

**BRIEFING OF THE SPECIAL ENVOY OF THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR YEMEN  
TO THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL  
26 January 2017**

Mr. President,

Thank you very much for the opportunity to brief this Council on the latest developments in the Yemeni peace process.

The last several months have seen a dangerous escalation of military activities with tragic consequences for the Yemeni people. Armed hostilities have continued in many areas including in Sana'a Governorate, Taiz city and in the border area between Yemen and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Civilians in Taiz continue to suffer from indiscriminate shelling in residential areas of the city, with such attacks increasing in recent days. Ground fighting and airstrikes have also escalated along the western coastline, following the launch of Operation Golden Spear by the Government of Yemen and allied forces.

Both sides continue to claim significant military progress in the media. But I remain convinced that there is no possibility of a military solution. We are witnessing daily attacks and counter-attacks. Those who seek a military solution will only prolong the suffering caused by the war, allow the terrorist threat to continue to grow, and deepen the challenges of Yemen's eventual recovery following the war.

The continued military activity is all the more tragic as a viable proposal for peace is on the table and within reach of both parties. With political courage and will, this war can be stopped.

Mr. President,

On 18 December, the Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia hosted a meeting in Riyadh with senior officials from the Sultanate of Oman, United Arab Emirates, the United States and the United Kingdom, which I was invited to join. The meeting ended with a call for a rapid return to a Cessation of Hostilities following a two-week preparatory period.

We have seen several ceasefires in recent months which failed within hours of their announcement. We are committed to ensuring that the upcoming Cessation of Hostilities will be durable and provide real relief to the Yemeni people. My Office has completed preparations for a five-day planning meeting that includes a workshop for representatives from both sides which will develop a joint implementation plan to ensure the success and sustainability of the Cessation of Hostilities.

The successful implementation of the Cessation of Hostilities will bring much needed respite for many Yemenis who have endured long months of war and will pave the way for progress towards a political agreement. I am very grateful for the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan's willingness to host the planning meeting. I met Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi on his second day in office. He informed me that Jordan will provide whatever support necessary to help the Yemeni people. This support is in keeping with Jordan's generous provision of protection, refuge and medical care for people from throughout the region including many Yemenis.

I welcome the Government of Yemen's commitment to sending its representatives to the planning meeting and call on Ansar Allah and the General People's Congress to do the same.

The 18 December meeting in Riyadh also called for all parties to work with me urgently, in advance of negotiations, on the basis of the proposals which I have submitted to them. The parties still have some

reservations and concerns but I will continue my consultations with them to propose solutions and bring their views closer.

My proposals are based mainly on the outcomes of Kuwait, and are intended to ease the path towards a comprehensive peace agreement. They are consistent with the GCC Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism and Security Council Resolutions including 2216, and provide a path back to a peaceful and orderly transition based on the National Dialogue Outcomes. These proposals have strong support and backing from the international community.

With active encouragement from the Sultanate of Oman and the United States, Ansar Allah and the General People's Congress accepted the Roadmap as a basis for future consultations in November. This was a positive step forward. However, their unwillingness to make proposals or seriously discuss the security arrangements, which are an essential part of a comprehensive agreement, do not help us advance towards peace. I discussed these issues with their senior representatives in Sana'a during my latest visit.

The decision of Ansar Allah and the General People's Congress to appoint a parallel government is deeply disappointing and contrary to the interests of a peaceful settlement. I have repeatedly made it clear to them that such unilateral moves reduce the trust between parties and will complicate efforts to restore State institutions after a peace agreement is signed.

Despite a complex security situation, I visited Aden twice since my last briefing to the Council and met with President Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi, Prime Minister Ahmed Obaid bin Dagher and Foreign Minister Abdulmalik Al-Mikhlaifi. During my second visit on 16 January, I urged President Hadi to publicly commit to consultations based on the proposals which I have presented in Kuwait and since. The President's repeated criticism of the Roadmap undermines confidence in the peace process and will only slow Yemen's progress towards an end to the war.

I have assured President Hadi that my proposals should serve as the basis for consultations which will develop a comprehensive agreement agreeable to all sides that brings peace and allows all Yemenis the opportunity to address their country's challenges including the historic grievances of the South.

Mr. President,

Yemen's economic and humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate. According to humanitarian agencies, 18.8 million Yemenis are in need of humanitarian assistance. 2.2 million Yemeni children are acutely malnourished, one of the highest rates of acute malnutrition in the world. This is not only a result of poverty but of the degradation of basic services in health, water and sanitation. The Emergency Relief Coordinator, my colleague Mr. Stephen O'Brien, will be able to give you more details on the war's terrible impact on the humanitarian situation.

The continued closure of Sana'a Airport has added unnecessarily to the hardship. Many of those who want to leave Yemen to seek medical treatment abroad cannot do so and Yemenis abroad are unable to return home. The journey to and from Aden airport is too difficult for many to undertake, leaving them with no option. I call on the Government of Yemen to allow the resumption of commercial flights to Sana'a without further delay. Given the ongoing clashes in Sana'a governorate, I have sent a letter to both parties requesting them to ensure the safety of the airport and of all civilian commercial aircraft.

The extended delay in civil servants' salary payments has severely undercut the purchasing power of most Yemeni households. Further absence of salary payments will drive ever more people into destitution. The Government of Yemen, the Central Bank, Ansar Allah and GPC must work together to ensure the resumption of salaries to civil servants in all areas of the country. We received information earlier today from the Government that salary payments have resumed.

It will also be critical to fully fund the Social Welfare Fund which provides cash payments to the most vulnerable, with technical support from UNICEF and the World Bank. I am also encouraging international partners to find ways to ensure access to hard currency for importers of basic commodities to assure continuity of those imports.

Mr. President,

There is a clear path out of the violence which is plaguing Yemen. The proposals that I have presented are well-balanced and reflect the concerns and needs of both sides, and take into consideration the political, security and social situation in the country. They involve difficult compromises, but provide a return to peace and the resumption of a peaceful transition. I call on the parties to display courage and statesmanship to engage with me and my Office on the basis of these proposals.

Since my last briefing to the Council, and during the past few weeks, I have held meetings with the Foreign Ministers of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Jordan and Sweden. I also met with the Deputy Foreign Ministers of China and Russia. I am extremely grateful for the continued support of these Member States and the wider international community for my efforts. In this context, I would like to express my gratitude for the support I received from the Russian Embassy in Sana'a during my last visit.

I hope this consistent support will encourage the parties to commit to the rapid resumption of a long-lasting Cessation of Hostilities in the coming days and weeks. I am confident that improvement in the security situation will open space for renewed dialogue.

I have seen for myself how great their suffering is. I only just returned from a devastated Sana'a. I saw firsthand the suffering of Yemeni women and men. I hope Yemeni leaders will be able to see the impact that this tragedy has had on the country, make the bold decision to commit to a political solution, and put an end to the senseless violence and suffering of their people. The solution to the Yemeni situation is not external. The UN and the international community can assist, promote and mediate but the key decisions and compromises must be taken by the Yemenis ...Failing this, History will judge them harshly.

Thank you, Mr. President.