



Security Council

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Letter dated 19 January 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Yemen to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government, I am pleased to write to you in response to the comments of Mark Lowcock, Under Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, in his briefing to the Security Council on 14 January 2021 with regard to humanitarian access in Government-controlled areas. Mr. Lowcock noted that access has become worse and further noted that: “Recent incidents include warehouse break-ins, detention of aid workers, seizure of relief items and attacks on humanitarian premises.” The Government of Yemen finds itself compelled to respond to those comments and clarify the following:

The Government of Yemen has always been, and continues to be, committed to supporting and facilitating the life-saving work of the United Nations and all other humanitarian organizations in Yemen. In particular, it works to facilitate, among other things, the shipping, granting of customs exemptions for, and storing, securing and distribution of the aid provided by the international community’s generous contributions to the intended beneficiaries all over Yemen. Still, the Government understands that some unintended obstacles may arise, and it is always willing to work with the United Nations agencies to solve them immediately, especially when they have been reported. This has been evident in Mr. Lowcock’s previous briefings to the Security Council. However, it was surprising to hear his comments to the Council on 14 January.

It is believed that Mr. Lowcock’s comments are related to the World Food Programme (WFP) warehouse incident in Aden. As clarified to the Panel of Experts on Yemen with evidence, the incident involves expired and rotten foods that are stored in WFP plastic tents, 59 metres away from the sewage processing facility basins, with no isolating floor from the ground soil, under temperatures of at least 36 degrees Celsius. The Government had to intervene, with established procedures, to prevent the distribution of these foods, which would have caused a health crisis among the beneficiaries, and is still looking forward to hearing about the steps taken by WFP to address those storage issues. This intervention did not result in any halting of WFP operations, and involved only 2 out of 22 WFP warehouses in Aden. Fortunately, the local authorities in Aden and WFP are working on resolving those issues. However, the Government thinks it is important to keep the Security Council informed, and to make a clear distinction between creating obstacles to humanitarian aid operations, as Houthis continue to do, and protecting Yemenis from expired and rotten foods, in fulfilment of the Government’s responsibilities.



Finally, I would like to renew the Government's sincere appreciation for the important humanitarian work of the United Nations, led by Mr. Lowcock, to alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Yemen, and reiterate to the Security Council and the United Nations its steadfast commitment to provide all kinds of support and cooperation to all humanitarian agencies in Yemen, and help them overcome any obstacles they might encounter.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the present letter made available to the members of the Security Council for their valuable consideration, and also issued as a document of the Council.

(Signed) Abdullah Ali Fadhel **Al-Saadi**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
