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Seventy-sixth year

8854th meeting

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Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Ms. Byrne Nason/Mr. Kelly	(Ireland)
 <i>Members:</i>	China	Mr. Geng Shuang
	Estonia	Mr. Jürgenson
	France	Mr. De Rivière
	India	Mr. Tirumurti
	Kenya	Mr. Kiboino
	Mexico	Mr. Ochoa Martínez
	Niger	Mr. Aougi
	Norway	Ms. Juul
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Ms. Gonsalves
	Tunisia	Mr. Cherif
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward
	United States of America	Mr. Mills
	Viet Nam	Mr. Dang

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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The meeting was called to order at 10 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. Hans Grundberg, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen; Ms. Ghada Eltahir Mudawi, Deputy Director of Operations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; and Ms. Entesar Al-Qadhi, Executive Director of the Ma'rib Girls Foundation for Development.

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

I give the floor to Mr. Grundberg.

Mr. Grundberg: I am honoured to have been appointed the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Yemen, a position I started four days ago. I appreciate the expressions of support from Yemenis and the international community, including Security Council members. I am also grateful to the previous Special Envoys, who have made considerable efforts to end the conflict.

I started working on Yemen over a decade ago. Yemen is a country of massive potential, situated at the gateway between Asia and Europe, between the Gulf of Aden and Africa. Yemen's impressive history of commerce, cultural richness and diversity is something I continue to admire.

However, my experience with Yemen also makes me painfully aware of the complexities of this conflict. Unfortunately, those complexities multiply as the conflict drags on. I am therefore under no illusions about the difficulty of the task handed to me by the Council. Enabling a resumption of a peaceful, inclusive, orderly and Yemeni-led political transition process that meets the legitimate demands and aspirations of the Yemeni people, as mandated by the Council, will not be easy. There are no quick wins.

The current armed conflict has continued unabated for over six years. Civilians, including many children, have been killed, displaced and impoverished. Civilian infrastructure has been targeted. Armed actors have detained, abducted and forcibly disappeared people with impunity. Gender-based violence has increased significantly.

The epicentre of the military confrontation has shifted over time, with combatants taking turns on the offensive. Since early 2020, the focus has been on Ansar Allah's sustained offensive on Ma'rib governorate, in which thousands of young Yemenis have lost their lives. Civilians, including the many internally displaced persons who sought refuge in Ma'rib, live in constant fear of violence and renewed displacement. The United Nations and the international community have been clear in its message — the offensive must stop.

In Al-Hudaydah, the city continues to experience a noticeable decline in ceasefire violations, while hostilities in the southern districts of the governorate are of particular concern. The United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement continues its vital work, including to urge the parties to come together through joint dialogue in order to define a sustained way forward.

The situation in the southern governorates, where there have been regular flare-ups of violence, is also deeply worrisome. Basic services and the economy have deteriorated into a desperate state. The implementation of the Riyadh agreement continues to face challenges, and the Government is not performing its functions from Aden. In that context, the impact of the conflict on the diverse range of grievances and demands in the southern governorates cannot be ignored. Peace in Yemen is not sustainable in the long term if southern voices do not play a part in shaping it responsibly.

The conflict in Yemen is also spilling across borders, threatening regional security and international waterways. I am particularly concerned about the targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure inside of Saudi Arabia. The fighting must stop; the violence has to come to an end. In that regard, it is also vital that external actors encourage de-escalation. Their involvement should be based on supporting a Yemeni-led political settlement. A peaceful and stable Yemen is essential for the stability of the entire region.

From unrelenting violence to fuel and electricity shortages to surging food prices, every detail of daily

life in Yemen is somehow tied to difficult political questions that demand a comprehensive resolution. State institutions have split apart, hobbling the economy and leaving citizens and businesses to navigate dizzying and often contradictory administrative requirements. Economic warfare by all sides is sowing devastating long-term consequences for the Yemeni State and its people. Yemenis all over the country live with severe limitations on their freedom of movement and of the movement of essential goods due to ongoing fighting, checkpoints and road, port and airport restrictions. The Organization's position remains unchanged — the freedom of movement of people and goods in and out, as well as throughout the country, should be guaranteed. Roads must be opened to allow people and goods to move in and out of Taiz. Sana'a airport needs to be open for commercial traffic. Restrictions on the import of fuel and goods through Al-Hudaydah port must end. There is a continuous need for close coordination among all members of the United Nations family, the broader international community and the parties to the conflict to appropriately address those issues.

By now it should be obvious that the peace process has stalled for too long. The parties to the conflict have not discussed a comprehensive settlement since 2016. That has left Yemenis stuck in an indefinite state of war with no clear way forward. It is therefore long overdue for the parties to the conflict to engage in peaceful dialogue with one another, under United Nations facilitation, the terms of an overarching settlement, in good faith and without preconditions.

The United Nations approach to ending the conflict must be inclusive. To define the best way forward, I intend to assess past efforts, identify what has worked and what has not, and listen to as many Yemeni men and women as possible. The way forward must be guided by the aspirations of the Yemeni people.

My Office and I will do our utmost to ensure the meaningful participation of women in all aspects of our engagement and to integrate gender perspectives across all issues. As we will also hear from my colleague from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the rights of Yemeni women and girls are overlooked, if not ignored. The United Nations is obligated to strive for a peace that not only ends the violence, but also a sustainable peace that protects the full range of their civil and political, as well as economic, social and cultural rights. A peace that ensures accountability,

good governance and State institutions that serve all citizens equitably.

We are clearly a long way off from that today. Nonetheless, I will spare no effort in trying to bring together actors across conflict lines to engage Yemenis from all political perspectives and societal components and from all parts of the country to discuss, under United Nations auspices, how they can find common ground and resolve their differences without resorting to force. I will be guided in that effort by the mandate given to me by the Security Council through its relevant resolutions.

We all have a shared responsibility in our different capacities for ending the conflict in Yemen. The beginning of my tenure should therefore be used as a moment to reassess our respective responsibilities. The initiatives from Yemen's neighbours and members of the Security Council in support of the United Nations efforts have been appreciated and will need to be stepped up.

My first consultations with Yemeni, regional and international actors will soon start. I will shortly travel to Riyadh to meet with President Hadi Mansour and other members of the Government of Yemen. I also look forward to meeting with the Ansar Allah leadership and other Sana'a-based actors, as well as other political actors throughout Yemen. And I plan to meet with regional leaders in Riyadh, Muscat, Abu Dhabi, Kuwait, Tehran, Cairo and elsewhere. My Office and I stand ready to spend as much time in Yemen and with Yemenis as possible. I will return to the Security Council each month to reflect frankly and openly on those discussions. And I will seek Council members' tangible and coordinated support to take my mandate forward.

The President: I thank Mr. Grundberg for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Mudawi.

Ms. Mudawi: I thank you, Madam President, for the opportunity to brief the Security Council.

As Hans Grundberg just described, conflict is raging across many parts of the country, especially in Ma'rib, where fighting has again become particularly fierce. As always, it is civilians who are paying the highest price.

During Under-Secretary-General Griffiths's last briefing to the Council, two and half weeks ago (see S/PV.8840), he outlined the many ways in which the war in Yemen is compounding people's suffering. We see it in the country's crumbling economy. We see it in the disintegration of essential services. And we see it in the faces of the millions of men, women and children who, despite their extraordinary resilience, are being forced deeper into desperation.

Today I wish to speak about what the humanitarian community is doing to mitigate some of those terrible consequences and what more needs to be done.

As the Security Council well knows, Yemen is home to the world's largest humanitarian aid operation. That is of course a distinction no country or people would wish upon themselves, but it speaks to the commitment of the international community to stand by the people of Yemen in their hour of need.

Over the past few months, we have seen a surge in donor funding. The Yemen humanitarian response plan is now one of the best-funded appeals in the world, having received more than \$1.9 billion so far this year, which is 50 per cent of its total requirement. That support has enabled the United Nations and its partners to scale up life-saving assistance across the country. Together, we managed to prevent famine during the first eight months of this year. Humanitarian organizations are active in all of Yemen's 333 districts. In June, we provided life-saving assistance to 12.8 million people; that is a full 3.3 million more people than we were able to reach the month before.

Those achievements are significant, but they are also fragile and uneven. The threat of famine is not over in Yemen. It will require our continued efforts unless we are ready to sacrifice the important gains we have made and invite famine back again into the country after we have fought so hard to keep it at bay. A lot of this comes down to donor support. A number of sectors remain gravely underfunded, including some that are critical to addressing food insecurity.

Health, for example, as well as water, sanitation and hygiene, have received only a tenth of the funding required for this year, threatening to shut down those vital services at a time when Yemen is grappling with multiple disease outbreaks, including cholera, dengue and diphtheria. A deadly third wave of the coronavirus disease is putting the country's population and its fragile health-care system at further risk.

Even food security and agriculture — one of the better-funded sectors in the appeal — currently faces a \$750 million funding gap. Without additional support, we could see cuts in that assistance as soon as in the coming weeks.

Another sector facing critical shortages in the humanitarian response is protection. In the first six months of this year, protection partners were able to reach only a fraction of people in need of protection owing to lack of funds. This is extremely serious in a country where protection needs are so high.

Yemen is an incredibly difficult place to live for women and girls. Gender-based violence is rampant across the country. Early marriage and pregnancy, including child mothers, are commonplace. Women and girls are often the last to eat, see a doctor or go to school.

I want to take a moment to salute the courage of women-led and women's rights organizations in Yemen. We are very fortunate to have with us today Ms. Entesar Al-Qadhi, Executive Director of Ma'rib Girls Foundation for Development. The extraordinary efforts of those organizations are helping to amplify the voices of women and girls across Yemen and to create better conditions for current and future generations.

Yemen is the world's fourth-largest internal displacement crisis, with numbers rising by the day as people flee violence, as well as flooding and other climate-related disasters in various parts of the country, including in Ma'rib, Taiz, Ad Dali', Lahij and Al-Hudaydah. Many internally displaced persons find refuge in schools, religious sites or abandoned buildings. Others are forced to take shelter in overcrowded settlements, where clean water, food, electricity and other essential services are in extremely short supply.

Yemen's protection crisis affects many other population groups. As a result of the conflict, children face horrific threats to their physical, emotional and mental well-being, including being killed or maimed, recruited into armed groups or exposed to sexual violence. People with disabilities, refugees, migrants and other marginalized groups are also highly vulnerable to many of these risks. These are just a few of the perils many civilians face on a daily basis in Yemen. The list is, of course, much longer.

There is one additional protection risk I wish to touch upon: landmines and explosive remnants of war.

Since 2018, landmines, improvised explosive devices and unexploded ordnance have killed or injured more than 1,400 civilians in Yemen, many of them children. In addition to causing direct and deadly harm, these explosive weapons, which are littered across large swathes of the country, instil terror in communities and have a deeply negative impact on people's livelihoods and the wider economy. Many farms and fishing communities in Yemen are standing idle owing to the presence or fear of landmines and sea mines. This represents a further hit to domestic food production and to people's incomes, when Yemen is already facing dire levels of food insecurity and poverty.

I urge all parties to uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law, including by refraining from using weapons that are by nature indiscriminate and by taking constant care to spare civilians and civilian objects throughout their military operations. I also call for practical steps to be taken. Scaling up humanitarian mine clearance and support for it, including by letting in and expediting the passage of demining equipment into the country, would go a long way towards protecting civilians.

On 22 September, a high-level side event on Yemen will take place at the margins of the high-level week at the General Assembly. It will be co-hosted by the European Union, Sweden and Switzerland, and it will be a key opportunity to discuss protection challenges and galvanize support for the country's most vulnerable.

During the event, donors will be able to announce the new contributions they have made since the high-level pledging conference in early March. As I mentioned earlier, donors have demonstrated tremendous generosity this year. I strongly encourage them to continue to do so by increasing their contributions to the humanitarian response plan. Ensuring adequate funding across all sectors is essential to protecting the delicate gains we have made this year. This is not the moment to slow down, unless we are ready to see record humanitarian suffering come roaring back in Yemen.

The President: I thank Ms. Eltahir Mudawi for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Al-Qadhi.

Ms. Al-Qadhi (*spoke in Arabic*): My name is Entesar Al-Qadhi, and I represent the Ma'rib Girls Foundation for Development, which promotes an agenda for women and peace and security. I am very

grateful for the opportunity to brief the Security Council today about what is happening, especially in Ma'rib governorate.

Much has been said about the cruelty of war, but we have lived it on a daily basis. The continuous Houthi aggression against Ma'rib terrorizes civilians, impedes humanitarian assistance and leads to spread of fighting in neighbouring governorates. Nearly 233,000 persons have died thus far due to the continuous conflict. I myself recently lost two of my nephews, both under the age of 15, in a Houthi attack that targeted our area. Loss of loved ones has become a norm for us, the people of Ma'rib.

We are facing a humanitarian crisis in Ma'rib that will only worsen unless there is an immediate ceasefire. Over the past two weeks, at least 200 families from Rahabah district fled from their homes to escape the attacks. Three members of those families are my own relatives. More than a quarter of Yemen's displaced people now live in Ma'rib, 80 per cent of whom are women and children. I visit them regularly through my work at the Ma'rib Girls Foundation, and I listen to their testimonies, which make me sad. I have met many families that have been displaced more than once, sometimes up to five times.

Even in the internally displaced persons (IDPs) camps families continuously risk death from drones and ballistic missiles. A woman mourning the loss of her son who was killed by a missile, lamented, "we left everything, and the Houthis are still chasing us to the tents. When will they stop?"

Beyond the threat of missiles, the conditions in IDP camps are dire, and we lack sufficient assistance and services. People are battered by wind, floods and the heat of the desert, without sufficient shelter. Public services in Ma'rib have collapsed, depriving people of clean water, sanitation and sufficient health care.

The Al-Jufainah camp, the largest displacement site in the country, has 12 classrooms, while it hosts more than 7,000 students, a number that keeps growing with the ongoing displacement. Consequently, many children have dropped out of school.

Women and girls face very difficult conditions in the camps, such as lack of hygiene supplies, the risk of abuse when visiting the latrines and a dearth of services for pregnant women. Women prefer to stay home because of those threats.

Amira, who is 8 years old, recently told me, “I dream of a latrine that is not far away from our shelter, where my family and I have some sense of privacy and feel safe.” Girls whom we meet now dream only of safety.

The Ma’rib Girls Foundation is working to address protection issues and help women find sources of income for their families. But our work is complicated by limited resources and the fact that people have to keep fleeing violence. It is impossible to expect the humanitarian situation to improve before there is a nationwide ceasefire. Women and girls continue to be affected by the ongoing conflict, although they play a critical role in the struggle for peace. They are excluded from representation in the Government and in decision-making processes.

Yemeni women have played a critical role in the struggle for peace, negotiating directly with parties to the conflict, acting as mediators, securing the release of prisoners and keeping humanitarian corridors and critical roads open. Yet we are not even consulted in decision-making, which means that our prospective contributions and concerns will continue to be ignored. There is clearly a trend against women’s participation in decision-making.

I will now present the humanitarian perspective. We see that the Houthis have enshrined religious sectarianism in the educational curriculum and are imposing segregation between sexes in public places. Meanwhile, for the first time in two decades, the newly formed Government has excluded women from positions, despite the 30 per cent quota that was agreed upon in the National Dialogue Conference outcome.

We welcome the new Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen. I thank him for calling for a ceasefire. For him to succeed, he has to work with a wide sector of the Yemeni society, especially women. We urge him to prioritize the interests and concerns of all Yemenis, especially those living in the country, and not only the parties to the conflict. He must give priority to a comprehensive peace process, not one imposed by regional agendas and international interests. He must also consult regularly and transparently throughout the entirety of the peace process with all Yemenis, especially women and young people. He must stress the participation of women representatives directly in all steps, from shaping the agenda to drafting a ceasefire agreement and engaging in negotiations.

In conclusion, an immediate halt to the Houthi attacks is an economic, humanitarian and political necessity. Ma’rib is strategically important. It is a major source of electricity for most of the Yemeni governorates, and its gas production meets approximately 80 per cent of Yemeni needs, more than half of which goes to Houthi areas on a daily basis. Ma’rib city is also home to more than 1 million displaced people. Is securing petroleum products more important than ending the bombardment against us?

I urge the Security Council, first, to take all the measures necessary in demanding the cessation of Houthi attacks against Ma’rib, including by the adoption of a draft resolution on a ceasefire that neither side will be able to take advantage of. A Ma’rib ceasefire should pave the way for a Yemen-wide ceasefire cessation of hostilities that would create necessary conditions to protect civilians, especially women and girls. We must learn from past mistakes. We need accountability mechanisms for non-compliance with such a ceasefire. We must also be clear that a failure to implement the resolution would lead the Council to take decisive action.

Secondly, the Council should support an inclusive peace process and ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all their diversity, as well as youth and civil society groups from every political background and every region in Yemen, on all diplomatic tracks and stages of the peace process.

Thirdly, urge all parties to the conflict to allow full, unimpeded, sustained and secure humanitarian access and to facilitate the work of humanitarian organizations to deliver aid to civilians in need.

Fourthly, call on Member States to meet the \$1.9 billion funding gap in the United Nations humanitarian response plan for Yemen and coordinate with them to provide a long-term economic rescue package for Yemen. That would help stabilize the economy and strengthen the financial system to prevent further increases in food prices and improve living conditions.

Fifthly, the Council should call on Member States to support women’s civil society organizations through the provision of core, flexible and long-term funding.

I thank you, Madam President, and all the members of the Council for giving me this opportunity to convey my own convictions and those of the civil society organization that I represent.

The President: I thank Ms. Al-Qadhi for her briefing.

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

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): I would like to start by thanking all of our briefers today. I welcome Mr. Grundberg, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen. He brings a great depth of knowledge to the role, and we look forward to working with him and supporting his efforts. His appointment comes at a critical time and, as he said, is a moment to reassess. The resumption of inclusive peace talks that represent all of Yemeni society, including minorities and women, is essential to ending the war. I welcome his plans to travel throughout Yemen and the region and listen first. That will also be an opportunity for the Yemeni parties to demonstrate their commitment to peace and move beyond their existing positions to meet with him without preconditions and facilitate his travel within Yemen.

Secondly, I would like to thank Ms. Entesar Al-Qadhi for her poignant briefing and courage. The bleak picture that she painted today for women and girls in Yemen, particularly in Ma'rib, underlines the necessity of peace. As members of the Security Council have said repeatedly, the Houthi offensive in Ma'rib must end. We condemn the reckless cross-border attacks by the Houthis facilitated by Iran. They have resorted once again to launching missiles and explosive-laden unmanned aerial vehicles. Most worrisome is the indiscriminate nature of those actions. On 31 August shrapnel wounded eight civilians and damaged a commercial aircraft at Abha airport, and, on 4 September, another two civilians — children — were wounded by more shrapnel.

Thirdly, we continue to be concerned about the situation in the south. The Riyadh agreement, facilitated by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, needs to be implemented so that stability returns to the south. The Government of Yemen and the southern groups must work together to that end. In addition, the Southern Transitional Council must facilitate the return of the entire Cabinet of the Government of Yemen to Aden.

Lastly, we remain alarmed by the deteriorating economy and increasing risk of famine. That must remain a key priority for the United Nations-led peace process. Last month, the Yemeni rial passed the symbolic mark of 1,000 rial to the dollar for the first time, making food and basic services increasingly

unaffordable for millions of people. The Government of Yemen must therefore implement reforms to open up the possibility of greater financial assistance, with support from the international community and the relevant international financial institutions.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Special Envoy Hans Grundberg, Deputy Director Mudawi and Ms. Entesar Al-Qadhi for their briefings. I especially welcome the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen in his new role.

Recently, there has been no sign of letting up in the Yemeni conflict, and the security situation continues to worsen. Within the international community, there has been a pervasive sense of dissatisfaction and concern about the status quo in Yemen. High hopes have therefore been placed on the Special Envoy to play an active role. China stands ready, together with all other Council members, to support the Special Envoy in objectively and impartially carrying out his work, based on his mandate, with a view to securing a political solution to the current Yemeni crisis. In that regard, I would like to make the following points.

First, the current priority is to achieve a cessation of violence and hostilities without delay. The months-long conflict in Ma'rib has further exacerbated the confrontation among the parties, hampering efforts towards achieving a political solution. China condemns all forms of violence against civilians and civilian infrastructure, including the Houthis' attack against the Abha International Airport in Saudi Arabia. The parties to the conflict must comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law to protect civilians, especially vulnerable groups, including women and the children. We hope that the Special Envoy will begin to engage with the parties concerned as soon as possible and convince them to abandon the military option and return to negotiations to resolve their differences.

Resolving the Yemeni issue is in the common interests of the countries of the region. China is in favour of the Special Envoy's visit to the countries of the region and encourages them to continue playing their part in facilitating peace negotiations.

Secondly, the level of humanitarian assistance provided must be increased further. Yemen has been gripped by a humanitarian crisis for many years, on which Ms. Mudawi has provided detailed information. What is most worrisome is the fact that, as fuel is running out, some power plants in Aden have ceased to

operate, depriving the population of basic services. Due to the onslaught of the pandemic, the health sector in the country is facing collapse. The Ministry of Health recently announced that the country had entered into the third wave.

We hope that the Special Envoy and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs will strengthen coordination with the parties concerned and, in the light of the situation on the ground, deliver humanitarian assistance to the country in a targeted manner.

China welcomes the announcement by the International Monetary Fund of \$665 million in special drawing rights to Yemen and supports the Yemeni Government in making good use of those funds to stabilize the local currency and ease economic hardship.

Thirdly, it is necessary to address concrete issues and promote a comprehensive solution in a gradual manner. After years of conflict, there is a serious lack of mutual trust among the parties. The Special Envoy could start by tackling concrete issues, such as the exchange of prisoners of war and the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker, in a focused manner so as to consolidate some visible progress as soon as possible, thereby creating positive momentum.

On that basis, and fully taking into account the political, security and humanitarian issues faced by the country, the Special Envoy could then work out a feasible solution to break the political stalemate, improve the situation on the ground and ease the people's suffering.

China is confident that, once the Yemeni parties can build more political will and mutual trust, with the United Nations deploying good offices and playing a primary role, accompanied by the international community offering its support, by working together it will be possible to find a political solution to accommodate the concerns of all the parties.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Grundberg, Ms. Eltahir Mudawi and Ms. Al-Qadhi for their briefings.

It has been seven years since the conflict in Yemen began. On the ground, there is no prospect of an end to the crisis. Since the beginning of the conflict, we have stated repeatedly that the military option will not lead anywhere, as the reality on the ground reminds us every day. The clashes continue, but the situation remains deadlocked.

The appointment of a new Special Envoy represents an opportunity to relaunch the peace process, which is currently at a stalemate. The parameters required to end the crisis are well known: a comprehensive ceasefire, the reopening of Sana'a airport and the port of Al-Hudaydah and negotiations among the various actors to reach a comprehensive and inclusive political solution.

As a prerequisite, it is imperative that the Houthis stop their unacceptable actions, both in the Ma'rib area and against Saudi territory. We condemn such acts, as well as the refusal to allow the United Nations inspection mission access to the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker, in the strongest terms. The Houthis' use of blackmail is also unacceptable. It is essential that they allow the United Nations inspection mission immediate access without preconditions, otherwise they will be responsible for a major environmental disaster.

I would also like to reiterate France's commitment to the territorial integrity of Yemen. Yemen must remain unified, as its sovereignty depends on it. In that respect, we are concerned about tensions in the south of the country and call for the return of the Yemeni Government to Aden. The impasse in the conflict will lead to the fragmentation of the country, which will push it further into the grasp of terrorism and extremism.

For seven years now, the Yemeni people have continued to suffer the consequences of the absence of a political solution. The status quo on the ground has dramatic consequences for the people of Yemen, who are paying the heaviest price for the political stalemate. The humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate. Nearly 70 per cent of the population is in need of humanitarian aid, which is equal to four out of every five children. Only half of the country's health infrastructure is operational.

We need to intensify efforts to address the risk of large-scale famine and to counter the spread of the coronavirus disease pandemic, including by accelerating the vaccination campaign. That includes ensuring full humanitarian access to all people in need. We call for the immediate removal of all bureaucratic obstacles in the country, particularly in Houthi-controlled areas.

The protection of civilians must remain an absolute imperative. Respect for international humanitarian law is an obligation for all. The perpetrators of violations of international humanitarian law and human rights must not go unpunished. Furthermore, indiscriminate

air strikes, which do not respect the principles of distinction, proportionality or precaution, must be stopped.

France remains determined to support all efforts to resume a peace process in Yemen. The new Special Envoy can count on our full support to that end.

Mr. Mills (United States of America): I would like to thank our briefers for their remarks, especially Special Envoy Grundberg, whom I join others in welcoming to the Security Council. The United States delegation looks forward to working with him and his team.

Today I would like to discuss three aspects of the conflict in Yemen, namely, the Houthi attacks, which, are undermining peace efforts; the country's dire humanitarian needs; and addressing the underlying economic drivers of the conflict. The international consensus is clear: the violence in Yemen must stop. A broad and inclusive political process must resume, and we need to alleviate the humanitarian crisis.

The appointment of Special Envoy Grundberg can help lend new momentum to those efforts, but the parties must engage seriously with the Special Envoy and without preconditions. The parties must choose to lay down their arms and sit across the table from other Yemenis and discuss what Yemen will look like after the war.

Sadly, the Houthis continue to undermine those efforts. On 29 August, the drone and missile attack on Al-Anad Air Base killed at least 30 people. That strike bore all the hallmarks of a Houthi attack. Two days later, on 31 August, the Houthis executed yet another drone attack against the airport in Abha, Saudi Arabia, which wounded eight civilians.

The United States strongly condemns those attacks, but those are only the latest attacks by a group that claims to want peace. In 2021 alone, the Houthis have launched more than 240 attacks into Saudi Arabia, endangering civilians throughout the country, including the 70,000 American citizens who reside there.

The Houthis have also continued their prolonged, unnecessary and dangerous stalling of negotiations with the United Nations on the assessment and repair of the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker. The environmental, public health and economic risks that are associated with the *FSO SAFER* are too grave and too expansive to be used as a political bargaining chip. Such provocations

are perpetuating the conflict and undermining our collective efforts to facilitate a path towards peace for Yemen.

As our briefers detailed, millions of Yemenis are suffering the effects of the conflict. The dire humanitarian situation includes, as we heard, starvation, abuse of children and women and the rampant spread of disease, including the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). The United States urges the international community to contribute to the United Nations humanitarian response plan for Yemen. As part of the United States effort, we have provided 151,000 doses of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine to Yemen. We want to thank UNICEF and the World Health Organization for working with the Yemeni Government to distribute those life-saving vaccines.

Finally, we need to address the underlying economic drivers that leave so many Yemenis unable to meet their basic needs. We urge Saudi Arabia, the Yemeni Government and the Houthis to take steps to ensure that fuel is adequately imported and distributed throughout Yemen at fair prices. We also want to welcome the recent allocation by the International Monetary Fund of \$665 million in special drawing rights to Yemen, which presents an opportunity to start reversing the decline in Yemen's economy. While this work is important and it is needed, only a durable peace agreement can begin to help reverse the dire humanitarian crisis, which is the result of seven years of war and the erosion of the economy and basic services.

Let me end by saying that despite the dire situation, the United States believes that we have reason to be hopeful. The Yemeni people want peace and an end to the ravages of war. The Houthis and other parties to the conflict still have the opportunity to change their behaviour, engage seriously with Special Envoy Grundberg and create a brighter future for Yemen. We call on them to choose that path — the path of peace and hope.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Mr. Hans Grundberg and Ms. Ghada Eltahir Mudawi for their briefings. We also listened closely to Ms. Entesar Al-Qadhi.

Mr. Grundberg began work on an extremely complex brief; we hope that he will without delay begin working to establish a substantive dialogue among the parties to the conflict in the interests of a rapid de-escalation. We will actively support the efforts of

the Special Envoy, taking into account our position on the central role of the United Nations in the political settlement process in Yemen. We are convinced that United Nations mediation will be able to reconcile the numerous competing players on the Yemeni landscape. A significant role could also be played by the States of the region, whose constructive contribution we are always ready to support.

We can see that the faltering progress on the path to peace has already led to a further escalation on the front lines, including in Ma'rib, as well as an intensification of air attacks on the territory of Saudi Arabia. We call upon all parties to show restraint and to cease hostilities primarily to avoid casualties from among the civilian population. As we have always said and will reiterate once again, there is no alternative to negotiations that take into account the interests of all Yemeni stakeholders. For our part, we intend to continue to encourage the Yemeni authorities and the Ansar Allah movement to adopt a constructive approach and to show a willingness to compromise when considering their disagreements. The international community is united on the Yemen file. The main goal is a comprehensive and long-term settlement of the conflict, which is having a negative impact on the entire region.

We remain particularly worried by the dire socioeconomic situation in the country. We support calls for the full lifting of the maritime, land and air blockade of Yemen and of restrictions on the delivery of food, medicine and other vital goods to all parts of the country. The Yemeni people are in dire need of humanitarian assistance that is provided on a depoliticized and non-discriminatory basis.

We are also seriously concerned by the ongoing attacks on civilian objects. We strongly urge the parties to the conflict to strictly respect the provisions of international humanitarian law and to immediately and fully refrain from combat operations, which result in civilian casualties and destroy non-military infrastructure.

We are convinced of the importance of the Security Council supporting the Special Envoy in holding a balanced line in the interests of a rapid settlement in Yemen. We trust that as he gets down to the nuts and bolts of his dossier, he will without delay be able to identify the main barriers preventing the parties from returning to the negotiating table and chart a course towards peace in the country. One useful aid for the

Special Envoy could also be resolution 598 (1987), as well as other initiatives, including the updated Russian concept for collective security in the region.

Mr. Ochoa Martínez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to start by congratulating Mr. Hans Grundberg on his appointment and to assure him that he can count on Mexico's full support. I thank Ms. Mudawi and Ms. Al-Qadhi for their briefings, and I welcome the presence of the delegation of Yemen here in the Chamber.

My delegation echoes the concerns about the tragic situation in Yemen and the ongoing violence there. As Ms. Al-Qadhi noted, the situation in Ma'rib is terrible; it is only one of the many fronts of the conflict, with devastating humanitarian consequences. Mexico urges once again the establishment of a national ceasefire and calls on all parties to exercise maximum moderation. In that regard, we condemn the attacks against targets in Saudi Arabia.

Given that the political process remains at an impasse, the mistrust between the parties continues to further deepen the geographical and social divisions in the country. That is why the ceasefire is essential to move towards political and social reconciliation. Without a national ceasefire, it will be impossible to meet people's most basic needs for food, housing and security.

The progress in the political process and the ceasefire are mutually reinforcing and complementary processes. We hope that the appointment of the Special Envoy will help in achieving both aims.

We urge the Houthi leadership to participate with no preconditions and in a constructive and committed way in the dialogue facilitated by the Special Envoy. We also call for an inclusive, broad-based political dialogue that is led and owned by the Yemenis themselves. In particular, we underscore the importance of the full, equal and significant participation of women, who have contributed to many local initiatives.

On the economic front, regrettably, the approval by the International Monetary Fund of special drawing rights and the cash injections from Saudi Arabia have not been sufficient to prevent the exchange rate from continuing to fall, leading to inflation and decreased purchasing power. In addition, there are restrictions on imports of basic commodities, which is the main cause

of food insecurity, and the risk of famine that prevails in the country.

Mexico calls on Ansar Allah and the Government of Yemen to eliminate all kinds of restrictions on and bureaucratic procedures that hamper the import of food and essential goods and to allow for unhindered access to humanitarian assistance.

As Ms. Mudawi noted, while the contributions made by the international community have allowed for the partial financing of the humanitarian response, the armed conflict, the pandemic, the risk of famine and heavy rains have severely impacted vulnerable groups, leading to a significant increase in humanitarian needs. The funding currently available will cover humanitarian operations for only a few more months. We hope that the financial pledges made will be duly fulfilled in a timely manner.

We also note with deep concern that a new wave of infections is affecting a significant portion of the population in a country where the capacities of the health system are already limited. We welcome the announcement, as referenced by the representative of the United States, of the recent donation of 150,000 vaccine doses, and we hope for the speedy arrival of additional doses and the efficient and expeditious deployment of the vaccination campaign.

I would like to conclude by referring once again to the threat posed by the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker. That vessel is not merely an environmental threat; a spill would also affect humanitarian operations and navigation in the area. Mexico urges the Houthis leadership to allow its immediate inspection and repair.

Mr. Dang (Viet Nam): I should like to start by thanking all of our briefers today, and I join others in congratulating Mr. Hans Grundberg on having assumed the post of Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen. I believe that he will build upon the important work of his predecessor and bring new momentum to the ongoing efforts for a comprehensive solution to the conflict in Yemen.

I also welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Yemen in our meeting today.

We join others in condemning the attacks against Saudi Arabia and share their concerns about the recent military escalation in a number of areas in Yemen, especially in Ma'rib. More than 200 people from all sides were killed in the heavy fighting over the past

two weeks. The continued hostilities, with no end in sight yet, will put the lives of millions of Yemeni people at risk and undermine the peace efforts of regional partners and the international community.

Against that backdrop, we reiterate our call for all parties concerned, especially the Houthis, to cease all military operations, resume dialogue and cooperate fully with the new Special Envoy, with a view to soon achieving substantive progress in negotiations.

The international community should redouble its efforts to avoid further deterioration in Yemen and help create favourable conditions for talks among the parties concerned. In that process, it is important that any solution ensure respect for the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Yemen, as well as the meaningful participation and adequate representation of women and youth. At the same time, the Stockholm Agreement and the Riyadh agreement should be fully implemented.

While striving for an ultimate solution, we should continue efforts to address the dire humanitarian situation in Yemen. Protracted conflicts, food insecurity, the lack of basic services in many areas and the coronavirus disease pandemic continue to take an increasing toll on the country's population. Food prices and hunger continue to increase. Although the recent arrival of funding has improved the work of the World Food Programme and the United Nations Population Fund, millions of people, including women and girls, still lack food to get them through the day and, at the same time, have only limited access to the essential services, especially health care and water.

More than 2 million children cannot go to school and are at heightened risk of child labour and other forms of exploitation. Approximately 6.1 million women require protection services. Therefore, additional financial contributions are urgently needed so that critical life-saving programmes can be scaled up and sustained until the end of this year and beyond.

It is compulsory to provide safe and unhindered passage for humanitarian work, including humanitarian workers, so that aid could be delivered in a timely manner to those in need. All parties must also comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law, protect civilians, including women and children, and implement resolution 2573 (2021), including protecting civilian infrastructure. Furthermore, we reiterate our call to remove import restrictions through

Al-Hudaydah ports. That would help sustain the supply of essential goods, reduce inflation and fuel shortages and ease economic hardship for Yemen.

Any progress on the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker issue, in that connection, will help alleviate the potential difficulties that the Yemeni people may face. We urge the parties concerned to work constructively with the United Nations in that regard.

Let me conclude by reiterating our full support for, and strong commitment to, efforts by the international community, regional partners and those of the United Nations to address the myriad issues that the Yemeni people now face.

Mr. Kiboino (Kenya): Let me join others in congratulating and welcoming Special Envoy Hans Grundberg. I assure him of Kenya's support for his efforts towards a political solution to the conflict in Yemen.

I would also like to thank Deputy Director of Operations in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Ms. Ghada Eltahir Mudawi, and Executive Director of the Ma'rib Girls Foundation for Development, Ms. Entesar Al-Qadhi, for their informative briefings. We were particularly touched by the testimony of Ms. Al-Qadhi and thank her for her courage.

We would also like to welcome the representative of Yemen to today's meeting.

As we have said before, there is no military solution to the conflict in Yemen. Indeed, the pursuit of a solution by military means has a net loss result, with the greatest brunt borne by the most vulnerable — children, youth, women and the elderly, whose daily wish is for an end to the ravaging civil war, a return to peace and, with it, the opportunity to rebuild their lives and regain the ability to fend for themselves.

It is deeply worrisome that, since our previous meeting two weeks ago (see S/PV.8840), there have been reports of an escalation of fighting in a number of areas. Of particular concern is the renewed violence in Ma'rib, which has claimed more than 80 lives since the beginning of this week alone. Kenya strongly condemns the deadly violence, including the recent drone attack on Al-Anad Air Base, which killed at least 30 soldiers and injured many others, further undermining the prospects for a ceasefire. The chaos along front lines creates the ideal conditions for terrorist groups, such

as Al-Qaida, to thrive and expand their networks. We must remain acutely alert to those emerging threats and take pre-emptive measures.

We continue to remind all Yemeni stakeholders that the time has come for them to reconsider their hard-line positions and agree to engage constructively in an inclusive Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned process, with the support of the United Nations, as well as regional and international partners. We urge them, in that regard, to engage, under the auspices of the United Nations, led by the Office of the Special Envoy, in good faith and without preconditions.

Kenya welcomes the actions of international financial institutions and development partners to inject much-needed foreign reserves into Yemen's economy. However, those measures will yield only short-lived solutions if the armed conflict persists. It is up to the parties to make the necessary compromises to break the existing stalemate, agree on a working nationwide ceasefire within an agreed time frame and intentionally work towards a negotiated political solution that would ultimately usher in an environment of hope for sustained economic recovery.

The humanitarian situation remains fragile, with the heightened risk of famine still affecting more than 20 million people. Kenya commends the efforts of the international community to increase funding for the humanitarian response plan. Those efforts will go a long way in mitigating the suffering of many families and communities in need, including those affected by the recent flooding in parts of the country. We continue to support calls for not only increased humanitarian assistance, but also guarantees for humanitarian access, in line with international humanitarian law.

With a third wave of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) unfolding in Yemen, we urge the international community to assist with an increased supply of COVID-19 vaccines. We encourage the Yemeni authorities to promote vaccination that addresses misinformation and disinformation.

Kenya notes the ongoing discussions on the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker. We once again call on the authorities handling the ship to urgently engage constructively in finding a solution and thus avoid an environmental catastrophe.

I conclude by reaffirming Kenya's solidarity with the people of Yemen in their quest for sustained peace, security and political stability.

Ms. Juul (Norway): I would like to extend a very warm welcome to Special Envoy Hans Grundberg. We are encouraged by his statement today and stand ready to support his work in any way possible.

I would like to also thank all the briefers for their important remarks, and especially Ms. Entesar Al-Qadhi for highlighting the need for women's participation in the peace process. I welcome as well the representative of Yemen and reiterate our support to the Yemeni Government, as expressed during the visit of the Yemeni Foreign Minister to Norway last week.

I would like to raise four key points today.

First, there is an urgent need for military de-escalation. We are deeply concerned that the offensive by the Houthis in Ma'rib has intensified for the second week, as has fighting in other areas. Furthermore, the security situation in the south of Yemen continues to deteriorate. We are also concerned by the escalating cross-border attacks into Saudi Arabia, including on Abha International Airport on 31 August. Those attacks serve to underline the clear need for de-escalation.

Secondly, it is essential that we seize every opportunity to move the peace process forward. The political process between the Yemeni parties needs to restart, and we urge them to fully cooperate without delay. We must acknowledge that there will be no rapid political solution and that the political process will require the parties' willingness to compromise.

We are encouraged by Mr. Grundberg's commitment to an inclusive approach that is Yemeni-owned and -led. The full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership of Yemeni women is their right, as well as a prerequisite for a sustainable solution. We encourage Mr. Grundberg to consider the recommendations from the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security in that regard.

Thirdly, there is an urgent need to reverse the current humanitarian crisis. We would like to echo calls for lifting the restrictions that have prevented food and fuel from entering the port of Al-Hudaydah. We are concerned about reports of increasing bureaucratic impediments inside Yemen. We call on all actors to ensure safe and unhindered humanitarian access

immediately. Norway will participate in the upcoming high-level event later this month, which will be important in order to address the current humanitarian challenges.

Finally, there is an urgent need to focus on the protection of civilians. The Yemeni conflict has had a severe impact on the civilian population. We note with concern the conclusions drawn by the Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen in their recent report. We would like to reiterate that all perpetrators of violations of international humanitarian law and human rights violations and abuses, including conflict-related sexual violence, must be held accountable for their crimes. Over 24,000 people have been displaced so far this year in Ma'rib, and children remain the most vulnerable in this conflict.

Yesterday was the International Day to Protect Education from Attack. Yet in Yemen UNICEF reports that 2,500 schools have been damaged, used as shelters or occupied by armed groups. Moreover, it is estimated that 8.1 million children need emergency education assistance across Yemen. We would like to reiterate that the Safe Schools Declaration and its guidelines are key instruments for protecting schools and universities from military use during armed conflict.

There is an urgent need for a revitalized United Nations-led peace process in Yemen. I will therefore conclude by repeating our support for the approach presented by Mr. Grundberg and encourage all parties to the conflict and all Security Council members to cooperate with him in good faith.

Mr. Aougi (Niger) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Grundberg for his briefing and wish him every success in his new role. I also thank Ms. Ghada Eltahir Mudawi and Ms. Entesar Al-Qadhi for their briefings.

My delegation is following with great concern the continuing hostilities in the conflict in Yemen, in particular the violent clashes around the province of Ma'rib, the attack on 29 August against the Al-Anad Air Base, as well as the attacks on 31 August targeting Abha International Airport, in the southern Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

My country condemns in the strongest terms the repeated attacks on Saudi territory, which endanger the lives of thousands of civilians and threaten peace and security in the region. The trend of widening the spectrum of violence in Yemen must end, as it will only

make the situation more complex and delay the way out of the crisis.

We call on the Ansar Allah authorities to act responsibly by putting an end to their deadly offensives in Yemen and beyond its borders.

We also call on all parties to act responsibly by putting an end to this tragedy, which has lasted too long, and to engage constructively in a sincere dialogue, under the leadership of the new Special Envoy, for a comprehensive political settlement of their dispute.

We call on the international community, regional actors and members of the Security Council that can influence the parties to the conflict to continue to exert the necessary pressure to revitalize the discussions for a way out of the crisis that will allow Yemenis to reconcile and once again move towards the rebuilding and development of their country.

In addition to the untold number of deaths, the main consequence of the war in Yemen remains the severe humanitarian crisis into which the country has been plunged in recent years. We therefore call on donor countries, and in particular those in the region, to be more generous and compassionate towards the suffering people of Yemen. Improving the humanitarian crisis in Yemen also requires the lifting of blockades on the delivery of humanitarian aid to the country, including through the ports of Al-Hudaydah and the Sana'a airport.

In conclusion, the Niger reaffirms its full support for all initiatives encouraging the resumption of dialogue between the Yemeni parties and the return of peace in the country.

Ms. Gonsalves (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): We thank our briefers for their insightful remarks and efforts to find a durable solution to the conflict in Yemen. The work being undertaken by Ms. Al-Qadhi, including through the Ma'rib Girls Foundation for Development and the Women Peacemakers initiative, is crucial to advance the safety and security of Yemen's youth and is indispensable to the long-term prosperity of the country. We also extend congratulations to Special Envoy Hans Grundberg on his recent appointment to that position and welcome his presence with us this morning.

We once again call for an immediate lasting ceasefire among the parties involved in the Yemeni conflict. The recent launch of attacks into Saudi Arabia from Houthis

in Yemen only underscores the urgent necessity for all sides to truly commit to a ceasefire. We condemn these most recent attack, as well as indiscriminate air strikes and shelling of civilians, as well as objects critical to civilians, which have characterised the war in Yemen. Even before the dust settles, we ought to have an open and frank conversation about reconciliation between the parties, an indispensable component of which is accountability. Our role as a Council and as individual Council members is to do our utmost to facilitate the warring parties reaching a settlement and to act responsibly when providing support to one party or another.

The impact of the protracted conflict is evident in the collapse of Yemeni institutions and the fragmentation of the social fabric. The brunt of that is borne primarily by those most vulnerable — women and children. Hostilities and displacement threaten millions of people, and we are all acutely aware that fighting on many front lines across the country continues to destabilize an already fragile situation. The overall humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate, in parallel with the economy, as many Yemenis lack the purchasing power needed to afford food and basic necessities.

In that regard, we recognize the need for unhindered passage of humanitarian aid, particularly against the backdrop of a third wave of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and an active rainy season that triggered, for the second time this year, the nationwide flood preparedness plan, as Yemen faces the climate crisis from a very vulnerable position.

In that context, we recall the relevant provisions under international law to which the parties to the conflict are legally bound. We also call on the international community to sustain and increase its support for the humanitarian response plan. We hope that the humanitarian event to be organized by Sweden, Switzerland and the European Union this month will be seized as an opportunity for the international community to renew its commitment to the people of Yemen. However, we note that humanitarian aid is merely palliative. The only viable solution to the conflict is an inclusive Yemeni-led, Yemeni-owned and Yemeni-focused political solution that reflects the complexities on the ground and addresses the root causes of the conflict.

Any reference to the political process will be incomplete without recognizing the role of women, who

make up a significant portion of the Yemeni population. Women are present and active on the ground in Yemen, including on the front lines, and were some of the first to call for a ceasefire in Yemen to respond to COVID-19 pandemic. Women in Yemen have demonstrated their resilience, strength and determination, and a peace process that marginalizes this group is destined for failure. Women must be included in all aspects of the peace process, not only when dialogue commences. We urge the Special Envoy to work with women's groups and leaders in Yemen, and for the Security Council to continue inviting women briefers to enrich our meetings.

Before concluding, we stress the need for concrete progress to be made on the issue of the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker. Its dilapidated condition increases the risk of a disaster, the occurrence of which has the potential to cause irreparable damage to the environment and the livelihoods of many in the Red Sea region. In that context, we recognize that a lack of trust can act as a barrier to compromise, and we encourage the parties to undertake confidence-building measures that can open the path to a pragmatic solution.

We reaffirm our support to Special Envoy Grundberg and the people of Yemen and reiterate our commitment to work constructively towards a solution that ensures long-term peace, stability and prosperity in Yemen.

Mr. Jürgenson (Estonia): I thank Special Envoy Grundberg for his briefing and wish him every success in his new role. I also thank Deputy Director Mudawi and Ms. Al-Qadhi for their briefings.

Estonia is deeply concerned about increased military activity in Yemen during recent weeks, especially in Ma'rib, which has caused further civilian casualties and displacement. Civilians and civilian infrastructure have also been targeted in Houthi attacks against Saudi Arabia, including Abha International Airport. We urge all parties to refrain from indiscriminate attacks against civilian objects, as they are a violation to international humanitarian law. We also call upon all parties to engage constructively with the new Special Envoy and to show willingness to compromise and agree to a sustainable ceasefire and a resumption of an inclusive political process, with the participation of women and youth.

Echoing the messages by Ms. Al-Qadhi, we call for full, equal and meaningful participation by women in

the peace efforts, as well as an increased role for women in Yemen's political life and humanitarian response.

We also call upon the Government of Yemen and the Southern Transitional Council to resume the implementation of the Riyadh agreement and to refrain from actions that will further increase tensions in an already volatile situation.

The fighting in Yemen must stop immediately, as it has a devastating effect on peoples' lives. Besides direct impact in the form of casualties, there are also strong interlinkages between the protracted conflict and the socioeconomic and humanitarian situation, as well as violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

The absence of a long-term agreement between the parties to the conflict on the import of fuel and commercial imports through Al-Hudaydah port contributes to the increase in food prices, and thus to the exacerbation of food insecurity. In that context, we welcome the upcoming pledging event, to be co-hosted by Sweden and Switzerland, aimed at supporting the humanitarian aid efforts in Yemen.

Due to the worsening socioeconomic conditions caused by the conflict, children are forced into early marriage or recruited. As recently reported by the Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen, the parties to the conflict have committed sexual and gender-based violence and have engaged in enforced disappearances, arbitrary detention and torture, in violation of international human rights law and international humanitarian law. That calls for more attention to the vulnerability of women and children to the protection risks related to the worsening economic and humanitarian conditions. We repeat our call to all parties to refrain from such violations and abuses, ensure accountability and cooperate with the Group of Eminent Experts, which, regrettably, for the third consecutive year was not able to access Yemen or other coalition countries.

Finally, we repeat our call upon the Houthis to ensure immediate and full access for the United Nations team to the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker for an assessment and light repairs mission.

Mr. Cherif (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to welcome Mr. Hans Grundberg, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, and wish him every success in his new tasks. We look forward to working with him to achieve comprehensive

and lasting peace in the brotherly country of Yemen. I also thank Ms. Mudawi and Ms. Al-Qadhi for their valuable briefings on the situation in Yemen. I would also like to welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of Yemen at this meeting.

The Special Envoy's assumption of his duties and the letter that he sent to the Yemeni people represent a clear message from the international community to the parties to the conflict to effectively engage in a political settlement, declare a comprehensive ceasefire and ensure that the interests of Yemen and its people prevail above any other consideration.

In that context, we once again stress that there is no alternative to a negotiated solution that puts the interests of the people of Yemen above all other considerations and avoids them further miseries and pain. We also stress that military options to impose a fait accompli by force would only exacerbate a complex situation, cause more victims, jeopardize the lives of millions of people, worsen the dire humanitarian situation and undermine opportunities for peace in Yemen.

Tunisia reiterates its support for the United Nations efforts and the contributions of the international community to put an end to the conflict and relaunch the political process with a view to achieving a comprehensive, peaceful solution that brings about an end to the suffering of the Yemeni people, preserves the sovereignty, independence and unity of Yemen and restores peace and stability to the country. We also call upon the parties to the conflict to respect the provisions of international humanitarian law and protect civilians and civilian installations.

In the same vein, we reiterate Tunisia's condemnation of repeated attacks targeting the territories of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and civilians. We call upon the Houthis to cease those violations.

The deteriorated humanitarian situation in Yemen is a source of grave concern, particularly in the light of the continued worsening of the economic and living situations, owing to the continued military operations and the stall in the relief and humanitarian operations. That is compounded by the effects of the coronavirus disease pandemic. According to United Nations reports, 80 per cent of the Yemeni population are in need of humanitarian assistance, and more than 20 million people are suffering from food insecurity and the collapse of health services.

We once again call for the delivery of humanitarian and medical assistance to those in need without obstacles, the lifting of the restrictions imposed on ports, the reopening of airports, the provision of the necessary financing for the humanitarian response programme and meeting the urgent needs of the Yemeni people.

Regrettably, according to UNICEF, a Yemeni child dies every 10 minutes for avoidable reasons, such as malnutrition and diseases that could be prevented through vaccination. Furthermore, children are suffering from serious psychological effects as a result of the continued hostilities, which have an impact on their education. Two million children in Yemen are no longer going to school. One in every six schools can no longer be used. That is unacceptable by any standard. For that reason, we call upon all parties to respect the rights of children in Yemen and to spare no effort in saving children from such serious consequences.

It is urgent that the situation of the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker be addressed. It represents a serious threat that could lead to an unprecedented environmental, economic and humanitarian disaster in the region. We therefore reiterate our call to facilitate processes that would allow United Nations experts to visit the site, conduct a technical inspection of the oil tanker and make the necessary repairs as quickly as possible.

Mr. Tirumurti (India): I join other colleagues in congratulating Mr. Hans Grundberg on his appointment as the new United Nations Special Envoy for Yemen and welcome him to today's meeting. I thank him for his briefing and assure him of India's full support for his efforts aimed at restoring peace in Yemen.

I also thank the Deputy Director of Operations of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Ms. Ghada Eltahir Mudawi, and Ms. Entesar Al-Qhadi for their briefings, and welcome the Permanent Representative of Yemen to today's meeting.

This month marks the completion of seven years of the current conflict in Yemen. Yet the situation in the country remains precarious. We are deeply concerned at the intensification of fighting in various parts of the country in recent weeks, in particular between Yemeni Government forces and the Ansar Allah in Ma'rib. The number of fatalities has been mounting, and the escalating levels of violence in the conflict is jeopardizing the chances of a ceasefire. We are also concerned by the deterioration of the security situation

in Aden and the southern governorates. Progress on the implementation of the Riyadh agreement remains vital to addressing these tensions, and we encourage the Government and the Southern Transitional Council to resume the dialogue facilitated by Saudi Arabia for resolving the issues related to the implementation of the agreement.

We call on all parties to renounce military confrontations and work towards protecting lives and establishing enduring peace. The aspirations of the Yemeni people and their hopes for peace, stability, and prosperity should be the focus of these efforts.

India views with concern the continued cross-border missile and drone attacks into Saudi Arabia, which undermine security and stability in the Gulf region as well as the supply and security of global energy flows. The deliberate targeting of civilian infrastructure is also a flagrant violation of international law.

Three Indians were among the eight civilians who were injured in the recent attack on Abha airport. We call for a strict implementation of the arms embargo envisaged in resolution 2216 (2015) and its effective monitoring to eliminate such attacks in future.

The chaotic security situation in Yemen and the recent developments in the region could provide fresh impetus to the revival of activities of such terrorist groups as Al-Qaida. It is important for the Security Council to keep its focus on the activities of these groups in Yemen and their linkages with the global terrorist network.

With respect to the humanitarian situation, India remains extremely concerned about the deteriorating situation in Yemen. The unprecedented humanitarian crisis is an indicator of the human toll of conflict and the suffering of the Yemeni people. Children in particular have been the most affected. India urges all parties to the conflict to permit the free, regular, and unimpeded passage of food, fuel, medicines and other humanitarian relief.

Peace and stability in Al-Hudaydah is also essential to ensuring the smooth flow of humanitarian aid and other essential commodities into Yemen. In this regard, I call on all parties to fully implement the Stockholm Agreement. I express our support for the efforts of the United Nations Mission to support the Hodeidah Agreement under the leadership of General Abhijit Guha towards implementing that Agreement.

Nearly 50 per cent of the funding requirement for human humanitarian response plan is still unmet. Without additional funding, humanitarian agencies may be forced to scale down or shut down programmes, starting this month, especially in the health, humanitarian and sanitation sectors. The consequences for such a reduction would be borne by millions of Yemenis. In this regard, the humanitarian conference on Yemen co-organized by the European Union, Sweden and Switzerland later this month is a welcome development. We hope it will provide an opportunity to address the crisis with new funding.

An urgent solution to the *FSO SAFER* issue is required to avoid any imminent environmental catastrophe and ensure uninterrupted international maritime passage through the Red Sea. Unfortunately, the discussions between Ansar Allah and the United Nations have not brought about the desired results so far. I reiterate our call for immediate and full access to the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker for the United Nations team.

We strongly believe that the meaningful participation of women in decision-making substantially strengthens and deepens the effectiveness of peacebuilding and developed stability in this society. I commend the efforts undertaken by various Yemeni women's groups to advance women's participation in the political process and welcome their active leadership in peacebuilding in Yemen. I also appreciate the close engagement of the United Nations with these groups.

In conclusion, I reiterate that the only sustainable solution to the conflict is a peacefully negotiated Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned political settlement that is inclusive, fair and prioritizes the well-being of all Yemenis. The nationwide cessation of hostilities is the starting point for such a settlement. I urge all relevant parties to engage constructively with the new Special Envoy to secure an early political solution to the conflict.

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

I want to thank our briefers for their briefings, and in particular Ms. Entesar Al-Qhadi for her frank and eloquent contribution today. We should never forget the tragic human consequences of this conflict. I salute Ms. Al-Qhadi's courage and her commitment to carrying out such vital work on the ground in Ma'rib.

I want to welcome the new Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Hans Grundberg. He can be assured of Ireland's full support for him and his team as they embark on the challenging task ahead. We call on all actors to engage constructively and in good faith with the Special Envoy. I shall make three points today.

First, the fighting in Yemen needs to end — and end now. The Houthi offensive on Ma'rib is unacceptable. Its impact on the people of Ma'rib, particularly its women and girls, is horrific. Thousands of Yemenis have been uprooted and displaced, as Ms. Al-Qhadi has so vividly described today.

Cross-border attacks on civilian infrastructure in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia must end, and escalating violence elsewhere in the country, including in Ta'iz, and Al-Hudaydah, is deeply concerning. Constructive engagement by all parties on a nationwide ceasefire is urgently needed now to allow for a political dialogue to take place under the auspices of the new Special Envoy.

Secondly, Yemen continues to struggle with the devastating humanitarian consequences of the protracted conflict. As we heard earlier, famine-like conditions are a reality for many Yemenis and pose a genuine threat to millions of others. The conflict has far-reaching economic consequences, such as the inadequate passage of fuel through Yemen's Red Sea ports, which compound the ongoing crisis and undermine the humanitarian response. The long-standing issue of irregular salary payments for civil servants has left millions of doctors, nurses and teachers struggling to feed their families. Let us be clear. Yemenis are not starving because there is no food; they are starving because they cannot afford it. We urge the parties with the power and means to do so to ensure that an adequate flow of fuel and commodities reach those who are in such desperate need of them.

Lastly, the consistent pattern of women's exclusion from the political process in Yemen cannot continue. Entesar Al-Qadhi exemplified today why women belong at every table, during peace talks and within the Government. Day in and day out, women are working to build peace in Yemen. From enhancing the role of political parties in local peacebuilding to developing local conflict-resolution mechanisms with tribal actors, Yemeni women like Ms. Al-Qadhi are waging peace, not war. Her work with children, who are suffering

enormously as a result of the conflict, is essential to building sustainable peace.

All Yemenis, regardless of gender, age or background, need to be given the chance to play a substantial role in shaping their future. That requires full respect for human rights as well as accountability for human rights abuses. The latter include conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence and violations of international humanitarian law. This is not rhetoric. Such violations are weaponized to prevent ordinary Yemenis, women in particular, from participating fully in political and public life.

In sitting around this table, we have a responsibility, collectively and individually, to act in the face of such immense suffering. Today we heard clarion calls to action. Let us not just hear these calls, but rather heed them. We owe that, at the very least, to the millions of Yemenis, who have already clearly suffered too much.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Yemen.

Mr. Al-Saadi (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me to congratulate you, Madam President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council this month. I wish you and your friendly delegation every success. I would like to thank your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of India, for his able leadership of the Council last month. I also thank Mr. Grundberg and Ms. Mudawi for their briefings, and I thank Ms. Entesar Al-Qadhi for hers, which reflected the dire humanitarian situation in Ma'rib governorate as a result of the continued Houthi offensive against the city and crimes committed against civilians and internally displaced persons (IDPs), particularly women and children.

The offensive against the city must stop immediately to avoid exacerbating the humanitarian situation. The Yemeni Government once again welcomes the appointment of Mr. Grundberg as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen. We stand ready to cooperate with him and support his efforts to reach a lasting and comprehensive peace in Yemen. We call for continued efforts to end the suffering of the Yemeni people. There is no time to lose. As Martin Luther King said, "There is only so much one can bear. Humans are crying out, and I cannot tolerate that any longer".

Under the leadership of President Hadi Mansour, the Yemeni Government is continuing its efforts to end

the absurd war being waged by the Houthi militias and achieve lasting peace in line with the political terms of reference agreed, namely, the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism, the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2216 (2015), and the outcome of the Comprehensive National Dialogue. They are the only guarantee to reaching a political settlement.

The appointment of the new Special Envoy, who will lead United Nations mediation efforts, has renewed hope for Yemenis that the end of the conflict is near. It will have been seven years this month since the Houthis carried out their coup after Yemenis had agreed through the Comprehensive National Dialogue on establishing a new federal Yemen. The Yemeni Government has repeatedly expressed its support to all United Nations and international efforts to end the conflict by constructively engaging in every initiative proposed by previous Special Envoys.

However, the Houthi militias have continued to insist on war instead of peace. They continue to target civilians and refuse to cooperate with United Nations Envoys and the international community. The Council must support Mr. Grundberg in adopting a firmer approach on dealing with the Houthi militias and compelling them to choose peace. The Houthis have always stalled for time by creating new front lines, continuing its unjust war, killing Yemenis and committing crimes against civilians, detaining journalists, torturing detainees, committing sexual violence against detained women, recruiting thousands of children, sending them to the battle fronts and threatening international navigation.

The Houthi militias have continued their offensive on Ma'rib and have resorted to inflammatory rhetoric, while they declared that they intended to attack all Yemeni governorates to subdue them by force and attack civilians and civilian infrastructure in Yemen and the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. That is how those militias welcome the new Special Envoy. The Houthi militias attacked Abha International Airport, and recently Najran and Jizan, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. They have escalated their military operations upon instructions from their sponsor and supporter the Iranian regime to undermine regional stability and security with the aim of replacing regular armies. That demonstrates what the Houthis truly think about the international community's calls for peace. We call on the Council to condemn those crimes and pressure the

militias and the Iranian regime to end their efforts to destabilize Yemen and the region.

The war continues to exacerbate the human suffering of Yemenis. The Houthis have repeatedly carried out indiscriminate attacks against residential areas and IDP camps in Ma'rib, forcing civilians to be displaced in order to escape the crimes of those militias. Last week, the Houthis also carried out systematic and intentional shelling against Rahabah directorate, south of Ma'rib governorate, which led to injuries and deaths among civilians, IDPs and members of host communities, as well as damage to their properties and homes. The shelling also led to the forced displacement of more than 505 families made up of 3,535 people to different places in an attempt to escape the Houthi shelling who used various kinds of weapons and missiles. In addition, the Houthi militias are hindering humanitarian deliveries. They continue to divert and loot humanitarian aid. The humanitarian community must draw the Council's attention to those crimes in order to put pressure on the Houthi militias to end their interference in humanitarian affairs.

As detailed in various briefings by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Security Council is aware that the weak purchasing power of the citizens is the main reason behind the threat of famine for millions of Yemenis in the country. Consequently, the Yemeni Government calls on the international community to provide generous support to Government plans and programmes to ensure stability and economic recovery and to support development projects, as well as humanitarian assistance.

We also call for capacity-building for State institutions and for promoting their role in providing services, in particular by creating a mechanism to channel humanitarian donor funds through the Central Bank of Yemen to support the national currency and improve the living conditions of citizens and alleviate their suffering. We call as well for integrating development priorities and needs in all humanitarian interventions so as to achieve early recovery.

In conclusion, the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker continues to pose a threat to the environment, security and safety of the Red Sea. It threatens the livelihoods of fishers and food security for millions of people in Yemen and the countries of the region. The Council has repeatedly taken up this issue, including in two meetings held on 15 July 2020 (see S/2020/721) and 3 June 2021

(see S/PV.8786), and agreed on the need for an urgent technical assessment of the tanker and necessary repairs to avoid a disaster. It is unacceptable that the Houthi militias continue to blackmail the international community and refuse access for United Nations experts to the tanker. They have used the issue as leverage for political gains without taking into consideration the threat posed by the tanker to Yemen and the region.

We hope that the Council will shoulder its responsibilities and put further pressure on the Houthi

militias to force them to end their intransigence and allow the United Nations team to immediately access the tanker without any preconditions in order to avert an imminent disaster.

The President: 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 in closed consultations.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.