



**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 Mr. President.

Mr. President, let me begin by extending my respects and good wishes to the people of Yemen, and to Muslims across the world, on the occasion of the Hijri Islamic New Year. Happy New Year.

This new year opens a hopeful note from the wider region. I want to echo the Secretary-General in welcoming the deal announced by the US and Iran. For nearly three years, regional shockwaves have complicated prospects for the Yemeni peace process, deepening mistrust between the parties and deferring willingness for compromise. I hope that this deal marks a turning point for the region, and I will be working with the parties to encourage them to seize this moment to make progress on Yemen.

So far, in military terms, the fallout for Yemen of the recent conflict in the region has been relatively contained. Despite threats, we have not seen renewed attacks on commercial shipping in the Red Sea. And the relative calm inside Yemen since the 2022 truce has continued to hold. But Yemen's conflict is unresolved, not over – and every day, it is Yemenis who bear the cost of this uncertain status quo. In meetings with Yemenis, we are told that entrenched front lines across the country are draining resources, deepening fragmentation and accelerating the militarization of society, even driving students and teachers to join armed groups simply as a means of economic survival.

The recent regional conflict has increased pressure on the Yemeni economy, due to the country's import dependence and geopolitical proximity. This is raising the cost of imported food and fuel, amplifying inflationary pressures and in recent weeks, there have been protests in Aden and other governorates over electricity shortages amid the summer heat. The economic reforms prioritized by the Government of Yemen should help improve living conditions, strengthen public revenues, and restore confidence in public institutions. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's recent 150 million US dollars grant to supply fuel to power stations is also critical to help address electricity shortages in government-held areas.

Continued efforts by the Government of Yemen to enhance security and ensure accountability for the deeply worrying recent assassination of public figures are also welcome. Such investment in security and economic stability is important to strengthen avenues for dialogue and consensus building, including on the southern issue.

Ultimately, however, the fundamental issues underlying the suffering of the Yemeni people can only be addressed sustainably through negotiations between the parties and an inclusive political process under UN auspices. I have continued to discuss the way forward with the parties, as well as with regional and international stakeholders, in Riyadh, in Muscat, Amman, Brussels, as well as here in New York. And despite the challenging regional context, we have been finding entry points for dialogue and negotiations.

Last month, the parties agreed to release over 1,600 conflict-related detainees, after 14 weeks of negotiations in Amman under United Nations auspices. This is the largest release operation agreed in the history of the conflict. These negotiations were exceptionally challenging and complex.

Trust was low; negotiations stalled multiple times, and it required courage and compromise. I commend the parties for their persistence to achieve this result, and I encourage them to make swift progress towards implementing the release operation, with the support of the International Committee of the Red Cross. I am particularly grateful to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for its critical role in supporting the talks, and to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for hosting and supporting the negotiations. I am also grateful to the Sultanate of Oman for hosting and supporting the previous round of talks in Muscat, which paved the way for this agreement.

I also wish to commend my team, which worked with tremendous patience, expertise and diligence over months to mediate between the parties to achieve this result. Their combination of skills, long-term dedication to this file demonstrate the unique value of UN mediation.

On the military/security track, my Office recently convened two meetings within the framework of the Military Coordination Committee, the MCC - with military representatives of the Saudi-led Joint Forces Command and Ansar Allah, and another with the Joint Forces Command and the Government of Yemen. These meetings allowed for an exchange of views on security priorities, as well as practical ways to de-escalate and improve communication channels. Based on a commitment from all sides, my Office is planning to invite the delegations to a trilateral MCC meeting in the coming period.

Finally, progress on the economic track could deliver tangible improvements in the lives of Yemenis across the country. My Office has been holding consultations and undertaking preparatory work on a wide range of economic issues that must eventually be addressed through negotiations between the parties.

Mr. President, these engagements build confidence for our core objective: launching an inclusive political process to comprehensively end the conflict. That process has been postponed for far too long. Although the parties have negotiated on other files, it has been several years since they met face-to-face for political talks. We need to establish a way forward toward

changing that reality - one that will require compromise and good-faith engagement from both parties.

Mr. President, before closing, I must recall that seventy-three United Nations personnel remain arbitrarily detained by Ansar Allah - many since the wave of detentions in June 2024, two years ago this month - alongside staff of NGOs, civil society organizations and diplomatic missions. The Secretary-General's recent statement underscored that these detentions violate international law, cause deep suffering to families, and constrain the United Nations's ability to assist millions of people in need. In its statement on the 6th of June, this Council condemned these detentions and demanded the unconditional, safe and immediate release of those held. The United Nations will continue doing all it can to press for their releases, and I ask this Council to continue its efforts until our colleagues are freed.

Mr. President, as long as Yemen's conflict remain unsettled, the risk of further destabilization persists - both within the country and, should regional tensions flare again, well beyond it. The parties should use this window of regional de-escalation to make progress towards reviving a political process that can sustainably end the conflict in Yemen. The United Nations remains ready and committed to support them, and the Yemeni people. And I ask for this Council's continued, united and sustained focus on Yemen to help influence the parties in this direction.

Thank you very much.