

مكتب المبعوث الخاص  
للأمين العام للأمم المتحدة إلى اليمن



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

**Briefing to United Nations Security Council by the Special Envoy for Yemen -  
Hans Grundberg**

**14 October 2021**

Thank you, **Mr. President**.

**Mr. President**, since I briefed this Council last month, I have conducted numerous consultations with Yemeni, regional and international actors. In all these discussions, I focused on the question of how to move toward a sustainable political solution to end the conflict. I asked my interlocutors to assess what has and has not worked in the past, and for their views on the way forward. Member States reiterated their support for the UN's efforts, for which I am grateful.

In my conversations, Yemenis without exception stressed the necessity to end the war. They also highlighted the urgency of addressing economic and humanitarian concerns, including stabilizing the economy, improving the delivery of basic services, and facilitating freedom of movement within as well as in and out of the country. Yemenis of all perspectives also acknowledged that their country cannot be effectively ruled by one group alone and that a durable peace will require pluralism.

The Yemeni men and women I met shared with me their concerns about the long-term consequences of the conflict. They see a systematic erosion of their fundamental rights as well as state institutions. They are worried about a whole generation of children traumatized by war and lacking in basic education. Since the onset of the conflict, civilian infrastructure has been damaged, and repair is likely to take decades. Ending the war is, therefore, only a first, but an essential step in a long recovery that includes healing societal wounds that are deepening with each day the conflict continues.

There is, nevertheless, hope that we must continue to build on. Youth representatives from across Yemen emphasized to me the role of the new generation as a driver of positive political change. In my meetings with Yemeni women, their determination to have a say in shaping the future of their country is unwavering and must have our full support. From inclusion in political talks to lifting of roadblocks that impede their full participation in civic, political and economic life, the rightful demands of Yemeni women and youth should be met by all parties to this conflict.

**Mr. President,** it is no secret that there are differences among the Yemenis I have been engaging with. The gap in trust between warring parties is wide and growing. I met with the Government of Yemen in Riyadh and Aden, and with Ansar Allah in

Muscat. The issue of sequencing of possible interim steps remains a preoccupation that overshadows the need to start discussing the parameters for an overall political settlement of the conflict.

My view, which I have shared with them, is that while interim progress should be made on urgent humanitarian and economic matters, a durable solution can only be achieved through a comprehensive negotiated political settlement. I have been clear in all my engagements that there should be no preconditions for these urgent political talks. And humanitarian measures should not be used as political leverage. Dialogue and compromise is the only sustainable way forward. On my end, I remain at the disposal of those who wish to engage in it.

I have also been clear in my conversations that measures to mitigate the immediate impact of the conflict on civilians are of paramount importance. Salaries need to be paid, roads in Taiz, Marib and elsewhere need to be opened. Restrictions on the import of fuel and goods through Hudaydah port must end, and fuel needs to be available for civilian use without restrictions. Sana'a airport needs to open for civilian traffic. These steps can tangibly improve the lives of Yemenis in the immediate term. The responsibility to address these urgent matters lies with the parties. I hope that they will receive firm encouragement from the international

community, particularly regional member states, in this regard. The UN is ready to do its part.

**Mr. President**, since my last briefing, the military escalation on the ground has taken an alarming turn. Marib and its surroundings, including Shabwa and Al-Bayda, remain the epicenter of the war. As we will hear from my colleague Assistant Secretary-General Rajasingham, the situation is getting worse for civilians every day, with thousands forced to flee in search of safety in recent weeks. I remind all parties to the conflict of their obligations to abide by international humanitarian law and to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure. The encirclement of Abdiyah district in southern Marib has persisted for almost a month, leaving thousands of people in a desperate situation. As repeatedly stated in this Council, Ansar Allah's military escalation in Marib must stop. The Secretary-General himself is following developments in Abdiyah closely. And I reiterate the UN's call on all parties to facilitate safe, timely and sustained humanitarian access to the affected areas. I am also deeply concerned about the military developments and incidents elsewhere in Yemen. Continued fighting increases the likelihood of civilian injury and death from indirect fire, missiles and airstrikes. I call on all parties to de-escalate.

**Mr. President**, the conflict continues to leave a tragic and widespread legacy of human rights violations. In recent weeks, we have seen public executions, enforced disappearances, killings, and the use of live ammunition against protestors in several areas of the country. The lack of accountability and impunity has diminished Yemenis' faith in the possibility of peaceful co-existence and a future in which the rights of all Yemenis will be respected. In this context, it is unfortunate that the mandate of the Group of Eminent Experts was not renewed. Nevertheless, the UN will continue to press for accountability in Yemen.

**Mr. President**, last week I visited Aden, where I met with Prime Minister Maen Abdelmalik, local officials and representatives of various political components, as well as civil society and women's rights advocates. I welcomed the Prime Minister's return to Aden as an important step towards enhancing the functioning of state institutions and their ability to address the urgent need for economic recovery and basic service delivery. Sustainable improvements, however, will not be possible unless political actors work together, across political divides. In Aden, I also took the time to listen to the many views that Yemenis in the south presented to me. As I stated in my first briefing, these cannot be ignored, and these discussions will have to continue.

Similarly, I therefore stressed to the Government of Yemen and the Southern Transitional Council the importance of implementing the Riyadh Agreement to regain stability in the southern governorates. Recent serious security incidents across the south, including an assassination attempt on government officials, are illustrations of an untenable situation.

In Hudaydah, UNMHA continues its tireless efforts to engage the parties in order to reactivate the work of the Redeployment Coordination Committee. The UN urges the parties to re-commit to the Committee without delay, as it remains the only viable framework to ensure sustained de-escalation, mitigate the impact of violence on civilians and alleviate the humanitarian situation. I would like to take the opportunity to recognise the contributions of General Guha, who completed his tenure as head of UNMHA at the beginning of this month. He has worked to support the parties in their implementation of the Hudaydah Agreement under challenging political and logistical circumstances and deserves our gratitude and appreciation.

Looking forward, **Mr. President**, a comprehensive negotiated political settlement is needed to end the violence once and for all. Critical political, security and economic priorities will need to be addressed. A comprehensive political settlement should aim at restoring and reuniting state institutions and pave the way for economic recovery

and development. In order to sustain peace in the long-term, the need for accountable governance, justice and accountability, and the rule of law cannot be ignored. Nor can the promotion and protection of Yemenis' full range of human rights.

**Mr. President,** I will continue my consultations with Yemenis and others on the way forward towards an inclusive political settlement. Let us not fool ourselves, this will be a laborious and complicated task that will take time but it must take place. The past weeks have illustrated the tension between the pace of the war and the economic collapse on one hand, and the time needed to devise and consult on a feasible way forward, on the other.

My aim is to forge agreement on a way forward. Such an agreement will require support from members of this Council, from regional States and from the broader international community. I will also count on your support in reinforcing to the warring parties that it is their responsibility to meet with, and engage seriously with each other under UN auspices.

Thank you, **Mr. President.**