



Security Council

Seventy-seventh year

9063rd meeting
 Tuesday, 14 June 2022, 3 p.m.
 New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Hoxha	(Albania)
<i>Members:</i>	Brazil	Mr. De Almeida Filho
	China	Mr. Zhang Jun
	France	Mrs. Broadhurst Estival
	Gabon	Mr. Biang
	Ghana	Mr. Agyeman
	India	Mr. Asokan
	Ireland	Ms. Byrne Nason
	Kenya	Mr. Ndung'u
	Mexico	Mrs. Buenrostro Massieu
	Norway	Ms. Heimerback
	Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
	United Arab Emirates	Mrs. Nusseibeh
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward
	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 3 p.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 Mudawi, Acting Director, Operations and Advocacy Division of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and Ms. Azal Al-Salafi, Protection and Advocacy Officer, Peace Track Initiative.

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 pleased to be here with Council members today. It is the first time that I have had the opportunity to brief the Council in person since I announced the truce in April (see S/PV.9017). The truce has now been holding in Yemen for two and a half months, a development that is unprecedented in this war and that seemed unimaginable at the beginning of this year. The parties recently extended the truce under the same terms until 2 August this year, and I commend the parties for their leadership and for listening to the millions of Yemenis who have been calling for respite and a chance for peace after more than seven years of conflict. At two and a half months into the truce, I would like to take stock of where we are on its implementation, highlight challenges and delineate the way forward.

First, the truce continues to hold in military terms. There have been no confirmed air strikes inside Yemen or cross-border attacks emanating from Yemen since the beginning of the agreement, and there has been a significant drop in civilian casualties. However, casualty numbers due to landmines and unexploded ordnance are unfortunately increasing as civilians, including children, venture into contaminated front-line areas that were previously inaccessible.

Despite the overall reduction in fighting, we continue to receive reports from both sides about alleged violations inside Yemen, including shelling, drone attacks, reconnaissance overflights and the redeployment of forces. Armed clashes have been reported on several fronts, with the majority of incidents reported in Ma'rib, Taiz and Al-Hudaydah governorates. As the Council is aware, we do not have independent monitoring capacities, but I take all those allegations very seriously. It will be critical to prevent such alleged incidents from provoking renewed escalation and violence. In that context, I am pleased to report that my Office has convened the first two meetings of the Military Coordination Committee, made up of representatives of the parties, in addition to the coalition's joint forces command. The Committee agreed to meet on a monthly basis and to set up a joint coordination room to address issues of concern in a timely manner. The face-to-face meetings represent a significant first step to building trust and improving communication between the parties.

When I last briefed the Council, the first commercial flight to Amman had just taken place the day before, following nearly six years of the closure of Sana'a airport. Since then we have also initiated flights to Cairo. To date, we have had eight commercial round-trip flights, which have transported 2,795 passengers from Sana'a to Amman and Cairo. I would like to recognize the efforts of the Government of Yemen for prioritizing the needs of Yemenis by facilitating the opening of the airport. I also want to reiterate my sincere appreciation to the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for their instrumental role in facilitating those flights.

The steady flow of fuel to the port of Al-Hudaydah has been maintained throughout the truce. During the months of April and May, more than 480,000 metric tons of fuel products were cleared — more fuel than entered Al-Hudaydah during the whole of last year. Since the beginning of the renewed truce, two ships have been cleared, and I hope the momentum of the last truce will not be lost. The steady delivery of fuel has taken the pressure off vital services, significantly decreased the queues at petrol stations that dominated the streets of Sana'a and allowed Yemenis to travel more easily around the country. As we will hear from Ms. Ghada Mudawi of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, those are some of the positive humanitarian implications of the truce.

It is critical to ensure that the truce also delivers on easing the suffering of the people of Taiz. Their freedom of movement has been greatly impeded by the conflict for years. As Taizis know all too well, the only open roads to the city are long and arduous. Last November I travelled for more than six hours along the narrow, winding and rugged mountainous road from Aden to the city of Taiz. Before the conflict, the same trip on the main road would have taken only three hours. In Taiz, I met with men, women and young people who told me about their daily plight they suffer because of closed access roads in and out of the city. I have also witnessed first-hand how the severe restrictions have crippled the economy, worsened access to health care and endangered travel for civilians.

Following the nomination of their respective delegations, I convened the parties in Amman to reach an agreement on opening roads in Taiz and other governorates. I would like to highlight the critical role played by local mediators and civil-society representatives present at the meeting, voicing their views and priorities and providing their expertise on road openings. After two rounds of frank and constructive deliberations on the views and options proposed by each side, I presented the parties with a proposal for a phased opening of roads that includes a main route from Taiz city to the Hawban area east of the city, as well as additional roads in Taiz and other governorates. The proposal also includes elements for an implementation mechanism and commitments for the safety of civilian travellers. While I am encouraged by the positive response by the Government of Yemen to the United Nations proposal, I am still waiting for a response from Ansar Allah. In the wake of the constructive discussions I had in Sana'a at the end of last week, I urge Ansar Allah to respond positively and without delay to the proposal.

Recent weeks have shown the fragility of the truce and that delays to its implementation may threaten to unravel it in its entirety. Resorting to transactionalism, by threatening to make the implementation of one element of the truce conditional against another, and using escalatory media rhetoric, undermines the truce. Ultimately, it is up to the parties to safeguard the truce and deliver on its promise to the benefit of the people of Yemen.

Over the past two and a half months, the truce has created a more conducive environment for the parties to engage in good faith. Yet the implementation of the truce

has brought to the surface more contentious issues with political implications, such as revenue management, public sector salary payments, travel documents and a more durable ceasefire. Those matters are political and governance-related, and we need to move towards more durable arrangements on those issues.

Some of those matters were indeed highlighted during my ongoing consultations to help formulate the priorities for a structured, multitrack process. During the past month, I held consultations with Yemeni public figures, diverse women constituencies and economic experts and the private sector to inform the design and substance of such a process. Certain themes emerged from those consultations, including the need to transform the truce into a durable ceasefire with a view to achieving longer-term security arrangements and an urgent call for the payment of public sector salaries and the management of revenues, monetary policy coordination and reconstruction. Participants also emphasized the need to ensure that the political process will be more inclusive, with women, youth and civil society represented across the various tracks. My Office has long recognized the valuable contributions of Yemeni peace actors, and I therefore look forward to listening to the briefing of Ms. Azal Al-Salafi.

The political, security and economic issues raised by Yemenis during the various rounds of consultations have given us a direction for the way forward. As we are working to consolidate the benefits of the truce, it is important to recognize that a structured, inclusive, multitrack process can provide the platform required to reach such durable solutions. It will also provide an opportunity to move Yemen towards a sustainable political settlement that meets the legitimate aspirations and demands of Yemeni women and men.

Over the next month and a half, I will pursue two main lines of action. First, I will work with the parties to ensure the implementation and consolidation of all the elements of the truce, including the opening of roads in Taiz and other governorates. Secondly, I will work to achieve more durable solutions to pressing economic and security needs. As such, I plan to initiate negotiations on the economic and security tracks. That work needs to be anchored in a political context, gearing towards a political settlement.

I remain deeply grateful for the continuous support I receive from the Council, as well as from the Sultanate of Oman, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the broader

international community. Such support will remain critical in the coming months. However, it is ultimately up to the parties to seize this opportunity, to negotiate in good faith and to make necessary compromises for the benefit of Yemen as a whole. The truce offers a rare opportunity to pivot towards peace that should not be lost.

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

I now give the floor to Ms. Mudawi.

Ms. Mudawi: The extension of the truce that the Special Envoy just described is extremely welcome. In its first two months, the truce has had a tremendous impact. We have seen a drop in civilian casualties as fighting has subsided. We have seen an end to severe shortages as more fuel comes in through Al-Hudaydah. We have seen commercial flights resume from Sana'a airport, allowing more people to move in and out of the country. And we have seen better humanitarian access in several areas.

Extending the truce will — we hope — allow those trends to continue. It will also provide more time for efforts to reopen roads in Taiz and elsewhere. Improving the freedom of movement is key to improving people's lives and humanitarian conditions, particularly in Taiz, Yemen's third-largest city.

But I must be clear — Yemen's humanitarian crisis remains as severe today as it was before the truce. In fact, the crisis could soon deteriorate. Allowing that to happen would run counter to the momentum the truce has generated and could undermine prospects for further progress. Right now, aid agencies are especially concerned by signs of growing needs, a shrinking humanitarian space and dwindling budgets. We need urgent action to address all three.

Let me start with the first threat — growing needs. As members of the Council know, the war in Ukraine is driving up the prices of food and other commodities worldwide, as well as straining global supply chains. Yemen is particularly vulnerable to those kinds of shocks because almost everything it needs, including nearly all of its food, must be imported.

We also know that more than half a million children were already likely to suffer from severe acute malnutrition this year. And we estimate that 19 million people across the country are going hungry, including

more than 160,000 who are at catastrophic levels of starvation and on the brink of famine.

Nevertheless, food prices in Yemen have risen by roughly another 10 per cent since February. That increase comes on top of enormous hikes over the previous year, when prices nearly doubled in many areas. A recent analysis by the Ministry of Planning projects that prices could rise another 50 per cent by the end of the year. If that continues, many fewer people will be able to afford to eat.

Currency depreciation is making matters even worse. In April, the Yemeni rial strengthened considerably, helping to offset some of the impact of higher global prices. But the April gains have now been almost entirely erased, and people's money is again losing value. That too will mean less food for hungry families. Let us not forget that most Yemenis do not have much money to start with. That is a result of broader economic decline, including the erratic payment of civil servant salaries that up to one quarter of the population relies on.

We welcome recent discussions by the Governments of Yemen, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates on financial support for Yemen's economy. Once disbursed, that support could quickly help to reign in the exchange rate, boost purchasing power and reduce hunger.

Beyond the food sector, needs also persist at or above pre-truce levels. Huge gaps continue in the provision of services such as water, health and education. Mine action is becoming urgent as well, particularly as the truce allows more civilians to move around front-line areas, many of which are contaminated with mines and other explosive remnants of war.

In addition, more than 4 million people are still displaced, including more than 7,000 who fled in the past two months alone. Displacement during the truce period was mainly due to people searching for jobs and adequate food. People also fled due to clashes in some areas, despite the truce. We hope that the extended truce will see a more comprehensive end to fighting, including localized clashes.

But the scale of the needs is not the only challenge. Aid agencies are also dealing with a growing set of access and security concerns. That leads me to a second matter and a second threat — Yemen remains a highly constrained environment for aid work.

Despite limited access improvements in some areas during the truce, agencies have actually faced more restrictions on staff movements in recent months, mainly due to regulations issued by local authorities in several areas. We are working with the authorities and other stakeholders to address those concerns as quickly as possible.

Agencies are also facing alarming levels of insecurity. Attempted carjackings, abductions and other attacks are all on the rise. Two United Nations staff members arrested in Sana'a last November remain in detention, and five United Nations staff members kidnapped in Abyan in February are still missing. We renew our calls for the immediate release of all detained staff.

In just the last few weeks, at least 10 attempted carjackings have occurred in Lahj, Taiz, Abyan and Ma'rib, including three attempts in a single day earlier this month. In some cases, these incidents have forced agencies to suspend activities, thereby diminishing the humanitarian dividends of the truce. Amid these attacks, agencies are also facing misinformation campaigns that are making baseless allegations and exacerbating insecurity. We are working with the Government and local authorities to address the rise in insecurity, strengthen public outreach on what agencies are achieving and remind all actors that humanitarian workers are not a target.

I also want to emphasize that, despite these challenges, agencies are still delivering aid across Yemen. More than 200 humanitarian partners — two thirds of them Yemeni organizations — are reaching 11 million people every month with assistance, working through the United Nations response plan. But that plan is currently just 26 per cent funded, which is far from enough to last through the year. Underfunding is the third major threat facing the humanitarian situation right now. It is also the reason many essential programmes are scaling back when they should be expanding. Food assistance has already been reduced for 8 million people. Other sectors essential to preventing famine, including nutrition, health, water and sanitation, are all currently funded below 25 per cent. Services for displaced people in Ma'rib, Hajjah, Taiz and other places are also struggling. So far this year, shelter programmes are just 14 per cent funded, while activities to provide immediate relief for newly displaced families and coordinate services at displacement sites have received almost no funding at all.

To make matters worse, humanitarian aid in Yemen is getting more expensive as a result of the rising global prices I mentioned earlier. The World Food Programme estimates its monthly operating costs in Yemen have gone up by as much as \$30 million, owing to surging prices of food, fuel and transport. On a related note, the United Nations plan to address the threat of a catastrophic oil spill from the *FSO SAFER* tanker remains stalled due to lack of funds. So far, the United Nations has received about \$60 million in pledges for the project. We thank all donors for this support, including pledges last week by the United States and Saudi Arabia. But the full plan needs \$144 million, including \$80 million to get started. This issue, as Council members know, becomes more dangerous by the hour.

We need urgent action on all these points to stop Yemen's crisis going from bad to worse. On 23 June, Sweden and the European Commission will host a meeting of senior humanitarian officials to discuss many of the issues I have just described. We welcome this opportunity to collaborate with donors on the major strategic challenges facing the response. In parallel, agencies are striving to improve the quality of the response right now. Recommendations from the inter-agency humanitarian evaluation are central to this effort. The evaluation report should be finalized later this month, and we look forward to sharing it with the Council in the coming weeks.

In closing, the extension of the truce will, we hope, bring Yemen one step closer to ending the war altogether. The Security Council's support for these efforts, as members have just heard from the Special Envoy, remains crucial. The Council's support in addressing Yemen's humanitarian crisis is equally important, not only to save lives right now, but to keep Yemen moving towards the just and sustainable peace that can finally end this crisis for good.

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

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

Ms. Al-Salafi: Thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the opportunity to brief the Security Council on behalf of the Peace Track Initiative and the Women Solidarity Network, which includes more than 350 Yemeni women leaders inside and outside Yemen. Yemen continues to be ravaged by a devastating war that has gone on for eight years now, disproportionately affecting women, girls and marginalized groups

and contributing to increased sexual and gender-based violence.

The United Nations-led truce has restored hope in the hearts of the Yemeni people, yet much is needed to be done to uphold the ceasefire and eventually reach a just and lasting peace. While cross-border military operations have halted, we still receive reports of indiscriminate targeting of people inside Yemen, especially in Taiz, Hajjah, Ma'rib, and Al-Hudaydah. We are also concerned about reported escalation preparations, including the sending of reinforcements to battle fronts, continued placing of landmines and the digging of new trenches.

On a positive note, we celebrated the reopening of Sana'a airport, which allowed many of our friends and families to reunite with their loved ones after years of separation. The airport is a lifeline for many civilians in Sana'a who are fragile and unable to endure the long and risky journey by road. However, not only do we want free mobility to continue by opening ports and airports, but we also demand that all roads inside the country, especially in Taiz, which is one of the most populated areas in the country, be opened immediately.

We continue to document cases of aid-relief convoys tipping over and people, including pregnant women seeking medical services, losing their lives because of the siege. To this end, we welcome the internationally recognized Government's acceptance of the United Nations Special Envoy's proposal for opening five roads, and we call on the Houthis to reciprocate and accept his proposal. We hope it will be the first step to opening all roads in the country, leading to unrestricted and affordable mobility.

Although the city of Aden is serving as the internationally recognized capital of Yemen, the people in Aden are suffering. The Yemeni riyal used in Aden is extremely devalued compared to that used in Sana'a, owing to inconsistent economic policies and lack of coordination between the two central banks. Additionally, Aden suffers from poor basic-service infrastructure, such as electricity, water and sanitation, communication and Internet access and transportation, affecting the ability to stabilize the city. Urgent support is necessary.

Yemenis abroad also face challenges as they seek refuge and safety in other countries. Yemeni women human rights defenders and members of vulnerable groups who relocated outside Yemen to escape arbitrary

detention and life-threatening situations successfully registered as refugees yet have been waiting for years for resettlement opportunities. They are also unable to move on in their lives, and many of them are not allowed to work. This has aggravated their trauma, which led to many of them having suicidal thoughts.

The participation of women in the peace and political processes remains limited and way below the 30 per cent quota we had committed to as a nation in 2014. While the Special Envoy's peace consultations made progress in terms of including women in the political party delegations, there are still no women among the members of the committees formed as a result of the peace process, including the prisoner exchange committee, the military and security committee and the Taiz committee. Similarly, while the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) intra-Yemeni talks also made progress in women's participation on various tracks, the security and anti-terrorism track had no women at all. Nonetheless, the entities formed as a result of the GCC intra-Yemeni talks did make progress in the inclusion of women, particularly in their appointment to the national commission for reconciliation and consultation and the legal and economic teams supporting the Presidential Leadership Council.

That progress needs the support of the international community to ensure that women's participation in all State entities during the peace and political process increases by no less than 30 per cent, including in any upcoming Government reshuffle. In June 2021, we launched a feminist road map for peace that was developed with women leaders in a participatory manner through consultations with local communities in Yemen. It is an expert document that was collectively conceived by hundreds of Yemenis from all walks of life. We would like to thank the Council for taking account of our recommendations on inclusion and multi-track design and reflecting them in its adoption in February of resolution 2624 (2022), which eventually materialized in the design of the recent United Nations-led peace consultations and in the outcomes of the GCC intra-Yemeni talks. We hope that our recommendations will continue to have a positive impact, and we hope that the Council will continue to support the truce with a view to transforming it into a sustainable nationwide ceasefire with a clear implementation mechanism that can be monitored.

We hope that the Council will support the opening of all Yemeni entry ports and airports, allowing

civilian travel and commercial use and encouraging the operation of more flight services, as well as the opening of all roads inside the country, starting with Taiz, along with lifting checkpoints and clearing landmines. We would also ask for the Council's support for restrictions on the flow of arms into the country and the removal of military camps and depots from densely populated cities. We further ask that the Council urge the donor community to fulfil its humanitarian, development and reconstruction pledges to Yemen, ensuring sustainable solutions that empower Yemenis and that focus on stabilizing basic services, disbursing salaries and strengthening infrastructure.

We hope that the Council will support the establishment and financing of a fund for the survivors of sexual and gender-based violence without delay, as per the recommendations of the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014). We ask for support for the Yemeni feminist road map for peace by considering it as a point of reference for the peace process. The Council should also continue to call for inclusive peace talks that ensure the participation of women, young people and civil society, including on peace implementation committees. Finally, we hope that the Council will support the Special Envoy in creating a permanent position for a gender adviser, ensuring the appointment of a qualified expert with strong feminist values.

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

I would like to draw the attention of speakers to paragraph 22 of the latest note by the President of the Security Council (S/2017/507) on its working methods, which encourages all participants in Council meetings to deliver their statements in five minutes or less, in line with the Security Council's commitment to making more effective use of open meetings.

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

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): I would like to thank Mr. Grundberg, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, and Ms. Mudawi, Acting Director of the Operations and Advocacy Division of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, for their very informative briefings. It was also very powerful to hear from Ms. Al-Salafi the views of Yemeni civil society, for which I thank her.

I would like to start by commending and thanking Mr. Grundberg for the leadership shown by the United Nations in extending the truce for a two-month period on 2 June. We welcome the commendable flexibility of the parties, which have shown that they are committed to the opportunity the truce presents. We should build on that positive momentum. Against that backdrop, however, I would like to reiterate the United Kingdom's concern about the grave humanitarian impact of the continued road closures around Taiz. We call on the Houthis to continue to demonstrate the flexibility that they have shown so far in order to reach a compromise as soon as possible and open the main roads. In the meantime, the three-track process that Mr. Grundberg outlined has allowed for positive progress on the economic and military tracks. That includes dialogue on the payment of salaries and initiatives to support improved monetary policy coordination. The news that the Yemeni parties' Military Coordination Committee intends to establish a joint coordination room is also an extremely welcome step.

As the Special Envoy mentioned, the number of civilian casualties remains below pre-truce averages, but we must strive for that figure to be zero. The people of Yemen deserve to live their lives without the fear of being killed or maimed. Landmines and unexploded ordnance were the most frequent cause of casualties last month. I would therefore like to acknowledge the crucial work of the United Nations Mission to support the Hudaydah Agreement and General Beary in accelerating demining efforts, and I call on all parties to support their work.

As we heard from Ms. Mudawi, the Yemeni people also continue to be threatened by acute food insecurity. The future generation — 2.2 million Yemeni children — are at risk of physical and cognitive impairment due to acute malnutrition. At this urgent moment, the United Kingdom calls on all donors to ensure that funding is available and disbursed without delay.

Finally, the United Kingdom welcomes the announcement of further pledges towards the United Nations operation to address the threat posed by the *FSO SAFER* tanker. We call on all who have not yet pledged to step up to meet the remaining \$20 million shortfall.

Mrs. Nusseibeh (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Grundberg for his valuable briefing and productive efforts to secure an extension

of the truce. I also thank Ms. Mudawi and Ms. Al-Salafi for their insightful briefings.

As we have heard, recent developments indicate that Yemen is at a critical juncture. Today we have a rare opportunity to achieve peace in Yemen and end the war that has exhausted its people. As the Special Envoy noted, the two parties to the conflict are currently conducting negotiations aimed at de-escalating the violence and alleviating the suffering of civilians. My country welcomes those critical developments and calls for building on them in order to reach a political solution to the conflict. The remarkable progress of the past two months brings hope that developments are proceeding in the right direction, reflected in the lower levels of violence and the improved movement of people and goods across Yemen. We applaud the positive and constructive engagement of the Yemeni Government in the consultations process co-facilitated by the United Nations, as well as the flexibility it has shown during the negotiations.

We appreciate the efforts of the Council and the Governments of the region in supporting the negotiation process. In particular, we appreciate the leading role of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as well as the efforts of the Sultanate of Oman. We call for intensifying diplomatic efforts at all levels so as not to lose the opportunities available at this critical stage, which also requires the continued commitment and involvement of all sides in good faith.

We reiterate the need to ensure the meaningful and active participation of Yemeni women in the political process, given their important role in achieving comprehensive and sustainable peace. It is also imperative to ensure that young people be included in the process so that their perspectives and aspirations are reflected in the peace efforts, which will enable them to play a positive role in their communities.

We also call on the Special Envoy to ramp up his efforts during negotiations for the immediate opening of not only secondary roads but also the main roads leading to Taiz in order to alleviate the suffering of the more than 3 million Yemenis in that city. That will also contribute to confidence-building measures among the parties, support the momentum of current developments and move the political process forward.

Despite the current truce, the Houthis continue their rallying and recruiting activities throughout the areas under their control. They continue their broad

campaigns to indoctrinate children with extremist ideology in so-called summer camps. They also subject children to military training, in violation of the action plan that they recently signed with the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict.

We also stress the need to swiftly address the deteriorating state of the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker in order to avoid a serious environmental catastrophe. In that regard, we commend the recent announcement by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to contribute \$10 million to address that issue.

We are concerned about the continued worsening of the humanitarian crisis in Yemen, which could be further exacerbated by the ongoing global food crisis. The United Arab Emirates remains firm in its historical commitment to support Yemen and its people during these difficult times. Accordingly, my country, along with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, recently pledged to provide a humanitarian and economic aid package amounting to more than \$3 billion. However, we reaffirm that political solutions remain the only path towards ending the humanitarian crisis. Therefore, those who block that path must cease their activities, which are prolonging the suffering of the Yemeni people.

In conclusion, it has become clear that extremist activities pose serious threats to regional and international peace and security when combined with advanced and lethal weapons. Therefore, there is a need to firmly respond to such threats and prevent the Houthis from acquiring advanced weapons such as drones and missiles. We also stress the need for the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities in that regard.

Mr. Biang (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I thank Special Envoy Hans Grundberg for his briefing on the most recent developments in Yemen. I also welcome the presence of the Permanent Representatives of Yemen.

The extension of the truce in Yemen for another two months provides hope for the Yemeni people and the international community as a whole. It offers hope of a lasting peace for the estimated 30 million Yemenis, who have been exhausted by fighting, displacement, hunger, disease, water scarcity and the collapse of the economy. The series of measures taken in tandem with the truce, such as the movement of essential goods and people, the resumption of commercial flights at Sana'a airport, the freedom of movement and the facilitation

of humanitarian access, are helping to improve the socioeconomic situation and contributing to the stabilization of Yemen.

However, the security situation in Yemen remains fragile. The lack of progress on the issue of lifting the siege of the large city of Taiz remains a matter of concern. The Government and the rebels appear to be unwilling to give up their respective positions, despite international pressure. For example, while the Government demands the reopening of main roads, the Houthis demand arrangements for the payment of civil servants' salaries and basic services in the areas under their control. Given those differences, we support the efforts of Special Envoy Grunberg to hold a second round of talks to improve the flow of goods and people in Taiz.

The continued threat posed by mines and unexploded ordnance, which has resulted in many civilian casualties, is also a matter of concern. We are further concerned about the increasing number of attacks against the personnel of non-governmental organizations and humanitarian workers operating in various parts of the country, as well as attempts to kidnap them. We call for respect for international humanitarian law.

Concerning the humanitarian situation, we call on the international community to ensure the availability of food stocks and the maintenance of supply chains for Yemen in order to prevent a food crisis that could affect the precarious gains that have been made.

With regard to the *FSO SAFER* tanker, we note with regret that the emergency transfer operation to remove the ship's oil has yet to begin, owing to insufficient funding. We call for a greater effort on the part of the international community to prevent a large-scale environmental and humanitarian disaster. To that end, we welcome the announcement by Saudi Arabia to provide \$10 million for the rescue plan involving the tanker.

In conclusion, we reaffirm our support for Special Envoy Grunberg, his tireless efforts to promote dialogue between the parties and his firm commitment to finding a lasting political solution in Yemen, including the establishment of a nationwide ceasefire.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in in Russian*): We thank Special Envoy of the Secretary-General Hans Grunberg, Ms. Ghada Mudawi, Acting

Director of Operations and Advocacy Division of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and Ms. Azal Al-Salafi for their briefings on the developments of the situation in Yemen. We continue to closely monitor the situation in Yemen, where we have recently seen increasingly positive trends in the long-standing military and political conflict.

We welcome the agreement reached between the Presidential Leadership Council and the Ansar Allah movement to extend the truce for another two months. We understand how difficult it was for the Yemenis to reach that compromise, which makes it all the more valuable. Almost immediately, the tripartite Military Coordination Committee resumed its work to ensure respect for the United Nations-backed truce and the implementation of ceasefire provisions. We consider that the agreement reached within its framework to set up a working group for permanent operational communication on ceasefire violations is a very encouraging sign. It is important that negotiations do not become static.

In particular, we would like to underscore the role of Special Envoy Grundberg, whose efforts greatly contributed to reaching the agreement and the implementation of the provisions of the truce agreement. Mr Grundberg can rest assured that our country will continue to provide him with the necessary support in his difficult work.

We are confident that the parties' compliance with all the terms of the truce and their rejection of unilateral provocations will allow the positive developments in the Yemeni crisis to be consolidated and to progress towards a full-fledged, comprehensive political settlement. A long-term cessation of hostilities would help create a favourable environment for launching serious political negotiations on the future of the country.

However, things are not going as smoothly as we would like. The negotiations under way between the Presidential Leadership Council and the Houthis under the auspices of the United Nations to reopen the roads around Taiz have not produced the results we had hoped for. We hope the parties' balanced and realistic approach to discussing this sensitive issue will help them find a common denominator.

We would like to reiterate our firm position that there can be no alternative to inter-Yemeni negotiations that take into account the interests and

concerns of all the parties involved in the conflict. That is a prerequisite for stabilizing the situation and restoring peace. It is vital that the representatives of the Presidential Leadership Council continue their direct dialogue with Ansar Allah. We will continue to use the diplomatic resources we have to cooperate actively with both the Presidential Leadership Council and the Houthi leadership, encouraging them to adopt a constructive approach and show their willingness to find a compromise solution aimed at normalizing the overall situation in the region.

We are concerned about the serious socioeconomic situation in Yemen, which the United Nations has called the biggest humanitarian disaster in the world. It will be crucial to lift the restrictions on the delivery of food, medicine and other essential goods to all areas of Yemen without discrimination, regardless of who controls the territory. In that regard, we note the mediation efforts of the stakeholders in the region who are helping Yemenis on the financial and humanitarian fronts.

In conclusion, we would once again like to remind the Council of resolution 598 (1987) and other initiatives aimed at the stabilization of the subregion, including Russia's updated collective security concept.

Mr. De Almeida Filho (Brazil): I would like to thank our three briefers for their informative presentations and to welcome the delegation of Yemen to this meeting.

I also want to reiterate Brazil's support to the Special Envoy in his engagement with all parties in pursuit of a Yemeni-led, Yemeni-owned political settlement that meets the aspirations of the Yemeni people. The renewal of the truce on 2 June should be seen as the renewal of an opportunity. We are hopeful that the parties will seize that opportunity and move towards a comprehensive and inclusive peace process with all possible speed. In the meantime, we urge all the parties to cooperate with the United Nations and other humanitarian partners in order to provide full and safe access to convoys delivering humanitarian aid throughout Yemen. We call on Ansar Allah to make serious efforts to ensure that the roads into the city of Taiz are reopened as soon as possible. The resumption of talks in Amman on 5 June between Ansar Allah and the Government of Yemen on that issue was a necessary first step, but more and quicker steps are needed.

The ports of Al-Hudaydah are also a critical lifeline for the Yemeni population. We therefore

welcome the continued commitment of the United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement to the efforts to achieve peace and stability in that area. We believe the Mission should intensify its efforts to proactively engage the parties and bring them back to the joint mechanisms.

As the restrictions on the freedom of movement of Yemeni women, men and children are gradually being lifted, we are hearing reports of an uptick in casualties caused by landmines, including explosive remnants of war. Children are especially at risk. We therefore stress the importance of mine action in Yemen and urge all parties to ensure that effective demining operations and mine-awareness activities are carried out throughout the country.

Brazil welcomes the efforts to end and prevent grave violations against children in Yemen, as well as their translation into an action plan signed by all parties to the conflict. We should closely monitor the commitment that Ansar Allah made with the United Nations in April to ending its recruitment and use of children and to releasing, rehabilitating and reintegrating them into Yemeni society. We therefore call on all the parties to provide United Nations officials with unfettered access in order to verify their compliance with their commitments.

Yemen has been at the forefront of a global food-insecurity crisis. The unilateral economic measures that a number of countries have instituted in response to conflicts elsewhere are helping to exacerbate the situation in Yemen, hampering trade flows of agricultural products and inputs, reducing the availability of foodstuffs and pushing up prices. They are having a significant impact worldwide, especially on developing countries, and they are depressing the already limited capacity of countries in conflict to provide food to their populations. We therefore acknowledge the importance of the work of United Nations agencies to alleviate the suffering of vulnerable communities affected by food insecurity in Yemen and encourage donors to fully fund the United Nations humanitarian response plan.

Mr. Agyeman (Ghana): My delegation is grateful to Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and Ms. Ghada Mudawi of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for their briefings to the Council, and we welcome their continuing engagement with all sides to address the security, political, economic and humanitarian dimensions of the Yemeni conflict.

The steady progress being made towards finding a comprehensive and lasting solution to the conflict in Yemen is grounds for some optimism. We would like to express our gratitude to the Special Envoy, the United Nations team and all stakeholders for their untiring efforts, which have resulted in the extension of the truce for another two months with effect from 2 June. We call on the parties to fully commit to the terms of the truce and to refrain from actions that could undermine the marginal progress being made in the process of restoring peace and security in Yemen.

Despite this hopeful news, the grim statistics of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification that have been released for Yemen are deeply concerning. According to the data, an estimated 19 million people are likely to face acute food insecurity in the second half of this year, with about 161,000 projected to experience famine-like situations. At the same time, about 2.2 million children under the age of five are acutely malnourished, with more than half a million of that vulnerable group living at a severe level, as the humanitarian crisis in the country shows no signs of abating. This crisis is a risk to the fledgling peace in Yemen and must be urgently addressed.

Similarly, the high risk of catastrophic oil spillage from the *FSO SAFER* in the Red Sea and the likelihood of a major humanitarian and ecological disaster resulting from such a spill remains a matter of great concern to us. We therefore call on all stakeholders in the United Nations coordinated plan to redouble their efforts to address the threat as quickly as possible.

Notwithstanding the challenging humanitarian context and the debilitating effects of the conflict in Yemen, the renewal of the two-month nationwide truce is a positive development that offers much-needed respite from the devastating war. The truce has the potential to ease the deplorable humanitarian conditions, as we heard in today's briefings, and to create a conducive environment that will give the necessary impetus to the political process for an amicable resolution of the conflict. We urge global support for the ongoing efforts to bridge the huge shortfall of almost 74 per cent of the \$4.28 billion that is badly needed to augment the efforts of the United Nations and other aid agencies in providing essential humanitarian assistance to the more than 17 million Yemenis in dire need of it.

We reiterate our earlier call on the political leaders and stakeholders to explore the possibility

of an indefinite extension of the truce, both as a confidence-building measure and as evidence of the commitment of the conflicting parties to the political process, which seeks to bring lasting peace and security to Yemen.

My delegation also welcomes the resumption of discussions on 5 June to reach an agreement to open the roads leading into and out of Taiz and other governorates, in line with the truce. We call on the parties to favourably consider the revised proposal by the Special Envoy on the phased reopening of the roads and the implementation mechanism and commit to ensuring the safety of civilian travellers. We firmly believe that the parties' agreement to the proposals will ultimately help to alleviate the suffering of ordinary Yemenis and enhance the delivery of the needed humanitarian aid to the vulnerable population in that part of the country.

We are pleased to note that, since the resumption of commercial flights out of Sana'a on 16 May for the first time in six years, under the terms of the United Nations-brokered truce, a total of 2,495 Yemenis have so far been reported as having travelled between Sana'a and Amman, as well as Cairo. We are encouraged that more such marginal, but incremental, progress will continue to be made with the renewal of the truce.

We are also pleased about the active engagement of regional leaders with the United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA) as part of the ongoing peacebuilding process in recent times, and urge all the regional powers to deepen their resolve towards finding a lasting solution to the conflict. We believe that the UNMHA mandate, which is due to expire on 15 July, is very crucial to the long-term peace and security of Yemen. We therefore call on the members of the Council to consider unanimously supporting the renewal of that mandate.

In conclusion, we all must support efforts to help the conflicting parties to deepen and sustain mutual trust, which is required to work towards a comprehensive and lasting peace in Yemen.

Mrs. Buenrostro Massieu (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Special Envoy Grundberg, Ms. Ghada Mudawi, Acting Director of the Operations and Advocacy Division of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and Ms. Azal Al-Salafi for their briefings.

Mexico welcomes the extension of the truce for two more months. We recognize the efforts made by all parties, as well as the support of regional partners such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan and Oman. We also commend the mediation efforts of Mr. Grundberg and reiterate our full support for his good offices in that process.

We also take note of the talks to reach an agreement on the opening of the roads around Taiz, and urge the parties to continue to cooperate fully with the Special Envoy. It is particularly important to make progress on that issue because the opening of access to Taiz will help to alleviate the humanitarian situation suffered by the population since 2016.

The recent developments represent a crucial opportunity to launch a political process leading to a lasting peace in Yemen, and neither the parties nor the international community can therefore miss this opportunity to make progress in resolving the conflict. We commend the Special Envoy's ongoing consultations with various sectors, including civil society, women, academics and economic actors. We also welcome his recent visit to Sana'a and urge the parties, particularly Ansar Allah, to keep the channels of communication open.

We are concerned about the deteriorating humanitarian situation. Hostilities and the collapse of the economy have exacerbated vulnerabilities, with nearly three quarters of the population requiring humanitarian assistance and the number of people in famine-like conditions now standing at 160,000. Greater efforts are needed to ensure humanitarian access to all those in need, including ensuring the freedom of movement and the security of those who are part of the humanitarian operation.

Persons with disabilities are disproportionately affected by the conflict and the humanitarian crisis. All the challenges faced by civilians in this conflict are compounded by disability. In parallel, the traumatic experience of seven years of armed conflict has led to a mental health crisis affecting a significant part of the population. Psychosocial support is virtually non-existent. It is essential to allocate funds and specific funding for such programmes, which are often the first to be cut due to scarce resources, as well as to mainstream mental health services in inter-agency response mechanisms.

Mexico condemns the use of landmines, which have killed and maimed thousands of civilians over the past seven years, causing lifelong disabilities and severely affecting Yemeni children. In that regard, we acknowledge the work of humanitarian and civil society organizations in mine clearance, as well as their efforts to raise awareness and care for victims. More assistance and resources need to be provided to support those efforts.

While we welcome progress on the *FSO SAFER* tanker, we are concerned that the necessary resources have not yet been marshalled. My country urges regional partners to continue to contribute to raising all the necessary funds. As time goes on, both the risk of a spill and the operational costs will increase. We urge the international community to redouble efforts to prevent a humanitarian and environmental catastrophe.

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): Let me start by thanking Special Envoy Grundberg, Ms. Mudawi, Acting Director of the Operations and Advocacy Division of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and Ms. Al-Salafi, our civil society briefer, for their briefings today. We are very grateful for all their dedicated efforts.

Today there is reason for hope. Thanks to the extension of the truce for another 60 days, this is the best opportunity for peace that Yemen has had in years. Over the past two months, we have witnessed a dramatic reduction in civilian casualties, improved freedom of movement and humanitarian access and increased access to fuel and basic goods.

That is a cause for genuine optimism, but make no mistake — there is difficult work ahead. I would like to emphasize that building on that progress will be a central focus of President Biden's trip to the region next month, which we just announced today. We can, and must, capitalize on this unique moment to solidify recent gains and lay the groundwork for a long-awaited political resolution to the conflict.

The parties must implement their responsibilities under the truce in good faith and work together to agree to a permanent ceasefire. The Yemeni Government has demonstrated important flexibility in facilitating the flow of fuel to Al-Hudaydah and the resumption of commercial flights from Sana'a to Cairo and Amman. It is now incumbent on the Houthis to demonstrate their own commitment by immediately opening roads

to the city of Taiz, easing the suffering of hundreds of thousands of Yemenis.

The next two months are critical to long-term peace efforts, and we urge all parties to cooperate fully with Special Envoy Grundberg as he builds on the truce to launch a comprehensive and inclusive political process, because a political settlement is the only way — I repeat, the only way — to provide true and long-lasting peace to the Yemeni people. That process must include the voices of women, civil society and members from other marginalized groups.

We also recognize the efforts of the Governments of Saudi Arabia, Oman, Jordan and Egypt in helping secure the truce. Continued international and regional support for the United Nations-led process is essential.

But as we work towards a long-term peace, we cannot lose sight of the immediate, dire humanitarian needs of the Yemeni people. In that spirit, we support the Presidential Leadership Council and its efforts to improve basic services and economic stability. And we welcome pledged international support for the Presidential Leadership Council's plan to tackle those challenges and urge donors to quickly disburse funds to address critical needs. But more help is needed.

And we should build on the progress of the truce to avert a needless environmental and economic catastrophe. Additional funds are currently needed to address the mounting risks posed by the corroding *FSO SAFER* oil tanker. The United States is pleased to announce that we are working with Congress to provide \$10 million towards those efforts. Other donors, including private sector actors, must now step up so that work can start on the emergency project before weather conditions further exacerbate the risks of disaster.

Finally, we were deeply saddened to learn of the death in Houthi detention of retired United States Embassy employee Abdulhameed Al-Ajami. The United States extends its condolences to his family and loved ones, whom the Houthis callously deprived of any contact with Mr. Al-Ajami. We condemn the unjust detention by the Houthis of Mr. Al-Ajami and 12 other current and former United States and United Nations staff, and we demand that the Houthis immediately and unconditionally release them before any further harm is done.

We remind all parties of their obligations under international humanitarian law and call on them to respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of

all those in Yemen. The world is watching and hoping that all parties in Yemen choose peace over continued war, suffering and destruction. We must all seize this pivotal hour and put in the hard work to secure a lasting peace.

Mr. Zhang Jun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, I wish to thank Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and Acting Director Ghada Mudawi for their briefings. I also listened carefully to the statement made by the civil society representative.

China welcomes the extension of the truce agreement among the Yemeni parties on 2 June. The protracted Yemeni conflict has lasted seven years, and the people have suffered immensely. The implementation and extension of the truce has brought some initial peace dividends to the Yemeni people and given them a ray of hope. Since the start of the truce, the number of civilian casualties has been more than halved. Some 20 oil tankers have sailed, in clusters, into the port of Al-Hudaydah, and the commercial flights from Sana'a to Amman and Cairo have resumed. We appreciate the efforts of the Yemeni parties, Special Envoy Grundberg and the countries of the Gulf region to that end.

The main task at hand is to fully implement the truce agreement, in particular to reopen the road to Taiz and mitigate, as soon as possible, the humanitarian situation in Taiz. The Yemeni Government has held two rounds of consultations with the Houthi organization in that regard, and Special Envoy Grundberg has made concrete proposals that balance the concerns of all sides. Going forward, it is hoped that the Yemeni parties will build on the Special Envoy's proposals, demonstrate political will on the issue of reopening the road to Taiz and make the necessary compromises in order to create conditions conducive to launching peace talks.

The truce agreement should be the starting point for broader efforts, which must be translated into a permanent ceasefire and a sustainable political solution. Under the auspices of the Special Envoy, the Yemeni Government forces and the Houthis have held two rounds of military coordination meetings and decided to meet regularly in future, which China welcomes. We support the Special Envoy's continuing work to promote communication among the stakeholders on the Yemeni issue in a rational and pragmatic manner, as well as to implement measures to rebuild mutual trust, steadfastly maintain the current positive momentum and encourage more progress in the peace process. The Security Council should maintain its unity and create

synergies with countries of the region that can bring their influence to bear, so as to play a constructive role in promoting the political solution to the Yemeni issue.

China is also concerned about the economic and humanitarian situation in Yemen, which faces multiple challenges and has a grim outlook due to the compounded effects of the coronavirus disease pandemic and political conflicts. Those challenges warrant our full attention. The international community should continue to focus on the situation in Yemen and take effective measures to lend the country a helping hand by prioritizing assistance to Yemen in stabilizing its currency and prices, alleviating energy shortages and meeting the basic needs of the population, such as food. The relevant United Nations agencies should act with a heightened sense of urgency, strengthen their coordination, properly address the shortages of resources and ward off greater crises. All parties in Yemen should also cooperate fully with international humanitarian operations and ensure safe and timely humanitarian access.

China supports the Yemeni Presidential Leadership Council in actively implementing the truce agreement, restoring State institutions in an orderly manner, regaining economic vitality and pushing forward the political process. We hope that the Presidential Leadership Council will unite all parties in Yemen, attach equal importance to both peace and development and promote the country's early return to a normal development track.

Mr. Ndung'u (Kenya): I thank Special Envoy Hans Grundberg, Acting Director Ghada Mudawi and Ms. Azal Al-Salafi for their briefings. I also welcome the participation of the representative of Yemen in this meeting.

Kenya welcomes the extension of the 2 June truce for a further two months as a positive step. We acknowledge the concessions made by the Government of Yemen to support the truce and hope that the Houthis will similarly engage constructively to fulfil the remaining commitments, in particular the opening of roads in Taiz.

Kenya remains concerned about the security situation in Yemen. The reports of a recent uptick in suspected Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula activities in Aden and southern Yemen could further fragment the fragile security situation, including in the wider region. The group's increased recruitment and mobilization in neighbouring Abyan governorate is also

concerning. We must remain alert to those emerging threats and undertake pre-emptive measures to prevent their expansion.

As peace talks progress, we strongly recommend that the peace framework and recovery process incorporate the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration plus framework in a fashion that ensures that reintegrated former fighters do not relapse to armed conflict or fall into radicalization by terrorist groups.

Peace efforts must also recognize that a generation of Yemeni women, youth and persons with disabilities has been denied access to education and social services by virtue of the protracted conflict. The international community should therefore deliberately invest in these populations through capacity-building to equip them with skills that would facilitate their making a decent living and contribute to national development.

Kenya remains concerned over the dire economic and humanitarian situation in Yemen. We are alive to the fact that global economies are being affected by the disruption of the food and energy supply chain, which is compounding food and energy insecurity, especially in fragile contexts such as that prevailing in Yemen, and driving millions deeper into poverty and humanitarian crises. To address these challenges, we appeal for enhanced support towards Yemen's 2022 humanitarian response plan, which remains underfunded; promoting local agriculture and food production; and increasing development assistance.

The reports of the detention, harassment and obstruction of humanitarian workers are deeply concerning. We call on the parties to uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law and allow for unfettered access for humanitarian personnel.

The *FSO SAFER* tanker is of key importance to our region, and the threat it poses remains an immediate concern. We appreciate all the contributions made thus far and sincerely hope that the remaining amount can be urgently raised to resolve this long-standing issue.

In conclusion, Kenya reaffirms its commitment to supporting the ongoing United Nations efforts towards finding a comprehensive and lasting solution for the people of Yemen.

Ms. Byrne Nason (Ireland): We welcome and thank our briefers, especially Mr. Grundberg, whom we thank both for his in-depth briefing but also for his encouraging news today. We thank him for all the work he and his team are doing. We also thank

Ms. Mudawi and her team. I want to extend special thanks to Ms. Al-Salafi, who is still with us on screen, who gave us excellent insights, but also a sort of reality check, with her take-way about what is happening and what the challenges on the ground are. It is really very important that we hear that.

As always, I welcome our Yemeni colleague to the table. I would also like to acknowledge the presence in the Chamber today of Major General Mike Beary, the Head of the United Nations Mission to support the Hudaydah Agreement (UNMHA), who is with us in person today for the first time. We will hear from him later, but I just wanted to recognize his being with us today.

I want to start by commending the parties' commitment earlier this month to extending the April truce for a further two months. It is heartening good news, and, as others have said, it gives us reason for hope. As we have heard again today, the measures already taken on freeing up movement of people and goods across the country are now providing Yemenis with long-overdue tangible relief. The vital efforts of the Special Envoy and of States of the region in facilitating these developments are deeply appreciated and to be welcomed.

The establishment of a joint coordination room and the agreement to monthly meetings by the Military Coordination Committee are further positive signals we see of the parties' commitment to de-escalation through communication and trust-building. The first meetings of the parties to discuss re-opening roads in Taiz is also a very welcome step. As Ms. Ola Al-Aghbary told the Security Council in January (see S/PV.8946), road closures mean journeys are longer and more perilous, rendering Taiz a repulsive environment for humanitarian and medical workers. We welcome the flexibility shown by the Government of Yemen and call on the Houthis to engage constructively with the Special Envoy's revised proposal.

We call on the parties to ensure the full participation of local, diverse women and the inclusion of youth peacebuilders in Taiz in ongoing negotiations. We share Ms. Al-Salafi's aspiration for a timely and inclusive process, and for the participation of women in all structures and committees. We also note the contributions to the United Nations-coordinated proposal to address the serious environmental and humanitarian threat posed by the *FSO SAFER* tanker.

Despite these positive developments, we continue to closely follow the fragile security situation and the threat of violence across Yemen, especially in Ma'rib, Al-Hudaydah, Aden and elsewhere in the south. We are very concerned about the vulnerability of civilians, especially children, to mines and other explosive remnants of war, particularly as Yemenis begin to move around more freely.

UNMHA is carrying out life-saving mine action in Al-Hudaydah. We call on the parties to prioritize mine clearance, allow full and safe access for mine-clearance teams, and provide and facilitate mine-risk education.

As we have also heard today, addressing the deteriorating economy is essential to improving the everyday lives of Yemenis and removing one of the largest drivers of conflict. We welcome the participation by United Nations humanitarian agencies and international financial institutions in the Special Envoy's meetings with Yemeni economic experts.

In spite of the gains made over the past months, tens of thousands of Yemenis still risk starvation or death. Just last week, the World Food Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations identified Yemen as one of the world's five hunger hotspots on the highest alert. We call on the international community to address the funding gaps in the United Nations humanitarian response plan.

It is also critical that humanitarian actors can undertake their life-saving work freely and safely. Attacks against international non-governmental organizations and United Nations entities, including those occurring online, are deeply troubling and must end.

In conclusion, we hope that the space created by the truce will ultimately lead to a durable ceasefire and an inclusive, Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned political settlement under the auspices of the United Nations. We strongly urge the parties to put women at the heart of the peace process and to ensure that the design of such a process includes their full, equal and meaningful participation; women must be in the room and at the table. We also cannot lose sight of the pursuit of justice and accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law that have been perpetrated against Yemenis with impunity. Let me be clear: without this, peace cannot be sustained. Finally, we call once again on all parties to seize the opportunity at hand for a lasting peace in Yemen and an end to the suffering of the Yemeni people.

Ms. Heimerback (Norway): I start by thanking Special Envoy Grundberg, Acting Director Mudawi and Ms. Al-Salafi for their important briefings and updates.

Let me extend our appreciation to the Special Envoy and his whole team, as well as regional and international actors, for their efforts over the past few weeks to secure a two-month renewal of the truce in Yemen. Indeed, because of the truce, the number of civilian casualties has been reduced, fuel deliveries have increased and commercial flights through Sana'a airport have resumed. These are tangible and most welcome developments that have been achieved through de-escalation and dialogue. And we commend the priority placed on alleviating civilian and humanitarian hardships.

The work must continue. We welcome the United Nations proposal on a phased re-opening of roads to the city of Taiz. It is positive that it takes into account feedback from Yemeni civil society and the protection needs of civilians. We urge Ansar Allah to show flexibility on opening the roads in and out of the city of Taiz as a critical next step.

The Special Envoy's continued consultations towards a framework for a multitrack peace process are crucial. It is important to seize the humanitarian gains from the truce to facilitate progress towards a comprehensive political settlement. The Special Envoy's recent second visit to Sana'a, his meetings in Aden and the parties meeting in Amman have been important.

We commend the Special Envoy's dialogue with the parties and a diverse group of Yemeni people, leaders and experts. It is vital to design a process that will receive local credibility and legitimacy — that means including diverse voices and interests, especially those most impacted by the conflict, namely, women and young people.

On security, we welcome the holding of the first and second meetings of the Military Coordination Committee and the establishment of a joint coordination room for more regular communication. That is the first time that the parties have met face to face under the auspices of the United Nations and represents a vital step towards building the trust required for a political settlement.

The humanitarian situation in Yemen is still acute. We remain deeply concerned about the growing food insecurity in the country and the dire risk of famine.

As we heard from our briefers again today, mines are increasingly a concern. Injuries and deaths from landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices now make up a large part of civilian casualties. Children are particularly vulnerable. Much more must be done to address that issue.

Finally, on the *FSO SAFER* tanker emergency, we remain deeply concerned about the humanitarian and ecological danger it represents. We urge even greater support and the implementation of the United Nations plan as soon as possible.

Mrs. Broadhurst Estival (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Hans Grundberg, Ms. Ghada Mudawi and Ms. Azal Al-Salafi for their presentations. I also welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of Yemen.

France welcomes the renewal of the truce this month, which constitutes a positive and encouraging signal from the parties to the conflict. The pause observed since April has led to a clear reduction of civilian casualties in particular and must be used to move towards lasting de-escalation. The work of the military committee in Amman is also moving in the right direction and must now be implemented on the ground. We reiterate our call for a full ceasefire throughout the country.

On the political front, I would like to recall that important concessions were made by the Yemeni Government in recent weeks, in particular with regard to oil tanker access to Al-Hudaydah port and the opening of Sana'a airport to commercial flights. France welcomes the efforts of the Yemeni Government, which have made it possible to improve the daily lives of the population.

As mentioned by the Special Envoy, the main sticking point today remains Taiz. France calls on the Houthis to reopen the roads to that city. For years, its inhabitants have been virtually cut off from the rest of the world. The situation is clearly unacceptable and must be brought to an end.

Although the truce has improved conditions of movement and access in some areas, we remain concerned about the humanitarian situation and reiterate the importance of ensuring full humanitarian access to all those in need. That is all the more necessary as Yemen continues to be severely affected by food insecurity, as was also recalled here today. We

also call for the immediate and unconditional release of the United Nations and humanitarian personnel held by the Houthis.

I would also like to mention the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker situation. The funds that have been raised are currently insufficient, as pointed out earlier, which has prevented the rescue operation from getting under way. We therefore take this opportunity to call on States and the private sector to contribute financially to the appeal launched by the United Nations. There is an urgent need to act as soon as possible in order to avoid an ecological and humanitarian catastrophe.

The renewal of the truce on 2 June brought renewed hope to Yemenis. I would like to thank the Special Envoy, who has France's full support, for all his efforts and his determination to make progress in extremely difficult circumstances. I also welcome his commitment to the participation of Yemeni women in the peace process. We call on all parties to the conflict, including the Houthis, to cooperate fully with the Special Envoy.

The prospect of peace has never been closer. Let us not miss this opportunity.

Mr. Asokan (India): I join other colleagues in thanking the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Yemen, Mr. Hans Grundberg, and Ms. Ghada Mudawi for their briefings. I also thank Ms. Azal Al-Salafi for her insights.

We welcome the agreement between the parties to the conflict to renew the truce for an additional two months. The truce, as our colleagues mentioned, has helped to reduce violence and civilian casualties in Yemen. It has provided an opportunity to hold a direct meeting between the parties — the first in recent years — under the auspices of the United Nations.

It has also resulted in significant gains on the humanitarian side. The opening of Sana'a airport in particular has brought immense relief to many Yemenis, especially those in need of urgent medical care. Since the commencement of the truce, we note that more than 2,700 Yemenis have been able to travel from Sana'a airport to Jordan and Egypt and back. We appreciate the flexibility demonstrated by the Government of Yemen in facilitating that travel.

Similarly, the increase in the number of fuel ships entering Al-Hudaydah port is a welcome development. At a time when the price in oil is rising globally, the entry of those ships has alleviated the suffering of

millions of Yemenis. The ceasefire has also enabled humanitarian agencies to scale up and deliver aid to areas that were previously inaccessible due to the fighting. We welcome those positive developments and encourage the parties to build on them to convert the truce into a durable and long-lasting ceasefire.

Despite those developments, the economic and humanitarian situation in Yemen continues to face significant challenges. The international community must continue its support to the Government of Yemen to help overcome them.

I would like to highlight three important issues that are critical to sustain the continued cessation of hostilities in Yemen.

First, the full and meaningful implementation of all measures agreed as part of the truce agreement is necessary. While there has been considerable progress in the delivery of fuel to Al-Hudaydah port and the opening of Sana'a airport, the opening of roads in Taiz has not witnessed much progress. Immediate progress in opening those roads is not only a humanitarian imperative but also extremely important to ensure that the implementation of the truce agreement is not lopsided.

Secondly, the smooth functioning of the Military Coordination Committee, coordinated by the Special Envoy, is necessary to help prevent any further escalation and ensure that the complete cessation of military operations continues. We welcome the recent meeting of the committee and the agreement to set up a joint coordination room. We encourage regular meetings of the committee, as outlined by the Special Envoy, which are important to sustain the truce.

Thirdly, a Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned political process, with the meaningful participation of women, must commence in parallel with the goal of achieving an inclusive and peacefully negotiated settlement to the conflict. We urge all parties to work towards such a settlement, and we appreciate the Special Envoy's continued consultations with all relevant stakeholders in Yemen to achieve that end.

The condition of the *FSO SAFER* tanker continues to pose an environmental, humanitarian and maritime threat. We appreciate the pledges by Saudi Arabia and the United States for the operational plan of the United Nations to combat that threat. We also welcome the United Nations crowdfunding campaign to bridge the

funding gap. We hope that long-pending issue will be addressed quickly with additional funding.

As a long-standing friend of Yemen, India will support a robust and inclusive political solution that fully respects Yemen's unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. Only such a solution can end the conflict in Yemen and restore peace, stability, security and prosperity in the country.

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

I would like to thank Special Envoy Grundberg for his valuable insights and once again providing us with uplifting and updated information. I also thank Ms. Mudawi for the detailed yet sobering information on the humanitarian situation on the ground, which remains dire. I am most grateful to Ms. Al-Salafi for her insights, her forward-looking message in relation to the situation of women and girls in Yemen and her concrete recommendations.

We salute this moment of renewed hope and optimism for the political process and the future of Yemen. We once again welcome and applaud the fact that the guns have broadly remained silenced, that reason has prevailed and that hope has taken deeper root in Yemen. This is an opportunity to be firmly seized by the parties to engage constructively in order to serve the interests of the aggrieved Yemenis and hopefully start a new chapter for the future.

For the truce to succeed, all those concerned must fully abide by their commitments to uphold and implement it. The resumption of flights between Sana'a airport and Amman and Cairo, as well as the entry of fuel ships into Al-Hudaydah port, have brought relief to thousands of Yemenis as dividends of the truce. The approach of the Government of Yemen has been crucial to all those achievements and their positive effects. We applaud the successful efforts of the Special Envoy and his team and commend the important role and strong support of regional partners, primarily Saudi Arabia and Oman, but also Egypt and Jordan, in making those achievements a reality.

The parties should continue their engagement with a view to reopening roads in Taiz and other governorates. We call on the Houthis to reciprocate the flexibility shown by the Government of Yemen. The full implementation of the truce should lead to a nationwide, comprehensive and permanent ceasefire,

which we have long called for. The parties should feel encouraged by the notable drop in the numbers of casualties, violent incidents and fatalities among civilians and take the necessary steps forward to enable the people of Yemen to start believing in a real chance for a durable and lasting peace in their country. That is why a comprehensive political process under the auspices of the United Nations remains a must. We reiterate our position that the political process should be inclusive, and the meaningful participation of women, young people and civil-society representatives remains of paramount importance, as Ms. Al-Salafi rightly highlighted.

Even as we value the benefits of the truce and the need to build on them, we remain worried about the deterioration of the humanitarian situation and, as we heard from Ms. Mudawi, the security situation as well. The absence of fighting cannot be replaced by lawlessness. We encourage the Presidential Leadership Council and the Government of Yemen to take the measures necessary to ensure the delivery of services to the Yemeni people. The fact that thousands of them are exposed to famine and other intolerable humanitarian challenges must be addressed as a matter of urgency, especially where women and children are concerned. Despite the improvements, children continue to suffer the brunt of the war, even after the truce. We deplore every violation of the rights of the child and every loss of children's lives. We call on the Houthis to release the children whom they have recruited and work for the full implementation of the action plan they signed in April.

No less troubling is the situation of women, which we deeply deplore, along with the increased incitement and other forms of attacks on them. That must end. Accountability must be strengthened, and the fight against impunity must be intensified. The situation of women attests to the need to maintain evidence-based monitoring and reporting mechanisms, as well as independent, international and impartial capacities to monitor the human rights situation in Yemen.

In conclusion, I would also like to reiterate our condemnation of the continued incarceration of Yemenis currently or formerly employed by the United States and the United Nations. We deplore Mr. Abdulhameed Al-Ajami's death in detention and call for the immediate and unconditional release of all detainees in conformity with obligations under international humanitarian law. Finally, we greatly appreciate the ongoing tireless efforts to finding a durable solution to the problem of

the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker, and we hope that conditions will be met so that the rescue operation can start soon.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I would again like to draw the attention of speakers to paragraph 22 of presidential note S/2017/507, which encourages all participants in Council meetings to deliver their statements in five minutes or less, in line with the Security Council's commitment to making more effective use of open meetings.

I now give the floor to the representative of Yemen.

Mr. Al-Saadi (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month and to wish you every success. I also thank your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of the United States, for her successful presidency of the Council last month. I am grateful to Mr. Grundberg, Ms. Mudawi and Ms. Al-Salafi for their briefings.

Mr. Grundberg, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, and a number of Council members mentioned the use of landmines in Yemen. I want to draw the Council's attention to the fact that it is the Houthis who have been indiscriminately planting them. Over the years of the conflict they have laid more than 1 million mines, which have claimed the lives of hundreds of civilians and have disabled many women and children, and Yemenis will continue to suffer from their tragic repercussions in the future.

The Presidential Leadership Council reiterates its full commitment and continued efforts to achieve a comprehensive and sustainable peace to end the conflict. It has done its utmost to ensure that Mr. Grundberg's work succeeds and to maintain the truce, which is a step towards a comprehensive ceasefire and a resumption of negotiations that can lead to a political settlement based on the agreed terms of reference, that is, the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its implementation mechanism, the outcome of the National Dialogue Conference and the relevant Security Council resolutions, especially resolution 2216 (2015). The decision of the Leadership Council to agree to extend the truce for another two months is based on its firm commitment and approach to alleviating the suffering of the Yemeni people and its refusal to use humanitarian issues as bargaining chips. At the same time, the Houthi militias continue

to renege on their commitments under the truce and to obstruct United Nations and international efforts to move forward on a path to peace, thereby exacerbating the humanitarian crisis.

Notwithstanding the militias' attempt to hinder commercial flights from Sana'a airport, in contravention of the provisions of the truce, the Presidential Leadership Council has made many concessions and demonstrated enormous flexibility in facilitating flights to and from Sana'a airport and enabling the regular entry of petroleum products through the port of Al-Hudaydah so as to ease the humanitarian suffering of the Yemeni people. The Government stresses that the intransigence of the Houthi militias regarding Taiz, their seizure of more than 90 billion Yemeni rials in tax and customs revenues from petroleum products at the port of Al-Hudaydah during the first two months of the truce, along with their refusal to pay the salaries of civil servants, demonstrates to Yemenis and the international community that they do not care about the people's suffering. Rather, they are using their suffering to make political gains, as they continue to loot sources of revenue to finance their war and their ongoing aggression against the Yemeni people for their own personal enrichment, which is intolerable.

The Yemeni Government has exercised restraint since the beginning of the truce, despite the Houthis' daily violations, which include artillery fire, the mobilization and deployment of troops and overflights and bombing by drones, which claimed the lives of 72 martyrs and injured 267 national army troops during the first two months of the truce. Yesterday alone, the Houthi militias, with the support of Iran, committed 80 violations of the United Nations truce on various battle fronts. These continued violations of the truce are testing the international community and the Council, which must put pressure on the militias to respond to peace efforts. Peace cannot be achieved without a genuine partner. From the very beginning, the Houthis' continued violations and failure to respect the humanitarian truce have demonstrated the approach of the militias and their sponsors in undermining efforts to achieve peace and a political solution to the Yemeni crisis.

The daily human suffering of more than 4 million civilians in Taiz, considered the largest governorate in terms of population density, under the brutal siege that the Houthi militias have imposed for more than seven years, is a war crime, a crime against humanity and a

flagrant violation of international law and the relevant conventions. The Yemeni Government calls once again on the Security Council, the international community and human rights organizations to compel the militias to completely and unconditionally lift the siege on Taiz in accordance with the terms of the truce, including by opening main roads, removing checkpoints and barriers and allowing freedom of movement for citizens and the smooth flow of foodstuffs and basic commodities. Pressure also must be put on them to release prisoners and detainees, based on the principle of all for all.

The Yemeni Government appreciates the generous support provided by sisterly and friendly countries, whether directly or through the humanitarian response plan, to alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni people. Despite that support, however, the humanitarian operations remain unable to reach all those in need, thanks either to a lack of funding, which risks halting relief projects, or as a result of obstacles created by the Houthi militias and the diversion of humanitarian aid from its intended recipients.

We once again call on the international community to keep Yemen at the top of its priority list, integrate development needs in all humanitarian interventions, contribute to early recovery and provide more support to address the humanitarian crisis, especially in the light of the current global circumstances and the significant spike in food prices.

The Presidential Leadership Council and the competency Government assign high priority to economic stability and reforms, including the establishment of a mechanism to make rapid use of the generous grants provided by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in the amount of \$3.3 billion dollars, which will contribute to stabilizing the currency and improving living and economic conditions.

In that regard, we emphasize the importance of supporting a transformation of the working methods of United Nations agencies from rescue and humanitarian action to support, development and peacebuilding action, as well as ensuring the interrelated links between those areas, in accordance with the requirements of the new phase and the Government's priorities. That would contribute to creating jobs, promoting growth and economic recovery projects, developing infrastructure, providing basic services to citizens, preparing for the

reconstruction phase and achieving the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Houthi militias continue to recruit tens of thousands of children in so-called "summer camps", in flagrant violation of children's rights, national legislation and international instruments. Those militias brainwash children with extremist ideas imported from Iran — slogans of death, violence and hatred — with the aim of forcing them into battle. Their actions demonstrate that, even while the truce is still in place, they are preparing for another round of escalation and intend to use children as fuel for their futile war.

Unfortunately, the international community remains silent in the face of the largest child-recruitment campaign in history, while ignoring the dangers of that crime for Yemen, the region and the world, along with its disastrous implications for the thousands of Yemeni children who have been deprived of their natural right to life.

In conclusion, the Yemeni Government reiterates its full support for United Nations efforts to address the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker issue and will provide all the necessary arrangements to ensure the success of those efforts in order to avoid an imminent environmental, humanitarian and economic disaster. Its repercussions would extend beyond Yemen, threatening maritime navigation routes and endangering countries bordering the Red Sea.

We would not have been confronted with that danger were it not for the intransigence of Houthi militias over the past few years. They have been using the tanker issue as a political bargaining chip. We once again call on the Security Council and the United Nations to act swiftly and exercise maximum pressure to ensure that the Houthis abide by the United Nations plan. We also call upon the international community to continue to fund and implement that plan in order to avoid such a disaster, from which it would cost billions of dollars to recover should it occur.

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 on the subject in closed consultations.

The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.