

مكتب المبعوث الخاص
للأمين العام للأمم المتحدة إلى اليمن



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

Briefing by Special Envoy Hans Grundberg to the UN Security Council

17 May 2023

Merci Madame **la Président.**

Madam President, I am pleased to be with you in person today to brief you on the situation in Yemen and my efforts to secure an agreement on a way forward that could sustainably end the conflict.

Since my previous briefing, I have continued my engagement with the Yemeni parties and regional interlocutors to establish a ceasefire and launch a political process. I have met with the President of the Presidential Leadership Council, Rashad Al-Alimi, in Aden, and with the Ansar Allah leadership, represented by Mehdi Al-Mashaat, in Sana'a. I have also met with senior regional and Yemeni officials in Riyadh and Abu Dhabi, and senior officials in Washington D.C.

I am encouraged by the positive and detailed discussions I have had. All interlocutors demonstrated an understanding of the immensity of what is at stake and displayed willingness to constructively engage on the way forward. There is clear determination on all sides to make progress towards a deal on humanitarian and economic measures, a permanent ceasefire and the resumption of a Yemeni-led political process under United Nations' auspices. I also welcome the ongoing efforts of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Sultanate of Oman to support the United Nations' mediation role.

While progress is being made, there are still issues that require further discussion. With sustained determination from the Yemeni parties, supported by a coherent and coordinated regional and international community, I believe that the outstanding issues can be resolved and the parties will be able to commit themselves to an agreement. Indeed, the parties have an obligation to build on the progress made to-date and to take decisive steps towards a peaceful and comprehensive solution.

Madam President,

As stated in my previous briefings, the truce has provided a conducive environment and starting point to build towards next steps. More than one year after its announcement, and seven months since its official expiration, the truce continues to deliver. Yemenis benefit from commercial

flights to and from Sana'a Airport and fuel and other commercial ships entering via Hudaydah port. While sporadic military incidents continue to occur, levels of hostilities are significantly lower than before the truce.

But the fragility of the military situation, the dire state of the economy and the daily challenges facing the Yemeni people provide us with constant reminders of why a comprehensive agreement between the parties is so vital.

The continuing reports of violence across frontlines, notably in Al Jawf, Ta'iz, Ma'rib and Sa'ada highlight the fragility of the current situation and underscore the need for a formal ceasefire. I am equally worried about the deteriorating economic situation and restrictions on freedom of movement and its impact on economic activity and people's livelihoods. The inability of the Government of Yemen to export oil, which generated more than half of total government revenues last year, is straining the government's capacity to meet its obligations to the Yemeni people. Inconsistent financial and economic policies in different areas of the country have hit citizens and businesses hard, with businesses facing particular uncertainty in Sana'a and the surrounding governorates. Lack of cooperation between the parties on critical monetary and financial issues means these challenges will worsen and potentially become more entrenched.

Despite these profound challenges, there is room for cautious optimism. In recent weeks the parties have taken some additional positive steps. Following last month's release of 887 detainees, facilitated by my Office and the ICRC, with the generous support of the Swiss government, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Ansar Allah have unilaterally released additional detainees. I am confident that these releases will build further confidence between the parties and support an environment conducive for dialogue. But, while every release is positive news for the detainees and their families, thousands more remain detained. I therefore call on the parties to continue to work with my Office to fulfil their commitments to release all conflict-related detainees in line with the Stockholm Agreement.

Exactly two weeks ago, the 3rd of May marked the 30th anniversary of World Press Freedom Day. While the recent release of four journalists, as part of the detainees' agreement, is a welcome step, media professionals across Yemen continue to face threats, harassment, imprisonment and confiscation of their offices and assets. I call on the parties to comply with their obligation under international law to immediately release all those who remain in arbitrary detention, including journalists, human rights defenders, political opponents, and other arbitrarily detained civilians.

Madam President,

The cornerstone of an agreement on the way forward must be the resumption of a Yemeni-led political process under the United Nations' auspices to bring an end to the conflict. The difficulties that I have described above, along with Yemen's other myriad challenges, cannot be addressed through partial or temporary solutions. Only an inclusive and comprehensive political process can sustainably forge a new political partnership and bring the promise of a secure and economically stable future, in which state institutions function effectively and Yemen returns to peaceful relations with its neighbours. This political process will need to address complex issues on the long-term future of Yemen and must start as soon as possible.

The inclusivity of this process will also be key for ensuring the sustainability of any political solution. The recently-held dialogue among a number of southern political groups in Aden underscored, once again, the urgent need for Yemenis to collectively discuss and define their own future through a Yemeni-led, UN-sponsored process. In this process, all Yemeni voices will need to be heard.

Equally essential is the meaningful participation and representation of women and youth in all aspects of the peace process in line with United Nations Security Council resolution 1325, as well as civil society. Meaningful and effective participation is not only about the number of female and civil society participants but also about providing a space for women and civil society to address their priorities and contribute with their perspectives and expertise. Women and civil society are far too often sidelined.

Madam President, allow me to take this opportunity to reiterate my appreciation for this Council's steadfast support. The Council's engagement and unity on Yemen is something I value greatly. Your continued support and accompaniment to any agreement reached will become even more important, not only in the short term, but in the long term, as Yemen charts a way towards a more peaceful and prosperous future that meets the aspirations of the Yemeni people.

Merci beaucoup, **Madame la Présidente**.