



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

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

Open session

15 September 2025

Thank you, **Mr. President**.

Mr. President, I have repeatedly emphasized to this Council that stability in Yemen cannot be separated from the wider dynamics of the region. Yemen's unresolved conflict is like a fault line, sending tremors across its borders and amplifying existing regional rivalries. And at the same time, the broader instability in the Middle East continues to return to Yemen, fueling its divisions and delaying sustainable peace. In other words, Yemen is both a mirror and a magnifier of the region's volatility. Left unaddressed, its conflict will perpetuate tension far beyond Yemen. Conversely, without addressing the sources of the region's instability, Yemen's peace process will remain fragile. Stability in one arena depends on progress in the other—today, neither can advance in isolation.

Against the backdrop of the war in Gaza, we are seeing an alarming and dangerous intensification of hostilities between Ansar Allah and Israel. Ansar Allah has continued to target Israel with numerous drones and missiles, attacks which have reportedly resulted in civilian injuries and impacted a civilian airport. And likewise, in August and September we have seen several Israeli strikes in Sana'a and other areas controlled by Ansar Allah, which have reportedly killed numerous civilians. The strikes on the 28th of August also killed senior Ansar Allah officials, some of whom were interlocutors of my office. This escalatory cycle must end.

At the same time, if Yemen is perceived and addressed primarily through the lens of regional concerns, the voices, the needs and the aspirations of the Yemenis themselves become sidelined. The current cycle of violence is dragging Yemen further away from a peace process that would bring a sustainable, long-term peace and economic growth. We need to get the focus back on Yemen. Focus on both its internal challenges and on unlocking its great potential.

Mr. President, the latest wave of arbitrary detentions of 22 United Nations staff in Sana'a and Hudaydah is an egregious escalation by Ansar Allah against the United Nations. While one staff member has recently been released, there are now over 40 UN personnel detained, in addition to a colleague who died while in detention. The United Nations and all its staff serve under the

principles of impartiality, integrity, and respect for human rights and dignity. Their unacceptable arrests, the forced entry into UN premises, and the seizure of UN property - in violation of international law - endangers the United Nation's very ability to advance peace efforts and deliver humanitarian support to the Yemeni people. I want to thank this esteemed Council for its strong statement condemning these actions.

I stand in solidarity with our colleagues who are being held and I will continue to work alongside with the wider UN family for their unconditional and immediate release. I also continue to urge Ansar Allah to repatriate the surviving crew members of the Motor Vessel Eternity C to their home countries - it has now been over two months since the ship was sunk.

Mr. President, the families of detained personnel of the United Nations, diplomatic missions, and civil society are not alone in missing their loved ones. There are currently thousands of Yemenis detained as a result of the conflict. We do not forget them either. I again stress that movement on this painful issue is long overdue. My office is working closely with the parties to ensure the release of all conflict-related detainees under the all-for-all principle.

Turning to the frontlines in Yemen, while relative calm and stability continues to hold, recent military activity in areas such as Al Dhale' Ma'rib and Ta'iz serve as a warning that miscalculations from either party could trigger a return to full-scale conflict. The consequences of war would be devastating for Yemen and the wider region. We must therefore continue efforts to de-escalate tension along the frontlines and maintain a meaningful security dialogue with all relevant actors. The productive engagement by Government of Yemen's military representatives as well as those from the wider region, under the auspices of the Military Coordination Committee, remains vital for maintaining open lines of communication and confidence building among the parties. The opening and securing of some of the key roads across the country in the last year demonstrate that cooperation is possible. We must continue to build on these entry points.

Over the past month, we have seen how the work of the Government of Yemen has helped improve the Yemeni economy, with hard won gains to the value of the currency and a commensurate reduction in the cost of living for Yemenis. My office has recently engaged extensively with the Governor of the Central Bank of Yemen in Aden, ministers in the Government of Yemen, and a wide range of private sector representatives. I welcome the depth and constructiveness of the dialogue and the focus on good governance, ensuring that economic stabilization is sustainable. My office stands ready to continue engagement on these economic issues with both parties. Only through collaboration, by depoliticizing national institutions and by taking a nationwide view, can Yemen's full economic potential be realized.

Mr. President, in recent weeks, I held discussions with many Yemeni interlocutors, including from the Government of Yemen and Ansar Allah, with representatives of regional countries, including Saudi Arabia, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates as well as with representatives of the broader international community. I emphasized in all my meetings that the best way forward is to engage on the commitments made towards a roadmap, making sure that they are anchored in Yemeni

ownership and responsive to current challenges and broader, regional security needs. The need for a nationwide ceasefire, country-wide economic reforms and an inclusive political process remains as valid as ever. My work on this continues, despite all the challenges I have enumerated, undeterred.

Mr. President, we achieve most when we work together. Unilateral decisions rarely bring solutions. They harden positions, deepen mistrust, and prolong conflict. In moments of heightened tension, keeping channels of communication open is not a sign of weakness, but of leadership and responsibility. Dialogue – however difficult – is the only viable path to bridge divides and to move forward. My message to all Yemeni leaders is that the United Nations remains committed to working with you towards de-escalation, dialogue and a long term, Yemeni-led inclusive political settlement. This is how we can ensure stability and prosperity for Yemen. It is possible - but it requires a conscious step back from where we are now. I want to thank the members of this Council again for their united and steadfast support for this goal. And for your role in supporting an agreement that is credible for Yemenis, supported by the region and insulated from wider geopolitical shocks.

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