

مكتب المبعوث الخاص
للأمين العام للأمم المتحدة إلى اليمن



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

Briefing to the UN Security Council by UN Special Envoy for Yemen 13 Oct 2022

Merci Monsieur Président.

Six and a half months ago, on 2nd of April, the nationwide truce in Yemen came into effect. Over the course of these past six and a half months, the truce has started to alleviate the suffering of Yemeni men and women and offered – after almost eight years of conflict – a truly historic opportunity to build trust and to work towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

On 2nd of October, the day the second extension of the truce ended, the parties regrettably did not reach an agreement on the extension and the expansion of the truce. This has caused new uncertainty for the country and a heightened risk of war.

In this briefing, I will provide an overview of what was put before the parties and outline the way forward.

Mr. President,

Efforts to not only extend, but also to expand and build on the elements of the truce have been ongoing since early July. On the 18th of September, I shared a proposal for a six-month extension and expansion of the truce elements with the parties. And in the weeks leading up to the 2nd of October, I intensified my discussions with them, conducting several rounds of negotiations in Aden, Sana'a, Riyadh, and Muscat. I subsequently shared a revised proposal with them on the 1st of October.

My proposal addressed the key – competing – demands of both sides, in a balanced manner. Allow me to outline the elements of the proposal and what the Yemeni people – men, women, and children – stand to lose:

First, the continued halt of all offensive operations and an enhanced Military Coordination Committee as a robust de-escalation communication and coordination channel,

Second, a transparent and effective disbursement mechanism for the regular payment of civil servant salaries and pensions,

Third, the phased opening of roads in Taiz and other governorates,

Fourth, an increase in the number of flights and destinations to and from Sana'a International Airport;

Fifth, the regular and unhindered flow of fuel to the ports of Hudaydah, and

Sixth, a commitment to urgently release detainees.

Additionally, for long-term progress towards a settlement of the conflict, the proposal also includes the establishment of structures for the initiation of negotiations over economic issues, a durable ceasefire, and – most importantly – the resumption of a Yemeni-led, inclusive political process to work towards a comprehensive resolution of the conflict.

In light of this, it's deeply regrettable that on the 2nd of October an agreement was not reached on the extension and expansion of the truce. I appreciate the position of the Government of Yemen on engaging positively with my proposal, and I regret that Ansar Allah came up with additional demands that could not be met. As I continue to work with both sides to find solutions, I urge them to demonstrate the leadership and flexibility required to reach an extended and expanded agreement.

Mr. President,

I welcome that the parties have shown restraint since the expiration of the truce on 2nd of October as we have fortunately not witnessed any major military escalation, only sporadic exchanges of artillery and small arms fire in the frontline areas in Taiz, Ma'rib, Hudaydah, and Dhale. I urge the parties to continue to exercise maximum restraint.

Since the 2nd of October, flights between Sana'a Airport and Amman have continued to operate, and I want to once more express my deep appreciation to the Kingdom of Jordan for its unwavering support and facilitation. Similarly, fuel ships have continued to regularly enter the ports of Hudaydah. I therefore call on the parties to uphold and safeguard the arrangements that operated under the truce, and which have brought vital benefits to the Yemeni people.

Mr. President,

The achievement and benefits of the truce should not be underestimated. The truce came into effect after almost eight years of conflict and brought the longest period of calm yet. In six months, its benefits for the people of Yemen included: no major military operations and a 60 per cent decrease in casualties; the reopening of Sana'a Airport with 56 commercial roundtrip flights to date, transporting more than 29 thousand passengers who sought medical attention, educational or business opportunities abroad; over 1.4 million metric tonnes of fuel product delivered to Hudaydah ports, more than three times the amount of fuel products entering in 2021; and face-to-face meetings of the parties under UN auspices on military de-escalation and road openings in Taiz and other governorates.

It is important to remember that the truce was never intended as an end in itself, but as a building block to enhance trust between the parties and establish a conducive environment to work toward a political solution to the conflict. And the parties now have a choice before them. They can choose to preserve and build on the truce and take the path towards peace as is expected from them by the Yemeni population. Otherwise, a return to war would mean renewed and increasing suffering for the civilian population, as my colleague from OCHA Assistant Secretary-General Joyce Msuya will explain. Women, who represent over half of the Yemeni population, would, as always, be disproportionately affected, and bear the brunt of the conflict. The choice to go back to war would also have destabilizing effects for the whole region. And should the cycles of violence and escalation start, it could be long before a window for peace will open again. Yemen urgently needs to avoid this scenario.

Mr. President,

Allow me now turn to the way forward. In the 11 days since the expiration of the truce, I have continued my relentless efforts to engage the parties as well as regional and international partners on options for the renewal of the truce. I have just returned from visits to Abu Dhabi and Muscat where I held important discussions to explore ways forward in close coordination with Yemen's neighbours. I personally believe that there is still a possibility for the parties to come to an agreement.

With the stakes this high, it is critical that we do not lose this opportunity. The parties need to demonstrate the leadership, compromise and flexibility required to urgently reach an agreement on the renewal and expansion of the truce. The members of this Council and the international community are following the situation in Yemen with concern. Yet, ultimately, the parties' duty is to the men and women of Yemen – to find solutions that are in the best interest of the Yemeni population and to pursue every avenue for peace.

In this context, I would also like to reiterate my appreciation for the continued steadfast support of this Council, as well as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Sultanate of Oman. This Council's united position on the renewal and expansion of the truce has made it clear that the international community expects the parties to reach an agreement with a sense of urgency.

Thank you, Mr. President.