



Security Council

Seventy-fourth year

8578th meeting
Thursday, 18 July 2019, 10 a.m.
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Provisional

President: Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru)

Members:

Belgium	Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve
China	Mr. Yao Shaojun
Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Ipo
Dominican Republic	Mr. Singer Weisinger
Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
France	Mr. De Rivière
Germany	Mr. Heusgen
Indonesia	Mr. Djani
Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
Poland	Mr. Lewicki
Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
South Africa	Mr. Mabhongo
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
United States of America	Mr. Hunter

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): 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. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen; Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator; and Mr. David Beasley, Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Programme.

Mr. Griffiths is joining today's meeting via video-conference from Amman.

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

I now give the floor to Mr. Griffiths.

Mr. Griffiths: I would like to thank you very much, Mr. President, for the opportunity to brief the Council on the latest developments in the Yemen peace process.

Since my most recent briefing to the Council (see S/PV.8551), I have been privileged to meet with ministers and senior officials engaged on Yemen in many countries and many capitals. I have been reassured in every case by their unanimous desire to see progress towards a political solution, and to see it quickly. The unanimity of the international community mirrors, of course, the same unanimity we see and cherish in the Council. In those visits and meetings, I was equally impressed by a common appreciation of the primacy of a political solution. All those with whom I spoke were clear that progress in realizing the objectives of the Stockholm Agreement, made in December, is crucial to the chances of political negotiations to end the war.

Al-Hudaydah, of course, is at the epicentre of those objectives. Our way forward, then, is clear and supported by international consensus — to implement the Al-Hudaydah agreement and, with that experience and that record, engage the parties swiftly on a settlement, the outlines of which, I think, are well known to all.

Before I turn to the facts on the ground, I would like to add two elements of central and contextual importance.

The first and certainly the most important is the dire and worsening humanitarian situation, about which we will all hear from my colleagues, Mr. Mark Lowcock and Mr. David Beasley. The second is the frightening prospect of war in our region. In all of the people I met, I found a strong desire to keep Yemen out of any such conflict, should it transpire. This is a desire I share deeply.

Last week, I had the privilege to meet President Hadi Mansour, which was an opportunity for me to renew my commitment to the cause we share — returning Yemen to a peace defined by the resolutions of the Council, including resolution 2216 (2015). In addition, just last night, I returned from a visit to Sana'a, where I was able to discuss my concerns with their leadership in order to advance the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement and the political process.

We are facing a crucial moment for the destiny of this war. We need to think now together of the realities and opportunities that define our chances of making a move towards peace.

First, with regard to the redeployment of some coalition forces in parts of Yemen, as senior coalition officials have themselves confirmed, that act is intended to place peace first at the centre of their efforts to restore peace and stability in Yemen. This is a reminder of the view already expressed that peace will come on the back of promises made in Stockholm now becoming promises kept in Yemen.

Secondly, Al-Hudaydah is, as I have said, central as the gateway to the political process. It gives me enormous pleasure to congratulate both parties, whose meeting this week on a United Nations vessel, under the leadership of my colleague, Lieutenant General Michael Lollesgaard, was a notable success. The meeting was held in — as Michael referred to it — open waters in the Red Sea. The parties, meeting in close quarters over two days — the first meeting in joint format since February — agreed together the operational details of all redeployment envisaged in our talks in Stockholm. This is an important breakthrough and an encouraging sign of progress.

Nevertheless, a major hurdle remains — agreement on local security forces, in particular, as well as attention to the issue of revenue and governance. Those issues

will require hard work, flexibility and a conviction, as in the Stockholm Agreement, that any solution is a temporary one, since a more permanent solution lies in the comprehensive agreements to be negotiated by the parties later. I shall redouble my efforts with the parties in the coming weeks to reach an agreement to satisfy both and I am calling on all the parties to muster the needed political will to make this happen with all speed.

If I may, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Lieutenant General Michael Lollesgaard for his collegiality, perseverance and wisdom. Under his leadership, the United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement has served as a credible, effective and impartial arbiter that has contributed very significantly to the peace process.

Progress in Al-Hudaydah would allow the parties to work together, whether on tripartite monitoring, the collection of revenues or on common assessments of possible ceasefire violations. My hope is that progress in Al-Hudaydah will finally allow us to focus on the political process, and I hope that we will see this before the end of the summer. Yemen, indeed, as we have observed before, has no time to waste.

Thirdly, in Taiz, we have noticed limited progress, but progress nonetheless, in opening up Taiz to civilian and humanitarian access. The first sign of that hope — we have heard some reference to this in recent meetings — will be the prospect of the opening of one humanitarian crossing. We will be exploring with the Taiz Committee, which was established in Sweden, those opportunities in the coming days and how we can benefit from them in order to ensure security, peace and stability for a city that has been yearning for that more than anything else for many years. I hope also that Taiz can benefit from the support of local-led and community initiatives to bridge the divides of war. Women's groups have a very distinguished history in that activity in Taiz, and I hope we will all benefit from their example.

There are, of course, remaining challenges. We were all dismayed by last week's announcement in Sana'a of the imposition of death sentences on 30 prisoners. The Secretary-General, as we all know, objects to the death penalty in all circumstances. Their sentences are now on appeal, and I have urged both due process and, ultimately, clemency in the spirit of humanity.

I am also concerned that the political and security landscape in Yemen, whether on the front lines or in

other areas, is becoming increasingly fragmented. As the war continues, there is a considerable risk that there will be further tensions and that it will become increasingly more difficult to reconcile those tensions and to resolve them the longer this war continues. There are also continuous acts of political and military provocations that can hold back the peace process. Although the Al-Hudaydah ceasefire broadly — and remarkably — continues to hold, military operations, as we have been frequently reminded, have continued on several other front lines, as well as on Yemen's border with Saudi Arabia to the north. I am particularly alarmed by the continued attacks by Ansar Allah on civilian infrastructure in Saudi Arabia.

Yemen is near the front lines of a potential tragedy arising from the tensions in the region. It is not in the interest of Yemen to be dragged into a regional war. All parties should desist from any actions that take Yemen in that direction. We need to prevent this to reduce regional tensions, to save lives and to give Yemen a prospect for peace rather than an enlarged war. We have to see de-escalation of violence now if those ambitions are to be achieved.

Finally, I cannot help but hope that Yemen might be nearing the end of its war. I realize I am often accused of optimism, and I happily stand guilty of that charge. However, it was not me but a very senior and very wise official in the region who recently said that the war can end this year. I take that as an instruction, and I hope that today I have been able to share my views as to how we can begin to meet that aspiration.

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

I now give the floor to Mr. Lowcock.

Mr. Lowcock: In resolution 2451 (2018) of December 2018, the Security Council offered unequivocal support for the humanitarian relief operation in Yemen. Specifically, the Council called for, first, respect for international humanitarian law; secondly, unhindered humanitarian access; and thirdly, more funding for the United Nations response plan. The Council also noted the link between ending the conflict and alleviating people's suffering. Unfortunately, the Council's calls have not been heeded.

As I said last month (see S/PV.8551), conditions for most people in Yemen are getting worse, not better. And if the current trajectory continues, we should all expect

that they will continue to get worse. The fighting rages on. Since June, 120,000 more people have fled their homes, bringing total displacement this year to more than 300,000 people, on top of the millions forced to flee in earlier years.

We have seen renewed conflict in Al-Hudaydah governorate, despite the governorate-wide ceasefire agreed in Stockholm. Two weeks ago, artillery fire and heavy clashes gripped several neighbourhoods in Al-Hudaydah city, damaging private homes, an abandoned hospital and other civilian sites. One civilian was killed and four injured when shells hit a local mosque. Seven children were injured in a separate shelling incident. Conflict also flared south of the city. In Al-Khawkhah district, shelling struck a site hosting displaced families, injuring three children and destroying a water tank. In Ad Durayhimi, a civilian was killed by a landmine, and in Al-Tuhayat, sniper fire killed a child. And in May and June, war planes carried out at least six air strikes across Al-Hudaydah.

As Martin Griffiths just said, hostilities in Al-Hudaydah have now subsided again and relative calm has returned, but violence continues elsewhere. At the end of June, air strikes reportedly hit a private home in Taiz, killing seven family members, including four children. Shelling also struck an aid distribution point in Taiz, killing four civilians and injuring two more. In Al-Dhale'e, we continue to receive reports of indiscriminate shelling affecting front-line villages. And in Al-Bayda, clashes in Rada'a killed one civilian and injured three last week, while shelling in another area injured a civilian and damaged family homes.

There are many other examples from more than 30 active front lines across the country. Ansar Allah forces have also continued drone and missile attacks on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which have killed and injured civilians, as well as damaged civilian infrastructure. Those attacks are reprehensible, and they are universally condemned by the international community.

As Martin Griffiths said, urgent steps are needed to de-escalate the violence. For months, I have called for a nationwide ceasefire that would end fighting in Yemen and attacks on neighbouring countries.

Let me turn now to progress on the Council's call for unhindered humanitarian access.

Ansar Allah-affiliated authorities in the north continue to hinder humanitarian assistance in areas

they control through bureaucratic impediments and interference. The Council will hear shortly from David Beasley about the difficult decisions that has forced on the World Food Programme (WFP). But the obstacles go far beyond WFP. In April and May, humanitarian agencies reported 375 access incidents across the country, some across Government-controlled areas, but mostly in areas controlled by Ansar Allah. During that time, Ansar Allah-affiliated authorities detained more than 180 trucks carrying humanitarian cargo and held them for an average of 36 days before they were released.

Ansar Allah authorities also continue to delay a United Nations technical assessment of the decaying *FSO SAFER* oil tanker, which, as I have told the Council many times before, threatens to spill up to 1.1 million barrels of oil into the Red Sea. The United Nations assessment team had planned to deploy to the tanker next week, but the necessary permits remain pending with the Ansar Allah authorities. Discussions to resolve this as quickly as possible continue. I would like to note that this is additionally frustrating when one recalls that the same authorities wrote to the United Nations early last year requesting assistance with the tanker and promising to facilitate its work.

In Government-controlled areas, coalition forces continue to impose bureaucratic requirements on humanitarian agencies trying to travel up the west coast from the south. That policy frequently delays assistance for people in those areas. The Government is also moving to introduce new regulations on commercial fuel imports. Fuel is essential to power generators at hospitals, to pump water and to run sanitation systems. Any mechanism to regulate those imports risks worsening the humanitarian situation.

Let me be clear that although access challenges are pervasive, they are not stopping the world's largest aid operation. I cannot say the same of the third point in the resolution, which is funding. At this time last year, the humanitarian response plan was 60 per cent funded. Substantial, flexible funding early in the year — mainly from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates — allowed the aid operation to scale up across all sectors at a critical time. That unquestionably saved millions of lives.

At the High-Level Pledging Event for the Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen, for this year's humanitarian response plan, which the Secretary-

General convened in February — six months ago — donors pledged \$2.6 billion. Twenty-seven of the 40 donors who pledged have paid more than 75 per cent of their pledges, and 20 of those donors have paid 100 per cent, and in some cases even more. But those who made the largest pledges — Yemen's neighbours in the coalition — have so far paid only a modest proportion of what they promised. As a result, the response plan is currently just 34 per cent funded, compared, as I said, to 60 per cent this time last year. So what are the consequences of that?

Well, there are not yet major consequences for emergency food aid led by the World Food Programme (WFP), as David Beasley will detail. Even after accounting for suspended programmes in Sana'a, WFP is reaching more than 11 million people, which is more than we have previously reported. But the situation is different across the rest of the relief operation.

Last month, I told members of the Council that support to medical facilities was being suspended in some areas (see S/PV.8561). Suspensions are now disrupting services of health facilities that serve 9 million people. Agencies are starting to suspend some regular vaccination programmes targeting 13 million people, including 200,000 infants. Work on 30 new feeding centres in areas with the worst levels of hunger has also been halted. Up to 60 existing centres could close in the coming weeks, putting at least 7,000 malnourished children at immediate risk of death.

In Sana'a, a United Nations-supported treatment plant that purifies water for agriculture has also started to shut down. That means that up to 4 million people could soon be eating vegetables irrigated with dirty water, making them more likely to contract cholera.

In the next two months, United Nations agencies expect to close 21 more key programmes. In August, that could mean, for example, an end to shelter services for more than 800,000 displaced people, as well as an end to reproductive health services available to 1 million impoverished women. We already see the impact of those cuts in the fight against cholera.

The Council will recall that, in 2017, more than 1 million suspected cases of cholera were reported. Many experts called that the world's worst-ever cholera epidemic. Last year, with funding provided under the United Nations response plan, humanitarian agencies implemented a major country-wide campaign against cholera. The effect was to reduce the number of cases

to 380,000 for the whole year. That is, of course, still a very high figure, but it is also a huge improvement over 2017, and it was achieved despite substantial further degradation of water, sanitation and health facilities caused by the war.

Those gains have now been lost. So far this year, nearly 500,000 cases of cholera have been reported. We have received reports so far of more than 700 deaths as a result, including more than 200 children. The death toll will surely grow.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Lowcock for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Beasley.

Mr. Beasley: I thank you, Sir, for the opportunity to brief the Security Council today on the situation in Yemen. I would also like to thank my colleagues Mark Lowcock and Martin Griffiths for all their hard work and updates.

When I briefed the Council about four weeks ago (see S/PV.8551), I said that the World Food Programme (WFP) was being prevented from feeding the hungriest people in Yemen. We were being prevented from operating independently, as we must, and much-needed food was not, in fact, reaching the right people who needed help. I ended my briefing by begging the Ansar Allah leadership, in front of the world, to just let WFP do what it does best — save lives. It is just that simple.

Because of the access challenges, food being diverted away from intended beneficiaries and the lack of accountability — and all the issues that I outlined last month — WFP made the difficult decision to begin a phased suspension of assistance in Yemen in late June. The suspension started in Sana'a and affected 850,000 women, men, girls and boys. As I am a father, those present can imagine how difficult a decision like that is. Not a day has gone by when I have not thought of the impact that suspending food assistance may have. I must tell the people in city of Sana'a, and through all of Yemen, that I am so sorry they are going through that.

But let me add that despite the suspension, we have increased, as Mark Lowcock said, the number of people who we have reached, from 10.6 million to 11.3 million, and we are continuing to scale up. In fact, we expect to reach over 12 million by the end of this month. Following the suspension, we have also expanded our nutrition programmes inside the city of Sana'a, where the suspension is in place, to ensure that the most

vulnerable children, pregnant women and nursing mothers have the food that they need to survive.

I want to make it very, very clear to everyone that the responsibility to stop malnutrition and hunger lies first and foremost with those who are at war and not with WFP, any of our partners or the United Nations. We are in Yemen only for the sake of humanity, to offer our assistance when warring parties cannot or will not fulfil their responsibilities. We are not in it for us; we are in it for the innocent people and victims of war in Yemen.

No one will be happier than all of us at the World Food Programme when we are no longer needed in Yemen because there is no more hunger. But until that time, when it comes to humanitarian assistance and issues, let us leave the politics out of it and uphold our obligations under international humanitarian law, which that specifically protects neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian action, including the delivery of essential items, including food.

Despite all the difficulties that I outlined last month, we have continued to engage in good faith. For the sake of those who need our help the most in Yemen, we have kept the lines of communication open. We have offered dialogue at every level. We have had dozens upon dozens of meetings and engagements with the Ansar Allah authorities. We have listened to and heard their concerns. We have explained our positions over and over and over, and we have looked for common ground. We have worked tirelessly to find solutions to accommodate the concerns that were raised and put forward workable proposals. That kind of work, as members of the Council well know, is not always so easy, but it is worth it.

While we have yet to sign an agreement, I must say that we have made substantial progress in the discussions. In fact, I want to read this one text message to make sure that we did not get a signed agreement in the past few minutes. The bottom line I have just received is that we were negotiating all night long and, as of this moment, we have an agreement in principle, but it is not a signed agreement as of yet. A lot of progress has however been made in that regard.

I want to thank Abdul-Malik Al-Houthi for his leadership. I want to thank Martin Griffiths and Resident Coordinator Lise Grande, who are on the ground. It has been tough. There has been a great deal of hard work taking place in the past few weeks

and the past 24 hours. But we must find a definitive solution. I believe that we will get there. I am hopeful that we will. As I said a little earlier, I have just been assured by this last-minute text message that they are meeting as we speak. I was hoping that we would have a signature before I got to this point in my briefing, but we have not reached that signature. So the door is still open. But once that is resolved, we are ready to begin implementing the agreement immediately. We will have food back on the streets in Sana'a in a matter of just days. That is what the people of Yemen deserve and demand of us.

While the agreement will help to ensure that the right people get the food, it will also allow the accountability framework required to start cash programmes. Cash will help to stimulate the local economy and to stabilize the rial, which will have a multiplier effect, bringing benefits to everyone in Yemen, not only the 12 million to whom we are providing assistance on a daily basis. That means another 18 million people, who now get their food through the market. The rial will stabilize. It will help mothers to provide more food for children, which will help us in so many ways, as Mark Lowcock has alluded to.

But let me be extremely clear: if we do not reach an agreement or if an agreement is reached and progress is not made on implementation, because we have been at this point before, we will find ourselves in the same position in which we are today but probably worse. Let us hope and pray that everyone, on all sides, will do what is good for the people of Yemen. We will keep the Council informed.

The suspension has been the headline story from Yemen over the past month. But the real story has been, and should continue to be, the humanitarian catastrophe that continues to unfold in Yemen. Lives are lost, livelihoods are gone and, for far too many, the hope for a better future grows dimmer every day. Approximately 30 million people live in Yemen, and more than two thirds of them are food insecure. That is 20 million people — boys, girls, men and women. Ten million of them are severely food insecure. They do not know where their next meal will come from as they march towards starvation. Every day Yemenis are making impossible choices just to survive. That is the toll that conflict and war collect.

Even in the most difficult circumstances, WFP continues to save lives, working with its other

humanitarian partners. As I have said before, we have scaled up our operations and, even despite the suspension, we have been able to increase the number of beneficiaries to more than 11 million, hopefully 12 million by the end of this month. We hope to continue to provide assistance.

Let me add that in December, we learned that 250,000 people in Yemen were facing catastrophic food security conditions. That is as bad as it can get. We tripled food assistance in the hardest-hit districts. It did the job. In 29 of the 45 districts where we were able to collect data, we can now confirm that none are in the catastrophic phase anymore. While we have seen those numbers go down, other numbers — for those who have gone from insecure to more insecure to more severe — are going up. The numbers are still bad and they are getting worse. In general, we are just keeping more and more people from death.

That is just one success story among many others. I want to thank those that have been extremely generous, such as the United States, the United Arab Emirates, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom and others, in allowing us to achieve these objectives.

Let me recount another success story, because there are so many bad stories. We know that the school system has all but collapsed because of the war, but we are doing our part to ensure that children still receive an education. This year alone, we were able to provide nutrition in schools for more than 700,000 children. Those are meals that give parents a little extra comfort, knowing that their children will get fed, in addition to what we are able to provide them at home.

That keeps the children in school, and it is an investment in the future of Yemen. At some point, when the guns go silent, and Yemen rebuilds, it is those little boys and girls who will turn Yemen into the country that it deserves to be.

We are grateful to everyone for all the support of the donors, many of whom are around this table today, whose generosity enable us to do what we do. However, donors must be even more generous because we need more help. Many of our humanitarian partners are not getting the assistance that they need. In order to keep reaching the most vulnerable, we need \$1.2 billion over the next months. We are only 43 per cent funded at the moment. Our partners also need more. WFP has a critical role to play in the humanitarian response but if our partners do not have the support that they need, it

does not matter how much food we deliver — lives will be lost.

I have a few requests today on behalf of the teachers, doctors, nurses, mothers, fathers and, last but not least, the little girls and boys, who just want to eat, play and learn. We request Member States to continue to be generous with their contributions. We ask that those that have made pledges honour them.

But I must say that we are reaching the point where no amount of money in the world will truly alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni people. The people in Yemen, the people at WFP and our partners do a heroic job, working hard day and night, risking their lives in order to make success stories and keep people alive. But when war destroys everything — lives, livelihoods, economies — there is only so much that we can do. We are fast approaching those limits. Please, for the Yemeni people, stop this war, find peaceful ways to settle the differences and end the suffering. We cannot give up. We owe the people of Yemen nothing less.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Beasley for his briefing.

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

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I would like to thank our United Nations colleagues for their briefings and once again to ask them to pass on our gratitude to their teams on the ground, who are working tirelessly to try and help the people of Yemen.

I wanted to start, if I may, by once again expressing our full support for Special Envoy Martin Griffiths, to welcome his recent meeting with President Hadi Mansour and to reiterate that Mr. Griffiths has the Council's backing as he tries to advance the broader Yemen political process. I am sure that all the other members of the Council will wish to express their support as well.

Something that Mr. Griffiths but also that Under-Secretary-General Lowcock said put together, juxtaposed, very aptly illustrates the dilemma of Yemen. Martin Griffiths that the war can end this year and Mark Lowcock said that there were 30 different front lines. So, having something that is potentially within reach, yet is so difficult to achieve on the ground, I think that in its private session the Council should try and think of ways that we can turn what is needed into concrete actions. I must say that I do not think that the

answer lies solely with the Council. I believe that all those Member States in the wider United Nations with influence, particularly on the Houthis, need to bring that influence to bear. It is so extremely frustrating to hear the accounts from the World Food Programme and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of what could be achieved but is held up. So I hope that we can spend some time in private session looking at action.

I think the first thing that we need is for the parties, following the meeting of the Redeployment Coordination Committee, to engage constructively with General Løllesgaard and the Special Envoy in order to finally get the outstanding negotiations completed so that we can implement the first and second phases of the Hudaydah Agreement. For the United Kingdom's part, we are happy to play whatever role we can in bringing that about. There are five main issues that I want to raise today. I think that we risk a perfect storm on the ground of various of these strands not coming together.

The first thing I would like to say relates to the military dimension. I want to condemn the persistent attacks by the Houthis on airports and infrastructure in Saudi Arabia. It is vital that all parties avoid provocative actions that could lead to escalation. Such actions obviously undermine trust, and they risk threatening undermining the political process. I also wanted to note the reports of the Emirati starting their withdrawal from Al-Hudaydah and say how welcome it is to see efforts to de-escalate the conflict in Yemen.

I wanted to turn to the humanitarian access and the situation relating to the WFP. I was going to be quite critical, but I think that Mr. Beasley's point about the agreement having been reached on Sana'a — even if it has not been signed — is obviously very welcome. We do not want to do anything that might impede the signature of that agreement, and I wish him good luck on that over the coming days.

I remain concerned, however, that the underlying fundamentals are not changing. As Mr. Lowcock said, there is a risk of the situation escalating and that we are taking three steps back for every two steps forward. I do not think that we can take our eye off any of those aspects because, as I said, they risk creating the perfect storm, if we cannot start making more and faster progress. The risk of cholera returning is horrific, and we need to do everything that we can to stop that from happening. Obviously, we want all the parties to comply

with resolution 2451 (2018) and facilitate unhindered humanitarian access.

My third point involves funding disbursements — a situation that I think is really shocking for what is the worst humanitarian crisis that the United Nations has dealt with in recent years. Funding of 43 per cent or 60 per cent is simply not enough. I would therefore like to urge other donors to rapidly disburse their funds to the United Nations-led appeal.

If I may, I would also like to talk about the economy. We heard a little bit about that, and what the representative of the WFP said about the link between food supplies and the stabilization of the currency is obviously important, but I think that we want both parties to be able to build on the revenue-sharing and the salary-payment talks that have been started in Amman. Neither side can be allowed to undermine the economic elements of the Al-Hudaydah agreement. It is key that this topic is not an add-on. From what we heard today, it is obvious that it is a fundamental part of being able to stabilize the situation. We therefore look to progress to be made on those issues.

Finally, with regard to human rights, to echo what Mr. Griffiths said about the reports — some of which have come from Amnesty International — that the Houthi Specialized Criminal Court has handed down 30 death sentences for political prisoners. We belong to those States that condemn the death penalty in all circumstances, but, in this particular case, given what that might risk doing on the ground, I want to take this opportunity to condemn Houthis — who are not a legitimate Government — and urge them to revoke those sentences immediately.

There are a number of actions that remain to be taken — on the implementation the political process, on unhindered food and humanitarian access, and on tanker access, as mentioned by Mr. Lowcock. All States Members of the United Nations with influence need to use it, whether they are on or outside the Council. We need an end to attacks on Saudi Arabia and its neighbours. We need funding disbursements to be done in full, as pledged. We need human rights to be respected. I hope we can follow up on these areas in private consultations.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we thank Mr. Martin Griffiths, Mr. Mark Lowcock and Mr. David Beasley for their briefings today, and we express our full support for their efforts.

As of today, seven months have elapsed since the entry into force of the Stockholm Agreement, which represents seven months of stalemate affecting the three pillars of the Agreement despite the Security Council's commitment to moving the political solution forward through United Nations-sponsored dialogue expressed in its unanimous adoption of resolutions 2451 (2018) and 2452 (2019) among other developments, including resolution 2481 (2018), which have all reiterated the importance of the full implementation of the Agreement. Nevertheless, despite the time elapsed, we have not seen any constructive measures that would help achieve its objectives.

The unprecedented blockade of Taiz has brought suffering to its men, women and children for over four years, and no tangible action has been undertaken to implement the statement of understanding on Taiz. Other forms of suffering include that of the thousands of Yemeni families who yearn for the release and return of the imprisoned, detained and forcibly disappeared. No progress has been made on the implementation of the prisoner-exchange agreement. Despite numerous meetings of the supervisory committee, many challenges have hampered the agreement's implementation, thereby blocking the release of any prisoners, detainees, abductees and forcibly disappeared persons.

With regard to the Al-Hudaydah agreement, whose full implementation has humanitarian implications, it too is based on agreements and understandings approved by the Redeployment Coordination Committee (RCC) at its multiple meetings, leading to an agreement to undertake redeployment outside of Al-Hudaydah under the supervision of the three members of the RCC.

In that regard, we welcome the fact that the RCC has resumed its meetings following a five-month suspension. Furthermore, we reiterate the importance of these meetings for the full implementation of the agreement. We should take into account the pivotal role played by the tripartite verification and inspection mechanism so as to allow the Yemeni Government to exercise its sovereign role in monitoring and redeploying in Al-Hudaydah.

We reiterate our firm position that there is no military solution and endorse the Special Envoy's position that not only is a military de-escalation needed, but more importantly, all the elements of the Stockholm Agreement must be implemented, which is the best way

for consultations focusing on comprehensive issues to be resumed.

With regard to security developments, the State of Kuwait strongly condemns continued attacks on civilian and critical infrastructure in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. We fully support the Kingdom and all measures being taken to maintain its security and territorial integrity. The Houthis' relentless attacks against Saudi territory are in blatant violation of international humanitarian law and a clear threat to regional security and stability, thereby justifying the arms embargo provided for in the relevant Security Council resolutions.

With regard to the humanitarian situation, at the previous meeting on this subject (see S/PV.8551), Mr. David Beasley discussed permanent solutions to the humanitarian situation. He cautioned that the World Food Programme (WFP) might have to suspend its activities in Sana'a, which is under Houthi control, leading to the denial of humanitarian assistance for some 850,000 people. As a result of ongoing intransigence and the failure to respond to the WFP's rational, legitimate demands, that actually happened on 20 June. Mr. Beasley called for an independent beneficiary-identification using biometrics in order to ensure that humanitarian assistance is not manipulated or diverted again. We also welcome Mr. Beasley's remarks about an agreement with the Houthis to address all the aforementioned problems.

We also commend the positive role played by the Yemeni Government, which continues to pay salaries to public-sector employees and retirees. In addition, the Yemeni Economic Committee is trying to facilitate fuel shipments and access to the Red Sea Mills and open routes for humanitarian assistance, notwithstanding the major security challenges. We reiterate our call on all parties to cooperate with relief and humanitarian agencies, refrain from placing obstacles to their movements and ensure the safety of personnel, who deserve our appreciation for their tireless efforts to provide humanitarian assistance despite the harsh conditions.

In conclusion, we reiterate our call on all Yemeni parties to fully implement the Stockholm Agreement on the city of Al-Hudaydah and its three ports, the prisoner-exchange agreement and the Taiz statement of understanding, so as to complement the efforts of the Special Envoy for Yemen aimed at reaching a political

solution underpinned by the three terms of reference, namely, the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism, the National Dialogue Conference outcomes and all relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2216 (2015). The goal is to end the crisis, preserve the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Yemen and cease interference in the country's internal affairs.

Mr. Hunter (United States of America): I thank our briefers for their remarks and the tireless efforts of their teams.

Progress on the United Nations-led political process is vital, but it faces obstacles from within Yemen and from outside forces. The Security Council has seen regional escalation by Iran, and we are alarmed about the recent uptick in Houthi attacks, especially on Saudi civilian airports. We must do everything we can to prevent these attacks from undermining hard-earned progress on the United Nations-led political track in Yemen. We urge the parties to undertake de-escalatory measures so as to show their commitment to a Yemeni-led political resolution.

As part of that de-escalation, we call on the Houthis to immediately cease unmanned aerial vehicle, rocket and other attacks against their fellow citizens and neighbours. Iran must cease supplying the Houthis with the weapons and technology used in those attacks. Since December, the Council has urged the Government of Yemen and the Houthis to demonstrate their commitment to a political settlement by taking good-faith measures to de-escalate tensions and redeploy from Al-Hudaydah, as agreed in Sweden.

We are encouraged by the progress at the recent Redeployment Coordination Committee (RCC) meeting and see it as proof of what can be achieved when the parties work in good faith with Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and RCC Chair Lieutenant General Michael Lollsgaard. Yet harder work lies ahead, as we have heard here today, and the parties must make good on their commitments. That means implementing redeployment and reaching consensus on the contentious issues relating to local security forces, while continuing to exercise restraint so that fighting does not threaten the ceasefire. We welcome the recent meeting between President Mansour Hadi Mansour and Special Envoy Griffiths and we hope that this can pave the way for further collaboration and towards finding a political solution to the conflict.

The United States expresses its disappointment over recent reports that Houthi authorities sentenced 30 activists to death in Sana'a and reminds the Houthis of their commitment to an exchange of prisoners and detainees per the Stockholm Agreement. Tangible progress on the exchange of prisoners would indicate the seriousness of the parties to build confidence towards an agreement to end the conflict.

As the sobering briefings today reminded us, the humanitarian situation in Yemen is dire. The United States remains seriously concerned about the increasing risk of famine in Yemen, in particular, as we have heard today, among vulnerable populations. We were heartened to learn that the World Food Programme (WFP) was able to salvage a portion of the wheat stored at the Red Sea Mills, which it recently reached despite obstacles placed by the Houthis. We commend the WFP's efforts in this regard.

We are also closely monitoring negotiations between the WFP and the Houthis to enable the full resumption of food aid. As long as the Houthis delay their cooperation with the WFP, the Yemeni people will continue to suffer. We hope for a resolution that prioritizes the needs of vulnerable Yemenis and we condemn Houthi efforts to undermine humanitarian activities through the diversion of aid.

We must ensure that humanitarian assistance continues to effectively reach the millions in need. There is no excuse for the obstruction of United Nations humanitarian assistance in Yemen. The United States remains one of the largest humanitarian contributors in the country. We join the call today for all donors to step up assistance in Yemen and fulfil their financial commitments pledged in Geneva in February.

The United States supports United Nations efforts to uphold the integrity of its humanitarian assistance programmes to ensure that life-saving aid directly reaches those in need. Those who seek to defraud or divert such assistance are in violation of internationally recognized humanitarian principles and are directly and intentionally contributing to Yemen's dire humanitarian crisis. We continue to encourage all parties to respect the humanitarian principles of independence, neutrality and impartiality to avoid creating more precarious situations for vulnerable populations in Yemen.

Mr. De Riviere (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Special Envoy Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Lowcock and World

Food Programme Executive Director Beasley for their briefings.

First of all, I would like to strongly reaffirm France's full support for the efforts of Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and Lieutenant General Lollesgaard. I reiterate France's full confidence in them.

As we have just heard, after weeks of deadlock, the parties managed to meet again at the beginning of the week within the Redeployment Coordination Committee (RCC) and agree on the general principles for implementing the first and second phases of the Hudaydah agreement on the ground. This is an encouraging step, and we welcome the resumption of talks. However, that is only the first step. The parties must now implement the agreed points quickly and concretely and remain engaged in good faith within the RCC and with the Special Envoy.

While we have just unanimously renewed the mandate of the United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement for six months (resolution 2481 (2019)), France reiterates its full support for the Mission. Its presence on the ground is crucial for observing and facilitating redeployment, as provided for under resolution 2452 (2019), but also for enabling the parties to rebuild trust. The increasing operationalization of the force is a good thing, and we call on the United Nations to continue to deploy its full capabilities on the ground. It is the responsibility of the parties to ensure their safety and free movement.

The efforts of the Special Envoy are all the more important given the regional security situation, which recently began to deteriorate. The current tensions in the Gulf are extremely worrying. They could have an impact on the situation in Yemen and the readiness of the parties to move forward in their discussions for the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement and, beyond that, to find a political solution to the current conflict.

France has been very clear: we strongly condemned the most recent attacks perpetrated and claimed by the Houthis, including those on the airport at Abha, which have already resulted in one death and left dozens wounded. These attacks are unacceptable and must stop. We therefore call on all parties to refrain from any escalation that could further destabilize the region and jeopardize the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement in all its dimensions and the resumption of discussions for a peaceful solution. In this regard, the

military redeployment announced by the authorities of the United Arab Emirates, in particular in Al-Hudaydah, could provide an opportunity for de-escalation. We hope that this decision could be used to facilitate a political solution to the crisis by all parties.

We remain very concerned about the continuing deterioration of the humanitarian and security situation. It is more essential than ever to protect civilians, including women and children, as they are particularly vulnerable. Nearly 2 million of them suffer from severe acute malnutrition.

I wish to reiterate our full support for the humanitarian actors and their efforts in this difficult context. They too must be protected. Commercial and humanitarian access, which must be guaranteed, has been further hampered by the closure of the road between Aden and Sana'a, but also by other obstructions, namely, the Houthis, which is unacceptable at a time when, as Mr. Beasley has just described it, the country is still at risk of starvation. We therefore call on the parties to make every effort to facilitate the implementation of the humanitarian response plan and ensure that action is taken in full respect of the principles of neutrality, independence, impartiality and humanity.

I will conclude by emphasizing that we must not lose sight of the fact that our collective goal is to find a political solution to the current conflict. The Stockholm Agreement is a first step in facilitating the establishment of trust between the parties. That is why achieving results in its implementation will help contribute to the resumption of political discussions.

A military solution cannot and must not be an option. Relaunching these discussions to reach a comprehensive and inclusive political agreement, taking into account the diversity of Yemeni actors, including women and civil society representatives, is the only real prospect for putting an end to the conflict and the humanitarian crisis. The mobilization and unity of the Security Council are our greatest asset when it comes to moving forward on this difficult path, but it is the only option for restoring the peace to which the Yemeni people aspire.

Mr. Singer Weisinger (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): We appreciate the briefings given today. We took careful note of the explanations on the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement, as well as the troubling report on the humanitarian situation.

We strongly condemn all violent acts committed by both parties to this conflict and we call for a cessation of hostilities and provocations jeopardizing the progress that has been made, especially with regard to the ceasefire. In order to achieve this objective, everyone — especially women and young people — must participate.

Despite the fact that there have been continuous confrontations in the Al-Hudaydah governorate, we welcome the fact that an agreement has been reached on the new mechanism for monitoring the ceasefire and the military de-escalation. As Mr. Griffiths informed us, it has also been agreed that committees will be formed to supervise compliance with the ceasefire with the participation of representatives from both parties, as well as the United Nations.

Furthermore, as Mr. Lowcock pointed out, the humanitarian situation remains catastrophic. Since the beginning of the year, new cases of cholera continue to be reported, with almost half a million people affected by the disease. We therefore need a robust and coordinated response from the relevant actors to improve the living conditions of the most vulnerable, especially children.

I would like to thank Mr. Beasley for his briefing, in which he eloquently outlined the current situation of the distribution of aid in some areas controlled by Ansar Allah. We regret that there has had to be a gradual suspension of assistance and we reiterate that, in order for humanitarian action to be effective, it must be provided in accordance with the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. Failure to comply with these principles puts the welfare of the affected population at risk. Further, we cannot allow hunger to become a weapon of war. We trust that, through dialogue, commitments can be reached to meet the people's food needs. We hope that, based on Mr. Beasley's announcement today, it will be possible to reach a signed agreement.

Moreover, we would like to draw attention to the problem of landmines and improvised explosive devices, which prevent humanitarian organizations from reaching populations in need. Civilian areas must urgently be cleared of mines and explosive devices, and this demining must take place not only in residential areas but also on agricultural land, so that people can access their fields safely.

We echo the concerns expressed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights with regard to the imposition of the death penalty on 30 people, most of whom are academics and students, by a Special Criminal Trial Court of de facto authorities in Sana'a. The defendants must be guaranteed due process and a fair trial, and any charges under political motives must be dismissed.

Finally, the Security Council remains united in the search for a political solution to the conflict in Yemen, and we would like to reiterate our delegation's steadfast support for Mr. Griffiths in his tireless efforts to find a solution. We call on the parties to the conflict to participate in good faith in these negotiations and to fulfil their commitments in the same spirit displayed in Stockholm in December.

Mr. Mabhongo (South Africa): We thank all the briefers for their detailed, informative and, indeed, illuminating briefings this morning.

South Africa remains extremely concerned at the serious humanitarian and security situation in Yemen. The continued violence, including the attacks on Abha International Airport, remains unacceptable and must be condemned. South Africa firmly believes that, in order to ensure a long-term solution to the crisis in Yemen, it is necessary for all parties to commit to a political process. With that in mind, we welcome the progress made in the implementation of the Hudaydah Agreement and the role played by the United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement (UNMHA).

We support the renewal of the UNMHA mandate for an additional six months, which was unanimously adopted by the Council on Monday (see S/PV.8572). We therefore wish to encourage all parties — who, by signing the Stockholm Agreement in the first place, have shown their willingness to commit to its implementation — to make every effort to fully implement all the elements of the Agreement, namely, the ceasefire and redeployment of forces, facilitation of the movement of humanitarian aid and, lastly, a prisoner swap. South Africa therefore calls on all parties to de-escalate the fighting in other parts of the country and commit to a general ceasefire to enable dialogue and inclusive peaceful negotiations. We wish to reiterate that the success of the Stockholm Agreement will require the sustained implementation of confidence-building measures by both parties.

Mr. Lowcock's briefing this morning was a painful reminder of the dire humanitarian situation in Yemen. My delegation therefore calls upon all parties to ensure that the necessary humanitarian assistance is able to safely reach the intended destinations without being used as a tool to further fuel the conflict. In this regard, we are concerned by the recent partial suspension of food aid from the World Food Programme, the dire implications of which were clearly articulated this morning by Executive Director Beasley. We call for the matter to be resolved in order for this aid to be resumed for those in need. Any hindrance to the delivery of this vital humanitarian aid only exacerbates the already severe crisis.

In conclusion, we wish to reiterate that the only sustainable resolution will be a negotiated, Yemen-led political process that is inclusive and fair and puts the interests and well-being of all the citizens of Yemen first.

Mr. Ipo (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation congratulates Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen; Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator; and Mr. David Beasley, Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), for their detailed briefings on the latest developments in Yemen.

As the Security Council extends the mandate of the United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA), my country notes with regret that the peace process in Yemen has struggled to make the expected progress in the implementation of the relevant provisions of the Stockholm Agreement. Côte d'Ivoire urges all Yemeni actors to seize the opportunity of this mandate renewal to resolutely engage in dialogue, as recommended by the Stockholm Agreement.

With regard to the Al-Hudaydah agreement, my delegation believes that it is essential that all parties scrupulously comply with the ceasefire and pursue the redeployment of military forces, including the withdrawal of the Houthis from the ports of Al-Hudaydah, Saleef and Ras Isa, under the auspices of the Redeployment Coordination Committee (RCC).

While contributing to the establishment of an environment of trust, compliance with the ceasefire will undoubtedly promote the full resumption of the WFP's activities and the deployment of the inspectors of the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism

in Yemen, with a view to assisting port authorities in increasing port capacities and generating resources. My country also believes that it is urgent to implement the provisions of the Stockholm Agreement relating to the exchange of 15,000 prisoners and the memorandum of understanding on the city of Taiz for the opening of humanitarian corridors.

Despite the complexity of the current challenges, my country reaffirms its conviction that a return to lasting peace and stability in Yemen remains possible through dialogue and courageous compromises among all actors in the crisis. In that regard, my delegation welcomes the ongoing mediation efforts of Mr. Martin Griffiths that enabled the warring parties, on 15 July, to commit themselves to honouring the ceasefire and facilitating the redeployment of forces from the port of Al-Hudaydah. My country calls on regional actors to participate in constructive efforts to support the ongoing mediation efforts and the commitment of the Yemeni parties to achieving meaningful results.

After several years of conflict, Yemen is now a devastated country where, according to United Nations agencies, 24 million people face a humanitarian emergency, 14 million suffer from food insecurity and 3.3 million are internally displaced. This situation is all the more worrying for my country, as deliberate and unacceptable obstacles to the delivery of food aid are abundant and led to the partial suspension of humanitarian aid on 20 June. We hope for a quick conclusion of the agreement announced by Mr. Beasley so that the WFP can fully resume its provision of aid to affected populations.

My delegation therefore urgently appeals to the Yemeni parties to refrain from any instrumentalization and manipulation of humanitarian assistance, which constitutes a serious violation of international humanitarian law and resolution 2417 (2018). It also calls on them to respect the obligation to protect civilians and to put an end to the recruitment of child soldiers.

In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire reaffirms its support for the tireless efforts of Mr. Griffiths, Mr. Lowcock and Mr. Beasley to reach a political settlement of the Yemeni conflict and to mobilize the necessary resources to mitigate the negative effects of the humanitarian crisis. My country also commends the RCC and UNMHA observation teams, led by Lieutenant General Michael Lollesgaard, for their determination to create the

environment necessary to a definitive and sustainable settlement of the crisis in Yemen.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Special Envoy Martin Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock and the Executive Director of the World Food Programme, David Beasley, for their comprehensive overview of the military, political and humanitarian situations in the Republic of Yemen.

We support the mediation efforts of Mr. Griffiths and Lieutenant General Michael Lollesgaard, who are striving to steer the parties to the Yemeni conflict to acknowledge the futility of a military solution. We are convinced that the implementation of the Stockholm Agreements remains possible. In that connection, we welcome the progress reached by the parties at the joint meeting of the Redeployment Coordination Committee, under the leadership of Lieutenant General Lollesgaard, particularly with regard to the development of confidence-building measures.

The completion of the redeployment of armed forces from the ports of Al-Hudaydah, Saleef and Ras Isa will undoubtedly help to unblock other aspects of the Stockholm Agreement, including the exchange of prisoners and the de-escalation of tensions in Taiz, and will help spark discussions of the framework parameters for a settlement.

We all voted to extend the mandate of the United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement. We are confident that the further deployment of an international presence will facilitate the separation of the conflicting parties in the city and promote the overall stabilization of the situation in Yemen. However, we should not expect instant results as the bulk of the work lies ahead. Russia will continue to provide assistance to United Nations mediation in Yemen, both in its national capacity and as one of five permanent members of the Security Council.

Mr. Lowcock and Mr. Beasley today painted a discouraging picture of the situation in the Republic of Yemen, which is experiencing one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. The crisis is structural in nature. It has inflicted irreparable damage on the population, economy and civilian infrastructure of Yemen. Millions of Yemenis are starving, cannot access needed medical services and supplies and are in dire need of various types of assistance. The country is once again in the grip of a cholera epidemic. The situation is

deteriorating with each passing day and approaching a point of no return. Providing humanitarian assistance to Yemen should be a priority of our work and must be carried out on a non-discriminatory basis, regardless of who controls any given area.

We once again call for a universal ceasefire, ensuring unfettered humanitarian access to all regions of the country and unconditional compliance with the provisions of international humanitarian law. All parties to the Yemeni conflict must immediately stop launching indiscriminate strikes against civilian facilities, abandon aggressive, provocative rhetoric and show restraint.

In conclusion, we recall resolution 598 (1987), as we so often do. The resolution tasked the Secretary-General to develop an architecture of security and confidence in the region in collaboration with the States of the region. This architecture, bringing together all key States of the region — the Persian Gulf countries and Iran — would now only strengthen comprehensive and indivisible security in this part of the globe but also help resolve long-standing and new crises, including the conflict in Yemen.

In that connection, our proposal to begin developing a package of security- and confidence-building measures for the Persian Gulf, and ultimately for the entire Middle East, remains on the table and relevant. We have said this repeatedly. This comprehensive formula would help replace threats and confrontation with dialogue and cooperation and improve the general environment, which would, incidentally, contribute significantly to the success of the Yemeni efforts under the auspices of the United Nations.

Mr. Lewicki (Poland): At the outset, let me thank all briefers for their comprehensive updates of the current situation in Yemen. Let me also seize this opportunity to renew Poland's full and continued support for all efforts of the Special Envoy Martin Griffiths, and to pay our most heartfelt tribute to all brave United Nations staff members, men and women, particularly those on the ground, who are providing life-saving assistance to Yemeni men, women and children.

Let me first address the situation in Al-Hudaydah. We welcome the recent meeting of the Redeployment Coordination Committee and we are encouraged by the finalization of agreements on concepts of operations for both phases of the mutual redeployment. In our view, it is critical to preserve the ceasefire and to

expedite the implementation of the remaining stages of the redeployment, in full cooperation with the United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA). We also encourage the parties to take meaningful steps to ensure the full implementation of all provisions of the Stockholm Agreement.

The ceasefire in Al-Hudaydah was intended to be a confidence-building exercise designed to help pave the way for the resumption of the political process. It demonstrated that direct dialogue between the parties is possible. But the Al-Hudaydah agreement itself will not resolve the conflict and will not put an end to the violence that has surged in other Yemeni governorates. As Mark Lowcock highlighted, conflict and violence continue in many places throughout the country.

We strongly believe that it is time to step up efforts to find a comprehensive solution to the conflict through the resumption of the political process, which should be conducted in parallel with the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement. Let me reiterate that we strongly support the Special Envoy's tireless efforts in that regard and we call on all parties to engage constructively with Mr. Griffiths, because as Mr. David Beasley said, the reason that the United Nations and the international community are providing assistance in Yemen is because all parties engaged in the conflict have failed in their responsibility to protect the civilian population and to provide them with the conditions to live in peace and security.

In that vein, we also urge the parties to refrain from taking actions that threaten to undermine the United Nations-led political process. Like other delegations, we condemn all attacks on the territory of Saudi Arabia, which pose a security threat to the Kingdom and might have a negative impact on broader regional stability. In that context, I wish to echo Martin Griffiths in stressing that we should keep Yemen out from other potential ongoing conflicts in the region.

Given the current fragile security environment, it is crucial that the parties de-escalate tensions and show utmost restraint. They must also meet their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law and ensure the protection of civilians at all times. As we keep stressing in this Chamber, complying with international human rights and humanitarian law is not a matter of choice; it is a matter of obligation under international law.

The protracted conflict in Yemen has created conditions in which the survival of millions of Yemenis depends entirely on the delivery of humanitarian aid. We have just heard briefings by Mark Lowcock and David Beasley in which they painted quite a bleak picture, unfortunately. Allowing humanitarian assistance to reach all the people in need is not a matter of choice; again, it is the responsibility and obligation of the parties to the conflict. Therefore, we urge them to allow and facilitate the flow of humanitarian and commercial imports, including in-country shipments of fuel, and to ensure free, safe and unimpeded access for humanitarian assistance and personnel to all parts of the country. All bureaucratic restrictions imposed on the movement of humanitarian convoys — and in that regard I wish to refer to the intervention by David Beasley — as well as any form of denial of humanitarian access, diversion of resources or interference in humanitarian operations is just unacceptable.

Let me also echo Ambassador Pierce's intervention in urging the Houthis to revoke the death sentences they have imposed and in calling upon all parties to comply with their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to express Poland's full support for the work of all United Nations agencies and their personnel in Yemen, as well as to welcome the extension of the UNMHA mandate.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): We have listened very carefully to the briefings just delivered by Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen; Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs; and Mr. David Beasley, Executive Director of the World Food Programme. We thank them for the detailed and valuable briefings they provided. We reiterate our full support for the work being done by Mr. Martin Griffiths, and encourage him to continue with his noble mission for the well-being of the Yemeni people.

As we meet once again today to analyse the conflict in Yemen, which is now in its fifth year, Equatorial Guinea would like to begin by expressing its praise and full support for the good management of the United Nations system and other international actors, the sole objective of which is to put an end as soon as possible to this situation, which has ensnared women and children and the entire Yemeni civilian population.

In late 2018, we were pleased to note the good management of the mediation process led by Mr. Griffiths, which led to the meeting in Sweden. Taking past failures into account, we considered the Yemeni parties' agreement to meet, negotiate and reach a consensus on the various aspects of the Stockholm Agreement to be a success. We have always recognized that important step, but the most important thing now is for the leaders of the parties to ensure strict compliance with those commitments and to cooperate with the Special Envoy in good faith and cooperation. Commitment to the political process and partnership with the United Nations, through the Special Envoy, are indeed essential to achieving the goals of peace, stability and the improvement of the living conditions of the population affected by the conflict.

Despite the delays observed in the implementation of the agreement, we welcomed some statements made by the Special Envoy at the meeting in June (see S/PV.8551), such as the ongoing reduction in violence throughout Al-Hudaydah governorate in the six months since the entry into force of the agreement and the reduction by 68 per cent in the number of civilian victims in the five months after the ceasefire. In the same vein, we were pleased to note the constructive collaboration in recent months of the warring parties with the Redeployment Coordination Committee in the plans for the first and second phases of the redeployments. It is important for that collaboration to lead them to the tripartite monitoring mechanism.

Furthermore, our delegation calls on the parties to immediately begin work on the other aspects of the agreement, such as the implementation of the exchanges of prisoners and detainees and the memorandum of understanding on Taiz, which are equally important in making progress towards achieving the established objectives.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea is extremely concerned about the humanitarian crisis affecting Yemen as a result of the conflict. The increase in food insecurity, epidemics and the collapse of the health system, as well as inflation and economic decline, have contributed greatly to worsening this crisis.

Faced with this situation, we note with concern the decision taken by the World Food Programme to partially suspend the delivery of humanitarian assistance in the country's capital. We therefore encourage the authorities of the warring parties to find a solution to the incidents

that led to the suspension so that aid can be restored and can continue to be distributed to the thousands of people who need it. Although an agreement has not been realized, we consider the ongoing negotiations worthwhile and we praise the efforts of the World Food Programme to reach that goal.

Similarly, we reiterate our concern about the increase in fatalities in the rapidly spreading cholera epidemic that has claimed thousands of human lives since the outbreak began in the country. In that regard, we urge all parties to facilitate humanitarian access to the population in need of medicines and other services. We further implore the parties to allow the displaced persons throughout the country access to food, medical care and shelter.

Finally, I would like to underscore the importance of making progress on all the issues in question, which deserve a sustainable solution in order to ensure the possibility of a resumption of talks between the parties on a comprehensive political solution. Moreover, we reaffirm and reiterate our full support for the diplomatic efforts of Special Envoy Griffiths, as well as the work of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Lowcock, and the Executive Director of the World Food Programme, Mr. Beasley, to alleviate the suffering of the population and resolve the conflict in Yemen.

Mr. Yao Shaojun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank Special Envoy Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General Lowcock and Executive Director Beasley for their briefings. China supports the efforts of Special Envoy Griffiths to advance the political process in Yemen and commends the United Nations and the World Food Programme (WFP) for their unremitting efforts to improve the humanitarian situation in that country.

The Stockholm Agreement — an important step towards the political settlement of the Yemeni issue — should be implemented in earnest. With the efforts of the international community and the Yemeni parties, the ceasefire is largely holding in Al-Hudaydah and the redeployment is making headway. Just recently, the Yemeni parties participated in the first face-to-face meeting of the Redeployment Coordination Committee (RCC) since February and agreed on a mechanism and new measures to reinforce the ceasefire and de-escalation in Al-Hudaydah.

Under the good offices of the United Nations, the Yemeni parties should continue to conduct dialogue and consultations with a view to resolving such outstanding issues as local security forces, relevant port revenues and prisoner exchanges. The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, the United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA) and the RCC should strengthen dialogue and collaboration with a view to forging synergies to promote the resolution of the aforementioned issues.

The Council should continue to maintain unity and provide support for the political process in Yemen. China supports the adoption of resolution 2481 (2019), which renewed the mandate of UNMHA for six months. Since the deployment of the Mission, violent incidents have decreased in Al-Hudaydah and the Mission's operations have been effective on the whole.

Given the complexity of the environment in Al-Hudaydah, the Mission has to overcome security, administrative and logistical difficulties. The Yemeni parties should strengthen cooperation with the United Nations to provide assistance and facilitate the deployment of the Mission and its mandate implementation. China supports UNMHA in continuing to oversee the ceasefire and advance the redeployment of forces and mine action operations, and commends the work of the Mission and the dedication of its staff.

China support the Yemeni parties on the basis of relevant Council resolutions, such as resolution 2216 (2015), the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism and the outcome of the comprehensive National Dialogue Conference in returning to the track of dialogue for a political settlement of the Yemeni issue. The sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Yemen must be safeguarded.

Since countries of the region play an important role on the Yemeni issue, China supports their enhanced dialogue and cooperation with the United Nations to create favourable conditions for the Yemeni parties to ease tensions, enhance mutual trust and advance the political process. China condemns all attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure.

Since the outbreak of the war in Yemen, the Yemeni people have suffered from violence, hunger, disease and displacement, among other threats. China is deeply concerned about the humanitarian situation in Yemen. The international community should increase

its assistance, provide tailored support in cash and in kind and honour its pledges in a timely manner. All parties concerned should ensure humanitarian access in Yemen so that humanitarian supplies can reach all the people and areas in need of assistance.

China is closely following the food crisis in Yemen and supports the work of the WFP to improve the living conditions of the Yemeni people. China has also provided multiple batches of humanitarian aid, such as food and medicine, to Yemen through bilateral and multilateral channels, and will continue to do its utmost to help the Yemeni people address their shortages of basic necessities, such as clothing, food, medicine and health care.

Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Martin Griffiths, Mr. Mark Lowcock and Mr. David Beasley for their briefings.

We welcome the unanimous adoption of resolution 2481 (2019) on the renewal of the United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement and call on all actors to facilitate its full implementation within a reasonable time frame.

We note with satisfaction the results of the latest meeting of the Redeployment Coordination Committee (RCC), held in Al-Hudaydah, including the agreements on de-escalation and the concept of operations for the first and second phases of the redeployment. We call on all parties to fully implement the withdrawal agreement, to respect the ceasefire in full and to resolve the outstanding points of disagreement, including the issue of local security forces. We continue to call on all parties to implement the Stockholm Agreement in its entirety, including the prisoner-exchange agreement and the memorandum of understanding on Taiz.

Moreover, Belgium continues to encourage the Special Envoy to continue to prepare the next steps in the political process, which must be inclusive. The Al-Hudaydah agreement is of particular importance to the humanitarian situation, but the core of the conflict requires a sustainable and inclusive political solution. We reiterate our full support for the efforts of Special Envoy Martin Griffiths.

Violence in the rest of the country continues, exacerbating the lack of trust between the parties. In addition, such violence has an impact on humanitarian access. We call on all parties to cease hostilities

throughout the country. Belgium remains deeply concerned over the high number of child victims, particularly as a result of air strikes and ground fighting, and urges all parties to take immediate measures to protect children. Furthermore, we strongly condemn the attacks with drones and missiles on civilian targets in Saudi Arabia claimed by the Houthis. Those attacks are unacceptable.

Efforts are needed to improve the humanitarian situation, which remains catastrophic, as we have heard once again this morning. We commend the humanitarian agencies for their outstanding work, despite difficulties. It is imperative for all parties to facilitate access for humanitarian assistance and to respect international humanitarian law. In particular, we strongly condemn any misuse of humanitarian aid. Assistance must be provided to those who need it. We are concerned that the situation in Sana'a remains unresolved. As David Beasley announced, we hope that an agreement will be signed soon.

We note with concern the financial situation, as described by Mark Lowcock. Belgium has paid its contribution to the Yemen Humanitarian Fund and calls on other contributors to do the same.

Lastly, it is crucial to continue to look into the violations committed in the territory. We call on the parties to respect their obligations and commitments under international humanitarian law and international human rights law. In that regard, Belgium is alarmed by the imposition of the death penalty by the Houthis on 30 people in Sana'a. Those people are on the list for the exchange of prisoners. The agreement on the prisoner exchange must be implemented as soon as possible.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): I would like first of all to thank Mr. Martin Griffiths, Mr. Mark Lowcock and Mr. David Beasley for their briefings. They may rest assured of Indonesia's full support in what they are doing. In responding to the briefings, we would like to underscore three important points.

First, we welcome the agreement reached at the joint meeting of the Redeployment Coordination Committee on new measures to reinforce the ceasefire and concepts of operations for both phases of redeployment. If implemented, the agreement will help to further de-escalate tension in the area. It is also another steppingstone towards the full implementation of the Hudaydah Agreement. We certainly agree with what Martin Griffiths mentioned regarding the fact

that the Agreement is a gateway to a political process. However, we should not forget that the end objective is a comprehensive agreement. Hopefully, we will be able to reach that as soon as possible. I remain optimistic about the work of Mr. Griffiths in that regard.

We also continue to push for the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement and the continuation of efforts to find a comprehensive political solution to end the conflict. In that regard, we reiterate our support for the work being carried out by the Special Envoy and General Lollesgaard, and we thank them for their tireless efforts in the quest for a wider peace in Yemen. Like others, we condemn any action or attacks that would further escalate the conflict, including on critical infrastructure in Saudi Arabia, which would threaten security and stability in the region.

Secondly, Indonesia is deeply concerned about the unwillingness of the Houthis to cooperate with the World Food Programme (WFP), resulting in a partial suspension of aid in some areas under the control of the authorities. We fully understand that that is the path that WFP must take to prevent the diversion of food from some of the most vulnerable people in Yemen. We call on the Houthis to cooperate with WFP and we reiterate our support for the humanitarian efforts of the United Nations, including WFP. We supported the appeal of the WFP Executive Director, Mr. David Beasley. Hopefully, the agreement will be signed as soon as possible and implemented. I think that that is a very important part of achieving success. I would like once again to underline that humanitarian aid should not, and cannot, be politicized. That is simply unacceptable.

Indonesia also notes Mark Lowcock's legitimate concerns about the funding issues. The commitments made at the Geneva pledging conference are in urgent need of being disbursed without delay. We will witness a humanitarian catastrophe if the operation is left unfunded. We heard what Mr. Lowcock said about the suspension of medical services, food availability and, of course, the closure of 21 more key programme, which is quite alarming.

Thirdly, we welcome the mandate renewal of the United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement (UNMHA) for another six months and the leadership of General Lollesgaard to navigate the Mission. At this juncture, the Mission's full deployment is critical, not only to monitor the implementation of the Hudaydah Agreement, but also, very important,

to facilitate humanitarian assistance. We are glad that since the establishment of UNMHA, there has been an overall reduction in both violence and the number of reported civilian casualties, alongside a growing number of returnees to the area and greater economic activity in Al-Hudaydah. In that connection, Indonesia is honoured to be able to take part in the Mission, and we stand ready to continue to contribute further to it.

In conclusion, the crisis in Yemen will be remembered as one of the biggest humanitarian crises in the history of humankind. However, it could also be remembered as the Council's best success if we continue to remain united and to support every effort to find peace and to avert a future disaster.

Mr. Heusgen (Germany): Germany is also concerned about the continuing military attacks. We condemn in particular the attacks on Saudi Arabia and the recent ones in general. It is very clear that for this conflict, as for many others, there is no military solution. We therefore support all the efforts of Martin Griffiths to reach a political solution. We think that looking at all the tactical steps that are necessary to implement the Stockholm Agreement is the right approach to but most important is to keep the strategic objective in mind, that is, to make progress on the political process. It is a question of political will. A solution can be found. The elements are there. The puzzle must just be put together.

I would like to echo what Martin Griffiths and the United Kingdom and Polish representatives said regarding the death sentence imposed on 30 civilians. I would urge the responsible Houthis to revoke those unacceptable sentences. I would also like to echo what Mr. Griffiths said with regard to General Lollesgaard. His perseverance is truly remarkable and I congratulate him on the success that he has had.

I thank Mr. Lowcock and Mr. Beasley for their briefings and for their efforts. I particularly thank their teams on the ground for what they are doing under difficult circumstances. It is unacceptable that humanitarian aid workers encounter the problems on the ground that they are seeing at the moment. I think Mark Lowcock said that it was ironic that some of those who asked for humanitarian aid are now making it very difficult for that aid to be delivered. Let me appeal to all sides to adhere to international humanitarian law. That is very clear and we can only recall and reiterate it day after day.

I hope that Mr. Beasley will soon receive the right text message, saying that it is now actually agreed and that WFP can continue with full-fledged humanitarian aid. I think that he took the right decision to cut the aid because there were too many people benefiting from the assistance that did not deserve to. At the same time, it was absolutely right that those who are the most vulnerable continue to receive support.

I also echo Mr. Beasley's plea for those who have pledged humanitarian aid to implement it. Germany has fulfilled its task. We have increased our pledge. But we really appeal to those who have pledged, including those from the region who have pledged large sums, to implement. We have heard the figures and we just cannot allow the humanitarian aid to stop.

In conclusion, let me express Germany's support for the work of Mr. Griffiths, Mr. Lowcock, Mr. Beasley and General Lollesgaard. I ask that they do all they can to end the worst humanitarian crisis of our time.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Peru.

We too would like to thank Mr. Griffiths, Mr. Lowcock and Mr. Beasley for their important and detailed presentations. We would like to express our ongoing appreciation for their efforts in their respective and complementary fields of action in bringing all parties closer to an inclusive political solution to the conflict in Yemen and in addressing the worst humanitarian crisis in the world today.

Peru is following the developments in Yemen with concern. While we welcome the recent preliminary understandings at the technical level within the Redeployment Coordination Committee, on which we congratulate General Lollesgaard, we cannot fail to emphasize the extremely fragile nature of the current situation given the deep mistrust that still prevails between the parties and the rigidity of their positions.

We believe that we are at a critical juncture, which demands more than ever that the leaders of both parties show concrete signs of genuine commitment and political will that translate into tangible and expeditious progress on crucial issues, such as the composition of local security forces in Al-Hudaydah, the management of revenue from commercial activity and the effective implementation of the two phases envisaged in the redeployment of the forces.

To that end, we stress the special responsibility of those countries that are able to influence the warring parties and that can and must do more to convince them to moderate their positions, avoid further escalation, strictly honour their obligations under international humanitarian law and human rights law and ultimately comply with what was agreed in Al-Hudaydah. We emphasize that the international community, in particular the Council, cannot tolerate further delays with regard to those critical issues or provocative and destabilizing actions, including by third countries, that could lead to an escalation of the conflict in an environment in which the devastating humanitarian crisis looming over that country continues to deteriorate on the ground.

The significant increase in the number of people in need of assistance and protection today, the 3.3 million displaced Yemenis and the ravages caused by the new outbreak of cholera are scourges for which we must all feel partially responsible. The work of the United Nations and various non-governmental entities in alleviating human suffering is commendable, but the reality is that their capacities are being overwhelmed by the scale of the tragedy.

As the Organization has pointed out, the struggle to prevent famine is being lost in Yemen. In such circumstances, it is regrettable that the quantity of imports continues to fall short of requirements as a result of the persistence of severe and inhumane restrictions imposed on the ports of Al-Hudaydah and Saleef, which have resulted in disappointing trade flows in essential goods, such as food, medicine and fuel. In that regard, we reaffirm that ports, airports and roads must remain open and operational and that humanitarian aid and the population's access to it cannot and must not be conditional on any military objective. Moreover, humanitarian personnel must be able to assist the population in a safe and unrestricted manner.

We also encourage the countries that participated in the pledging conference in February to disburse their generous and critical contributions so that the humanitarian response plan, which is crucial to filling the gaps for the afflicted Yemeni population, can resume its operations without impediment.

In conclusion, I stress the imperative that Mr. Griffiths be able to continue to count on the resolute support of the Council and the main actors involved in the conflict in carrying out the complex

task of persuading the parties to agree to an inclusive political solution endorsed by the United Nations, in full respect for the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Yemen.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Yemen.

Mr. Al-Saadi (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): I congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I wish you and your delegation every success.

From the outset, following the instructions of Mr. Mansour Hadi Mansour, President of the Republic, the Yemeni Government has demonstrated openness and flexibility and made concessions and initiatives to establish peace, end the coup d'état, restore State institutions and alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni people. Our Government has taken care to support the efforts of the United Nations, represented by Special Envoy Griffiths and Lieutenant General Lollesgaard, Chair of the Redeployment Coordination Committee (RCC) in order to implement the Stockholm Agreement and to achieve a political settlement according to the agreed terms of reference, namely, the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative, its Implementation Mechanism, the outcome of the National Dialogue Conference and the relevant Security Council resolutions, chief among which is resolution 2216 (2015).

Our Government is committed to the full and complete implementation of the Stockholm Agreement for the release of prisoners and detainees and the lifting of the siege on Taiz. We reject any attempt to manipulate the interpretation of the Agreement to achieve other ends or justify the practices and obstinacy of the Houthi militias, which want to shirk their obligations for achieving peace and are able to create obstacles so that they can control Al-Hudaydah and its ports by misleading the international community.

In that regard, the Yemeni Government stresses the importance of implementing their redeployment in accordance with what has been agreed, as well as the tripartite Verification and Inspection Mechanism. Each phase of redeployment must be accomplished before the subsequent stage is initiated. The second stage of redeployment must be implemented after establishing the legal authority and security services in charge and agreement has been reached on the mechanism for

the collection of revenues. We reject any unilateral measure. We also reject the staged withdrawals of the Houthis, which are a clear and established violation of the Stockholm Agreement, as well as the relevant Security Council resolutions. Those withdrawals do not respect past agreements.

We stress the importance of opening crossing points and facilitating the movement of United Nations personnel in Al-Hudaydah. Such obstructionist practices by the militias have led to the failure of bilateral meetings in the city, which resulted in the latest meeting of the RCC taking place in a United Nations vessel off the coast in the Red Sea. Our Government is working to correct the redeployment operation and avoid the shortcomings we have seen in the past, namely, during the first phase of redeployment. We will work in accordance with the established agreements. We will demine and fill the trenches in Al-Hudaydah, as well as in the ports of Al-Hudaydah, Saleef and Ras Isa.

Unfortunately, confidence-building measures are difficult to establish when the United Nations has failed to exert pressure on the Houthis to open up crossing points in Al-Hudaydah. It is difficult to undertake such confidence-building measures when meetings have been held in the middle of the sea.

Since the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement, we have seen over the course of the past eight months that no tangible progress has been made to date, apart from what had already been announced in terms of a unilateral withdrawal — a show that has been staged by the militias. Following the Stockholm Agreement, the militias have dug trenches, strengthened their military positions, opened up new front lines and fanned the flames of the humanitarian crisis. Rockets and drones have been launched against the Yemeni people and against civilian infrastructure, as well as the friendly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Since the Stockholm Agreement, the Houthi militias have continued their military escalation, targeted cities and violated international humanitarian law and human rights law. They have launched drones and rockets against the Yemeni people and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. They have also targeted international maritime navigation. For its part, the Iranian regime is supporting those militias by providing them with arms and military technology used in terrorist operations. That demonstrates that there is a manifest will to perpetuate

the war, derail the peace efforts and exacerbate the humanitarian crisis.

A few weeks ago, we saw a Houthi militia demonstration of their military arsenal. When we compare what we saw during that demonstration with what we saw in a demonstration by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in 2019, there is proof of the origin of the weapons used to kill the Yemeni people and to target civilian structures in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as well as to threaten international maritime navigation. That is a clear challenge for the international community and a violation of Security Council resolutions, in particular resolutions 2216 (2015) and 2140 (2014). Our Government calls on the international community and the Council to fulfil their responsibility to maintain regional and international peace and security and take deterrent measures to ensure that Iranian regime is held to account for its actions, in particular perpetuating the war in Yemen and providing weapons to the Houthi militia, thereby jeopardizing the security and stability of the region, in particular the security of Bab Al-Mandeb, one of the most important trade passages in the world.

The situation in Yemen is not simply a humanitarian crisis. The crisis is important, of course, but it is the result rather than the cause of the situation. To remedy the crisis, the international community must support the peace efforts, based on the agreed parameters to put an end to the coup d'état, restore the State institutions and support our Government's efforts. Our Government fully plays its role by adopting plans and programmes to address developments in every area. Our Government is also leading the way in implementing reforms to address challenges and adopting effective policies to build the State's institutions. We also work hard to provide services, revive the economy, reinvigorate construction and restore normal life. Ultimately, the Yemeni Government is responsible for all Yemenis, wherever they may be — in all governorates, without exception. Our Government was recently able to stabilize the national currency, while bolstering State revenue, combating money-laundering and the illicit trade in oil products and strengthening financial and banking institutions, which, undoubtedly, reduced and alleviated the humanitarian crisis.

The Houthi militias continue to divert and steal food assistance, including from the World Food Programme (WFP), and hinder humanitarian access. The Yemeni Government declares that the Houthi militias are

responsible for the decision taken by the WFP on 20 June to partially suspend its operations in the area under militia control, in particular Sana'a. That decision will affect 850,000 of the most vulnerable people, including women and children. Houthi militias continue to block and target food assistance. Militia heads are involved in that practice, demonstrating contempt for morals and international law. This constitutes a crime and a clear violation of international laws and norms. The international community has remained silent in the face of such crimes and violations. Houthi militias continue to starve the Yemeni people by stealing humanitarian and food assistance provided by international organizations and agencies. Customs barriers are being set up against the trucks delivering aid in governorates under militia control.

Houthi militias have prevented the entry of 88 vessels containing assistance and oil products. Seven vessels have been attacked in the Red Sea. Three hundred and eighty-eight trucks — some of which were carrying medicines to combat malaria and cholera — have been looted. Militias have also struck four relief trucks and targeted WFP depots and storehouses and the Red Sea Mills. They have burned thousands of tons of cereal, which could have fed 3.7 million people. The militias have detained employees of international organizations and prevented them from visiting the affected areas to assess the humanitarian situation. They manipulate access permits, planned visits and the names of the beneficiaries of assistance. That aid is diverted and then sold on the black market. At times, local organizations are set up and run by Houthi militia leaders in order to monopolize aid distribution.

International personnel have been forced out and local civil servants have also been detained. Twenty employees of the French Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development were detained and prevented from leaving the Bani Qais directorate and Hajjah governorate. Their passports were confiscated for a week. The Yemeni Government calls on the international community and the Security Council to condemn the violations committed by Houthi militias, put pressure on them to lift all barriers they have imposed on humanitarian agencies and allow the United Nations, in particular the World Food Programme, to play its full role and uphold its noble humanitarian responsibility in Yemen. Our Government stresses and affirms that we will continue to provide all necessary support to facilitate the delivery of that humanitarian assistance.

Houthi militias have imposed death sentences on 30 activists and academics, after kidnapping and subjecting them to physical and psychological torture over many years. We call on the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Secretary-General to intervene and do all in their power to revoke those unjust sentences, handed down by a court that has no authority or legality and uses justice as a tool to oppress those who oppose it. The trials and death sentences, which are extrajudicial, are not in favour of citizens on the lists of the prisoner exchange programme under the Stockholm Agreement. Such unlawful acts are being carried out by illegal armed groups that have no authority to hand down such sentences. Pressure must be exerted on the militias to force them to release all detainees, prisoners, people under house arrest, disappeared persons and those who are imprisoned by the militias.

Houthi militias also impose taxes on schools under their control. Many of the schools that are unable to pay those taxes have closed their doors, which increases the suffering of children who no longer have access to education and are caught up in the conflict. Furthermore, the heads of the militias have opened holiday camps. They force parents to send their children between the ages of 6 and 16 to the camps so that they can brainwash them with sectarian ideas to encourage them to go to the front lines. That is a violation of the rights of the child and a methodological destruction of the present and the future of those children.

Before I conclude, I would like to say that Houthi militias continue to target civilians, including women and children. I listened to Mr. Lowcock's briefing. I would have liked to hear him talk about the children and the women who have been targeted by snipers, which is a practice used by the armed militias. A nine-year-old child was targeted at his home by a Houthi sniper two days ago. Gratitude and tributes have been expressed and made to people on Council sanctions lists who are the perpetrators of violations against the Yemeni people. Those same persons are responsible for bureaucratic obstacles. Following the Council's meetings, those people then send messages to say that they agree to the various provisions, simply so that they can dodge responsibility in the eyes of the Council. The humanitarian crisis in Yemen is far more important than politicization.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.