

**United Nations**

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



**الأمم المتحدة**

مكتب المبعوث الخاص للأمين العام  
للأمم المتحدة لليمن

Statement to the UN Security Council  
Mr. Martin Griffiths - UN Special Envoy for Yemen  
Amman, 11 September 2018

Madam President,

Thank you very much, Madam President and let me first express my sympathies to you Madam President, your government and your people on this tragic day that we have all mourned for so long.

Madam President,

When I called for the Intra-Yemeni Consultations in Geneva, I never expected it to be an easy mission. The parties have not met for more than two years. The war has been escalating virtually on all fronts. The level of confidence is at its lowest and the human and humanitarian cost is ever rising. The parties have been locked into a cycle of violence. In contrast, the main victims of this war, the Yemeni people, naturally have been yearning for a peaceful political solution that can end their misery, put an end to the war and deliver a government that is in a position to address their basic needs. I have also learned that this is no longer a race between political and military institutions and solutions. It is, instead, a race to salvage what is left of state institutions as quickly as possible. It is with this sense of urgency indeed, that I was encouraged as you know Madam President to move forward with the parties so as to inject a prospect of hope and to develop an alternative narrative to the narrative of war.

# United Nations

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



# الأمم المتحدة

مكتب المبعوث الخاص للأمين العام  
للأمم المتحدة لليمن

Following many months, seven months of intensive discussions, and based on my strong conviction supported by this council for a political solution, I decided to call for formal consultations that would lead to a resumption of the political process, and indeed I had the honor being with you on August the 2nd to announce this call. I am glad in fact to report to this Council that despite the absence of one of the sides to the Consultations in Geneva, last week, and even if it certainly did not go as planned, we still managed to relaunch the political process with solid support clearly from the Yemeni people and the international community.

Of course, I was as disappointed as anyone that we were unable to bring the delegation from Sana'a to Geneva. This is certainly not what I had planned for last week, and I certainly would not want to see this happen again, nor would any of us. But I will continue, with your permission Madam President, not to be drawn, into going into the details of the many issues that we had to overcome together, even if we ultimately failed to bring the delegation to Geneva and I should just stress here, that efforts were made by everybody, all of us in Geneva, in Amman, in the Coalition and certainly in the Government of Yemen to try and overcome the issues that were presented to us, just did not work, it just did not work on this occasion, and I will promise to make absolutely sure that this does not happen again.

Madam President,

The Yemeni political process, like so many other of its kind, will see ups and downs. The challenges we faced last week, and I think this is my main message, remain temporary hurdles to be overcome. It is not a sign, in my view, that the political and military situation as dire as it is

# United Nations

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



# الأمم المتحدة

مكتب المبعوث الخاص للأمين العام  
للأمم المتحدة لليمن

and perhaps because it is dire, is not conducive to formal consultations. We need to stay focused on nurturing the political process particularly in these fragile early stages and build the needed momentum so that it can deliver some tangible benefits to Yemenis throughout Yemen. Such a process is not simply about holding and moving from one big and indeed short event to the next. Instead, it needs political will, determination and commitment from all the actors including of course the members of this council as well as putting the interests of the Yemeni people above all else. I see my role, therefore, as working with the parties to understand their concerns, their hopes, and expectations, so that I can provide the needed help and support to move the process forward. My role, therefore, perhaps somehow controversially, is to encourage but not expose them, and to work with but not undermine them, all the while reminding them of the need to respect their obligations and responsibilities towards the Yemeni people and the international community.

Madam President,

As the parties resume these formal efforts to make compromise and build trust, it is important that we do not allow ourselves to become embroiled once again in large-scale military confrontations. As I said, the fighting is escalating on all sides, but we have still not seen their operations on the outskirts of the city of Hudaydah and we have still not seen an attack on the city and the port, and I hope that will continue to be the case. We are concerned about the launching of attacks by Ansar Allah forces towards Saudi Arabia as this council has frequently mentioned, and the attacks on Red Sea shows the continued threat of this conflict towards regional security.

# United Nations

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



# الأمم المتحدة

مكتب المبعوث الخاص للأمين العام  
للأمم المتحدة لليمن

In addition, Madam President,

The continued decline in the Yemeni Riyal and broader economic decay are pushing people further into vulnerable situations, into poverty. The frustration is rising, and this brings with it a threat of conflict in particular in the South, during the past ten days, there have been widespread demonstrations in southern governorates. The protestors gave voice to their concern over the economic situation and basic service delivery. They remind us of the importance of listening to southern voices and ensuring their meaningful participation in the arrangements to put an end to this conflict. I have met with several southern groups in recent months, I will be meeting with them again, and they have been strongly in favor of resolving their concerns through dialogue and they are keen to participate, I am glad to say in the peace process.

I will continue my discussions by beginning a set of visits Madam President in the coming days, including tomorrow to Muscat and then to Sana'a, to engage with the political leadership in those two cities. I have two objectives for this next visit: Firstly: making tangible progress building on discussions in Geneva on key confidence-building measures. This includes on an exchange of prisoners and on the opening of Sana'a airport. I am greatly encouraged by the very positive open and constructive approach to these issues that I have encountered from the Government of Yemen and from the Coalition in their support and I am keen to outline a public commitment to progress on these issues in the coming days; My second objective : of course unsurprisingly is to secure firm commitment from the parties to convene for continued and indeed positive consultations.

# United Nations

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



# الأمم المتحدة

مكتب المبعوث الخاص للأمين العام  
للأمم المتحدة لليمن

I hope to meet with the Government of Yemen in Riyadh and look forward to seeing President Hadi and I must say here that I am very grateful to President Hadi for his personal support and his government support for all the efforts that the UN is making to provide a political solution to this conflict. I am grateful to him and his Government for their Delegation's presence in Geneva and the constructive participation in rather unusual circumstances that we were able to enjoy with them in Geneva. I am planning to consult, as I have said with a number of southern stakeholders soon to agree on their meaningful participation in the process. I would like to add not least that we had the presence in Geneva of a group of women from Yemen with strong specific strength in various issues and given the fact that there was rather more time available I think we have a very positive trajectory going forward as to how they will both advise me, but also have a meaningful input into the process as we go forward.

Inclusivity indeed is crucial for the success of this process. While the two parties are the two parties and they are the two principal parties, it would behoove me to continue to include broader consultations with people who I think can advise me to do my job better.

Finally, Madam President the reason why I am so grateful to you for convening this session today so soon after Geneva and indeed before I am able to outline hopefully a positive path back to peace, I would just like to say this. The road to peace is never straight. It is always going to be difficult particularly at a time when it is restarting a process after two years of enmity, opposition, doubt, confusion and a lack of confidence. It is not surprising that there will be those who find it difficult in this case to attend, and it is not surprising there will be those who find some element of interest, in the fact that they didn't. It is not going to be the

# United Nations

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



# الأمم المتحدة

مكتب المبعوث الخاص للأمين العام  
للأمم المتحدة لليمن

last time we will have difficulties, I am sure it will be the last time we have that particular difficulty, but it does not mean for one minute, and this is why I am glad to be here Madam President, that the process towards peace is made more difficult. It is made more urgent. I think we learned things in Geneva and I would like if I may, to ask for the Council's continued support for the efforts of the international community and my office under the Secretary-General, to move back to the table with all speed.

Thank you very much