



# Security Council

Seventy-seventh year

**8995**<sup>th</sup> meeting

Tuesday, 15 March 2022, 10.30 a.m.

New York

*Provisional*

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*President:* Mr. Abushahab . . . . . (United Arab Emirates)

*Members:*

Albania . . . . .	Mr. Hoxha
Brazil . . . . .	Mr. Costa Filho
China . . . . .	Mr. Dai Bing
France . . . . .	Mrs. Broadhurst Estival
Gabon . . . . .	Mr. Biang
Ghana . . . . .	Ms. Oppong-Ntiri
India . . . . .	Mr. Asokan
Ireland . . . . .	Mr. Gallagher
Kenya . . . . .	Mr. Kiboino
Mexico . . . . .	Mr. Ochoa Martínez
Norway . . . . .	Ms. Heimerback
Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Polyanskiy
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Kariuki
United States of America . . . . .	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield

## Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.*

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

### **The situation in the Middle East**

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): 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. Hans Grundberg, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, and Mr. Martin Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

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

**Mr. Grundberg:** I thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to brief the Security Council again on the situation in Yemen and on the relentless efforts of the United Nations to support a peaceful resolution of this conflict. Yemenis have been denied the possibility of living in peace for too many years. We need a joint concerted effort by Yemenis and the international community to break this never-ending cycle of violence and lay the foundation for a sustainable peace.

Allow me first to give a few updates on the past month's developments. In Taiz, the exchange of artillery shelling has again inflicted civilian casualties and damage to residential buildings. Hostilities have also been reported in Sa'dah and Ad Dali' governorates. Air strikes inside Yemen continue, this month primarily on front lines in Ma'rib and Hajjah. In Ma'rib, Ansar Allah continues its offensive, which has caused enormous harm to civilians for more than two years. In Al-Hudaydah's southern districts, hostilities continue, with reports of civilian casualties, including women and children. The United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement is working to rebuild communication between the parties, re-establish avenues for de-escalation and enhance the Mission's monitoring of the ports, while expanding its patrolling reach. I join Major General Beary in stressing the need to maintain the civilian nature of the ports, which are a lifeline for millions of Yemenis. The violence also

continues to spill into the region. On 21 February, shrapnel from a drone intercepted over Jizan city's King Abdullah Airport wounded 16 civilians.

Sometimes territory exchanges hands; sometimes it changes back. We see front lines go quiet in one part of the country, only to intensify elsewhere. Always, we see civilians paying an unacceptable price for choices over which they have no influence. Through the ebbs and flows of the conflict, the fact remains that a military approach is not going to produce a sustainable solution. Years of fighting have only destroyed Yemen's institutions, economy, social fabric and environment. As UNICEF reported, at least 47 children were killed or maimed in Yemen during just the first two months of this year. More than 10,200 children were verified injured or killed over the past seven years, with the actual numbers likely to be much higher.

As the fighting goes on, the economic crisis continues to deepen. As we will also hear from Under-Secretary-General Griffiths, it is likely to get worse. In Aden and the surrounding governorates, the Yemeni rial has decreased by 20 per cent against the dollar since January, raising concerns of another precipitous decline in the currency, increasing prices and deepening divisions in the nationwide economy. Tangible measures are needed to stabilize the currency. Throughout Yemen, accessing fuel is increasingly difficult. That is particularly acute in Ansar Allah-controlled areas, where fuel shortages have grown even more severe. Since my last briefing (see S/PV.8966), one ship carrying cooking gas has entered Al-Hudaydah port; two fuel vessels remain in the coalition holding area, waiting for clearance. Impediments to overland deliveries have aggravated shortages. The currency depreciation and fuel shortages impact Yemenis' everyday needs — clean water, food, transportation, electricity and health care. Civilians will be affected even more during this period as Yemeni households prepare for the holy month of Ramadan.

Yemenis also continue to live with severe restrictions on their freedom of movement. The closure of Sana'a airport prevents many Yemenis in the north from travelling abroad. Ongoing fighting, the proliferation of checkpoints and the closure of access points, especially in Taiz, impede Yemenis' movements within the country. International Women's Day this month was a reminder that women and girls face additional movement restrictions with the imposition of a male guardian. Against the backdrop of those

exceptional challenges, we see Yemeni women coming together to advocate powerfully for political change. In Taiz, for example, women, young people and civil society recently launched a campaign to challenge the arbitrary demand for a guardian when women apply for a passport and to insist that Yemeni law be upheld. That campaign has achieved initial success, with the Prime Minister issuing directives to the Ministry of Interior to uphold the law.

I am keenly aware of the urgent need to halt the violence and to provide relief to Yemenis. That is why, in parallel to my work on the framework, I am actively exploring options with the parties regarding immediate de-escalation measures that could reduce the violence, ease the fuel crisis and improve freedom of movement. With Ramadan approaching, I hope that the parties will engage swiftly and constructively with my proposals so as to bring the people of Yemen some much-needed hope and relief. In that regard, I am looking forward to the opportunity to engage with the leadership of Ansar Allah in Sana'a on this issue and on how we can move the political process forward.

However, as I have said before, any potential de-escalation measures will not hold unless they are supported by a political process. That is why my framework and its attempt to chart a path towards reaching an inclusive political settlement are vital.

Since I briefed the Council last month, my Office has launched a series of structured consultations intended to inform the development of my framework. I am encouraged by the interest and active engagement from Yemeni political parties, components, experts and civil society representatives. I am also grateful for the very constructive discussion that I had earlier this month with President Hadi Mansour about the process.

Over the past week, I have held bilateral meetings with leaders from the General People's Congress party and with delegations from the Al-Islah party, the Yemeni Socialist Party, the Nasserist Unionist People's Organization and the Southern Transitional Council. I want to express my gratitude to the Government of Jordan for facilitating the holding of those meetings in Amman, and I want to thank the members of the Council and other Member States that have shown clear support for the consultations.

I am focusing the consultations on identifying short- and longer-term priorities for the agenda of the multitrack process envisaged for the framework. I am

also exploring guiding principles for the process and gathering an understanding of the participants' vision for the future. I hope that the consultations mark the beginning of a serious and structured conversation between Yemenis about finding an end to the war.

In the coming weeks, I will hold consultations with more Yemeni political components, security and economic actors and civil society representatives. Furthermore, I have strongly encouraged all political parties and civil society organizations to include at least 30 per cent women representatives in the consultations, and my Office continues to follow up with the delegations to encourage them to reach that standard. I also intend to consult the broader Yemeni public, including young people, to ensure that the framework reflects public priorities and aspirations.

Following all these years of war, there is a need for serious, constructive and solution-oriented political dialogue. The consultations held in Amman are an encouraging reminder that this is possible. Together, we need to pursue solutions that will not only end the war, but also build the foundations for a sustainable peace. I will continue to look to the members of the Council to support the process as it moves forward.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Grundberg for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Griffiths.

**Mr. Griffiths:** I extend my best wishes to the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates, Ambassador Nusseibeh. I thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to brief the Council. As we heard from Mr. Grundberg, after more than seven years of war, Yemen is becoming what humanitarians often refer to as a chronic emergency. And, as aid workers know, there are grave risks in chronic emergencies, namely inertia and fatigue. We must not give into those forces.

Tomorrow, the Secretary-General will join the President of Switzerland and the Foreign Minister of Sweden in hosting a high-level pledging event for Yemen. Aid agencies are seeking nearly \$4.3 billion to help more than 17 million people across the country this year. Yemen suffers globally from the terrible statistic that it has the highest rate, as a percentage of its overall population, of people in need. That is why we so often hear that it is one of the gravest global humanitarian catastrophes.

Tomorrow's event is not just about the money, although that is tremendously important. It is also an opportunity for the international community to show that we are not giving up on Yemen, even after all these years, and with new crises emerging. That is a very important message because Yemen still urgently needs help. Hunger, disease and other miseries — as we have been hearing from Mr. Grundberg — are rising faster than aid agencies can roll them back.

New nationwide assessments run by our humanitarian partners in Yemen confirm that 23.4 million people now need some form of assistance. That is three of every four people — a vastly astonishing figure that is deeply troubling. Among them, 19 million will go hungry. That is an increase of almost 20 per cent since last year, and we believe — and I use these words carefully — that more than 160,000 of those will face famine-like conditions.

Despite many calls for dialogue and a ceasefire — as Mr. Grundberg has just reminded us — hostilities persist along nearly 50 front lines. This includes Ma'rib, where the Houthi offensive continues to this day, two years in, and Hajjah, where clashes have escalated sharply in recent weeks.

Last year, hostilities killed or injured more than 2,500 civilians and forced nearly 300,000 people to flee their homes — now amounting to 4.3 million people who have been displaced in Yemen since 2015.

The war has also accelerated Yemen's economic problems, pushing more families into destitution. This collapse is among the largest drivers of humanitarian needs. We see this in so many of the crises that we discuss in the Chamber.

Unfortunately, the outlook is grim. Yemen relies on commercial imports for about 90 per cent of its food and nearly all its fuel and other essential goods. Many of those goods could soon be much harder to obtain and only at a greater cost. About a third of Yemen's wheat, as we were discussing before this meeting, comes from Russia and Ukraine, where the current conflict may restrict supply and push up food prices, which already nearly doubled in Yemen last year. And these could go much higher. There is no doubt of the consequences and of the harm that this will cause to the lives of so many Yemeni families.

Fuel imports, as Mr. Grundberg reminded us, have also fallen sharply recently through Al-Hudaydah,

where fuel volumes last month were less than half the average. That drop is contributing to fuel shortages and price rises, which are likely to become even more acute as energy prices globally continue to rise.

All of this means that Yemen's import-dependent economy, because of events that have nothing to do with Yemen, is even more fragile now than just a few weeks ago. The Yemeni economy needs the support of all of us, including through foreign-exchange injections and other measures, in order to avoid risking further damage. We are very hopeful that Governments in the region will also look to this as an urgent priority.

Much of what I have just described will already be familiar to the Council and the wider international community because, since 2015, donors have spent nearly \$14 billion on United Nations appeals to reduce the suffering. It is an exceptional, extraordinary and generous sum. More than 75 per cent of that money has come from just six donors — the United States, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, Germany and the European Commission, who footed so much of that bill. I would like to thank all donors for their exceptional generosity over the years. It has made an enormous difference, and it is important to take stock of what that generosity and the humanitarian programmes it spawns has achieved.

First and foremost, for the dog that does not bark, there has been no mass starvation in Yemen, as we were so often reminded might be coming. The country started down that dark road several times, including early last year, only to be pulled back by timely, well-funded humanitarian action. That is an important success. The new increase in the food security numbers I mentioned earlier show how important it is to continue that effort to contain and repel the prospect of such starvation.

Initial research also indicates that humanitarian action has helped keep morbidity and mortality rates steady during the conflict. In other words, without the level of the response, many more people in Yemen would have fallen sick and died. That is another critical result.

Those and other achievements are the result of collective action — not the action of one. Last year, more than 200 aid agencies — the great majority of them being Yemeni non-governmental organizations — worked together, in coordination with international organizations, including the United Nations, through the response plan — we will be launching this year's tomorrow — to help nearly

12 million people every month. That aid reaches all 333 districts across the country. That is what was true last year and that is what we must hope for this year.

We have always been clear, however, that delivering that aid is much harder than it should be. We are especially alarmed about growing insecurity for United Nations personnel and other aid workers, including recent abductions of staff. Efforts continue at all levels to secure their release. Those kidnappings, in addition to a rise in carjackings and other incidents, may signal the start of a very dangerous trend. Houthi authorities also continue to detain two United Nations staff who were arrested in Sana'a in November — a completely unacceptable violation of United Nations privileges and immunities.

Beyond the security risks, humanitarian aid agencies also continue to face the familiar bureaucratic and other obstacles that hinder their work. Those problems are especially severe in Houthi-controlled areas, where they include restrictions on movement, attempts to interfere with aid operations and other challenges. Last year, 2021, those kinds of obstacles delayed or otherwise affected assistance for millions of people. Here, too, there have been some improvements.

Over the past two years, agencies have worked very closely with donors, many represented in the Chamber, and other stakeholders to address those challenges and impediments through detailed negotiations. One of the key improvements is the completion of the three new needs assessments that produced the figures I cited earlier, but there is much more work to be done. Many more improvements are still needed, including in data collection, monitoring and other areas. They are possibly dull but absolutely essential elements of an effective humanitarian response plan. That remains a top priority for agencies and donors, working closely together this year and coming together tomorrow. The Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation, a massive operation and task, will be published in the coming weeks. It will help us, as it is an objective review of humanitarian performance.

On a separate and positive note, last week Houthi authorities in Sana'a signed a memorandum of understanding on the *FSO SAFER* tanker. That confirms the agreement in principle we announced last month — on which David Gressly, humanitarian leader in Yemen, has been working — and brings the world just one step closer to solving a very dangerous

problem. We must hope that that will be achieved in May, at the latest. When I held Mr. Grundberg's position, I frequently spoke to the Council about the difficulties that the United Nations has encountered in trying to reach an agreement on the issue. Let us hope that it works. I sincerely thank the Government of the Netherlands for its support and assistance in bringing in this private sector hybrid operation.

Nonetheless, all of those achievements are at risk, as aid agencies face alarming and unprecedented funding shortages, as I warned here last month (see S/PV.8966). It is astonishing to say that two-thirds of major United Nations programmes have already scaled down or closed in recent months for lack of money. It includes deep cuts to core services, such as food aid, water, health care and relief for people fleeing violence in Ma'rib and elsewhere.

If I have one message for the world today, it is this — let us not stop now. The United Nations and its Members must keep working together to help the millions of Yemenis who urgently need and deserve it. They must show that being out of the headlines does not mean being left behind. We will look for generous pledging at tomorrow's event and prompt disbursement. Attention and investment are needed in the longer term, too, to support Mr. Grundberg's efforts. As my predecessor said every time he spoke in the Chamber, the efforts of the Special Envoy are to bring peace and resolution to the conflict, which is the hope of all of us and the greatest priority.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Griffiths for his briefing.

I now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

**Mr. Kariuki** (United Kingdom): I thank Special Envoy Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General Griffiths for their valuable and sobering briefings today.

The United Kingdom warmly welcomes the launch of Mr. Grundberg's consultations with the parties this month. We commend his inclusive approach, which invites the views of a wide range of Yemenis. We encourage all parties to engage constructively, in line with their obligations under resolution 2624 (2022). I would like to thank Council members for their efforts in the adoption of that resolution. It imposed, for the first time, an arms embargo on the Houthis as a whole, and explicitly denounced the Houthi terrorist group. That is

vital as we witness continued cross-border attacks on Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, including last Thursday's attack on a Saudi oil refinery.

It is important to highlight that resolution 2624 (2022) was also clear in its support for the continued maintenance of humanitarian access and commercial imports of food, fuel and other essential civilian commodities into all Yemen's ports. The Council has not targeted humanitarian activity or trade.

Resolution 2624 (2022) also called for the immediate return of all United States and United Nations staff to their families and for Houthi withdrawal from the United States Embassy. The United Kingdom strongly condemns the detention in February of an additional United States staff member. We also call for the Houthis to release British national Luke Symons.

As we have heard from Mr. Griffiths today, across Yemen the conflict continues to have a devastating human toll. The evidence from the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification and from today's briefing is clear — Yemen is experiencing drastically deteriorating food security. As 7 million Yemenis risk starvation in 2022 and the number of those in famine-like conditions is expected to increase fivefold, the Yemen pledging conference convenes tomorrow in need of \$4.27 billion. The United Kingdom calls on all donors, including those in the region, to step up.

Finally, I would like to end on a hopeful humanitarian note by welcoming the signature this month of the memorandum of understanding between the Houthis and the United Nations regarding the transfer of oil from the *FSO SAFER* tanker, as Mr. Griffiths briefed us. That is an important step. We must now all act together in support of the initiative.

**Mr. Asokan (India):** I thank Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths for their briefings.

It is unfortunate that the calls of the Council and the international community for a nationwide ceasefire and urgent de-escalation of tensions by all parties to the conflict are yet to be heeded. Military operations continue undermining the peace and security of not just Yemen but the entire region. We strongly condemn the cross-border terrorist attacks, using missiles and drones, on the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, which have resulted in the death or injury of innocent civilians, including Indian nationals.

Reports about the possible use of Al-Hudaydah's Red Sea ports for staging maritime attacks are also deeply worrisome. Freedom of movement of the personnel of the United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement must be ensured to facilitate the constant monitoring and reporting of any possible misuse of Al-Hudaydah's ports, which remain the primary gateway for Yemen's humanitarian aid and commercial inputs.

As outlined in resolution 2624 (2022), adopted last month, we demand the urgent release of the crew members of the vessel *Rwabee*, whose on-board crew includes seven Indian nationals. They continue to be detained unlawfully. Regular access to them and updates on their condition must be ensured by Ansar Allah until they are released.

We welcome the signing of the memorandum of understanding on the *FSO SAFER* tanker. Swift action is now required to ensure the operationalization of the memorandum of understanding to avert a potential environmental, maritime and humanitarian catastrophe in the Red Sea.

We call upon all parties involved in Yemen to move from the battlefield to the negotiating table, in line with resolution 2624 (2022). We emphasize the need for sustained and focused diplomacy to bring political discussions back on track. In that regard, we note the commencement of the wide-ranging, inclusive consultations being carried out by Special Envoy Grundberg to finalize a comprehensive framework for a peace process. Such a framework should consider and address the legitimate aspirations of all Yemenis. We call upon all parties to engage with the Special Envoy in those consultations, without any preconditions.

In that context, the resumption of consultations between Saudi Arabia and the Southern Transitional Council is a notable development and a move in the right direction. Sustained dialogue between the Government of Yemen and the Southern Transitional Council is also essential for resolving issues that are related to the implementation of the Riyadh Agreement. We note that the multitrack approach of the consultations, initiated by Special Envoy Grundberg, includes an economic track. India has repeatedly underscored the need to address the disruption to key segments of Yemen's economy and its fragmentation. A sustained solution to the unfolding humanitarian crisis lies in concrete economic measures that benefit the people of

Yemen. Progress on the economic track can also build confidence among the parties and feed into the political and security tracks. I request that the Special Envoy give due attention to that aspect in his consultations with the Yemeni parties.

Pending an economic recovery and the cessation of the military conflict, humanitarian aid operations are the only lifeline for millions of Yemenis, yet are currently at risk owing to severe funding shortfalls. Yemeni women and children are particularly bearing the brunt of the closure and scaling down of major United Nations aid programmes. We hope that tomorrow's high-level pledging conference will result in garnering enhanced support for the 2022 United Nations humanitarian response plan for Yemen.

India has centuries-old relations with Yemen and our people-to-people ties remain very strong even today. We have extended humanitarian support for Yemen in the past and we remain deeply committed to doing so today. Our doors are open to the people of Yemen, even during the tough times of the coronavirus disease pandemic. Thousands of Yemenis receive treatment in our hospitals every year and several thousand students continue to pursue their studies in India. Last year alone, we issued more than 6,000 medical visas for Yemenis and more than 400 student visas to Yemeni students.

Let me conclude by reiterating India call for an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire across Yemen, which must be followed by a robust and inclusive political process that fully respects Yemen's unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. We believe that with the effective international pressure by regional and international actors on Yemeni parties, a lasting and inclusive political settlement in Yemen is achievable.

**Ms. Heimerback** (Norway): I thank Special Envoy Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General Griffiths for their briefings.

We are deeply concerned about the current level of food insecurity and hunger in Yemen. Food assistance is urgently needed by nearly 13 million Yemenis, including children suffering from malnutrition, as well as pregnant or nursing mothers. And 2 million children under the age of five are stunted — a condition that will permanently influence their mental development.

That human-made tragedy is truly unacceptable. The recent closure of humanitarian assistance

programmes in Yemen owing to the lack of funding is the opposite of what is needed. The high-level pledging event on the humanitarian crisis in Yemen to be held tomorrow presents an important opportunity to mobilize attention and financial support for the deteriorating humanitarian situation.

Turning to security developments, we continue to be greatly alarmed by the serious military escalation of the conflict in Yemen by all parties. Let me underline Norway's strong call on all parties to exercise restraint and let me stress once again that it is the children who pay the highest price as violence escalates. In the first two months of 2022, 47 children were killed or injured.

We wish to remind parties of their obligations to respect international humanitarian law and international human rights law, in particular their obligations to protect civilian lives and infrastructure. We reiterate the importance of ensuring the safety and security of United Nations and humanitarian personnel.

De-escalation, a nationwide ceasefire and a turn towards a political solution represent the only path forward to end the cycle of violence. Norway welcomes the Special Envoy's consultations on the framework for an inclusive multitrack process. His recent and upcoming meetings with leaders of Yemeni political parties, the security and economic sectors and civil society, as well as regional and international stakeholders, will be essential to building a coalition for a peaceful settlement.

We call on all parties to prioritize the needs and interests of the Yemeni people by fully cooperating with the Special Envoy, without preconditions and without delay. We also commend the emphasis that Mr. Grundberg has placed on women's meaningful contribution to the framework consultations.

The recent United Nations *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*, which details lessons learned from women's leadership in mediation over communal water resources, showcases how inclusion is not a talking point but a smart approach to building peace, boosting livelihoods and strengthening community resilience.

Lastly, we wish to welcome the progress made in mitigating the threat caused by the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker. It is a positive step that Ansar Allah has signed a memorandum of understanding with the United

Nations. We urge continued momentum to quickly resolve the issue.

**Ms. Opong-Ntiri** (Ghana): At the outset, I would like to thank Special Envoy Hans Grunberg and Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths for their informative briefings on the overall difficult situation in Yemen. I also welcome the participation of the representative of Yemen at this meeting.

The prevailing situation in Yemen reinforces the need for the Security Council and the international community to continue to support efforts aimed at finding a lasting and peaceful resolution to the conflict, while also responding to the worsening humanitarian crisis to bring a respite to the suffering people of that country.

We take note of the matters raised in the briefings and wish to emphasize the following points.

First, we condemn, and call for an end to, the unremitting targeted attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure in blatant disregard for the precepts of international law and international humanitarian law. The ordinary people of Yemen continue to suffer needless deaths and casualties from the unabated hostilities and military escalations in the Ma'rib and Hajjah governorates and across several conflict lines in the country. Those dangerous escalations have resulted in the highest civilian casualties in at least three years, including the killing of 47 children in January and February alone.

We therefore strongly support the call for a nationwide ceasefire, which is most urgent now. The conflicting parties must end the hostilities and commit to working together in good faith to forge common understandings for a political settlement of the conflict. Finding common ground in the highly fragmented society of Yemen has proven to be difficult and will require the implementation of enhanced trust and confidence-building measures among the people.

The facilitating role of the Special Envoy in that context is vital to ensure an inclusive political process in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. We therefore welcome and express our support for his ongoing consultations with all parties and stakeholders as part of the framework for a comprehensive peace process. We stress the importance for the parties to provide the space for the full, effective and meaningful participation of Yemeni women at

all stages of the peace process, noting their long-demonstrated willingness and capacity to engage in communal and national efforts to resolve the conflict.

Secondly, we wish to highlight the urgent need for funding in support of humanitarian operations. Worse than the harrowing humanitarian situation itself would be the failure of the international community and donor partners to meet the challenge of an imminent humanitarian catastrophe. We are hopeful that the high-level pledging event that will be held tomorrow under the benevolent auspices of the Governments of Sweden and Switzerland will extend a lifeline to the millions of Yemenis on the brink of starvation.

Thirdly, we stress the need for urgent measures to stabilize the fast-deteriorating economy. We continue to advocate for the lifting of import restrictions, in accordance with the Stockholm Agreement, in order to facilitate commercial imports and lessen the reliance on humanitarian aid. Far-reaching measures, including the peaceful resolution of the conflict in Ukraine, are needed to curtail significant import shocks, as 30 per cent of Yemen's wheat imports come from Ukraine. We look forward to receiving further insights on the implementation strategy for the economic framework proposed by the United Nations to address the underlying problems of poverty in Yemen.

We take note of the progress of the signing of the memorandum of understanding among relevant parties to enable work to proceed on the *FSO SAFER* tanker. We urge continuous and open engagement among all concerned parties with the sole objective of averting or mitigating any environmental accident.

Finally, we affirm our support for a Yemeni-led, Yemeni-owned political process under the auspices of the United Nations, with the objective of finding a comprehensive and lasting peace in Yemen.

**Mr. Costa Filho** (Brazil): I would like to begin by thanking Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths for their informative briefings.

Brazil welcomes the first round of bilateral consultations held by the Special Envoy with Yemeni stakeholders, and we reiterate our support for the Special Envoy's efforts aimed at establishing a structured and inclusive political process. Brazil encourages all relevant parties to engage fully and without preconditions, and we also urge regional actors with direct influence in

Yemen to do their utmost to support this initiative. We take this opportunity to recall that unity of purpose and unequivocal support are the main assets that we as the Security Council can provide to the Special Envoy.

On the issue of inclusiveness, we note that stakeholders and social groups that are not actively involved in the conflict will nonetheless be essential to achieving and sustaining peace. We therefore reiterate our support for making women, youth and civil society representatives an integral part of the consultations. It is encouraging to see that all delegations that have met the Special Envoy thus far have included women.

While these initial consultations are encouraging, the situation on the ground keeps deteriorating. The conflict rages on at almost 50 front lines, with record numbers of unacceptable attacks against civilian targets. The civilian population of Ma'rib, which includes a million internally displaced persons, is still under threat from the Houthis, who continue to disregard international humanitarian law. The economy is still on the path of implosion and fragmentation.

As we have heard from Under-Secretary-General Griffiths, the humanitarian situation is desperate, and the response underfunded. Special Envoy Grundberg has correctly assessed that we cannot wait for a political solution to tackle these issues. The international community can and must do more.

With regard to the economy, Brazil supports the implementation of the United Nations economic framework for Yemen and reiterates its call for easing restrictions on the Yemeni Red Sea ports and on Sana'a airport. Imports are the lifeblood of the Yemeni economy, and any unnecessary constraints should be avoided. It is also essential to maintain the civilian nature of the Al-Hodeidah ports and to ensure that they are kept open for unimpeded entry of humanitarian aid, as we have heard from the Head of the United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement. Brazil also encourages other proactive measures, such as foreign-exchange injection into the Yemeni Central Bank.

We have yet to witness the full effects on Yemen of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, but shocks to oil, wheat and other commodities' international prices make it all the more urgent to bolster the economy now before the brunt of the crisis reaches Yemen. The parties on the ground also have pressing responsibilities in this regard and should refrain from imposing internal economic

barriers or employing predatory economic practices, which is an especially acute problem in Houthi-controlled areas.

On the humanitarian front, Under-Secretary-General Griffiths has yet again painted a dismal picture. The need for urgent aid keeps on expanding at unsustainable rates. We commend Sweden, Switzerland and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for convening tomorrow's pledging event in Geneva, to which Under-Secretary-General Griffiths referred. In the light of the numerous crises demanding the world's attention, we must do all we can to keep Yemen at the top of the agenda. As with similar events convened in previous years, Brazil will reiterate its solidarity with the Yemeni people by announcing a financial contribution.

Humanitarian aid is urgent and essential, but it is not a solution. The need for ever-growing humanitarian appeals will only subside when Yemen's economic and political woes are over. Supporting the economy and moving the political process forward are as urgent as sustaining the emergency humanitarian response.

Finally, we are encouraged by developments with regard to the *FSO SAFER* tanker and urge the Houthis to maintain their engagement with the United Nations Resident Coordinator.

**Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield** (United States of America): I thank our briefers, Special Envoy Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General Griffiths, for their tireless efforts, and I welcome the participation of the Yemeni Permanent Representative at today's meeting.

Today I want to address four aspects of the situation in Yemen. Progress toward an inclusive political peace process, the outrageous detention of United States and United Nations locally employed staff, the results of the Council's latest resolution on Yemen (resolution 2624 (2022)), and the situation related to humanitarian fuel and the *FSO SAFER* tanker.

First, the United States welcomes Special Envoy Grundberg's launch of an inclusive consultative process to work towards a resolution of this heartbreaking conflict. We applaud his work to incorporate the perspectives of a wide range of Yemeni political and civil society groups. The Security Council must maintain unified support for his efforts, which offer a valuable opportunity for Yemenis to develop a renewed vision for political resolution of the conflict.

We all know that this conflict has created significant fractures and altered the balance of power on the ground. For a peace process to be successful, it must reflect these shifts and incorporate the perspectives and the grievances of Yemenis across the country, including calls for justice and accountability. We therefore call on all parties to the conflict to take part fully and meaningfully in the United Nations consultations. That requires permitting Special Envoy Grundberg to visit all the relevant cities, including Sana'a, without preconditions. He has held in-person consultations with senior leaders from the other key parties, and a visit to Sana'a is long overdue. We also call on the parties to ensure that delegations to these consultations include diverse civil society representatives — women, youth, people with disabilities and members of other marginalized groups. These perspectives are essential to identifying a durable resolution that improves the lives of all Yemenis.

Secondly, we are saddened to confirm that the Houthis have detained yet another member of our local staff, who was abducted while shopping at a Sana'a market on 15 February. This is unjust and unacceptable. We call loudly and clearly for the immediate release of our current and former Yemeni employees — and for them to be released unharmed. It is time for the Houthis to cease all threats against them and their families and to release the United Nations staff and others they have also detained.

Thirdly, we welcome the Council's adoption of resolution 2624 (2022), which renews the existing travel-ban and asset-freeze measures for another year and applies the arms embargo explicitly to the Houthis as a group. The resolution includes strong language condemning the illicit transfer of weapons to the Houthis and the group's cross-border terrorist attack on Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Stopping the illegal flow of weapons from Iran to the Houthis is a top priority. Those weapons are only fuelling the war, destabilizing the region and exacerbating the suffering of Yemenis. We cannot stress enough the need for all Member States to strictly implement the arms embargo.

Resolution 2624 (2022) includes strong language, emphasizing the importance of facilitating humanitarian assistance, remittances and unhindered imports of critical goods like food and fuel. That language clearly conveys the Security Council's intent to ensure the

new measures do not target humanitarian activity or legitimate trade. We are grateful for the work that aid organizations and commercial importers are doing to stabilize Yemen's economy and ensure the population can meet its basic needs. We reiterate that the language of the resolution is not intended to prevent that work from proceeding.

That leads me to my fourth and final point about the humanitarian, fuel and *FSO SAFER* tanker situations. Sadly, Yemen remains one of largest humanitarian crises in the world, as evidenced by the latest highly concerning food insecurity data. Funding gaps have already forced aid organizations to make significant cuts to life-saving assistance, impacting millions of Yemenis. Donors have an opportunity to change that on 16 March at the virtual 2022 high-level pledging event. The United States is planning to make a significant contribution, but it will take all donors working together to meet Yemen's dire needs. We must address Yemen's humanitarian crises now, otherwise the path to peace will narrow.

Fuel imports through Al-Hudaydah port were up in February but unfortunately due to actions by all the parties, including Houthi stockpiling, the blockage of imports from southern Yemen and the manipulation of prices, Yemenis are still suffering from severe fuel shortages. A comprehensive solution is needed to address the fuel crisis facing Yemenis.

We encouraged by the signing on 5 March of a memorandum of understanding to allow a vessel to temporarily store oil from the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker until a permanent solution is agreed. We urge all parties to abide by that agreement in order to prevent a humanitarian and environmental disaster. We think the Netherlands for its work towards a solution and encourage donors to provide the necessary funding to implement that plan and forestall a tragic outcome.

The situation in Yemen remains dire. I sincerely hope, as we all do, that the Special Envoy's efforts towards an inclusive peace process prove successful.

**Mr. Hoxha** (Albania): I thank Special Envoy Grundberg for his detailed briefing. We commend his efforts to overcome the current political impasse and find a sustainable solution to the conflict in Yemen. We also thank Under-Secretary-General Griffiths for the information he provided, once again giving us the full picture of the devastating humanitarian and

dire economic situations, in particular with regard to food security.

The protracted conflict in Yemen has had a devastating impact on civilians across the country, as they suffer from destroyed critical infrastructure, a lack of basic services, widespread abuse and weak and fragmented governance. Nearly 400,000 Yemenis have died during seven devastating years of war, in many cases killed by indirect causes such as hunger. Seventy per cent of the fatalities are children under 5 years old. That is why reaching every one of them is critical.

Yemen must not become and then remain a forgotten war due to inertia and fatigue, as Mr. Griffiths rightly mentioned. In that respect, we hope that the conference in Geneva will restore due attention to the Yemeni people and their urgent needs.

There is no military solution to the conflict in Yemen. Only a comprehensive and inclusive political process can restore peace to the Yemeni people. We fully support the consultation process launched by Mr. Grundberg and call on all political actors and stakeholders to engage meaningfully. He must be granted full access throughout the country, including Sana'a, and he must be able to meet all political actors and stakeholders everywhere. The Council needs to be united in support of the work of the Special Envoy and his consultation process.

Yemen belongs to all its citizens. An inclusive and credible process requires the full engagement and participation of civil society actors, women and young people, as well as marginalized groups, to move ahead from the infernal and never-ending spiral of violence towards a durable solution to the conflict. Regional actors play a key role in the resolution of the conflict in Yemen. In that respect, we welcome reports that the Gulf Cooperation Council is considering inviting all political actors in Yemen for consultations. That is the news I heard this morning.

Agreeing to a ceasefire and respecting it is the starting point for seeking a different outcome of the situation in Yemen. That must be a priority. International humanitarian law is a centrepiece of international law that must be respected in every situation and in any conflict, including in Yemen. Civilians must be protected. The adoption of resolution 2624 (2022) represents a concrete commitment to peace and security in Yemen. Full respect for the arms embargo is a must if we want to stop the proliferation of arms in Yemen

and avoid the danger of them ending up in the wrong hands or being used in cross-border terrorist attacks by the Houthis in neighbouring countries, as we have seen repeatedly, including last month.

Let me conclude by reiterating three key issues.

First, we praise the work of the Resident Coordinator in Yemen and the Dutch authorities in finding a sustainable solution to the issue of the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker in the Red Sea. The memorandum of understanding signed on 5 March must be implemented by all the parties without delay.

Secondly, I reiterate that the kidnapping and detainment by the Houthis of Yemeni nationals affiliated with the United States and the United Nations must cease immediately.

Thirdly, I reiterate our condemnation of the seizure and detention of the United Arab Emirates-flagged merchant vessel and call on the Houthis to release the ship and crew, as the Council requested on 14 January.

**Mr. Biang** (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Special Envoy for Yemen, Mr. Hans Grundberg, and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Martin Griffiths, for their respective briefings. I welcome the participation of the representative of Yemen in this meeting.

The briefings we just heard from Mr. Grundberg and Mr. Griffiths highlight a deplorable situation that is now spilling over into the region. The recent launch of a missile in the busy waters of the Red Sea exacerbates the insecurity of international shipping and highlights the strong propensity of the crisis to flare up.

There is no doubt that the conflict in Yemen is multidimensional, but I will focus my statement on two aspects: first, the impasse in the security situation and secondly, its humanitarian consequences.

In addition to being a threat to the region, the escalation of the conflict in Yemen puts the lives of millions of people at risk. Indeed, daily life for the Yemeni people has been marked in recent months by the multiplication of front lines and a record increase in the number of civilian casualties. The escalation of violence is most alarming given the continuation of fighting that is spreading to neighbouring States, which risks destabilizing the region further. It is clear that the implementation of the Stockholm and Hudaydah Agreements has been slow to materialize.

The lack of progress on the political front contributes to the continuation of hostilities and hinders the restoration of State authority throughout Yemen, which is under severe strain. Only an inclusive dialogue involving all segments of the Yemeni population, including women, will put an end to the suffering caused by the conflict to the civilian population.

We urge all parties and actors to cease hostilities and exercise maximum restraint. The solution in Yemen is a political, not a military one. But that cannot be done without restoring trust and the willingness of all to compromise.

We also denounce the indiscriminate use of landmines, particularly on the west coast, whose long-term consequences are appalling. Every year, anti-personnel landmines kill and maim tens of thousands of civilians, including children. Their multiple impacts cause long-term injuries, as well as severe psychological trauma.

The ongoing sexual violence and repression against women, particularly women who are active in both the professional and the political spheres, are of the utmost concern to us. We condemn in the strongest terms the systematic use of arrest, detention, torture, sexual violence and rape against prominent women in Yemeni society.

The humanitarian toll of the conflict is devastating and has an impact on the livelihoods of millions of Yemenis, while the country's economy and basic services continue to collapse. Famine, disease, exacerbated by the coronavirus disease pandemic, and internal and cross-border displacement remain real concerns.

While we are aware of the many challenges facing the international community, this situation calls for its renewed commitment. In that regard, we welcome tomorrow's holding of a high-level pledging conference under the auspices of the Secretary-General to assist Yemen. However, as people's survival cannot depend on the generosity of donors in the long term, the international community must also address the underlying factors of this crisis.

I take this opportunity to once again call for the accountability of all perpetrators of violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Yemen. We also call for the access of the Special Envoy to all parts of the country.

We welcome the signing of an agreement between the United Nations and the Houthis on the situation of the *FSO SAFER* tanker, which gives real hope of containing the environmental and humanitarian threats posed by that ship.

Finally, we would like to express our support for Special Envoy Hans Grundberg for his tireless efforts in a complex environment. We positively note his engagement with all stakeholders in this crisis—national, regional and international actors — with a view to a political settlement of this crisis.

**Mr. Dai Bing** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I wish to thank Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths for their briefings. I welcome the presence of the representative of Yemen at our meeting.

The seven-year conflict has brought irreparable harm to the people of Yemen and caused immeasurable damage to the country. The situation on the battlefield over the past seven years has repeatedly proved that there is no such thing as winner takes all and a military approach cannot achieve the expected goal.

A Yemeni-led peace process is the only way forward. Special Envoy Grundberg recently had consultations with the relevant parties on political, security and economic issues. China welcomes that development. Having noted that the parties at the meeting emphasized the need for a nationwide ceasefire and the urgency of resuming negotiations, we call on all parties to the conflict to heed the call of the Yemeni people from all sectors of society, cease all hostilities, actively cooperate with the mediation efforts of the Special Envoy, adhere to the general direction of a political settlement, set reasonable expectations, show the necessary flexibility and commit to resolving differences through diplomatic means to achieve peace. We hope that the countries that have influence over the situation in Yemen will play a positive and constructive role in that regard.

Last month, the Security Council adopted resolution 2624 (2022), on sanctions against Yemen and the extension of the mandate of the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to paragraph 19 of resolution 2140 (2014) (see S/PV.8981). China's position on the sanctions is consistent. We pay close attention to the impact of the sanctions. We hope that such measures will help to encourage the parties to the conflict to renounce the military option and

return to the right track of political negotiations at an early date. The Panel of Experts should carry out its work in strict accordance with its mandate, maintain objectivity and impartiality and provide accurate and unbiased information.

We condemn all attacks targeting civilians and civilian facilities, urge the immediate cessation of cross-border attacks and security threats against the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia and support the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia in their efforts to safeguard their national security.

The Government and the people of Yemen need the help of the international community, as Under-Secretary-General Griffiths has just told us. Yemen is mired in a multiple humanitarian crisis. The conflict is escalating. The pandemic is raging, and the deteriorating economic situation is making life worse for ordinary people.

China supports the Yemeni Government's efforts to stabilize the currency and build back its economy. We support the efforts of the United Nations to promote a short-, medium- and long-term economic framework in Yemen. The parties to the conflict should ensure the import, transport and supply of oil and essential commodities and provide access for and facilitate humanitarian relief operations.

I am pleased to hear that progress has been made on the issue of the *FSO SAFER* tanker. I hope that the oil in the tanker will be removed as soon as possible and that the potential threat to the regional ecology will be eliminated as early as possible.

The United Nations humanitarian projects in Yemen are life-saving projects that must be sustained. I wish tomorrow's humanitarian pledging conference success.

**Mrs. Broadhurst Estival** (France) (*spoke in French*): I too would like to thank Hans Grundberg and Martin Griffiths for their briefings.

As the Special Envoy said, the intensity of the fighting on the ground is decreasing. But let us make no mistake: that relative lull will be short-lived, since the warring parties continue to favour the military option, even though that will lead nowhere. As the month of Ramadan approaches and in view of the current de-escalation, France reiterates its call for a nationwide ceasefire.

I would also like to condemn the holding in captivity by the Houthis of 13 people who work or have worked for the United States Embassy in Yemen. France calls for their immediate release and expresses its solidarity with the United States and the Yemeni families concerned.

As we know, the current conflict has consequences for peace and security in the entire region. In that regard, I would like to condemn the Houthi attack on a refinery in Saudi Arabia. Such missile attacks are irresponsible and unacceptable and must stop immediately.

The humanitarian situation in Yemen continues to worsen. The threat of famine is increasing, particularly due to the loss of supplies from Ukraine. Humanitarian actors are warning of the imminent risk of their assistance being cut due to funding difficulties.

The donor conference scheduled for tomorrow, which was mentioned by Martin Griffiths in particular, should enable the humanitarian needs to be met. France will be there. We will continue to increase our contribution to the humanitarian response in Yemen.

The protection of civilians, including humanitarian personnel and civilian infrastructure, is an obligation for all parties. It is essential to allow all United Nations and humanitarian personnel to move without fear of being targeted or arrested. In that regard, we condemn in the strongest terms the abduction of humanitarian personnel and the arbitrary arrests of United Nations staff. We call for their immediate and unconditional release.

Full humanitarian access to all people in need must be guaranteed. We reiterate our call for the removal of all bureaucratic obstacles.

On the political front, France welcomes the holding of the first round of political consultations in Amman under the auspices of the Special Envoy, to whom we give our full support. We therefore support his efforts to maintain an intra-Yemeni political process despite a security context that remains adverse. France welcomes the cooperative attitude of the Yemeni parties, which held talks with Mr. Grundberg this week and presented their vision of the Yemen of tomorrow. I welcome the participation of Yemeni women in those exchanges. We call on the Houthis to stop their prevarication and bargaining and to also participate in the consultations in the coming weeks. It is time for them to face up to their responsibilities.

We call on regional actors and the members of the Council to support the work of the Special Envoy. It is also essential to ensure that Yemeni civil society and women have a voice in all future negotiations.

Finally, we welcome the signing of a memorandum of understanding on the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker. Urgent action is needed to avoid an environmental disaster that would have a devastating effect on Yemen and on the region, as a whole.

**Mr. Kiboio** (Kenya): I thank Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths for their briefings. I also welcome the participation of the representative of Yemen in this meeting.

Kenya remains concerned about the intensified hostilities between factions across several front lines. This unfortunate trajectory, if it is not stopped, will erode any peace gains and threatens to sink the country deeper into conflict from which it will be more difficult to emerge. We particularly condemn the targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure, noting that the vulnerable, including children, women, the elderly and people living with disabilities, bear a disproportionate impact of such atrocious acts.

We reaffirm our support for the ongoing relentless efforts of Special Envoy Hans Grundberg in search of a sustainable political solution to the Yemeni crisis. We urge all the parties to engage constructively with the Special Envoy and commit to cessation of hostilities, at a minimum, in order to create an environment conducive for negotiations towards the desired political solution.

Kenya regrets that the fighting has displaced around 20,000 people since the start of this year alone. That is exacerbating the already dire humanitarian situation that is becoming increasingly costly and burdensome. The restrictions on commercial ships bringing fuel into Al-Hudaydah is further aggravating the grim humanitarian and economic situation. Kenya calls on all stakeholders that have control of infrastructure necessary for humanitarian access, particularly parties to the conflict, to ensure that such infrastructure is protected and available for humanitarian use.

With approximately a third of Yemen's wheat grain imports originating in Europe, the ongoing armed conflict in Ukraine is likely to result in worsening food shortages, as noted today by Under-Secretary-General Griffiths. There is an urgent need for the relevant United

Nations agencies to consider innovative approaches to mitigate that shortage.

We are worried that the increasing demand for humanitarian assistance from current and emerging conflict zones across the world is resulting in huge funding gaps for Yemen's humanitarian needs. The deeply disturbing scaling down and closure of at least 26 out of 41 major United Nations humanitarian and development programmes in Yemen due to inadequate funding attests to that.

We appeal to the international community to take urgent action to avert the looming famine by surging the necessary support, including through participating in tomorrow's high-level pledging conference on Yemen.

The parties to the conflict have a critical role to play in humanitarian action. They must de-escalate and provide safe corridors in order to ensure that assistance reaches all in need.

Kenya notes the positive developments on the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker, and we encourage the United Nations agencies to keep coordinating with the stakeholders towards the urgent finalization of the project.

In conclusion, I reaffirm Kenya's commitment to working closely with members of the council and all stakeholders of goodwill in support of efforts to restore peace and stability to Yemen and to allow its people to rebuild their lives.

**Mr. Gallagher** (Ireland): I would like to thank Special Envoy Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General Griffiths for their briefings today.

The conflict in Yemen has caused unthinkable suffering for too long. Yemenis have endured more than seven years of conflict, which has savaged their country. As we heard from Mr. Griffiths, they continue to battle everyday with extreme levels of hunger. And, as we know from the Integrated Phase Classification report, 19 million people across Yemen will face acute food insecurity, with 160,000 living in famine-like conditions — the highest number in years.

The humanitarian community is providing life-saving assistance on the ground in challenging circumstances. We commend their efforts. However, we are increasingly concerned that a lack of funding is forcing many humanitarian programmes to scale back or shut down entirely. That risks leaving millions without access to food, water and other life-saving

services. Half of those who need life-saving assistance are children.

The high-level pledging event taking place tomorrow is therefore very welcome, and Ireland is pleased to participate. It is clear that Yemen still needs the strong support of the international donor community. It is also clear that sustainable solutions are required. The United Nations economic plan for Yemen provides that opportunity, and we call for progress in its operationalization. Ultimately, however, only an end to the conflict can truly lead to long-term stability and prosperity for the Yemeni people.

Yemenis rely upon commercial and humanitarian imports for up to 90 per cent of their food, medicine and fuel. That is a reality that we are all familiar with here. We know that the timely and unimpeded flow of those commodities through Yemen's ports is essential. We call on all actors to ensure this, without delay. As Under-Secretary-General Griffiths said today, that is particularly vital at a time when tragic events elsewhere in the world are, unfortunately, likely to push Yemenis further into hunger.

We fully support the Special Envoy's work and welcome the launching of his consultations last week with a broad range of Yemeni actors. We reiterate our call on all parties to meaningfully engage with him towards establishing an inclusive framework.

Only a negotiated political settlement will bring peace to Yemen. We reiterate that all efforts to that end must include the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and extensive engagement with civil society. Young people, who have the right to shape their own future, should also be central to those efforts. The exclusion of those groups from the table over recent years is simply inexcusable.

Furthermore, we believe that negotiations towards peace can only take place when there is a serious effort towards de-escalation in violence, including an end to the Houthi offensive on Ma'rib. We condemn in the strongest terms the cross-border attacks against Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Ireland also condemns the detention of Yemenis who are currently or formerly employed by the United Nations or by the United States. We call for their immediate and safe release and that, at a minimum, they be afforded contact with their families. We also

reiterate our call for the release of the vessel *Rwabee* and its crew.

Innocent civilians have suffered for too long. Air strikes and all other attacks where civilians and civilian objects bear the brunt of the impact are unacceptable. Let me take this opportunity to once again remind parties of their obligations under international humanitarian law.

Finally, we welcome the recent progress made on the United Nations-coordinated proposal to address the threat posed by the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker, which we have often referred to in the Council as a "ticking time bomb". The memorandum of understanding signed last week was a positive first step towards stopping the clock, and we hope that momentum continues. The humanitarian and environmental imperatives are indisputable, and the vital livelihoods of many Yemenis rely on it.

**Mr. Polyanskiy** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Mr. Hans Grundberg, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, and Mr. Martin Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, for their overview of the political and humanitarian situation in Yemen.

We regret to note that the Yemeni Republic continues to experience an acute military and political crisis, accompanied by a wholesale escalation of violence and an intensification of hostilities on all fronts.

The epicentre of the armed clashes remains in Ma'rib, Shabwah, Al-Jawf and Al-Hudaydah. We are concerned about attacks on civilian infrastructure, both in the Republic of Yemen itself and outside its borders in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. We firmly urge all warring parties to strictly comply with the provisions of international humanitarian law. We are convinced that further confrontation could expand the scope of the armed conflict far beyond the region. The ongoing impasse in the political settlement process brings us closer to the point of no return, after which restoring Yemen's unity would simply be impossible.

Moreover, the crisis in the Republic of Yemen strengthens the position of terrorist groups. In that context, we would once again like to underscore that there is no alternative to a peaceful political solution to the Yemeni conflict. The United Nations and Special Envoy of the Secretary-General Grundberg continue to

play a central role in the settlement process. At the same time, a reference point in such efforts should be the principle of inclusivity. The end goal is a comprehensive and long-term settlement of several issues faced by the country's population, which, in large part, also affect neighbouring States.

We support the efforts of the Special Envoy and urge him to step up his mediation role to bring the parties to the conflict in Yemen back to the negotiating table. In that context, we note the start of consultations in Amman with the representatives of Yemeni political forces. It was particularly important today to hear Mr. Grundberg's assessment of the contact he has had with the Yemeni parties. We trust that, going forward, the proposed negotiating platform, under the auspices of the United Nations, will provide Yemenis with a good opportunity to discuss the paths for a political solution to the conflict and allow the Special Envoy to develop a new comprehensive peace settlement plan that could reconcile the many competing players on Yemen's internal political landscape.

For our part, we intend to continue to encourage the Yemeni authorities, as well as the leadership of the Ansar Allah movement, to take a constructive approach. We are convinced that the issue concerning the *FSO SAFER* tanker can and must be resolved through compromise. In that context, we welcome the agreement reached between the Ansar Allah movement and the United Nations with regard to addressing the threat posed by the floating oil tank.

A subject of particular concern remains the dire humanitarian situation in Yemen. As we heard from Mr. Griffiths, the situation worsens day by day and increasingly resembles a full-fledged humanitarian disaster. In that regard, we place our hopes in the international conference on humanitarian assistance to Yemen, at which paths to providing assistance to the Yemeni people will be discussed. At the same time, we recall that humanitarian assistance must be impartial in nature.

In conclusion, we would like to note that States in the region can continue their mediation and humanitarian efforts as part of the Yemeni settlement. We also recall resolution 598 (1987), as well as other initiatives that are focused on stabilizing the subregion, including the updated Russian collective security concept for the Persian Gulf.

**Mr. Ochoa Martínez** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): First and foremost, we thank Special Envoy Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General Griffiths for their briefings.

Today, I will focus my statement on three issues: first, the political process; secondly, the humanitarian situation and respect for the humanitarian space and, thirdly, the impact of the conflict in Yemen on women and girls.

First, with regard to the political process, we thank the Special Envoy for sharing information on the structured consultations that were held with various Yemeni actors. We trust that those exchanges will help move the political process forward. We acknowledge the importance of those consultations and the fact that they were inclusive and allowed the voices of Yemeni women to be heard. We hope that the Special Envoy will be able to meet shortly with the Houthis.

Concerning the humanitarian situation, we are deeply concerned about the ongoing violence reported in Ma'rib, Hajjah and other regions. We once again call for a national ceasefire. Prolonging the conflict has led to a considerable increase in humanitarian needs, which have not been met with sufficient financial resources. In addition, we must consider the fact that, as Under-Secretary-General Griffiths mentioned, approximately 40 per cent of Yemen's wheat imports are from Ukraine and Russia. Some 60 per cent of the Yemeni people are already suffering as a result of food insecurity and the number of people suffering from hunger has tripled in the past year. There are signs that grains will be increasingly scarce and, as a result, the number of Yemenis facing food insecurity will increase, and that is regrettable.

United Nations agencies and humanitarian organizations alike are facing a series of bureaucratic obstacles, intimidation, restricted access and insecurity, which is also regrettable. The work of those organizations is vital for the survival of a large segment of the population and for progress in building peace.

Mexico strongly condemns the fact that medical and humanitarian personnel are the target of deliberate attacks. Such acts are serious breaches of international humanitarian law. We also condemn the harassment of United Nations personnel and of those who worked for the United States Embassy in Sana'a.

In the light of the worrisome situation, we are encouraged by the recent signing of a memorandum of understanding between the United Nations and the Houthis to address the issue of the *FSO SAFER* tanker.

With regard to gender issues, we deplore the conflict's heavy toll on women and girls, such as limited access to education for girls; the lack of access to reproductive health services; the increase in early marriage and harassment and detention of activists and human rights defenders, just to mention a few issues.

In conclusion, we once again condemn the indiscriminate attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, in Yemen and neighbouring countries alike. Such attacks are serious breaches of international law, in particular international humanitarian law.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United Arab Emirates.

I would like to thank Mr. Grundberg and Mr. Griffiths for their briefings.

In recent years, many regional and international attempts have been made to achieve a comprehensive political settlement to the Yemeni crisis that would meet the aspirations of the Yemeni people. The United Arab Emirates has been eager to support all United Nations mediation efforts and peace initiatives, based on our firm conviction that this is the only way to put an end to the crisis.

However, the Houthis have not taken advantage of those initiatives to reach a peaceful settlement. They have used them to continue their hostilities, undermine stability and expand their military presence on the ground. By continuing to choose violence over peace and imposing their control over millions of Yemenis by force, the Houthis have demonstrated that they do not want the war to end.

While the Houthis continue to reject calls for a ceasefire and pursue their grave violations against civilians, Houthi leaders in Sana'a continue to refuse to positively engage with the United Nations and with efforts to end the war. The Houthi escalation has reached the level of launching terrorist attacks on neighbouring countries and threatening maritime navigation. Such actions foretell the future that will befall the region if the Houthis are not deterred and their grave violations do not come to an end.

In the light of this intransigence and these escalatory actions, my country welcomes the adoption of resolution 2624 (2022) and calls on all Member States to abide by it. However, we would like to clarify that the ultimate goal is not to impose sanctions, but to end the crisis through a political solution. That, in turn, requires the international community to use all means at its disposal to continue putting pressure on the Houthis to stop their violations and hostilities, return to the negotiating table and seriously engage in the political process.

We stress that the previous initiatives and negotiation frameworks, especially the Saudi initiative to end the war, provide a solid basis for the resumption of the political process. What is lacking, however, is a revitalized diplomatic approach and the genuine political will of the Houthis to engage in such initiatives. In that regard, we note the importance of ensuring the meaningful and active participation of women in the political processes.

The United Arab Emirates condemns the continued attacks launched by the Houthi terrorist group, including the recent drone attack against a refinery in Riyadh, as well as their repeated attacks against Abha airport and the missile launched towards the Red Sea. Such violations confirm once again the urgent need for Member States to strictly implement their obligations, as provided in the arms embargo imposed by resolutions 2216 (2015) and 2624 (2022). That requires redoubling efforts to combat the smuggling of weapons and their components to Houthis via land and sea routes.

We reaffirm that the continued imposition of sanctions on the Houthis is necessary until they realize that there is no alternative to a political solution chosen by the Yemeni people.

We reiterate our deep concern about the seriousness of the humanitarian situation in Yemen and the suffering of millions of Yemenis, especially women and children, who lack basic services. Furthermore, the health system is collapsing amid the worsening economic situation in Yemen. The exacerbation of those conditions is closely related to the Houthis' continued military escalation and their acts of violence against civilians in Yemen. The Houthis' obstruction of humanitarian aid shipments and confiscation of food supplies confirm the extent to which the Houthis have ignored and exacerbated the needs of the Yemeni people.

With regard to the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker, we commend the tireless efforts of the United Nations

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in facilitating the most recent agreement and we appreciate the role of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. We hope that the agreement will prevent a disaster from occurring. To that end, we must make all efforts to pressure the Houthis to honour their commitments and cease their strategy of procrastination.

We note that any agreement with the Houthis on the issue must take into account their pattern of behaviour. As we have seen over the past four years, the Houthis have made insincere promises as a negotiation strategy, while at the same time completely ignoring the warnings of an imminent environmental disaster in the event that urgent maintenance work is not completed.

In conclusion, the United Arab Emirates will continue working with the members of the Security Council to support a Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned peaceful solution that will achieve security, stability and prosperity for the brotherly Yemeni people.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Yemen.

**Mr. Al-Saadi** (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): Let me, Mr. President, congratulate you and the United Arab Emirates, a sisterly country, on assuming the presidency of the Council this month. I wish you and your delegation every success. I also thank the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation for his country's successful presidency of the Council last month. I thank as well Mr. Hans Grundberg and Mr. Martin Griffiths for their briefings.

The suffering of the Yemeni people has continued for eight years, owing to the continued military escalation by the Houthi militias, their refusal of any initiative leading to a political solution and the obstacles that they have placed in the path of all peace efforts made by the United Nations through its Special Envoy. Nearly 24 million Yemenis are still in dire need of humanitarian assistance from the United Nations and other international partners, on which their survival depends.

I would be remiss were I not to mention the importance of the donor conference to be held tomorrow under the sponsorship of the Kingdom of Sweden, Switzerland and the United Nations to provide financial support for the 2022 United Nations humanitarian response plan for Yemen.

We call on all sisterly and friendly countries, as well as international donor organizations, to participate in that important event and pledge generously, while honouring their commitments to reduce the funding shortfall affecting humanitarian operations. In the light of the events and crises currently facing the world, which have resulted in complicating the economic and humanitarian situation in Yemen, it is important that Yemen remains at the top of the international community's priorities. The international community must not abandon Yemen.

The Yemeni Government once again welcomes resolution 2624 (2022), adopted in February to extend the sanctions regime in Yemen. The resolution designates the Houthi militias as terrorists. For years, those militias have chosen the path of terrorism and violence, which justifies their designation as terrorists given the crimes and unprecedented violations that they have committed against the Yemeni people.

They continue to target civilians and civilian structures in Yemen, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. They pose a threat to the security and safety of commercial vessels and international navigation lanes. The resolution is an important step towards ending Iranian military support for the Houthis, which is prolonging the war, complicating the humanitarian crisis and undermining political efforts to establish peace in Yemen.

Based on its political competence, the Government is making significant efforts to return to normalcy and is implementing many reforms and development projects, as we cannot await the restoration of peace to relaunch development in Yemen.

We call on the international community to support the economic efforts of the Government and its recovery programmes and work to establish sources of revenue, as an essential way to resolve the humanitarian crisis without solely relying on emergency assistance. The reforms undertaken by the Government will make a significant contribution to achieving economic stability, controlling inflation, stabilizing the exchange rate of the national currency and thereby improving the humanitarian situation.

While we appreciate the efforts of sisterly and friendly countries to reduce humanitarian suffering, we reiterate that Yemen remains in great need of economic support to enable it to resume the level of economic growth it had achieved prior to the coup carried out

by the Houthi militias. The relevant 2019 international reports indicate that Yemen has lost two decades of development, which could become as many as four decades if the militias continue their war and efforts to abort the prospects for peace.

The Yemeni Government is aware that ending humanitarian suffering, restoring security and stability, and returning to the path of development will be possible only by ending the crisis that Yemen is experiencing today as a result of the coup d'état carried out by the Houthi militias. The Government, under the leadership and guidance of His Excellency Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour, President of the Republic, therefore remains committed to the peace process, under the auspices of the United Nations, with a view to achieving a just and lasting peace.

The Government has made many concessions to ensure the success of the missions of the successive United Nations Special Envoys. The Government currently continues to support the work of Mr. Grundberg and to facilitate his task in leading the peace process on the basis of the agreed terms or reference for a political solution, namely, the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism, the outcome of the comprehensive National Dialogue Conference and relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2216 (2015). Despite all that, the Houthi militias, supported by Iran, have continued their escalation and war, while hindering efforts to achieve peace.

They continue to refuse to receive the Special Envoy in Sana'a. They have chosen war as a means of achieving their ambitions, seizing power and either governing or killing Yemenis in order to change the nature of Yemeni society and introduce obscure traditions and values that do not match the aspirations of the Yemeni people, who wish to build a civil and modern State based on security, stability, development, justice and the rule of law.

We call on the international community and the Security Council to understand the various root causes

of this destructive war and its repercussions, of which the principal cause was the coup d'état by the Houthi militias against the constitutional legitimacy, State institutions and national consensus.

The Houthi militias must be aware that there is no way to resolve the crisis other than through a political solution. They must cease killing Yemenis, avoid further bloodshed and stop this war, which has caused the worst humanitarian crisis in the world. These militias must understand that peace is the only way out of the current situation.

We call on the Security Council to put more pressure on those terrorist groups and we call on the rogue regime of Iran, which supports them, to stop the military escalation and to engage positively in the efforts of the United Nations to achieve a comprehensive and lasting peace and bring an end to the conflict.

In conclusion, we have taken note of the United Nations efforts to resolve the situation concerning the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker. Despite the commitment of the Yemeni Government to support and facilitate those efforts in order to avoid an environmental, humanitarian and economic disaster that would affect Yemen and the countries of the region and jeopardize international maritime navigation routes, we once again warn against the methods and manoeuvres being adopted by of the Houthi militias to hinder those efforts, renege on their commitments and make false promises to deceive the international community.

We call on the Council to continue to put pressure on those militias in order to avoid an imminent catastrophe. We thank the Netherlands and the United Nations for their efforts in that respect.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I will now adjourn the meeting so that the Council can continue its discussion of the subject in closed consultations.

*The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.*