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Protests continue amidst preparation for military parade

By: Mohammed Bin Sallam and Fuad Mus'ed

SANA'A / DHALE', May 17 — As the military continues its rehearsals in Sana'a for the military parade celebrating the 19th anniversary of the Yemeni unity, citizens in Al Dhale' took to the streets to protest against the government.

The military rehearsals have been taking place since the beginning of this week in the Al-Sab'een quarter of Sana'a, with jet fighters and helicopters flying at low altitudes over the location of the rehearsals. All roads to the location of the parade have been blocked by the military since Saturday.

The celebration, which will be held next Friday, May 22, focuses on the military parade where new and developed weapons, including MIG 29 air fighters which Yemen recently purchased from Russia, will be paraded.

So far, the government hasn't revealed the budget spent on the parade.

Last week, state-run news agency Saba quoted an official saying that the celebra-

tion this year will include fireworks and the launching of new projects in many governorates.

Observers say that the military parade this year is a clear hint that the government is strict in dealing with people who oppose the ruling regime, and indicates concerns among the ruling elite over current issues in the southern governorates and in Sa'ada where fighting is ongoing between Houthis and pro-government tribes.

"A parade to show off military force is not justifiable," said Sultan Al-Atwani, Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP), the main opposition party in Yemen.

"We no longer have foreign threats to our borders or lands," he said. "This parade can be considered as one of the scare tactics of our ruler. Through this parade, the government wants to terrorize those who oppose their regime, which has failed to tackle or solve the aggravating crises in the country."

"The government has announced that it would rationalize public spending dur-

ing the years to come due to the current economic crisis in Yemen and would stop any celebrations," he continued. "But, instead of launching new infrastructure projects and providing necessary services, it is lavishly spending billions of riyals on showing off its military capabilities."

"This confirms that the country is ruled by a military mentality," he concluded.

Al-Atwani expressed his concerns over the current situation in the southern and eastern governorates as well as the situation in Sa'ada, demanding that the government put forth solutions, listen to the complaints and opinions of citizens, stop violations, reconsider responsible leaders, fight corruption, and employ government resources in a way to achieve social justice.

A number of citizens in the city of Al-Dhal'e blocked the main road for hours on Wednesday evening following clashes that broke out between armed citizens and security forces serving on the premises of the Prosecution of Appeals.

The city witnessed continuous gunfire on Al-Dayeri Street where the Public



The protesters marched down the streets demanding the siege on Al-Ayyam newspaper be lifted.



Unity day carnival in Ibb on the 18th anniversary last year.

Prosecution is located.

Eyewitnesses told the Yemen Times that armed men fired at the prosecution premises at around 8:00 pm after a soldier shot at them, wounding three citizens who were later taken to the hospital. According to eyewitnesses, one of the wounded is in serious condition.

Civilians blocked the road inside the city in protest at what they called 'the negative security reaction' toward the soldier who shot at the citizens.

The protesters marched down the

streets demanding the siege on the Aden-based Al-Ayyam newspaper be lifted. Demonstrators chanted in support of the newspaper and the Southern Movement, and demanded peace.

They further burned a number of official and state newspapers in protest at halting the distribution of a number of private newspapers, including Al-Ayyam.

Abdul A'lem Al-Humaidi, head of the Al-Thawra newspaper bureau in Al-Dhal'e, said that burning newspapers, including Al-Thawra, is considered aggressive behavior that encourages a culture of hatred.

He demanded that concerned bodies work to protect newspapers against prac-

tices that offend Al-Dhal'e citizens.

He further called on political parties, civil society organizations, and political and social dignitaries in the governorate to undertake their proper role and raise awareness among citizens to follow legal ways in demanding their rights within the context of democracy.

Al-Dhal'e, Abyan, and Lahj witnessed clashes two weeks ago between the government and groups of local residents who complained that "northerners have abused a unity agreement to grab their resources and discriminate against them," and raised slogans calling for secession, at the end to Yemen's 19 year-old unity.

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Government continues to silence independent newspapers

By: Khaled Al-Hilaly

SANA'A, May 17 — The government has prevented the distribution of seven independent newspapers for the second week running and charged its journalists with attempting to harm supreme national interests, triggering widespread condemnation from media and human rights organizations worldwide.

Up to 30 editors and journalists from newspapers Al-Share', Al-Masdar, Al-Diyar, Al-Nida', Al-Watani and Al-Ahali, as well as Al-Ayyam, have been accused of inciting their readers to armed insurrection and posing a threat to national unity.

Based on a request by the Ministry of Information, the Press and Publication Prosecution last week questioned journalists from these newspapers, before charging them with, among others, provoking sectarian strife among Yemenis.

The journalists are expected to be tried in the special media court established last week with the approval of Minister of Justice Ghazi Shayef Al-Aghbari, who said the new court would bring all press and publishing-related legal cases under one roof in Sana'a. He said the aim was to "serve and protect the press."



Journalists mourn the death of press freedom during previous oppressions in July 2008. With the latest attacks on independent media, the deputy chairman of the YJS has called press freedom in Yemen dead.

Sami Ghalib, editor-in-chief of Al-Nida', said to the Yemen Times that he, Shae' Al-Abd, Fuad Musad and Abdulaziz Al-Magidi from the same newspaper, and another twenty journalists from targeted newspapers faced charges of "spreading hatred among Yemenis and calling for breaking up national unity."

He pointed out that the government

considers any coverage of the current social unrest in Yemen's southern governorates as inciting towards insurrection and threatening the supreme interest of the nation.

"Instructions went given to imams to welcome closure of the newspapers in their Friday sermons," said Ghalib. "The government is campaigning against journalists"

He explained that, when instructions by the Minister of Information came to state-owned printer and publisher Al-Thawra to stop printing Al-Nida', he approached a private printing company to continue distributing his weekly, but the latter refused to help, citing fear of prosecution under Article 103 of the Yemeni Journalism Law.

According to a statement from Al-Share' newspaper on Friday, the Ministry of Information issued an order for all printers and publishers in Sana'a, including Al-Thawra, not to print any copies of any of the targeted newspapers.

"Unfortunately, the board of the Yemeni Journalists' Syndicate (YJS) seems to have been lured over to the government's side," said Ghalib. "Before the beginning of the campaign against the newspapers, the syndicate issued a strange statement about national unity asking newspapers to commit to the ethics of journalism, it seems at the request of the government."

The editors of Al-Share', Al-Masdar, Al-Diyar, Al-Nida', Al-Watani and Al-Ahali in a joint statement last Saturday condemned the Ministry of Information's recent actions, which they described as "an explicit violation of the Constitution."

They regretted that some members of the YJS's board had written or allowed inflammatory propaganda against the independent press in government media, and called for their solidarity.

"Press freedom is dead," replied Saeed Thabit, deputy chairman of the YJS. "But solidarity is weak. Whenever we call a meeting, only a few journalists turn up."

"By establishing specialized courts for journalists, the government has put non-official journalism in a cage," said Khaled Al-Anisi, one of the accused journalists' defense lawyers. "It's a tool to refrain press freedom. These kinds of courts only exist under dictatorships."

The government has prevented the distribution of these newspapers, especially the popular daily newspaper Al-Ayyam. Since May 2, thousands of copies of Al-Ayyam have been confiscated from street kiosks in Sana'a and the southern cities.

At the end of the last week, Al-Ayyam supporters and security personnel prevented government forces surrounding the Aden-based newspaper from entering the building in clashes which left one person dead and at least two more injured.

"These actions are a clear effort to

silence independent voices in Yemen," said Sarah Leah Whitson, Middle East director at Human Rights Watch (HRW). "President Ali Abdullah Saleh needs to end this campaign of intimidation and censorship."

Yemen is signatory to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Arab Charter on Human Rights, both of which guarantee the right to freedom of expression, stresses HRW.

The Washington-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) has strongly condemned the Yemeni government's latest campaign against the country's independent journalists.

"We urge President Saleh to order the release of our colleagues without delay and to bring this shameful campaign to uproot independent reporting to an end," said Mohamed Abdel Dayem, CPJ's Middle East and North Africa program coordinator.

"Stifling freedom of expression runs counter to Yemen's avowed commitment to democracy and reform," he said. The International Federation of Journalists fully supports the Yemeni Syndicate of Journalists (YJS), which is calling for an end to threats of violence against Al-Ayyam, the IFJ reported on its website.

"Alkasir" for circumventing website censorship released in BETA version

By: Yemen Times Staff

CAIRO, May 16 — A new tool to circumvent website censorship named "Alkasir" was released today in its BETA version 1.0 and is now in the public domain. The release comes after the software was publicly revealed for the first time in Cairo yesterday during the first day of the "Blogging the Future" summit organized by the Kamal Adham Center for Journalism Training and Research.

The software, whose name originates from the Arabic word 'alkasir', meaning 'the circumventer', is now accessible and according to its developer, Walid Al-Saqaf, can be downloaded directly from the web at <http://alkasir.com/download>.

"Al-Kasir is a project carried out with the support of the MidEastGate ongoing program to expand access to information in the Middle East. The program is implemented by MideastYouth.com, a nonprofit network supporting freedom of expression and activism online," Al-Saqaf said during a session he presented in

front of an audience of bloggers and journalists representing many countries from around the world.

It was revealed in the session that alkasir is capable of tracking and circumventing censorship of websites by applying a multi-layered and distributed technique depending on a central service for storing information regarding blocked websites and other servers to provide tunneling channels for users of the program.

The author of the program said that although it originates from and is intended primarily for the Middle East, it is still possible to use it for other countries as well.

"But we decided to give priority to the Middle East and North Africa region as it is one that suffers from excessive website censorship," Al-Saqaf noted.

Many of the participants in the Cairo summit gave a favorable opinion of the program's objectives and technique. Meanwhile, some participants expressed privacy and security concerns of its use and application given that it predominantly targets news and

activism-related content. It was hence a priority, according to them, that the circumvention tool should enhance its anonymity and security features to avoid the exposure of data about users the service and what websites they access.

The launch of alkasir comes in a time when dozens of political and news websites are blocked by ISPs due to their critical anti-government content.

Syria, Tunisia, Bahrain, Syria, and Yemen are examples of countries where the software could be utilized to allow users to access banned websites. The developer however warned that the version is meant for testing purposes in the time being and features will be introduced in the future.

More information about the software and its uses can be found at: <http://alkasir.com>.

The product is freeware and can be downloaded from <http://alkasir.com/download> and instructions on how to get the software can be provided upon sending an email to admin@alkasir.com.

Broken generator strikes another blow to electricity network

By: Mahmoud Assamiee

ADEN, May 17 — Even as demand increases on already over-worked power stations around the country, the Al-Huswa 60-megawatt generator in Aden has broken down, depriving Aden's inhabitants of yet more electricity and further disrupting the country's already patchy network.

In Aden power station alone, explained Jalal Nasher, the general manager of the Aden Corporation for Electricity, the power station's output has decreased from 260 to 185 megawatt since last year, and the situation will not improve any time soon: "This year electric blackouts will increase, due to increased demand for energy, especially in the summer," he said.

"The problem of electricity will not be solved in this country," said a source in the Ministry of Electricity and Energy, who asked to remain anonymous, explaining that widespread corruption at the level of all official electricity institutions has led to talking to the press being prohibited.

Although there is special committee chaired by Abdul-Mu'men Mutahar, also the general director of the General Corporation of Electricity, in charge of talking to press, no one was available to talk to the Yemen Times.

According to engineers at the Central Power Control, the main cause of increasing blackouts in Yemen is that power stations have become old. When they repair one generator, they discover another fault caused by the great pressure on the electricity networks.

"Nowadays, the electricity shortage in Sana'a has reached almost 50 megawatt because of the great demand for electricity mostly in hot cities," said an official in the control department at Sana'a Power Station. "In the past, the daily shortage ranged from 20 to 30 megawatt."

He explained that the increase in demand and consumption of electricity in the summer time exerts great pressure on power stations, causing technical problems: "Sometimes, it takes a long time to repair them," he said.

"Aden's districts suffer from

blackouts due to an increasing shortage of electricity output from power stations," said Nasher in a statement to the state-run Al-Siyasiyya daily newspaper.

The shortage rate in Aden city alone will be 15 megawatt in the morning and 20 megawatt during the night, from a total shortage of 180 megawatt in the whole city's network, he added.

Two weeks ago, Prime Minister Ali Mujawar held a meeting with officials at Ministry of Electricity and Energy to discuss improving the electricity network across the country.

He directed officials in the General Corporation for Electricity to disconnect electricity of big consumers who did not pay their bills.

He urged them to speed up the building of Marib Power Station, a gas-fuelled station with an expected output of 500 megawatt, to start production by the end of 2009, and take the necessary measures to start building a second gas station in Ma'abar, Dhahar.

Most believe that these two stations will bring electric blackouts in major cities to an end.

Changemakers offer solutions to youth problems

By: Ola Al-Shami

SANA'A, May 17 — Yemeni change makers are taking positive steps to address their issues through research, advocacy and creating awareness. This was clear during their most recent session at the British Council's session held yesterday.

The members of the Changemakers program were selected through personal interviews. "We gauged their interest to be change makers through discussions. They are motivated people who do not depend on others and who are creative in addressing their issues," said Elham Al-Quhali, coordinator at the Changemakers program at the British Council - Yemen.

Professors Ayid Sharyian from Sana'a University and Yahya Saleh Dahami from the Al-Mustaqbal University presented seminars on personality building. They addressed the obstacles that youth are currently facing such as poverty, early marriage and unemployment.

In his presentation, Sharyian pointed out the importance of raising independence among youth. "You should be creative and find your own way. Don't wait for the official degree," he said. "Youth must try to create their own opportunities."

Twenty three Yemeni Changemakers identified steps to be strong and pro-

ductive in society during discussions held yesterday. "There is not much care for the youth these days. We expect much from life and need to work hard to meet our expectations," said Mersil Hadi, a participant in the program.

They accused society of being inconsiderate and lacking care and attention. "Members who deal with and treat youth problems must be selected carefully," said Prof. Dahami.

The Changemakers team is divided into three networks according to each one's abilities, attitudes and interests which will help them focus on their duties.

The first network will be concerned with researching what kinds of programs are available that are concerned with youth issues and will also identify young people to be part of the program. This network is supposed to support and help young people in carrying out their research and in applying for funding. It will also help secure publication outlets.

"My dream is to change what I can in society. The ideas we share are going to be the fundamental steps for change" said Hanan Al-Yazied, a member at the research network.

The second network is concerned with advocacy and discussing youth issues with decision makers. It aims to empower young advocates with the

necessary knowledge and help them to speak responsibly and effectively in their own interests while respecting the rights of others. "In this network we are supposed to highlight youth problems and try to contact families to convince them that the ideas that we are working on will actually make a positive difference. We must show them, since 'seeing is believing,'" said Osama Al-Rawhani, an advocate member.

The third network will spread awareness through available media. It aims at empowering a key youth group with the appropriate knowledge, skills and tools so they can enhance the quality of information available to youth in order to help them with decisions and choices they make now and in the future as adults.

"This network meets my interest to discuss and find solutions for youth who lack many advantages, especially those who live in remote areas away from the capital Sana'a," said Sahar Nuraddin, a Human Rights Assistant and a member of the awareness network.

Most of the members were volunteers in other programs and wanted to make a change in society. "I worked with the Yalla Shabab program as a means to change behaviors and spread awareness in society," said Al-Rawhani.

Yemeni judges call for strengthening the parliamentary regime

By: Ismail Al-Ghabri

SANA'A, May 16 — Speaking at a seminar titled 'The State of Institutions and the Principles of the Separation of Powers,' Judge Yahya Mohammed Al-Maori said that the principle of the separation of powers will prevail only under the rules of the parliamentary regime which relies on empowering the legislative, executive and judiciary authorities.

Held last week, the seminar was jointly organized by the Yemeni Center for Historical Studies and Future Strategies and Al-Manarat Center.

It was attended by Ahmed Mohammed Al-Kuhlani, the Minister of State for the House of Representatives and the Shoura Council. Participants included a number of researchers.

Al-Maori, who is a board member of the Yemeni Center for Historical Studies and Future Strategies, said, "The failure of Arab political thought in devising practical solutions to the problem of the modern state is due to the lack of acceptance of the principles of a peaceful rotation of power." He added that this defect is a crisis of the Arab political system and it is also the biggest obstacle facing democracy in the Arab world.

Judge Al-Maori reviewed the

experience of Yemen and how Yemen suffered under the rule of Imamate and British colonialism.

He also talked about the subsequent conflict between the two regimes of the former south and north states of Yemen.

He emphasized that Yemen had made a great historical achievement by the country's reunification which resulted in a multi-party regime and the emergence of the state of institutions and the separation of powers.

Al-Maori pointed out that there is still an overlap in terms of areas of concern in relation to the executive authority.

He emphasized the need to review the causes of the imbalances in some of the constitution texts as well as the need to work on the constitutional reform with a unified national responsibility and without laying the blame on a particular group.

For his part, Dr. Hamood Saleh Al-Awdi, Professor of Sociology at Sana'a University and also a board member of Al-Manarat Center, presented his paper which focused on a general vision for joint work needed for the period following the postponement of elections. It also talked about extending forward until the proposed date when the forthcoming elections take place.

Al-Awdi reviewed the current situation and the needed solutions to tackle current problems and their challenges, in addition to looking at the future with its dreams and aspirations. Current challenges, he said, were drifting against revolution, unification, peace and security in Yemen.

He added that any future vision must be shaped so as to accommodate Yemeni aspirations and its role among other nations. An executive mechanism must be adopted.

Following this, board member of Al-Manarat Center Mr. Salem Mohamed Hussein presented a paper focusing on country development plans, challenges facing the media, and the recent difficult and complicated circumstances that have emerged as challenges in the face of peace and security of the country and national unity.

He referred back to earlier days of reunification of Yemen when people burst into song out of sheer happiness as they hailed that great achievement. People's promising hopes knew no limits at that time regarding the future of Yemen.

The seminar was enriched by extensive participation by a number of researchers and other attendants interested in the field of political power and thought.

In Brief

SANA'A
Larijani warns of Zionist plots in region

Speaker of the Iranian parliament Ali Larijani warned on Friday from plots of the Zionist entity in the region.

Upon his departure of Sana'a international airport after two-day official visit to Yemen, Larijani stated to Saba that he discussed with the Yemeni officials these plots which target Arab and Islamic nations.

He added that the talks with the Yemeni officials also focused on topics related to means of enhancing mutual cooperation between Yemen and Iran, highlighting outcomes of these talks.

He was seen off by speaker of the parliament Yahya al-Rae and other top Yemeni officials as well as Yemeni ambassador to Tehran Salah al-Salal and Iranian ambassador to Sana'a Mahmoud Hassan Zadah.

Official of international relief program arrives

Regional Director of the International Relief Program for Middle East, Mid of Asia and East of Europe Dali Bal Qasim arrived in Sana'a in several days official visit.

Upon his arrival, Bal Qasim stated to Saba that the visit comes within mutual cooperation between Yemen and the program and to discuss issues related to projects of the programs in the country.

He was welcomed by the deputy minister of planning and international cooperation Hisham Sharaf and representative of the program in Yemen Jian Carroll.

50 wanted outlaw elements arrested

Police arrested around 50 wanted outlaw elements who attacked possessions of citizens and security forces during riots which targeted unity and stability of the nation in southern and eastern governorates during few days ago, media center of interior ministry reported on Friday.

According to the center, these

elements have opened fire and threw grenades on the citizens and security forces in these governorates and police are investigating with them to be sent then to the justice, the center added.

Security forces highlighted cooperation of the citizens in these governorates in arresting these elements and rejecting for riots.

SNACC organizes workshop on national strategy to combat corruption
The Supreme National Authority for Combating Corruption (SNACC) organized here on Wednesday the 2nd workshop on the preparation of national strategy to combat corruption.

The workshop aims to review ideas that could form the basis to put the general framework of national strategy to combat corruption.

It also aims to promote the principle of partnership between the body and National Integrity System (NIS) and to look at the views and orientations of the NIS and its role in fighting corruption and implementing the strategy.

During the workshop, the SNACC head Ahmed Welfat pointed out that there will be further meetings with all relevant bodies of combating corruption.

Ten work papers included the vision of each body's role in combating corruption were also presented in the workshop.

The aim of the National Strategy to Combat Corruption is to analyze the nature of corruption and to identify its sources from the overall perspectives as well as to analyze NIS and examine its role and nature.

It also aims to promote integrity, transparency, accountability and law enforcement in Yemeni society, in addition to prepare an integrated strategic framework for combating corruption.

MAHARAH
3 Somalis arrested accused of stealing YER 6 million in gold

Police in the city of Ghaidah, Maharah, have apprehended three Somalis accused of stealing a briefcase which had inside gold jewelry worth YER 6 million.

The Interior Ministry's Information Center reported that preliminary investigations with the arrested revealed the three were guilty of robbery.

The briefcase was in a car parked at one of the city streets when the Somalis arrested along with a fourth accomplice who a search for is ongoing took it.

Many African migrants, mostly Somalis and Ethiopians, arrive in Yemen almost daily, fleeing deteriorating humanitarian situations in their homelands.

Yemen says the number of Africans who have already arrived in Yemen exceeds 700.000 people.

I says the flow of Africans overburdens its fragile economy, urging the international community to provide further assistance to enable it shelter and provide necessary aid materials for the people.

African refugees and illegal migrants, most of whom from the African Horn states, usually reach Yemeni territories via a dangerous sea route where many die when overcrowded smuggling boats capsize or when they are ordered by the boat owners to swim in deep waters to Yemeni coasts.

About 131 African migrants, mostly from Somalia, drowned while trying to reach Yemeni territories through sea and 66 others went missing during the first months of 2009, the UNHRC says.

DALEI
Three wanted people in Dalei governorate arrested

Security apparatuses in Dalei governorate have captured three wanted people by security charged with attacking officials and nationals in the local and judicial civil authority.

Deputy of the governorate Abdullah al-Hadi said that the accused people confessed of implementing several attack operations such as the attack of house of Judge Mohammed Ali al-Gayzi, head of Dalei Court, by throwing a bomb at his house yard in addition to other criminal acts.

He said the security apparatuses hunt the rest of the accused people who participated in the sabotage acts.

He affirmed the local authority will not tolerate the perpetrators who aimed to damage social peace and cause unrest to security, stability and public peace.

ADEN
World health development fund delegation arrives

A delegation of World Health Development Fund headed by Elhami al-Ghandour, businessmen and investors, and a number of German and global companies directors have arrived in Aden to get acquainted with investment projects in Yemen.

The delegation will visit officials in the local administration in Abyan governorate and leaders in the Chamber of Trade and Industry and several Yemeni investors and businessmen to discuss the chance of partnership to implement a joint investment projects in Yemen besides completing study procedures of projects that will be established in Abyan governorate according the signed agreement between Abyan governor and the fund last month.

The investment projects will include building hygienic city with an estimated cost at 3,800,000,000 Euro, cement plant with an estimated cost at 500,000,000 Euro and a residential city with an estimated cost at 2,000,000 Euro.

Meanwhile, al-Esi Trade Group signed with chairman of World Health Development Fund an agreement to establish maritime seaport at the coastal area in Abyan governorate co-financed by the Fund and the Group

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with estimated cost at 2,700,000,000 Euro.

It is worth to mention that the World Health Development Fund concentrated

its investments on health sectors to support health aims in different areas, especially treating cancer patients, hepatitis and HIV AIDS and combating smoking.

Armed group killed a citizen in Aden, says police

security source in Aden governorate stated on Wednesday that a citizen was killed and other three injured by an armed group who opened fire

randomly while police tried to carry out the arrest request against editor in chief of al-Ayyam daily in Aden city in a killing crime.

Al-Ayyam editor in chief Hisham BaShrahil and Hani BaShrahil are suspected by the prosecution in killing a citizen Salah Tariq al-Masri.

The source said that the group came out from the building of the newspaper and opened fire randomly on the police, saying that the concerned bodies admitted injured people to a hospital.

He added that the police started to investigate in the incident and arrest elements of the group.

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Mother of the youngest suicide bomber in Yemen: “My son is a victim and terrorists misled him”

Interviewed by: Mohammed An'am

The mother of the teenager Abdul Rahman Mahdi Al-Ojairi who carried out the suicide bombing in Shibam mid-March, killing four South Koreans, called on security forces to hasten arresting terrorism veterans who deceive the youth of this country before they succeed in misleading more youth. She further demanded that security hold these terrorists accountable for crimes they committed in the country, stressing the necessity to monitor religious sheikhs who teach the youth at mosques. The mother didn't deny that her son might have been forced into carrying out the suicide attack Korean tourists in Shibam. This came in an interview with *Al-Methaq* newspaper in which she confirmed that killing Korean tourists without a sin is a disaster and that losing her son was painful.

Q: How was your son Abdul Rahman brought up? And how did he reach his disastrous fate?

A: I brought up my son Abdul Rahman in the best way and educated him in the best private schools in spite of the high expense. I then took him to public schools and followed up his study. He excelled at school and his behavior wasn't suspicious. He was polite and quiet.

Two years ago, he told me that he wanted to memorize the Holy Quran. I was happy to hear that and encouraged him to do it. I enrolled him in a Quranic school where he stayed for over a year. He was about to finish memorizing the Quran. When he finished his second year in high school, he told me that he wanted to complete memorizing the Quran at an internal center in Taiz. He said that at that center, they provided food and residence.

In the beginning, I was hesitant to allow him go to that center, but he insisted, so I agreed to allow him to study there for two months. During that time, I was in contact with him and sent him money, clothes and everything he needed. After that he came to visit us and told us that only some chapters of the Holy Quran remained for him to complete the memorization of the entire Quran. He returned to Taiz to achieve his objective. Following that, he began studying for his last year in high school. He was committed to a precise system which I taught him with regards to going to bed, getting up in the morning, leaving the house, and studying. However, having studied for two months, he started to change and stopped going to school. He told me that since he was in his last year of high school, no one punished him for being absent and that he was able to manage his study well. He used to spend all his time at the mosque, performing the five prayers and then listening to continuous religious lessons. We were always watching him. His younger brother would visit him at the mosque and find him preoccupied with the religious lessons.

I was pleased that my son was committed to performing the five prayers and following the path of God and the Sunna [the prophet's guidance]. Last Ramadan, he started talking about martyrdom for the sake of God. He told me that he intended to be a martyr and that he wanted to go to Iraq or Palestine for jihad. 'Prepare me for martyrdom, mother, because whoever prepares an invader is equal to the one who invades,' said my son. He also began telling me about religion and life.



Mother of the teenager who carried out the suicide bombing in Shibam killing four South Koreans: "Listen to my story before you judge me!"

He used to give me religious books, and of course I was happy with that. He encouraged me to study at a religious institute where I began memorizing the Holy Quran. However, he never stopped talking about jihad. I appeased him and told him that if the Yemeni government allowed mujahedeen to fight in the jihad in Palestine, he would be the first to go; I would prepare him and be proud of that. He used to tell me that Jews are the enemies of God and religion, and therefore we should fight against them. I told him that everybody knows that, but going to Palestine to fight the Jews was not his decision and he wouldn't be able to change the reality there as this issue needs strong decisions from Arab and Islamic governments and huge mobilization, and not just the efforts of one man. 'You are alone and cannot do anything, but if mujahedeen were allowed to go to Palestine, I would allow you to go,' I told him.

This discussion continued for many days, and every time he repeated the same ideas about jihad. After that, we had the chance to find him a job at Azal hospital. While at work, we watched him and checked up on his behavior. The personnel of the hospital loved him and commended his morals, performance and commitment to religion. Two months after he started working for Azal hospital, he told me that he was determined to leave the hospital because of the low salary they gave him. He said that he found a job with a better salary at a special office where he worked as a typist. I accepted his decision to leave his job, as I was confident that he would never go down the wrong path. He worked at that office and was punctual in going to work and coming back home. His father has been working abroad for over twelve years and, consequently, my children are familiar with me more than they are with their father. I stay with them always.

Later, my son visited me and brought me some wheat and sugar as well as some other household needs. He said that he had received his salary and bought this stuff for the house. I was very happy with that. He was an altruist and would prefer giving more to his brothers than to himself. He didn't care about money and he never asked for money from anyone. He used to go from Al-Dayri street in Sana'a to Azal neighborhood on foot. I used to check his pocket while he was sleeping, but found nothing.

Once he came back home while I was sleeping. He took his religious books and high school books. 'Take them to the motorbike,' he said to his brother. 'When my mother gets up, tell her that I am going out for a tour,' he added.

He used occasionally go around on tours along with his friends while they were fasting. We were accustomed to that and he would come back at night, but that time he was late. I called him many times, but he didn't answer. I sent him messages but he replied that he would never come back. Once he sent me a message telling me to strengthen my faith in God. Exchanging messages continued for several days until the advent of the Eid of Sacrifice this past December. He wasn't with us. I called him, but he sent me a message telling me that calling him was forbidden at the place where he was. I was shocked as to why calling was forbidden. I sent him a message asking if he was imprisoned, but he didn't reply, and then he switched off his phone. Therefore, Eid was a huge ordeal.

I thought that he might have gone to Aden, as he wanted to go there many times. On the second day of Eid, his father and I decided to go to Aden to look for our son. When we were in Al-Dhal'e heading to Aden, we received a phone call from my son. He was talking and crying. He ensured us about his wellbeing.

'How are you, mother?' asked my son. 'We live in suffering and we are heading to Aden to look for you,' I told him. He was crying and said, 'Pray for me to obtain martyrdom for the sake of God.' We came back to Sana'a, hoping that he would come back or call, but he didn't. We were very sad.

After a few days, he called me and said that he was heading to attain martyrdom and only my prayer would benefit him. This was around four months ago. Later, two men came on a motorbike and met my younger son. They delivered a letter from my son Abdul Rahman, saying that he was going to Somalia, that he was on the right path, and that he requested me to pray for him to attain martyrdom. This was his last communication with me.

I realized that my son put the idea of martyrdom in his mind, and certainly he wouldn't be able to go to Iraq or Palestine for jihad. After that, I learned that my son and others attempted to leave Yemen to go to Palestine, but they were sent back. I also found out that my son might have been imprisoned or held in custody, but I wasn't sure. I then felt that he might have gone to Somalia after he was kept from going to Palestine.

Q: Do you mean that you realized that your son would never renounce his decision?

A: We talked a lot with him during the last period about this issue and referred to the Quran and the Sunna. I told him that his being with us and helping me and his sis-

ter is part of jihad. However, I realized that he would never renounce his idea of martyrdom, even though I told him that jihad in Palestine or Iraq was not his duty as mujahedeen are not allowed to go there. He wasn't satisfied with what I told him, though. During the last period, he changed a lot and preferred to be isolated. He gave up wearing pants and let his hair grow longer, thinking he was imitating the Prophet (PBUH). After he sent me his last letter, I surrendered to reality and prayed for him a lot. I asked God to keep him safe. I said, 'O my God! My son was under my guardianship and now he is in your hands. Keep him safe and return him to me.'

Q: Was he in company with people who are trustworthy?

A: I believed that my son was in God's houses [mosques] studying the Quran and the Sunna. Therefore, I was certain he was safe with trustworthy people. I didn't believe that God's houses would make children disobey their parents and follow such misleading ideas. If this is the case, it is better to close down God's houses and do our prayers at home. This means that we have to teach our children prayer and religion at home if these houses mislead them so. Those are not the God's houses that we know. I wished that my son would be a physician or a pilot, but as he loved the Quran and the Sunna, I wished he would be a religious scholar or a famous caller to Allah.

Q: Do you regret that you lost your son?

A: I feel that I sustained a big loss and I ask God to look at him as a martyr as he was misled by wrong ideas from those people, the real terrorists. They persuaded him that this is the real martyrdom and taught him to say, 'Kill them wherever you find them.'

Those people who taught my son twist the Quran. My son was 17 years old and those Korean tourists were not sinful. They were guests, and the Prophet (PBUH) ordered us to be generous with guests, not to kill them.

We all know that this is not the jihad that the Prophet (PBUH) recommended.

Q: Did sheikhs who taught your son Abdul Rahman live in your neighborhood?

A: Frankly, I don't know them and I don't know who taught my son the Holy Quran. All I know is that my son memorized the Quran and an honoring ceremony was held at a mosque during which they granted his father a certificate for supporting him.

Q: Security apparatuses spread pictures of those who are wanted. Do you know any of them?

A: I don't know any one of them. I didn't allow my son to bring his friends to our home as I was busy with tailoring. Even his father didn't chew qat with his friends at home. My son never mentioned the names of his friends to me.

Having lost my son, I would like to tell mothers that they shouldn't forbid their sons from going to mosques. However, my advice is that the activities of mosques and religious sheikhs who teach our children should be monitored. It is not reasonable to forbid our children from going to mosques upon hearing the call to prayer.

Q: Your son was a teenager and you know that at such an age it is easy to be misled. Why didn't you watch your son and his company to keep him safe?

A: I didn't expect that Abdul Rahman would commit such a mistake inside his country. I expected that he might have gone to fight in the countries that he wished to go to. I never heard him say bad things about any official in the country.

Q: Was Abdul Rahman kidnapped?

A: I don't rule out that. He might have been taken to some place and threatened. He was affected upon hearing my voice on phone.

Q: You said that he cried when he called you.

A: I believe that he coercively cried and that he was misled and prompted into taking the action that he did. He cannot have done this inside his country out of his own satisfaction. I am 100 percent sure of this.



Abdul Rahman Mahdi Al-Ojairi

Q: Did you ever think to inform security and ask them to help you find your son?

A: Yes I did. I thought a lot about that, but I didn't do out of fear that my son was safe in Somalia and that I may put him in a dilemma. Therefore, I decided to be patient.

Q: How and when did you learn about the painful incident?

A: I learned about the incident the third day after it occurred. I am not interested in news, but since my son left home, I followed up the news on Al-Jazeera and Yemen channels. Suddenly, I saw a picture of Abdul Rahman on TV. I had to be patient. I suffered a lot in bringing him up. In spite of my grief, I would like to reconfirm that my son who wished martyrdom was misled and prompted into this action.

Q: Why don't you demand the government to take revenge on those who prompted your son into this action?

A: We are most certainly demanding that because another Abdul Rahman may be misled by those tomorrow and after tomorrow. I mean, if the concerned bodies don't pay attention to this issue, other children will be victims like Abdul Rahman. There are people who work on youths of Abdul Rahman's age and they will succeed unless security takes on its role and arrests those who mislead our children.



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It is in the hands of the people in charge of this country to make our transformation towards democracy real and meaningful. It would be unfortunate if the change in Yemen remains merely a show or something superficial.

Our politicians need to believe in preparing for the 21st century. To do that, they have to internalize some new values.

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



OUR OPINION

1325

After years and years of conflict and since its establishment decades ago, the United Nations Security Council realized that in order to achieve peace it needs to involve women in conflict resolution, and hence came UN resolution 1325 of year 2000.

The resolution states that women should be involved in peace making and conflict resolving. Yet how much more time must we wait until such a resolution becomes known, popular and binding, especially among decision makers who are mostly men?

Women are excellent peace makers because they are usually not part of the reasons behind conflict. They can see issues more objectively and are able to come up with decisions that really aim for peace and reconciliation.

Now in the UN-designated year for reconciliation, we should remember that women have a long history in reconciling their children with each other, reconciling the needs of a job with those of a family, and peacemaking between neighbors, for example.

Even the most inexperienced woman has innate knowledge and expertise of reconciliation and peacemaking in her. We can't help it, we are made that way.

But why aren't there many women working in this field around the world, especially in the Middle East where conflict has become the norm?

I spent three days with wonderful ladies from 12 countries from across the world, but especially from the Middle East. Despite holding high positions in their various fields, these women all spoke of a need for reconciliation to reach peace in the Middle East.

Led by the Women Federation for World Peace, the 45 women have decided they want to bury the hatchet and become friends, because whatever differences they have are not going to stop them from working together in order to make a better future for their children.

A lady from Cyprus said that Nicosia is the only capital around the world that is divided and in which you need a passport to travel between the Greek and Turkish halves. Yet women from both sides of the island danced together, joked, sang and talked thoroughly about their differences and worked together for a larger cause.

Women from Israel and Palestine talked about their acknowledgement of mutual suffering and recognized common ground while accepting their differences. They talked about how there were political divisions in their own countries and how it was up to them on the nongovernmental and grass root levels to work towards peace for the best interest of their people.

The energy these women emitted was amazing, and they were almost glowing with hope and desire to make the world a better place. These women were not welcomed into life - some have seen relatives die in front of their eyes, some had been subjected to crimes of violence and some had to push their way to success through agony, pain and many tears.

These women have seen conflict, tasted pain and know what lack of security is like, and so their desire to make peace comes from very deep within their hearts.

Women like these need to be empowered even further and given the opportunity to make decisions to reach peace in the world. We have tried the ruling of man for many centuries, but it is time he moves aside and lets us try to reconcile and clean up the mess he made. After all, isn't that what we do all the time?

Nadia Al-Sakkaf

Let's work on creating a national culture

By: Taha Al-'Aamiri

We in Yemen are in desperate need of a serious and honest national culture based on principles of identity and affiliation to our nation's civilization. We need a culture that embodies the values and objectives of the Yemeni revolution, the republic, its unity, democracy and freedom. We need a culture that enhances all of these aims in a national, civilized way that reflects a unification of our geographical, historical, and cultural existence.

This culture should also reflect our popular heritage so full of values of peace and fraternity, and should express our Islamic identity through moderation. We need this culture to move away from negative tendencies and phenomena that split society. We need it to avoid those concepts that reflect the desires of opportunists and crises-makers. All social phenomena and crises that we suffer from and through which we distort progress, experience and accomplishments wouldn't have happened if there hadn't been an absence of a national culture. This culture should be fixed and embodied in our behavior, speech, stances and educational curriculum.

Countries can never be developed or constructed without a national culture that embodies all the values of a national identity. Creating a national culture will promote stronger loyalty to the homeland, will enable us to make changes and accomplishments, and will enhance the social structure collaboratively.

This can be based on honest national principles that can save us from the quagmire of the pillaging culture that gives precedence to individuals and opportunistic people at the expense of unity.

A culture of hatred, malice and disparagement constitutes fleeting negative phenomena through which we can never construct a country, make progress or feel proud of the accomplishments that we achieved. Unfortunately, some people nevertheless attempt to destroy the massive accomplishment of unity. They try to

strip national unity of all its values and common sense at the expense of individual tendencies and political calculations.

Currently this movement is coming either from parties inside the country which lost their interests, prestige and privileges or from foreign parties that attempt to contain Yemen and its initiatives.

None of these parties should have turned unity into a political target. National unity is a civilized, national, historical and Islamic project that Yemen accomplished in record time under the leadership of Ali Abdullah Saleh who is known for tolerance, wisdom, sound judgment, management, and the ability to fulfill his commitments. This man extended the hand of loyalty and affection to others and opened his heart and mind to all people of Yemen. It was he who seized the historical opportunity to achieve unity and turn it into an accomplishment that every Yemeni, Arab and Muslim should be proud of. Everyone should interact with every step that promotes its greatness.

Unity is the great project that Yemen performed single-handedly in the Arab and Islamic surroundings. As a result, Yemeni unity stands out as a shining example in the 21st century of an accomplishment that the Arab and Islamic nations, as well as all free people worldwide, witnessed during the latter part of the previous century.

Furthermore, Yemeni unity came at a time when the world witnessed a change in international relations and the lateral polar initiative which believed that its best interest and strategy depended on splitting the social structure of nations. This initiative destroyed the heritage of many centuries of partnership, coexistence and joint civilized heritage that was crystallized by a unity of geography, identity, faith and affiliation.

At such a time when the world was altering its maps by dividing countries, Yemen created a historical and civilized integration. It is still offering to the world an example of sublime civilized conduct to be followed, holding itself far apart from odd voices and supporters of sectarianism,

racialism, regionalism and isolation. Such people mix up their individual position with the general situation of the homeland. This mix-up is illogical, unprecedented and undesired.

The fate of the country is not connected with the fate of individuals and national stability can never be achieved through the stability of a group of people, whatever their prestige, roles and history are. Therefore, we should live up to our national responsibility and be transparent and clear. This homeland is more valuable than its leaders, whatever their roles may be.

People who desecrate national stability and sovereignty and then connect the fate of the homeland with their own prove that they are stupid and ignorant. They don't realize that it is not possible for them to control the people, which they proved so blatantly during the fiasco of 1994. Yemeni society has grown aware that these people cannot be entrusted to achieve society's aspirations and dreams.

As long as Yemeni society has ostracized these people, it is logical that they should keep silent out of respect for the popular will and out of respect for themselves. They are demanded to stop creating crises and to maintain a remnant of the respect that some of them still hold on to. They should appreciate the Yemeni nation and renounce their insistence to keep on playing such a negative role by fanning the flames of an argument they lost more than a decade ago. They have lost their glamour and ability to make anything positive. As a result, they attempted to express themselves through a way that indicates nonexistence and a lack of affiliation.

In conclusion, it is important to adopt a national cultural project that embodies all the noble and original values of our people. This culture can restore consideration for our national identity and social structure, values of affection and tolerance, and concepts that are still a source of our pride and dignity. Will the issue of a national culture become a motivation for all honest citizens to care about the unity of the social structure and the sustainability of national bonds? This is what we hope.

What can history teach us?

By: Abdullah Assana

assana.abdullah@gmail.com

As we've all seen and heard, Yemen is undergoing major civil unrest these days, and the realities of the situation seem to predict that the situation is only getting worse.

The current situation in Yemen is a multi-dimensional one, with many conveying mostly reasonable arguments from both sides.

Yes, it is true that Yemen is not in the best shape, whether economically, politically and/or even socially, as recent events illustrate. Yes, there are those of us who've experienced harsh treatment at the hands of the government. Yes, there are those of us who have lost property.

These are issues that the Yemeni government repeatedly failed to address. It is our right to protest and seek, time and time again, justice and basic rights that any good government would give to its citizens. It is our rights as citizens that we defend our property.

But as citizens, it is also our duty that we seek those rights in a civilized manner. Instead of seeking to depart and demand independence, one must take their time to think a lot and ask, what has history taught us about being divided? What can history offer us that we might learn from Yemen's current situation? Is dividing Yemen into two or three or four autonomous regions really worth it? And last but not least, is this division even possible?

In order to answer these questions, one needs to capitalize

on history and embrace similar scenes that reflect the realities of what was and what has become of those nations.

One should first look at the greatest example of all time, which is the Civil War in the United States of America, and its persistence and unwillingness to divide, regardless of the costs. One needs to look at South and North Korea and the aftermath of their division.

One needs to revisit the former Yugoslavia and what it has become. Having said that, I believe, as the saying goes, that two heads are better than one. Yemenis must seek peace and justice uniformly with one voice and with one direction.

Yemenis must also embrace their similarities and disregard their differences, if indeed there are any.

SILVER LINING

Equal citizenship to maintain unity

It seems the political regime is not taking what is happening in the south seriously. The recent political violence and rioting in some of the southern governorates should have been enough to alarm about the culminating congestion. The regional countries and international community have voiced concern over this development in the south. The US has said it supports "a stable, unified, and democratic Yemen." Similarly, other Arab and non-Arab countries expressed the same stand.

The government media outlets celebrated such statements coming from here and there. They have invited every Tom, Dick, and Harry to say the same thing and voice support to President Saleh. Government officials visiting some of the regions have been making redundant and monotonous speeches that unity is a red line and that all people are ready to die for it. Paradoxically, these media outlets published articles last week that there is fear about the unity of Yemen.

Hey guys! Please do not try to fool us that everything is fine and that the international community is supporting the unity and that is all. The international community realizes the urgent need for a drastic reform and overhauling to get out of the current impasse and salvage the state on the brink of collapse already.

The unity is not an idol that people should worship. It should rather be a source of prosperity for all people. The US embassy statement has been very clear in this respect as it said: "The United States believes that Yemen's unity depends on its ability to guarantee every citizen equal treatment under the law, and the opportunity to participate fully in the political and economic life of the nation."

Without this equal treatment under the law and equal economic and political participation, the unity means nothing to people. It is not something holy but first of all an economic interest.

Again, we heard last week that committees will be sent to Radfan, the battleground of the recent clashes, to assess the needs of the people there. Also big amount of money has been channeled to the presidential committee to go and distribute over there. The political regime is still haunted with this stupid tactic that buying the loyalty of social dignitaries will be the magic to calm down the situation and put off the nerves of angry people in the southern movement. It is not Radfan that is suffering from these legitimate grievances but the entire south in particular and the whole country in general. This tactic of painkilling is no longer effective. The south should be a part of an overall redress to the situation.

President Saleh called on the people for dialogue to address these grievances but we have found the state-media kept on neglecting this call and only focused on mobilizing public opinion against the southern protestors. This does not serve the spirit of dialogue that has become crucial and should be with a broad perspective involving all concerned players.

By and large, the regional and international community support to unity is important. But, this support without internal dialogue to address the problems and gripes of the concerned citizens will not be enough to maintain the unity. Unity and stability of any country is maintained and protected by its own citizens who should feel they are equal before the law and enjoy equal political and economic opportunities to contribute to the building of their own nation. These are the guarantees of maintaining stability and unity for any regime based on corruption, favoritism, and nepotism is prone to collapse sooner or later.

Information minister

The information minister Hasan Allowzi lives these days the best of his time; he is back to his repressive era through the suspension of newspapers and the exercise of censorship. He described last week initiating a special court for media is the greatest achievements of the judiciary. It is such cronies of the president that would lead the country to catastrophe.

Dr. Mohammed Al-Qadhi(mhalqadhi@hotmail.com)
is a Yemeni journalist and columnist.

SKETCHED OPINION



By Hamid

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Yemen Press Review

الجمهورية اليمنية

Al-Sahwa.net, affiliated with the Islah Party, Thursday, May 14, 2009

Top Story

Amnesty International denounces closure of some Yemeni newspapers

Amnesty International has strongly denounced recent measures taken by the Yemeni government against some newspapers, leading to their closure and punishment of their staff, the website reported.

"This clampdown on newspapers appears to be retribution for their coverage of protests and the authorities' reaction to them," said Philip Luther of Amnesty International. "Such actions are an attack on the right to freedom of expression and must end immediately."

Seven newspapers had been confiscated on May 4, following a widely publicized decision by Yemen's Minister of Information Hassan Al-Lawzi.

The government has accused all seven newspapers of expressing views favor-

able to the secession of the south in their coverage of protests in the southern part of the country in April.

The Federation of Arab Journalists, from its side, expressed deep concern over the confiscation of some Yemeni independent newspapers, warning of targeting press and democracy principles in the Arab country.

In a letter sent to President Ali Abdullah Saleh, the chairman of FAJ Ebrahim Nafa'a demanded to put an end to this trend, extend the margin of freedoms in Yemen and stand by the freedom of expression.

FAJ expressed hope that Saleh would end this recent inclination, particularly when he had pledged to support journalists to have good access to information.

The government accuses the suspended papers of running anti-national unity coverage, publishing materials that harm the supreme interest of the nation, spreading hatred and enmity among the Yemeni people and calling for tearing up national unity and fragmenting Yemeni people.

Women Journalists Without Chains (WJWC), a local organization concerned with defending rights of women journalists and press freedoms and chaired by

Tawakul Karaman, a well-know woman journalist, has denounced the ban imposed by the Information Ministry on seven Yemeni independent newspapers.

It described the ban as a deterioration of Yemeni press and a disaster against the freedom of expression, calling on all journalists, activists and NGOs to renew their weekly sit-ins to protest the government trend to set up specialized courts for press-related issues.

According to WJWC, the government alleges that those newspapers are running anti-national unity coverage, publishing material that harms the supreme interest of the nation, spreading hatred and enmity among the Yemeni people and calling for tearing up national unity.

On a side note, the website reported that Prosecution of Press and Publications charged on Saturday some Yemeni newspapers of provoking seditions and turmoil. Yemeni information ministry had banned the printing of seven newspapers for allegedly promoting separatism.

Chief editors of the banned newspapers emphasized that charges against their newspapers are baseless. Naif Hassan, editor-in-chief of Al-Sahwa, said resorting to Judiciary is better than banning

newspapers, and wished that there is just judiciary.

Chairman of the National Organization for Defending Rights and Freedoms, known as HOOD, Mohammad Naji Alaw said the investigations of some Yemeni newspapers are severe blow on Yemen's press and freedom of expression, pointing out that the charges against those newspapers are groundless.



26September.net, affiliated with Yemeni Army, Thursday, May 14, 2009

Top Story

Al-Dhalea citizens make up national body for defending Unity

A national body for defending Yemen's unity was announced to be formed on Tuesday during a meeting attended by number of social figures and senior citizens in Al-Dhalea province, the website reported.

Some national figures were elected to head the body which is comprised of

Abdul Fatah M. Naser, Mansur Tubazah, Hamud Harmal, Ali Abdulah Al-Khadri, Ali Abdulah al-Ga'di, Husam Shaye, Kaed Hasan and Adnan Mohsen.

A statement was issued for the announcement of the body, confirming that establishment of such body came as a sense of responsibility toward those plots threatening homeland and its blessed unity.

The statement stressed that locals in Al-Dalea province support and defend the unity, safety and stability of the nation.

On a side note, the website reported that H.H. Prince Saud Al-Faisal, Saudi Minister of Foreign Affairs has underlined the Kingdom's keenness on the stability and safety of Yemen, lauding the level of ties between Yemen and the kingdom.

Prince Faisal has made the remarks during a press conference attended by Dutch Foreign Minister, during which he said that the kingdom is with Yemen on all tracks, highlighting that Kingdom's stability reflects Yemen's stability and vice versa. "Yemen's Unity is precious and dear to us," the prince went on to say.

Prince Saud Al-Faisal, moreover, added that there is a common vision about

how the relations between Yemen and other neighboring countries should be.

He further continued, "We expect nothing only beneficial to brotherly country, signaling what harms Yemen harms us and what benefits Yemen benefits us."

The Yemeni community in Jeddah city in Saudi Arabia has stressed its firm support for the unity, denouncing the voices that called for sabotage to return the history's wheel of the unity to the past through subversive schemes that violate law and order in the nation.

The community's administrative body has followed up the recent activities instigated by close-minded persons who endangered the homeland's stability and safety, said the community's statement.

The statement added all community's sons slam all activities of sabotage and riots that some provinces witnessed in a bid to split the nation, threatening safety, stability and people's lives.

The statement revealed that the community is indignant for the subversive thoughts and sicken and satanic voices, and therefore firmly supports all reasonable voices and constructive hands so as to stem the delusion's elements from achieving their schemes.

Poverty: The real threat to health

By: Philip Stevens

A major new report from doctors at University College, London, and medical journal The Lancet claims that climate change "is the biggest global health threat of the 21st century." Their solution means permanent recession, more famine and more disease.

Killer heatwaves, insect-borne "tropical" diseases, flooding and hurricanes will affect billions over the next 100 years as global temperatures soar, they say. With this report published on 14 May, doctors are adding their powerful voice to calls for deep cuts in carbon emissions to stabilize global temperatures. But if their aim is actually to improve health—particularly in poor countries—they could hardly be more

wrong.

For starters, the relationship between climate and disease is weaker than claimed. The Lancet report details at length how warmer temperatures will lead to so-called tropical diseases such as malaria moving northwards and to higher altitudes. But this ignores the vast range of human and ecological factors that surround disease.

According to Professor Paul Reiter, an expert on insect-borne diseases and contributor to the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), "there is no evidence that climate has played any role" in malaria. Reiter points out that malaria was endemic in Britain until the second half of the 19th century, when improved agricultural practices, drainage and housing caused a spontaneous decline of the disease because mosquitoes had fewer opportunities to bite peo-

ple—while records show temperatures rising.

The report also claims global warming will lead to more deaths from heat waves as the sick and elderly struggle with high temperatures. But Professor Bill Keatinge, an expert on human physiology at London University, has shown that deaths do increase in the first few days of a heat wave but most of the victims were likely to die shortly anyway. The data show that average mortality actually decreases during the later stages of heat waves.

Moreover, humans have developed a range of ways coping with high temperatures, from adaptation to siestas to air conditioning. Ask the Tuareg.

In fact, cold weather is far more harmful because of the increased risk of respiratory infections, heart attacks and strokes. Britain, for example, with a tem-

perate climate, has only 1,000 heat-related deaths every year, compared with 20,000 cold-related.

The report also claims that millions will die as a result of "extreme weather events" such as hurricanes. But such deaths have actually decreased by 95 per cent since the 1920s, according to calculations by Indur Goklany, who has represented the USA on the IPCC, largely due to better early warning systems, building standards and weather forecasts.

Cutting greenhouse gas emissions, however, would be very bad for human health.

According to calculations by Lombard Street Research in the UK, any global treaty that would stabilise the climate at today's temperatures would cost a total of £8 trillion—45% of the world's current annual economic output, causing permanent economic depression.

Economic growth is an absolute prerequisite for improved health. One study has shown that if economic growth in the developing world had been a mere 1.5% higher in the 1980s, at least 500,000 child deaths could have been prevented.

This is because much of the disease burden in developing countries is a direct result of poverty. Diarrhoea, chest infections from burning wood and dung indoors, water-borne infections and malnutrition are the biggest killers of children, killing millions regardless of any changes in the climate.

Britain eliminated malaria as a side-effect of increasing prosperity: glass windows, separate barns for cattle and better land management, depriving the mosquito of feeding and breeding opportunities. It is no coincidence that malaria is currently confined to the poorest parts of the world, because they are the least able to

afford such improvements.

The doctors' call for cutting carbon emissions would be a betrayal of the sick in the world's poorest regions, because it would undermine the one mechanism—economic growth—which allows people to move beyond the primitive living conditions that encourage disease.

Prosperity also removes the doctors' apocalyptic vision of social turmoil and mass migration as millions flee flood or drought: growth allows adaptation and protection.

If doctors are concerned about the effect of climate on health, they should not advocate hobbling the global economy and preventing the poor from getting richer.

Philip Stevens is director of policy at International Policy Network, a development think-tank based in London.

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**Selection of Consultants
Request for Expression of Interest**
**To Prepare Equipment Lists, technical specifications, bills of quantities,
Estimated cost, Bidding Documents and Supervision for supply of equipment.**

The Government of the Republic of Yemen - Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational (MTEV) has received a grant from the Saudi Fund for Development (SFD) towards equipping the new Technical and Vocational Institutions in (Sana'a Secretariat, Aden, Taiz, Abyan, Lahj, Shabwa, Hadramout, Sa'ada, ALmahara, Sana'a, ALmahweet, ALbaida'a, Hajah and ALhodeidah). In order to complete equipping and furnishing the new Technical and Vocational Institutions, the services of Consultants are required to undertake preparation of the specifications of the Equipment, Furniture, Tools and consumables for the new Technical and Vocational Institutions workshops and Labs as well as the bidding documents and Supervision for supply of equipment. **Which will be financed from the local budget (Government 100%).**

The Consultant assignment will include and not be limited to:-

- ¥ Lists of equipment, furniture, tools, consumables etc for each specialization, with preliminary cost estimate.
- ¥ Detailed lists of equipment, furniture, tools, consumables etc for each specialization, with the final cost estimate, specifications, supported with lay out plans indicating all items distribution for each lab and workshop.
- ¥ Preparation of the final bidding documents prepared after elaborating them based on client comments.
- ¥ Supervision for supply of the equipment and furniture etc from advertisement of the tenders until the completion of supply, examination and receipt of equipments and then installation, operation and training, according to (SFD) Guide lines.

Assignment duration

1. The assignment of the preparing studies will be completed within six months starting from the date of signing the Contract.
2. The assignment of the supervision will be start from advertisement of the tenders until the completion of supply, examination and receipt of equipments and then installation, operation and training.

The Ministry of Technical Education & Vocational Training - Project Implementation Unit of Technical and Vocational Institutions now invites eligible consultants to indicate their interest in providing the services. Interested consultants must provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform the services (brochures, description of similar assignments, experience in similar conditions, availability of appropriate skills among staff, etc.). Consultants may associate to enhance their qualifications.

A Consultant will be selected according to the basis and standards specified in the Executive By-law of Procurement Law and its Manual.

Interested consultants may obtain further information at the address below during office hours 08.00 to 14.00 hours.

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Water and sanitation across the country – Part 4

Managing low rainfall in Aden

By: Khaled Al-Hilaly and Ridwan Al-Saqqaf

As the economic capital of the country Aden prepares itself for the Gulf Cup 2010, the city's authorities are making sure that infrastructure is adequate to receive tens of thousands of football fans from around the region in a year's time. The government in particular plans to dig ten more water wells to support the occasion.

Pumping more water out of the aquifers of Bir Ali or Bir Naser which support the city will enable it to receive all these guests for a few weeks. But, with the level of groundwater declining at a rate of up to a meter a year, digging more wells is perhaps not a good long-term move for water management in the area.

In Aden, the smallest governorate of Yemen, water supply is based entirely on groundwater. As rainfall is the lowest in the whole country according to governmental statistics and its hot climate quickly evaporates any rain that does fall on its lands, this precious source of water is not recharged at the same rate that it is exploited.

While ensuring good access to water and sanitation is very important to develop the city and attract foreign investors, good management of the governorate's remaining water resources is essential, especially in view of further developing the governorate's industry to boost the country's economy.

The city of Aden benefits from a well-developed reticulated water supply and sewage system with high connections rates compared with other governorates, operated by the Local Corporation for Water and Sanitation in Aden which was created as an independent utility in 2000.

Water production increased by 27.3 percent between 1990 and 2007, and subscribers increased by 81.9 percent,



Although rainfall in Aden is very low, the governorate is strategically located on the sea and home to the country's only desalination plant

according to the Local Corporation for Water and Sanitation. By 2008, the office had ensured around 98,000 water subscribers -around 80 percent of the governorate's total population- benefited from its water networks.

And if water distribution is good in Aden compared to the rest of the country, so are sanitation networks. In 2007, there were up to 85,137 subscribers to its sanitation networks, ensuring an estimated coverage of over 65 percent of the population.

To treat the city's wastewater, two main wastewater treatment plants serve most of the city, according to the German Development Bank (KfW). The first is Al-Shaab, constructed in 1970s and extended in 1980s, to serve the Sheikh Othman and Masoura areas of Aden.

The effluent is discharged to a wetlands area of about 50 hectare before draining into the sea port's outer harbor. The wetlands, created and maintained by the effluent flow, are now an area of regional ecological importance, particularly for wading and migratory birds and

as a resource to irrigate fodder by local farmers.

The second wastewater treatment plant, Al-Arish, started operating in 2002 and serves the Crater, Mu'alla, Khormaksar and Tawahi areas. It is located on the coast, 11 km from the city center, and the effluent is currently discharged into the sea.

The German Development Bank (KfW) in cooperation with local governmental authorities is building several sewage networks and pumping stations in Aden, but although sewage from Little Aden is discharged directly into the sea, a wastewater treatment plant has still not been built in the area.

There is still work to be done. The rapid expanding in population and urbanization and the old water pipes in the network are just some of the obstacles to water development in Aden, according to Local Water and Sanitation Office.

Between 2006 and 2010, the office has set out to improve water service in the governorate by increasing the quantity of water produced by regulating operating

hours, maintaining existing water pumps, and stopping random well-drilling.

In particular, the water authority needs to work on stopping the random drilling of water wells by punishing those who drill water holes illegally, according to Abdulaziz Mahyoub, the head of the General Authority of Water Resources (GAWR) in Aden.

"People who violate the law about access to water resources are punished according to the water law of 2002 and its amendments," said Mahyoub. "For example if someone digs a well randomly, the well is filled up and the person is fined."

"But we can't work alone: All the concerned parties like the police, prosecution, the courts, local councils and community should cooperate in water conservation," said Mahyoub, adding that laws and decisions should be enforced to save water from depleting and pollution.

Rationalizing water consumption

Annual rainfall in Aden was 20 times lower than in Ibb in 2006. With climate change now coupled with low rainfall, working together towards good management and long-term planning for Aden's water resources is vital.

Good water management starts with evaluating water consumption in the governorate. Apart from the water used in agriculture to grow fodder, cereals and vegetables—all needing fairly little water compared to more thirsty crops such as qat, water is consumed by households.

The General Establishment for Water and Sanitation in cooperation with the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) is conducting a field survey in Aden, in particular to check the state of water meters and report the number which need replacing, to ensure appropriate readings of water's consumption. The project, which cost YR 60 million, is due to be complete by June 2009.

Once the water consumption is meas-

ured, it is easier to rationalize it. To do this, modern methods of irrigation and water meters for each well to avoid exceeding the maximum water volumes determined by the GAWR are essential.

Growing drought-resistant crops, such as the fodder already widely grown in the area, is also a good step towards clever water consumption.

Continuing century-old traditions of water preservation is very important, according to local water authorities: Expanding rain-fed farming, rehabilitating dams and irrigation canals, and exploitation of the floods flowing on rain seasons are also very important.

"To maintain the groundwater in daily life, we should repair the water system to reduce wasted water, replace the old water meters and control water use in facilities like mosques, schools military camps and hospitals, as well as reduce the quantity of water used in some purposes like washing cars and swimming pools," said Mahyoub.

"We should develop an appropriate water resource policy which includes building of dams, dykes, ponds, reservoirs and tanks," he continued. "In addition, we should re-use treated wastewater coming out of wastewater treatment plants, preserving trees and natural vegetation, encouraging public efforts to establish water projects, establishing more water treatment plants, especially in coastal areas."

Protecting precious water

"Regarding water pollution, we should reducing excessive pumping near the sea to avoid saltwater intrusion and prohibit digging cesspits near eater basins and systems to avoid pollution by sewage," he added.

"We should determining the antacids and fertilizers that pollute water resources, correct the misbehavior of those who throw garbage near or into water basins, and expand water analyzing

to figure out the source of pollution," said Mahyoub.

To raise awareness about the importance of protecting dwindling water resources, a media campaign should spread awareness about the water crisis, its risks and consequences, according to the water official.

Although most of Aden's water comes from wells, the rest already comes via pipes from the neighboring governorates of Abyan and Lahj.

Presenting the best methods of rationalizing water and enlist the help of religious authorities such as Imams in educating the public on preserving the water supply.

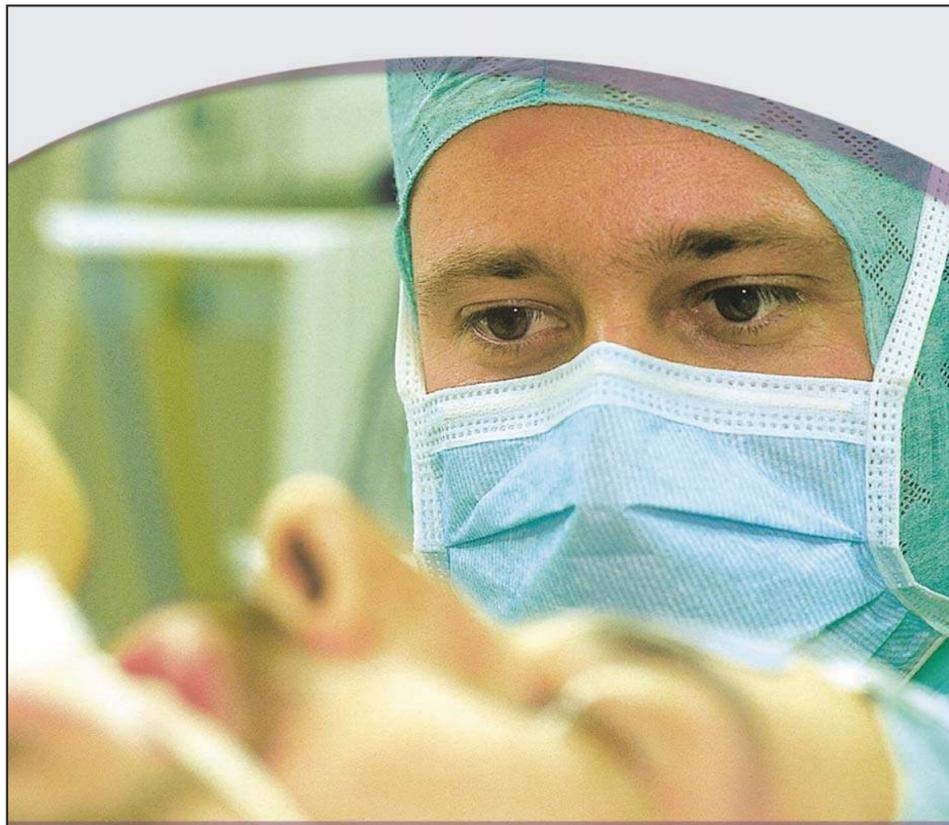
The issue should be included in school curriculum to make the next generation aware of the importance of good management of water, he said. Non-governmental organizations, farmers associations, local councils, sports clubs and schools should carry out continuous awareness campaigns by using different means like brochures, booklets, posters, articles and cartoons.

Desalination as a last resort

Aden's strategic position on the coast means that, if worse came to the worse, a desalination plant could be built on the coastline fuelled by either petrol or solar power, to extract the salt from the seawater and supply the city with more water.

The country's only desalination plant was built in Aden during the British occupation. The desalinated water produced reached 25.1 million m3 in 2006, an increase of 151 percent compared to 1989, contributing to the water supply of Aden city, according to Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

"One of the alternatives for the next ten years is desalination," said Mahyoub, head of National Water Resources Authority in Aden. "Studies in this area are not complete, and it is an investment project so the private sector is important."



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The Thirteenth Annual Women's Conference for Peace in the Middle East Reconciliation: A first step to lasting peace

By: Yemen Times Staff

Throughout time women have been leaders, often practicing a behind-the-scenes form of leadership known as 'soft leadership.' Achieving peace through reconciling first is the mission taken on by today's women leaders, feeling confident that they can bring reconciliation in the true sense to the world.

"Lasting peace can only come from respecting human rights, especially for women and children," said guest speaker Mr. Ilias Libers, Executive Director of the Hellenic National Committee for UNICEF - Greece at the inauguration session of the Thirteenth Conference for Peace in the Middle East.

The conference was organized by Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP) International and by Japan to "look more pragmatically about the issue of reconciliation and how we can achieve it, which is the foundation for all the other steps towards peace," said Carolyn Handschin, Deputy Director of the United Nations office of the WFWP.

As early as 1987, pioneers from Japan started the Asian Women Federation for Peace that expanded in 1992 into the International Federation for World Peace. Today it has nearly 100 national chapters in nine different world regions, and all its staff are volunteers. The tradition of annual conferences for Middle East peace started in 1997.

Dr. Lan Young Moon, president of WFWP International, commented that we are all internationalizing through a multicultural and multi-faith era. The changes are more rapid and more complicated in today's environment because of globalization.

Participants agreed that the problem is the ruling leadership, and so the problem is in the power in the hands of men. However, men are not bringing peace to this global era which calls for diversity and more global thinking. This is a time for us women to participate wholeheartedly in this world. We need to change our mentality that women are just on the sidelines and not in the mainstream.

Noor Baabad, Assistant Deputy Minister for Social Care, and Nadia Al-Sakkaf, Editor in Chief of Yemen



Forty five women from across the Middle East and East Asia gathered in Vravrona, Greece to prove that women can be better peace makers than men setting grudges aside and identifying common grounds even in the most difficult environments and political circumstance.

Times, joined 45 leading women from 12 countries across the Middle East, Japan and Korea for a two-day Women's Conference for Peace in the Middle East in Vravrona Greece between 12 and 14 May 2009.

Zoe Bennett, vice president of the WFWP of the Middle East and North Africa region, said that there is suffering all over the world, particularly in the Middle East. "We have to break through the barriers of prejudice and stereotyping. This is the UN's year for reconciliation, and in order to make big changes, changes within ourselves have to come first."

"Children face violence in the Middle East in their everyday life," Ilias Liebers said. "UNICEF considers the Middle East region to be highly important because of unacceptable conditions. Children everywhere have suffered for too long and are being brought up in unhealthy mental circumstances due to ongoing wars, especially girls because they suffer from more discrimination. More than half of Jordanian children are subjected to some sort of violence in schools."

Discussing the role of UN and other international agencies it is time to join forces to fight violence, and we must begin by recognizing women and children as a priority. They are rarely talked about except as victims, yet they can be catalysts for peace. No effort to promote peace can succeed unless we provide protection for vulnerable

groups such as women and children. We need to promote skills, attitudes and values to bring out behavioral changes that would eventually allow critical thinking, coping, and decision making skills that will lead to peace.

Sonia Billard Fattah, coordinator for women's issues and manager of the on-line education system at the UN Institute for Disarmament Research, said, "we have to dismantle any barriers that we might have and start as individuals and members of a movement in order to establish true reconciliation in the world."

Aida Al-Maainah, wife of the UAE Ambassador in Korea said that the Islamic greeting Assalam Alikum, or 'peace be upon you,' explaining that Islam is the culture of peace which is evident in its expression of greeting. She commented that there are some champions for peace and development in the region, such as Sheikhah Fatima bin Mubarak who works with women, refugees, those with physical hardships and victims of armed conflicts with no regards to religion, nationality or race. She was selected as the Mother of the UAE in 2005.

"At the family level, women can play an important role in peace building, making the house a place for peace and allowing family and visitors to feel peaceful," said Al-Maainah.

Rihab Ghazal, lecturer at the American University Cairo, explained that reconciliation is the highest form

of dialogue. However, before that we have to value dialogue and communication itself, and build the ability to communicate and engage in such dialogue to achieve reconciliation.

Education is the way to do this and it can be through either formal or informal education. It can foster attitudes of tolerance and encourage the responsibility not only to reach peace but to sustain peace.

"We have to raise our children properly and change the curriculum to adjust and tolerate others, otherwise we will never get there," said Dr. Moza Al-Maliki, a therapist and writer from Qatar and a candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Judith Karp, former General Attorney from Israel, brought up the late Sami Adwan as an example, who was the President of the Palestinian and Israeli History Research Institute, one of the few organizations created to reach common ground between Palestinian and Israeli people. "We have a conflicting historical identity narrative. And we need to come to terms with our past in order to advance into a peaceful future," she said.

Stella Savvides, president of the United Democrats Women Organization in Cyprus, explained that the Middle East is one of the regions that has always seen conflict throughout the years.

"Nicosia is the only capital in the world that is divided. I must show my

passport if I want to move from the south to the north side of Cyprus, as if I am travelling from one country to another. For 35 years, the people of Cyprus have been separated. We don't want to forget our history but rather we want to build on it. We must keep in mind that we all are Cypriots and that we want to live together. We must use music, games, cultural events and plays to bring young people closer to each other."

Oya Talat, a Cypriot from the Turkish Women Solidarity Council, said that culture determines race rather than race determining culture. "If we want our world to be less problematic, we need to make small successful steps rather than committing big failures," she said. "Come on women, be more actively involved. We need this, and the role of women in reconciliation is important. Since women are not directly involved in the cause of war, we can be more objective in reaching peaceful solutions."

Avital Shapria-Shabirow is the Director of the International Relations Department of the Histadrut-General Federation of Labor in Israel, which is the largest labor organization in Israel with over 7,000 members from many different religions. "It is based on equality, solidarity and brotherhood," she said. "Lasting peace can only be built on genuine relationships among people, and we need to build mutual trust and understanding and recognize

the suffering of all sides in any conflict."

She added that in war there are no winners and that people should not let the political situation affect relations. Members of the union set the example of how Arabs and Israelis can work together in peace. "As trade unions, we meet and discuss the work problems. We signed an agreement in June 2008 with Palestinian Transport Union and solved the financial disputes. We translate the work rights into Arabic so that Arab employees which exceed a million persons working for Israeli employers in West Bank settlements understand their benefits and get them from the Israeli government such as pensions. An emergency hotline was created for those who cannot cross the borders so that they can be helped by Histadrut, which will assist the workers crossing the separation wall and come to work."

Noor Mohammed Baabad, Deputy Minister of Work and Social Affairs, commented that "Yemen has recognized the strength of reconciliation, both in modern and in ancient times. During the 1960s, it was very important to support the revolution. So many meetings and conferences took place after the 1962 revolution faced serious obstacles, and without reconciliation, none of these meetings would have been successful. Afterwards, it was equally as important if not more so to support reconciliation when North and South Yemen unified under one republic. Even after this achievement, people still faced illiteracy, poverty, ignorance, revenge and weapons proliferation in a difficult environment. Reconciliation is still important and needed."

Dr. Moza Almaliki said that reconciliation from within the most important step. When a person is at peace with him or herself, reconciliation with others is easy and there is a better chance to achieve it. The person will then have the flexibility to adapt to the other and accept his or her culture, ideas and religion. If this is achieved, the world will be a better place for live in. Discussions from the sessions concluded that women could and should do it as they engage in common cultural and civil society activities. It is important for the world to understand what a great idea reconciliation is and that it should be used to bring peace.

TV Fatwas, Sy Hersh and New Vehicles dominate Arab Media Forum

By: Magda Abu Fadil
www.huffingtonpost.com

Over 80 satellite channels are airing fatwas, or Islamic edicts, aimed at believers in the Arab and Muslim worlds, with religious leaders bemoaning the credibility of media that spew venom and incite violence, participants at a Dubai conference were told this week.

"Media privatization has led to the proliferation of outlets and chaos on the air," lamented Jameel Al Theyabi, managing editor of the pan-Arab daily Al Hayat's Saudi Arabia and Gulf Cooperation Council states section at the 8th Arab Media Forum.

He said the most dangerous aspect of the trend was presenting ill-qualified, self-appointed experts to provide advice to the uninitiated.

Worse than TV were control-free new media such as email and mobile phones for issuing fatwas from unknown sources, Theyabi said.

He noted that ignorant preachers play with simpletons' minds, mislead youth, and recruit suicide bombers and terrorists through this new fatwa industry and that the umma, or Islamic nation, must get a grip on the situation.

The comments, during a workshop that preceded the forum's opening, grouped Islamic religious leaders who



Jamil Al Theyabi and Al Jazeera anchor Khadija Ben Genna discuss TV fatwas.

debated the hot potato issue that has prompted the Organization of the Islamic Conference's Fiqh (doctrine) Academy to detail the conditions and manners of issuing fatwas.

The proliferation of fatwa channels has also spawned celebrity preachers, akin to their televangelist counterparts in the West, who cash in on followers' devotion, participants were told.

"Fatwa shows are the first line of defense against violence and terrorism," argued Fahad Al Shimeimri, chairman of Al Majd TV in Saudi Arabia, adding that his station's preachers were qualified, understood the stakes, could communicate with audiences and were able to handle calls.

New media have allowed preachers to enter people's homes, giving rise to

sharp competition aimed at drawing audiences and viewers, said Abdel Hamid Ansari, a professor of Islamic Studies at Qatar University.

In addition to fame and stardom, fatwas have turned into a lucrative business, he said.

At another session, Pulitzer Prize-winner Seymour Hersh packed the main conference hall with a talk on investigative journalism and lauded Arab media for reporting on issues neglected (intentionally or otherwise) by U.S. print and broadcast outlets.

"The [American] press turned cheerleaders and did not challenge the WMD [weapons of mass destruction] story," he said of former President George W. Bush's war in Iraq. "Bush helped me in my career and I hope [US President Barack] Obama doesn't."

But he cautioned that Obama was falling in the same trap as Bush and that nothing, except the leadership, had changed with regard to Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Hersh praised Dubai for being at the cutting edge and urged Arab journalists to push for good governance but said an investigative journalist was like a dead rat brought to a party.

"Nobody likes us, but if you don't do what you do, you can't change things," he said, adding that the Internet had changed the face of journalism.

The Web's increasing dominance and print media's accelerating demise in the West, don't seem to have adversely affected newspapers in the Arab World where growth is still key, experts said.

Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have seen more newspapers come onto the print scene in parallel with the rapid increase of online media and portals drawing ever more readers and advertisers in the region.

With the emergence of a knowledge society, new media and platforms are increasingly contributing to user-generated content and providing average citizens with vehicles to supplement traditional media reports.

"What's new isn't just media but the handling of news, and anyone can be a content creator," said Sultan Al Bazei, CEO of Saudi Arabia's Attariq Communication.

That scared more traditional journalists at the forum who feared editors, fact checkers and any modicum of ethical standards would disappear altogether.

They also raised questions about the credibility of citizen journalism and whether video clips shot on mobile phones could be considered news.

In another twist, representatives of foreign TV channels broadcasting in Arabic came under close scrutiny with detractors questioning their aims and messages.

Panelists from the BBC, France24, Russia Today and U.S. government-financed Al Hurra defended their stations, insisting they were not mouthpieces for the governments that funded them.

It followed charges of "foreign political agendas" permeating those media.

"We don't represent French policy or the French view but a French perspective," said Nahida Nakad, deputy editor of France 24, an all-news French channel that recently increased its Arabic-language programming to compete in a crowded broadcast landscape long dominated by the BBC.

Later a very heated discussion erupted between the news heads of Al Arabiya and Al Jazeera channels who argued over Israel's war on Gaza and their respective linguistic differences over coverage of that conflict.

"Martyr is a religious term, I cannot

issue a judgment on the dead person because I am not God," said Al Arabiya's Nabil Khatib during the Gaza session, to the dismay of Ahmad Al Sheikh of Al Jazeera who said his station's hyped coverage aimed to halt conflicts and victims' suffering.

Khatib said he must consider his audience despite the old adage that what bleeds leads, and that a lot of news reaching newsrooms during conflicts was misleading.

Other sessions dealt with the worldwide financial crisis and the media's handling, or mishandling, thereof.

The harsh reality of online media taking over worldwide means funders' mentality has to change and advertisers will seek "fast fooders," participants heard experts say.

A key question raised at the forum was whether industry was willing to invest in new content and delivery systems. Conferees agreed on the need for extensive training to upgrade and update journalists' skills.

The two-day forum organized by the Dubai Press Club (www.dpc.org.ae) drew over 600 people from the Arab world and beyond.

It concluded with the highly touted Arab Journalism Awards handed to print reporters, editors and publishers from across the region.

The forum and awards are supported by Dubai's ruler, Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid Al Maktoum.

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First official directory for Yemeni businesses

By: Nadia Al-Sakkaf

In an attempt to improve business communication and promote investment in Yemen, the Federation of Yemen Chambers of Commerce and Industry launched the official website of Yemen's business directory at www.business.ye.

Yemen Business is a registered company in the Yemen Chamber of Industry and Commerce and was established in Jan 2009. It specializes in E-Business and International Business Solutions as a leading gateway to the world of commerce and communications. The long term vision of the establishment is to develop new marketing tools, find out new solutions to reach target customers, and take advantage of modern technology.

We aim at developing an interactive bridge between Yemen's promising grow-



ing market and the rest of the world, introducing its potentials and features to all who are looking to do business in Yemen," said Wael Al-Taweel, general director of Business Yemen.

The directory is designed in 14 different languages and lists companies as either exporters and manufacturers or service

providers. It includes 39 categories listing around 95 Yemeni companies. Although it was just launched three weeks ago, the site is already receiving around ten applications per day.

Moreover, the directory is sponsored by a number of official agencies such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Trade and commerce and this allows more facilitation to member companies especially with regards to procedures relating to the various ministries.

The next step would be to expand the services

Companies who wish to be enlisted must pay a fee that ranges from US 265 to 827 dollars depending on the size of the company and its status. Al-Taweel explained that starting companies are given some discount to help them establish themselves in the Yemeni market. Registering companies are granted eight

advertisement spaces in the site of 198 pixels each.

By joining the directory, in addition to being listed in the largest Yemeni business search engine of manufacturers and importers, companies can send enquiries to multiple suppliers without filling out a new profile each time and can receive enquiries and offers from business.ye visitors or subscribers.

The difference between this site and any other is that this is the official site of the Federation and in order for any company to be listed we must verify its authenticity and licensed in order to maintain the directory's credibility and protect any interested company or individual wanting to connect with the directory from fraud companies," explained Al-Taweel. Moreover, there is a provision for having an email account and an online profile for members through which networking is facilitated and members get updates of business news and opportunities in Yemen.

The directory has a 24 hour customer service hotline at (967) 711 94 7575 through which enquires can be made.



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