a continuation of a long history of art in a country that is the cradle of Arab civilization," he said.

Nuseibeh also said that financing the exhibition was part of their company's policy of acting as a responsible citizen in Yemen and creating good long-term relationships with civil society.

Hakeem Al-Akel, advisor to the Minister of Culture, said that they had thought of renting a gallery space but did not have the financial capacity to do so.

"Then TOTAL financed the project and after nine months of hard work and dedication we launched this gallery," he said.

The paintings showcased several aspects of Yemeni life from various eras. The artists also belong to different artistic schools, including classic and modern art.

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A host of artists from different generations are currently showing their works depicting life in Yemen.

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