

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

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

15 February 2022

**Thank you, Mr. President,**

**Mr. President,** the continued military escalation of the conflict in Yemen has escaped no-one. I am here today to discuss these worrying developments and to share with you my efforts and to try and reverse this trajectory and initiate a long-delayed political process.

The recent months of escalation have put a spotlight on the regional dimension of the conflict in Yemen. I have always seen a peaceful and prosperous Yemen as key for the stability of the Arabian Peninsula. This was true already before the current war. Following the attacks last month by Ansar Allah on the United Arab Emirates, including on a civilian airport and nearby industrial areas where three civilians were killed, it should be obvious to everyone just how high the stakes have become. The Secretary-General has condemned these attacks and I echo that condemnation. Furthermore, the attacks on United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia indicate how this conflict risks spiraling out of control unless serious efforts are urgently made by the Yemeni parties, the region and the international community to end this conflict.

For Yemenis, the past month was marked by a multiplication of frontlines and appalling record numbers in civilian casualties. The Coalition airstrike on a detention facility in Saada killing or injuring more than 300 detainees was among the worst civilian casualty incidents in three years. The sharp increase in airstrikes in Yemen, including on residential areas and civilian infrastructure in Sana'a and Hudaydah is alarming.

Once again, I am compelled to remind all parties of their obligations under international humanitarian law, and I repeat my condemnation of any indiscriminate attack against civilians and civilian infrastructure inside Yemen and outside its borders.

**Mr. President**, as Martin will elaborate on, Yemen's war continues to be fought also in the economic arena, with warring sides battling over resources, trade flows and monetary policy. The impact of this aspect of the war continues to irrefutably hit Yemen's population as a whole. The past month has seen particularly severe shortages in fuel and oil derivatives, notably in areas controlled by Ansar Allah, putting unprecedented strain on the everyday lives of people. After a long delay, four fuel ships were granted clearance to enter Hudaydah this month. Only one was for the general market; this is not enough to meet the needs of the population. I once again call on the parties to remove all obstacles to the import and domestic distribution of fuel and other basic commodities.

The war is also fought in the public domain with increasingly hostile media rhetoric combined by intimidation, detention and harassment of media professionals and activists in Yemen. This contributes to a toxic environment when there is a need for dialogue. I urge all sides to protect press freedom and release immediately and unconditionally detained journalists and political activists.

Despite all these challenges, **Mr. President**, there is a way out of this war. Allowing the war to continue is a choice, and so is ending it. We all know that ending it will not be easy, but I firmly believe that it is possible.

To this end, I am developing a Framework that will set out my plan to move towards an inclusive political settlement, including the establishment of a multi-track process. Through this process, the warring sides' interests can be addressed within the context of a broader Yemeni agenda along the three tracks of political, security and economic matters.

As part of this effort, next week I will begin a series of structured bi-lateral consultations aimed at informing and refining the Framework. I will engage with multiple Yemeni stakeholders, including the warring parties, political parties, representatives of civil society, and Yemeni experts in the political, security and economic arenas. The Consultations will explore Yemenis' priorities for the immediate and longer term for the three tracks, as well as their aspirations and broader vision for ending the conflict. Ensuring inclusivity and including women will be an important aspect of these consultations. I count on the support of this Council to encourage all actors to participate constructively without delay. This is a real opportunity for Yemeni parties to shift gear and charter a peaceful way forward.

The Framework, **Mr. President**, will be the operationalization of my core mandate of laying the foundation for an inclusive political process that can sustainably end the war. For each year this war is allowed to continue, that task becomes more challenging but no less necessary. For too long Yemenis have been without a political process and without hope that this conflict can end. Through initiating a structured process trying to address the key elements of the conflict, hope for an end to the devastating military, political and economic battles can be restored. I look forward to presenting my framework later this Spring.

In parallel, **Mr. President**, I am continuing to explore every possibility of fast-tracking de-escalation. I have continuously engaged with the warring parties on possible mutually agreeable

compromises. In recent meetings in Riyadh and Muscat, I urged the conflict parties to engage in de-escalation talks and I have presented options for moving forward. Until now my calls, and the calls of this Council for restraint and de-escalation, remain unanswered. As we have seen over the past years, positions are mutually exclusive with demands on sequencing and guarantees unable to be met by the other side. My efforts in this regard, nevertheless, will continue and I remain actively engaged with the warring sides in pursuit of any opening and will report back to this Council on any progress.

On this note, **Mr. President**, allow me to welcome Major-General Michael Beary to this Council in his new role as Head of UN Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement. General Beary assumed his duties on the 19<sup>th</sup> of January and has commenced his own important engagements with parties in Aden, Sana'a and Hudaydah to assess their positions and explore openings for de-escalation of violence in Hudaydah.

**Mr. President**, I will keep working on the two lines of efforts that I have laid out to this Council: Establishing a multi-track process that can produce durable solutions to this conflict while seeking any opportunity for immediate de-escalation. My conviction is that a structured and focused approach that does not shy away from the fundamental and complex challenges is needed. However, trust is low and ending this war will require uncomfortable compromises which no warring party is currently willing to make. It is therefore incumbent upon all of us, including this Council, to exert every possible effort to impress upon the parties to this conflict that there is no sustainable military solution, and that their quest for a perfect moment of balance on the battlefield when the other side is sufficiently weakened to accept its fate is futile. Dialogue and compromise are required if Yemenis are not to be left suffering until the parties are tired of fighting. A political process under UN auspices, supported by this Council, is our best way forward.

Thank you, **Mr. President**.