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# YEMEN TIMES

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## Amidst coverage in the Swedish media and a protest by RSF YemenPortal.net blocked for fifth consecutive day

Yemen Times Staff

SANA'A, Jan. 23 — Swedish daily Nerikes Allahanda gave significant coverage in its issue Wednesday on the blocking of YemenPortal.net, Yemen's first and only news search engine, essentially a product of a master study at Örebro University in Sweden by Walid Al-Saaqaf. The search engine, which tracks more than 200,000 items, gained significant popularity in Yemen and the world after it was established in May 2007. It was also approved by Örebro University's Master of Arts in Global Journalism as a research tool used to study and analyze Yemeni online news media. Furthermore, Swedish radio's Arabic program, which reaches many Arab countries, broadcast a special program on this blockage and interviewed members of the academic cadre responsible for the program along with Al-Saaqaf, who expressed his disappointment of the censorship and demanded the prompt unblocking of the website, which he said covers all political views and opinions related to Yemen.

### Int'l advocacy group acts

This comes as Paris-based Reports sans Frontières (RSF) condemned the blockage of YemenPortal.net in a press release published the same day. "President Ali Abdullah Saleh's government is forced to deal with growing social unrest and a Zaidi uprising but that is no reason to target the media and websites," RSF said. "As the government is unable to influence what the media posts, the government has decided to block independent news websites in order to suppress their criticism." The blockage of YemenPortal.net along with several other websites with a political or opinion orientation was triggered, according to RSF, after Prime Minister Ali Mohammed Mujawar and other government officials accused the press on January 17 of "jeopardizing the country's national interest" and "inciting secession."

### Solidarity and resistance

To combat this wave of blockages, 28 representatives of the news and opinion websites came together under the auspices of YemenPortal.net in a meeting on Tuesday. In the meeting the websites condemned the blockage and asked President Saleh to intervene. In the final official statement of the assembly, the participants also denounced "violations that were and are still being committed against online news websites in the form of blockage, threats and other acts that contradict the democratic orientation of the country."

Furthermore, they also agreed to approve and support an initiative by YemenPortal.net named 'Combating Website Blocking Initiative', through which the search engine will deliberately place the full material of blocked websites on its pages. Concerning the initiative, Al-Saaqaf noted that "this action is a sort of resistance that will be carried out only if the government continues to insist on blocking any Yemeni web pages from access by visitors in Yemen. By exposing all the blocked material to any visitor to YemenPortal.net or its alternative links, we hope to demonstrate that in this era, blocking access to information is not only wrong, but it is impossible to sustain and is ultimately a waste of time and energy."

The bold step was viewed by one official, whose name is kept anonymous to avoid repercussions, as a 'threat', hinting to the possibility that it could constitute a risk to Al-Saaqaf and his search engine. "I'm fine with taking a risk if that is what it takes to ensure that visitors are able to access material hidden from them by the authorities. The people in Yemen need to know stories from both angles, and that is a fundamental right that the government should not take away from them," Al-Saaqaf said.

### Online journalists want a role

The assembly on Tuesday focused on the need to have a more prominent role for online journalists. A four-member committee was formed to work on a mechanism to establish a unit in the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate YJS dedicated solely to online journalism. Nabil Al-Sufi of newsyemen.net, Ms. Nabila Al-Hakimi of alhadath-yemen.net, Hassan Al-Zaidi of yemenpost.net, and Isam Al-Sufyani of almotamar.net will be working with the YJS to establish this unit and to allow membership for online journalists so they could be on par with their colleagues working in printed and broadcast media.

Yemen Times Staff

SANA'A, Jan. 23 — The World Bank presented its 2008 World Development Report on Wednesday, which featured plans for more investment in the agriculture sector of Yemen's economy.

This year's world development report and subsequent presentation focused on agriculture's role in relieving poverty. It explained that though 75 percent of the world's poor live in agriculturally-based developing countries, only 4 percent of international aid goes to agriculture.

On a national level, 84 percent of Yemen's citizens are impoverished rural dwellers, and 52 percent of rural households in Yemen live by subsistence farming, meaning they grow only enough food for their own consumption, according to the report.

Alain de Janvry of the University of California at Berkeley, a co-author of the report, outlined the steps Yemen can take to relieve pervasive rural poverty.



52 percent of rural households in Yemen live by subsistence farming. Picture: Qat fields in Qaren village, Amran governorate.

"Yemen is both an agriculturally-based country and a transforming country," said de Janvry. "Growth in agriculture is more effective for poverty reduction than growth that originates from other methods."

However, most of the report's suggestions, such as the immediate recom-

mencement of the long-stalled Doha trade talks and redirecting more money from the budget towards the agricultural industry, would rely heavily on the Yemeni government's initiatives and could take years before affecting any change.

De Janvry also warned that unless

agriculture becomes a higher priority for the Yemeni government and international aid donors, the poverty rate will not only fail to meet the Millennium Development Goals set by the United Nations, it would also increase enormously.

Mustapha Rouis, the World Bank's country manager for Yemen, praised the World Bank-supported (and government-implemented) rainwater farming aid system that is already in place, but said that the World Bank should do more to help increase investments in Yemen's agriculture industry.

The presentation was attended by the Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, the Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation and many World Bank employees. This was the first time in 25 years that the World Bank's world development report focused on agriculture, and Yemen hosted the first in a series of similar presentations scheduled to take place in other countries, including Morocco, Tunisia and Iran.

## Yemenis protest Israeli blockade of Gaza

Yemen Times Staff

SANA'A, Jan. 23 — Thousands of Yemenis marched in the streets of Sana'a Tuesday and Wednesday to protest Israel's blockade of the Gaza Strip.

Protesters chanted slogans condemning Israel's policy of terrorism, killing, compulsory eviction, establishing settlements and making Jerusalem Jewish.

In a statement, the Popular Committee to Back the Palestinian People called on the U.N. Security Council, the European Union, the Arab League and the Organization of the Islamic Conference to intervene quickly to stop the Israeli aggression and lift the blockade of Gaza.

The committee further called on Egypt to employ every means of pressure to end the blockade, reopen the Rafah border crossing and offer all types of support to the Palestinian people.

Additionally, the group's statement called on all Palestinian factions, namely Hamas and Fatah, to overcome their differences and stand united in the face of such Israeli aggression.

The Sana'a protests were held following the Yemeni government's request for an emergency Arab summit to discuss the situation. On Jan. 22, President Ali

Abdullah Saleh asked Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to hold an emergency summit.

Tuesday's protest brought together university students and hundreds of Yemeni women who gathered at Al-Saba'een Square in Sana'a before heading to the United Nations Development Program premises in Sana'a, demanding international intervention to stop Israel's aggression.

The women raised signs condemning Islamic ignorance toward the Palestinian cause, further expressing their anger at the situation by burning an Israeli flag. They submitted a letter containing their requests to UNDP resident representative Flavia Pansieri, who assured them that their message would reach the U.N.

Pansieri noted that the situation in Gaza doesn't allow remaining silent or delaying support, adding that 1.5 million people there are receiving assistance from the U.N. and other aid agencies. Warning of a humanitarian disaster should the blockade continue, she stated, "We urge the U.N. to offer more assistance and support to the Palestinians."

After this, the Yemeni protestors headed to the Egyptian Embassy in Sana'a, requesting those nations that have nor-



UNDP resident representative while receiving the protesters letter.

malized relations with Israel to dismiss its ambassadors and work toward lifting the blockade of Gaza.

Abdullah Al-Aza'azi, an information officer for Sana'a University's Yemeni Teachers Board, attributed the Israeli blockade to weak Arab regimes.

He called on Yemeni authorities to cease all forms of dealing with the United States and dismiss the U.S. ambassador

to Yemen. He further requested Yemeni civil society organizations cut their relations with the U.S. Embassy until the blockade is lifted, noting that it's important for Yemenis to stand with the Palestinian resistance and continue protesting.

Israel stated yesterday that it has lifted the blockade temporarily, but only for one day.

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## In brief

## SANA'A

## Caricature exhibition

Eleven cartoon artists will participate with their drawings in a weeks exhibition at the Culture House in Sana'a starting today. Around 110 different caricature depicting political, social, and culture issues. The cartoonists belong to print media as well as freelancers.

The exhibition is a result of a training that was conducted by the Yemeni Association for Culture and Arts in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture in computer designing and technical issues of drawing cartoons.

## National Museum receives four historical pieces

Mareb governor presented the Yemeni National Museum with four historical pieces dating back to the pre-Islamic era in Yemen. The pieces were delivered to the governor by one of the citizens in Mareb. The pieces are being documented in the museum now and will be displayed soon.

Mareb security explained that there are over 14 thousand pieces still in the governorate's stores waiting to be released to a national museum to be constructed by the Germans in the governorate.

## Program for protecting archaeological sites to be launched

Culture Ministry is currently working to prepare a plan aims at raising the awareness of society in the protection of archaeological sites.

Minister of Culture Muhammad Abu Bakr al-Maflahi confirmed that the ministry would make serious efforts in the field of protecting archaeological sites from tampering and looting.

Speaking to Saba, al-Maflahi noted also that the protection of the archaeological sites is responsibility of the official bodies and citizens.

## ADEN

## Yemeni media history exhibition concludes

An exhibition on the history of media was organized at Aden University in coordination with Al-Adhwa, AL-Thawra, and 14 Oct papers over three days. The exhibition included four sections: print media, photography, governorates, and Aden University sections. The exhibition depicted the role of media in independence and advocating for the Yemeni unity.

## 10 million dollars worth stamp burned

A Yemeni stamps collector has realized that in his rage against media in Norway and Sweden that had republished the Danish cartoons; he had burned stamps worth millions of dollars. Salem Nasir from Aden had burned more than five thousand stamps issued in Norway and Sweden of which is the Treskilling Yellow Swedish stamp. The "Treskilling" Yellow is a misprint from Sweden from the year 1857; the 3 skilling in its original colour was green, while the 8 skilling was a yellow stamp. Only a single 3 skilling yellow stamp has ever been found during the 150 years that Swedish stamps have been in existence. The "Treskilling" Yellow is today the world's most valuable stamp, a record recognized by Guinness World Records. It is valued at a minimum of \$3.5 million.

## MAREB

## Student councils' work shop

Middle East Partnership Initiative organized a two day workshop in Majzar district in Mareb governorate on student councils. The training targets 32 school masters and specialized teachers in order to educate them about students' councils activities and how to nurture talented youth.

## Police arrest suspects involved in tourists' assassination

By: Adel Al-Khawlan

HADRAMOUT — Jan. 22 — Police arrested four people found guilty of carrying out Friday's terrorist attack that killed two Belgian female tourists and their Yemeni driver and left three others injured in the Do'an area of Hadramout governorate, in eastern Yemen, security sources told media on Tuesday.

The same source confirmed that security authorities caught two of the terrorists who opened fire on the European tourists on Friday, but he refused to say where the perpetrators were captured, promising that more details on the story will be released later on.

Another Yemeni security source was quoted to the official Yemeni media Agency Saba as saying the police launched an arrest campaign over the past three days, cracking down on suspects, believed to have connections with terrorist organizations responsible for such violent acts, until it identified the real perpetrators. According to the source, four of the extremists are believed to have launched the attack.

However, the Defense Ministry website 26september.net reported that the security authorities also seized the Toyota truck, which the terrorists used to attack the tourist convoy.

"A group of people suspected of involvement in the Do'an terrorist attack was arrested, and the number of group members doesn't exceed 10," said Hadramout Governor Taha Hajer, as quoted by the Yemen News Agency, Saba. Hajer clarified that the concerned security authorities are still investigating the suspects in the search for evidence to see whether or not they have connections with the incident, while confirming that a military campaign will continue to crack down on any other escaped vehicles.

The incident, involved four vehicles that were transporting 15 Belgian tourists, four Yemeni drivers and two guides, all of whom were leaving Sayoun city for Wadi Do'an. The convoy was touring the historic city of Hajarain when unidentified gunmen aboard a Toyota pick-up truck in the Ghar Al-Sudan area fired live ammunition at the convoy. Two European women and their Yemeni driver were killed, and three others including a Belgian tourist, were injured, according to local sources, who told the story to 26september.net. The injured Yemeni driver later died as a result of his wounds.

Additionally, the terrorists selected an area where cars are usually incapable of high speeds because of rough terrain. The terrorists parked their pickup at one of the many speed

bumps in the area, opening the truck's hood to give oncoming cars the impression that their vehicle had broken down.

This set-up allowed the shooters to fire easily into the slow-moving vehicles hired by the tourists.

The gunmen selected the time of Friday Prayer to attack the European tourists, which coincided with the anniversary of Ashura Day, a solemn holiday marked by Shia Muslims throughout the world.

There were no other people in the area when the terrorist operation was carried out.

The Tourism Ministry announced on Saturday, one day following the terrorist attack, that the tourism situation is normal across the country.

The Tourism Ministry said in a press release that the Belgian tourists subjected to the terror attack were taken back to Belgium via Frankfurt by Lufthansa and that healthcare was also given to the injured, under the supervision of the Health Ministry.

Interior Minister Rashad Al-Alimi stressed the necessity of expanding the scope of coordination and cooperation between both the interior and tourism ministries, in order to activate and improve the tourism industry in Yemen. This news came during the annual conference for senior security officials on Jan. 19 to 21, at the

Sana'a-based Police Officers Club.

Entitled "Updating Management, Improving Performance of Security Authorities, and Enhancing Relations with the Society," the conference discussed many subjects related to the security situation in Yemen and its direct influence on the local tourism.

The event was attended by Vice President Abdurabbo Mansour Hadi, who declared that "targeting the European tourist convoy last Friday is a criminal act contravening the Islamic and national values." Hadi said he is confident that the security authorities will be able to capture all the terrorists and bring them to justice.

"Terrorism is a global phenomenon. It has no homeland, it has no borders and it has no religion while terrorists never feel ashamed of what they do," said Yemen's Vice President, add his proper name here.

"The situation necessitates that joint efforts must be expended by the government and society to exterminate a criminal phenomenon that turned to be a fierce foe to our religion and nation."

Policemen must be more capable to discover the crime before it occurs, while the tools and means used by the interior ministry and its bureaus in the different governorates must be developed as criminals continue developing their means for committing crimes,

according to Hadi.

The government offered its concern and all possible facilities to visitors, pointing out that the Yemeni people and all political and civil society organizations condemned this latest terror attack.

Yemeni officials said the attackers were believed to be from a group of Al Qaeda fighters hiding in the valley. But officials in Belgium did not confirm any Al Qaeda links to the attack. "There were about 15 people in the tourist group in Hadramout province, including the driver and guides," said an official quoted by the Reuters news agency

"The region is known for its Islamist extremism, but we have no indication that Al Qaeda or any other extremist group was involved," said a Belgian government spokesman, adding that the area also had "tribal problems."

Tourists often travel through the Wadi Do'an en route to Shibam, a historic town of mud-brick houses, some as many as nine stories high.

An Interior Ministry official, quoted anonymously by the Associated Press, said that Yemeni authorities had received email and telephone threats of imminent attacks over the past two days. The official said Al Qaeda militants were pushing for the release of jailed comrades.

## Yemen is a growing market for used tires

By: Almigdad Dahesh Mojalli

SANA'A, Jan. 20 — A growing market for used tires is developing in Yemen and this is cause for concern because driving on used tires is considered the primary cause of vehicular accidents in Yemen. According to the most recent government statistics, there were 10,439 car accidents in Yemen in 2007, claiming 2,892 lives.

According to tire and repair shop owner Fuad Ali, "Based on my experience, used tires are sold and used more than new ones. I think this is because most people are poor and prefer buying the cheaper tires."

According to him, the price differ-

ence can be as much as YR 13,000. "We sell new tires for between YR 20,000 and YR 23,000, whereas we sell used ones for YR 6,000 to YR 8,000."

Most used tires enter Yemen via illegal import, as Abu Al-Hassan Al-Nihari, manager of quality administration in Standardization and Measurement Authority, explains, "We ban the import of used tires because they're unsafe both to the environment as well as people. Therefore, we monitor the market and confiscate any quantities found."

There are two ways to obtain used tires: import them from Dubai or get them from large companies, embassies and the rich. As Ali explains, "There's

a company that imports used tires from Dubai and then distributes them to tire exchange shops here. We also get such tires from embassies and rich people, who change their tires while they're still useful.

They sell them to us for a little money and then we sell them to our customers, thereby reaping the benefits."

Saleh Ahmed, an employee with the General Traffic Administration, notes that used tires have a flat or "bald" sur-

face, whereas they should be deeply ridged; thus, when the driver attempts to brake, the car either doesn't stop or it slides off the road, causing an accident. He adds that tires must have some specifications, such as regarding their thickness, which differs from one tire to another. For example, the tread of tires for large trucks must be between 30-40 millimeters, while those for other cars must be between 20-25 millimeters.

4U

Before you buy tires, check out the tread:

Large trucks: New tread must be 30-40 mm.  
Ordinary cars: New tread must be 20-25 mm.

## Workshop: Income-generating projects may help reduce child trafficking

By: Yemen Times Staff

HAIJA, Jan. 22 — A workshop on child trafficking was organized Sunday in Hajja, one of the Yemeni governorates that suffer the most from the social problem due to high poverty and illiteracy rates. Attended by local officials and non-governmental organizations concerned with children's development, the workshop came up with a list of possible solutions to eradicate the phenomenon, believed to have a negative impact on the future of Yemen's children.

"Needy families, known for their willingness to let their young children be smuggled into Saudi Arabia to improve their own livelihood, should be assisted by income-generating projects to help them support themselves to help curb the rampant phenomenon of child trafficking in Yemen," recommended workshop participants.

Raising awareness about the risks related to child trafficking by carrying the messages to schools and mosques was a further recommendation suggested by the workshop, which was organized by Alternatives to Combat Child Labor through Education and Sustainable Services (ACCESS) MENA, a non-governmental organization affiliated with the Islah Social Charitable Association.

The symposium also focused on diagnosing the phenomenon, putting proposals for treatment, and coordinating with neighboring countries like Saudi Arabia to combat the phenomenon.

Dr. Jamal Al-Hadi, Director of the ACCESS MENA Project, said in a statement that the workshop discussed three papers on effective mechanisms to fight child trafficking.

According to Al-Hadi, the first paper

discussed the phenomenon of child trafficking through facts and figures, while the second one, presented by Hajja Deputy Governor Jamal Al-Aqel, shed light on the long term negative consequences of the phenomenon unless immediate action is taken to stop it. It also recommended that the government and civil society organizations should work jointly to combat child trafficking. The third paper, presented by Al-Hadi, concentrated on the efforts and achievements of the project and its sought-after objectives.

Five districts, local council members, representatives from ministry of education, and principals of the nine project-targeted schools participated in the workshop.

Authorities have thwarted trafficking attempts of as many as 23 children to the bordering state of Saudi Arabia since the beginning of this year, Marebpress.net quoted official sources as saying on Monday. The children, aged between 8 and 15 years, were taken to a Yemeni center in Haradh at the Saudi border for temporary care before being returned to their respective families.

"Last week we returned one kid from Hajjah, seven from Hodeidah, one from Al Beidha, three from Taiz, two from Sa'ada, and two from Al Mahwit," Mohammad Ali Al-Rae, head of the Planning and Stats Unit at Hajja Security Department, told media outlets the same day.

About seven more children were taken to the Haradh center earlier this month after traffickers' attempts to smuggle them to Saudi Arabia were foiled.

Yemeni children from poverty-stricken families either try individually or with help from smugglers to enter Saudi Arabia for work or to beg.



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Envelopes will be opened at 11:00 am on Tuesday, March 11, 2008 in the corporation headquarter.

For more detail please visit our website: [www.ygcrtv.com](http://www.ygcrtv.com), or send email to [info@ygcrtv.com](mailto:info@ygcrtv.com)

WHAT IT MEANS...

What it means is an analytical feature of Yemen Times, in which Yemeni topics are discussed and analyzed by Yemeni and international experts. Contributions and comments are welcomed, they could be sent to the feature's coordinator; Dr. Abdullah Al-Faqih (dralfaqih@yahoo.com).

# Effects of global climate changes on the ecosystem and agriculture

By: Dr. Adel Al-Weshali

Climate is the average of weather conditions for long periods of not less than 30 years. It depends upon temperature, absolute and relative humidity, atmospheric pressure, precipitation rates and wind speed and direction. Simply, climate determines the ecosystem and agro-economic activities for a specific area. The responsibility of dramatic changes in global climate conditions rests upon humans, especially after the industrial revolution. Over the last 100 years, the massive deforestation and excessive burning of fossil fuels for energy needs has resulted in enormous amounts of carbon dioxide (CO2) emitted into the atmosphere. The increase of CO2 in the atmosphere caused the 'greenhouse effect' marked with annual temperature rises. As a consequence of the CO2 concentration reaching 385 parts per million (ppm), our planet temperatures increased 0.74o C in the last 100 years. If the CO2 concentration continues to increase at its present rate of 3 ppm, average global temperatures will rise by 0.7o C in the next 30 years, and could increase by as much as 6.4o C by the year 2100. This could put tens of millions of people at risk of flooding and landslides driven by projected increases in

rainfall intensity, rising sea levels and river currents affected by rapidly melting glaciers and ice, especially during spring. Effect of climate change on agriculture and the ecosystem is global, and Yemen, as well as other countries, will be influenced by one or more of the following:  
 - earlier spring seasons, causing plants to bloom earlier  
 - migration changes of birds and many species  
 - change in rain patterns and intensity with high variability on horizontal vision level  
 - plant migrations toward cooler and more humid areas  
 - farmer difficulties in planting and cultivating crops  
 - regions affected by higher temperatures and greater precipitation, likely to result in the spread of agricultural pests and diseases. In brief, scientists estimate an overall decrease in agricultural productivity (600 million people facing malnutrition), and severe water shortages in the arid and semi-arid land areas in southern Africa, the Middle East and southern Europe (1.8 billion people facing water shortage by 2080). These major losses in productivity (25% by 2060) and changes in critical ecological systems will lead to higher worldwide food prices as food and water supplies diminish.

In addition, there will be a displacement of up to 332 million people in coastal and low-lying areas through flooding and tropical storm activity. Over 70 million Bangladeshis, 22 million Vietnamese, and six million Egyptians could be affected by global warming-related flooding. Eliminating the dangerous effects of climate change on agriculture and the ecosystem is linked with adapting to changes in climate conditions:  
 - Reforming the agricultural map using available water resources, considering changes in rain patterns and season timings  
 - Selecting crops which don't require much water and are highly resistant to diseases  
 - Approving an integrated water resources management policy, especially in elevated regions  
 - Increasing productivity quantity and quality by applying modern irrigation techniques and introducing mechanization into all cultivation processes  
 - Improving harvesting, storing, food technology and marketing processes  
 The total annual amount of carbon dioxide emitted into the atmosphere is estimated at 24,215,376 thousand metric tons. The amount of CO2 Yemen produces is estimated at 14,158 thousand metric tons, divided as follows:

- 48% from transportation
  - 20% from electricity and heat production
  - 20% from residences
  - 7% from manufacturing and construction
  - 5% from other energy industries
- The main goal of any environmental policy must reduce the annual amount of CO2 emitted. Scientists and responsible public and private establishments and organizations must work together on the following:  
 - Prevent the burning of agriculture and garbage, and develop a recycling program for waste  
 - Conserve greenery and restrict deforestation  
 - Require industries to limit CO2 output  
 - Use renewable energy resources such as wind and solar energy  
 - Control CO2 produced by transportation vehicles and improve traffic systems  
 - Increase community awareness about environmentally-friendly lifestyles  
 - Prevent armed conflicts and wars that destroy nature and produce CO2 and other deadly gases  
 Within the actual concentration of carbon dioxide (385ppm) in the atmosphere, any process could succeed in reducing the annual temperature increases. However, if CO2 concentration levels reach 450 ppm, it will

be the point of no return, where global warming and all its dramatic effects will be out of control.  
 Dr. Adel Al-Weshali is Assistant Professor - Faculty of Agriculture, Sana'a University. He could be reached at drweshali@yahoo.com

## Erratum

The biographical information for the last issue's "What It Means" writer, Dr. Khaleel Al-Odeiny, was omitted by mistake. Holding a doctorate in Agricultural Economics from Cairo University, Al-Odeiny has taught at Sana'a University since 2004 and is a consultant to the Yemeni Parliament's Water and Environment Committee. Over the past four years, he has consulted on a variety of issues relating to his area of expertise for the Yemeni Irrigation Development Project, the National Population Council, the World Bank and GTZ, among others.

## Their News

### Germany and Yemen celebrate 30 years of cooperation on archaeological projects

Since 1978, Germany and Yemen have jointly conducted archaeological and restoration projects which have allowed to preserve some of Yemen's most valuable ancient sites, such as the pre-Islamic temple Arsh Bilqis in Marib and the Almaqah sanctuary in Sirwah. To highlight this longstanding and highly successful cooperation, the President of the German Archaeological Institute, Prof. Hermann Parzinger, pays Yemen a visit from 18 to 21 January 2008. During his stay, he will visit some of the ongoing excavation works and meet up with representatives from the General Organization of Antiquities and Museums and the National Museum of Sana'a.

The German-Yemeni cooperation in the archaeological field folds into the wide-ranging cultural cooperation and the developmental efforts Germany has been undertaking jointly with Yemen since the beginning of bilateral relations in the late 1960s.

The excavation and preservation of ancient monuments in Yemen does not only serve scientific purposes. It also largely contributes to promoting the image of Yemen as an ancient nation of rich culture and great variety, thus attracting tourists from all over the world and stimulating Yemen's economy.

In order to explain the background and the details of the German-Yemeni cooperation in the area of archaeology and restoration, the German Ambassador to Yemen, Michael Klor-Berchtold, Prof. Parzinger and Dr. Iris Gerlach, Director of the German Archaeological Institute Sana'a, will host a Press conference at the Institute's premises\* on Monday, 21 January 2008, 16.00 h.

### Special announcement from the national council

Applications Now Being Accepted For The National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations'

Malone Fellow Study Visit to Yemen The National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations is pleased to offer, through the Joseph J. Malone Fellowship in Arab and Islamic Studies, a study visit to Yemen April 18 - 29, 2008, with (a required) pre-departure orientation in Washington, D.C. on April 17 - 18. This special opportunity will provide participants a privileged first hand exposure to one of the Arab and Islamic world's most fascinating countries, one whose society has retained its customs and traditions whilst, for the past decade and a half, demonstrating one of

the most dynamic and diverse systems of popular multi-party participation in the country's politics to be found anywhere in the developing world's 140 nations.

The National Council is currently accepting applications to participate in this study visit.

American professionals in academia, government, business and educational non-profit organizations are invited to apply.

This Malone Fellow Study Visit to Yemen will provide participants an educational experience that few Americans and other Westerners have had. The visit is choreographed to provide participants an unparalleled exposure to one of the most stunningly beautiful of any of the dozen Arab countries to which the National Council has been organizing and escorting delegations of American leaders for the past quarter century. This will be the Council's 20th study visit to Yemen.

### RJ agreement for leasing 2 Boeing 787 Dreamliner

An agreement between RJ and CIT Aerospace International, one of the largest aerospace financing and leasing companies, was signed for the operational lease of two Boeing 787s Dreamliner aircraft. RJ's President/CEO Samer Majali and Damon J. D'Agostino, senior vice president and chief sales officer at CIT, signed the contract. Naser Lozi, the chairman of RJ's board of directors, was also present.

The agreement includes leasing the two B787s for 12 years from the date of their assimilation in the fleet, in September 2012 and January 2013, to operate on the long-haul routes in North America and the Far East. Leasing the two aircraft comes in line with the airline's strategy of modernizing its long-range fleet by introducing 12 newly manufactured B787s Dreamliner; four of which RJ contracted to purchase directly from Boeing and which will be delivered in 2013 and 2014. Eight other aircraft from renowned leasing companies will enter service through operational lease.

Recently, RJ contracted with International Lease Finance Corporation (ILFC) to lease two B787s, to be delivered by the end of 2010 and the beginning of 2011, and it will soon sign a contract with the Low-Cost Aircraft Leasing (LCAL) company to lease another three aircraft of the same type.

Royal Jordanian's fleet currently consists of 26 aircraft; 23 are for passenger transportation, two for air freighting and one airliner, operated by Royal Wings, is dedicated for charter flights.

During this year, six modern and newly manufactured airplanes will join the fleet: two Embraer 175s, two Airbus A319s and two Airbus A321s. Two of the latter model currently operative in the fleet will be phased out.

### IBA Middle East Office opens in DIFC

The International Bar Association (IBA), in partnership with the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC), announces the opening of its Middle East Office in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The IBA, headquartered in London, England, has opened the new office as part of its global strategy of expanding its network of international offices to serve regions more fully and broaden contact with its members.

Fernando Pombo, IBA President, in Dubai for the opening, said, 'It is important to me that the IBA is accessible and geographically close to its members. The physical presence of an IBA office in the Middle East will enable us to better respond to the needs of our members there. We recently hosted the Islamic Finance in the Middle East conference in Dubai and, in time, will develop and deliver other tailored programmes like this which specifically address issues unique to the region.'

The IBA Middle East Office is based at the heart of the Middle East's business and financial community in the DIFC, the world's fastest growing international financial centre.

Nasser Al Shaali, CEO, DIFC Authority says, 'We are committed to offering a hub of business excellence and the establishment of the IBA within the DIFC is in line with this strategy. The IBA is a world leading organisation and I am certain that legal practices within the DIFC and the rest of the region will see real benefits. Beyond the individual legal practices the IBA will play a significant role in developing the region's legal framework with its invaluable knowledge of international best practice.'

Faten Hani, CEO, DIFC Centre of Excellence says, 'The fact that the IBA is setting up an office within the DIFC is testament that the region has grown into a major financial centre and a unique jurisdiction. This is a major endorsement of the significance of legal practices within the Middle East and will be invaluable to the sector's growth in the region. The DIFC Centre of Excellence has attracted a number of high profile organisations within the professional services industry. The IBA is a welcome addition and truly strengthens our offering as a world

class centre for education.'

Mark Ellis, IBA Executive Director comments, 'The opening of the Middle East office represents the culmination of several years of research and planning. It also represents a major investment by the IBA in the Middle East. It is essential for the IBA, as the global voice of the legal profession, to be engaged with regional developments around the globe. The new IBA Middle East Office in the prominent location of Dubai provides the IBA with the excel-

lent advantage of being in close proximity to the leaders of the regional business community throughout the Middle East.

This will be of enormous benefit to the IBA in delivering programmes throughout the region with greater clarity and understanding.'

The IBA will hold its annual conference in Dubai in 2011. This will be the first time in the Association's history that the IBA Annual Conference will be held in the Middle East.



### EMBASSY OF INDIA SANA'A REPUBLIC DAY 2008

The Embassy of India, Sana'a cordially invites all Indian nationals in the Republic of Yemen along with their families, to join in the celebrations of 59th Republic Day of India on Saturday, the 26th January, 2008 at 0845 hrs. at the Embassy premises (Building No. 12, Djibouti Street, Off-Haddah Street, Sana'a).

(Cameras/Mobile Phones/bags etc. not allowed).

A leading multinational oilfield chemicals company plans to recruit Yemeni nationals ambitious to work as chemical engineer at various oilfields throughout Yemen.

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# Cheating is a grave problem at government universities, officials say

Cheating and corruption has become normal in government universities in Yemen, whereas they should be places creating and shaping the character of honest, sincere, hardworking men and women with clear consciences to serve their country. A report by Hamed Thabet. The reporter can be reached by [hamed\\_thabit@hotmail.com](mailto:hamed_thabit@hotmail.com).

Many students at government universities – even at Sana'a University – pass exams by cheating and using different tricks, quite frequently graduating with high marks. Additionally, anyone may cheat at Sana'a University without facing any problems, especially women.

## Supervisors are facilitators

According to Hamid Al-Madhaji, director of admissions and registration, "Exam halls are small and overcrowded, with as many as 50 to 60 students, which helps students cheat easily. Most students prefer to sit in the back of class in order to cheat more freely and easily. Additionally, many exam proctors who

aren't university staff are insincere and dishonest, so they help students cheat."

He adds, "Students bribe proctors with money or sometimes a bag of qat in order to let them cheat and this works because their salaries are low and insufficient. Very often, there are only two or three proctors for more than 50 students, which makes monitoring difficult."

According to Al-Madhaji, some citizens register to oversee university exams because they need extra cash, but really do so because they have friends or relatives studying there. In this case, they are just there to facilitate the cheating process.

One anonymous proctor who used to oversee exams at Sana'a University's Faculty of Commerce every semester maintains, "As long as there's no scan-

dal, I think it's fine to let students cheat on their exams. I think many professors put difficult questions on their exams so students will fail, so I must help them by allowing them to cheat so they'll pass."

Some students even threaten proctors, telling them they'll be in trouble or be beaten if they don't allow cheating. One former proctor who now has stopped supervising exams admits, "Many students from powerful tribes are dangerous, threatening, 'If you don't let us cheat, you'll be in danger!' Thus, I had no choice but to let them cheat."

## Methods

Students use various tricks and means to cheat. As Al-Madhaji notes, "Women are really good at this, using the speaker on their mobile phone to ask their friends outside the class to give them the answers they need. No one notices this because their faces are covered."

A source at Sana'a University indicates, "Every semester, exam proctors in the Faculty of Commerce catch 25 to 30 young women cheating with their phones. Undoubtedly, many haven't been caught yet because some proctors don't do their job well and thus, allow this to happen."

One such anonymous senior at Sana'a University's Faculty of Commerce says with satisfaction, "I always enter exams with my mobile phone while my friend waits outside with the book. Then, in a low voice, I ask her the questions and she gives me the right answers. Many girls regularly do the same and no one can catch us. Only a few get caught because they are nervous or talk too loudly."

She continues, "Sometimes I – and other girls as well – enter the exam room with the mobile phone and then wait an hour or two until the other students – particularly the smart ones – finish and leave. Then, my friend who is outside

takes the exam question sheet from them with their answers written on it and calls us with the correct ones."

Another trick involves female juniors and seniors taking exams for freshmen by giving the exam supervisor their freshman friend's identity card.

According to Al-Madhaji, "We know many young women take exams for their friends, but we can't say anything because they are veiled. In Yemeni society, veiled women can't be forced to show their face, so young women are exploiting this weakness to their advantage." Because there's no serious scrutiny before exams, both male and female students alike sometimes gain admittance to exam halls with forged university identity cards or those belonging to their friends or relatives in order to take exams for them by attaching their real photo to the card, despite the fact that the card bears a different name.

Al-Madhaji notes, "So far this year, I've seized eight students at the Faculty of Commerce with forged identity cards. The university still is investigating to learn how they obtained them and who helped them."

Because they are locals hired from outside the university, exam proctors aren't qualified for such a task and even if they do realize that an identity card is for someone else, they are content to keep quiet for as little as YR 500. Very few proctors actually are honest and willing to hand over such students to officials to handle the problem.

During exams, some students write their answers on the exam question sheet itself [Yemeni universities allow students to keep their test sheets rather than turning them in upon completion of the exam] under the pretext that they want to review the answers they gave after the exam; however, the truth is that they then give their answers to their friends, sometimes with the help of the exam proctor,



A few students get high grads with out cheating in exams.

YT PHOTO

who will act as a courier, if paid some money.

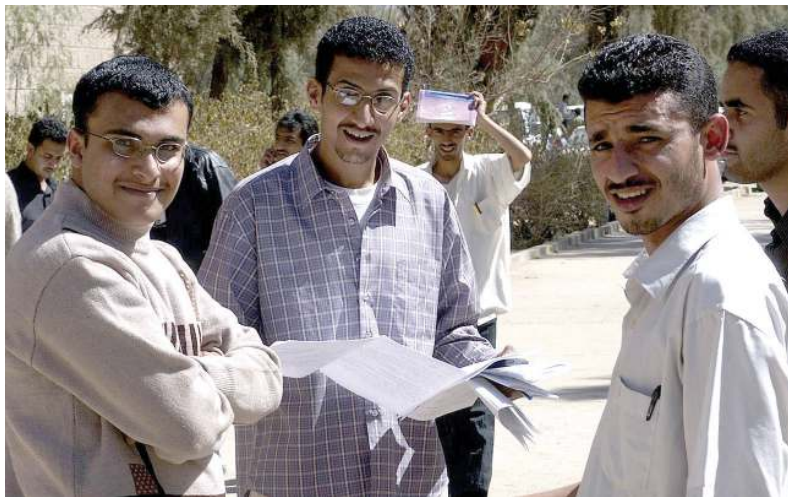
Writing on rulers and small papers or "cheat sheets" – called barashim in Arabic – also is normal in exams, while another method of cheating involves students writing answers on their desks or chairs. As one student maintains, "There's no law or system in the universities, so you can do whatever you want because it's too crowded. Because the desks aren't checked, before an exam, I write on it answers to questions I expect to be on the exam. Even if a proctor does see it and ask, 'What's this?' a very simple reply is, 'It's not mine. Maybe other students before me wrote it.'"

A graduate of Sana'a University's Faculty of Arts describes, "I used to bring some money with me to exams. Before it commenced, I'd go to the proctor and convince him or her to let me cheat by giving him or her some money, like YR 300 to YR 500. Most of the time, it worked, but some proctors were so rude and impudent that they couldn't be bribed!"

When asked why they accept money from students to allow them to cheat, one exam proctor replied, "Here at the university, they expect us to work without good pay and they don't pay us on time. I'm a poor man with three children, so without good pay and with rising costs, I think it's ok to take money from students to let them cheat. I don't consider it a bribe, but rather as a way of helping my fellow brothers and sisters."

Expressing concern about this grave situation, one Sana'a University official comments, "We're looking forward to resolving this problem by providing more and larger exam halls, in addition to hiring trustworthy exam proctors to monitor students."

However, he notes, "Many programs and plans remain on paper for now. Due to shortfalls in the university's budget, only a few have been carried out because all can't be done at the same time. It's only a matter of time and then things will be fine," he observes, adding that, "One step toward wiping out corruption is providing good pay."



A group of students discussing their exam questions.

YT PHOTO

# Construction in Yemen and sustainable development: Are they sustainable?

Sustainable development refers to fulfilling human needs through simultaneous socio-economic and technological progress and conservation of the earth's natural systems. Sustainable world progress depends upon continued economic, social, cultural and technological progress. The construction industry together with those construction material production industries supporting it are significant contributors to both the local and the global economy's current unsustainable development path and major exploiters of local and global natural resources. Therefore, as indicated by the United Nations "Agenda 21," the industry's development isn't a local issue, but has become an international one.

The Agenda 21 for Sustainable Construction in Developing Countries urges introducing sustainable construction development into the developing world for two main reasons: First, the developing world still is under construction and every minute means that, in all likelihood, constructing a building, road or dam won't support sustainable development principles. Second, pressures on resources in these countries means they can't afford to make mistakes and must ensure that what's being constructed now will be sustainable economically.

Sustainable construction is seen as a way for the building industry to achieve sustainable development and is described by the European Union as the set of processes by which a profitable and competitive industry delivers built assets (building structures, supporting infrastructure and their immediate surroundings), which:

- Improve quality of life and offer customer satisfaction
- Offer flexibility catering to user changes in the future
- Provide and support desirable natural and social environments
- Maximize efficient resource usage while minimizing waste
- Minimize energy consumption throughout production and a building's life cycle

The construction industry's key contribution to economic sustainability can be seen in:

- Ensuring financial affordability for



By: Dr. Basel Sultan

the intended beneficiaries

- Ensuring cost reduction by improving efficiency
- Ensuring sustained and efficient usage and reduction of resources and materials
- Ensuring reduced energy and raw materials input
- Ensuring sustained employment opportunities through materials production and distribution

Most of the abovementioned issues are lacking in most developing nations' construction industries, including Yemen, which historically has established a unique heritage of traditional construction and urban environment. Up until a few years ago, traditional Yemeni buildings successfully sustained and survived virtually unchanged over the centuries.

Yemenis efficiently utilized only locally-available materials and resources to create such buildings, which are well adjusted to the hardships of that country's varied climatic regions.

However, the low productivity regarding such traditional buildings and Yemen's urgent need for infrastructure and housing projects, along with the emerging trend toward modernization, has caused an ongoing and hasty shift from the traditional to the modern and modern/traditional building types.

Such modern buildings mostly depend on inefficiently implemented imported technologies and materials and, as previously pointed out, excessive construction waste associated with the construction activities of these modern/traditional buildings.

What have increased the industry's problems are poor and inadequate architectural and structural designs not in accord with local needs or priorities nor

adapting to local conditions and resources. Practically, less costly modern buildings typically are achieved by lowering quality, thereby creating less durable, less attractive and less sustainable buildings and constructed environments.

## Traditional Yemeni construction and materials

Traditional Yemeni construction is characterized by using local materials and implementing indigenous methods and techniques. The merits of this traditional model in the construction industry are many, with their designs meeting the needs of the environment without violating it. In mountainous areas, homes built of stone and brick or mud walls with thicknesses of 50 cm. and over afford excellent thermal insulation qualities, whereas the traditional materials for traditional buildings in Yemen's hot and humid coastal areas are sun-dried or burnt clay and mud bricks.

## Traditional Yemeni buildings in mountainous areas.

Traditional walling materials and buildings of clay and mud bricks currently aren't in wide use in most parts of Yemen and their construction has decreased – not only in urban areas but in rural areas as well – thus indicating the greater desirability of cement buildings, lack of interest by designers and clients and public ignorance concerning local materials.

Other reasons are that mud homes are considered unattractive, subject to water penetration, unsound and may not be structurally durable if not well constructed. Furthermore, limited quantities, extremely poor quality and high costs hinder the widespread use of local materials.

## Traditional Yemeni buildings may not be structurally durable.

**Modern Yemeni construction and materials**  
Modern construction refers to those buildings recently constructed in Yemen, mostly in cities and towns. Construction in these urban areas frequently is done using modern techniques, mainly characterized by a reinforced concrete structural frame, while exterior walls are constructed of cement blocks or local stones simulating the traditional style in a type of blended

modern/traditional.

In mountainous areas, buildings designed and constructed using modern techniques, wherein exterior walls are made of only cement blocks and typically plastered inside and out with cement plaster, are unsuitable for Yemen's climatic conditions. Additionally, their design ignores regional environmental conditions. Such reinforced concrete buildings with concrete block exterior walls provide insufficient thermal inertia; thus, climatic protections are inadequate and comfort is minimal because they are warm during the day and cold at night, thus requiring artificial heating. Moreover, stresses caused by extreme temperature differences rapidly deteriorate such structures' construction, as well as their appearance.

Modern buildings of the same design, i.e., those with cement block exterior walls, that are constructed in Yemen's hot and humid coastal climate offer very little thermal comfort. They are hot during the day and uncomfortably warm at night, so artificial cooling is required continuously. Furthermore, concrete reinforcement and plaster quickly disintegrate in the humidity and salinity of such climate's air, hence, continuous essential maintenance is costly.

## Cement plaster disintegration of modern buildings in Yemen's coastal areas.

However, external stone wall cladding added to the modern reinforced concrete frame's structure, despite being over-designed and over-constructed, and hence, excessively expensive and unaffordable, nevertheless afford a comfortable indoor climate both day and night without need of artificial heating or cooling. Long-term savings in energy, maintenance and a comfortable indoor living environment can outweigh the initially high cost of stone walls.

## Modern/traditional buildings and excessive use of materials.

**Modern/traditional buildings are rigid toward future changes and recycling.**  
**Assessment**  
Yemen has a long tradition of construction and materials that can have more sustainable character and better suited to local conditions than that introduced by imported technologies. But due to the low

construction productivity, stability and high cost in the traditional buildings; together with the urgent need for infrastructures and housing projects, it was necessary to use modern practices and materials, but this was done in a hasty and chaotic way, creating inefficient and wasteful industry, and led to the over reliance on high energy materials. In addition what has increased the problem is the incapability of the construction industry neither to control nor to recognize the faults within the modern construction process and activities. In assessing the local construction and material industries of Yemen, the main factors that have generated the current inefficient and unsustainable building and design practices, in the modern/traditional buildings, can be suggested as the unclear and chaotic construction and design practices. The addition of unnecessary structural elements with the absent of supervision has led to the inefficient utilization and excessive waste of high energy structural materials such as steel and Portland cement. The situation is persistent due to the absence of local standards, specifications and Lack of construction regulations more-over due to the lack of studies to evaluate the necessary domestic requirements for the main structural materials such as cement and steel, and ways to lessen or substitute their use.

The unreliable and untrustworthy professional services and assistance, in the design and construction practices, together with the inefficient and corrupted authority control over inadequate design and construction activities, and the non-transparent and costly

process for obtaining permissions; has all increased informal activities. The widespread drift to exclude professional services and the reliance on informal or self-help has only led to implementing costly over-designed practices, especially in the structural elements. Moreover, in an attempt to reduce cost has caused a general tendency to use low quality and less durable finishing works.

There are general inefficiency and randomness in the allocation of local resources, e.g. inefficient production, distribution and utilization of stones; which has caused needless high increase in energy consumption, in the extraction, trans-

portation and the on-site stone cutting and craftsmen activities, together, with the non-existence of reuse mechanism, and cost reduction approaches.

In view of the above difficulties, and with the broad absence of clear future vision and lack of knowledge to how the industry should be, it will not be likely to apprehend sustainable technologies and sustainable development requirements. It can be difficult to achieve sustainable construction through efficient and affordable techniques. Unless the local industry, with its traditional heritage, realise the different ways of defining and meeting this goal at a local level, thus actions have to grow from local initiatives, making use of local strengths and addressing local barriers. Actions that can help in achieving Sustainable Construction development are by Initially unravel the problems associated with the current industry; Increase awareness of the industry to the new issues and requirements of sustainable construction and designs. Also the education syllabus and the media should increase the perception and awareness of engineers so they can achieve cost reduction through efficiency improvements and material inputs moreover achieve energy efficient designs. The authorities should strengthen their control through legal practices and appropriate construction practices, clear building technologies, standards and regulations. This can start off through human development, which is needed to control and to monitor any required development. All the participants in the local industry (government, private sector and academic) should set up enhanced construction methods and designs that can effectively make use of low energy local materials. Additionally, the industry should essentially and effectively develop appropriate building models that embrace economic, social, cultural, and technological sustainable progress. Finally and most importantly the industry should establish 'Local Agenda' and local sustainable strategies and policies and ways in implementing them.

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## First London Yemen film festival

By: Desmond Korros  
For Yemen Times

“A tremendous success” the words used to describe The First London Yemen Film Festival by visitors to the screenings at the School of Oriental and African Studies, part of the University of London. This Festival was the brainchild of a remarkable British woman, Leila Ingrams, who has worked enthusiastically and tirelessly for Yemen – her work includes writing articles and books, putting on exhibitions about Yemen for British universities and exhibiting Yemeni children's work around the UK; added to this, charitable work concerning Yemen for different charities

I met Leila Ingrams for the first time briefly on the first night, but was told that in a very modest manner, she had written “Actually this Festival would not have happened if it had not have been for the Film Directors' generous permission to show their films, the magnificent support from the London Middle East Institute, School of Oriental and African Studies, but characteristically, apparently, had not mentioned the work she had put into it!

The School of Oriental and African Studies, London Middle East Institute, University of London hosted the films



in the Khalili Lecture Theatre. The Festival ran for three nights in December to well-packed audiences. Professor Mohamed Said, lecturer at SOAS, introduced the Festival and the Yemeni Ambassador to Britain, Mr. Mohamed Taha Mustapha, who opened this First Festival of films on Yemen. The films of the French film Director, Pascal Privet, and the well-known French Ethno-musicologist, Jean Lambert, illustrated the vital part that music plays in Yemeni life. The song of Sana'a, a unique musical form, was recognised by UNESCO in 2003. The films of the Italian, Caterina

Borelli, on the unique architecture of Hadhramaut and the restoration, using local materials, local knowledge and local people, of Madrasah al-Amiriyya in Rada were unique. Added to this, was the knowledge that the famous Iraqi archaeologist, Dr. Selma Al Radi who presented the latter film, has just received the AGHA KHAN AWARD for her work in Yemen. The well-known Yemeni Film Directors, Khadija Al Salami and Bader Ben Hirsi showed their expertise in film-making -

Khadija's A Stranger in Her Own City and Bader's feature film, A New Day in Old Sana'a – the first-ever Yemeni feature film. New Film Directors to many are Sami Saif and Sophia Ambo with their tear-jerking film Family. All the films deserve praise and the directors have won awards from around the world. I thought them all of a special standard. Each night the audience applauded the films and the work of the Directors. I noticed that Leila Ingrams was surrounded by questioners as to how to get hold of the films and I gather people were asking ‘When will the next Festival be?’ Much of the audience seemed to know nothing or very little about Yemen. This Festival, an exceptional feat, has really put Yemen on the map. Ingrams was approached by SOAS to display photographs and artefacts on Yemen in the foyer of the Khalili Theatre and has been asked to continue the display until the end of February – what a compliment! Absolutely wrongly, Yemen is not portrayed by the West in a good light, but Leila's Festival has created a positive foundation on which to build the Truth about Yemen and its people – its importance in antiquity and in the present times.

The first thing I wanted to do after attending these films was buy a ticket to Sana'a, meet the Yemeni people, hear their music, eat their food and see their beautiful country.

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- Review inventory controls and do periodic test counts.
- Ensure that assets in the field are accounted for and safeguarded.
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- Review and process invoices relating to field services.
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2. Taking and publishing English and Arabic meeting notes.
3. Manage the Company Correspondence Database.
4. Attend various meetings for the purpose of ensuring clear and accurate delivery of information to and from the company.

#### Required Qualifications

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2. Must have 5 - 10 years of (Interpreter / Translator) experience within a business environment.
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- Must be local resident for the position applied for.

Please indicate which city you are applying for (Abyan/Al-Dhala).

Interested candidates who possess the above requirements are invited to send their CVs to the below E-mail address:

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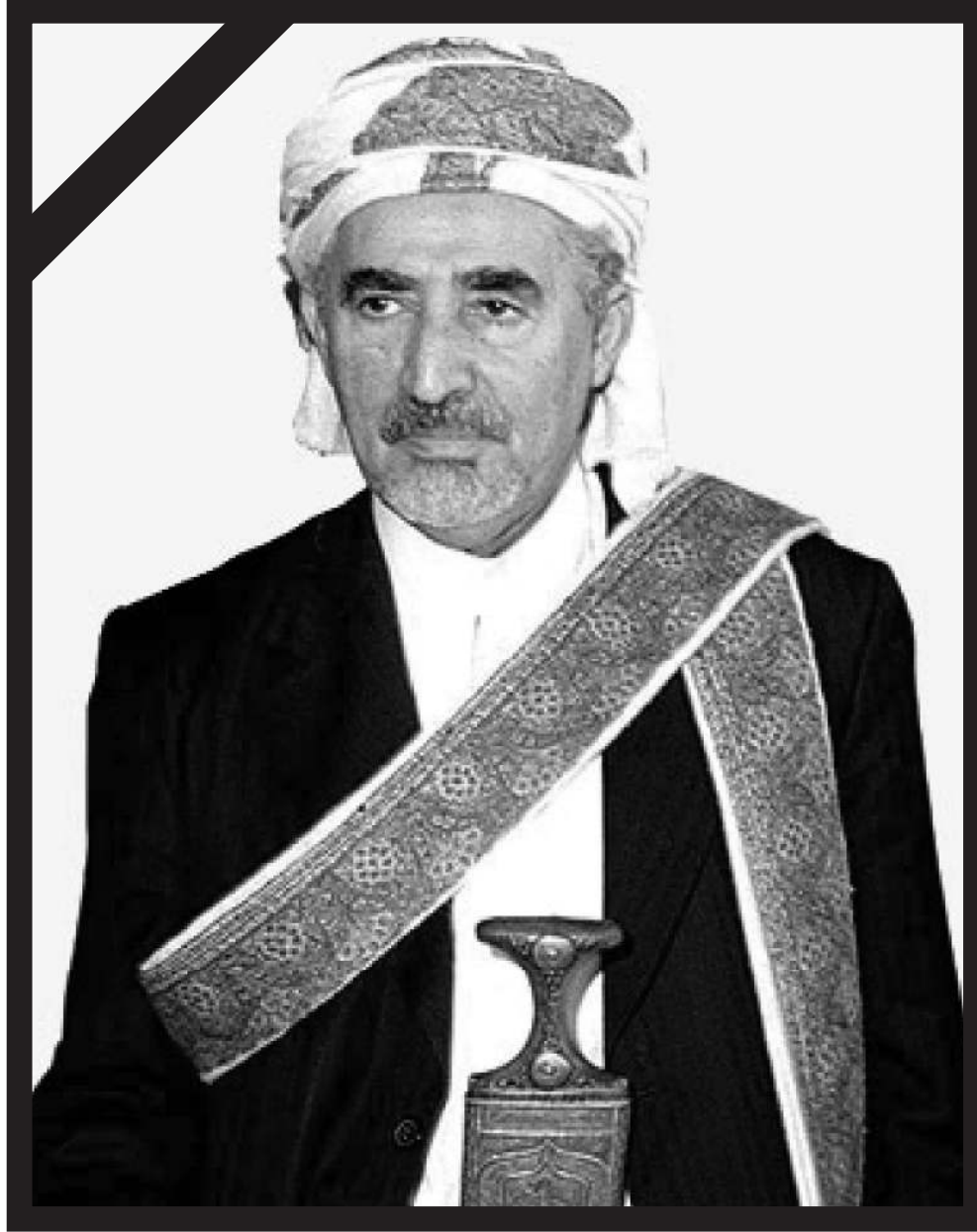
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## شكر على التعزية



### Sheikh Sadiq bin Abdullah bin Hussein Al-Ahmar, his brothers and Al-Ahmar relatives

immensely thank all Yemeni people, diplomats and representatives of regional and international organizations who profusely condoled them in the demise of the National Figure, late Sheikh Abdullah bin Hussein Al-Ahmar, may Allah have mercy upon him and dwell his soul in the garden of abode.

**Sheikh Sadiq and his relatives appreciate** the presented condolences either in presence, participation, funeral procession, telegrams or publishing condolences in the newspapers.

We all belong to Allah, and to Him we shall return

يتقدم

الشيخ / صادق بن عبدالله بن حسين الأحمر  
وإخوانه وكافة آل الأحمر

بجزيل الشكر والتقدير لكل أبناء الشعب  
اليمني الوفي وأعضاء السلك الدبلوماسي  
وممثلي المنظمات الدولية والإقليمية الذين  
واسوهم وعزوهم في فقيد الأمة الكبير:

الشيخ / عبدالله بن حسين الأحمر  
يرحمه الله

سواء بالحضور والمشاركة في التشييع والعزاء  
أو عبر البرقيات والرسائل والاتصالات  
الهاتفية أو النشر في الصحف  
سائلين الله سبحانه أن لا يريهم مكروهاً في

عزيز

إنا لله وإنا إليه راجعون

# Government needs to be aware of suspicious activities

By: Abdulfatah Al-Batool

As Yemen's political climate is experiencing sharp tension in the relation between ruling and opposition parties, plus an unprecedented tension between political partners, the National Democratic Institute, or so called (NDI) is operating actively throughout the country's political arena. The American organization moves between premises of political parties and civil community organizations until the extent of making its country Director Peter Dimitroff and other staff members attend political sessions.

The institute is pondered upon as one of the arms of U.S. Intelligence and exercises political activities in the Arab countries on behalf and in favor of the U.S. Intelligence while its presence in the region represents occupation but with a new abolition, according to political analysts and observers.

Amid the frequent movements of NDI in the capital city of Sana'a, the Institute's country director never thinks about quitting his activities after

expanding differences and disputes between political parties. Moreover, he turned to instigate women in political parties and NGOs.

At a news conference recently organized by Yemen Female Media Forum, the man expressed his sorrow over the great loss suffered by female candidates who so far stood in the country's previous parliamentary and local council elections because of what he called "treason exercised by parties" that neither remain committed to nor show respect for the code of ethics with regard to their support for women. He is instigating women in Yemen in order to retaliate against these parties and punish them for cheating them in the elections, according to his words.

The matter compelled Ms. Sameera Rajab, member of Bahrain's Shoura Council, who is also a member of the Arab National Conference, to question the state's position and reaction to the U.S. organization's movements and the statements made by its country director. The woman also questioned why Yemen's NGOs and parties don't oppose the NDI activities, nor did they send out a note to the concerned agen-

cies in the government to take a quick action against movements of such a suspicious organization.

She also raised numerous questions about legitimacy of the presence of such foreign organizations in the Yemeni territory, confirming that such a fact doesn't exist in Bahrain because their laws don't allow any suspicious activities. "Such organizations have to be fought since they are the other face of the American and western occupation today in the region via their suggestions for improving democracy and reform", the leading women reacted.

Regarding Yemen's parties and NGOs strong desire to meet and sit together with NDI staff in Sana'a, Rajab attributed the matter on the atmosphere of frustration on the part of these parties and organizations, mainly as the government makes no attempt to contain demands of political organizations and parties, nor did it try to get closer to the needs of its society and citizens.

According to the woman, illiteracy and oppression of culture make people have strong faith that such foreign organizations may provide them with

guarantees, stressing the necessity of Yemen taking quick action to end the role of such organizations in its territory.

On her part, Ms. Jawhara Hamoud, Yemeni Socialist Party Assistant Secretary General for Women Affairs, commented on NDI Country Director's statements saying, "Dimitroff may target other parties because such statements don't apply to YSP and this party is far away from the man's suggestions and remarks."

She indicated that YSP is an intimate friend for women and supports them lavishly, and that it has no cultural problem toward women's issues. Instead, under this party's rule in South Yemen, women witnessed the best stages of prosperity, attained high social prestige and held senior positions in the government.

Hamoud affirmed that her party assigned 30 percent of its elected staff and election management membership for women, adding that it is discussing the subject of women's candidacy in the different Yemeni governorates.

Source: Akhbar Al-Yaum Daily

## COMMON SENSE

For all practical purposes:

### The Yemeni constitution is suspended

"How can he say anything like that?" asked Yunis as he plucked 4 leaves of qat folded them neatly at the middle seam and smuggled them deep into his right cheek. "How can he say what?" asked Ramzi, who had just come in and completed his round of hand salutes to the other participants in the qat session, which is one of the most popular in Sana'a.

"How can Mahmoud say that the Constitution of Yemen has become, for all practical purposes, suspended" elaborated Yunis.

"You know that the Revolution of the 26th of September and the 14th of October and all those glory days when the Patriots of the Nationalist movement, north and South of Jabal (Mount) Mukeiras had sacrificed their lives just so they and their children could now enjoy Government by constitutional rule and national consensus, which all came to end despotic rule and whimsical rule by fiat" explained Ramzi to Yunis and the other qat session guests.

Mahmoud was not going to be bought by what his friend has just said: "Oh come on Ramzi! I hope you are not going to repeat that monotonous rhetoric one hears daily on the public radio and television stations of our blessed Government, which has the greatest amount of media jive that any propaganda machine could come up with. We have had more constitutions and more laws than any patriot could ever ask for. Yet, look at us now and compare it to how we were without any constitutions whatsoever. When one talks to anyone who lived in Yemen over fifty years ago, they depict a land of paradise with the country abundant with the bounty of the Lord. Yemen was actually giving aid to its neighbors, who were then hardly able to subsist on the produce of the land. They talk of an equitable and fair judicial system, which enforces judgments, even if they ruled against the Imam. They explain that Yemen's environment was the cleanest in the world and not just in the Middle East. They tell us that the military brass, would be made to change to civilian attire just before sunset, if they were to mingle with the people when they are off duty. So many things do they reveal to us that it seems, as one of the leaders of the Revolution once said in his memoirs, that someone made a mistake in resorting to chaotic rule and falling to the dictates of foreign leaders, who promised a bed of roses, but forgot to remind us that even roses can be very prickly at times."

"What is really worrying you, Mahmoud?" asked Ramzi.

All these paradoxes render one speechless: "All the rights that the constitution of Yemen guarantees have been thrown overboard either due to the clumsy and whimsical dictates of some of the top brass in the military, or of the hypocritical religious establishment that can't come to a clear definition of the kind of Islam that is right for Yemen, and resorts to fomenting bloodshed on the pretext that this serves the interests of Moslems in Chechnya, although they are killing Belgians instead of Russians, or by the inability of the Government to recognize that the Government cannot insist that we have democratic rule, when it allows for the connection to the internet, but turns around and closes all internet blogs or portals that communicate any public dissatisfaction at what the Government is doing. We have a Government that insists that it can use all that military hardware and software, which it supposedly bought for the protection of the country from foreign invasions, against its own citizens in Sa'ada, Aden or Mukalla. We have a Government that has an elaborate anti corruption campaign that is geared not to send anyone to jail although corrupt officials have been bleeding the Treasury for well over thirty years. Mind you, the latter can be found on all sectors of government from the top down. We have a Government that screams about the outage of electricity in Gaza, but has not been able to rectify a serious power shortage that has existed in the country since the Early 1990s. We have a Parliament that penalizes the laws that it passes by modifying them or killing them altogether, rather than press the Government for their enforcement. We have a constitution that guarantees that all Yemenis will get a proper education, but we have 55% of the school age population out of schools, while those who manage to go through the educational system graduate still not being able to write a simple letter. So my friends, for all practical purposes, consider the Constitution either suspended or shelved. The logic there is that at least it will be able to protect the wood of the cabinet in which it is shelved, which is a far cry from protecting the rights of the Yemeni people."

Hassan Al-Haifi has been a Yemeni political economist and journalist for more than 20 years.



By: Hassan Al-Haifi

# Unified will and decision

By: Ali Mohsen Hamid

It is unusual for a writer to give an essay to someone else as a gift, but a writer should gift a book he authored for a respected friend. So, I will go beyond the usual norm and gift this essay to Dr. Mohammed Abdulmalik Al-Mutawakel, Hamoud Ubad, Minister of Youth and Sports and Mohammed Al-Jayefi, appointed minister at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who met in Al-Mutawakel's house, along with me, in 1986 for discussing the 'National Covenant' and then presented their remarks and comments on the covenant to the General People Congress. At that time, neither negligence nor rust infected the covenant, but later on, unity had the covenant infected with flabbiness since it was drawing its value, not from its strong provisions, but rather from a Sana'a's pervasive feeling of a competitive regime in Aden.

Following establishment of the National Unity, apathy was noticed nationwide. For further information, syndicates and unions were active prior to the unity, but after the unity, they turned to be nationalized and in line with the top decision maker in the country. This essay concentrates much on what has been contained in the "National Covenant Document" and attempts to clarify the obviously remarkable contradictions between the covenant and essays about this matter.

#### Unity of decision and the covenant:

Fortunately, this essay attempts to explain the wider purpose behind the most recent initiative made by President Saleh to amend the constitution, move toward a more presidential system and give absolute powers to President of the Republic. In the meantime, the reader should have noted that Mr. President doesn't pay closer attention to the move toward a presidential system in his addresses. Instead, he excessively talks about the local governance and its advantages and nothing more. Ultimately, nobody needs to care about Mr. President's addresses or essays since most of them

are employed as a measure to evaluate public reactions before the implementation of his intents.

To verify that GPC is progressing on the wrong course, I remind the respected readership that the introduction of the National Covenant, issued in 1982, disclosed the following facts:

The first fact is that the Yemeni people did not make their ancient civilization except under unity of land, people and governance. Despite its being the GPC's ideology, the National Covenant doesn't contain anything about the unified decision and will. For the covenant's introduction, unity of governance means that Yemen should be governed by a politically unified system, but not a totalitarian regime. Being one of the major facts that correlates between unity and democracy, such a fact indicates that "Reunification could not have been established until the birth of a governance system based on shoura (consultations) and popular participation for all." If this is our past, why do we forget about it? Why did not remain adherent to the Shoura and citizens' right to exercise politics.

At this point, it has been made clear to us that the common denominators between the unified will and decision, on the one hand, and the Shoura and people's involvement in politics, on the other, are missing. The first fact implies an effective participation in taking decisions and drawing policies, as well as examining them well before implementation, through the engagement of effective political forces and civil community organizations.

The second of the facts means nothing more than further consultations and deliberations between decisions makers. Had the covenant's party (GPC) remained committed to this fact, its officials would have understood that unity must be of a sustainable democratic nature. In this way, the covenant would have embodied ambitions of Yemeni people, who strove for a long time for the sake of replacing the totalitarian regime by a shoura-based system, as advocated by

the Yemeni generation that revolted against the Imamate in 1948. We are entitled to blame the present generation that put cotton on their ears and shut up their mouths, thus demonstrating no reaction to the deteriorating situation of their country.

The third fact of the covenant confirmed that "bind fanaticism produces nothing more than evil, and any recurrent attempts by a fanatic group to exterminate others or oppress them have ultimately failed throughout the different stages of Yemen's history. According to this fact, any partial or comprehensive stability for Yemen under an oppressive regime misleading and deceiving its citizens is impossible to last for a longer period of time. This kind of stability often ends up with a catastrophe while dialogue is the only means for creating better living standards for all the Yemeni citizens without an exception.

This fact ascertains that fanaticism is evil, attempts to exterminate others are doomed to fail and stability through fools and deception is impossible to last for a longer distance of time while the civilized dialogue, on the other hand, is the shortest way to achieving all people's interests.

All these are facts and not fabrications, and history is full of lessons and examples. Every noble issue has its own wicked elements, who shift it from the right path. Also, such elements, available anytime and anywhere, turn to be a hammer for destruction. Yemen has proved to be a home to such wicked elements, who never care about peace, stability, progress, or justice.

Wherever and whenever these wicked elements exist, interests have been and still are the source of conflicts, as well as just and unjust wars in any country. But, it is unbearable for a particular group of people to construct palaces or double their wealth at the expense of others' lives or via illegal earnings. In its chapter No. three, the covenant reiterated what was advocated by some Quranic verses that prohibited earning and making money via illegal means in order for livelihood sources not to be

suspicious.

When the covenant discusses people's interests, it means the economically, politically and culturally coexisting interests and prevents influential persons from demonstrating dominance over the interests of simple citizens. Interests proved to be responsible for the war in South Sudan while the year 1987 disclosed that a fair distribution of wealth and senior government posts is the workable solution to such a kind of conflicts. Dr. Hassan Al-Turabi, who was at that time serving as Sudan's Foreign Minister, did not listen to such expressions. During an interview with Events Magazine, he preferred separation of South Sudan to quitting enforcement of legislations in this part of the Arab country. Due to this policy, Sudan paid an expensive price in a war that continued up for 17 years, thus destroying the country's infrastructure and causing splits and fragmentation among its people.

Source: Al-Wasat Weekly.



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# Fleeing Africa, seeking refuge

By: Jessica Steinberg,  
The Media Line

In a dilapidated corner of south Tel Aviv, at the back of a crumbling building fenced by a yard full of scaffolding, live 150 African men seeking refuge. Their eyes are yellow from a lack of fresh fruit and vegetables, and they lean from months of difficult travel and living conditions. Yet they are clean, neatly dressed and well-groomed, despite sharing a single bathroom, and sleeping in one crowded, stench-filled room.

They are also grateful to the Israeli government for granting them protection from whatever it is they are escaping.

"The situation here is very good," says 'Abdallah Muhammad in broken English, a refugee from the Ivory Coast, who has been in Israel for ten days. "I am very grateful."

There are currently some 6,000 African refugees seeking sanctuary in Israel, escaping primarily from Eritrea, Sudan, and the Ivory Coast. After arriving in small numbers for many years, the figures rose in recent months reaching as many as 50 a day, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Last spring, some 1,500 Sudanese arrived, fleeing the fighting in Darfur.

Most are running from what UNHCR terms 'crisis countries', which currently includes Eritrea, Sudan, and the Ivory Coast. But some are seeking jobs and a better life eco-

nomic. They usually head to Egypt first, but because of the difficult conditions there for refugees, and given its proximity to the Israeli border, they are making their way in increasing numbers to the latest destination of choice, Israel.

Once they reach Israel, usually by paying Bedouin smugglers to bring them into the Negev desert, they travel to Tel Aviv to find other refugees, and, hopefully, a new way of life. Sometimes they are waylaid by the police in Beersheva and sent to Ketziot Prison in the south.

"In Israel, they have the hope of making a living wage, being given fair procedure and police who treat them fairly," says Jean-Marc Liling, an attorney and UNHCR Protection Officer. "Even the people in Ketziot Prison have been freed. The 600 Darfur refugees are receiving full refugee status and the Eritreans are allowed to work. The Israeli population is responding."

At the same time, it was only recently that Israel began addressing its refugee situation. People fleeing crisis countries made their way to Israel, found one another and perhaps some work, but not much else. According to Yohannes Lemma Bayu, director of the African Refugee Development Center (ARDC), there simply wasn't a system.

Bayu, 35, has firsthand knowledge of the refugee experience. After fleeing his Ethiopian hometown of Addis Abba in 1998, Bayu made his way to Israel, hoping for asylum and a new life. Unlike many refugees, Bayu came

with a little money in his pocket, which he used to pay for a Tel Aviv hotel, before making his way to Jerusalem and the UNHCR office. However, what he found was that Israel lacked a process for handling refugees.

"Israel is part of the world and refugees are part of the world reality. But there are no laws here for dealing with refugees, they just don't exist," says Bayu. "Refugees need help, they need information."

In August 2001, Bayu and other refugees formed the African Refugee Development Center and staged a 23-day hunger strike outside the Knesset, Israel's parliament, demanding refugee rights. It was there he met activists from several organizations, including Physicians for Human Rights, the Tel Aviv University Refugee Rights legal clinic, and the hotline for foreign workers.

"They were just people looking to help," describes Bayu. "We hadn't experienced that before, because our situation is too messy for most people."

Liling at UNHCR succinctly describes just how 'messy' the African refugee situation has become, both for the refugees and Israel. The Israeli government cannot send Sudanese refugees back to their home country because Sudan does not recognize Israel; if it were known they had been in Israel, there is a chance they would be killed by their government. Israel cannot send Sudanese refugees back to Egypt either because if they are black and Christian, as many of them are, there is a lack of trust in Egypt's abili-

ty to protect them. International human-rights organizations regularly condemn Cairo's treatment of such people.

Eritreans are newcomers on the refugee scene and less is known about the problems in their country. Meanwhile, the situation in the Ivory Coast has improved and the U.N. indicates that most Liberians can return home. This said, many can and do appeal to the UNHCR for visa extensions to stay in Israel.

Yet part of the problem in Israel is that no government body is handling the refugees. There are ad hoc solutions, but "we're missing the opportunity to create an official system for accepting refugees," says Anat Ben-Dor, an attorney with the Tel Aviv University Refugee Rights legal clinic. "At the moment, the UNHCR is trying to do this work, and does it, but Israel must learn to take over."

For now, there is no track to permanent status for refugees in Israel. They can acquire temporary resident status, which is reviewed every two to three years and allows them to work, receive free health care, and vote in municipal elections. But, what Israel lacks is a refugee law; instead it relies on the UNHCR process that is based on the 1950 law on the status of refugees.

Refugees apply to the UNHCR, and the agency presents each case to the National Status Granting Body, a committee of Israel's Ministry of Interior that determines whether a refugee gets a visa or not.

"The perception is that we're responsible, but we always tell

refugees that we don't make the final decision, the Israeli government has to sign the papers," explains Liling. "In some countries the government makes the decision, in other countries, it's the UN. Israel is a mixed system."

Israel needs the system to "mature," says Ben-Dor. Since the refugee situation in Israel changed so radically in terms of numbers, Israel joined the rest of the western world in facing an influx of refugees. "I don't think it'll end anytime soon," says Ben-Dor. "What we must do now is create a system to handle these numbers."

"We're doing very real things for them," continues Ben-Dor. "We had a long period of not dealing with the Sudanese and now the government has accepted 600 refugees and given them temporary status, which allows them to get health care."

It's a similar story for the Eritreans, many of whom were sent to do agricultural work, but have now been given work permits that allows them to find jobs and live a more independent lifestyle.

"We understand Israel's situation," says Bayu. "But panic isn't the answer either. Once people are here, how do you deal with them? Can you leave them to starve?"

Up to nine months ago, Israel had no shelters for refugees. But as numbers increased, several NGOs banded together to rent space in Tel Aviv, just to get people off the street. Their three shelters now house a total of 300 people.

The men's shelter "is a disaster, but at least it's a roof over their heads,"

says Bayu. It was the Tel Aviv municipality and an organization known as Mesila, which rented the shelters and helped collected donated mattresses and blankets. Another 60 women and children live in a second, more orderly, shelter near the bus station, where there is a well-stocked kitchen and several bathrooms. But that shelter is problematic due to the prostitutes and drug dealers in the area.

"The shelters are terrible places and we're looking for different sites," says Tel Aviv Deputy Mayor Yael Dayan, former member of parliament and daughter of renowned general, Moshe Dayan. "Everything we do is because we want to, not because it's our responsibility. It's the government's responsibility to give them support and status."

The city has matched the NIS 200,000 raised from private donors and used that money to rent and renovate the shelters. There is also the health clinic run by the local branch of Physicians for Human Rights and a mother-baby well clinic for infants and children up to six years of age. All children can be enrolled in daycare centers, kindergarten, elementary, middle school, and high schools and a local youth group has volunteered to teach Hebrew to the teenagers.

"We didn't want more foreign workers," says Dayan, noting the 40,000 foreign workers already in Tel Aviv. "But once they're here, we have a humanitarian responsibility. They need education and health and social services. In Tel Aviv no one will go hungry — even if their status isn't legal."

## Cairo & Tehran: A new affair of the heart?

By: Nick Davies-Jones with Rachelle Kliger, The Media Line

For 30 years, Egypt and Iran have been bitter enemies locked in hatred. While other battles are fought over land, religion and resources, this one has been waged, in part, over a street name. Yet, today, the two are inching toward détente, in a bid to bridge a divide wider than the Suez Canal.

Iran severed diplomatic relations with Egypt following President Anwar Sadat's signing of the Camp David peace agreement with Israel in 1979. Tensions were exacerbated the same year when Sadat welcomed the Shah of Iran following the collapse of his regime. The conflict again intensified in 1981, when an Iranian street was named after Khalid Al-Islambouli, the man who assassinated Sadat, and reached its crescendo when Cairo supported Iraq during its war with Iran.

Based upon this history, it might be surprising that the two nations even have interest sections in each other's capitals.

But over the past few months, Egypt and Iran have expressed a willingness to re-establish ties: embassies are now open in each other's capital, and officials from both countries have been shuttling back and forth.

Perhaps most significant was Iranian National Security Council chief 'Ali Larjani's December visit to Cairo. Larjani, a close aide of Iran's most powerful figure, spiritual leader 'Ali Khamanai, met high-ranking Egyptian officials including foreign minister Ahmad Abu Al-Gheit; security chief 'Umar Suleiman; Arab League Secretary-General 'Amru Mousa; and Muhammad Sayid Tantawi, the Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar.

But what has caused the two sides to move toward rapprochement? Political analyst Nader Mokhtari believes, "talking is always a positive thing. When you don't, problems occur."

### Newfound Rapprochement

Recently, Iran has been doing a lot of talking to many different countries. So it was not surprising to find someone who is optimistic. Mokhtari, enthusiastic in his assessment, says, "I think there is a future, Egypt's sourcing its future in Islam and economic ties between both countries were a great loss. They should be pursued again."

In the time since Iran's revolution, the two states have gone their separate ways politically: Egypt having become a stalwart ally of the United States and Iran emerging as one of America's most bitter foes. So before President George W. Bush climbed onto Air Force One and

flew to the Middle East for talks, a curious warming of ties between Iran and Egypt had taken place before Tehran — the Islamic Republic's capital — was buried under snow. Both parties are looking to start afresh.

Recently, Iran offered Egypt help if it decides to undertake a domestic nuclear program. Although some see a wry smile on the Iranian's face, the proposal should be considered a firm offer. It would be Tehran's first major step in establishing itself as a responsible nuclear state in the region. But could this be the ember causing the melt? Mokhtari is thinking along those lines: "Iran has the capability to help build such a place, but I'm a little skeptical about the more advanced concepts." He agrees that an Iranian move in this manner would surely upset the White house? "Enriching Uranium or developing centrifuges could be a touchy subject. But while I would say that Iran could definitely be used for construction, the matter of the technological aspects is one to wait on and see."

Mokhtari also touches upon Iran's growing stature within the region. Afghanistan has seen Iranians build roads in the west of the country, even when the Taliban were in power. It has also sat round a table with the U.S., discussing Iraq's security. Perhaps this is why many in Tehran are starting to believe that Egypt and Iran have more in common than ever before. The link is the fraternity many Iranians show to each as Muslims — even extended across borders.

A restoration of full diplomatic ties could bring significant changes to the rest of the Middle East, given that both Egypt and Iran are powerful players in the region.

Both Iran and Egypt have something to gain from such a move.

Iran could use the friendly relations to dispel fears in the Sunni Muslim world that its nuclear program poses no threat and that it is not seeking Shi'ite domination in Sunni countries. If Iran has its way, this could also help it consolidate its growing influence in the region, by joining forces with a dominant Arab power.

Egypt is an exceptional portal from which to reach out to the Sunni world, because it has good relations with many diverse and often rivaling powers in the region.

Egypt can expect an alliance with Tehran will give it the power to stop Iran's disruptive influence in the Middle East, and bring about greater stability in the region.

### The Al-Islambouli Affair

One significant sticking point preventing reconciliation between the two

countries is a street in a district of Tehran just north of the downtown area that was named in honor of Khalid Al-Islambouli. To look at the street you would be hard-pressed to think of it as a diplomatic obstacle. But while it is said that every stand-off needs visual center piece, a point with which Mokhtari agrees, center pieces do not come much larger than the four-story mural of Al-Islambouli, pictured behind bars with doves flying free. It is painted on the side of the Imam Khomeini building which houses a bank and the offices responsible for confiscating any remaining property of the Shah. Opposite the tower are the Valiassr Mosque and a local park. In a point of irony not lost on the Iranians, a road in Egypt bears the name of the Shah.

But do residents and workers in the street actually know the significance of their zip code? Asked why the street was called by its current name, a newsagent located there said, "[I have] no idea and I don't care." He, like the residents who live there, thought the road was going to be renamed. "The Basij [volunteer officers loyal to the religious leaders] and Ahmadi Nejad's government are very strong and if they don't want to change it, they won't," he said.

Further up the road, a young traffic policeman wearing a matching white poncho and rimmed leather hat helps guide motorists. He is cold, but happy to answer questions. He comes out with a carbon-copy answer to that of the newsagent, saying that he doesn't know who Al-Islambouli was, but did want to find out. Surely, he would remember if the name of the road had changed or not: "No, it hasn't happened. But I know they're going to change the street name to 'Park'. It doesn't matter. They'll change the name of every street to Imam Khomeini. If that's fine, we'll have thousands of streets named after him." In fact, the name of the street was officially changed in 2004. Political analyst Mokhtari thought the name became 'Intifada Avenue' last year, although people living and working there have little idea.

A flower-shop owner near the Egyptian's mural knows the reason for the street name and why the four-story painted mural is there, although he thinks Egyptian Al-Islambouli is actually Lebanese. Regardless, the owner is conscious of Iran's ties with other countries and believes that "if changing the name improves relations with Egypt, it should be done soon."

The 12:30 call to prayer from Valiassr Mosque drowns out the background noise of slushing car tires and engines. A mullah walks towards the mosque. Many ordinary Iranians listen intently to what the religious clerics have to say.

They are featured regularly on news broadcasts as in-studio experts or guests. Their views are shared nationally by other clerics, depending on their moderation. The mullah outside is well versed in Al-Islambouli's history, and his take on the current Iranian Egyptian moves is simple. "If change is good, then we should start relations. However, if Egypt is doing something counter-productive to Iran's interests, there's no need. We haven't had relations with that country for a long time."

### Through American Eyes

Hala Mustafa, editor of the Al-Ahram political Quarterly Democracy Review, sees the thaw in Egyptian-Iranian relations entirely through an American prism.

It is a direct result of the United States' policies in the Middle East, she says. There are more disagreements between Egypt and the U.S. than meets the eye, Mustafa believes, and this is causing no small amount of tension.

"Egypt is sometimes obliged to adopt the same line as the U.S. in public or during bilateral negotiations," she says. "But actually, its foreign policy has a very different framework than the American one."

According to Mustafa, Egypt is seeking a closer relationship with Iran, a major U.S. foe in the region, in order to differentiate itself from Washington and its policies of change and reform in the Middle East.

Dr. Osama Harb, a member of the Egyptian Shoura Council and editor of the political magazine A-Siyssa A-Dawliyya, says Egypt can use this warming of relations in order to pressure Iran into falling in line with Cairo's goal of a nuclear-weapons-free Middle East.

However, Harb is not optimistic that the two countries will be able to overcome the many obstacles in their way.

For starters, he says, the Egyptians are not happy about Iran's ambitions in exporting the Islamic revolution.

"Iran is a regional power and it has resources and ambitions, but at the same time there is a contradiction between Iran in this capacity and the other principle powers in the region, like Egypt. There is a latent and indirect competition over influence in the region."

One example of this is the diverging attitudes of the two countries towards Israel. The fact that since 1979 Egypt has had a peace agreement with the country that Iran has urged to be wiped off the map is inevitably a bone of contention.

"The relationship between Iran and Hizbullah; Iran and Syria; the influence of Iran in Lebanon; and now the relationship between Iran and Hamas —

these are a major source of problems," Harb says.

"Egyptians do not feel comfortable with these developments."

### Can the U.S. Benefit?

No doubt Washington is following these developments closely. After all, a strategic alliance between U.S.-ally Egypt, and Iran, a major American rival, can have significant implications for the future of Washington's policies in the region.

The current tension between the U.S. and Iran is focused on the latter's efforts to pressure Iran into abandoning its nuclear program. The administration has implied that it will not rule out military action against Iran.

Edgar Valesquez, a spokesman for the U.S. State Department, told The Media Line that Washington was not intervening in what it sees as Cairo's domestic affairs.

"Egypt is a sovereign state that will manage its bilateral relations and guard its national interests as it sees fit," Valesquez said. "We are confident Egypt understands the harmful role Tehran has played within the region and is taking that into account."

But would a strong Iranian-Egyptian alliance necessarily be detrimental to America's efforts to install democracy and freedom in the Middle East?

Washington might adopt a dual attitude toward any future alliance between the two countries.

Egypt wants to be a powerful broker in the Middle East and in improving its relations with Iran, Cairo could help the U.S. pressure Tehran into abandoning its nuclear program.

However, Washington is also likely to seek clarifications from Cairo regarding any cooperation in the field of nuclear energy, which Iran has offered to Egypt.

A major factor which Egypt cannot afford to ignore in this equation is its reliance on significant U.S. aid. Egypt receives some \$1.3 billion in military aid from the U.S. every year. The U.S. can, if it wishes, use this aid as a tool to influence Egypt's policies.

Robert Pelletreau, a former U.S. ambassador to Egypt, says it is unlikely the aid will be reduced or otherwise affected by Egypt's rapprochement with a U.S. foe.

"I think the assistance has a different motivation and a different basis," he says.

The large scale yearly assistance began after the Camp David Accords and the Egyptian-Israeli treaty. Pelletreau pointed to a currently high level of strategic cooperation between Cairo and Washington, with Egypt enabling the U.S. to use its territory for providing its forces in the Gulf with

logistic support.

"As long as those aspects of the relationship are not called into question, I don't think the U.S. will meddle much with its level of assistance," Pelletreau says.

It is more likely that any thaw in Egyptian-Iranian relations will be subtle rather than drastic, so as not to upset the delicate balance in American-Egyptian relations.

Harb says aid money from the U.S. is certainly in the back of the minds of those pulling the strings in Cairo.

"The [ruling] National Democratic Party depends heavily on the support of the U.S., so I don't think they can make adventures or drastic changes that will affect their relations with the States negatively."

For its part, the United States relies on Egypt to perform the role of go-between in several Middle Eastern disputes, most prominently the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which Washington wants to see resolved by the end of 2008.

A closer relationship with Iran is likely to affect the course of the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. Egypt is not only a mediator but an active player in the conflict, controlling the flow of weapons into the Gaza Strip. This has recently become a major sticking point in relations between Israel and Egypt.

"I think a relationship with Iran is something that plays into Egypt's role in Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking," Pelletreau says.

"Iran's support for Hamas is certainly one issue that Egypt will want to address with the Iranians, particularly if the Iranians are trying to send certain types of military equipment to Hamas in Gaza through Egyptian territory or the Suez Canal," he says.

But for the time being, Harb, who spends much of his time brushing elbows with Egyptian decision-makers, downplays reports of a celebratory opening of embassies.

"I think the contradictory factors in this relationship are more decisive than the friendship manifestations," he says. "You can expect an improvement here and there but it doesn't mean a strategic development."

From the comments made by those working on Teheran's Khalid Al-Islambouli Street, it appears as though many want improved relations with Egypt. The cleric's answer is one that is perhaps closest to the Iranian government's way of thinking: "Issues are resolved when they need to be and on Iranian terms. If they are not, the Islamic Republic will be more than happy to continue doing what it is doing alone. Khalid Al-Islambouli's street name is just one such example."



الجامعة اللبنانية الدولية - صنعاء  
LEBANESE INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

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Yemen - Sana'a Campus

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LIU is pleased to announce the following dates for its English placement tests. These tests are required for all applicants to all areas of the university curriculum:

- Saturday, the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February, 2008 at 09:00 (AM).
- Wednesday, the 13<sup>th</sup> of February, 2008 at 09:00 (AM).
- Saturday, the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February, 2008 at 09:00 (AM).
- Wednesday, the 5<sup>th</sup> of March, 2008 at 09:00 (AM).

For further information contact our numbers below

Al Rowaishan Square - Sana'a - Tel: 01/50 21 75  
Khor Maksar - October Area - Aden - Tel: 02/23 13 45

[www.liu.edu.lb](http://www.liu.edu.lb)

Almuthallath

## Employment Vacancy – HR Manager

### *Are you ready for the next challenge?*

A rapidly expanding international company in the oil and minerals sector, based in Sana'a, has an opportunity for an experienced HR professional with a strong generalist background.

The role, based in our Sana'a office, with regular visits to the project site, involves playing a leading role in the recruitment and management of around 350 people, to be recruited over a 2 year period for a project that is the first in its field and which features a very substantial investment. The position, working closely with the Europe based GHRM, is suitable for someone with a minimum of 8 years strong generalist HR experience, ideally gained in an Oil/Telecoms/Cement/Manufacturing environment in Yemen.

With a proven background in employee management / relationships, you will have an excellent knowledge of Yemen Labour Law and will also have experience working with western companies. You will be expected to play a leading role in developing training programs, creating appropriate remuneration structures, and managing employee relations, whilst also ensuring that all relevant Labour regulations are complied with in conjunction with the GHRM and group policies.

It is a requirement that the candidate is fluent in both Arabic and English. Yemeni nationals are particularly encouraged to apply.

For further details please submit your CV including details of your current remuneration and availability to [jsapplications@yahoo.com](mailto:jsapplications@yahoo.com).

# Port Cities Development Program Position Announcement Local Team Leader/Director

The PCDP Local Team Leader/Director will work closely with the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation to organize and manage the functions in implementing and administrating the IDA Credit and any other funding dedicated for the port Cities Development Program (Aden, Hodeidah and Mukalla) and Coordinate actions with Government ministries, local government officials and World Bank and donors teams, and to Provide guidance, technical and administrative support in the PCDP activities.

#### Duties and Responsibilities:

- Report directly to the Minister and will be responsible for overall implementation of the project and managing the staff of the Project.
- Carry out all duties required to direct project activities.
- Plan and implement project components.
- Guide and coordinate the work of all members of the project team.
- Interaction with MOPIC and line agencies at governorate level, WB, & Local Governorates/Local Councils (LCs) and other local agencies,
- Carry out procurement process and financial management under the credit agreement.
- Review all planning and programming activities to verify project activities.

#### Qualifications:

- Several years of experience (minimum of five years) in Implementing complex development Projects.
- Master of Science degree or PHD in natural resources and/or in management, economics, or relevant technical discipline.
- Professional experience is likely to be in the area of public demonstration, public policy, development economics and / or development project management.
- Good interpersonal skills and ability to motivate staff and promote team spirit in the unit.
- Strong local knowledge of relevant institutions, public sector policies and practices.
- Strong English language verbal and written skill.

Interested persons may send their applications (documents, certificates, CVs) in waxed envelopes within one week of this advertisement to the following address:  
Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation / office of the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs Minister of Planning & International Cooperation.



# Yemen's Economic Freedom: Going nowhere

The Heritage Foundation index of economic freedom has been published for 2008, it is among the best and well-researched reports to rank the economic freedoms of countries relative to each other, with reference to a ten-factor criterion, including business freedom, fiscal freedom, property rights, freedom from corruption, and other factors. The index indicated that Yemen's overall ranking has barely improved, as it had moved from 51.8 in 2006, to 53.2 in 2007, back to 52.8 in 2008, with a slight deterioration as a result of a small fallback in the monetary freedom indicator.

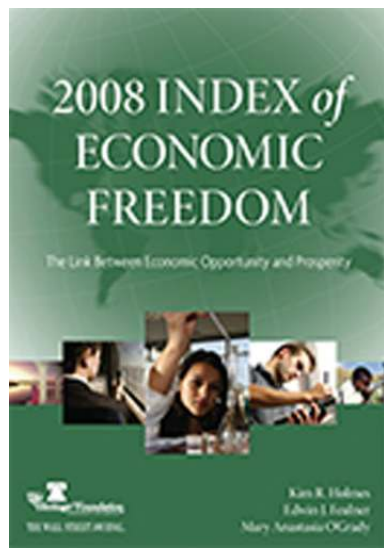
The index may reflect government commitments to reform and the improvement in business environment, including the relaxing of trade and investment restrictions and flexibility of government in dealing with business. The report states that "Yemen and Morocco made the biggest leaps forward with 3.0 percent and 4.4 percent increases, respectively. The United Arab Emirates (UAE), Tunisia, Qatar, Jordan, Libya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Israel, and Egypt also improved their economic freedom scores, marking a definite regional trend."

However, in the Middle East and North Africa region, Yemen holds the 14th out of 17th ranks, falling behind all GCC countries, but ahead of Iran, Syria and Libya, three countries which attract more foreign investments than Yemen.

## Explaining sluggish economic growth

The report states that one of the prime reasons for sluggish economic growth in the region is due to the lack of economic freedom: "The Middle East does not have any countries in the ranks of the world's 20 most free. Israel, the region's most free nation, is ranked 37 globally, Bahrain is ranked 39, and Jordan is ranked 53. Oman, Kuwait, and Tunisia are the last countries in the top 70. The lack of economic freedom reflects the region's sluggish economic growth and hints at the reason why its GDP per capita lags behind the rest of the world."

Additionally, the report also states that dependence on Oil in curbing



economic growth: "The Middle East's stunted economic growth may be due to its over-reliance on oil wealth. To determine whether this is so, we divided the region into two halves, categorizing 12 of the 17 countries as oil exporters (with such exports in excess of 10 percent of total GDP) and the other five as non-oil countries. The most oil dependent economies in the Middle East are Qatar (60 percent), Oman (49 percent), Algeria (45 percent), Saudi Arabia (43 percent), Libya (33 percent), and the UAE (32 percent)."

The report's analysis revealed that "non-oil countries have 10 percentage points more economic freedom, using a population-weighted average. They also have lower inflation and slightly better employment and income levels, although their growth rates have been insignificantly lower. Economists subscribe to a theory known as the "Dutch disease," which holds that natural resource wealth can inhibit the development of other sectors by skewing wages."

In contrast, the report concludes, resource-poor countries must give their citizens a certain amount of economic freedom in order to create a living for themselves, developing human capital in order to create value. This means that people must be invested with skills.

Oil revenue, on the other hand, comes from the ground. In most Gulf States, even the process of extracting the oil is in the hands of foreigners. It requires no investment in labor, no investment in humans, and only a marginal amount of investment in the

land. People need different freedoms to be productive, but oil does not generate the incentives needed for societies to create those freedoms."

## Fiscal Freedom

The Middle East is the absolute world leader in only one category: fiscal freedom. Fiscally, its 90.4 percent average score is well above the world average of 82.8 percent, a level reached because of the extremely low income taxes common to oil kingdoms. The region does score above the world average in other areas, however, such as monetary freedom and freedom from corruption—a result that may reflect the measures regional leaders are taking to cut back on bribery and government malfeasance.

## Yemen's Ranking

Yemen's economy is 52.8 percent free, according to our 2008 assessment, which makes it the world's 125th freest economy. Its overall score is 0.4 percentage point lower than last year, reflecting slightly worsened scores in monetary freedom and labor freedom. Yemen is ranked 14th out of 17 countries in the Middle East/North Africa region, and its overall score is lower than the regional average.

Yemen scores well in fiscal freedom and labor freedom. The top income tax is relatively low, but the corporate tax rate is more burdensome. Overall tax revenue is low as a percentage of GDP. The labor market is relatively flexible.

Yemen faces major challenges in financial freedom, monetary freedom, government size, property rights, and freedom from corruption. The regulatory process is opaque, and court rulings are subject to the demands of the government. Political interference bleeds into the financial market, which is unsophisticated, dominated by the state, and not subject to standard oversight and international regulations. Corruption is prevalent throughout the civil service. Inflation is high, although the government directly subsidizes only a few goods. State expenditures equal almost two-fifths of GDP.

## Background

Yemen, in addition to being a poor country with few natural resources, is politically unstable. President Ali Abdallah Saleh's government continues to face intermittent challenges from some of the country's often unruly tribes and Islamic radicals, who oppose economic reform and cooperation with the United States in the war against terrorism. Saleh's government has placed economic reforms on the back burner while it has waged war against Islamic extremists. In

recent years, the economy has been hurt by declining oil production, terrorist attacks, and kidnappings, which have undermined tourism and foreign investment. The government has taken some steps to combat corruption it, but it needs to do more.

## Business Freedom - 53.7%

The overall freedom to start, operate, and close a business is restrained by Yemen's regulatory environment. Starting a business takes an average of 63 days, compared to the world average of 43 days. Obtaining a business license takes less than the world average of 19 procedures and 234 days. Bankruptcy proceedings are relatively straightforward.

## Trade Freedom - 66.4%

Yemen's weighted average tariff rate was 11.8 percent in 2000. Some import bans and restrictions, import taxes, import licensing requirements, weak enforcement of intellectual property rights, inefficient customs administration, and corruption add to the cost of trade. An additional 10 percentage points is deducted from Yemen's trade freedom score to account for non-tariff barriers.

## Fiscal Freedom - 83.2%

Yemen has a low income tax rate but a burdensome corporate tax rate. The top income tax rate is 20 percent, and the top corporate tax rate is 35 percent. Other taxes include a property tax and a fuel tax. In the most recent year, overall tax revenue as a percentage of GDP was 7.4 percent.

## Freedom from Government - 58.5%

Total government expenditures, including consumption and transfer payments, are high. In the most recent year, government spending equaled 37.2 percent of GDP. Yemen depends heavily on foreign private oil companies that have production-sharing agreements with the government.

## Monetary Freedom - 62.9%

Inflation is high, averaging 18.4 percent between 2004 and 2006. Unstable prices explain most of the monetary freedom score. The government controls the prices of pharmaceuticals and petroleum products and influences prices through regulation, subsidies, and state-owned enterprises and utilities. An additional 10 percentage points is deducted from Yemen's monetary freedom score to account for policies that distort domestic prices.

## Investment Freedom - 50%

The government officially permits foreign investment in most sectors, grants equal treatment to domestic and foreign investors, and intends to turn the General Investment Authority into a one-stop shop for investors. Foreign investment in the exploration for and production of oil, gas, and minerals is subject to production-sharing agreements. Foreign investment is not permitted in the arms and explosive

materials industries, industries that could cause environmental disasters, or wholesale and retail imports. Though political unrest and civil violence are deterrents, Yemen appears to have attracted some regional investment enthusiasm and political support since its presidential election in late 2006. Foreign exchange accounts are permitted. There are no restrictions on payments and transfers, and capital transactions are subject to few restrictions. Corruption is significant.

## Financial Freedom - 30%

Yemen's financial system is small, underdeveloped, and dominated by the state. Financial regulation remains insufficient, but the government is taking some steps to improve certain regulations like capital requirements. Non-performing loans are a problem. Of the 16 commercial banks (including four Islamic banks) in October 2006, nine were private domestic banks, five were foreign banks, and two were state-owned banks. Two state-owned development banks lend to the agriculture and housing sectors. The state wholly owns the country's largest bank, the National Bank of Yemen, and owns a majority of the Yemen Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Efforts to privatize these banks have foundered. A second plan, to combine them into a single institution, has also stalled. The Embassy of Yemen reports that the state is a very small shareholder in three other private banks. Commercial lending is limited to a small circle of clients, partly because of legal inability to collect on overdue debts. The insurance sector is small, capital markets are negligible, and there is no stock market.

## Property Rights - 30%

The judiciary is subject to government pressure and corruption. Contracts are weakly enforced. Foreigners may own property, but foreign firms must operate through Yemeni agents. Protection of intellectual property rights is inadequate.

## Freedom from Corruption - 26%

Corruption is perceived as widespread. Yemen ranks 111th out of 163 countries in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index for 2006. Government officials and members of parliament are presumed to benefit from insider arrangements and embezzlement. Procurement is a regular source of corruption in the executive branch.

## Labor Freedom - 67.7%

Relatively flexible employment regulations could be further improved to enhance overall productivity growth and job creation. The non-salary cost of employing a worker is low, but dismissing a redundant employee can be burdensome. Regulations related to the number of work hours remain rigid.

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## Business in Brief

### Total to double Natural Gas production in Yemen

The newly-appointed General Manager for Total in Yemen states that the French company is planning to double its production from natural gas from block 71 in Hadhramout. He also added that the company plans on constructing a power plant to be powered with natural gas, in order to provide the people of Hadhramout with ample supply of affordable certificate.

### Sana'a Airport construction falling behind schedule

The committee to monitor the construction of the new Sana'a International Airport has stated that the pace of construction is falling behind schedule. In its meeting with the minister of transportation, the minister compelled the construction company working on the project to resubmit a revised timeline of construction, in order to ensure that the construction is completed on time as initially scheduled. The new airport will cost over US\$ 500 million.

### Korean Oil company to invest in Yemen

The Ministry of Oil, Minerals, and Natural resources is currently holding talks with Korea National Oil Corporations, in order to allow the company to invest in oil exploration activities in blocks 16 and 70 in Al-Mahara governorate.

### Yemenia transports over 1.3 million passengers in 2007

A public statement made by Yemenia Yemen Airways stated that over 1.3 million passengers were transported during 2007, with an increase of 8 percent compared to 2006. The statement also indicated that operation hours were decreased by 28 percent in order to cut back on the operating costs.

### Remittance to Yemen exceed US\$ 10 billion

World Bank report stated that remittance from Yemeni workers abroad back to Yemen during the period 2000 - 2007 has exceeded US\$ 10 billion, while the remittance from foreign workers in Yemen to abroad reached US\$ 587 million during the same period.

### WTO to facilitate Yemen's accession

Director of the WTO Pascal Lamy promised Yemen's ambassador to the U.N that the WTO will facilitate Yemen's accession to the organization as a less developed country. Lamy also stated that regional economic integration will help Yemen's economy develop further.

### Saudi Investments fall in 2007

The General Investment Authority has stated that Saudi investments in Yemen have fallen to 12 billion Riyals, in 2007, compared to 166 billion Riyals in 2006. However, the overall number of Saudi projects in 2006 was 10 projects, compared to 17 projects in 2007.

Year	Ranking	Score	Business Freedom	Trade Freedom	Fiscal Freedom	Gov't Size
2008	125	52.8	53.7	66.4	83.2	58.5
2007	128	53.2	53.5	66.4	83.2	56.2
2006	134	51.8	54.9	61.6	75.0	56.2
2000	142	44.5	55	61.0	74.8	41.9
1996	105	49.6	70	45.0	78.4	75.3

Year	Ranking	Score	Business Freedom	Trade Freedom	Fiscal Freedom	Gov't Size
2008	125	52.8	53.7	66.4	83.2	58.5
2007	128	53.2	53.5	66.4	83.2	56.2
2006	134	51.8	54.9	61.6	75.0	56.2
2000	142	44.5	55	61.0	74.8	41.9
1996	105	49.6	70	45.0	78.4	75.3

## Tadhamun Islamic bank achieves record profit in FY 2007

The Tadhamun International Islamic Bank has announced record financial results for the year 2007, which have strengthened the bank's leadership position in Yemen's banking sector. Mr. AbdulJabar Hayel Saeed Anam, chairman, stated that total income in 2007 amounted to 16,383 billion Yemeni Riyals, compared to 12,857 billion Riyals in 2006 and a growth rate of 27%. The bank also increased its finan-

cial position from 190,538 billion in 2006, to 236,115 billion Riyals in 2007 with a growth rate of 24%.

The Bank's domestic investments have increased from 76,554 billion Riyals in 2006 to 148,675 billion Riyals in 2007, with a growth rate of 94%.

Deposits have also seen a strong growth rate of 20% in 2007, reaching 190 billion Yemeni Riyals, while depositors' profits in 2007 reached 14.23% of deposits in local currency and 6% of deposits in the U.S. dollar. This is the

highest profit rate ever achieved by the bank, and the strong performance is a reflection of the growing confidence of depositors in the bank.

The Chairman of the board of directors stated that the bank had developed an ambitious plan to increase expansion in Yemen and overseas, adding that 3 new branches in Yemen will be opened in 2008, bringing the total number of branches by the end of 2008 to 24 branches in Yemen. The bank has also regional expansion plans through the

opening of new foreign offices; the bank also has several shares and significant contributions in a number of Islamic banks in Malaysia, Singapore, Bahrain, Syria, Sudan and Algeria.

Mr. Abduljabar added that the bank is working towards obtaining the best banking systems, software, in compliance to the regulations of the Central Bank of Yemen. He added that a new agreement will be signed to provide the latest global banking systems, in an effort to keep pace with global develop-

ments and modern banking in line with Islamic law.

The board chairman emphasized that the bank and its clients are proud of the successes achieved and accomplishments at the level of Islamic banking, and the overall banking market in the whole of Yemen, and that the bank's market leadership would not have been possible but for the conciliation of God Almighty and the efforts of the bank's affiliates and the confidence and the support of loyal customers.

# VACANCIES ANNOUNCEMENT



**DOVE ENERGY LIMITED**

**Position Title:** Field Plant Electrician  
**Description:** handle the day-to-day electrical of the Sharyoof wells and Facilities  
**Location:** Sharyoof (Field)  
**Deadline Date:** 4th February 2008

**Responsibilities:**

- Perform tasks and duties as directed by the Maintenance Supervisor and Site Manager.
- Handle the servicing and repair needs of the electrical equipments.
- Troubleshoot equipment malfunctions and operational problems.
- Perform preventative maintenance checks on the electrical equipments in accordance with the Sharyoof Preventative Maintenance Program.
- Monitor and maintain the electrical

**Qualifications and Experience Preferred**

- Bachelor Electrical Engineer or equivalent diploma degree
- 2-5 years work experience.
- Good oral and written skills in both English & Arabic languages
- Multi-disciplinary team work
- Excellent communication skills
- Good IT skills including Microsoft applications

**Position Title:** Field Construction Supervisor  
**Description:** Responsible for the day-to-day construction activities associated with the Sharyoof wells and facilities  
**Location:** Sharyoof (Field)  
**Deadline Date:** 4th February 2008

**Responsibilities:**

- Follow up progress ongoing projects and make sure the completion in safe manner.

Dove Energy Ltd. Yemen is an independent UK company, formed to manage worldwide oil exploration and production acreage. Dove discovered the Sharyoof Oil Field within its primary asset, Block 53 East Sarr. Dove Energy Limited invites *Yemeni Nationals only* to apply for the following positions.

- Responsible for acceptance of the construction tasks / projects, assigns work to contractors.
- Ensure all projects are planned and executed in a safe, cost effected and in a timely manner
- QA/QC Inspector to check and approve third party inspections.

**Qualifications and Experience Preferred**

- Bachelor in Civil Engineering or equivalent diploma degree
- 5 + years work experience.
- Good oral and written skills in both English & Arabic languages
- Multi-disciplinary team work
- Excellent communication skills
- Good IT skills including Microsoft applications

**Position Title:** Field Mechanic (Diesel Generator Specialist)  
**Description:** Handle the day-to-day maintenance needs of the mechanical equipment associated with the Sharyoof wells and facilities  
**Location:** Sharyoof (Field)  
**Deadline Date:** 4th February 2008

**Responsibilities:**

- Perform tasks and duties as directed by the Maintenance Supervisor.
- Maintain the mechanical equipment of the Sharyoof production facilities in a safe manner so as to minimize equipment downtime and lost production.
- Handle the servicing and repair needs of the mechanical equipment.
- Troubleshoot equipment malfunctions and operational problems.
- Perform preventative maintenance checks on the mechanical equipment in accordance with the Sharyoof Preventative Maintenance Program.

**Qualifications and Experience Preferred**

- Should be Yemeni Nationality
- Diploma in Mechanical engineer.

**Position Title:** Field Plant Operator  
**Description:** The role offers you many challenges in a highly active, multi-disciplinary team. Position will assist to operate the process facilities from well site to export pipeline.  
**Location:** Sharyoof (Field)  
**Deadline Date:** 4th February 2008

**Responsibilities:**

- Operate the Sharyoof facilities in a safe and prudent manner so as to minimize the risk to personnel, company property and the environment.
- Closely monitor all wells and facilities to ensure appropriate production levels are maintained at all times.
- Perform well and equipment checks, and record operational data as often as deemed necessary to ensure continuous running.
- Start-up and shutdown wells and equipment as necessary for servicing and repair.
- Prepare production, safety and environmental reports as required.
- Closely monitor and record all chemical, lubricant and fuel usage to ensure optimum equipment performance.

**Qualifications and Experience Preferred**

- Bachelor degree or equivalent diploma degree
- 2+ years work experience.
- Good oral and written skills in both English & Arabic languages
- Multi-disciplinary team work
- Excellent communication skills
- Good IT skills including Microsoft applications



Interested candidates are requested to submit their CVs and applications by mail to the Dove Energy, Human Resources Department, by email to: [hr@doveyemen.com](mailto:hr@doveyemen.com). (Please type the position title in the subject box) Responses will only be made to short listed candidates. Kindly do not contact the company to ask about the status of your C.V.

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Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat	1015	1345	EK962
Days	Depart Dubai	Arrive Sana'a	Flight
Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat	0710	0900	EK961



## You® View

Every month, there will be a fixed topic on which we would like to encourage Yemen Times readers to participate in. It could be an article, a short story, a poem, or even a picture. The person with the best contribution will receive a Yemen Times cap, T-Shirt or Mug. Send your contributions under the title of YOUR VIEW to: [eljabree@gmail.com](mailto:eljabree@gmail.com)

This month is about: *An experience with a nutcase*  
Have you ever encountered a crazy person and lived through a worth telling experience?

## Aseed, a Taizi delicacy

By: Minal S.

Eating fish is believed to be very healthy because it is rich in proteins, which enhances hair growth and is good for the eyesight. Additionally, it's a rich source of iodine so it prevents goiter and because it's anti-cholesterol, hearts patients eat it frequently. If you have long, beautiful eyelashes and thick eyebrows, then surely, you're a fish eater!

I'm not marketing fish or fish-related products, but I am leading up to a peculiar Yemeni specialty – aseed, which locals are very fond of eating. So what is aseed? It's a Yemeni meal cooked in a very interesting way.

Simply begin by boiling some salted water. Once it boils, gradually add white flour, stirring continually with a

wooden spatula to avoid lumps. Lower the heat just as the aseed starts to thicken. Add a bit of water and stir again, doing so until the consistency becomes soft.

Next, transfer this mixture into a bowl and make a hole in the center of it. The next step involves adding wazef (a variety of very small dried fish often eaten in Yemen) to local cheese and churning it in a mixer. This paste then is added to the hole in the center of the bowl.

This dish is fantastic when eaten with a fresh salad of garlic and spring onions. Another variation is to add soup or yogurt and water, and then putting that mixture into the center hole.

Aseed is eaten either with meat and onion or just meat alone, hulba and chicken, meat stock and bisbas (red and green pepper) or maraak and

hamedh (lamb with sauce).

This delicacy is enjoyed by one and all, but especially savored at lunchtime. Many also say it's their favorite dish during Ramadan. Additionally, some Yemeni women tickle their taste buds by eating it as a snack during their get-togethers.

Residents of Hadramout and south of Aden aren't particularly fond of aseed, but those north of Aden are crazy about it.

I became interested in aseed because it's a Taizi delicacy devoured by both rich and poor. The proverb that says, "The way to a man's heart is through his stomach," certainly is true if one witnesses how many Taizis enjoy aseed because that's what those with great taste buds eat.

So, when are you going to take the plunge and try some aseed?

## The cost of education

By: Ghaleb Hassan Al-Ahlasi  
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When she was 12, Salwa promised herself that she would complete her education and attend college, so day after day, she worked as hard as she could, studying day and night. She had planned her path and everything to be done in order to achieve it.

After doing all of that, her dream came true and she graduated from high school with very good grades. Her mother and sister did everything, encouraging her to enter college, but nothing works out entirely. Her fiancé, who was working outside the country and had a very good and high-paying job, decided he couldn't wait anymore and he wanted to get married.

"Well, ok, let's get married, but you must let me finish my education," she stipulated.

"What do you mean?" he replied smiling.

"Does it really require an explanation?"

"Well, I don't think so."

"Good, so we agree."

"No, we don't," he said politely, "I didn't wait three years for you just to wait another four."

"Who said you would have to wait? I just said..."

"I know what you said. You see, I have a job, a house and a great future, but what I need is a wife to share my life with, to make my house like heaven when I come home tired, to give me children and take care of them. What I want is a housewife, not a certificate. Do you understand me?"

"Yes," her brother said, entering the room, "but I don't think her studying will hinder your wishes."

"And education isn't just a certificate," she protested, "It's part of raising your children well and making your house a heaven."

He gave her a bright smile and said, "First of all, it's not just my children or my house – it's ours, if we agree. Your education will require four or five years, so that means it'll be six years before I have my first child. Also, instead of coming home to relax and have a good time after a long, hard day of work, I must come to..."

"What are you trying to say?" she interrupted.

"Nothing, I just want you to choose between either marrying me, living in my house and being a housewife and mother or completing your education. You have three days. I hope you'll think about it and choose wisely," and without a word, he stood and left, leaving her between two hells.

She hadn't thought of anything like this and never even imagined such a

thing could happen. Now what should she do? On one hand, she had a very nice guy with whom she would have a great and happy life. He was rich, well-mannered, well-educated and handsome.

On the other, she had her dream, for which she had been studying and working hard for 18 years. Here was her past and her future.

Unable to choose, she sought help from her mother, who said simply, "Look baby, you're old enough now and you know what will benefit you. Think wisely, consider the matter from all sides and then do what you feel is right." Her older sister had nothing to add.

"Sister," her brother said when she inquired of him, "you see, I know it's your dream – actually it's all our dream – that you finish college. I'm not telling you to stop and get married, I'm just telling you to look at both choices and think about them. Opportunity comes only once in a lifetime; if we don't take it, we'll lose it forever," and with that, he left for work.

For the first time in her life, Salwa missed her father and actually envied those girls whose fathers didn't even give them a choice, but just gave their final decision on the matter.

The three days flew by and she didn't have a decision. "Marry or education, marry or education..." She spent two hours pacing back and forth until her fiancé arrived and asked for her decision. Without thinking, she told him she chose to complete her education. Her decision shocked everyone. Then, the man who had been her fiancé sadly and very quietly left. Ten days later, he was married and had traveled to his home with his new wife.

Salwa went on to study at college for five years until she graduated, but unfortunately, her grades weren't good enough to become a lecturer at the college. Although her brother didn't mind if she restudied her last year, she knew she couldn't do any better. At age 24, she knew she must be independent.

Seven months of searching for a job ended with nothing. Wherever she went, she found 60 to 80 applicants, all with better grades and experience than her and some with an intermediary. With nowhere else to apply, she was totally desperate.

Her former fiancé's words and face came to her mind again and again as she realized what a colossal mistake she had made.

Two months later, a friend offered her a teaching job at her school, explaining, "We really need teachers. All you have to do is work as a volunteer for a year and then you'll be an official teacher, so what do you say?"

With nothing much she could say,

Salwa took the job, working as hard as she could for an entire year to earn that opportunity. However, when the time came, she was overlooked and her position given to the school manager's relative.

Another year of Salwa's youth was gone.

Ten days later, she found a job in a small clothing factory that required hard work. She worked 13 hours a day for a salary that wasn't that good. In the beginning, she thought she'd be an accountant or something similar, working in an office and not doing much, which is why she accepted the job, but she was really disappointed.

She couldn't stand it any more than four months. "I didn't study all of that to have this type of job," she explained to her family, "I can't do all this hard work for nothing," so she quit.

Finally, she yielded to her brother and her mother's opinion and returned to college to retake her final year. She really did her best, but once again, it wasn't enough. Another long, hard year of work had come to nothing, as her grades weren't much better.

Five months later, her brother came home with some good news. "A friend of mine has been promoted to bank manager. I told him about you and he said he could find you a job at the bank."

The next day, she went with him to see his friend, who seemed nice, and got a job at the bank counter. It was a nice, easy part-time job with a good salary and all it required was being nice and polite to others. However, not more than a year later, she was fired. During that year, she had worked in every department of the bank.

"I know she's educated and has certificates," the manager explained to her brother, "but that doesn't mean she's above others. She's no better than anyone else to look down on them. You must understand my position. I really did all I could, but it didn't work. She couldn't get along with her coworkers and customers, which is what our job requires."

Now 30 years old, Salwa was really disappointed. She had lost everything – her youth, her beauty, her nice fiancé, her health, her education and her future. Who would marry a 30-year-old woman without any special merits? With no job, no money and no beauty, she had become nothing.

"What was my error?" she asked her brother, to which he replied, "Your fault was that you didn't understand your culture and society. You thought you could do everything because of your certificate."

You didn't understand that your society hasn't yet admitted that women are effective associates of men and possess rights just as they do."

## Through The Mind's Eye

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## Iran & Iraq: A comparison (Part 1)

By: Maged Thabet Al-Kholidy  
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As an independent nation, weapons manufacture is one area to which Iran pays much attention; however, this actually astonishes other countries, especially Iran's enemies. It also reminds us of Iraq's situation prior to the U.S. invasion. The question that arises is: "Do the similarities between Iran and Iraq only offer Iran an end similar to Iraq's?"

I'm going to compare the similarities and differences between these two nations' situations so that we might foresee what will be Iran's future. I'll be very happy if readers also send their viewpoints about this topic, which I'll shed light on in two parts.

The first similarity is their declaration of having modern weapons policies and announcing the manufacture of nuclear weapons. Saddam Hussein declared this, challenging the world, with special reference to the U.S. and Israel. This was a strong pretext for the United States and its allies – with the U.N. Security Council's permission – to invade Iraq.

Such forces employed all types of weaponry to invade Iraq, destroying it not only militarily and politically, but also socially and culturally. I don't think there's any need to go into detail about Iraq's current status because it's obvious to all.

Like Iraq, from time to time, Iran announces the progressing advancement of its weapons program, proudly declaring its readiness to stand against any hostile nation, with particular reference to the United States and Israel. However, it's also charged with sponsoring terrorism, particularly Hamas in Palestine and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Iraq was a symbol of dignity and independence, formerly declaring its readiness to fight whoever interfered with its independence and power in the world. Such declarations drew the attention of nations such as the U.S., Israel and Britain, which considered it

a threat to their interests in the entire Middle East region.

Further, some Gulf nations such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait also considered it a threat – especially after Iraq's attempted invasion of Kuwait – and it was these Gulf countries that supported the U.S. and its allies in launching the war against Iraq.

Similarly, Iran now threatens U.S. interests in the Middle East and, "according to President George W. Bush," it is among those countries sponsoring terrorism. Additionally, Iran has some problems with the United Arab Emirates regarding islands along their sea boundary.

These factors are more than enough to give the United States and Israel the pretext to wage war against Iran with the support of the United Nations and possibly with the help of the United Arab Emirates. In fact, the U.N. already has imposed some sanctions against Iran as an initial step in the United States' war against it, so what will be the coming punishments?

At the outset of the war with Iraq, no other nation was on its side. The whole world left it alone in what's called a "war," although "invasion" is a better term for it. No Arab or Islamic country or any other nation offered Iraq any help or support. Instead, some such countries simply "condemned" it. In reality, most nations – particularly the Arabs – were just watching and waiting to side with the eventual winner.

While Iran does have relations with other nations, its relations with Syria and Hezbollah in Lebanon may not offer it any real help because they too are threatened. Additionally, it's difficult for them to be involved in any such war since their capabilities are insufficient to battle far from their homelands.

Thus, these countries may only be able to condemn, as they did in the case of Iraq. Once they feel the situation has become more critical, they no longer condemn, but support the one who is about to win.

Iraq has experienced hard times, thereafter taking freedom and dignity as their ultimate mottoes of existence.

Such thinking actually gave Saddam Hussein the power to challenge the United States and its allies because he thought Iraqis would never refuse fighting enemies like the U.S. He strongly believed Iraqis would never sell their homeland, but that was merely a feeling, while reality is something else entirely.

Immediately following the war, many Iraqis sought personal gain, selling their homeland for a sum of money or the promise of a high-ranking position within the new government. This is still occurring and because of it, Iraq still bleeds.

Likewise, Iran's president, Mahmoud Ahmdeinejad, now speaks as if he's sure about all Iranians. Indeed, if all Iranians are totally loyal to fighting the U.S. and its allies, that's ok, but what guarantees are causing Ahmdeinejad to think so? Does he bear in mind the Iraq situation as a lesson?

The U.S. and its allies have discovered that Iraq's religious sects are a good way to split the nation into smaller and smaller parts. Worse still, they were clever enough to let them fight each other and this is still happening as Sunnis attack Shi'ites. In this way, the U.S. can destroy not only Iraq's infrastructure, but rather the relationships and the spiritual links between its citizens.

Although most Iranians are Shi'ite, there are some other religious sects and even Jews, as well as opposition parties, which could be exploited by the U.S., which follows a policy of "divide and conquer." I hope this won't happen in Iran, if they've learned any lesson from Iraq.

These are the similarities and there are some differences, which I'll shed light on in my next column. Such similarities evoke a strong curiosity to foresee the situation in Iran. I hope you'll view this topic critically to evaluate the situation and then send your opinions either directly to me or to the newspaper.

Maged Thabet Al-kholidy is a writer from Taiz, currently doing his M.A. at English Dep, Taiz Uni. He is an ex-editor of English Journal of the University.

## Commuting in Yemen... Survival of the maddest

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A day after my plane landed in Sana'a, a traffic sign caught my eye, "slow down, a school ahead." I was pleasantly surprised by this sign, but my joyful moments evaporated as a taxi driver sped and bypassed us in the school zone. Few minutes later, an unannounced dabbab (small shuttle bus) driver decided to jump from his lane to our lane without signaling and without checking his blind spot.

Out of no where, a number of loud and obnoxious motorbikes took off, suffocating us with dust and engine waste and stirring streams from nearby sewage slough. The abundant amount of fumes produced from ill-maintained vehicles blurs any driver's vision and suffocates any pedestrian's nostrils. Honking, of course, is a continuous melody throughout any ride.

Moreover, most motorbikes' drivers take a "noise-inhibiting" piece out of their exhaust to produce a deafening noise. Unfortunately, these drivers are usually teenagers who should be in school. Instead, they are enjoying undeserved freedoms and projecting a wrong perception of manhood by speeding or showing off their zigzag driving.

Besides hasty and irresponsible driv-

ers, pedestrians are the most pitiful and at the same time, the most entertaining sides of daily traffic. I am always surprised by dressed-up women, showing off slender bodies in exceptionally tight abayas and taking their time crossing a crowded street. I am equally surprised by an oblivious man hurdling cars and forcing himself through a red light to catch a bus or chitchat with a driver he knows.

My entertainment ends when I see young kids wandering alone in busy streets, as if they're hanging out in their living room. I cannot stop myself from occasional frantic leaps when little boys and girls cross roads without a warning and without guardians – almost crushed by reckless drivers. Pedestrians are certainly an interesting case in daily commute.

My favourite part is the symbol of justice and discipline: policemen, who are – most of the time – the real cause behind traffic jams. Usually, they are either pathetically chitchatting or grumpily chewing Qat or hideously practicing bogus authority on poor crowds. Most Yemeni policemen do not understand their duty. When they decide to understand, they hurdle traffic to investigate drivers for wrong and lame reasons, banking on people's willful ignorance.

The most intriguing part of a policeman's life is his ability to stand for endless hours under unbearable sun, staring at hundreds of dabbabs and

taxis, inhaling carbon by-products, deafening his ears by motorbikes' noise, and clutching to fancy cars for a "private toll" – a disgraceful 100 or 200 rials. I end up not knowing whether to despise or pity policemen for having such a job.

Despite all traffic madness, I should take off my hat to all Yemeni drivers for managing driving on narrow and wrecked streets. Most, if not all, roads lack proper signage and clear marking. A two-lane street amazingly becomes a four-lane street. I could see an expansion to a fifth lane, if there is a way to drive on pedestrians' pathways and if such pathways existed to begin with. A good driver in Yemen is obviously equipped with different skills than those known internationally.

By the end of any commute, my head is spinning and my mood is ruined. Commuting in Yemeni cities is an irritating and frustrating experience. As a driver or a passenger, I always opt to shut my windows, suffocate and roast in the car's heat rather than expose myself to all the smoke, dust, and noise.

To survive driving in Yemen, you must be bold with a strong instinct guiding you and you must have an incredible patience to put up with unpredictable pedestrians' wanders. I am not sure if Darwin would agree with me, but commuting in Yemen, whether on foot or by car, is beyond doubt survival of the maddest.



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## Saudi women journalists are coming out of the closet

Not being allowed to drive or attend press conferences are only some of the obstacles that female journalists in Saudi Arabia face on a daily basis. But more and more women are demanding their proper place in the newsroom, and they are succeeding – slowly.

By: Hana' al-Khamri

“One day, about ten years ago, I was informed of my promotion to vice editor-in-chief. After receiving the compliments of the colleagues, the news suddenly took another turn. My nomination was frozen, or to use a better term, it evaporated due to the threats of resignation of the male officials at the newspaper if I was to take this position.”

This is the story of Saudi journalist Amjad Mahmoud Rida, as she only recently told it to the London-based al-Hayat newspaper. Her story is typical of the working conditions of female journalists in a country where even the women's magazines are run by men.

Rida was one of the first female journalists to enter the Saudi media world after her university studies in Cairo, and the first woman ever to be appointed vice editor-in-chief of a Saudi newspaper. She was also the only Gulf Muslim woman to cover the Russian war in Afghanistan.

But Rida has since left the media world and is now concentrating on research, in addition to having published two books, entitled “Saudi Women in the Media” and “Women Cultural Forum in Jeddah.”

For the women who are currently active in the Saudi media, Rida's story is a familiar one.

Sabria Jawhar was until recently the editor-in-chief of the daily Saudi Gazette. She is a fluent English speaker, and she wears a veil that only

reveals her eyes. We met Jawhar in her old office where she used to work before she resigned her post to travel and to finish her studies.

Jawhar related a recent incident. “I was on my way to attend a press conference by the Saudi Foreign when a guard refused to let me in because I'm a woman. So I said that I wasn't a woman but a journalist coming to officially represent the newspaper. But he insisted and kept repeating, ‘We don't allow women in.’” In the end, Jawhar was forced to contact the manager of the conference who ordered the guard to let her in.

The minister then allowed her to ask the first and the last question of the press conference, a unheard of privilege. So is the position of women in the Saudi media improving? There are a couple of facts that point in that direction. Last year, for the first time in Saudi history, female students were allowed to take courses in media and international relations studies at Um al-Qora public university.

At the same time, female journalists are still compelled to write under a pseudonym, or to use only their first name and the name of their father rather than the tribal family name, in order to avoid harassment from people who still consider it a great shame for a woman's name to appear in print. It is only one of the many absurdities that female journalists in Saudi Arabia face.

Most female journalists have no diploma in journalism because none of the universities for women had a media studies program, as this was considered an inappropriate field for women.

Instead, they took unrelated majors



and relied on practice to learn the job. Working female journalists are not allowed to drive a car, even of their job requires them to do a lot of field work.

Women are absent from the editorial room because they are confined to rooms that are off-limits to men.

Women initially entered the field of journalism to fill the gap caused by the male journalists' inability to cover women's activities and issues. But the female editors worked hard to get out of “the closet” of the women's pages, gradually moving towards writing for all the newspaper sections, from local news to the business pages, politics and culture.

Other obstacles included female journalists being denied the opportunity to take part in training programs, not

to mention their low salaries in comparison with male colleagues doing the same work. Last year saw the birth of a new controversy after a group of female journalists were forbidden from attending a conference restricted to men.

This is not uncommon because conference organizers always have to provide a separate room for female journalists, and when one is not available, they simply don't invite the women.

Journalist Loubna al-Tahlawi addressed some of these issues during a workshop last week, entitled “The role of female journalists in supporting charity work.” Al-Tahlawi talked about the challenges female journalists face and reminded the audience of Article 10 of the Media Policy Act in the Saudi

Kingdom, which states that “women are considered the sisters of men. [Working in the] media means that they are realizing the special gift of intelligence that God gave women.” But much of Saudi society has yet to catch up with Article 10. Take the example of Wafaa Baker Junis.

Her intervention during the second Forum for Female Saudi Journalists, which was organized early last year in the Saudi capital under the patronage of her Royal Highness Princess Adela bint Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Saud, led to her dismissal from the radio station where she worked.

Junis had harshly criticized how her rights and those of her female colleagues were being trampled on, mentioning that she hadn't received her

salary for four months and that she still hadn't been hired as a full-time employee despite the fact that she had been working for seventeen consecutive years for the same employer.

She also gave the example of a female colleague who was humiliated by a male colleague, and who turned to the media to transmit her complaint to the officials after the radio station management had ignored her.

Radio host Fatima al-Anzi was also suspended from work for the same reasons. The official response to Wafaa Yunis and Fatima al-Anzi's transgression was quick: an official letter from the Minister was sent to their employers asking them to immediately stop all cooperation with the two employees because of what was described as harsh criticism of officials in the Ministry without any prior agreement. The reason given was that work problems should not be discussed publicly.

At the Forum, a group of recommendations were stated to improve the situation of female journalists:- specifying the career ladder for female journalists;- removing obstacles facing female journalists in training sessions;- improving female journalists and raising them to higher levels in all sections;- issuing a law to protect female journalists and their rights;- opening a Press and Media section at King Saud University;- improving the women's image in the media;- instituting a female official position at the Ministry of Information to deal with female journalist issues.

Hopefully, the next generation of graduates from the Press and Media School will see some of these recommendations implemented, so they can look forward to a brighter future.

Source: MENASSAT.COMPhoto source: © S.M. / arabimages.com

## Unite for Children

The State of the World's Children 2008 provides a wide-ranging assessment of the current state of child survival and primary health care for mothers, newborns and children.

These issues lie at the heart of human progress, serving as sensitive barometers of a country's development and wellbeing and as telling evidence of its priorities and values. Investing in the health of children and their mothers is not only a human rights imperative, it is also a sound economic decision and one of the surest ways for a country to set its course towards a better future.

UNICEF is calling for concerted action to reach the millions of children still excluded from health interventions.

Reducing child mortality requires the achievement of the health-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

– especially reducing poverty and

hunger (MDG 1), improving maternal health (MDG 5), combating HIV and AIDS, malaria and other major diseases (MDG 6) and improving water and sanitation (MDG 7). Attaining

MDG 4 – which requires a two-thirds reduction in the under-five mortality rate between 1990 and 2015 – is still possible, but the challenge is formidable: Reaching the target implies lowering the number of under-five deaths from 9.7 million in 2006 to less than 5 million by 2015.

It is clear that meeting all of these goals will require political will, resources and sound strategies on an unprecedented scale. Much of our efforts will focus on sub-Saharan Africa, which accounts for almost half of all child deaths, and West and Central Africa in particular, where little progress has been made in reducing the aggregate under-five mortality rate since 1990. Attention must also be given to South Asia, which has the second highest number of child deaths, and to countries and communities elsewhere that currently lack essential services.

The lessons learned on child health during recent decades should inform the way forward.

Children 2008 examines these lessons and highlights the most important emerging precepts, including:

- The need to focus on the countries and communities where child mortality rates and levels are highest, and on those that are most at risk of missing out on essential primary health care.
- The merits of packaging essential services together to improve the coverage and efficacy of interventions.
- The vital importance of community partnerships in actively engaging community members as health workers and mobilizing the community in support of improved health practices.
- The imperative of providing a continuum of care across the life cycle, linking households and communities with



outreach and extension services and facility-based care.

- The benefits of a strategic, results-oriented approach to health-system development with maternal, newborn and child care as a central part.
- The crucial role of political commitment, national and international leadership and sustained financing in strengthening health systems.
- The necessity for greater harmonization of global health programmes and partnerships.

In order to achieve these objectives the key decision makers – governments and communities, donors and international agencies, non-governmental organizations and private sector collaborators – will need to unite their actions and partnerships in support of maternal and child survival and health. Working together, we can ensure that mothers, newborns and children receive quality essential services, improve their health and nutritional status, and place the survival of children at the heart of global efforts to advance humanity.



The 60 priority countries for child survival targeted by Countdown to 2015



Source: Countdown to 2015, Tracking Progress in Child Survival: The 2005 report, UNICEF Health Section, New York, 2006, p. 37.

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