



Briefing to the United Nations by the Special Envoy for Yemen

Hans Grundberg

22 November 2022

Thank you Madam President.

Madam President, in this briefing, I intend to provide an overview over the situation in Yemen following the formal expiration of the truce on the 2nd of October, and also brief on the current mediation efforts and the way forward.

Seven weeks have passed since the United Nations mediated nationwide truce in Yemen expired. Seven weeks in which, despite the expiration of the truce and despite incidents of concern, we have fortunately not seen a return to full-fledged war, and I note the courageous and difficult decisions to avoid this path.

In recent weeks, however, Ansar Allah have carried out attacks against oil terminals and ports in Hadramawt and Shabwa governorates with the aim of depriving the Government of Yemen of its main source of revenue from exporting oil. These attacks - the last of which occurred yesterday in Dhabba port in Hadramawt - have significant economic repercussions. Attacks on oil infrastructure and threats to oil companies undermine the welfare of the entirety of the Yemeni people. They risk setting off a spiral of military and economic escalation, a pattern we have seen play out before over the course of Yemen's war. Beyond the risk of escalating violence and undermining current mediation efforts, attacks on civilian infrastructure are prohibited by International Humanitarian Law. As we will hear from OCHA's Director of Operation and Advocacy, Reena Ghelani, these attacks could also lead to a further deterioration of the economic and consequently the humanitarian situation.

Even though overall levels of violence have only increased slightly compared to the six-month truce period, in recent weeks we have seen a concerning uptick in incidents in Ma'rib, in Taiz, including incidents involving civilian casualties. Such incidents demonstrate how fragile the situation remains and underscores,

once more, the need for the parties to urgently reach an agreement to renew the truce. I reiterate my call on the parties to exercise maximum restraint during this critical time.

Madam President,

The absence of a major military escalation thus far has facilitated my continued discussions with the parties, as well as with regional countries. It has also allowed for the elements operated under the truce – such as regular flights between Amman and Sana’a International Airport and fuel deliveries to Hudayah port – to be upheld for the benefit of Yemenis. The United Nations’s efforts to convince the parties to renew and expand the truce continue. In this context, I would like to express my appreciation for the coordinated efforts of regional countries, including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Sultanate of Oman, in support of the efforts of my Office. In light of the military and economic developments I just outlined, it is vital that the ongoing discussions yield positive results as soon as possible. In addition to the efforts related to renewal of the truce, I am engaging the parties not only expanding the truce but initiating discussions on a path toward a more comprehensive settlement of the conflict. I have outlined ideas and options to them on steps to be taken and I repeat my message that the international community and more importantly Yemenis expect them to demonstrate actionable commitment to a peaceful resolution of this conflict.

Indeed, the recent developments reaffirm my conviction that addressing urgent humanitarian and economic issues is needed in the immediate term to avoid the situation for civilians to deteriorate further, but more durable solutions can only be reached in the context of a comprehensive settlement of the conflict. Many of the economic issues being discussed, such as the issue of revenue management for the payment of salaries, require cooperation between the parties in order to be sustainable. This is why I want the parties to the conflict to not only renew the truce but – crucially – to commit to taking steps towards a comprehensive resolution of the conflict. A political process under United Nations auspices will be needed to reach such a resolution and the sooner we can start that work in earnest, the greater our chances of reversing the devastating trends of this war. I have outlined options to the parties in this regard and I will keep advocating for an approach that looks beyond the immediate interests of the warring sides.

In this context, **Madam President,** I would like to reiterate my conviction that for any settlement to be sustainable, it needs to be broad-based and include all segments of Yemeni society, including youth, civil society, and women. The International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on the 25th of November serves as a stark reminder – not just on this day, but every day of the year - of the disproportionate effects that Yemeni women continue to suffer from the conflict and the integral role women should play in all aspects of an inclusive, political settlement. Time is not on the side of Yemeni women as their basic rights, including freedom of movement, are further violated. This is now affecting all Yemeni women in

the north, including our United Nations staff, and we need to be clear that there are no excuses for such actions.

Madam President,

I would like to conclude by reiterating my sincere appreciation for the sustained support of this Council. Your support will continue to be vital to convince the parties to abandon short-term calculations in favour of political, economic and security cooperation toward a sustainable settlement of the conflict in Yemen.

Thank you very much, Madam President.