

Partners for Democratic Change International and *Partners Yemen* have the pleasure to invite you to the event

Yemen - forgotten citizens: the Al Akhdam
February 13th, 2014

2.00 pm - 3.30 pm at PDCI
Rue Belliard 205 (8th floor), 1040 Brussels

Fahd Alabassi from Partners Yemen and Huda Seif, anthropologist and Expert on Yemen and Minorities, will speak on Al Akhdam, Yemen's most marginalized ethnic minority.

While there is no official census on the group, non-official sources estimate the size of this population to be between 1-1.5 million individuals with varying locations throughout the Republic of Yemen. The leaders of this group however claim the size of the minority to be about 3 million individuals thus suggesting Al-Akhdam to be close to 10% of the total population. As the country's most excluded minority, Al Akhdam people face centuries old history of unmitigated and systematic socio-cultural persecution, brutal physical exclusion, and discrimination akin to those faced by the Dalits of India, Pakistan, Nepal and other South Asian countries hence their description as the "Untouchables" of Yemen. Isolated from mainstream economic activities and denied ownership of land in a largely agrarian society, Al-Akhdam communities are forced to subsist on carrying out Yemen's most socially and cultural loathed menial tasks of dealing manually with human waste of all types. And because they are physically excluded from mainstream society, these communities dwell in shanty towns at the margins of the larger society where they are deprived of all basic services such as health, sanitation, electricity and access to clean water.

Huda Seif is a political and legal anthropologist with a research interest and expertise in labor, migration, minority rights, gender and postcolonial fragile states in the Middle East and the Horn of Africa. She received her B.A in Anthropology and Economics from the City University of New York, and MA and Ph.D. in Anthropology from Columbia University Graduate School. Outside the academic field, Seif worked for several years as a staff member and consultant with numerous UN agencies including UNDP, UNICEF, WFP, UNESCO and UNOCHA in several conflict ridden countries including Afghanistan, Djibouti, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen and Zimbabwe. She is the author of numerous academic articles on Yemen and Shadow Reports on the State of Yemen and Al-Akhdam to the UNHCHR Committees on human rights.

Partners for Democratic Change International (PDCI) and *Partners Yemen* are engaged in supporting local communities to overcome conflicts. A participatory and conflict sensitive approach brings local leaders together and builds on existing capacities to mediate conflicts successfully. Our engagement assist the Yemeni government, security sector actors, local and tribal authorities in establishing sustainable structures for short- and long-term interventions addressing conflict over land, natural resources, health services, education, and conflicts between corporations and local communities.

Please let us know if you would like to join the discussion.

Best regards,

Janneke Stein

Partners for Democratic Change International, AISBL

205, Rue Belliard, B-1040, Brussels

+32 2 230 71 10; fax +32 2 231 11 08

www.pdci-network.org

www.facebook.com/PartnersforDemocraticChangeInternational