

مكتب المبعوث الخاص
للأمين العام للأمم المتحدة إلى اليمن



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

Briefing to the United Nations by the Special Envoy for Yemen

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Thank you, Mr. President

Mr. President, one year on since the parties agreed to a truce under UN auspices, Yemen is again at a critical juncture. The truce has continued to deliver well beyond its expiration six months ago. And the parties are engaging on next steps. I believe we have not seen such a serious opportunity for making progress towards ending the conflict in eight years. But the tide could still turn unless the parties take bolder steps yet towards peace.

The parties have recently shown that negotiations can deliver results. In March, the parties agreed in Switzerland under the auspices of the United Nations to release almost 900 conflict-related detainees from all sides. They also agreed to meet again in May to make further progress on their commitment as part of the Stockholm Agreement to release all conflict-related detainees. And they agreed to undertake joint visits to each other's detention facilities, including in Marib and Sana'a.

The release operations took place between 14th and 16th of April, reuniting hundreds of Yemeni families with their loved ones, just in time to celebrate Eid together. This has renewed the hopes of many more Yemenis that their relatives, too, may soon be released. The emotional scenes of the detainees being released over the last few days demonstrated the power of peaceful negotiations.

I commend the parties on the cooperation they have shown to achieve this result. But I also remind them of the suffering of the many more Yemenis still waiting for their loved ones to return. I encourage them to make swift progress toward fulfilling their commitment to release all conflict-related detainees.

I also commend Yemeni civil society for their crucial role in advocating for detainee releases. I thank the Swiss and Jordanian governments for their support to my Office on this file, and the ICRC for their role in the implementation of the release operation. I also thank my deputy Mr. Muin Shurim and the broader team that has been working on this file in my office for all their dedication and persistence.

Another encouraging sign, **Mr. President**, is that many aspects of the truce continue to be implemented beyond its lifespan. Yemen is experiencing the longest period of relative calm yet in this ruinous war. Fuel and other commercial ships continue to flow into Hudaydah. And commercial flights continue between Sana'a International Airport and Amman.

However, this is not enough. Yemenis still live with unimaginable hardship every day. And recent developments are a reminder that escalation can quickly reverse hard-won gains.

I am concerned about recent military activity in Marib, Shabwa, Taiz and other governorates. We have seen in the past how escalation particularly in Marib has spilled over to frontlines elsewhere. I call on the parties to exercise maximum restraint, refrain from provocative actions and continue to engage with my Office to ensure maintained de-escalation.

Mr. President, the truce was meant to be a temporary measure to open space for political talks to sustainably end the war. We could never rely on it to deliver a peaceful future to Yemen. As such, I have continued my engagement with the parties to identify next steps towards a permanent ceasefire and the reactivation of a political process under United Nations auspices. I have also engaged with them on measures that can alleviate the economic and humanitarian situation in the country. In recent weeks, I have met with representatives of Yemeni parties as well as regional officials. I have visited the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Oman, as well as Brussels and Geneva.

Discussions are also ongoing among regional and Yemeni stakeholders. Building on the achievements of the Truce, representatives of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Sultanate of Oman have recently been in Sana'a, where they have engaged in constructive dialogue. Saudi representatives have also held productive discussions with members of the Presidential Leadership Council in Riyadh. I am working closely with regional and Yemeni stakeholders to ensure such channels feed into United Nations' efforts to mediate an end to the conflict.

I also welcome the statement by the foreign ministers of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran, at a ministerial meeting in Beijing, committing to enhance their cooperation on matters that would promote security and stability in the region. A supportive regional environment will reinforce peace efforts in Yemen.

Mr. President, any new agreement in Yemen must be a clear step toward a Yemeni-led political process. It needs to include a strong commitment from the parties to meet and negotiate in good faith with one another. The political process needs to orient toward the future that so many Yemeni women and men have told us they want: one of accountable governance, equal citizenship, and social and economic justice.

We need to see a Yemeni-owned ceasefire that durably stops the violence, ensures the safety and security of Yemenis, and builds trust for a political process. We need the parties to refrain from using economic measures as tools of hostility, and create the conditions to allow people and businesses to work unimpeded. We need to see greater freedom of movement of people and goods across all of Yemen, including renewed efforts to open roads in Taiz and other governorates. We need to see the full opening of Sana'a airport, with expanded destinations, and we need to see commercial goods continue to enter Yemen smoothly and without delays and we need to see public servants salaries paid nationwide.

I believe, **Mr. President**, all of this is not only necessary but also attainable. Yemen has a rich history of compromise, negotiation, and dialogue.

My Office continues to engage along multiple tracks to build on the benefits of the truce and build towards a process for Yemenis to come together and agree on how to sustainably end the conflict. The economic, political and military tracks need to reinforce one another. And we need to address both short- and longer-term measures.

As part of the military and security track, my Office continues to engage with the delegates of the parties through the Military Coordination Committee, which was established during the truce. We stand ready to reconvene this Committee to support any new agreement on the way forward. We also work with Yemeni

civil society, security actors and experts to prepare for an implementable and sustainable ceasefire, as well as inclusive and accountable security at the national and local levels.

On the economic track, we continue to engage the parties and their technical representatives, as well as civil society organizations, experts and researchers, the private sector as well as international financial institutions. The aim is to provide a forum in which the parties can resolve differences and jointly identify solutions on pressing economic challenges, with the support of Yemeni technical experts and international and regional partners.

All of this needs to be rooted in the work towards an inclusive, intra-Yemeni political process, because only Yemenis can debate and ultimately decide on the future political, economic and security governance of Yemen. In addition to my engagements with the parties and regional actors, I continue to consult Yemen women, youth, and civil society. I am always struck during these engagements by the resilience of the social fabric. This is the country's most important national resources, and one that we must leverage for peace. My Office recently held consultations with diverse Yemenis on advancing the participation of women and marginalized groups in the peace process. They must have a say in the future of their country.

Mr. President, let us be under no illusions. There is a lot of hard work to be done to build trust and to make compromise Yemenis need to come together under United Nations auspices to agree on how to end this long and terrible war. There is even more work to be done to recover, rebuild and reach a sustainable, just, and equitable peace.

Mediation efforts will always adapt and evolve. But the parties must not allow this moment to pass by without coming to agreement. As always, I remain grateful for the support that I had received from this council. I ask the international community to redouble its support to ensure this delicate and rare opportunity is not lost.

Thank you, **Mr. President**.