

# Sports in Yemen

## A Glimmer of Hope in Times of Conflict

Great Challenges and Modest Participations in Local and International Championships

Sports in Yemen between Ambitious Youth and Destructive Conflict

Sawt

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### Editorial

#### A Glimmer of Hope in the Darkness



Abdul-Aziz Ali Oudah  
Editor in Chief

Over the decades, and until today, the general Yemeni public believe that sport is something secondary of an entertainment nature. This view has remained widely prevalent, except in cases imposed by some achievements of varying importance, such as participations of national teams in various sport games outside the country.

This belief was not only held by the general public. Rather, it was clearly manifested, at the official level, in the interests of successive governments since the outbreak of the September 1962 and October 1963 Revolutions.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports was at the bottom of the list of ministries that received support from state leaders.

Sport in Yemen was not a focus of interest to be developed and promoted, with the exception of some foreign participations of Yemeni sport, which had varying achievements at the continental or international level - especially in individual sports.

This official and popular neglect of the sports sector also coincided with the lack of international support for Yemen, began even before the outbreak of the conflict.

Those, who track international support for Yemen in the pre-2015 period, will find that the sports sector was the least supported. Rather, it was almost absent from the programs and activities of international

bodies and donor countries for development in Yemen.

The ongoing conflict has destroyed the hopes of a bright athletic future, there is an almost complete absence of local sports activities, and there are rare participations outside the country for a limited number of national teams in various sports games.

Yemen has endured multi-level problems and difficulties in recent years, which has resulted in the exclusion of sports from programs and activities at all levels. Voices calling for maintaining and rehabilitating the remaining sports facilities have become a matter of ridicule.

Sports infrastructure- which was modest- and facilities have been severely damaged during the period of conflict that the country has been going through for years, athletic human staff and technical capabilities are no exception.

In the midst of this bleak situation of sports in war-torn Yemen, the victory of the Yemeni Junior Team in the West Asian Football Championship came to revive hopes and draw attention once again to sports. This victory has made Yemenis rejoice for the first time since the eruption of the devastating war; their cheers soared over their pains and misery.

This victory realized what international community and UN mediations could not. It brought the warring parties together, and got them

to agree at least to one thing. Regardless of their intellectual, religious or political affiliations, people poured into the streets and squares of Yemeni cities to celebrate the victory in a way we had never seen before, raising the flag of the Republic of Yemen and chanting the slogan "with our souls and blood, we will redeem you, Yemen." Indeed, the Yemeni junior players made what politicians could not, and sport restored what was ruined by the gunfire of the warring parties throughout Yemen.

This sporting achievement, that united everyone under the flag of the Republic of Yemen, is an open invitation to bring the parties to the conflict to the negotiating table, and is a golden chance to be seized to start the peace process that all Yemenis aspire to. There are similar historical examples that motivate us to reach this goal.

In this issue of Swat Al-Aml, we try to send a message of hope to all Yemenis and to those interested in sports that sports can be a gateway for ending war and bringing peace. We also seek to raise awareness about the importance of the sports sector and about the possibility of investing in the capabilities of young people and directing their energies in the right way. We discuss the state of sport from various aspects with sport professionals and those interested in the sports sector.



# Sport is a Missed Opportunity for Peace

*It was not just a final goal that shook the net, but it was a sign of the end to transcend all differences and start a new phase entitled peace and security for all.*

*The youth team's victory in the West Asian Championship came to form an unprecedented national consensus, with which the calls for division and fighting faded in an incident that showed that we have many missed opportunities for peace and turning the page of conflict. Sport unites all spectrums of Yemenis when politics divides them. Sport has achieved what political negotiations and peace mediations have not for years. It has revived the common patriotism among Yemenis, which sheds light on possible outlets to break through the barrier of violence and go towards restoring stability.*



Arwad Al-Khatib  
Sawt Al-Amal (Voice of Hope)

Ali Al-Burihi, professor of media at Sana'a University, believes that sport is primarily a recreational activity that requires a state of stability, coexistence and harmony.

Football is a popular recreational activity in which enjoyment, excitement, and interaction are achieved. As it revives hopes and aspirations, the collective joy extends to the desire for sharing, cooperation, interdependence and construction. Through collective activity, the characteristics and features of the collective identity of the community emerge, and the narrow deconstructive tendencies are weakened. Thus, sport plays an important role in coexistence, harmony and community stability.

## Sports and Peace

He added that as long as sport is one of the factors for achieving stability and coexistence, it necessarily helps create and achieve peace. By its nature, sports create a lively, creative interaction that enhances societal cohesion, and transcends the culture of hatred and disharmony in society. It draws a picture of society, through which a sense of integration and collaboration is developed among viewers to achieve big goals. This kind of thinking results from the community's awareness of the importance of teamwork, coexistence and peace.

On the possibility of sports restoring what weapons ruined, Al-Burihi asserted that sport can restore what was ruined by weapons, provided that the advocates of sedition, gangs of corruption and mercenaries, which commit pre-meditated murder, must be dispensed with.

Al-Burihi stressed the need to allocate sufficient spaces for sports, because sports and sports activity is an expression of the cultural, intellectual and political situation and the strategic orientations of governments.

He believes that sports activities- in our country and in Arab and underdeveloped countries in general- is among the activities that aim to control or domesticate young people.

Sports were not the focus of attention, and were not planned for the purpose of entertainment and the enjoyment of the masses and



Ali Al-Burihi

society. Rather, politics has seized control of sports, which has caused sports to lose its influence and importance. The same happens to the educational, health, services and economy sectors. As politics has dominated everything, sports have not had enough space in the media, as the media was preoccupied with propaganda, misinformation, and fake news, as well as spreading lies, fueling conflicts and rivalries, and covering up the failure of regimes, gangs, and militias in the absence of the state.

For his part, sports commentator Bakr Alwan stressed the importance of sport and its role in social coexistence. He said that sports are very important, and have a prominent role in many things. It has become a national wealth for some countries that are interested in this sport game. He said that sport has a prominent role in social coexistence and strengthening the bond between peoples.

When national team players choose any game from different governorates and cities, under one flag, they seek to embody the model of a family which is a microcosm for the homeland, supported by a large family of fans having no affiliations.

He proposed to strengthen community ties through organizing or resuming popular or official championship. He stated that in our country, for instance, we have noticed sport mass momentum and talks have been resumed after holding the general league in the two-group system and the refresher league with the assembly system before, the basketball league in Aden has been restored. There are also various popular championship, we need pages to list them.



Ahmed Abu Zina

On the ways sports competitions contribute to creating opportunities for peace and on the experience of the Junior National Team's victory in unifying the opinions and feelings of Yemenis, Alwan said, "the Junior National Team is not the only one that brought joy and happiness, but there is also the Youth Team; both teams have qualified for the Asian Cup. However, the two championships were canceled over Covid-19. Our teams, as well as other athletes at the individual level, such as swimmer Mukhtar Al-Yamani, and Ibrahim Jubran who ranked 12th in the world in junior table tennis.

Nevertheless, perhaps this was the first Yemeni championship in history, which was achieved by the Football Junior National Team, which made us all rejoice all over Yemen. We all noticed how Yemenis expressed their happiness with this historic achievement for Yemeni football.

Bakr Alwan asserted that sports can restore what weapons ruined, and provided examples of sporting events, especially football. He explained that before launching the 2006 World Cup in Germany, Ivory Coast was experiencing civil wars, and after its national team qualified for the finals, star Didier Drogba and his Ivory Coast teammates helped end the war. They called upon all the warring parties- in letters- to stop the war, which is what happened.

In Nigeria in 1969, during the Santos Club trip around the world, along with the famous player at the time, Pele, the Brazilian Football legend also known as "The Black Pearl", the players entered to play a match in Lagos on January 26. Surprisingly, the guns fell silent for



Bakr Alwan

48 hours, as Nigeria and Biafra put aside their differences and held a ceasefire to enjoy watching the match.

He said that sport is the only thing that has brought us together as Yemenis from all over the republic for more than seven years. In his view, sport is capable of ending the war, but this, according to him, requires awareness among politicians to place the interest of the nation over their personal interests.

Regarding the possibility of investing the national team's victory in holding a meeting between the warring parties, so that they may put aside their differences, promoting the common weal and advancing the public good, Alwan said, "The phrase of the Yemeni football striker at Al-Wehda Aden and our national junior team player, Muhammad Al-Barwani, made me cry when he said, "We are one people." I do not find more eloquent than this phrase to tell our politicians that despite diversity, we must coexist and live together in our homeland Yemen. This team would constitute a pressure- for the benefit of the peace sponsors- on the warring parties to participate in a genuine peace conference in which all conflicting parties make concessions.

## Sports in the Media

Regarding the limited space for sports programs in the media in favour of conflict news, political programs and others, Alwan directed the question to the concerned authorities: Why do our channels trade in politics and are not interested in sports? Don't you think it's time to broadcast our championships and the matches of our national teams through Yemeni studios

and with Yemeni commentators?! He asserted that he did not find a convincing answer, and believes that the stakeholders, influencers and channels do not want that.

Ahmed Abu Zina, editor-in-chief of Al-Malae website, said: Sports have a major and pivotal role in the unification of peoples and coexistence of societies. Our country lived through this reality, as the first unified football team was formed before the declaration of Yemeni unity on May 22, 1990, and the victory of the Iraqi national football team in the AFC Asian Cup Championship in 2007 contributed to the unification of Iraqis who lived through division and dispersion. He emphasized that this happens when sport exists for the sake of peace, and not for political or sectarian gains. He confirmed that what the junior national team has achieved is a living witness to the possibility of uniting the Yemeni the northerners and the southerners, with one common slogan (with our souls and blood, we will redeem you, Yemen.) The Yemeni people desperately needed this joy, which came at the right time.

Regarding the possibility of investing the national team's victory in holding a meeting between the warring parties, Ahmed Abu Zina said it is possible if there are sincere intentions to end war and bring peace, and it will be easily applicable if the decision is purely Yemeni, that is, by consensus of the conflicting parties. The youth team's achievement reminds us of what happened in Ivory Coast, where a civil war erupted in 2002 between two factions, and when the Ivory Coast qualified at the expense of the Sudanese team for qualified for the 2006 FIFA World that were held in Germany. Joy prevailed all over the Ivory Coast, change took place in the country, the war ended and peace prevailed.

On the reasons for not allocating enough space for sports programs in the various media, he said that all media outlets have tendencies that follow influential and decision-makers in the country.

Political orientation casts a shadow over the policy of media. If we find sports personalities in media platforms that are not aligned with a political party, we will notice a different orientation and policy, and there will be enough space for sports programs in the local media.

## Counted from Last Page ... The Junior's Feet Beat the Warriors' Guns

She said that the school witnessed - after the national team's victory - spontaneous celebrations in which the students exchanged congratulations and gifts on this occasion. Besides, the painters hung pictures of the team around the school. The poet students wrote poems in praise of the little team and its achievement, which brought joy to everyone.

Khadija Al-Silwi, a housewife, said that Yemeni women had a share of this joy, and they expressed it by ululating and exchanging congratulations through women's gatherings, phone messages and WhatsApp groups.

She said that this achievement prompted many women to encourage their children to play sports in various games and to join the

ranks of sports clubs, following the example of the junior national team champions.

### Joy Transcends Country Borders

The joy was not limited to Yemenis inside the country, but also extended to Yemenis living abroad. Besides, other places in the world witnessed similar celebrations of joy by the Yemeni communities for this victory, including Cairo, some cities in Saudi Arabia, the Gulf, the United States, Britain and other countries.

Abdul Majeed Al-Hajri, a Yemeni expatriate residing in the United States, said that this was the first time that a Yemeni football team has achieved a continental championship. Celebrations pervaded the regions of the poor coun-

try mired by conflict, and people took to the streets celebrating in various regions.

Meanwhile, the Yemeni journalist residing in Cairo, Saleh Al-Humaidi, asserts that Yemenis in Cairo of all political affiliations celebrated the football victory. Cairo witnessed gatherings of Yemenis in cafes and public places chanting for Yemen and the junior team, which draw a smile on the Yemenis faces despite the conflict and tragedies that have plagued the country for years.

### But...

What dampened the Yemenis' joy at this achievement was the indiscriminate shooting that caused the deaths of five people, includ-

ing a girl, and 124 were injured in the capital, Sana'a, according to the announcement of the Ministry of Health.

The Ministry of Health stated that the capital, Sana'a, and other governorates witnessed unprecedented mass celebrations, with the junior national team crowning the West Asian Championship. In addition, it witnessed shooting in the air, which caused the death of five people and the injury of 124 because of the return bullets. Among the dead was a four-year-old girl, according to AFP. Moreover, shooting was heard and lasted for four hours, while families were roaming in the streets with their cars. Others set off fireworks, as this scene was repeated in other Yemeni regions.

It is worth noting that sports team players are usually gathered in camps in Sana'a or Aden before matches. Besides, they participate and undergo a short preparation period for the championships.

The coaching staff of the national team searches for talent in the regions they visit after making arrangements with the sporting officials there, as the journey is often fraught with dangers.

The Yemeni national football team crowned this evening, the eighth West Asian Federation Championship for juniors, by defeating the Saudi team 4-3 on penalties, after they tied in the original time in the match that was held in Dammam, Saudi Arabia.



# Sports Sector.. Financial and Administrative Problems Hindering the Economy of the Sports Sector in Yemen

By: Hanin Al-Wahesh  
Sawt Al-Amal - (Voice of Hope)

Sports in various countries of the world contribute significantly to the national economy, as the economic return far outweighs the expenses. Therefore, great and diverse interest in this sector is taken by those in charge of it.

In Yemen, the sports sector has long suffered, and is still, from neglect and weakness in providing appropriate performance in various sports activities, and in making the best use of the sector,

## The Private Sector and its Role in the Investment Process

On the impact of sports on the national economy, Farhan Thabet, General Director of the General Administration of Federations and Clubs in the Ministry of Youth and Sports - Aden, said: Sports around the world is an economy in its own right, from which one makes money, not the other way around. However, sport in Yemen is still a state-supported service, and the athlete still serves sport for nothing.

He added to "Sawt Al-Amal": The effects of conflict on sport are great. Sports, human energies, halls, clubs and stadiums have been destroyed. There are some sports institutions aware of their role in handling all administrative, financial and security challenges and supporting sports activity in clubs in one way or another, which gives us hope for the recovery of this sector.

On the reason for the weak investment in sports from the private sector, Thabet explained that there are many reasons, the most important of which are: lack of understanding of the importance of investment, instability of management, lack of transparency, mismanagement of investment from some clubs, and political interference in sport.

Regarding how to put forward necessary solutions to advance the sports sector, Thabet said, "So far, there are no solutions mentioned, because we have been tinkering for decades. We are looking to find additional sources of income to support sports. We have completely relied on the Youth Welfare Fund to reactivate the sports sector again."

## Sports and the Economy

Fares Al-Najjar, an economist, assured



"Sawt Al-Amal" that sport plays an important role in the economic process. He said that "if we go back in history to the 20th Arabian Gulf Cup, we will see the organization of the tournament was one of the factors of attraction to support the tourism sector in Yemen. Sports activities in general, the organization of sports championships, and the presence of strong clubs in the country are investment attractions that not only promote tourism, but contribute to the recovery of the economic sector and provide foreign exchange that strengthens and supports national economy."

Al-Najjar added: To support the economy, stadiums and sports screens should be used for commercial advertisements by private companies and their revenues should go back to the Ministry of Youth and Sports, sports facilities, and the country's economy. These revenues are mainly invested in developing the infrastructure of the sports sector, which will be necessarily reflected on the performance of the players and their skills.

## Future Plans

Within the economic reconstruction and recovery plan priorities implemented by the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation 2018, Al-Najjar stressed the need

to involve young men and women in development, reconstruction and peacebuilding through starting the reconstruction of sports facilities damaged by the conflict and activating the Child and Youth Welfare Fund to build young people's capacities and develop their creative talents in various sports fields (physical and intellectual).

The plan also clarified the importance of dealing with the requirements of the current unstable stage, starting restoring basic services, enhancing economic stability and recovery by providing adequate funding for all institutions and sectors, including the sports sector.

Within the framework of future plans to activate the field of sports and invest in it, Ayman Al-Mikhlafi (Director of the Youth and Sports Office in Taiz Governorate) said that the office has many future plans to develop sports performance in the governorate and the country in general, including how to receive championships in many games at the level of the Republic, such as: (chess, taekwondo, swimming, and karate) as a first stage."

Al-Mikhlafi added: There are plans to invest in projects in rural sports clubs, restore and rehabilitate many sport federations that

were suspended during the last period, and activate the Women's Sports Federation to participate in the development process at the governorate level in Yemen in general.

The Reality of Sports Economy in Yemen Captain Bashir Mahyoub, a former player and a presenter of sports and youth programs) stated that sport in Yemen does not receive the necessary attention that would make it able to contribute to the economic aspect, especially at the present time.

He stressed that one of the most important requirements for reviving the sports sector is community awareness of the importance of sports, and the need to provide moral and material support to athletes, especially by merchants and businessmen.

Mahyoub called upon the Ministry of Youth and Sports to take interest in sports and revive sport activities with special interest in young talents by raising their awareness and giving them the opportunity to participate and prove their potentials at local and international levels.

Khalid Abdulhadi (journalist from Taiz) said: It is not possible to talk about sports economics in Yemen, because the sport that creates an economy needs to spend a large amount of money on sports infrastructure,

## Sports in Yemen is still a State-Supported Service

recruiting players, establishing financial centers for sport clubs, and providing salaries to athletes. These are the most important factors that will make sports able to attract sponsors, television broadcast contracts, partnership agreements, and create a sports market. This cycle is completed in the public treasury by collecting a tax on the revenues of the clubs and the income of the athletes.

## Sport Economics

In a research paper presented by Mazen Wahib to Awraq Thaqafya for the year 2020, he explained the relationship of sport to the economy of countries and the importance of diversifying the sports sector, which is one of the most important sectors that contribute in many aspects, whether health, educational or other aspects.

In his research, he explained that sport is an important source of national income for many countries, as its revenues of the sports market, which consists of many and varied fields, including the involvement of the industrial side and sponsorship, profits and taxes levied on clubs and players. It includes: clothing, sports equipment, payments, and charges related to the team or the league, media and advertising.

The research showed many benefits that motivate countries to raise and develop the level of sports in the country, with the aim of obtaining a large income to host international championship, promote tourism, and support state institutions and services. Hence, it produces an integrated economic cycle that has national, material and moral returns.



# Qualifying 25 Female Journalists in the Field of Sports Media

By: Alia Muhammed  
Sawt Al-Amal - (Voice of Hope)

The first workshop of Women's Press was held during the period (27-30) December 2021. It was organized by Yemeni Association for Sports Media and sponsored by the National Telecommunications Company Yemen Mobile. More than 25 trainees from the Faculty of Media and activists in the media field participated in. The workshop included many theoretical presentations and practical applica-

tions, revolving around:

Introduction to Women's Sports Journalists and its Way of Writing by Samia Al-Aghbari, Methods of Preparing Sports Programs by Dr. Najeeb Al-Shamiri, Methods of Sport Analysis by Prof. Dr. Saleh Humaid, Methods of Photography in Sports Journalism for Photography Coaches Abdulaziz Omar and Randa Al-Zayadi.

This was the first workshop of its kind in the history of Yemeni sports media.

The Chairman of the Yemeni Association for Sports Media, Saleh Humaid, confirmed

that holding this workshop came with the aim of activating women's sports, creating an adequate sports space, and adopting sports media for both males and females, as in previous periods most of the members of the Sports Media Union were males. Our vision of a balanced sports media work within sports federations, clubs, media institutions and sports journalism, on the grounds that female sports journalists are no less than male sports journalists.

Humaid said: "Although the program was stressful, we noticed the difference in the performance of the trainees and felt their joy. We

will gain an Arab and international resonance as the first association to care for women's sports and give women enough space according to a pre-prepared sports program, especially in light of the ongoing conflict.

He added that we, as an Association for Sports Media, have given women the opportunity to take advantage of their potentials in sports journalism, not only at the local level, but also at the international level.

Abduaziz Amr, a professional sports photojournalist, pointed out the importance of having a leading female sports journalism,

representing Yemen in international sports and forums. He stressed that the workshop was very successful. It covered the most important sports concepts.

The attendees praised the efforts of the Yemeni Association for Sports Media and the keenness of its member to overcome all obstacles to develop the capabilities of Yemeni female Sports journalists.

The association confirmed and assured that it is going to implement its future plan and will hold similar workshops in the governorates of Ibb, Aden, Hodeidah, and Hadramaut.



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*Sports has occupied an important place in the lives of society members throughout history. It has is of high importance at the level of the state and individuals and has an impact on all social, economic, health and cultural aspects, as it has become part of the civilized structure of the state. It was necessary to take interest in sport and make the necessary and supportive determinants of economic activity, including facilities, capabilities, tools, stadiums, halls, means of transportation and other factors such as safety and security.*



# Sports in Yemen between

By Rajaa Mukred  
Sawt Al-Amal - (Voice of Hope)

In Yemen, with the conflict entering its eighth year, sports and youth is enduring the deterioration of the infrastructure, which caused some competitions and external participations to stop. As a result, the psychological state of the ambitious youth deteriorated, who, despite the conflict, try to find a glimmer of hope among the wreckage to bring joy and happiness into the hearts of Yemenis in all governorates of the Republic, persistently seek to overcome the difficult circumstances Yemen is going through, and provide the best in all kinds of sports, both inside Yemen and abroad.

## The Status of Sport in Yemen

Faris Al-Imad, a citizen of Sana'a, confirmed that the situation today is financially and morally tragic, sports are deteriorating for the worse, and there is no league or active sports in some Yemeni governorates as before. Yemen's participation in most of the world Olympiads has become few due to the continuation of the conflict.

Al-Imad added that sports in Yemen need state officials to take interest in youth and support them financially, morally or healthily, and pay attention to the youth staff who are trying during this period to break out of cycles of conflict to bring their voices and their sport abroad.

For his part, Taha Al-Shaibani, a citizen from Taiz, said: Sports today are not supported. The focus should be on all sports. However, the sport that is focused on is football. We call on the concerned authorities to help young people and encourage them to go off like other countries, especially in international forums.

Al-Shaibani added: There are other sports

besides football related to physical fitness, such as combat sports and wrestling, all of which need technical, administrative and financial support, and above all moral support.

## Numbers

A report issued by the Media Department of the Ministry of Youth and Sports in March 2021, "Sawt Al-Amal" obtained a copy of it, showed the state of the infrastructure and the extent of damage to the sports sector. The report revealed that the Ministry of Youth and Sports lost one billion dollars in youth and sports facilities, between direct and indirect losses, due to the ongoing conflict.

In the same report, as a result of the conflict, the toll number of deaths from Youth Sports in Yemen reached 129. 108 youth and sports facilities, distributed over 17 Yemeni governorates, were partially or completely destroyed. In addition, 7 sports stadiums, 13 playground, 23 gyms, 9 youth hostels, 21 administrative headquarters, 6 sports headquarters, and 12 light fields were destroyed. About 6000 workers were deprived of job opportunities in projects implemented by the ministry.

The report indicated the extent of the damage to equestrian sport in Yemen. In March 2020, the Equestrian Pavilion of the Military academy in northern Sana'a was targeted by three airstrikes, which killed 70 purebred Yemeni horses and injured 30 others. In November 2020, the horse stables were destroyed, and the horse shelter was severely damaged, in addition to the death of 30 thoroughbred horses.

## Amount and Type of Damage

Dr. Mabrouk Abdullah Al-Hasani, General Director of Planning and Performance Evaluation at the Ministry of Youth and Sports, said that the conflict caused great damage not only to the sports sector, but also to many private

and public facilities and properties.

Dr. Al-Hasani determined the extent and type of damage to the sector. He said that some sports facilities were either completely or partially destroyed. Stadiums, sports club buildings and their annexes are the most affected facilities.

Dr. Al-Hasani mentioned the completely destroyed facilities in Aden, which are: May 22 Stadium, the gym, Bayt al-Shabab in the Sheikh Othman district, the Al-Tilal Sports Club building and its annexes, the gymnasium, the Al-Jalaa Sports Club buildings and its annexes in Khor Maksar district, Al-Hubaishi Football Stadium in Crater district, Al-Menaa Club in Al-Tawahi, and Al-Shula Club in Al-Buriqa district.

He added, "Not to mention the damage to sports facilities in the governorates of Lahj, Taiz, Al Dhale'e, Shabwa, and Abyan, which are many and documented in whole or in part statistics."

## Sports Difficulties and Challenges

Sport in Yemen faces many difficulties, including those related to the conflict, the capabilities and tools of clubs, sports medicine, means of transportation, and other difficulties reported by the concerned authorities, coaches and youth.

Dr. Al-Hasani confirmed that the difficulties facing Yemeni youth and sports sector are many, including the deterioration of the economic situation in general, the failure to reform and prepare sports facilities, so that players can practice sports activities in them, and the lack of appropriate and sufficient means of transportation for players.

He added that among the difficulties are the lack of sports needs such as swimming pools and clubs for the rest of the games, the lack of places capable of hosting outdoor camps, and the state of political division, which is one of

the biggest factors that cause many difficulties and impede the establishment of unified sports activities.

Dr. Mabrouk went on: Among the challenges facing sports in Yemen are the collapse of the local currency, the lack of doctors specialized in sports medicine, and businessmen' lack of interest in supporting sports, in addition to the lack of conducive environment for sports marketing investments.

Tamer Hanash, a football coach, said: The difficulties facing sports in Yemen are many. The first is the athlete's social conditions. Athletes begin their sports life with a high level of performance. Yet, the lack of interest from state officials leads athletes to enter the whirlpool of social conditions and begin the search for a source of income to secure a livelihood. Accordingly, their interest in sport diminishes until they leave it completely.

The second difficulty is the family and social environment of the athlete. There is no family support for athletes to develop their talents. Athletes are forced to look for a new job that helps increase the family's income. Due to the constant pressure from their families, athletes have to quit sports.

The third is related to friends. Many athletes lose their position in sport and their chances of getting into the national team and deviate from their sporting goals, because of friends who have no sporting goals or a football future. He emphasized that his most permanent advice to players is to look for a friend who shares their sporting ambitions and to continue as long as possible in the field of sports.

## Sports Medicine

The lack of doctors specialized in sports medicine is also one of the challenges encountering the sports sector in Yemen, although there are sports medical centers and physiotherapy in some clubs and teams, such as the

Yemeni Center for Sports Medicine in al-Thawra Sports City in Sana'a, but its staff is not qualified and due to the conflict, the center has been transformed into a residence, according to sports journalist Ali Al-Ghorbani.

Al-Ghorbani confirmed that sports medicine centers in Sana'a, Aden, Hadramout, Taiz, and Al-Hodeidah, have sports equipment and examination devices. They were provided by one of the countries. They were worth more than one billion twenty years ago. These centers are more than four floors high, but lack Sports machines.

Al-Ghorbani added: There is no qualified medical staff that is capable of diagnosing sports injuries. When a player has sustained a significant injury, our medical staff either use spray or make massage over the injured area. The sports doctor's job is to buy the oil or ointment and make basic treatments. The job of the sports doctor is to buy the oil or ointment and do first aid. There should be "sports medicine" in our country.

## The Absence of Sports Leagues is one of the Most Important Difficulties that Sports in Yemen Face

## Yemeni Clubs under Scrutiny

# Efforts to Develop

*Sports clubs are the first headquarters that attract different groups of society, especially youth who have many talents in various sports and intellectual activities. Among its priorities and concerns directed to community service, clubs contribute to preparing qualified potentials.*

*In such circumstances that the country is going through and due to the neglect that the sports sector has endured for many years, sport club's intellectual and cultural activities have become very few, revolving around football games.*

*"Sports clubs, since their inception in Yemen in the ninth decade of AD, have been the first outlet and safe place for all age groups, including children, youth and the elderly. They help discover and refine talents," according to Farhan Al-Muntaser, Director General of the General Administration of Sports Federations and Clubs – Aden.*

By: Hanin Al-Wahesh  
Sawt Al-Amal - (Voice of Hope)

He said: There is a reluctance to implement various programs and activities in sport clubs, as programs are becoming more and more focused on football. Although there are 24 sports federations in 24 diverse sports, these federations do not perform their activities in the required manner, mainly due to the weak financial capacity and the lack of support, and most sports are absent in reality.

Al-Muntaser stated that since the beginning of the conflict until the present time, there is no complete database of clubs in Yemen. However, in pre-conflict period, the number of clubs approximately exceeded 350, in addition to the clubs that were granted permits after the

conflict. Currently, a database that takes care of all the details, not just of numbers, is being worked on.

On the challenges facing sports clubs, Al-Muntaser explained that the most important problems, besides the weak budget and the ongoing conflict and their repercussions, are the poor administrative performance and the reluctance of moneymen to take administrative positions owing to the overlap between sports and politics.

He pointed out that solutions are currently difficult in light of the unstable conditions, because stability is the real start of any treatment. There is also a general strategy in the fields of sports and youth that will be worked on to reform the sports sector.

## Clubs throughout History

The first club to be established in Aden is Al-Faras Club in 1887. It included many diverse games such as athletics, cricket, and others. Then, Aden Tennis Club was established and its members were from the foreign communities at the time.

A report issued by the Aden Sports Association in February 1958 showed that the number of Aden sports clubs for football and hockey reached 41.

During the period between 1963-1965, Aden Sports Association accepted the membership of a number of clubs emerging in that period after fulfilling the conditions specified in its constitution and worked to include other sport games in its membership to create a talented generation of youth in various fields of sports such as basketball, volleyball, hockey and others," based on the book of Aden Sports Association 1934



- 1967 by the writer Mohammed Abdo Ali.

The book mentioned the most important clubs that were members of the association in that period, which are Al Ittihad Al Mohammadi Club- currently Al-Tilal - which is the first Yemeni football club, Al-Hussaini Club, Al-Ahrrar Club, Al-Shabab Sport Club, Al-Quaiti Youth Club, Al-Aidroos Youth Club, Al-Khassaf Youth Club, Al-Ahly Club, Al-Tawahi Youth Club, the Islamic Ittihad Club, Al-Shaab Club, Yemen Youth Club, African Star Club, Al Jazeera Youth Club, Wehda Al-Shabab Al-

Arabi Club, Al-Rawda Youth Club, Asian Star Club, United Shabiba Club, Al-Hilal Club, Al-Shabab Al-Muhammadi Club, Al-Jamhour Club and Al-Ahram Club Al-Sabr Club, Lahj National Team, and Sultanate Al-Fadhli Club.

## Sports in Taiz

Ayman Al-Mikhlafi, Director of the Youth and Sports Office in Taiz, said that there are 21 clubs in Taiz Governorate, divided into three tiers: the first is Al-Saqr Club; the second constitutes Al-Talia, Al-Ahly and Al-Rasheed Clubs; the third constitutes Al-Siha Club in the



Al-Ghorbani continued: The lack of a qualified sports medical staff, the players are forced to travel abroad for medical treatments and surgeries, namely those related to meniscal and cruciate ligament damage, due to an exacerbation of the injury or an incorrect diagnosis. The player may have only a sprain or strain, but the unqualified sports doctor will make massage for the injured knee, causing damage to the cruciate ligament, or give a wrong injection, making the injury worse.

Al-Ghorbani added: the lack of a qualified medical staff may cause the player to stay out of competition due to the injury he sustained.

The suspension of Competitions Caused Psychological Damage

One of the stories of sports championships that caused competitions to be suspended is that of Shaima Al-Ulfi (the Asian Tennis Champion) from 2008-2014. Shaima won many local championships, including the champion of the Republic. Internationally, she took the Asian and West Asian Championships, and she also represented West Asian countries in the whole Asia group. However, due to the interruption of all competitions due to the conflict, she no longer has any new participations, according to Abduljalil Al-Harazi, Secretary General of the Tennis Federation.

Abduljalil added that the damage caused by the conflict to buildings and facilities is documented. However, there are damages that are overlooked by everyone, such as psychological damages to players, coaching staff, administrative staff or other employees."

Abduljalil pointed out that the most severe damage was the one that deeply affected the psyche of the athletes who were representing Yemen in foreign forums. Athletes usually exercise and play sport at stadiums or gyms, but now these places are badly damaged due to conflict. Moreover, athletes have stopped



*Abdulaziz Omar, a Yemeni international professional photojournalist and athlete.*

playing sports or participating in external competitions.

Abduljalil regretted, saying that we spent more than 20 years working to develop the athletic skills of players to reach this level of competition. However, their athletic performance has decreased, because the ongoing conflict and its repressions on them. We need to rehabilitate them psychologically.

Most of the athletes who are most affected psychologically are young aged between 12 and 14. Young people are the pillar of the nation and it is necessary to take care of them.

#### Sports and Media Coverage

The media is a motivator and promoter of sports. Media hype makes sports and athletes prominent. Therefore, sport need to be

covered live through visual media. However, for reasons related to low wages, the level of sports media is on decline, which may not give the athlete or sports media attention.

There is a saying in Yemen that there is a sports media, but there is no sport. Sports in Yemen has become a pastime for many people who are ignorant of the importance of sports, especially senior officials and do not pay attention to sports unless an external achievement or championship has been achieved, like what happened with the junior national team when it won the West Asian Junior Championships. Everyone was happy and proud of the team, according to Abdulaziz Omar, a Yemeni international professional photojournalist and athlete.

Abdulaziz said that sports media gener-

ously praises, greatly overrates and harshly criticize. It also offers a constructive criticism that we often miss in Yemen. Sports media is paid for in advance. There is no professionalism in it, as sports media has become a lucrative business.

Lack of capabilities is one of the most difficult difficulties that sports photographers face. Sports photographer equipment, such as Zoom lenses, is one of the most expensive equipment in the field of photography, not to mention the high costs of qualifying, training and, accompanying national teams in all game, especially football.

On the reason to give up photography in the sports media, Omar said that this is due to the neglect and unfairness to the intellectual production that the sports photographer receives, especially for local coverage. A picture is worth a thousand words, and it represents 85% of the reading material which represents 15%.

#### Despite the Pain, there is Hope

With the deteriorating conditions of sport in Yemen, the victory of the junior team in the West Asian Championship Cup for the year 2021 brought joy to the hearts of athletes.

Qais Muhammad Saleh, the coach of the junior national team, told Sawt Al-Amal, "This first historic victory in Yemen externally was the result of the efforts of the supporters and the technical, medical and media staff of the team and the efforts of the leaders of the association, who contributed to the success of the internal camp in Seiyun and Aden.

Qais added that the team initially suffered a lot in the two internal camps in Seiyun, particularly when the West Asian Championships were canceled in July and postponed to another time. This caused confusion in the prepared program, and caused players grief not participating and postponing the championship.

### This is the Beginning of Achievements and we Aspire to the World Cup

He emphasized that he and the team worked hard to make the camp a success, create a kind of understanding between the players and harmony among them, and apply the ways and methods of playing in order to take the championship that the team has already won.

The coach of the junior team thanks the two sports leaders in Seiyun and Aden, who contributed to promote and enhance the technical and physical aspects of the team by holding 13 matches between Seiyun and Aden, the last of which was in Aden; they helped the team a lot to get into the championship while they were fully prepared.

Qais Saleh concluded, "This is just the beginning, the next will be much better, because we aspire to the World Cup by qualifying for the Asian qualifiers in October. We extend our great thanks to the Yemeni sports audience who supported us everywhere, inside and outside the stadium, and in all governorates, cities and streets, and we thank all the countries that supported and helped us and prayed for us.

# Sports Clubs in Yemen

city and the rest are rural clubs.

Regarding the infrastructure and its level, Al-Mikhlaifi confirmed to "Sawt Al-Amal" that the general infrastructure is not at the required level and needs development, as there are first and second-tier clubs that have infrastructure, but need to be restored and rehabilitated. Regarding rural clubs, they have infrastructure, but need to be developed and taken interest in to become more suitable for exercising sports activities, especially that sports activity in the rural areas is very strong in Taiz governorate.

He also explained that the follow-up and control process for clubs is carried out by the administration of Federations and Clubs in the Youth and Sports Office in Taiz. The administration oversees the role and activities of the clubs, and then evaluate the process of technical and administrative reports for activities and championships.

#### The Reality of Sports Clubs

Bashar Mahyoub, a former player, media presenter of sports and youth programs, believes that the role of clubs is not limited to the field of sports only. Rather, they carry out various cultural, social and intellectual activities. Otherwise, the managements of clubs may commit a mistake.

He added that sports clubs are important and influential institutions in any society, because they help in the youth industry. Therefore, it is very important to take interest in them. In addition, the control process should be implemented effectively in order not to deviate from carrying out its real.



#### Club Activities

Regarding the sports activities practiced by the clubs, Bashar said: Sports activities are many and varied, including individual and group, and all of them are important. However, clubs focus on football and neglect the rest of sports, especially individual ones. In addition, there are games that have not been included in club activity at all, such as some combat games, gymnastics, basketball and swimming. Bashar stated the most important challenges

facing sports clubs, such as the state's lack of interest in youth and sports, which creates a feeling of frustration and despair among young people and athletes, prompting them to quit sports and move to other things. Also, the lack of financial support for clubs and youth makes young people tend to search for other financial resources that are far from their interest in order to be able to earn a living.

Bashar assured "Sawt Al-Amal" that the state should focus on youth in particular and on the sport sector in general, because it is an im-

portant sector; if it is recovered, it will have a strong return nationwide.

#### Reports on Sports Clubs

It was stated in the annual report of Al-Ahly Club in Youth and Sports Office in Taiz Governorate that the club hold many sports, cultural and artistic activities during the second half of the year 2021, most notably the Summer Center, which was in July 2021 and contained five sports (football, basketball, taekwondo, table tennis, and karate, the 26th Revolution Day

Cup-Taiz, which took place in September, Football Championship-Taiz, which was organized by the Football Association in August 2021 and in which the club won first place, in addition to many other activities and sports organized by the club to qualify and train players.

The report indicated that there are obstacles that impede the progress and continuity of activities, such as all clubs' facilities are destroyed, sports clubs lack equipment and basic requirements to resuming their sport activity, clubs are unable to take advantage of its facilities owing to damage caused during the ongoing conflict, and the support provided by the various backers has stopped.

In the same report, Al-Rasheed Club in Taiz Governorate implemented many sport activities during the year 2021, including Khaled Saleh Championship for Cubs and Al-Baraem age groups for all Football Clubs in Taiz, Football Championship in Taiz, November 30 Revolution Day Cup Championship in Taiz and October 14 Revolution Day. It also carried out many routine activities aimed at raising the level of performance of the players and rehabilitating them, and established summer centres that contain sports activities and cultural programs.

The report asserted that among the most prominent challenges facing the club are the loss of human lives of athletes, the lack of supplies, the destruction of some headquarters facilities as a result of the conflict, and the cessation of support provided by some parties. He explained that there are efforts made by the club to follow up the progress of sports activities within the capabilities available to it.



## Sports Media and its Role in the Development of Sports Activity

# Yemeni Sports Media is a Pioneer in the Region and the Arab World

*Sports media is one of the most important elements of sports activity, which is relied upon in many countries of the world. It is the means through which the receiving audience are informed by the rules and regulations of various sports, their athletic awareness is developed, their passion for sports is satisfied, as they have access to sport-related information and results.*

By: Manal Amin  
Sawt Al-Amal - (Voice of Hope)

"Sports media is the compass of the sports sector in Yemen. It has a major role in determining the activities of sports community, and it is an observer of the entire sporting process," Mansour al-Jaradi, Vice-Chairman of the Temporary Committee of Yemen Sport Press Union, confirmed.

He explained to "Sawt Al-Aml" newspaper that sports media plays a guiding developmental function for youth and athletes through providing development suggestions for sports activities, and learning about the laws and regulations for athletes and those interested in sports. It also aims to improve the economic and development process of sports activity at the local and international levels, and also contributes to providing some support for sports activities as an important component of the sports development process.

Ali Al-Rimi, Deputy Editor-in-Chief of Al-Riyadh Weekly newspaper, issued by Al-Thawra Foundation for Press, Printing and Publishing, agreed with him. He confirmed that sports media is an integral part of the sports and youth sectors in every place and time and a key partner in improving the condition of sports and athletes in Yemen, especially in such difficult conditions that the country in general and athletes in particular suffer from.

He told "Sawt Al-Aml": Sports media contributes to raising the level of public awareness for juniors and young adults of the importance to engage in various individual and team sports. This may benefit them and prevent them from slipping into other matters unrelated to youth and sports, including engaging in extremist actions.

Farhan Al-Muntasir, Editor-in-chief of the Yemeni Sport website, reviewed the historical role of sports media in Yemen and its importance. He said: The Yemeni sports media is a pioneer at the level of the region and the Arab world. Sports media came along with the emergence of the press, and kept pace with the developments of sports in the fifties of the last century through many local and international newspapers. It then witnessed a huge shift in the late sixties, seventies and early eighties by broadcasting matches on the radio.

Al-Muntasir added to "Sawt Al-Aml" that the Yemeni sports media contributed to the establishment of the Arab Sports Press Association and the Asian Sports Press Association in the seventies of the last century.

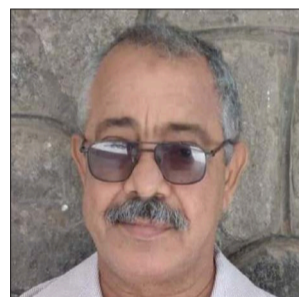
He continued: During the past decades, the Yemeni sports media in its development preceded the Yemeni sport itself. Before 2015, the number of sports media practitioners affiliated with the association reached 400 members all over Yemen. They were active in covering, as well as keeping up on and following up after various sports events before the emergence of social media. There was a wide variety of sports activities across the country.

### Encountered Challenges

Al-Muntasir pointed out that the current situation is different from what was before, especially with the spread of new media- social media- and the lack of various sports activities, especially seasonal ones, due to the unstable security conditions which has affected sports journalists as it has affected sports in general. Furthermore, the economic situation has led to the deterioration of the general situation of me-



Mansour al-Jaradi



Mahmoud Thabet



Farhan Al-Muntasir



Ali Al-Rimi



dia professionals.

He indicated that the sports media at the present time has become an administrative rather than a sports media, due to the lack of awareness among most journalists about the importance of paying attention to sports sublime message. Moreover, media professionals themselves do not seek to develop their skills and abilities in the field of specialized sports media.

Here, Al-Jaradi confirmed that one of the most important challenges facing media work in the sports sector is how to preserve the General Yemeni Sports Press Association that had a major role in establishing the Arab and continental sports associations. The association was among the first seven founders of the International Sports Press Association.

He continued: The real challenge for the

association lies in how to maintain its internal entity, as it is linked to the Ministry of Youth and Sports by an official decision. The ministry has the right to dismiss the association's board of directors- this actually happened over 15 years ago-which affected the role of the association and sports journalists, its entity and activities, and the continuation of its work to achieve its goals.

There are also challenges that include media professionals themselves who are not well qualified in different sports disciplines, which is a problem.

In the same context, Al-Rimi explained that the most important obstacles facing sports press are the absence of criteria that determine who is a specialized and professional sports journalist in the past and present. Personal relationships and nepotism have become the

criteria for determining or describing the specialized professional sports journalist from the professional one.

### Requirements for the Development of Sports Media

"In order to improve the reality and level of sports journalists in Yemen and in order for them to have an effective and tangible role in advancing the reality of the sports sector, they must have a free and independent opinion, and the requirements of their daily life must be met. Moreover, they should receive attention and care throughout their working life, not to mention the post-retirement period," Ali Al-Rimi reviewed.

For his part, Al-Jaradi added stressed the importance of the role of the General Yemeni Sports Press Association, which was reactivated three years ago. It is a professional

sports association concerned with media affairs, namely qualification and training. It also organizes media activities and regulates the relationship between journalists and the media by preparing training and qualification programs and various activities in the field of sports media.

Mahmoud Thabet, President of the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate (YJS) in Aden, explained the importance of the role of sports media. He told "Sawt Al-Aml" that sports media plays a major role in mitigating intolerance and/or reducing hooliganism in sports stadiums. It also contributes to spreading the culture of tolerance and high sportsmanship, and learning to accept winning and losing through the topics presented in media materials, or even through sports analysis and commentaries that are published or broadcast.

"The role of the syndicate lies in coordinating with sports media of the Ministry of Youth and Sports to hold many training and qualification events, which improves the level of sports journalists in their coverage of sports events. The syndicate is also working on developing a code of ethics for sports media that contributes to activating their role in reducing intolerance in the sports media discourse," according to the syndicate president.

### Sports Journalists

On the role of female media professionals in the sports field, Mansour Al-Jaradi said, "There is little number of female sports journalists in Yemen, especially at this stage the country is going through. Contrary to the previous stage, in which they had a presence, even if it was little or unnoticed. As a result of the conflict, many female journalists have given up writing in the sports field in Yemen.

He stressed that the union seeks to train and qualify many female journalists to specialize in the sports field, especially graduates of media colleges and institutes of physical education and sports.

For his part, Ali Al-Rimi, Deputy Editor-in-Chief of Al-Riyadh Weekly newspaper, confirmed that there are female sports journalists in various Yemeni governorates who have proven their presence by keeping pace with various local and foreign sports competitions, even if a few.

Al-Rimi hoped that female journalists and media professionals would have a full opportunity to be professional in sports field work through their media - visual, audio and print, and to find the necessary support and encouragement to engage strongly in the work of the sports media.

## Health and Sport Relationship

# Solutions and Treatments for Taking Interest in Sports in Yemen

*Many doctors, psychiatrists, and members of society agree that sport enhances fitness, strengthens muscles, increases blood circulation, regulates metabolism, and makes a person feel psychologically comfortable.*

*Dr. Entisar Ali Kamel, a cardiologist from Shabwa governorate, pointed out that exercising daily strengthens the human immune system. Daily physical exercise strengthens the immune system and decreases risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, coronary heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and stroke.*



By: Samah Emlaak  
Sawt Al-Amal - (Voice of Hope)

Dr. Entisar always advises her patients to engage in sports activities regularly. Exercising may be part of the treatment and the best medications, and is one of the self-measures that protect them from most of the diseases.

As for the mental level, Dr. Entisar explained that sport helps improve mood, develop an inner balance, and create psychological comfort, which positively affects various aspects of a person's life. Sport is the best thing to do in free time and prevent boredom. It enhances happiness and increases self-confidence.

### Effect of Sports on General Health

Basima Al-Hashidi, founder of the Queen of Sheba Sports Club in Ibb Governorate, said that sport prevents or reduces the risk of psychological disorders, especially depression, and gives its practitioner a greater ability to manage and reduce stress and tension in his/her life.

Al-Hashidi went on: Regular exercise activates the mind, develops intuition, increases intelligence, especially social and kinesthetic intelligence, improves memory and concentration, and reduces mental dispersion. Therefore, without a healthy body, it is almost impossible to have mental health.

### A Closely Tight Link

"It is well known that a healthy mind resides in a healthy body. This interrelationship between the physical, mental and psychological aspects is not based on an ordinary, purposeless routine, but on rigorous training and practice-based skill," according to Marwan Al-Amri, Professor of Clinical Psychology, College of Arts, Taiz University.

Al-Amri added: The constant, purposeful, and balanced movement makes the brain lively and active, helps it absorb large amounts of information, and makes it able to precisely organize the information received through the senses. Al-Amri considers physical activity one of the ways to treat psychological disorders and mental illness, and a means of relieving psychological distress.

He added, "Sport is a way to discover the abilities and skills that an individual possesses." Hence, it helps people promote their pride and self-esteem, and gives them confidence that they are capable of making a difference in their life for the better. Sport also plays many roles in self-regulation, mutual respect and understanding of the other, and adherence to rules and regulations that govern a game in sport; all of these will be manifested on other aspects of an athlete's life.

Al-Amri also confirmed that sport changes internal aggressive energy into constructive activity and behaviour for the benefit of the group and the society in which the athlete lives.

Paying attention to youth sports is crucially important, because the energy of the youth should be directed in the right way to positive developmental thinking and purposeful action, which have sound effects on the individual and the society that empowers and supports young people.

Zakaria Muhammad, Civil Engineer from Ibb Governorate, said that sport helps people get rid of excess fat and burn more calories. It also maintains a healthy weight, delays aging, and protects against Alzheimer's and other types of dementia or age-related cognitive



Marwan Al-Amri



Fouad Yassin Al-Attab



Issa Al-Qadri



Zakaria Muhammad

decline.

Issa Al-Qadri, Zakaria's fellow at the College of Engineering, Ibb, confirmed that sport is the successful solution to most health problems that people suffer from. He had personal experience in overcoming painful kidney stones by drinking water and walking a lot, and he recovered from despite the progression of the disease.

He continued, saying that their ancient ancestors were- and some still- in good health, as they moved more and sat less since their early childhood. Today, we have a generation of slackers; the prevailing laziness will lead to sickness, stupidity, and other undesirable consequences.

### Opinions on the Importance of Sports

In a field visit, Sawt Al-Amal Newspaper found a discrepancy in awareness of the importance of sport. Intikhab Al-Amri, 36 years old from Taiz, said sport is not important, but the everyday physical movement of a person to fulfil basic needs will increase his blood circulation. For this, Intikhab is against joining sports clubs and considers it a waste of time, effort and money and a way to brag about, not to maintain health.

Abdulsalam Mohsen, 24 years old from Shabwa said, "Over exercise is very worrying. Walking for half an hour a day in addition to the everyday physical movement is enough for him to have a healthy mind and body."

Munir Ahmed, 36 years old from Ibb, disagrees with the opinion of Abdulsalam and

Intikhab. He believes that paying attention to organized and planned sports activities is one of the basics of a healthy life for the individual and society, and that joining sports club is a necessity, not a luxury. From Munir's point of view, the more physical activity one does, the greater the health benefits and the further delay of aging signs.

Munir hopes the state will give sports more importance and impose sports-related activities in all state facilities, including schools, institutes, universities and parks.

### Non-Turf Sport Clubs are Harmful to Health

Coach Fouad Yassin Al-Attab, Director of Al-Ittihad Sports Club Management Office

in Ibb Governorate, said that the absence of grassy playgrounds in Ibb Governorate greatly affects the health of the trainees due to the dust on the training grounds, which affects the respiratory system of the players.

The Al-Ittihad Sports Club in Ibb also faces many challenges related to poor capabilities. The club - according to Al-Attab - depends on some donations from fans and loyalists to the club; however, the support provided does not exceed \$1,000 per month, which is not enough to cover the expenses of employees' salaries and activities of age groups and professionals. Moreover, the club has no stadium for training.

"Most of the Al-Ittihad club's members practice their sports activities in Al-Kibsi which is a non-grassed commercial playground that lacks the basic needs for health and safety; in their absence, players practice football, handball, table tennis, and chess, as the most prominent activities of Al-Ittihad Club," according to Captain Fouad Al-Attab.

He continued, saying: The Al-Ittihad Sports Club in Ibb Governorate was made up of two clubs: Al-Fatwa Club and Al-Salam Club, and they were merged together under the name Al-Ittihad Club in 1992. The club won the President's Cup for the years 1996 and 1997, respectively, and also participated in Egypt and Qatar as champions of the Arab Club.

### Solutions and Treatments

"Through personal relations and communication with some of the supporters of Al-Ittihad club management in Ibb, the club gets some support that contributes to solving some problems. The president of the club supports the club with an amount of five million annually, in addition to different donations from expats interested in sports," according to Coach Fouad Al-Attab.

Al-Attab added, "The economic stagnation of the club is ascribed to the general conditions of the country, which caused sports activities to stop five years ago. It indicated that the Youth Fund at the Ministry of Youth has allocated some support to the clubs participating in Football League First Division that Fahman team won this year in Abyan governorate, and the Youth Fund supported Al-Ittihad Club with ten thousand US dollars. The Youth Fund has supported the Union Club with \$10,000."

Although the activity stopped in 2014, a refresher league was held in 2018 after a four-year hiatus. Al-Ittihad Club participated, Ibb in Seiyun, after which the activities stopped until 2021. Since then, activities were suspended until 2021. Al-Ittihad Club faced Fahman (Abyan), Al-Wehda (Sana'a), Shabab Al-Jeel (Hodeidah), and Al-Orouba (Sana'a). Al-Ittihad club ranked fourth in the league," according to Al-Attab.

Al-Ittihad club members hope that relevant authorities and sports lovers take care of the health aspect by providing a playground having grass all the year round, and a resident doctor with first aid kits to handle any accidents that players may have during training.





70% of those who consume qat are unemployed. According to the study titled "Attitudes of Yemeni Youth towards Consuming Qat" by researcher Najat Muhammad Khalil, at Sana'a University, the results of the study concluded that most of qat chewers are young people aged between 18 and 24.



# Qat Chewing and Smoking are the Prominent Enemy for Sport in Yemen

By Alia Muhammed  
Sawt Al-Amal- (Voice of Hope)

These young people waste their time and huge sums of money on chewing qat and smoking until late hours. Therefore, few of them go to sports and recreational clubs to exercise.

Ali Muhammad, a young man in his twenties, chews qat daily, starting at eight in the evening and continuing until six in the morning. According to his interview with "Sawt Al-Amal", he says, "I am unemployed and I have not found an employment opportunity until now. I spend my free time on chewing qat with my friends everyday. However, we just go to sport clubs for entertainment, and sometimes we may go swimming".

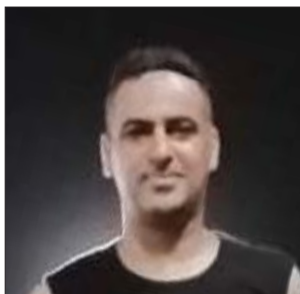
Wissam Abdullah, 30 years old, goes to the gym daily to practice the bodybuilding exercises. He says that he just chews qat once a week. He also does not smoke because he has a great conviction that smoking affects human health and prevents him from carrying out his daily activities. In addition, he thinks that smoking is harmful, as it causes fatigue and shortness of breath. Therefore, it may prevent him from continuing to exercise.

While, Amr Ahmed indicated that he used to play football, but he started moving away from it gradually, because he did not get the encouragement to continue with this game. Thus, he used to waste his time chewing qat with his friends, until he got addicted to it. Now he chews qat daily, and when he plays, he cannot continue.

## Incompatible Relationship between Sports and Qat Chewing

A number of countries have classified qat as a narcotic and stimulant substance. Therefore, the athletes are prohibited from consuming it. Despite this, qat and smoking are still a major problem facing the young Yemeni people of various age groups.

In a study by researcher, Abdullah al-Kibsi, entitled "Qat and the Practice of Sport in the Yemeni Social System at the



Muhammad Al-Itali



Captain Sadada Al-Halali



Abdul Sattar Al-Hamdani



Captain Ali Al-Nono

Beginning of the Twenty-First Century", which issued by Najat Foundation for raising the awareness of the damages of qat in 2019. It indicated that qat is one of the main characteristics of Yemeni social and cultural systems.

The study dealt with the emergence of qat as a tangible phenomenon, which is considered as recreational social culture. This is manifested in the interaction of relations between the components of Yemeni social system. Thus, it leads to perform the functions of reshaping the social and cultural identity as a system that shows the hegemony and influence of qat on the society, which has become an integral part and daily ritual of their lives.

The researcher concluded that, the greater the manifestations of qat consumption, the greater the dominance of it in the society. Thus, this leads to the absence of sports recreation.

Abdul Sattar Al-Hamdani, President of the General Basketball Federation, believes that qat and smoking are dangerous substances, whether in large or small quantities. Besides, there is no compatibility between sports and the use of these substances that lead to addiction. Therefore, qat tree must be treated as a narcotic substance. In addition, many studies have confirmed that it contains stimulant substances classified as internationally prohibited, because of its health, psychological and economic effects.

Al-Hamdani said that chewing qat and

smoking are harmful to human health and do not give any positive signs. Unfortunately, these customs have entered every detail of the lives of the Yemeni people. Therefore, we find qat and smoking available in social gatherings and in people's pain and joys. Coach Abdul Sattar Al-Hamdani is upset when he meets young men who are interested in sports, yet they keep chewing qat.

## Harmful Effects of Qat and Smoking

Regarding the most important damages that can result from consuming qat and smoking, al-Hamdani explains to "Sawt al-Amal" that excessive qat consumption leads to a person's psychological dependence on this plant. That is, the person has a permanent desire to continue using it, because of its effect in raising the mood, in addition to the appearance of a number of side effects, such as mania, delirium, feelings of anxiety and tension for hyperactivity and aggressiveness.

He continued, "Many qat consumers are exposed to cancer in addition to damage to the lungs, which are the main factor of the athlete's success. Besides, qat consumption may cause an increase in heart rate, which leads to high blood pressure. Besides, there are many who suffer from the symptoms of qat consumption to health. Thus, the effects of qat are manifested on the faces of its chewers like being thin, has saggy cheeks, and their eyes are yellow in color.

## Absence of Clubs and Sports Classes

Hammoud Abdullah Ali, an academic athlete, stresses on the importance of the sport classes for the students. He believes that it must be activated in private and public schools, so that the students begin to discover and refine their talent in the early stages of their life.

Ali suggested to "Sawt Al-Amal" that the lack of interest in the sports aspect in schools is due to a number of reasons like, the lack of specialized teachers and stadiums or sports equipment, also the sport classes are just limited for playing football, in addition to neglecting the aspect of sports competitions between teams. Thus, he called for an involvement of the relevant organizations and authorities to activate and rehabilitate young people in various sport activities either in public or in private schools at various levels.

## Sport is a Psychological and Physical Balance for a Person

Muhammad Al-Itali, psychological consultant, stated that sport is of great importance in human life from a psychological and physical point of view. In addition, it has very great benefits, especially among young people who waste their time in vain.

Muhammad added that free time leads our young people to engage in groups that practice negative habits in an attempt to satisfy their desires in qat and smoking or

with social media. However, they do not really know that sport is the only solution to eliminate wasting their time, and achieve a healthy balance between the psychological and physical side.

Then he said that, exercising is a prevention of many diseases, and it contributes to the process of burning fat, getting rid of obesity, strengthening the muscles of the body, and getting an ideal body. Thus, it is possible for sport to rid you of toxins and waste that are stored in your body through sweat and urination. Regarding the psychological aspect, it has many benefits such as improving your mood, getting rid of anxiety and stress. That is, the human body, during exercising constantly, it secretes a group of acids, like gamma, which contributes to reduce stress and anxiety. Besides, it treats some cases of mild depression.

## Tips for Young People

Captain Ali Al-Nono, formerly captain of the national football team, confirmed that many young Yemeni people may ignore the importance of exercise, and they neglect its practice. This is due to many significant reasons, like the lack of awareness of the importance of sports, and of free sport outlets to exercise. However, this does not prevent to devote few times in their life to exercise.

Al-Nono offered a number of tips for young athletes and young people who are about to practice sport such as, maintaining exercise regularly, making it as a daily routine in their life, paying attention to good and proper food, and making sure to sleep and wake up early, because of its benefits for the body and health. In addition, it leads to some positive attitudes such as respecting the time, drawing a plan and a goal for the future, moving away from bad habits.

Captain Sadada Al-Halali, the sports supervisor in Al-Rasheed Modern Schools, stressed on the importance of joining the young people to sport clubs and sport academies in order to choose the appropriate game that matches their physical abilities, and to invest their free time to quit negative habits.



# Sport for Children

## Between the Importance for Health and the Neglect of the Official Authorities

Samah Emlaq  
Sawt Al-Amal- (Voice of Hope)

In separate tours conducted by "Sawt Al-Amal" newspaper, we were able to notice different gatherings of children playing in alleys and dirt playgrounds, because there are no special clubs for children to train them, direct their capabilities and develop their sports performance in various sports activities and playgrounds. The importance of sports is not completed in the minds of many children. Therefore, most of them do not see it as a hobby to be developed, but as a leisure and entertainment, except for those who were the offspring of athletes.

According to the pediatrician at Al-Manar Hospital, Dr. Marwan Al-Daer, sport is a major and important component of the child's health. Therefore, every age stage requires specific types of sports, training and rehabilitation programs for their abilities. However, these activities are not given to children, and there is a continuous effort to shed light on this part.

Al-Da'ari told "Sawt Al-Amal" that Caring of children's sport is one of the basics that contribute to strengthening the child's health and his psychological, mental and physical personality. In addition, many children are exposed to many genetic, immune, inflammatory and allergic diseases or nutritional deficiencies due to the conditions in which they live -either with their family or at school- in addition to the effects of the conflict on their health. All of these diseases affect the child and his exercise of sports.

### The child's Mind Turns to Virtual Games

Children view football as a game for entertainment, so they play it without realizing the great benefit of it. Despite its importance,

it does not receive comprehensive attention from those who are responsible for it, as there are no specialized clubs in this playground for children.

Captain Amr Al-Jamai, founder and director of the Al-Assad Sports and Cultural Club in Ibb, says, "Children's minds tend to virtual games such as, PlayStation, 3D games, anime, and others. Therefore, this unreal world has taken a large part of our children's mind, which made them leave sport except for those who were influenced by one of his family members or friends who play sports."

Al-Jamai added that sport lack great support, as clubs need to provide tools that players use and need for exercising, such as boxing, coaches, and kickboxing, as well as games that are suitable for children.

Therefore, the clubs that provide the tools make themselves desirable by the children. The child tends to the easiest activity that is within his reach, such as the mobile phone in which the child has found all the electronic games he needs.

Pediatrician Dr. Marwan Al-Da'ari told "Sawt Al-Amal", "It is worth noting that running and playing are not considered as purposeful sport without a specialized supervisor, because they are not practiced according to appropriate healthy sport rules that preserve the child's privacy and health. Therefore, that would cause him infections in the respiratory system, especially in unsafe dirt playgrounds.

Al-Da'ari says, "It is important to focus on sports that are appropriate for the child's age, health condition, and physical building." He also warned against choosing the wrong game that the child plays. He pointed out that it is not right for young children to play competitive games with older ones, because this may lead to major health consequences such as broken bones, and bruises. Moreover, it may

even create psychological problems in the child.

The mother of the child, Ibrahim Al-Wasabi, who has a yellow belt in karate from Sha'ab IBB Club, said that sport in her child's eyes is like food and air. When he started with it, he used to play it for fun, but his constant visit to the club developed his skills and abilities more. Therefore, he exercised under the supervision of a coach and a specialized expert, which made him obtain the yellow belt at the age of only 9 years.

### Sport is Better in the Growing Period

Sport greatly affect the mental and physical development of children, according to the director of Al-Assad Club, Captain Amr Al-Juma'i. He said, "The child's growth period starts from the age of 9 to 16, and if the child exercises during this period, his physical and mental structure will be better than anyone else who does not exercise, because it helps the child to have proper nutrition and sleep. In addition, it renew blood circulation, burn more energy, and better bone growth for the baby."

Dr. Marwan Al-Da'ari receives in his specialized pediatric clinic a number of children suffering from calcium deficiency, osteoporosis or congenital anomalies. Therefore, he advises the child's parents to make him practice various kinds of sport that are appropriate for his structure. In addition, He views sports as an activity that indirectly cares for the health of the child.

He added that the child's parents should visit the pediatrician without an apparent disease, because the doctor can diagnose diseases that are not noticed by them. In addition, there is no objection for asking the doctor about the aspects of fitness for the child at different age stages, because there are may be obstacles related to the child's health, physical and psy-



chological condition. Therefore, the practice of sports must be subjected to these standards in accordance with a professional legalization that defines the sports that are suitable for the child.

### Absence of Child-Directed Activities.

Al-Jumai, founder of the Al-Assad Sport Club in Ibb Governorate, confirmed that there are no clubs that work to include sport programs in the community in order to direct it for the children. Therefore, the Ministry of Sport and the government neglect are responsible for this problem.

He adds, "There are no official efforts being made in the aspect of children's sports. For example, during my sports career in Shaab Ibb

Club, I did not receive any attention from the official authorities, or even from the club itself. Nevertheless, I got the title of the Governorate Champion, the Republic and the title of the Arab Champion. In addition, I participated in local and international championships".

The Director General of Sports Activity in the Ministry of Youth and Sports in Aden, Raed Ali Noman, says, "As a result of the existing conditions, we cannot evaluate sports. The leadership of the Ministry is making great efforts to restore sport activities and achieve the desired goals for all age groups, including children, to receive the necessary support to develop their sport activities in which they excel. Therefore, efforts must be combined to improve sport activities in Yemen.





Director General of the Projects and the Head of the Executive Unit of the National Vision 2030,

# "The Sports Spirit will Remain unified despite the Downsides of the Struggle"

**Sport in Yemen has gone through great obstacles and challenges. The most recent was the seven-year conflict that left significant economic and structural damages. Therefore, buildings and facilities have deteriorated, and many sport activities have stopped.**

**Due to the current deteriorating situation of the sport sectors, the Ministry of Youth and Sports sought to make rapid interventions. It aims to review the extent of the destruction and the needs of sports in Yemen. It resulted in the importance of paying attention to the sports sector as an essential factor for development and the economy.**

**Regarding the position of sport in the National Vision 2030, "Sawt Al-Amal" had an interview with the engineer Ahmed Al-Tuwaiti, the Director of Projects at the Ministry of Youth and Sport and the Head of the Executive Unit of the National Vision.**

**Rajaa Mukred**  
Sawt Al-Amal (Voice of Hope)

**First of all, could you tell us about the current state of sport in Yemen?**

Youth and sports were greatly affected by the conditions left by the conflict, especially in terms of infrastructure. A large number of youth and sport facilities were destroyed. Thus, it led to the deprivation of young people and athletes from practicing sport activities.

Since the beginning of the destruction of the facilities, the ministry has worked to identify the damaged facilities and address the sport federations concerned with youth and international institutions. It aims for mobilizing a supportive position for youth and athletes in Yemen, in order to stop the conflict targeting these facilities. Based on the fact that they are international and civil society institutions whose goal is development and stopping the conflict.

**What role does the Ministry of Youth and Sports play in light of the continuing conflict?**

The Ministry seeks to rehabilitate the damaged infrastructure, in order to provide a suitable environment for the youth and sport. Therefore, they can regain their sporting activities. It also supervises many activities in the available facilities. Despite these difficulties and great challenges facing the youth and sport sector, there is a spirit of determination from athletes to improve their performance in various activities. As we know, Yemeni environment is an incubator for distinguished talents in various sports, and we see this a

lot in younger age groups. There is a wide range of talented people. Accordingly, it is supposed to support them and develop their abilities and talents. By that, they can participate with the national or international teams.

**How has the conflict affected the sport sector in Yemen?**

The destruction of sport facilities had a negative impact on it. As a result, it led to a decline in the activities and the suspension of training and rehabilitation programs. However, the ministry tried to find alternatives to this situation imposed by the conflict and to create the appropriate environment for athletes to practice their hobbies. Whereas, there are some sports, such as football, whose activities are continuing in the dirt playgrounds, which may lack the least capabilities or requirements.

**What are the most dangerous and harmful types of sports?**

The most dangerous sports are those connected to the facilities with gymnasiums and stadiums as well. There are 28 gymnasiums destroyed in various governorates of the republic, in which a large number of games were played, such as, volleyball, basketball, handball, wrestling games. In addition to various combat games such as karate, judo, taekwondo, kickboxing and many other games that were held in it. As a result, the activity of these sports has been negatively affected. There are large sports stadiums were destroyed in the governorate centers too such as, Al-Muraisy Stadium, Aden International Stadium, Al-Wahda Stadium in Abyan, Ibb Stadium and Dhamar Stadium.

These large stadiums used to hold football matches and host the General Football League competitions, but it stopped as a result of the situation imposed by the lived reality. In addition to what resulted from the division taking place at the level of the political situation in general. However, some clubs and sports federations in a number of Yemeni governorates have resumed league activities. This was done by holding a championship at Sayun Stadium with the participation of clubs from various Yemeni governorates, such as Sanaa, Aden, Hadhramaut and others. Therefore, the Ministry seeks to keep the athletic spirit unified, despite the negative effects caused by the conflict.

**What is special about sports as a glimmer of hope for recovery?**

What distinguishes youth and sports work is that sports bodies and federations are still united. Thus, this is a gain for them. Whereas, there is neither fragmentation nor division within the framework of the sports bodies and institutions that have tried to maintain a unified entity represented by all governorates, and this is what the Ministry seeks to achieve. Besides, if we observed the teams participating in the recent championship which made great achievements in terms of playing football, we would find that they were formed from various clubs in the governorates of the Republic. Therefore, this is a strategic objective of the Ministry whose goal will continue in order to maintain a unified sports entity. In addition to preparing programs to qualify and develop sports teams so that they can participate in international championships and highlight the civilization of Yemen.

**What does sport need in Yemen?**

What sports need most in Yemen is paying attention for young age groups, because the Yemeni environment is an incubator for talents for various kinds of sports. Thus, if there is no interest in developing and refining these talents, it will reflect on the sports sector in general, especially when they reach an old age group or exposed to life pressures. Accordingly, support and care must be provided to make them focus on sports and develop their abilities and skills.

**How can sport be one of the development goals in Yemen?**

Youth are the tool and means of development, so their skills and energies should be supported, developed, directed and invested through sport, and there is a tendency on the part of the National Vision Project to adopt that. Additionally, sports should carry a message of peace and harmony



**Engineer Ahmed Al-Tuwaiti**

The Director of Projects at the Ministry of Youth and Sport and the Head of the Executive Unit of the National Vision.

between people and nations. It is possible to use this message to bridge the views between the political action parties and reform what the policy has corrupted. Therefore, we look forward to sports making qualitative leaps in the near future, which will raise the status of the country. It is also one of the most important pillars of progress and economy in many countries of the world.

**How can sport be a supplement to the economy?**

Many clubs in the developed world depend on the private sector, which in turn is the sponsor of the activity and clubs project. Sports can be used to attract investors and all private sectors, and interest in sports will also reflect positively on the economy. Besides, when Yemen hosted the championship of "Gulf 20", this had impacts on the political movement, and there were notable activities in Aden and Abyan cities, though the championship was for a limited period. In addition, talented players are the focus of attention of big clubs, and large sums of money are paid to players who reach professionalism. Therefore, it is possible to take advantage of the talent-rich environment and utilize them to improve sport situation in Yemen, which would in turn have positive impacts on the country.

## Women's Sports.. Between Facing the Dominance of Social Beliefs and Imposing the Social Reality

**By: Alia Muhammed**  
Sawt Al-Amal (Voice of Hope)

With the dominance of customs and traditions in Yemeni society in addition to its refusal for women to engage in sports activities, because they believe that sports are just linked to males, there are women who challenged these beliefs and became an honorable model in Yemeni feminist sports. They also imposed their participation by force, and made themselves a reality to be proud of, so they emerged in their society to tell their successful stories.

Captain Amani Abdul Majeed, a Taekwondo and kickboxing trainer, is one of the Yemeni female athletes, who started training secretly and without the knowledge of her family, due to the lack of societal awareness of the importance of sports.

Amani says, "When I decided to enter the field of sports, I faced great difficulties. The most important of which was the lack of acceptance by my family to my athletic tendencies, and they looked at me as rebelling against customs and traditions. However, I did not succumb to these pressures. Then, I began to exercise secretly without the knowledge of my parents, because I belong to a conservative family. On the other hand, there was someone from my family who supported me in every step I take. After that, my family began hardly accepting the idea."

She added, "There are many girls who did not pursue their dreams, because some of them got married and their husband refused to make them participate in sport. Others gave in to people's words who accused them by violating the teachings of religion."

Captain Amani stresses on the importance of activating the media and the role of federations and school competitions in order to spread awareness of it for all segments of society. She says, "Unfortunately, the challenge we face is the absence of the importance of sports and women's participation, which is an integral part of sports, because we have girls who have very strong skills and the ability to achieve first places.



### Discrimination in Sports

"Do you compare yourself to a boy?" This is the response that Samar Abdullah, a medical student, received when she decided to exercise in the sport of boxing. In her interview with "Sawt Al-Amal", and she says, "I don't know why when a girl decides to participate in any sport they think that she is giving up her femininity, though sport has nothing to do with that, and all those ideas are wrong."

She added, "I am a medical student, and I know the importance of sport, because I spend about eight hours studying and that is not healthy. Therefore, I had to take two hours of my time to exercise, and I actually noticed the difference in my health and psychology."

Samar adds, "In our society, discrimination between men and women is practiced in everything let alone sports, which they believe that it is restricted just for men. Therefore, the idea of women's sports participation needs a great force of persuasion and awareness of its psychological and physical importance."

Nawal Mohammed, a 35-year-old, referred to her great attempt to convince her husband to exercise. However, she could not convince his family, because they see the participation of women in sports as an inappropriate work. She also says, "We find challenges and difficulties due to the traditional and prevalent ideas of so-

ciety until now".

Amani Shoukry, a volleyball player, says that female athletes suffer from a limited societal view, marginalization, and exclusion in the field of sports. Additionally, some people just agree to certain types of sports such as the individual ones. However, team sports are preserved just for men, and they did not have the opportunity to participate.

### Few Specialized Clubs

Samah al-Wajeh, a member of the Women's Department at the Ministry of Human Rights, confirms to "Sawt al-Amal" that there are no public clubs for women. On the other hand, just private clubs are available where they charge high fees that women cannot pay under these current conditions. Yet, if the clubs are available, they cannot find the required sport equipment.

Aisha Salem, a citizen from Sana'a, explains that the clubs around the country are just means of entertainment more than exercising, because it does not have machines to lose weight. In addition, there is no specialized sport, meaning that there are no clubs that refine women's skills in various sports activities, either collective or individual.

### Lack of Government Interest

Siham Amer, a boxing champion, points out



that government agencies and sports federations ignore women's participation in the local and international championships. Therefore, by neglecting the Ministry of Youth and Sports for women athletes, they do not find financial or moral support.

She added, "In the past, we had a championship in Jordan. Therefore, we exercised in the training camp, and we made a great effort to participate in it. Then, two days before the trip, we were surprised by the Ministry's refusal for our travel arguing that we are girls, and we should not participate in such sports. We tried hard to convince them, but in vain."

She continued, "even the invitations for participation do not reach us from the sports federations but from the abroad ones. However, we apply to participate without their knowledge, and this is by our personal effort. Sometimes there are those who stand against us and work to prevent us from participating in these activities."

Amer stresses that the neglect did not stop here, but it reached the local media, because it refrain from covering women's championships or focusing on their importance. In addition, it does not highlight women's sports due to the culture of shame.

Amer talked about her suffering, saying, "When I participated in an honoring ceremony, and it was necessary for me to appear in the re-

port, I was surprised by the deletion of the paragraph that concerned me. When I asked why I did not appear in the report? The coach replied, "It is an instruction from the Ministry not to present the report in which you appear."

### Getting Rid of the Culture of Shame

Noha Shukri, a member of the General Administration for Family Protection, states that every woman has the right to have her own sport just like the rest of the women in the world. Therefore, every family should be the primary supporter of women, and they should facilitate women's access to sports clubs, and allocate times for them to exercise at least two days a week.

Shukri added, "We must get rid of the culture of shame that accompanies us at all times, because we do not deviate from customs and traditions. Our practice of sports does not conflict with our morals and values, because all trainings that women do are held in special closed places and under the supervision of female cadres."

Stressing that sport is very important, because it is useful for obtaining a high physical fitness. It is also a psychological treatment for many of the pressures that women are exposed to, and for the nature of women's work at home and with children. Accordingly, they need time to release these pressures by practicing sport.

## Sport in Yemen

# Between the scarcity of Resources and Attempts to Revive Sports Activity

*Sport contributes greatly on increasing the overall economic capacity of many countries of the world. It is a factor promoting the development of the economic and development process in the country. However, sport in Yemen still suffers from neglecting and lack of interest, and it depends on the support of the state and society.*

*Khaled Mohsen Al-Khulaifi, Undersecretary of the Sports Sector at the Ministry of Youth and Sports - Aden, confirmed in an exclusive interview with "Sawt Al-Amal Newspaper" that the cessation of the conflict, reconstruction and recovery of the country, are among of the most important factors that will contribute to the reformulation of sports life in Yemen. Accordingly, it will transform it into an independent and self-sustaining economy.*

Hanin Al-Wahesh  
Sawt Al-Amal-(Voice of Hope)

**First of all, can you describe the state of sport in Yemen in general?**

Sport is a reflection of the general situation in the country for a long time. It was receiving government and popular attention, but not in the desired way. Despite all the intensified efforts that were made during consecutive periods, and the successes achieved in various sports participating either internationally or locally, the situation in general does not meet the ambition of the members of the sports sector in particular. In addition, the basic resources of the sector and the infrastructure of stadiums, clubs and sports institutions, which were destroyed during the conflict period since 2015, caused the elimination of athletes generations who did not find space to practice various types of sports.

Regarding the state of the sports sector in Yemen, we can say that it was witnessing a kind of stability in providing support from the Youth Welfare Fund, as a result there was a discipline participation in the international championships. In addition, the rehabilitation and athletic training program was going well.

**- How do you evaluate the sports sector nowadays comparing to the situation before the conflict?**

There is no doubt that there is a big difference before and

after 2015. Thus, it is certain that the conflict had a negative impact on all aspects of the sport related to the official seasonal competitions and to the financial resources, that were devoted to support sports activities of all kinds in Yemen.

Today, the situation has changed a lot, especially after the destruction of many clubs, gyms and stadiums in various Yemeni governorates. However, we are still striving to revitalize sport again, despite the few and modest possibilities that we have.

**- What is the extent of the damage suffered by the sports sector during the conflict period?**

The damage was very large and had an obvious impact on the sports sector and the players. The most important sports stadiums, halls and club headquarters were destroyed in some Yemeni governorates such as, Aden, Abyan, Lahj, Al-Dhalea, Taiz. Most of them were badly damaged. Regarding the human level, during the conflict, we lost many athletes in various games, which led to the suspension of competitions. Therefore, it in turn affected the rehabilitation of trainees and referees, and caused the decline of Yemeni sport and the interruption of its seasons for several years.

**- What is the role of the Ministry of Youth and Sports in improving the infrastructure of the sports sector in Yemen?**

Since 2015 and until now, the Ministry has been seeking to rehabilitate the stadiums, club headquarters and reacti-

vate sports activity. Therefore, it has achieved great strides in this, as some clubs were restored in Aden city, and some stadiums in many governorates were rehabilitated according to the available capabilities. However, the rehabilitation of large international stadiums and sports halls still requires great support and huge budgets that exceed the capabilities of the Yemeni government, let alone the ministry.

**- What is your assessment of the role of the private sector and the supporting bodies in improving and developing the sports sector?**

The private sector still has deficiencies in interaction with the sports sector. This is not only in terms of support, but also in terms of sponsoring, holding advertisements and promotional partnerships. In addition, there is a belonging default by the businessmen who should support sports and the athletes in a way that serves them in various fields.

**How will the sports sector contribute to Yemen's economic recovery in the future?**

When the process of peace and economic recovery is achieved, this will reshape sports life in a way that contributes to its transformation into an independent and self-sustaining economy. Meanwhile, the sports sector depends on the support of the state and society. As it represents a source of income for players, coaches and referees in various sports.

**- What are the most important international sports participations that have achieved remarkable success recently?**

We have taken on a great challenge in addressing all the difficulties that the country is facing in general by working to reach advanced stages. Despite the modest means that we have, we have launched many official championships for sports at the level of the entire Republic of Yemen. We have also worked hard to maintain the cohesion of sports institutions and protect them from fragmentation or rupture in all Yemeni regions, especially during the current situations that the country is going through. This task was difficult for us, but we are reaping the benefits of it by winning many championships.

The external participations are continuing. Many aspirations and goals of all athletes have been achieved. However, most of them are in individual games, so they do not find the full interaction of the media. Most of the activities, media and public interactions are directed towards football. Besides, among the participations that took place recently is swimming, about two months ago, during the interna-



**Khaled Mohsen Al-Khulaifi**  
Undersecretary of the Sports Sector at the Ministry of Youth and Sports - Aden

tional participations and competitions, we won two gold and silver medals in swimming in addition to the great success that we achieved in the West Asian Junior Championships held in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

**- What are your suggestions in the process of improving the performance of players in sports sector in general?**

Currently, we cannot talk about or make any plans for development unless the conflict stop and peace is established in all governorates of Yemen.

**What are the most important requirements that the sports sector in Yemen needs to improve its role in all local and international participations?**

Perhaps one of our most important requirements is to provide an operating budget that enables us to qualify players, take care of them, develop their performance, and carry out activities that enable them to develop their abilities in various sports activities.

**- Is there a future vision for developing sports in Yemen from your point of view?**

Our perceptions and the strategy that might help in this aspect are ready, but they need the right environment for their implementation.

## Women in the Sports Sector:

# Successful Models in Yemeni Women's Sports despite the Difficulties

By: Alia Muhammed  
Sawt Al-Amal -(Voice of Hope)

Despite all the challenges, conflicts and false beliefs in Yemen, Yemeni women have emerged in more than one field, in the service and development sectors. In addition, she has an impact on all levels, and the sports sector has honorable female models in this field.

"Sawt Al-Amal" newspaper sheds light on the achievements and activities of the Yemeni female players who imposed their participation by force at the local and international levels, armed with the challenge to face their obstacles and came to tell their successful stories.

Haifa Al-Matari, one of the young Yemeni women who became famous in the sport of shooting. Despite the circumstances she went through with her team members, she was distinguished by her athletic talent and was able to achieve high positions.

Her passion for sports created in her feeling the need to be a member of the shooting team in Yemen. After graduating from high school, she joined the Police Institute in 2002 to realize her dream.

In her interview with "Sawt Al-Amal", she said that there are those who believe that shooting is a difficult sport for women. However, she loved this sport, though she thought it was difficult at first. The difficulties faced by her were particularly in how to disassemble weapons, how to do proper shooting positions, and taking safety precautions. After that, when she practiced sports, she trained more and more, and then she learned how to use a weapon, so the target that was ten or sometimes twenty meters away from her was hit by her.

**Lack of Qualification and Training**

Haifa was among the first batch to join the sport of shooting in Yemen. She participated in a number of championships. In addition, she won many first places and over time, she became a trainer for a number of trainees.



However, Haifa and her team members suffered from insufficient training and qualification to face her competitors from other countries. Thus, she began to train her members on live ammunition. However, when she participated in Kuwait Olympics, she found that all competitors used the pneumatic weapons.

She explained that her participation was a new experience that she benefited from in many ways. She learned about the use of pneumatic weapons that are used in the Olympics. She also participated in a championships held in Sharjah.

Intisar Al-Mudhafari, a Yemeni national team player and the republic's champion in athletics, is an honorable role model for Yemeni women, who is interested in sports. She achieved high positions in the long-distance running competitions of about 10 km.

**Chess is a Great Experience**

From an early age, Buthaina Al-Qurashi started playing chess. After that, she moved to

university, and she participated in cultural and sports activities at the university. Accordingly, she achieved the first places, and she reaped medals and cups.

She grew up in an athletic family. Her older brother was a chess player, who helped her in developing her skills and become an outstanding player.

She tells "Sawt Al-Amal" that her real playing career began when she joined the Chess Federation, especially when she participated in the President's Youth and Women's Championships. All of that was under the shadow of the national team.

Al-Qurashi played in Al-Ahly and Al-Wahda Club. Then she participated in a number of Olympiads, most importantly were in Istanbul in 2000, Slovenia, Cairo, Sudan and Algeria. Therefore, she won many cups and medals.

She said that she started a professional training and arbitration. After that, she got the international badge from Dubai and the periodic badge in India. Then, she went into the field of

women's training, and she was appointed to the position of the head of the women's sector in the Federation. After that, she became the officer of media.

She confirmed that the game of chess establishes the principle of love, harmony and activates the mind. Accordingly, she has a team of young women at the Sam Foundation for Childhood and Development too. She is keen to hold monthly championships to strengthen their abilities and potential.

**Boxing is a New Sport that Breaks Tradition**

Siham Amer, a 23-year-old who is the martial arts champion and the first Arab in kickboxing, won more than 33 medals. Most of them are gold. In addition, she has represented Yemen in foreign championships. She participated in the first international kickboxing championship in Amman 2017, and she achieved the first place and the gold medal by knockout. Furthermore, she participated in the World Championships in Belarus, and won four medals. Besides, she participated in the Muay Thai championship in 2018, and won the gold medal and first place.

She broke the rule that martial arts are just for men, and she decided to enter this kind of sport. Thus, she overcame many difficulties, especially those that prevented her from continuing under the pretext of society's view of martial arts, and she was able to change the family's conviction.

Siham tells Sawt Al-Amal, "In my beginnings, I trained in a closed hall because there were no training clubs for girls for this sport, so I suffered a lot and I was prevented from participating in a number of championships, with the excuse that women do not fit in such sports. However, I did not bow to reality and I made my country proud of me in a number of championships with personal efforts".

She added, "I am currently working at the International Academy of Martial Arts. I train in various martial arts sports, such as, Karate, Taekwondo, kickboxing, and Kung Fu. There-

fore, the number of trainees has reached 100 and every day is increasing".

**Difficulties and Challenges in Women's Clubs**

There are major challenges encountering women's sport in Yemen. Despite the development that the world has reached, it makes Yemeni women face a society that does not accept the idea of women's clubs. As a result, this led to the closure of many government clubs that included women.

She pointed out that government clubs are currently closed, and there is only one club left that charges fees for training. What is worse, it has no significant role.

She stressed on the importance of activating the role of government clubs and sports federations that have stopped working. That is, in every sports federation there should be a special section for women, because it has a great role in refining sports skills. Besides, school sports should be activated, and it should be a basic subject taught like the rest of the curricula.

She stressed on the importance of separating sports from the political side, because this greatly affects the role of teams, players, sports federations, and women's sports.

Haifa Al-Matari confirmed that the Sports Federation has little role in providing any achievements to the sports field. This is what they suffer in the shooting team, as it lacked trainers and clubs specialized in shooting, ammunition and weapons suitable for this kind of sport.

The coach Siham Amer, revealed that there are many clubs and a number of female coaches who do not have sufficient experience, yet they are still training. In accordance, this may put many women at risk because of the incorrect movements that cause fractures and wounds.

She pointed out that sports have a positive and negative perception in the society. Therefore, they strive as much as possible to improve the negative one of women athletes.



# A Historical Overview for Sports in Yemen

Reported by: Manal Amin  
Sawt Al-Amal- (Voice of Hope)

Sports in Yemen is one of the highest fields in which young athletes of different races and groups meet in the country, in order to compete for achieving sports victory with a team spirit, and to bring joy and fun among the community.

The sports sector in Yemen has a long history full of achievements and championships. Besides, various sports at the local, Arab and international levels- especially in Aden city in southern Yemen- represent this. It was one of the first Arab cities to know and practice sports since the beginning of the twentieth century, when the first football club was established in 1902.

The book "Aden Sports Association 1934 - 1967" by Muhammad Abdo Ali, reviewed the history of the Yemeni sports movement in addition to the various sports activities at that time including, football, hockey, tennis, and other games. Furthermore, the local and foreign administrative bodies also supervised the conduct of these activities, which were represented in "Aden Sports Association", as being the first sports administration in the Arabian Peninsula.

The book explained that the population in Yemen, especially in Aden, began to be interested in watching football at the beginning of the twentieth century, especially the matches that were held between teams of British military forces units at Al-Khazinah Stadium, which is now called Al-Hubaihi Stadium, for football.

In 1902 came the idea of founding the first local football club by the prominent sports figure, Yusuf Muhammad Khan. At that time, the club was called "The Entertainment Club- " Al-Tarfeeh Club", but it did not last long because of the First World War. However, it came back again by the player Mahfoudh Makkawi.

According to the writer Muhammad Abdo Ali, among the achievements that have been made in the history of Yemeni football, especially in Aden, is the admission confirmation for Aden Sports Association to the membership of FIFA in January 1968. This was done in accordance with the Article 10 under paragraph 6 of FIFA constitution, which states, "Al-Ahly Federation- in the region that has not gained its independence - may submit its admission to FIFA after a permit from the National Federation of the country.

The book, a copy of which was obtained by "Sawt Al-Amal", indicated that sports spread in the thirties of the last century in public and private schools, such as athletics, football, cricket, tennis, hockey, volleyball, and table tennis.

## Hockey Game

In 1934, a sports body called Aden Sports Association was established. Its work was just confined to football and hockey. The association organized many sports competitions. Besides, players of many clubs in that period won many cups and medals bearing foreign names until 1938, when sports activity froze with the start of World War II in 1939. Nevertheless, a limited number of sports clubs such as, Al-Itihad, Al-Muhammadi, Al-Hussaini, Al-Itihad Al-Islami, Al-Aidaros, and Awlad Al-Thakanat

Clubs continued their sports activity which was limited to hockey.

In 1936, the first local hockey club was founded, which was called "Nojom Al-Lail Club ". Then its name was changed to "Al-Haidari Hockey Club ", due to the name of the famous football, hockey player and referee Hassan Ali Haider.

Aden Sports Association was keen to continue encouraging the practice of hockey in light of the limited number of clubs that used to play it. In 1964, it carried out an official competition for the "Rothman" Cup between the national teams represented by: Al-Ahly, Al-Sharqi, Al-Gwanis Institute, Al-Qatai Youth, Al-Barid and Al-Barq, Al-Assad Clubs, and the British Forces teams. As a result, Al-Qatay'i team won this championship. Thus, the association implemented another competition in 1965 for the "Bateel" Cup, which was the last competition. Thereby, that was the end of the history of this game in Aden.

## Various Sports

The game of tennis began in Yemen at the end of the eighteenth century AD and "Jim Kaneh" club was established in 'Krater' area of Aden city. Besides, in 1902 and 1908 Adeni and Sira Tennis Clubs were established, and there were a number of tennis playgrounds in different parts of the city. Besides, cricket started at the beginning of the twentieth century, and it was among the main games of school. It continued its practice until the late sixties of the twentieth century.

Regarding the table tennis, Aden Table Tennis Association was established in 1951 with

a few clubs. Later it became a member of the International Table Tennis Federation. In addition, it participated in many Arab courses in Egypt and Jordan and volleyball, boating and bodybuilding appeared respectively as well.

According to the report of the National Information Center, the interest and focus on sports in Yemen began in 1990. The government tended to support various sports activities by expanding stadiums and sports clubs. Besides, a youth fund was established to provide funding for sports and youth activities in addition to the participation of many sports teams in many local and international championships, where they achieved many recognitions and successes that began since 2002 when the national team almost reached the Asian Cup finals and the final qualifiers for the World Cup finals. They also achieved the second place in the finals of the Asian Cup for juniors in UAE, and they reached to the finals of the Junior World Cup in Finland in 2003 and the Asian Cup finals in Malaysia. The latest of which was the junior football team who won the West Asian Championship 2021 Cup in Saudi Arabia.

## The Official Authority

Khaled Mohsen Al-Khulaifi, Undersecretary of the Sports Sector in the Ministry of Youth and Sports, evaluates the sports sector at the present time compared to the period before 2015 saying, "there is no doubt that there is a great difference in the sports reality in Yemen nowadays and before the past seven years, especially in the human, technical and infrastructure aspect. In addition to the sports

aspect related to official seasonal competitions, and the financial resources devoted to support sports activities of all kinds".

He explained to "Sawt Al-Amal" newspaper that the sports sector witnessed some kind of stability in providing support from the Youth Welfare Fund before 2015. As a result, there was discipline in the international championships participation, and the rehabilitation and sports training program were progressing well.

He confirmed that there are stadiums, gymnasiums and club headquarters that were destroyed during the conflict period. Besides, financial resources have also been drained away from their main goal, which is to develop sports. This necessitated seeking to revitalize sports in Yemen again to reach an advanced stage by launching official championships for the year of 2021 for many sports games at the country level, regardless the modest possibilities that we have. The international participations were supported, and the sports sector receives only 10% of the financial resources. They achieved successes at various levels. The most recent of which was winning the West Asian Championship for juniors in a football game.

Regarding the role of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the undersecretary says that the ministry has made a great effort to maintain the cohesion of the sports sector institutions in addition to protect them from disruption at the level of clubs and federations in all Yemeni governorates affected by the conflict. Besides, it is still in the process of supervising and monitoring the work of federations and clubs in a way that make it conform to the Yemeni laws and regulations.

## The Sports Sector in Yemen:

# Facing Challenges and Modest Participation in Local and International Championships

By Manal Amin  
Sawt Al-Amal - (Voice of Hope)

The international participation of Yemeni teams in various sport games is an important matter for athletes. It helps to increase the experience of athletes, develop their performance and skills in all sports. In this way, distinguished results will be achieved that will bring joy to the hearts of Yemeni people.

Raed Ali Noaman, Director General of Sports Activity at the Ministry of Sports and Youth, told "Sawt Al-Amal" newspaper about the most important local and international sports activities in which the Yemeni teams participated, despite the continuing conflict and exacerbation of challenges.

He said that the conflict had a negative impact on sports activity and the level of teams. It led to the suspension of sports activity for a long time, and the reluctance of many players from sports because of displacement and the difficult living situation. Some of them were killed in the conflict, and others joined the military units. In light of this, the athlete's level of all games declined for long periods.

In order to face these persistent challenges, Raed explained that after the re-establishment and activation of the Ministry of Youth and Sports in 2016, the sector faced all the challenges it is going through. In addition, it worked on reactivating the sports clubs again and confronting the unstable security situation in most of the Yemeni governorates.

He added that the ministry was operating without any financial resources. Yet, with the combined efforts of the ministry's leaders, the sports sector was given all the powers, such as reforming the lists of departments, arranging



the conditions of public sports federations and creating legal frameworks for the starting the activity by organizing Karate championships and marathons for children in the main street of Al-Mualla, which brought joy to the hearts of people. Therefore, the interaction of the residents of Al-Mualla was positive.

## The Level of Achievement of the Sports Sector Activity

To know the level of achievement of sports sector activity in the international participation of sports teams, Raed reviewed a list of local and international championships in addition to their participations for various sports. He said that the international championships that they participated in during the period from January to December 2021 included the Arab arm wrestling championship in Cairo. Furthermore, he confirmed that they participated in many sports activities and won many gold, silver and one bronze medals. Some of the participated

championships included, the Asian Boxing in Dubai, the Olympia of Tokyo for people with special needs, the World Youth in Nairobi, the Arab Judo in Cairo, the Arab Swimming in Abu Dhabi, the Arab field tennis pioneers in Baghdad, the Arab Chess in Dubai, the Arab Junior Athletics in Tunisia, the Arab Cycling in Cairo, the Arab Football Cup in Qatar, the Yemen Cup in Cairo, the Arab Club Football in Cairo, the Arab Weightlifting in Iraq and the Arab Club Championship for Basketball In Cairo.

Raed also explained to "Sawt Al-Amal" the level of implementation of the local sports activity for the year of 2020. These activities and championships included, volleyball, karate, the Girls' Marathon, judo, Boxing, Basketball, Handball, Swimming, Table Tennis, Taekwondo, Lifting Weightlifting, Athletics, Chess, field tennis and Cycling. Most of these activities were held in Aden and Hadramout cities.

Regarding the international participations and championships of the same period- in

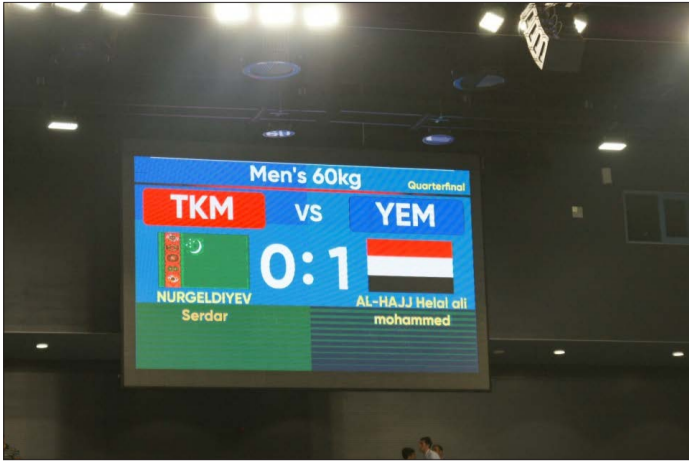
which they won many gold, silver and bronze medals- they included the Arab Judo Club in Kuwait, the Central and West Asian Junior for field tennis in Bahrain, the Arab clubs and teams for Taekwondo in Fujairah, the Davis Cup for field tennis in Indonesia. Our country also participated in international meetings of volleyball, wrestling, boxing and swimming in Egypt, India, Switzerland and Oman.

The level of achievement of the international activity for sports sector during the period from January to December 2019 included the twenty- second of the Arab Cross Country Athletics Championships in Jordan. As a result, the team won the third place and won two silver and bronze medals. Besides, the West Asian Karate Championship in the UAE, in which they won a silver and bronze medal. In addition to the Davis Cup Junior Championships for field tennis in Bahrain, and they won the first place in addition to two gold medals. The 12th Arab Kung Fu Club Championship in Jordan, and they won

the second place and a silver, a bronze and two gold medals.

Regarding the level of achievement of the activity of the international sports sector during 2018, Ra'ed said that Yemen participated in many championships despite the difficult capabilities that the country is going through. These championships included the third Arab Youth Boxing in Cairo, where the team won a silver medal and two bronze medals. Besides, there are other championships regarding the field tennis including, the Asian Junior in Lebanon, in which they won two silver and one bronze medals. The Asian Junior in Jeddah, and they won two gold medals. The Asian Junior Championships in Riyadh, in which they won a silver medal. The Asian Championship for the teams in Qatar, and they won a bronze medal. In addition, they participated in the Arab Championship for Judo Clubs in Cairo, and they won gold, silver, and bronze medals. The Arab Senior Swimming Championships in Tunisia, and they won the bronze medal. Furthermore, they participated in the qualifiers for the World Equestrian Cup that was held in Muscat, and they won the first place with two gold medals. They took the championship cup and the Best Knight's Cup. Besides, they participated in the eighth Arab Championship for youth in athletics in Jordan and Muscat, and they won a silver, bronze medal and the championship cup.

In the conclusion of his speech with the newspaper, Ra'ed looks forward to the need to combine all societal efforts to provide the necessary support to the sports sector in general. In addition to advancing it in the desired way that contributes to the national economy and its development. Additionally, to strengthening the national belonging in all local and international forums.



## The Importance of Supporting Youth Capabilities in the Sports Sector

# The Role of the Supporting Bodies in Reviving the Sports Sector in Yemen

## The Yemeni Olympic Committee is a Link between Local and International Federations to Highlight Sports Talents

By Manal Amin  
Sawt Al-Amal –(Voice of Hope)

The sports sector in Yemen suffers from many challenges due to the economic and security situation in the country, and it still needs a lot of support and attention from the government and the private sectors, to implement many model projects for stadiums and clubs that contribute to improve the level of players and financial income.

The Yemeni sports and Youth sector looks forward to improving the sport sector in the near future. Besides, they try to activate their role in supporting the capabilities of young people with more qualifications that enable them to reach global achievements by supporting activities and training programs in clubs and federations, so that the process will be integrated to improve their performance.

Shukri Hussein, Director General of the General Department of Information in the Ministry of Youth and Sports, confirmed that the Ministry of Youth and Sports is the official supportive and supervisory body for the sports sector in Yemen in various sports games and activities. Besides, all federations and clubs are given financial allocations annually to carry out various activities that contribute to develop the performance of the athletes, and it supervises the process of international participation.

He explained to "Sawt Al-Amal" that sport is one of the sectors that does not receive support from international or local organizations for its various sports activities in clubs, stadiums and gyms. Rather, it depends mainly on the support of the Ministry and the private sector.

According to the director general of information in the ministry, "the ministry seeks - despite its modest capabilities - to provide young people with a healthy, scientific and athletic qualification. Therefore, they can contribute to promote development and keep up with sports developments in various regional, Arab, international activities and competitions."

### Yemeni Olympic Committee

Shukri Hussein explained to "Sawt Al-Amal" that the Olympic Committee in Yemen is the link between the local federations of various sports and with the international federations. It plays a major role in highlighting and developing talents in various fields and sports activities.

In order to learn about the emergence and the role of the Olympic Committee in Yemen, "Sawt Al-Amal" had a special interview with Muhammad Al-Ahjri, Secretary-General of the Yemeni Olympic Committee. He explained that the Yemeni Olympic Committee is a sports organization that aims to take care and improve the quality and level of athletes in many sports activities.

The Committee is an independent, non-governmental sports organization operating in accordance with the International Olympic Charter. It was established from 6 to 11 of July, 1976 AD. This came after holding the first conference to establish the seven sports federations namely, football, basketball, volleyball, athletics, table tennis, handball and wrestling in Sana'a.

He explained that the committee began seeking for the recognition of the Olympic sports federations by the international federations, and it got recognition in the eighties of the last century.

According to Al-Ahjri, "the Olympic Committee was established in Aden city on February 4, 1981 AD. That was under the supervision of the mass organizations in the Central



Ali Al-Humairi



Muhammad Al-Ahjri

Committee of the Yemeni Socialist Party. Thus, the Committee received the recognition of the International Olympic Committee on October 2, 1981 AD, which was held in Germany. Then, it was agreed to merge the two committees. After that, the announcement of the Yemeni Olympic Committee came on February 28, 1990 AD".

### The Committee and International Participation

Al-Ahjri reviews for us a number of the committee's participations in the Olympic Sports Games namely, the Seoul Olympics in 1988, the 25th in Barcelona 1992, the 26th in Atlanta 1996, the 27th in Sydney 2000, the 28th in Athens 2004, the 29th in Beijing 2008, the 30th in London 2012, the 31st Rio de Janeiro 2016 and the 32nd Summer Olympics Games in Tokyo 2020.

Our country participated in the Youth Sport Games in a number of Olympic Championships, included, Singapore 2010, China 2014, and Buenos Labour- Argentina 2018. It also participated in a number of Asian Games, namely New Delhi 1982, the 11th Asian Summer Games in Beijing 1990, the 12th Asian Summer Games in Hiroshima 1994. We also won many gold, silver and bronze medals and awards in a number of Olympic Games such

as, bronze medal in the 15th Asian Summer Games in Doha 2006 AD , a silver and two bronze medals in the second Asian Games for the beaches of Muscat 2010 , a gold medal in the first Asian Games in Singapore.

### Football Game

With regard to the international participation of various sport games and their support, Al-Ahjri explained to "Sawt Al-Amal" that the Olympic Committee guarantees Yemen's participation in the Olympic, Asian, Islamic and Arab Games, despite the lack of its activity in recent years. In addition, it always seeks to provide capabilities to support Yemen's participation in these games.

He added that for football, volleyball, and basketball, which are called "team games", their requirements and needs are great in international participation, because there are small potential of the Olympic Committee. Hence, it cannot provide the necessary support for those games.

Regarding the parties that support Yemen's participation in the football game abroad, Al-Ahjri indicates that the Yemeni Football Association is responsible for providing the necessary support to meet the requirements of Yemeni participation in the field of football abroad. Besides, this game is persistent today

compared to other sports. The most recent of which is Yemen's participation in the West Asian Junior Championships, in which the Yemeni team was rightfully crowned champion.

### Future Aspirations

Regarding the future vision that the committee hopes to achieve, Al-Ahjri confirms that the committee was subjected to halt its activities during the conflict period for a short period. Despite the destruction of its headquarters, they continue their work with determination to achieve success . In addition, the committee looks forward to establishing centers in each sports game, in order to ensure its permanent and regular presence throughout the year. Besides, it seeks to preserve sports and games activities from extinction, due to the current situation in the country which led to the suspension of many activities. Furthermore, it made many efforts to maintain the Yemeni presence in all major international sports activities according to the regulations followed in all sports championships, such as the Olympic Sports Games, the Asian and Islamic Sports Games and others.

He adds that the qualification is one of the most important aspects that the committee seeks to develop by maintaining the national cadre - coaches, referees and athletes. This could be achieved through communication with local and international federations for the process of continuous rehabilitation and development of sports capabilities.

### The Private Sector and Supporting Personalities

Ali Al-Humairi, the writer and sports analyst for the newspaper of "Sawt Al-Amal," explained that the private sector is the largest supporter of the sports sector and the first participant in improving the role and development of club activities for various sports games.

He pointed out that due to the difficult conditions that the country is going through today, the private sector has become a major and influential role in the process of continuing Yemeni sport and its activities at the local and in-

**The Yemeni Football Association is responsible for providing the necessary support to meet the requirements of Yemeni participation in the field of football abroad.**

ternational levels. It contributed to providing sports with the youth skills required in various sports, yet it still needs greater support.

Al-Humairi mentioned a number of parties, including the private sector that contributed to providing the sports sector with the required support. Additionally, it helped to improve the performance of athletes and sports clubs, such as the Presidency of the Football Association, which contributed to providing the necessary support to Yemeni teams at all levels, juniors, youth, and the national team. Besides, it supported "Al Hilal Al-Sahili" club in Al Hudaydah Governorate. Furthermore, it is currently providing all financial requirements of the Yemeni teams in the light of hard conditions the country is witnessing in a way that enables them to participate in the regional, continental and international championships.

He added to "Sawt Al-Amal" that there are some merchants in Hadhramaut governorate, who have a prominent and tangible role in supporting the most prestigious sports clubs in the governorate. They provided 'Sha'ab Hadhramaut Club' with all the support it needed to be able to participate in local championships in addition to the support provided by businessmen in Taiz governorate, who supported football sports clubs. Thus, their support helped in bringing many clubs out of bankruptcy to recovery, such as Ahli Taiz, Al Saqr and Al Taliah clubs.

He added that there is also support from the private sectors for one of the most prestigious clubs in Sana'a, such as 'Wehdat Sana'a Club' that provided it with the necessary supplies for various sports activities such as cycling, athletics and others. In addition to "Ahli Sana'a Club", which is one of the biggest clubs that won many local championships.

**The Yemeni Olympic Committee is a sports organization that aims to take care and improve the quality and level of athletes in many sports activities.**



# Youth Challenges and Initiatives to Develop the Sports Sector in Yemen



Samah Emlaq  
Sawt Al-Amal - (Voice of Hope)

"The government protects motherhood and childhood and it takes care of children and youth." This is the text of Article 30 of the Yemeni constitution. Yet, this is not the only article that states the rights of the young people. They were mentioned in a number of articles of the constitution within various societal categories, such as article 54, which states that the government takes special care of young people and protects them from deviation. It provides them with religious, physical and mental education, as well as the appropriate conditions for the development of their talents in all fields.

In the midst of youth work and with the modest capabilities - according to the latest periodic report in 2020- there were self-efforts and youth initiatives working to support themselves and their local sporting status with self-motivation during the periods of their establishment. Thus, they proved that young people are the engine of nation's development and enlightenment, regardless of the hard circumstances surrounding them.

### Idea then Giving Initiative "Mobadarat Fekrah then Ata'a"

An initiative, Fekrah then Ata'a, was established in March 2015 in Sana'a. Its message is that there are young people whose main goal in life is to develop their country through education. The vision of the initiative revolved around the offering scientific services and spreading the culture of the importance of sport among members of society which is mentioned in their electronic directory for Yemeni youth initiatives in 2020, that sport is their most prominent goal. In addition, a training workshop entitled "Define your Goals from Now" was held as part of the initiative's development activities. Furthermore, an educational, cultural and sports center was established as one of the workshop activities.

### "Athletic Step Initiative" during the COVID-19 Pandemic

The youth sports initiative "Athletic Step Initiative" appeared because of the suspension of sports activities and competitions due to COVID-19, and the precautionary measures taken by Yemen and most of the countries around the world. The initiative was launched by a group of young athletes to achieve a de-



Nasser Al-Majidi



Khaled Mohsen



Helmy Anwar Maree

gree of sports culture and awareness of the importance of sports and its role in development. The goal of the initiative - according to what is mentioned in its biography in the electronic directory of Yemeni youth initiatives - is to cover the absence of the ministry, sports federations and the Olympic Committee.

The "Athletic Step Initiative" was chaired by the sports professor Amat Al-Salam Al-Faqih. It includes a number of athletes and sports media professionals. She says that her initiative comes to cover the deficit of the official sectors, federations and clubs, whose activities were reduced under the pretext of the decision to stop sports activities. However, there were supposed to be alternatives to other activities that would keep the connection with the athletes, the youth and the community.

Al-Faqih stresses that the programs prepared by the initiative reflect the awareness of youth who can use sport as a means to confront the pandemic based on that sport strengthens the human immune system.

Since most of the clubs and sports centers were closed, this initiative was launched via social media with new ways to exercise while settling at home. In addition to spreading awareness in the community about the importance of sports and reaching a healthy sports community in all circumstances and conditions.

Regarding the role of youth initiatives that continued to give lessons about sports even in light of Covid-19, Hassan Al-Wareeth, a sports writer in the official Yemeni newspaper 'Al-Thawra', stressed on the need to support such youth initiatives.

### Youth Opinions

Nasser Al-Majidi, 26 years old, Al-Odeen District, Ibb city, believes that youth initiatives in the sports sector are the main pillars for building a sports generation through which the country can keep up with the other countries of the world.

He stressed the importance of taking care

of young people saying, "In fact, the role of youth is fundamental in the development process. Thus, those in charge of this sector should properly care of this generation, in order to raise Yemen's name high, as what happened recently with the youth team, who drew joy in the heart of 30 million Yemenis of all sects and their categories.

He added, "We will not be certain of a bright future unless full care is provided for the country's youth", because sporting future is contingent upon a government involvement represented by the Ministry of Youth and Sports Sector in every field, in order to take care of these creative youths to raise the flag of Yemen in all international activities.

Nasser concluded by saying, "We hope that all those in charge will look responsibly and faithfully to the youth of Yemen in general. Thus, the result will inevitably be happy and a source of pride."

Helmy Anwar Maree, aged 22, from Taiz city, said that the role of youth initiatives in the sports sector is positive in more than one field, such as exercises of all kinds that benefit the soul and the body. Besides, sport is a sustainable development, especially in developing countries that suffer from conflicts with various causes.

He points out that the future of sports will be great if sports clubs are established in various governorates, and talented people are trained.

### Challenges and Treatments

Khaled Mohsen, Undersecretary of the Sports Sector at the Ministry of Youth and

Sports, confirms that the state of sports is a reflection of the general situation of the country. Despite the intensified efforts being made and the successes achieved, the situation does not meet the ambition, and Yemeni sport is still in decline.

Regarding the total damage caused to the sports sector, Mohsen told "Sawt Al-Amal" that the extent of the damage suffered by the sports sector during the conflict was great. The most of the important sports stadiums, halls and club headquarters were destroyed in many cities such as, Aden, Abyan, Lahj, Al Dhale'e, Ibb, Taiz, and other governorates. Therefore, the suspension of competitions and its seasons affected the qualification of coaches and referees in addition to the decline of Yemeni sport as well.

Mohsen lists the efforts made by the Ministry of Youth and Sports in Aden, saying that the ministry has improved the infrastructure of the sports sector in Yemen, especially stadiums and sports clubs that were damaged and neglected during the past periods. Additionally, the ministry has sought and is still seeking to rehabilitate stadiums and club headquarters.

Mohsen confirms that the ministry has made great strides in rehabilitating a number of stadiums, such as the Al-Shaheed Al-Hubaishi Stadium and its lighting, the indoor gym, and the restoration and furnishing of some clubs in Aden in addition to rehabilitating some stadiums in many governorates according to the available capabilities. However, the rehabilitation of large international stadiums and halls requires huge budgets that exceed the capabilities of the Yemeni government let alone the ministry.

Regarding the private sector and its position on the sports sector, he said that the private sector is negligent in interacting with sports, not only in terms of sport, but also in terms of sponsorship and advertising partnerships. In addition, businessmen did not achieve support in belonging to the sport, and support it through clubs and federations, with the exception of a few.

However, with the available resources, Yemen won two gold medals and a silver two months ago in the swimming game which is an achievement to be reckoned with. In addition, it has got achievements in other sports games as well, yet, the interaction is taking place with football game in particular. Therefore, its great achievement in the West Asian Junior Championships is proof of that. According to Mohsen.





## Peace Goal

# The Importance of Sports in the Eyes of the Yemeni People



Rajaa Mukred  
Sawt Al-Amal -(Voice of Hope)

Sport is the exercise of a physical and intellectual skill. During the events in which sports teams compete, many people from different nationalities and regions gather under the name of 'One Team'. Besides, in the sports field, there were many sects and political trends that came together to achieve the championship goal. Despite the bitterness and pain between the conflicting parties, sport - of all kinds - is a means to achieve peace.

After seven years of conflict in Yemen, in mid-December 2021, sport was able to make a huge difference and joy in Yemeni society. According to residents, it has proven to be an effective tool for peace and joy. This was evident with the victory of the Yemeni junior team for the first time in its history in the final of the West Asian Championship.

During a field visit to the Yemeni street, "Sawt Al-Amal" newspaper tracked the views of Yemenis, and summarized their views on sports in the following lines:

### Sport is Joy

"Whenever we do sports, we feel happy", that is according to Wafaa Muhammad, a citizen from Aden, when she talked about the importance of sport. She added that sports have a psychological and physical impact, so the athlete feels comfortable when practicing sports. She affirmed that the feeling of happiness with sports accompanies her children upon their return from school and even at home. Therefore, whenever she gives her children time for sports, their bodies become energized and strengthened, so their minds accept studying.

Adnan Al-Nadhari, a youth activist from Raymah Governorate, says, "I am a citizen. I was searching among the rubble of sad news for an event that would make me happy.

However, this occasion was a victory over the living situation that made our people miserable, so I felt an indescribable happiness. As this victory united the Yemeni people, who



suffer from a division among their sects, so they celebrated and expressed their happiness with this championship by chanting, "With our souls and blood, we will redeem you, Yemen" from different cities including, Sana'a, Aden, Hadhramaut, Socotra, Saada and even in the Yemeni rural areas, where basic services do not reach. He added that the Yemeni people were able to find happiness after all. The sports institution is the only Yemeni institution that has not been divided. Therefore, thanks for the efforts of those in charge of it, and for the Yemeni people at home and abroad with their various orientations.

### Health Benefits

According to Dr. Nadwa Redman, exercise has a great health benefit for the body and soul. These benefits includes, stimulating positive energy in the body, helping it to get rid of negative energy, maintaining an ideal body weight, giving it a flabby-free appearance, improving skin and enhances the work of the immune system in the body.

Redman adds that sports have mental ben-

efits, such as aiding understanding and stimulating memory. There are types of sports that increase IQ - intelligence quotient- like chess, and there are many health benefits for certain disease states that are devoted to specific types of exercise, such as walking, swimming, and meditation. These sports are applied by most of the clubs in Yemen.

### Sport is Development

According to Ahmed Taha, a social activist, "Sports is an important tool for development in the developing societies. In addition, it has a major role in spreading the culture of tolerance and peace. Therefore, Development in Yemen can be achieved by involving men and women in sports, and encouraging pioneer professional female athletes in championships by supporting sports clubs and initiatives.

According to, Mansour Adeb, a teacher and chess player, stresses that it is necessary to make strong partnerships, because sport has the ability to link the conflicting parties, and it seeks to achieve a common interest and sustainable development. That is why sports should be encouraged in Yemen.

### Blowing the Whistle of Peace -Calling for Social Unity Solidarity.



"The best experience which prove that sport is a path to peace is what the Yemeni junior national team achieved in the West Asian Championship final when the referee announced the victory of our team, we all chanted in the name of Yemen, and we did not call people for racism or regionalism. Besides, we did not say that this is a northern or southern goal, but our unity was one word which is our Yemeni team." This was confirmed by Hana Al-Wasabi to "Sawt Al-Amal."

She added that sports have united the southern and northern of Yemen, because the flag, the cheer and encouragement were one. Besides, the goal of the sports team at the time was to come out with a mission to unite the ranks of society and win with merit. Therefore, it left all of its political concerns and human suffering aside to raise the flag of Yemen.

Ali Al-Hajjaji, a teacher from Ibb, expressed his feeling about the distinguished sporting event of the Yemeni national team,

saying that it is a feeling of pride mixed with love, friendliness and hope. Then, he added that it was the first time that he felt the Yemenis are interconnected and united with love for Yemen. Their struggles and separation are not in their convictions, but rather they were forced to do so for a living. He believes that sport can unite the Yemeni people, improve their country and generate love, respect and morals. Therefore, the recent events of the youth team gave Yemenis and the world a great lesson in patience, strength, endurance and good manners.

Al-Hajjaji added, "The youth team were kissed on their foreheads. Besides, we pray for them, and we wish that the concerned authorities take care of sports in general."

### Practicing Sports is a Challenge

Ahmed Munir, a citizen of Sana'a, points out that sport in Yemen faces many difficulties, including the continuation of the conflict and the deterioration of the sport's infrastructure, yet we find Yemeni youth practicing sports. Therefore, playing football in the dirt playgrounds and with the bad conditions that they live in is considered as an obvious challenge for them, since there are no sports clubs to embrace them.

He also said that it is necessary to encourage sports and raise awareness of its importance from a young age. Thus, schools should allocate classes for all kinds of sports. In addition to conducting sports activities and competitions at the school level. Sport is an incentive for education and not just for entertainment, as some think.

Ismail Mohammed, a citizen from Taiz city, said that the Yemeni national team's participation in football is a challenge for the difficult living conditions and the conflict as well.

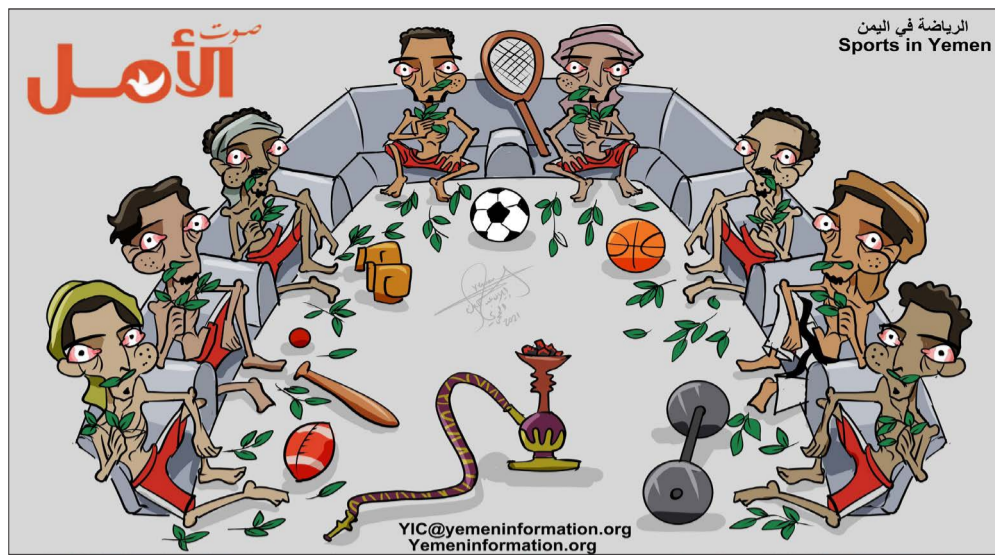
He concluded his speech by saying that sport is a culture that must find care to be developed. It is the future of health, peace, sustainable development, and economic recovery. Therefore, it is necessary to take care of it and to provide the necessary capabilities for sports facilities and athletes. It is also necessary for the concerned authorities to have a tangible role towards it.

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## The Junior's Feet Beat the Warriors' Guns

# Sport Unite Yemenis after Being Separated by Politics

By: Mohammed Abdulaziz  
Sawt Al-Amal -(The Voice of Hope)

A great joy spread throughout Yemen, as all members of the society participated in their various groups, trends, political and sectarian affiliates with celebrating the national football team's achievement of the Eighth West Asian Federation Championship for juniors hosted by Saudi Arabia.

People took to the streets carrying national flags and chanting slogans for Yemen, and the women's throats ululated and fireworks lit up the skies of cities and villages.

The capital, Sanaa, witnessed spontaneous popular celebrations for the achievement of the championship in various squares and public streets, where hundreds of fans gathered, and they lit fireworks in the sky of the capital.

Aden city - in the south of the country - witnessed wide celebrations as well and hundreds of citizens roamed the streets of the city, rejoicing at the team's achievement of the West Asian Junior Cup.

A massive festive march took place in the center of Taiz city, in which hundreds of citizens participated and raised the national flag. They were also chanting, "With our souls and blood, we will redeem you, Yemen." In addition to other popular chants.

Most of Yemen's urban and rural areas witnessed wide celebrations, rejoicing at what the country's junior national team had achieved. Moreover, every member of the team was congratulated with announcements of financial and in-kind donations from major commercial companies and businessmen, and even ordinary citizens.

A number of Yemeni personalities and companies presented financial and in-kind prizes to the players for their achievement, despite the difficult circumstances the country is going through due to the conflict that has existed for seven years.

### Sport Reforms What Politics Ruined

Political analyst Amin Al-Hujaili says that this achievement, which is the first of its kind in the history of Yemeni sports, made another achievement on the political level. It was able to unite all the conflicting parties for the first time since the outbreak of the conflict and



## The Joy of Yemen with the Victory of the West Asian Football Championship

congratulating all of the Yemeni people with this historic achievement.

He adds that the junior national team players came from various Yemeni cities and regions, and their achievement is for Yemen in its entire geographical extent.

Al-Hujaili confirms that the victory of the Yemeni junior team in the West Asian Championship revealed the extent of interest for sport in Yemen, especially among young people. He said, "In an unprecedented scene with unconventional and even spontaneous manifestations, Yemenis' celebrations of this victory pervaded all cities of Yemen, despite the state of political fragmentation as a result of the conflict on its land for the seventh year."

The euphoria of victory reached some of them to the point of firing live ammunition in the air as well as fireworks and lighting torches on rooftops and in the streets.

Journalist Omar Al-Qadi says, "The Yemenis expressed their joy by spontaneously going out to celebrate in the streets of Yemeni cities, without any organized party or advocate for going out. Besides, in a short fleeting moment, they forgot all their successive sorrows and setbacks." He added that the reaction caused by the national team's victory goes beyond football to expressing the unity of the people, north and south, without regional, political or cultural considerations.

According to the journalist Maher Al-Mut-

awakil from Taiz, "the youths blew up all the concepts and administrations of politics. They hold the love of their homeland and nothing else. This was evident by the wide joy and happiness that were witnessed in all the governorates of Yemen".

Al-Mutawakel added that the result of the little team confirmed how much Yemenis missed happiness in times of conflict, because all the contradictory affiliations united under the flag of one nation, and they put politics aside.

Ali Naji Al-Raawi, One of the most prominent founders of sports media, summed up his point of view by saying, "apart from the issue of this team qualifying for the West Asian fi-

nal, the most important thing is that, it is the first time that we have a team that knows how to play, how to attack, how to defend, and even knows how to overcome its suffering".

He added that despite the joy of this team, what they fear is that it will fade and neglected. As happened before with "Al-Amal" team.

The former star of Al-Yarmouk Club in the capital, Sana'a, Murad Al-Hashidi expressed his happiness with this achievement, which he described as a historical victory. He wished that the team would receive attention and care and not be neglected or meet the fate of those who preceded them.

He praised the performance of the national team and its players, who were greater than the politicians, because they united the hearts of all Yemeni people, and gave them an indescribable joy.

Al-Hashidi congratulated the technical and administrative staff of this team, which gave us renewed hope, because they overcome harsh conditions and emerged from the womb of suffering. Therefore, he ask everyone to keep balance. Based on the fact that it is required to build on what has been achieved and not to exaggerate neither their joy nor their sadness.

### Will Conquers Circumstances

Ophthalmologist Dr. Zine El Abidine Badr confirmed that the renewed spirit and strong will of our youth, represented in the outstanding and brilliant performance of the junior team in the West Asian Championship. All of them drew the features of a better future for Yemeni football, and created a lot of happiness and hope in the hearts of all Yemenis.

He believes that the Yemeni junior team can be betting on it, and he hopes that it will not be neglected after the championship as usual.

Walid Al-Sidra hopes that the junior team's victory with the title has drawn joy in the hearts of all Yemeni people, who have suffered greatly because of the war and politics, yet this little team has overcome all of that.

### Women Have a Share of Joy

According to Professor Nawal Al-Siyaghi, the social supervisor at a girls' school, the joy of Yemenis was not limited to a certain group, however women had a share in these celebrations.....*Continue ....page2*

# More than 38% of the Proposed Improvements to Sports are Maintaining Clubs.

By: Rajaa Mukred  
Sawt Al-Amal- (Voice of Hope)

The results of an electronic opinion poll conducted by Yemen Information Center in mid-December 2021, on sports in Yemen, showed that 38% of the population believe that the most proposed improvement for sports is the interest in clubs. 33% is the interest in sports classes at schools and the work of clubs in universities, 19% is the awareness of the importance of sports, and 10% is the good choice of coach.

In the opinion poll, which targeted 69% of males and 31% of females in the various Yemeni governorates. It was found through opinions to the extent of the population's satisfaction with the government's effort towards sports that, 6.2% are not satisfied, 6.3% are satisfied, and 87.5% are somewhat satisfied.

94% of the opinions agreed that interest in youth and sports is important, 2% unimportant, and 4% to some extent. Regarding the

extent of Yemeni women's participation in sports, the poll results showed that 51.1% is very weak, 31.9% weak, 14.9% is medium, and 2.1% is large.

For the extent of Yemeni society's awareness of the importance of sport, 12.5% see it as strong, 54.2% as weak, and 33.3% to some extent. It was also found by the respondents' opinions that, 47.9% of the concerned authorities neglect, 31.3% the deterioration of the sports infrastructure, 12.5% the conflict, and 8.3% the player's low level of income.

While the results of the opinion poll revealed that the role of organizations and civil society in supporting sports 6.3% is average, 54.2% is weak, and 39.5% is non-existent. The opinion poll summarized what the youth team achieved in the West Asian Championship for the year 2021 AD for Yemenis, 6.7% achieved a sense of peace for them. 20% Yemeni unity, 11.1% professional players despite the conditions and lack of capabilities, and 62.2% all of the above. Deteriorate the sports structure, and 12.5% conflict, and 8.3% low player income.

## Opinion Poll Results on "Sports in Yemen"

