



**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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Gracias, **Mr. President**. The regional turmoil continues to erode prospects for peace and stability in Yemen, where the situation remains deeply fragile. There is an urgent need for proactive and pragmatic measures that can pave the way for peace in Yemen. We must remain steadfast in our shared efforts to propel Yemen toward a future where the country is at peace with itself and with the region.

Last month when I briefed this Council, I outlined three priorities to lay the groundwork for lasting solutions to Yemen. The first was supporting de-escalation on the frontlines and working with parties on the tenets of a ceasefire. While the frontlines have mostly seen stable levels of hostility, on the 25th of July we saw a significant assault on the Aleb front in Sa'adah Governorate resulting in high numbers of fatalities and injuries on both sides. We also see Ansar Allah fortifying its positions including around Hudaydah City. These developments are concerning and highlight the need for active de-escalation and security dialogue between the parties.

Last week, my Office concluded the latest series of meetings with Government of Yemen and regional security actors under the auspices of the UN-facilitated Military Coordination Committee. The work of the MCC is crucial to de-escalation along the frontlines and preparations to implement and manage a future ceasefire. Over the course of the week, the parties discussed the role of the MCC in de-escalation along those frontlines that have experienced renewed hostilities over the past year. They also addressed challenges in the maritime domain, exploring options that could be pursued in the event of a return to ceasefire negotiations.

The second priority is establishing a path for talks between the parties in line with the commitments made toward the Roadmap in December 2023. To not lose sights of these commitments, it is essential that measures that build trust and improve the day to day lives of Yemenis continue. In this regard, we are seeing positive and ongoing momentum to address road access in different parts of the country, and notably the route connecting Bayda and Abyan governorates. I want to acknowledge the valuable contributions made by civil society in advancing these efforts and express my full support for these initiatives. I encourage the parties to open more key roads and to take further steps to facilitate movement of people and commercial activity. My Office remains ready to support efforts toward this goal.

Mr. President, the parties can also make progress toward broader political talks by finding solutions and compromises that enable the effective functioning of Yemen's economy to deliver goods and services for all. In recent discussions with government officials, business representatives and civil society in Aden, my Office continued to push for dialogue to address the root causes of Yemen's economic issues. Further

economic escalation and fragmentation is in no one's interest. It is crippling Yemeni households and has a stranglehold over Yemen's private sector. It is vital to find the will and space to act – and the time is now.

In this regard, I welcome the recent steps taken by the Central Bank of Yemen in Aden, and the Government of Yemen more broadly, to address the recent currency depreciation. I congratulate both on the marked improvement of the exchange rate in Government of Yemen areas. I also commend the Government of Yemen for its efforts to stabilize the prices of essential goods in light of the recent appreciation of the currency. I hope that these steps mark the start of a sustained recovery.

Mr. President, to make continued progress, as I have said before, the parties need to take actions that build trust and good faith. Unfortunately, we have seen the opposite in the last month with unilateral and escalatory decisions that risk deepening divisions within institutions and state structures. There are numerous examples of such decisions. One is the issuance of the new 50 Riyal coins and 200 Riyal notes by Ansar Allah, which contributes to the fragmentation of the Yemeni Riyal and complicates future discussions to unify the Yemeni economy and its institutions. There are several other examples of unilateral decisions aiming at dividing institutions rather than unifying them. These are steps in the wrong direction. Instead, I urge dialogue between parties, which is the only way to bring about long-term sustainable solutions on all matters which affect the day to day lives of the Yemenis.

The third priority is the continued work with the region and international community to stabilize and support Yemen. This includes addressing the need for security guarantees, including with respect to the Red Sea. The recent seizure off the Red Sea coast of Yemen, of a significant cache of weapons and technology once again underscores the importance of reminding all Member States of their obligation to fully comply with the UN Security Council resolutions concerning the UN arms embargo.

Mr. President, following the sinking of two ships off the west coast of Yemen in early July, some of the surviving crew members of the Motor Vessel Eternity C have still not been repatriated to their home countries. I strongly encourage Ansar Allah to enable their immediate repatriation.

For Yemen to have a real chance for peace, it must be protected from being further drawn into the ongoing regional turmoil emanating out of the war in Gaza. Therefore, the strikes against civilian ships in the Red Sea must cease. The missile attacks against Israel and the subsequent Israeli strikes on Yemen must also come to an end. Beyond complicating the mediation space for a long-term settlement of the conflict in Yemen, this escalation has led to the near destruction of Yemen's west coast port facilities. This is placing immense strain on Yemen's vital infrastructure. As an example, unloading at Saleef Port took three times as long last month compared to June. Only two ships berthed in July and spent the entire month there. The increased waiting and unloading times at both Al Hudaydah and Saleef ports are a major cause of concern with both ports serving as critical entry points for essential food commodities.

This trajectory can be stopped. But instead, we see escalation, notably the announcement of Ansar Allah on the 27th of July expanding the scope of vessels that it would target. A de-escalation in violence and a renewed focus on diplomacy are urgently needed to protect both the people of Yemen and provide broader regional stability.

Mr. President, today is International Youth Day. In Yemen, the role of youth in overcoming hurdles towards a political process is not to be underestimated. In all of Yemen's significant moves towards peace and prosperity, young people have been in the forefront in demanding more from those in power. We take

their role seriously, and in the recent political dialogue sessions that my Office, initiated we heard their principled and grounded perspectives as well as their concerns over economic deterioration pushing youth to the frontlines. All parties need to do more to empower youth in building Yemen's future.

Mr. President, the 23 UN detainees alongside those from national and international NGOs, civil society organisations and diplomatic missions remain in a desperate situation. This is unacceptable. They need to be released unconditionally and immediately.

I want to again thank this Council for its continued advocacy for the release of these detainees, as well as for your broader support to Yemen. As I have said so many times before, reaching a sustainable solution to the situation in Yemen is not only possible, but it is essential. While there are no simple solutions to the challenges we face, we must strengthen our collective efforts, guided by our shared commitment to lasting progress in Yemen.

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