

مكتب المبعوث الخاص
للأمين العام للأمم المتحدة إلى اليمن



Office of the Special Envoy
of the Secretary-General for Yemen

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UN SPECIAL ENVOY FOR YEMEN

BRIEFING TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE
EAST (YEMEN)

14 April 2022

Thank you very much.

Madame President, at the start of this year, I told this Council that the military escalation was among the worst we had seen in Yemen for years. Now I am pleased to tell you that there is light at the end of the tunnel. After some three months of bilateral negotiations, the parties have agreed to a United Nations initiative for two-month nationwide, renewable Truce. The first nationwide Truce in six years. The Truce commenced with the start of the holy month of Ramadan and includes provisions to improve the freedom of movement of goods and civilian men, women and children. Thus far, the agreement is broadly holding. It offers a moment of respite for Yemenis, and a moment of possibility for pursuing peace. But it requires continued commitment from the parties and broad support from the region and the international community to make sure it holds and becomes a turning point toward peace.

Since the start of the Truce, there have been encouraging signs that halting the cyclical patterns of escalation is possible. There has been a significant reduction of violence and civilian casualties. There have been no confirmed airstrikes inside Yemen or cross-border attacks emanating from Yemen. There is more fuel flowing through Hudaydah ports into the country. Preparations are underway for commercial flights to depart from Sana'a airport for the first time since 2016. My Office is working to bring the parties together to open roads in Taiz and other governorates. The impact of this on Yemeni lives, as well as the symbolism, should not be underestimated.

Although the Truce is broadly holding, reports of military operations, particularly around Marib, are concerning and must be addressed urgently through the mechanisms established by the Truce. Many Yemenis have told me that they fear the truce will be exploited and used to set this stage for a new escalation. This fear is understandable given the lack of trust and past experience. And I want to remind the parties that the foundational principle of the Truce is that the respite it offers should be used to make progress toward ending the war, not to escalate it. The parties have publicly committed to de-escalation, and this is what the Yemeni people and the international community expect of them. My office has established coordination mechanisms for all aspects of the Truce and I encourage the parties to engage seriously and meaningfully in those mechanisms.

I want to emphasize, **Madame President**, that easing restrictions on the movement of goods and civilian men, women and children is a priority for the Truce. We have already seen a number of ships enter Hudaydah ports, something that is having a positive impact on the lives of civilians. Flights to and from Sana'a airport need to resume and we are working with partners to make this happen as quickly as possible. I also want to emphasize that reaching an agreement to open roads in Taiz and other

areas is a priority. I know that the people of Taiz have waited too long for the moment when they can move freely into and out of the city. It is imperative that serious work is done in Taiz to open roads, allowing civilians on either side of the frontlines, both in the city and the surrounding areas to go to work and school, and facilitate trade.

Madame President, I want to thank the Government of Yemen and Ansar Allah for showing the required leadership and making the necessary compromises to reach this agreement. I want to use this opportunity to encourage them to continue implementing all elements of the Truce. I also want to recognize the crucial roles played by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Sultanate of Oman in supporting the negotiations that got us here. The members of this Council also played a critical role in backing the talks. I also want to express my gratitude to Member States who are actively working with us to set up some of the mechanisms relating to the parameters of the Truce. I would also like to recognize the contributions of Yemeni peace actors. This truce builds on the longstanding and tireless efforts of Yemeni civic actors, youth groups, and women peace activists to stop the war and improve the situation of civilians across the country. I will continue working with them to generate additional momentum for peace.

Madame President, the Truce is the result of the commitments of the parties, and it enjoys significant international support. But it is still fragile and temporary. We need to work collectively and intensively in these coming weeks to ensure it does not unravel. I will continue engaging the parties to implement, strengthening and extend the truce. This was the focus of my recent visit to Muscat and Sana'a. I am grateful for the constructive conversations I had in Sana'a that during which I received reaffirmed commitment to all aspects of implementing the Truce. I also discussed next steps on strengthening the Truce and further steps beyond the two months.

Madame President, there have been other positive signs of progress on confidence-building in recent weeks. We have been making headway on the exchange of detainees and I urge the parties to expeditiously agree on details of the release, so that Yemeni families may be reunited with their loved ones as soon as possible. My Office and the International Committee of the Red Cross, as co-chairs of the Supervisory Committee, will support them in this endeavor.

Madame President, the Gulf Cooperation Council hosted at the end of March and beginning of April consultations with hundreds of Yemenis in Riyadh in stated support of a peaceful solution to the conflict. Several conclusions emerged from these consultations, including the need to eschew military solutions and commit to political dialogue under UN auspices. It demonstrated the importance of regional organizations in supporting United Nations peace efforts.

On 7th of April, President Hadi took the decision to delegate his full authorities to a newly-formed Presidential Leadership Council. In line with the United Nations Security Council, I welcome the creation of and assumption of responsibilities by the Presidential Leadership Council of the Government of Yemen that reflects a broader array of political actors. The UN Security Council has expressed its expectation that the formation of the Presidential Leadership Council will form an important step towards stability and an inclusive Yemeni-led and owned political settlement under United Nations auspices. I look forward to engaging with the Presidential Leadership Council to continue to work towards that end. I also welcome the economic package that has been announced by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Madame President, the Truce is a chance to steer Yemen in a new direction. But to consolidate this path, and to prevent a slide back into fighting, there needs to be progress on the political front as well. Through dialogue, Yemenis need to determine and own a negotiated settlement to the conflict.

Looking ahead, I will continue to engage the parties to build upon the elements in the Truce, both in order to sustain it, and as part of my multi-track process. These efforts will also be informed by my consultations. At the end of March, I completed the first round of consultations and discussions with diverse Yemeni men and women including political parties, economic and security experts, civic actors and the wider Yemeni public. The aim was to understand their priorities for economic, security and political elements that will inform my Framework for a multi-track process to reach a durable settlement. I will hold further consultations after Ramadan.

The main message that has emerged from the consultations so far is that Yemenis want the war to end. They want to live in safety and security, to be able to care for their families, to have access to public services, and to exercise their rights. Yemenis across political and geographical divides have stressed the dire economic situation in the country, pointing to the need to resume salary payments and service delivery, address the rising cost of living, ensure freedom of movement of people and goods, and bring together economic institutions. Many Yemenis have pointed to the need for accountable and effective governance at all levels, including at the local level. Several groups from southern Yemen have stressed the need to address the southern question in a lasting manner. And different Yemenis have raised the need for security arrangements to include local security actors and civil society and be informed by the needs of the civilian population. Women have participated actively in these consultations and I am very encouraged by that. They have highlighted the

disproportionate impact of the conflict and economic strains on them, called for their inclusion in peace talks, and for the protection for women and girls from all forms of violence.

Madame President, these priorities will shape next steps and my overall approach to reaching a sustainable solution. The Truce offers a rare opportunity to pivot towards a peaceful future. The coming weeks will be a test of the parties' commitments to uphold their obligations. This is a time to build trust and confidence, which is not easy after more than seven years of conflict. Yemen will need the international community's support as much as ever to maintain the momentum, and move toward finding an inclusive, peaceful and sustainable end to the conflict. And I will need your redoubled efforts and support during this critical period.

Thank you very much, **Madame President**.