

Briefing to the United Nations by the Special Envoy for Yemen

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Thank you, **Mr. President,**

I brief you as Yemenis and Muslims around the world look forward to the holy month of Ramadan. Having lived in this region for many years, I have come to really appreciate the holy month of Ramadan as a time of reflection and a time of hope.

Almost a year ago, as Ramadan was just beginning, the United Nations-mediated Truce ushered in a new phase of relative calm on the frontlines and gave us the opportunity to make progress on efforts to relieve the suffering of the Yemeni people.

As the holy month approaches again, and despite the dire economic and humanitarian situation, Yemen is still benefiting from the achievements of the Truce. But of course, all Yemenis that I have talked to hope for a comprehensive resolution of the conflict. This remains my priority.

Mr. President,

The overall military situation in Yemen continues to be relatively stable. Since the truce came into effect on the second of April last year, Yemeni men and women have experienced almost a year of lower levels of violence. But this is fragile. I am concerned by the uptick in the number and the intensity of clashes in several frontline areas, particularly the fronts in Ma'rib and Ta'iz. I call on the parties to exercise

maximum restraint during this critical time, including refraining from escalatory public rhetoric, to avoid destabilizing the situation.

In addition to the relative calm, elements of the Truce continue to be implemented. Thanks to the valuable support of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, commercial flights continue to operate three times a week between Sana'a and Amman. Fuel ships continue to enter Hudaydah ports, along with other commodities. Yet, these gains are also fragile. And daily life remains a struggle for most Yemenis. The economic situation continues to be dire with the sadly familiar pattern of tit-for-tat economic retaliations, rather than cooperation. New restrictions hinder the freedom of movement of civilians, particularly women, and impede commercial traffic between different parts of the country. Yemenis' access to basic services remains limited.

This underscores what I have stated almost one year ago: The Truce can only be a steppingstone. We urgently need to build on what was achieved by the Truce and work towards a nationwide ceasefire and an inclusive political settlement to end the conflict in Yemen.

Mr. President,

With the security situation remaining relatively stable, but no agreement on the way forward, Yemen may seem to be in a precarious political holding pattern. Yet, intense diplomatic efforts are ongoing at different levels to bring the conflict in Yemen to an end.

We are currently witnessing renewed regional diplomatic momentum, as well as a step change in the scope and depth of the discussions. I welcome the continued efforts of regional member states, in particular the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Sultanate of Oman and ask the parties to seize the opportunities created by the regional momentum. I also call on all sides to maintain a conducive environment for discussions and to allow the time and the space needed for the discussions to bear fruit. Impatience at this juncture risks a return to a cycle of violence and risks unravelling what has been achieved so far.

I have been clear in past briefings to this Council that short-term solutions and a piecemeal approach can only bring partial relief. A ceasefire and a sustainable political settlement can only be achieved through a more comprehensive approach. I continue to actively engage the Yemeni parties, as well as regional and international stakeholders to achieve this objective. The parties, as well as regional states, are clear that any understanding reached as part of the ongoing discussions must be translated into an intra-Yemeni agreement under UN auspices. A resumption of a political process is a central element in this regard and remains at the core of my mandate.

The political process must take into account the complexities of the conflict. It will be a difficult process which requires strong planning and a vision, backed by the commitment of the parties. In this regard, I welcome the recent efforts of the Government of Yemen through the ongoing work of the Consultation and Reconciliation Commission. I stand ready to work with the Yemeni parties and support them, so that when the political process starts, they can engage with confidence and a clear sense of direction.

Mr. President,

A political process that addresses the concerns and aspirations of the Yemeni people must be Yemeni-owned and inclusive. It must include the voices of a wide range of Yemeni stakeholders, including youth, civil society, and women. Last week's observance of International Women's Day serves as an occasion to reflect on the role that women play in furthering peace. But is also a reminder of the continued risks and restrictions they face. Women are central to the social fabric of Yemen and their meaningful participation is essential for moving Yemen forward.

I remain committed to promote the meaningful participation of women in all aspects of the peace process in line with the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda as outlined in UNSC resolution 1325 and other relevant resolutions.

Mr. President,

Allow me also to briefly update you about the meeting of the Supervisory Committee on the Implementation of the Detainees' Exchange Agreement, which is co-chaired by my Office and the International Committee of the Red Cross. Deliberations are still ongoing between the parties, and I ask them to continue to engage in good faith.

It is my sincere hope that they will be able to implement their obligations under the Stockholm Agreement to release all conflict-related detainees. I urge the parties to finalise the details of the current phase that they have agreed on, including the implementation plan. And I would like to thank the Swiss Government for hosting these talks.

Mr. President,

Returning to my overall efforts to achieve peace in Yemen, I reiterate my appreciation for this Council's unity and its steadfast support. This support and unity of purpose was underscored during my recent visits to Moscow, Abu Dhabi, Paris, Tehran, and Riyadh. Allow me to also take this opportunity to welcome the recent agreement between Saudi Arabia and Iran to resume diplomatic ties, which was facilitated by the People's Republic of China. This dialogue and good neighbourly relations are important for the region and for Yemen.

The parties must seize the opportunity presented by this regional and international momentum to take decisive steps towards a more peaceful future. This requires patience and a long-term perspective. And this requires courage and leadership. Much has been achieved over the past year and now is the time to take the next steps. Thank you, **Mr. President.**