



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

Briefing by Special Envoy Hans Grundberg to the UN Security Council

13 May 2024

Thank you, **Mr. President**. Today I am addressing you from Aden, where I have had meetings with the Chairman of the Presidential Leadership Council, Dr. Rashad Al-Alimi, and Vice President Aidarous Al-Zubaidi, as well as the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister. In these meetings we have discussed the urgent need to address the deteriorating living conditions for Yemenis and make progress toward securing a roadmap agreement that ends the war and opens a path to just peace. I am encouraged by the constructive environment that these meetings were conducted in. My interlocutors did not shy away from the challenges that we face but also confirmed the long-term goal to resolve the conflict in Yemen.

Mr. President, on the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace, celebrated on the 24th of April, the United Nations Secretary-General reminded us that dialogue, diplomacy, and multilateral solutions provide the surest path to a peaceful and just world. In December last year, through dialogue, diplomacy, and negotiation, the parties took a courageous step towards a peaceful solution for Yemen when they agreed to a set of commitments to be operationalized through a UN roadmap. These commitments would provide for a nationwide ceasefire, ensure much-needed relief for Yemenis, and initiate an inclusive political process to sustainably end the conflict.

However, the challenges that I have highlighted in previous briefings continue to hamper progress, most critically the precarious environment in the wider region. Although we have witnessed a reduction in attacks on commercial and military vessels in the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean, as well as reduced numbers of US and UK airstrikes against land-based targets within Yemen, hostilities continue. Announcements by Ansar Allah to expand the scope of attacks are a worrisome provocation in an already volatile situation. With the regional situation continuing to complicate our ability to achieve progress in Yemen, I reiterate the United Nations Secretary-General's call for a ceasefire in Gaza and I urge all involved to de-escalate the situation in the Red Sea and its vicinity.

Inside Yemen, the security situation along the frontlines has remained contained in the past month. Still, I am concerned about the continuation of military activity in the form of shelling, sniper fire, intermittent fighting, drone attacks and troop movements in Al Dhale, Hudaydah, Lahj, Ma'rib, Sa'adah, Shabwa, and Ta'iz. On the 27th of April, two women and three girls were tragically killed in Ta'iz governorate by a drone attack while collecting water near their home. This highlights the dire risks to civilians in the currently unresolved situation. I am also concerned about the parties'

threats to return to war, including Ansar Allah's rhetoric and actions in relation to Ma'rib. Let me be clear, further violence will not resolve the conflict. On the contrary, it will only exacerbate the suffering we see today and risk losing the opportunity for a political settlement. Again, I urge the parties to exercise maximum restraint in both their actions and their words during this fragile period.

Mr. President, despite these challenges, I believe that a peaceful and just solution remains possible. Over the past month, my office and I have stepped up engagements in Yemen and the region with the Government of Yemen, Ansar Allah and other Yemeni voices, including political parties, women and civil society activists, as well as the international community. The message we hear from our engagements is a continued desire for a peaceful solution to the conflict. Yemenis are calling for equality as citizens before the law. For a chance to tap into their country's true economic potential. And for functioning services and good governance. These calls ultimately require an agreement to end the war and to begin a political process.

Mr. President, my approach to realizing these objectives is three-pronged. First, I am continuing engagements with the parties to make progress on the UN Roadmap, with the support of the international community and the region, notably the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Sultanate of Oman. To that end, I have held meetings in Aden, Riyadh, and Muscat with senior officials of the Government of Yemen, Ansar Allah, and with the regional stakeholders.

Second, I continue to explore avenues for de-escalation and confidence building. This requires both coordinated international engagement and the good faith of the parties to take initial steps to work together to relieve some of the most severe hardship. Currently, my office is engaged with Yemenis to facilitate the release of conflict-related detainees, the opening of roads, and improvements in the economic and financial sector. My economic team, for example, has engaged extensively with both parties and key stakeholders on recent developments in the banking sector, which I hope will provide an opportunity to also discuss economic issues more broadly. I urge the parties to engage in good faith with my office and to find mutually acceptable solutions to de-escalate and to prioritize the well-being of Yemenis.

Third, I continue preparations for a nationwide ceasefire and the resumption of an inclusive political process. To this end, my office is engaging with diverse actors such as local authority representatives, security actors and military officials, economic policy makers, civil society actors, journalists, community leaders, local mediators, and representatives of the private sector. I continue to prioritize the Women, Peace, and Security agenda, and my office has recently organized several meetings together with Yemenis on how to enhance women's meaningful participation in all aspects of the peace process.

I am determined, **Mr. President**, to continue directing all my efforts toward enabling Yemenis to reach a nationwide ceasefire and start an inclusive political process that lays the foundations for a lasting peace. There are concrete and critical steps that the parties can take right now. Clearly, the uncertainty in the wider region is impacting Yemen, but we must not lose sight of the intrinsic value of long-term peace. To make these shared aspirations possible, I will need to draw on the support of the region and this Council. The Yemeni people expect nothing less.

Thank you, **Mr. President**.