



Security Council

Seventieth year

7596th meeting

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New York

Provisional

President: Ms. Power/ Ms. Sison (United States of America)

Members:

Angola	Mr. Gimolieca
Chad	Mr. Cherif
Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
China	Mr. Zhao Yong
France	Mr. Delattre
Jordan	Mrs. Kawar
Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
Spain	Mr. González de Linares Palou
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Suárez Moreno

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Yemen to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen; Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; and Ms. Kyung-wha Kang, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed.

Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank you, Madam President, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council on the latest developments in Yemen.

I have just returned from the first face-to-face talks in the Yemen peace process, which I facilitated in Switzerland. While the meetings did not bring about an end to the fighting, as we had all hoped, they did result in constructive talks between the Yemeni Government and its political and military opponents. The dialogue provided a firm foundation for resuming talks in the near future and the basis for a renewed and strengthened cessation of hostilities. I am very grateful to the Government of Switzerland for having hosted the talks and for its excellent support.

The talks were conducted during a very bleak period for Yemen and during a worsening security situation. Since my previous briefing to the Council (see S/PV.7542), violence has pervaded in many parts of the country, resulting in hundreds of civilian deaths and many others injured. The catastrophic situation with regard to Yemen's health-care system was made even worse with the destruction of two Médecins Sans Frontières medical facilities in Taiz and Saada.

Cross-border attacks in the north involving the use of heavy weaponry had a serious impact on security and stability in the border area. The residents of Taiz continue to suffer the consequences of heavy fighting and severe lack of assistance. Artillery fire and air strikes have continued to affect the residential areas of the city. Those attacks, which constitute grave breaches of international humanitarian law and obstruct the delivery of humanitarian assistance, have had a devastating impact on the lives and livelihoods of the city's residents.

As I have noted in earlier briefings, the conflict and the security vacuum it has caused have led to the dangerous expansion of extremist groups in the country, particularly in the areas of Abyan, Albeda'a and Shabwa. Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula has consolidated its presence in the Governorate of Hadhramaut and its control of the port of Al Mukalla. The Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham has continued its campaign of attacks and assassinations of political leaders and security officials. The Governor of Aden, Major General Mohammed Jaafar Saad, was assassinated on 6 December, along with six of his guards, one day after my visit to Aden. At the time, I strongly condemned that act of terrorism.

The talks in Switzerland followed many weeks of consultation with Yemeni leaders and the Governments in the region. I consulted with the Foreign Ministers of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Sultanate of Oman, the United Arab Emirates, the State of Qatar, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), all of whom expressed their strong support for the peace process. Despite the grave security challenges, I visited President Hadi Mansour in Aden on 5 December for a final consultation in advance of the talks. I also met repeatedly with Vice-President Khaled Bahah and Yemeni Government representatives in Riyadh, and with representatives of the Houthis, the General People's Congress and other stakeholders in the Sultanate of Oman. Despite profound differences, we were able to agree on the format and agenda of the talks in the days before the consultative meeting.

On 15 December, delegations finally met around a single table in the town of Magglingen, Switzerland. The talks were aimed at putting an end to violence in Yemen and developing a clear framework based on resolution 2216 (2015), which will bring the country back to a peaceful and orderly transition, in accordance with the GCC Initiative and the outcomes

of the National Dialogue. Participants in the talks demonstrated the courage and determination needed for successful negotiations. In the weeks of preparation for the talks, the Government of Yemen, the Houthis, the General People's Congress and other key Yemeni stakeholders expressed their willingness to have a full and comprehensive cessation of hostilities during the talks. President Hadi communicated his support for the ceasefire to the Secretary-General in a letter dated 7 December. States of the region and the coalition also expressed support for the cessation of hostilities, which I believe was essential to ensure the confidence of the Yemeni people in the peace process.

I announced the cessation of hostilities on the morning of 15 December. The Government of Yemen, the Houthis and the General People's Congress publicly welcomed my announcement and pledged to respect the cessation of hostilities. In order to minimize the violations, a coordination and de-escalation committee was established, comprised of military advisors from the two delegations and United Nations experts. The committee liaised with the military leadership in Yemen in order to help avert clashes and any escalation of violence, with some success in the early days.

Tragically, we were unable to preserve the cessation of hostilities throughout the duration of the talks, although we did see a significant reduction of violence in the first few days. Numerous violations were reported by the committee on the third day. The lack of compliance with the ceasefire demonstrated the need for stronger agreements and more robust mechanisms to ensure adherence. The participants in the talks subsequently agreed that the committee's work would continue over the coming months immediately after the end of that round of talks. We agreed with the delegations that the committee should be based in the region, with United Nations support. To that end, I hope that we can rely on the generous support of Member States. This is a concrete and practical outcome of the talks in Switzerland, and I hope it will allow for a more effective ceasefire agreement in the near future.

The agenda for the talks included the discussion of humanitarian issues, confidence-building measures and a general framework that could serve as the foundation for a comprehensive settlement. The first days of the talks also saw constructive engagement on humanitarian issues. In order to ensure that the discussions on humanitarian issues were grounded in the practical challenges of delivering assistance in

Yemen, I invited several senior officials from United Nations humanitarian agencies to join the talks. With their assistance, the participants in Switzerland agreed to restore humanitarian access to Taiz, which had been largely cut off from aid for many months. I am very grateful to my colleagues from the United Nations humanitarian agencies who were able to operationalize that agreement immediately. A large United Nations convoy with fuel and food supplies entered Taiz on 17 December, the first large shipment of aid to arrive in almost three months. As noted in the final communiqué of the talks, the sides are committed to working with me and the United Nations humanitarian team to build on the agreement with a view to ensuring expanded aid in the coming weeks.

Most importantly, the discussions in Switzerland led to a common understanding of a negotiating framework for the conclusion of a comprehensive agreement to end the conflict and resume inclusive political dialogue. That framework is firmly based on resolution 2216 (2015) and other relevant Security Council resolutions, and provides a mechanism for a return to a peaceful and orderly transition based on the GCC Initiative and National Dialogue outcomes. The two sides have agreed that the framework will serve as the foundation for the next round of talks. The framework provides a mechanism for negotiating the sequencing and interdependence of the key elements of resolution 2216 (2015), including the creation of interim security committees, the withdrawal of militias and armed groups, the restoration of State institutions and State functioning, and the resumption of inclusive political dialogue, which will be needed to come to an agreement on the remaining steps of Yemen's political transition. The framework provides the foundation for a new political consensus with special security measures, which will help Yemen to achieve stability and enable it to confront the expansion of terrorist groups.

The talks reveal deep divisions between the two sides on the path to peace and the formulation of a future agreement. Trust between the parties remains weak. I must admit that there were several days when I feared that the two sides would not find a way to make progress on any of the central issues. Ultimately, however, the commitment of the delegations, especially the Chairs, proved stronger than those divisions. By the end of the talks, the delegations had agreed to meet again next month using a common framework, which will help them map out a clear and effective path

towards peace and a negotiated and inclusive political transition.

The parties to the talks should be commended for the progress that has been made and the courage they demonstrated at the talks in Switzerland. We all know that the path to peace in Yemen will be a long and difficult one, but we also know that failure is not an option. The lives of the Yemeni people have been devastated by the most horrific violence and conflict that the country has ever seen. It is time to begin creating a safe and stable future for the generations to come. The challenge now will be to find a way to strengthen and build upon the progress we have made thus far. The peace process is in its very early days. In order for it to flourish and prosper, it will take nurturing, care and a great deal of support.

I would like to sincerely thank President Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour for his strong commitment to bringing lasting peace to Yemen. I am also very grateful to the Government's delegation, led by the Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Malik Al-Mukhlafi, for its constructive and open spirit during the consultations. I am equally grateful to Mr. Aref Al-Zouka and Mr. Mohammed Abdulsalam and their respective teams for their conciliatory and courageous attitude during the talks.

I must also thank Member States for their tireless and steadfast support of our efforts, which has been invaluable. I hope we can count on their continued help in the coming months. I need the Council's support in order to ensure a durable and comprehensive ceasefire in advance of the upcoming round of talks. I will also need the Council's backing for the negotiating framework that we have proposed to the parties and which, I believe, will help Yemen to find an end to the war and the beginning of a more prosperous and stable future.

The President: I thank Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed not only for his briefing but for the tireless work that he and his team are putting in, as well as for the risks he is taking in travelling to Yemen and investing all his efforts in trying to bring about a political solution.

I now give the floor to Mr. Al Hussein.

Mr. Al Hussein: I thank you, Madam President, for allowing me this opportunity to brief the Security Council on the latest developments in Yemen.

I am encouraged by the recent efforts by the parties to the conflict, supported by the Special Envoy of

the Secretary-General for Yemen, aimed at reaching a peaceful solution. The earlier intensification of the conflict in Yemen led to a dramatic increase in the number of civilian casualties and aggravated the already dire humanitarian situation. It also continues to undermine prospects for peace.

The conditions of life have become untenable for the vast majority of people in Yemen. The combined impact of the violence and the artificial impediments to the delivery of humanitarian assistance have proved disastrous. At least 21 million people — 80 per cent of the population — currently rely on some measure of humanitarian assistance, while approximately half the population is suffering from malnutrition. Furthermore, the findings of my Office indicate a continued intensification of existing patterns of violations, including, inter alia, the violation of the right to life and the destruction of civilian objects and infrastructure, as well as illegal detentions, committed by all parties to the conflict. As the violence continues to intensify, the number of civilian casualties across the country continues to increase. According to information gathered by my Office in Yemen, over 2,700 civilians have been killed and more than 5,300 have been injured since the start of the conflict. My Office has also documented dozens of cases of alleged illegal detention, primarily at the hands of the popular committees. Sadly, it is children who are bearing the brunt of the conflict in Yemen. There has been a steady increase in the number of children killed and injured. This year alone, more than 600 children have been killed, and over 900 have suffered serious injury. That represents a five-fold increase over the figures for 2014.

In September, I presented a report on the situation of human rights in Yemen to the thirtieth session of the Human Rights Council. The report addresses credible allegations of violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, as gathered by my Office. The report also presents the Human Rights Council with a number of recommendations, chief among which is a call for an international investigation into credible allegations of violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, as well as a call for accountability for the perpetrators of such crimes.

The Government of Yemen earlier announced its intention to create a national commission of investigation, which I welcomed. The Human Rights Council subsequently adopted resolution 30/18, which

calls on my Office to provide technical assistance to a national commission of inquiry and to report to the Council on the situation of human rights in Yemen at its thirty-third session. The recruitment and deployment of new staff members to support follow-up to that Human Rights Council resolution are currently pending approval by the Fifth Committee.

I have observed with extreme concern the continuation of heavy shelling from the ground and the air in areas with a high concentration of civilians, as well as the continued destruction of civilian infrastructure — in particular hospitals and schools — by all parties to the conflict, although a disproportionate share appeared to be the result of air strikes carried out by coalition forces. My Office will continue to document credible allegations of violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in the context of Yemen, and will continue to call upon all parties involved to abide by, and commit themselves to, the protection of civilians and to hold to account those responsible for serious violations of international law. In that regard, I also strongly encourage the Government of Yemen to ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, or at least to urgently accept its jurisdiction. I further call on the Security Council to do everything within its power to help restrain the use of force by all parties and to urge all sides to abide by the basic principles of international humanitarian law, including by immediately removing all impediments to humanitarian assistance and fully cooperating with the humanitarian response team.

Unless Yemen and the world urgently rise to meet the extraordinary challenges presented by the situation, the consequences could be even more catastrophic. To that end, I urgently call on the Council to expedite and intensify diplomatic efforts to bring about a ceasefire and to help create a framework for negotiating a comprehensive and sustainable peace in Yemen. Any military solution that falls outside the context of a negotiated agreement may in the short term bring about an immediate strategic advantage to one side or another, but it will inevitably render Yemen and its neighbours less stable and less secure over the long term.

A failure to act decisively not only spells misery for the millions of vulnerable people in Yemen today, but will inevitably push the country into an irreversible process of Balkanization, the consequences of which would lie outside anyone's control. The potential ramifications of a failed State in Yemen would almost

inevitably include the creation of safe havens for radical and confessional groups such as the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham. That, in turn, could expand the conflict beyond Yemen's borders, potentially shattering regional stability. Finally, in the light of the enormity of the crisis, it is imperative that the relevant stakeholders put aside their political and ideological differences in order to achieve our common goal of re-establishing some measure of security and stability in Yemen.

The President: I thank Mr. Al Hussein for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Kang.

Ms. Kang: I thank you, Madam President, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council on the latest developments in Yemen on behalf of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. Stephen O'Brien.

The conditions today for the people inside Yemen are appalling. Around 7.6 million people now require emergency food assistance to survive. At least 2 million people are malnourished, including 320,000 children, who suffer from severe malnutrition, which represents a two-fold increase since March. There can be little doubt that the serious deterioration in the humanitarian situation has been caused by the current conflict in Yemen.

Since mid-March, the conflict has spread to 20 of Yemen's 22 governorates, exacerbating an already dire humanitarian situation brought on by years of poverty, poor governance and ongoing instability, and triggering a large-scale protection crisis. Since March, around 8 million people have lost reliable and safe access to drinking water. At least 1.8 million children have had to drop out of classes, adding to the 1.6 million who were already out of school before the crisis began.

The conflict has had a widespread impact on the whole array of social infrastructure, including markets and road networks. That, combined with import restrictions, has crippled the economy and amplified the vulnerability of the civilian population, including their ability to procure food. Institutions that provide basic services in Yemen are unravelling. The north has no financial resources, and the relevant authorities cannot procure the supplies they need or to pay salaries to doctors, nurses and teachers.

While some 14 million people lack adequate access to health-care assistance, Yemen's health system is

close to collapse. Prior to the conflict, some 70 per cent of health care was provided by the private sector, which is now no longer functioning because of the failing economy, and the public system is unable to absorb the burden. Health facilities are closing — including 190 that provided nutrition services — medicines and supplies are depleted and health workers have gone unpaid for months. Patients with chronic illness, such as kidney disease and diabetes, can no longer find the most basic treatments.

Relentless air strikes, shelling and violence continue to force Yemeni families from their homes. Today Yemen has over 2.5 million internally displaced people (IDPs) — an eightfold increase since the start of the conflict. While displacement has decreased in the southern governorates, where people have been returning home in recent months, it has increased significantly in the northern governorates, primarily due to air strikes. Taiz governorate now hosts the highest number of IDPs — nearly 400,000 people — followed by the northern governorates of Amran and Hajjah. In addition, almost 170,000 Yemenis, refugees and migrants have fled to neighbouring countries, often forced to take perilous sea journeys.

The conflict is devastating the country and causing widespread suffering as parties show disregard for human life and the protection of civilians and indiscriminately target civilian infrastructure, in clear violation of international humanitarian law. More than 2,700 civilians have been confirmed killed, at least 637 of them children. At least 70 health facilities have been hit by air strikes or shelling. Over 170 schools have been destroyed, and more than 600 damaged. At least 58 schools have been occupied by armed groups, nearly all of them in Taiz governorate. Another 238 schools are hosting people displaced by the violence. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict has verified at least 740 cases of child recruitment this year — almost five times the number in 2014. Nearly 85 per cent of those children have been recruited by non-State actors.

Yemeni women have been particularly impacted by the conflict, and their voices are important for us to listen to and heed. Over 30 per cent of displaced households in some areas of the country are female-headed, a notable increase from the 9 per cent before the current crisis. Approximately 70 per cent more gender-based violence incidents have been reported since March. Women are also disproportionately impacted by the

failing economy and social services, resulting in a lack of access for many to life-saving reproductive care.

Despite a challenging and dangerous environment, humanitarian organizations on the ground are responding with life-saving assistance. Four million people have been provided access to emergency water and sanitation through water trucking and the provision of fuel. Since April, monthly food distributions have been steadily expanding, with 1.9 million people reached in November and 3 million people planned for December. By February, 5 million people should be receiving food assistance each month across the country. Over 250 metric tons of life-saving medical supplies have been distributed to health facilities, assisting more than 7 million Yemenis. International and national non-governmental organizations are playing a significant role in the response, running and supporting health facilities, providing psychosocial care, administering treatment to malnourished children and implementing critical water and sanitation projects.

The announcement of the cessation of hostilities by the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Yemen and the agreement by the Yemeni parties, as of 15 December was seized by humanitarian actors as a long-awaited opportunity to reach areas of the country that have been inaccessible, in particular to carry out independent needs assessment and project monitoring, two activities that have been extremely challenging due to the lack of security guarantees and continuing hostilities. While United Nations agencies and partners were able to proceed with some of their intended activities, notably in Taiz governorate, deliveries have been impacted by continued fighting, denials of clearance for convoy movements, and delays stemming from the resumption of cumbersome movement notification procedures to the coalition.

We are very grateful for the tireless efforts of the Special Envoy. I welcome the agreement reached in Switzerland to facilitate humanitarian access to all affected governorates in Yemen, in particular Taiz. I call on the parties to take concrete measures to implement that in practice. Over 200,000 civilians in Taiz have been effectively cut off from assistance. Three months of virtual siege has grounded to a halt much of the city's basic services. Over 50 per cent of its water network has been destroyed by fighting. The health facilities that remain open are operating with limited capacity and are overwhelmed with the war wounded, often to the detriment of those with chronic illness. To date,

only a small amount of supplies have entered the areas of the city affected by the siege. Wheat, pulses, oil and sugar have been offloaded in the warehouses of the partners of the World Food Programme in the districts of Al-Mudhaffar, Al-Qahirah, Al-Salh and Al-Taiziah. The distribution of those supplies has not yet taken place.

We continue to monitor commercial imports into Yemen, and I am relieved to report some improvements in that regard. Food imports have returned to pre-crisis levels. Although still half of what they were before the crisis, fuel imports have increased fourfold since October. Prices remain high despite that progress, in part because of damaged road networks throughout the country. It is vital that continued increases in imports of all critical commodities are sustained. The United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism is expected to be operational in mid-January, once all pledges have been received, thereby ensuring steady flows of commercial supplies, especially those vital to the survival and wellbeing of the Yemeni people.

May I once again remind the parties of their obligations under international humanitarian law to protect civilians from hostilities; safeguard civilian infrastructure, including schools and hospitals; and enable the movement of humanitarian workers and supplies into and across all areas of the country. United Nations agencies and partners will continue to scale up their assistance to save lives. However, only a political settlement can end the immense suffering facing more than 20 million men, women and children in Yemen today.

The President: I thank Ms. Kang for her briefing.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): I thank the President for her initiative in holding this important open debate. I welcome the briefings from Special Envoy Ould Cheikh Ahmed, from High Commissioner Al Hussein and from Assistant-Secretary-General Kang.

As all the briefers have made painfully clear, the situation facing the people of Yemen is alarming. Yemenis are in the midst of one of the very worst humanitarian crises in the world. We have heard the statistics just now. But to bring it home to this Chamber, if the members of this Security Council were an average

group of 15 Yemenis, 12 of us would need humanitarian assistance and four would need emergency food assistance just to survive.

Against that appalling backdrop, however, there are some signs of hope. We welcome the positive progress made at the United Nations talks last week and the at-times constructive approach taken by the delegations. I am sure all of us here will join me in praising the Special Envoy for his efforts to bring the parties to the negotiating table. Ismail says he needs our backing. On behalf of the United Kingdom, I can say that he has it. I hope that the whole Council will support him and encourage further progress at the talks.

The onus must now be on all parties to build on the progress made by taking forward the agreements and implementing further confidence-building measures. This will lay the foundations for a sustainable peace. The United Nations-facilitated talks remain the best way to resolve the current crisis in an inclusive manner. I welcome the agreement by the delegations to ensure a greater involvement of women in the next round of talks. Women are greatly impacted by the conflict, so we must heed their voices.

I believe that there are three steps that now need to be taken: a ceasefire, alleviating the humanitarian situation and implementing resolution 2216 (2015). The first step has to be a meaningful and sustainable ceasefire that is respected by all sides. We welcome the agreement reached in Switzerland to extend the ceasefire until 28 December and give our full support to the work of the Coordination and De-escalation Committee. But there have been too many breaches over the past week, and it does need to be extended further beyond 28 December. Without a ceasefire, all other efforts to improve the situation in Yemen, whether human rights or humanitarian or political in nature, are all put in jeopardy. I therefore call on all sides to respect the ceasefire and fulfil their obligations under international humanitarian law.

Secondly, we need to be doing all we can to alleviate the dire humanitarian situation and help the 21 million Yemenis in need of assistance. The agreement reached to allow humanitarian access to Taiz was a crucial step in this regard. Over 100 World Food Programme trucks reached the city last week, and medical supplies are also arriving. All parties must do what they can to facilitate rapid and safe access to humanitarian aid and remove bureaucratic impediments. Increasing

commercial imports, improving port capacity and granting greater access to finance for traders would all be vital if markets are to reopen.

We all have a role to play, and I am proud that the United Kingdom has doubled its assistance over the past year to around \$110 million, but overall the international humanitarian response remains underfunded. In addition, we should all be worried by the continuing arbitrary detentions and enforced disappearances of non-governmental organization workers, activists, protesters and journalists. These repressive measures by the Houthis are not only closing down the democratic space, but are also denying Yemenis the fundamental rights to which we are all entitled. The United Kingdom called for the release of all those unlawfully detained, including the Yemeni Defence Minister, Mahmoud Al-Subaihi, and for the human rights of all Yemenis to be respected.

The third step needs to be building on the discussions in Switzerland last week for a framework for implementing resolution 2216 (2015). This means the Houthis relinquishing weaponry, withdrawing from towns and cities, and recognizing the legitimacy of the Government of Yemen. It also means former President Ali Abdullah Saleh stopping his destabilizing actions, which continue to undermine the peace, security and stability of Yemen.

There are other areas that are crucial to further progress. Reviving the social welfare fund, protecting State institutions, stopping the recruitment and use of children, and taking action against the use of landmines — these are all vital to finding a sustainable peace in Yemen. In addition, the Special Envoy has reminded us of the risk that Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and Daesh Yemen will exploit the current situation to consolidate their position. The seizure of towns in southern Yemen by AQAP earlier this month and the multiple and coordinated attacks conducted by Daesh Yemen across the country should alarm us all. Countering such terrorist threats must remain a top priority for the Council and the international community as a whole.

In conclusion, I would reiterate that a long-term solution must be found through dialogue and negotiations. We should encourage all sides to take forward the agreements made in Switzerland and build on this solid foundation when talks resume in January 2016. There will be much to discuss in 2016 to ensure that resolution 2216 (2015) is implemented in full and

that ordinary Yemenis can eventually return to a life of normality and safety.

Mr. Cherif (Chad) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen; Prince Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; and Ms. Kyung-wha Kang, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, for their briefings.

Chad is following with great concern the ongoing hostilities and the persistent deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in Yemen. Civilians, including women and children, represent 80 per cent of the victims of this war and continue to pay a very heavy price. The human cost is overwhelming, as we have just heard: over 6,000 deaths, more than 27,000 wounded, nearly 2.5 million internally displaced. Further, for more than three months, thousands of other innocent civilians have been under siege in the city of Taiz and have been denied the subsistence minimum by the Houthi and their allies.

Against this sombre backdrop, the destruction of vital infrastructure and the lack of basic social services exacerbate the suffering of civilian populations. This disastrous war threatens the unity of Yemen and, in the absence of a political perspective, contains the seeds of a regional conflict with incalculable consequences. Moreover, it provides a breeding ground for terrorist groups such as Al-Qaida, thereby threatening international peace and security.

As a result, the international community and countries of the region should encourage the fostering of conditions conducive to dialogue and help the parties opt for a political solution to the conflict. It is therefore urgent to make every effort to promote de-escalation, establish a comprehensive permanent ceasefire and meet the pressing needs of needy populations in all affected areas. In this context, we welcome the recent holding in Switzerland of consultations among the Yemeni actors under the auspices of the United Nations and salute the tireless facilitation efforts of Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General. We hope that the parties will resume consultations shortly, as planned, in order to adopt measures for building mutual trust that will lead to starting a peaceful dialogue.

Nevertheless, we deplore the repeated violations of the ceasefire by the Houthis and their allies and call

on all parties to respect their commitments and refrain from any action likely to undermine the ongoing peace efforts. Accordingly, the international community as a whole must exert all necessary pressure on all parties to engage in good faith and without preconditions in the process of exiting the crisis in accordance with the relevant provisions of resolution 2216 (2015), the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism and the outcomes of the comprehensive National Dialogue conference. The Security Council should continue to monitor the situation in Yemen closely and give its full support for the Special Envoy's efforts in order to provide a decisive boost to the peace process.

Mr. Ibrahim (Malaysia): I thank you, Madam President, for convening today's meeting in an open format, to accord the issue the attention that it deserves. My delegation is appreciative of the insightful briefings by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed; the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Prince Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein; and the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Ms. Kyung-wha Kang. Listening to the briefers, Malaysia is deeply concerned about the protracted conflict in Yemen and the humanitarian disaster that it has triggered.

We take note of the progress made by the conflicting parties in Switzerland last week in the talks brokered by Special Envoy Ahmed. The fact that the conflicting parties had come together to engage in face-to-face negotiations for the first time since the escalation of the conflict is by no means a small feat. However, we regret the lack of commitment on the part of the conflicting parties to engage in good faith and to adhere to the ceasefire agreed prior to the talks. Clearly, the conflicting parties seem to think that they can still win the war militarily.

Malaysia reiterates our position that a political solution remains the only legitimate path towards a democratic, stable and inclusive Yemen. Prolonging the military conflict will only benefit terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda and Daesh. In the past months, we have seen how these terrorist groups and their affiliates have sowed sectarian discord and expanded their influence in Yemen, taking full advantage of the lack of effective Government and ongoing insecurity in the country.

The protracted conflict has exacerbated the humanitarian crisis at the expense of the Yemeni people, particularly children. Since March, over 600 children have been killed in the conflict. The staggering figure of 10 million children are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance, while over 500,000 children under the age of five are at risk of severe acute malnutrition. In addition, half of Yemen's school-aged children are out of school. Over 1,000 schools are unable to resume lessons since they are destroyed, damaged or being used as temporary shelters for internally displaced persons.

In that regard, we reiterate the urgent need for an immediate ceasefire or, at the very least, ample periods of humanitarian pauses to allow humanitarian aid and personnel to reach those in need. As repeatedly expressed by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Malaysia emphasizes that humanitarian aid cannot and should not be expected to take over the role of commercial shipments to the country. We therefore remain concerned about the continuing blockade of commercial shipments and allegations of corruption on the part of certain parties who are trying to benefit from the blockade at the expense of the welfare of the people. Malaysia urges all parties to respect international humanitarian and human rights law, ensure humanitarian access, minimize harm to civilians and refrain from damaging civilian infrastructure. We wish to see independent investigations into various incidences that seriously violated international humanitarian and human rights law, including targeted attacks on civilians, schools and medical facilities.

In concluding, Malaysia reaffirms our strong support for the efforts of Special Envoy Ahmed to identify and implement confidence-building measures towards achieving a durable ceasefire and a comprehensive settlement. We look forward to the next round of talks, which we hope will take place in January. The success of the talks depends on the political will of the conflicting parties themselves. We therefore urge all parties to extend their full cooperation in the peace process and demonstrate their sincerity in ending the conflict and returning the country to its democratic transition path, based on the relevant Security Council resolutions, the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its implementing mechanisms, and the National Dialogue outcomes. We echo the view of the international community that this remains the only

legitimate path in the long run, and we will continue to support Yemen towards that endeavour.

Mr. González de Linares Palou (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank you, Madam President, for convening today's open meeting of the Security Council on the issue of Yemen. It has been some time since we last had an opportunity to address this crisis in the Council, and with today's briefing we have avoided the trap of overlooking and neglecting the grave situation in that country. I thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator for their briefings.

The magnitude of the humanitarian catastrophe in Yemen is highly alarming. Before March, half of Yemen's population lived below the poverty threshold. We can only imagine what the situation is like now. In August, the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Peter Maurer, visited Yemen, and upon his return stated that Yemen, after five months, looks like Syria after five years. Today, 14.5 million people in Yemen are living in food insecurity, and we have all seen the shocking photos in the media of children suffering from malnutrition. We know what that will mean over the coming years. Even if the war in Yemen were to come to an end today, the future of the next generation has already been jeopardized. Given the situation, I would like to focus on three points

The first is the absolute and pressing need for a ceasefire. The objective today must be for parties to agree to a ceasefire, which must be put in place immediately and be effective and, if at all possible, permanent. We believe that a ceasefire is needed to foster trust and allow negotiations to be resumed in good faith. The war in Yemen has taught us that a military solution is not a viable option. The progress that we have seen on the ground over the past few months is irregular and cannot be consolidated easily from a military perspective, especially in a country like Yemen, which has a plethora of militias with shifting loyalties and terrorist groups, some of which are extremely dangerous. It involves not only finding the right humanitarian approach but also being pragmatic in seeking a solution that is not military and that must be embraced by all sides.

The second point that I wish to make is the need to respect international humanitarian law. It is absolutely essential that the core elements of international

humanitarian law be upheld at all times as hostilities continue. Last week's ceasefire, despite its limitations, was nonetheless very useful for humanitarian agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in many areas of the country. We also have positive information from the past few months, as noted by Assistant Secretary-General Kang in her briefing, about the delivery of goods into the country, including fuel, without which no basic services can be provided. But it is clear that there are severe shortages, and we are still a long way from a situation that could be considered acceptable. The entry of goods into the country must be stabilized and all ports along the Red Sea must be made operational. We also recall yet again the importance of preventing attacks on schools, hospitals, other health infrastructures and, of course, medical staff.

The third point concerns the role of the region. The war in Yemen is very closely linked to regional dynamics. Throughout 2015, we have seen considerable headway made in reducing tension in certain conflicts in the Middle East. In July, we reached a historic agreement on Iran's nuclear dossier. Last week, we unanimously adopted resolution 2254 (2015), aimed at laying the foundation for negotiations in Syria with a clear and well-drafted road map. We need that same strength and spirit of consensus with regard to Yemen. We therefore call on all countries of the region to exercise their influence upon the parties to that end.

We wish to express our support for the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, whose skill, level-headedness and discretion have enabled him to persuade the parties to sit at the negotiating table and to extract from them a promise to return to negotiations in January 2016. We also commend the Secretary-General for the key role he plays in keeping a watchful eye on the situation in Yemen. He has become personally involved in the quest for a solution to that crisis.

I wish to conclude by extending our profound gratitude to all the humanitarian workers and staff of the United Nations agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross and NGOs such as Médecins Sans Frontières, who have continued their work on the ground in Yemen, who risk their lives every day to mitigate the impact of this humanitarian catastrophe.

Mr. Suárez Moreno (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen; Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, United

Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; and Ms. Kyung-wha Kang, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs.

We must acknowledge the fact that the Security Council's efforts regarding the situation in Yemen have been ineffective, since resolution 2216 (2015), which we adopted in April, has failed to bring about any significant resolution of the armed conflict there. Venezuela is still convinced, however, that only dialogue and negotiations can lay the groundwork for ending the conflict so as to promote a peaceful and orderly political transition. In that regard, we commend the peace talks that took place in Switzerland last week. The Special Envoy's new initiative demonstrates the importance of the leadership of the United Nations in the political negotiation process and its role as a mediator in the conflict. That process should be conducted in good faith, without conditions, and should include representatives of civil society, including women, with the aim of outlining public policies that benefit the population of Yemen as a whole.

Unfortunately, despite the fact that the parties agreed to suspend hostilities before the talks began, there have already been violations of the ceasefire, which have a damaging effect on the dialogue and put obstacles in the way of a peace agreement. In that regard, we urge the parties to comply with their commitment in order to facilitate concrete progress for the good of the people of Yemen.

Achieving a political, peaceful and definitive settlement in Yemen has become correspondingly more difficult as the conflict has been prolonged. It is regrettable that a lack of political will among the parties to end hostilities has resulted in a chaotic situation that has had a terrible effect on the civilian population. We therefore call once again on the parties to commit to specific goals with a view to settling the crisis as quickly as possible. We reiterate that we will see positive results from the negotiations only to the extent that the parties demonstrate flexibility and a willingness to compromise in order to reach a secure and lasting peace in Yemen.

Thanks to the armed conflict, Yemen is dealing with a serious humanitarian crisis that is shaking it to its foundations. According to a number of reports, 80 per cent of the population — more than 20 million people altogether — is in urgent need of some form of humanitarian aid to meet their desperate needs for

food, medicines and fuel. Yemen has thus become one of the worst, if not the worst, humanitarian crises in the region, despite the silence of the media about this fact.

It is deeply regrettable that the conflict has so far resulted in about 6,000 deaths, half of them civilians, and more than 27,500 wounded. According to UNICEF, those numbers include 637 children killed and 927 injured. To that tragedy we must add the 1.3 million children under five who are at risk of malnutrition and 2.3 million people who have been forced to leave their homes, while hundreds of thousands more have fled the country. We hope the parties to the conflict can guarantee access to the country's more remote areas for humanitarian workers so they can provide assistance to relieve the people's most urgent needs. I would like to take this opportunity to commend the World Food Programme, UNICEF and the various humanitarian and volunteer agencies, among others, for their invaluable efforts to relieve the adverse impact on the civilian population in the wake of the conflict.

I would also like to take advantage of this occasion to firmly condemn the assassination earlier this month by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) of the Governor of Aden, Mr. Jafar Mohamed Saad. We reiterate that the only beneficiaries of the conflict in Yemen are Al-Qaida and ISIS, which feed on chaos and violence in their efforts to achieve their objectives. As Mr. Ahmed said in his briefing, those terrorist groups have expanded their activities into Yemen, further complicating what was already a precarious political situation. As we have already said, effectively combating terrorism in Yemen requires the existence of a State with solid institutions, but that can be achieved only when the armed conflict ends and peace and stability are restored, with the participation of every sector of society.

As we have said before and say again, we reject violence and terrorism in all their forms and manifestations. Given the devastation caused by this conflict, Venezuela appeals to the parties to take urgent steps aimed at reaching an agreement that can end the hostilities. We call on all concerned to respect international humanitarian and human rights laws, which are being violated repeatedly and systematically by the parties to the conflict. Dialogue is the only way we can achieve peace and stability. We reiterate that the solution must be political, negotiated and peaceful. Countries that have any influence on the parties should do all they can to help achieve progress in this process.

The situation in Yemen is tragic. We should see the prolonged crisis as an urgent wake-up call, telling us that we cannot abandon our efforts to help reverse the prevailing climate of violence. The international community has an obligation to support any peaceful political efforts to protect Yemen's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the country, and in particular to work to ensure the protection of Yemenis affected by the war.

Finally, we believe the Council should act constructively to address the political crisis affecting our brothers the people of Yemen and to help its millions of citizens overcome the hardships the war has caused.

Mr. Zhao Yong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank Special Envoy Ahmed, High Commissioner for Human Rights Al Hussein, and Assistant Secretary-General Kyung-wha Kang for their briefings.

Thanks to the active good offices of the international community, including the United Nations, the settlement process in Yemen has made progress recently. The Yemeni parties have restarted their political dialogue in Switzerland and have arrived at agreements, including on a temporary ceasefire, developments that China welcomes. China greatly appreciates the good offices of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and his Special Envoy, Mr. Ahmed, in mediating the conflict in Yemen.

In Yemen, history has repeatedly shown that war offers no solutions and that political dialogue is the only path to achieving a durable peace. The parties must sit down and continue their talks. It is hoped that they will proceed based on the long-term interests of their country and their people and in the interests of peace and stability in the region in general. They should take this opportunity to continue to participate unconditionally in the political dialogue, conducted under United Nations auspices, ensure that it continues as scheduled, demonstrate their good faith and see that it produces policy decisions that can result as soon as possible in a political settlement that reflects reality in Yemen and accommodates all the parties' concerns. We hope that the international community will work hard to promote the peace talks, build confidence and allay suspicions, and that other States in the region and the relevant regional organizations will continue to play a constructive role.

The protracted conflict in Yemen has resulted in a deteriorating humanitarian situation. China sympathizes deeply with the suffering of the Yemeni

people. Alongside the efforts to advance Yemen's political settlement process, we hope that the United Nations will continue to improve its coordination of the delivery of humanitarian assistance there. The parties concerned should also cooperate actively with United Nations efforts by ensuring that there are no obstacles to safe humanitarian access. International donors should honour their commitments as soon as possible in order to ease Yemen's humanitarian crisis.

China has been following the situation in Yemen closely. We have actively promoted the peace talks and provided large amounts of humanitarian assistance. China will continue to work with the international community in a concerted effort to push for an early resumption of peace and stability in Yemen.

Ms. Murmokaitė (Lithuania): My delegation welcomes the initiative, Madam President, to hold this open briefing on Yemen. I thank all of the briefers for their valuable contributions, which once again remind us of the deep and abysmal crisis that Yemen is in. To expect a military solution or a surrender of the other side is to court a self-defeating illusion. One may win a war but lose a country while doing so. If the conflict continues, the consequences will be devastating for generations to come — for Yemenis and for the entire region and beyond.

Let me express our full support to the mediation efforts of Special Envoy of the Secretary-General Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed. There needs to be viable follow-up to the meetings in Switzerland. We welcome in particular the commitment of the parties to continue the work of the Coordination and De-escalation Committee. The three key pillars — the cessation of hostilities, unhindered humanitarian access and a political process that puts Yemen's transition back on track — must be unconditionally supported and sustained. The transition framework is well-known, based on resolution 2216 (2015), the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and the National Dialogue outcomes.

The onus is on all of the parties to break the cycle of violence and restore respect for human life. If Yemen and the Yemenis are to have a viable future, a durable solution leading to transition and peace must be found now. Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham will not wait. They are already making themselves very comfortable on the ground, and we know what happens where they settle in. We cannot afford another terrorist black hole in the region.

We are well aware of how difficult the process is. We pay tribute to the Special Envoy's perseverance and tenacity in keeping the hope of negotiations alive. Having the date for the next meeting is a small but important signal. We hope that the talks will increasingly be based on substance and the agenda set forth by the Special Envoy, ideally all in one package. We would like to thank the Special Envoy for reaching out to Yemen's women in particular. Their voices must continue to be part and parcel of all the talks and the efforts aimed at restoring peace in that much-suffering country.

Confidence-building measures, including a prisoner release, are key to making sure peace happens. We welcome the fact that more than 100 United Nations food trucks managed to reach Taiz, and that both sides have agreed to make humanitarian access to the city permanent. However, more deliveries of that kind are most urgently needed across the country. Malnourishment, starvation, the stunted growth of children — all of that will negatively impact the future of the country and should not be allowed to continue. It is disappointing that the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism is not yet operational. Given the level of delivery shortages, including the delivery of commercial goods and fuel in particular, any further delays are unacceptable, including considering the fact that the coalition has acknowledged that the approach offered by the United Nations would substantially alleviate their concerns regarding possible breaches of the arms embargo. A lot of figures have been mentioned. I will refer to only one that speaks for itself and underlines the urgency. The prices of fuel and cooking gas have gone up by 300 per cent over pre-war levels, in a country that was already very poor before the crisis struck.

We regret that ceasefire violations continue to occur on both sides. It is crucial to observe and to extend the ceasefire, with an effective ceasefire coordination mechanism in place and operating. In that context, let me also stress, as many delegations have before me, the critical need for all parties to the conflict to observe international humanitarian and human rights law. Schools, health facilities and humanitarian and medical workers must be protected and safe from attacks. Violations against them may amount to war crimes. Those who violate international humanitarian law and human rights law must sooner or later be held to account.

Let me move now to the issue of sanctions. When the sanctions regime was set up, the prevalent thinking was that the threat of sanctions alone was sufficient to deter spoilers. That proved erroneous. Empty shells do not deter spoilers. When the first individuals were finally designated in November 2014, it was already too late, since by that time arms were flowing freely into the Houthis' hands, and they were well advanced in their march against the legitimate Government of Yemen.

A lot more needs to be done with regard to former President Ali Abdullah Saleh, his son Mr. Ahmed Ali Saleh and the inner circle, who have played a huge role in stoking the conflict. Some countries have already started identifying and freezing their assets. We encourage all countries that may have information on their assets to step up their cooperation with the Panel of Experts as they prepare their final report to the Committee, which is due in January.

The need to stop uncontrolled arms flows into Yemen and to deal with the massive saturation of the country with arms was evident even before the conflict flared. Lithuania has consistently supported the idea of an arms embargo that could have given a United Nations-supported disarmament, demobilization and reintegration effort a better chance of success. The targeted arms embargo has finally been imposed. Yet we need to admit that, as currently structured and applied, its impact is yet to be assessed. For that we need better reporting on the implementation of the arms embargo. It is important to also ensure that reported cases of arms-embargo violations, such as the one concerning the attempted weapons transfer from Iran, should be seriously examined by the Panel and the Committee.

Mrs. Ogwu (Nigeria): I thank you, Madam President, for convening this meeting. We are also grateful to the briefers — Special Envoy of the Secretary-General Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, whom I welcome back to the Council, and Ms. Kyung-wha Kang. We wish to thank them for their updates on the situation in Yemen.

We have very closely followed the mediation efforts of Special Envoy Ould Cheikh Ahmed. We commend him for his commitment to searching for peace in Yemen. Getting the Government of President Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour and the Houthis to engage in discussions for the first time is in itself is

a very encouraging development that we can describe as a significant silver lining in the cloud. We wish to welcome the agreement reached by the parties on the broad framework for ending the conflict. Particularly noteworthy are the confidence-building measures agreed by the parties, including the release of prisoners and the facilitation of humanitarian access.

We are concerned, however, that a permanent ceasefire has not yet been agreed. An enduring ceasefire, we believe, will be the most effective confidence-building measure. We encourage the parties to extend the current temporary ceasefire to make it permanent. Even with a temporary ceasefire in place, numerous violations have rendered it tenuous. It is not enough to have a ceasefire; the parties must refrain from violence during the ceasefire. That is a crucial first step in de-escalating the conflict and improving the humanitarian situation in Yemen. We look forward to the resumption of talks on 14 January. It is our hope that they will build a scaffolding on top of the gains of the first round to produce an outcome that will end the conflict in Yemen.

Mrs. Kawar (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): First and foremost, I wish to thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed; Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; and Ms. Kyung-wha Kang, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, for their briefings today. I would also like to thank the United Nations staff in Yemen, who work around the clock to deliver assistance despite the serious security risks in the country.

The direct talks among the parties to the conflict in Yemen, held recently in Geneva, provide a source of relief. Jordan supports the positive development at the political level and the inclusion of the Houthis in an attempt to implement resolution 2216 (2015). The declaration by President Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour of a seven-day ceasefire, parallel to the negotiations in Switzerland, was a welcome step. We also welcome the fact that he has extended the ceasefire. That is proof of the Yemeni Government's genuine commitment to finding a negotiated political and peaceful settlement, which they favour over any other solution. The Government's tireless support for the cessation of hostilities following the ceasefire is due to their belief that it can further successful negotiations in Switzerland.

The negotiations in Switzerland mark a decisive turning point in the current political crisis in Yemen. Even if it is only a beginning, we look forward to a more definitive cessation of hostilities. Negotiations have allowed us at least to begin to overcome the deadlock that has characterized the political situation in Yemen for some years now. Those who were engaged in the negotiations in Geneva agreed to the implementation of a ceasefire monitoring committee and a humanitarian mechanism. We therefore underscore the importance of such negotiations, even if they are but a beginning. They took place at a timely moment, and the initial results have been fruitful.

Similarly, we are looking forward to the next cycle of negotiations, which are scheduled to begin on 14 January 2016, and we underscore the importance of the framework for the negotiations, which is provided by resolution 2216 (2015), the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Initiative and the outcomes of the Yemeni National Dialogue. We would also like to reiterate the importance of pursuing negotiations, and we call on all parties to participate seriously and in good faith in the discussions because we are firmly convinced that the solution to the Yemeni crisis is a political one involving the re-establishment of the legitimacy embodied by President Hadi Mansour and by the control of the Government over all areas of Yemen, including all of its governorates.

Jordan profoundly regrets and unequivocally and robustly condemns all violations of the humanitarian pause agreed by President Hadi Mansour. There have been many reported violations of that pause, particularly in the Taiz and Marib governorates. I prefer not to go into detail concerning those violations, but I would draw everyone's attention to the fact that they have been duly documented in report S/2015/582. Such violations are not limited to Yemen alone; we have seen similar violations in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, with the launching of ballistic missiles. That is a serious and alarming development and a clear act of provocation. Nonetheless, the Yemeni Government has maintained its commitment to respecting the ceasefire and cessation of hostilities, while the coalition forces have expressed their commitment to the truce and have held back from responding to provocation.

The humanitarian situation in Yemen is a further source of concern. We have always called attention to the inextricable link between the humanitarian situation and a political settlement, which go hand in

hand with the restoration of the legitimacy of the duly elected Government of Yemen. Those three elements go together. We need to identify the root causes of the escalation of the humanitarian crisis in Yemen, owing in part to the fragility and weakness of the country and its institutions. We are aware that the relevant resolutions of the Security Council — particularly resolutions 2201 (2015) and 2216 (2015) — are not being properly implemented because of that weakness.

I would like to draw particular attention to the humanitarian situation in the city of Taiz, which is suffering the worst form of collective punishment by being besieged. Because of the humanitarian blockade, no aid is getting through, putting the city's population of 400,000 at risk of their lives. We therefore call on the international community to urgently respond by exercising pressure on the Houthis and their partners so as to open the roads and infrastructure for the delivery of aid to that city and to ensure that no humanitarian aid is diverted. During negotiations, we noticed the failure to reach an agreement on enabling humanitarian aid to reach Taiz, and we need to urgently remedy that.

Despite the violations of the humanitarian pause, there is nonetheless grounds for hope because the information gathered by the security forces indicate that, despite the violations, it has been possible to improve the humanitarian situation. Thanks to the humanitarian pause, some aid has have been delivered to other affected cities and regions, which makes it very clear, once again, that a political solution lies in the framework of the GCC Initiative, the outcomes of National Dialogue and resolution 2216 (2015).

This might be the last statement made by my country before the Security Council on the subject of Yemen. As a parting appeal, we therefore call on all members of the Security Council and the entire international community to work together in shouldering our responsibilities to the people of Yemen and implement all possible measures aimed at helping the Yemenis achieve progress on the path to peace and stability in their country and among themselves, because our brotherly country of Yemen and its people are known for their generosity and wisdom. Its people look to the Council to bring them hope and an end to the tragedy, which has led to the suffering of children, women, men and the elderly in Yemen.

It is also extremely important to listen to the concerns of the country and to ensure that the GCC is part of the solution, because Yemen has made it very

clear that the deterioration of the security situation in that country is a serious threat to the region in general, including the members of the GCC. They therefore need to be part of any solution, and we need to keep an eye on any repercussions resulting from potential political insecurity in the broader region and any potential spillover, should the situation in Yemen deteriorate further. If that does happen, Yemen will become a fertile breeding ground for terrorists to extend their control and grip and to project the shadow of terrorism throughout the region, becoming a much greater threat than they already are, including for GCC countries. As we have seen throughout the world, terrorists have irrefutably demonstrated that what is happening in our region will not remain contained there, but will impact the entire world.

Mr. Safronkov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed; the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein; and the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Ms. Kyung-wha Kang, for their briefings on the situation in Yemen.

We welcome the resumption of negotiations between the Yemeni parties. We note the productive work of Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed, who overcame numerous difficulties in Switzerland and was able to bring together all the key parties to the conflict to conduct comprehensive political talks with a view to putting a timely end to the bloodshed. We regret that the talks did not coincide with a lasting ceasefire. It is not encouraging that the meeting has been deferred to mid-January. We underscore our position that we do see no alternative to a political settlement of the conflict. We truly hope that the Coordination and De-Escalation Committee, comprised of military advisers from each party to the conflict, will be able ensure reconciliation as soon as possible.

We believe that the agreements with regard to unhindered humanitarian access and the lifting of any blockades are exceptionally important. We continue to believe that the establishment of humanitarian pauses is timely, a point on which Russia has insisted since the very beginning of the crisis in Yemen. Such humanitarian pauses, aimed at alleviating the suffering of civilians, are of critical interest and must be complied with under all international humanitarian laws. The Russian Federation has provided and will continue to provide humanitarian assistance to Yemen.

We welcome the outcome that was reached under Mr. Ahmed's leadership in Switzerland with regard to the exchange of prisoners. In the future, it will be necessary to gradually establish an atmosphere of mutual trust. In that regard, the unifying elements might also include a joint effort to fight the terrorist threat emerging in the country. The development of events on the ground this year have demonstrated the evident futility of wagering on a military solution to resolve the crisis in Yemen. Ongoing military clashes can lead only to the further deterioration the situation, exacerbate the humanitarian crisis and promote the anarchy and chaos that terrorist groups actively exploit to spread their presence and influence in Yemen. All Yemeni patriotic forces must come together to push back against terrorism.

In conclusion, we would like to express our support for the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed, and his team. We expect an increased level in his efforts to end the military clashes as soon as possible and launch substantive talks on the withdrawal of forces and the start of an inclusive dialogue to rebuild statehood and the unity of the country.

Mr. Gimolieca (Angola): We would like to thank Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen; Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; and Ms. Kyung-wha Kang, the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs.

We also take this opportunity to commend Mr. Ahmed for being able to broker the ceasefire agreement last week, which surely brought a welcome break in the fighting for the people of Yemen. After more than a year of fighting, the loss of thousands of lives and the worsening humanitarian situation, the warring sides have to seize such opportunities in order to reduce the suffering of the people of Yemen and to achieve a sustainable political settlement.

It is most unfortunate that the proposed ceasefire was repeatedly violated during the peace talks in Switzerland, and that no tangible outcome was achieved. However, we are fully aware that this process will take time and patience. We therefore welcome the announcement by Special Envoy Ahmed that a new round of talks will be held on 14 January. In the meantime, we reiterate our call on the warring parties to respect the safety of the civilian population and to heed the call for a permanent ceasefire in order to prevent further loss of life and the proliferation of

terrorist armed groups, including the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham, that have exploited the violence to spread their influence in that volatile region.

Mr. Van Bohemen (New Zealand): I would like to thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed; the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein; and the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Ms. Kyung-wha Kang for their briefings. We welcome the update on the first round of talks in Switzerland, as well as the forthright nature of the briefings on the human rights and humanitarian situations in Yemen.

All of us here would have wished to see greater progress made in the past week's talks. Even so, it is welcome that the parties have found some important areas of agreement and that there is a commitment to resuming talks in mid-January. It is vital that both sides remain committed and engaged, without preconditions, to achieving a negotiated solution to the crisis, and to working to ensure progress towards that goal at the next round of talks. We agree with the Special Envoy that the Security Council must support his efforts. We call on all sides to engage meaningfully. Those who may seek to undermine the talks or the ceasefire should know that there will be consequences.

The violations of the temporary ceasefire on both sides are very disappointing. We commend, however, the efforts of humanitarian agencies to reach those in need during the window provided. It is important now that the ceasefire be extended and respected, both to facilitate further humanitarian access and to provide the resumed talks with the best prospects for success. Given the fragmented nature of the forces on the ground, we call on all sides to exercise restraint in responding to provocations in the weeks ahead in order to give the ceasefire a chance to take hold.

The situation in Yemen has deteriorated very seriously during 2015. A country that was already seriously impoverished has now suffered egregiously due to serial failures in its leadership and sectarianism. The longer this conflict continues, the more the Yemeni people suffer, and the greater the threat to the stability and security of neighbouring countries. It is in the interests of all sides in the conflict to end the fighting and instability as soon as possible and work towards an inclusive and sustainable political solution. Only then can the work of the political transition resume and the country's leadership begin to address the multitude

of political, security, economic and humanitarian challenges that await.

Hostilities in and around civilian areas, including the use of heavy weapons and cluster munitions, as well as air strikes and anti-aircraft fire, have inflicted an unacceptably high toll on the civilian population. Weapons flows from Yemen into Somalia and elsewhere threaten regional stability. There is mounting evidence that extremist groups, such as the Yemeni incarnations of Al-Qaida and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, are the primary beneficiaries of continued instability and conflict. Neither Yemen nor its neighbours can afford this conflict.

Efforts to prevent the flow of arms into the country continue to inhibit access for desperately needed imported goods. New Zealand supports, both politically and materially, the development of the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism, and hopes that with its implementation the passage of commercial supplies into Yemen will be significantly improved. We are very encouraged that the parties have agreed to remove barriers to the safe, rapid and unhindered access of humanitarian supplies to all parts of Yemen. These commitments must be honoured by all sides.

As we have heard, serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law have been committed. To avoid deepening the divisions within Yemeni society, it is essential that the national commission of inquiry independently and thoroughly investigate violations by all sides and share its findings with the international community. Against that background, the focused discussion of the Security Council today is significant. Since the beginning of its political transition in 2011, the United Nations and the Security Council have played a significant political role in Yemen. And since April this year, resolution 2216 (2015) has been prominent in the Yemeni political discourse.

Ultimately, there will have to be an inclusive solution that provides for broad participation in governance arrangements. Any agreement will necessarily have challenging and complicated security arrangements that provide for the disarmament of armed groups and the re-establishment of State authority. The Council must be ready to support such efforts with the same commitment we have been able demonstrate on other regional issues.

Mr. Barros Melet (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the initiative of the United States to convene this public meeting. We thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Ismail Ould Sheik Ahmed; United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein; and Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Ms. Kyung-wha Kang, for their briefings.

The information provided by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other stakeholders reveals the serious deterioration of the situation in Yemen, in particular the humanitarian situation. We note with alarm reports of actions that may constitute serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

We condemn the use by all parties of explosive weapons in densely populated areas and their serious consequences on the civilian population and Yemeni infrastructure, including schools and hospitals. In particular, we condemn indiscriminate aerial attacks and the use of schools for military purposes, in violation of resolution 2143 (2014), and the possible use of cluster munitions. In the absence of a political solution and a definitive ceasefire it is urgent that we reiterate the call on the parties to the conflict to respect international law. For its part, the international community should promote justice and accountability. We support the recommendation of the High Commissioner pertaining to the establishment of an impartial and independent mechanism to investigate all allegations of violations and abuses of international human rights law and violations of international humanitarian law.

We thank the agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations and its partners for their efforts to address the humanitarian needs in Yemen. Nevertheless, we must not forget that humanitarian assistance relieves the symptoms of the conflict without curing the underlying problem. We reiterate that a political solution is the only remedy for the latter. We call on the parties to constructively resume direct negotiations in January without preconditions. Such negotiations would be a step in the right direction. We also reiterate our support for the work of the Special Envoy. Only through a political solution can the crisis in Yemen come to a sustainable end, thereby making it possible to address the institutional, economic, humanitarian and security challenges faced by the country. With regard

to the latter, we must not lose sight of the threat posed by Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula.

Given that this will probably be our last opportunity to refer to the matter within the context of our two-year tenure as a member of the Council, we wish to note how deeply moved we are by the conflict in Yemen, having seen first-hand the disappointment of the dreams of the women and men who in 2011 aspired to build a better country. We hope that we have contributed, through our actions in the Council, to ensuring due respect for the humanitarian needs and protection of the civilian population affected by the conflict, including children, and we call on the Council to continue to work towards the implementation of resolution 1612 (2005) and subsequent relevant resolutions, and well as towards the eradication of the use and recruitment of children in Yemen.

We hope that the international community will not fail the Yemeni people and that it will support them in creating the conditions that will help them establish a stable, tolerant, inclusive and democratic system.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Assistant Secretary-General Humanitarian Affairs for their briefings and their commitment.

For several months, Yemen has been plunged into a major humanitarian and political crisis. In that context, France welcomes the emerging progress. France also welcomes the holding of talk in Switzerland from 15 to 20 December and the ensuing progress, in particular the establishment of a military committee tasked with ensuring respect for the ceasefire and the establishment of humanitarian access to the city of Taiz. In that regard, we would be remiss not to acknowledge all the work undertaken by the Special Envoy in bringing the two parties together and leading them to the negotiating table. We also commend the parties' commitment to putting an end to the hostilities. However, in the face of the continued fighting, we must recognize the long road that remains to be covered before lasting trust between the parties can be re-established. In that context, a lasting ceasefire respected by all must be put in place without delay.

The second round of negotiations, which will begin on 14 January, should make it possible to make progress towards a compromise agreeable to all the parties in order to pave the way for the establishment of an

inclusive Government, promote national reconciliation and re-establish the rule of law. Such a compromise should also make it possible to relaunch a political transition process based on the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2216 (2015), as well as on the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference.

A political solution is all the more necessary given that the humanitarian and human rights situation is now more critical than ever. As the Council was just reminded, more than 80 per cent of the Yemeni population currently requires humanitarian assistance. Millions of people lack access to water, suffer from malnutrition and have no access to medical attention. We hope that the mechanism for delivering humanitarian assistance to the city of Taiz can be rapidly expanded to other cities in the country. Likewise, the human rights situation throughout the country is extremely troubling, if not to say tragic, as we just heard from the High Commissioner for Human Rights, whose presence here today I welcome.

The situation in Yemen is not just a regional threat but an international one. The growing strength on Yemeni territory of the terrorist groups Al-Qaida on the Arabian Peninsula and Daesh has gone hand in hand with the disintegration of the Yemeni State. That development represents a threat to regional stability and to all countries, as we have seen. The exacerbation of that threat heightens the urgency of a political solution, which alone can address the root causes that are undermining Yemen.

France therefore takes the opportunity of this formal meeting of the Security Council to call on the parties to take all the necessary measures to ensure the success of the negotiations, as well as to urge regional partners to use their influence to support the efforts of the Special Envoy. It is incumbent upon all of us collectively to support the fragile process leading to an end of the crisis. In that regard, it is vital for the Security Council to play its full role. France will continue to spare no effort to work with its partners on the Council to that end.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United States.

I thank Special Envoy Ould Cheikh Ahmed, High Commissioner Al Hussain and Assistant Secretary-General Kang for their briefings on Yemen's dire political, humanitarian and human rights challenges.

I want to particularly commend the Special Envoy for traveling here straight from a week of political talks in Switzerland. We are grateful to him. I also want to thank all the Council members who have spoken before me. This is a very opinionated group, as it should be, and we do not always agree on everything. But listening to the remarks here this morning, one thing is clear: the Security Council is united on Yemen. We are united, to begin with, in our support for the work undertaken by the Special Envoy and his team over the past week in Switzerland and well beyond. He negotiated critical confidence-building measures, a mechanism seeking to de-escalate military tensions and improved humanitarian access to all governorates. Those are important steps forward, and we commend him for his work. As others have noted, after nearly nine months of fighting and more than 2,700 civilian deaths, such steps are long overdue. The United States stands ready to work with the rest of the Council to hold all sides to their commitments in advance of the resumption of talks next month.

Today has also shown that the Council has a common vision of what must happen next. As the negotiators are returning home from Switzerland, let me highlight three of the most important messages we as the Council have sent today.

First, all sides must do more to facilitate access for life-saving humanitarian assistance and shipments of the most basic commercial goods. We heard to day about Yemen's already devastating humanitarian crisis, including the fact that more than 80 per cent of the population needs humanitarian assistance. In some governorates, including Aden and Sa'ada, but especially Taiz, it is even worse. There, nearly every resident requires aid. The suffering is being significantly and unnecessarily compounded by restrictions and impediments to access that are preventing assistance from getting through, from reaching those who need it most and thereby causing dramatic price increases in the markets. That has to stop. Recent events have shown that access can be improved even in the absence of a lasting political agreement.

After the lifting of restrictions on commercial vessels entering the country in October, food imports finally returned to pre-crisis levels, as we heard from Ms. Kang today. More ships are now reaching many of Yemen's ports to deliver their cargo. Now we have to find ways to increase the through-put of those ports by shortening the time needed to unload critical supplies.

And — this is critical — the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism must become operational as long last to help restore the confidence of the shipping industry and further accelerate shipments of goods, especially fuel. Fuel imports are still only half of what they were before the crisis, and fuel drives so much of what goes on in the country, including even the ability to access clean water.

Meanwhile, more than 100 trucks were finally allowed passage into Taiz last week to deliver drinking water, food, medicine and other basic supplies. But those supplies now need to actually reach the more than 200,000 besieged civilians. With enormous needs still unmet, progress like this is just the beginning. The Houthis must allow access into Taiz. Similar efforts should be made elsewhere to facilitate the transport of staple goods.

Secondly, the Council today reaffirmed its conviction that the crisis will be solved not through military action but, as we have all heard again and again, through political dialogue like the one that the Special Envoy managed to restart in Switzerland. That progress reinforces the message that the Council previously sent through resolution 2216 (2015), which called unequivocally for a consensus-based political solution to the crisis based on dialogue. Such dialogue will lead to peace only if all parties fully commit to its success and are willing to make hard compromises. The lack of trust among the parties after everything is understandable, particularly after the Houthis violated one agreement after another in their military push southward — the event that precipitated the current phase of the conflict. But for the sake of the Yemeni people, the warring parties must now come together to engage in good faith. They must be prepared to show flexibility and adhere to compromises once the talks conclude. Even when there may be provocations on the ground, everyone must be resolute in the commitment to return to a political transition based on the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative, the outcomes of the National Dialogue and the relevant Security Council resolutions. As the transition takes shape — and I realize that we are not there yet — it will be critical that it incorporate not only armed groups but also Yemeni women and members of Yemeni civil society. We commend the Special Envoy for his dedicated effort to that end. Such representatives must have the freedom to leave Yemen to take part in peace talks, and we hope that they are also able to leave Yemen to provide

the Security Council with first-hand perspectives on conditions on the ground.

Thirdly, and finally, the Council made clear today that all sides must commit to a de-escalation of the hostilities and a lasting ceasefire. The ceasefire that began last week was imperfect, but it was a step. The United States joins others in welcoming President Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour's commitment to extending it, and we urge forces on the ground to respect this halt in attacks. To bolster the ceasefire, we hope that all parties will send empowered representatives to the United Nations-proposed coordination and de-escalation committee without delay.

While urging all sides to respect the ceasefire, I also want to reiterate that all parties must fully abide by their obligations under international humanitarian law, which, as High Commissioner Al Hussein reported, has been violated repeatedly during this conflict, with horrific consequences. Militias loyal to the Houthis and former President Ali Abdullah Saleh must stop any and all indiscriminate shelling of civilian areas, including in Taiz, and they must halt their cross-border attacks. We will also urge the Saudi-led coalition to ensure lawful and discriminate targeting and to thoroughly investigate all credible allegations of civilian casualties, and make adjustments as needed to avoid such incidents.

Today's Council meeting has sent a single, unified message about what must be done in Yemen. We stand behind the Special Envoy's efforts and we urge all sides to continue moving towards a political transition. In the interim, we call on them to improve access, de-escalate hostilities and commit to a lasting ceasefire. Our unity on this issue stems from our shared conviction that too many Yemenis have already suffered from this war. Let me conclude with the story of just one of them.

In October, a 6-year-old boy named Fareed Shawki was playing hide-and-seek in Taiz when a missile struck nearby. He was hit by shrapnel and rushed to a hospital along with at least six other boys who had been injured. Having lived too long amid conflict, he knew what could happen. "Don't bury me," he cried, as doctors worked and his father watched. "Don't bury me." Fareed later succumbed to his injuries. He was buried by his relatives, as his father could not bear to do it himself.

In its profound tragedy, Fareed's story is the story of this war. It is a story that should have had a different ending very long ago. The parties have a chance to end

the conflict now, and the United States joins the other members of the Security Council in urging them to do so.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Yemen.

Mr. Alyemany (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to express our gratitude to our friend Ambassador Samantha Power, Permanent Representative of the United States of America, for her continuous efforts and her engagement on the Yemeni issue, most recently expressed here during her statement, in which she referred to the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Taiz as a result of the policy of collective punishment practiced by the militias of Houthi and former President Saleh against the people of this long-suffering governorate. We also thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for according the Yemeni crisis great attention through his Special Envoy for Yemen, Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, who is making serious efforts to find a negotiated solution for the implementation of resolution 2216 (2015). On behalf of the Government of Yemen, I also thank the team of the Special Envoy for its major efforts in organizing the talks at the Magglingen centre in the Swiss town of Biel from 15 to 20 December.

We have just closed another chapter in the efforts to bring about peace in my country based on resolution 2216 (2015), which informed the Biel negotiations agenda with the aim of reversing the putsch by the Houthis and Saleh against the legitimate authorities and ending the suffering of millions of our people, whose blood has been shed as a result. The coup has destroyed their homes, deprived them of their livelihoods and inflicted a toll of death and hatred — a situation alien to our social fabric, which has shaped our people over centuries of coexistence. Much success was achieved in the Biel talks, in spite of the challenges and difficulties in the consultations, including the lack of readiness by the putschist side and the fact that its leadership did not authorize its interlocutors to engage effectively to achieve the points set for the negotiations.

We look to our supporters in the Security Council, the international community and the 18 sponsors of the political process in Yemen to bring more pressure to bear with regard to the delivery of humanitarian assistance to all regions in Yemen, especially to Taiz. The long-suffering city Taiz is being blockaded in an

unprecedented manner, to the point of genocide. Its citizens look forward to a spirit of solidarity in the form of the delivery of humanitarian, medical and emergency relief assistance to vanquish the spectre of death.

We also look for a major role by the United Nations and the Red Crescent in securing the release political detainees as a building block of the confidence-building measures in the consultations. The Government of the Republic of Yemen seeks to revive economic life and commercial activity as the lynchpin of normalization. The Government reached an agreement in early August with the United Nations and the coalition forces to implement the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism. However, financial and organizational impediments, which the Yemeni Government has nothing to do with, has prevented its operationalization to date. The Mechanism can achieve a lot to guarantee the restart of commercial activity. In addition, the representative of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs mentioned at the Biel talks the presence of numerous shipments in the Port of Aden, which are intended for the central and northern governorates. However, the local warlords, loyal to the Houthis and Saleh, seek to impede its transfer, plunder it instead in order to enrich themselves on the black market. There are also large quantities of supplies awaiting distribution at the Port of Al-Hudeidah. But the putschists are deliberately obstructing it, in an act of cheap political blackmail that brazenly ignores the suffering of the Yemeni people.

Based on its from responsibility to the patient Yemeni people — from Sana'a to Al-Mahrah — the Government expresses its readiness to spare no effort to deliver food, medicine and supplies to all areas of Yemen without exception. My Government is also committed to peace, and to ending the war and the suffering of the Yemeni people, as well as to providing a conducive environment for the consultations, as reflected President Mansour's letter addressed to the Secretary-General on 6 December. The President declared an unconditional ceasefire 10 days before the launch of the consultations in order to foster an atmosphere of confidence. He is continuing to extend his hand for the sake of peace, but the putschists refuse even reveal the fate of the detainees or to allow the Red Cross to visit them. Refusing to release them or to allow them access to relief supplies is a violation of humanitarian law as well as an affront to human dignity.

Against that backdrop, on the instructions of President Mansour, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Abdul Malik Al-Mukhlafi, head of the Yemeni delegation to the Biel consultations, confirmed another one-week extension to the ceasefire, thereby abiding by the letter and spirit of the President's letter to the Secretary-General.

Flagrant violations by the putschist forces of the Houthi and Saleh militias are still occurring daily all over Yemen. Those militias are violating human rights through abductions, threats and intimidation of young men, as well through the illegal financial fees imposed on businessmen under the flimsy pretext that the extorted funds are contributions to a legitimate military effort. Further human rights violations by the Houthi and Saleh militias include the arrest of journalists, who now languish in prisons run by the militias. Many of the detainees have been subjected to psychological and physical torture.

The putschist forces continue to target children with a long-term plan. Numerous militia leaders regularly visit schools to recruit children for military purposes, despite the fact that children should clearly remain in school rather than be put in harm's way at the deadly military front. We know that members of the Council have followed press and other media reports of the visits by those militias members to schools in Sana'a to spread their discourse designed to stoke violence and extremism.

Finally, I cannot but affirm that all segments of Yemeni society, throughout the homeland and in the diaspora, hope that the putschists will join, in a sincere and credible manner, the next round of consultations scheduled for 14 January, and that the suffering of the country, which has been triggered by the militias' theological project, which is entirely alien to the Yemeni social fabric, will touch their humanity and move them to seek reconciliation. As we express our appreciation for Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed and his team, we call upon them, before they embark on a new round of consultations in mid-January, to address the issue of confidence-building measures. More importantly, we call for the release of the political detainees from the putschist prisons, pursuant to those detainees' rights under international law. We also call for the lifting of all obstacles to the delivery of humanitarian assistance to all affected regions, for the resumption of commercial activity in order to revive Yemen's economic life, and for the end of black market trade by the Houthi warlords.

My Government will continue, with the same momentum, to sincerely engage in the United Nations-led consultations and in the implementation of resolution 2216 (2015) and all the other United Nations resolutions relevant to the question of Yemen. We will spare no effort to eliminate all the effects of the putsch, restore the Government's legitimacy and pursue the dream of all of the children of Yemen for a democratic federal Yemen, in accordance with the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and the outcomes of

the comprehensive National Dialogue. This is our joint vision with the United Nations, the Gulf Cooperation Council and the sponsors of the Yemeni political process, namely, to shape a future in which the community of Yemeni men and women will be free from the myths of dynastic hegemony and will remain within the Gulf family, bound together in amity, solidarity and a single, shared destiny.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.