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**Schools dropouts: Economics, neglect, or apathy?**



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**Looking for a Common Beat**



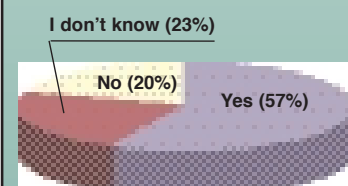
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**Overcrowding at Al-Thawra Hospital Cardiac Center**

## Readers' Voice

Last edition's question:

Do you think terrorizing the remaining Yemeni Jews is an attempt to deport them to Israel or the United States?



This edition's question:

After refugees were found on a forsaken island accidentally by the coastguard, do you think that there are more refugees left astray on other deserted islands?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Go to our website at: [yementimes.com/#poll](http://yementimes.com/#poll) and have your voice heard

## Armed forces clash with Al-Huthi rebels

By: Raidan Al-Saqqaf

SAADA, Jan 28 — Local sources in the governorate of Saada said that the Yemeni armed forces confronted a group affiliated to Zaidi-Shiite Leader Badr al-Deen al-Houthi in Mathaab village located in the southern part of the governorate. The exchange of fire resulted in over 26 casualties involving soliders, while the number of casualties among Al-Huthi followers has not been confirmed as the clash continues.

The armed clash between the two sides disrupted a cease-fire agreement signed between the al-Houthi followers and local authorities in 2005. Mr. AbdulMalik Al-Huthi, who is the son of Badr al-Deen al-Houthi, confirmed that the arbitration committee set to solve the previous disputes with the authorities has been notified of the attack. He warned that this attack has violated the cease-fire agreement and will spark violence in the governorate. He also added that there is no clear reason for the attacks against civilians in the area.

Al-Huthi further noted this attack came after his followers received leaflets which target the beliefs and foundations of the Zaidi Islamic sect, adding that residents of Mathaab area are being targeted and discriminated against because of their religious beliefs and affiliation with Zaidi cleric Al-Huthi.

The attack on the Mathaab village came a few days after 45 Yemeni Jews evacuated their homes in Saada upon receiving threats from al-Houthi followers, an issue which raised concern around the situation of Yemeni Jews living in Saada.

Sources close to Al-Huthi group, which is also known as the Believing Youth, indicate that they have nothing against the Jewish community and that al-Houthis did not threaten them or their livelihood in any way, adding that the government is using different tactics to distress them and use this problem to suppress them even further.

According to local sources in the province, the threatened Jews are still residing in a Hotel in Saada city and have not yet been able to return to their homes for fear of losing their lives as the person who sent the threatening letter has not been identified.

## Yemen, Syria accords aim to foster economic projects

By: Yasser Al-Mayasi

SANA'A, Jan. 29 – Activities of the Joint Yemeni-Syrian Higher Committee's seventh round are wrapping up today in the Syrian capital of Damascus. Both governments reached numerous economic agreements during the session.

Meeting participants discussed several issues and agreements of mutual interest to both Arab states. Yemeni Prime Minister Abdulqader Bajammal co-chaired the event with his Syrian counterpart, Mohammed Naji Etri. Many Syrian and Yemeni ministers and senior officials also attended.

The session followed results of discussions in Aden between President Ali Abdullah Saleh and Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad.

During its meeting, the committee discussed 21 agreements, protocols, executive programs and memorandums in areas including technical and vocational education, fisheries, broadcasting, youth and sports, education, environmental protection, health, judiciary and social affairs and labor. The two sides also signed an agreement on mutual cooperation between both countries' news agencies.

Bajammal emphasized the closeness of Yemeni-Syrian ties and the mutual history of both nations. "The good relations between the two brotherly countries are interpreted from jointly-implemented projects and true partnership in the economy, development and culture, which help expand the base of mutual interest for both nations," he explained.

He noted that establishing good relations requires developing the methods and mechanisms of joint work and investment at both the government and private sector levels. Bajammal stressed putting into practice the results reached by the Yemeni-Syrian summit late last year in Aden and co-chaired by both nations' leaders.

The Yemeni prime minister called for establishing a multipurpose company in the area of sea transportation to include Yemen, Syria, Jordan and other countries in the Red Sea to develop economic cooperation and overcome any persistent difficulties in sea transportation. Additionally, he urged establishing banking transactions to assist in the process of mutual investments.

investments.

Syrian Prime Minister Etri expressed his hope for driving forward the process of mutual cooperation between Syria and Yemen and improving it in order to meet the demands of both states and their people.

Etri ascertained that Yemen has historic ties with Syria dating back several years. "The signed agreements are due to help foster investment projects in both states. The most prominent of the agreements and protocols concern trade cooperation, investment protection, industry, culture, health, agriculture and transportation," he concluded.

Areas of health, industry, agriculture, transportation and energy topped the discussions' agenda.

## Businessmen demand clear tax and investment policy

By: Mohammed Bin Sallam

SANA'A, Jan 28 — Hundreds of Yemeni businessmen, investors and merchants congregated at the Sana'a Chamber of Commerce in solidarity with Yemeni businessman Jamal Al-Mutareb who was subjected to a harsh media campaign from September 26, the official newspaper of the Yemeni armed forces.

September 26 harshly attacked Al-Mutareb in response to his statements to independent and opposition newspapers.

Al-Mutareb expressed his fears of the consequences for the government's policies related to economy and investment with specific reference to the General Sales Tax.

"Yemen still performs badly in attracting investments, and the problem lies with an administrative system that is still clinging to the past rather than shifting into a reality which demands market liberation and an encouragement of investment in Yemen," according to Al-Mutareb.

He feels that Yemen should be one of the most suitable lands for investment, but that the administrations use government sponsored media to attack and criminalize dissent and that makes Yemen a trying environment for investors.

The chairman of Sana'a Chamber of Commerce, Mahfouz Bashamakh, criticized September 26 for its unjustified attack against Al-Mutareb and he considers the attack to be rashness on the newspaper's part.

Bashamakh also revealed that the finance minister, Saif Al-Asali, directed specialists not to implement the cabinet's resolution to suspend the sales tax. He also said that the presidential directives were a shock among businessmen.



Mahfouz Bashamakh

According to Al-Jumhuria newspaper, Al-Asali also noted that President Saleh, as well as ordering the implementation of the sales tax law, ordered the adjustment of income tax to become 20 percent instead of 25. He also said there was a reconsideration of the income law relating to Zakat, investment exemptions, and customs. However, Al-Asali's statement was not published in other official newspapers.

Bashamakh maintained that the private sector refuses the sales tax collection, hinting that businessmen could have a different position in terms of lowering prices according to the Cabinet's resolution.

"The merchants will not implement the Cabinet's resolutions until they are complete," said Bashamakh.

He further added that businessmen were ready to lower prices after settling upon an agreed resolution with government and ministers. However, the new information seemed frustrating and they are awaiting the outcome.

Bashamakh said it was supposed to be the prime minister speaking about the application of such tax and we feel surprised that the finance minister would use the president's name in this manner.

Continued on page 2

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## In brief

**Aden****German musical team in Aden**

Jan. 28 — A German artists team visiting Yemen organized a musical party at the German Consulate in Aden City. German Diplomat Christen Hoken said the musical team sang some songs and played classical music for 4 days within the framework of the Yemeni-German cultural cooperation.

**Marine survey for Yemen's coastal areas**

Jan. 28 — Yemeni Harbor Authority's survey section is carrying out a marine survey of Yemen's coasts. A marine source in Aden port stated that this marine activity is being carried out by a Yemeni specialized boat outfitted with survey electronic sets such as Atlas, another one working through satellites and a number of marine sets. The survey aims at setting marine maps and studying the depths in targeted areas as well as defining sailing areas and ship positions.

**Taiz****Taiz official meets Egyptian ambassador**

Jan. 28 — Secretary General of Taiz Local Council Mohammed Al-Haj met the Egyptian ambassador to Yemen Mohammed Awadh to review a number issues related to small enterprises, cultural activities and joint developmental investments. The ambassador showed his embassy's willingness to activate a cultural role for Egypt in Taiz and encourage Egyptian investments in the governorate.

**Armed clash injures two people**

A clash over a small land in Jamal Street, Taiz, between Hizam Moghli's sons and Nasser Al-Maqtari injured two of them on Saturday. The clash occurred when Moghli's sons armed with small arms were trying to wall the land and Al-Maqtari called his people to prevent them. The injured people were rushed to the hospital and police arrested some while others managed to run away. According to sources, the incident was caused because the court has not resolved the land's disputed ownership for 20 years.

**Hadramout****7th festival for traditional games**

Jan. 27 — Hadramout governorate concluded the festival for traditional games in Seyun district on Friday. The festival was showing and renewing interest in different traditional games and identify the new generation with their public heritages. The festival included poetic works by some public poets and other activities.

**Lahj****Cement factory project in Al-Musaimir**

Jan. 28 — Members of the local Lahj government visited the cement factory project in Wadi Saem, Al-Musaimir district. They inspected the ongoing structural works of the \$200 million factory being built by the Assaeed Contractions Company. The factory is expected to provide 1700 jobs, 90 percent Yemeni workers. Production is scheduled to start during 2007.

**Sana'a****Yemen, UNESCO study cultural cooperation**

Jan. 28 — Minister of Culture Khalid Al-Rowaishan held a discussions with the UNESCO's director of cultural heritage sector, Loran Storth. The discussions covered means pertaining to reinforcing the current cultural collaboration between Yemen and UNESCO, particularly concerning Yemeni historical sites included within the Human Heritage List. Al-Rowaishan said the ministry's plan for the coming 3 years is to reinforce and activate its role in different cultural fields.

## Refugees found on forsaken island

By: Amel Alariqi

SANA'A, Jan. 28 — Hundreds of illegal African immigrants were found on an isolated Yemeni island on Thursday, said coast guards official.

"We rescued 236 African Immigrants that were found in Al-Aziza island where is located in Ras Amran area near Aden coast" Said the official who wants to remain anonymous.

He explained that there were 140 Somalis including 104 Somalis men, 30 women, and six children, in additions to 96 Ethiopians including 73 men and 23 women.

He pointed out that all the Somalis were handed over to the office of UN refugee agency in Yemen. Whereas, the Ethiopians were handed over to the concerned authorities of immigration, to be repatriated to their country.

"They were lucky that we found them, as this island so far from the coast," he confirmed, referring that the smugglers seem to have new methods to discard illegal immigrants.

"Mostly the smugglers throw the immigrants from their small boats to the sea 100-150 Km far from the cost, and most of them do not survive. However this time the smugglers offloaded them

in this remote island to face their fate" he commented.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees UNHCR , more than 27,000 people from Somalia and Ethiopia have risked their lives to cross the Gulf of Aden to Yemen in rickety smugglers' boats during 2006. They expect more displacement of Somali citizens if conditions in their country are not be stabilized.

n this regard, UNHCR and the United Nations World Food Program( WFP ) in Yemen announced that they have developed a contingency plan to respond to possible arrival of new refugees.

The two agencies have signed on Tuesday, in WFP office, a Joint Plan of Action for their operations in Yemen. "To facilitating coordination at the field level, the Plan of Action has been an opportunity for the two agencies to develop strategies and mechanisms to monitor the refugee situation and their repatriation or integration." Said a press release issued from the UN Information Center in Sana'a.

"This Plan is a precious tool to guide our staff in the field as well as our Headquarters to improve assistance to the refugees we serve" said Adel Jasmin, UNHCR Representative in Yemen.

Under existing arrangements, UNHCR provides refugees with shelter and non-food items such as jerry cans, blankets, tents, plastic sheets, sop, stoves, kitchen sets, mattresses and sanitary materials for women. UNHCR also provides help in implementing health and education activities. Whereas WFP provides food assistance to around 16,000 refugees on monthly basis, including the refugees' children who are attending the basic schools at Kharaz and Basateen camps. WFP also assists malnourished children, pregnant and lactating mothers attending Mother and Child Care centers MCC). In addition, WFP provides three days rations as wet food to refugees upon arrival at Mayfa'a reception center.

Referring to the Memorandum of Understanding signed between WFP, UNICEF and WHO in May 2006, Dr. El Kouhene added, "this is the second time in less than a year that strong operational agencies in Yemen sign a document committing them to intensify their cooperation and jointly delivery".

There are currently over 88,000 registered refugees in Yemen, including some 84,000 Somalis, but it is estimated that there are hundreds of thousands more in the country.

## New center at Sana'a University aims to improve education methods

By: Nisreen Shadad

Sana'a University inaugurated on Tuesday the University Education Development Center to be in charge of academic standards, such as the quality of teaching and learning, and on Wednesday launched its first symposium on university education quality assurance.

The purpose of the program is to develop academic programs which are in line with new educational developments in the world. The center consists of four units: Evaluation and Quality Assurance, Educational Technology, University Teaching and Programs Development, and Research, Materials Development and Translation. These units are assigned to Mahuob Anam, assistant professor of Curriculum and Instruction, Yehia Al-Shehari, assistant professor of Educational Technology, Radman Saeed, professor of Educational Mathematics and Ayid Sharyan, professor of English Language and Literature.

The center is interested in higher education, quality assurance, total quality management, academic accreditation, academic standards, new trends in higher education, concept of the university,

university teaching, academic leadership, and qualities of a university professor.

"We are really in need of changing and developing some of the curricula since there are various faculties that don't teach practical research, and others have an impractical curriculum or unqualified teachers...So they have knowledge a but lack the essential skills such as using the Internet, communication, presenting a lesson and academic research," Asma'a Al-Subae, a teacher in Al-Nahdha school and a graduate student from the faculty of education.

"When teaching, I feel I have no idea of the ways of preparing the lessons. Each teacher has a different way of preparing the lesson, although we graduated from the same college," she explained.

Sharyan, the professor of English, expects that such a center will effect change since this project began two years ago.

"The intended goal is to have a radical change in Sana'a University education as a model for developing education in all Yemeni universities, as well as a change in the traditional teaching and learning systems at the universities. In addition, there will be a change in the

outdated teaching methods, outdated educational technology and outdated evaluation methods to modern universities," Sharyan added.

Many students are not satisfied with the curriculum.

"When I studied in the university, I studied something a far cry from society's needs. Some curricula are good, however we need to improve the teachers' performance," Al-Subae said.

"Some curricula involve old information and theories with no importance or value nowadays. It is good to know a historical background but not to focus on it," said Ebtehal Al-Aghbari.

The University Education Development Center currently implements a vital development project of evaluating the university programs at different faculties. This project is immediate and essential for bridging the gap between the existing university programs at different faculties that were not reviewed or developed for years, and is necessary to measure up to other universities in the world. The project mainly focuses on revising and developing the undergraduate programs according to a systematic and scientific way through a carefully-planned process that spans from 2006 through 2009.

## Prime minister's security allegedly attacks reporter

SANA'A, Jan. 28 — The Yemeni Journalists Syndicate condemned on Wednesday the assault and harassment of journalist Mohamed Al-Ghubari, office director of the Emeriti Al-Bayan newspaper.

Al-Ghubari was attacked along with three other journalists allegedly by the prime minister's bodyguards on Tuesday morning as the four pressmen were trying to enter the cabinet building to cover a press conference between Yemeni Prime Minister Abdulqader Bajammal and his Jordanian counterpart.

In an appeal to the prime minister, YJS demanded investigating the assault that violates the simplest principles of press freedom and human rights.

Al-Ghubari said he was dragged by the guards as he tried to enter the building to cover the news conference.

"The prime minister's bodyguards' assault on a journalist means that the government officials consider journal-

ists as the enemies who uncover their weaknesses. These officials order guards to harass and attack journalists, Al-Ghubari commented.

He urged the prime minister to interrogate the perpetrators for attacking the journalists who were invited to cover the conference.

Deputy President of YJS Sa'eed Thabet Sa'eed strongly condemned the repeated assaults against journalists. He said this is an unacceptable phenomenon that degrades the role of journalism and shows no respect for human rights and dignity.

Thabet clarified that Yemeni journalists have repeatedly been subjected to abuse, harassment and attacks by authorities. "YJS always insist on punishing assailants and enemies of the press, but its demands remain unmet," he continued.

Thabet suggested that perpetrators be taken to court to stand trial for attacking journalists who were on assignment.

## Landslide kills two people

RAYMA, Jan 28 — Two people were killed on Friday in a landslide that occurred in Maswar village, Rayma government, as they tried to move a rock while hunting for a wild rabbit.

The two men died on the spot, and no relief efforts by the authorities were made inspite of informing the authorities of the incident. Local council member for the area Mr. Ali Al-Muradi called on the villagers in Maswar to be more careful as most rocks are subject to fall any time from the highlands overlooking their houses following rains that fell for eight continuous days last month.

Al-Muradi also called on concerned authorities to take necessary measures to avoid the occurrence of similar incidents.

The department for geological screening affiliated to the Ministry of Oil and Minerals has warned of such landslides nationwide and especially in the northwestern region of the middle highlands, as that area is of a rocky and fragile nature, and called on citizens to inspect their whereabouts and the areas surrounding their villages for any abnormal cracks in the area.

On January 16 this year, two landslides in the main road leading to the Al-



Satellite image of Yemen with landslide areas indicated.

Haymah Al-Dhakhlyha caused the area to be inaccessible and prevented more than 55,000 people from reaching other areas and governorates. The slides also destroyed more than 66,000 km of agricultural land.

In December 2005, about 120 people died in a landslide that took place in Al-Dhafeer Village and 12 houses were totally destroyed.

## Yemen gets millions to fight malaria

SANA'A, Jan. 27 — The Gulf Cooperation Council Health Minister agreed on Wednesday to grant Yemen \$17 million to combat malaria.

The grant, which is a part of a plan aimed to eliminate malaria from the Arabian Peninsula, came at the end of the annual conference of GCC Health Ministers which was held last week in Kuwait.

The minister of public health and population and head of the Yemen delegation, Abdul Karim Yahya Rasae, Yemen will work towards making the Arabian Peninsula free of malaria in coordination with World Health Organization.

According to health officials malaria is one of the most serious health problems in Yemen. Approximately 60 percent of the population live in areas with a malaria presence. It is estimated that the annual malaria cases in Yemen range between 800,000 and 900,000. However, WHO said that the number of reported cases in 2005 was only 200,560 which is reflection of poor malaria awareness.

The Ministry of Health said that Yemen had made progress in its fight against the disease. On Socotra the rate

of infection of malaria fell from 36 percent to 1 percent, whereas the rate of infection in Tihamah region was 46 percent in 1998, and it dropped to 11 percent in 2003. But WHO insist that Yemen is still one of most malaria-infected countries in the Middle East.

Low coverage for public health services and the National Malaria Control Program is still weak in terms of human resources and infrastructure and the high percentage of misdiagnosis are among other factors that lead to malaria in Yemen, said WHO.

According to the WHO report, Yemen managed to control this disease successfully in 1980s. However, Yemen was hard hit in 1998 after an extremely heavy rain season. The number of annual cases during that period doubled from 1.5 million to three million, with mortality rate between 15,000 and 30,000.

In 2001, Yemen with the cooperation of WHO established its National Malaria Control Program whose strategy includes elements such as early diagnosis and prompt treatment, awareness and an information system and up of these reducing malaria mortality by 75 percent by 2010.



Yemeni and German journalists during their visit to Dar Al-Hajar, Wadi Dhahr- Sana'a to discover the monuments.

a greater role in promoting the country's tourism since tourism promotion abroad doesn't go on in an organized way," she noted.

German journalists also criticized people in charge of organizing Yemeni exhibitions abroad, adding the government sent people who are not specialized in tourism, and they cannot respond to tourism inquiries by exhibition visitors. This lack creates a negative picture of Yemen and prevents enthusiastic people from visiting Yemen. "The government has to play an important role in conveying a true picture of Yemen and help foreigners know about the country, particularly as tourism depends mostly on promotion and marketing. Yemen's unique topography and climate help attract visitors throughout the year," the team explained.

Over the past years, Yemen has received a large number of German tourists while people concerned with tourism attribute such a fact to the deep Yemeni-German relations that demon-

strated the ideal example of friendship. The Yemeni-German relations date back more than 35 years and they experienced fruitful cooperation reaching different political, economic and cultural areas.

The European country has worked on boosting Yemen's development and reviving its economy by extending support through organizations contributing to implementing various important projects.

As part of its survey, the New York Times Daily selected Yemen as a top tourist destination for 2007 for the tourist discovery trips.

The New York Times reported that Yemen has become more safe than before and it has unique sites and an attractive location for the Europeans who frequently visit the country.

In 2006, the country's returns from tourism exceeded YR 850 billion, compared to only YR 46 billion in 2005. In its annual report, the Ministry of Tourism indicated that Yemen received more 355 thousand tourists between January and November 2006.

Continued from page 1

## Businessmen demand clear tax and investment policy

He inquired why some want contradictions to exist between President Saleh and the Cabinet and wonders whose interests this serves.

"The new sales tax law will cause trade and investment to be concentrated in the hands of very few people and this is what we are afraid of. It will turn all companies into limited ones with small shares in the stock market," remarked Bashamakh. "Thus,

any company from the Gulf, America or Britain can come and buy these companies. We, in turn, become occupied without arms.

"This is the plan of the World Bank and others who conspire against our economy and further to concentrate trade and investments in the hands of a small group and thus deprive ten thousands of people from their income sources."



# Queen Rania becomes UNICEF's first eminent advocate for children at WEF

UNICEF and Her Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah signed an agreement at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Friday, naming Queen Rania as UNICEF's first ever Eminent Advocate for Children.

After signing the agreement, Queen Rania said, "It is a fancy title, but I see it as a fundamental job: To do all I can on behalf of child survival and education around the globe."

"Her Majesty Queen Rania has been a tireless champion for children," said UNICEF Executive Director Ann M. Veneman, who signed the agreement with Queen Rania. "This title recognizes her steadfast commitment to creating a better world for children."

As Eminent Advocate, Queen Rania will work to raise awareness of children's issues and promote achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, which are directly related to the health, education and well-being of children.

"I believe that helping children is a basic human instinct," said Her Majesty. "We all began our lives as children. Many of us have boys and girls of our own...Children bring us together. They remind us of what is really important in life. And, working together, I know there is much we can – and must – bring to

children."

Her Majesty cited some vital things that children need access to: "Things like clean water – the liquid of life – and proper sanitation, which can reduce the risk of a child dying by as much as 50 percent. Things like the basic childhood immunizations that all of us here take for granted – but which are still denied to at least 27 million infants each year."

Queen Rania, as Eminent Advocate, will work together with UNICEF and other partners to mobilize resources and develop policy to improve the lives of children.

"We can bring children cost-effective interventions for maternal and newborn health – which could help save the lives of the more than half a million women who die in pregnancy or childbirth each year... and the more than 4 million babies who never make it to one month old," she said. "We can bring them access to quality education – for girls as well as boys – because we know, as the youth of the G8 nations told their leaders in St. Petersburg last summer, that 'education is the foundation of everything.'"

Queen Rania is an active supporter of UNICEF and its programs in Jordan, in the Arab world and globally. Queen



Queen Rania looks at samples of children's drawings, during a visit to the Ritanjali Learning Center, which was established in 1995 to provide education to out-of-school children.

Rania has accompanied UNICEF to earthquake zones in Pakistan, where she delivered needed supplies, and to learning centers in India. A member of the UNICEF Global Leadership Initiative for Children, Queen Rania is a renowned advocate for child protection, supporting several initiatives for children and youth. She has been instrumental in expanding Early Childhood Development in Jordan, promoting access as well as gender parity in

schools, and encouraging excellence in education.

"For the millions of children whose voices are not being heard, let us commit to take a stand, and take a step, and make real strides for child survival and education," said Queen Rania. "I am convinced that transformational change is just the sum of many small steps – footprints marking a path ahead where none existed before."

Source: <http://www.queenrania.jo/>

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## Keep Yemen as it is today

By: Saddam Al-Ashmuri

Believing in the strong relationship between tourism and environment Orhan Kural, a mining professor at Istanbul Technical University, visited numerous countries. Yemen played host to the avid globetrotter, talented scholar and lecturer. The main aim of Kural's travel is to promote environmental protection and the development of ecological tourism.

He was among a group of 15 writers and photographers visited Yemen to see the natural sights and culture.

"I believe Yemen is one of the countries that is protecting their environment and culture. I visited almost 185 countries, but Yemen is my favorite country," said Kural. "I wrote many

books about Yemen. I wrote about the Yahya age and several places in Yemen such as Thula Hababah and Sana'a.

"I make a television program, a radio program and I am also writing in the most important news papers about tourism."

Kural has given thousands of conferences, and they promote mutual understanding and ensure peace. He likes the simplicity and kindness of Yemenis.

"Yemenis are so good. They don't cheat. They need nothing from us so we walk safely and this is very important," explained Kural, who is writing articles, taking photos and discussing Yemen.

About his project, "The faculty of Mines at Istanbul Technical University authorized me to

introduce the program of the Faculty of Mines mobile education and research program. This program aims to provide education services in the field of mining projects and operations in developing countries. Once we know the existence of any problem, we will send experts to study the problem and everything will be paid by Turkish government."

Kural's conferences, articles and exhibits focus on the promotion of environmental protection and the development of ecotourism.

Kural has been traveling since his high school years. He has been lecturing in courses on mining and environment, coal technology and statistics. Up to now he has been to 181 different countries on 5 continents and has been on news channels and radio

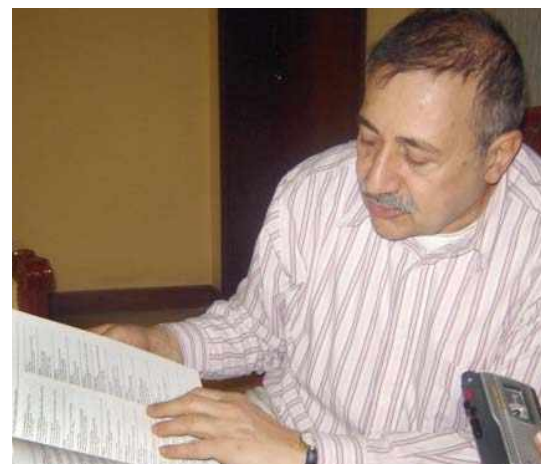
stations in many of these countries.

The multi-lingual Kural has shared his experiences with readers through his 10 travel books released over 12 years, some of which are best-sellers in Turkey.

He has arranged 36 photo exhibitions consisting of color photos taken during his trips in and outside Turkey.

His provides travel impressions and his thoughts on preserving life on our planet through newspaper and magazine articles, statements on broadcast and TV in many countries of the world.

Mr. Kural's visit was sponsored by Arab Horizons for Travel & Tourism.



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## UNICEF YEMEN

### EXTERNAL VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT # 01/07

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) invites applications from qualified Yemeni nationals for the following position:

**Title:** Project Officer- HIV & Youth  
**Level:** National Officer Category – C  
**Type of Contract:** Fixed Term (One year)  
**Duty station:** Sana'a

Under the supervision of the Project Officer, Child Protection Youth & HIV/Aids (L3), the incumbent will perform the following main responsibilities:

- Contributes towards the preparation of the Situation Analysis by compiling data, analyzing and evaluating information, and writing chapters of the analysis related to children, youth and HIV/Aids.
- Contribute to the design, preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of a project to support the implementation of the national HIV/Aids strategy mainly through life-skill based education especially mobilising the most vulnerable groups of youth.
- Analyzes and evaluates data to ensure achievement of objectives and/or takes corrective action when necessary to meet project objectives, contributes to the development and/or introduction of new approaches, methods and practices in project management and evaluation.
- Participates in inter-sectoral collaboration with other programme colleagues. Assists in development of appropriate communication and information strategy to support and/or advocate project development.
- Undertakes field visits to monitor projects, as well as conducts periodic programme reviews with government counterparts and other partners. Provides technical advice and assistance to government officials and other partners in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project.
- Participates in the development of the sectoral workplan.
- Coordinates with the Operations/Supply staff on supply and non-supply assistance activities ensuring proper and timely UNICEF and government accountability.
- Prepares project status reports required for management, board, donors, budget review, programme analysis, annual reports, etc...

#### Qualifications and Skills Required:

- Advanced University Degree in Social Sciences or related technical field
- Five years of progressively responsible work experience at professional work experience at the national and international levels in programme management, monitoring and evaluation, in a field related to adolescents and youth participation and development, HIV/Aids.
- Fluency in English required
- Knowledge of Arabic is an asset
- Knowledge of the latest developments and technology in related fields.
- Analytical, negotiating, communication and advocacy skills
- Supervisory and managerial skills.
- Leadership and teamwork abilities
- Computer skills, including internet navigation and various office applications
- Demonstrated ability to work in a multi-cultural environment and establish harmonious and effective working relationships, both within and outside the organization.

Interested and qualified individuals should send their application along with the curriculum vitae and copies of the performance evaluation report (most recent two reports) to - The Operations Officer, P.O. Box 725, Sana'a, Republic of Yemen. Applications received after February 07, 2007 will not be considered.

"UNICEF encourages qualified women candidates to apply. UNICEF is a non-smoking environment."



## UNICEF YEMEN

### EXTERNAL VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT # 02/07

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) invites applications from qualified Yemeni nationals for the following position:

**Title:** Asst. Programme Communication Officer  
**Level:** National Officer Category – B  
**Type of Contract:** Fixed Term (One year)  
**Duty station:** Sana'a

Under the supervision of the Project Officer, Education (L4), the incumbent will perform the following main responsibilities:

- Contributes to the development of a behaviour change and social mobilization strategy, by carrying out/facilitating research and compiling and analyzing data relevant for girls' education and early childhood development.
- Assists in building alliances/partnerships with religious groups, traditional leaders, teachers, artists and other organized groups in the community, as well as civil society organizations, to orient them on the country programme goals and to solicit their involvement in the implementation of the Basic Education and Gender Equality programme.
- Participates in the design, development, pre-testing and evaluation of culturally relevant programme communication materials and integrated community-based communication activities..
- Follows up on the production of materials and oversees the qualitative aspects of production (e.g., quality control, translation, review of layout and graphic design).
- Participates in the coordination of community-based communication activities, especially with ECD related interventions, in geographic areas covered by UNICEF country programme.
- Monitors and evaluates the appropriate and timely dissemination of programme communication materials to target audiences, and participates in the evaluation of their impact..
- Monitors implementation of community-based communication activities by reviewing progress and identifying constraints through field visits, consultation with government counterparts, partners and community and UNICEF programme staff. Prepares analyses and reports.

#### Qualifications and Skills Required:


- University Degree in Social/Behavioural Sciences (Sociology, Anthropology, Psychology, Health Education).
- Two years professional work experience in social development, preferably in the areas of participatory communication, communication planning, social mobilization, behaviour change and community empowerment, at either the national or international level.
- Fluency in English and another UN language is required
- Knowledge of the local working language of the duty station is an asset.
- Knowledge of current developments in the fields of adult learning theory, community organization and participation.
- Training in community planning, behaviour analysis, formative research, and evaluation of communication interventions
- Ability to research, analyze, evaluate and synthesize information.
- Ability to express clearly and concisely, ideas and concepts in written and oral form.
- Proven skills in communication, networking, advocacy and negotiation, especially at the community level.
- Computer skills, including internet navigation, and various office applications.

Interested and qualified individuals should send their application along with the curriculum vitae and copies of the performance evaluation report (most recent two reports) to - The Operations Officer, P.O. Box 725, Sana'a, Republic of Yemen. Applications received after February 07, 2007 will not be considered.

"UNICEF encourages qualified women candidates to apply. UNICEF is a non-smoking environment."



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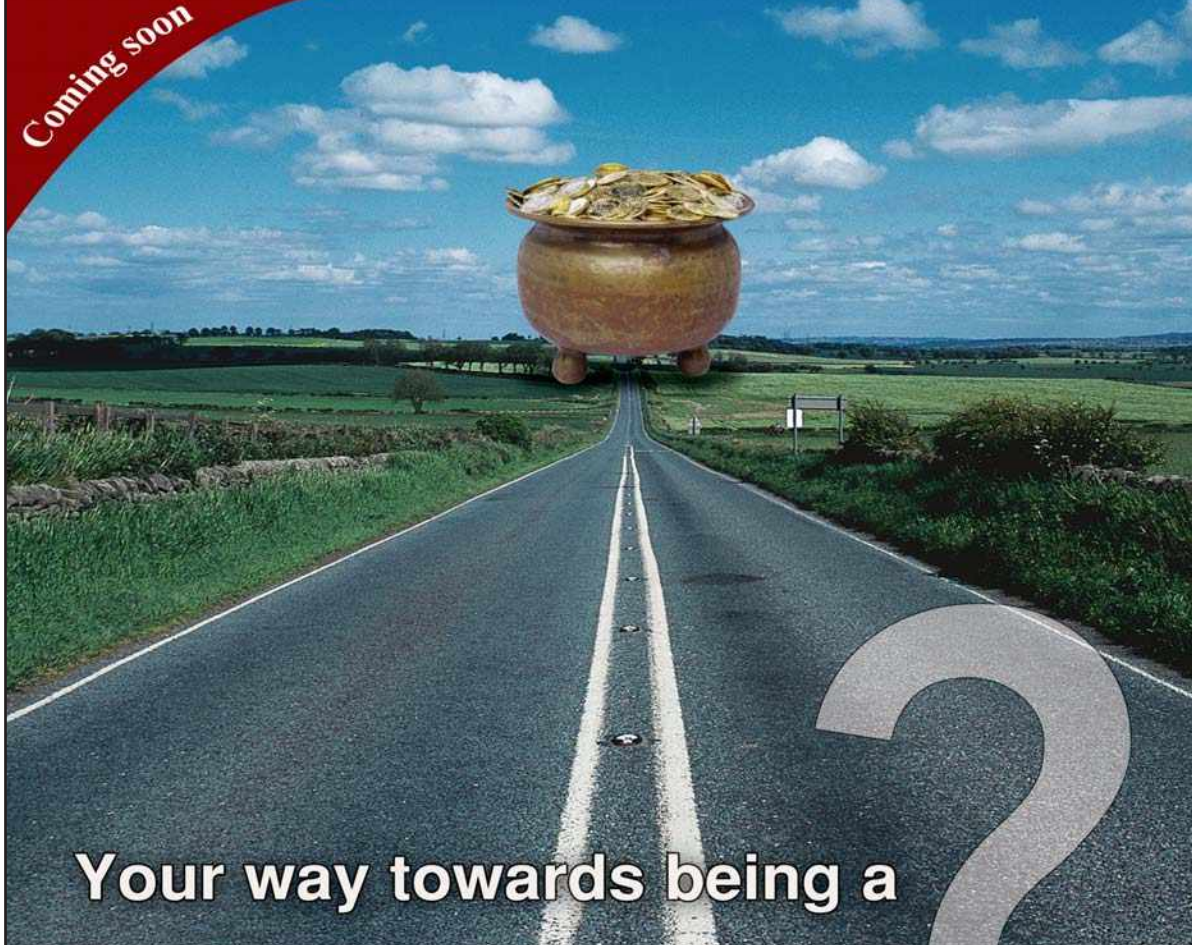
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## VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) invites *Yemeni Nationals* to apply for the following position with its project Second National Communication, Sana'a.

**Post Title:** *National Project Coordinator*  
**Duration:** *12 months*

### Responsibilities:

- Supervises and ensures the timely implementation of the project relevant activities as scheduled in the working plan
- Prepares a detailed work plan for the project and draft terms of reference for the subcontracts (in consultation with the PSC and UNDP);
- Identifies and hire/subcontract the national experts and institutions (in consultation with Liaises with the relevant ministries, national and international research institutes, NGOs, and other relevant institutions in order to involve their staff in project activities, and to gather and disseminate information relevant to the project;
- the PSC and UNDP);
- Ensures that the SNC process is in the line with guidance provided by the CoP of the UNFCCC and contributes to the improvement of the UNFCCC reporting process.
- Oversees the maintenance and update of Yemen's climate change web page;
- Collaborates with all relevant stakeholders and the Project Steering Committee and other partners to ensure their involvement in the SNC

### Qualification:

- Master's degree preferably in environment-related studies and other related disciplines;
- Good understanding of Yemen's environment/development issues as well as the three thematic areas under investigations;
- At least six to eight years experience relevant to the project;
- Excellent English and Arabic communication Skills; (Written and Oral)
- Demonstrated experience in project management;
- Expertise in putting together results-oriented action plans;
- Demonstrated experience in working with government, donors and the United Nations system;
- Appropriate experience working with government structures at local levels, and working with NGOs and private sector;
- Substantial involvement in the preparation of the national GHG inventory and the initial National Communication is mandatory
- Familiarity with international negotiations and processes under the UNFCCC preferred
- Familiarity with computers and word processing

Interested candidates are requested to visit our website at: <http://www.undp.org/ye/undp-vacancies.htm> for detailed term of reference of the position and may submit their applications indicating the title of the post applied for by mail to Human Resources Unit and response will only be made to short listed candidates.  
UNDP, P.O.Box 551 Sana'a/Fax: 448892/E-mail: [hr.ye@undp.org](mailto:hr.ye@undp.org)  
The deadline for receiving applications is Saturday, 10 February 2007

*UNDP is an equal opportunity organization and qualified female candidates are strongly encouraged to apply.*





# Schools dropouts: Economics, neglect, or apathy?

By: Yemen Times Staff

While illiteracy is about to disappear in most countries, primary and secondary education is compulsory in many countries and both the government and the family essentially are responsible for educating children and observing/monitoring them, many [Yemeni?] students drop out and skipping school/classes.

According to the higher council for educational planning regarding 2004-2005, the percentage of Yemeni students dropping out of basic education reached 9.66 percent, while failing amounted to 5.2 percent. The highest percentage of dropping out of grade 1 by both sexes accounted for 13.7 percent.

When passing near any Yemeni school, one can find many students hanging around the school with the acquaintance knowledge of some school administrations. This is in addition to students who totally drop out of school. In seeking the reasons students escape and drop out of school, we find that the reasons are various and different such as poverty, the weak roles of the government, the schools administrations and the families.

Some Yemeni students skip school during class time due to the uncomfortable school environment. Mohammed Ameen, a 14-year-old eighth grader, admits, "I often attend class only until 10 a.m. because I'm bored and feel like I'm imprisoned. The class is overcrowded, which makes it noisy, and after 10 a.m., the weather gets hotter."

In some students' viewpoints, only

future aims. Thus, they hopelessly acquire information yet are unable to listen because they have no psychological appetite to attend school. Their bodies are in the classroom, but their minds remain outside.

One reason for students' absentmindedness may be problems at home. "My father always shouts at me and he sometimes imprisons me after school. He doesn't advise me to do my assignments. For this reason, I don't wish to continue my studies after secondary graduation," Amran Al-Saem says disappointedly.

**"Our teacher is incompetent because his specialization is history and he teaches us Arabic. When we ask about anything, he eludes our enquiries, so we skip those periods."**

Looking forward to the future, Yemeni students find no job opportunities for themselves or even for their post-graduate friends. Helplessly, many college graduates remain unemployed. Also, some families stand with students who drop out of school under the pretext

But some parents' viewpoints are totally different and offer a positive aspect. Ali Al-Hamdani, a father of three sons and two daughters, feels that both families and schools are responsible to follow up students and both must be in constant contact."

Additionally, many Yemeni students study to satisfy their parents' intentions rather than for the importance of education and knowledge. Thus, such students attend school simply to waste time and chat with their friends. The phenomenon increases, especially among students from rich families, who live in relaxation and believe everything is in their hands.

"You see, teacher, studying is hard and gives me a headache. Inshallah, I'll go to America and work in a supermarket. I'll marry, buy a big beautiful house and the latest model car and I'll live happier than you," says one Yemeni-American student. However, such students actually have no idea how to exploit their comfortable and prosperous situations to go on to higher education, either in Yemen or in the United States.

Generally, teachers try to advise their students by either telling them true stories or making them plan their own futures. "Historically, observers recognize that most famous individuals who pushed the world's wheels forward were either rich or poor. The rich exploited money to improve and achieve their ambitions. One way or another, they overcame their ill omens. Other reputable rich men found money destroying them, so they left to build their own future," one English teacher commented.

"To the contrary, in spite of poverty, some famous men defeated harsh circumstances and life's obstacles to obtain what they were seeking. Students must look at such famous individuals and learn their lessons from them. Achieving one's goal isn't as easy as drinking a glass of water and scoring goals doesn't happen all at once as a result of a hodgepodge," he added.

Like boys, many girls drop out of school mainly due to poverty or marriage. Naseem Sa'ad, 20, explains, "I had to drop out of school two years ago because my father died. We now live with my uncle and he can't bear the expenditures for studying."

Amel Al-Raimi, 21, is another student unable to withstand her family tradition of marrying at an early age. "Although I dreamed of continuing my studies and graduating from university, I dropped out of school in 10th grade because I got married. However, I always remember my school days and I hope to go back one day," she says.

Although students of both genders drop out of school, the rate differs and the factors causing girls to drop out are more reasonable than those for boys. Shafeka Al-Nazari, schoolmaster at Mohammed Zaid School, says, "I admit that the dropout rate for girls is large, but most girls can't help the cause, such as early marriage or a father's oppressiveness and greed; consequently, a father obliges his daughter to marry early."

"Failing, difficulty with the curriculum and stern punishment from both teachers and families also cause girls to drop out," she adds.



Dare to play hookey: Punishments and rebukes do not deter some students from escaping classes.

The main difference between boys and girls is that practically no girls skip certain class subjects, whereas others attend because of accurate observation of students. "You'll never find a girl skipping some class periods and attending others because teachers take attendance secretly to determine absent girls. If a teacher finds any girl absent, we investigate and send for her father," Al-Nazari explains.

**"I left school two years ago when I became responsible for my family after my father's death."**

Contrary to many boys who drop out of school under the pretext that there are no job opportunities, girls don't hold such a pessimistic viewpoint. "Girls are more optimistic and stick to completing their education more than boys. They don't care about working as much as they care about completing their education," Al-Nazari adds.

Others within the education system attribute many reasons for students dropping out and skipping school. Physical education teacher Mohammed Al-Ansi says, "Actually, the school, the family and the government are responsible for this problem – the student is just a victim. All of these parties should cooperate to solve the reasons for students' problems. The government should develop citizens' financial

income. Also, contact between the family and the school should be constant in order to determine the student's trend and then push him or her toward his or her field of interest."

psychologist teacher Jamil Al-Harazi adds, "Financial problems and television play an important role in deviating student behavior, which, over time, makes students hate their reality and drop out of school."

Many school administrations take particular initiative to alleviate poverty and help very poor students continue their studies. Al-Nazari is one such schoolmaster who decided with her school staff to form a committee to collect donations in order to enable destitute students to continue their studies.

"Some elite teachers at the school collect donations from businessmen to buy the basic needs of destitute students, in addition to health care, which they receive in order to help them continue studying. Not only that, every teacher willingly donates approximately YR 500 every month for these students. Consequently, every student receives YR 2,500 per month," she explains.

Al-Nazari notes that the committee's efforts aren't sufficient to help all destitute students because the number of poor students is large and the contributions of the businessmen and school staff aren't enough to cover all of the poor students. "Many students complain and ask us to enroll their names," she adds.

According to 2004-2005 education indicators of Yemen's Higher Council for Educational Planning, Ministry of Education data points out that failure and dropout rates are increasing among males and females, which leads to the

**Mohammed Zaid School's staff formed a committee to collect donations from businessmen in order to enable destitute students to continue their studies, but it isn't sufficient to help all poor students.**

low growth of basic education internal efficiency.

The education indicators summarize the reasons for Yemeni students failing and dropping out of school due to the following: school-age children aren't enrolled at the required age, thus crowding classrooms with large numbers of students; weak and unqualified teachers using poor methods to punish students cause many to think of leaving school; and school infrastructure is both unattractive and discouraging, especially school furnishings.

The rate of females in all secondary education grades dropping out of school is higher than males. However, dropout rates for male students in grade 12 are higher than females due to their families' low income, which forces them to work instead of completing their studies. All of these reasons and others negatively affect the Yemeni education system's internal efficiency.



Some Yemeni students cite crowded classes as a reason for dropping out-of-school.

certain subjects are important and require more explanation and concentration, so they attend all of those classes while other subjects are meaningless or easy to study without a teacher's help. Tenth grader Najeeb Amer notes, "I attend only scientific subjects like mathematics, chemistry, physics and biology. As for the other subjects, I study them myself at home as self-study."

Due to a lack of teaching staff, many Yemeni school administrations force teachers to teach subjects unrelated to their specializations and as a result, their performance is weak. Student Al-Khader Mahmoud, 17, comments, "Our teacher is incompetent because his specialization is history and he teaches us Arabic. When we ask about anything, he eludes our enquiries, so we skip those periods."

Unqualified teachers are the main reason some students don't attend some class periods. Student Aimm Al-Najar, 15, says, "I feel that I receive nothing from my teacher. We don't understand things from him and he doesn't try to change his teaching methods to simplify the ideas for us. He's incompetent."

A low economic state is the main reason students drop out of school completely. Due to poverty and bad circumstances, many students seek jobs to support their families, especially those students in secondary school.

Bassam Al-Mahwiti, 19, explains, "I left school two years ago when I became responsible for my family after my father's death. I want to continue my school studies, but no one will care for my family." Likewise, Rashad Al-Nehmi, 20, says, "I left school five years ago to help my father with his work. He's a welder and earns very little, so I must help him."

However, some Yemeni students have no hopes or ambitions regarding their

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## Words of Wisdom



One of the major changes needed in the reform process is to establish some degree of accountability. To weed out the bad elements is an important step, not only for the system to regain credibility and prestige, but also to help speed up the development process.

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

OUR  
OPINIONGood governance:  
The need to re-train  
our politicians for the  
21st century

Throughout most of the world, there is a trend. It has to do with raising the efficiency of managing public affairs. The catch phrase is 'good governance'.

The concept of good governance entails many important values which should be integral to the system - all of which are destined to be the hallmark of the new century. These include effective grass-roots participation in public affairs, decentralization, integrity of the system, civil service reform, the rule of law and order, checks and balances, accountability and transparency.

Here in Yemen, the situation is no different. We are part of this worldwide trend, or so we say. Our politicians speak of the need to improve the efficiency of managing public affairs. There is talk about decentralization, but we have seen none; there is talk of raising the level of integrity of the system, but what we see is more corruption; there is talk of civil service reform, but that is still a non-starter; there are promises of law and order, but what we have is more lawlessness; etc. So, the situation in Yemen is more promises. It is as if our officials talk the talk, but they don't walk the walk.

To improve governance in Yemen, there is clear need for re-training our officials. We need the people in charge to really believe in the need for change in the way they manage public affairs. They need to accept new values, such as:

1. To accept a distinct role for the three authorities (executive, legislative, judicial). Here in Yemen, parliament is utterly weak. In reality, most of those who are in the present parliament are there because of 'help' from the executive branch of authority. In other words, they did not earn their seats. As for the judicial branch of authority, it is so hopelessly corrupt and inefficient that it cannot stand its own ground.

2. To accept political pluralism in a real way. Unfortunately for Yemen, the country today is far less pluralistic than it was a few years ago. In other words, one can easily feel the preponderant dominance of the People's General Congress, creating a vacuum on the other side of the equation. This is partly because no political party can really muster any meaningful public support unless it has the resources of the state at its disposal.

3. To accept the watchdog role of a media not under state control. The state has monopoly over the television and radio stations. For a country that has a 60% illiteracy, this is far more effective than the written media. But even in the written media, the state controls more than 75% of the newspapers and magazines. As if this situation is not bad enough, the importance of public opinion is very marginal in our 'democracy'.

4. To accept the input of grass-roots level organizations, the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), including unions, cooperatives, syndicates, etc. These are now controlled, or at least influenced by the state. The politicians have effectively infiltrated these NGOs and rendered them almost paralyzed.

In the final analysis, 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.

Late Pro. Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf  
Editor-in-Chief and Publisher

## Execution and agitating a conflict

By: Nassr Taha Mustafa

With the execution of the former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein one of the longest and most exciting, rather bewildering in the process of its evaluation, chapters of the Arab contemporary history has been folded. The man has gone and with him are buried many secrets, as his contemporaries, aides and men believe and who were the last ones to know about his plans and policies. Many endless questions will remain in the minds about many of real backgrounds on his war with Iran throughout eight years, 1980 to 1988, and the more important the backgrounds of his invasion and occupation of Kuwait. Those matters, or some of them, could have been disclosed had the trial of the man covered all the different issues in which he involved himself and people and led to this dramatic end which is considered the first of its kind for an Arab leader and I think it will not be repeated in the same way.

Three years have passed from when he was arrested to his hanging and they were the severest and most difficult for him in all his life. In December 2003 the former American ruler of Iraq Paul Bremer announced in Hollywood acting style the news of arresting the ousted Iraqi President Hussein in an underground hideout. That made media instruments, particularly those hostile to Saddam, concentrate on the hideout more than the man himself. They considered his hiding in a place under the ground as something shameful for him, although it

is a normal thing for where they would have wanted him to hide, in a big mansion or to flee outside Iraq? Surely, for Saddam the operation of catching him was no more than a question of time as long as he decided to stay inside Iraq.

This Hollywood-style of capture was three years ago, which is a period long enough for a trial in an issue deemed to be marginal compared to other more dangerous ones. I think this is an intentional matter without any doubt. This trial was intended mainly for agitating sectarian sentiments against the entire era of Saddam. The strange thing is that the Iraqi government, understanding with the American occupation, was keen to bring Kurdish judges to decide this case so that their verdicts appear as revenge for the massacre of Halabja besides the Dujail. This behavior would in fact not remove from it the sectarian description, but rather enhance and flare it.

Imagine that after all that lifetime, he was to be 70 in four months, and after all his political life that was full of assassinations and physical liquidations even of his sons in law and different wars, he is tried and hanged for a case, jurists and politicians see filled with thousands of legal ambiguities, considering what happened in Dujail was originally an attempted assassination against him followed by reaction by his government towards persons who tried to kill him. Is not the insistence of occupation and the Iraqi government on trying him for this case an attempt specifically aimed at instigating sectarian fanatical instincts as part of what is planned for Iraq?

In fact it is very difficult to accept the idea of accusing Saddam with

sectarianism for one simple reason. The man was originally a nationalist and secular and he had suppressed Islamic trends, both Sunni and Shiite. How then can he be a sectarian? Undoubtedly, Saddam was a Ba'athist and it is known that the Ba'ath party included in its ranks members and leaders from the Sunnis and the Shiites as well as Kurds until the moment of his fall. His victims included all sects without exception, so why was first day of Al-Adha Eid was chosen as a date for implementing the death sentence? Observers and analysts could not find an objective excuse for speeding up his execution but for arousing the sectarian conflict.

There is much suspicion on why Al-Maliki and his government have been hasty in carrying out the hanging of Hussein as aimed at calming down the wave of the resistance that is prevalent in the Iraqi street. Saddam has maybe remained throughout the past three years of his captivity as a symbol for one or some parties of resistance but he was certainly not able to administer it or direct it from his prison. Therefore his absence will not have any effect on its progress, especially that the major part of and most effective portion of resistance is Islamic, which is outside the Ba'ath ranks. That branch of resistance considers the Ba'ath party as responsible for the present developments in Iraq, let alone that the Ba'ath is viewed by the resistance groups as a secular party. Upon all that how would the execution of Hussein lead to alleviate severity of violence in the country where resistance is not associated with him and does Al-Maliki not know that too? Source al-Khaleej newspaper

## It is not universal Your Excellency!

By: Abdulrahman Al-Ahdal

In his speech before the Yemen Women Federation in Aden in December, the president said the rise in prices was resulting from world rise in prices. This is untrue absolutely. We wish the president to be sure from the staff of his government and those around him that they do not tell him the truth, if he is depending on what they offer him of information. But if he were unleashing his statements simultaneously the tragedy is greater. A Yemeni citizen who is distressed about the current state of affairs said the president's campaign to eliminate poverty, launched in his electoral campaign, was meant to put an end to the poor in Yemen. We have to tell our rulers we are humans and feel and coexist with the failure of your policies and the reason is that you hand over the responsibilities

and destinies of the people to people who are not efficient and have no qualifications but the false loyalty to you.

It is the tragedy of despotic regimes who do not care about realizing the interests of the people as much as their interest in their own interests. When there are lies alongside with developmental and services failure, as is the case in Yemen, there lays the tragedy. The reason is that the people all know it is a lie to attribute failure of price control to world pressure. Talking about world issues is no longer secrets known by the elite because they are available for all through various means of communication therefore we know they are not true. It is thought the head of the state be a good example in word and deed, be accurate in what he says and keen on the importance of the post he occupies and committed to texts of the constitution on which swore to

respect.

The price hikes in Yemen is a big failure of the governance in its ability to create real development and the management of the country's resources in a manner serving interests of the citizens and achievement of the minimum degree of dignified living. Citizens now know that corruption is the legitimate child of the existing regime and it receives good care from the state authorities. What they do not imagine is that the rule justifies acts of the corrupt in its addresses as if giving them the green light to continue robbing the country's destinies and the continued protection of their corruption. Don't these people who granted you their voices deserve some attention from you to protect them from the greed of merchants? We have them begging for votes in the election campaign and the use of tempting and frightening warnings of coming dangers if they would not vote for you. Nevertheless if there were dangers to come they will be the

## Letters to the Editor

**Tears of Iraq**  
Tears are tears whether they fall from a poor or rich person's eyes or from an Iraqi or American mother's. Most the U.S. papers marking the number of U.S. Marines killed in Iraq so far are 3000, adding that mothers shed tears. It was sad that they could see the tears of the mothers of 3000 soldiers while ignoring the mothers of 655,000 innocent Iraqi civilian. In my view, situations of Iraqi mothers are serious and worse than that of the American because a U.S. mother's lose only son while Iraqi mother lose the whole family.

Bush has been trying his best to win the Iraqi war but all his prescriptions, planning, meetings, agendas, homework and strategies are continuously ending in

smoke. I am afraid that someday he will be forced to either bomb Iraq and Afghanistan like Hiroshima and Nagasaki and/or commit suicide.

It was coincidence that on one hand he succeeded in hanging a president who he, his predecessors, had supported fully in the past while on the other hand he paid tributes to his predecessor, Ford, who died as the 39th President of United States of America.

Let's not forget that Allah's wrath is not only for Muslims who are undergoing these days, but also for non-Muslims and we can see it in what the former Israeli premier, Ariel Sharon, the killer of innocent Palestinians, is now experiencing being in the state of coma. According to the religious scholars, the state of coma is also a kind of punishment for a wrongdoer.

Thus Sharon is a vivid example for Olmert who has been following in the footsteps of the former. What if a Palestinian youth could not harm him, but at least Allah is omnipresent and the Most Powerful and Qaha'ar to punish one for his/her misdeeds?

As regards the footage of Saddam's execution spread across the globe, the puppet Iraqi premier, Al Maliki, who was clearly seen at the time of execution, signing the authorization, is reported to have ordered a probe in the act of taking footage of the execution, but what about the whole film which was recorded just to show his masters Bush and Blair? It's nothing but just to save his skin now.

Barkatullah Marwat  
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## SILVER LINING

The Interior Ministry  
“Great Achievements”!

Last Wednesday the Ministry of the Interior held their 17th Conference for ministry leaders. The ministry shrugged its shoulders at its ability to bring nationwide security and control crime. It talked about an endless list of achievements. President Ali Abdullah Saleh pinpointed a very significant issue – the link between security and development. Foreign investment cannot flow into the country without competent security. The security of the citizen is a signal of a good environment for investment.

The ministry forgot about the crime rate which soared in 2006. There are now almost four crimes taking place per hour. A scary statistic.

Thousands of Yemeni people are killed annually due to crazy traffic accidents. Almost every day we hear reports of people killed or injured because of traffic accidents. According to Saba News and September 26 mobile service SMSs last Thursday, eight were killed and five injured from one family in a car accident on the Sana'a-Marib road and that ten were killed and two injured in another car accident in Hajja. In Al-Dhal'e and in the same day four were killed and another eight injured in a car accident. This is just in one day and there might be more that have not been reported. People are dying as though it's a war.

Who is responsible for this? What is the business of the ministry and the traffic authority in addressing such terrible problems? I believe it is the role of the ministry to initiate stiff regulations to address this issue.

A foreign diplomat told me once that he used to take a bus to go around in Sana'a as he is afraid to drive because of the traffic mess. An overhaul of the traffic system is a first step towards tackling this concern.

Again, the Ministry of Interior, whose business is to protect the lives of the people, has done nothing to address the torture crime of Hamdan Darsi at the hands of the arrogant influential Sheikh Shua'eeb al-Fasheq and his cruel escorts. Darsi also faced sexual harassment. Anisah al-Shuaibi was taken to jail and raped by the jail officers. These two victims are still searching for justice and it seems they are facing intimidation to drop their cases and forget their plight.

If the ministry has failed to bring the predators of such heinous crimes to justice, what sort of nonsensical “achievements” are they talking about.

Hey guys, I understand the biggest achievements you can celebrate is your ability to bring arrogant and influential guys like Al-Fasheq, Mohammed Ahmed Mansur and the like who are behaving like dictators in their territories and considering their fellow citizens as their subjects in their own kingdoms that do not recognize law and order.

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

product of the regime's ill policies. The regime itself used extremist elements and it is the one that used the military and security as a terrorist force possessing weapons and equipment making them a threat to security and stability and that made Yemen a safe haven for terrorist groups even after the 9/11 events.

The claim that the rise in prices is universal is groundless. The world is stable through the good management of its resources. Even the five poorest countries in the Arab world do not have price chaos like that in Yemen. It is one of the important reasons of that is that the rulers in those countries are not merchants as is the case in Yemen.

Despotism is a savage political state and a ferocious behavior in its severity and a practice killing the spirit of creativity among the youth. But what distinguishes despotism

besides its corruption is deluding the citizen with noble values and slogans like freedom and democracy, but not for noble purposes. It can almost be a crime against the nation and the homeland. That is how our rulers do with noble ideas and principles. Democracy as a noble idea contributed to build and develop many of the world countries but our rulers have misused it. They deformed it and in its name they violated the rights and freedoms of its citizen's.

The reality of the people's situation belies what the rulers say and they are in a state of despair. They feel there is no truthfulness and seriousness in fighting corruption. Over years they listen to words and will not find acts. The area of poverty is expanding and the number of unemployed is increasing and the lies of officials are continuous.

Source: Al-Thawri Newspaper



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# Yemen Press Review

By: Mohammed Khidhr



AL-India weekly, 24 Jan. 2007.

## Main headlines

- Aden's gardens the first victims of imaginary investment
- The YSP leading official Anis Hassan Yahya The Central Committee concerned with rectification of performance of general secretariat departments
- Controversy over the sales tax continues, Consultative team from Washington mediates between the government and the private sector
- Child adultery network seized in Sana'a
- Al-Anisi: Authorities invest terror for political blackmail and frighten people

Water Mohammed al-Ghubari writes saying after its apology for not hosting the annual ordinary Arab Summit and its welcoming the Arab leaders at the headquarters of the Arab League Saudi Arabia has its second thought to announce its acceptance of hosting the Arab annual summit in Riyadh during the next March.

The surprise announcement has come under very bad circumstances the Arab nation is experiencing and an apparent role by Riyadh in the growing spots of tension in the region, specifically in Lebanon and Iraq in addition to its well-known stand in the Arab-Israeli conflict. at the beginning it was openly siding with the Lebanese government in its

confrontation with the opposition exceeding what is known of it of diplomacy in expressing its stances but now it has returned to play a shy role for mediation between the two parties supported by desperate efforts for containing Syria with the purpose of dragging it to room of secret negotiations with Israel.

If added to that issue the file of the Iranian-American conflict in Iraq and the region as well as the repeated America's failures, the late back down by the KSA regarding the hosting of the Arab summit excites suspicions more than optimism.

What is being talked around inside the decision-making circles of the United States ushers clearly that the coming Arab summit is intended to be similar to the summit that accompanied the occupation of Kuwait by Iraq in 1990. To speak clearer the new American strategy in Iraq must receive Arab legitimacy and that Washington should get an announcement on formation of an Arab axis undertaking the confrontation of Iran as a surrogate as it was happening with the Soviet Union.

It is quite sure that Iran has its ambitions in the Gulf region and there are Arab fears which have not received assurances from Iran but we are not demanded to fight Iran instead of Washington. If Bush's government believes that Iran's power has become threatening it and its interests why does not it fight it as it did in the occupation of Iraq with allegations that time proved they were just lies?

The fanatic republican administration in the White House is not unable to fabricate a pretext or excuse to invade any

country including Iran. The history of this state is full of such bad examples. It is not reasonable that the Saudi leadership does not realize the danger of the role it is playing in service of these destructive projects. Sectarian diversity inside the kingdom and the atmospheres of tolerance and freedom can represent a supportive force for a new Arab project. Recognition of this diversity and its right to practice their rituals and taking part in decision making can represent the guarantee bigger than the danger of the external exploitation.



Al-Wahdawi weekly, organ of the Nasserite Unionist Organization, 23 Jan. 2007.

## Main headlines

- Shadow government to encounter the ruling party hegemony
  - Military units demolish houses on heads of their inhabitants
  - Shovels demolish citizens' houses in Hudeida and a sheikh's militia storms al-Jaashin village
  - The capital merchants' strike paralyzes commercial life
  - Influential persons behind closure of Mathbah commercial market
  - Gangsters block the high way between Sana'a and Saada
  - 50 thousand children smuggled to Saudi Arabia
  - Al-Qaeda cell trial in Switzerland
- Writer Mahmoud Sharafudin writes

saying \$ 280 billion the Saudi Arabia paid for arms deals for the period of 1990 to 2004 with western countries mainly America, France and Britain at a high spending rate regarding the third world. Such a rate exceeding the rate of spending on armament by Iran, India or North Korea and Israel.

This state is the least in population and army and the most in armament in the region has flourished the western market of weapons, not to face Israel but to encounter the Iranian danger and before it the Iraqi and then what has been termed as terror.

It is an unprecedented armament piled in stores and with modernity the Saudi army is incapable of dealing with them and also exposed to corruption before its being used.

The strange thing is the Saudi regime's endeavor to huge spending on armament without thinking of building industrializing establishments of its own possession as many countries in the area have done with costs much less than the Saudi armament costs. Such countries are Iran, India, Pakistan and Iraq before the American occupation that which Saudi Arabia had endeavored with America and Britain with support and payment for its occupation, destroying it and pushing it to the situation it is now in. this situation in Iraq now is the making of an alliance composed of America, Britain, Israel and Saudi Arabia. In this alliance Saudi Arabia offered all forms of support and cooperation in protection of the Zionist entity and the American interests in the region and against both the Arab and Islamic nations.

The Saudi regime that is bragging

through its media empire of its big role in serving the issues and rights of the Arab nation has helped in the destruction entirely of an Arab state that was a shield for the nation and that all in service of the Zionist and American plans. This regime tampers with properties of the Saudi people but recovers recession of the market of western arms companies.

It dories that under illusions of the western frightening of the unknown future.

One would now wonder who would be the next prey of the Saudi regime and its American masters after Iraq.



Al-Sahwa weekly, 25 Jan. 2007.

## Main headlines

- Politicians astonished about contradiction of the ruling party in its attack on opposition and its call for opening a new chapter
- Qahtan to president: If you can restore the egg price to that before elections you are an exemplary president
- In its report on developments of economy in 2006, the World Bank: Yemen the worst country in using loans and government spending
- Ali Nasser praises struggle of Bin Shamlan
- Islah party members continue election of their representatives in the 4th general conference
- Business shops owners continue

strike in protest to sales tax  
- Condemned violence and terror, Muslims parliamentarians Forum confirms u [grading performance of MPs

Writer Zaid al-Shami says in his article a general look at the conditions of Muslims and others we can see defeats come successively on us and victories of our enemies are repeated. Although we possess huge riches out peoples in general live in need and poverty and although we are one nation we are among nations who seek for causes of schism and difference.

The condition of the nation is a reflection of weakness or power we have in our souls

One wonders where is that education of the nation freedom and dignity and non-surrendering to calls of weakness. And why do we live without ambition? Why do rulers fear the power of peoples and their enlightenment and freedoms? Where is the power of science and modern technology? We wonder where our scientists are and why are they leaving their homelands and why we close doors before them? where is the power of economy that makes the citizen lives without being needy and why our industries are confined to making furniture and house utensils? we are lacking the power of coordination and integration among our states and peoples as the powerful in Europe and east Asia have done.

The starting point comes from reforming, educating and developing the human to be strong, healthy and educated, entertaining freedom and acquires his legitimate rights in full.

## Oil won't last - invest in Arab education

By: Raja Kamal

Many Arab nations have been blessed historically with oil and natural gas, which became the dominant engines of economic change in the last century. That is the good news. The bad news is that oil and natural gas are the sole economic foundation of the Arab world as a group. What the Arab world has failed to achieve is economic diversity.

If we are to exclude oil and natural gas from the various Arab economies of the 300 million inhabitants of the Arab world, the cumulative GDP would be less than that of Finland, a country with a population of just over 5 million. The Arab world, with a few exceptions, has failed miserably at catching up with the economic renaissance

sance of most other parts of the world. It is now struggling to catch up, and reforming the education system should be the starting point.

Higher education in the Arab world has performed inadequately and produced graduates who are having a difficult time integrating and assimilating into the global economy. A recent study compiled by the International Ranking Experts Group and the Institute for Higher Education Policy in Washington found only one Arab university at the bottom of a list of 3,000 world universities. In contrast, some Israeli universities are among the top 200 on the list.

The DNA of the Arab universities seems to be poorly constructed. There seems to be a virtual wall between the universities and the real world. College culture does not encourage individuality and fresh ideas. The curriculum structure in universities is often rigid and sheltered. There is an urgent need to overhaul the system.

In many universities that I have visited in the Arab world, enrolment is viewed as a right rather than a privilege. Some Arab governments pay monthly salaries to all enrolled students in tuition-free state universities - regardless of their financial needs, their area of specialisation or their academic performance.

The teaching quality of the so-called "hard sciences" and mathematics is weak and ranks poorly when compared to international standards. The vast majority of Arab universities teach their students what to think, instead of how to think. Unless this mentality changes fast, little hope of progress will be seen on the horizon. Hisham Ghassib is the president of the Princess Sumaya University for

Technology in Jordan. In a recent interview, Ghassib, an advocate of change in the region's universities, observed that Arab societies' focus should be on promoting free thinking, whereas the current system brings out graduate students "submissive to all the powers of society".

Additionally, many graduates are very narrowly focused in their studies, with very little prospect of using their college training in future careers. For example, each year tens of thousands of graduates throughout the Arab world major in Islamic law or Arabic literature. The vast majority of them will be unemployed, underemployed or end up working in the swelling government sector - further contributing to already bloated and inefficient state bureaucracies. Furthermore, an unemployable college graduate is an unhappy and frustrated graduate, who will become a prime candidate for recruitment into extremist causes.

Institutions of higher education must look at the needs of the private sector, determine the future demand of the labour market, and adjust the curricula accordingly. Universities must downsize some programs or limit enrolment in programs unlikely to yield economic benefit to society.

The value of fine universities is immeasurable to any culture. Lebanon benefited from having the American University of Beirut (AUB). Founded by missionaries in 1866 as a private non-sectarian liberal arts college, AUB became a beacon of change in Lebanon and elsewhere in the Middle East. The commitment to critical thinking and to a well-rounded liberal arts education was and still is integral to its mission statement. Sadly, AUB is one of the few exceptions in the Arab world.

Arab countries must incorporate higher education into their strategic planning. There must be a partnership between the private sector and educators. Arab universities should focus on market-oriented majors. Large universities in the Arab world tend to be run by governments. Perhaps giving freedom to the private sector to launch private colleges and universities is a step in the right direction.

Universities must serve the national economy and train future leaders who can move the region to diversify its economy and help catch up with the rest of the world. Thus far, the performance has been dismal. An urgent overhaul is needed. Oil will not last indefinitely.

*Raja Kamal is associate dean for resource development at the Harris School for Public Policy Studies at the University of Chicago. Source: www.commongroundnews.org*

## The new Middle East order

Sometime this month, President George W. Bush will - reluctantly - announce a new policy for the United States in Iraq. A new policy is needed not only in order to halt America's drift into impotence as it tries to prevent Iraq from spiraling into full-scale civil war, but also because the map of power in the Middle East has changed dramatically.

That map has been in constant flux for the last 60 years, during which the main players - Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Israel, and Iran - have formed and broken alliances. Now, something like a dividing line is emerging, and if Bush finally begins to understand the region's dynamics, he may be able to craft a policy with a chance of success.

This regional realignment is typified by the emergence of a de facto alliance that dare not speak its name. Israel and Saudi Arabia, seemingly the most unlikely of allies, have come together to contain their common enemy: Iran, with its mushrooming influence in Iraq, Lebanon, and Palestine. Iran not only threatens Israel (and the region) with its desire for a nuclear capability and its Shi'a proxy militants; it is also seeking to usurp the traditional role of moderate Sunni Arab regimes as the Palestinians' defenders.

After decades of using concern for the Palestinian cause to shore up popular support for their own ineffective and undemocratic regimes, these moderate Arab leaders have now been put on the defensive by Iran's quest for hegemony.

If Iran succeeds in being seen as the genuine patron of Palestinian national aspirations, it will also succeed in legitimizing its claim for dominance in the Middle East.

Israel, a country in shock following its failure to destroy Hezbollah last summer, and humiliated by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's vow to "wipe Israel off the map" - a threat backed up by Iran's support of Hamas and Hezbollah - now talks about a "quartet of moderates" as the region's only hope. Indeed, Israel now sees its security as relying not so much on a US guarantee, but on Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey (which is seeking regional influence in fear of rejection by the European Union) restraining Iran and its paid proxies. According to Israeli Vice Premier Shimon Peres, Israel hopes to isolate and contain the Shi'a/Farsi spheres of power by forging open cooperation with the Sunni/Arab domain.

Saudi Arabia is just as eager to contain the Iranian threat and the growing "Shi'a crescent" that, with the empowerment of the Shi'a in Iraq, has moved westward to begin to include the Shi'a regions of the Kingdom. So it should be no surprise that the Saudi regime was the first to condemn Shi'a Hezbollah at the start of the war with Israel, and that it announced in December that it would support Iraq's

Sunnis militarily should a precipitate US withdrawal incite a Sunni/Shi'a civil war there.



By: Mai Yamani

The Shi'a threat to the Saudi government is ideological. Indeed, it goes to the heart of the Saudi state's authority, owing to the Al Saud royal family's reliance on Wahhabi Islam to legitimate its rule. Since the Wahhabis consider the Shi'a apostates, the challenge from the Shi'a - both within and without Saudi Arabia - represents a mortal threat.

So Saudi Arabia is ready to cooperate with Israel not only against Iran, but also against other "radicals," such as Hamas. Remarkably, Palestine's Hamas prime minister, Ismael Haniyeh, was not received in Saudi Arabia in December, when he was traveling through the region pleading for support for his beleaguered government. Conservative Saudi Arabia prefers dealing with traditional and predictable leaders, such as Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Lebanon's premier, Fouad Siniora, rather than firebrand populist leaders like Hezbollah's Hassan Nasrallah, Hamas' Khalid Meshal, and Iran's Ahmadinejad.

Last year, Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah, worried by Shi'a expansionism, was persuaded by Prince Bandar bin Sultan, the head of his National Security Council, to coordinate policy with Israel to counter Iran's growing influence. Israel, after all, is a "reliable

enemy" for Saudi Arabia, having destroyed Nasser's Egyptian army in 1967 - a time when the Saudis were fighting Egypt by proxy in Yemen. So Prince Turki al-Faysal, the long time head of Saudi intelligence, has met with Meir Dagan, the head of Israel's Mossad, while Bandar met with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert in Jordan the same month.

Yet covert support from Israel, America, and the Saudis for Abbas and Siniora does little to help them in their domestic battles. From Morocco, Algeria, Libya, and Sudan to Bahrain and Yemen - indeed, throughout the Muslim world from Jakarta to Nigeria - Islamic radicals have won the popularity sweepstakes. A recent poll in Egypt ranked Nasrallah, Meshal, and Ahmadinejad as the three most popular figures. This leads to an unavoidable dilemma: Bush will have to choose between supporting democracy and backing those who want to fight Islamic radicalism.

Yet Israel, America, and the region's moderates can benefit from the deepening schism in the Arab/Muslim world. That schism is being consolidated by Saudi support of all the region's Sunni Muslims. It is this sense of "Sunni solidarity" that is becoming the decisive factor in the war for the soul of Islam, and in the struggle for mastery in the Middle East that is now underway.

*Mai Yamani is an author and broadcaster. Her most recent book is Cradle of Islam. Source: Project Syndicate.*

## Five Job Vacancies for Yemenis

As a result of the progress and development of the oil, gas and minerals sector and the need for implementing the new Ministry's policy, the General Department for Oil, Gas and Minerals Media of the Ministry of Oil and Minerals announces five job openings as follows:

- Two Professional Journalists:** Applicants must have knowledge of different journalistic writings and methods; be specialized in Journalism; and have a good command of English Language as we 1 as at least five years experience in this field.
- Graphic Designer:** Applicants must have the required skills and abilities to make use of graphics; design websites and other advertising work in both the written and E-media; have a good command of English and have eight years experience in this field.
- An English Translator:** Applicants must have previous experience in journalistic translation; have worked in one of the English publications for at least five years.
- Arabic Language Proofreader:** Applicants must have complete knowledge of the Arabic Language; be able to use a computer and have at least three years of experience.
- Mass Media Field Coordinator:** Applicants must have a diploma in public relations and field coordination with five years experience.

How to apply: All interested nationals should email their CV's and relevant document to [oil-media2007@yahoo.com](mailto:oil-media2007@yahoo.com) no later than a period of 14 days from the date of the publication of this Ad. Any personal submission of documents would not be considered.



## The orient in children's literature

## “Anton Gröbel and the Caliph's Treasure Trove”

Peter Strebel's adventure novel "Anton Gröbel" takes the reader to the caliph empire of Baghdad, to India and Egypt, and into dark dungeons and spooky catacombs. What seems at first to be a solid adventure novel soon proves a surprisingly educational book. Volker Kaminski has read it

After just twelve pages of Peter Strebel's adventure novel entitled "Anton Gröbel and the Calife's Treasure Trove," the fantastic quest already begins. Four boys and their ringleader Anton Maier – nicknamed „Gröbel" (the brooder) due to his tendency to endlessly ponder things – plus their smart sidekick Sarah suddenly find themselves in a labyrinth beneath a knight's castle during one of their nightly escapades.

Before they know it they are on an odyssey through the Middle Ages, encountering dubious Knight Templars, ruthless caliphs, magical beings both good and evil, murderous pirates and live mummies.

#### Perilous predicaments and numerous challenges

The plot's settings are spread far and wide, taking us to the caliph empire of Baghdad, to India and Egypt, and into dark dungeons and spooky catacombs. Yet the novel has a very real-

istic storyline. The children are all from broken or patch-work families – as is common these days – with the exception of Sarah, who grew up in a sheltered home.

The children's history teacher Gutknecht, alias Scharte, had initially brought their at-tention to a treasure purportedly located beneath the secret castle. After a few ex-ploratory forays in the "shadowy empire," Anton and his friends encounter the "Rose Sorceress," who grants them three wishes and sends them back thousands of years into the land of the caliphs.

There they discover how treacherous and arduous their search for the treasure will become as they face perilous predicaments and endure numerous challenges.

#### A bloody chronicle of Baghdad, Babylon

What seems at first to be a solid adventure novel with fantasy elements soon proves a surprisingly educational book spiked with historical

knowledge. It may not always be easy for young readers to find orientation in the fast-moving plot and frequent change of setting. Peter Strebel was apparently out to write not just an adventure story with Oriental magicians, Egyptian phoenixes, and clever monkeys, but also a bloody chronicle of Baghdad, Babylon and ancient Egypt.

The adventurers roam from one treachery to the next, becoming entangled in political machinations at the caliph's court, witnessing torture and murder, and eventually coming to the realization that they will not be able to find the treasure without the help of adults. Thus they return to the present at the end of the first part without having accomplished their task.

#### Mustafa the Giant

In the beginning the individual episodes are nicely interwoven. The dragon Tara-munga, who embodies evil, can only be conquered with the sword of Semiramis. But the sword is hidden in a circle of flames in a chamber for which the only entrance lies under the sea.

The journey to the "Island beyond the Wind," where the children suspect the caliph's treasure is to be found, is undertaken aboard the ship of

Mustafa the Giant, who like Homer's Cyclops has only one eye on his forehead. The children learn from Mustafa how to navigate by the stars, and slowly the lesson-filled tale begins to unfold. But the book unfortunately begins to sound like a lexicon of mythologies and the wonders of the world.

The author indiscriminately mixes facts with myth and legend. In the midst of this overload of information, the protagonists' characters remain undeveloped. The ring-leader Anton is the only convincing personality among them, and his small romance with Sarah is tenderly portrayed.

The book is told in a straightforward, easily understandable language – though it probably would have benefited from a few attempts at the epic. The rhythm of the narrative is sometimes monotone, sometimes too rushed. On a more positive note, the novel employs cinematic effects, is rich in dialog, and unfolds in short, quickly changing scenes. But sometimes the rapid succession of different settings is confusing and seems choppy.

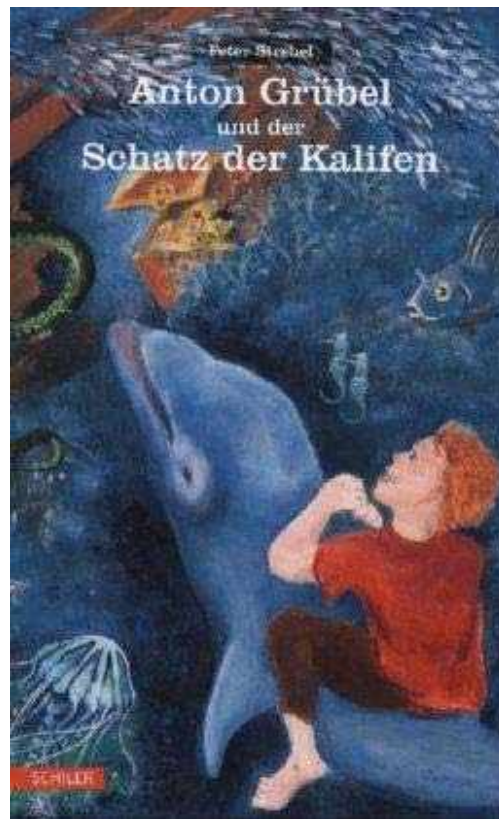
#### Immaterial treasures

A few ideas are very successful. On the group's second journey to the past, Anton takes his laptop with him. The

internet thus makes its debut in the ninth century: armed with a GPS navigation system and a search machine, the adventurers are able to close in on the treasure underneath the pyramids of Giza.

The computer also comes in handy in solving the last mysteries that separate them from the golden tomb of Alexander the Great. But here the author unfortunately over-does things again by entangling the philosopher Aristotle in the treasure hunt – a move that will only please the most patient of book worm readers.

A nice touch comes at the end when the five adventurers return to their old lives and are able to improve in their school work, which means their journeys have been worthwhile after all, and they even receive a raise in their allowance. But they never did find the caliph's treasure chest – a disappointment that is at least partly ameliorated by the consolation that their experiences and the



Spiked with historical knowledge about the Orient - Peter Strebel's adventure novel "Anton Gröbel"

stories told constitute the real treasures in and of themselves.

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## Hip-Hop in Yemen Looking for a Common Beat

At weddings, on car radios and while chewing intoxicating qat leaves: the traditional sounds of the lute can be heard everywhere in Yemen. Now, however, the country's first ever hip-hop concert was staged in the capital. Klaus Heymach reports.

“Hip-hop moves are only for homosexuals,” ten-year-old Abdullah was warned before the open-air event in Sanaa. And a Yemeni woman working at the Deutsches Haus, fully veiled in a niqab, finds it “embarrassing” to see grown men whirling across the stage to western rhythms. Up to now, rap and hip-hop have almost only found their way into Yemen via foreign satellite

a baseball cap instead of the usual white men's dress and curved dagger. "I've already organised a dozen private hip-hop parties for my friends, but a real public show – that was inconceivable until now."

#### Security guards for a cultural event

It was the project European-Islamic Cultural Dialogue that made the inconceivable possible. The French and German embassies invited four artists to Sanaa for the workshop, where they worked on a one-hour stage performance together with the Arab participants, under the motto "Common Beats".

Thousands of people thronged to the three concerts in Sanaa, the former Socialist capital of Aden and the port of Hodeidah – accompanied by hundreds of security men to protect the musicians and their fans from possible attack by Islamic militants.

The reserves on the part of the Yemeni sponsor illustrate just how much of a tightrope modern youth culture has to walk in what is probably the most traditional Arabic country. The cell phone company Sabafon failed to send representatives to either the press conference or the concerts themselves, ignoring the opportunity for marketing directly to their young target group. Sabafon is run by a prominent representative of the Islam-oriented Islah party, the son of the country's

most important sheikh. For many – not just in Islah – music and dancing are "haram", banned by Islamic law.

Yet there were clear rules on the content of the raps in English and Arabic: "No politics, no religion," says the 25-year-old musician Karim Sfahi, who flew in from Berlin along with the Japanese performer Tomoki. "As an Arab, I can totally understand that. In Tunisia, where I come from, unpolitical lyrics help avoid a lot of problems too." In Berlin, the two men produce electronic club music with an oriental touch in their project "Nomad Soundsystem".

But even the Tunisian Sfahi seems to have only discovered the true orient now: "Yemen is still 100 percent Arab," says Karim. "The traditions here are still exactly like they used to be."

"If you're isolated, you can't develop"

But the event organisers don't want



Enthusiasm and frowns - Modern youth culture has to walk a tightrope in what is probably the most traditional Arabic country.

the hip-hop workshop to be seen purely as an import from the west. "Hip-hop and dance are nothing new here," says Frank Werner, cultural attaché at the German embassy. "We watch what goes on here, pick up on it and help to develop it in conjunction with our own culture. If you're isolated, you can't develop. And Yemen wants to

develop."

Guido Zebisch, an employee of the German embassy, sees similarities to the traditional Yemeni tribal dances: both forms of dancing are sporting competitions, he points out. Nevertheless, many of the workshop participants have faced long discussions with their families, while others decided to leave them in the dark altogether. "People come up to me on the street because of my clothes, they say they're un-Islamic," says the rapper Ali. "That's hurtful. I am a Muslim and I even pray."

#### Call to prayer

Hip-hop fan Ramzi, who is really impressed by the concert in Sanaa, also comes up against a lack of understanding for his taste in music at times:

"The hardliners try to tell us that Islam doesn't go with this music. But the two things have nothing to do with each other." The rehearsals have shown that religion and rap really can go hand in hand: at the sound of the muezzin's "Allahu akbar," the rehearsal room immediately falls silent. And the unusual sounds from the West don't seem to be a threat to traditional oriental music either.

"When I'm chewing qat I listen to Sanaani music, and after a long day at the college I like to listen to hip-hop with my friends," says Ramzi. He liked the show so much he wants to join the newly formed Yemeni breakdance troupe and show off a couple of his own moves. His mother doesn't mind his new hobby, although it's very unusual in Yemen: "At least it'll stop him chewing so much qat."

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Many of the hip-hop workshop participants have faced long discussions with their families - others decided to leave them in the dark altogether.

television.

But Ali Salih is all the more fired up, having spent two weeks rehearsing for his first show with two Berlin-based musicians, two choreographers from Marseille and eleven other Yemenis. "It was a unique opportunity, an absolute premiere," says the 18-year-old, who sports baggy pants, a sports jacket and

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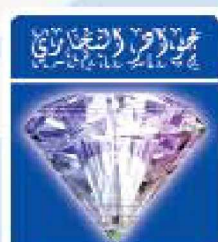
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# Overcrowding at Al-Thawra Hospital Cardiac Center

By: Almigdad Dahesh  
For The Yemen Times

For many years, Yemenis suffering any type of heart disease had to travel abroad to receive treatment and pay a lot of money, but those who didn't have enough money to travel abroad were compelled to go to Al-Thawra Hospital in Sana'a to receive treatment for a limited number of specific diseases in only a handful of rooms. "There was only one catheterization room and one operation room, in addition to a few rooms in the medical department," noted Dr. Abdulkader Abbas, director of Al-Thawra Hospital Cardiac Center in Sana'a.

Cardiac surgeries began somewhat irregularly at the beginning of the 1980s, when many Arab and foreign surgeons from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Germany and other European countries used to visit Al-Thawra Hospital from time to time, explained Dr. Ali Al-Rabowae, cardiac surgery professor at Sana'a University and consulting surgeon at Al-Thawra Hospital Cardiac Center.

"Surgeries weren't performed regularly; rather, they were performed two or three weeks and then stopped for two or three months," Al-Rabowae added, "However, cardiac operations have begun being performed regularly since 2000 when some of my colleagues and I decided to establish a

types and sub-types. "We can divide the cardiovascular disease risk factors into major and contributing factors. Major factors further divide into non-modified factors that we can't change, such as gender and age. For example, we find that women over age 55 and men over age 45 are greatly exposed to cardiovascular disease.

He continued, "Regarding gender, men have a higher risk of heart attack than women, but the difference narrows after women reach menopause. After age 65, the risk of heart disease is about the same between the genders. Another type of major risk factor is modified factors, or those for which one can make modifications.

"One major modified factor is high blood pressure, which increases the risk of heart disease, heart attack and stroke. In addition to non-modified factors, high blood cholesterol, diabetes, smoking, being overweight, heredity and physical inactivity are considered major risk factors for cardiovascular disease."

Explaining the contributing risk factors for cardiovascular disease, Anounu noted, "Sex hormones also appear to play a role in heart disease. Heart disease is rare among women younger than 40. Nevertheless, between ages 40 and 65, around the time when most women go through menopause, the chances that a woman will have a heart attack greatly increase. From 65 onward, women make up about half of all heart attack

difficult to protect ourselves from it. As we learn about cardiovascular disease, we can avoid it by avoiding its causes.

Dr. Mohammed Al-Foras of Al-Askari Hospital in Sana'a advises, "People can prevent cardiovascular disease by giving up smoking. We can see that while smoking shrinks more and more every day, it increases daily in Yemen and, as I mentioned, smoking is a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease.

"We also should play sports and try our best to lose weight. Moreover, we must avoid all processed foods labeled 'low fat' or containing polyunsaturated vegetable oils, hydrogenated fats, white flour, refined sugar or additives. Applying these instructions to a good extent can help protect people from cardiovascular diseases," Al-Foras concluded.

Al-Rabowae related death rates to Yemeni heart patients' late arrival to the hospital. "The success rate for surgeries is very high, but the problem in Yemen is that patients arrive at the hospital late and, consequently, the death rate will be high. But I can emphasize that the success rate is high in comparison to the death rate," Al-Rabowae noted.

## Lack of trust remains

While it's the only cardiac center in Yemen, it offers patients high-standard services. "This center performs all cardiac surgeries except heart transplants," Al-Rabowae noted,



Women over age 55 are greatly exposed to cardiovascular disease.

an immediate report about the cause of death on the same day," he added.

## Other obstacles

Patients and doctors may differ in their judgments about the Al-Thawra cardiac center, but they do agree on one thing – the center's limited capacity and distance from other governorates. "We receive patients from every governorate, but the center can't embrace them all. We daily perform approximately 10-15 therapeutic and diagnostic catheterization operations, six or seven open cardiac surgeries like valve replacements and artery transplant surgery a week and now beds and so many other operations," Abbas noted.

Center administration considers the

center's limited capacity as its main and only problem, whereas for patients, it's only one of the problems and difficulties they face.

Patient Tariq Mohammed Bin-Ali remarked, "While this center is very good, it isn't enough. The government must build another center in Aden. I came from Lahj with my father. We suffered a lot from both the traveling and the expenditures. My father has to pay for food, accommodation and transportation, in addition to the cost of medicine. We've been here more than a month and all the money we spend is a debt from our friends and relatives." He stressed, "The state must build another center in Aden."

Sa'ada Hassan, 35, commented, "I had valve transplant surgery. I'm fine now, but I really suffered a lot due to the center's long registration

procedures until I could have the operation. I have heart disease, so I can't come here and then go home every day for more than a month. Believe it or not, I didn't want to come to the hospital at all. I had to take a taxi every day and then had to wait many hours once I arrived at the center. By the time my turn came, the work day was over."

Others complain that there's insufficient care for patients. A patient companion who refused to give his name said, "The doctors are competent in performing operations, but the problem is that when we bring in an emergency case, no one hears us. Additionally, after the operation, the doctor's observation of the patient isn't constant. Therefore, we can't find the doctor if something wrong happens to the patient."



Dr. Abdulkader Abbas



Dr. Ali Al-Rabowae



Dr. Abdulkaliq Anounu

cardiac center."

Because of the sensitive nature of cardiac diseases and lack of an independent facility to embrace as many of the daily-increasing cardiac patients as possible, the Yemeni government decided to build the Al-Thawra Hospital Cardiac Center. Inaugurated in 2002, it consists of three floors dedicated for adults, children and one for cardiac surgery.

"This center has great importance because it's the only place we can perform open-heart surgeries, such as implanting arteries, replacing valves, performing congenital modification operations, therapeutic and diagnostic catheterization. In fact, it's the only well-equipped and prepared center in Yemen in which to perform such operations," Abbas noted.

Additionally, the center is planning to receive several Arab and foreign delegations, which will assist the Yemeni staff's competence. "We're planning to entertain foreign teams that have more experience than us, especially in those cases that are still difficult for us, in order to continue qualification and training," Abbas added.

## No studies on Yemen

Al-Thawra Hospital cardiac surgeon Dr. Abdulkaliq Anounu said, "Until now, there have been no statistics or studies about the number of those affected by cardiovascular disease in Yemen; however, I can say that the rate of prevalence of cardiovascular disease in developing countries differs from one type to another.

"For example, rheumatic heart disease and valvular heart disease affect 50 percent of Yemeni cardiac patients, while hypertension, coronary artery disease, congenital heart disease and other cardiac diseases represent the other 50 percent of Yemeni heart patients."

Anounu divides the risk factors that cause cardiovascular disease into

victims. Birth control pills, alcohol and emotional stress are considered contributing risk factors."

Anounu pointed out that some popular Yemeni dishes contain items contributing to increasing the risk of cardiovascular disease. "Yes, many people add things like ghee and cooking oil to popular dishes, which contribute to infecting people with cardiovascular disease," Anounu stressed.

When cardiovascular disease risk factors – or even some of them – affect the human body, many symptoms begin to appear. "Symptoms usually are related to efforts. If a person feels chest pain, shortness of breath or any other symptom only while exerting himself, this means his condition isn't dangerous. However, if the symptom appears during rest and directly increases with effort, his condition is dangerous. Actually, there are many symptoms of cardiovascular diseases and some are common with specific diseases," Anounu explained.

"For example, shortness of breath is common with congenital heart disease, rheumatic heart disease and hypertension, while chest pain is common with coronary artery disease. Additionally, many other symptoms like palpitations provide an awareness of one's heartbeat or a feeling of having a rapid and unusually forceful heartbeat, especially if they last several hours or recur over several days and/or cause chest pain, breathlessness or dizziness.

"Fainting, which is due to insufficient oxygen reaching the brain, is another symptom. Moreover, we can't forget fatigue, which is a common symptom that has numerous causes, including depression," Anounu added.

The types, risk factors and symptoms of cardiovascular disease are many and varied. It may be difficult to be healed of cardiovascular disease or obtain medicine, but it isn't

"The competence level of the services this center offers, including the success of operations, is no less than the level of any cardiac center in Europe."

Heart patient Abdulraqueeb Mahli, 35, explained, "I had surgery 10 months ago to replace a valve and now I never feel in pain in my heart. I'm here to receive treatment for an inflated abdomen, which is unrelated to my cardiac operation. Really, the care here is very good."

Yahya Al-Marhabhi, 43, from Amran governorate, remarked, "I had artery transplant surgery a week ago and I'm completely fine now."

Despite the fact that Al-Thawra Hospital Cardiac Center can compete with European centers, many Yemenis still prefer to travel abroad for treatment. A patient companion who requested anonymity declared, "I took my wife to Egypt to replace a heart valve because I'm not ready to sacrifice her life by having Yemeni doctors learn on her!"

Accompanying his father, Moneer Al-Homaidi commented, "I took my father to Egypt twice and once to Jordan because he suffers valvular heart disease and needs surgery. I didn't take him to Al-Thawra Hospital because I don't trust the Yemeni doctors."

Explaining the reasons for such mistrust of Yemeni doctors, Al-Rabowae said, "I believe the trust between doctor and patient is nonexistent. The reason for this is the Ministry of Health and hospital administration ignoring doctors' rights, which, consequently, has led to ignoring patients. Doctors didn't receive their rights properly, thus, patients were neglected completely.

"However, I'd like to stress that the situation has changed and now there's strong observation of everything. Doctors may be interrogated for any wrong they cause. For example, if a patient dies, the doctor must present



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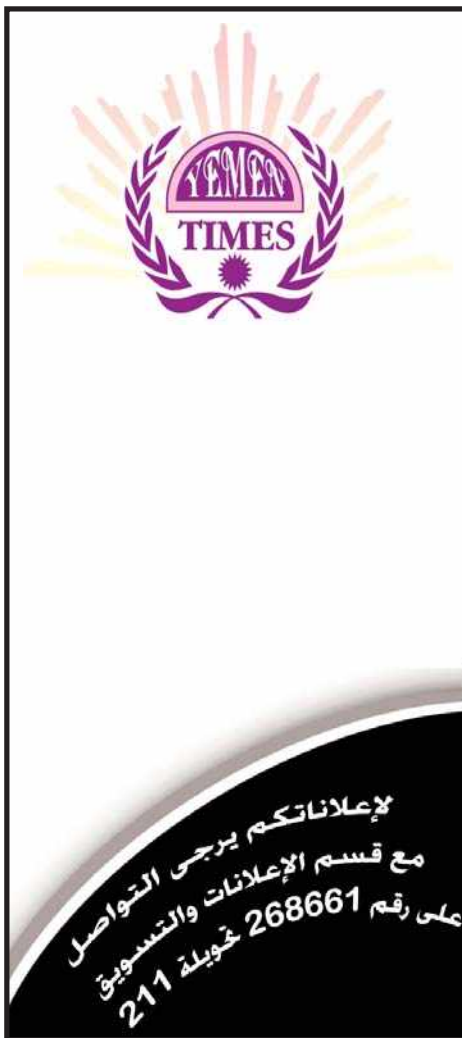


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## Protracted refugee situations:

## Millions caught in limbo, with no solutions in sight

While news of major refugee emergencies often dominate headlines, the plight of millions of people who have languished in exile for years -- and sometimes decades -- remains a low-profile high-risk situation with serious humanitarian and security implications.

"protracted refugee situations" involving groups of 25,000 people or more who have been in exile for over five years. According to UNHCR data, altogether they account for 5.7 million of the world's 9.2 million refugees. Those figures do not include the world's oldest and largest protracted refugee situation, Palestinian refugees, who fall under the mandate of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

The vast majority of these exiles are to be found in the world's poorest and most unstable regions, often the result of neglect by regional and international actors amid declining donor support. Trapped in these forgotten situations, the refugees cannot return home because of continuing violence or persecution, while facing significant restrictions on their rights in the places of asylum. At the same time, UNHCR warns, their presence raises political and security concerns among host governments and other states in the region. As such, protracted refugee situations represent a significant challenge both to human rights and security.

### The Context

• Since the early 1990s, the international community has focused largely on refugee emergencies in high-profile areas such as the Balkans, the Great Lakes region of Africa and, more recently, Darfur (Sudan) and Chad. Yet more than 60 per cent of today's refugees are trapped in situations far from the international spotlight.

### "Ten Stories the World Should Hear More About"

In 2004, the United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI) launched an initiative called "Ten Stories the World Should Hear More About" to draw attention to important international developments and issues that fall outside the media spotlight. The list includes stories on an array of issues and from several geographical regions. Some of the stories on the list focus on troubling humanitarian emergencies and conflict situations, but they also highlight such vital areas as human rights, health and development. Every issue, we will bring a new story to you, hoping that our little effort to advocate for human rights all over the world would make a difference, some how, some way...

The editor

- The root causes of long-standing refugee populations stem from the very states whose instability engenders chronic regional insecurity. Most of the refugees in these regions - be they Somalis, Sudanese, Burundians or Burmese - come from countries where conflict has persisted for years.
- East and West Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia, the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Middle East are all plagued by protracted refugee situations. Sub-Saharan Africa has the largest number, 17, involving 1.9 million refugees. The countries hosting the biggest groups are Guinea, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.
- In Asia (China, Thailand, India and Nepal) there are five protracted situations and some 676,000 refugees. Europe has three major cases involving 510,000 refugees, primarily in the Balkans and Armenia.
- Although the measure of at least 25,000 refugees in exile for five years is traditionally used to define such situations, UNHCR argues that other groups should not be excluded. For example, of the Rohingya who fled from Myanmar to Bangladesh 12 years ago, 20,000 still remain. Similarly, there are 19,000 Burundians in the Democratic Republic of Congo, 16,000 Somalis in Ethiopia, 15,000 Ethiopians

in Sudan and 19,000 Rwandans in Uganda.

- While today there are fewer refugees in protracted situations, the number of such situations has greatly increased. According to UNHCR, they are also spending longer periods in exile. It is estimated that in 2003 major refugee situations, protracted or not, averaged 17 years -- nearly twice as long as in 1993.



Refugees from Myanmar living in Bangladesh on the tidal mudflats of the Teknaf River which borders the two countries.

### The Story

While worldwide refugee numbers have fallen to their lowest level in 25 years, a larger percentage of asylum-seekers are spending a longer time in exile in an often-overlooked plight of subsistence living in a virtual state of limbo. "The majority of today's refugees have lived in exile for far too long, restricted to camps or eking out a meagre existence in urban centres throughout the developing world," says the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in its 2006 report on the state of the world's refugees.

Today, there are at least 33 so-called

## Refugees and displaced persons

### Who

A refugee is someone with a well-founded fear of persecution on the basis of his or her race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion, who is outside of his or her country of nationality and unable or unwilling to return. Refugees are forced from their countries by war, civil conflict, political strife or gross human rights abuses. There were an estimated 14.9 million refugees in the world in 2001 - people who had crossed an international border to seek safety - and at least 22 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) who had been uprooted within their own countries.

### What

Enshrined in Article 14 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the right "to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution." This principle recognizes that victims of human rights abuse must be able to leave their country freely and to seek refuge elsewhere. Governments frequently see refugees as a threat or a burden, refusing to respect this core principle of human rights and refugee protection.

### Where

The global refugee crisis affects every

continent and almost every country. In 2001, 78 percent of all refugees came from 10 areas: Afghanistan, Angola, Burma, Burundi, Congo-Kinshasa, Eritrea, Iraq, the Palestinian territories, Somalia and Sudan. Palestinians are the world's oldest and largest refugee population, and make up more than one fourth of all refugees. Asia hosts 45 percent of all refugees, followed by Africa (30 percent), Europe (19 percent) and North America (5 percent).

### When

Throughout history, people have fled their homes to escape persecution. In the aftermath of World War II, the international community included the right to asylum in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In 1950, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was created to protect and assist refugees, and, in 1951, the United Nations adopted the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, a legally binding treaty that, by February 2002, had been ratified by 140 countries.

### Why

In the past 50 years, states have largely regressed in their commitment to protect refugees, with the wealthy industrialized states of Europe, North America and

Australia - which first established the international refugee protection system - adopting particularly hostile and restrictive policies. Governments have subjected refugees to arbitrary arrest, detention, denial of social and economic rights and closed borders. In the worst cases, the most fundamental principle of refugee protection, nonrefoulement, is violated, and refugees are forcibly returned to countries where they face persecution. Since September 11, many countries have pushed through emergency anti-terrorism legislation that curtails the rights of refugees.

### How

Human Rights Watch believes the right to asylum is a matter of life and death and cannot be compromised. In our work to stop human rights abuses in countries around the world, we seek to address the root causes that force people to flee. We also advocate for greater protection for refugees and IDPs and for an end to the abuses they suffer when they reach supposed safety. Human Rights Watch calls on the United Nations and on governments everywhere to uphold their obligations to protect refugees and to respect their rights - regardless of where they are from or where they seek refuge.

Source: Human Rights Watch

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