



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

UN Special Envoy Hans Grundberg's Briefing to the Security Council

Open session

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Thank you, **Madame President**.

Madame President, families across Yemen have just celebrated Eid al-Adha: coming together with their families, friends and wider community. I want to start my briefing by wishing all Yemenis Eid Mubarak.

But this moment of celebration also tragically marks one year since the arbitrary detention by Ansar Allah of dozens of personnel from the United Nations, national and international NGOs, civil society organizations, and diplomatic missions. Some colleagues have been detained since 2021 and there were additional detentions in 2025. Their continued imprisonment is shameful. I call again in the strongest terms for their immediate and unconditional release. And I will continue to demand their release – at every opportunity I have – until they are home with their families. This is the commitment I made in January to the mother, the wife, the children of my own team member, who has been detained for over a year now. To the families of all our colleagues who have been deprived of their liberty, know that the United Nations will continue to stand with you. To members of this Council, I urge all of you to use your powerful voices, your diplomatic channels and your influence, to exert maximum pressure on Ansar Allah for the unconditional release of all detainees.

Turning to recent developments, while the Red Sea remains calm following the cessation of hostilities agreement between the United States and Ansar Allah, there have been multiple attacks launched by Ansar Allah in the last month on targets in Israel, including on Ben Gurion Airport.

In response, over the past weeks, Israel has conducted strikes on Hudaydah port, Saleef port, and Sana'a International Airport, destroying a civilian aircraft. I reiterate my call for all actors to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure. We now see a situation where Yemenis living in Ansar Allah controlled areas are unable to fly commercially from Sana'a Airport to seek medical treatment abroad, to travel by air for the Hajj or visit their families. This was one of the key peace dividends delivered by the 2022 truce and it had generated some sense of normalcy among civilians and a hope for a better future.

Since I last briefed this Council, I have met with representatives of both the Government of Yemen and Ansar Allah, as well as key regional actors, including Egypt, Iran, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. There is a general consensus that only a negotiated settlement can resolve the conflict in Yemen and provide the guarantees that the region requires, including for the Red Sea. Regional dynamics have long played a key part in Yemen's history, as well as in its current trajectory. The support of the region - as well as the wider international community - will be critical in reaching a sustainable solution for Yemen.

I emphasise again, however, that time is not on our side. Conditions can change rapidly and unpredictably. The multiple frontlines across Yemen remain fragile and risk descending into more active fighting. Marib, in particular, remains a cause for concern at this time, with reports of troop movement and occasional flareups, in addition to sporadic activity on other front lines in Al-Dhale'a, Hudaydah, Lahj and Ta'iz Governorates.

My office continues to monitor frontline developments, engage with military and security officials from all sides, and offer alternatives to a return to full-scale conflict. In the discussions my team has with members of the Military Coordination Committee, we stress the shared responsibility for all actors to step away from confrontation and instead resume discussions on a ceasefire.

Madame President, in the last month, we have seen a sign of what is possible with the reopening of the Al-Dhale'a Road – a main road between Aden and Sana'a. I commend again the local facilitators across the frontlines who worked to make this happen. Initial scoping work is currently being undertaken by the United Nations to ensure the safety of the communities using this road, with support from civil society and my office. I encourage the parties to protect this achievement. I hope this will lead to many more openings. Yemen's economy is in dire need of positive and trust-building steps such as these.

Yemeni citizens continue to shoulder the impacts of an economy in freefall. More can and should be done to alleviate the humanitarian and economic hardships faced by the Yemeni people, including allowing the Government of Yemen to export oil and gas and facilitating unobstructed flow of goods across the country. For Yemen to extricate itself from its current economic hardship, the parties need to move away from a zero-sum mindset, towards pragmatism and compromise.

There is a real scope to make progress on the economy. We in this chamber are not the only ones imploring the parties for this. Nor are these concerns only being raised in high-level diplomatic meetings. Over the last month we have seen more protests led by women in Aden, Taiz, Lahj and Abyan, demanding solutions and action to address the dire economic deterioration and lack of basic services. They demand a more dignified life, including the payment of salaries and accountability. I underscore the importance of respecting the rights of all citizens to demonstrate peacefully. Civic space must be protected by all parties. And I am particularly concerned that Ansar Allah continues to suppress civil society voices and recently conducted a new wave of arrests among journalists and public figures, this time across Hudaydah governorate.

Madame President, this month also marks a year since the Government of Yemen and Ansar Allah last met under UN auspices to discuss the release of conflict-related detainees. Despite continued attempts to bring the parties together, progress on this file has slowed to almost a standstill. There are thousands of detainees, some of them have been languishing for ten years. And this is unacceptable. In stark contrast, we see the exchanges of prisoners in other active conflicts around the world. And I call on the parties to reprioritise this humanitarian file and move forward based on the agreed upon all-for-all principle.

Madame President, I have stressed the importance of the ties between Yemen and the wider region. We need to build on the recent cessation of hostilities in the Red Sea and provide durable guarantees to the region and the wider international community and ensure the safety of all those using this critical waterway. This effort goes hand in hand with our ongoing work towards a roadmap that will help Yemen overcome its current divisions and lead to a comprehensive ceasefire, critical economic measures and an inclusive political process.

I will continue to work with the Yemeni parties, the region and the broader international community towards this goal, identifying pragmatic and achievable steps to move forward. The cost of inaction is high. And Yemen cannot afford more years of division, economic collapse and human suffering.

Madame President, allow me to conclude by saying that peace in Yemen is so much more than the containment of a threat. It is, first and foremost, about the Yemenis. It is a country where there are incredible opportunities, a long and rich history, and lives full of promises. I want to again thank this Council for its unified and highly valued support – even when the overall situation remains so challenging – to realise this potential for Yemen.

Thank you very much, **Madame President.**